

Explore More—Confucianism and Daoism

Directions: Listen to your teacher talk about Confucianism and Daoism, two Chinese belief systems. Refer to the maps in your Explore Geography Picture Dictionary to locate the places your teacher mentions. Circle any words you don't understand. Underline or highlight important ideas in the text. Write notes in the margins to help you understand key points. Then answer the questions in your own words.

The Life of Confucius

Confucius was born in 551 B.C. in northeastern China.

Point out China on your world map.

Point to the date on your class time line.

He came from a poor family and his father died when he was very young. While still a boy, Confucius traveled widely and studied in the city of Zhou. For most of his early life, he wanted an appointment to an important government position. However, he was able to get only minor government positions, and usually only held them for a short time. During the years he was a government worker, Confucius was an outspoken teacher. He wandered the Chinese countryside with his disciples going from one royal court to another. Later he returned home to teach and write.

The Teachings of Confucianism

During his lifetime, Confucius was not a famous or powerful man. But he stood out because of his concern for the way people lived their daily lives. Confucius taught people the importance of living according to the traditional values of virtue. These values included kindness, goodness, respect, and "proper conduct" in relationships with others. Confucius's teachings also emphasized order in social relationships. Five social relationships needed to be honored: father and son; ruler and subject; husband and wife; older brother and younger brother; and older friend and younger friend. People in these relationships had well-defined roles of submission and superiority and had a responsibility to each other. Confucius believed that the world would become a better place if all people, both men and women, honored these ideals.

Continued on next page

The Teachings of Daoism

Historians think Laozi was born around 601 B.C.

Point to the date on your class time line.

He may have lived about the same time as Confucius, but he was probably older. Laozi lived during a time of great social disorder when many people were distrustful of religion. Laozi took the ancient Chinese tradition of nature worship and made it into a way of life. In nature worship people believe that rocks, mountains, the sun, animals, and other things in nature have spirits. Laozi developed the idea that the Dao—"the way"—was the beginning of all things. He also taught that the Dao was the force behind all changes in the natural world and surrounds everything. But only people who were living in harmony with nature could experience the Dao. Laozi's set of teachings are called Daoism (or Taoism). Daoists believe that living a healthy lifestyle is important for keeping in harmony with nature. Daoists believe that each person's responsibility is to develop moral virtue. The most important moral virtues are kindness, moderation, and humility. ❖

YOUR TURN!

Write your answers to the following questions.

1. Who was Confucius? Describe his life.

2. Describe the fundamentals of the teachings of Confucianism.

3. Describe the fundamentals of the teachings of Daoism.

Questions for further discussion:

- What would you like to know more about in terms of Confucius, Confucianism, and Daoism? Frame questions that you can answer by historical study and research. Conduct this research and discuss your findings.
- Recall what your textbook and anthology say about the development of Confucianism and Daoism. How does the combination of ideas and events in China explain the emergence of new patterns and ways of life?
- What were the causes of the development of Confucianism and Daoism? What were the effects? How do Confucianism and Daoism correlate to historical events in China?