



# **Chinese Philosophies & Ethical Codes**



# Confucianism

# Confucius



- \* 551 - 479 B.C.E.
- \* Born in the feudal state of Liu.
- \* Became a teacher and editor of books.

# Major Confucian Principles

*Li* --> Rite, rules, ritual decorum (Binding force of an enduring stable society)

*Ren* --> humaneness, benevolence, humanity

*Shu* --> Reciprocity, empathy

*Do not do unto others what you would not want others to do unto you.*

*Yi* --> Righteousness

*Xiao* --> Filial Piety (Respect your elders!)

# 5 Principle Relationships

1. Ruler            Subject

2. Father            Son

3. Husband            Wife

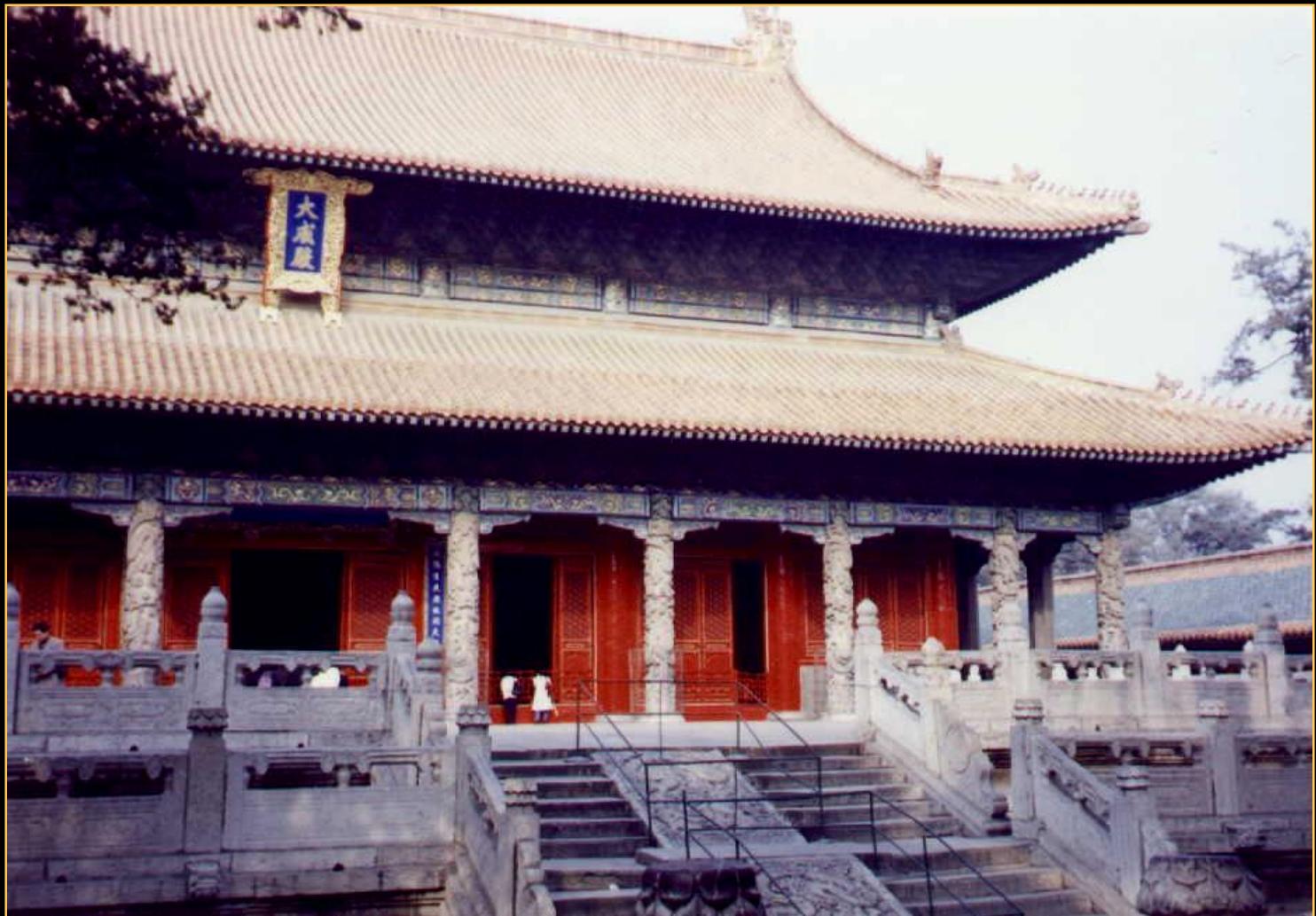
4. Older  
Brother            Younger  
Brother

5. Older  
Friend            Younger  
Friend

# Organizing Principles

- \* Status
- \* Age
- \* Gender

# Confucian Temple Complex



# The Analects

- \* The single most important Confucian work.
- \* In Chinese, it means “conversation.”
- \* Focus on practicalities of interpersonal relationships and the relationship of the role of rulers and ministers to the conduct of government.

# Sayings from The Analects

- \* *Knowing what he knows and knowing what he doesn't know, is characteristics of the person who knows.*
- \* *Making a mistake and not correcting it, is making another mistake.*
- \* *The superior man blames himself; the inferior man blames others.*
- \* *To go too far is as wrong as to fall short.*

# Stones Engraved with Confucius' Life Stories



# Confucius' Tomb



# Mencius

- \* 372 - 289 B.C.E.
- \* Disciple of Confucius.
- \* Starts off with the assumption that “people are basically good.”
- \* If someone does something bad, education, not punishment, is the answer.
  - Good people will mend their ways in accordance to their inherent goodness.

