

2. **Engagement:** after the wedding day is chosen, the bride announces the wedding with invitations and a gift of cookies made in the shape of the moon.
3. **Dowry:** This is carried to the groom's home in a solemn procession. The bride-price is then sent to the bride by the groom's parents.
4. **Procession:** The groom visits the bride's home and brings her back to his place, with much fanfare.
5. **Marriage and Reception:** The couple recite their vows, toast each other with wine, and then take center stage at a banquet.
6. **Morning after:** The bride serves breakfast to the groom's parents, who then reciprocate.

**DEATH:** At death, the relatives cry out aloud to inform the neighbors. The family starts mourning and puts on clothes made of a coarse material. The corpse is washed and placed in a coffin. Mourners bring incense and money to offset the cost of the funeral. Food and significant objects of the deceased are placed into the coffin.

END

**Review Questions:**

Write four higher order questions from each philosopher - Lao Tzu and Confucius, then answer them in your notebook.

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## Lesson 18

### Lao Tzu & Taoism



**LAO TZU (LAO TSU)**

1. Lao Tzu, also known as Laozi, Lao Tsu, Lao Tse, Lao Zi, Laotze or a number of other ways, is said to have lived in the sixth century BCE according to Chinese tradition. However, recent scholars believe this is incorrect place the life of Lao Tzu in the fourth century BCE.
2. Although little is known about the life of Lao Tzu, his cultural significance is important to the lives of generations of Chinese. According to Chinese tradition, Lao Tzu was born in Ku Prefecture of the Chǔ state, which today is named Lù yì County of the Henan province.
3. Born in the Spring and Autumn Period, 604-531 BCE. Some legends state he was born with white hair, having spent more than eighty years in his mother's womb, giving him his title Laozi, which means "the old master".
4. According to tradition, and biography which includes Sima Quian's works, Lao Tzu was an elder contemporary of Confucius and worked as an archivist in the Imperial Library of the Zhou Dynasty.
5. Confucius met Lao Tzu near modern Luoyang where he was going to study library scrolls. Over the next few months, the two discussed ritual and propriety, the cornerstones of Confucianism - Laozi strongly opposed Confucius's ideals.
6. Laozi, now eighty, quit his work and headed west on a water-buffalo through the state of Qin, which is now Tibet, and disappeared into a vast desert.
7. However, before his enter into the desert, Yin Xi (Yin Hsi), a guard at the western-most gate, Hank Pass, of the Great Wall convinced Lao Tzu to write down his wisdom. Laozi's response to the soldier was *Dao De Jing*, also spelled *Tao Te Ching*, which means "The Law of Virtue and Its Way".
8. Lao Tzu's work, *Tao Te Ching*, was a testament to his rationalism and beliefs. The work later led to the creation of both the philosophical Taoism and religious Taoism, with the help of Chuang Tzu, which is most associated with harmony and leading a simple life. Taoism is best known for its tianjitu (commonly misnamed as Yin and Yang) and the bagua.

**Filial piety** is considered among the greatest of virtues and must be shown towards both the living and the dead (including even remote ancestors). The term *filial* (meaning *of a child*) characterizes the respect that a child, originally a son, should show to his parents. This relationship was extended by analogy to a series of five relationships:"

**The Five Bonds:**

1. Ruler to Subject
2. Father to Son
3. Husband to Wife
4. Elder Brother to Younger Brother
5. Friend to Friend

Specific duties were prescribed to each of the participants in these sets of relationships. Such duties were also extended to the dead, where the living stood as sons to their deceased family. This led to the veneration of ancestors. The only relationship where respect for elders wasn't stressed was the Friend to Friend relationship. In all other relationships, high reverence was held for elders.

In time filial piety was also built into the Chinese legal system: a criminal would be punished more harshly if the culprit had committed the crime against a parent, while fathers often exercised enormous power over their children. Much the same was true of other unequal relationships.

Filial piety has continued to play a central role in Confucian thinking to the present day.

**PRACTICES:**

**BIRTH:** The T'ai-shen (spirit of the fetus) protects the expectant woman and deals harshly with anyone who harasses the mother to be.

**REACHING MATURITY:** This life passage is no longer being celebrated, except in traditional families.

**MARRIAGE:** This is performed in six stages:

1. **Proposal:** the couple exchange the eight characters: the year, month, day and hour of each of their births.

**Confucian ethical teachings include the following values:**

- Li:** Includes ritual, propriety, etiquette, etc.  
**Hsiao:** Love within the family: love of parents for their children and of children for their parents  
**Yi:** Righteousness  
**Xin:** Honesty and trustworthiness  
**Ren:** Benevolence, humaneness towards others; the highest Confucian virtue  
**Chung:** Loyalty to the state, etc.

