



Neo-Confucian Ideas

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Neo-Confucian Ideas

- **Main Idea (Objective):**



- The Tang Dynasty returned to the ideas of **Confucius** and created a new class of scholar officials.

Neo-Confucian Ideas

- **Lecture Focus (Essential Question):**



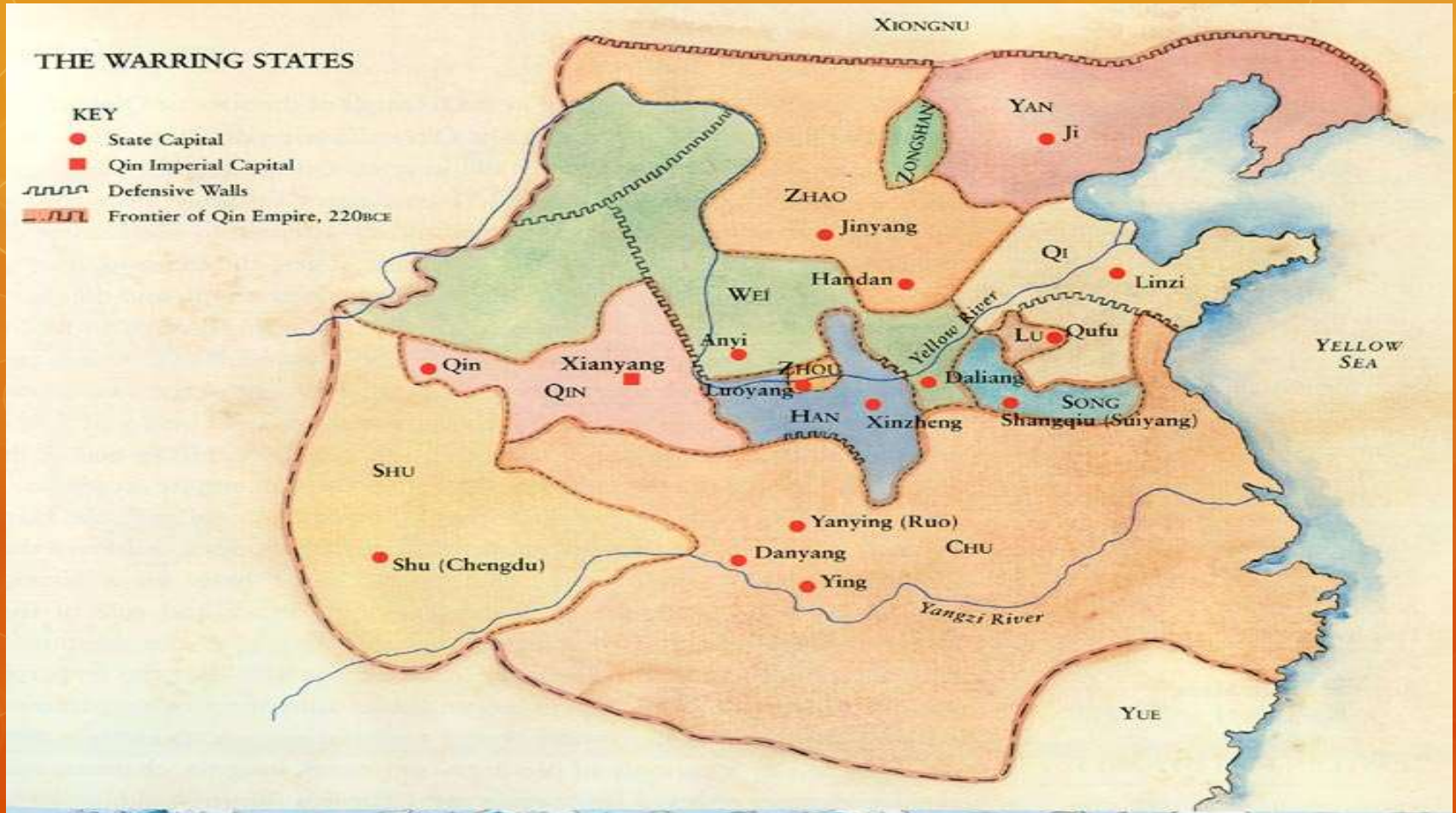
- Have you ever seen someone get a reward that he or she did not earn? Lets take a look at how China's rulers tried to avoid this problem when hiring government officials.

Neo-Confucian Ideas



- Before we talk about Neo Confucian ideas we should revisit who **Confucius** was and what exactly his teachings taught China.

Who was Confucius?



○ Do you remember **The Warring States?** (403 – 221 B.C.E)

Who was Confucius?

- Most people concentrated on simply surviving these war torn times in Chinese history.



- A few however, wanted to identify principles that would strengthen social order.

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Who was Confucius?

