

A SOURCE BOOK IN
CHINESE
PHILOSOPHY

Translated and Compiled by

WING-TSIT CHAN

. . . this handsome and massive production should prove indispensable to western students of Chinese philosophy. . . It covers the entire development of Chinese philosophy from pre-Confucianism . . . to modern neo-Rationalist and neo-Idealist movements, as well as the philosophic trends of present-day Communist China. / *The Times Literary Supplement*

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ABRIDGMENTS

- CTTC *Chu Tzu ta-ch'üan* (Complete Literary Works of Chu Hsi), SPPY
ECCS *Erh-Ch'eng ch'üan-shu* (Complete Works of the Two Ch'engs), SPPY
NHCC *Nan-hua chen-ching* (Pure Classic of Nan-hua, another name for the *Chuang Tzu*), SPTK
PNP *Po-na pen* (Choice Works Edition)
SPPY *Ssu-pu pei-yao* (Essentials of the *Four Libraries*) edition
SPTK *Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an* (*Four Libraries Series*) edition
TSD *Taisho shinshu daizokyo* (Taisho Edition of the Buddhist Canon)
Changes *The Book of Changes*
History *The Book of History*
Mencius *The Book of Mencius*
Odes *The Book of Odes*
The Mean *The Doctrine of the Mean*

Full publication facts for titles abbreviated or abridged in the footnotes are given in the Bibliography.

THE GROWTH OF HUMANISM

IF ONE WORD could characterize the entire history of Chinese philosophy, that word would be humanism—not the humanism that denies or slights a Supreme Power, but one that professes the unity of man and Heaven. In this sense, humanism has dominated Chinese thought from the dawn of its history.

Humanism was an outgrowth, not of speculation, but of historical and social change. The conquest of the Shang (1751-1112 B.C.) by the Chou in 1111 B.C. inaugurated a transition from tribal society to feudal. To consolidate the empire, the Chou challenged human ingenuity and ability, cultivated new trades and talents, and encouraged the development of experts from all levels of society. Prayers for rain were gradually replaced by irrigation. *Ti*, formerly the tribal Lord, became the God for all. Man and his activities were given greater importance. The time finally arrived when a slave became a prime minister. Humanism, in gradual ascendance, reached its climax in Confucius.

Having overthrown the Shang, founders of the Chou had to justify their right to rule. Consequently, they developed the doctrine of the Mandate of Heaven, a self-existent moral law whose constant, reliable factor was virtue. According to this doctrine, man's destiny—both mortal and immortal—depended, not upon the existence of a soul before birth or after death nor upon the whim of a spiritual force, but upon his own good words and good deeds. The Chou asserted, therefore, that the Shang, though they had received the mandate to rule, had forfeited it because they failed in their duties. The mandate then passed on to the founders of Chou, who deserved it because of their virtue. Obviously, the future of the house of Chou depended upon whether future rulers were virtuous.

The idea that the destiny of man or the future of a dynasty depended upon virtue rather than upon the pleasure of some mysterious, spiritual power marked a radical development from the Shang to the Chou. (Significantly, the term *te* [virtue] is not found in the oracle bones on which Shang ideas and events are recorded, but it is a key word in early Chou documents.) During the Shang, the influence of spiritual beings on man had been almost total, for no important thing could be done without first seeking their approval, but in the Chou (1111-249 B.C.) their dwelling places were regulated by the rulers. As the *Book of Rites* says, "The people of Yin (Shang) honor spiritual beings, serve them, and put them ahead of ceremonies. . . . The people of Chou honor ceremonies and

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highly value the conferring of favors. They serve the spiritual beings and respect them, but keep them at a distance. They remain near to man and loyal to him."¹

Similarly, belief in the Lord underwent a radical transformation. In the Shang, he was the supreme anthropomorphic deity who sent blessings or calamities, gave protection in battles, sanctioned undertakings, and passed on the appointment or dismissal of officials. Such belief continued in the early Chou, but was gradually replaced by the concept of Heaven (*T'ien*) as the supreme spiritual reality.² This does not mean that either Heaven or spiritual beings did not continue to be highly honored and greatly respected. But their personal power was supplanted by human virtue and human effort, and man, through his moral deeds, could now control his own destiny.

It was in this light that ancestors were regarded in Chou times. During the Shang, great ancestors were either identified with the Lord,³ or considered as mediators through whom requests were made to the Lord. In the Chou, they were still influential but, as in the case of Heaven, their influence was exerted not through their power but through their moral example and inspiration. They were to be respected but to be kept from interfering with human activities. Individual and social categories were to be stated in moral terms according to a "Great Norm."

The above beliefs are illustrated in the following selections. They are taken from the *Book of History*,⁴ the *Book of Odes*,⁵ the *Tso chuan* (Tso's Commentary on the *Spring and Autumn Annals*),⁶ and the *Kuo-*

¹ *Book of Rites*, "Record of Example," pt. 2. See Legge, trans., *Li Ki*, vol. 1, p. 342.

² On this question, see Dubs, "The Archaic Royal Jou (Chou) Religion," *T'ung Pao*, 46 (1959), 218-259.

³ According to Kuo Mo-jo, *Ch'ing-t'ung shih-tai* (The Bronze Age), 1946, pp. 9-12, and Fu Ssu-nien, *Hsing-ming ku-hsün pien-cheng* (Critical Studies of the Classical Interpretations of the Nature and Destiny), 1940, 2:3a.

⁴ The *Book of History*, a basic Confucian Classic, is a collection of documents from the time of legendary Emperor Yao (3rd millennium B.C.) to the early Chou. Twenty-five of the fifty-eight chapters are believed to be forgeries by Wang Su (195-256), Huang-fu Mi (215-282), or Mei Tse (of the Eastern Chin period, 317-420). Of the rest, modern scholars accept only the Chou documents as authentic. The selections presented here are from this group. For English translation, see Legge, trans., *Shoo King*.

⁵ The *Book of Odes*, also a basic Confucian Classic, is a collection of 305 poems, including songs sung in religious and early official functions and popular songs from the various states of early Chou times. Five are supposed to have come from the Shang dynasty. Tradition holds that Confucius selected these from three thousand prevailing songs, a belief rejected by modern scholars. It is agreed, however, that many of the songs had been popular and that Confucius knew them. For English translations, see Karlgren, trans., *The Book of Odes*, and Waley, trans., *The Book of Songs*.

⁶ This has been traditionally attributed to Tso Ch'iu-ming, a contemporary of

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yü (Conversations of the States).⁷ The former two contain the oldest material of Chinese literature. Although the latter two are much later works, they record events of pre-Confucian times.

1. ANCESTORS AND THE LORD ON HIGH

Abundant is the year, with much millet and much rice,
And we have tall granaries,
With hundreds of thousands and millions of units.
We make wine and sweet spirits
And offer them to our ancestors, male and female,
Thus to fulfill all the rites,
And bring down blessings to all.

(*Book of Odes*, ode no. 279, "Abundant is the Year")

Heaven produces the teeming multitude;
As there are things, there are their specific principles (*tse*).
When the people keep to their normal nature,
They will love excellent virtue.

Heaven, looking down upon the House of Chou
Sees that its light reaches the people below,⁸

And to protect the Son of Heaven,
Gave birth to Chung Shan-fu [to help him].⁹

(*ibid.*, ode no. 260, "The Teeming Multitude")

Comment. Neo-Confucianists, injecting a more metaphysical sense into the second line of this ode, made it mean that inherent in every single thing there are specific principles about its being. There

Confucius, and is regarded as a commentary on the *Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Ch'un-ch'iu*) which records the events of the state of Lu during the Spring and Autumn period (722-481 B.C.). The authorship of the *Spring and Autumn Annals* has been ascribed to Confucius, who was a native of Lu. Its records are so brief and often so obscure that commentaries were necessary to supply the background and context and to make the meanings clear. Of three commentaries, the *Tso chuan* is the standard. For English translation, see Legge, trans., *The Ch'un Ts'ew, with The Tso Tsuen*. Modern scholarship, however, holds that the *Tso chuan* is probably an independent work and was not written until the 4th century B.C.

⁷ Also attributed to Tso Ch'iu-ming, though not by modern scholars, who believe that the work was probably edited by Liu Hsin (c. 46 B.C.-A.D. 23). However, they accept it as an authentic record of conversations in various states during the Spring and Autumn period. For French translation, see de Harlez, trans., "Koue-Yü," 1st pt., *Journal Asiatique*, vol. 9, no. 1 (1893), 373-419, no. 2 (1894), 5-91; 2nd pt., *Discours des Royaumes*, 1895, pp. 1-268.

⁸ The interpretation of this line varies. That of the *Mao-shih cheng-i* (Correct Meanings of the *Book of Odes* Transmitted by Mao) by K'ung Ying-ta (574-648) is followed here.

⁹ Chung Shan-fu was Marquis of Fan, according to the *Mao-shih cheng-i*, a very virtuous man, whom Heaven sent out to help King Hsüan (r. 827-782 B.C.).

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is no doubt, however, that from very early days the Chinese believed that existence implies a certain principle. Significantly, the word *tse*¹⁰ means not just principle but *specific* principle, though perhaps it did not have this meaning at the time when the poem was written. In any case, those who believe that, to the Chinese, reality is something like an undifferentiated void should revise their opinion in the light of this long tradition of specific principles for specific things. Mencius, it is to be noted, quoted this poem to support his theory of the originally good nature of man.¹¹

2. THE MANDATE OF HEAVEN, ANCESTORS, AND VIRTUE

The Mandate of Heaven,
How beautiful and unceasing!
Oh, how glorious
Was the purity of King Wen's¹² virtue!
With blessings he overwhelms us.
We will receive the blessings.
They are a great favor from our King Wen.
May his descendants hold fast to them.
(*ibid.*, ode no. 267, "The Mandate of Heaven")

Comment. Both Cheng Hsüan (127-200)¹³ and Chu Hsi (1130-1200)¹⁴ remarked that the Mandate of Heaven (*T'ien-ming*) means the "Way" or the moral order of Heaven (*T'ien-tao*), thus interpreting it in the naturalistic sense. However, in early Chou the belief in an anthropomorphic God was still quite strong.

Thus Duke Chou (d. 1094 B.C.) said, "Prince Shih,¹⁵ Heaven, without pity, sent down ruin on the Yin dynasty (1384-1112 B.C.). Yin having lost the Mandate of Heaven, we, the Chou, have received it. But I dare not say with certainty that our heritage will forever truly remain on the side of fortune. If Heaven renders sincere help, I do not dare say with certainty that the final end will result in misfortune. Oh! you have said, Prince, 'It depends on ourselves.' I also dare not rest in the Mandate of

¹⁰ For a good discussion of the term *tse*, see Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, vol. 2: *History of Scientific Thought*, pp. 558-562.

¹¹ *Mencius*, 6A:6.

¹² Founder of Chou (r. 1171-1122 B.C.).

¹³ Quoted in *Mao-shih cheng-i*.

¹⁴ See his *Shih-ching chi-chu* (Collected Commentaries on the *Book of Odes*).

¹⁵ Name of Duke Shao (d. 1056 B.C.). Presumably this was written by Duke Chou to dissuade Prince Shih from retiring as chief minister to King Ch'eng (r. 1104-1068 B.C.).

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the Lord on High, forever refraining from thinking of the awe-inspiring power of Heaven. At the same time when the people do not complain, so long are there men [like you]! If our successors should prove utterly unable to reverence Heaven above and the people below, and so bring to an end the glory of their forefathers, could you, by remaining at home, be unaware of it?

"The Mandate of Heaven is not easily [preserved]. Heaven is hard to depend on. Those who have lost the mandate did so because they could not practice and carry on the reverence and the brilliant virtue of their forefathers. As for the present, it is not that I, a little one, have a way of correcting our king. My way of leading him would be merely to make it possible to apply the glory of the forefathers to our young king."

Duke Chou also said, "Heaven is not to be trusted. My way is simply to continue and extend the virtue of our peace-establishing king, and Heaven will not have occasion to remove the mandate received by King Wen. . . ." (*Book of History*, "Prince Shih")

They (descendants of Yin) became subject to Chou.

Heaven's Mandate is not constant.

The officers of Yin were fine and alert.

They assist at the libation in our capital.

In their assisting in the libation,

They always wear skirted robes and close caps [peculiar to Yin].

Oh, you promoted servants of the king,

Don't you mind your ancestors!

Don't you mind your ancestors!

Cultivate your virtue.

Always strive to be in harmony with Heaven's Mandate.

Seek for yourselves the many blessings.

Before Yin lost its army,

Its kings were able to be counterparts to the Lord on High.

In Yin you should see as in a mirror

That the great mandate is not easy [to keep].

(*Book of Odes*, ode no. 235, "King Wen")

Comment. The line "Don't you mind your ancestors" has given scholars a great deal of trouble. Because of the deep Chinese reverence for ancestors, they could not see how the advice not to mind the ancestors could be consonant with Confucianism. Therefore Legge had to drop the word "don't" ("Ever think of your ancestors"),¹⁶ Karlgren had to turn it into a question ("Should

¹⁶ Legge, trans., *She King*, p. 431.

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you not think of your ancestors?"),¹⁷ and Waley had to interpret the term "to mind" to mean "shame."¹⁸ If we realize that humanism was growing strong, and that the emphasis was on self-dependence rather than dependence on Heaven or ancestors, there is no need to twist the original and obvious meaning of the text to conform to any earlier or later custom of ancestor worship.

The Lord on High said to King Wen:
"I cherish your brilliant virtue,
Which makes no great display in sound or appearance,
Nor is changed with age."¹⁹
Without any manipulation or deliberation,²⁰
You follow the principles of the Lord."
(*ibid.*, ode no. 241, "August")

"Let the king first bring under his influence the administrators of the affairs of Yin and place them in the midst of the administrators of the affairs of our Chou. Their natures will thus be regulated, and they will improve daily.

"Let the king be serious in what he does. He should not neglect to be serious with virtue." (*Book of History*, "The Announcement of Duke Shao")

Comment. The emphasis on virtue necessarily raises the question of man's original nature. This eventually became one of the most persistent questions, perhaps the most persistent, in the history of Chinese philosophy. But the question was not specifically discussed until Mencius' time. Here is the earliest reference to it. Since nature has to be regulated, especially in the sense of restraint, the implication is that man's nature is originally indifferent or perhaps even evil, which is quite different from the later-established doctrine that human nature is originally good.

3. THE "GREAT NORM"

In the thirteenth year (1121 B.C.) the King [Wu] visited Viscount Chi. The King said, "Oh! Viscount Chi. Heaven, working unseen, has decisively made men with certain hidden springs of character, aiding also the harmonious development of it in their various conditions. I do

¹⁷ *The Book of Odes*, p. 186.

