

Introduction to Chinese Philosophy in the Context of Eastern Civilization

A Brief Review of Chinese Thought through the Ages

S.A. Martin (2016)
Eastern Civilization
Prince of Songkla University



Early Major Religions of South & East Asia

India

- ▣ Indus River Valley Civilization
- ▣ Hinduism (Vedic culture)
- ▣ Jainism (all life as sacred)
- ▣ Caravaka (materialism)
- ▣ Buddhism (a new & middle way)
- ▣ Sikhism (Hinduism meets Islam)

China

- ▣ Confucianism (Ru Jiao)
- ▣ Taoism (Dao Jiao)
- ▣ Legalism (Fa Jia)
- ▣ *Buddhism (Fo Jiao)*

Japan

- ▣ Shintoism (animism & more)
- ▣ *Buddhism*

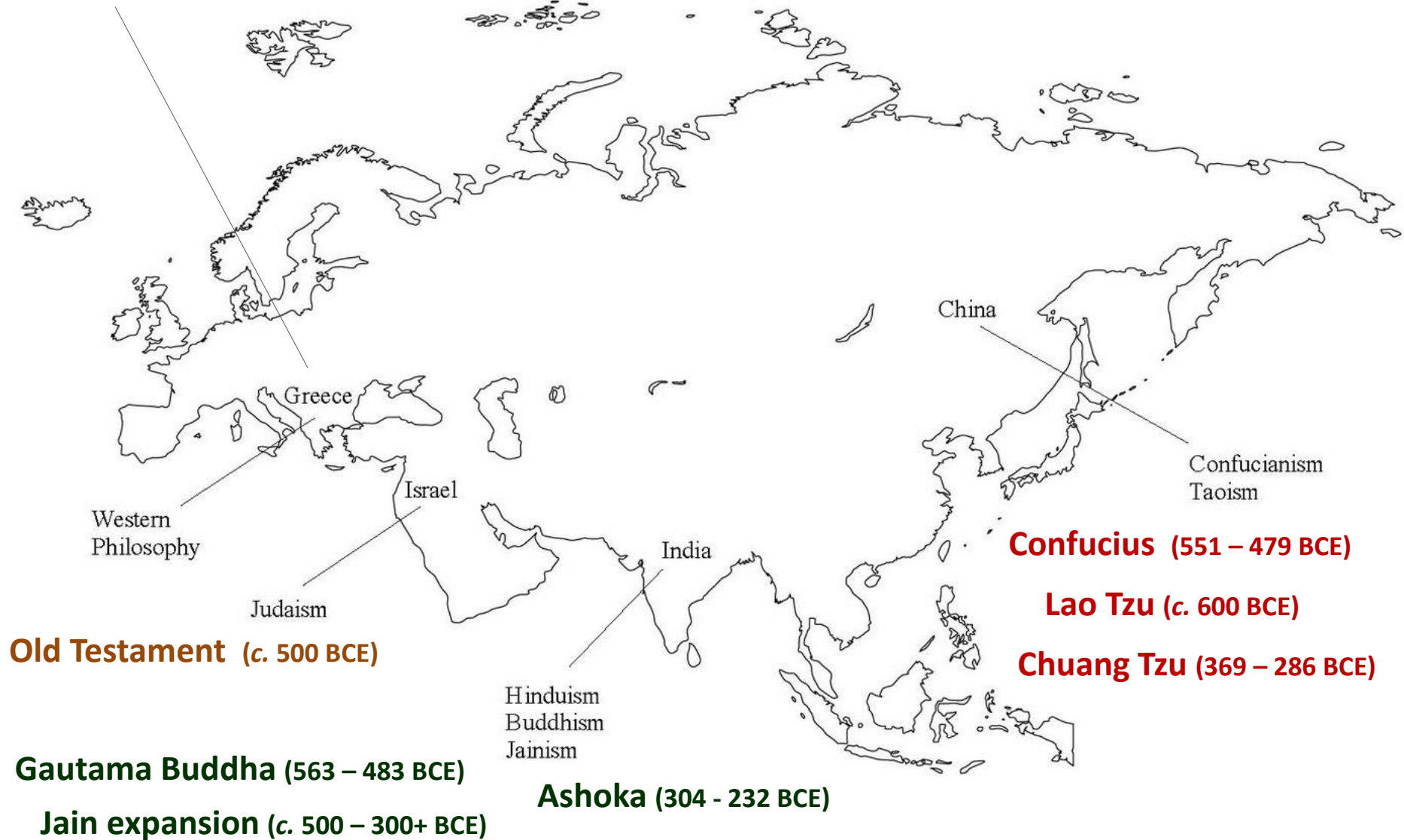
**Folklore, Animism, Ancestor
Worship, and more...**

