

Philosophies of Ancient China

The Love of Wisdom

the word “**philosophy**” comes from the **Greek** roots; philo (**love**) and sophia (**wisdom**). A philosophy is the study of **truths** or principles that can be used to create a system of **beliefs** to guide everyday life. During periods of time in ancient China, there were great **struggles** between different states (kingdoms) which caused instability and **turmoil**. This period was known as the **Warring** states period. During this time rulers searched for the best way to **govern** based on understanding of human natures. The three most influential philosophies were **Daosim**, **Legalism**, and **Confucianism**.

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Daoism/Taoism

Founder:

Laozi

Goal: Create **harmony** by finding natural balance with **nature**

Belief:

-The **Dao**, or “Way” is a **force** that give **order** to the universe

-**nature** is full of **opposites**, represented by **yin** and **yang** (ex: light & dark, life & death)

Avoid feeling self-important or trying to achieve **wealth** and fame - it is not **natural**

Laws and rules prevent natural harmony, so a ruler should **rule** as little as possible

Example:

Picture/Illustration:

Confucianism

Founder:

Confucius

Goal: Create a **just** and **peaceful** society

Belief:

-Society is based on **relationships**

-When people **act** properly in their relationships, **society** thrives

Respect and obey those **above** you, set good **examples** for those below you

wisdom in word and action is more important than **wealth**

Example:

Picture/Illustration:

Legalism

Founder:

Han Feizi

Goal: create **peace** and order through **strict** laws

Belief:

-People are **selfish** and cannot be **trusted**, even **family** members

-Rulers should use **strict** laws and absolute **power** to create **order**

-Reward **good** behavior, but punish **bad** behavior **severely**

Example:

Picture/Illustration: