

# A Learning Resource Report

Reading Materials for Participants of The International Forum

December 2003

## **Confucius and Socrates and the Development of a Moral Leader**

Confucius or Kongfuzi, who lived during the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> century BC is the philosopher whose thought has influenced the Chinese both morally and politically for over 2000 years. His work is captured in the *Analects*, which was a record of the dialogues which he had with his students. The simplicity of the parables and rules that emerged from this ensured that even the uneducated could retain the messages, enabling an incredibly strong influence on the Chinese population for centuries. Confucius taught his students much like Socrates did his. Both men believed that the main purpose of education was virtue and self-improvement. Their teachings were dedicated to such questions as: What makes a good man? And how can we develop this quality in ourselves?

Like Socrates, Confucius' philosophy still influences his civilization thousands of years after his death. Both men were dedicated the investigation of moral character, the study of right and wrong and what constitutes a good society. They believed that the moral foundation of any society rested on the virtue of the individuals within it.

Confucius believed in the virtue of human-heartedness or goodness. It was innate in all people. Socrates believed love was the energy that moved us toward the good, which was divine. Both men espoused a version of the golden rule, which is also found in Christianity and other religions of the world which emerged since then.

While religion was important to both men, they were more concerned with understanding how people can improve themselves than the existence of a higher being or the nature of the universe. Both men saw education as the means to improve oneself by learning what one knows and also learning what one does not know. They both understood men's tendency to love beauty more than virtue, but both believed that by becoming more educated, one would understand more and improve oneself. Virtue was the path to happiness even though few would follow it.

Confucius and Socrates tried to set a personal example of what would be the ideal gentleman, yet it was through their discussions with students that they sought to teach. Rather than dictating an ideal model, they discussed in the abstract with the intent for each disciple to create their own personal model to follow. This way each student would strive for their own ideal without simply copying their teacher.

Both Socrates and Confucius believed that the ideal man was friendly and always courteous, treating people with dignity. The good man exemplified virtue, though he may not always be a king or leader. The higher ideals discussed by these two men, were not prevalent in the societies of their time, but they were presented at that time as a goal and future for mankind.

Western and Confucian societies have evolved differently since the time of these two wise men. What have been the reasons for this and how do they differ? How does each civilization now define what makes a good man and what makes a good society? What clues can we find in the actions of the leaders and the people of both civilizations today?

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## Part I: Confucius

An essay by Professor Jeffrey K. Reigel, Berkeley University

**Consider these excerpts from the following reading and the questions posed below:**

“Confucius' social philosophy largely revolves around the concept of *ren*, “compassion” or “loving others.” Cultivating or practicing such concern for others involved deprecating oneself. This meant being sure to avoid artful speech or an ingratiating manner that would create a false impression and lead to self-aggrandizement. For Confucius, such concern for others is demonstrated through the practice of forms of the Golden Rule: “What you do not wish for yourself, do not do to others;” “Since you yourself desire standing then help others achieve it, since you yourself desire success then help others attain it.”

- Is this a model for leadership that you would emulate?

“Confucius warns those in power that they should not oppress or take for granted even the lowliest of their subjects. “You may rob the Three Armies of their commander, but you cannot deprive the humblest peasant of his opinion.” Confucius regards loving others as a calling and a mission for which one should be ready to die.”

- Is Confucius speaking of an idea similar to a western form of democracy or is this form of empowerment something different? In what ways might it provide clues as to what the Chinese expect of their leaders and of each other in society?

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## Confucius

by Professor Jeffrey K. Reigel, Berkeley University

Confucius (551-479 BCE), according to Chinese tradition, was a thinker, political figure, educator, and founder of the *Ru* School of Chinese thought. His teachings, preserved in the *Analects*, form the foundation of much of subsequent Chinese speculation on the education and comportment of the ideal man, how such an individual should live his life and interact with others, and the forms of society and government in which he should participate.