The Axial Age (800 – 200 B.C.E)

Centers and Religions

Socrates (470 – 399 BCE)

Plato (428 – 348 BCE)



Early Chinese Thought

- ▣ Sage Kings
 - Hundred Schools of Thought
- ▣ Confucianism (Ru Jiao)
- ▣ Taoism (Dao Jiao)
- ▣ Legalism
- ▣ Mohism
- ▣ Logitians
- ▣ *Buddhism (Fo Jiao)*

Pragmatism
an intrinsic
current

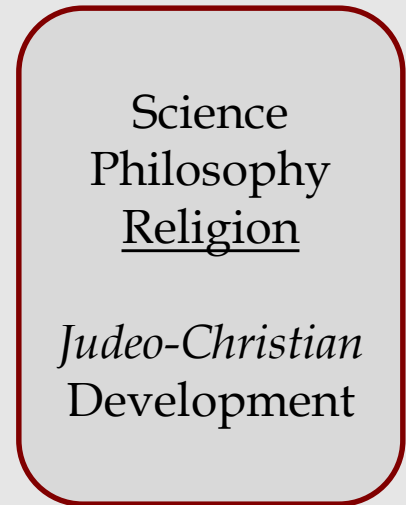
PHILOSOPHIC IDENTITY OF THE EAST

- ▣ All things are always changing
- ▣ Pragmatic-based approach
- ▣ Follows the Han majority
 - Follows the Han identity
- ▣ Sense of nationalism
 - Sense of 'civilization-ism'
- ▣ Follows that which is time-proven / time-honored
 - Sewn into aphorisms of philosophic truth

PHILOSOPHIC TREND

- 
- ▣ RELIGION
 - ▣ PHILOSOPHY
 - ▣ SCIENCE
 - ▣ NATURE

+ Folklore, Animism, and more...



CONFUCIANISM

Confucianism is the backbone of Eastern Civilization

Jen (humanity) 仁

Combines the Chinese radical for *human* with the *number 2*

Hierarchy & Harmony: the 5 Cardinal Relationships

1. Ruler – Subject
2. Father – Son
3. Husband – Wife
4. Older Sibling – Younger Sibling
5. Friend – Friend



Kǒng Zǐ 孔子

▣ **Classical Confucianism**

- Confucius (6th Century BC)
- Mencius (3rd Century BC)

In 140 BC (Han Dynasty)
Confucianism became the
official doctrine of the
nation

▣ **Neo-Confucianism**

- 10th - 16th Century.
- Buddhist Influence... Heaven = Nature

▣ **New-Confucianism**

- 20th Century - Western Humanism



The Four Books of Confucianism 四書 Sì Shū

as selected by Zhu Xi in the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279)

- ▣ **Great Learning 大學 Themes & Politics in Chinese Philosophy**
- ▣ **Doctrine of the Mean 中庸 Following the Tao of Perfect Virtue**
- ▣ **Analects of Confucius 論語**
- ▣ **Mencius 孟子 Discourses with the King of Mencius' time**

