

Part III Readings

Passage One

Hundred Schools of Thought

A. The Hundred Schools of Thought were philosophies and schools that flourished from the 6th century to 221 BC, during the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period of ancient China. This period ended with the rise of the imperial Qin Dynasty and the subsequent purge of dissent.

B. As an era of great cultural and intellectual expansion in China, it was fraught with chaos and bloody battles, but it was also known as the Golden Age of Chinese philosophy because a broad range of thoughts and ideas were developed and discussed freely. This phenomenon has been called the Contention of a Hundred Schools of Thought. The thoughts and ideas discussed and refined during this period have profoundly influenced lifestyles and social consciousness up to the present day in East Asian countries and the East Asian diaspora around the world.



C. A traditional source for this period is the *Shih Chi*, or *Records of the Grand Historian* by Sima Qian. The autobiographical section of the *Shih Chi*, the “Taishigong Zixu” (《太史公自序》), refers to the schools of thought described below.

Confucianism

D. Confucianism is the body of thought that arguably had the most enduring effects on Chinese life. Confucius (551–479 BC), or Kongzi (Master Kong), looked back to the early days of the Zhou Dynasty for an ideal socio-political order. He believed that the only effective system of government necessitated prescribed relationships for each individual: “Let the ruler be a ruler and the subject a subject.” Furthermore, he contended that a king must be virtuous in order to rule state properly. To Confucius, the functions of government and social **stratification** were

stratification *n.* (社会等) 阶层化

facts of life to be sustained by ethical values; thus his ideal human was the junzi, which is translated as “gentleman” or “superior person”.

E. Mencius (372–289 BC), or Mengzi, formulated his teachings directly in response to Confucius. Mencius was the codifier and interpreter of a system of relationships based on ethical behavior, and the synthesizer and developer of applied Confucianist thought. The effect



of the combined work of Confucius was to provide traditional Chinese society with a comprehensive framework by which to order virtually every aspect of life.

F. There were many **accretions** to the body of Confucian thought, both immediately and over the millennia, from within and without the Confucian school. Interpretations adapted

to contemporary society allowed for flexibility within Confucianism, while the fundamental system of modeled behavior from ancient texts formed its philosophical core. Diametrically opposed to Mencius, in regards to human nature, was the interpretation of Xunzi (300–237 BC), another Confucian follower. Xunzi preached that man is not innately good; he asserted that goodness is attainable only through training one's desires and conduct.

Legalism

G. The School of Law or Legalism doctrine was formulated by Li Kui, Shang Yang (395–338 BC), Han Feizi (280–233 BC), and Li Si (284–208 BC), who maintained that human nature was incorrigibly selfish; accordingly, the only way to preserve the social order was to impose discipline from above, and to see to a strict enforcement of laws. The Legalists **exalted** the state above all, seeking its prosperity and **martial prowess** over the welfare of the common people. Legalism greatly influenced the philosophical basis for the imperial form of government. During the Han Dynasty, the most practical elements of Confucianism and Legalism were taken to form a sort of synthesis, marking the creation of a new form of government that would remain largely intact until the late 19th century.

accretion *n.* 增加物, 添加物

exalt *v.* 提高

martial *a.* 军事的, 战争的

prowess *n.* 英勇

Taoism

H. Philosophical Taoism or Daoism developed into the second most significant stream of Chinese thought. Its formulation is often attributed to the legendary sage Laozi (Old Master), who is said to predate Confucius, and Zhuangzi (369–286 BC). The focus of Taoism is on the individual within the natural realm rather than the individual within society; accordingly, the goal of life for each individual is seeking to adjust oneself and adapting to the rhythm of the natural (and the supernatural) world, to follow the Way (*dao*) of the universe, and to live in harmony.

Mohism

I. Mohism or Moism was developed by followers of Mozi (also referred to as Mo Di; 468–376 BC). Mohism was seen as a major rival of Confucianism in the period of the Hundred Schools of Thought. Its philosophy rested on the idea of impartial care. Mozi believed that “everyone is equal before heaven”, and that people should seek to imitate heaven by engaging in the practice of collective love. His aim was to re-evaluate behavior, not emotions or attitudes. His **epistemology** can be regarded as **primitive materialist empiricism**; he believed that human cognition ought to be based on one’s perceptions — one’s sensory experiences, such as sight and hearing — instead of imagination or internal logic, elements founded on the human capacity for abstraction.

J. Mozi advocated **frugality**, condemning the Confucian emphasis on ritual and music, which he denounced as **extravagant**. He regarded offensive warfare as wasteful and advocated **pacifism** or at the most, defensive **fortification**.