Confucius taught that when societies operate under laws, people are punished by authorities after having committed illegal activities. People generally conform to the laws, often without necessarily understanding the rationale behind them. He promoted a different way: to internalize behaviors so that actions are controlled beforehand. People then behave properly because they wish to avoid feeling shame and want to avoid losing face. In theory, the result is a reduction in the number of coercive laws required for smooth functioning of the society.

Relationships are central to Confucianism. Particular duties arise from one's particular situation in relation to others. The individual stands simultaneously in several different relationships with different people: as a junior in relation to parents and elders, and as a senior in relation to younger siblings, students, and others. While juniors are considered in Confucianism to owe their seniors reverence, seniors also have duties of benevolence and concern toward juniors. This theme of mutuality is prevalent in East Asian cultures even to this day.

Social harmony -- the great goal of Confucianism -- therefore results in part from every individual knowing his or her place in the social order, and playing his or her part well. When Duke Jing of Qi asked about government, by which he meant proper administration so as to bring social harmony, Confucius replied:

"There is government, when the prince is prince, and the minister is minister; when the father is father, and the son is son." (Analects XII, 11)

9. Laozi is traditionally regarded as the founder of Taoism. As a figure, he is intimately connected with the Tao Te Ching and "primordial", or "original", Taoism.

10. Popular ("religious") Taoism typically presents the Jade Emperor as the official head deity. Intellectual ("elite") Taoists, such as the Celestial Masters sect, usually present Laozi (*Laojun*, "Lord Lao") and the Three Pure Ones at the top of the pantheon of deities.

11. *Tao* literally means "path" or "way", and can figuratively mean "essential nature", "destiny" "principle" or "true path". The philosophical and religious "Tao" is infinite, without limitation.

12. One view states that the paradoxical opening is intended to prepare the reader for teachings about the unteachable Tao. Tao is believed to be transcendent, indistinct and without form. Hence, it cannot be named or categorized. Even the word "Tao" can be considered a dangerous temptation to make *Tao* a limiting "name".

13. The story of Laozi has taken on strong religious overtones since the Han dynasty. As Taoism took root, Laozi was recognized as a god. Belief in the revelation of the Dao from the divine Laozi resulted in the formation of the Way of the Celestial Master, the first organized religious Taoist sect.

14. In later mature Taoist tradition, Laozi came to be seen as a personification of Dao. He is said to have undergone numerous "transformations", or taken on various guises in various incarnations throughout history to initiate the faithful in the Way.

15. Religious Taoism also holds that the "Old Master" did not disappear after writing the Tao Te Ching, but rather traveled to India to reveal the Dao.

16. There are many popular accounts of Laozi's life, though facts and myths are impossible to separate regarding him. He is traditionally regarded as an older contemporary of Confucius, but modern scholarship places him centuries later or questions if he ever existed as an individual.

17. An early account of his life was the biography by Sima Qian which seemed to some scholars incoherent but can not be disproved. Laozi is regarded as the author of the Dao De Jing, though there is a debate on the authorship.

18. In legends, he was conceived when his mother gazed upon a falling star. It is said that he stayed in the womb and matured for sixty-two years. He was born when his mother leaned against a plum tree. He emerged a grown man with a full grey beard and long earlobes, which are a sign of wisdom and long life.

19. According to popular biographies, he worked as the Keeper of the Archives for the royal court of Chou. This allowed him broad access to the works of the Yellow Emperor and other classics of the time. Laozi never opened a formal school.

20. Nonetheless, he attracted a large number of students and loyal disciples. There are numerous variations of a story depicting Confucius consulting Laozi about rituals.

21. Laozi is said to have married and had a son named Tsung, who was a celebrated soldier. A large number of people trace their lineage back to Laozi, as the T'ang Dynasty did. Many, or all, of the lineages may be inaccurate. However, they are a testament to the impact of Laozi on Chinese culture.

22. Traditional accounts state that Laozi grew weary of the moral decay of the city and noted the kingdom's decline. At the age of 160, he ventured west to live as a hermit in the unsettled frontier. At the western gate of the city, or kingdom, he was recognized by a guard. The sentry asked the old master to produce a record of his wisdom.

23. The resulting book is said to be the Tao Te Ching. In some versions of the tale, the sentry is so touched by the work that he leaves with Laozi to never be seen again. Some legends elaborate further that the "Old Master" was the teacher of the Buddha, or the Buddha himself.

