

from

The Analects of Confucius

Confucius was a Chinese philosopher who promoted a code of conduct based on high moral ideals. His teachings have had a lasting influence on Chinese civilization. The following is an excerpt from the *Analects*, or collection of Confucius' teachings.

"The superior man is seen in three different aspects:—look at him from a distance, he is imposing in appearance; approach him, he is gentle and warm-hearted; hear him speak, he is acute and strict. . . ."

"Superior men," said the Master, "are modest in their words, profuse in their deeds. . . ."

"With a meal of coarse rice," said the Master, "and with water to drink, and my bent arm for my pillow—even thus I can find happiness. Riches and honors without righteousness are to me as fleeting clouds. . . ."

"Concentrate the mind," said he, "upon the Good Way."

"Maintain firm hold upon Virtue. . . ."

"Find recreation in the Arts."

"I have never withheld instruction from any, even from those who have come for it with the smallest offering. . . ."

"Those who keep within restraints are seldom losers."

"To be slow to speak, but prompt to act, is the desire of the 'superior man.'"

"Virtue dwells not alone: she must have neighbors. . . ."

"It does not greatly concern me," said the Master, "that men do not know me; my great concern is, my not knowing them."



Discussion Questions

1. According to Confucius, what are some important values to guide one's behavior?
2. What wise sayings do you know that express values or morals?

Encourage students to choose one or more of the sayings here and explain each one in their own words.

Name _____

Two Great Philosophers



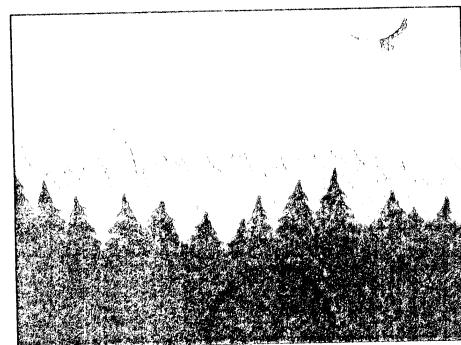
CONFUCIANISM

Confucius was born into a noble family that had lost its money at a time when China was in chaos and warfare raged among many feudal states. He was orphaned while he was still a child but gained an education, became a student of history, and held an influential government post. As a protest against the emperor's misrule, Confucius resigned to become a wandering scholar and teacher. He was China's first professional educator. He believed that the early

years of the Zhou were golden years of social harmony. Most of his teaching was not religious. His system of ethics demanded strong moral principles, or a code of behavior that focused on the relationships between ruler and those ruled, father and son, husband and wife, older and younger brothers, and friend and friend. Following the death of Confucius, his followers collected his teachings into a group of books called the *Five Classics*. In 124 BC, the government established the Imperial University to educate future government officials in Confucian ideals. Confucianism became the official state philosophy.

Lao Tzu is believed to have been the founder of Taoism.

As a librarian of a very wealthy prince, he became disillusioned by the decadence of court life, left the palace, and traveled extensively throughout China. Lao Tzu believed that people should live simply in harmony with nature. He disagreed with Confucius because he did not believe in regulations. Taoists often withdraw from public life because they believe involvement with government or groups conflicts with a life of inner reflection. Taoists thought it was possible to discover the elixir of life and become immortal. Taoist monks offered emperors mysterious concoctions as the secret of immortality. Many consider Taoism to be China's only organized, indigenous religion.



Choose one of these quotations from Confucius, put the idea into your own words, ~~and make a poster with an illustration to show the idea graphically.~~ ★

- He who speaks without modesty will find it difficult to make his words good.
- Recompense injury with justice, and recompense kindness with kindness.
- What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others.
- The people may be made to follow a path of action, but they may not be made to understand it.

Choose one of the quotations from Lao Tzu and ~~use it as a basis for a short essay.~~ put the idea in your own words. ★

- A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step.
- To know what you do not know is the best. To pretend to know when you do not know is a disease.
- He who knows others is wise; He who knows himself is enlightened.

★ WRITE YOUR ANSWERS ON THE BACK OF THE PACKET

LEGALISM—GOOD OR BAD?

OLD ADULT

Shi Huangdi, the king of the western state of Qin, defeated the warlords in all the other states and turned China into an empire. The emperor and his chief minister, Li Si, were disciples of a doctrine called *legalism*. It held that people could be controlled through strict laws and severe punishments. The emperor was quick to suppress criticism, especially from scholars who opposed the precepts of legalism. ~~The emperor was quick to suppress criticism, especially from scholars who opposed the precepts of legalism.~~

~~Legalist principles contrasted with the more humane teachings of Confucius. After students learn about legalism and the teachings of Confucius, have them present a "meeting of the minds" with Shi Huangdi and Confucius in a discussion of whose philosophy is most correct. This exercise can be done in small groups or with different sets of students role-playing Shi Huangdi and Confucius. A mediator can help the students find common ground and keep the discussion moving.~~

WHAT'S YOUR OPINION? WAS LEGALISM A GOOD OR A BAD IDEA?
WHY? Answer in AT LEAST 5 SENTENCES.