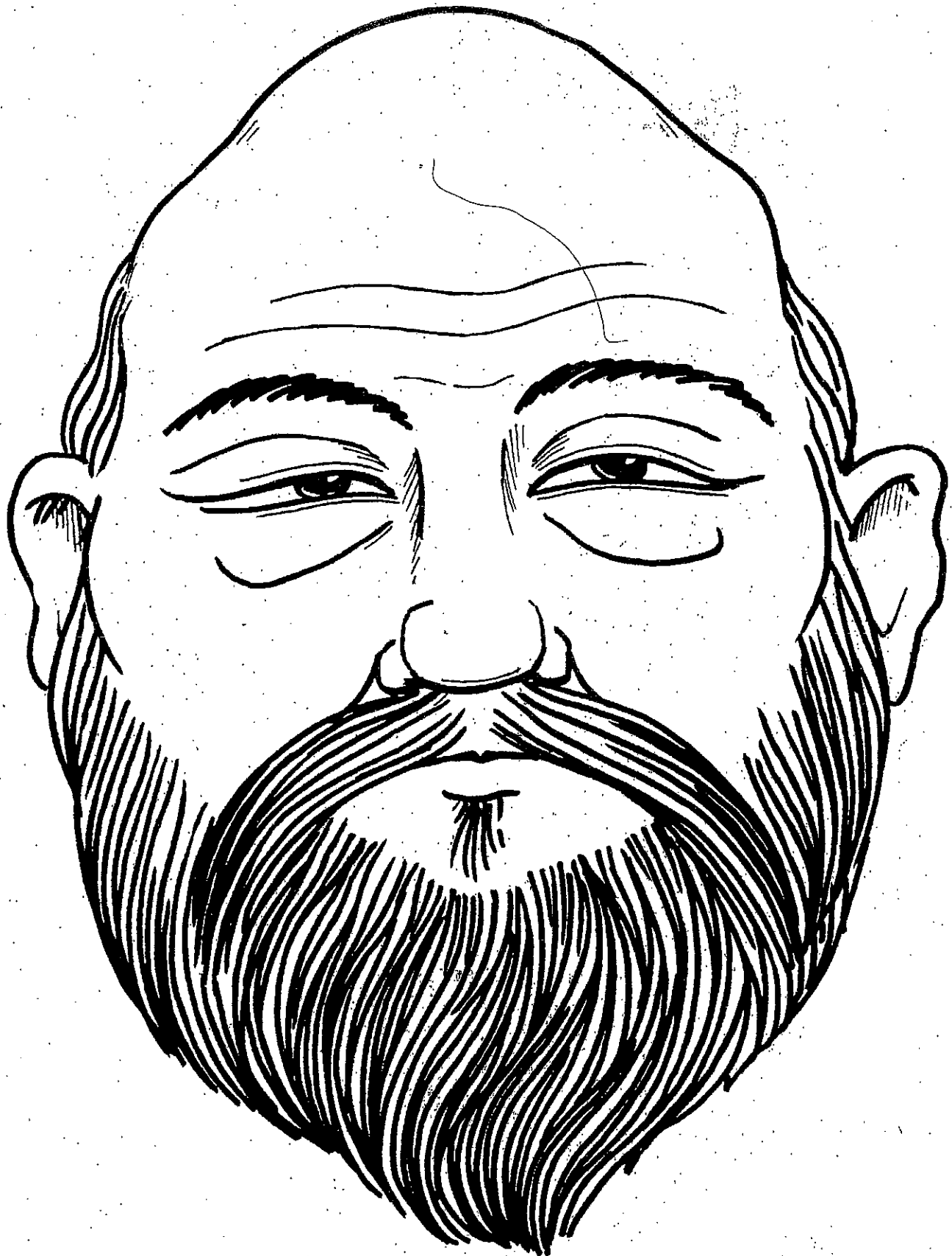
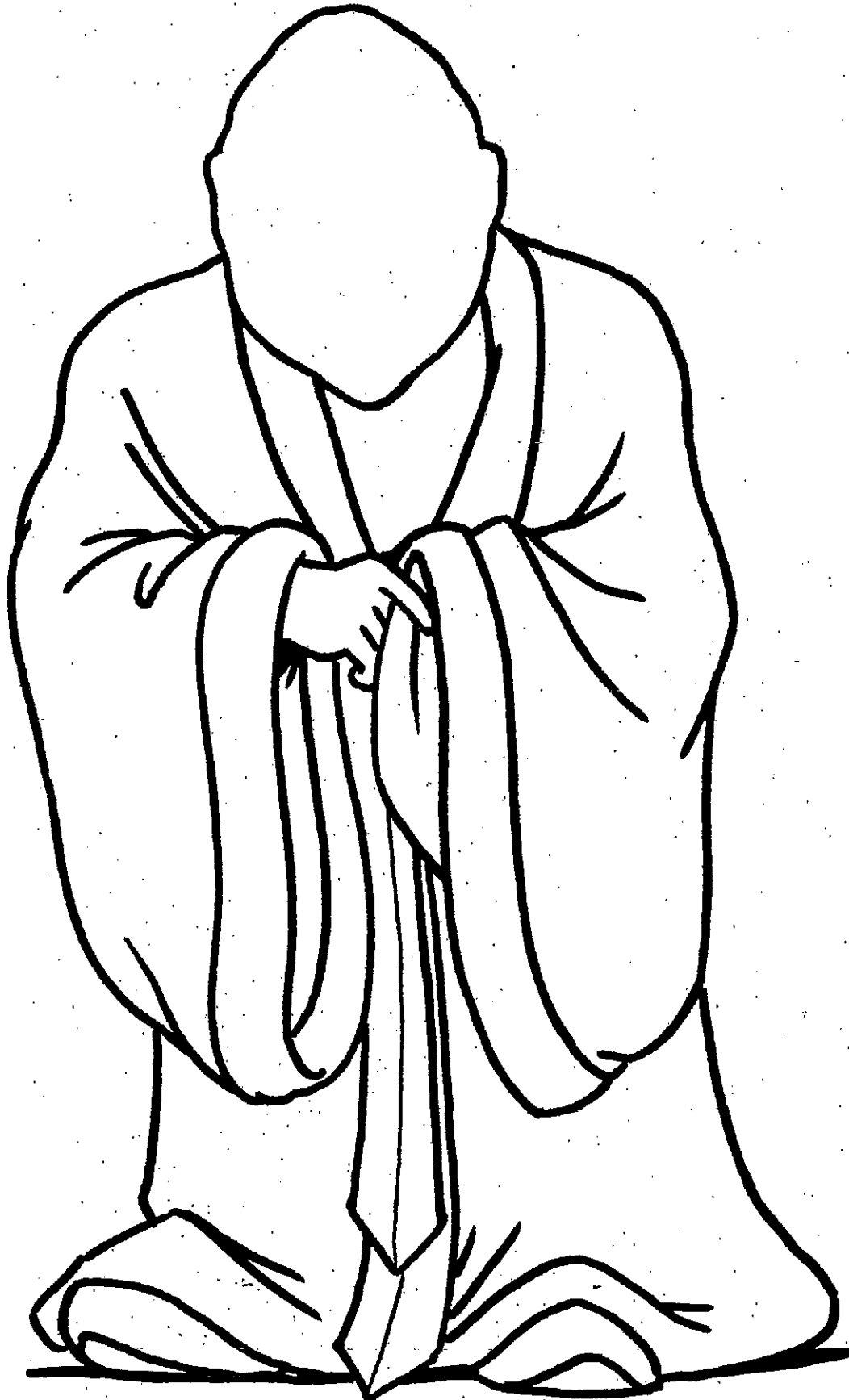


