**China’s Ancient Philosophies**

**MAIN IDEAS**

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| **Belief Systems** Legalists believed that the government must control people through strict laws.  **Belief Systems** Confucius taught that order would return to China if society was organized around five relationships.  **Belief Systems** The followers of Daoism taught that people could find virtue by living in harmony with nature. |

**Legalism**

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION** How did Legalism suggest that society be controlled?

**Peace Through Ideas**

• In Time of the Warring States, warlords and kings fought for land

• Scholars developed three ways of thinking to bring peace to land

* Legalism, Confucianism, Daoism
* each was a **philosophy**—study of basic truths, ideas about universe

• **Legalism**—rulers should use legal system to force people to obey laws

* believers felt strong government would end Chinas disorder

**Strict Laws and Harsh Punishments**

• Legalists felt human nature is wicked

* must force people to do good
* government must pass strict laws to control people’s behavior

• Believed harsh punishments kept people afraid to do wrong

**An Increase in Government Control**

• Legalist Shang Yang wanted to force people to report lawbreakers

• Legalists taught that rulers should reward people who do their duty

• Legalists did not want complaints or questions about government

* arrested people who questioned government, taught different ideas
* felt rulers should burn books with different philosophies, ideas

**REVIEW QUESTION**

Why did Legalists want a strong government?

**Confucianism**

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION** What actions did Confucius believe would bring order to China?

**Confucius**

• Confucius lived 551 to 479 B.C., during time of unrest in China

* developed ideas to end conflict, have peace in all relationships

• Believed that respect for others was necessary for peace, harmony

• Confucius ideas collected into book, *Analects*

* together the teachings form the belief system of **Confucianism**

**The Five Relationships**

• Confucius taught code of proper conduct

* proper conduct in family, proper conduct in society

• Confucianism had Five Relationships

* father and son, older and younger brothers
* husband and wife, friend and friend, ruler and subject

**Proper Conduct**

• Confucius felt correct behavior would bring peace to society

* should begin at home; husbands good to wives, wives obey husbands
* brothers kind to one another, but younger must obey older

• **Filial piety**—idea that parents must be treated with respect

• Confucius said respect authority; rulers—live right, respect people

* subjects had duty to obey ruler if ruler lived in right, moral way

**The Impact of Confucianism**

• Confucianism set out family and social roles

* following these roles helped Chinese avoid conflict, live peacefully

• Rulers tried to live up to Confucius model

• Confucius encouraged education, creating fair and skilled officials

**REVIEW QUESTION**

How did Confucius think rulers should behave?

**Daoism**

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION** What did the Daoists believe about society?

**The Way**

• **Daoism**—Laozis ideas in *Dao De Jing (The Book of the Way of Virtue)*

* Laozi may not have existed, but said to have lived in 500s B.C.

• Daoists felt universal force, the Dao (the Way), guides all things

* all creatures but humans live in harmony with Dao

• Humans must find own way (Dao) to relate to nature, each other

* each must learn to live in harmony with nature and inner feelings

**Following the Way**

• Daoists did not argue over good and bad, or try to change things

* accepted things as they were; did not get involved in government

• Tried to understand nature, live in harmony with its rhythms

• Forces of yin, yang interact, complement each other; change, evolve

* yin (black)—cold, dark, mysterious
* yang (white)—warm, bright

• Understanding yin and yang helped people find place in the world

**REVIEW QUESTION**

Why did Daoism teach that each human had to find an individual way to follow in life?

**Lesson Summary**

• Legalists believed humans are wicked and need strict laws with harsh punishments.

• Confucius taught a code of proper conduct, including respect, that humans could learn.

• Daoists held the view that each human must find an individual moral path to follow.

**Why It Matters Now...**

The teachings of Confucianism and Daoism remain influential in China and the world today.