# Social Cohesion is Paramount!

- \* The emperor is the example of proper behavior --> “big daddy”
- \* Social relationships are based on “rites” or “rituals.”
- \* Even religious rituals are important for SOCIAL, not religious reasons, acc. to Confucius.

# Differences in Cultures

## INDIA

1. Brahmin
2. Kshatriyas
3. Vaishyas
4. Shudras

## CHINA

1. Scholar-Gentry
2. Peasants
3. Artisans
4. Merchants

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Untouchables

Soldiers

Imperial Nobility  
Domestic Slaves

# Legalism

# Han Fei

- \* 280? - 233 B.C.E.
- \* *Han Fe Zi.*
- \* Lived during the late Warring States period.
- \* Legalism became the political philosophy of the Qin [Ch'in] Dynasty.



# Major Legalist Principles

1. Human nature is naturally selfish.
2. Intellectualism and literacy is discouraged.
3. Law is the supreme authority and replaces morality.
4. The ruler must rule with a strong, punishing hand.
5. War is the means of strengthening a ruler's power.

# Authoritarian



One who favors the principle that individuals should obey a powerful authority rather than exercise individual freedom.

The ruler, therefore, “cracks his whip” on the backs of his subjects!

# Daoism

# Lao Zi [Lao-Tzu]



- \* Not sure when he died.  
[604 B.C.E. - ?]
- \* His name means  
“Old Master”
- \* Was he Confucius' teacher?

# The Dao De Jing

- \* The basic text of Daoism.
- \* In Chinese, it means *The Classic in the Way and Its Power.*
- \* *"Those who speak know nothing:  
Those who know are silent."  
These words, I am told,  
Were spoken by Laozi.  
If we are to believe that Laozi,  
Was himself one who knew,  
How is it that he wrote a book,  
Of five thousand words?*

# Major Daoist Principles

1. *Dao [Tao]* is the first-cause of the universe. It is a force that flows through all life.
2. A believer's goal is to become one with *Dao*; one with nature. ["The butterfly or the man?" story.]
3. *Wu wei* --> "Let nature take its course."  
--> "The art of doing nothing."  
--> "Go with the flow!"
4. Man is unhappy because he lives acc. to man-made laws, customs, & traditions that are contrary to the ways of nature.

# The "Dao" [Tao]



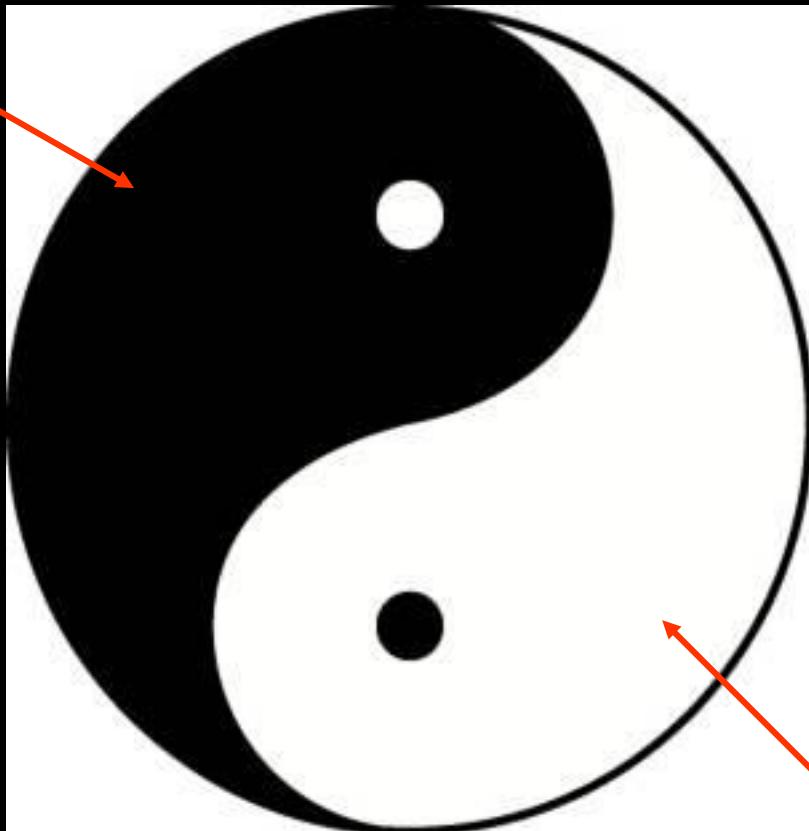
To escape the “social, political, & cultural traps” of life, one must escape by:

1. Rejecting formal knowledge and learning.
2. Relying on the senses and instincts.
3. Discovering the nature and “rhythm” of the universe.
4. Ignoring political and social laws.

# The Universe of Opposites: Find the Balance!

**Yin**

- \* Feminine
- \* Passive
- \* Darkness
- \* Cold
- \* Weak
- \* Earth;  
Moon



- \* Masculine
- \* Active
- \* Light
- \* Warmth
- \* Strong
- \* Heaven;  
Sun

**Yang**

# The Uniqueness of Daoism

*How is a man to live in a world dominated by chaos, suffering, and absurdity??*

**Confucianism** --> Moral order in society.

**Legalism** --> Rule by harsh law & order.

**Daoism** --> Freedom for individuals and less govt. to avoid uniformity and conformity.

# What's Your Philosophy of Life?