- The first Chinese thinker who addressed the problem of political and social order in a straightforward manner was **Kong Fuzi** “**Master Philosopher Kong**” or simply **Confucius**.

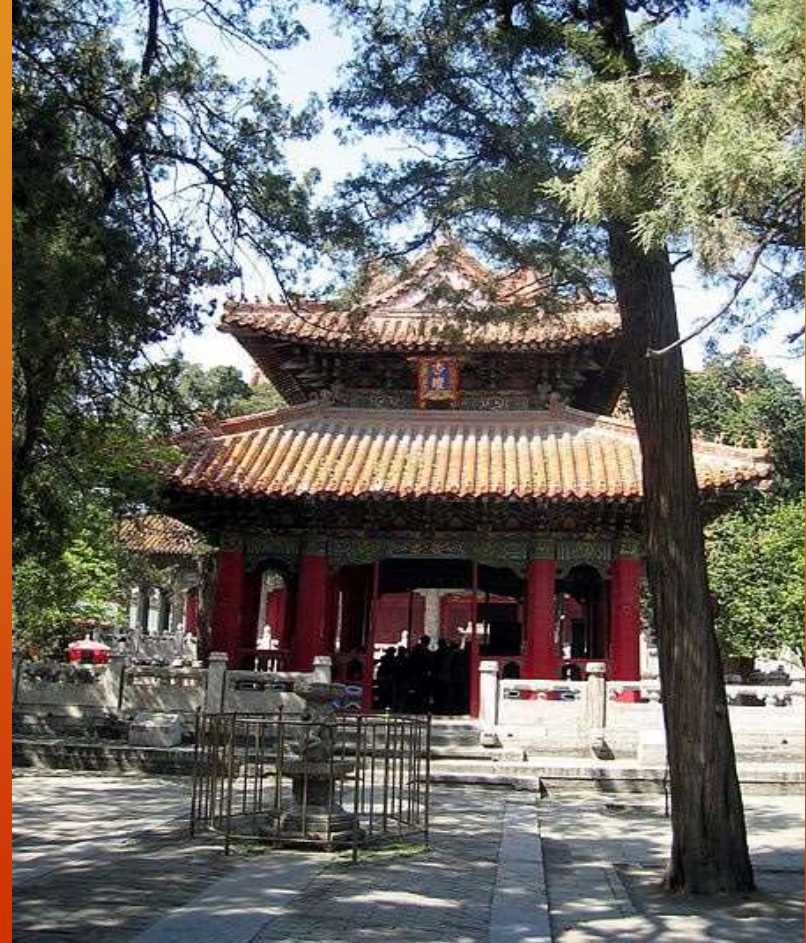


Who was Confucius?

- Confucius was born in 551 B.C.E. in **Qufu** (Ch'ü-fu) which was part of the Lu state under the Zhou Dynasty

- He died in 484 B.C.E. in the same village.

- Today the village has about 60,000 inhabitants.



Who was Confucius?



- **The Confucius Temple** in Qufu is one of the three largest ancient architectural complexes in China.

Who was Confucius?



- For over 2,000 years, this temple has gradually grown and serves as the blueprint for all other Confucian temples.

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Who was Confucius?



Who was Confucius?



○ Confucian grave in Qufu.

Who was Confucius?

- Confucius was from an aristocratic family and for many years perused an position on the Lu Court.



- Confucius was an extremely strong willed individual and rarely got along with others, insisting on observing his beliefs and principles which frequently clashed with state policy.

Who was Confucius?

- As a result Confucius was unable to obtain a high position at the Lu court.



- Confucius then hunted for employment with other courts in northern China but after a decades of travel found none willing to accept his vices.

Who was Confucius?

- Although Confucius never realized his ambition, he left an enduring mark on Chinese society through his work as an educator and political advisor.



- He attracted numerous disciples who aspired to political careers and extended his teachings throughout China.

Who was Confucius?

- His disciples compiled the masters sayings and teachings in a book known as the "The Analects", a work that has profoundly influenced Chinese political and cultural traditions to this day.



- Basically its a collection of moral and ethical principles voiced by Confucius in conversations with his students

