

Confucius, Mencius and Xun-zi

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As education and literacy spread in China and scholars became influential as ministers of rulers, philosophers also began to flourish. In the late sixth century BC two of the greatest philosophers of all time emerged in China - Lao-zi, the founder of Daoism, and Confucius, whose philosophy and religion came to dominate China for more than two millennia.

Confucius

Confucius is the Latinized form of Kong Fu-zi, which means Kong the master. Confucius was born in the small state of Lu in 551 BC and died in 479 BC, living during the time of turmoil, political intrigue, and numerous small wars in the last part of the Spring and Autumn era. Assassinations, bribery, adultery, and other crimes were common even though punishments were severe. In Lu three families contended for the hereditary rulership, while numerous educated aristocrats sought positions in the government, while many suffered poverty.

Confucius was brought up as a gentleman who took up music, archery, and fishing, although he said he fished without a net and would not shoot at a bird at rest. He was so absorbed in music that once he did not know the taste of meat for three months. He also learned to do practical jobs of humble people such as keeper of the stores and head of the pastures. However, most of the time Confucius was not able to find an official position though he was willing to do anything that did not involve wrong-doing. Perhaps it was his ethical concerns that prevented him from being useful to the rulers of his time. Instead he occupied his time in what he loved the most - the pursuit of learning.

By the age of fifteen Confucius had set his heart on learning; by thirty he felt that he was firmly established; at forty he was no longer confused; by fifty he had a sense of mission in following the will of heaven; at sixty he was at ease with whatever he heard; and when he was seventy, he felt he could do whatever he liked without violating moral principles. No single teacher had a great influence on Confucius, as he tried to learn from everyone. His model, however, was the ancient Duke of Zhou, who had helped to establish the Zhou dynasty. The spiritual connection he felt with the ancient duke is indicated by his regret once that it had been a long time since he had dreamed of the Duke of Zhou. Confucius studied thoroughly the classics of history, poetry, propriety, and especially the *Book of Changes* (Yi Jing). He believed that if he could spend fifty years studying *Changes*, he might yet be free of great mistakes.

Confucius became an orphan at an early age. He married and had a son and a daughter, and he also took care of his older brother, who was crippled. Confucius claimed little for himself except that he never neglected proper mourning nor was he ever overcome by wine. Confucius was perhaps the first professional teacher of adults we know of in China. He accepted any student bringing any gift at all even if they were poor. When he was fifty, Confucius was finally given a position in the government though his advice was not often valued. He advised Ji Kang-zi, who became head of the ruling families, to show piety toward his parents and kindness toward his children, promote the worthy, and train the incompetent. Here we see the important emphasis on education and ability rather than heredity. Several of Confucius' students did attain important positions in government, as Confucius recommended Zi-lu for efficiency, Zi-Gong for understanding, and Ran Qiu for versatility.

In his late fifties Confucius used a ceremonial impropriety to leave Lu so that he could see if other states might put his principles into practice. In Wei he was not afraid to meet with the notorious Nan-zi, a woman involved in incest, adultery, and political intrigue. When the Duke of Wei asked his advice on military strategy, Confucius declared that he had knowledge of sacrificial vessels but had not studied warfare. The next day he left Wei and went to Chen. While he was traveling through Song, Huan Tui, the Song Minister of War, tried to have him assassinated, but Confucius said, "Heaven produced the virtue that is in me. What do I have to fear from such a one as Huan Tui?"¹ This did not prevent Confucius from accepting Huan Tui's brother Sima Niu as a student, although Sima Niu did renounce his dastardly brother.

Confucius was also trapped at Kuang and thought his favorite student, Yen Hui, was dead. When they got to Chen, they were weak and short of supplies. The Duke of Chen was involved in war at the time; but Confucius did speak with the Minister of Crime about propriety before going back to Lu, because he was concerned that his students were becoming headstrong and careless. The only ruler who seemed to agree with Confucius that virtue was important was the Duke of She in the small state of Cai. He was invited there once, but Zi-lu pointed out they were in rebellion then, and so Confucius decided not to go though he felt like a gourd that was only fit to hang up but not to eat. Confucius also rejected an offer in a similar situation from the Bi castle even though he believed that he might be able to "make a Zhou in the east."²

Confucius returned to Wei to advise the Prime Minister Kung Yu, who was willing to listen to him. Kung forced one of his nobles to divorce his wives to marry his daughter; but when he kept a concubine, and Kung asked Confucius how to attack him, Confucius told him not to attack. When Kung went ahead anyway, Confucius prepared his chariot to leave. Kung apologized, and Confucius was ready to change his mind; but then messengers arrived from Lu inviting him to return to his home state. Confucius spent his last five years in Lu, and once Ran Qiu was sent by Ji Kang-zi to ask the master's opinion about raising taxes. Confucius stood with the people against this, and when Ran Qiu collected the increased taxes, Confucius declared that he was no disciple of his. Although Confucius did advise Duke Ai to support the common people, advance the upright, and punish a usurper, he was ignored and felt that he never really had a chance to show what he could do.

In addition to teaching, Confucius is credited with editing the *Book of Odes* and the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, revising the music and ceremonies, and writing commentaries on the *Book of*

Changes. The main source of his teachings which describes his conversations with his students is the *Analects (Lun Yu)*, which was apparently written by his students. From these accounts we can see not only what Confucius taught but how he taught and what his attitudes and manners were like. He was said to be free of having forgone conclusions, dogmatism, obstinacy, and egotism. His manner was affable but firm, commanding but not harsh, while he was polite and completely at ease. Zi-Gong said Confucius could get information in a foreign state by being cordial, frank, courteous, temperate, and deferential. Zi-Gong added that this was not the way inquiries were usually made. Confucius had a gentle sense of humor and did not mind being corrected by his own students.

Confucius was particularly respectful of those in mourning and made filial piety or respect for one's parents a cardinal virtue. He said,

In serving his father and mother
a man may gently remonstrate with them.
But if he sees that he has failed to change their opinion,
he should resume an attitude of deference and not thwart them;
may feel discouraged, but not resentful.³

Confucius cared most about people and was perhaps the first great humanist in history. When the stables burned down, he asked if any person had been hurt but did not inquire about the horses. He recognized the free will of every individual, believing that the commander of three armies could be removed, but the will of even a common man could not be taken away. He spoke of the way (*dao*), as when he said, "In the morning hear the way; in the evening die content;"⁴ yet he believed that it was humans who made the way great, not the way that made humans great. Confucius believed that he could even live among the barbarians, because virtue never dwells alone and will always bring good neighbors. He believed that a gentleman should help the needy, not make the rich richer still. Confucius criticized Yuan Si for rejecting his salary of nine hundred measures of grain as governor, because he could have given it to his neighbors.

Confucius never gave up and believed that he was serving by being filial even if he was not in the government. He never expected to meet a faultless person but hoped that he might meet someone of fixed principles even though he saw many examples of nothing pretending to be something. He greatly disliked sham and deceit. He felt he could not stoop to clever talk, a pretentious manner, and a reverence that was only of the feet. He could not bear to see high offices filled with men of narrow views, ceremonies performed without reverence, and mourning forms observed without grief. He hated seeing sharp mouths overturning states and clans.

Confucius believed that his mission was to spread the culture that had been passed on to him by King Wen, and trusting that this was the will of heaven he did not even fear an assassin. He must have believed in prayer, because he said that whoever turns away from heaven has no one to pray to. He hoped that even if he was not recognized in the world, he would be known in heaven. When Confucius became ill, some of his students dressed up as retainers; but the master reprimanded them for this pretense, because he knew he could not deceive heaven. He preferred to die in the arms of his disciples anyway. Although he believed there were others as honest as himself, Confucius felt that no one loved learning as much as he did. Any situation could be a lesson. When walking with others he could emulate the good qualities he saw in others and

correct the bad qualities in himself. Confucius did not believe himself to be a sage or even perfectly virtuous, but he did claim unwearied effort to learn and unflagging patience in teaching others.

Confucius believed that people were similar by nature but became different by practice, and thus there are some one can join in study, others one can join in progress along the way, others again beside whom one can take one's stand, and finally some whom one can join in counsel.

Teachings of Confucius

Confucius was willing to teach and learn with anyone who came to him; once he even accepted an uncapped youth though he stated that he was not responsible for what the youth did when he left. He once struck a man who was waiting for him in a sprawling position in the shins with his staff, declaring that youths who show no respect for their elders achieve nothing, and those who merely get older are useless pests. He observed that one youth seemed to be more interested in growing up quickly than in improving himself. He expected his students to desire learning and think for themselves. As long as the student was making effort, regardless of his progress he would help him. He even encouraged them to compete with him in goodness. However, he found that most of them were looking for the rewards of a career. He was glad when students stayed with him rather than accepting the first position offered, though he did emphasize that the model sayings were to be carried out in practice. The rational Confucius did not act without knowing why; he heard much and selected what is good to follow, calling it the second type of knowledge. He once spent a whole day meditating without food and all night without sleep, but found that it was better for him to learn.

Confucius thought of himself as a transmitter of the ancient culture, not a creator of new ideas. He held nothing back from his students and consulted with them as friends on every step. Yet he realized it is useless to speak of higher things to those who are below average. Listening silently and learning and teaching untiringly were natural to Confucius.

The thought that I have not properly cultivated virtue,
that what is learned has not been thoroughly discussed,
that knowing what is right I have not moved toward it,
that what is wrong I have not been able to change -
these are the things which bother me.⁵

Confucius observed and related to the individual characteristics of his students, but he did not know if any of them were truly good. When Zi-Gong quoted back to the master his version of the golden rule - "What I do not want others to do to me, I do not want to do to them"⁶ - Confucius pointed out he had not lived up to that yet, because he was often criticizing others. Confucius said Zi-Gong was fortunate to have time for that, but he himself did not. Confucius usually brought issues back around to self-knowledge and self-improvement. When the ruler Ji Kang-zi complained about all the thieves, Confucius said that if he were free of desire, they would not steal even if he paid them. Asked about the treatment of parents Confucius gave four different answers to four men, recommending obedience, behavior that does not make the parents anxious, sincere feeling of respect, and proper demeanor.

