

Sacred Literature Before the Common Era (BCE, or BC): What is the Nature of the Life Worth Living?

Course

In this course we will study representative works of literature considered sacred by various traditions, and emerging from the archaic to classical periods (c. 1500–500 BC), such as the Vedas, the Hebrew Bible, the Tao Te Ching, and the initial teachings of Confucius and the Buddha.

Description

In this literature course, we will read from some of the great texts revered by various traditions, religious and cultural, and representing some of the oldest known literature of the world, all dating prior to the Common Era. We will explore their contents and styles in an attempt to appreciate their special designation as "scripture," or sacred literature. We will apply various literary approaches to understand their import and to enjoy the various techniques of genre they display.

We will ask important and stimulating questions: Who wrote them? Where? When? For whom and to what purpose? How does translation affect them? What roles are played by symbol, metaphor, and other literary elements?... Ultimately, since these books have been the foundations of vital civilizations, religions, and philosophies, can they still offer us wisdom toward the living of our modern lives?

Texts

Required:

The Tao Te Ching, trans. Feng and English
The Analects of Confucius, trans. Huang
The Dhammapadam: Teachings of the Buddha, trans. Easwaran
The Jewish Study Bible, JPS Tanakh (Oxford)
Understanding the Bible, Harris
The Upanishads, trans. Easwaran
Awakening Osiris: The Egyptian Book of the Dead, trans. Ellis

The syllabus is geared to the particular editions of the texts ordered for this course, as listed above. (See the bibliographies.) For most of these books, many other translations exist. If students choose to read a different edition, they must be alert to the fact that its format and its translation may vary to a small or very large degree.

Recommended:

An English or writer's handbook
A college-level dictionary

Course Requirements

A grade for the course will be based on two essays, a midterm, a film review, and a final. In-class reading and discussion, response exercises, and group and individual tasks will help us work through each of the texts. All assignments for credit must be word-processed and must adhere to MLA standards of presentation (i.e., documentation); some review of these standards and protocols will be provided.

Student Learning Outcomes

- Distinguish among the stylistic and thematic characteristics of the texts.
- Determine how the content is being conveyed; specifically, what literary elements are being employed.
- Evaluate the effects of translation on both content and style.

Table of Contents

The contents of this module are as follows.

- Course structure and description of texts
- Caveats and cautions
- Keeping a “wisdom log”
- Sample syllabus
- Lecture notes
- Key terminology
- Essay assignments
- Exams
- Film review
- Bibliographies

Course Structure and Description of Texts

Theme: What Is the Nature of the Life Worth Living?

The course begins with texts that developed between 500 and 200 BCE, a highly fertile and provocative period in human cultural history—in Greece, the great philosophers Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle were putting forth their ideas; in China and India, Lao Tzu’s Tao Te Ching, Confucius’ Analects, and the earliest teachings of the Buddha were being disseminated, compiled, and canonized. These texts, recognized as sacred by specific world religions, are characterized by a shift in the tradition from religious thinking toward philosophical thinking. Less theistic than the thinking expressed in their respective traditions prior to this time, these texts place emphasis on the individual life worth living; certainly, this includes a concern for the individual’s relationship with ultimate realities, but is no longer confined to it or defined by it.

We move through the course backwards into history, so that the second half of the semester’s readings takes us into that earlier sacred world from which those later texts emerged. So we go back in time into that theistic world of the Tanakh (i.e., the Jewish Scriptures), the Upanishads, and the Egyptian Book of the Dead, where the nature of the life worth living is less individualized and more overtly connected to the Divine.

The Course

We begin with the **Tao Te Ching**: Lao Tzu's eighty-one poems of paradoxical wisdom were his gift to his society, which was struggling to find peace and establish new ways of being in the turbulent time following the Warring States Period in ancient China. This small text has continued to stimulate and challenge thinkers for over 2,300 years. Whether Lao Tzu was real or legendary or an iconic composite of many valley sages is still debated, but his provocative advice for living in accord with the Nameless Ultimate, Tao, is one of the earliest studies in practical metaphysics.

Then we move to the **Analects**: Confucius, roughly contemporary with Lao Tzu in both time and geography, offered that same fomenting society a very different (though not incompatible) approach to living in and through a troubled era. A well-documented historical figure, Confucius taught a kind of sacred sociology, premised on a set of ideal relationships in family and community, which emphasized the values of learning, self-cultivation, and humaneness—this last being the first time that such a concept was at the very hub of an ethical philosophy. “Analects” is a Latin word for sayings or literary gleanings; the collection of aphorisms and anecdotes has been redacted over the centuries into twenty “books” or chapters, which are heavy with topical allusion (I recommend an edition with extensive footnotes).

Next we read the Buddha's **Dhammapada**: the earliest, and perhaps the only, text directly attributable to the Buddha. This relatively small collection of sayings, most in antithetic parallel structure and arranged thematically in twenty-six chapters, offers to guide us on an unusual path toward personal liberation. It is premised on ideas that would become the major tenets of Buddhism: the power of thoughts to shape lives; the training of the mind; the cultivation of non-attachment; the exercising of compassion. For the many strains of Buddhism, this text remains a primer, preserving the earliest expressions of the Four Noble Truths, Eightfold Path, and the Three Refuges (the Buddha, the *dharmā*, and the *sangha*).

The **Tanakh**: the Jewish Scriptures are also referred to, though inaccurately, as the Old Testament. It is a collection of thirty-nine different works in three major divisions: the Torah, or “Law,” the earliest and most sacred portion containing Yahweh's law, and boasting two of the most famous narratives in western civilization, Genesis and Exodus; the Nevi'im, or “Prophets,” second in sacred importance, preserving the often dramatic reminders of the people's covenantal obligations; and the Kethuvim, or “Writings,” the fine literature, if you will, of the Bible—poetry, short stories, drama. This third portion, which is characterized by diversity of theological thought as much as genre, asks hard questions about God's presence, protection, love, goodness, and might in the midst of profound human suffering. We will read Genesis, Exodus, and Ecclesiastes in full, and significant portions of Proverbs, Song of Songs, Psalms, and Job.

Then onto the Hindu **Upanishads**: also a diverse collection in style and genre, but fairly consistent with the Vedic ideas of a divine unity lying behind the apparent multiplicity of this manifested cosmos, and that a human being's purpose in life is to realize this ultimate Oneness through learning and cultivation of purity in both mind and body. The word “upanishad” means “sitting near” and suggests the ideal mode of such learning and cultivation: at the foot of a personal sage. What is recorded in these texts are not doctrine per se but the direct experiences of the Divine by such seers and sages (some of whom are named in the texts). The great theological innovation of the Upanishads is that the inner Self (as contrasted with the ego self of personality) is Brahman, God. We will read the ten major upanishads, most in full.

We end with the **Egyptian Book of the Dead**: having moved our way backward in time, we arrive at about 2500 BCE in the land which invented the Afterlife! This book is a loose collection (versions were created by commission, scribes drawing from a large resource of spells, chants, and prayers per their patron's aesthetic and spiritual tastes), and was known by the ancient Egyptians as the Book of Coming Forth by Day. These texts, which were painted inside coffins, on tomb walls, as well as on papyri scrolls, were understood as rubrics and instructions to guide the “soul” (a concept more complex than ours) on its gauntlet-like journey through the transformations and ultimate judgment before Osiris, God of Resurrection.

Caveats and Cautions

Even though my course description says, “Ultimately, since these books have been the foundations of vital civilizations, religions, and philosophies, can they still offer us wisdom toward the living of our modern lives?” I emphasize that acquiring, developing, or enhancing a personal set of values or beliefs, or not, is entirely up to the students.

This part, I tell them at the beginning of the semester, is not in my course—our job as a learning community is to comprehend (as best we can) these often inspiring but frequently elusive texts, and, secondly, to appreciate how the normal aspects of literature (metaphor, analogy, symbol, irony, and so on) serve the essential function of carrying these books’ powerful and provocative ideas. I call this the *Literary Function*. By which I mean: it is what fine literature does which even makes it possible to speak of what is essentially ineffable. The power to image is the primary tool of the revelatory mind to express the inexpressible, to convey the inaudible, to clothe the invisible... If the what (content) and the how (style) of great literature are inextricable, then here in a literature which probes the ultimate mysteries of existence, we can see the ultimate example of that integral nature.

It is also our job, as I see it, to become sensitive to the challenges, problems, and effects of translation. The act of translating complex ideas from ancient languages into modern English is difficult enough; add to that the near-impossibility of expressing the Ineffable even in a familiar tongue, and we can see how often imagery is culture-bound! While I have carefully selected the translations we use for the courses, I bring other versions into the classroom for constant reference and comparison. Further, the major paper for each course is a detailed study of three versions of the same passage—students get to select the passage and the alternate translations guided by my annotated bibliographies.

Keeping a "Wisdom Log"

Note: This assignment is for additional credit (optional assignment).

Log Type 1

The students should consider this ongoing assignment as their personal laboratory for exploring the concepts, adages, ideas, precepts, and admonitions offered by our sacred texts. In this laboratory, each student will select those passages which strike him/her as worth further time, thought, and investigation, and which ultimately he/she may find worth applying to how the student leads his/her life. This wisdom log is intended to be the student’s personal book of collected wisdom.

I recommend the student make or buy a notebook just for this purpose. Title it: The Book of Jason or Sharon’s Book of Wisdom... or something along such lines.

What the student should do:

Each week (beginning with week 2 of the course, and until Due Date on syllabus) select one brief passage from our current text(s).*

a. Copy the passage into your notebook *onto a left-hand page*, noting title, section, chapter, verse as appropriate, and date of your entry.

b. Then *across from it on the right-hand page*, respond to it: your thoughts, reactions, feelings, connections... genuine response (average = one handwritten page).

(Some students really enjoy this thoughtful activity; please feel free to do more than 1 entry per week, but mark it as additional.)

*When more than one book is scheduled in a week's time, you may choose which one to respond to.

Log Type 2

If you are interested in and have the time to explore *applying and experimenting* with the insights from our texts in your daily life, Log 2 may be a better choice.

With the text we are reading at the time (apply for four weeks minimum; notice special due date for Wisdom Logs and allow time accordingly), select one passage to *actively experiment with in your daily life*. Record what you’re doing and make observations... Is it difficult to apply? If so, why? How does

it change you? and so forth... These entries should constitute a series of dated reports on how the experience is going. Make a minimum of two entries per week and date them clearly.

Note: Wisdom Log 2 is about *doing something*.

*Besides obvious activities like meditation or alms giving, this could include changing or fostering attitudes, responding to others in new ways, promoting or preventing certain mental processes...

For either log project: *points will be awarded based mostly on thorough attention to activities required and thoughtfulness in the written expression.*

If there's anything you'd rather I not read, just fold the page.

Sample Syllabus

- Prior to class, you should have read the week's assignment.
- In general, I recommend that you read the sacred text itself (or portion assigned) before reading the introductory or support materials (exceptions noted below).
- Bring your Syllabus-Supplemental Reading Packet to each class.
- This syllabus is geared to the particular editions of the texts ordered for this course. If you choose to read a different edition, be alert to the fact that its format may vary and its translation may vary to a small or very large degree.
- Page #s in () = recommended reading

Week One: Getting started... an introduction to the course; + introduction to Tao Te Ching

Week Two: Tao Te Ching, poems 1–37 + Needleman's introduction (begin Wisdom Log)

Week Three: finish Tao Te Ching poems 38–81
begin Analects books 1–6

Week Four: Analects books 7–18; + introduction
Discuss essay 1

Week Five: Dhammapada chaps. 1–12; + general introduction pp. 7–46; see glossary and notes at back

Week Six: Dhammapada chaps. 13–26; + introduction pp. 46–72
Essay 1 due

Week Seven: Tanakh; read in your Bible, in this order:
Proverbs ch. 1, 3, 8, 9, 19;
Song of Songs ch. 1, 2, 5, 8 (browse);
Ecclesiastes ch. 1–3, 7, 12 (browse)
In *Understanding the Bible*: 1–37 Bible overview; (43–49); *see 45–48 two important timelines
In *Understanding the Bible*: 268–269 Wisdom Literature; 270–272 Proverbs; 283–285 Ecclesiastes; 290–291 Song
These are really short but really helpful bits ! You might even want to read these before the primary texts.
Understanding the Bible: *see 86–87 inset
*Discuss essay 2

- Week Eight:** Tanakh: read in your Bible: browse Psalms;
Job ch. 1–13; 29–31; 38–42
In *Understanding the Bible*: 255–262 Ketuvim; 262–268 Psalm; 272–282 Job;
76–90 The God of Israel
Midterm
- Week Nine:** Tanakh: read in your Bible: Genesis
Choose one of these sections to read more closely:
Genesis ch.1–11, or 12–36, or 37–end; in *Understanding the Bible*: 113–127
Genesis
- Week Ten:** Genesis
Film Review due
- Week Eleven:** Tanakh: read in your Bible:
Exodus ch. 1–24 (25–31), 32–34 (35–39), 40
In *Understanding the Bible*: 129–143 Exodus; 94–112 Torah; 70–73 Promised
Land
Wisdom Log due
- Week Twelve:** Upanishads pp. 33–122; + general introduction pp. 7–30; 251–261
Essay 2 due (non-Upanishad text)
- Week Thirteen:** Upanishads pp. 123–249; + pp. 270–277
Essay 2 due (Upanishad text)
- Week Fourteen:** Egyptian Book of the Dead, first half
- Week Fifteen:** Egyptian Book of the Dead, second half
Final

In addition to logs or other additional credit, you may do the following reading here and do a summary and response of 2–3 pages (by the general additional credit cutoff date): read in your Bible: Isaiah ch. 1–12; 24–27; 40–45; (56–62); in *Understanding the Bible*: 210–218 Nevi'im; 223–228 1st Isaiah; 242–246 2nd Isaiah; 248–249 3rd Isaiah.

Lecture Notes

Tao Te Ching

Text

Translations: Tao Te Ching = "the way of life," "the way of power," "the book of the Way," "the way and the virtue of the way," "the way and its virtue."

