

Comparison of eastern and western philosophers

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[Comparison of Eastern and Western Philosophers] Comparison of Eastern and Western Philosophers I will compare the Western philosopher Socrates to the Eastern philosopher Lao Tzu. These two philosophers had some things in common with their ideas and philosophies that they pursued. Socrates was a western philosopher that lived in Athens Greece and Lao was thought to be from what is now known as the Hunan province of China. Socrates lived in Athens which was a city that taught it was better to solve problems through debate rather than violence.

It was because of this environment he grew up in that he became a great debater and strived to discover something important, namely, the essential nature of knowledge, justice, beauty, goodness, and, especially, traits of good character such as courage (McGraw-Hill, pg. 37, 2008) . He believed that power was not attained through wealth or physical strength but rather it was achieved through discussion or debate. The Delphi Oracle is said to have pronounced Socrates the wisest of people. To Socrates this meant he was aware of his own ignorance not that he was the wisest man in the world.

Socrates made many enemies after this because he set out to find a man wiser than him and exposed many of them as frauds this brought about his demise as he was sentenced to death for corrupting young men's minds. Even though it is said by Plato that he could have gotten out of prison he choose to remain there because by living in Athens he agreed to live by their laws. Lao Tzu Lao Tzu believed that it was not through intervention but rather through understanding of how it functions. He also believed that the foundation of life was through peace and not through strife.

The wise ruler, Lao Tzu believed, understands that violence is a last resort and knows that it can often be avoided by anticipation, by reconciling potential enemies and resolving difficulties when they first arise. Lao also believed it was through deeds done for others and not doing just the things that benefited himself that would define a person. This thought is best supported by a quote from his views on virtue where he stated The superior man hoards nothing. The more he uses for the benefit of others, the more he possesses himself.

The more he gives to his fellow men, the more he has of his own (McGraw-Hill, pg. 538, 2008). The absence of selfish desires is the secret to his virtue. What Socrates and Lao Tzu had in common Both Socrates and Lao Tzu thought that even the wisest of humans is still ignorant. Both held that to act on that ignorance under the pretense that it is knowledge is folly that leads not to progress and betterment within the individual and society but to the opposite effect(McGraw-Hill, pg. 536, 2008).

Even though both Socrates and Lao Tzu believed in fighting for injustices. Both Socrates and Lao both believed that it is best to settle things through talking and that war should be a last resort because violence only causes more tension and a retaliatory type reactions. In conclusion we can see that there similarities and differences in how these philosophers went about getting their messages across to others Socrates was more open and engaging in his desire to find true knowledge and meaning and used his gift of debate to engage others to find a better solution.

Where Lao believed in just letting things happen and unfold as they may and what happens is what is meant to happen. Both of these philosophers were alike in the fact that they both strongly believed in only using force as a last resort. As both of these types of philosophy's have many good points I am more proponed to agree with western philosophy because I think like Socrates it is important to stick to what one truly believes as long as it is not detrimental to anyone else.

Because if one's life is going to have meaning then we have to stick to what we believe because at the end of the day what really matters is how we feel about ourselves. If we compromise what we believe because of how others see us then our lives mean nothing. There is a very good poem by an unknown author called The Man in the Mirror in this poem the author states that at the end of the day the only thing that matters is that we can look at ourselves in the mirror and like what we see. References Moore, B. N. ; Bruder, K. (2008). Philosophy: The power of ideas (7th ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill.