

Chapter 5: Ancient China to 221 B.C.E.: 5-4b Moism
Book Title: World Civilizations
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5-4b Moism

For over two centuries, the philosophy taught by Mozi (moh-tsoh; c. 470–390 B.C.E.) was a serious rival to the other three major schools of Chinese thought. Mozi, after whom this school was named, propounded a doctrine of universal love as a solution to the chaos of the Warring States period. Mozi intended this as an intellectual repudiation of Confucius's ideas about the primacy of family relations—ideas that he thought undermined the ideal of social equality. Mozi instead expounded a doctrine that closely resembled the Judeo-Christian golden rule: that people should treat one another as they themselves wished to be treated. As a practical consequence, his followers developed a military science that emphasized the use of defensive tactics as a way of ending chronic warfare. For several centuries, such tactics were in high demand among smaller, weaker states that were threatened by more powerful neighbors, but once the First Qin ruler, Shi Huangdi, restored order and established the first empire, they and Moist philosophy quickly lost favor.

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