(*Tao* = way; *te* = virtue; *ching* = sacred book or tradition).

The work consists of 81 brief chapters, or poems.

It is a collection, or even anthology, of instructional utterances, hymns, proverbs, polemic fragments... unified by a cohesive point of view.

It consists of observations and advice (rather than dogma: descriptive rather than proscriptive or prescriptive).

how to be in accord with existence, and with that which supports existence (i.e., the transcendental): *mystical*
how to lead a "good" life (i.e., content, balanced, centered): *psychological*
how to be a proper citizen, a proper leader: *sociopolitical*

The Tao Te Ching is traditionally divided into two parts:

- 1–37 "Tao Ching" = canon of *tao*; (emphasis on) metaphysics
- 38–81 "Te Ching" = canon of *te*; (emphasis on) ethics and politics

"The Tao Te Ching is thus a work of *metaphysical psychology*, taking us far beyond the social or biological factors that have been the main concern of modern psychology. It helps us see how the fundamental forces of the cosmos itself are mirrored in our own individual, inner structure. And it invites us to try to live in direct relationship to all these forces....

But it is extremely challenging, and this challenge was apparently as difficult for the men and women of ancient China as it is for us." (Needleman, introduction in Feng and English edition vi)

Poetry (attention to form)

General characteristics

1. compression of thought, economy of expression
2. use of imagery, especially figurative: simile, metaphor, symbol, analogy, paradox, hyperbole
3. attention to diction
4. interest in sound and rhythm

Noted: The greatest challenge to translators is poetry... how to retain the poetic aspects (which by their nature require some interpreting even in their original language, or have to do with qualities of sound) while rendering an accurate lexical equivalence.

Context and Commentary

Lao Tzu (traditionally 604–531 BCE) -- "Master Lao," "Old Master," "Old One"

throughout the world, Lao Tzu is commonly placed among the greatest spiritual figures of all time, along side Moses, Gautama Buddha, Jesus, and Muhammad.

He was a legendary figure -- court archivist who gave up urban life, disappointed with direction his society was going.

He may be the mythic incorporation of several sages who contributed to the development and dissemination of these teachings which became the basis for Taoist thought; an epitome of the "valley sage."

"Mysticism is often given anonymously, by principle. All we can guess about the authorship of these poems is that the main threads of their argument originated among recluses in remote valleys before Confucius's time and that the results took form late in the 3rd century BC." (Blakney 27)

Historical information about the author and text are scant and clouded in legend, and what little exists is debated by scholars.

"The traditional view is that the *Lao Tzu* was written by a man named Lao Tzu who was an older contemporary of Confucius (551–479 BC). The locus classicus of this tradition is the biography of Lao Tzu in the *Shih chi* (Records of the Historian) the earliest general history of China, written at the beginning of the first century BC by Ssu-ma Ch'ien:

‘Lao Tzu was a native of the Ch’u Jen Hamlet in the Li Village of Hu Hsien in the State of Ch’u. His surname was Li, his personal name was Erh and he was styled Tan. He was the Historian in charge of the archives in Chou.’” (Lau, viii)

The texts can be dated c.300 BCE; usually referred to as the “Lao Tzu”; preserved primarily in commentaries, fragmented manuscripts.

"Ancient Text of the Lao Tsu" collated c. 550 CE (complete extant text) based on a text discovered in a tomb from c. 200 BCE (now lost), and possibly the source of the *Wang Pi* (226–249 CE) text which circulated among scholars and intellectuals

"Essential Principles of The Lao Tzu" c. 25 BCE (fragmented).

Thought to be the origin of the *Ho-shang Kung* text which diverged into a northern (4,999 words) and a southern version (5,302 words) circulating primarily among the illiterate masses

“Ma-wang Tui manuscript,” or Silk manuscript, discovered in 1974, are dated to c. 206–195 BCE; they show a different arrangement of the chapters (see Mair or Henricks).

“The Guodian Laozi,” or Bamboo texts, discovered in 1993, are now the oldest; unearthed from a royal tutor’s tomb, where evidence suggests the texts were written well before 300 BCE; approximately 40 percent of the Received Text, differing order of stanzas, some chapters briefer. (See Henricks, Ames and Hall, or Roberts.)

Emperor reigning 156–141 BCE decreed the Lao Tzu to be *ching* (sacred), officially elevating it from a revered philosophical text to a sacred one.

Ellen Chen -- see bibliography -- suggests this may have been mere formal sanction of what had already been common attitude and practice.

The Tao Te Ching has been a major underlying influence in Chinese thought for c. 2000 years.

Its thematic concerns are:

- harmony -- being in accord with... nature, humankind, transcendent
- cycle of return -- non-being into being, being into non-being
- non-interference/intervention, non-striving -- *wu wei*: “non-action”
- anti-materialism
- "devoted to a denial of selfishness and self-seeking and to a mystical union with the ultimate" (Hung, foreword in Blakney)
- restraint, simplicity, contentment
- water imagery and symbolism dominate
- unique in otherwise patriarchal culture, the Tao Te Ching idealizes the "mystic feminine":

for example, poem 28 suggests preference for "yin" over "yang"; "valley spirit" characterized as feminine

master/sage exhibits "feminine" traits

use of mother imagery and symbolism

"mystic female"

"The way/Tao -- path... method... Ultimate Principle...

This Ultimate Is-ness... is Nameless; a unique Something apprehended, for which language is entirely inadequate; world is its by-product; nothing exists separate from it; there can be no good government and no personal well-being apart from it.

Tao: the word was already old and familiar; Confucius also used the term, but applied it more specifically to the scope of moral conduct... *li/tao*.

"*Metaphysically*, the term *Tao* refers to the way things are; *psychologically*, it refers to the way human nature is constituted, the deep, dynamic structure of our being; *ethically*, it means the way human beings must conduct themselves with others; *spiritually*, it refers to the guidance that is offered to us, the methods of searching for the truth

that have been handed down by the great sages of the past -- the way of inner work. Yet all these meanings of Tao are ultimately one." (Needleman, introduction in Feng and English viii)

Te: virtue, power, integrity... Tao manifested, the Way embodied... art of living in the world yet in accord with Ultimate... also the art of leadership and citizenship; duty... weight of character... full personhood.

"The Tao is... fused with, and balanced by, the *Te*, as yin balances yang. *Te* is usually translated as 'virtue,' although the poet and oriental scholar Arthur Waley translates it as 'power,' giving us the Way and its Power... [as if]... *Te* is the outworking of the Tao.

"What the *Te* brings to the *Tao Te Ching* is consequence... [making it] a handbook of applied wisdom.

[*Te* is] the moral behaviour that should flow from following the Tao."
(Palmer, introduction in Freke 11–12)

The canon of *Te* is traditionally understood as the poems 38–81.
This is only an emphasis; poems of metaphysical themes are still to be found in this section.

The Tao and the Analects

The writers of both the Tao and the Analects were responding to societal change, political, religious, social upheaval. In c. 6th century BCE, the north-central Chinese were expanding from feudalism toward nationalism; customs, norms, ideas, and ideals were shifting, changing, blending.

There were two styles of response to challenging times: Confucius = moral / Lao Tzu = spiritual. The Analects of Confucius were urban, ritualistic, social, stressed conduct, and were codified, systematized, prescriptive, proscriptive. Confucius was deified and personalized.

The Tao of Lao Tzu was rural, mystical, individualistic; stressed attitude, observation, advice; and was descriptive. Lao was an anonymous valley sage and was universalized.

Both sages were influenced by the ancient *Book of Odes (Songs)*, revered text of poems, songs, commentaries on politics and government, personal reflections on society.

Both sages quote from and make reference to its teachings; both hearken back to an idealized time when the wisdom of the divine sages prevailed.

"The purely moral proposal is most probable where people press together and life requires general agreement on its conduct. The mystic view becomes probable where individuals confront the universe alone. In China, the masses of people have always been pressed together. So they are moral, and Confucius has been their representative man. Mysticism still survives in China but rather on the periphery of life, where there is room." (Blakney 17)

(See Blakney's introduction to his edition of *Tao Te Ching* for a fuller comparative discussion of Taoism and Confucianism and the historical environment which spawned them both.)

Note on religious development: in about 100–200 CE, mystics organized themselves into a church and the *Tao Te Ching* (or the *Lao Tzu*) was assigned scriptural status.

However, the text itself may have undermined Taoism's success, because:

1. It was difficult for average man to grasp: its poetry (form) and mysticism (content) were difficult for the undereducated or unsophisticated
2. It lacked a clear exemplar (a Buddha, a Christ, a Confucius)
3. It lacked a picturable future promise (like a paradise, heaven, nirvana)

Taoism competed heavily with Buddhism, which tended to be more popular among the masses,
Taoism was popular among the literate and ruling classes.

Analects of Confucius

Text

The analects consist of 500 brief, varied pieces; aphorism, anecdote, dialog, parable

Chinese title = Lun Yu ("selected sayings")

"Analects" = "selected sayings," any miscellaneous collection, specifically a literary one.

The work is a compilation from a broad range of sources, oral and written; texts existed in widely variant versions long after death of Confucius.

For sayings embedded in a context (i.e., brief narratives, anecdotes), the contexts are probably later inventions/additions.

Books 3–8 are most widely accepted; books 1–15 are mostly accepted as genuinely the sayings of Confucius. (Close study reveals differences in styles and intent from the aphoristic/proverbial sayings and exchanges which characterize the core.)

Even these may not have been recorded by Confucius, though he probably taught them; collection we have now developed from written records made, compiled, redacted by his immediate and subsequent disciples.

Some sayings are those of his disciples, who are also referred to as "master"; oddly, some sayings appear to be hostile and probably filtered in from outside material.

The Analects are not written in formal or philosophical terms (abstract conceptual), but in colloquial language.

They are seminal expressions of some of the typical ideas of Chinese civilization.

Most of Confucius's quotations of ancient sayings cannot be verified (texts no longer exist); however, the *Book of Songs*, to which he frequently refers, did probably exist in his time.

The Analects is only one of several (13) revered sacred Chinese classics.

The Analects is an example of "sayings literature." Its general characteristics are:

a fairly simple literary form, devoid of most formal literary elements (character, tone, plot, etc.)

- a compilation or collection, unified or eclectic, of aphoristic expressions (aphorism = brief, pithy, wise saying)
- authorship or attribution is primary
- straightforward prose, or simple poetry
- accented with often colorful, but simple imagery (especially similes)
- dogmatic (conveys or comments on principles, beliefs, doctrines)
- parallelism is common device (though not much used in Analects)

Other examples of sayings literature: Dhammapada, Book of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Gospel of Thomas, hypothetical Q Gospel.

Parallelism is a simple, ancient literary device which structures parallel couplets (or sometimes triplets) in at least three variations:

1. antithetic: second half states opposite
2. synonymous: second half restates
3. synthetic: second half completes, expands, or complements

Parallelism and imagery are especially helpful to memory.

Context and Commentary

"Confucius" = Latinization for "K'ung Futse," "Kong (Kung) fuzi," ("Master Kong").

His traditional dates are c. 551–479 BCE.

He was probably a teacher who prepared young men for public office. Perhaps a private tutor who trained the sons of gentlemen in the virtues proper to members of the ruling classes. Perhaps seeking a wider audience for his ideas, he traveled. Eventually, the appeal of his teachings gave him a reputation out of proportion to his personal life and worldly success, i.e., he became a figure around which much legend grew.

For example, he had a remarkable birth, special physical features, extraordinary encounters, and underwent divinization (credited with the legendary omniscience and moral infallibility of the Divine Sage).

As the most authentic account of the teachings of a man who has been at the summit of Chinese intellectual life for 2000 years, the Analects is a work of central importance.

The text is the earliest use of "humaneness" as a pivotal philosophical reality.

It places the earliest insistence on ethical matters for their own sake (promoting man's inclination to act for ethical reasons rather than practical advantage).

It stresses the practical nature of instruction to assist individuals in essential process of self-cultivation, fit to participate in government and society.

In a time of social and political change, Confucius offered what worked well!

Keynotes

"Ritual" (*li*): Public ceremony, social formalities, codes of conduct which touch an ancient chord in the soul and which emphasize harmony, beauty, sacredness. There is one *li* and it is in harmony with the greater cosmic *tao*.

“Well learned conventional practice distinguishes humans from beasts and the inanimate.” (Fingarette 63)

"Humaneness" (*ren/jen*): central virtue in Analects... kindness, goodness. The humane man (or "gentleman" [*junzi/chun tzu*]) is concerned with what is right, not for himself but for the sake of the moral order.

“How miraculous, how humane a power was inherent in well-learned conventional practices as distinguished from force, threats, or commands.” (63)

"The way" (*tao*): ideal course of conduct for individuals and for group which has always existed and can be reintroduced, recultivated; looks back to an idealized former time, a golden age of the ancient sage-rulers. There are not different paths, but one; you succeed in following it or you don't.

It's the concepts that pose challenge to translators:

“What these differences among translators, all of whom are expert, indicate is an important non-alignment between the concepts we use and those of the ancient Chinese: there is no single concept in our moral vocabulary which captures precisely what the Master means by *jen*. ‘Goodness,’ ‘perfect virtue’ have the merit of indicating correctly that *jen* is the supreme virtue... while ‘humaneness,’ ‘benevolence’... give a flavor of the precise form of goodness he had in mind.” (Wilkinson, introduction in Waley; Wordsworth ed.)

Expanded application of *li* from religion to society (etiquette, relationships).

"Confucianism stood for a rationalized social order through the ethical approach, based on personal cultivation. It aimed at political order by laying the basis for it in a moral order, and it sought political harmony by trying to achieve moral harmony in man himself." (Yutang 6)

“Society is men treating each other as men according to the obligations and privileges of ‘li,’ out of love and loyalty and respect called for by their human relationships to each other.” (Fingarette 76)

Primary relationships: father–son, brother–brother, prince–subject, friend–friend, husband–wife. "Culture" is the appreciation of the refinements of civilized life -- art, literature, music, dance, decoration -- that which graces learning and the practicing of social virtues ideas of personal soul or inner psychic life are not addressed; man is a "sacrificial vessel" -- fulfilled and realized as he participates in the holy rite of civilized life.