## Confucius' Life

The sources for Confucius' life are later and do not carefully separate fiction and fact. Thus it is wise to regard much of what is known of him as legendary. Many of the legends surrounding Confucius at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE were included by the Han dynasty court historian, Sima Qian (145-c.85 BCE), in his well-known and often-quoted *Records of the Grand Historian* (*Shiji*). This collection of tales opens by identifying Confucius' ancestors as members of the Royal State of Song. It notes as well that his great grandfather, fleeing the turmoil in his native Song, had moved to Lu, somewhere near the present town of Qufu in southeastern Shandong, where the family became impoverished. Confucius is described, by Sima Qian and other sources, as having endured a poverty-stricken and humiliating youth and been forced, upon reaching manhood, to undertake such petty jobs as accounting and caring for livestock.

Sima Qian's account includes the tale of how Confucius was born in answer to his parents' prayers at a sacred hill (*qiu*) called Ni. Confucius' surname *Kong* (which means literally an utterance of thankfulness when prayers have been answered), his tabooed given name *Qiu*, and his social name *Zhongni*, all appear connected to the miraculous circumstances of his birth. This casts doubt, then, on Confucius' royal genealogy as found in Sima Qian. Similarly, Confucius' recorded age at death, 'seventy-two,' is a 'magic number' with far-reaching significance in early Chinese literature.

We do not know how Confucius himself was educated, but tradition has it that he studied ritual with the Daoist Master Lao Dan, music with Chang Hong, and the lute with Music-master Xiang. In his middle age Confucius is supposed to have gathered about him a group of disciples whom he taught and also to have devoted himself to political matters in Lu. The number of Confucius' disciples has been greatly exaggerated, with Sima Qian and other sources claiming that there were as many as three thousand of them. Sima Qian goes on to say that, " Those who, in their own person, became

conversant with the Six Disciplines [taught by Confucius], numbered seventy-two.” The 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE *Mencius* and some other early works give their number as seventy. Perhaps seventy or seventy-two were a maximum, though both of these numbers are suspicious given Confucius' supposed age at death.

At the age of fifty, when Duke Ding of Lu was on the throne, Confucius' talents were recognized and he was appointed Minister of Public Works and then Minister of Crime. But Confucius apparently offended members of the Lu nobility who were vying with Duke Ding for power (or was it the duke himself that Confucius had rubbed the wrong way?) and he was subsequently forced to leave office and go into exile. As in other ancient cultures, exile and suffering are common themes in the lives of the heroes of the early Chinese tradition. In the company of his disciples, Confucius left Lu and traveled in the states of Wei, Song, Chen, Cai, and Chu, purportedly looking for a ruler who might employ him but meeting instead with indifference and, occasionally, severe hardship and danger. Several of these episodes, as preserved in the *Records of the Grand Historian*, appear to be little more than prose retellings of songs found in the ancient Chinese *Book of Songs*, Confucius' life is thus rendered a re-enactment of the suffering and alienation of the personas of the poems.

In any case, by most traditional accounts, Confucius returned to Lu in 484 BCE and spent the remainder of his life teaching, putting in order the *Book of Songs*, the *Book of Documents*, and other ancient classics, as well as editing the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, the court chronicle of Lu. Sima Qian's account also provides background on Confucius' connection to the early canonical texts on ritual and on music (the latter of which was lost at an early date). Sima Qian claims, moreover, that, “ In his later Years Confucius delighted in the *Yi* ” —the famous, some might say infamous, divination manual popular to this day in China and in the West. The *Analects* passage which appears to corroborate Sima Qian's claim seems corrupt and hence unreliable on this point. Confucius' traditional association with these works led them and related texts to be revered as the “ Confucian Classics” and

made Confucius himself the spiritual ancestor of later teachers, historians, moral philosophers, literary scholars, and countless others whose lives and works figure prominently in Chinese intellectual history.

Book X of the *Analects* consists of personal observations of how Confucius comported himself as a thinker, teacher, and official. Some have argued that these passages were originally more general prescriptions on how a gentleman should dress and behave that were relabeled as descriptions of Confucius. Traditionally, Book X has been regarded as providing an intimate portrait of Confucius and has been read as a biographical sketch. The following passages provide a few examples.

