MAIN IDEAS

1 **Belief Systems** Legalists believed that the government must control people through strict laws.

2 **Belief Systems** Confucius taught that order would return to China if society was organized around five relationships.

3 **Belief Systems** The followers of Daoism taught that people could find virtue by living in harmony with nature.

TAKING NOTES

Reading Skill: Comparing

Comparing can help you see the similarities and differences among sets of things. In this lesson, look for details about the three Chinese philosophies. Identify points that all three philosophies consider important in a chart similar to the one below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legalism</th>
<th>Confucianism</th>
<th>Daoism</th>
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Symbol: The Way

This Chinese symbol is called Dao. It means “the Way” or “the path.” It is made up of two characters. The red one means “go forward,” and the green one means “head.” Taken together, they mean “the way to understanding.”

CALIFORNIA STANDARDS

6.6.3 Know about the life of Confucius and the fundamental teachings of Confucianism and Daoism.

6.6.4 Identify the political and cultural problems prevalent in the time of Confucius and how he sought to solve them.

6.6 Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the early civilizations of China.
China’s Ancient Philosophies

Build on What You Know  In the last lesson, you learned about the Time of the Warring States in China. During this time, Chinese society experienced much disorder. Warlords and kings fought with each other to gain control of lands. Scholars wondered what it would take to bring peace to the land. They developed three ways of thinking: Legalism, Confucianism, and Daoism. Each was a philosophy, or a study of basic truths and ideas about the universe.

Legalism

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

One philosophy was **Legalism**, or a belief that rulers should use the legal system to force people to obey laws. Those who followed this belief system saw disorder in society. These people decided that a strong government was the answer to China’s problems.

**Strict Laws and Harsh Punishments** Legalists believed that human nature is wicked and that people do good only if they are forced to do it. Legalists believed that the government must pass strict laws to control the way people behaved. They believed that harsh punishments were needed to make people afraid to do wrong.
An Increase in Government Control  Shang Yang, a supporter of Legalism, wanted to force people to report lawbreakers. In fact, he thought people who did not report lawbreakers should be cut in two. Legalists taught that rulers should reward people who do their duty.

Legalists did not want people to complain about the government or question what it did. They favored arresting people who questioned the government or taught different ideas. They also taught that rulers should burn books that contained different philosophies or ideas.

**REVIEW** Why did Legalists want a strong government?

Confucianism

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

Confucius lived from 551 to 479 B.C., in a time of much conflict and unrest in China. He developed ideas to end conflict and have peace in all relationships. According to Confucius, respect for others was absolutely necessary for peace and harmony. Government leaders should set a good example so that people would see what was correct. Confucius’ students collected his ideas and recorded them in a book called the *Analects*. The book tells of Confucius’ teachings, which together form a belief system known as **Confucianism**.

The Five Relationships  Confucius taught a code of proper conduct for people. In Confucianism there were five basic relationships. Each type of relationship had its own duties and its own code of proper conduct. Here are the five relationships.

- father and son
- elder brother and junior brother
- husband and wife
- friend and friend
- ruler and subject

Notice that the relationships fall into two basic categories: proper conduct in the family and proper conduct in society.
Proper Conduct  Confucius believed good conduct and respect began at home. Husbands had to be good to their wives. Wives had to obey every decision of their husbands. Brothers had to be kind to brothers, but a younger brother always had to follow the wishes of his older brother. One of Confucius’ most important teachings was about filial piety, or treating parents with respect. The Primary Source above is about filial piety.

Confucius was also concerned with people’s behavior in society. Authority should be respected. The ruler’s responsibility was to live correctly and treat his subjects with respect. If a ruler led in a right, moral way, a subject’s duty was to obey. If these behaviors were followed, there would be peace in the society.

The Impact of Confucianism  Confucianism set out clear family and social roles. By following these roles, the Chinese people found ways to avoid conflict and live peacefully. Many rulers tried to live up to Confucius’ model for a good ruler. By encouraging education, Confucius laid the groundwork for fair and skilled government officials.

Review  How did Confucius think rulers should behave?
ESSENTIAL QUESTION What did the Daoists believe about society?

The third philosophy is said to have begun with Laozi (low•dzuh). No one knows if he really existed, but some say he lived in the 500s B.C. The name Laozi means “Old Master.” The book of his teachings is the *Dao De Jing* (*The Book of the Way of Virtue*). The teachings of Laozi are called Daoism (DOW•IHZ•uhm). They contrast sharply with Legalism and Confucianism.

**The Way** Daoists believed that a universal force called the Dao, or the Way, guides all things. All creatures, except humans, live in harmony with this force. To relate to nature and each other, each human being had to find an individual way, or Dao. The individual had to learn to live in harmony with nature and with inner feelings.

**Following the Way** Daoists did not argue about good and bad, and they did not try to change things. They accepted things as they were. They did not want to be involved with the government.

Daoists tried to understand nature and live in harmony with its rhythms. This included the idea of yin and yang, or two things that interact with each other. The yin (black) stands for all that is cold, dark, and mysterious. The yang (white) represents all...
that is warm, bright, and light. The forces complement each other. The forces are always changing and evolving. Understanding yin and yang helped a person understand how he or she fits into the world.

In the next lesson you will learn how the three philosophies influenced the way in which the rulers of China controlled their lands.

**Review**

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.

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**Terms & Names**

1. Explain the importance of philosophy Confucianism Daoism Legalism filial piety

**Using Your Notes**

**Comparing** Use your completed graphic to answer the following question:

2. Which of the Chinese philosophies stressed the importance of family? (6.6.3)

**Main Ideas**

3. How did Legalists believe governments should keep peace among people? (6.6)
4. What was the purpose of Confucius’ five relationships? (6.6.4)
5. What did Daoists believe about nature? (6.6.3)

**Critical Thinking**

6. Comparing and Contrasting How did the Legalists’ views of human nature contrast with those of the Confucians? (6.6.3)
7. Making Inferences How might a Daoist respond to Confucius’ teachings? (6.6.3)

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**Activity**

Creating Classroom Rules Choose one of the three Chinese philosophies and create a set of classroom rules that reflect the basic ideas of that philosophy. Share your rules with others, and decide which rules you would like for your classroom. (6.6.3)