Questions and answers enabled Confucius to refine his teachings. He differentiated the good and the wise. The good love people, are tranquil like water, and enjoy long life. The wise know people, are active delighting in mountains, and enjoy happiness. When asked if injury should be repaid with virtue, Confucius said that injury should be repaid with justice so that virtue could be repaid with virtue. When asked about the true gentleman, Confucius said that he cultivates himself carefully so as to help other people. In government one ought to lead by example and work hard for the people.

Honesty and sincerity were essential for Confucius, and he insisted on the correct use of language. Yet a lazy student helped Confucius himself to learn that he must not only listen to what people say and but also watch to see what they do. He suggested caution in speech: "Do not be too ready to speak of it, lest the doing of it should prove to be beyond your powers."⁷ Yet Confucius often used metaphors to express his meaning and liked to quote poetry as well. When the bold and daring Zi-lu asked him whom he would take with him to command an army, Confucius replied, "Not the man who is ready to 'attack a tiger bare-handed or swim across a river' not caring whether he lived or died, but I should take someone who approaches difficulties with due caution, who likes to plan precisely and carry it out."⁸

The brash Zi-lu could not believe the answer of Confucius that the first measure in administering a government is to correct the language. So Confucius explained that if what is said is not in accordance with the truth of things, affairs cannot be carried out to success; propriety and music will not flourish, and punishments will go astray. When punishments go astray, people do not know how to move hand or foot. The *Analects* concludes with the statement by Confucius that a gentleman must understand the will of heaven, the rules of propriety, and be able to understand words in order to understand people.

Confucius liked to use the examples of men to illustrate his lessons. He often referred to the legendary emperors Yao, Shun, and Yu to show how one could rule virtuously. He also admired those who humbly refused the sovereignty and renounced violence despite their sufferings. He cited the historical examples of Duke Wen of Jin for rising to an emergency but not following propriety and Duke Huan of Qi for following propriety but failing in an emergency. Confucius credited Guan Zhong for helping Duke Huan to unite the states' rulers without using war-chariots, but he still did not necessarily consider him good. Yet if it had not been for Guan Zhong, they might be folding their clothes in the manner of the barbarians. In history as in personal life, Confucius tended to focus on the ethical questions.

In his own time he felt that one change could bring Qi to the level of Lu, and a single change would bring Lu to the way. He believed that the common people could be made to follow the way even if they were not able to understand it. He pointed out the virtues of ministers but never found anyone who was truly steadfast. Confucius believed that if the people were led by governmental measures that kept order by laws and punishments, they would try to avoid them but would lose all self-respect. Yet if they were led by virtue with order kept by propriety, they would keep their self-respect and set themselves right. Confucius observed that if one's actions were motivated by profit, one would have many enemies. Confucius did not like competition and pointed out that even in an archery match the contenders were gentlemen at the drinking-bout

afterward. He believed that the ancients studied for self-improvement, but that now people learn in order to impress people.

The goal of education for Confucius was not merely to get a salary nor was it to learn and remember as many things as possible. He said there was a thread which runs through all his teachings. The single saying he believed could be practiced all the time was the saying about consideration known as the golden rule of not doing to others what you do not want them to do to you. Confucius was said to have taught culture, conduct, loyalty, and truthfulness. Through culture one may be stimulated by poetry, established in character by the rules of propriety, and perfected by music. The extensive study of literature helps one not to violate the way. However, before culture came moral education. Confucius said, "Set your heart upon the way. Support yourself by its virtue. Rely on goodness. Find recreation in the arts."⁹ After a youth had learned to behave well toward parents and elders, to be cautious in giving promises and punctual in keeping them, to overflow in love to all, and to cultivate the friendship of the good, if one had energy to spare, then the cultural arts could be studied.

A passage from the later text of the *Li Ji* has Confucius explaining the values of studying each of the classics as well as the dangers of superficial exposure.

When one is kind and gentle and simple-hearted,
and yet not ignorant,
we may be sure one is deep in the study of poetry.
When one is broad-minded and acquainted with the past,
and yet not filled with incorrect legends or stories of events,
we may be sure one is deep in the study of history.
When one is generous and shows a good disposition
and yet not extravagant in one's personal habits,
we may be sure one is deep in the study of music.
When one is quiet and thoughtful
and shows a sharp power of observation,
and yet is not crooked,
we may be sure that one is deep in the study of philosophy.
When one is humble and polite and frugal in one's personal habits
and yet not full of elaborate ceremonies,
we may be sure one is deep in the study of propriety.
And when one is cultivated in speech,
ready with expressions and analogies
and yet is not influenced by the picture of the prevailing moral chaos,
we may be sure that one is deep
in the study of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*.¹⁰

Poetry not only stimulated the mind, but Confucius also said it helped self-contemplation, taught the art of sociability, showed how to regulate feelings of resentment, and from it one learned the duties of serving parents and the ruler as well as the names of birds, beasts, and plants.

For Confucius propriety enabled the ancient kings to establish harmony and beauty. Without propriety courtesy becomes tiresome, caution becomes timidity, daring insubordination, and straightforwardness rudeness. It was better to be sparing than extravagant in ceremonies, and funerals were to be observed with deep sorrow not fear. A gentleman properly blends substance and refinement, for too much of the first is rude and of the latter pedantic. Yet Confucius

believed that anyone who followed the rules of propriety completely would be thought a sycophant.

Confucius always kept in mind the practical goals of education. He asked if one could recite the three hundred *Odes* but did not know how to act in government or answer specific questions on a mission, of what use was extensive knowledge? The first step is for one to correct one's own conduct, then one may assist in governing others. But if one cannot rectify oneself, how could one ever rectify others? Wisdom may bring one into power, but goodness is needed to secure that power. Without dignity one will not be respected by the common people, and the rules of propriety must also be followed. With sincere faith and the love of learning one should not be afraid to die in pursuing the way. Dangerous and chaotic states should be avoided. If the way does not prevail, it is better to hide, and the wealthy and honored ought to be ashamed. When the way does prevail, one may show oneself and be bold in speech and action.

When Ji Kang-zi asked Confucius if he should kill those who do not have the way, the master said, "You are there to rule, not to kill. If you desire what is good, the people will be good."¹¹ In loving their children and people parents and rulers must exact some effort from them, and in being loyal to parents and rulers children and the people should not refrain from admonishing the object of their loyalty. In addition to attending strictly to business and punctually observing promises, Confucius said an administrator is economical in expenditure, loves the people, and uses the peasants' labor only at the proper seasons of the year.

Though religious, Confucius rarely discussed supernatural phenomena or spirits. Until one has learned to serve humans, how can one serve ghosts? he asked. Till one knows about the living, how can one know about the dead? Nevertheless when he did offer sacrifices to his ancestors he felt their spirits were present. Like Lao-zi, Confucius believed in following the way. How else could one get out of the house except through the door or find one's way into the Inner Room? Knowing the way leads to loving it, and loving it to taking delight in it.

The Chinese word for virtue (*de*) implies power and something that can be built up within oneself. Confucius said he never found anyone whose desire for virtue was as strong as the sexual desire for beauty. Virtue can be gained by doing the work first before considering the reward and by attacking the evil within oneself rather than the evil in others. One of the great threats Confucius saw to virtue was the confusion of clever talk, just as small impatiences can ruin great projects. For Confucius the good are never unhappy, the wise never confused, and the brave never afraid. Courage, however, must not take priority over justice or else an aristocrat would become an insurgent and a common person a thief. The higher knowledge of wisdom is to know when one knows something and when one does not. "Whoever learns but does not think is lost; but whoever thinks but does not learn is in danger."¹²

Love of learning is essential to the virtues, and Confucius explained how love of the six virtues can degenerate without the love of learning. Love of goodness degenerates to simple-mindedness, love of knowledge to lack of principle, love of faithfulness to injurious disregard of consequences, love of uprightness to harshness, love of courage to insubordination, and love of strong character to mere recklessness. People's characters can be penetrated by looking at their aims, how they pursue them, and what brings them content. Yet the ultimate value of observing

others is to learn how to equal those of worth and to examine the faults of others in ourselves. Confucius said he never found a single person who could see one's own faults and bring the charge against oneself. To have faults and not be trying to correct them is really to have faults. Confucius advised people not to be afraid of admitting mistakes and amending their ways. He recommended friendships with the upright, sincere, and well-informed, but warned against those who flatter, have weak principles, and talk cleverly. Beneficial pleasures are studying ceremonies and music, discussing good points in others' conduct, and in having many wise friends. Detrimental are profligate enjoyments, idle gadding about, and feasting.

Confucius taught the middle way between extremes in regard to most virtues and considered moderation transcendent and rare in his time. Lavishness may lead to presumption and frugality to meanness, though the latter is a less serious fault. The Confucian middle way was later elaborated on in the treatise called the *Doctrine of the Mean* or *The Center of Harmony* (*Zhong Yong*).

The greatest concept of virtue for Confucius was *ren*, which has been translated here as goodness but also means humanity or human-heartedness. A good person does not worry about not being known by others but rather seeks to know them. The good know how to like and dislike people, although the one whose heart is set on goodness will dislike no one, according to Confucius. Without goodness one cannot endure adversity for long nor enjoy prosperity for long. The good are also courageous, but the brave are not necessarily good, just as the virtuous are eloquent though the eloquent may not be virtuous. Confucius observed that faults fell into patterns, and that one looked for faults only in order to recognize goodness. Confucius said he did not know whether Ran Yung was good, but he saw no need for him to be a good talker. Confucius felt that goodness meant courtesy in private life, diligence in public life, and loyalty in relationships. The good establish their own character and then help others to establish theirs. To be able to see others by what is within ourselves Confucius called the art of goodness, and a ruler who could benefit the people and bring salvation to all he called a divine sage.