Confucius, at home in his native village, was simple and unassuming in manner, as though he did not trust himself to speak. But when in the ancestral temple or at Court he speaks readily, though always choosing his words with due caution. (*Lunyu* 10.1)

When at court conversing with the officers of a lower grade, he is friendly, though straightforward; when conversing with officers of a higher grade, he is restrained but precise. When the ruler is present he is wary, but not cramped. (*Lunyu* 10.2)

On entering the Palace Gate he seems to contract his body, as though there were not sufficient room to admit him. If he halts, it must never be in the middle of the gate, nor in going through does he ever tread on the threshold. (*Lunyu* 10.4)

When fasting in preparation for sacrifice he must wear the Bright Robe, and it must be of linen. He must change his food and also the place where he commonly sits. He does not object to his rice being thoroughly cleaned, nor to his meat being finely minced. (*Lunyu* 10.7, 10.8)

When sending a messenger to enquire after someone in another country, he bows himself twice while seeing the messenger off. (*Lunyu* 10.15)

In bed he avoided lying in the posture of a corpse ... On meeting anyone in deep mourning he must bow across the bar of his chariot. (*Lunyu* 10.24, 10.25)

*Analects* passages such as these made Confucius *the* model of courtliness and personal decorum for countless generations of Chinese officials.

By the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE, Confucius was recognized as a unique figure, a sage who was ignored but should have been recognized and become a king. At the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, Mencius says of Confucius: “ Ever since man came into this world, there has never been one greater than Confucius.” And in two passages Mencius implies that Confucius was one of the great sage kings who, according to his reckoning, arises every five hundred years. Confucius also figures prominently as the subject of anecdotes and the teacher of wisdom in the writing of Xunzi, a third century BCE follower of Confucius' teachings. Indeed chapters twenty-eight to thirty of the *Xunzi*, which some have argued were not the work of Xunzi but compilations by his disciples, look like an alternative, and considerably briefer, version of the *Analects*.

Confucius and his followers also inspired considerable criticism from other thinkers. The authors of the *Zhuangzi* took particular delight in parodying Confucius and the teachings conventionally associated with him. But Confucius' reputation was so great that even the *Zhuangzi* appropriates him to give voice to Daoist teachings.

## **Confucius' Social Philosophy**

Confucius' teachings and his conversations and exchanges with his disciples are recorded in the *Lunyu* or *Analects*, a collection that probably achieved something like its present form around the second century BCE. While Confucius believes that people live their lives within parameters firmly established by Heaven—which, often, for him means both a purposeful Supreme Being as well as ‘ nature’ and its fixed cycles and patterns—he argues that men are responsible for their actions and especially for their

treatment of others. We can do little or nothing to alter our fated span of existence but we determine what we accomplish and what we are remembered for.

Confucius represented his teachings as lessons transmitted from antiquity. He claimed that he was “ a transmitter and not a maker” and that all he did reflected his “ reliance on and love for the ancients.” (*Lunyu* 7.1) Confucius pointed especially to the precedents established during the height of the royal Zhou (roughly the first half of the first millennium, BCE). Such justifications for one's ideas may have already been conventional in Confucius' day. Certainly his claim that there were antique precedents for his ideology had a tremendous influence on subsequent thinkers many of whom imitated these gestures. But we should not regard the contents of the *Analects* as consisting of old ideas. Much of what Confucius taught appears to have been original to him and to have represented a radical departure from the ideas and practices of his day.

Confucius also claimed that he enjoyed a special and privileged relationship with Heaven and that, by the age of fifty, he had come to understand what Heaven had mandated for him and for mankind. (*Lunyu* 2.4). Confucius was also careful to instruct his followers that they should never neglect the offerings due Heaven. (*Lunyu* 3.13) Some scholars have seen a contradiction between Confucius' reverence for Heaven and what they believe to be his skepticism with regard to the existence of ‘ the spirits.’ But the *Analects* passages that reveal Confucius's attitudes toward spiritual forces (*Lunyu* 3.12, 6.20, and 11.11) do not suggest that he was skeptical. Rather they show that Confucius revered and respected the spirits, thought that they should be worshipped with utmost sincerity, and taught that serving the spirits was a far more difficult and complicated matter than serving mere mortals.