¹⁸ *The Book of Songs*, p. 186.

¹⁹ This is a very obscure line. The interpretation here follows the *Mao-shih cheng-i*.

²⁰ This is the interpretation of many outstanding commentators, as pointed out by Ch'ü Wan-li, *Shih-ching shih-i* (Meanings of the *Book of Odes* Explained), 1952, p. 214.

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not know how the various virtues and their relations should be regulated."²¹

Viscount Chi thereupon replied, "I have heard that of old (Great Yü's father) Kun dammed up the flood and thereby created a chaos among the Five Agents. The Lord (of Heaven) was aroused to anger and did not give him the Great Norm with its Nine Categories. The various virtues and their relations declined in due course, and K'un was executed. Yü thereupon rose to continue the heritage. Heaven gave him the Great Norm with its Nine Categories. And the various virtues and their relations were regulated. . . .

"The first category is the Five Agents (Five Elements); namely, Water, Fire, Wood, Metal, and Earth [which correspond to various human activities]. . . .²² The second category is the Five Activities; namely, appearance, speech, seeing, hearing, and thinking. The virtue of appearance is respectfulness; that of speech is accordance [with reason]; that of seeing is clearness; that of hearing is distinctness; and that of thinking is penetration and profundity. Respectfulness leads to gravity; accordance with reason, to orderliness; clearness, to wisdom; distinctness, to deliberation; and penetration and profundity, to sageness [all of which should be cultivated by the ruler]. The third category is the Eight Governmental Offices; namely, those of food, commodities, sacrifices, public works, education, and justice, the reception of guests, and the army. [All these functions should be fulfilled in harmony with the next category.] The fourth category is the Five Arrangements of Time, namely, the year, the month, the day, the stars, planets, zodiacal signs, and the calendaric calculations. The fifth category is the Supreme Standard. The sovereign, having established the highest standard, gathers in him the Five Blessings and spreads over his people. Then the people, following your standard, preserve it with you. . . .

"The sixth category is the Three Virtues; namely, correctness and uprightness, strong government, and weak government. In times of peace and tranquillity, apply correctness and uprightness; in times of violence and disorder, apply strong government; and in times of harmony and order, apply weak government.²³ Apply strong government to the reserved and retiring, and apply weak government to the lofty and intelligent. . . . The seventh category is the Examination of Doubts. Select

²¹ The interpretation of this passage is based on the *Shang-shu cheng-i* (Correct Meanings of the *Book of History*) by K'ung Ying-ta. An alternate translation would be: "Heaven, working unseen, protects mankind below and helps it to maintain harmony in its abode. I do not know how its eternal principles of human relations should be regulated."

²² This paragraph in full is found below, ch. 11, sec. 3.

²³ This interpretation also follows the *Shang-shu cheng-i*.

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and appoint officers for divination by tortoise shells and by stalks, and command them thus to divine. . . . The calculation of the passage of events is the function of experts whose duty it is to perform the divination. When three of them divine, follow the words of two of them. If you have any doubt about important matters, consult with your own conscience, consult with your ministers and officers, consult with the common people, and consult the tortoise shells and stalks. If you, the tortoise shells, the stalks, the ministers and officers, and the common people all agree, this is called a great concord. There will be welfare to your own person and prosperity to your descendants. The result will be auspicious. If you, the tortoise shells, and the stalks agree but the ministers and officers and the common people oppose, the result will be auspicious. If the ministers and officers, the tortoise shells, and the stalks agree but you and the common people oppose, the result will be auspicious. If the common people, the tortoise shells, and the stalks agree but you and the ministers and the officers oppose, the result will be auspicious. If you and the tortoise shells agree but the stalks, ministers and officers, and the common people oppose, internal operations will be auspicious but external operations will be unlucky. If both the tortoise shells and stalks oppose the views of men, inactivity will be auspicious but active operations will be unlucky.

"The eighth category is the General Verifications [that is, checking governmental measures against natural phenomena], namely, rain, sunshine, heat, cold, wind, and seasonableness [corresponding to the Five Agents]. When the five all come and are complete, and each in its proper order, even the common grain will be luxuriant. . . . The ninth category is the Five Blessings, namely, longevity, wealth, physical and mental health, cultivation of excellent virtue, and an end crowning a good life.

"Negatively, these are the Six Extremities [a punishment for evil conduct]; namely, premature death, sickness, sorrow, poverty, wickedness, and weakness." (*Book of History*, "Great Norm")

Comment. This document is important for two reasons. One is that it contains the doctrine of the Five Agents (which will be dealt with later). The other is that it encompasses early Chinese ideas about the interrelationship of nature (categories nos. 1, 5, 8), the cultivation of personal life (nos. 2 and 6), government (nos. 3, 4, 6), retribution (no. 9), and a central principle, the Supreme Standard (no. 5). Heaven, Earth, and man are correlated, preparing for the later development of the doctrine of the unity of man and Nature that was to dominate the course of Chinese history. Some scholars

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think that this document is much later than the twelfth century B.C., but concrete proof is lacking. Besides, its spirit is perfectly consonant with that of the songs of Early Chou, that is, that the power of Heaven is recognized, but the deciding factor is human virtue.

4. SPIRITS, THE SOUL, AND IMMORTALITY

In the fifteenth year (of King Hui, 662 B.C.), a spiritual being descended, and appeared in Hsin. The Bang asked his minister Kuo, saying, "Why is this? Is there such a thing?"

Kuo replied, "Yes. When a state is about to rise, its ruler is solemn, illustrious, sincere, and correct. He is discriminating, pure, kind, and affable. His virtue is sufficient to make his fragrant offerings manifest, and his kindness is sufficient to unify the people. As the spiritual beings enjoy his offerings and the people listen to him, neither the people nor the spiritual beings have any complaint. Therefore brilliant spiritual beings descend in his state, see the evidence of the virtue of the government, and spread blessings everywhere. When the state is about to perish, its ruler is greedy, reckless, depraved, and perverted. He is lewd, indolent, negligent, and lazy. He is vulgar and cruel. Because his government has a disgusting odor, his offerings do not rise [to reach the spiritual beings]. And because his punishments are imposed on the basis of treachery and slander, his people desert him and divert their loyalty elsewhere. The brilliant spiritual beings no longer give him purification, and his people want to leave him.²⁴ Both the people and the spiritual beings blame him and hate him, and there is nothing in him for them to cling to. The spiritual beings likewise go to such a state, see the evidence of oppression and evil, and send down calamity." (*Kuo-yü* or *Conversations of the States*, SPPY, 1:11a-12b)

The Marquis of Chin again (in 655 B.C.) borrowed a way through Yü to attack Kuo. (Great Officer) Kung Chih-ch'i remonstrated with him. . . . The marquis said, "My sacrificial offerings have been abundant and pure. Spiritual beings will comfort me."²⁵

Kung Chih-ch'i replied, "I have heard that spiritual beings are not endeared to man as such but cleave only to virtue. Therefore it is said in the 'Book of Chou' that 'August Heaven has no affections; it helps only the virtuous.'²⁶ It further says, 'It is not the millet that has the fragrance [which attracts the spiritual beings]. Illustrious virtue alone has the

²⁴ According to the commentary by Wei Chao (of the Wu period, 222-280), to rebel against him.

²⁵ According to the *Ch'un-ch'iu Tso chuan cheng-i* (Correct Meanings of Tso's Commentary on the *Spring and Autumn Annals*) by K'ung Ying-ta, *chü* here means to comfort.

²⁶ *History*, "Charge to Chung of Ts'ai." Cf. Legge, *Shoo King*, p. 490.

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fragrance.²⁷ It also says, 'People have not slighted the things, but it is virtue that makes things acceptable.'²⁸ Therefore if a ruler acts against virtue, his people will not be attached to him and spiritual beings will not accept his offerings. It is virtue that the spiritual beings will adhere to." (*Tso chuan*, Tso's Commentary on the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, Duke Hsi, 5th year)

[In 535 B.C.] the people of Cheng frightened one another about Po-yu [who was a drunkard],²⁹ crying, "Po-yu has arrived." They all ran off, not knowing where they were going. In the second month of the year when the criminal code was cast, someone dreamed that Po-yu walked by him in armor and said, "In the year *jen-tzu* I will kill Tai and the next year, the year *jen-yin*, I will kill Tuan. When Ssu Tai did die in the year *jen-tzu*, the terror of the people increased. Then when in the year *jen-yin*, in the month that the Ch'i and Yen states made peace, Kung-sun Tuan died, the terror of the people increased further. It did not stop until the next month when [Prime Minister] Tzu-ch'an appointed Kung-sun Hsieh and [Po-yu's son] Liang-chih [as successors to their fathers] in order to pacify them. Tzu Ta-shu asked him for the reason. Tzu-ch'an replied, "When spiritual beings have a place to return to, they will not become malicious. I have given them a place to return to. . . ."

When Tzu-ch'an went to Chin, Chao Ching Tzu asked him, "Can even Po-yu become a spiritual being?" Tzu-ch'an answered, "Yes, he could. In man's life the first transformations are called the earthly aspect of the soul (*p'o*). After *p'o* has been produced, that which is strong and positive is called the heavenly aspect of the soul (*hun*).³⁰ If he had an abundance in the use of material things and subtle essentials, his *hun* and *p'o* will become strong. From this are developed essence and understanding until there are spirit and intelligence. When an ordinary man or woman dies a violent death, the *hun* and *p'o* are still able to keep hanging about men and do evil and malicious things. How much more would be the case of Po-yu, a descendant of Duke Mu (r. 659-619 B.C.), the grandson of Tzu-liang, the son of Tzu-erh, all ministers of our state, engaged in government for three generations! Cheng is not a great state but a small, insignificant one; nevertheless, because his family had administered the government for three generations, his use of material things must have been extensive and his enjoyment of subtle essentials

²⁷ *ibid.*, "Prince Ch'en," Legge, p. 539.

²⁸ *ibid.*, "Hounds of Lü," Legge, pp. 347-348.

²⁹ For an account of him, see *Tso chuan*, Duke Hsiang, 30th year. Cf. Legge, *The Ch'un Ch'ew, with The Tso Tsoen*, p. 557.

³⁰ As generally understood, *hun* is the spirit of man's vital force which is expressed in man's intelligence and power of breathing, whereas *p'o* is the spirit of man's physical nature which is expressed in bodily movements.

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abundant. Furthermore, his clan is large and there was much to which he could cling. Is it not proper that having died a violent death he should become a spiritual being?" (*ibid.*, Duke Chao, 7th year)

In the spring of the twenty-fourth year (of Duke Hsiang, 546 B.C.), Mu-shu (great officer of Lu) went to Chin. Fan Hsüan Tzu met him, saying, "The ancients had the saying 'Dead but immortal.' What does it mean?"

Before Mu-shu replied, Hsüan Tzu went on to say, "Anciently, the ancestors of our Fan family, from the time of Emperor Shun (3rd millennium B.C.) and earlier, were the Princes of T'ao and T'ang. In the time of Hsia (2183-1752 B.C.?), their ancestors were the lords of Yü-lung. In the time of Shang, they were the lords of Shih-wei. And in the beginning of Chou, they were the lords of T'ang and Tu. Now Chin has achieved the control of the great alliance and become the lords of Fan. Is this [unbroken heritage] what is meant by immortality?"

Mu-shu said, "According to what I have heard, this is called hereditary rank and emolument, not immortality. There was a former great officer of Lu by the name of Tsang Wen-chung. After his death his words remain established. This is what the ancient saying means. I have heard that the best course is to establish virtue, the next best is to establish achievement, and still the next best is to establish words. When these are not abandoned with time, it may be called immortality. As to the preservation of the family name and bestowment of membership in the clan branch in order to preserve ancestral sacrifices uninterrupted from age to age, no state is without these practices. But even those with great emolument cannot be said to be immortal." (*ibid.*, Duke Hsiang, 24th year)

Comment. Chinese belief in the immortality of influence has not changed since ancient times, and is still the conviction of educated Chinese. It is remarkable that a simple and casual utterance made when Confucius was only a child of three should have remained an unalterable conviction for the Chinese for 2,500 years.

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CONFUCIUS (551-479 B.C.) can truly be said to have molded Chinese civilization in general. It may seem far-fetched, however, to say that he molded Chinese philosophy in particular—that he determined the direction or established the pattern of later Chinese philosophical developments—yet there is more truth in the statement than is usually realized.

Neo-Confucianism, the full flowering of Chinese thought, developed during the last eight hundred years. Its major topics of debate, especially in the Sung (960-1279) and Ming (1368-1644) periods, are the nature and principle (*li*) of man and things. (For this reason it is called the School of Nature and Principle, or *Hsing-li hsüeh*.) Supplementary to these topics are the problems of material force, (*ch'i*); yin and yang (passive and active cosmic forces or elements); *T'ai-chi* (Great Ultimate); being and non-being; substance and function; and the unity of Nature and man. Confucius had nothing to do with these problems, and never discussed them. In fact, the words *li*, *yin*, *yang*, and *t'ai-chi* are not found in the *Lun-yü* (Discourses or *Analects*). The word *ch'i* appears several times, but is not used in the sense of material force.¹ And Confucius' pupils said that they could not hear the Master's views on human nature and the Way of Heaven.² He did not talk about human nature except once, when he said that "by nature men are alike. Through practice they have become far apart,"³ but the theory is entirely different from the later orthodox doctrine of the Confucian school that human nature is originally good.

The present discussion is based on the *Analects*, which is generally accepted as the most reliable source of Confucius' doctrines. The subject of "the investigation of things" originated in the *Great Learning* and most of the other topics are mentioned in the *Book of Changes*.⁴ But these two Classics are not generally regarded as Confucius' own works. Furthermore, even if they were, the subjects are only briefly mentioned without elaboration. It is correct then to say that the Neo-Confucianists drew their inspiration from them or made use of them to support their

¹ *Analects*, 8:4; 10:4 and 8; 16:7. In the rest of this introduction, references to the *Analects* are given only in specific cases. For references on general subjects, see the analytical list at the end of this introduction. For discussion of the *Analects*, see, below, n.11.

² *Analects*, 5:12.

³ *ibid.*, 17:2.

⁴ For these Classics, see below, ch. 4, n.5, and ch. 13, n.1.

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own ideas, but it would be going too far to suggest that they provided an outline or framework for later Chinese philosophy.

However, judging on the basis of the *Analects* alone, we find that Confucius exerted great influence on Chinese philosophical development in that, first of all, he determined its outstanding characteristic, namely, humanism.