TAOISM 道 Dào

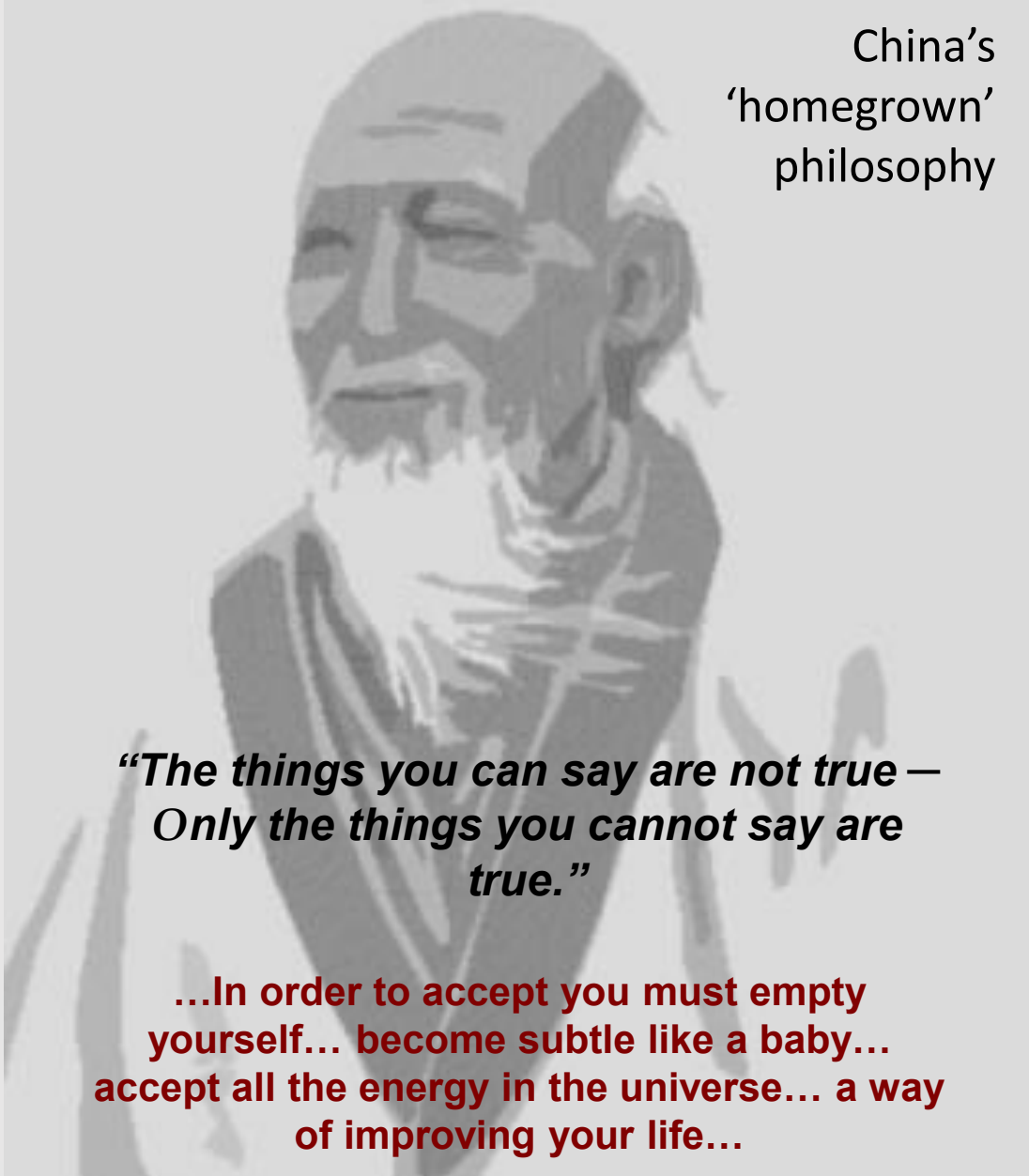
▣ **Tao Jia (school)**

- A philosophy which developed in the 6th Century BC (Zhou Dynasty) connected with Lao Tzu and the book called Tao-te-Ching

▣ **Tao Jiao (teaching)**

- A religious development in the 2nd century AD (Han Dynasty) connected with the Chen-I (orthodox) sect and Chuan-chen (complete reality sect)

China's
'homegrown'
philosophy



*“The things you can say are not true —
Only the things you cannot say are
true.”*

**...In order to accept you must empty
yourself... become subtle like a baby...
accept all the energy in the universe... a way
of improving your life...**

陽 Yang

Light/Bright/Sun
Strong/Assertive
Dry/Hot/Fire
Male
Positive Charge
Heaven
Spring & Summer