Confucius' social philosophy largely revolves around the concept of *ren*, “ compassion” or “ loving others.” Cultivating or practicing such concern for others involved deprecating oneself. This meant being sure to avoid artful speech or an ingratiating manner that would create a false impression and

lead to self-aggrandizement. (*Lunyu* 1.3) Those who have cultivated *ren* are, on the contrary, “ simple in manner and slow of speech.” (*Lunyu* 13.27). For Confucius, such concern for others is demonstrated through the practice of forms of the Golden Rule: “ What you do not wish for yourself, do not do to others;” “ Since you yourself desire standing then help others achieve it, since you yourself desire success then help others attain it.” (*Lunyu* 12.2, 6.30). He regards devotion to parents and older siblings as the most basic form of promoting the interests of others before one's own and teaches that such altruism can be accomplished only by those who have learned self-discipline.

Learning self-restraint involves studying and mastering *li*, the ritual forms and rules of propriety through which one expresses respect for superiors and enacts his role in society in such a way that he himself is worthy of respect and admiration. A concern for propriety should inform everything that one says and does:

Look at nothing in defiance of ritual, listen to nothing in defiance of ritual, speak of nothing in defiance of ritual, never stir hand or foot in defiance of ritual. (*Lunyu* 12.1)

Subjecting oneself to ritual does not, however, mean suppressing one's desires but instead learning how to reconcile one's own desires with the needs of one's family and community. Confucius and many of his followers teach that it is by experiencing desires that we learn the value of social strictures that make an ordered society possible (See *Lunyu* 2.4.). Nor does Confucius' emphasis on ritual mean that he was a punctilious ceremonialist who thought that the rites of worship and of social exchange had to be practiced correctly at all costs. Confucius taught, on the contrary, that if one did not possess a keen sense of the well-being and interests of others his ceremonial manners signified nothing. (*Lunyu* 3.3). Equally important was Confucius' insistence that the rites not be regarded as mere forms, but that they be practiced with complete devotion and sincerity. “ He [i.e., Confucius] sacrificed to the dead as if they were present. He sacrificed to the spirits as if

the spirits were present. The Master said, ‘ I consider my not being present at the sacrifice as though there were no sacrifice.’ ” (*Lunyu* 3.12)

While ritual forms often have to do with the more narrow relations of family and clan, *ren*, however, is to be practiced broadly and informs one's interactions with all people. Confucius warns those in power that they should not oppress or take for granted even the lowliest of their subjects. “ You may rob the Three Armies of their commander, but you cannot deprive the humblest peasant of his opinion.” (*Lunyu* 9.26) Confucius regards loving others as a calling and a mission for which one should be ready to die (*Lunyu* 15.9).

### **Confucius’ Political Philosophy**

Confucius' political philosophy is also rooted in his belief that a ruler should learn self-discipline, should govern his subjects by his own example, and should treat them with love and concern. “ If the people be led by laws, and uniformity among them be sought by punishments, they will try to escape punishment and have no sense of shame. If they are led by virtue, and uniformity sought among them through the practice of ritual propriety, they will possess a sense of shame and come to you of their own accord.” (*Lunyu* 2.3; see also 13.6.) It seems apparent that in his own day, however, advocates of more legalistic methods were winning a large following among the ruling elite. Thus Confucius' warning about the ill consequences of promulgating law codes should not be interpreted as an attempt to prevent their adoption but instead as his lament that his ideas about the moral suasion of the ruler were not proving popular.

Most troubling to Confucius was his perception that the political institutions of his day had completely broken down. He attributed this collapse to the fact that those who wielded power as well as those who occupied subordinate positions did so by making claim to titles for which they were not worthy. When asked by a ruler of the large state of Qi, Lu's neighbor on the Shandong peninsula, about the principles of good government, Confucius is