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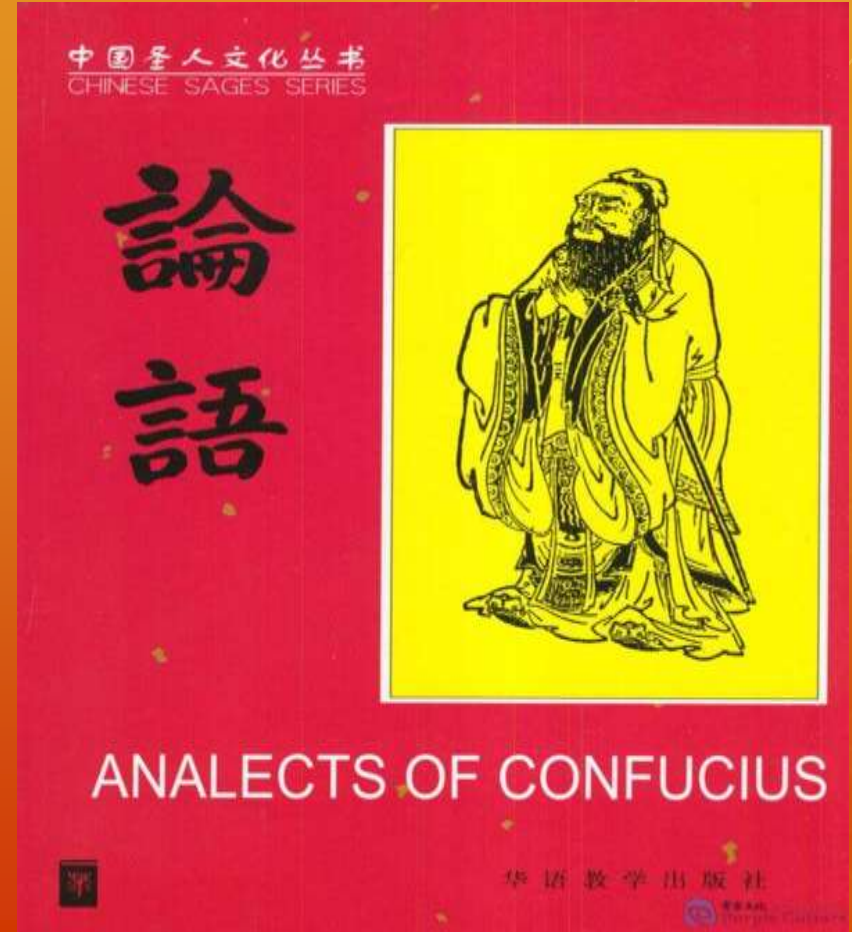
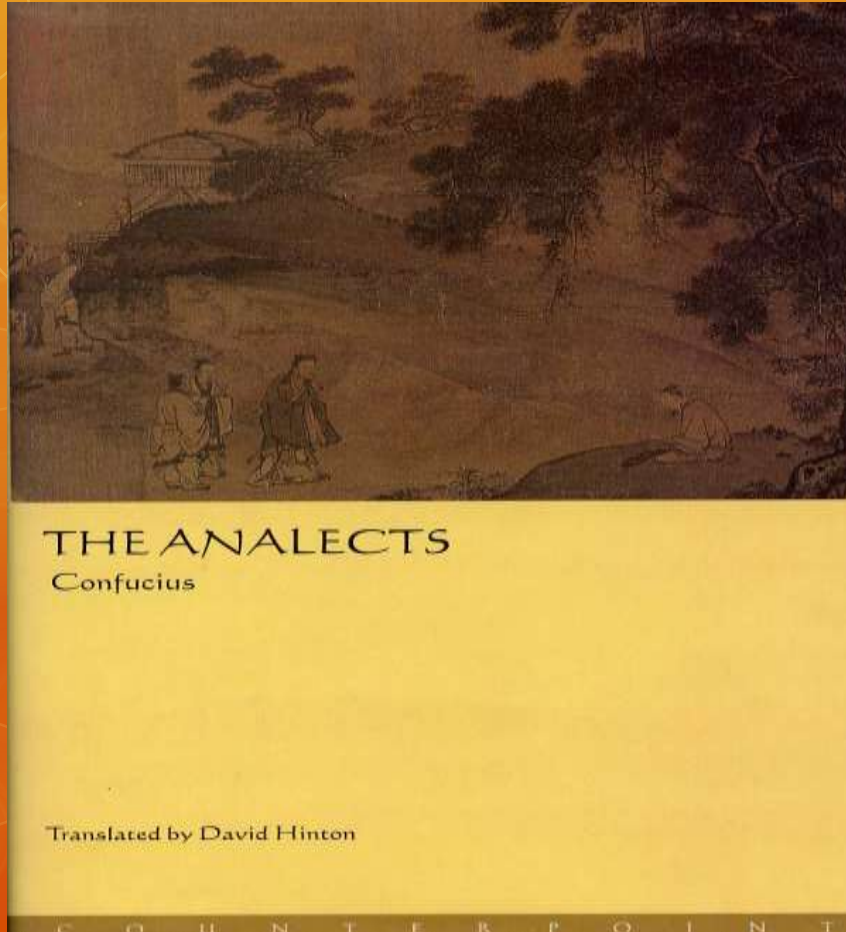
Who was Confucius?

- The Analects was produced after Confucius's death in 484 B.C.E. by his followers who simply wanted to further his teachings.



