

## Chapter 4

### WHAT'S THE SIGNIFICANCE?

**Ban Zhao:** A major female Confucian author of Han dynasty China (45–116 C.E.) whose works give insight into the implication of Confucian thinking for women. (*pron.* bahn joe)

**Bhagavad Gita:** A great Hindu epic text, part of the much larger *Mahabharata*, which affirms the performance of caste duties as a path to religious liberation. (*pron.* BAH-gah-vahd GHEE-tah)

**Church of the East:** A theologically and organizationally distinct Christian church based in Syria and Persia but with followers in southern India and Central Asia.

**Confucianism:** The Chinese philosophy first enunciated by Confucius, advocating the moral example of superiors as the key element of social order.

**Daoism:** A Chinese philosophy/popular religion that advocates simplicity and understanding of the world of nature, founded by the legendary figure Laozi. (*pron.* dow-ism)

**Greek rationalism:** A secularizing system of scientific and philosophic thought that developed in classical Greece in the period 600 to 300 B.C.E.; it emphasized the power of education and human reason to understand the world in nonreligious terms.

**Jesus of Nazareth:** The prophet/god of Christianity (ca. 4 B.C.E.–ca. 30 C.E.).

**Judaism:** The monotheistic religion developed by the Hebrews, emphasizing a sole personal god (Yahweh) with concerns for social justice.

**Legalism:** A Chinese philosophy distinguished by an adherence to clear laws with vigorous punishments.

**Mahayana:** “Great Vehicle,” the popular development of Buddhism in the early centuries of the Common Era, which gives a much greater role to supernatural beings and proved to be more popular than original (Theravada) Buddhism. (*pron.* mah-hah-YAH-nah)

**moksha:** In Hindu belief, liberation from separate existence and union with Brahman. (*pron.* mokeshuh)

**nirvana:** The end goal of Buddhism, in which individual identity is “extinguished” into a state of serenity and great compassion. (*pron.* neer-VAH-nah)

**Saint Paul:** The first great popularizer of Christianity (10–65 C.E.).

**Siddhartha Gautama (the Buddha):** The Indian prince turned ascetic (ca. 566–ca. 486 B.C.E.) who founded Buddhism. (*pron.* sidd-ARTH-uh gow-TAHM-uh)

**Socrates:** The first great Greek philosopher to turn rationalism toward questions of human existence (469–399 B.C.E.).

**Theravada:** “The Teaching of the Elders,” the early form of Buddhism according to which the Buddha was a wise teacher but not divine and which emphasizes practices rather than beliefs. (*pron.* THAIR-ah-VAH-dah)

**Upanishads:** Indian mystical and philosophical works, written between 800 and 400 B.C.E. (*pron.* ooh-PAHN-ish-ahds)

**Vedas:** The earliest religious texts of India, a collection of ancient poems, hymns, and rituals that were transmitted orally before being written down ca. 600 B.C.E. (*pron.* VAY-dahs)

**Zoroastrianism:** Persian monotheistic religion founded by the prophet Zarathustra. (*pron.* zor-oh-AST-rec-an-ism)