The Chinese term *zhun-zi* originally meant the son of a ruler and thus an aristocrat, but in the time of Confucius and perhaps due to his influence it came to imply a moral quality and has been translated a superior man or a gentleman. Thus one could attain higher social status through moral and educational development. For Confucius a good man was always a gentleman, but not all gentlemen were good. A gentleman considers loyalty and faithfulness fundamental and is not afraid of correcting his mistakes. We must acknowledge that as a male term this does indicate sexism, which seems to have been the case since there is no evidence that Confucius had any female students, though he did speak to the notorious Nan-zi.

For Confucius the main concern for the gentleman was self-improvement. He is distressed at his own lack of capacity, never at the failure of others to recognize his merits. Confucius warned that the gentleman should guard against lust when one's physical powers are not settled, strife when they are full of vigor, and avarice when they are declining. A gentleman's nine cares are to see clearly, hear distinctly, be kind in looks, respectful in manner, sincere in words, and diligent in work. When in doubt, he asks for information; when angry, he considers the consequences; and when he sees a chance for gain, he considers whether the pursuit would be right. A gentleman is cautious with words and diligent in action lest his words outrun his deeds. The superior person

does not promote someone merely because of what one says nor does one reject sayings because of who said them.

Sometimes Confucius contrasted the superior person to the inferior. The superior sets one's heart on virtue, the inferior on comfort. The superior think of sanctions, the inferior of favors. The superior person looks at a question from all sides without bias; the inferior is biased and can see only one point of view. The superior are not for or against anything but follow what is right; the inferior understand only profit. The gentleman calls attention to the good points in others; the small person points out their defects. A gentleman makes demands on himself; the small person makes them on others. The superior people can influence those above them, but the inferior only those below them. The gentleman is calm and at ease; the inferior frets and is ill at ease. The gentleman is dignified but not proud; the inferior are proud but not dignified. For Confucius the gentleman thinks of the way and its progress, not how he is going to make a living. He warns against dehumanization, saying that a gentleman is not an implement. A gentleman considers justice essential, practices propriety, is modest and faithful. A gentleman acts before he speaks and then speaks according to his action.

Confucius warned against hypocrisy when he said that one with clever words and a pretentious manner is seldom good. He did not consider himself truly good, wise, or courageous. He said he was not concerned that he had no office, only that he make himself qualified for one. Confucius believed that a gentleman can withstand want; only a small person is swept away by it. Rather than give up his principles Confucius could be satisfied with coarse rice to eat, water to drink, and a bent arm for a pillow. He considered wealth and honor obtained through injustice to be as remote from him as clouds in the sky. Confucius claimed that he could try a civil suit as well as anyone, but that it was better to bring it about so that there are no civil suits. Not given the opportunity to put his teachings into practice on a large scale, Confucius learned and taught others instead. As one of the most influential ethical teachers in history, the results of those teachings have been immeasurable.

Followers of Confucius

Once a border guard at I asked to see Confucius, because he was always allowed to see any true gentleman who was passing by. After talking with Confucius he told the disciples not to be disheartened at their master's lack of office, because the way has not prevailed in the world for a long time. Yet he prophesied that heaven was going to use their master as a bell with a wooden tongue.

Confucius praised Yen Hui (521-481 BC) more than any of his students for his cheerfulness in poverty and his mind's attention to goodness. Yen Hui never said much, but the master knew he was not stupid from the quality of his conduct. Unfortunately Yen Hui died at a young age, and Confucius felt that no others were really fond of learning.

Ji Kang-zi became head of the administration of Lu in 492 BC and asked Confucius if Zi-lu, Zi-Gong, and Ran Qiu were fit for office. The master recommended each of them. Zi-lu (542-480 BC) appointed a student Confucius considered slow as steward, and the master said that it would ruin him. Zi-lu replied that one does not have to study books to be learned, to which Confucius

responded that such talk made him detest glib talkers. Confucius predicted that the bold and daring Zi-lu would not die in bed, and in fact he bravely refused to flee Wei in loyalty to the Kung family and was killed trying to save the prince who had hired him.

Confucius said that Ran Qiu (b. 522 BC) could be charged with the duty of managing the military levies of a town with a thousand households or for a family of a hundred chariots, but he could not say whether he was good. Confucius advised Ran Qiu to act immediately, because he had a tendency to hold himself back. Yet he cautioned Zi-lu against immediate action, because he tended to be rash. When Ran Qiu collected higher taxes for the wealthy Qi family, Confucius had him drummed out of his circle of students. Ran Qiu continued to serve the Qi family successfully for many years.

Zi-Gong (b. 520 BC) was eloquent, and Confucius described him as a sacrificial vessel of jade. In 487 BC a rebellion in Qi led to some families attacking Lu. Confucius refused permission to Zi-lu and two others to go out to Qi but granted the request of Zi-Gong. Zi-Gong persuaded Tian Chang that because of the probable rebellion it would be better for him to attack the stronger state of Wu than the weaker Lu. Zi-Gong then went to the King of Wu and convinced him to attack Qi without fearing Yue because he went there to get Yue to join Wu in the attack on Qi. Zi-Gong then went to Jin to warn them to be prepared for an attack from Wu if they defeated Qi. This all came to pass; but then Yue launched a surprise attack on Wu, killed their king and prime minister, and by 470 BC had become protector. Although in a few years all of these states and Lu were undone, Zi-Gong had preserved Lu for a while.

Zi-Gong was one of the first to go from state to state persuading rulers which policy to follow, a practice that became common in the ensuing Warring States Period. Zi-Gong also became wealthy buying and selling in accordance with market changes and was once prime minister in Lu and Wei before he died in Qi. Zi-Gong is an example of a common man who rose to fame and wealth through education and his own abilities. According to Mencius, after Confucius died, Zi-Gong went back to the religious sanctuary near his master's grave, built a house and mourned for an additional three years after the traditional three-year mourning period, showing himself to be perhaps the most devoted disciple.

Zeng Shen (505-436 BC) was described as dull-witted by Confucius, and Mencius wrote that when his house was going to be attacked, he ordered his steward not to let anyone stay in the house because he did not want the plants and trees harmed. Zeng was obviously not the humanist that Confucius was, and he seems to have emphasized filial piety even more than the master; the *Classic of Filial Piety* is often attributed to him. Zeng refused to join other disciples in rendering the same respect to Yu Ro that they had given to Confucius even though he and Yu Ro were the only others besides Confucius to be referred to as masters in the *Analects*.

Confucius considered Zi-yu (506-443 BC) well versed in culture and learning, though once when he heard Zi-yu singing and playing a string instrument, he said in jest that it was not necessary to use an ox-cleaver to kill a chicken. Zi-yu replied that a gentleman learns from the way to be kind, while an inferior person becomes easier to command. When Zi-yu was warden of the castle of Wu, Confucius asked him if he had got hold of the right people there. Later Zi-yu criticized the

school of Zi-Xia (507-425 BC) for practicing unimportant things like sprinkling and sweeping the ground, answering summons, replying to questions, and coming forward and retiring.

Zi-Xia defended his method of education by saying that the way of a gentleman must not be transmitted before the student is ready. Confucius once found that he could discuss the odes with Zi-Xia, but in evaluating him he said Zi-Xia had not reached worthiness yet. Confucius told Zi-Xia to practice the *ru* of the gentleman not that of the common people. The original meaning of this term *ru* is unclear. Waley suggests that it may have meant unwarlikeness in contrast to the cowardice of the inferior. Eventually this was the term that was used to refer to the followers of the Confucian philosophy. In the first chapter of the *Analects* Zi-Xia is quoted as saying that one who treats betters as betters, serves father and mother with all his strength and his prince with his life, and with his friends is true to his word may be called educated.

Zi-zhang (503-447 BC) was from a humble family in Lu, studied with Confucius and traveled with him in spite of the difficulties. He wrote one of the master's maxims down on his sash so as to always have it with him. The writing down of Confucius' teachings in the *Analects* is what enabled his philosophy to be passed on, but the authorship of that work is unknown. The historian Sima Qian listed the names of seventy-seven disciples of Confucius that he did not consider dubious. Though there is no indication that Confucius ever spoke to great crowds, it is clear that his teachings took hold among some devoted disciples. A document from the third century BC lists the names of six men who improved their lives through education: two had studied with Confucius, one with Zi-Xia, and two with Mo-zi. Confucian tradition credits Zi-si, the grandson of Confucius, with writing the *Da Xue (Higher Education)* and the *Zhong Yong (Center of Harmony)*, but there is no evidence these texts appeared for at least two centuries.

Mencius

The only other person in China to have his name commonly Latinized besides Confucius is Meng-zi (Mencius), who is thought to have lived from 371 to 289 BC. His father died when he was three, and his mother was said to have moved from the vicinity of a cemetery and a market to a school, because her son imitated their activities. Another story tells how Mencius had walked in on his wife in a private room as she was sitting in an improper way; when Mencius complained, his mother persuaded him not to leave his wife, because he had not announced his coming or kept his eyes down when entering.