陰 Yin

Dark/Moon
Recessive/Nurturing
Damp/Cool/Water
Female
Negative Charge
Earth
Autumn & Winter

Legalism 法家 *Fǎjiā*



- ▣ **The School of Law**
 - Utilitarian political philosophy
 - Not concerned with the nature and purpose of life
 - ▣ Philosophic current during the **Warring States Period**
 - ▣ Employed/Failed during **Qin Dynasty**
 - ▣ Prevalent during the **Han Dynasty**

- ▣ **Human beings are self-serving and need to be guided by laws & punishment in order to have a better society/state/nation**

CHINESE BUDDHISM

- ▣ Indian Buddhism has had a profound effect on Chinese culture — And Chinese Culture has had a profound effect on Buddhism
 - *“Buddhism Changed China and the Chinese Changed Buddhism”*
 - 3 wicked ‘persecution eras’ of Buddhism... With each revival, Buddhism became more ‘Chinese’
- ▣ Indian Buddhism mixes with Chinese thought...
 - Tien-Tai & Hua Yen Schools
 - Pure Land... Just call the name of the Buddha
 - Neo-Confucianism, Neo-Taoism and Chan (Zen) Buddhism

The Acceptance of Mahayana & the Transformation Toward Chinese Buddhism

▣ Theravada

- Individualistic
- Monastic
- Scholastic

▣ Mahayana in China

- Humanistic (Civilization-istic)
- Semi-Monastic (Confucian values of filial piety)
- Semi-Scholastic (everyday Buddhism of farmers & peasants)

Buddhist thought adjusted to the pragmatic nature of Chinese culture



Cooking & Philosophy

The Way We Cook is the Way We Think?

▣ West —

- Cook separate and eat separate
- Clear-cut and distinct
- Each time it should be the same



▣ East —

- Make small pieces and mix together
- Chop Suey Approach
- Each time it should vary a little



San Jiao He Yi 三教合一

Three Teachings Harmony One

- ▣ San Jiao 三教 3 Teachings
- ▣ The **Syncretic** Nature of Chinese thought
- ▣ **Confucianism** in Times of Prosperity
- ▣ **Buddhism** in Times of Disparity
- ▣ **Taoism** to Explain Nature and Change

“Confucians at work—Taoists at home”

Focus on Human Relations

- ▣ **Confucian Philosophy**
 - **Human to Human Relations**
- ▣ **Buddhist Philosophy**
 - **Human to all Sentient Life**
- ▣ **Taoist Philosophy**
 - **Human to all things (sentient & non-sentient)**

“Even love the stone”



Dynastic Highlights in Eastern Philosophy

Shang Dynasty (B.C. 1766 – 1122): *I-Ching [The Book of Changes]*

Western Zhou (1046-771 BC): *Sage Kings; Duke of Chou; Book of Songs*

Eastern Zhou (770 BC –)

Spring & Autumn Period

Warring States (– 221 BC)

The Axial Age of Philosophy – The Classic Period

- Confucius & Mencius – Confucianism
- Laozi & Zhuangzi – Taoism
- Xunzi – Confucianism
- Han Feizi – Legalism