reported to have replied: “ Good government consists in the ruler being a ruler, the minister being a minister, the father being a father, and the son being a son.” (*Lunyu* 12.11) If I claim for myself a title and attempt to participate in the various hierarchical relationships to which I would be entitled by virtue of that title, then I should live up to the meaning of the title that I claim for myself. Confucius' analysis of the lack of connection between actualities and their names and the need to correct such circumstances is usually referred to as Confucius' theory of *zhengming*. Elsewhere in the *Analects*, Confucius says to his disciple Zilu that the first thing he would do in undertaking the administration of a state is *zhengming*. (*Lunyu* 13.3). Xunzi composed an entire essay entitled *Zhengming*. But for Xunzi the term referred to the proper use of language and how one should go about inventing new terms that were suitable to the age. For Confucius, *zhengming* does not seem to refer to the ‘ rectification of names’ (this is the way the term is most often translated by scholars of the *Analects*), but instead to rectifying behavior of people so that it exactly corresponds to the language with which they identify and describe themselves. Confucius believed that this sort of rectification had to begin at the very top of the government, because it was at the top that the discrepancy between names and actualities had originated. If the ruler's behavior is rectified then the people beneath him will follow suit. In a conversation with Ji Kangzi (who had usurped power in Lu), Confucius advised: “ If your desire is for good, the people will be good. The moral character of the ruler is the wind; the moral character of those beneath him is the grass. When the wind blows, the grass bends.” (*Lunyu* 12.19)

For Confucius, what characterized superior rulership was the possession of *de* or ‘ virtue.’ Conceived of as a kind of moral power that allows one to win a following without recourse to physical force, such ‘ virtue’ also enabled the ruler to maintain good order in his state without troubling himself and by relying on loyal and effective deputies. Confucius claimed that, “ He who governs by means of his virtue is, to use an analogy, like the pole-star: it remains in its place while all the lesser stars do homage to it.” (*Lunyu* 2.1) The way to maintain and cultivate such royal ‘ virtue’ was through the

practice and enactment of //or ‘ rituals’ —the ceremonies that defined and punctuated the lives of the ancient Chinese aristocracy. These ceremonies encompassed: the sacrificial rites performed at ancestral temples to express humility and thankfulness; the ceremonies of enfeoffment, toasting, and gift exchange that bound together the aristocracy into a complex web of obligation and indebtedness; and the acts of politeness and decorum—such things as bowing and yielding—that identified their performers as gentlemen. In an influential study, Herbert Fingarette argues that the performance of these various ceremonies, when done correctly and sincerely, involves a ‘ magical’ quality that underlies the efficacy of royal ‘ virtue’ in accomplishing the aims of the ruler.

## Confucius and Education

A hallmark of Confucius' thought is his emphasis on education and study. He disparages those who have faith in natural understanding or intuition and argues that the only real understanding of a subject comes from long and careful study. Study, for Confucius, means finding a good teacher and imitating his words and deeds. A good teacher is someone older who is familiar with the ways of the past and the practices of the ancients. (See *Lunyu* 7.22) While he sometimes warns against excessive reflection and meditation, Confucius' position appears to be a middle course between studying and reflecting on what one has learned. “ He who learns but does not think is lost. He who thinks but does not learn is in great danger.” (*Lunyu* 2.15) Confucius, himself, is credited by the tradition with having taught altogether three thousand students, though only seventy are said to have truly mastered the arts he cherished. Confucius is willing to teach anyone, whatever their social standing, as long as they are eager and tireless. He taught his students morality, proper speech, government, and the refined arts. While he also emphasizes the “ Six Arts” -- ritual, music, archery, chariot-riding, calligraphy, and computation -- it is clear that he regards morality the most important subject. Confucius' pedagogical methods are striking. He never discourses at length on a subject. Instead he

poses questions, cites passages from the classics, or uses apt analogies, and waits for his students to arrive at the right answers. “ I only instruct the eager and enlighten the fervent. If I hold up one corner and a student cannot come back to me with the other three, I do not go on with the lesson.” (*Lunyu* 7.8).