- The collection highly influenced educational, social, and cultural thought in China and through out other parts of Asia.

Who was Confucius?



- The book has been translated into every language imaginable and can be purchased today at your local book store...

Who was Confucius?



- Confucius did not address philosophical or religious questions but rather focused instead on the proper human relationships.

Who was Confucius?



- Confucius believed that the best way to promote good government was to fill official positions with well educated individuals.

Who was Confucius?

- Thus Confucius concentrated around the formation of what he called the **Junzi** or “**Superior individuals**”.



- Essentially **Junzi** would not allow personal interest to influence their judgments and cloud their abilities in office.

Who was Confucius?



- For Confucius ideal government officials needed more than an advanced education, they needed a strong sense of moral honesty and a ability to deliver wise and fair judgments.

Who was Confucius?

- One of these judgments was called **Ren**, which meant an attitude of kindness and a sense of modesty.
- Confucius explained that individuals possessing **Ren** were courteous, respectful, diligent and loyal...characteristics desperately needed in government officials.



Who was Confucius?

- Another quality of central importance was **Li**, a sense of politeness, which called for individuals to behave appropriately.



- They should treat all other beings with courtesy, while showing special respect to elders or superiors.

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Who was Confucius?



- The third and arguably the most important quality that Confucius emphasized was **Xiao**, which obliged children to respect their parents and other family elders, look after their welfare, to support them in old age, and to carry on their memory in death

Who was Confucius?

- Confucius believed only through these enlightened, morally strong individuals, lied the only hope for the restoration for political and social order in China.



- He truly believed that through the creation of **Junzi** China would be brought back to a state of stability.

Neo-Confucian Ideas

- **Questions:**

- **1)** What did Confucius want to do before he became a teacher?

- **2)** What was the name of the book that Confucius' students wrote after his death?

- **3)** What does the term **Junzi** mean?

Neo-Confucian Ideas

- **Questions:**
- **1) What did Confucius want to do before he became a teacher?**
 - **A judge in the Lu court**
- **2) What was the name of the book that Confucius' students wrote after his death?**
 - **The Analects**
- **3) What does the term **Junzi** mean?**
 - **Superior individuals**

Neo-Confucian Ideas



- Essentially Confucius and his followers believed that a good government depended on having wise leaders.