Face of Laozi.



Outline of Laozi





Background Information on Daoism

Directions: This information will help your group create a character collage of Laozi. Take turns reading sections of the handout aloud and leading a discussion of the questions after that section.

Daoism (pronounced DOW-ism) is a belief system based on the teachings of Laozi (pronounced LAU-zuh). Laozi a legendary wise man, who probably lived from 606 to 530 B.C. Laozi lived during troubled times in China. The Zhou (pronounced JOE) empire was weakening, and society was violent and unstable. Laozi decided that people should not seek power and wealth. He believed that they should seek happiness and peace within themselves. To teach them how to do this, Laozi wrote a book called *Daodejing*, or “The Way and Its Power.”

Laozi thought that people could find peace and happiness by being connected, or becoming one with the *Dao* (the Way). The *Dao*, he said, is a universal force connected to nature. The *Dao* can only be experienced and felt. Daoism teaches that people should see themselves as part of nature. To discover how to behave, they should look at nature. They should sit by a river, feel a breeze, and watch a drifting cloud. As they do this, they will notice that nothing in nature strives for fame, power, or knowledge. The river, the breeze, and the cloud move without making any effort. They just follow the *Dao*, the way of nature that guides all things.

Laozi believed that the small farming villages in which most Chinese people lived were perfect communities. These villages had little government and few schools. The villagers lived in harmony with the natural seasons on which their lives depended. Laozi believed that these communities would remain happy and successful as long as the government did not try to control them.

Stop Here
& Discuss



- How did Laozi believe that people could find happiness?
- What is the *Dao*?
- According to Daoists, how should people discover how to behave?

Laozi taught that people should balance the opposite forces of nature, called *yin* and *yang*. This way, they could find harmony and happiness in life. Laozi taught that it is impossible to have good without bad, beauty without ugliness, or pleasure without pain. Because Daoists think that good and bad are connected, they try to accept both. They do not brag when things go well, and they do not complain when things go badly. They accept whatever happens. They believe that whatever happens is part of the balance of *yin* and *yang*.

Stop Here
& Discuss



- What are yin and yang?
- Why do Daoists accept whatever happens?