As pointed out in the previous chapter, the humanistic tendency had been in evidence long before his time. But it was Confucius who turned it into the strongest driving force in Chinese philosophy. He did not care to talk about spiritual beings or even about life after death. Instead, believing that man "can make the Way (Tao) great," and not that "the Way can make man great,"⁵ he concentrated on man. His primary concern was a good society based on good government and harmonious human relations. To this end he advocated a good government that rules by virtue and moral example rather than by punishment or force. His criterion for goodness was righteousness as opposed to profit. For the family, he particularly stressed filial piety and for society in general, proper conduct or *li* (propriety, rites).

More specifically, he believed in the perfectibility of all men, and in this connection he radically modified a traditional concept, that of the *chün-tzu*, or superior man. Literally "son of the ruler," it came to acquire the meaning of "superior man," on the theory that nobility was a quality determined by status, more particularly a hereditary position. The term appears 107 times in the *Analects*. In some cases it refers to the ruler. In most cases, however, Confucius used it to denote a morally superior man. In other words, to him nobility was no longer a matter of blood, but of character—a concept that amounted to social revolution. Perhaps it is more correct to say that it was an evolution, but certainly it was Confucius who firmly established the new concept. His repeated mention of sage-emperors Yao and Shun and Duke Chou⁶ as models seems to suggest that he was looking back to the past. Be that as it may, he was looking to ideal men rather than to a supernatural being for inspiration.

Not only did Confucius give Chinese philosophy its humanistic foundation, but he also formulated some of its fundamental concepts, five of which will be briefly commented on here: the rectification of names, the Mean, the Way, Heaven, and *jen* (humanity). In insisting on the rectification of names, Confucius was advocating not only the establishment of a social order in which names and ranks are properly regulated, but also the correspondence of words and action, or in its more philosophical

⁵ *Analects*, 15:28.

⁶ Yao was a legendary ruler of the 3rd millennium B.C. Shun was his successor. Duke Chou (d. 1094) helped the founder of the Chou dynasty to consolidate the empire and establish the foundations of Chinese culture.

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aspect, the correspondence of name and actuality. This has been a perennial theme in the Confucian school, as well as in nearly all other schools. By the Mean, Confucius did not have in mind merely moderation, but that which is central and balanced. This, too, has been a cardinal idea in Chinese thought. In a real sense, the later Neo-Confucian ideas of the harmony of yin and yang and that of substance and function did not go beyond this concept. In his interpretation of Heaven, he departed from traditional belief even more radically. Up to the time of Confucius, the Supreme Power was called *Ti* (the Lord) or *Shang-ti* (the Lord on High) and was understood in an anthropomorphic sense. Confucius never spoke of *Ti*. Instead, he often spoke of *T'ien* (Heaven). To be sure, his Heaven is purposive and is the master of all things. He repeatedly referred to the *T'ien-ming*, the Mandate, will, or order of Heaven. However, with him Heaven is no longer the greatest of all spiritual beings who rules in a personal manner but a Supreme Being who only reigns, leaving his Moral Law to operate by itself. This is the Way according to which civilization should develop and men should behave. It is the Way of Heaven (*T'ien-tao*), later called the Principle of Heaven or Nature (*T'ien-li*).

Most important of all, he evolved the new concept of *jen* which was to become central in Chinese philosophy. All later discussions on principle and material force may be said to serve the purpose of helping man to realize *jen*.⁷ The word *jen* is not found in the oracle bones. It is found only occasionally in pre-Confucian texts, and in all these cases it denotes the particular virtue of kindness, more especially the kindness of a ruler to his subjects. In Confucius, however, all this is greatly changed. In the first place, Confucius made *jen* the main theme of his conversations. In the *Analects* fifty-eight of 499 chapters are devoted to the discussion of *jen*, and the word appears 105 times. No other subject, not even filial piety, engaged so much attention of the Master and his disciples. Furthermore, instead of perpetuating the ancient understanding of *jen* as a particular virtue, he transformed it into general virtue. It is true that in a few cases *jen* is still used by Confucius as a particular virtue, in the sense of benevolence. But in most cases, to Confucius the man of *jen* is the perfect man. He is the true *chün-tzu*. He is a man of the golden rule, for, "wishing to establish his own character, he also establishes the character of others, and wishing to be prominent himself, he also helps others to be prominent."⁸ In these balanced and harmonized aspects of the self and society, *jen* is expressed in terms of *chung* and *shu*, or conscientious-

⁷ For this concept, see Chan, "The Evolution of the Confucian Concept *Jen*," *Philosophy East and West*, 4 (1955), 295-319; also, see below, comment on *Analects* 12:22, and comments on the following: ch. 30, A; ch. 31, secs. 1, 11; ch. 32, sec. 42; ch. 34, A, treatise 1.

⁸ *Analects*, 6:28.

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ness and altruism, which is the "one thread" running through Confucius' teachings, and which is in essence the golden mean as well as the golden rule. It was the extension of this idea of *jen* that became the Neo-Confucian doctrine of man's forming one body with Heaven, or the unity of man and Nature, and it was because of the character of *jen* in man that later Confucianists have adhered to the theory of the original good nature of man.

It is clear, therefore, that Confucius was a creator as well as a transmitter. He was not a philosopher in a technical sense, but Chinese philosophy would be quite different if he had not lived. He was born in 551 (or 552) B.C. in the state of Lu in modern Shantung. His family name was K'ung, private name Ch'iu, and he has been traditionally honored as Grand Master K'ung (K'ung Fu-tzu, hence the Latinized form Confucius). He was a descendant of a noble but fairly poor family. His father died when Confucius was probably three years old. Evidently a self-made man, he studied under no particular teacher but became perhaps the most learned man of his time.

He began his career in his twenties or thirties. He was the first person in Chinese history to devote his whole life, almost exclusively, to teaching. He sought to inaugurate private education, to open the door of education to all, to offer education for training character instead of for vocation, and to gather around him a group of gentlemen-scholars (thus starting the institution of the literati who have dominated Chinese history and society).

In his younger years Confucius had served in minor posts in Lu. At fifty-one he was made a magistrate, and became minister of justice the same year, perhaps serving as an assistant minister of public works in between. At fifty-six, finding his superiors uninterested in his policies, he set out to travel (for almost thirteen years) in a desperate attempt at political and social reform. He took some of his pupils along with him. Eventually disappointed, he returned, at the age of sixty-eight, to his own state to teach and perhaps to write and edit the Classics. According to the *Shih chi* (Records of the Historian),⁹ he had three thousand pupils, seventy-two of whom mastered the "six arts."¹⁰ He died at the age of seventy-three.

⁹ These accounts are found in the first-and still the standard-biography of Confucius, ch. 47 of the *Shih chi*. See French translation by Chavannes, *Les mémoires historiques*, vol. 5, pp. 299-300, 391-403, 420; or English translation by Lin Yutang, *The Wisdom of Confucius*, pp. 57, 88-91, 95.

¹⁰ Traditionally believed to refer to the Six Classics, i.e., the Books of *History*, *Odes*, *Changes*, *Rites*, and *Music*, and the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. The *Book of Music* is now lost. For three of the others, see above, ch. 1, nn.4-6. The "six

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Many Chinese scholars, especially in the last several decades, have debated such questions as whether he actually made a trip some time in his forties to see Lao Tzu to inquire about ancient rites and ceremonies, whether he wrote the *Ch'un-ch'iu* (*Spring and Autumn Annals*), edited the other ancient Classics, and wrote the "ten wings" or commentaries of one of them, namely, the *Book of Changes*. After having once rejected these claims, many scholars are now inclined to believe them. The controversy has by no means ended. At the same time, the fact that the *Analects* is the most reliable source of Confucius' teachings is accepted by practically all scholars. For this reason, the following selections are made entirely from this book.

Ceremonies and Music: 1:12; 2:5; 3:3-4, 17, 19; 6:25; 8:8
Confucius: 2:4; 5:25; 6:26; 7:1, 2, 7, 8, 16, 18-20, 37; 9:1, 4; 10:9, 14;
14:30, 37, 41; 18:6; 19:24
Education and Learning: 1:1, 6, 8, 14; 2:11, 15; 6:25; 7:7, 2, 24; 15:38;
16:9; 17:8; 19:6
Filial piety: 1:2, 6, 11; 2:5, 7; 4:18, 19, 21
Government: 2:1, 3; 3:19; 8:9, 14; 12:7, 11, 17, 19; 13:3, 6, 16, 29, 30;
14:45; 15:4; 16:1
Heaven, Spirits, Destiny: 2:4; 3:12, 13; 5:12; 6:20, 26; 7:20, 22, 34; 9:1, 5,
6; 11:8, 11; 12:5; 14:37; 16:8; 17:19
Humanism: 6:20; 10:12; 11:11; 12:22; 15:28; 18:6
Humanity (*jen*): 1:2, 3, 6; 3:3; 4:2-6; 6:20, 21, 28; 7:6, 29; 8:7; 12:1, 2,
22; 13:19, 27; 14:30; 15:8, 32, 35; 17:6, 8; 19:6
Knowledge and Wisdom: 2:17, 18; 4:2; 6:18, 20, 21; 7:27; 12:22; 14:30;
15:32; 16:9
Literature and Art: 1:15; 6:25; 7:6; 8:8; 9:5; 15:40; 17:9
Love and Golden rule: 4:2, 15; 5:11; 6:28; 12:2, 5; 14:36, 45; 17:4
Mean and Central thread: 4:15; 15:2
Nature, human: 5:12; 6:17, 19; 16:9; 17:2, 3
Rectification of names: 12:11, 17; 13:3, 6
Righteousness: 2:24; 4:16; 13:3, 6; 15:17
Superior man: 1:2, 8, 14; 2:11, 13; 4:5, 24; 6:16; 9:13; 13:3; 14:30; 15:17,
20, 31; 16:8, 10; contrasted with inferior man: 2:14; 4:11, 16; 8:6; 12:16;
13:23, 26; 14:24; 15:20; 17:23
Virtue: 1:4, 6, 8; 4:12; 7:6; 8:5, 7, 13; 9:4; 13:18, 19; 14:33; 15:8, 17;
16:4, 10; 17:6, 8
Way (Tao): 4:5, 8; 7:6; 15:28, 31; 17:4
Words and Acts: 2:13, 18; 4:24; 13:3; 14:29

THE ANALECTS¹¹

1:1. Confucius said, "Is it not a pleasure to learn and to repeat or practice from time to time what has been learned? Is it not delightful to have friends coming from afar? Is one not a superior man if he does not feel hurt even though he is not recognized?"

arts" are also understood to mean ceremonies, music, archery, carriage-driving, writing, and mathematics.

¹¹The *Analects* is a collection of sayings by Confucius and his pupils pertaining to his teachings and deeds. It was probably put together by some of his pupils and

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Comment. Interpretations of Confucian teachings have differed radically in the last 2,000 years. Generally speaking, Han (206 B.C.-A.D. 220) scholars, represented in Ho Yen (d. 249), *Lun-yü chi-chieh* (Collected Explanations of the *Analects*),¹² were inclined to be literal and interested in historical facts, whereas Neo-Confucianists, represented in Chu Hsi (1130-1200), *Lun-yü chi-chu* (Collected Commentaries on the *Analects*) were interpretative, philosophical, and often subjective. They almost invariably understand the Confucian Way (Tao) as principle (*li*), which is their cardinal concept, and frequently when they came to an undefined "this" or "it," they insisted that it meant principle. This divergency between the Han and Sung scholars has colored interpretations of this passage. To Wang Su (195-265), quoted in Ho, *hsi* (to learn) means to recite a lesson repeatedly. To Chu Hsi, however, *hsi* means to follow the examples of those who are first to understand, and therefore it does not mean recitation but practice. In revolt against both extremes, Ch'ing (1644-1912) scholars emphasized practical experience. In this case, *hsi* to them means both to repeat and to practice, as indicated in Liu Pao-nan (1791-1855), *Lun-yü cheng-i* (Correct Meanings of the *Analects*). Thus Ho Yen, Chu Hsi, and Liu Pao-nan neatly represent the three different approaches in the three different periods. Generally speaking, the dominant spirit of Confucian teaching is the equal emphasis on knowledge and action. This dual emphasis will be encountered again and again.¹³

1:2. Yu Tzu¹⁴ said, "Few of those who are filial sons and respectful

their pupils. The name *Lun-yü* did not appear until the 2nd century B.C. At that time there were three versions of it, with some variations. Two of these have been lost. The surviving version is that of the state of Lu, where it circulated. It is divided into two parts, with ten books each. In the *Ching-tien shih-wen* (Explanation of Terms in the Classics) by Lu Te-ming (556-627), ch. 24, it is divided into 492 chapters. Chu Hsi combined and divided certain chapters, making a total of 482, one of which is divided into eighteen sections. In translations like Legge's *Confucian Analects*, and Waley's *The Analects of Confucius*, these divisions are taken as chapters, making 499. The same numbering is used in the following selections.

The material is unsystematic, in a few cases repetitive, and in some cases historically inaccurate. However, it is generally accepted as the most authentic and reliable source of Confucian teachings. Chu Hsi grouped it together with the *Book of Mencius*, the *Great Learning*, and the *Doctrine of the Mean* as the "Four Books." Thereupon they became Classics. From 1313 to 1905, they served as the basis for civil service examinations, replacing the earlier Classics in importance.

¹² In the *Lun-yü chu-shu* (Commentary and Subcommentary on the *Analects*) in the Thirteen Classics Series.

¹³ See below, comment on *Analects*, 2:18.

¹⁴ Confucius' pupil whose private name was Jo (538-c.457 B.C.), thirteen years (some say thirty-three years) Confucius' junior. In the *Analects*, with minor

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brothers will show disrespect to superiors, and there has never been a man who is not disrespectful to superiors and yet creates disorder. A superior man is devoted to the fundamentals (the root). When the root is firmly established, the moral law (Tao) will grow. Filial piety and brotherly respect are the root of humanity (*jen*)."

1:3. Confucius said, "A man with clever words and an ingratiating appearance is seldom a man of humanity."¹⁵

1:4. Tseng-Tzu¹⁶ said, "Every day I examine myself on three points: whether in counseling others I have not been loyal; whether in intercourse with my friends I have not been faithful; and whether I have not repeated again and again and practiced the instructions of my teacher."¹⁷

1:6. Young men should be filial when at home and respectful to their elders when away from home. They should be earnest and faithful. They should love all extensively and be intimate with men of humanity. When they have any energy to spare after the performance of moral duties, they should use it to study literature and the arts (*wen*).¹⁸

1:8. Confucius said, "If the superior man is not grave, he will not inspire awe, and his learning will not be on a firm foundation."¹⁹ Hold loyalty and faithfulness to be fundamental. Have no friends who are not as good as yourself. When you have made mistakes, don't be afraid to correct them."

