Major Belief Systems by 1000CE

# Belief System

Hinduism

Buddhism

Confucianism

Daoism

Judaism

Christianity

Islam

Polytheism

# Origin/Dates

Aryan invaders 1700-1500BCE

Later groups added ideas

India, Siddharta Gautama 500BCE

China, Kong Fuzi 500BCE

And Mencius 300BCE

China, Lao-Tzu 400 and 300BCE

Hebrews, ancient Israelites first writings 1000-800BCE

Jesus of Nazareth 30s CE

Muhammad Early 600sCE

Earliest Religion across all culture regions

# Spread

Throughout India and modern Pakistan

Northern India throughout Asia, SE Asia and Japan 700CE

China

China

Israel; Diaspora 130sCE

North Africa

Middle East Europe

Palestine throughout Roman world, Byzantines, Northern Europe

Arabian Peninsula-Middle East-India-China-Moorish Spain

Continued in areas not evangelized by Christians or Muslims

# Tenets

-One ultimate reality-Brahma, nameless

-Reincarnation for spiritual progress based on karma

-Dharma, duties and rules of conduct

Four Noble Truths

-Universality of suffering

-Desire is the cause of suffering

-Nirvana as the cessation of desire

-Eightfold Path as the guide

-Based on jen, the quality that relates all people to one another

-Humaneness

-Filial piety, family as teacher of social roles

Five relationships

-Tao-“The Way” Naturalness

-Oneness through meditation

-Yin and Yang influence on everything

-One God

-Chosen people

-Messiah to come

-Torah, Mosaic Law and Talmud (oral laws)

-One God with Jesus as the Messiah

-People saved through God’s grace via Jesus

-Sins are forgiven and receive eternal life

-Gospels as main source of teachings

-Large body of later writings to interpret

-One God, Allah – Quran, original teachings

-Muhammad as “Seal of the Prophets”

-Five Basic Pillars

-“There is no God but Allah and

Muhammad is His Prophet.”

-Pray 5 times/day facing Mecca

-Fasting during Ramadan-Charity

-Pilgrimage to Kaaba in Mecca

-Belief in many gods

-Animism

# Significance

-No founder and no dates of founding

-Tolerant of other religions

-Little in the way of formal beliefs

-Adaptable to meditation and ritual

-Strong monastic tradition

-Monks carried Buddhism beyond India

-Hinduism revival and Islamic invasions

-Mahayana and Theravada sects

-Zen Buddhism-enlightenment > meditation

-Philosophical and ethical system of conduct

-Dominant influence on Chinese government

-Conservative influence of status quo

-Mandate of Heaven

-Ancestor worship

-Societal conventions are unnatural

-Mixed with peasant belief in spirits

-Influenced Chinese art; Nature

-First (?) monotheistic religion

-Influenced Christianity and Islam

-No widespread hierarchical structure

-Persecuted by Romans

-Legalized by Constantine in late 300sCE

-Monastic tradition saves Greek and Roman

-Strong missionary outreach

-Roman Catholic power of the papacy

-Split into Sunni and Shi’is sects

-Sunnis majority; adherents of Umayyad

-Shiites followers of Ali

-Development of Sharia, legal code

-Lack of hierarchical structure

-Sumerians, Shang, Romans, Greek, Germanic, Mayan, Aztec, and African

-Modern religion: Hinduism