In his one-page biography of Meng Ke (Mencius), Sima Qian wrote that he was from the state of Zuou, studied under a disciple of Zi-si (grandson of Confucius), and having mastered the way went to Qi to serve King Xuan. Mencius also went to Liang where King Hui found the views of Mencius impractical and remote from reality before he fully listened to them. This was when Qin had enhanced its wealth and military strength by putting Lord Shang in power. Chu and Wei had also won wars by putting Wu Qi in charge of their governments. King Wei and King Xuan made Qi dominant by employing Sun-zi, Tian Ji and others. This was the middle of the Warring States period when military alliances were continually being formed and changed in relation to the powerful western state of Qin. Mencius preached the traditional virtues of the three dynasties but never received a sympathetic hearing. According to the historian he then retired and with the

help of his disciple Wan Zhang and others wrote the *Mencius* in seven books and commented on the classical books of *Odes* and *Documents* while developing the ideas of Confucius.

The first book of *Mencius* begins by describing his visit to King Hui of Liang in Wei; he ruled from 370 to 319 BC. The aged king assumed that Mencius came a long way because he believed he could profit his state, but Mencius replied that concern for profit is what imperils a state; all that matters is what is good and right. King Hui said he had worked hard in governing and asked why his population had not increased. Mencius told him that he was too fond of war. If he did not interfere with the busy seasons in the fields, then the people would have more grain to eat. If he did not allow nets with too fine a mesh to be used in the large ponds, there would be more fish to eat. If the cutting down of trees with axes was limited, there would be enough timber. By caring for education in village schools and teaching proper human relationships, humans would respect each other and their king. But failing to garner surplus food or distribute it when people are starving, saying it is the fault of the harvest, is like killing a man and blaming it on the weapon. Good government reduces punishment and taxation, gets the people to plow deeply and weed promptly, and helps the able to learn.

The king of Liang asked Mencius how the empire could be settled, and he replied that one who is not fond of killing could unite it; but among the shepherds of people at that time there was not one doing so. Mencius said that King Hui could become a true king by bringing peace to the people; but he was failing because he did not practice kindness. It was not that he lacked the ability, but he had refused to act in the proper way. Mencius knew that the king wanted to extend his territory, rule over the central kingdoms and bring peace to the barbarians on the borders, but his way of going about it was like looking for a fish by climbing a tree. Not only was it unlikely he would find it, but in his case it was worse because his way caused disaster as well. If he practiced good government, the office seekers would want to be in his court, the farmer to till his land, the merchants to use his marketplace, the travelers to go by his roads, and all those who hate their rulers would come to him with their complaints. Mencius said that only a gentleman can keep a constant heart; the people tend to lose constancy and go astray, falling into excesses. To punish them then is like setting a trap for them. A bright ruler makes sure they have what they need before he drives them toward the good; thus it is easy for them to follow him. To accomplish this he must go back to the fundamentals of nurturing the people's needs and providing education.

When King Hui died, his successor seemed to Mencius to lack dignity, and so he went to advise Xuan, who had become King of Qi in 320 BC. Mencius suggested that King Xuan share his enjoyments with his people, for when a king's park is open to the people they consider it small; but when they are prohibited from entering it they naturally think it is too large. King Xuan asked how to promote good relations with other states, and Mencius said that by submitting to a state smaller than his one delights in heaven and enjoys possession of the empire, and in submitting to a larger state one is in awe of heaven and enjoys the possession of one's own state. Mencius told how Duke Jing followed wise advice and opened his granaries for the poor; another ruler cared for the aged and orphans.

Although King Xuan said these things were well spoken, he could not put them into practice because he loved money and women. When Mencius asked the king what should be done if

someone entrusted his wife and family to the care of a friend, and they were allowed to suffer cold and hunger, the King said he should break with his friend; and if the Marshal of the Guards could not control his guards, he should be replaced. Yet when Mencius asked what should be done if the whole realm is ill-governed, the King turned to his attendants and changed the subject. Mencius advised that when the attendants all give the same recommendation and the counselors and everyone else does also, it still should be investigated to see if what they say is true. In this way good and wise men may be appointed and unsuitable officers removed.

King Xuan asked if regicide was permitted since Shang founder Tang banished Jieh, and King Wu marched against the last Shang king; but Mencius responded that these rulers so mutilated humanity that they should be called outcasts not kings. In 315 BC the King of Yen abdicated and appointed his prime minister, causing a revolt in Yen. Mencius was asked if it was all right to march on Yen, and he said yes, because the king had no right to give Yen to another; but he explained that he was not encouraging Qi to invade Yen, because only a heaven-appointed officer had the right to do so. After Qi invaded Yen, King Xuan asked Mencius if he should annex Yen. Mencius said that if annexing it would please its people then it could be done; but if annexing it antagonized its people, then he should not. Qi annexed Yen, and most of the feudal lords planned to aid Yen. King Xuan asked Mencius how he should meet the threat. Mencius referred to the example of Tang, founder of the Shang dynasty and then gave the following advice:

Now when you went to punish Yen
 which practiced tyranny over its people,
 the people thought
 you were going to rescue them from water and fire,
 and they came to meet the army,
 bringing baskets of rice and bottles of drink.
 How can it be right for you to kill the old and bind the young,
 destroy the ancestral temples and appropriate the valuable vessels?
 Even before this, the whole Empire was afraid of the power of Qi.
 Now you double your territory without practicing good government.
 This is to provoke the armies of the whole Empire.
 If you hasten to order the release of the captives, old and young,
 leave the valuable vessels where they are,
 and take your army out
 after setting up a ruler in consultation with the men of Yen,
 it is still not too late to halt the armies of the Empire.¹³

Mencius later explained that he never intended to stay long in Qi, but he was unable to leave because the war broke out. Duke Mu of Zuou asked Mencius what he should do after thirty-three of his officers died without the people helping them. Mencius recalled that in the years of bad harvest nearly a thousand of his people had suffered in spite of full granaries, because his officials had not informed him of what was happening. Zeng-zi's warning that what you mete out will be paid back to you came to pass. Mencius said the Duke should not hold a grudge against the people, because if he practices good government they will love their superiors and even die for them.

Mencius advised Duke Wen of the small state of Teng to do good and hope that heaven will grant success. In starting an enterprise a gentleman can only leave behind a tradition that can be

carried on. He cited the case of a leader of Pin, who told his people that the Di tribes wanted their land, and so rather than bring harm to them he was leaving. The people of Bin realized that he was a good man and flocked after him as if to market. Others decided to stay and defend their land. These were the two choices.

Mencius declared that the appearance of a true king was never more overdue than in his time when the people suffered under such tyrannical governments. He did not just admire the ancients; he believed that twice as much could be done in his time with half the effort. For Mencius ethical good was at the center of the vital force in the human body called *qi*. The will directs this energy and when it nourishes it with integrity, the *qi* unites what is right and the way. He recommended a middle path between too much meddling and negligence. He told of a man who urged his rice plants to grow by pulling them out too soon. The other extreme is not even bothering to weed. Mencius could read character from one's words. He could see the blind in their biased words, the ensnared in their immoderate words, those who have strayed in their heretical words, and those at their wits' end in their evasive words.

Along with the legendary sages, Bo Yi and Yi Yin, he admired Confucius most of all. They were capable of winning the homage of the feudal lords, but if they had to kill one innocent person in order to gain the empire, none of them would have consented to do so. People only submit to force unwillingly, because they are not strong enough to resist; but when they submit to the transforming influence of ethics, they do so sincerely with admiration in their hearts. Goodness brings honor, but cruelty disgrace. When the good and wise rule, the able are employed; in times of peace the laws can be explained to the people, but the ruler indulging in pleasures and indolence courts disaster. If the good and wise are honored and the able are employed, gentlemen will come to the court. If goods are exempted from taxation in the marketplace and premises are exempted from land taxes, traders will come. If there is no fee at border stations, travelers will come. If tillers pay no land tax but help in the public fields, farmers will come.

Mencius believed that no one is devoid of a heart sensitive to the suffering of others and uses the example of a baby about to fall into a well. Anyone will naturally be moved by compassion to prevent the tragedy, not to get into the good graces of the parents nor to win praise nor because one dislikes to hear a child cry. Whoever is devoid of a heart of compassion and shame and right or wrong is not human. From this heart comes the good, duty, courtesy, propriety, and wisdom. Anyone lacking these is a slave. Practicing the good is like archery: when one fails to hit the mark, one must correct oneself. If others do not respond to your love, look into your own humanity. If others fail to respond to your governing, consider your own wisdom. If others do not return your courtesy, look into your own respect. In other words, whenever you fail to achieve your purpose, look into yourself.

The best person, like the great Shun, is not afraid to learn from others, and after doing good oneself goes on to help others do good. Mencius believed that the good and talented ought to help those who are less so. Only one who will not do some things is capable of doing great things. He warned people to think of the consequences before pointing out the shortcomings of others. Doing what is right was paramount for Mencius, as he believed that a great person might not always keep one's word or see actions through to the end, if these were not right. A superior person finds the way in oneself, is at ease with it, and draws deeply from it, finding its source

wherever one turns. Those who follow the way have many supporters; those who do not have few. At court rank is exalted, and in the village age is respected; but for assisting the world and governing people virtue is best. Mencius accused the governor of Ping Lu of refusing to report to duty several times because he allowed his people to starve during a famine.

Mencius recommended that if farmers help each other to keep watch, and nurse each other in illness, they will live in love and harmony. The way cannot be bent to please others. No one has ever straightened others by bending oneself. Mencius mentioned that the current teachings in the empire were those of Yang Zhu and Mo. Yang Zhu taught everyone for oneself, and Mo advocated love without making any preference for family, which Mencius felt was no better than beasts. Mencius believed that love of one's parents was the first step which could lead to peace in the empire. Pleasing one's parents begins by being true to oneself which depends on understanding goodness. By pleasing one's parents one can win the trust of friends, the confidence of superiors, and thus govern the people.