Comment. The teaching about friendship here is clearly inconsistent with *Analects*, 8:5, where Confucius exhorts us to learn from inferiors. It is difficult to believe that Confucius taught people to be selfish. According to Hsing Ping (932-1010),²⁰ Confucius meant people who are not equal to oneself in loyalty and faithfulness, assuming that one is or should be loyal and faithful; according to Hsü

exceptions, he and Tseng Ts'an are addressed as Tzu, an honorific for a scholar or gentleman, giving rise to the theory that the *Analects* was compiled by their pupils, who supplemented Confucius' sayings with theirs.

¹⁵ Cf. below, 13:27.

¹⁶ Tseng Shen (505-c.436 B.C.), pupil of Confucius, noted for filial piety, to whom are ascribed the *Great Learning* and the *Book of Filial Piety*.

¹⁷ Ho Yen's interpretation: Whether I have transmitted to others what I myself have not practiced. This interpretation has been accepted by many.

¹⁸ *Wen*, literally "patterns," is here extended to mean the embodiment of culture and the moral law (Tao)—that is, the Six Arts of ceremony, music, archery, carriage-driving, writing, and mathematics.

¹⁹ To K'ung An-kuo (fl. 130 B.C.), quoted by Ho Yen, *ku* means "obscure," not "firm." The sentence would read, "If he studies, he will not be ignorant."

²⁰ *Lun-yü shu* (Subcommentary on the *Analects*). This is part of the *Lun-yü chu-shu*.

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Kan (171-218), Confucius simply wanted us to be careful in choosing friends.²¹

1:11. Confucius said, "When a man's father is alive, look at the bent of his will. When his father is dead, look at his conduct. If for three years [of mourning] he does not change from the way of his father, he may be called filial."

Comment. Critics of Confucius have asserted that Confucian authoritarianism holds an oppressive weight on the son even after the father has passed away. Fan Tsu-yü (1041-1098) did understand the saying to mean that the son should observe the father's will and past conduct,²² but he was almost alone in this. All prominent commentators, from K'ung An-kuo to Cheng Hsüan (127-200),²³ Chu Hsi, and Liu Pao-nan have interpreted the passage to mean that while one's father is alive, one's action is restricted, so that his *intention* should be the criterion by which his character is to be judged. After his father's death, however, when he is completely autonomous, he should be judged by his conduct. In this interpretation, the way of the father is of course the moral principle which has guided or should have guided the son's conduct.

1:12. Yu Tzu said, "Among the functions of propriety (*li*) the most valuable is that it establishes harmony. The excellence of the ways of ancient kings consists of this. It is the guiding principle of all things great and small. If things go amiss, and you, understanding harmony, try to achieve it without regulating it by the rules of propriety, they will still go amiss."

1:14. Confucius said, "The superior man does not seek fulfillment of his appetite nor comfort in his lodging. He is diligent in his duties and careful in his speech. He associates with men of moral principles and thereby realizes himself. Such a person may be said to love learning."

1:15. Tzu-kung²⁴ said, "What do you think of a man who is poor and yet does not flatter, and the rich man who is not proud?" Confucius replied, "They will do. But they are not as good as the poor man who is happy²⁵ and the rich man who loves the rules of propriety (*li*)." Tzu-kung said, "*The Book of Odes* says:

²¹ *Chung lun* (Treatise on the Mean), pt. 1, sec. 5, SPTK, 1:21b.

²² Quoted in Chu Hsi's *Lun-yü huo-wen* (Questions and Answers on the *Analects*), 1:20a, in *Chu Tzu i-shu* (Surviving Works of Chu Hsi).

²³ *Lun-yü chu* (Commentary on the *Analects*).

²⁴ Confucius' pupil, whose family name was Tuan-mu, private name Tzu, and courtesy name Tzu-kung (520-c.450 B.C.). He was noted for eloquence and was thirty-one years younger than the Master. See *Analects*, 5:8 about him.

²⁵ An old edition has "happy with the Way."

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As a thing is cut and filed,
As a thing is carved and polished. . . .²⁶

Does that not mean what you have just said?"

Confucius said, "Ah! Tz'u. Now I can begin to talk about the odes with you. When I have told you what has gone before, you know what is to follow."

1:16. Confucius said, "[A good man] does not worry about not being known by others but rather worries about not knowing them."²⁷

2:1. Confucius said, "A ruler who governs his state by virtue is like the north polar star, which remains in its place while all the other stars revolve around it."

Comment. Two important principles are involved here. One is government by virtue, in which Confucianists stand directly opposed to the Legalists, who prefer law and force. The other is government through inaction, i.e., government in such excellent order that all things operate by themselves. This is the interpretation shared by Han and Sung Confucianists alike.²⁸ In both cases, Confucianism and Taoism are in agreement.²⁹

2:2. Confucius said, "All three hundred odes can be covered by one of their sentences, and that is, 'Have no depraved thoughts.'"³⁰

2:3. Confucius said, "Lead the people with governmental measures and regulate them by law and punishment, and they will avoid wrongdoing but will have no sense of honor and shame. Lead them with virtue and regulate them by the rules of propriety (*li*), and they will have a sense of shame and, moreover, set themselves right."³¹

2:4. Confucius said, "At fifteen my mind was set on learning. At thirty my character had been formed. At forty I had no more perplexities. At fifty I knew the Mandate of Heaven (*T'ien-ming*). At sixty I was at ease with whatever I heard. At seventy I could follow my heart's desire without transgressing moral principles."

Comment. What *T'ien-ming* is depends upon one's own philosophy.

²⁶ Ode no. 55. Describing the eloquence of a lover, but here taken by Tzu-kung to mean moral effort.

²⁷ Similar ideas are found in *Analects*, 14:32; 15:18, 20.

²⁸ See Ho Yen's *Lun-yü chi-chieh* and Chu Hsi's *Lun-yü chi-chu*.

²⁹ Cf. *Analects*, 15:4 and *Lao Tzu*, ch. 57.

³⁰ *Odes*, ode no. 297. Actually there are 305 odes in the book. The word *ssu* means "Ah!" in the poem but Confucius used it in its sense of "thought." For discussion of the *Book of Odes*, see above, ch. 1, n.5.

³¹ The word *ko* means both to rectify (according to Ho Yen and most other commentators) and to arrive (according to Cheng Hsiün). In the latter sense, it can mean either "the people will arrive at goodness" or "the people will come to the ruler." See below, ch. 32, comment on sec. 44.

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In general, Confucianists before the T'ang dynasty (618-907) understood it to mean either the decree of God, which determines the course of one's life, or the rise and fall of the moral order,³² whereas Sung scholars, especially Chu Hsi, took it to mean "the operation of Nature which is endowed in things and makes things be as they are."³³ This latter interpretation has prevailed. The concept of *T'ien-ming* which can mean Mandate of Heaven, decree of God, personal destiny, and course of order, is extremely important in the history of Chinese thought. In religion it generally means fate or personal order of God, but in philosophy it is practically always understood as moral destiny, natural endowment, or moral order.

2:5. Meng I Tzu³⁴ asked about filial piety. Confucius said: "Never disobey." [Later,] when Fan Ch'ih³⁵ was driving him, Confucius told him, "Meng-sun asked me about filial piety, and I answered him, 'Never disobey.'"³⁶ Fan Ch'ih said, "What does that mean?" Confucius said, "When parents are alive, serve them according to the rules of propriety. When they die, bury them according to the rules of propriety and sacrifice to them according to the rules of propriety."

2:6. Meng Wu-po³⁷ asked about filial piety. Confucius said, "Especially be anxious lest parents should be sick."³⁸

2:7. Tzu-yu³⁹ asked about filial piety. Confucius said, "Filial piety nowadays means to be able to support one's parents. But we support even dogs and horses.⁴⁰ If there is no feeling of reverence, wherein lies the difference?"

2:11. Confucius said, "A man who reviews the old so as to find out the new is qualified to teach others."

³² See Ch'eng Shu-te *Lun-yü chi-shih* (Collected Explanations of the *Analects*), 1943.

³³ Chu Hsi, *Lun-yü chi-chu*.

³⁴ A young noble, also styled Meng-sun, once studied ceremonies with Confucius.

³⁵ Confucius' pupil, whose family name was Fan, private name Hsi, and courtesy name Tzu-ch'ih (b. 515 B.C.).

³⁶ Not to disobey the principle of propriety, according to Hsing Ping; not to disobey moral principles, according to Chu Hsi; or not to obey parents, according to Huang K'an (448-545), *Lun-yü i-shu* (Commentary on the Meanings of the *Analects*).

³⁷ Son of Meng I Tzu.

³⁸ Another interpretation by Ma Jung (79-166), quoted by Ho Yen: A filial son does not do wrong. His parents' only worry is that he might become sick. About half of the commentators have followed him.

³⁹ Confucius' pupil. His family name was Yen, private name Yen, and courtesy name Tzu-yu (b. 506 B.C.).

⁴⁰ Alternative interpretations: (1) Even dogs and horses can support men; (2) Even dogs and horses can support their parents.

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2:12. Confucius said, "The superior man is not an implement (*ch'i*)."⁴¹

Comment. A good and educated man should not be like an implement, which is intended only for a narrow and specific purpose. Instead, he should have broad vision, wide interests, and sufficient ability to do many things.⁴²

2:13. Tzu-kung asked about the superior man. Confucius said, "He acts before he speaks and then speaks according to his action."⁴³

2:14. Confucius said, "The superior man is broadminded but not partisan; the inferior man is partisan but not broadminded."

2:15. Confucius said, "He who learns but does not think is lost; he who thinks but does not learn is in danger."

2:17. Confucius said, "Yu,⁴⁴ shall I teach you [the way to acquire] knowledge?⁴⁵ To say that you know when you do know and say that you do not know when you do not know—that is [the way to acquire] knowledge."

2:18. Tzu-chang⁴⁶ was learning with a view to official emolument. Confucius said, "Hear much and put aside what's doubtful while you speak cautiously of the rest. Then few will blame you. See much and put aside what seems perilous while you are cautious in carrying the rest into practice. Then you will have few occasions for regret. When one's words give few occasions for blame and his acts give few occasions for repentance—there lies his emolument."

Comment. The equal emphasis on words and deeds has been a strong tradition in Confucianism.⁴⁷ Eventually Wang Yang-ming identified them as one.⁴⁸

2:24. Confucius said, "It is flattery to offer sacrifice to ancestral spirits other than one's own. To see what is right and not to do it is cowardice."

3:3. Confucius said, "If a man is not humane (*jen*), what has he to do with ceremonies (*li*)? If he is not humane, what has he to do with music?"

⁴¹ Literally "an implement or utensil," *ch'i* means narrow usefulness rather than the ability to grasp fundamentals.

⁴² Cf. below, 9:6.

⁴³ Cf. below, 4:22, 24; 14:29.

⁴⁴ Name of Confucius' pupil whose family name was Chung and courtesy name Tzu-lu (542-480 B.C.). He was only nine years younger than Confucius. He was noted for courage.

⁴⁵ The sentence may also mean: "Do you know what I teach you?"

⁴⁶ Courtesy name of Confucius' pupil, Chuan-sun Shih (503-C.450 B.C.).

⁴⁷ See also *Analects*, 4:22, 24; 5:9; 13:3; 14:29; 15:5; 18:8; and *The Mean*, chs. 8, 13.

⁴⁸ See below, ch. 35, B, sec. 5.

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3:4. Lin Fang⁴⁹ asked about the foundation of ceremonies. Confucius said, "An important question indeed! In rituals or ceremonies, be thrifty rather than extravagant, and in funerals, be deeply sorrowful rather than shallow in sentiment."

3:12. When Confucius offered sacrifice to his ancestors, he felt as if his ancestral spirits were actually present. When he offered sacrifice to other spiritual beings, he felt as if they were actually present. He said, "If I do not participate in the sacrifice, it is as if I did not sacrifice at all."

3:13. Wang-sun Chia⁵⁰ asked, "What is meant by the common saying, 'It is better to be on good terms with the God of the Kitchen [who cooks our food] than with the spirits of the shrine (ancestors) at the southwest corner of the house?'" Confucius said, "It is not true. He who commits a sin against Heaven has no god to pray to."

3:17. Tzu-kung wanted to do away with the sacrificing of a lamb at the ceremony in which the beginning of each month is reported to ancestors. Confucius said, "Tzu!⁵¹ You love the lamb but I love the ceremony."

3:19. Duke Ting⁵² asked how the ruler should employ his ministers and how the ministers should serve their ruler. Confucius said, "A ruler should employ his ministers according to the principle of propriety, and ministers should serve their ruler with loyalty."

3:24. The guardian at I (a border post of the state of Wei) requested to be presented to Confucius, saying, "When gentlemen come here, I have never been prevented from seeing them." Confucius' followers introduced him. When he came out from the interview, he said, "Sirs, why are you disheartened by your master's loss of office? The Way has not prevailed in the world for a long time. Heaven is going to use your master as a bell with a wooden tongue [to awaken the people]."

4:2. Confucius said, "One who is not a man of humanity cannot endure adversity for long, nor can he enjoy prosperity for long. The man of humanity is naturally at ease with humanity. The man of wisdom cultivates humanity for its advantage."

4:3. Confucius said, "Only the man of humanity knows how to love people and hate people."⁵³

4:4. Confucius said, "If you set your mind on humanity, you will be free from evil."⁵⁴

⁴⁹ A native of Lu, most probably not a pupil of Confucius.

⁵⁰ Great officer and commander-in-chief in the state of Wei.

⁵¹ Tzu-kung's private name.

⁵² Ruler of Confucius' native state of Lu (r. 509-495 B.C.).

⁵³ Hate here means dislike, without any connotation of ill will. See *Great Learning*, ch. 10, for an elaboration of the saying.

⁵⁴ The word *e*, evil, can also be read *wu* to mean hate or dislike, but it is hardly ever done.

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4:16. Confucius said, "The superior man understands righteousness (i); the inferior man understands profit."

Comment. Confucius contrasted the superior man and the inferior in many ways,⁷¹ but this is the fundamental difference for Confucianism in general as well as for Confucius himself. Chu Hsi associated righteousness with the Principle of Nature (*T'ien-li*) and profit with the feelings of man, but later Neo-Confucianists strongly objected to his thus contrasting principle and feelings.

4:18. Confucius said, "In serving his parents, a son may gently remonstrate with them. When he sees that they are not inclined to listen to him, he should resume an attitude of reverence and not abandon his effort to serve them. He may feel worried, but does not complain."

4:19. Confucius said, "When his parents are alive, a son should not go far abroad; or if he does, he should let them know where he goes."

4:21. Confucius said, "A son should always keep in mind the age of his parents. It is an occasion for joy [that they are enjoying long life] and also an occasion for anxiety [that another year is gone]."

4:24. Confucius said, "The superior man wants to be slow in word but diligent in action."