“The glue that binds everything together in the pragmatic moral universe of Confucius is the virtue of truthfulness or trustworthiness, faithfulness to the ideals exemplified by the sum of the cardinal virtues of humanity, justice, courtesy, and wisdom. Confucius likened trust to the link between a vehicle and its source of power and taught that trust was absolutely essential to the life of a nation” (Cleary 6).

Confucianism vied with Taoism and Buddhism, and by c. 1000 CE it reigned supreme in China. Is it a civil religion? It has no theology, metaphysics, or doctrinal beliefs.

A Brief History of the Text

There are two main (Chinese) interpretations of the Analects: "old" and "new."

Old : "Collected Explanations of the Lun Yu"; presented to emperor by a committee of scholars c. 240 CE. The effort was to update the texts and make them accessible to the then current reader (explain references, allusions, archaisms, etc.). From 240 to 1100s it was a scripture among many scriptures studied by the literary elite.

New: a theologian-scholar (Chu Hsi, 1130–1200) transformed it into a schoolbook, the basis of all education -- *the* schoolbook! An effort was to make the hidden Truth ensconced in this classical sacred book available to all.

The most influential English translation is that of James Legge, in *The Chinese Classics* (1886). For more information on the history of the text, see D. C. Lau’s afterword or Arthur Waley’s original edition (1938).

Dhammapada (of Buddha)

Text

The Dhammapada is a collection of vivid, practical verses (423), gathered probably by direct disciples who wished to preserve what they had heard from the Buddha himself.

It is one of the oldest and most loved of classics of Buddhism.

It is a kind of handbook -- a condensed, readily accessible book of the Buddha’s teachings; known for its simplicity and viewed as a primer of basic Buddhism.

"Dhammapada" (Pali) means something like "the path of dharma" (*dharma* = truth, teaching, righteousness, central law + *pada* = path, way; word, verse), or “verses on dharma” or "statements of principle."

The Buddha did not leave a set or static structure of belief or doctrine (though *Buddhism* did develop such); rather his teaching is an ongoing "way of perfection" or “path to liberation” which anyone can follow to highest good (self-realization). The Dhammapada is a map for that journey; intended for the average person who seeks "salvation" (audience).

Prince Siddhartha Gautama (Gotama), c. 550 BCE, "the Buddha" = "awakened one," "one who awoke" ("the Christ" = "the anointed one").

He did not write the Buddhist scriptures.

The Dhammapada was probably compiled from writings of his earliest disciples and was preserved and transmitted by monks and teachers.

It was canonized (closed scripture) c. 200–100 BCE.

“Already during his lifetime, the sayings of Gotama were being memorized and repeated by his disciples. These have survived in many versions and recensions, of which the Dhammapada is one of the most widely received.... [They] are arranged in verse structure, whether or not they were in fact spoken that way originally, at least in part as a mnemonic device and as a basis for ritual recitation.” (Pelikan, introduction; Carter and Palihawadana trans.)

The codification and circulation of the work resulted in wide acceptance. (Buddhism traveled from India throughout Southeast Asia and into the Far East.) Some early deposits were in Sanskrit, the language of sages and scholars; during the Buddha’s time, Pali was a vernacular language (entire Theravada canon is in Pali).

The Pali Dhammapada came into being in Sri Lanka, into which Buddhism spread in the 3rd century BCE, first in oral form; in written form it was carried to most of Southeast Asia (Pelikan xiv).

“Various individual verses have parallels and echoes throughout Buddhist literature of sayings attributed to the Buddha.” (Pelikan xiv)

The Dhammapada is revered by all the strains of Buddhism. “It can lay claim to an ecumenical authority”... and is considered “the common property of all those who profess to be his [the Buddha’s] disciples” (Pelikan xvi).

It was translated into Latin in 1855 by a Danish scholar, V. Fausboll; a second edition of this work appeared in 1900.

The Dhammapada is an example of “sayings literature.” Its general characteristics are: a fairly simple literary form, devoid of most formal literary elements (characters, tone, plot, etc.).

- a compilation or collection, unified or eclectic, of aphoristic expressions (aphorism = brief, pithy, wise saying)
- authorship or attribution is primary
- straightforward prose, or simple poetry
- accented with often colorful, but simple imagery (especially similes)
- dogmatic (conveys or comments on principles, beliefs, doctrines)
- parallelism is common device

Other examples of sayings literature: Analects, Book of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Gospel of Thomas, hypothetical Q Gospel.

Parallelism is a simple, ancient literary device which structures parallel couplets (or sometimes triplets) in at least three variations:

1. antithetic: second half states opposite
2. synonymous: second half restates
3. synthetic: second half completes, expands, or complements

Parallelism and imagery are especially helpful to memory.

Keynotes

Themes:

- mastery and purification of self
- strength and sobriety of character
- individual liberation and attainment of peace of mind

- life is shaped by our thinking
- if we can get hold of the thinking process, we can remake ourselves and our experience of life
- premise and purpose
- desire to help others liberate themselves from the suffering in life
- reaction to/reformation of the socio-religious culture of his day repudiated caste system (as social oppression)
- denied ritual and dogma as vehicles to freedom and enlightenment
- abandoned cultism of priesthood
- supported direct experience of the divine
- talked with people of all walks of life in local vernacular
- offered pragmatic approach to bettering life here and now:
- Four Noble Truths
- Eightfold Path
- peace, clarity, serenity can be had by all (householders as well as monks)
- at essence is understanding and training the mind
- focus on *dharmā* and the paths to be in relationship with it

Key Concepts

Four Noble Truths:

1. *fact of suffering*: life is change; change cannot satisfy desire since desire seeks to hold onto
2. *cause of suffering*: mistaken idea that life can bring happiness (life = temporality, impermanence; these do not create happiness)
3. *suffering can be cured, if understood*: when mind is free of desire/attachment (must have!), what remains is peace, joy, a state of *wakefulness*
4. *selfishness (desire/attachment) can be extinguished* by following the Eightfold Path.

Eightfold Path:

1. right understanding (seeing life as it is)
2. right purpose (willing, desiring, thinking in line with Life As It Is)
3. right speech (speaking kindly)
4. right conduct (acting kindly)
5. right occupation (livelihood which does not hurt or infringe on others)
6. right effort (disciplined endeavor to train our thoughts, words, actions to be in accord with *dharmā*)
7. right attention (mental focus; here and now; attentive to *dharmā*)
8. right meditation (means for training the mind)

(Notice the interplay of 6, 7, 8.)

Key Terms

dharmā: universal sacred law; cosmic moral order; duty; teaching

yoga: practice; discipline

karmā: something done; cause or effect; action in harmony with *dharmā*

budh: to wake up

buddha: one who has awakened

brahmadīya: supreme science, meditation, a discipline of intense focus on contents and processes of consciousness

bodhi or *sambodhi*: enlightenment; an instantaneous experience during which customary mental activity is momentarily suspended and the processes of consciousness are exposed

dhyana: stages or levels of enlightenment; degree to which one has control over contents and processes of consciousness

nirvana: a result of the fourth *dhyana* or highest level of meditative achievement; unity experience; self-will extinguished; seeds of separateness burned out

“Bodhi is not nirvana. It is a temporary stilling of the mind which brings illumination of consciousness; nirvana, the permanent release from all sources of suffering, is attained only when the experience of enlightenment has been repeated so often that it, not ordinary conditioned awareness, has become one’s constant state. Only when the insights of bodhi are completely absorbed into one’s character and conduct would the Buddha call a person truly awake.” (Easwaran 93)

Context

The Buddha’s reforms addressed a movement already underway -- partly expressed in the tradition of the Upanishads and the "forest-dwellers" (mystical approach), as contrasted with the tradition of the Vedas and the urban-dwellers and supremacy of priestly class (doctrinal approach). The social religion of the Vedas (majority) with Brahmins preserving ancient scripture and presiding over a complex system of ritual activities.

Vedas: c. 2000 BCE; hymns, songs; Brahmins (priests) hierarchical, centralized; systematic; ritual, ceremony, observance; knowledge = learning facts, reciting hymns, performing rites.

Buddhism goes beyond ritual and meditations of the priests, and asserts that it is possible to practice spiritual disciplines to realize directly the divine ground of being.

Upanishads: c.1000 BCE; mystical utterances (added to end of Vedas as scripture); forest sages; "democratic," universal; experiential, meditation, personal disciplines; knowledge = intuitive, experiential, mystical.

This secondary tradition (as taught by forest sages) represents a clear antecedent to the Buddha's teachings. Its focus was on *dharma* and the paths to be in relationship with it, but whereas the sages sought to know, the Buddha sought to save.

History of Text and Translation

Buddhist tradition has it that shortly after the Buddha’s passing away, 500 of his disciples met for the purpose of recalling the truths they had received during the 45 years of the Buddha’s teaching. . . they “prepared their discourses for recitation, that is, basic themes were repeated with variations in order to impress the ideas on their hearers . . . the Dhammapada was assembled from the sayings of Gautama given on some 300 different occasions” (Kaviratna vii). Several renditions of the Dhammapada in Sanskrit and Chinese languages came into circulation (Kaviratna viii).

The Pali Dhammapada came into being in Sri Lanka, into which Buddhism spread in the 3rd century BCE, first in oral form; in written form it was carried to most of Southeast Asia (Pelikan xiv).

It was translated into Latin in 1855 by V. Fausboll; a second edition of this work came out in 1900.

“Having been originated and transmitted orally, the text of the Dhammapada has repeatedly proved baffling to its editors and translators. The production of the first edition of the original Pali text in accordance with critical philological standards, based on three Pali manuscripts with a Latin translation, was the work of a Danish scholar, V. Fausboll, in 1855; a second edition appeared in 1900.” (Pelikan xv)

The history of subsequent translations into European languages follows the gradual discovery of Buddhism by Western scholars and thinkers.

In 1931 the Dhammapada was translated into English by Max Muller (part of a series titled *Sacred Books of Buddhism*).

In 1950 an English translation with Pali text and translator's notes was published by S. Radhakrishnan.

Tanakh

Overview

The Tanakh is a collection of 24 scrolls (containing 39 works).

The term *biblia* = Greek "books" ... later Latinization created singular name "Bible" (or "the Book").

TaNakh is really an acronym combining initial letters of the three principal parts of the Jewish scriptures: Torah, "the law"; Nevi'im, "the prophets"; and Kethuvim, "the writings."

These three divisions of books correlate to the 3 stages of canonization.

Torah, the five Books of Moses, holds highest status as the foundation of the faith and life of the people of Israel by c. 500 BCE.

Nevi'im, the Books of the Prophets, was probably assembled concurrently but sanctioned slightly later, probably within the subsequent century.

Kethuvim, the Writings, do not fit neatly into the two former categories and often seem problematic as *scripture*. (Some Writings present controversial characterizations of God, values or ideas inconsistent with orthodoxy, or display pessimism, existentialism, erotica.) The Writings were accepted and established as canon c. 100 CE.

Many of the books of the Hebrew Bible bear the name of a writer to whom authorship is traditionally ascribed, or the figure of history or legend whose life and words the book chronicles.

In Hebrew, the equivalent titles are based on the initial word or words of the scroll.

Text and context are tightly interwoven in the Hebrew Bible.

These books purport to preserve the deeds and words of the One God who is integrally involved with his chosen people and whose actions direct history often difficult to distinguish among history, myth, metaphor, and symbol.

The majority of text was written in Hebrew (some portions in Aramaic, a local vernacular) and is virtually the only surviving document of ancient Hebraic literature.

The Hebrew alphabet has only consonants.

Keynotes

Covenant = promise, binding agreement; special relationship, contractual obligations, judgment, punishment.

Monotheism (see Deut. 6:4–6, "the Shema").

Revelation and authority.

God spoke to and personally gave the Law through Moses... God spoke to and led Abraham... God spoke to and through the Prophets.

Law (as the supreme guide; people of the law).

There are 613 commandments in Torah.

Salvation comes from loving God above all else and following His Law.

Prosperity as a sign of God's favor.

These are the principle orthodox themes of the Tanakh.

They are most prevalent in the Torah and the Nevi'im.

The Hebrew Bible contains:

- prose narratives
- law codes

- prophetic oracles
- devotional poetry
- prudential wisdom
- sayings literature
- erotic poetry
- short stories
- apocalypses

(See Harris's full list of categorized examples on p. 47; 5th ed.)

The Torah, or Pentateuch, or the Five Books of Moses consists of:

- Genesis, Exodus: extensive prose narratives
- Leviticus: law codes
- Numbers, Deuteronomy: narratives and codes

The elements of narrative consist of:

- plot, action, character, setting, structure, point of view, tone
- style (diction, syntax, description, imagery, symbolism)
- allusion, irony, dialogue
- motifs, conventions, sub-themes
- theme

Versions

Hebrew is an ancient script whose alphabet has only consonants.

While Hebrew remained the language of scripture and worship, Aramaic took precedence in everyday life of pre-Common Era Palestine. Translations were made into Aramaic of the various Hebrew scriptural scrolls; these translations are known as Targums.

Outside Israel, in the Hellenistic world, Jews spoke Greek; in Alexandria a most influential translation was produced in approximately 200 BCE; this is known as the Septuagint (Greek "seventy-two").

Some books were included in the Bible which eventually were not authorized by the Palestinian canon.

Later Greek-speaking Christians adopted the Septuagint as their Old Testament, leading to the difference between the Hebrew Bible and Christian Old Testament.

We call these in-between books the Apocrypha, meaning "of questionable authority" or "hidden away," or deuterocanonical ("secondary canon").

About 400 CE a group of biblical scholars added vowel symbols to the written Bible in Hebrew. The result became known as the Masoretic Text.