Confucius' goal is to create gentlemen who carry themselves with grace, speak correctly, and demonstrate integrity in all things. His strong dislike of the sycophantic “ petty men,” whose clever talk and pretentious manner win them an audience, is reflected in numerous *Lunyu* passages. Confucius finds himself in an age in which values are out of joint. Actions and behavior no longer correspond to the labels originally attached to them. “ Rulers do not rule and subjects do not serve,” he observes. (*Lunyu* 12.11; cf. also 13.3) This means that words and titles no longer mean what they once did. Moral education is important to Confucius because it is the means by which one can rectify this situation and restore meaning to language and values to society. He believes that the most important lessons for obtaining such a moral education are to be found in the canonical *Book of Songs*, because many of its poems are both beautiful and good. Thus Confucius places the text first in his curriculum and frequently quotes and explains its lines of verse. For this reason, the *Lunyu* is also an important source for Confucius' understanding of the role poetry and art more generally play in the moral education of gentlemen as well as in the reformation of society.

## Part II : The Analects – An Excerpt

The importance of the **Analects** cannot be doubted. As the only reliable record of what Confucius (551-479 B.C.) believed and advocated, it is a highly valuable source for the concerns of a sensitive and intelligent man in the era when the Chou dynasty had begun to fragment. As a sacred book, memorized by beginning students, it influenced the values and habits of thoughts of Chinese for centuries.

The **Analects** does not provide carefully organized or argued philosophical discourses. The sayings in it are seemingly haphazardly arranged, and the wisdom they contain is often of a prosaic sort. Yet Confucius' injunctions for men to set high standards for their conduct marks a major development in the history of Chinese thought. Like his predecessors, Confucius accepted the importance of proper performance of ceremonies and respectful obedience to rulers and family elders; yet he invested these practices with new moral meanings.

Attached are some of Confucius' sayings on three of the topics he most frequently addressed. They are written in a dialogue format between him and some of his disciples.

*Please consider the following questions.*

- How does Confucius provide a framework of moral and social behavior that works in modern China today? How has it been adopted on a widespread basis by the Chinese?
- Which parts of Confucius' writings are consistent with your own values? Which appear contradictory? Why?

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### On Being a Gentleman

**Confucius said**, “ The gentleman concerns himself with the Way; he does not worry about his salary. Hunger may be found in plowing; wealth may be found in studying. The gentleman worries about the Way, not about poverty.”

**Confucius said**, “ When he eats, the gentleman does not seek to stuff himself. In his home he does not seek luxury. He is diligent in his work and cautious in his speech. He associates with those who possess the Way, and thereby rectifies himself. He may be considered a lover of learning.”

**Tzu Kung** inquired about being a gentleman. **Confucius said**, “ First he behaves properly and then he speaks, so that his words follow his actions.”

**Ssu-ma Niu asked** about the nature of the gentleman.

**Confucius replied**, “ The gentleman does not worry and is not fearful.”

**Ssu asked**, “ Then, can not fearing and not worrying be considered the essence of being a gentleman?”

**Confucius responded**, “ If you can look into yourself and find no cause for dissatisfaction, how can you worry and how can you fear?”

**Confucius said**, “ The gentleman reveres three things. He reveres the mandate of Heaven; he reveres great people; and he reveres the words of the sages. Petty people do not know the mandate of Heaven and so do not revere it. They are disrespectful to great people and they ridicule the words of the sages.”

**Confucius said**, “ The gentleman must exert caution in three areas. When he is a youth and his blood and spirit have not yet settled down, he must be on his guard lest he fall into lusting. When he reaches the full vigor of his manhood in his thirties and his blood and spirit are strong, he must guard against getting into quarrels. When he reaches old age and his blood and spirit have begun to weaken, he must guard against envy.”

**Confucius said**, “ The gentleman understands integrity; the petty person knows about profit.”

**Confucius said**, “ For the gentleman integrity is the essence; the rules of decorum are the way he puts it into effect; humility is the way he brings it forth; sincerity is the way he develops it. Such indeed is what it means to be a gentleman.”

**Confucius said** that Tzu Ch'an possessed the way of the gentleman in four areas. In his personal conduct he was respectful; in serving his superiors he was reverent; in nourishing the people he was kind; in governing the people he was righteous.

**Confucius said,** " The gentleman has nine concerns. In seeing he is concerned with clarity. In hearing he is concerned with acuity. In his expression he wishes to be warm. In his bearing he wishes to be respectful. In his words he is concerned with sincerity. In his service he is concerned with reverence. When he is in doubt, he wants to ask questions. When he is angry, he is wary of the pitfalls. When he sees the chance for profit, he keeps in mind the need for integrity."

