

Core values and beliefs

Relationships

1. There are five relationships that are highlighted in the doctrines of Mencius
2. These are
 - **The love between father and son (parent and child)**
 - **The duty between ruler and subject**
 - **The distinction between husband and wife**
 - **The precedence of the old over the young**
 - **The trust between friends**
3. So duty and obedience and trust are important in these relationships
There are distinctions between husband and wife (but I will talk about this later)

Improving oneself

4. One core belief is that people are teachable, improvable and perfectable through personal and communal endeavour

Education

1. The notion of education and its importance in terms of knowledge are also highlighted in Greek philosophy and thought
2. So people like **Socrates and Plato mention** education and knowledge
3. But perhaps not in the same way as **Confucianist** ideas – as knowledge is not linked to power but to virtue

Bonds

1. Later on (about 4 centuries after the five relationships had been written about) the notion of bonds emerged
2. Three bonds are
 - **Authority of ruler over subject**
 - **Authority of father over son or parent over child**
 - **Authority of husband over wife**

Bonds at the time of Confucius

1. So in Confucianism there is proper **respect for rules, parents and obedience is** of central value

Analects

1. The **analects** are the written down sayings of Confucius
2. The notion of **order** is highlighted in the Analects
3. The notion that what is on the outside represents what is on the inside.
4. It is about living an ordered and reasoned life.

History

1. Chinese culture **has a history of honouring ancestors** with a belief that there is a spiritual component running through the world of both the living and the dead
2. There should be proper respect for the **deceased**

Confucianism and Women

1. Confucianism has had a reputation for having a repressive attitude towards women and for oppressive practices such as foot binding
2. It is not clear that Confucius and Mencius had oppressive attitudes towards women – as the mother was given equal status with the father in relation to the children
3. But there was a **mixed** attitude towards women

Patriarchal

1. So some viewpoints suggests that Confucianism teachers such things as **'women should submit'**
2. So home is perceived as the place for women (internal) and the public (external)
3. Mencius also believed that the husband's function was external and the woman's internal

But

1. But it has been suggested that after Mencius and Confucius died that **sexism** became characteristic of Confucianism
2. It was the **Han Confucian master** in 179-104 BC that said the husband was the yang (male) and was superior even if from a humble family

Contemporary Confucianism

1. From the **1990s** onwards there have been feminist scholars who have reinterpreted Confucianism
2. And presented a more favourable position for women
3. They note that Confucius was commenting on the social order of the time
4. **Contemporary Confucianism** does not suggest a separation of the sexes

Contemporary Confucianism

1. Instead contemporary Confucianism is evolving to accommodate changes that embrace male-female equality
2. Everyone, **male and female**, can improve **themselves through education** and self-cultivation
3. So the roles of men and women are also subject to change
4. Where the nature and degree of **women's power** depends on factors such as social position, type of task, personal skill, one's position in the life cycle
5. So many **contemporary confucianists** suggest that it needs a re-interpretation for contemporary society

Japan

1. Japan has a blend of **Shinto, Buddhism, Confucius, Taoist and folk traditions.**

2. People can belong to more than one tradition

Shinto

1. Writings do not refer to a Shinto religion but to a collection of myths and beliefs.

2. There are the **public shrines** and worship of **different gods**

3. There are **spirits, gods, or essences** associated with Shinto called **kami**

4. Kami and people are not separate but **exist in the same world**

New religions

1. Traditional Shinto is to do with **hereditary** –

2. A person practices in the activities devoted to the local deity or ancestor

3. In new religions they **form groups** without regard to kinship or territory

Gender and Japan

1. The role of women has traditionally been subordinate to men in law, **politics, economics and social relations**

2. During the 20th Century the **role of women** in Japan has changed drastically

Animation

1. We can look though at how **popular culture** defines gender

2. Particularly in relation to **Japanese animation**

3. As popular culture should enable us to understand something about contemporary Japanese behaviour

Animation and women

1. Anime – highlights changes in Japanese society

2. anime is Japanese Animation – **a style of Japanese film and television animation, typically aimed at adults as well as children.**

3. manga is a style of **Japanese comic books and graphic novels**, typically aimed at adults as well as children.

4. Japanese animation caters for female tastes as well as males

Studio Ghibli

1. films such as **Spirited Away, Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind and Princess Mononoke**

2. In most films there is **Shinto and kami** (spirit gods of the animate and inanimate world)

3. There is also **associations with Buddhism's** one-ness of all things present

4. There are also **strong female** role models from Japanese myths and history

5. **Studio Ghibli** films are an alternative to Disney's sexism (and racist portrayals) which are **not about the male gaze** or how she looks and also has different roles of the males in these films.

The concept of ma

1. The Japanese word ma translates rough into the negative **space or a pause for though**, So there are instances where **seemingly nothing happens**
2. A character will sit and look at a river for a few seconds
3. They **provide role models** for how women can make a difference in their worlds, **morally, politically or environmentally**
4. They show there is no **need for males to prove their masculinity** through the medium of war and destruction
5. Maybe more balance – **yin yang**.

Yin Yang

1. The ideas of yin Yang go back about **three thousand years**
2. Yang is light, originally perhaps sun, or sunshine
3. It also led to meanings of **hardness, dominance and masculinity**
4. So the **Yang is masculine and superior**

Yin

1. And **the yin is feminine and inferior**
2. **Yin refers to darkness**
3. **It appears** black and perhaps originally meant moon
4. **This symbol over time came to be associated with coldness, passivity and softness**
5. **And then** submission and softness and femininity

Buddhism

1. Buddhism is a spiritual tradition that focuses **on personal spiritual** development and the attainment of a deep insight into the true nature of life.
2. Buddhists seek to reach a state of **nirvana**,
3. There **is no belief in a personal god**.
4. Buddhists believe that **nothing is fixed or permanent** and that change is always possible.
5. The path **to Enlightenment** is through the practice and development of **morality, meditation and wisdom**.
6. Buddhists believe that life is both end**less and subject to impermanence, suffering and uncertainty**.

Existence

1. Existence is endless because individuals are **reincarnated** over and over again, **experiencing suffering** throughout many lives.
2. Buddhists believe that **no state, good or bad, lasts** forever.
3. Rather, it is our mistaken belief that things can last which is a chief cause of suffering.

4. Buddhism incorporates a variety of **rituals and practices**, which are intended to aid in the journey to **enlightenment** and bring blessings on oneself and others.

Women and Buddhism

1. The founder of Buddhism Gautama Buddha – **allowed women to join** his monastic community
2. However, the early texts state that **every nun must bow to every monk**
3. Which Buddha instituted because of the customs of the time
4. There was a mix of **positive and negative** attitudes to femininity

Nirvana

1. There are some **negative image of women** (being responsible for the downfall of the human race)
2. But equally, there are **some positive images**
3. Such as the concept of gender differentiation as serving as a hindrance to **attaining nirvana or enlightenment**
4. **Buddha taught that either a man or a woman clings to gender identity - that person is in bondage**

Family life in Buddhism

1. Buddha offers advice to married women – including long term **self control**, being **caretakers (motherly wife)** and **companion (friend wife and submissive (sister wife and salve wife)**

Motherhood in Buddhism

1. **Suffering** is a major characteristic of human existence
2. The image of the mother as the embodiment of compassion – she'll do **anything for the children**
3. Buddhism regards the **celibate monastic** life as the highest idea
4. But recognises the **importance of marriage**.

Films that Buddhist themes have been applied to

1. Lucy, Kung Fu Panda
2. **Batman**- his superpowers came from years of intentional effort and painful transformation (suffering to enlightenment)