Laozi was against government. But he knew that lords and emperors would not disappear and leave people to rule themselves. However, he believed that leaders should follow the rules of the Dao. The most important of these rules was *wuwei* (pronounced woo-way). Wuwei means “acting by not acting.” Laozi believed that a leader should take very little action, instead of trying to take control and guide the people. He thought a leader should only help people to achieve what they naturally want. Just as a farmer cannot force a plant to grow, Laozi thought that a leader cannot force people to become successful. A plant grows best by itself, and the farmer who tries to force it only hurts it. In the same way, people already know how to live, and a leader who makes too many laws will only cause problems.

Daoism still influences Chinese society today. Many Chinese people have lived through hard times in their recent history by practicing *wuwei*. That is, instead of trying to take control of a situation, they simply wait for the situation to pass. Daoism has also influenced the way nature is shown in Chinese landscape paintings. These paintings often show calm mountains (yin) contrasted with violent storms (yang). They show humans as small beings living in harmony with the natural world, which always looks larger and more powerful.

Stop Here
& Discuss



- How did Laozi believe a leader should govern?
- How does Daoism influence Chinese society today?

Quotes from the Teachings of Laozi

Quote 1: *Highest good is like water. Because water excels in benefiting the myriad creatures without contending with them (helps all creatures without struggling against them), and settles where none would like to be (comes to rest in places where nobody would want to be), it comes close to the Way (follows the Dao).*

Quote 2: *The more laws and edicts are imposed (the more rules there are), the more thieves and bandits there will be.*

Steps for Creating a Character Collage

Roles

Researcher Underlines or highlights key ideas on **Student Handout 2B**. Finds additional information about belief system from textbooks, the library, or the teacher. Helps brainstorm ideas for the character collage. Makes sure the most important ideas are included. Assists in the production of the final collage.

Graphic Designer Responsible for the overall look and organization of the character collage. Leads discussion, takes notes, and contributes ideas during the brainstorming session. Makes sure visuals accurately represent the ideas of the belief system. Leads in the production of the final collage.

Illustrator Traces the outline of the historical figure and attaches the face to it. Creates visuals for the character collage. Helps brainstorm ideas for the collage. Creates a rough sketch of the collage for the teacher to review. Assists in the production of the final collage.

Paraphraser Reads quotes on **Student Handout 2B** aloud to the group. Helps brainstorm ideas for the character collage. Leads discussion on how to paraphrase (restate in simple words) the historical figure's quotes so classmates can easily understand them. Assists in the production of the final collage.

Steps

Step 1: Read and discuss your belief system. Take turns reading the information on **Student Handout 2B** aloud. As you read, have the Researcher underline or highlight key details. Talk about the "Stop Here and Discuss" questions.

____ After your group has read the information on **Student Handout 2B**, highlighted key details, and discussed the "Stop Here and Discuss" questions, have your teacher initial here.

Step 2: Brainstorm ideas for key words, phrases, and visuals to include in the character collage. Your group must create a character collage—a life-size outline of a historical figure, within and around which are carefully arranged key ideas, symbols, and illustrations that represent the person's beliefs. Your classmates should be able to "read" your collage and understand the key ideas of the belief system. The Graphic Designer should make sure your collage includes

- *at least five key words or phrases that represent main ideas of the belief system*
- *at least five visuals—illustrations, symbols, pictures—that represent main ideas of the belief system*

____ After your group has brainstormed words and visuals for your character collage, have your teacher initial here.

Step 3: Paraphrase the quotes for your collage. You must rewrite the quotes from your historical figure in simple words, or *paraphrase* them, for your character collage. The Paraphraser should lead the group in paraphrasing the quotes on **Student Handout 2B** so they are simple, memorable, and easily understood by a sixth grader.

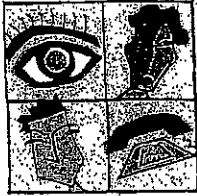
____ After your group has paraphrased the quotes, have your teacher initial here.

Step 4: Brainstorm ideas for how to lay out (arrange) the character collage and create a rough draft. Talk about how to arrange the words, phrases, visuals, and paraphrases on the character collage. These can be placed within or outside of the outline of the character, but should be arranged in a way that helps the viewer understand the main ideas of the belief system. The format of your character collage should reflect the beliefs of your character. For example, if your character valued neatness, the contents of the collage would be arranged in a very orderly way. The Illustrator should quickly create a rough draft of the character collage on a standard-size piece of paper.

____ After your group has created a rough draft of the character collage, have your teacher initial here.

Step 5: Sketch the outline of your historical figure and create your final character collage. After you have received feedback from your teacher on your character collage, the Illustrator should sketch the outline of your historical figure on a large piece of unlined paper. Tape or glue the drawing of the figure's face from **Student Handout 2C** to the outline. Then, work neatly and carefully to create the final version of your character collage. Use color and other creative touches to make the collage visually appealing.

Character Collage Rubric



_____ **15pts:** at least 5 key words or phrases that represent main idea of the belief system

_____ **15pts:** at least 5 visuals- symbols, illustrations, pictures that represent the main ideas of the belief system

_____ **5pts:** quotes paraphrased correctly and made easy to understand

_____ **5pts:** use of color, or other creative touches to make the collage visually appealing

_____ **10pts:** Exhibits clearly higher level thinking and well thought out planning

