Confucianism
• Focuses on Human conduct,
• Not belief in personal God

• Emphasizes:

• 1. The value of rational thought
• 2. Role of morals in social relations
• 3. The individual soul being connected to the transcendent
• 4. Does not believe in Reincarnation
Confucius: 551-479 BC - “Kung Fu-tzu”

- Lived in N.E. China
- Traveled for 50 years
- Became Police Commissioner for 1 year
The Spread of Confucianism by 200 B.C.
Philosophy and/or Religion?

- Does not teach that God (s) should be worshipped
- Does not contemplate the possibility of life after death
- Does have rituals
- Rationalist religion
Origin of Confucianism

- Difficulty to determine
- Pre-Confucianism: 4,000 years ago during Shang Period
- Archeological discoveries show the practice of
- Sacrifice / Divination / Ancestral Rituals
China’s Golden Age of Philosophy began in the 6th BC

• Produced a rationalist intellectual tradition

• Focused on Social order and harmony

• Human destiny was associated with the activities of human beings no ghosts and spirits
• The ancient Chinese system of religious traditions was not discarded, but its influence receded

• Spiritual beings were now thought to embody virtue instead of supernatural power
Confucian Thought

• Great merit of Confucianism is that it discovers the ultimate in the relative

• It finds ultimate meaning in the moral character of human relationships

• Human relationships and how we treat each other became of supreme value
Confucian Thought

• Doctrine of Reciprocity

• Doctrine of Neighborliness

• Negative Golden Rule

• Anyone can be a Gentlemen
Confucian Thought

• Established China’s first school of private education

• Devoted to the art of government

• Developing the moral sensibilities of students
Confucianism Texts:

• *Analects* (Collections of saying of Confucius)
子曰，学而时习之不亦说乎？有朋自远方来，不亦乐乎？人不知而不愠，不亦君子乎？
Analects

• “The man who moves a mountain begins by carrying away small stones.”

• “Respect yourself and others will respect you.”

• “To be wealthy and honored in an unjust society is a disgrace.”
Analects

• “Never give a sword to a man who can't dance.”

• “True wisdom is knowing what you don't know”
Analects

• “Tsze-Kung asked, “Is there one word with which to act in accordance throughout a lifetime?” The Master said, “Is not reciprocity such a word? What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others.”
5 Cardinal Relationships

• 1. Ruler and Subject
• 2. Father and Son
• 3. Husband and Wife
• 4. Elder Brother to Younger Brother
• 5. Friend to Friend
1. Ruler and Subject

• Benevolence in rulers

• Loyalty in subjects
2. Father and Son

• Kindness in the father

• Filial piety in the son
3. Husband and Wife

• Righteous behavior in the husband

• Obedience in the wife
4. Elder Brother to Younger Brother

• Gentility in the oldest son

• Humility and respect in the younger siblings
5. Friend to Friend

• Mutual respect
• Views world as large family

• Imposes mutual and reciprocal responsibilities

• Subject owes loyalty to ruler and son owes respect to father

• Ruler must care for subjects as parent cares for child

• Emphasizes vertical hierarchy not horizontal mutual status

• Seniority rules friend to friend relationship (Respect)
The Gentleman (Jen)

- Confucius stressed one ideal person above all others

- By this, he meant someone who has attained a noble character and superior status through hard work, not by birthright.
Humanity (REN)

- The affection and love involved in human relationships

- Translated as goodness, humanity, human heartedness

- For Confucius, cultivating ren involves following a version of the Golden Rule, which entails reciprocity. By understanding our own wishes, we may imagine what others desire.
For Confucius, Li referred not only to public formal occasions or ritual but to all occasions of human interaction.

For example: social etiquette, included no rudeness and maintaining sincerity.

Confucius believed that, when dealing with others, one should behave with the dignity appropriate to a sacred rite.

Confucius also understood Li as a form of moral development.