Mencius referred to Confucius criticizing Ran Qiu for agreeing to raise taxes. How much more would he reject those who wage war on behalf of rulers to gain land and fill the plains with the dead! This Mencius called showing the land how to devour human flesh. For Mencius a great person retains the heart of a child. He felt that even goodness could not be used to dominate people. One can only succeed by using goodness for the welfare of the people, and one can never gain the empire without their heart-felt admiration. The good retain their hearts and love others, and the courteous respect others. Sages may live in retirement or in the world, but they always keep their integrity intact. The heart of compassion is good; the heart of shame is dutiful; the heart of respect appropriate; and the heart of right and wrong wise. Mencius said, "Seek and you will find it; let go and you will lose it."¹⁴ People become different because of what ensnares their hearts. The sage is merely the one who discovers what is right and reasonable in the heart.

Mencius observed that once the trees had been luxuriant on Ox Mountain, but being near a city they were constantly lopped by axes. With rain and dew, new shoots came out, but then cattle and sheep grazed upon the mountain, leaving it bald. Is this the nature of the mountain? he asked. Similarly humans lose their true hearts, just as the trees were lopped off day by day. Humans rest at night, but each day dissipates what has been gained. When what was original is no longer preserved, they become like animals. Anything will grow with the right nourishment, but without it anything will wither away. Goodness is the heart, and rightness the correct road. When the heart strays, people often fail to go after it; yet when chickens stray, they will retrieve them. For Mencius the sole concern of learning is to go after this strayed heart. People love all the parts of their person. However, the small person harms the more important in seeking what is less valuable, while the great person nurtures the parts of greater importance. The heart can think and tell the difference. This is what heaven has given humans. But if one does not think, one will not find the answer.

Mencius compared goodness to water, which can overcome the cruelty of fire. Some try to put out a cartload of burning wood with a cup of water and then say water cannot overcome fire. To do this is to place one on the side of the most cruel; in the end they perish. The way is like a broad road that is not difficult to find. The problem is that people simply do not look for it. Those who do look for it will find enough teachers. Once Mencius met a man, who was going to

Chu to persuade them that war was unprofitable. Mencius commended his purpose but suggested that by putting profit first ethics may be excluded, and the result will be chaos. By placing the ethics of what is best for all before them all human relationships can be made mutually beneficial.

Mencius explained how morality had degenerated from the three ancient emperors to the five protectors of the feudal lords to the current feudal lords and their counselors, each of which offended against those who came before. The emperor used to inspect the domain, and the feudal lords reported on their duties. Those who needed it were given aid. In the feudal system lords were rewarded with land. If the land was neglected, the good and wise overlooked, and grasping men put in power, then the lord was reprimanded. Thus the emperor punished but did not attack, while the feudal lords attack but do not punish. The protectors then intimidated the feudal lords to attack other feudal lords.

The most illustrious of the protectors, Duke Huan of Qi, got the feudal lords to agree to a pledge which included first: not punishing dutiful sons nor putting aside heirs nor elevating concubines; second: honoring the good and wise and training the capable; third: respecting the aged and being kind to the young, guests, and travelers; fourth: not making offices hereditary, nor letting one man hold more than one office nor allowing a feudal lord to execute a counselor solely on his own authority; and fifth: not allowing diversion of dikes nor prohibiting the sale of rice. Today, said Mencius, the feudal lords violate all of these five injunctions. Yet Mencius concluded that the crime of encouraging a ruler to evil deeds is small compared to the pandering to his unspoken evil desires. Thus the counselors of the time offend against the feudal lords.

Mencius held that a good person would not even take from one person to give to another, let alone seek territory at the cost of human lives. To enrich a ruler, who is neither attracted to the way nor good to the people, is like enriching a tyrant. When about to place a great responsibility on a person, heaven may test one with hardship and frustrated efforts in order to toughen one's nature and shore up deficiencies. People usually only mend their ways after making mistakes. Those whose minds are frustrated learn how to innovate.

Mencius believed that those who understand their own nature will know heaven; by retaining the heart and nurturing their nature they serve heaven. He found no greater joy than finding upon self-examination that he is being true to himself. He taught the golden rule of trying your best to treat others as you would wish to be treated yourself as the shortest path to goodness. The best person does not abandon what is right in adversity nor depart from the way in success. In obscurity one can perfect one's own person; in prominence one can perfect the whole empire as well. For Mencius good government was not as important as good education, because the people fear good government, but they love good education. Good government wins their wealth, but good education wins their hearts. Mencius believed it contrary to goodness to kill even one person and contrary to justice to take what one is not entitled to. The wise person knows everything but considers urgent only what demands attention. The good person loves everyone but devotes oneself in close association with the good and wise.

Mencius pointed out how Duke Hui of Liang extended his ruthlessness from those he did not love to those he did by sending to war even the young men he loved, whereas a good person

extends one's love to those one did not love. Mencius could find no just wars in the Spring and Autumn Era but only peers trying to punish one another by war. He considered those who thought of themselves as military experts as grave criminals. The trouble with people, he thought, was that they leave their own fields to weed others' fields, being exacting toward others but indulgent toward themselves. Like the sages of India, he recommended nurturing the heart by reducing the number of one's desires.

Xun-zi

Xun-zi (Hsun-tzu) was born about 310 BC in the state of Zhao, but at the age of fifteen he went to study in a center of learning in Qi. There Xun-zi probably wrote his books criticizing the ideas of Shen Bu-hai, Shen Dao, Zhuang-zi, Mo-zi, and the "Rectifying Theses" aimed at the logicians. After Qi attacked and absorbed the state of Song in 286 BC, Xun-zi tried to persuade King Min and the Lord of Meng-chang that their policies were excessive and would lead to doom if they persisted in them. The Lord of Meng-chang turned against King Min, and Qi was invaded by the armies of Yen, Qin, Wei, and Zhao in 284 BC. The scholars of the academy in Qi had to flee.

Xun-zi went to the southern state of Chu, which was suffering under the domination of the powerful Qin state. As Qin took over portions of Chu, Xun-zi learned that power must be tempered with justice, and his writings there emphasized education. After about eight years in Chu, Xun-zi returned to the academy in Qi, where he became the most honored scholar. Xun-zi's writing in this period seems to have been influenced by Daoism, though he criticized some of Lao-zi's ideas. About 265 BC Xun-zi was slandered and began to travel to other courts such as Qin and Zhao to give advice as a scholar though he was never allowed to govern. Xun-zi left Qin when he was about fifty.

About a year after Qin's devastating defeat of Xun-zi's native Zhao in 260 BC in which 400,000 soldiers were buried alive, Xun-zi had a discussion with the Lord of Lin-wu in the presence of King Xiao-cheng of Zhao. Xun-zi argued that what was most important is winning the support of the people so that they can be unified. He claimed that military deception is of no use against a good person and a state that is not torn apart. He observed that Qin used a system of rewards and punishments to build up their strength and expand their territory with repeated victories in the last four generations. Xun-zi believed that people are deceived by using such military means and profit motivations, while the way to unite them is by principles of propriety and moral education. When deception meets deception, the battle may go either way; but when deception meets unity, unity is sure to win.

Xun-zi recommended practical arts for regulating military commands through authority, consistent and appropriate rewards and punishments, alert troop movements, complete reports on the enemy, and proceeding in battle only on the basis of thorough understanding. The five expedients are not worrying about one's rank, not pressing too hard for victory, not being too stern with the men nor despising the enemy, not thinking only of gain but of loss as well, and using supplies liberally. The general may refuse to obey the command of his ruler if he is told to take up an untenable position, attack without hope of victory, or deceive the common people. The king's army should not kill old men and boys nor destroy crops nor seize those who retire

without a fight, but it does not forgive those who resist. It does not punish the common people but those who lead them astray.

A true king according to Xun-zi does not make war but carries out punitive expeditions. He does not lay siege to a guarded city nor attack soldiers who resist strongly. He does not massacre a city nor move his army in secret, and he does not keep his soldiers in the field for more than one season. When the king asked him why a good man would take up arms at all if it is only to contend for spoil, Xun-zi replied that a good person loves others and hates to see men do them harm. He only takes up arms to put an end to violence and do away with harm, not to contend for spoil.

Li Si, who studied with Xun-zi and later became prime minister for Qin and helped to establish its empire, said to Xun-zi that Qin won victories not by goodness and justice but by taking advantage of opportunities. Xun-zi responded that Qin lives in terror and apprehension lest the rest of the world unite to defeat them. This superficial model is the way to bring disorder to the world in a degenerate age. Xun-zi summarized his policies this way:

Lead the people by magnifying the sound of virtue,
 guide them by making clear ritual principles,
 love them with the utmost loyalty and good faith,
 give them a place in the government
 by honoring the worthy and employing the able,
 and elevate them in rank by bestowing titles and rewards.
 Demand labor of them only at the proper season,
 lighten their burdens, unify them in harmony,
 nourish them and care for them as you would little children.
 Then, when the commands of government have been fixed
 and the customs of the people unified,
 if there should be those who depart from the customary ways
 and refuse to obey their superiors,
 the common people will as one man turn upon them with hatred,
 and regard them with loathing,
 like an evil force that must be exorcised.
 Then and only then should you think of applying penalties.¹⁵

Xun-zi explained how a neighboring state may be annexed by virtue, by force, or by wealth. In using virtue the customs of the people are respected so that the people follow willingly, and power is increased. But using force wastes strength on military means and weakens the state, while using wealth depletes the material resources of the state. He pointed out that Qi annexed Song but could not hold on to it, as Wei took it over; Yen managed to annex Qi but lost it to Tian Dan, the Qi general; part of Han joined Zhao, but Qin took it away.

