

Mencius

Religion



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

1. What social structure does Mencius envision for the ideal society? Who should be in charge? Does he favor choosing officials based on ascriptive status (i. e. their aristocratic pedigree) or does he believe in using meritocratic criteria for selecting officials? Is he egalitarian, or does he favor maintenance of a social hierarchy? Mencius developed a very early form of what was to be called in modern times the " social contract. Mencius, like Confucius, believed that rulers were divinely placed in order to guarantee peace and order among the people they rule. Unlike Confucius, Mencius believed that if a ruler failed to bring peace and order about, then the people could be absolved of all loyalty to that ruler and could, if they felt strongly enough about the matter, revolt.

2. What makes a state successful in Mencius' eyes? Does he esteem conquest and military might? Economic power? Religious or moral force? What does a ruler need to do to make his state successful? What happens to bad rulers? (Mencius' argument that unjust rulers may be overthrown) Does Mencius esteem the creation of a unified empire, and if so, how should one go about unifying China? Mencius emphasized the significance of the common citizens in the state. While Confucianism generally regards rulers highly, he argued that it is acceptable for the subjects to overthrow or even kill a ruler who ignores the people's needs and rules harshly. This is because a ruler who does not rule justly is no longer a true ruler.

What are the hallmarks of a moral society in Mencius' way of thinking? How should wealth be distributed? What kinds of lives should people lead? What outward signs indicate that a society is good, and what are the symptoms of emerging social problems? 4. What is the role of education in Mencius' ideal

society? Should education focus on practical training? Ritual knowledge? Moral cultivation? Who ought to be educated? According to Mencius, education must awaken the innate abilities of the human mind.

He denounced memorization and advocated active interrogation of the text, saying, " One who believes all of a book would be better off without books. " One should check for internal consistency by comparing sections and debate the probability of factual accounts by comparing them with experience. 5. Explain the following ideas according to Mencius: gentleman, mandate of Heaven, filial piety, the (Doctrine of the) Mean, the Five Relationships, benevolence, the innate goodness of humankind.