



T 11. Ancient China :Dissident Philosophies

New philosophical thinking

- **Spring and Autumn period** (722-481 BCE) and the **Warring States period** (403-221 BCE) during Eastern Zhou Dynasty
- Intense competition and fighting among the warlords for supremacy
- Further weakened the Zhou Dynasty

New Philosophical Thinking (contd.)

- Development of agriculture, politics and society despite political unrest
- Alliance of **scholars** and the **state** – scholars became state officials
- New ideas on **human nature** and **role of government** presented by **Hundred Masters (Hundred Schools of Thought)**
- Appearance of great philosophers like **Confucius, Laozi, Xunzi, Han Fei** and others

Confucius (K'ung Fu-tzu)- 551-479 BCE



Chinese teacher, editor, politician, and philosopher

Confucius (Contd.)

- *The Analects* – compilation of the teachings of Confucius made by his disciples
- A complex system of moral, social, political, and religious thoughts
- Proposed a moral framework to create an enlightened society through: a) correct performance of **ritual**; b) responsibility and loyalty to the **family** and c) perfection of moral character to become a ‘**superior man**’

Confucius (Contd.)

- **Five** vital human relationships between: husband and wife, parent and child, elder and younger, ruler and subject, friend and friend
- No coercion or punishment needed in an enlightened society of '**superior men**'
- **Education** rather than birth makes a man capable of ruling
- Sought a society that guaranteed **peace** and **justice**
- Lasting influence of Confucius in China

Some sayings of Confucius

- Knowing what he knows and knowing what he doesn't know, is characteristic of the person who knows
- Making a mistake and not correcting it, is making another mistake
- The superior man blames himself; the inferior man blames others
- What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others

Some sayings of Confucius (Contd.)

- I teach whoever wants to learn with no regard to his birth";
- "The best educated men should serve the government";
- Those who work with their minds should rule and those who work with their hands should be ruled.

Laozi (Laotsi/Laotsa) 6th–5th century BCE



Chinese philosopher and writer

Laozi (contd.)

- Laozi – founder of *Daoism* (*Taoism* – “the Way”)
- The best way to live is to follow the natural order of things - “Doing nothing” – **non-interference** – spontaneity
- **Accepting** the world as it is, without trying to change it - living a simple and balanced life in harmony with nature

Laozi (contd.)

- **Least governance** is the best governance
- Society should not try to impose rules and laws
- Life and death are different stages of existence

Legalism

- Propagated by **Xunzi** (Shun-dji) and **Han Fai**
- People are evil by nature
- Need for moral education and state control
- Emphasized the need for a strong bureaucracy and legal system



Study questions

- What do the “Spring and Autumn” and “Warring States” periods mean?
- Who were the “Scholar-Officials”?
- Who were the “Hundred Masters”?
- What were the five vital human relationships according to Confucius?
- How did Confucius define the “Superior Man”?
- How did Laozi explain the virtues of “Doing Nothing”?
- What were the basic features of Legalism?

Thank You