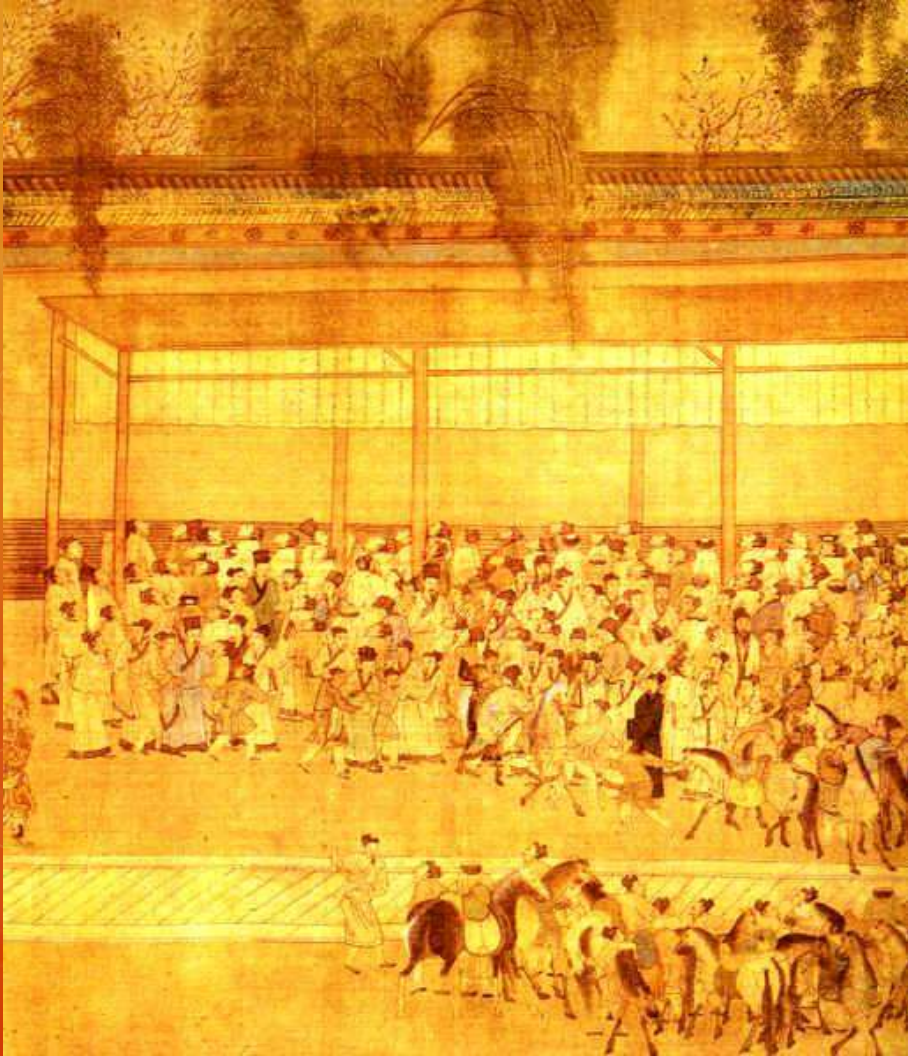
Neo-Confucian Ideas

- The **civil service examinations** introduced by the Han Dynasty rulers were a product of Confucian ideas...to help choose the best possible leaders



- **Civil Service Exams** - are tests given to those who want to become a civil servant, a term often used to refer to a professional job in a government.

Neo-Confucian Ideas



- The idea behind these civil service exams was to recruit talented government officials.

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Neo-Confucian Ideas

- After the fall of the Han Dynasty, no national government in China used civil service examinations.



- Confucianism lost much support and Buddhism with its positive spiritual message won many followers.

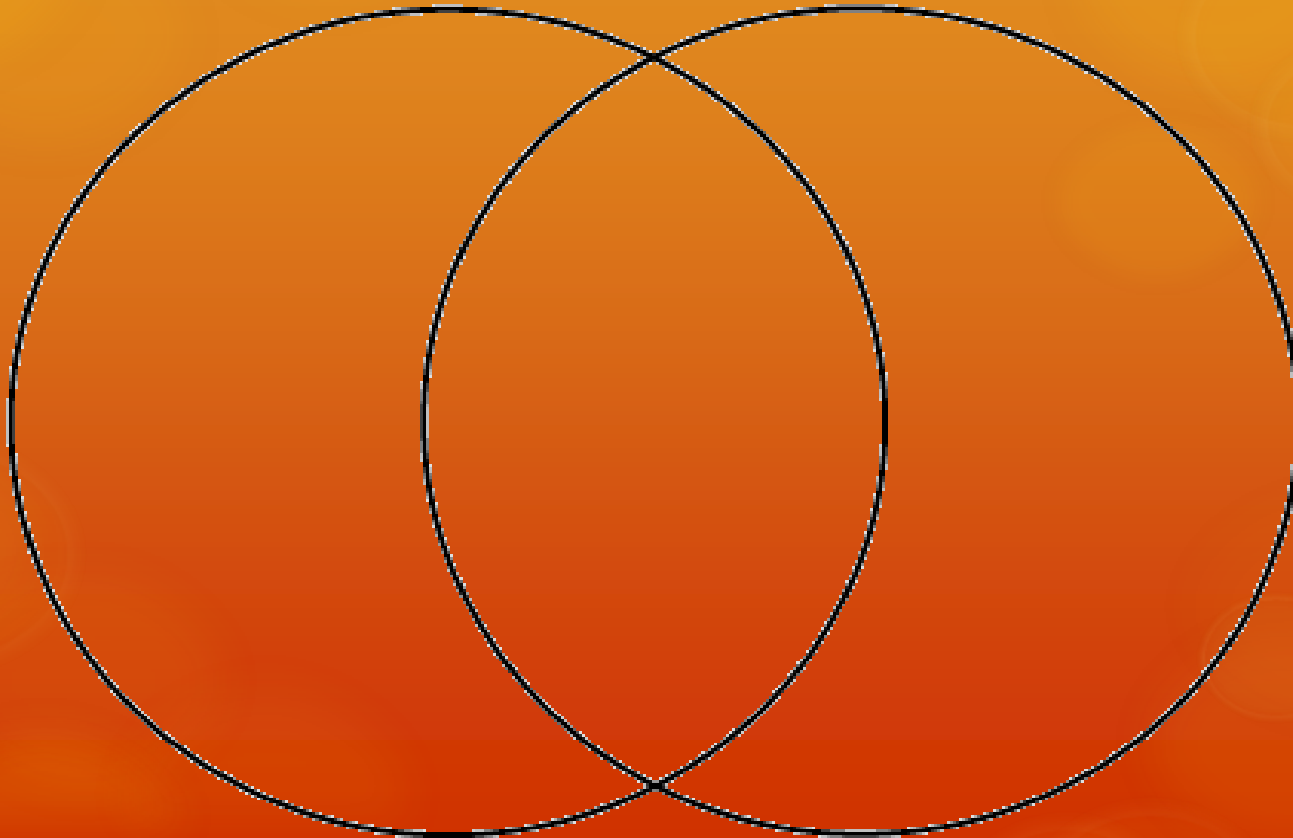
Neo-Confucian Ideas



- The Tang Dynasty, however, began to eliminate Buddhism once it began to grow in popularity, in favor of Confucianism.

