

## CONFUCIUS



Confucius was the most influential and respected **philosopher** in Chinese history. He lived during the Zhou dynasty in Ancient China, which was filled with chaos, disorder, and anarchy. Confucius' main interest was to figure out ways for the government to do a better job of taking care of the people, since the country was filled with problems like bribing, stealing, and killing. Confucius felt the answer to China's problems was **better moral leadership and respect** in families.

He created a system called **Confucianism**, which he wrote about in his famous book called the **Analects**. In Confucianism, it stressed different levels of honesty and trustworthiness, like how you should be honest to yourself, your family, and those around you. He also developed a system for how families should interact with one another. For example, he believed that sons and daughters should respect their parents, and that subjects should respect their rulers. In return, the rulers and parents should be kind and loyal to their people. **Filial piety**, or the unending devotion of children, especially sons, to their parents and family, was also a very important belief in Confucianism.

Today, Confucianism has impacted everything in China, from its education, government, public and private attitudes and, etiquette (manners). With a population of over 1.3 billion people (the biggest in the world), this country has used his ideas as a way to live and run its government. Furthermore, China's education is one of the best in the world because of Confucius' values. These beliefs have also influenced other parts of Asia today.

**Source: The History Alive! The Ancient World textbook**



Mao Zedong

- **Occupation:** Leader of the Communist Party of China
- **Born:** December 26, 1893 in Shaoshan, Hunan, China
- **Died:** September 9, 1976 in Beijing, China
- **Best known for:** Founding Father of the People's Republic of China

### **Biography:**

Mao Zedong (also called Mao Tse-tung) founded the [People's Republic of China](#) and was the primary leader of the country from its establishment in 1949 until his death in 1976. Mao also led the [communist](#) revolution in China and fought against the Nationalist Party in the Chinese Civil War. His ideas and philosophies regarding communism and Marxism are often referred to as Maoism.

### **Where did Mao grow up?**

Mao was born the son of a peasant farmer on December 26, 1893 in Shaoshan, Hunan Province, China. He attended the local school until he turned 13 when he went to work full time on the family's farm.

In 1911 Mao joined the Revolution Army and fought against the [Qing Dynasty](#). After that he went back to school. He also worked as a librarian.

### **Becoming a Communist**

In 1921 Mao went to his first communist party meeting. He soon became a leader in the

party. When the communists allied with the Kuomintang, Mao went to work for Sun Yat-sen in Hunan.

Since Mao grew up a peasant he believed strongly in communist ideas. He studied Marxism and felt that communism was the best way to get the peasants behind him in overthrowing the government.

### **Chinese Civil War**

After President Sun Yat-sen died in 1925, Chiang Kai-shek took over the government and the Kuomintang. Chiang no longer wanted the communists as part of his government. He broke the alliance with the communists and began killing and imprisoning communist leaders. The Chinese Civil War between the Kuomintang (also called the Nationalist Party) and the communists had begun.

After years of fighting, the Kuomintang decided to destroy the communists once and for all. In 1934 Chiang took a million soldiers and attacked the main communist camp. Mao convinced the leaders to retreat.

### **The Long March**

The retreat of the communists from the Kuomintang army is called the Long March today. Over the course of a year Mao led the communists over 7,000 miles across southern China and then north to Shaanxi province. Although most of the soldiers died during the march, around 8,000 survived. These 8,000 were loyal to Mao. Mao Zedong was now the leader of the communist party (also called the CPC).

### **More Civil War**

The Civil War subsided for a while when the Japanese invaded China and during World War II, but picked up again quickly after the war. This time Mao and the communists were stronger. They soon routed the Kuomintang. Chiang Kai-shek fled to the island of Taiwan.

### **Founding the People's Republic of China**

In 1949 Mao Zedong founded the People's Republic of China. Mao was the Chairman of the Communist Party and the absolute leader of China. He was a brutal leader, insuring his power by executing anyone who disagreed with him. He also set up labor camps where millions of people were sent and many died.

### **The Great Leap Forward**

In 1958 Mao announced his plan to industrialize China. He called it the Great Leap Forward. Unfortunately the plan backfired. Soon the country experienced a terrible famine. It is estimated that 40 million people starved to death.

This horrible failure caused Mao to lose power for a time. He was still part of the government, but no longer had absolute power.

## **The Cultural Revolution**

In 1966 Mao made his comeback in the Cultural Revolution. Many young peasants followed him and formed the Red Guard. These loyal soldiers helped him to take over. Schools were shut down and people who disagreed with Mao were either killed or sent to the farms to be re-educated through hard labor.

## **Death**

Mao ruled China until he died on September 9, 1976 from Parkinson's disease. He was 82 years old.

## **Interesting Facts about Mao Zedong**

- Part of Mao's comeback in the Cultural Revolution was fueled by a small red book of his sayings. It was called the "Little Red Book" and was made available to all.
- He met with [President Richard Nixon](#) in 1972 in an effort to show openness to the west. Because Mao was in poor health, Nixon mostly met with Mao's second-in-command Zhou Enlai. The meeting was an important part of the Cold War as China began to move closer to the US and away from the Soviet Union.
- Mao is generally credited with uniting the country of China and making it a significant power in the 20th century. However, he did this at the cost of millions and millions of lives.
- He was married four times and had ten children.
- Mao cultivated a "cult of personality". His picture was everywhere in China. Also, members of the communist party were required to carry his "Little Red Book" with them.

**Source:** [http://www.ducksters.com/biography/world\\_leaders/mao\\_zedong.php](http://www.ducksters.com/biography/world_leaders/mao_zedong.php)