"Although it is, of course, impossible to pronounce any language without vowels or their equivalents, the authoritative Hebrew text itself consists only of consonants. Neophytes in the study of the text learned, as they still do, which vowels to supply where; around the end of the fifth century CE a group of biblical scholars known as 'Masorettes' provided a system of vowels written below the Hebrew consonants, resulting in what now is called the Masoretic Text." (Pelikan, introduction in *Judaism: The Tanakh* xii)

Kethuvim

The Kethuvim ("The Writings") is the third part of the Hebrew Bible and includes the books of Proverbs, Songs, Ecclesiastes, Psalms, and Job, among others.

As such, it contains psalms (songs, of praise and complaint), laments, poetry, narratives, chronicles, and wisdom literature.

It was the last section of Jewish scripture to become canon, c.100 CE.

The Writings themselves may have originated as far back as 1000–700 BCE.

The Kethuvim contains writings which do not fit neatly into either of the two main categories of Law and Prophets, but due to attribution, thematic concern, or tradition were eventually canonized.

The Writings are often seem problematic as *scripture*; i.e., they present controversial characterizations of God, values or ideas inconsistent with orthodoxy, such as pessimism, existentialism, or erotica.

Wisdom as a theme and as type of literature is well represented in the Writings. The ideas of Law (Torah) and Wisdom became connected c. late BCE, which probably helped move them into canon. Wisdom came from God as a divine gift.

Wisdom Literature

Wisdom (Hebrew *hokhmah*) includes "understanding," "discipline."

Use of aphorism, command, admonition, reflective or instructive poems.

Parallelism is common device.

Wisdom/prosperity vs. folly/destruction is common motif.

Not doctrinal or historical; rather, daily experience of life and how best to handle it (observational, reflective; injunctive; more philosophical than religious).

The wisdom is divinely given; the sage is a man of God.

The wisdom literature in the Bible consists of the books of Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes, and certain Psalms (along with Sirach, Wisdom of Solomon, which is deuterocanonical).

Variety:

- Proverbs: clear program for prosperous living
- Job: wrestles with suffering of the just
- Ecclesiastes: melancholic reflection in near-existential vein

Wisdom literature has very ancient history, dating back to c. 2600 BCE. It was long known in Fertile Crescent, especially in Egypt and Babylonia. It circulated widely, due to trade? Israel was situated at Middle Eastern trade "crossroads."

The problems these sages reflected upon had versions in most societies.

Focus on the individual; sage interested in everyman.

Transcended history in order to analyze the challenge of human existence

There are two classes of wisdom literature:

1. *practical*: advice, often directed to young approaching adulthood; prudential literature; examples include Egyptian *Teaching of Amen-em-opet*, Babylonian *Counsels of Wisdom*, maxims in Proverbs.
2. *reflective*: probing into depths of human sorrow, suffering, meaning of life; often skeptical in tone; examples include Egyptian *Dispute Over Suicide*, Babylonian *I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom*, most of Ecclesiastes and Job.

Scholars speculate that a vigorous wisdom movement existed among the Canaanites which carried over into Israel before monarchy.

By the time of the age of monarchy, the sage (both male and female) was a well-established and respected leader in Israelite society.

There were three important classes of leadership in Israelite society: the torah of the priest, the word of the prophet, and the counsel of the sage. While the priest and prophet relied on supernatural sources, sage was practical, empirical.

Proverbs

The Book of Proverbs consists of sayings, commands, aphorisms, instructions, poems, riddle poems, and an acrostic poem.

While many of its sayings likely date from pre-exilic period (c. 900–600 BCE), the book was edited and took shape in the post-exilic period, c. 400 BCE.

Proverbs is traditionally attributed to Solomon (renowned for his wisdom; see 1_Kings) who may have spoken, composed, or collected the original nucleus (the oldest are believed to be chapters 10–29) and to the Sages of Israel. The book is heavily influenced by similar Egyptian literature - - Solomon had established diplomatic ties with Egypt.

Its purpose was transmit tradition, experience, observation, adherence to which can create a virtuous and prosperous life; instruction for cultivating moral character.

There is a clear division in it between wisdom/prosperity vs. folly/destruction, and an emphasis on proper conduct, attitude, and speech.

God loves and rewards the virtuous.

Wisdom is personified as female and stands in contrast to "Dame Folly," "the strange woman," and a prostitute.

Parallelism is a much-used device.

Many of the sayings are crisp two-line sentences in the "synonymous," "antithetic," or "synthetic" modes.

We can see a more secularly oriented sacred literature here, concerned not with religious doctrine, history, or ritual but with the art of life.

The key theme = fear of and reverence for God are the foundations of wisdom.

Attention to Genre

The Book of Proverbs is an example of "sayings literature." Its general characteristics are:

- a fairly simple literary form, devoid of most formal literary elements (characters, tone, plot, etc.).
- a compilation or collection, unified or eclectic, of aphoristic expressions (aphorism = brief, pithy, wise saying)
- authorship or attribution is primary
- straightforward prose, or simple poetry
- accented with often colorful, but simple imagery (especially similes)
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Other examples of sayings literature: Analects, Dhammapada, Ecclesiastes, Gospel of Thomas, hypothetical Q Gospel.

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3. synthetic: second half completes, expands, or complements

Parallelism and imagery are especially helpful to memory.

Proverbs is a collection of collections. It consists of the following:

1. "The proverbs of Solomon" 1–9
2. "The proverbs of Solomon" 10:1–22:16
3. "The words of the Wise" 22:17–24:22
"These also are sayings of the Wise" 24:23–34
4. "The proverbs of Solomon collected by the men of King Hezekiah" 25–29

5. "The words of Agur the son of Jakeh" 30
6. "The words of Lemuel King of Massa" 31:1–9
7. An alphabetic (acrostic) poem on the good wife 31:10–31

Songs

Song of Songs (or Most Beautiful of Songs), also known as the Canticle of Canticles and the Song of Solomon.

The Songs is a collection of love poems, or a dramatic poem with several speakers, exalting sensuality, sexuality, devotion, passion, admiration, and boasting in extravagant metaphors.

It is controversial: is this to be taken at face value? If so, how did erotic love poetry get into the Jewish and then Christian Bibles?

The Songs have been a source of consternation to the prudish religious for millennia.

It has frequently been interpreted, by both Jewish and Christian theologians, as an allegory (e.g., of God's love for His people, of Christ's love for His Church).

Other interpretations: an exaltation of marriage; an anthology of ceremonial poems for ancient marriage festivals.

Some scholars suggest that the collection is not originally Hebrew, but derived from ancient cultures which worshipped fertility deities, i.e., Ishtar, Tammuz.

Some scholars see unifying structural themes of courtship leading to marriage; others see only a compilation of poems on human love.

The dating of the text varies from pre- to post-exilic times (c. 600–400 BCE).

The Songs are traditionally ascribed to Solomon, who was said to have composed over 1000 songs and poems, and who was reputed to have had 700 wives and 300 concubines! As Solomon is an icon of wisdom figures, this traditional ascription alone may have been enough to include the piece in the biblical canon.

Ecclesiastes

This book is also called (in Hebrew) Koheleth or Qoheleth.

Ecclesiastes = one who teaches or speaks to an assembly (*ecclesia*, Greek).

"Ecclesiasticus" suggests the book itself (as in a church book).

The author is unknown, perhaps a teacher in a wisdom school, perhaps in Jerusalem. He was a sensitive and observant individual trying to make sense of the human condition.

The book is believed to have been composed c. 300 BCE.

Ecclesiastes has had perhaps the most difficulty of any book in terms of canon, due to its skepticism, fatalism, existentialism, pessimism, epicurism, and depressing tone, all of which appear anti-orthodox... however accented with scattered optimism.

It was probably included in the canon because of (1) an attribution to Solomon and (2) its final verses (a later emendation) which suggest that one must work to understand the positive.

Ecclesiastes appears to be a compilation of sayings by this preacher, rather than a unified work of literature.

Its structure is as follows:

- search for meaning ch. 1–2
- sayings about life ch. 3–12
- editorial comment ch. 12–14

Keynotes

The most prominent theme = "all is vanity !" e.g., all effort is essentially worthless, as is striving to catch the wind.

"Vanity of vanities" (like "holy of holies") is Hebrew idiom for a superlative ("most").

"Vapor" or "wind" connotes the utterly insubstantial (occurs 38 times in the book).

The teacher attempts to be realistic: is there meaning in life? If so, where? Can one be happy? If so, how?

Wisdom, work, wealth, pleasure, power, and reputation are all worthwhile, but ultimately cannot guarantee fulfillment or give purpose to life.

- make the best of it
- where there's life, there's hope
- trust in God; keep his laws (meaning is beyond human ken)

The Book of Ecclesiastes is not to be confused with a deuterocanonical book known variously as Ecclesiasticus, or Sirach, or the Wisdom of Sirach, or the Wisdom of Jesus Son of Sirach, or the Wisdom of Ben Sira, another wisdom book.

Psalms

Psalms is an anthology of Hebrew devotional poetry.

It contains a broad range of religious and spiritual responses to Israel's historical experiences.

The book's Hebrew title is Tehillim (Praises); Greek Psalmoi (= religious songs performed to musical accompaniment).

It was composed for public worship in the Temple.

The psalms contains:

- hymns of praise, thanksgiving, faithfulness/trust
- songs of petition, lament, indebtedness
- songs celebrating royalty
- poems of blessing, cursing
- meditations on wisdom, instruction

Psalms is divided into 5 books or sections: 1–41; 42–72; 73–89; 90–106; 107–150. Psalms 1–41 may contain the oldest compositions.

Composed over a span of perhaps six centuries, the collection "expresses virtually the full range of Israelite religious experience" (Harris 235).

The psalms were collected for systematic use in worship during the post-exilic period, but their composition stretches across Israel's history to that time and probably after (Kethuvim not canonized until c. 100 CE).

Many psalms are attributed to King David, though scholars believe he actually wrote very few, if any.

The psalms' thematic concerns are expressed in the division of "types" given above.

These concerns are:

- reasons that God deserves Israel's worship: his creation of the world, his
- God's saving intervention in national history
- thanksgiving, gratitude for help, deliverance from threat
- individual and communal complaints, expressions of sorrow and grief, supplications
- requests for blessings upon the good, curses upon enemies
- commemorate kingly deeds and events
- prayerful hopes that Yahweh will restore Israel to its sovereign glory
- instruction or teaching

"In the Torah and the Prophetic books, God speaks to humanity through Moses or the prophets. In the Psalms, the covenant people speak to God, sometimes praising his past actions in delivering Israel and other times questioning the way in which he governs the cosmos." (Harris 241)

Job

The Book of Job is a narrative poetic religious-philosophical drama.

It is a controversial book which probes the depths of faith in the midst of suffering.

It is controversial because of:

- the unflattering portrait of God presented
- the violation of conventional theology, which asserts that the righteous are rewarded and protected by God
- ironically, Job's fierce faith and belief in his own sinlessness creates in him a stubborn, rebellious relationship to God -- is this to be seen as a valued characteristic?
- does God incite the Adversary toward the bet?

The book is based on an ancient folktale about a saintly Job (perhaps that of Ezekiel 14.14, 20).

It probably dates from c. 400 BCE (range of scholarly opinion = 500–200 BCE vs. 400–300 BCE).

"[The Book of Job] seems to reflect the troubled post-exilic era when conventional assumptions about rewards and punishment for sin had lost much of its former authority." (Harris 246)

No evidence exists concerning the book's author.

The book's genre forms include prose (framing narration), poetry, and dialogue (long speeches).

Is it an epic religious poem? A dramatic philosophical lament?

"A masterpiece of religious thought, the Book of Job dramatizes the plight of an innocent man whose tragic sufferings inspire him to question the ethical nature of a god who permits evil and the unmerited pain of sentient beings." (Harris 245)

Thematic Keynotes

The book's main theme appears to be the question of *theodicy* (= if God is king of all, why do good people suffer?)

Why me? (There is no answer)... Job becomes a symbol for all who suffer (pain, illness, poverty, dispossession) and who are not necessarily bad or evil or sinful.

The book's audience would have been exilic or post-exilic... The community had kept to God's laws and ideals, and yet still suffered ... Why?

Despite all appearances, Job keeps his faith in ultimate justice; he is sure of his innocence and he sticks to that opinion in face of his friends' offering of conventional theology, i.e., if not a punishment for apparent sin, then his punishment is for a "secret sin," or it's a test, or a trial to strengthen faith.

Once established, the friends' arguments simply recycle, with added stridency. What makes them worthwhile is their imagery, the power of expressive language.

A few contemporary scholars (e.g., S. Mitchell) see something more: an underlying theme of spiritual transformation; a descent journey (the friends cannot comprehend because they have not and would not choose to risk the journey; they cling to convention). By Job undergoing the "hell" of his sufferings, he breaks through to a higher experience of Divinity.

By the end, Job has surrendered but not submitted -- is it because he is permitted an epiphany (like Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita)? Does he now see far beyond conventional perception?

Job presents cosmic nature of whirlwind vision = beyond human-centered ideas of good and evil; benign ferocity?

Notice the shift in emphasis at the end from righteousness to beauty.

The book is critical of conventional, dualistic theology, which (suggests Mitchell) cannot tolerate the "Shiva-aspect" of God. In order to have an experience of God, we must put aside all our ideas/concepts about God.

The structure of the Book of Job is as follows:

- prose prologue ch. 1–2
- dialog of Job and friends 3–31
- Elihu speeches 32–37
- God's speeches and Job's response 38–42
- prose epilogue, the rest of 42

Textual Problems

Chapter 28

The summary of conventional wisdom in Job's mouth in this chapter does not make sense; since the style is consistent, it is probably not a later addition, but it still may be the result of editorial interference: the cycle of dialogue should have allowed for Zophar's summation at this point in the text -- which does not exist.

"Because the poem was so beautiful and so 'orthodox' in terms of wisdom theology, later editors not fully understanding the purpose of the original writer transferred these marvelous lines to the lips of the hero, Job." (Elfird 248–249)

Section 19:23–29, especially Verses 25–27

Who is this "Redeemer"? The text in this area is in very poor shape, making it almost impossible to translate.

"Another problem is the translation of the Hebrew word Go'el, which means Avenger or Vindicator. The familiar translation, 'Redeemer,' is misleading.... The garbled text makes it unclear who this vindicator might be, but there is strong evidence to point in the direction of God... This passage certainly does not predict some figure from the future." (Elfird 250).