Neo-Confucian Ideas

- **Analysis:** Compare and contrast the differences and similarities between **Confucianism** and **Buddhism** using a **Venn Diagram**.



The Way it Was: **Civil Service Exams**



- Lets take a closer look at the Chinese Civil Service Examinations and see how they compare to some of the exams today!!!

The Way it Was: Civil Service Exams

- Focus on Everyday Life:



- Proficiency tests and final exams today take a lot of preparation, but they are not as difficult as China's civil service examinations given during the Tang Dynasty.

The Way it Was: Civil Service Exams

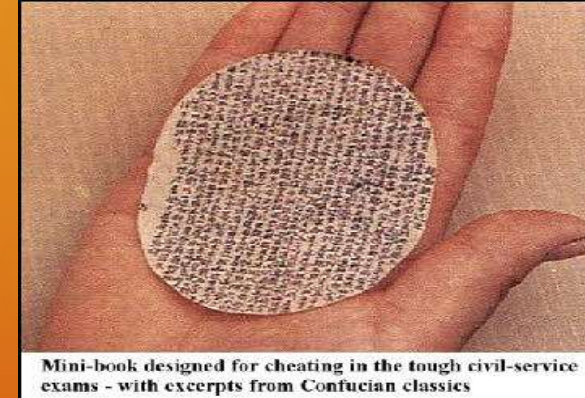
- Men of almost all ranks tried to pass the exams so they could hold government jobs and basically become wealthy.



- Thousands attempted the tests, but only a few hundred people qualified for the important positions.

The Way it Was: **Civil Service Exams**

- Chinese boys began preparing for the exams in primary (elementary) school.



- After many years of learning to read and write more than 400,000 words and sayings, the boys...now men in their twenties or early thirties would take the first of three level exams.

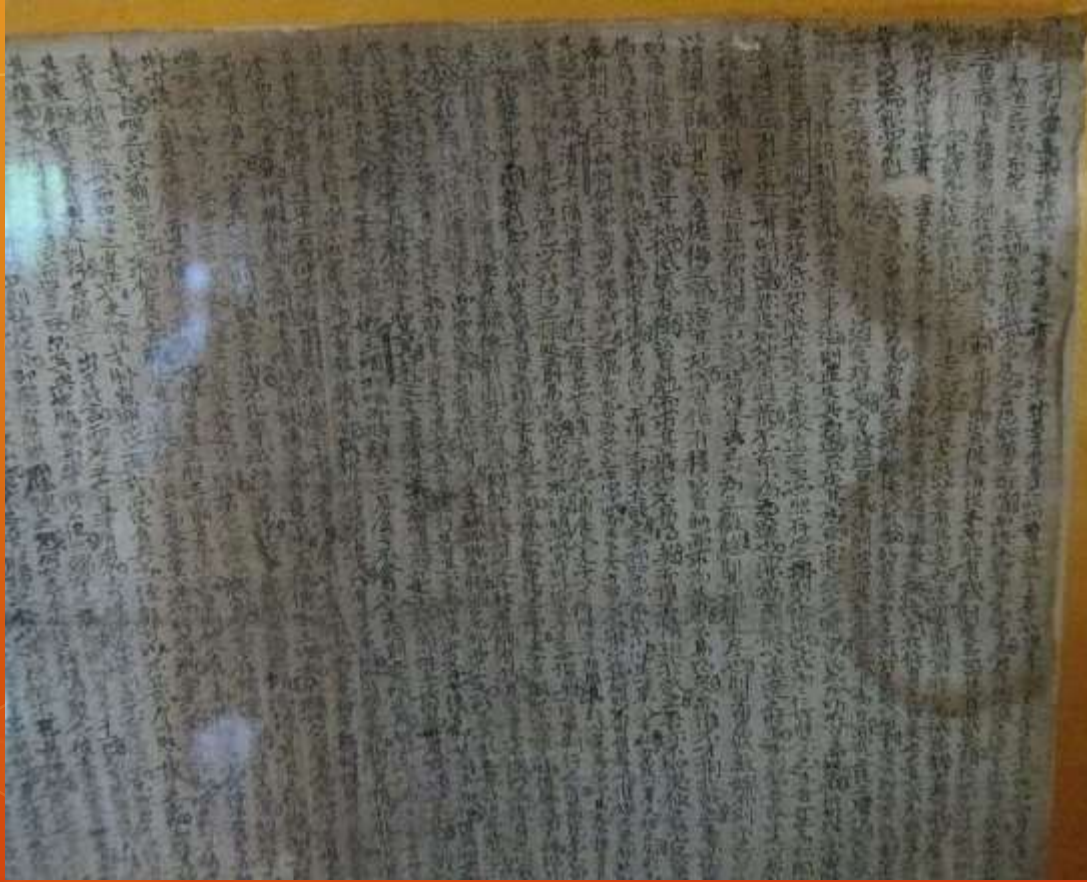
The Way it Was: **Civil Service Exams**

- Students traveled to huge testing sites to take the tests.



