

SACRED TEXTS OF THE EAST

1. VEDAS - Hindu scripture as early as 2000 B.C. - VEDAS (sacred hymns) and ARANYAKAS (forest books) and UPANISHADS (underlying truths of human life). Also BRAHMANAS that explain the VEDAS - all 4 texts collectively called VEDAS. VEDAS explain Creation ("from it were born the verses and the sacred chants, from it were born the meters, from it the sacred formulas, from it horses were born, and those animals with double rows of teeth, cows were born from it, also goats and sheep") - also explain division of all mankind into four orders or castes.
 2. UPANISHADS - Hindu VEDAS expound KARMA, that every action has its consequence, human soul travels through many bodies, one soul reaps in one life what has been sown in previous lives. "Now the man who does not desire, he who is without desire, who is freed from desire, whose desire is satisfied, whose desire is the soul, his breaths do not depart. Being very Brahmin, he goes to Brahmin.
 3. BHAGAVAD-GITA - Hindu VEDAS (smriti, what is remembered). Arjuna is arrayed for battle, hero Arjuna lays down his arms, does not want to slay his fellow man. The god KRISHNA, serving as Arjuna's charioteer, discourses with Arjuna and urges him to do his caste duty; "The truly wise mourn neither for the living nor the dead."
 4. MAHAYANA - Buddhists worship the bodhisattva, perfect Being who helps others to Salvation/Enlightenment; "I shall become the savior of all beings and set them free from their sufferings," LOTUS SUTRA compiled before 250 A.D., teaches Salvation is open to all who seek it; "Even boys at play who have painted Buddha with straw and sticks, even these by gradual merits and compassion, have already achieved Buddhahood."
 5. ANALECTS - Confucius gathered together 5 Classics, later disciples the 4 Books. In the ANALECTS, Confucius is seen teaching LI or JEN, perfect virtue. "We don't know yet how to serve men, how can we know anything about serving spirit/gods?" The next question: "What about death?" Confucius said: "We don't know yet about life, how can we know anything about death?" . . . Tzu Kung asked: "Is there one word to serve as principle for conduct of life?" Confucius said: "Reciprocity - do not do to others what you would not have them do to you." When asked the first thing he would do if he were Emperor of the Universe, Confucius said: "I would call things by their right names." Another time, Confucius said: "If a man have not order inside himself, how can he create order outside himself?" He taught there were 3 things essential to government: food, troops, and confidence of the people; of these 3, he said troops and food were dispensable, but "a people without faith cannot survive."
- THE BOOK OF MENCIUS - Mencius (372-289 B.C.) expounds Confucian faith that human nature is innately good, and all evil is a perversion of this. (Cf Christian doctrine of Original Sin; Melville & Dostoyevsky, man's "innate depravity").
6. TAO TE CHING - Laotse, 6th century B.C. contemporary of Confucius, taught the TAO or WAY; man is to follow wu-wei or non-action, quietism. "The Tao that can be told is not the true Tao. . . The Great Tao flows everywhere. . ."