Elihu Speeches, Chapters 32–37

Why are they here? They purport to criticize both Job and his friends, yet Elihu comes out in same direction as the friends and their traditional wisdom; why enter a new character at all? It does not serve plot or theme or character.

"Whether this section was intended by the author as a respite from the dialogue, a pause for dramatic effect, or a summary of all that had gone before, or whether... [it] is a later insertion... as many interpreters think, cannot be precisely ascertained. The religious thought is not really developed further by these chapters in any case." (Elfird 251)

Genesis 1

Chapters 1–11 are a primordial history, universal epic that describe the creation... fall... The human saga begins... People scattered in confusion and strife; estranged from God.

Chapters 12–50 are a patriarchal history, national epic; God calls... Abraham responds, initiating history of a chosen people which will bless all humankind... God directs history... God as intimate... The three promises: possess a land, become a great nation, be a blessing. Deterrents to fulfillment.

Genesis, Chapters 1–11: A Closer Look

Structure and Highlights:

Chap. 1.1–2.3: Creation, I; universal God's making of cosmos, world, life, humanity... the majestic six days of creation (P).

Chap. 2.4–25 (chapter 2): Creation, II: an older (J) tale focused on the making of "earthlings" (*adam*).

Chap. 3: Temptation and fall from Paradise; an ancient etiology explaining the human condition: labor is required to survive; Nature is contentious; childbirth is dangerous; relationships are difficult; we often feel estranged from God.

Chap. 4: Cain and Abel; envy leads to murder... further decline of humanity.

(Chap. 5: Sons of Adam; a genealogy.)

Chaps. 6, 7, 8: Noah and the Flood; human devolution has cosmic consequences; God will punish the sinful; as total Lord of Creation He can easily become its Destroyer.

Chap. 9: God's covenant with Noah; a remnant will always be spared, saved, loved... God preserves the righteous.

(Chap. 10: nations from Noah and his sons; a genealogy.)

Chap. 11: The Tower of Babel; introduction of Abraham.

Genre, Origins, Thematic Concerns

The ostensible narrative mode is actually a blending or assembling of various traditional units (sacred myths, legends, poems, etiologies).

The Book of Genesis was developed orally and in written forms from c. 1000 BCE to early 500 BCE.

At least four composers' styles can be identified in it: this is known as the Documentary Hypothesis.

(See Harris 101, 6th ed.; see also Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?*)

The thematic concerns of Genesis are:

- cosmogony
- Yahweh as universal creator and lord of history
- paradisaal origins
- human disobedience ends that golden time

God made humans the crown of creation, gave them all that was necessary for life of paradise (which included intimacy with God Himself), *and set limitations*. Humans violated those limitations, inspired by envy, curiosity, desire, and poor advice. Such violation has its consequences: some of the gifts are rescinded; life will be harsher, uncertain, end-stopped. God will be harder to find, but He is there...

Humanity's capacity for and tendency toward sinfulness knows no bounds.

God will select and mold a special people who will be his emissaries on earth.

Genesis 2

As stated previously, chapters 1–11 are a primordial history, universal epic that describe the creation... fall... The human saga begins... People scattered in confusion and strife; estranged from God.

Chapters 12–50 are a patriarchal history, national epic; God calls... Abraham responds, initiating history of a chosen people which will bless all humankind... God directs history... God as intimate... The three promises: possess a land, become a great nation, be a blessing. Deterrents to fulfillment.

Genesis 12–50: A Closer Look

Attention to Genre

The narrative mode weaves poetry, mythology, history, national memory, religion, faith, tradition, and etiology.

Etiologies are small narrative units within larger ones which purport to explain "why it is" ... a custom, a rite, a name, a place (often a sacred well or site of worship).

Genesis stresses character over plot, symbolism over realism, motif and convention over verisimilitude.

Its characterizations are archetypal, mythic, iconographic.

The stories of Abraham (and Sarah), Isaac (and Rebekah), Jacob (and Leah and Rachel) and Esau, and Joseph and his brothers not so much biographies as personifications, condensations of national character and history. The supporting characters include sons, daughters, servants, messengers, kings, pharaohs.

Plot: What moves the saga? Yahweh's three promises: possession of a land, become a great nation, be a blessing to all. But there are various delays to fulfillment.

Motifs, Conventions, Themes

The principal motifs are:

- journey
- barren wife bears a son
- ascendancy of lesser or unlikely
- renaming -- new personhood
- God communicates directly (speech, appearance, dream)
- famine in land -- dislocation
- prosperity arouses host/neighbors/relatives
- "she's my sister"
- winning by wits; trickster

The principal conventions are:

- anthropomorphic characterization of God
- reiteration of God's promises to each generation
- repetition and blending of versions
- etiologies (as asides or thematic interest)
 - place names, well sites/names
 - national/ethnic origins
 - historical animosities
- compression
 - patriarchs are symbolic personifications
 - events as historical shorthand
 - one progenitor for an entire people

The principal themes are:

- God's covenant with His select people
- God's faithfulness
- God's judgment, punishment, mercy
- Humanity's faithfulness = love, trust, obedience
- God's protection of Israel's purity
- God's power, commitment and interventions will prevail
- rough road to fulfillment of destiny

Structure and Highlights

Chapters 12–23: Abraham stories

- 13.14 promise of land and descendants
- 15.5 reiteration with different simile
- 15.7, 17 strange, ancient ceremony preserved;
- 15.12 delay forecast (imagery foreshadows Exodus)
- 16.11–13 Ishmael (Arabs)
- 18 ancient stories (J) of divine visitation and destruction of wicked
- 22 the binding of Isaac

Chapters 24–26: Isaac stories

- 24 obtaining Rebekah
- 25.5 Abraham selects Isaac as sole heir
- 25.21–26 birth of Esau and Jacob; struggle in womb; Lord's forecast
- 25.29–34 "sale" of birthright; 27.1–45 stealing of blessing
- 26.3–5 God reiterates national promise to Isaac

Chapters 27–35: Jacob stories

- two versions of why Jacob is sent to Laban: end of chap. 27 + opening of chap. 28 = "J" and "P" (Mitchell is interesting here: see his pp. 54 and 58).
- 28.11 ladder dream... 28.13 God reiterates promise to Jacob
- 32.27 God renames Jacob *Israel*

Chapters 37–50: Joseph stories

Joseph as first sustained, well-developed prose narrative; self-contained literary unit:

- vivid characterizations
- exotic settings, foreign courts and intrigue
- clear, believable motivations (envy, jealousy, revenge)
- plot turns; tests and trickery
- suspense; reversals; redemption and resolution

49 Jacob's death

50 Joseph's death; Israel in Egypt

At the closing of Genesis, Israel (Joseph, his brothers, and all their families and households) is settled in Egypt. We are poised for the second great book, Exodus!

In some sense, we can see Genesis as a marvelous prologue to Exodus, the central and defining event -- and, therefore, book -- for Israel.

Reminders and Remarks

When we read theological history, religious/cultural myths, or artistic-literary artifact, we must remember the writers' concerns: form, audience, purpose.

We must not expect verisimilitude, although narrative mode seduces us into desiring it.

Be alert to archetypal and folklore motifs.

We must be willing to relinquish reader-response and (current) moral critical approaches and rely more heavily upon sociological (theological), historical, and literary critical approaches.

What may be uncomfortable or morally challenging in the book should not be ignored, but only subordinated to the text's "higher values" or "higher concerns" (don't let them derail you).

Some of these aspects should indeed be wrestled with, but not as the only or primary concern (don't get out of focus).

Some of the seedier characteristics or behaviors may be a brutally honest depiction of human nature; ask, is it in writers' interest to show that? One general answer is Yes, because humanity is fallen.

What's *not* said: strength of oral tradition (everyone knows details); religious tradition (everyone knows theological meaning); early prose "weaknesses" -- differences in style expectations.

Exodus

Exodus is the heart of the Torah; the central, defining story.

Genesis can be seen as an introduction to (a "read-back").

Exodus celebrates Israel's special relationship with Yahweh.

It is a theological interpretation of national memory.

Exodus is probably an elaborate expansion of ancient creeds, national traditions, poetry, theology, and legal codes (J, E, and P are intricately blended).

The Song of Miriam, 15:21, may be the oldest literary unit of Hebrew Bible.

Israel becomes welded as the Lord's own community at the Sea of Reeds – this is referenced throughout the rest of the Tanakh.

Moses is the central figure of Hebrew tradition.

At the center are Yahweh's two saving acts: deliverance from slavery; and revelation of law.

Pivotal events:

- reception of the Divine Name, 3:14–15 (compare Genesis 32.27)

- escape from Egyptian bondage

- Passover event (establishing observance)

- theophanies at Mt. Sinai (Horeb)

- the Decalogue

- establishment of religious practices

Exodus has two large divisions:

- chaps. 1–18: Israel's deliverance from slavery in Egypt and the pilgrimage to Sinai

- chaps. 19–40: Israel's sojourn in Sinai, where covenant is made and laws governing life and worship are established

Moses as central figure: hero, lawgiver, mediator, prophet, judge, founder, God's intimate and chief instrument.

- Torah = Mosaic Law

- Torah = the 5 Books of Moses

After Exodus, the narrative segues to the body of law codes: Leviticus (laws of sacrifice, ordination, consecration, purity, atonement, priestly conduct, religious calendar and festivals, curses for disobedience).

This initiates episode on the continued journey toward Promised Land: Numbers (the former generations, who grumbled against God, die off; a new generation is prepared for the settling of Canaan).

The ground is laid for ongoing thematic concern: the people's apostasy and Yahweh's threat to bring disaster upon them as punishment (the Prophets).

Nevi'im

The Nevi'im ("Prophets") is the second part of the Hebrew Bible, after the Torah.

"The Torah is the first unit of a long narrative section that traces Israel's history from the founding father and mother, Abraham and Sarah, through the creation of a national empire under kings David and Solomon, to Israel's destruction by Babylon in the sixth century B.C.E. (Genesis through 2 Kings)." (Harris, 4th ed., 63)

The Prophets consists of two parts. The first part of the Prophets, referred to as the Former, constitutes a good portion of this continuing narrative (Joshua, Judges, 1–2 Samuel, 1–2 Kings).

The Former Prophets

The books of the Former Prophets trace Israel's history from conquest of Canaan (Joshua) in late 13th century BCE to destruction of Jewish state in 6th century BCE (2 Kings).

Provide historical-theological background for teachings of the great prophets who typically appear in times of crisis.

These books are referred to as Deuteronomistic History because "these theologically oriented narratives vigorously interpret Israel's historical experience according to rules laid down in the Book of Deuteronomy" (Harris 144, 5th ed.).

That is, when Israel worships Yahweh exclusively and keeps Torah regulations, the nation prospers and wins battles.

Six hundred years after the attainment of Canaan (c. 1200 BCE) and after Israel's national zenith under the reigns of Kings David and Solomon (c. 1000–922 BCE) had passed, Israel witnessed many reversals of fortune, which were attributed to the people's covenant-breaking

In revision of this material, a clear shift in emphasis now presents Israel's history according to a single overriding principle: the fatal consequences of disobedience to Yahweh. (The incentive for revision was the fall of Judah and the Jews' captivity in Babylon.) As the Deuteronomistic redactors saw it, Israel's survival had always been conditional on her faithfulness.

(For full discussion of Deuteronomy and its recensions, see Harris 144–148, 5th ed. See also Harris historical timeline, pp. 54–56, and compare it to scripture composition timeline, pp. 56–57.)

In the books of the Former Prophets, the significant prophetic figures are usually woven into the narratives as prominent characters, rather than being the center of their own books (Elisha and Elijah, for example).

The Latter Prophets

The books of the Latter Prophets mark a shift in form: they are collections of oracles and events associated with specific prophetic figures.

From c. 750 BCE the prophets' disciples begin collecting and writing down their masters' deeds and oracles under those prophets' individual names.

The Hebrew term *navi* (singular), *nevi'im* (plural) = Greek *prophet*.

A prophet is one who is called; one who speaks for God; he is Israel's means of ascertaining the Divine Will. Prophets are not prognosticators as much as illuminators, reminders, revealers. This version of the role is unique to the Hebrews.

The prophets appeared in times of crisis. Some prophets were associated with shrines; most clustered at the royal court, where they counseled and criticized kings. Their emphasis was on ethical (social justice) and religious issues.

Hebrew prophecy of this type flourished 10th century to 6th century BCE (900–500 BCE), corresponding to the rise and decline of the monarchy. It almost disappears after 5th century; its function is adopted and adapted by priests, scribal interpreters of Torah, and sages (the professional teachers of wisdom).

There were three major prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. The criteria for this is their theological influence + length of text.

There were twelve minor prophets: the criteria for this is the brevity of their texts; their placement in collection has most to do with text length; chronology is subordinated.

There were three great periods of crisis in which most of the prophets can be placed :

8th century BCE: Assyrian threat and occupation

Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah

7th / 6th centuries BCE: Babylonian Exile

Habakkuk, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Second Isaiah

6th / 5th centuries BCE: post-exilic adjustment

Haggai, Zechariah, Joel, Malachi, Third Isaiah, Ezra, Jonah

(For a quick synopsis of each prophet's main theme and historical positioning, see Harris 194 passim, 5th ed.)

The general literary characteristics of the Latter Prophets are:

- ecstatic
- unsigned point of view shifts
- unreferenced pronouns
- personifications of cities
- vivid imagery (agricultural, domestic, legal, nature)

Isaiah

Isaiah is preeminent among the prophetic books. He is the only prophet whose texts span all three critical periods.

The Book of Isaiah contains memorable poetry. While traditionally it is regarded as a single, unified book, it is actually an anthology of poetic oracles and small prose narratives, partially composed by an historical Isaiah, who lived and prophesied in Jerusalem c. 742–701 BCE and by other later poet-prophets and disciples who wrote in his tradition

The book shows shifts and differences in style, setting, allusions, and theological emphasis that signal the multiple composition.

