

Confucianism vs Legalism

Name: _____

You are comparing the 2 most important philosophies of the Early Imperial Period in China. Both have been important throughout Chinese history and can still be seen in Chinese Culture and Politics.

Legalism	
<p>Human Nature: Legalism rejects the idea that people can be good or bad. Legalism states that people are basically selfish. They will do whatever they want so long as they can get away with it. They cannot be made better. That's just how humans are.</p>	<p>What does legalism say humans are like?</p>
<p>Amoral Philosophy: Legalism is what is called an "amoral" philosophy—not immoral. An amoral philosophy is one that does not recognize morality. To the Legalist, people are not good or bad. They are either obedient or disobedient. Legalism wants people to be obedient. It doesn't care if they are good people or not.</p>	<p>What is an amoral philosophy?</p> <p>What does Legalism want people to be?</p>
<p>Ideal Citizen: to a legalist, the ideal citizen obeys the law and the ruler. It doesn't matter if they are kind or well-adjusted or educated. Therefore, legalism supports anything that makes people obey the law. The ideal citizen is therefore fearful. People who do not fear the government are less likely to be loyal. The ideal citizen is also uneducated because the more education they have, the more likely they are to question the government.</p>	<p>What are the traits of an ideal citizen?</p> <p>Why?</p>
<p>Government Actions: Legalism is a very practical philosophy. Most of legalist philosophy consists of advice for rulers on how to keep their citizens loyal. Number one is strict laws that are brutally enforced. Those who defy the laws should die—preferably in public and horribly. Bury them alive, burn them, leave them to starve, etc. Second, destroy the writings and suppress the point of view of anyone who disagrees with the government. If they continue to defy, make an example of them as well. Keep people stupid so they do not question the government.</p>	<p>What 3 pieces of advice does Legalism give to rulers?</p>

Confucianism	
<p>Human Nature: Confucianism states that humans are essentially good but are quite complex. It states that failures in the system are what make people evil, not people themselves. It is therefore the main drive of Confucianism to create a system in which people are most likely to develop into their most fully-realized good selves.</p>	<p>What are humans like?</p> <p>What makes people evil?</p>

<p>Proper Behavior: To followers of Confucianism, the ultimate goal is Social Harmony—everyone doing their role in the world without strife. Just as the Emperor should do what is proper for an emperor, a peasant should do what is proper for a peasant. There is not a value of equality in Confucianism. People belong to different positions, and will hold many different positions in their life. Being a good person means acting appropriately in all of these relationships: father and son; husband and wife; ruler and subject; friend and friend; etc. Each person must know and accept their role in the social order—be they emperor or peasant.</p>	<p>What is the most important goal of Confucianism?</p> <p>What actions must you do to get there?</p> <p>Analysis: why would this serve to “pacify” people?</p>
<p>Inner Cultivation: Confucianism did encourage loyalty and proper actions but it also encouraged the cultivation of the self. It encouraged wisdom, humanity, honesty, and sincerity. None of those things can exist without self-reflection and growth. So Confucianists must always be looking to grow and improve. Confucianism encouraged people to be thoughtful and to identify when things needed to be improved. It required them to question leadership and to refuse to serve corrupt officials—just to do so in the proper manner.</p>	<p>Besides loyalty, what does Confucianism say good people should be or do?</p> <p>How might this conflict with proper behavior?</p>
<p>Government Actions: Confucianism is a much broader philosophy than Legalism but it still did have advice for rulers. Number one, a government should educate its people. Only through education can people cultivate themselves and their society. 2) A government should take care of its people like a father takes care of the family. 3) A government should be self-reflective just as a person should and should always be looking to improve itself.</p>	<p>What three things does Confucianism say governments should do?</p>

	Legalism	Confucianism
What are people like?		
What are the desired traits of a person?		
How should a government act?		