5:11. Tzu-kung said, "What I do not want others to do to me, I do not want to do to them." Confucius said, "Ah Tzu! That is beyond you."⁷²

5:12. Tzu-kung said, "We can hear our Master's [views] on culture and its manifestation,⁷³ but we cannot hear his views on human nature⁷⁴ and the Way of Heaven [because these subjects are beyond the comprehension of most people]."

5:25. Yen Yüan⁷⁵ and Chi-lu⁷⁶ were in attendance. Confucius said, "Why don't you each tell me your ambition in life?" Tzu-lu said, "I wish to have a horse, a carriage, and a light fur coat⁷⁷ and share them with friends, and shall not regret if they are all worn out." Yen Yüan said, "I

1A:7. The negative version is found in *Analects*, 5:11; 12:2; 15:23; in *The Mean*, ch. 13; and in the *Great Learning*, ch. 10.

⁷¹ See *Analects*, 2:14; 4:11, 16; 6:11; 7:36; 12:16; 13:23, 25, 26; 14:7, 24; 15:1, 20, 33; 17:4, 23.

⁷² Cf. *Great Learning*, ch. 10.

⁷³ The term *wen-chang* can also mean literary heritage or simply the ancient Classics.

⁷⁴ The word *hsing* (nature) is mentioned elsewhere in the *Analects* only once, in 17:2.

⁷⁵ Confucius' favorite pupil, whose family name was Yen, private name Hui, and courtesy name Tzu-yüan (521-490 B.C.). He died at 32.

⁷⁶ Tzu-lu.

⁷⁷ The word "light" does not appear in the stone-engraved Classic of the T'ang dynasty and is probably a later addition.

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wish never to boast of my good qualities and never to brag about the trouble I have taken [for others]."⁷⁸ Tzu-lu said, "I wish to hear your ambition." Confucius said, "It is my ambition to comfort the old, to be faithful to friends, and to cherish the young."⁷⁹

5:27. Confucius said, "In every hamlet of ten families, there are always some people as loyal and faithful as myself, but none who love learning as much as I do."

6:5. Confucius said, "About Hui (Yen Yuan), for three months there would be nothing in his mind contrary to humanity. The others could (or can) attain to this for a day or a month at the most."⁸⁰

Comment. On the basis of this saying alone, some philosophers have concluded that Yen Yüan was a mystic and that Confucius praised mysticism!

6:16. Confucius said, "When substance exceeds refinement (*wen*), one becomes rude. When refinement exceeds substance, one becomes urbane. It is only when one's substance and refinement are properly blended that he becomes a superior man."

6:17. Confucius said, "Man is born with uprightness. If one loses it he will be lucky if he escapes with his life."

Comment. Although the Confucian tradition in general holds that human nature is originally good, Confucius' own position is not clear. We have read that his doctrine of nature could not be heard,⁸¹ and we shall read his statement that by nature men are alike.⁸² But how they are alike is not clear. The saying here can be interpreted to mean that man can live throughout life because he is upright. This is the interpretation of Ma Jung (79-166),⁸³ which is followed by Wang Ch'ung (27-100?).⁸⁴ Most people followed Chu Hsi. He had the authority of Ch'eng Hao (Ch'eng Ming-tao, 1032-1085),⁸⁵ who echoed Cheng Hsüan's interpretation that Confucius said that man is *born* upright. This means that Confucius was not only the first one in Chinese philosophy to assume a definite position about human nature, but also the first to teach that human nature is *originally* good.

⁷⁸ Another interpretation: For his own moral effort.

⁷⁹ This is Chu Hsi's interpretation. According to Hsing Ping, it would mean this: The old should be satisfied with me, friends should trust me, and the young should come to me.

⁸⁰ We don't know whether this was said before or after Yen Yüan's death.

⁸¹ *Analects*, 5:12.

⁸² *Analects*, 17:2.

⁸³ Quoted by Ho Yen.

⁸⁴ *Lun-heng* (Balanced Inquiries), ch. 5, SPPY, 2:2a. For English translation, see Forke, *Lun-heng*, vol. 1, p. 152.

⁸⁵ See *Lun-yü chi-chu*.

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6:18. Confucius said, "To know it [learning or the Way] is not as good as to love it, and to love it is not as good as to take delight in it."

6:19. Confucius said, "To those who are above average, one may talk of the higher things, but may not do so to those who are below average."

6:20. Fan Ch'ih asked about wisdom. Confucius said, "Devote yourself earnestly to the duties due to men, and respect spiritual beings⁸⁶ but keep them at a distance. This may be called wisdom." Fan Ch'ih asked about humanity. Confucius said, "The man of humanity first of all considers what is difficult in the task and then thinks of success. Such a man may be called humane."

Comment. Many people have been puzzled by this passage, some even doubting the sincerity of Confucius' religious attitude—all quite unnecessarily. The passage means either "do not become improperly informal with spiritual beings,"⁸⁷ or "emphasize the way of man rather than the way of spirits."⁸⁸

6:21. Confucius said, "The man of wisdom delights in water; the man of humanity delights in mountains. The man of wisdom is active; the man of humanity is tranquil. The man of wisdom enjoys happiness; the man of humanity enjoys long life."

Comment. In the Confucian ethical system, humanity and wisdom are like two wings, one supporting the other.⁸⁹ One is substance, the other is function. The dual emphasis has been maintained throughout history, especially in Tung Chung-shu (c.179-c.104 B.C.) and in a certain sense in K'ang Yu-wei (1858-1927).⁹⁰ Elsewhere, courage is added as the third virtue,⁹¹ and Mencius grouped them with righteousness and propriety as the Four Beginnings.⁹²

6:23. Confucius said, "When a cornered vessel no longer has any corner, should it be called a cornered vessel? Should it?"

Comment. Name must correspond to actuality.⁹³

6:25. Confucius said, "The superior man extensively studies literature (*wen*) and restrains himself with the rules of propriety. Thus he will not violate the Way."

⁸⁶ Meaning especially ancestors.

⁸⁷ According to *Lun-yü chi-chieh*.

⁸⁸ According to Cheng Hsüan, Chu Hsi, and most commentators.

⁸⁹ See also *Analects*, 4:2; 12:22; 15:32.

⁹⁰ See below, ch. 14, E, sec. 3; ch. 39, sec. 3.

⁹¹ See *Analects*, 9:28; 14:30; *The Mean*, ch. 20.

⁹² *Mencius*, 2A:6; 6A:6.

⁹³ For the Confucian doctrine of the rectification of names, see below, comment on 13:3.

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6:26. When Confucius visited Nan-tzu (the wicked wife of Duke Ling of Wei, r. 533-490 B.C.) [in an attempt to influence her to persuade the duke to effect political reform], Tzu-lu was not pleased. Confucius swore an oath and said, "If I have said or done anything wrong, may Heaven forsake me! May Heaven forsake me!"⁹⁴

6:28. Tzu-kung said, "If a ruler extensively confers benefit on the people and can bring salvation to all, what do you think of him? Would you call him a man of humanity?" Confucius said, "Why only a man of humanity? He is without doubt a sage. Even (sage-emperors) Yao and Shun fell short of it. A man of humanity, wishing to establish his own character, also establishes the character of others, and wishing to be prominent himself, also helps others to be prominent. To be able to judge others by what is near to ourselves may be called the method of realizing humanity."⁹⁵

Comment. The Confucian golden rule in a nutshell.

7:1. Confucius said, "I transmit but do not create. I believe in and love the ancients. I venture to compare myself to our old P'eng."⁹⁶

Comment. This is often cited to show that Confucius was not creative. We must not forget, however, that he "goes over the old so as to find out what is new."⁹⁷ Nor must we overlook the fact that he was the first one to offer education to all.⁹⁸ Moreover, his concepts of the superior man and of Heaven were at least partly new.

7:2. Confucius said, "To remember silently [what I have learned], to learn untiringly, and to teach others without being wearied—that is just natural with me."

7:6. Confucius said, "Set your will on the Way. Have a firm grasp on virtue. Rely on humanity. Find recreation in the arts."

7:7. Confucius said, "There has never been anyone who came with as little a present as dried meat (for tuition)⁹⁹ that I have refused to teach him something."

7:8. Confucius said, "I do not enlighten those who are not eager to learn, nor arouse those who are not anxious to give an explanation themselves. If I have presented one corner of the square and they cannot

⁹⁴ This episode took place when Confucius was 57.

⁹⁵ See above comment on 4:15.

⁹⁶ An official of the Shang dynasty (1751-1112 B.C.) who loved to recite old stories.

⁹⁷ *Analects*, 2:11.

⁹⁸ See Fung, *History of Chinese Philosophy*, vol. 1, pp. 46-49.

⁹⁹ Cheng Hsüan's interpretation: From young men fifteen years old and upward. Cf. *Analects*, 15:38.

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come back to me with the other three, I should not go over the points again."

7:15. Confucius said, "With coarse rice to eat, with water to drink, and with a bent arm for a pillow, there is still joy. Wealth and honor obtained through unrighteousness are but floating clouds to me."

7:16. Confucius said, "Give me a few more years so that I can devote fifty years to study Change.¹⁰⁰ I may be free from great mistakes."

7:17. These were the things Confucius often¹⁰¹ talked about—poetry, history, and the performance of the rules of propriety. All these were what he often talked about.

7:18. The Duke of She¹⁰² asked Tzu-lu about Confucius, and Tzu-lu did not answer. Confucius said, "Why didn't you say that I am a person who forgets his food when engaged in vigorous pursuit of something, is so happy as to forget his worries, and is not aware that old age is coming on?"¹⁰³

7:19. Confucius said, "I am not one who was born with knowledge; I love ancient [teaching] and earnestly seek it."

7:20. Confucius never discussed strange phenomena, physical exploits, disorder, or spiritual beings.

7:22. Confucius said, "Heaven produced the virtue that is in me; what can Huan T'ui¹⁰⁴ do to me?"

7:24. Confucius taught four things: culture (*wen*), conduct, loyalty, and faithfulness.

7:26. Confucius fished with a line but not a net. While shooting he would not shoot a bird at rest.¹⁰⁵

7:27. Confucius said, "There are those who act without knowing [what is right].¹⁰⁶ But I am not one of them. To hear much and select

¹⁰⁰ The traditional interpretation of the word *i* (change) is the *Book of Changes*. The ancient Lu version of the *Analects*, however, has *i* (then) instead of *i* (change). Some scholars have accepted this version, which reads ". . . to study, then I may be. . . ." Modern scholars prefer this reading because they do not believe that the *Book of Changes* existed at the time. However, the fact that Confucius was thinking of the *system* of Change instead of the *Book* should not be ruled out.

¹⁰¹ The word *ya* (often) was understood by Cheng Hsüan as standard, thus meaning that Confucius recited the Books of *Odes*, *History*, and *Rites* in correct pronunciation.

¹⁰² Magistrate of the district She in the state of Ch'u, who assumed the title of duke by usurpation.

¹⁰³ According to *Shih chi* (Records of the Historian), PNP, 47:18a, Confucius was 62 when he made this remark. See Chavannes, trans., *Les mémoires historiques*, vol. 5, p. 361.

¹⁰⁴ A military officer in the state of Sung who attempted to kill Confucius by felling a tree. Confucius was then 59 years old.

¹⁰⁵ He would not take unfair advantage.

¹⁰⁶ Other interpretations: Act without the necessity of knowledge; invent stories about history without real knowledge of it; write without knowledge.

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rarely discussed material gains compared with the will of Heaven and compared with humaneness."¹¹³ Chiao Hsün (1763-1820), in his *Lun-yü pu-shu* (Supplementary Commentary on the *Analects*) said that when Confucius occasionally talked about profit, he spoke of it together with destiny or humanity, that is, in the light of either of them. Han Yü (768-824) thought that what Confucius seldom talked about was the *men* of profit, destiny, or humanity, not the three subjects themselves (*Lun-yü pi-chieh*, or Explanations of the *Analects*). According to Huang Shih-nan's *Lun-yü hou-an* (Recent Examinations of the *Analects*, 1844), the word *han* does not mean "seldom," but is an alternate for *hsien*, "elucidation." While this is possible, it seems to be going too far. Most scholars leave the difficulty alone. As K'ang Yu-wei, in his *Lun-yü chu*, says, Confucius talked about the three subjects a great deal, since they are inherently important subjects for discussion.

9:3. Confucius said, "The linen cap is prescribed by the rules of ceremony (*li*) but nowadays a silk one is worn. It is economical and I follow the common practice. Bowing below the hall is prescribed by the rules of ceremony, but nowadays people bow after ascending the hall. This is arrogant, and I follow the practice of bowing below the hall though that is opposed to the common practice."

9:4. Confucius was completely free from four things: He had no arbitrariness of opinion, no dogmatism, no obstinacy, and no egotism.

9:5. When Confucius was in personal danger in K'uang,¹¹⁴ he said, "Since the death of King Wen,¹¹⁵ is not the course of culture (*wen*) in my keeping? If it had been the will of Heaven to destroy this culture, it would not have been given to a mortal [like me]. But if it is the will of Heaven that this culture should not perish, what can the people of K'uang do to me?"

9:6. A great official asked Tzu-kung, "Is the Master a sage? How is it that he has so much ability [in practical, specific things]?" Tzu-kung said, "Certainly Heaven has endowed him so liberally that he is to become a sage,¹¹⁶ and furthermore he has much ability." When Confucius heard this, he said, "Does the great official know me? When I was young, I was in humble circumstances, and therefore I acquired much ability to do the simple things of humble folk. Does a superior

¹¹³ "Lun Yü IX, 1," *ibid.*, 54 (1934), 83.

¹¹⁴ The people of K'uang, mistaking Confucius for Yang Hu, their enemy whom Confucius resembled in appearance, surrounded him. This happened when Confucius was 56.

¹¹⁵ Founder of the Chou dynasty.

¹¹⁶ The term *chiang-sheng* is also understood to mean a great sage, or almost a sage.

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man need to have so much ability? He does not." His pupil Lao said, "The Master said, 'I have not been given official employment and therefore I [acquired the ability] for the simple arts.'"¹¹⁷

9:13. Confucius wanted to live among the nine barbarous tribes of the East. Someone said, "They are rude. How can you do it?" Confucius said, "If a superior man lives there, what rudeness would there be?"

9:16. Confucius, standing by a stream, said, "It passes on like this, never ceasing day or night!"

Comment. What was Confucius thinking about? Was he thinking of the unceasing operation of the universe (Chu Hsi and Ch'eng I)? Was he lamenting over the fact that the past cannot be recovered (Hsing Ping)? Was he comparing the untiring effort of a superior man's moral cultivation (Liu Pao-nan)? Was he praising water because its springs continuously gush out (Mencius¹¹⁸ and Tung Chung-shu¹¹⁹)? Was he praising water because it has the qualities of virtue, righteousness, courage, and so forth (Hsün Tzu, fl. 298-238 B.C.)?¹²⁰ One thing is fairly sure: water to him meant something quite different from what it meant to Indian and Western philosophers, and to some extent to Lao Tzu.¹²¹

9:25. Confucius said, "The commander of three armies may be taken away, but the will of even a common man may not be taken away from him."