School of Yin-yang

K. The School of Naturalists or Yin-yang was a philosophy that synthesized the concepts of yin-yang and the Five Elements; Zou Yan (324–250 BC) is considered the founder of this school. His theory attempted to explain the universe in terms of basic forces in nature: the complementary agents of yin (dark, cold, female, negative) and yang (light, hot, male, positive) and the Five Elements or Five Phases (water, fire, wood, metal, and earth). In its early days, this theory was most strongly associated



epistemology *n.* 认识论

primitive materialist empiricism 朴素唯物主义经验论

frugality *n.* 节俭

extravagant *a.* 奢侈的, 浪费的

pacifism *n.* 和平主义, 反战主义

fortification *n.* 设防; 防御工事

with the states of Yan and Qi. In later periods, these epistemological theories came to hold significance in both philosophy and popular belief. This school was absorbed into Taoism's **alchemic** and magical dimensions as well as into the Chinese medical framework.

Logician

L. The School of Names or Logicians grew out of Mohism, with a philosophy that focused on definition and logic. It is said to have parallels with that of the Ancient Greek **sophists** or **dialecticians**. The most notable Logician was Gongsun Longzi.

Passage Two

Ancestor Veneration in China

One of the most ancient practices relating to spirits in China is **ancestor** veneration: the practice of honoring one's ancestors and providing for their welfare in the afterlife. The living hope that their ancestors who have passed on to the next world and have close contact with spiritual forces can help bring them good fortune, wealth, prosperity, and **progeny**. These beliefs, some of which had developed by the 2nd millennium BCE (before common era), have evolved over time and are still practiced today. The practices of ancestor veneration today include offerings made at grave sites and ceremonies held in the home or in a town's family ancestral hall.

Traditionally in many regions of China, when a member of the family dies, ancestor veneration ceremonies are performed as part of the funeral. Personal items are placed in the coffin, and paper effigies of houses and servants are burned so that the smoke ascends and accompanies the deceased into the next world. After the funeral, a home altar is established consisting of a photograph or portrait of the deceased, dishes or cups used for offerings of food and wine, incense, and "spirit money"—symbolic paper bills. The home altar is attended with daily offerings for 49 days, the period in which the soul of the deceased is thought to be undergoing judgment. Then the altar is taken down, and the deceased



alchemic *a.* 炼金术的

sophist *n.* 诡辩者

dialectician *n.* 辩证家

ancestor *n.* 祖先

progeny *n.* 子孙, 后裔

is honored along with the rest of the family's ancestors in the home shrine and the town's ancestral hall. In both of these places, a wooden tablet is inscribed with the ancestor's name and dates of birth and death. It is thought that the spirits of the deceased reside in these tablets, so accordingly, they are offered incense, food, and spirit money. These customs are observed with regional specificities throughout China's many regions. In Huizhou, the offerings of incense are made daily, while food and spirit money are offered twice a month. These practices were interrupted for more than 40 years in mainland China after the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 but have returned to prominence in recent times.

Elaborate ancestor veneration ceremonies are performed at the time of family weddings and funerals, as well as at holidays throughout the year. Here are some examples:

- Lunar New Year
- Tomb-sweeping Day
- Ghost Festival
- 24th day of the 12th month

Passage Three

Confucianism

Confucianism is a set of ethical values based on the studies and teachings of Kongzi, called Master Kong or Kongfuzi and romanized as Confucius. He was a philosopher and teacher who lived during the Spring and Autumn Period (770–476 BC) of the late Zhou Dynasty (1030–221 BC), a time of great political upheaval. Kongzi did not set out to



found a religion but rather to study the moral and social relationships of the Zhou Dynasty and their ancient roots. In so doing, he hoped to establish a society with morality based on **filial piety**, loyalty, and humility. His teachings stress the importance of moral character for an individual within society, as well as the proper relationships among family members, friends, and a government and its citizens. These teachings are often practiced with fervor even today and are connected with practices such as ancestor veneration but do not address issues of gods or deities.

Sometimes called a “civil religion” or “diffused religion”, Confucianism is integrated into every aspect of Chinese culture. The practices of Confucianism include formal offerings

Confucianism *n.* 孔子学说, 儒家思想
filial piety 孝敬, 孝道

and ceremonies as well as the social practices of courtesy and respect, which Kongzi felt were the basis of a strong civilization. **Controversial** during Kongzi's lifetime and repressed during the subsequent dynasty, Confucianism became the state ideology during the reign of the Han Emperor Wu (Han Wudi, 156–87 BC), who founded a school for the study of Confucian texts and instituted a policy that government administrators must be trained in these texts. This served as the basis for the imperial civil service examination system through which officials were selected for positions based on merit rather than family connections. The system evolved over the centuries and was part of imperial government processes until 1905.