By the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE, Confucius was recognized as a unique figure, a sage who was ignored but should have been recognized and become a king. At the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, Mencius says of Confucius: "***Ever since man came into this world, there has never been one greater than Confucius.***"

Confucius also claimed that he enjoyed a special and privileged relationship with Heaven and that, by the age of fifty, he had come to understand what Heaven had mandated for him and for mankind. (*Lunyu* 2.4). Confucius was also careful to instruct his followers that they should never neglect the offerings due Heaven. (*Lunyu* 3.13)

Confucius' social philosophy largely revolves around the concept of *ren*, "compassion" or "loving others." Cultivating or practicing such concern for others involved deprecating oneself. This meant being sure to avoid artful speech or an ingratiating manner that would create a false impression and lead to self-aggrandizement. Those who have cultivated *ren* are, on the contrary, "simple in manner and slow of speech." For Confucius, such concern for others is demonstrated through the practice of forms of the Golden Rule: "***What you do not wish for yourself, do not do to others;***" "***Since you yourself desire standing then help others achieve it, since you yourself desire success then help others attain it.***"

He regards devotion to parents and older siblings as the most basic form of promoting the interests of others before one's own and teaches that such altruism can be accomplished only by those who have learned self-discipline.

Learning self-restraint involves studying and mastering *li*, the ritual forms and rules of propriety through which one expresses respect for superiors and enacts his role in society in such a way that he himself is worthy of respect and admiration. A concern for propriety should inform everything that one says and does:

***"Look at nothing in defiance of ritual, listen to nothing in defiance of ritual, speak of nothing in defiance of ritual, never stir hand or foot in defiance of ritual."*** (*Lunyu* 12.1)

At the age of fifty, when **Duke Ding of Lu** was on the throne, Confucius' talents were recognized and he was appointed **Minister of Public Works** and then **Minister of Crime**. But Confucius apparently offended members of the Lu nobility who were vying with Duke Ding for power and he was subsequently forced to leave office and go into exile. As in other ancient cultures, exile and suffering are common themes in the lives of the heroes of the early Chinese tradition. In the company of his disciples, Confucius left Lu and traveled in the states of **Wei, Song, Chen, Cai, and Chu**, supposedly looking for a ruler who might employ him but meeting instead with indifference and, occasionally, severe hardship and danger. Several of these episodes, as preserved in the *Records of the Grand Historian*, appear to be little more than prose retellings of songs found in the ancient Chinese *Book of Songs*, Confucius' life is thus rendered a re-enactment of the suffering and alienation of the personas of the poems.

In any case, by most traditional accounts, Confucius returned to Lu in 484 BCE and spent the remainder of his life teaching, putting in order the *Book of Songs*, the *Book of Documents*, and other ancient classics, as well as editing the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, the court chronicle of Lu.

Our best source for understanding Confucius and his thought is the *Analects*. But the *Analects* is a problematic and controversial work, having been compiled in variant versions long after Confucius's death by disciples or the disciples of disciples. Some have argued that, because of the text's inconsistencies and incompatibilities of thought, there is much in the *Analects* that is non-Confucian and should be discarded as a basis for understanding the thought of Confucius. Benjamin Schwartz cautions us against such radical measures.

**Book X** of the *Analects* consists of personal observations of how Confucius comported (behave, agreed) himself as a thinker, teacher, and official. Some have argued that these passages were originally more general prescriptions on how a gentleman should dress and behave that were relabeled as descriptions of Confucius. Traditionally, **Book X** has been regarded as providing an intimate portrait of Confucius and has been read as a biographical sketch. Confucius, at home in his native village, was simple and unassuming in manner, as though he did not trust himself to speak. But when in the ancestral temple or at Court he speaks readily, though always choosing his words with due caution. (*Lunyu* 10.1)

### Quotations from Lao Tzu

"A good traveler has no fixed plans, and is not intent on arriving."

"A leader is best when people barely know he exists, when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say: we did it ourselves."

"A scholar who cherishes the love of comfort is not fit to be deemed a scholar."

"All difficult things have their origin in that which is easy, and great things in that which is small."

"Ambition has one heel nailed in well, though she stretch her fingers to touch the heavens."

"An ant on the move does more than a dozing ox."

"Anticipate the difficult by managing the easy."

"At the center of your being you have the answer; you know who you are and you know what you want."

"Be Content with what you have; rejoice in the way things are. When you realize there is nothing lacking, the whole world belongs to you."

"Be the chief but never the lord."