**Confucius said,** " The gentleman is easy to serve but difficult to please. When you try to please him, if your manner of pleasing is not in accord with the Way, then he will not be pleased. On the other hand, he does not expect more from people than their capacities warrant. The petty individual is hard to serve and easy to please. When you try to please him, even if your method of pleasing him is not in accord with the Way, he will be pleased. But in employing people he expects them to be perfectly accomplished in everything."

**Confucius said,** " The gentleman is in harmony with those around him but not on their level. The small man is on the level of those around him but not in harmony with them."

**Confucius said,** " The gentleman aspires to things lofty; the petty person aspires to things base."

**Confucius said,** " The gentleman looks to himself; the petty person looks to other people."

**Confucius said,** “ The gentleman feels bad when his capabilities fall short of some task. He does not feel bad if people fail to recognize him.”

**Confucius said,** “ The gentleman fears that after his death his name will not be honored.”

**Confucius said,** “ The gentleman does not promote people merely on the basis of their words, nor does he reject words merely because of the person who uttered them.”

**Confucius said,** “ The gentleman is exalted and yet not proud. The petty person is proud and yet not exalted.”

**Tzu Hsia said,** “ The gentleman has three transformations. Seen from afar he appears majestic. Upon approaching him you see he is amiable. Upon hearing his words you find they are serious.”

**Confucius said,** “ If the gentleman is not dignified, he will not command respect and his teachings will not be considered solid. He emphasizes sincerity and honesty. He has no friends who are not his equals. If he finds a fault in himself, he does not shirk from reforming himself.”

**Tzu Kung said,** “ When the gentleman falls into error, it is like the eclipse of the sun and moon: everyone sees it. When he corrects it, everyone will look up to him again.”

**Tzu Kung said,** “ Does not the gentleman also have his hatreds?”

**Confucius replied,** “ Yes, he has his hatreds. He hates those who harp on the weak points of others. He hates those who are base and yet slander those who are exalted. He hates those who are bold but do not observe the proprieties. He hates those who are brash and daring and yet have limited outlook.” **Confucius then asked,** “ You too have your hatreds, do you

not?” **Tzu Kung replied**, “ I hate those who are imprudent and consider it courage. I hate those who leak out secrets and consider it honesty.”

**Tseng-tsu said**, “ The gentleman knows enough not to exceed his position.”

**Confucius said**, “ The gentleman is not a tool.”

### On Humanity

**Tzu-chang asked Confucius** about humanity. **Confucius said**, “ If an individual can practice five things anywhere in the world, he is a man of humanity.” “ May I ask what these things are?” Said **Tzu-chang**. **Confucius replied**, “ Reverence, generosity, truthfulness, diligence, and kindness. If a person acts with reverence, he will not be insulted. If he is generous, he will win over the people. If he is truthful, he will be trusted by people. If he is diligent, he will have great achievements. If he is kind, he will be able to influence others.

**Chung-kung asked** about humanity. **Confucius said**, “ When you go out, treat everyone as if you were welcoming a great guest. Employ people as if you were conducting a great sacrifice. Do not do unto others what you would not have them do unto you. Then neither in your country nor in your family will there be complaints against you.” **Chung-kung said**, “ Although I am not intelligent, please allow me to practice your teachings.”

**Ssu-ma Niu asked** about humanity. **Confucius said**, “ The man of humanity is cautious in his speech.” **Ssu-ma Niu replied**, “ If a man is cautious in his speech, may it be said that he has achieved the virtue of humanity?” **Confucius said**, “ When a man realizes that accomplishing things is difficult, can his use of words be anything but cautious?”

**Confucius said,** “ A person with honeyed words and pious gestures is seldom a man of humanity.”

**Confucius said,** “ The individual who is forceful, resolute, simple, and cautious of speech is near to humanity.”

**Confucius said,** “ The man of wisdom takes pleasure in water; the man of humanity delights in the mountains. The man of wisdom desires action; the man of humanity wishes for quietude. The man of wisdom seeks happiness; the man of humanity looks for long life.”

