Religions of Japan

Windstar Cruises
Ross Arnold, Spring 2018
Japan & North Pacific Crossing

- Emperors & Shoguns: A Brief History of Japan
- Samurai & the Code of Bushido
- **Religions of Japan**
- Islands of Tranquility-Japanese Gardens
- Japan vs. China
- The Pacific War
- Birth of the Atomic Age: Hiroshima & Nagasaki
- Japanese Art & Architecture
- Silk Road Empires
- A Brief History of Korea & the Korean Conflict
- China’s Treasure Ships
### Today’s World Religions by Date of Founding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Pop. (000s)</th>
<th>% of World</th>
<th>Founded (c.)</th>
<th>Where</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hinduism</td>
<td>1,100,000</td>
<td>12.65%</td>
<td>4000-2500 BC</td>
<td>Indus Valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judaism</td>
<td>14,000</td>
<td>0.20%</td>
<td>2000 BC</td>
<td>Palestine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhism</td>
<td>488,000</td>
<td>5.29%</td>
<td>560-490 BC</td>
<td>India</td>
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<td>Chinese Trad.</td>
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<td>Christianity</td>
<td>2,200,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Islam</td>
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1. Includes Confucianism, Taoism, Shamanism
2. Includes all other smaller religious affiliations identified
3. Includes secular, non-religious, agnostic and atheist
Families of Religions

1. **Abrahamic** monotheisms of Judaism, Christianity & Islam.

2. **Dharmic** religions that began in India, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism & Sikhism.

3. **Taoic** religions of the Far East, especially China and Japan, including Taoism, Confucianism and Shinto (*along with versions of Buddhism*).

*And sometimes also ...*

4. **Iranian** religions that predate Islam, including Zoroastrianism, Mandaeism and the Kurdish Yazdanism faiths (Yazidi, Alevi, etc.).
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Shinto (or kami-no-michi)

- **Shinto**, which literally means "the way of the gods," is an animistic folk religion from Japan, focused on ritual practices to establish a connection between present-day Japan and its ancient past. Shinto and Asian Buddhism are inextricably linked in Japan; many Japanese Shintoists also identify themselves as Buddhists.
Shinto Theology

- **Kami** – “god,” “spirit,” the spiritual essence that inhabits all things, animate or not.
- **Kannagara** – meaning "way of the kami,” refers to the natural order of things.
- **Amenominakanushī** – "Heavenly Ancestral God of the Originating Heart of the Universe"— the first *kami*.
- **Creation** – the Japanese islands came to be from two gods: *Izanagi* ("He-who-invites") and *Izanami* ("She-who-is-invited").
Types of Shinto

- **Shrine Shinto** – most common, involves worship and events at local public shrines.
- **Imperial Household Shinto** – rites exclusive to the royal family at imperial shrines.
- **Folk Shinto** – fragmented folk beliefs in deities and spirits.
- **Sect Shinto** – private, local religious communities/shrines (vs. public shrines).
- **Koshinto** – literally “Old Shinto,” seeks to restore Shinto to pre-Buddhist times.
The Vinegar Tasters, representing Buddhists, Taoists and Confucianists.

"Confucius presents a young Buddha to Laozi"
Taoism

- **Founder:** Laozi (or Lao-Tzu)
- **Taoism** is better understood as a way of life than as a religion, emphasizing the unity of the universe, of the material world, of the spiritual world, and of the past, present and future. Taoist theology focuses on doctrines of relativism, spontaneity, and emptiness.
Confucianism (or “Ruism”)

• Founder: Confucius

Confucianism is a complex system of moral, social, political, and religious thought, and includes a complicated system governing duties and etiquette in relationships. Confucian ethics focus on familial duty, loyalty and humaneness.
Buddhism

• **Founder:** Siddhartha Gautama, “The Buddha” (“Enlightened One” of “Awakened One”)

• **Major Traditions:** Theravada, Mahayana (also Pure Land, Zen, Nichiren, Tibetan/Vajrayana, etc.)

• **Locations:** Thailand, China, Burma, Japan, East Asia, (global).
Buddhism – The Four Noble Truths

1. The Truth of *Dukkha* – all of life is suffering;

2. The Truth of the Origin of *Dukkha* – craving and clinging to pleasure and aversion to what is not pleasurable are the cause of all suffering and of *samsara*;

3. The Truth of the Cessation of *Dukkha* – putting an end to craving and clinging ends suffering, so rebirth, dissatisfaction, and redeath no longer arise;

4. The Truth of the Path Of Liberation from *Dukkha* – by following the Noble Eightfold Path.
Buddhism – The Noble Eightfold Path  
(or “Middle Way”)

1. **Right View** – accepting the Four Noble Truths.
2. **Right Intention** – right thoughts/aspirations.
5. **Right Livelihood** – no working with weapons, degradation, meat, intoxicants, poisons.
6. **Right Effort** – discipline thought, word & deed.
7. **Right Mindfulness** – being alert to all that affects us.
8. **Right Concentration** – right meditation.
Pure Land Buddhism
Nichiren Buddhism
Shingon Buddhism