

# Confucius: The Most Famous Teacher in China

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Confucius was a famous teacher, politician, and philosopher who lived in China over 2,600 years ago. During his lifetime, he planted the seeds for China's transformation by teaching thousands of people, including those without money or power. Today, he is considered to be one of the world's greatest teachers.

Historians believe that Confucius was born in 551 B.C.E. during China's "Spring and Autumn Period" (771 - 476 B.C.E.). This period was a dangerous time in China's history. During this period, many rulers and warlords were fighting across the country. Because of all the fighting, life was difficult for the poor. They worked hard for their rulers and received little money in return.

Confucius' father was a great warrior during this time. However, his father died when Confucius was only three years old. Because of this, he grew up in poverty with only his mother to support him.

As he grew up, Confucius worked to help his mother earn extra money. When he wasn't working, he would read. His favorite thing to do was learn. His mother saw this and did her best to help him learn. Eventually, wealthy families noticed how smart he was and offered him jobs counting their money and keeping track of their crops.

Confucius did this until he was 30 years old, but he always wanted to do more. He didn't like the way rulers treated their subjects. He began reading again. He wanted to find a way to help people who were less fortunate than he was. Through many hours of studying, he founded the philosophy that would become known as "Confucianism." Confucianism states that by educating yourself, loving your family, and respecting tradition you could become a better person. Confucius believed a person could achieve these things by practicing self-discipline. In teaching self-discipline, he encouraged his followers to control their actions and emotions so that they could focus on improving themselves and the lives of the people around them. He believed that these teachings would stop war, bring peace, and save China.

For the rest of his life, Confucius traveled and taught the people of China about self-discipline and the importance of education. He even opened China's first school that taught both the poor and the wealthy as equals. Although he became very famous among China's lower classes, the rulers of China never accepted his teachings. Self-discipline and education didn't sound as good to them as power and wealth.

In 479 B.C.E, Confucius died at the age of 72. When he died, he believed that he had not saved China. Little did he know, just 200 years later all of China would accept his teachings.

Despite living in a time dominated by war and poverty, Confucius promoted peace, encouraged equality, and educated thousands of people across the country. His loyal students continued to travel China long after his death teaching all classes of people.

Eventually, his philosophy of self-discipline helped China unite under one ruler and finally find peace. Today, Confucius is celebrated all over the world for his philosophy of education, equality, and peace over war, money, and injustice.

**Questions**

1. Why did Confucius want to help people who were less fortunate than him?
2. What does *dominated* mean here: “Despite living in a time dominated by war and poverty”?
3. What is self-discipline?
4. What do you think of Confucius’ teachings?