10:9. When his mat was not straight [Confucius] did not sit on it.

10:12. A certain stable was burned down. On returning from court, Confucius asked, "Was any man hurt?" He did not ask about the horses.

10:14. On entering the Ancestral Temple, he asked about everything.

11:8. When Yen Yüan died, Confucius said, "Alas, Heaven is destroying me! Heaven is destroying me!"

11:11. Chi-lu (Tzu-lu) asked about serving the spiritual beings. Confucius said, "If we are not yet able to serve man, how can we serve spiritual beings?" "I venture to ask about death." Confucius said, "If we do not yet know about life, how can we know about death?"

Comment. A most celebrated saying on humanism.

11:15. Tzu-kung asked who was the better man, Shih¹²² or Shang.¹²³

¹¹⁷ Cf. *Analec*s, 2:12.

¹¹⁸ *Mencius*, 4B: 18.

¹¹⁹ *Ch'un-ch'iu fan-lu* (Luxuriant Gems of the Spring and Autumn Annals), ch. 73, SPTK, 16:3a.

¹²⁰ *Hsün Tzu*, ch. 28, SPTK, 20:5b-6a.

¹²¹ See below, ch. 7, comment on *Lao Tzu*, sec. 8.

¹²² Name of Confucius' pupil, Tzu-chang.

¹²³ His family name was Pu and courtesy name Tzu-hsia (507-420 B.C.). Also Confucius' pupil.

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Confucius said, "Shin goes too far and Shang does not go far enough." Tzu-kung said, "Then is Shih better?" Confucius said, "To go too far is the same as not to go far enough."

11:21. Tzu-lu asked, "Should one immediately practice what one has heard?" Confucius said, "There are father and elder brother [to be consulted]. Why immediately practice what one has heard?" Jan Yu (Jan Tzu) asked, "Should one immediately practice what one has heard?" Confucius said, "One should immediately practice what one has heard." Kung-hsi Hua¹²⁴ said, "When Yu (Tzu-lu) asked you, 'Should one immediately practice what one has heard?' you said, 'There are father and elder brother.' When Ch'iu (Jan Yu) asked you, 'Should one immediately practice what he has heard?' you said, 'One should immediately practice what one has heard.' I am perplexed, and venture to ask you for an explanation." Confucius said, "Ch'iu is retiring; therefore I urged him forward. Yu has more than one man's energy; therefore I kept him back."

11:25. Tzu-lu, Tseng Hsi,¹²⁵ Jan Yu, and Kung-hsi Hua were in attendance. Confucius said, "You think that I am a day or so older than you are. But do not think so. At present you are out of office and think that you are denied recognition. Suppose you were given recognition. What would you prefer?" Tzu-lu promptly replied, "Suppose there is a state of a thousand chariots, hemmed in by great powers, in addition invaded by armies, and as a result drought and famine prevail. Let me administer that state. In three years' time I can endow the people with courage and furthermore, enable them to know the correct principles." Confucius smiled at him [with disapproval].

"Ch'iu, how about you?" Jan Yu replied, "Suppose there is a state the sides of which are sixty or seventy *li* wide, or one of fifty or sixty *li*. Let me administer that state. In three years' time I can enable the people to be sufficient in their livelihood. As to the promotion of ceremonies and music, however, I shall have to wait for the superior man."

"How about you, Ch'ih?" Kung-hsi Hua replied, "I do not say I can do it but I should like to learn to do so. At the services of the royal ancestral temple, and at the conferences of the feudal lords, I should like to wear the dark robe and black cap (symbols of correctness) and be a junior assistant."

[Turning to Tseng Hsi,] Confucius said, "How about you, Tien?" Tseng Hsi was then softly playing the zither. With a bang he laid down the instrument, rose, and said, "My wishes are different from what the

¹²⁴ Confucius' pupil. His private name was Ch'ih and courtesy name Tzu-hua (b. 509 B.C.). Jan Yu (522-c. 462), whose private name was Ch'iu and courtesy name Jan Tzu, was also a pupil.

¹²⁵ Tseng Tzu's father, whose private name was Tien and courtesy name Hsi. He was also a Confucian pupil.

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gentlemen want to do." Confucius said, "What harm is there? After all, we want each to tell his ambition." Tseng Hsi said, "In the late spring, when the spring dress is ready, I would like to go with five or six grown-ups and six or seven young boys to bathe in the I River, enjoy the breeze on the Rain Dance Altar, and then return home singing." Confucius heaved a sigh and said, "I agree with Tien."

Comment. Why did Confucius agree with Tseng Hsi? The field is wide open for speculation, and most Confucianists have taken the best advantage of it. Thus it was variously explained that Tseng Hsi was enjoying the harmony of the universe (Wang Ch'ung),¹²⁶ that he was following traditional cultural institutions (Liu Pao-nan), that he was wisely refraining from officialdom at the time of chaos (Huang K'an), that he was thinking of the "kingly way" whereas other pupils were thinking of the government of feudal states (Han Yü), that he was in the midst of the universal operation of the Principle of Nature (Chu Hsi), and that he was expressing freedom of the spirit (Wang Yang-ming, 1472-1529).¹²⁷ It is to be noted that the last two interpretations reflect the different tendencies of the two wings of Neo-Confucianism, one emphasizing the objective operation of the Principle of Nature, the other emphasizing the state of mind.

12:1. Yen Yüan asked about humanity. Confucius said, "To master¹²⁸ oneself and return to propriety is humanity.¹²⁹ If a man (the ruler) can for one day master himself and return to propriety, all under heaven will return to humanity.¹³⁰ To practice humanity depends on oneself. Does it depend on others?" Yen Yüan said, "May I ask for the detailed items?" Confucius said, "Do not look at what is contrary to propriety, do not listen to what is contrary to propriety, do not speak what is contrary to propriety, and do not make any movement which is contrary to propriety." Yen Yuan said, "Although I am not intelligent, may I put your saying into practice."

¹²⁶ *Lun-heng*, ch. 45; SPPY, 15:10a. Cf. Forke, *Lun-Heng*, vol. 2, p. 235.

¹²⁷ *Ch'uan-hsi lu* (Instructions for Practical Living), sec. 257. See Chan, trans., *Instructions for Practical Living*.

¹²⁸ The word *k'o* was understood by Ma Jung as "to control" but Chu Hsi interpreted it to mean "to master," that is, to conquer the self since it is an embodiment of selfish desires. Here is another example of the sharply different approaches to the *Analects* between the Han Confucianists and the Sung Neo-Confucianists. The Ch'ing Confucianists, such as Juan Yuan, violently opposed Chu Hsi, as is to be expected.

¹²⁹ An old saying. Other interpretations: (1) To be able to return to propriety by oneself; (2) to discipline oneself and to act according to propriety.

¹³⁰ Other interpretations: (1) Ascribe humanity to him; (2) will follow him.

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12:2. Chung-kung¹³¹ asked about humanity. Confucius said, "When you go abroad, behave to everyone as if you were receiving a great guest. Employ the people as if you were assisting at a great sacrifice.¹³² Do not do to others what you do not want them to do to you.¹³³ Then there will be no complaint against you in the state or in the family (the ruling clan)." Chung-kung said, "Although I am not intelligent, may I put your saying into practice."

12:5. Ssu-ma Niu,¹³⁴ worrying, said, "All people have brothers but I have none."¹³⁵ Tzu-hsia said, "I have heard [from Confucius]¹³⁶ this saying: 'Life and death are the decree of Heaven (*ming*); wealth and honor depend on Heaven. If a superior man is reverential (or serious) without fail, and is respectful in dealing with others and follows the rules of propriety, then all within the four seas (the world)¹³⁷ are brothers.'¹³⁸ What does the superior man have to worry about having no brothers?"

12:7. Tzu-kung asked about government. Confucius said, "Sufficient food, sufficient armament, and sufficient confidence of the people." Tzu-kung said, "Forced to give up one of these, which would you abandon first?" Confucius said, "I would abandon the armament." Tzu-kung said, "Forced to give up one of the remaining two, which would you abandon first?" Confucius said, "I would abandon food. There have been deaths from time immemorial, but no state can exist without the confidence of the people."

12.11. Duke Ching of Chi¹³⁹ asked Confucius about government. Confucius replied, "Let the ruler *be* a ruler, the minister *be* a minister, the father *be* a father, and the son *be* a son." The duke said, "Excellent! Indeed when the ruler is not a ruler, the minister not a minister, the father not a father, and the son not a son, although I may have all the grain, shall I ever get to eat it?"

12:16. Confucius said, "The superior man brings the good things of others to completion and does not bring the bad things of others to completion. The inferior man does just the opposite."

¹³¹ Confucius' pupil, whose family name was Jan, private name Yung, and courtesy name Chung-kung. He was noted for excellent character.

¹³² Paraphrasing two ancient sayings.

¹³³ See above, comment on 4:15.

¹³⁴ Confucius' pupil, whose family name was Hsiang.

¹³⁵ Meaning that his brother Huan T'ui (see above, 7:22) was not worthy to be a brother.

¹³⁶ Insertion according to Liu Pao-nan.

¹³⁷ Ordinarily meaning China, none doubts that here it means the entire world.

¹³⁸ Some say that the last sentence is Tzu-hsia's utterance.

¹³⁹ He reigned from 546 to 489 B.C.

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13:30. Confucius said, "To allow people to go to war without first instructing them is to betray them."

14:2. [Yüan Hsien]¹⁴⁸ said, "When one has avoided aggressiveness, pride, resentment, and greed, he may be called a man of humanity." Confucius said, "This may be considered as having done what is difficult, but I do not know that it is to be regarded as humanity."

14:24. Confucius said, "The superior man understands the higher things [moral principles]; the inferior man understands the lower things [profit]."¹⁴⁹

14:29. Confucius said, "The superior man is ashamed that his words exceed his deeds."

14:30. Confucius said, "The way of the superior man is threefold, but I have not been able to attain it. The man of wisdom has no perplexities; the man of humanity has no worry; the man of courage has no fear." Tzu-kung said, "You are talking about yourself."

14:33. Confucius said, "He who does not anticipate attempts to deceive him nor predict his being distrusted, and yet is the first to know [when these things occur], is a worthy man."¹⁵⁰

14:36. Someone said, "What do you think of repaying hatred with virtue?" Confucius said, "In that case what are you going to repay virtue with? Rather, repay hatred with uprightness and repay virtue with virtue."

Comment. The word for uprightness, *chih*, is not to be understood as severity or justice, which would imply repaying evil with evil. The idea of repaying hatred with virtue is also found in the *Lao Tzu*, ch. 63, and some have therefore theorized that the questioner was a Taoist or that the saying was a prevalent one at the time. In any case, by uprightness Confucianists mean absolute impartiality, taking guidance from what is right instead of one's personal preference, however admirable. Obviously this does not satisfy followers of the Christian doctrine of loving one's enemy. As to the golden rule, see above, comment on 4:15.

14:37. Confucius said, "Alas! No one knows me!" Tzu-kung said,

¹⁴⁸ Confucius' pupil.

¹⁴⁹ This is the general interpretation, based on Huang K'an and commonly accepted before the Sung times. According to Ho Yen, higher things mean the fundamentals and the lower things mean secondary things. Chu Hsi, consistent with his own philosophy, interpreted the word *ta* not to mean to understand but to reach, and said that the superior man reaches the higher level because he follows the Principle of Nature while the inferior man reaches the lower level because he is carried away by selfish human desires. Cf. below, 14:37.

¹⁵⁰ See Wang Yang-ming, *Ch'uan-hsi lu*, in Chan, trans., *Instructions for Practical Living*, secs. 171 and 191 for his discussion of this topic.

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"Why is there no one that knows you?" Confucius said, "I do not complain against Heaven. I do not blame men. I study things on the lower level but my understanding penetrates the higher level.¹⁵¹ It is Heaven that knows me."

14:41. When Tzu-lu was stopping at the Stone Gate¹⁵² for the night, the gate-keeper asked him, "Where are you from?" Tzu-lu said, "From Confucius." "Oh, is he the one who knows a thing cannot be done and still wants to do it?"

14:45. Tzu-lu asked about the superior man. Confucius said, "The superior man is one who cultivates himself with seriousness (*ching*)." Tzu-lu said, "Is that all?" Confucius said, "He cultivates himself so as to give the common people security and peace." Tzu-lu said, "Is that all?" Confucius said, "He cultivates himself so as to give all people security and peace. To cultivate oneself so as to give all people security and peace, even Yao and Shun found it difficult to do."¹⁵³

15:2. Confucius said, "Tz'u (Tzu-kung), do you suppose that I am one who learns a great deal and remembers it?" Tzu-kung replied, "Yes. Is that not true?" Confucius said, "No. I have a thread (*i-kuan*) that runs through it all."¹⁵⁴

15:4. Confucius said, "To have taken no [unnatural] action¹⁵⁵ and yet have the empire well governed, Shun was the man! What did he do? All he did was to make himself reverent and correctly face south [in his royal seat as the ruler]."

15:8. Confucius said, "A resolute scholar and a man of humanity will never seek to live at the expense of injuring humanity. He would rather sacrifice his life in order to realize humanity."¹⁵⁶

15:17. Confucius said, "The superior man regards righteousness (*i*) as the substance of everything. He practices it according to the principles of propriety. He brings it forth in modesty. And he carries it to its conclusion with faithfulness. He is indeed a superior man!"

15:20. Confucius said, "The superior man seeks [room for improvement or occasion to blame] in himself; the inferior man seeks it in others."¹⁵⁷

15:22. Confucius said, "The superior man (ruler) does not pro-

¹⁵¹ There is a general agreement that the higher level refers to matters of Heaven, such as Heaven's decree (K'ung An-kuo and Huang K'an) and the Principle of Nature (Chu Hsi), and that the lower level refers to mundane matters. Cf. above, 14:24.

¹⁵² The outer gate of the city of Lu. Cf. below, 18:6.

¹⁵³ See above, comment on 4:15.

¹⁵⁴ For the idea of a central thread, see above, 4:15.

¹⁵⁵ The term is the same as in Taoism, *wu-wei*. See above, comment on 2:1

¹⁵⁶ Cf. *Mencius*, 6A:10.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. *Great Learning*, ch. 9.

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mote (put in office) a man on the basis of his words; nor does he reject his words because of the man."

15:23. Tzu-kung asked, "Is there one word which can serve as the guiding principle for conduct throughout life?" Confucius said, "It is the word altruism (*shu*). Do not do to others what you do not want them to do to you."

