Critical Thinking Questions on Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism

Directions: use your Introduction to Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism sheet to identify, and interpret the following quotes.

1. “Like a spider caught in its own web is a person driven by cravings. Break out of the web, and turn away from the world of sensory pleasure and sorrow.” In your own words, what does this statement mean? Who do you think said it, the Buddha, Confucius or Laozi?
2. “If a ruler himself is honest, all will go well without orders. But if he himself is not honest, even though he gives orders they will not be obeyed.” In your own words, what does this statement mean? Who do you think said it, the Buddha, Confucius or Laozi?
3. “Highest good is like water. Because water excels in benefiting the many creatures without contending with them and settles where none would like to be, it comes close to the way.” In your own words, what does this statement mean? Who do you think said it, the Buddha, Confucius or Laozi?
4. “The mind is flighty, and hard to grasp, the mind pursues all its desires. To tame the mind is great goodness. Subdue the mind and know tranquility. In your own words, what does this statement mean? Who do you think said it, the Buddha, Confucius or Laozi?
5. “The more laws and edicts are imposed, the more thieves and bandits there will be.” In your own words, what does this statement mean? Who do you think said it, the Buddha, Confucius or Laozi?
6. “Be respectful at home, serious at work, faithful in human relations. Even if you go to uncivilized areas, these virtues are not to be abandoned” In your own words, what does this statement mean? Who do you think said it, the Buddha, Confucius or Laozi?
7. “Seeing that our body, with hair and skin, is derived from our parents, we should not allow it to be injured in any way. This is the beginning of filial (family) respect. We develop our own character and practice the way so as to perpetuate our name for future generations, and to bring honor to our parents.” In your own words, what does this statement mean? Who do you think said it, the Buddha, Confucius or Laozi?
8. “Life is a journey, death is a return to the earth, the universe is like an inn, the passing years are like dust.” In your own words, what does this statement mean? Who do you think said it, the Buddha, Confucius or Laozi?
9. “The sage, because he does nothing, never ruins anything; and, because he does not lay hold of anything, loses nothing.” In your own words, what does this statement mean? Who do you think said it, the Buddha, Confucius or Laozi?