

The Rise and Decline of Buddhism and Daoism

A New Belief System

- Buddhism arrives in China with merchants and missionaries from India;
- During turmoil between Han and Tang dynasties, Buddhism and Daoism appealed to those who were searching for **more emotional and spiritual satisfaction**;
- eventually found support among ruling classes as well;

Sinification of Buddhism

In China, Buddhism began to take on Chinese characteristics. Divided into sects appealing to different needs: different forms of Buddhism appealed to different groups:

- mind training and strict discipline; Chan (Zen)
- reflected Daoist ideas and appealed to intellectuals;
- devotion
- magical symbols and rituals;
- political reform

Most **assimilated** Buddhism into their daily lives, where it **joined Confucian ideology and spirit worship, mixing with them** in an **eclectic** and **tolerant** Chinese worldview.

Early Support

Early Tang rulers supported Buddhism and Buddhist monasteries;

Buddhist scripture was represented on the Civil Service Exam;

Rulers had Buddhist and Daoist advisors;

But ultimately, Buddhism was **rejected** at court and at times was officially **persecuted**;

Why Rejected?

- Xenophobia – foreign origins;
- Financial – Buddhist monasteries owned large tracts of land and were exempt from taxation; this led to corruption; later Tang dynasty, many Buddhist temples and monasteries destroyed; 100,000 monks compelled to return to the world;
- Conflict with Confucianism: Buddhism's belief that the world is **illusory** conflicted with Confucianism's **filial piety and hard work**;

Neo-Confucianism

- Under the influence of Buddhism and Daoism, Confucianism begins to speculate in **metaphysics**; theorize about the nature of the cosmos and man's place in it; it unites the metaphysical speculations of Buddhism and Daoism with the pragmatic Confucian approach to society;
- Neo-Confucianism maintains that the world is real, not illusory, and that fulfillment comes from participation in, not withdrawal from society.
- divides the world into a material world and a transcendent world(the Supreme Ultimate);
- Human beings are called transcend the material world; self- cultivation; achieved by “the **investigation of things**;”
- The School of Mind expression of Confucianism sees knowledge as **intuitive** rather than empirical; knowledge obtained through **self searching** rather than investigation of the outside world;