Xun-zi arrived at the court of Zhao just after the Lord of Ping-yuan's state had been rescued by the Lord of Xin-ling and his army from Wei and also an army from Chu in a defeat of Qin that delayed for thirty years their imperialist conquest. The prime minister of Chu, the Lord of Chun-shen, appointed Xun-zi magistrate of Lan-ling but was persuaded to remove the philosopher from office because of the fear that his good government would lead to a mandate from heaven for him to rule larger areas, threatening the Lord of Chun-shen's own power. However, another rhetorician convinced this prime minister that he should ask Xun-zi to return to his post, because

he is one of the worthiest men in the world. In reply Xun-zi sent a letter saying that a leper pities a king, because a ruler who has robbed and murdered suffers mental anguish, while a leper suffers only physically. Xun-zi composed a poem complaining of one who considers the blind clear-sighted, the deaf keen of hearing, and who considers danger security, asking finally "Why did I ever have anything in common with him?"¹⁶ Nevertheless Chun-shen invited him to return once more, and Xun-zi took up his post in Lan-ling until Chun-shen was assassinated in 238 BC.

His two most famous students, Li Si and Han Fei-zi, had left him by then; Li Si sought an office in Qin in 247 BC, and Han Fei-zi soon after went to present his views to the king in Qin, where he died in 233 BC. Li Si persuaded the king of Qin not to banish all foreigners, and after Qin conquered all of China in 221 BC he was a high minister two years later and chancellor by 213 BC. Li Si offered his old teacher a nominal position, but Xun-zi was now in his nineties; foreseeing that he would fall into unfathomable disasters, Xun-zi declined the position and died in his late nineties.

Xun-zi's book is organized into discourses on various topics with some poetry. He began by encouraging learning, which the gentleman says should never cease. By studying widely and examining oneself wisdom becomes clear, and conduct can be without fault. For Xun-zi there is nothing more spiritual than transforming oneself with the way. The gentleman is not different by birth but knows how to make use of things as a traveler uses carriages and horses or a boat to cross rivers. Everything has a cause, and human glory or shame is nothing but reflection of one's virtue. When one is careless and lazy and forgets oneself, disaster occurs. Evil and corruption invite the anger of others. Virtue can be created by piling up good deeds, and then spiritual understanding will come of itself. Achievement results from never giving up.

Xun-zi's learning program begins with the classics of history, poetry, and the annals and ends with the books of propriety. The learning of the best is manifest in action, but what the small people hear comes right out the mouth. It is best to associate with the learned and love them. Xun-zi warned against speaking to the gross or arguing with the contentious, but the way may be discussed with a respectful person and its principles with a reasonable person. The best person trains oneself to see, hear, and think only what is right even more than the objects of the senses. The best are not subverted by power or the love of profit nor swayed by the masses or the world. Through constancy in virtue one can order oneself and then respond to others.

Xun-zi emphasized self-improvement. Whoever censures you is your teacher; whoever approves you is your friend; but whoever flatters you is your enemy. Clinging to profit and turning aside from what is right Xun-zi called depravity. If your will is well disciplined, you may hold up your head before wealth and eminence. A person of breeding loves the law and puts it into effect. A gentleman has a firm will and embodies it in conduct. A sage has keen insight that never fails. If you treat old people well and do not press the already hard pressed and do good in secret and seek no reward for kindness, both sages and unworthy people will be with you, and would heaven leave such a person to perish? Though poor and hard pressed, the gentleman is benevolent; though rich and eminent, he is respectful; though at ease, he is not indolent; though weary, he still values good form; he does not take away too much in anger nor give too much in joy.

Xun-zi contrasted the gentleman and the petty person. When the gentleman is courageous, he reveres heaven and follows its way. When faint-hearted, he follows moral duty. When knowledgeable, he understands the interconnections of phenomena. When ignorant, he is honest, diligent and follows a model. When followed, he restrains himself with respect. When not followed, he regulates himself. When he is happy, he harmonizes with others. When sad, he maintains inner peace. When successful, he maintains good form. When encountering hardship, he is frugal and careful. When courageous, the petty person is indolent and haughty; when faint-hearted, lecherous and subversive; when knowledgeable, predatory and clandestine; when ignorant, malicious and rebellious; when followed, imperious; when not followed, resentful and underhanded; when happy, frivolous; when sad, despondent; when successful, proud and unfair; and when encountering hardship, negligent and lazy.

Xun-zi described how a person may nurture one's mind with truthfulness, uphold the principle of humanity, and behave with justice. Thus giving humanity form it produces transmutation in accord with natural order. But those who lack truthfulness will not be individuals; their characters will not be given form; and the common people will never follow them unless with suspicion. The wise through truthfulness may transmute the people; but without it fathers and sons drift apart, and rulers are considered base.

Xun-zi delineated six productions. Public spirit produces clear understanding, but partisanship produces obscurity. Straightforward diligence produces success, but deceit produces obstructions. Honesty produces perspicacity, but boasting produces self-delusion. Like the Epicureans, Xun-zi found that the desirable may also bring what is detestable, and what is beneficial may eventually involve harm. Therefore one must maturely calculate the relative merits and liabilities in choosing. Human calamities tend to result from prejudices. For Xun-zi the courage of the gentleman is staying with what is just, not being swayed by the exigencies of the moment, not looking for one's own profit, but considering the interests of the whole state and assisting in realizing them, and weighing the threat of death by upholding moral duty.

Xun-zi wrote that Mo-zi knew how to elevate merit and utility, frugality and economy, but he ignored gradations of rank and status, which Xun-zi considered essential to social order. He also criticized those who follow Zi-si and Mencius as deluded. Xun-zi believed that one may develop inner power (virtue) by not using honor to be arrogant nor intelligence to place others in difficulty nor intellect to gain precedence over others nor courage to cause injury. When not knowing, ask others; when lacking ability, study; and even when having ability, yield to others. For Xun-zi learning means not only understanding but carrying it out in action. The wise base their conduct on goodness and justice, making one's speech accord with action.

In governing Xun-zi recommended promoting the worthy, dismissing the incompetent, punishing the incorrigibly evil, and teaching the average people. Proposals ought to be weighed in terms of justice and harmoniousness, but to show favoritism and partisan feeling is the worst thing one can do. Xun-zi believed that if everyone is treated equally, conflict will result from insufficient goods. Distinctions were set up so that those above could watch over those below, but he did not seem to rationalize this with the principle of justice. Nevertheless he believed that the common people should be treated with kindness by capable governors, encouraging filial piety and brotherly affection by looking after orphans and widows and assisting the poor. When this is

done, the gentlemen may occupy their positions in safety. However, if the state's coffers are heaped up while the people are impoverished, the state will not be able to protect itself at home nor fight its enemies abroad.

A king works to acquire people, a dictator to acquire allies, and a despot to acquire territory. The militarist who uses might to conquer cities inflicts great injury on people in other states who will want to fight him, but he also harms his own people who will hate him and will not want to fight for him. Thus he lives in constant peril. Xun-zi did not believe that secrecy was beneficial to the way of the ruler, because the superior should elucidate the standard, be correct, diligent, impartial, and honest.

Xun-zi warned against cutting down trees and injuring plants and fishing in the lakes at the wrong time lest life be destroyed and growing things be injured. Foreseeing an ecological vision, he concluded that the wise found every move on unity. Those who choose well control others, but those who choose badly will be controlled by others. Xun-zi held that war is caused by desire for fame or territory or by anger, but a good ruler may gain fame or territory without fighting, and no one is angry with him. The wicked arise because the rulers do not honor justice. The just person is in accord with people inwardly and things outwardly, at peace with those above and in harmony with the people below.

Perhaps influenced by the mysticism of Lao-zi, Xun-zi saw the work of heaven as bringing to completion without acting and obtaining without seeking. When the work of heaven is established, then the human form is whole and one's spirit is born, resulting in the emotions of love and hate, delight and anger, sorrow and joy. The heart dwells in the center and governs the five senses. The wise cherish heavenly nourishment, obey heavenly dictates, nourish heavenly emotions, understanding what is to be done and what is not to be done. The gentleman does not stop acting because the petty carp and clamor any more than heaven suspends winter because people dislike cold. The gentleman focuses on what is in his power, living in the present and remembering the past, refined in purpose, rich in virtuous action, and clear in understanding. The petty put aside their own power and long for heaven's power. Xun-zi was skeptical of heavenly portents, fearing rather human portents such as poor plowing, bad weeding, and evil government. To set aside human concerns and long for what belongs to heaven is to mistake the nature of all things. Xun-zi considered ceremonies as markers of the way to guide the people.

Xun-zi offered this succinct critique of some other philosophers:

Shen-zi could see the advantages of holding back,
but not the advantages of taking the lead.
Lao-zi could see the advantages of humbling oneself,
but not the advantages of raising one's station.
Mo-zi could see the advantages of uniformity,
but not those of diversity.
Song-zi could see the advantages of having few desires,
but not of having many.
If everyone holds back and no one takes the lead,
then there will be no gate to advancement for the people.
If everyone humbles himself and no one tries to improve his station,
then distinctions between eminent and humble become meaningless.
If there is only uniformity and no diversity,

then the commands of government can never be carried out.
 If there is a lessening of desires and never an increase,
 then there will be no way to educate and transform the people.¹⁷

Xun-zi placed great importance on *li* (propriety, ceremonies, ritual). He explained that the ancients found desires led to conflict and disorder if they were not regulated by principles of propriety and justice. He believed that social distinctions need to be made between the eminent and humble, elder and younger, rich and poor, and the important and unimportant. The wise know how to think and be steadfast, but he also felt they have a love of ritual. Both the outer form and inner meaning must be considered along with the inner feelings and outer practical use. A gentleman would be ashamed to treat even a slave in a way that offends the heart. He wrote, "Rites trim what is too long and stretch out what is too short, eliminate surplus and repair deficiency, extend the forms of love and reverence, and step by step bring to fulfillment the beauties of proper conduct."¹⁸

Xun-zi also loved music, which he called joy. Bad music he felt could be a source of danger and disgrace. The wise kings found joy in proper music, because it could make the hearts of people good by deeply influencing them and reforming their ways.