15:28. Confucius said, "It is man that can make the Way great, and not the Way that can make man great."

Comment. Humanism in the extreme! Commentators from Huang K'an to Chu Hsi said that the Way, because it is tranquil and quiet and lets things take their own course, does not make man great. A better explanation is found in the *Doctrine of the Mean*, where it is said, "Unless there is perfect virtue, the perfect Way cannot be materialized."¹⁵⁸

15:31. Confucius said, "The superior man seeks the Way and not a mere living. There may be starvation in farming, and there may be riches in the pursuit of studies. The superior man worries about the Way and not about poverty."

15:32. Confucius said, "When a man's knowledge is sufficient for him to attain [his position]¹⁵⁹ but his humanity is not sufficient for him to hold it, he will lose it again. When his knowledge is sufficient for him to attain it and his humanity is sufficient for him to hold it, if he does not approach the people with dignity, the people will not respect him. If his knowledge is sufficient for him to attain it, his humanity sufficient for him to hold it, and he approaches the people with dignity, yet does not influence them with the principle of propriety, it is still not good."

15:35. Confucius said, "When it comes to the practice of humanity, one should not defer even to his teacher."

15:38. Confucius said, "In education there should be no class distinction."

Comment. Confucius was the first to pronounce this principle in Chinese history. Among his pupils there were commoners as well as nobles, and stupid people as well as intelligent ones.¹⁶⁰

15:40. Confucius said, "In words all that matters is to express the meaning."

16:1. Confucius said, "... I have heard that those who administer a state or a family do not worry about there being too few people, but

¹⁵⁸ *The Mean*, ch. 27.

¹⁵⁹ According to Pao Hsien (6 B.C.-A.D. 65), quoted by Ho Yen.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. above, 7:7.

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worry about unequal distribution of wealth. They do not worry about poverty, but worry about the lack of security and peace on the part of the people. For when wealth is equally distributed, there will not be poverty; when there is harmony, there will be no problem of there being too few people; and when there are security and peace, there will be no danger to the state. . . ."¹⁶¹

16:4. Confucius said, "There are three kinds of friendship which are beneficial and three kinds which are harmful. Friendship with the upright, with the truthful, and with the well-informed is beneficial. Friendship with those who flatter, with those who are meek and who compromise with principles, and with those who talk cleverly is harmful."

16:8. Confucius said, "The superior man stands in awe of three things. He stands in awe of the Mandate of Heaven; he stands in awe of great men;¹⁶² and he stands in awe of the words of the sages. The inferior man is ignorant of the Mandate of Heaven and does not stand in awe of it. He is disrespectful to great men and is contemptuous toward the words of the sages."

16:9. Confucius said, "Those who are born with knowledge are the highest type of people. Those who learn through study are the next. Those who learn through hard work are still the next. Those who work hard and still do not learn are really the lowest type."¹⁶³

16:10. Confucius said, "The superior man has nine wishes. In seeing, he wishes to see clearly. In hearing, he wishes to hear distinctly. In his expression, he wishes to be warm. In his appearance, he wishes to be respectful. In his speech, he wishes to be sincere. In handling affairs, he wishes to be serious. When in doubt, he wishes to ask. When he is angry, he wishes to think of the resultant difficulties. And when he sees an opportunity for a gain, he wishes to think of righteousness."

17:2. Confucius said, "By nature men are alike. Through practice they have become far apart."

Comment. This is the classical Confucian dictum on human nature. Neo-Confucianists like Chu Hsi and Ch'eng I¹⁶⁴ strongly argued that Confucius meant physical nature, which involves elements of evil, for since every man's original nature is good, men must be the *same* and therefore cannot be *alike*. Others, however, think that the word *chin* (near or alike) here has the same meaning as in

¹⁶¹ The historical background in this chapter may be inaccurate, but the teaching in this selection has never been questioned.

¹⁶² Various interpreted as sages or rulers. It is more likely a Platonic philosopher-king, for in the Confucian system, the sage should be a ruler and the ruler should be a sage.

¹⁶³ Cf. *The Mean*, ch. 20.

¹⁶⁴ *I-shu*, 8:2a.

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Mencius' saying, "All things of the same kind are similar to one another."¹⁶⁵ However, on the surface this saying is indisputably neutral, but all of Confucius' teachings imply the goodness of human nature.¹⁶⁶

17:3. Confucius said, "Only the most intelligent and the most stupid do not change."

Comment. Advocates of the theory of three grades of nature, notably Wang Ch'ung,¹⁶⁷ Chia I (201-169 B.C.),¹⁶⁸ and Han Yü,¹⁶⁹ have drawn support from this saying by equating the most intelligent with those born good, the most stupid with those born evil, and the rest born neutral. They overlooked the fact that this passage has to do not with nature but only with intelligence. Practically all modern Confucianists are agreed on this point. As Ch'eng I,¹⁷⁰ Wang Yang-ming,¹⁷¹ Tai Chen (Tai Tung-yüan, 1723-1777),¹⁷² and Juan Yüan¹⁷³ all pointed out, it is not that they cannot change. It is simply that they are too intelligent to change downward or too stupid to change upward.

17:4. Confucius went to the city of Wu [where his disciple Tzu-yu was the magistrate] and heard the sound of stringed instruments and singing. With a gentle smile, the Master said, "Why use an ox-knife to kill a chicken [that is, why employ a serious measure like music to rule such a small town]?" Tzu-yu replied, "Formerly I heard you say, 'When the superior man has studied the Way, he loves men. When the inferior man has studied the Way, he is easy to employ.'" Confucius said, "My disciples, what I just said was only a joke."

17:6. Tzu-chang asked Confucius about humanity. Confucius said, "One who can practice five things wherever he may be is a man of humanity." Tzu-chang asked what the five are. Confucius said, "Earnestness, liberality, truthfulness, diligence, and generosity. If one is earnest, one will not be treated with disrespect. If one is liberal, one will win the hearts of all. If one is truthful, one will be trusted. If one is diligent, one

¹⁶⁵ Mencius, 6A:7.

¹⁶⁶ See above, comment on 6:17.

¹⁶⁷ See below, ch. 16, first comment.

¹⁶⁸ Hsin-shu (New Treatises), ch. 5, sec. 3, SPPY, 5:7a.

¹⁶⁹ See below, ch. 27, sec. 1.

¹⁷⁰ I-shu, 18:17b.

¹⁷¹ Ch'uan-hsi lu, sec. 109. See Chan, trans., *Instructions for Practical Living*.

¹⁷² Meng Tzu tzu-i shu-cheng (Commentary on the Meanings of Terms in the *Book of Mencius*), sec. 22.

¹⁷³ Hsing-ming ku-hsin (Classical Interpretations of Nature and Destiny), in *Yen-ching-shih chi*, 1st collection, 10:16b.

IDEALISTIC CONFUCIANISM: MENCIUS

THE CAREER OF MENCIUS (371-289 B.C.?) was amazingly similar to that of Confucius, whom he proclaimed the greatest sage.¹ Like Confucius, he was born in what is modern Shantung province. Like Confucius, he was a professional teacher, having studied under the pupils of the grandson of Confucius. Like Confucius, he idolized the legendary sage-emperors.² Like Confucius, he lived in a period of political struggle, moral chaos, and intellectual conflicts. Like Confucius, he had a sense of mission, if only to suppress "perversive doctrines."³ To this end he debated with scholars and attacked his opponents, especially the followers of Mo Tzu (fl. 479-438 B.C.) and Yang Chu (440-360 B.C.?).⁴ Like Confucius, he traveled for forty years from about 354 B.C. or earlier, to offer advice to rulers for reform.⁵ Like Confucius, he once served as an official, in Ch'i from 319 to 312 B.C. Like Confucius, he was a filial son, for while serving in Ch'i, he took three years out to mourn the death of his mother. And like Confucius, he was eventually disappointed, and retired.

One contrast between the two, however, is that we know practically nothing about Mencius' family or his private life. He was a pupil of Confucius' grandson Tzu-ssu's pupil. His dates are uncertain. The most scholars can say is that he lived between 370 and 290 B.C., thus making him contemporaneous with Hsün Tzu, Chuang Tzu, and Plato, with whom he is often compared.

The greatest difference between Mencius and Confucius, however, is in their doctrines. Basically, Mencius' teachings were derived from Confucius. But in the central doctrine of the Confucian school, that of human nature, Mencius took a big step forward, and his new theory colored his other doctrines. While Confucius no more than implied that human nature *is* good, Mencius declared definitely that it is *originally*

¹ *Mencius*, 2A:2; 3B:9; 7B:38.

² *Ibid.*, 3A:1; 3B:9; 4A:28; 5A:1-3; 7A:16, 30, 35; 7B:33.

³ See below, comment on 3B:9.

⁴ For debates, see *Mencius*, 3B:9; 4A:17; 6A:1-6. For criticisms of Yang and Mo, see *Mencius*, 3A:5; 3B:9; 7A:26; 7B:26. For attack on other schools, see *Mencius*, 3A:4; 3B:10; 6B:1.

⁵ So far as scholars can make out, his travel was something like this: He visited the state of Ch'i in or about 357 B.C. He was in Sung around 325 B.C. Some two years later he went to Hsüeh and returned to his native Tsou the next year. At the request of the Duke of T'eng, he went there, staying for three years, probably from 322 to 320 B.C. From T'eng he went to Liang. About 319 B.C. he visited Ch'i once more and served in an official position. In 312 B.C. or soon after, he resigned and left.

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good. Moreover, he built his entire philosophy on this tenet, and was the first to do so. Since man is originally good, it logically follows (1) that he possesses the innate knowledge of the good and "innate ability" to do good;⁶ (2) that if one "develops his mind to the utmost," he can "serve Heaven" and "fulfill his destiny";⁷ (3) that evil is not inborn but due to man's own failures and his inability to avoid evil external influences;⁸ (4) that serious efforts must be made to recover our original nature; and (5) that the end of learning is none other than to "seek for the lost mind."⁹ His doctrine of the recovery of original nature formed the basis of the philosophy of Li Ao (fl. 798).¹⁰ His doctrine of innate knowledge and ability became the backbone of the idealistic philosophy of Wang Yang-ming (Wang Shou-jen, 1472-1529)¹¹ and those who followed him for two hundred years. His general theory of the goodness of human nature exercised a tremendous influence on the whole movement of Confucianism in the last millennium, especially on Tai Chen (Tai Tung-yüan, 1723-1777).¹²

Since human nature is good, love is therefore an inborn moral quality. But Mencius insisted that the practice of love must start with the family, and he bitterly opposed the Moist doctrine of universal love without distinctions. For this reason he often advocated humanity (*jen*, love) and righteousness (*i*) together,¹³ for to him humanity was necessary to bind people together and righteousness was necessary to make distinctions. In Mencius the ideal of righteousness assumed unprecedented importance. He was the first one to raise righteousness to the highest level in moral values.

In government, too, he felt, humanity and righteousness must be the guiding principles. He strongly advocated "humane government."¹⁴ In fact, he was the first one to use the term. He vigorously opposed righteousness to utility, advantages, and profit. He wanted to overcome the "way of a despot," or the way of force, by the "kingly way," or the way of moral power.

As moral power is inherent in everyone's nature, therefore every individual is "complete in himself"; every individual can become a sage; and everyone is equal to everyone else. For Mencius, people are the most important factor in government, and they have the right to revolt. This idea of revolution was not only novel in Mencius, but it also made him the greatest advocate of political democracy in Chinese history.

Revolutionary as he was, Mencius did not deviate from the general

⁶ *Mencius*, 7A: 15.

⁷ *ibid.*, 7A: 1.

⁸ *ibid.*, 6A:8.

⁹ *ibid.*, 6A:11.

¹⁰ See below, ch. 27, sec. 3.

¹¹ See below, ch. 35.

¹² See below, ch. 38, A, secs. 2, 10; and B, sec. 29.

¹³ See below, 1A:1; 4A:10, 20, 27; 6A:1, 4, 6, 11.

¹⁴ 1A:1, 5; 2A:5; 3A:3-4.

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direction determined by Confucius. What we have in Mencius is therefore orthodox Confucianism, developed along idealistic lines.

The following selections from the *Book of Mencius* consist of Book Six, part 1, in full, which is the most important portion of the book, and selected chapters from other books. Their major topics and references are:

Benevolent government: 1A:1, 5, 7; 1B:5, 7; 2A:5; 3A:3; 4A:14; 5A:5
Equality: 6A:7; 3A:1; 4B:28, 32
Great man: 6A:14, 15; 4B:11, 12
Human relations: 3A:4; 3B:2, 9; 4A:17, 18, 26; 4B:30
Humanity (*jen*) and Righteousness: 6A:1, 4, 8, 10, 11, 18, 19; 1A:1; 2A:2;
4A:10, 20, 27
Nature, human, and Innate virtue: 6A: 1-6; 2A:6; 4B:26
People and Revolution: 1B:7, 8; 4B:3
Social classes: 3A:3, 4
Unbearing mind: 1A:7; 2A:6
Undisturbed mind: 2A:2
Yang and Mo: 3A:5; 3B:9; 7A:26

THE BOOK OF MENCIUS¹⁵

Book Six, Part I

6A:1. Kao Tzu¹⁶ said, "Human nature is like the willow tree, and righteousness is like a cup or a bowl. To turn human nature into humanity and righteousness is like turning the willow into cups and bowls." Mencius said, "Sir, can you follow the nature of the willow tree and make the cups and bowls, or must you violate the nature of the willow tree before you can make the cups and bowls? If you are going to violate the nature of the willow tree in order to make cups and bowls, then must you also violate human nature in order to make it into humanity and righteousness? Your words, alas! would lead all people in the world to consider humanity and righteousness as calamity [because they required the violation of human nature]!"

¹⁵ The *Book of Mencius*, *Meng Tzu* in Chinese, is divided into seven books, each subdivided into two parts. In all probability it was compiled by pupils of Mencius after his death. Chu Hsi (1130-1200) grouped it with the *Analects*, the *Great Learning*, and the *Doctrine of the Mean* as the "Four Books." From then on they ranked as Classics. These four books and Chu Hsi's commentaries on them were the basis of the civil service examinations from 1313 till 1905, replacing other Classics in importance and influence. For translations of the *Book of Mencius*, see Bibliography.

¹⁶ His dates are c.420-c.350 B.C., but otherwise nothing is known of him. Chao Ch'ī (d. 201), in his *Meng Tzu chu* (Commentary on the *Book of Mencius*), says his name was Pu-hai. Chiao Hsün (1763-1820), in his *Meng Tzu cheng-i* (Correct Meanings of the *Book of Mencius*), thought Chao confused him with the Pu-hai who once studied under Mencius. The two different persons merely had the same private name.