"Because of a great love, one is courageous."

"Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while loving someone deeply gives you courage."

"By letting it go it all gets done. The world is won by those who let it go. But when you try and try. The world is beyond the winning."

"Do the difficult things while they are easy and do the great things while they are small. A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step."

"Fill your bowl to the brim and it will spill. Keep sharpening your knife and it will blunt."

**Taoism** is one of the great religions of the world. It is an Eastern religion/philosophy with perhaps 225 million followers. The exact number is impossible to estimate because many of its followers also identify with other religions -- often Buddhism and Confucianism.

Taoists were heavily persecuted in China after the Communist victory in 1949, and during the cultural revolution from 1966 to 1976. Some religious tolerance and freedom has been experienced over the last three decades.

Tao (pronounced "Dow") can be roughly translated into English as path, or the way. It is basically indefinable. It has to be experienced. It "refers to a power which envelops, surrounds and flows through all things, living and non-living. The Tao regulates natural processes and nourishes balance in the Universe. It embodies the harmony of opposites (i.e. there would be no love without hate, no light without dark, no male without female.)"

The founder of Taoism is believed by a few religious historians to be Lao-Tzu (604-531 BCE), whose life overlapped that of Confucius (551-479 BCE). However most historians suggest that he is a synthesis of a number of historical figures or that he is a mythical figure. Still others suggest that he lived in the 4th century BCE.

He was searching for a way that would avoid the constant feudal warfare and other conflicts that disrupted society during his lifetime. The result was his book: **Tao-te-Ching** (a.k.a. **Daodejing**). Others believe that he is a mythical character.

Taoism started as a combination of psychology and philosophy but evolved into a religious faith in 440 CE when it was adopted as a state religion. At that time Lao-Tzu became popularly venerated as a deity. Taoism, along with Buddhism and Confucianism, became one of the three great religions of China.

"Daoism and Buddhism in China were influenced by each other as they developed. Buddhism was in fact mistaken by some early Daoists as a new form of Daoism. Some early translations of Buddhist texts used Daoist terms to interpret Buddhist concepts, so the Chinese probably first understood Buddhism in a very Daoist way. During the 3rd and 4th

**Confucius** (551-479 BCE), according to Chinese tradition, was a thinker, political figure, educator, and founder of the *Ru* School of Chinese thought. His teachings, preserved in the *Lunyu* or *Analects*, form the foundation of much of subsequent Chinese speculation on the education and comportment of the ideal man, how such an individual should live his life and interact with others, and the forms of society and government in which he should participate. **Fung Yu-lan**, one of the great 20<sup>th</sup> century authorities on the history of Chinese thought, compares Confucius' influence in Chinese history with that of *Socrates* in the West.

**Confucius' Life:** The sources for Confucius' life are later and do not carefully separate fiction and fact. Thus it is wise to regard much of what is known of him as legendary. Many of the legends surrounding Confucius at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE were included by the Han dynasty court historian, **Sima Qian** (145-c.85 BCE), in his well-known and often-quoted **Records of the Grand Historian**. This collection of tales opens by identifying Confucius' ancestors as members of the **Royal State of Song**. It notes as well that his great grandfather, fleeing the turmoil in his native Song, had moved to Lu, somewhere near the present town of **Qufu** in southeastern Shandong, where the family became impoverished. Confucius is described having endured a poverty-stricken and humiliating youth and been forced, upon reaching manhood, to undertake such petty jobs as accounting and caring for livestock. A tale tells how Confucius was born in answer to his parents' prayers at a sacred hill called **Ni**. Confucius' surname **Kong**, his tabooed given name **Qiu**, and his social name **Zhongni**, all appear connected to the miraculous circumstances of his birth. This casts doubt, then, on Confucius' royal genealogy as found in Sima Qian. Similarly, **Confucius' recorded age at death, 'seventy-two,'** is a 'magic number' with far-reaching significance in early Chinese literature.

We do not know how Confucius himself was educated, but tradition has it that he studied ritual with the Daoist Master **Lao Dan**, music with **Chang Hong**, and the lute with Music-master **Xiang**. In his middle age Confucius is supposed to have gathered about him a group of disciples whom he taught and also to have devoted himself to political matters in Lu. The number of Confucius' disciples has been greatly exaggerated, claiming that there were as many as three thousand of them.