**Confucius said,** “ If a man does not have humanity, how can he have propriety? If a man does not have humanity how can he be in tune with the rites or music?”

**Confucius said,** “ The humanity of a village makes it beautiful. If you choose a village where humanity does not dwell, how can you gain wisdom?”

**Confucius said,** “ Humanity is more important for people than water or fire. I have seen people walk through water and fire and die. I have never seen someone tread the path of humanity and perish.”

**Confucius said,** “ Riches and honors are the things that people desire; but if one obtains them by not following the Way, then one will not be able to hold them. Poverty and low position in society are the things that people hate; but if one can avoid them only by not following the Way, then one should not try to avoid them. If the gentleman abandons humanity, how can he live up to his name? The gentleman must not forget about humanity for even the space of time it takes him to finish a meal. When he is hurried, he must act according to it. Even when he is confronted with a crisis, he must follow its tenets.”

**Confucius said,** “ The strong-minded scholar and the man of humanity do not seek to live by violating the virtue of humanity. They will suffer death if necessary to achieve humanity.”

**Confucius said,** “ In practicing the virtue of humanity, one should not defer even to one’ s teacher.”

**Confucius said,** “ Is humanity far away? Whenever I want the virtue of humanity, it comes at once.”

**Tzu-kung asked** about the virtue of humanity. **Confucius said,** “ The artisan who wants to do his work well must first of all sharpen his tools. When you reside in a given state, enter the service of the best of the officials and make friends with the most humane of the scholars.”

**Confucius said,** “ Only the man of humanity can rightly love some people and rightly despise some people.”

**Confucius said,** “ People can be classified according to their faults. By observing an individual’ s faults, you will know if he is a person of humanity.”

**Confucius said,** “ Those who possess virtue will be sure to speak out; but those who speak out do not necessarily have virtue. Those who possess the virtue of humanity certainly have strength; but those who are strong do not necessarily have the virtue of humanity.”

**Confucius said,** “ Although there have been gentlemen who did not possess the virtue of humanity, there have never been petty men who did possess it.”

## On Filial Piety

**Tzu Yu inquired** about filial piety. **Confucius said**, “ Nowadays, filial piety is considered to be the ability to nourish one’ s parents. But this obligation to nourish even extends down to the dogs and horses. Unless we have reverence for our parents, what makes us any different?”

**Confucius said**, “ When your father is alive, observe his intentions. When he is deceased, model yourself on the memory of his behavior. If in three years after his death you have not deviated from your father’ s ways, then you may be considered a filial child.”

**Tseng-tzu said**, “ I have heard from Confucius that the filial piety of Meng Chuang-tzu is such that it could also be attained by others, but his not changing his father’ s ministers and his father’ s government is a virtue difficult indeed to match.”

**Meng I-tzu inquired** about filial piety. **Confucius said**, “ Do not offend your parents.” Fan Chih was giving Confucius a ride in a wagon, and Confucius told him, “ Meng Sun questioned me about filial piety and I told him, ‘ Do not offend your parents.’ ” **Fan Chih said**, “ What are you driving at?” **Confucius replied**, “ When your parents are alive, serve them according to the rules of ritual and decorum. When they are deceased, give them a funeral and offer sacrifices to them according to the rules of ritual and decorum.

**Confucius said**, “ When your father and mother are alive, do not go rambling around far away. If you must travel, make sure you have a set destination.”

**Confucius said**, “ It is unacceptable not to be aware of your parents’ ages. Their advancing years are a cause for joy and at the same time a cause for sorrow.”

Confucius said, “ You can be of service to your father and mother by remonstrating with them tactfully. If you perceive that they do not wish to follow your advice, then continue to be reverent toward them without offending or disobeying them; work hard and do not murmur against them.”

**The Duke of She** said to Confucius, “ In my land there is an upright man. His father stole a sheep, and the man turned him in to the authorities.”

**Confucius replied,** “ The upright men of my land are different. The father will shelter the son and the son will shelter the father. Righteousness lies precisely in this.”