

Critical-Thinking Questions on Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism

Directions: Carefully read the introductory information on Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. Next, read the quote on each slide your teacher projects. Then, discuss the following critical-thinking questions in your small group and write your answer. Your Presenter should be prepared to share the group's answer with the class.

Introduction to Confucianism: Confucianism is a system of beliefs based on the teachings of Kong Fu Zi (first called Confucius by Europeans), who lived in China from 551 to 479 B.C. Confucius developed a practical philosophy for life and government—which focused on proper conduct, respect for elders, education, and government service—that he felt would create a peaceful, stable society. Confucius based his ideas on ancient Chinese traditions of respect and hard work. The code of behavior he taught revolved around five relationships: 1) ruler and subject, 2) parent and child, 3) husband and wife, 4) sibling and sibling, 5) friend and friend. Confucius believed these relationships would be harmonious if the people involved were loyal, courteous, honest, faithful, and obedient to those in authority. Confucianism taught, for example, that harmony in the family would result from a child showing absolute respect for the parent's authority. Confucius also believed that if the ruler lived according to strong virtues, then the ruler's subjects would follow his or her example and a harmonious, stable society would be possible.

Introduction to Daoism: Daoism is a religion based on the teachings of Laozi, believed to be the first Daoist philosopher, who lived from 606 to 530 B.C. Laozi taught that the goal of life was to achieve oneness with the Dao, a universal force connected to nature that cannot be defined, only experienced and felt. Daoism teaches that humans should see themselves as part of nature and should understand change as part of everything. Daoism stresses that the best way for humans to find peace is by living simply, in harmony with nature. To discover how nature acts, taught Laozi, sit by a river, feel a breeze, and observe a drifting cloud. Notice that nothing in nature strives for fame, power, or knowledge. The river, the breeze, and the stream move without effort because they follow the Dao, the way of nature that guides all things. Daoists do not believe in strong government, but that happiness and peace can be achieved by contemplating (thinking about) nature and leading a balanced life in tune with nature, not by following societal rules and laws. Daoism teaches that harmony comes from balancing the opposite forces of nature, called *yin* and *yang*. Yin's attributes include female, earth, dark, and cold; yang includes male, sky, light, and heat.

Introduction to Buddhism: Buddhism is a religion based on the life and teachings of Siddhartha Gautama, known as the Buddha, which means “enlightened one.” Gautama lived in India from 563 to 483 B.C. Buddhism was brought to China around A.D. 200 by Buddhist monks and traders who traveled to China from India and central Asia along the Silk Road. The Buddha’s teachings are summed up in the Four Noble Truths: 1) all life is suffering and pain; 2) suffering and pain are caused by desire for wealth, pleasure, fame, and power; 3) to end suffering one must overcome desire; 4) to overcome desire, one must follow the Middle Way. The Middle Way stresses virtuous (morally excellent) conduct and compassion for all living things, which leads to calmness and purity of mind. Buddhism preaches reincarnation—the idea that when a person dies, the soul is reborn in a new body. The first goal in life, Buddhists believe, is to attain nirvana, the condition of desiring nothing. When one attains nirvana, he or she breaks the cycle of life and death and no longer is reincarnated into an earthly life of suffering. The final goal for Buddhists is to devote their lives to bringing others to enlightenment.

Three Ways of Thought in China

Name: _____

Period: _____

World History

Date: _____

Directions: During your reading on the three major Chinese religions, record your answers and thoughts.

	Confucianism	Buddhism	Daoism
1. What were the most important parts of this religion?			
2. Who created this religion?			
3. Why would people find this religion appealing?			