Scholars treat three distinct literary compositions in it, yet these can also be broken down into smaller units which suggest different hands:

1st Isaiah = ch. 1–39

2nd Isaiah = ch. 40–55

3rd Isaiah = ch. 56–66

Genres:

poetry with small narratives
ecstatic utterances, oracles, psalms, parables

Imagery and motifs:

rebellious children, unfaithful wife, betrayal, idolatry, rotten vineyards refreshing streams and shade trees,
nature or weather phenomena
warnings, condemnations, end times (eschatology)
God as warrior, a Messiah-king;
"Immanuel," God is with us (symbol)

Themes:

call for social justice, inner purity over outward ritual, faith
God's punishment of faithless
God's scourging of Israel's oppressors

God's deliverance now as in Exodus of old
future renewal, a restored remnant

Literary characteristics (as in general prophetic books):

ecstatic
unsignaled point of view shifts
unreferenced pronouns
personifications of cities
vivid imagery (agricultural, domestic, legal, nature)

Isaiah 1–12: A Closer Look

Chapters 1–12 establishes pattern, themes, motifs.

Pattern:

chastisement, admonition, warning
prophesy of punishment (invasion, blight, enslavement)
promise of restoration (redemption, healing, renewal)
it's all about relationship (Covenant)
love God above all
keep his Laws and perform social justice
all will be well
God will protect and make prosperous

Themes and motifs:

Israel as faithless wife, whore
God will use political enemies as tools for punishing
there are signs which may be read and understood
a remnant will survive and be restored to her God
through her ordeal, God will be with her
a Messiah (an anointed one) will arise as a divine instrument of
God's future righteous reign

Later Chapters

Chaps. 13–23: oracles concerning Assyria, Babylon, Moab, Damascus, Egypt, etc.

Chaps. 24–27: mini / proto-apocalypse.

Chap. 28: judgement will be passed on corrupt rulers, priests, prophets.

Chaps. 29–35: hope for the future; uselessness (and faithlessness) of alliances; trust and fear Yahweh only.

Chaps. 36–37: narrative: Assyria spares Judah (but some of the narratives are inconsistent with other historical documentation).

Chaps. 38–39: envoys from Babylon.

Historical Context

Isaiah of Jerusalem prophesied c. 742–701 BCE.

Assyrian Empire has already crushed the Northern Kingdom (Israel or Ephraim); Judah (Southern Kingdom) is in imminent peril.

Isaiah 1 is a series of oracles advising Judah to rely exclusively on Yahweh's protection. (In the Syro-Ephraimite alliance/crisis, Ahaz saved his capital from these kings' political influence, but puts it in servitude to Assyria. Isaiah denounces his compromise and predicts that Yahweh will use Assyria to punish Judah. In the subsequent Assyrian crisis, Hezekiah at first avoids Egyptian alliance on Isaiah's advice, then later joins; Assyria lays siege to all.)

Isaiah 2 and 3: A Closer Look

Isaiah 2

Chapters 40–55, also known as the Book of the Consolation, shows important theological developments:

- absolute monotheism
- suffering servant concept

Themes and motifs:

- God of Creation is also Lord of history
- the only God; universal; immanent and transcendent (40:12–31)
- nations on trial; courtroom symbolism
- Cyrus, Persian king (a gentile) as savior (45)
- Israel will be a light to all; a servant returned and restored; God's unique possession (43:1)
- God as redeemer, deliverer; a new Exodus (43:16–17)
- divorce, slavery imagery (50:1–3)
- mysterious servant songs (42:1–4; 49:1–6; 50:4–11; 52:13–54:12)

Historical context, exilic and post-exilic: both Assyria and Isaiah himself are gone; tone and setting shift: an anonymous prophet speaks to Judean captives in Babylon, hailing (ironically) Cyrus as Yahweh's divine agent for liberation... A new exodus will deliver a faithful remnant back to the land of Israel.

Isaiah 3

Chapters 56–66 are miscellaneous oracles, mostly directed to an impoverished, struggling colony of exiles resettled in Judah, but under Persian rule.

An apocalyptic element (65:17–25) looks beyond bleak present to a new heaven and new earth. (While many of the oracles are from this late 6th century BCE period, there are others scattered throughout from the entire Age of Prophecy, 8th–5th centuries BCE.)

Upanishads

The Vedas are the oldest scriptures of India, dating to c. 2000 BCE.

They are the origin of the Hindu faith, and its highest written authority.

Apauruseya = not produced by human agency.

Shruti = revealed (scripture in highest sense).

There are four: Rig (Rik, Rg), Sama, Yajur, Atharva.

Each divides into two parts: work and knowledge/reflection.

Work = hymns, rites, ceremonies, rules of conduct.

Samhita (strictly, these are the Vedas) -- hymns, prayers, liturgical formulas.

Brahmana -- instructions to the priests for ritual.

Reflection = holy utterances expounding on or responding to Vedic topics from an intuitive approach.

Aranyaka -- philosophical speculations (what do the words and actions of the Vedas mean?).

Upanishad -- ("sitting near devotedly," "secret teaching"); mystical insight, inspired literary exploration of the ideas and doctrinal beliefs in the Vedas; metaphysical, cosmological; concerned with direct experience and knowledge of God; "an utterance of mystical truth" (Nagler in Easwaran ed.).

108 upanishads are preserved, each *attached* by tradition to a certain Veda.

Their length varies from a few hundred words to a few thousand; some are poetry, some prose, some dialog, some narrative. The genre, tone, and style may vary even within a single upanishad.

Sixteen are recognized as authentic and authoritative.

Ten of these are elaborately commented upon by Shankara, 8th-century saint-scholar (he quotes from the other six), and these are known as the principle upanishads: Katha, Isha, Kena, Prasna, Mundaka, Mandukya, Taittiriya, Aitareya, Chandogya, and Brihadaranyaka.

Characteristics of the Upanishads

They are visionary... unconcerned with consistency or coherence. They are of varying genres... within one upanishad we may see poetry, prose, drama or dialogue, and narrative.

Orthodoxy: while their style and emphasis may vary, what they express is always in alignment with Vedic belief.

Authorship

The authors were anonymous saints and seers interested in mysticism, not ritual; they reported direct experiences of God; they were unconcerned with formulating doctrine or liturgy; they sought to inspire rather than instruct.

The upanishads' composition may have begun as early as c. 1500–1000 BCE and continued up to near the Common Era, with the most important texts dated to c. 800–400 BCE.

Geographically, most are thought to have originated in northern India.

Keynotes (Themes and Doctrines)

- Regardless of who we are or what we do, there is inside of us an inalienable Self that is divine
- Love is the first and last commandment of this realization
- We are called to discover this deep inner realm which is our native state
- Death cannot reach this realm (Self)
- In this realm, all is One
- If we devote our lives to the necessary purification (meditation and other disciplines), we can experience this realm here and now; the unitive experience is the great mystical experience

Among the key *Vedic* concepts is Oneness... a pervasive order (*rita*)... governed by universal sacred law (*dharmā*).

"Truth is one: the wise call it by different names" (Rig Veda).

All is God... manifested universe as God's body.

Hinduism appears to be polytheistic (a huge pantheon of gods), yet all are expressions of the One, which cannot be known except via these varied expressions, or aspects (as a drop of seawater implies the ocean) and which ultimately cannot be named.

There are multiple names; the references (names and epithets) for a deity may vary even within a single text.

Brahman: usually represents the Godhead, the transcendent, beyond aspects.

We can speak of a kind of high trinity: Brahma (creator), Shiva (destroyer), and Vishnu (sustainer).

Krishna: God as manifest; he is the central deity in the Bhagavad Gita; he represents supreme deity (all aspects of above trinity) and incarnates specifically to teach (enlighten) Arjuna, the hero.

Self (vs. self)... *atman*/Self = God within; "higher Self" (vs. ego self).

- *atman* is inherent, eternal, unstainable God-within
- takes on body after body, like changing clothes, in order to experience, learn, grow, realize

Brahma-vidya is the supreme science and the science of the Supreme... meditation... concentrated, focused, disciplined study of consciousness.

Final Points

Compositional strata (in general ranges) of Vedic literature:

Samhita period: 2000–1100 BCE

Brahmana-Aranyaka period: 1300–800 BCE

Upanishad period: 1000–500 BCE

The perennial philosophy:

- an infinite, changeless reality supports the world of change
- this same reality lies at the core of every human personality
- the purpose of life is to discover this reality experientially

Religious innovations of the Upanishads:

- supreme unifying Godhead
- self/Self: *atman* is Brahman!
- we can know this by experience (meditation; purification)

Egyptian Book of the Dead

The title is actually a misnomer; it is applied to a collection of primary texts known by Egyptians as the “Book of Coming Forth by Day.”

The book was written or revealed by priests, copied by scribes, used by nobles and peasants alike to prepare and guide them through the world of the dead into the afterlife.

It consists of various compositions: hymns, prayers, incantations, and rubrics (instructions).

It was composed and revised over some 5,000 years... much of the text was already ancient in the Old Kingdom (c. 2800–2100 BCE)!

The texts were inscribed on tomb walls, sarcophagi, coffins, funeral stelae, papyri, and amulets.

Their purpose was to protect, direct, and ensure the well-being of the dead in the world beyond.

The first translation into English, dating to the late 19th century (1897), was by E. A. Wallis Budge as an accompaniment to a scholarly text on hieroglyphics. This translation was subsequently published separately as *The Book of the Dead* in Britain in 1899.

The Book of the Dead’s appeal at this time was mainly to specialist scholars (average person knew little more of Egypt than pyramids, and the finest tombs had yet to be discovered).

The greatest number of texts included in any translation are from the chapters of Coming Forth by Day and introductory hymns, along with supplementary extracts from other ancient works, rubrics, and prayers.

The book was translated chiefly from papyri found at Thebes; taken together, they are generally known as the Theban Recension of the Book of the Dead.

Based on other scholarship and discoveries, at least two other versions are recognized: the Heliopolitan Recension and the Saite Recension.

Themes and Motifs

The principal themes are:

- identification with Osiris
- protection of the heart/purity of the heart
- the *ka*’s (soul’s) journey (notice the gauntlet motif)
- transformation
- judgment
- the weighing of the heart; records
- resurrection (watch for the various symbols of)
- pantheistic/panentheistic mysticism
- gods/people
- life/death
- earth/heaven
- being/becoming
- immanent/transcendent
- cycles of nature, existence
- embrace life, live well, do well, know yourself, be upright
- appreciate the beauty/face the terror that is a human life
- trust in the gods, trust in your deeds, trust in these words of power to guide and protect you beyond this life: these prayers, hymns, spells
- life and death, creation and destruction are complements in a greater process

Key Terminology

allegory

analogy

ascribed
attributed, attribution
belief
canon
codex, codices
cosmology
cosmogony
doctrine, doctrinal
dualism
deuterocanonical
epiphany
epistemology
etiology
exegesis
faith
immanent
incarnation
manifestation
mantra
metaphor
metaphysics, metaphysical
monism
mysticism, mystical
myth
mythos
ontology
orthodox
pantheism
panentheism
paradox
parallelism
proverb
recension
redaction
reincarnation

religion
sacrifice
sage
salvation, salvific
simile
sutra
symbol
tantra
theism
theology
theophany
transcendent, transcendental

Essay Assignments

Essay 1: Response/Critique

1. Select a passage/section/chapter from ANY of the texts listed on our syllabus; you are free to look as far ahead as you wish.

2. Clearly identify the section with appropriate terminology within opening paragraph and *offer an appreciation of or assertion about the text* which you will support in the body of the essay (this is your thesis).

3. In the body of the essay, discuss more specifically why you respond to this text: identify what you feel is its theme; speak to other ideas which get your attention; point to specific metaphors, similes, analogies, etc., which convey and enliven the content

4. Conclude with some evaluative comment on this text's universal importance (beyond its time and place, beyond your personal appreciation, what do you see as the value of this passage?).

MLA documentation: internal parenthetical citations (appropriate to the specific text) plus Work(s) Cited at end of essay.

Consult a handbook

900 words (target)

Essay 1: Grading Rubrics

	Content	Organization	Development	Style
A	Response to assignment is insightful, original. Essay reflects depth of thought. Excellent analysis of reading. Effective selection of topic passage.	Thesis is well-focused. Paragraph sequence is logical; transitions clarify relationships of ideas. Introduction is engaging; conclusion is substantive.	Sections are unified and coherent. Observations are clear and comments on them are well-developed. Relevant quotations are skillfully integrated.	General expression is even distinctive. Especially smooth incorporation of quotations and other material.
B	Response to assignment is thoughtful; purpose is clear. Close reading is evident. Effective selection of topic passage.	Thesis is focused. Sequence of paragraphs is logical; transitions are generally smooth. Introduction is informative; conclusion goes beyond summary.	Sections are unified and coherent. Observations are supported with effective commentary. Quotations are generally relevant and integrated.	General expression is and fluent. Smooth incorporation of quotations and other outside material.
C	Response to assignment is appropriate but needs more sustained thinking. Essay may not be fully developed. Analysis of reading may be superficial. Appropriate selection of topic passage.	Thesis is evident, but may need sharper focus. Organization is apparent but not consistent. Transitions are lacking. Introduction and/or conclusion may be weak.	Sections are generally developed but have occasional lapses in coherence or unity. Observations may be unsupported. Adequate incorporation of relevant quotations.	General expression is fluent but may have clarity. Occasional awkwardness. Diction and syntax are generally idiomatic. Occasional inappropriate wording or awkwardness in incorporation of quotations.
D	Assignment addressed inadequately. Ideas lack development. Understanding of reading is not demonstrated.	Thesis is weak. Organization is haphazard; paragraph breaks are illogical. Some paragraphs are repetitious or irrelevant. Introduction and conclusion are weak.	Sections lack coherence; may be too short. Observations may not be grounded in text. Quotations may be insufficient, excessive, or inaccurate.	Awkward syntax; occasional obscured train of thought. Diction frequently vague, repetitive, incorrect, unidiomatic. Slang. Ineffective incorporation of quotations.
F	Assignment goals not in evidence. Off topic. Unacceptable length. Failure to incorporate or identify the selected passage.	No thesis. No plan or organization evident.	Sections are inadequately developed, lack coherence, or are too short. Few, if any, transitions. Quotations are insufficient, excessive, or inaccurate.	Train of thought free obscured by problem diction or syntax. Slang. Few relevant quotations.