- Food and beds were not provided, so they had to bring their own supplies. (**Examination hall with 7500 cells**)

The Way it Was: **Civil Service Exams**



- Many men became sick or insane because of the stress of the tests and the poor conditions under which they were tested. ("**Cribbing Garment**" answers to questions would be worn as underwear into the examination)

The Way it Was: **Civil Service Exams**

- **Connecting to the Past Questions:**
- **1)** How old were the Chinese boys / men when they took the Civil Service Exams?
- **2)** Why do you think taking the test was so stressful for these men?

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The Way it Was: **Civil Service Exams**

- **Connecting to the Past Questions:**

- **1) How old were the Chinese when they took the Civil Service Exams?**

 - **Twenties or early thirties**

- **2) Why do you think taking the test was so stressful for these men?**

 - **Answers will vary ... I think maybe they knew their future career, wealth and status depended on it.**

What is Neo-Confucianism?

- The Tang Dynasty gave its support to a new kind of Confucianism called **Neo-Confucianism**.
- The “**Neo**” in Neo-Confucianism stands for “**new**”...so essentially Neo-Confucianism means...New-Confucianism.



What is Neo-Confucianism?

- This new variation of Confucianism was created, in part, to reduce Buddhism's popularity.



- It taught that life in this world was just as important as the afterlife and that followers were expected to take part in "Life" and help others.

What is Neo-Confucianism?

- Although it criticized Buddhist ideas, this new form of Confucianism also incorporated some Buddhist and Daoist beliefs.



- For many Chinese, Confucianism became more than just a system of rules for being good...it became a religion with beliefs about the spiritual world.

What is Neo-Confucianism?



- Confucian thinkers taught that if people were to follow Confucius' teachings, they would find **peace of mind and live in harmony with nature**...both of which are Buddhist and Daoist philosophies.

What is Neo-Confucianism?

- The Song Dynasty, which followed the Tang Dynasty, also supported Neo-Confucianism.



- The Song even adopted it as their official philosophy, or belief system, where it profoundly influenced government officials and policies.

What is Neo-Confucianism?

- **Questions:**

- **1)** What was this new kind of Confucianism called?

- **2)** Why was this new form of Confucianism created by the Tang Dynasty?

- **3)** What other two religions had an influence on this new form of Confucianism?

What is Neo-Confucianism?

- **Questions:**

- **1)** What was this new kind of Confucianism called?

- **Neo-Confucianism**

- **2)** Why was this new form of Confucianism created by the Tang Dynasty?

- **To reduce Buddhism's popularity**

- **3)** What other two religions had an influence on this new form of Confucianism?

- **Buddhism and Daoism**

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Primary Source: Defending Confucianism



○ Primary Source Time!!!!!!

Primary Source: Defending Confucianism

- **Han Yu** became known as the father of neo-Confucianism, but he is also a well known writer and poet.
- He stood for strong central authority in politics and trust in cultural matters.
- He rejected the ornate and flowery style of his time in favor of a simpler, more direct one.