Xun-zi was concerned that people become obsessed by a small corner of truth and fail to comprehend its over-all principles. He believed that people sincerely seek what is proper, but they are led astray by their prejudices and bad habits. He criticized Mo-zi for being obsessed by utilitarian considerations, Shen Bu-hai for being obsessed by the power of circumstance, and Zhuang-zi for being obsessed by thoughts of heaven. Utilitarian considerations make the way wholly a matter of material profit; thinking only of circumstance makes it wholly a matter of expedience; and thinking only of heaven makes the way wholly a matter of harmonizing with natural forces. However, he considered Confucius good, wise, and free of obsession. People understand the way by using the mind to understand through its emptiness, unity, and stillness. Yet the mind also stores things up, is diversified, and constantly moving. The intellect can use memory, which does not hinder new impressions. The mind is the ruler of the body and the master of its intelligence. By its own will it prohibits or permits, rejects or accepts, goes or stops; the mind decides what is right.

In a time of much logical debate, Xun-zi attempted to "rectify names" by defining his terms. What comes from birth he called nature. Likes and dislikes, delights and angers, griefs and joys of nature he called emotions. When emotions arise, the mind makes a choice among them through thought. Applied decisions he called conscious activity. Action based on profit is business, and action based on duty is moral conduct. Knowledge that is applied practically is called ability. Injuries to one's nature are sickness, and unforeseen occurrences are fate. Clarifying terms so that they correspond to reality he considered essential to social order. Because he believed that everyone does what they think is good and rejects what they think is bad, anyone who understands the way will abide by it. Anyone who would exchange the desires of countless years for a momentary gratification simply cannot do arithmetic. Those who endanger their bodies, afflict their minds, and behave recklessly when they want health, joy, and honor have allowed the self to become the slave of things.

The main difference Xun-zi had with Mencius was that he believed that human nature is evil and that goodness is the result of conscious activity. Desire for profit comes from the nature of the emotions, but one can be transformed by instruction from a teacher and guidance by propriety. Courtesy and humility are contrary to the emotional nature and must be learned by conscious action. Thus the wise transform their nature by conscious activity to set up ritual principles and regulations. Xun-zi feared that if the authority of the ruler was eliminated so that the order of ritual principles and laws and standards with their punishments were rejected, then the powerful would exploit the weak, the many would terrorize the few, and the whole world would become chaotic and mutually destructive. Nevertheless he believed that everyone could understand goodness, justice, and ritual principles and put them into practice if one associates with good people and is properly taught.

In one of his poems Xun-zi lamented that the world is not well ordered. The military is promoted in the name of military preparedness. Those who follow the way and its virtue are slandered by many. The humane are degraded and reduced to poverty, while proud and violent men usurp and tyrannize at will. Xun-zi believed that when a country is about to flourish it is certain to value its teachers and give great importance to education, and its laws and standards will be preserved; but when it is on the verge of decay, teachers are treated with contempt, the people are smugly self-satisfied, and the laws and standards will be allowed to go to ruin. In the final eulogy at the end of Xun-zi's book, a commentator explained that Xun-zi had a harder time than Confucius, because he was oppressed by a chaotic age that was intimidated by threats of stern punishment, as rulers faced the aggression of Qin. Ritual and moral principles were not observed; the humane were degraded and constrained or ridiculed and derided; and the transforming effects of teaching were not brought to completion.

Later Confucian Works

In addition to the five ancient classics of Confucius' time, from the fourth to the first centuries BC many shorter Confucian writings were collected together in the *Li Ji*, which became the most important classic of *Li* (propriety, rites). In addition to the *Analects* of Confucius (*Lun Yu*) and the books of Mencius and Xun-zi, another minor Confucian classic was the *Book of Filial Piety* (*Xiao Jing*), which was traditionally ascribed to Zeng-zi, the disciple of Confucius who emphasized this virtue. However, scholars believe it was compiled from Confucian teachings in the same period when the *Li Ji* was being formed.

The *Xiao Jing* consists of conversations between Confucius himself and Zeng-zi. In this text filial piety (*Xiao*) is heralded as the basis of virtue and the source of culture. Confucius explains that since all of our bodies are given to us by our parents, filial piety should make sure that no harm comes to our parents. This loyalty begins with the parents but moves on to service of the sovereign and is completed by the establishment of one's own personality. From our parents we learn how to love, and one who loves one's parents does not dare to hate others. Love and reverence in service to one's parents gives one a moral influence that transforms people and becomes a model for all.

The filial feudal lord is not proud and arrogant but frugal and prudent in order to keep his wealth and dignity. Filial officers do not presume to use words or act contrary to the early kings. Filial

scholars have equal love for their mothers and fathers and their prince; they show love to their mothers, reverence to their prince, and both to their fathers. The common people are filial by supporting their parents through using the soil of the earth and being prudent and frugal in their expenditures. Government by filial piety means not neglecting the ministers of small states nor ignoring widows nor mistreating servants and concubines much less the aristocrats, scholars, people, wives, and children.

No bond is greater than the life parents give one. No kindness is greater than their care for the children in their upbringing. Thus filial piety loves one's parents before all by revering them, making them happy, taking care of them in sickness, showing sorrow over their death, and sacrificing to them solemnly. Whoever really loves one's parents will not be proud in a high position nor rebellious in an inferior position nor contentious with the people. Another duty is for the son to admonish the parents even if it means disobedience. In case of gross wrong, the son should admonish the father just as the minister should admonish his sovereign and a friend admonish a scholar. If ministers admonish the ruler, a state will not be lost even if the ruler is not virtuous.

Three books of rituals served as the *Li Jing (Ritual Classic)*. The oldest is the *I Li*, which was discussed in the last chapter. The *Zhou Rituals (Zhou Li)* is ascribed to the famous Duke of Zhou, but scholars believe it was a work of the fifth or fourth centuries BC, although some believe it was entirely forged by Han scholars. The six parts of the *Zhou Li* describe what came to be the six departments of Chinese government for the next two thousand years. The Institute of Heaven is the Prime Ministry that supervises all governmental activities and controls and appoints all the officials. The Institute of Earth covers education and social welfare, especially agriculture and marriage. The Institute of Spring is concerned with ceremonies and protocol, including divination and astrology. The Institute of Summer manages defense and security, training the troops. The Institute of Autumn is the department of justice and punishment, administering the laws. The last section of the book on the Institute of Winter was lost but was replaced by the "Record of the Inspection of Works" on the department of public works and economic production.

The collection of texts known as the *Li Ji* was composed by followers of Confucius and became an important compendium of Confucian teachings by the first century BC when it was compiled by Dai De and his nephew Dai Sheng. The rules of propriety are discussed in detail for funeral rites and mourning, sacrifices, archery and chariot-driving contests, capping ceremonies for the initiation into adulthood, marriage ceremonies, audiences, drinking and banquet festivities, and friendly missions. The *Li Ji* begins with the following summary of the rules of propriety:

Always and in everything let there be reverence;
with the deportment grave as when one is thinking,
and with speech composed and definite.
This will make the people tranquil.
Pride should not be allowed to grow;
the desires should not be indulged;
the will should not be gratified to the full;
pleasure should not be carried to excess.
Men of talents and virtue can be familiar with others
and yet respect them;

can stand in awe of others and yet love them.
 They love others and yet acknowledge the evil that is in them.
 They accumulate and yet are able to part with it;
 they rest in what gives them satisfaction
 and yet can seek satisfaction elsewhere.
 When you find wealth within your reach,
 do not get it by improper means;
 when you meet with calamity,
 do not escape from it by improper means.
 Do not seek for victory in small contentions;
 do not seek for more than your proper share.
 Do not positively affirm what you have doubts about;
 and do not let what you say appear as your own view.¹⁹

What is right for the time and circumstances should be followed. In a mission to another state, its customs are to be observed. One should not try to please others in an improper way nor be lavish with one's words. Good conduct is when one cultivates one's own person and fulfills one's words in accordance with the right course. Virtue, goodness, and justice cannot be fully carried out without the rules of propriety, nor can training and lessons be complete, quarrels cleared up, duties between ruler and minister, high and low, father and son, elder brother and younger be determined, nor can majesty and dignity be shown at court nor official duties carried out nor offerings to spiritual beings be presented without the rules of propriety. Respect and reverence make humans different from beasts. The rules of propriety value reciprocity. Propriety is seen in humbling oneself and honoring others.

In the chapter on the evolution of propriety Confucius recalls the Grand Unity when a public and common spirit ruled everywhere. Those with talents, virtue and ability were chosen. Words were sincere, and harmony was cultivated. People did not only love their parents or sons but everyone's. The aged were provided with security until death, the able-bodied with employment, and the young with the means of growing up. Kindness and compassion were shown to widows, orphans, and the disabled. Men had proper work, and women had their homes. Selfish schemings found no development, and stealing did not show itself.

When this Grand Union fell into disuse, the kingdom became hereditary, and now everyone loves their own parents and cherishes their own children, working for their own advantage. The rules of propriety were used by great men of power and position to drive away rulers who did not follow them, having recourse to arms. In this less spontaneously good age, ancient kings used the rules of propriety to represent the ways of heaven and regulate human feelings.

The seven feelings are joy, anger, sadness, fear, love, disliking, and liking. The ten virtues that are right are kindness of the father and filial duty of the son, gentleness of the older brother and obedience of the younger, justice of the husband and submission of the wife, kindness of elders and deference of juniors, benevolence of the ruler and loyalty of the minister. Truthfulness in speech and cultivation of harmony are called advantageous, while quarrels, plundering, and murder are disastrous.