Essay 2: A Study in Translation

1. Select a passage/section/chapter from any of the texts on our syllabus.
2. Locate two other translations.
3. General goal: Make a close study of differences and similarities and how these modify and enhance your understanding of the text .

4. Specifically, clearly identify the section (applying text-specific terminology) and the translator and edition which will serve as your primary text (to which you will compare and contrast the other two); identify the other two versions; make some introductory assertions or comments.

- Begin by presenting your general understanding of the text.
- Then discuss its theme, or related themes.
- Point to specific metaphors, similes, analogies, etc., which convey and enliven the transmission of ideas and how each translator presents them.
- The heart of this essay is the interweaving of the comparison/contrast: How do different editors translate key ideas, images, symbols, metaphors? How do their lexical choices vary (be sensitive to connotation as well as denotation)?
- Ultimately, how do these variations affect interpretation? (Much of your evaluation on this may be interspersed in body; however, you should conclude with a summary evaluation of these effects.)
- A comparison-contrast study can be organized in two ways—please remind me to review these in class—either is appropriate.

MLA documentation: 3 sources minimum (the 3 translations);

commentary or other resources are optional

1,700 words (target)

This is a formal, primarily objective and analytical essay: please use a formal title page.

Essay 2: Grading Rubrics

	Content	Organization	Development	Style
A	Challenging selection of passage. Excellent analysis of aspects of language, including literary elements, and keen observations which are well-supported. Exceptional attention to goals of assignment.	Thesis is well-focused. Paragraph sequence is logical; transitions clarify relationships of ideas. Introduction is engaging; conclusion is substantive.	Sections are unified and coherent. Ideas are well-supported with significant and persuasive discourse. Comparative observations are astute. Passages are skillfully integrated.	General expression skillful and distinctive. Diction is precise. Syntax is concise and substantive. Smooth and complete integration of resource materials.
B	Substantive selection of passage. Solid analysis of aspects of language, including literary elements, and keen observations which are well-supported. Effective attention to goals of assignment.	Thesis is focused. Sequence of paragraphs is logical; transitions are generally smooth. Introduction is informative; conclusion goes beyond summary.	Sections are unified and coherent. Ideas are supported with effective discourse. Comparative observations are substantive. Passages are smoothly incorporated.	General expression fluent and concise. Smooth and complete integration of resource materials.
C	Adequate selection of material but needs greater attention to details of language. Analysis of literary aspects may be superficial. Minimal attention to goals of assignment.	Thesis is evident, but may need sharper focus. Organization is apparent but not consistent. Transitions are lacking. Introduction and/or conclusion may be weak.	Subpoints of discussion are generally supported but may have lapses in development. Some obvious opportunities for comparison have been overlooked. Passages are adequately incorporated.	General expression mostly fluent but with occasional lapses in clarity or precision. Occasional awkwardness in integration of resource materials.
D	Selection of material is inadequate. Identification of aspects of language is insufficient.	Thesis is weak. Organization is insufficient to support topic. Some repetition or irrelevant areas. Introduction or conclusion is weak or absent.	Discussion lacks coherence; may be overly generalized. Many opportunities for comparison have been overlooked. Passages may be awkwardly or insufficiently incorporated.	Awkward syntax and inappropriate diction; sometimes obscures train of thought. Repetitive or unidiomatic diction. Slang. Ineffective use of resource materials.
F	Selection of material is inadequate. Insufficient discussion. Failure to identify aspects of language. Unacceptable length.	Thesis is unidentifiable. Plan is not in evidence.	Undeveloped. Off topic. No comparisons identified. No attempt to incorporate passages.	Train of thought frequently obscured. Problems in diction and syntax. Slang. Abuse of resource materials.

Exams

Final Exam

Topics for finals (I usually offer two or three, asking them to select one only.)

Given that it is foundationally Judeo-Christian, what insights about Western society have you gained from your reading in the Hebrew Bible? You should point to passages or chapters from which you draw these insights, discuss their import and the influence you see they have had on your culture, as you observe or experience it. (Tips: Our relationship to nature, women's place in society, laws, ethics, turmoil in the Mideast.) (This essay is analytical.)

Any one of these texts we've studied can be seen as (a) cultural myth, (b) profound philosophy, (c) the word of God, or (d) a work of art. Select one text from our semester and argue for it being one (primarily) of these things. (This essay is persuasive.)

Select one passage from each of the six texts we've read (I'm counting the Tanakh as one here; you should choose a passage from any book within the Tanakh that we read) which might serve as foundation stones for your own developing world view or spiritual philosophy. Your essay's development will present why you chose these particular passages and to what purpose in your larger goal (the world view or spiritual philosophy). (This essay is subjective.)

“Sharp like a razor's edge, the sages say/Is the path, difficult to traverse.” Using this passage from the Katha Upanishad, develop an essay on the theme of the difficulties of following a spiritual path, a theme which has appeared in the majority of our texts whether overtly or subtly. Draw from at least three separate texts in your essay, adding your own observations and reflections. (This essay is analytical and subjective.)

Note: Exercising judgment about documentation is part of the test

Final: Objective Portion

(Sometimes I give an objective portion as well or in place of an essay:)

1. What genre dominates Genesis? (1)
2. Which collection of texts studied is most tied to its context? (Tip: The collection in which myth and history are conflated.) (1)
3. The first five books of the Tanakh are called _____ (give Hebrew not Greek term). They are also traditionally known as the Books of _____. (2)
4. List three unique characteristics (literary elements) of the narrative form: (3)
5. Genesis is divided into two epics, the _____ and the _____. (4)
6. The theory that at least four strands of composition can be detected in the Torah is called the _____. (3)
7. "Dhammapada" means _____. (2)

Identify the source of each of the following passages by writing the title on line below passage:

8. Where were you when I laid the earth's foundations?
Speak if you have understanding.
Do you know who fixed its dimensions
Or who measured it with a line?
Onto what were its bases sunk?
Who set its cornerstone
When the morning stars sang together
And all divine beings shouted for joy? (2)
9. The Lord said to Abraham, "Go forth from your native land and from your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you. (2)
10. Futility! All is futility, said Koheleth,
Utter futility! All is futile
What real value is there for a man
In all the gains he makes beneath the sun? (2)
11. Get up! Wake up! Seek guidance of an
Illumined teacher and realize the Self.
Sharp like a razor's edge, the sages say,
Is the path, difficult to traverse. (2)
12. Hail, Thoth, architect of truth, give me words of power that I may recall the years and weave together my history. I stand before the masters who witnessed the recollection of Osiris (2)
13. Let me be a seal upon your heart
Like the seal upon your hand.
For love is fierce as death,

Passion is mighty as Sheol;
Its darts are darts of fire,
A blazing flame. (2)

14. The Master said: "Set your heart on the Way, base yourself on virtue, rely on humaneness, and take your relaxation in the arts." (2)
15. How do I know this is true?
By looking inside myself. (2)
16. It is Wisdom calling,
Understanding raising her voice.
She takes her stand at the top most heights,
By the wayside, at the crossroads,
Near the gates at the city entrance;
At the entryways she shouts,
"O men, I call to you;
My cry is to all mankind. (2)
17. If you find no one to support you on the spiritual path, walk alone.
There is no companionship with the immature. (3)
18. Perhaps the most *literary* of the books we have studied is _____, because (3)
19. List three characteristics of the narrative form: (3)

Identify the *type of imagery* being used in each of the following excerpts; where *parallelism* is also used, identify what type.

20. As rain seeps through an ill-thatched hut, passion will seep through an untrained mind. (4)
21. Seeing into darkness is clarity.
Knowing how to yield is strength. (4)
22. Suffering follows an evil thought as the wheels of a cart follow the oxen that draw it..
Joy follows a pure thought like a shadow that never leaves. (4)
23. To find the origins,
trace back the manifestations.
When you recognize the children
and find the mother,
you will be free of sorrow. (4)
24. Pride goes before destruction,
and a haughty spirit before a fall. (4)

25. As a solid rock cannot be moved by the wind, the wise are not shaken by praise or blame. When they listen to the words of the dharma, their minds become calm and clear like the waters of a still lake. (4)
26. The way of the lazy is overgrown with thorns, but the path of the upright is a level highway. (4)
27. Select one of the above passages (20–26) to explain how the imagery works and what it contributes to the expression. (10)

Midterm

After each, provide the *attributed author* AND the probable *range of composition*

1. Analects (4)
2. Tao Te Ching (4)
3. Dhammapada (4)
4. Kethuvim (4)

Briefly define:

5. Attribution (2)
6. Canon (2)
7. Name two texts we've read which clearly fall into the category (genre) of Sayings Literature: (4)
8. Give one characteristic of this genre: (2)
9. What genre dominates the Tao Te Ching? (3)
10. Name another book we've read which is clearly in that genre: (4) Bonus: name another: (2)
11. Give one essential characteristic of that genre: (2)
12. The _____ is accepted as the earliest and most authentic sayings of the Buddha. (4)
13. The title of that collection means: (2)
14. A distinctive poetic feature found prominently in this work as well as in the Book of Proverbs and in some portions of Ecclesiastes is _____ .
As well as a device of literary structure, this poetic feature probably assisted disciples (or disciples') _____ . (6)
15. While the Analects is strongly _____ ,
complementarily, the Tao Te Ching is strongly _____ . (4) Bonus: Provide another of these complementary pairs: (2)

Identify the source (the text) for the following passages; identify the literary element as asked for in specific questions:

16. The Master said: "Set your heart on the Way, base yourself on virtue, rely on humaneness, and take your relaxation in the arts." (5)

17. Set me as a seal upon your heart,
as a seal upon your arm;
for love is strong as death,
passion fierce as the grave. (5)
18. The Adversary answered the Lord, "I have been roaming all over the earth." The Lord said to the Adversary, "Have you noticed my servant _____ ? There is no one like him on earth, a blameless and upright man." (5)
19. As rain seeps through an ill-thatched hut, passion will seep through an untrained mind.
As rain cannot seep through a well-thatched hut, passion cannot seep through a well-trained mind. (5)
20. Identify the type of imagery in #19 above. (2)
21. Identify the type of parallelism in #19 above. (2)
22. Seeing into darkness is clarity.
Knowing how to yield is strength. (5)
23. Identify the type of imagery in #22 above. (2)
24. Happy are those who find wisdom,
and those who get understanding;
for her income is better than silver,
her revenue better than gold. (5)
25. Identify the type of imagery in #24 above. (2)
26. Identify the type of parallelism in #24 above (2)
27. Utter futility ! -- said Koheleth --
Utter futility ! All is futile!
What real value is there for a man
In all the gains he makes beneath the sun? (5)
28. The Lord is my shepherd;
I lack nothing.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
He leads me to water in places of repose;
He renews my life;
He guides me in right paths
As befits His name. (5)

Bonus: Identify two ways the Jewish Tanakh differs from the Christian Old Testament: (4)

Film Review

Notice that at the end of the annotated bibliographies in your Syllabus-Supplemental Readings Packet, there are short lists of approved documentary films or videos and a few trade films.

What to do: Arrange to view one of these films or videos and write a *one-page summary plus a two-page response*, word-processed, and submit any time before the deadline on our syllabus. Be alert to the fact that you are not evaluating the film or video as such (we are not film students), but that "review" is just a handy title for this assignment. Be sure to include comments that link the film you watch to one or more of the texts we read. You need not provide a bibliographic entry.

Some of these films/videos will be used (partially) in class, but even those are worth a closer and complete viewing, so there are no restrictions on which you may select.

List the films and videos.

Bibliographies

Tao Te Ching

Text

Addiss, Stephen, and Stanley Lombardo, trans. *Tao Te Ching, Lao Tzu*. Introduction by Burton Watson. Cambridge: Hackett Publishing, 1993.

The preface looks concisely and insightfully at translating Chinese characters. This book is sometimes a provocative translation, but the real draw is the inclusion of one line of each poem in Chinese plus the same line in Chinese ideograms. The ink paintings throughout are a nice touch. There is a glossary of Chinese words with ideographs.

Ames, Roger T., and David L. Hall, trans. *Dao De Jing: A Philosophical Translation*. New York: Ballantine Books, 2003

An interesting new translation which tries to get at Lao Tzu's original philosophical concepts. There are page-length commentaries on each chapter, plus notes regarding Mawangdui and Guodian manuscript comparisons. A very good introduction features a solid discussion of "correlative cosmology" and some historical background.

Blakney, R. B., trans. *The Way of Life: A New Translation of the Tao Te Ching*. New York: Penguin, 1983. SBCC, 299.514 L298W 1983

A highly informative introduction illumines the relationship between the writings of Lao Tzu and those of Confucius, their influence on subsequent Chinese philosophies, and gives historical background to these writers' times. Blakney's translation seems occasionally too prosy, but there are helpful paraphrases and footnotes.

Chan, Wing-tsit, trans. *The Way of Lao Tzu (Tao-Te-Ching)*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1963.

This work is too scholarly for class use, but it's a great resource! Lots of notes, explanation, and commentary.

Chen, Ellen M., trans. *The Tao Te Ching: A New Translation and Commentary*. New York: Paragon House, 1989. SBCC, 299.514 L298TC

This is an explicating commentary; use as a resource.

Duyvendak, J. J. L., trans. *Tao Te Ching: The Book of the Way and Its Virtue*. London: J. Murray, 1954.

Feng, Gia-fu, and Jane English, trans. *Tao Te Ching*. New York: Knopf, 1974.

This edition continues to be my choice for the course because of its astute and measured translation (it walks the middle way between dynamic equivalence and formal correspondence). It is concise, sensitive, and accessible without losing the sense of challenge and mystery. Needleman's introduction is splendid.

Freke, Timothy, trans. *Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching*. London: Piatkus Publishers, 1999.