Primary Source: Defending Confucianism



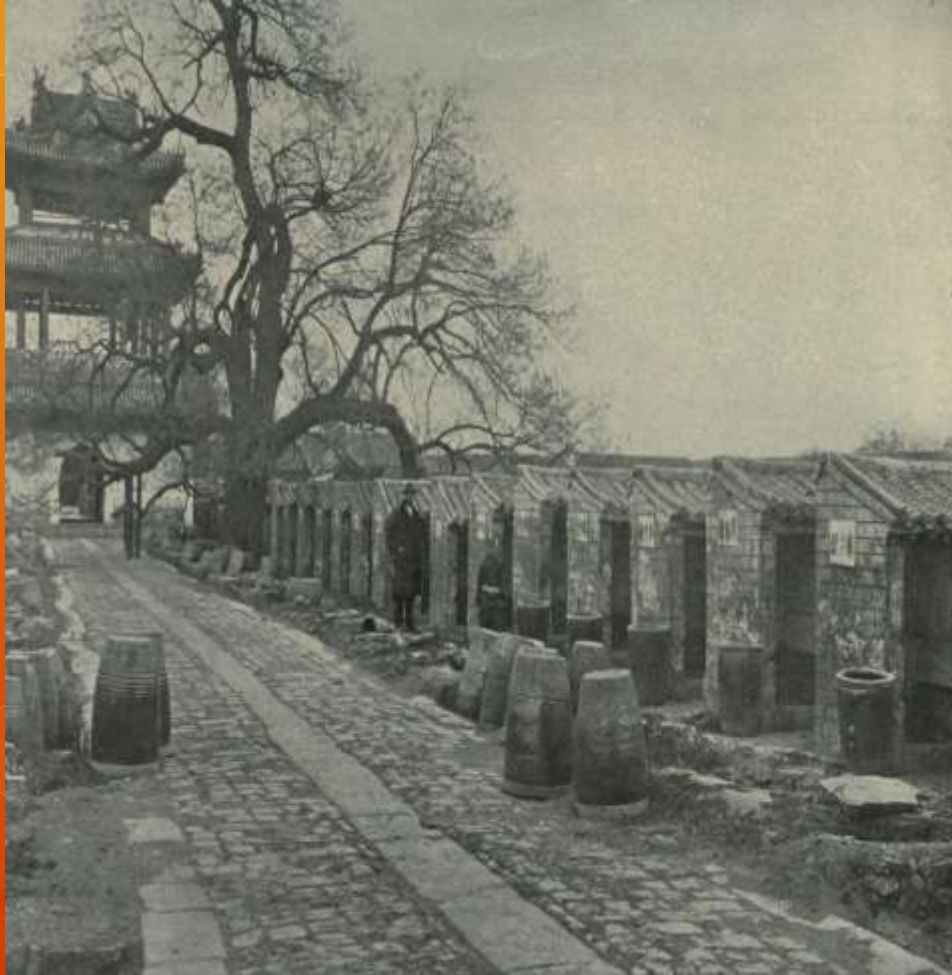
- His style was so unusual that he initially failed his civil service examinations because the graders hated his simplicity.

Primary Source: Defending Confucianism

- Han Yu encouraged the Chinese people to remain faithful to Confucianism, stating in his book "**An Inquiry on The Way**"...
- *"What were the teachings of our ancient kings? Universal love is called humanity. To practice this in the proper manner is called righteousness. To proceed according to these is called the Way... They offered sacrifices to Heaven and the gods came to receive them... What way is this? I say: This is not what I call the Way, and not what the Daoists and Buddhist called the Way..."*
- **What do you think Han Yu is trying to state in this passage?**



Scholar-Officials



- Neo-Confucianism also became a way to strengthen the government.
- Both the Tang and the Song Dynasties used civil service examinations to hire officials.
- (**Beijing Examination Hall**)

Scholar-Officials

- In doing so they were basing their government on a **merit system** (hiring employees based on their abilities) .



- Under the **merit system**, people are accepted for what they can do and not on their personal wealth or personal connections.

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Scholar-Officials

- The examinations tested job seekers on their knowledge of Confucian writings.



- To pass, it was necessary to write with style as well as understanding.

Scholar-Officials

- The tests were supposed to be fair, but only men were allowed to take the exams.



- Also, only rich people had the finances that was needed to help their sons prepare for the examinations. (**Paper and Coin currency**)

Scholar-Officials

- Passing the tests was a very difficult task, however, parents did all they could to prepare their sons.



- At the age of four, boys started learning to write the characters of the Chinese language.

Scholar-Officials

- Later, students had to memorize all of Confucius's writings.



- If a student recited passages poorly, he could expect to be hit by the teacher!

Scholar-Officials

- After many years of study, the boys took their examinations and despite all of the preparations, only one in five passed.



- Those who failed usually found jobs helping officials or teaching others, however, they would never be given a government position.

Scholar-Officials

- Over the years, the examinations system created a new wealthy class in China.
- This group was made up of **scholar-officials**.



Scholar-Officials

- Strict rules set the scholar-officials apart from society.
- They were prohibited from doing physical work and were primarily looked at as sophisticated leaders.
- In fact students preparing for the exams were taught never to use their hands except for painting and writing.



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Scholar-Officials

- **Questions:**

- **1)** What is the merit system?

- **2)** What types of people were able to take the civil service examinations?

- **3)** What would students have to do in order to prepare for the exams?

Scholar-Officials

- **Questions:**

- **1) What is the merit system?**

- **Hiring employees based on their abilities**

- **2) What types of people were able to take the civil service examinations?**

- **Boys / Men who came from rich families**

- **3) What would students have to do in order to prepare for the exams?**

- **Learn how to write the Chinese language and memorize Confucius's teachings**

Scholar-Officials

- **Reading Check:**
- Complete the following question in a three to four sentence open ended response.
- **How did Confucianism change China? Was it for better or worse?**

Scholar-Officials

- **Drawing Conclusions:**
- Complete the following question in a one paragraph open ended response.
- **Do you think China's civil service system truly brought the most talented individuals into the government? How would you have made the system fairer?**

Scholar-Officials

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