## Lesson 19

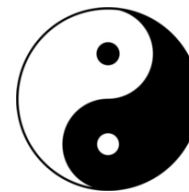
### Confucius (Kong Fu Tzu)



century [CE], there was a Neo-Daoist movement called Xuan Xue, and many Buddhists entered into Xuan Xue discourses, and it was by way of Xuan Xue discourses that Buddhism became integrated into the intellectual mainstream of Chinese thought. On the more popular level, the turbulent times from the beginning of 3rd to the beginning of the 7th century in China caused many to look for hope in immortality and salvation, so Daoism and Buddhism both became increasingly influential on the popular level. Throughout Chinese history, there had been some hostilities between them, but I believe their mutual influence and in mutual inclusivity are more significant.

With the end of the Ch'ing Dynasty in 1911, state support for Taoism ended. Much of the Taoist heritage was destroyed during the next period of warlordism. After the Communist victory in 1949, religious freedom was severely restricted. "The new government put monks to manual labor, confiscated temples, and plundered treasures. Several million monks were reduced to fewer than 50,000 by 1960. During the cultural revolution in China from 1966 to 1976, much of the remaining Taoist heritage was destroyed. Some religious tolerance has been restored under Deng Xiao-ping from 1982 to the present time.

The number of followers of Taoism is impossible to estimate with any accuracy. There are about 225 million followers of Chinese traditional religions of which Taoism appears to be the main influence. Taoism has had a significant impact on North American culture in areas of "acupuncture, herbalism, holistic medicine, meditation and martial arts..."



This is a well known Taoist symbol. "It represents the balance of opposites in the universe. When they are equally present, all is calm. When one is outweighed by the other, there is confusion and disarray."

One source explains that it was derived from astronomical observations which recorded the shadow of the sun throughout a full year. The two swirling

shapes inside the symbol give the impression of change -- the only constant factor in the universe. One tradition states that Yin (the dark side) represents the breath that formed the earth. Yang (the light side) symbolizes the breath that formed the heavens.

One source states: "The most traditional view is that 'yin' represents aspects

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of the feminine: being soft, cool, calm, introspective, and healing... and "yang" the masculine: being hard, hot, energetic, moving, and sometimes aggressive. Another view has the 'yin' representing night and 'yang' day.

Allan Watts, describes the yin and yang as negative and positive energy poles: "The ideograms indicate the sunny and shady sides of a hill....They are associated with the masculine and the feminine, the firm and the yielding, the strong and the weak, the light and the dark, the rising and the falling, heaven and earth, and they are even recognized in such everyday matters as cooking as the spicy and the bland."

However, since nothing in nature is purely black or purely white, the symbol includes a small black spot in the white swirl, and a corresponding white spot in the black swirl.

Ultimately, the 'yin' and 'yang' can symbolize any two polarized forces in nature. Taoists believe that humans often intervene in nature and upset the balance of Yin and Yang.

- Tao is the first-cause of the universe. It is a force that flows through all life.
- "The Tao surrounds everyone and therefore everyone must listen to find enlightenment."
- **A believer's goal is to harmonize themselves with the Tao.**
- Taoism has provided an alternative to the Confucian tradition in China. The two traditions have coexisted in the country, region, and often within the same individual.
- The priesthood views the many gods as manifestations of the one Dao, "which could not be represented as an image or a particular thing." The concept of a personified deity is foreign to them, as is the concept of the creation of the universe. Thus, they do not pray as Christians do; there is no God to hear the prayers or to act upon them. They seek answers to life's problems through inner meditation and outer observation.

- In contrast with the beliefs and practices of the priesthood, most of the laity have "believed that spirits pervaded nature...The gods in heaven acted like and were treated like the officials in the world of men; worshipping the gods was a kind of rehearsal of attitudes toward secular authorities. On the other hand, the demons and ghosts of hell acted like and were treated like the bullies, outlaws, and threatening strangers in the real world; they were bribed by the people and were ritually arrested by the martial forces of the spirit officials."
- **Time is cyclical, not linear as in Western thinking.**
- **Taoists strongly promote health and vitality.**
- Five main organs and orifices of the body correspond to the five parts of the sky: water, fire, wood, metal and earth.
- **Each person must nurture the Ch'i (air, breath) that has been given to them.**
- Development of virtue is one's chief task. The Three Jewels to be sought are compassion, moderation and humility.
- Taoists follow the art of "wu wei," which is to let nature take its course. For example, one should allow a river to flow towards the sea unimpeded; do not erect a dam which would interfere with its natural flow.
- One should plan in advance and consider carefully each action before making it.
- A Taoist is kind to other individuals, in part because such an action tends to be reciprocated.
- Taoists believe that "people are compassionate by nature...left to their own devices [they] will show this compassion without expecting a reward."