This is very much a dynamic equivalence approach; it is interesting and, contemporary, but caution is advised.

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Grigg, Ray, trans. *The New Lao Tzu: A Contemporary Tao Te Ching*. Boston: C. E. Tuttle Co., 1995.

Henricks, Robert G., trans. *Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching: A Translation of the Startling New Documents Found at Guodian*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.

The only English translation to date of the surprising archaeological discovery near Guodia, China, of a version of the Lao Tzu on bamboo slips. Representing only 40 percent of what we've come to know as the Received Text, this is the oldest manuscript of the Lao Tzu now extant, c. 300 BCE.

Henricks, Robert G., trans. *Te-Tao Ching: A New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Ma-Wang-Tui Texts*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1989. SBCC, 299.514 L298TH

Unearthed in 1973, the Mawangdui (or silk manuscripts) were the oldest manuscripts of the Lao Tzu, dating to c. 200 BCE, until the Guodian discovery; they are significant primarily because the Tao and Te canons are reversed.

La Fargue, Michael, trans. *The Tao of the Tao Te Ching: A Translation and Commentary*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992.

Lau, D. C., trans. *Lao Tzu: Tao Te Ching*. New York: Penguin Books, 1963.

This translation is scholarly, with fairly formal diction. It has excellent footnotes that often give insight into historical or religious context. It also has an informative introduction, and a glossary of historical books, names, places. His asterisks will suggest where rhyming would have appeared in the original.

Le Guin, Ursula, with J. P. Seaton. *Lao Tzu Tao Te Ching: A Book about the Way and the Power of the Way*. Boston: Shambhala, 1998

Le Guin's personal and poetic rendition is intuitive and fresh; there are also observational notes.

Mair, Victor H., trans. *Tao Te Ching: The Classic Book of Integrity and the Way / Lao Tzu*. New York: Bantam Books, 1990.

Based on the recently discovered Mawangdui manuscripts, this edition rearranges the canons of Te and Tao. The book has an excellent apparatus: etymological glossary, discussion of orality theory, and a proposal for an Indian-yogic connection between Taoism-Tao Te Ching and the Bhagavad Gita and Upanishads.

Mitchell, Stephen, trans. *Tao Te Ching: A New English Version*. New York: Harper and Row, 1988.

This translation is a very dynamic equivalent; read it only in comparison with others for a contemporary feel.

Roberts, Moss, trans. *Dao De Jing: The Book of the Way*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.

While the chapter translations themselves are stiff, due to diction and form choices (he tries to rhyme in English where the original may have), the commentaries after each chapter and the extensive notes, making comparisons with the Mawangdui and Guodian texts, and an informative introduction are extremely worthwhile.

Watson, Burton, trans. *Tao Te Ching*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1993.

Wu, John C. H., trans. *Tao Te Ching*. Boston, Shambala.

After Feng and English's edition, this is my most recommended one. It is a thoughtful, sensitive, middle-way approach to translation. The text has facing-page Chinese characters; no notes.

Yutang, Lin, trans. *The Wisdom of Lao-tse*. New York: Modern Library, 1983. SBCC, 299.514 L298T16

Context and Commentary

Blofeld, John. *Taoism: The Road to Immortality*. Shambhala, Boston 1985.

Chen, Ellen M. *Tao: Nature Man: A Study of the Key Ideas in the Tao Te Ching*. New York, 1966.

Ching, Julia. *Chinese Religions*. New York: Orbis Books, 1993. SBCC, 200.951 C539c

Cleary, Thomas F. *The Essential Tao: An Initiation Into the Heart of Taoism through the Authentic Tao Te Ching and the Inner Teachings of Chuang Tzu*. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1991.

This selected look at the two essential texts of Taoism includes a chapter on the historical background of the two books and the rise of the philosophy.

La Fargue, Michael. *Tao and Method: A Reasoned Approach to the Tao Te Ching*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994.

Legge, James, trans. *The Sacred Books of China: The Texts of Taoism*. New York: Dover Publications, 1962. SBCC,299.514L513

Watts, Alan, with Al Chung-Liang Huang. *Tao: The Watercourse Way*. New York: Arkana, Penguin Books, 1975.

This is an engaging, incisive exploration into the Tao Te Ching and Taoist philosophical concepts, making their complexities accessible and clear; it is wonderfully illustrated with Chinese calligraphy.

Wawrytko, Sandra A. *The Undercurrent of Feminine Philosophy in Eastern and Western Thought*. Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1981.

Wei, Henry, ed. *The Guiding Light of Lao Tzu: A New Translation and Commentary on the Tao Teh Ching*. Wheaton: Theosophical Publishing House, 1982. SBCC, 299.514 L298TW

Wong, Eva. *Teachings of the Tao*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1997.

This book contains selected excerpts from the Taoist spiritual tradition, categorized and with some comment: shamanic origins; the classics; devotional, mystical, alchemical, ethical, and ceremonial texts; cultivating mind and longevity; and a concise look into the variety of texts which make up the larger Taoist canon.

Related

Capra, Fritjof. *The Tao of Physics*. Boston: Shambhala, 1975

Palmer, Martin and Eliz. Breuilly, eds. *The Book of Chang Tzu*. New York: Arkana, Viking Penguin, 1996.

A new, complete translation of the classic Taoist text.

Rosen, David. *The Tao of Jung: The Way of Integrity*. New York: Arkana, Viking Penguin, 1996.

“[This book] links Jung with Lao Tzu in a way that throws new light on Taoism and the psychology of the Self.” (I’ve not reviewed it, but it looks interesting!)

Analects

Texts

Cleary, Thomas. *The Essential Confucius: The Heart of Confucius' Teachings in Authentic I Ching Order*. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1992.

In this selected study, the sayings of Confucius from the Analects are arranged in small groups by topic, following his commentary on images in the *I Ching*, the ancient Chinese classic which he studied and promoted. This is a nicely presented thematic collection with the *I Ching* as lens.

Dawson, Raymond. trans. *Confucius: the Analects*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, World's Classics, 1993.

This book is small, inexpensive, but densely printed.

Giles, L. trans. *The Sayings of Confucius*. New York: Grove Press, 1961.

Hinton, David, trans. *The Analects: Confucius*. Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 1998.

A thoughtful new translation, with a good glossary and excellent historical information in the introduction.

Huang, Chichung, trans. *Analects of Confucius*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. SBCC299.51C748tH

An excellent recent translation with good notes.

Legge, James, trans. *Confucian Analects: The Chinese Classics*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960 (1861).

Legge, James, trans. *The Four Books: Confucian Analects, the Great Learning, the Doctrine of the Mean, and the Works of Mencius*. New York: Paragon Book Reprint, 1966. SBCC 181.S774F

Lau, D. C. trans. *Confucius: The Analects*. New York: Penguin Books, 1979. SBCC 299.51 C748tL

This book has a lengthy, informative introduction; appendices on Confucius' life, and his disciples as they appear in the Analects; a survey of the text's history; and glossary of names and places.

Ware, James, trans. *The Sayings of Confucius*. New York: New American Library, Mentor Classic, 1955.

Waley, Arthur, trans. *Confucius/The Analects*. Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, Wordsworth Classics of World Literature, 1996 (1938). SBCC 299.51

This is a new edition of the Cambridge scholar's well-known translation with a new introduction by Robert Wilkinson. (It does not contain Waley's original introduction.)

Context and Commentary

Fingarette, Herbert. *Confucius: The Secular as Sacred*. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1972. SBCC 181.09512 C748xF

Yutang, Lin. *The Wisdom of Confucius*. New York: Random House, Modern Library, 1994 (1938). SBCC 181 C748xY

Films and Videos

Confucius: Words of Wisdom

Dhammapada

Texts

Cleary, Thomas, trans. *The Dhammapada: The Sayings of Buddha*. New York: Bantam Books, 1995. SBCC 294.3C623d

Some interesting footnotes.

Easwaran, Eknath, trans. *The Dhammapada*. Translated for the modern reader. Berkeley: Nilgiri Press, 1992. SBCC 294.3D533d

Helpful chapter introductions and notes.

Kaviratna, Harischandra, trans. *Dhammapada: Wisdom of the Buddha*. Pasadena: Theosophical University Press, 1996 (1980).

Lal, P., trans. *The Dhammapada*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1967. SBCC 294.3 D533d

Mascaro, Juan, trans. *The Dhammapada*. London: Penguin Books, 1973.

As always with Mascaro, a good way for Westerners (especially Christians) to enter this work.

Muller, Max, trans. *The Dhammapada*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1965.

Pelikan, Jaroslav, ed. *Sacred Writings*, vol. 6, *Buddhism: The Dhammapada*, trans. J. R. Carter and M. Palihawadana. New York: Quality Paperback Book Club, 1992 (1987).

Ross, John, trans. *Dhammapada*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Anthologies

Burt, E. A., ed. *The Teachings of the Compassionate Buddha: Early Discourses, the Dhammapada, and Later Basic Writings*. New York: Penguin, Mentor Books, 1982.

Goddard, Dwight, ed. *A Buddhist Bible*. Introduction by Huston Smith. Boston: Beacon Press, 1970 (1938).

Kornfield, Jack, ed. *Teachings of the Buddha*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1996.

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Context

Beyer, Stephan. *The Buddhist Experience: Sources and Interpretations*. Encino: Dickenson, 1974.

Complete Guide to Buddhist America. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1998. SBCC 294.30973 M872c

Conze, Edward. *Buddhism: Its Essence and Development*. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1975.

Conze, Edward. *Buddhist Texts Through the Ages*. New York: Harper and Row, 1964.

Conze, Edward. *Buddhist Thought in India: Three Phases of Buddhist Philosophy*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1967 (1962). SBCC 294.3 C768bi

Humphreys, Christmas. *An Invitation to the Buddhist Way of Life for Western Readers*. New York: Schocken, 1969.

Keown, Damien. *Buddhism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Kulananda. *Principles of Buddhism*. London: Thorsons, an imprint of HarperCollins, 1996.

Kulananda. *Western Buddhism*. London: Thorsons, an imprint of HarperCollins, 1997.

Price, A. F., and Wong Mou-lam, trans. *The Diamond Sutra and the Sutra of Hui-Neng*. Forewords by W. Y. Evans-Wentz and Christmas Humphreys. Boston: Shambhala Press, 1990.

Suzuki, D. T. *An Introduction to Zen Buddhism*. Foreword by C. G. Jung. New York: Grove Press, 1954.

Santideva. *The Bodhicaryavatara*, trans. Kate Crosby and Andrew Skilton. Oxford: Oxford University Press, World's Classics, 1995.

Schumann, Hans Wolfgang. *Buddhism: An Outline of Its Teachings and Schools*, trans. G. Feuerstein. Wheaton: Quest Books, 1974.

Warren, Henry Clark. *Buddhism in Translation*. New York: Athenaeum, 1962.

Related

Armstrong, Karen. *Buddha*. New York: Viking, 2001. SBCC 294.363 A736b

Bstan-dzin-rgya-mtsho, Dalai Lama XIV. *The Good Heart: A Buddhist perspective on the Teachings of Jesus*. Paperback ed. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1998.

Blofeld, John E. *Beyond the Gods: Taoist and Buddhist Mysticism*. New York: Dutton, 1974.

Khema, Ayya. *Be an Island: The Buddhist Practice of Inner Peace*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, c. 1999. SBCC 294.3 K45b

6

Hahn, Thich Nhat. *Living Buddha, Living Christ*. Introduction by Elaine Pagels, foreword by David Steindl-Rast. New York: Putnam's Sons, Riverhead Books, 1995.

Hahn, Thich Nhat. *Zen Keys: A Guide to Zen Practice*. New York: Doubleday, 1995.

Hesse, Hermann. *Siddhartha*. New York: Bantam Books, 1951

Films and Videos

Professor N. Iyer Lecturing on Buddhism

Robert Thurman on Buddhism: The Buddha, The Dharma, The Sangha

Seven Years in Tibet

Siddhartha

Tanakh

Text

The Holy Scriptures. According to the Masoretic Text. World Publishing Company, 1917.

The Jewish Study Bible. Featuring the JPS Tanakh Translation. Ed. Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures. The New JPS Translation according to the Traditional Hebrew Text. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1985. SBCC 221.52 J59t

Old Testament Editions

The Holy Bible. Revised Standard Version. Dallas: Melton Book Co., 1971.

Holy Bible: New American. Nashville: Catholic Bible Press, 1987.

New English Bible with Apocrypha. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1961.

The New International Version (NIV) Study Bible. Grande Rapids: Zondervan, 1985.

New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha. New Revised Standard Version. Ed. B. Metzger and R. Murphy. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

This is an excellent Old Testament = New Testament study Bible; a college paperback version now exists.

Specific Books

The Book of Job. Translated and with an introduction by Stephen Mitchell. New York: HarperCollins, 1987. SBCC 223.1 M682b

Genesis. A New Translation of the Classic Biblical Stories by Stephen Mitchell. New York: HarperCollins, 1996. SBCC 222.11 M682g

7

Genesis. Translated and with an introduction and notes by E. A. Speiser. The Anchor Bible vol. 1. Garden City: Doubleday, 1964. SBCC

Song of Songs. A new translation with introduction and commentary by Marvin H. Pope. Garden City: Doubleday, 1977. SBCC 223.9066 P826s

Context and Commentary

Ackroyd, P. R., and C. F. Evans, eds. *The Cambridge History of the Bible*. 2 vols. Cambridge: University Press, 1970. SBCC 220.09 C178

Ancient Near East Texts Relating to the Old Testament. 3rd ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969. SBCC221.93 P961a

Anderson, Bernhard. *Understanding the Old Testament*. 3rd ed. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1975. SBCC 221.95 A545u

Bruce, F. F. *The English Bible: A History of Translations from the Earliest English Versions to the New English Bible*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1970. SBCC 220.52 B 887e

Brueggeman, Walter. *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997. SBCC 221.6 B889t

Crenshaw, James. *Old Testament Wisdom*. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981. SBCC 223 C915o

Elfird, James M. *The Old Testament: History, Literature, Interpretation*. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982.

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