Chin Dynasty (B.C. 221 – 206): *Legalism*

Han Dynasty (B.C. 206 – A.D. 220): *State Confucianism*

Tang Dynasty (A.D. 618 – 907): *The Golden Age of Philosophy*

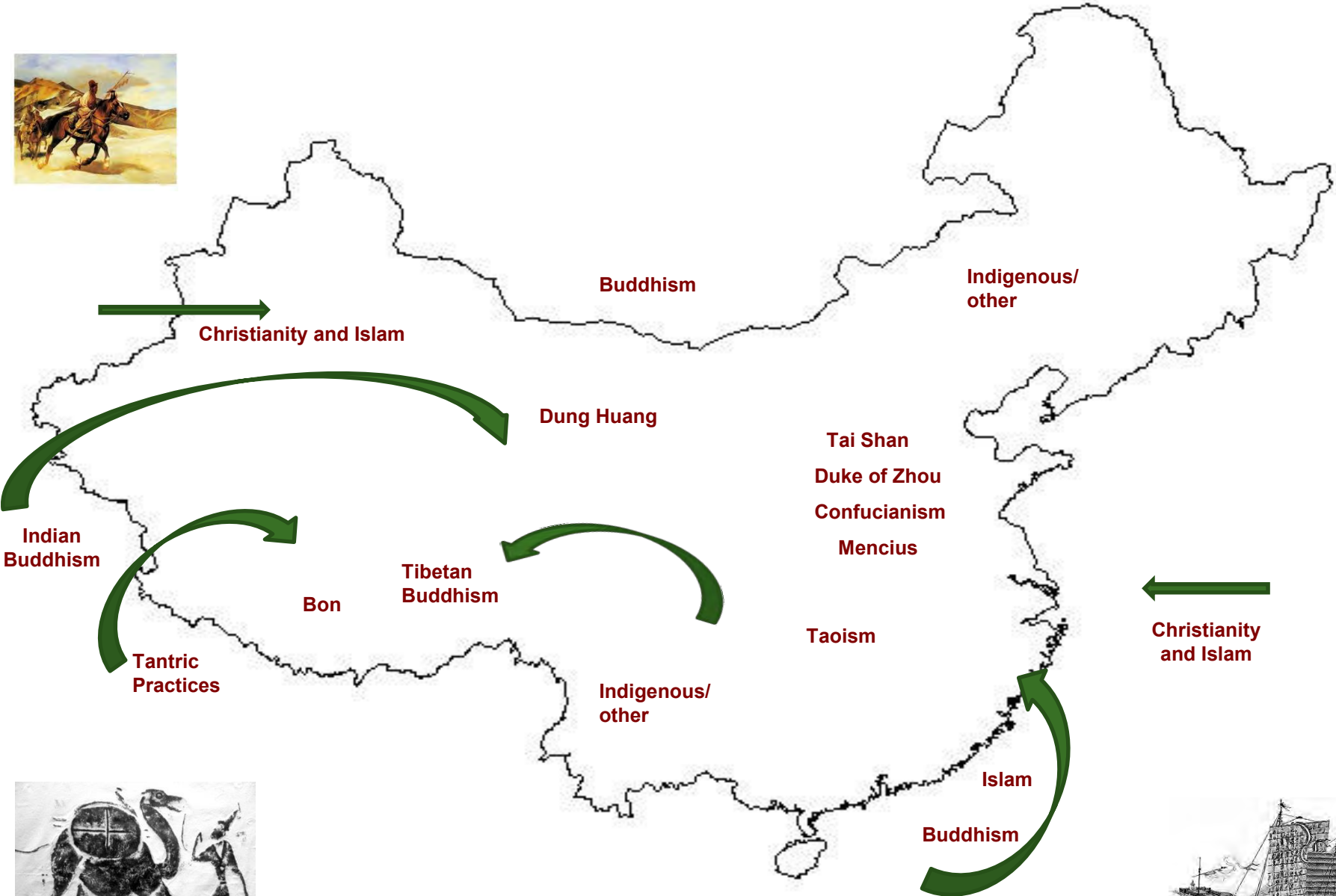
Song Dynasty (960-1279): *Zhu Xi's Neo Confucianism [Buddhism Declines]*

Yuan Dynasty (A.D. 1280 – 1368): *Confucianism; Buddhism; Taoism; Totemism*

Ming Dynasty A.D. 1368 – 1644): *Wang Yangming's Confucianism*

Ching Dynasty (A.D. 1644 – 1911): *Confucian politics under Manchu Rule*

The Geography of Eastern Philosophy



Christianity and Islam

Buddhism

Indigenous/
other

Indian
Buddhism

Dung Huang

Tai Shan
Duke of Zhou
Confucianism
Mencius

Bon

Tibetan
Buddhism

Christianity
and Islam

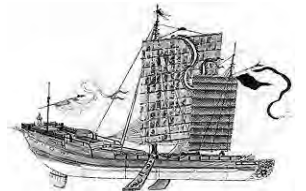
Tantric
Practices

Taoism

Indigenous/
other

Islam

Buddhism



Xiexie
谢谢

Zàijiàn
再见