The excellence of two short texts in the *Li Ji* was so recognized by Neo-Confucian scholars of the twelfth century CE that they made them two of the four Confucian classics (along with the *Analects* and *Mencius*), and for six centuries they were the basis of civil service examinations.

These two texts are the *Da Xue*, which has been translated as "The Great Learning" and which I call "Higher Education" because it means learning for adults, and the *Zhong-Yong*, which has been translated as "The Doctrine of the Mean" and "Central Harmony" and which I call "The Center of Harmony." The first part of the *Da Xue* is attributed to Confucius, and scholars divide on the authorship of the commentary and editing between the disciple Zeng-zi and the grandson of Confucius, Zi-si, who is also generally considered the author of the *Zhong-Yong*.

The *Da Xue* begins with the three aims of the way of learning as manifesting clear character, loving the people, and living in the highest good. These enable one to achieve directing purpose, calm clarity, peaceful poise, careful deliberation, and success. The eight steps begin with the investigation of things and proceed to extending knowledge, a sincere will, setting the heart right, cultivating the personal life, making families harmonious, government orderly, and result in peace in the world. Cultivating the personal life is considered the root. Such is the essential text attributed to the great Confucius.

In the commentary Confucius is quoted as saying that he could handle litigations as well as anyone, but what is needed is for people not to have litigations at all. Making the will sincere means not allowing any self-deception. Thus the best people always watch over themselves when they are alone. Zeng-zi said that wealth may make a house shine, but virtue makes a person shine. Saying that cultivation of the personal life depends on rectifying the mind means that when one is affected by anger, fear, fondness, worries and anxiety, the mind will not be correct. One must cultivate the personal life in order to regulate the family or else one will be partial toward those they love, dislike, fear, revere, pity, and respect. Few in the world know what is bad in those they like and what is good in those they dislike.

The family must be regulated before the state can be governed, because no one who cannot teach his own family can teach others. When families become good and compliant, then the whole state will become so. Yet when one man becomes greedy, the whole country will be disordered. A gentleman must have good qualities in himself before he can require them in others. No one who does not have altruism oneself can teach other people. When the ruler treats the elders with respect and the young with compassion, then the people will be aroused to filial piety and find peace in the world. Virtue is the root that produces the fruit of wealth. Yet when wealth is gathered in the ruler's hand, the people will scatter away from him; but when wealth is scattered, they will gather around him. Evil words uttered will be uttered back to one. When wealth is acquired in an evil way, it will be taken away in an evil way. But when the ruler loves humanity, the people will love justice and carry the affairs of the state to completion.

"The Center of Harmony" (*Zhong-Yong*), which is influenced by mystical Daoism, begins by defining human nature as what is given by heaven which when followed is called the way. Cultivating the way is education. The best people look into their hearts and watch the unseen and apprehend the unheard. Before the feelings of pleasure, anger, sorrow, and joy are aroused, one is in what is called the center. When these feelings are aroused and attain their due measure and degree, it is called harmony. The center is the supreme foundation of the universe, and harmony is its universal expression. When the center and harmony are fully realized, order and happiness abound in heaven and earth, and everything flourishes.

Confucius said that the best people always maintain the center, but others do not watch the center in their hearts. The smart go beyond it; the stupid do not come up to it. Confucius regretted that the way was not being pursued. The legendary emperor Shun avoided the extremes and found the center. Confucius also saw the good embraced by his student Hui. Even when states are put in order, honors and rewards are declined, and naked weapons are trampled on, the center of harmony is still not being followed. Only the wise who are in accord with the center of harmony retire from the world and are unknown to their age with no regret. Yet even the wise do not know the way nor practice it completely. The way finds its simple beginnings in the relationship between a man and a woman, but in its ultimate extent it illuminates heaven and earth.

For Confucius the way is not far from people; what is removed from people cannot be considered the way. The best govern people according to human nature. Conscientiousness and reciprocity mean not doing to others what you do not wish them to do to you. The best do what is proper to their position and do not go beyond this. The way is like a long journey that must begin with what is near. In a religious moment Confucius praises the power of invisible spiritual beings. Next Confucius praises the founders of the [Zhou Dynasty](#) for their virtue.

The way is cultivated by human goodness, and its greatest expression is in loving relations. Justice is the principle of setting things right, and its greatest expression is honoring the worthy. These two give rise to the rules of propriety. To cultivate their personal lives rulers must serve their parents and know people, and then they will know heaven. The three universal virtues are wisdom, love, and courage, and the way by which they are practiced is one. These three virtues come from love of learning, practicing vigorously, and a sense of shame. The nine rules for governing the world, states, and families are cultivating the personal life, honoring the worthy, loving the relatives, respecting the great ministers, identifying oneself with the welfare of all the officers, treating the common people as one's own children, promoting all the useful arts and crafts, being kind to strangers from far countries, and taking interest in the princes of the world.

Understanding what is good leads to sincerity, which is the way of heaven. Thinking how to be sincere is the human way and is choosing the good and holding to it. Sincerity may be studied extensively by inquiring into it accurately, thinking it over carefully, discerning it clearly, and practicing it thoroughly. Do not give up even if it takes a thousand efforts. Enlightenment results from sincerity. Those who are absolutely sincere develop fully their own nature, the nature of others and things, and by forming a trinity with heaven and earth are able to assist in the transforming and nourishing process. This is done by the expression and manifestation of sincerity so that it is full of light, moves others, changes and transforms them. Absolute sincerity can even foreknow and understand omens. Sincerity completes the self in goodness and things in wisdom, uniting the internal and external. Absolute sincerity is ceaseless, eternal, manifest, infinite, extensive and deep, transcendental and brilliant.

By this bridge the Confucians get to the Daoist way of accomplishing without acting. Yet for the Confucians the process begins with study and learning and results in respecting the rules of propriety. Confucius is credited with transmitting the ancient doctrines of Yao and Shun harmonized with the adaptations of Wen and Wu. The Confucians look to the perfectly wise, who can rule all people with quick apprehension, intelligence, insight, and wisdom; embrace all people with greatness, generosity, kindness, and a tender heart; maintain everything with energy,

strength, steadiness, and resolution; command reverence with balance, seriousness, centeredness, and correctness; and exercise discrimination with order, refinement, concentration, and penetration.

The best people of this Confucian ideal expressed in the *Zhong-Yong* examine their hearts so that nothing is wrong there and so can observe what others do not see, be reverent without moving, truthful without speaking, encourage good without rewarding, awe people without showing anger in perfect virtue. Thus we find here a synthesis of Confucian and Daoist philosophy.

The philosopher-scholar who helped to bring about the triumph of Confucianism in the Han dynasty, Dong Zhong-shu, lived in the second century BC. Dong Zhong-shu wanted to unify the empire culturally by teaching the Confucian classics. In 136 BC he urged Emperor Wu to open an imperial university for the study of the five traditional classics (*Documents*, *Odes*, *Changes*, *Rites* and the *Spring and Autumn Annals*). His own book, *Luxuriant Gems of the Spring and Autumn Annals*, integrates the currently popular yin-yang cosmology with Confucian philosophy. Dong Zhong-shu treated the universe as an organic whole in which heaven, earth, and humans all influence each other. He would subject the people to the ruler and the ruler to heaven. Dong Zhong-shu believed that heaven's will could be discerned by correlating catastrophes and anomalies with warnings in one's heart. This philosophy led to a more superstitious attitude toward such things as eclipses and weather patterns.

Dong Zhong-shu believed that humans are the only creatures capable of practicing goodness and justice, but they can also be greedy. For Dong one must rectify oneself to be just, and love others to be good. Love needs the discrimination of wisdom, and wisdom needs love to be translated into action. Dong Zhong-shu taught that the good person loves people, harmonizes likes and dislikes in human relations, does not harbor hatred or a desire to hurt, does not conceal or evade, is not jealous, does not let desires lead to sadness or worry, and does not do anything treacherous, cunning, or depraved.

Confucius and his followers, in my opinion, offered a marvelous ethical philosophy in warring and chaotic times that mostly ignored their advice. Although sexist and patriarchal as their times, the universal ethical values and methods of attaining them are well thought out and available to everyone. The detailed regulations of the rules of propriety could become rigid and tyrannical to free expression if they are slavishly followed, and the emphasis on the traditions of past heroes and excessive respect for elders could also lead to a rigid social culture dominated by tradition and the older generation. Yet this tendency was already in Chinese culture before Confucius, whose ethical principles at least provided an opportunity to moderate such dominance. The Confucian influence in Chinese culture was to be immense, but how it was practiced in the coming centuries still needs to be examined.

Notes

1. *Analects* tr. Arthur Waley, 7:22.
2. *Ibid.* 17:5.
3. *Ibid.* 4:18.
4. *Ibid.* 4:8.

5. *Ibid.* 7:3.
6. *Ibid.* 5:11.
7. *Ibid.* 14:21.
8. *Ibid.* 7:10.
9. *Ibid.* 7:6.
10. *Li Chi* 26: "Ching Chieh" in Lin Yutang, *Wisdom of Confucius*, p. 191-192.
11. *Analects* tr. Arthur Waley, 12:19.
12. *Ibid.* 2:15.
13. *Mencius* tr. D. C. Lau, 1B:11, p. 70.
14. *Ibid.* 6A:6, p. 163.
15. *Basic Writings of Hsun Tzu* tr. Burton Watson, p. 74
16. *Hsun-tzu* 26:8 in *Xunzi* tr. John Knoblock, Vol. 3, p. 204.
17. *Basic Writings of Hsun Tzu* tr. Burton Watson, p. 87-88.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 100.
19. *Li Chi (Book of Rites)* 1:1 tr. James Legge, p. 61-62.