After the establishment of Confucianism as the state ideology, the Chinese government supported Confucian teachings across the nation in towns and cities by having Confucian texts inscribed on stone monuments, publishing books on morality, and promoting lectures on Confucian ethics. Government awards were given to citizens who embodied these principles, including people who were filial and widows who were **chaste**. Yin Yu Tang's Huang family documents include such citations:

Authorized by Mr. Ni, sent to Anhui (by the Central Government), who, according to the regulations of the Ministry, after reporting to the President of the Republic, confers this certificate to the wife of Huang Yigu, surnamed Cheng . . . , to express the appreciation of her chastity and filial piety with this banner. Respectfully raised on an auspicious day of the sixth month of the fourth year of the Republic of China.

controversial *a.* 有争议的
chaste *a.* 贞洁的

Passage Four

Daoism

Daoism is a spiritual, philosophical and religious tradition of Chinese origin that emphasizes living in harmony with the Dao. In Daoist philosophy, there is a unified way or path (*dao*) that is the origin of all things in the universe. All **manifestations** of the dao are represented with the union of opposites, or yin and yang. Humans have a place in the natural order of the universe, and they can best fulfill their role through inaction (*wu wei*), or letting nature take its course. Unlike Confucianism, which occupies itself wholly with **virtues** of the human realm, Daoism states that the individual must negotiate his position with regard to the forces of nature rather than the artificial values of society. Followers of the dao are encouraged to develop the “three jewels of the dao” (compassion, simplicity, and patience) and to nurture the three bodily energies (*jing, qi, and shen*) through mediation and exercise such as taijiquan (widely known in the West as tai chi) and qigong.

The founder of Daoism is Laozi (604–531 BC), who is believed to have been an older contemporary of Kongzi, although some scholars posit that he did not exist and that the writings attributed



to him in the *Dao De Jing* were the work of multiple philosophers. The writings of Daoism include the **eponymous** volume *Zhuangzi* (4th century BC) and the *Daozang* (400 BC), a compilation of thousands of Daoist texts.

Beginning in the 2nd century, religious Daoism (*dao jiao*) emerged as a separate tradition from philosophical Daoism (*dao jia*), leading to the establishment of formal Daoist temples, ceremonial practices, and the development of the Daoist **pantheon**. The pantheon grew to encompass not just deities that appear in the Daoist scriptures but also popular deities from Chinese folk religions, as well as some Buddhist deities and nature spirits, all of whom are considered manifestations of the *dao*.

manifestation *n.* 表现

virtue *n.* 美德

eponymous *a.* 齐名的

pantheon *n.* 众神

Passage Five

Neo-Confucianism

Neo-Confucianism is a moral, ethical, and **metaphysical** Chinese philosophy influenced by Confucianism, and originated with Han Yu and Li Ao (772–841) in the Tang Dynasty, and became prominent during the Song and Ming dynasties.

Neo-Confucianism was an attempt to create a more rationalist and secular form of Confucianism by rejecting **superstitious** and mystical elements of Taoism and Buddhism that had influenced Confucianism during and after the Han Dynasty. Unlike the Buddhists and Taoists, who saw metaphysics as a **catalyst** for spiritual development, religious enlightenment, and immortality, the Neo-Confucianists used metaphysics as a guide for developing a rationalist ethical philosophy. Neo-Confucianism is generally categorized into two different schools.

Cheng-Zhu School

Zhu Xi believed that the Tao (Chinese: “道”) of Tian (Chinese: “天”) is expressed in principle or li (Chinese: “理”), but that it is **sheathed** in matter or qi (Chinese: “气”). In this, his system is based on Buddhist systems of the time that divided things into principle (again, li), and function (Chinese: “事”). In the Neo-Confucian formulation, li in itself is pure and almost-perfect, but with the addition of qi, base emotions and conflicts arise. Human nature is originally good, the Neo-Confucians argued (following Mencius), but not pure unless action is taken to purify it. The imperative is then to purify one’s li. However, in contrast to Buddhists and Taoists, neo-Confucians did not believe in an external world unconnected with the world of matter. In addition, Neo-Confucians in general rejected the idea of **reincarnation** and the associated idea of **karma**.



Lu-Wang School

Wang Yangming (Wang Shouren), probably the second most influential Neo-Confucian, came to another conclusion: if li is in all things, and li is in one’s heart-mind, there is no better place to seek than within oneself. His preferred method of doing so was jingzuo (Chinese: “静坐”), a practice that strongly resembles Chan (Zen) meditation. Wang Yangming developed the idea of innate knowing, arguing that every person knows from birth the difference between good and evil. Such knowledge is intuitive and not rational.

Neo-Confucianism 宋明理学

metaphysical *a.* 玄学的, 形而上学的

superstitious *a.* 迷信的

catalyst *n.* 催化剂; (比喻) 触发因素, 促进因素

sheathed *a.* 覆盖的

reincarnation *n.* 投胎转世, 再生

karma *n.* (佛教) 因果报应, 因缘