Reading Passage 2

You should spend about 20 minutes on **Questions 14-26**, which are based on **Reading Passage 2.**

Taoism and Confucianism — Ancient Philosophies

"Those who know do not say; those who say do not know." -Lao-tzu

"The superior men are sparing in their words and profuse in their deeds." -Confucius

The 6th century B.C.E. was an amazing time of philosophical growth for ancient China. It was during that time that the two most influential spiritual leaders native to China, Confucius and Lao-tzu, are thought to have lived and taught. The philosophies that they practiced, Taoism and Confucianism, existed simultaneously in dynastic China, attracting countless numbers of followers over the past 2,500 years. The fascination of both the Eastern and Western worlds with these two legendary figures and the philosophies that they created remains strong.

The Old Master

Lao-tzu, translated as either "Old Master" or "Old Boy," is believed to be the author of Taoism. Very little is known of his life; he may not even have existed. According to myth, at his birth around 604 B.C.E., Lao-tzu came from the womb as an old man, white-haired and full of wisdom. He eventually took a position as head librarian of the Imperial Archives. Saddened by society's lack of goodness, Lao-tzu decided to leave his home in Luoyang to live out the rest of his life in quiet and solitude somewhere beyond the Great Wall of China, possibly near Tibet. As he passed through the city gates for the final time, the gatekeeper asked Lao-tzu to write down his parting thoughts. The "Old Master" agreed, and three days later returned with a small book. Lao-tzu then left civilization, never to return. His writings were titled the *Tao Te Ching*, and became the most important text of Taoism.

According to Taoism, the entire universe and everything in it flows with a mysterious, unknowable force called the Tao. Translated literally as "The Way," the Tao has many different meanings. It is the name that describes ultimate reality. The Tao also explains the powers that drive the universe and the wonder of human nature. Taoists believe that everything is one despite all appearances. Opinions of good and evil or true and false only happen when people forget that they are all one in the Tao. Therefore, it is the aim of Taoists not to forget, and if forgotten to remember that oneness. However, Lao-tzu reminds believers that the Tao is difficult to grasp: "*the Tao that can be spoken is not the true Tao.*"

Over time a Taoist religion evolved, becoming somewhat different from the philosophy of Taoism just described. While religious Taoism held some of the same beliefs, it also called for worship of many gods and ancestors, a practice that began during the Shang

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dynasty. Other religious practices included the cultivation of bodily energy called "chi," the creation of a system of morals, and use of alchemy in attempts to attain immortality. The folk religion of Taoism became popular after its adoption by China as the state religion in 440 C.E., and continues to be practiced even to the present-day.

Confucius and the Analects

The other driving philosophy of dynastic China was created by a politician, musician, and philosopher named Confucius. Born in 551 B.C.E., Confucius wandered throughout China, first as a government employee, and later as a political advisor to the rulers of the Chou dynasty. In later life, Confucius left politics to teach a small group of students. After his death in 479 B.C.E., the ethics and moral teachings of Confucius were written down by his students to become the *Lun-yü*, or *Analects*. Many of his clever sayings are still followed today. "It is as hard to be poor without complaining as to be rich without becoming arrogant."

Learning to be human was the goal of Confucianism. According to Confucius, each person should act with virtue in all social matters; family, community, state, and kingdom, to ensure order and unity. Man's virtue in all its forms is called "Jen." "Jen" is all encompassing and unable to be defined, in some respects similar to the Tao. Confucian ceremonies contained many rituals based in the Five Classics, especially the *I Ching*, or *Book of Changes*. Procedures for birth, marriage, and death were rigid and specific. For example, according to Confucian funeral tradition, a willow branch is always carried behind the body of the deceased symbolizing the soul of that person.

However, by far the most influential aspect of Confucianism remains the *Analects*: "Not to teach a man who can be taught, is to waste a man; to teach a man who cannot be taught, is a waste of words. The wise will lose neither men nor words." It was sayings such as this one that made Confucianism the social philosophy of China from the Han dynasty in 202 B.C.E. until the end of dynastic rule in 1911.

Rival Philosophies

Taoism and Confucianism have lived together in China for well over 2,000 years. Confucianism deals with social matters, while Taoism concerns itself with the search for meaning. They share common beliefs about man, society, and the universe, although these notions were around long before either philosophy. Both began as philosophies, each later taking on religious overtones. Legend states that Confucius and Lao-tzu did in fact meet to discuss the Imperial Archives. Lao-tzu was unimpressed by the beautiful robes worn by Confucius, and did not agree with looking back on the past. "Put away your polite airs and your vain display of fine robes. The wise man does not display his treasures to those he does not know. And he cannot learn justice from the Ancients."

Regardless of the disagreements between Lao-tzu and Confucius, both Taoism and Confucianism have served as guides. They have led China through the peaks and valleys of its vast history, the longest continuing story on the planet.

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Questions 14–18

Answer the questions below.

Choose **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the passage for each answer.

Write your answer in boxes 14-18 on your answer sheet.

14. What job did Lao-tzu use to work as?

15. What did Lao-tzu note down before leaving the city?

16. What did Confucius decide to separate himself from in order to devote more on teaching?

17. What should human behavior be accompanied by in all circumstances, according to Confucius?

18. By Confucius's ceremonial belief, what usually appears in a funeral to represent for the dead person's soul?

Questions 19-22

Complete the table below

Choose **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the passage for each answer

Write your answer in boxes **19-22** on your answer sheet.

Philosophy	Belief
Taoism	The meaning of the Tao says how **(19)** ..... is like The universe is driven by certain **(20)** ..... Everything on Earth is a single unit although their **(21)** ..... can be different.
Confucianism	Teaching can be a **(22)** ..... without having the right learners.

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