

Asian Philosophy Study Questions -- Lectures 10

Laozi

Who is Laozi? What is the legend of the writing of the *Daodejing*?

What is the basic theme of Daoist thought?

Why do Daoists recommend being like an uncarved block?

How does this recommendation differ from Confucius's recommendations?

Why do Daoists disagree with Confucius's recommendations?

According to Daoists, what is the cause of social disorder?

What is the basic principle of Daoism? Why is rigidity self-defeating?

What is the connection between flexibility and qi (vital energy)?

Why does being flexible eliminate the need for laws, rules, and rituals?

What are yin and yang? What are some examples of each?

What is the dao? How does the dao account for the interaction between yin and yang?

What does it mean to say that dao is wu? What is wu (openness)? What are some examples of wu? What is the relation between wu and being?

What is the Daoist recommendation on how to live a sagely (wise, well-lived) life?

What is wu-wei? What does it mean to say that one should enact wu-wei? What are some examples of actions that do not enact wu-wei? of actions that do?

What happens when our actions attain wu-wei? Why is it impossible to act mistakenly when we enact wu-wei?

Explain the Daoist recommendation to act without acting.

What is it to be ziran? How does being ziran allow one to act without acting?

How does one go about being ziran?

What is the connection between ziran and creativity?

Why, according to Daoists, is being ziran the basis of de? How do the Daoist and Confucian understandings of de differ?

In what sense does Daoism stress passivity and receptivity? In what sense does Confucianism stress activity and responsibility?

What are some differences between the ideal Confucian ruler and the ideal Daoist ruler?

What is the Daoist criticism of the Confucian ideal?

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Zhuangzi

Who is Zhuangzi?

What are some ways in which the *Zhuangzi* differs from the *Daodejing*?

What is the guiding thesis about knowledge in the *Zhuangzi*?

What is perspectivalism?

Why is trying to attain knowledge of the dao (or any other knowledge) a waste of time?

Explain the Argument from the Relativity of Distinctions in favor of perspectivalism.

Explain the Argument from Many Appearances in favor of perspectivalism.

What is Zhuangzi's recommendation for what we should do in order to not distort reality?

Explain the Argument from Skepticism in favor of perspectivalism.

What is Zhuangzi's attitude toward arguing with others?

What is Zhuangzi's attitude toward education and rules of conduct? What does he recommend as an alternative (and why)? How does one carry out his recommendation?

According to Zhuangzi, what is a "true person"?

Why does following the dao require avoiding the spotlight?

What is the main Daoist critique of Confucianism?

What is the main Confucian critique of Daoism?