

Confucianism and Daoism: An Overview

Confucianism – A philosophical and religious tradition where the key to maintaining society is through traditional social relationships (between father and son, husband and wife, ruler and subject, etc.). It states that human beings are teachable and can improve both individually and through interactions with the community.

Daoism (sometimes spelled Taoism) – A philosophical and religious tradition that promotes harmony and unity with nature. It encourages people to live calmly and peacefully. It teaches that intervening in life’s events causes conflict and destruction, so people should limit their interference and only do what is required.

Confucianism	Daoism (Taoism)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Founded by Confucius in 6th-5th century BCE. • Main principle is <i>ren</i>, which describes that people should behave in a loving, selfless, and moral way. • Principles of <i>li</i> and <i>yi</i> dictate actions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Li</i> describes the actions that are right because of the needs of society. ○ <i>Yi</i> describes the actions that are inherently right, good, and moral. • <i>Hsiao</i> is the principle of filial piety, which means that children should respect their parents. • Virtue is seen as leading by the proper moral example. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Founded by Laozi in 6th-5th century BCE. • Main principle is the <i>Dao</i>, which means “the Way.” All things in the universe are connected together through the <i>Dao</i>. • <i>Wu Wei</i> is the method of following the <i>Dao</i>. This involves living in harmony and letting things take their natural course without interference. • Principle of <i>Yin Yang</i> states that opposites fit together and depend on each other for harmony (i.e., darkness and light, life and death). • Virtue is seen as being true to oneself, instead of satisfying the standards set by others.

Document A (Modified)

The Duke Ai asked the Master, "What should be done to secure the **submission** of the people?"

The Master replied, "Advance the upright and set aside the **crooked**, then the people will submit. Advance the crooked and set aside the upright, then the people will not submit."

Ji Kang asked how to cause the people to respect their ruler. The Master said, "Let him rule over them with seriousness; – then they will respect him. Let him be final and kind to all; – then they will be faithful to him."

Ji Kang asked the Master about government. The Master replied, "To govern means to **rectify**. If you lead the people with correctness, who will dare to not act correct?"

The Master said, "If good men were to govern a country for a hundred years, they would be able to transform the violently bad, and dispense with **capital punishments**."

Vocabulary

submission: obedience

crooked: dishonest, immoral

rectify: to correct

capital punishment: death penalty

Document B (Modified)

Not to value and employ men of superior ability is the way to keep the people from **rivalry** among themselves. Not to prize articles which are difficult to **procure** is the way to keep them from becoming thieves. Not to show them what is likely to excite their desires is the way to keep their minds from disorder. . . .

When there is this **abstinence** from action, good order is universal. . . .

Use fairness in governing the state. Use surprise tactics in war. Be unconcerned and you will have the world.

How do I know it is like this? Because: the more regulations there are, the poorer people become. The more people own weapons, the greater disorder there is in the country and clans. The more clever the people are, the more extraordinary actions they take. The more picky the laws are, the more thieves and gangsters there are.

Therefore the **sages** say: “I do not force my way, and the people transform themselves. I enjoy my **serenity**, and the people correct themselves. I do not interfere, and the people enrich themselves. I have no desires, and the people keep their simple ways.”

When the government is laid back, the people are relaxed. When the government is nitpicking, the people have anxiety.

Vocabulary

rivalry: competition

procure: to get

abstinence: declining to do something

sage: a very wise person

serenity: the state of being calm

Confucianism and Daoism Guiding Questions: Documents A & B

Close Reading: In your own words, describe three features of the ideal government according to Document A and three features of the ideal government according to Document B.

Document A

1.

2.

3.

Document B

1.

2.

3.

Sourcing: Two sources are listed below. Which is Document A, and which is Document B?

The Confucian Analects: The Great Learning and the Doctrine of the Mean, recorded by the disciples of Confucius between 551 and 479 BCE.

Document _____

Use evidence from the document and your knowledge of Confucianism and Daoism to support your answer.

Dao De Jing: The Classic of the Way and Virtue, written by the legendary Daoist scholar Laozi c. 550 BCE.

Document _____

Use evidence from the document and your knowledge of Confucianism and Daoism to support your answer.

Document C (Modified)

Chien Wu went to see Chief Yu. Chief Yu said, “What was Chung Shih telling you the other day?” Chien Wu said, “He told me that the ruler of men should devise his own principles, standards, ceremonies, and regulation, and then there will be no one who will fail to obey him and be transformed by them.” Chief Yu said, “This is bogus virtue! To try to govern the world like this is like trying to walk the ocean, to drill through a river, or to make a mosquito shoulder a mountain! When the sage governs, does he govern what is on the outside? He makes sure of himself first, and then acts. He makes absolutely certain that things can do what they are supposed to do, that is all. The bird flies high in the sky where it can escape the danger of stringed arrows. The field mouse burrows deep down under the scared hill where it won’t have to worry about men digging and smoking it out. Have you got less sense than these two little creatures?”

Yang Tzu-chu said, “May I venture to ask about the government of the enlightened king?” Lao Tan said, “The government of the enlightened king? His achievements blanket the world but appear not to be his own doing. His transforming influence touches the ten thousand things but the people do not depend on him. With him there is no promotion or praise—he lets everything find its own enjoyment. He takes his stand on what cannot be understood and wanders where there is nothing at all.”

Document D (Modified)

The scholar answered King Hui, “Even with a territory of a hundred *li*, it is possible to become the true king of the empire. If Your Majesty can practice a humane government to the people, reduce punishments and fines, lower taxes, make it possible for the fields to be plowed deep and the weeding well done, men may cultivate their filial piety, brotherly respect, loyalty, and faithfulness.”

The scholar said . . . “Let mulberry trees be planted about the homesteads with their five *mou*, and men of fifty will be able to be clothed in silk. Let there be timely care for fowls, pigs, dogs, and swine, and men of seventy will have meat to eat. Let there be timely cultivation of the farm with its hundred *mou*, and the family of eight mouths will suffer no hunger. Let serious attention be paid to education in school, and the gray-haired men will not carry burdens on the roads. There has never been a case when men of seventy had silk to wear and meat to eat, when the common people were neither hungry nor cold, and yet the ruler did not become true king of the empire. . . .

The scholar said to King Hsuan . . . “When all your immediate ministers say that a man should be executed, do not listen to them. When all your great officers say so, do not listen to them. When all your people say so, look into the case, and if you find that the person should be executed, then execute him. It is therefore said that the people execute him. Only in this way can a ruler become parent of the people.”

Vocabulary

li: area of land equal to one-third of a mile

mou: area of land equal to one-sixth of an acre

Close Reading: In your own words, describe three features of the ideal government according to Document C and three features of the ideal government according to Document D.

Document C

1.

2

3.

Document D

1.

2.

3.

Sourcing: Two sources are listed below. Which is Document C and which is Document D?

Mencius, written by Confucian scholar Mencius in the 4th Century BCE.

Document _____

Use evidence from the document and your knowledge of Confucianism and Daoism to support your answer.

The *Zhuangzi*, written by Daoist scholar Zhuang Zhou in the 4th Century BCE.

Document _____

Use evidence from the document and your knowledge of Confucianism and Daoism to support your answer.