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6A:2. Kao Tzu said, "Man's nature is like whirling water. If a breach in the pool is made to the east it will flow to the east. If a breach is made to the west it will flow to the west. Man's nature is indifferent to good and evil, just as water is indifferent to east and west." Mencius said, "Water, indeed, is indifferent to the east and west, but is it indifferent to high and low? Man's nature is naturally good just as water naturally flows downward. There is no man without this good nature; neither is there water that does not flow downward. Now you can strike water and cause it to splash upward over your forehead, and by damming and leading it, you can force it uphill. Is this the nature of water? It is the forced circumstance that makes it do so. Man can be made to do evil, for his nature can be treated in the same way."

6A:3. Kao Tzu said, "What is inborn¹⁷ is called nature." Mencius said, "When you say that what is inborn is called nature, is that like saying that white is white?" "Yes." "Then is the whiteness of the white feather the same as the whiteness of snow? Or, again, is the whiteness of snow the same as the whiteness of white jade?" "Yes." "Then is the nature of a dog the same as the nature of an ox, and is the nature of an ox the same as the nature of a man?"

6A:4. Kao Tzu said, "By nature we desire food and sex. Humanity is internal and not external, whereas righteousness is external and not internal." Mencius said, "Why do you say that humanity is internal and righteousness external?" "When I see an old man and respect him for his age, it is not that the oldness is within me, just as, when something is white and I call it white, I am merely observing its external appearance. I therefore say that righteousness is external." Mencius said, "There is no difference between our considering a white horse to be white and a white man to be white. But is there no difference between acknowledging the age of an old horse and the age of an old man? And what is it that we call righteousness, the fact that a man is old or the fact that we honor his old age?" Kao Tzu said, "I love my own younger brother but do not love the younger brother of, say, a man from the state of Ch'in. This is because I am the one to determine that pleasant feeling. I therefore say that humanity comes from within. On the other hand, I respect the old men of the state of Ch'u as well as my own elders. What determines my pleasant feeling is age itself. Therefore I say that righteousness is external." Mencius said, "We love the roast meat of Ch'in as much as we love our own. This is even so with respect to material things. Then are you going to say that our love of roast meat is also external?"

¹⁷ According to Chu Hsi, *Meng Tzu chi-chu* (Collected Commentaries on the *Book of Mencius*), *sheng* refers not to man's inborn nature but to his consciousness and activities, and is comparable to the Buddhist theory that function is nature.

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6A:5. Meng Chi Tzu¹⁸ asked Kung-tu Tzu,¹⁹ "What does it mean to say that righteousness is internal?" Kung-tu Tzu said, "We practice reverence, and therefore it is called internal." "Suppose a fellow villager is one year older than your older brother. Whom are you going to serve with reverence?" "I shall serve my brother with reverence." "In offering wine at a feast, to whom will you offer first?" "I shall offer wine to the villager first." Meng Chi Tzu said, "Now you show reverence to one but honor for age to the other. What determines your actions certainly lies without and not within." Kung-tu Tzu could not reply and told Mencius about it. Mencius said, "If you ask him whether he will serve with reverence his uncle or his younger brother, he will say that he will serve with reverence his uncle. Then you ask him, in case his younger brother is acting at a sacrifice as the representative of the deceased, then to whom is he going to serve with reverence? He will say he will serve the younger brother with reverence. Then you ask him 'Where is your reverence for your uncle?' He will then say, '[I show reverence to my younger brother] because he represents the ancestral spirit in an official capacity.' You can then likewise say, '[I show reverence to the villager] because of his position.' Ordinarily, the reverence is due the elder brother, but on special occasions it is due the villager." When Chi Tzu heard this, he said, "We show reverence to uncle when reverence is due him, and we show reverence to the younger brother when reverence is due him. Certainly what determines it lies without and does not come from within." Kung-tu Tzu said, "In the winter we drink things hot. In the summer we drink things cold. Does it mean that what determines eating and drinking also lies outside?"

6A:6. Kung-tu Tzu said, "Kao Tzu said that man's nature is neither good nor evil. Some say that man's nature may be made good or evil, therefore when King Wen and King Wu²⁰ were in power the people loved virtue, and when Kings Yu and Li²¹ were in power people loved violence. Some say that some men's nature is good and some men's nature is evil. Therefore even under (sage-emperor) Yao²² there was Hsiang [who daily plotted to kill his brother], and even with a bad father Ku-sou, there was [a most filial] Shun²³ (Hsiang's brother

¹⁸ Chu Hsi thinks he was possibly a younger brother of Meng Chung Tzu, pupil of Mencius.

¹⁹ Mencius' pupil.

²⁰ Sage-kings who founded the Chou dynasty (r. 1171-1122 B.C. and 1121-1116 B.C., respectively).

²¹ Wicked kings (r. 781-771 B.C. and 878-842 B.C., respectively).

²² Legendary ruler (3rd millennium B.C.).

²³ Legendary ruler, successor of Yao.

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was handsome. Any one who did not recognize his handsomeness must have no eyes. Therefore I say there is a common taste for flavor in our mouths, a common sense for sound in our ears, and a common sense for beauty in our eyes. Can it be that in our minds alone we are not alike? What is it that we have in common in our minds? It is the sense of principle and righteousness (*i-li*, moral principles). The sage is the first to possess what is common in our minds. Therefore moral principles please our minds as beef and mutton and pork please our mouths."

Comment. In saying that one is of the same kind as the sage, Mencius was pronouncing two principles of utmost significance. One is that every person can be perfect, and the other is that all people are basically equal.³⁷ Also, in pointing to the moral principle which is common in our minds, he is pointing to what amounts to the Natural Law. Belief in the Natural Law has been persistent in Chinese history. It is called Principle of Nature (*T'ien-li*) by Neo-Confucianists. It is essentially the same as Mencius' *i-li*.

6A:8. Mencius said, "The trees of the Niu Mountain³⁸ were once beautiful. But can the mountain be regarded any longer as beautiful since, being in the borders of a big state, the trees have been hewed down with axes and hatchets? Still with the rest given them by the days and nights and the nourishment provided them by the rains and the dew, they were not without buds and sprouts springing forth. But then the cattle and the sheep pastured upon them once and again. That is why the mountain looks so bald. When people see that it is so bald, they think that there was never any timber on the mountain. Is this the true nature of the mountain? Is there not [also] a heart of humanity and righteousness originally existing in man? The way in which he loses his originally good mind is like the way in which the trees are hewed down with axes and hatchets. As trees are cut down day after day, can a mountain retain its beauty? To be sure, the days and nights do the healing, and there is the nourishing air of the calm morning which keeps him normal in his likes and dislikes. But the effect is slight, and is disturbed and destroyed by what he does during the day. When there is repeated disturbance, the restorative influence of the night will not be sufficient to preserve (the proper goodness of the mind). When the influence of the night is not sufficient to preserve it, man becomes not much different from the beast. People see that he acts like an animal, and think that he never had the original endowment (for goodness).

³⁷ A similar idea is expressed in *Mencius*, 4B:28 and 32.

³⁸ Outside the capital of the state of Ch'i.

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But is that his true character? Therefore with proper nourishment and care, everything grows, whereas without proper nourishment and care, everything decays. Confucius said, "Hold it fast and you preserve it. Let it go and you lose it. It comes in and goes out at no definite time and without anyone's knowing its direction.' He was talking about the human mind."

6A:9. Mencius said, "Don't suspect that the king³⁹ lacks wisdom, Even in the case of the things that grow most easily in the world, they would never grow up if they were exposed to sunshine for one day and then to cold for ten days. It is seldom that I have an audience with him, and when I leave, others who expose him to cold arrive. Even if what I say to him is taking root, what good does it do? Now chess playing is but a minor art. One cannot learn it unless he concentrates his mind and devotes his whole heart to it. Chess Expert Ch'iu is the best chess player in the whole country. Suppose he is teaching two men to play. One man will concentrate his mind and devote his whole heart to it, doing nothing but listening to Chess Expert Ch'iu's instructions. Although the other man listens to him, his whole mind is thinking that a wild goose is about to pass by and he wants to bend his bow, adjust the string to the arrow, and shoot it. Although he is learning along with the other man, he will never be equal to him. Is that because his intelligence is inferior? No, it is not."

6A:10. Mencius said, "I like fish and I also like bear's paw. If I cannot have both of them, I shall give up the fish and choose the bear's paw. I like life and I also like righteousness. If I cannot have both of them, I shall give up life and choose righteousness. I love life, but there is something I love more than life, and therefore I will not do anything improper to have it. I also hate death, but there is something I hate more than death, and therefore there are occasions when I will not avoid danger. If there is nothing that man loves more than life, then why should he not employ every means to preserve it? And if there is nothing that man hates more than death, then why does he not do anything to avoid danger? There are cases when a man does not take the course even if by taking it he can preserve his life, and he does not do anything even if by doing it he can avoid danger.⁴⁰ Therefore there is something men love more than life and there is something men hate more than death. It is not only the worthies alone who have this moral sense. All men have it, but only the worthies have been able to preserve it.

Suppose here are a small basket of rice and a platter of soup. With

³⁹ Probably King Hsüan of Ch'i (r. 342-324 B.C.).

⁴⁰ Cf. *Analects*, 15:8.

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them one will survive and without them one will die. If you offer them in a loud and angry voice, even an ordinary passer-by will not accept them, or if you first tread on them and then offer them, even a beggar will not stoop to take them. What good does a salary of ten thousand bushels do me if I accept them without any consideration of the principles of propriety and righteousness? Shall I take it because it gives me beautiful mansions, the service of a wife and concubines, and the chance gratitude of my needy acquaintances who receive my help? If formerly I refused to accept the offer (of rice and soup) in the face of death and now I accept for the sake of beautiful mansions, if formerly I refused the offer in the face of death and now accept for the sake of the service of a wife and concubines, if formerly I refused the offer and now accept for the sake of the gratitude of my needy acquaintances, is that not the limit? This is called casting the original mind away."⁴¹

6A:11. Mencius said, "Humanity is man's mind and righteousness is man's path. Pity the man who abandons the path and does not follow it, and who has lost his heart and does not know how to recover it. When people's dogs and fowls are lost, they go to look for them, and yet, when they have lost their hearts, they do not go to look for them. The way of learning is none other than finding the lost mind.

6A:12. Mencius said, "Suppose there is a man whose fourth finger is crooked and cannot stretch out straight. It is not painful and it does not interfere with his work. And yet if there were someone who could straighten out the finger for him, he would not mind going as far as to the states of Ch'in and Ch'u because his finger is not like those of others, yet he does not hate the fact that his mind is not like those of others. This is called ignorance of the relative importance of things."⁴²

6A:13. Mencius said, "Anybody who wishes to cultivate the *t'ung* and *tzu* trees, which may be grasped by one or both hands, knows how to nourish them. In the case of their own persons, men do not know how to nourish them. Do they love their persons less than the *t'ung* and *tzu* trees? Their lack of thought is extreme."

6A:14. Mencius said, "There is not a part of the body that a man does not love. And because there is no part of the body that he does not love, there is not a part of it that he does not nourish. Because there is not an inch of his skin that he does not love, there is not an inch of his skin that he does not nourish. To determine whether his nourishing is good or not, there is no other way except to see the choice he makes for himself. Now, some parts of the body are noble and some

⁴¹ According to Chu Hsi, this is the original mind of shame and dislike.

⁴² This interpretation is according to Sun Shih (962-1033), subcommentary on Chao Ch'i's commentary in the *Meng Tzu chu-shu* (Subcommentary and Commentary on the *Book of Mencius*) in the Thirteen Classics Series.

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are ignoble; some great and some small. We must not allow the ignoble to injure the noble, or the smaller to injure the greater. Those who nourish the smaller parts will become small men. Those who nourish the greater parts will become great men. A gardener who neglects his *t'ung* and *tzu* trees and cultivates thorns and bramble becomes a bad gardener. A man who takes good care of his finger and, without knowing it, neglects his back and shoulders, resembles a hurried wolf.⁴³ A man who only eats and drinks is looked down upon by others, because he nourishes the smaller parts of his body to the injury of the greater parts. If he eats and drinks but makes no mistake [of injuring the greater parts of his body], how should his mouth and belly be considered merely as so many inches of his body?"

6A:15. Kung-tu Tzu asked, "We are all human beings. Why is it that some men become great and others become small?" Mencius said, "Those who follow the greater qualities in their nature become great men and those who follow the smaller qualities in their nature become small men." "But we are all human beings. Why is it that some follow their greater qualities and others follow their smaller qualities?" Mencius replied, "When our senses of sight and hearing are used without thought and are thereby obscured by material things, the material things act on the material senses and lead them astray. That is all. The function of the mind is to think. If we think, we will get them (the principles of things). If we do not think, we will not get them. This is what Heaven has given to us. If we first build up the nobler part of our nature, then the inferior part cannot overcome it. It is simply this that makes a man great."

Comment. We shall find that the idea of building up the nobler part of our nature became an important tenet in the moral philosophy of Lu Hsiang-shan (Lu Chiu-yüan, 1139-1193), leader of the idealistic school of Neo-Confucianism.⁴⁴

6A:16. Mencius said, "There is nobility of Heaven and there is nobility of man. Humanity, righteousness, loyalty, faithfulness, and the love of the good without getting tired of it constitute the nobility of Heaven, and to be a grand official, a great official, and a high official—this constitutes the nobility of man. The ancient people cultivated the nobility of Heaven, and the nobility of man naturally came to them. People today cultivate the nobility of Heaven in order to seek for the nobility of man, and once they have obtained the nobility of man, they

⁴³ The meaning of the phrase is obscure.

⁴⁴ See below, ch. 33, secs. 8 and 24.

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forsake the nobility of Heaven. Therefore their delusion is extreme. At the end they will surely lose [the nobility of man] also."

6A:17. Mencius said, "The desire to be honored is shared by the minds of all men. But all men have in themselves what is really honorable. Only they do not think of it. The honor conferred by men is not true honor. Whoever is made honorable by Chao Meng⁴⁵ can be made humble by him again. The *Book of Odes* says, 'I am drunk with wine, and I am satiated with virtue.'⁴⁶ It means that a man is satiated with humanity and righteousness, and therefore he does not wish for the flavor of fat meat and fine millet of men. A good reputation and far-reaching praise are heaped on him, and he does not desire the embroidered gowns of men."

6A:18. Mencius said, "Humanity subdues inhumanity as water subdues fire. Nowadays those who practice humanity do so as if with one cup of water they could save a whole wagonload of fuel on fire. When the flames were not extinguished, they would say that water cannot subdue fire. This is as bad as those who are inhumane.⁴⁷ At the end they will surely lose [what little humanity they have]."

6A:19. Mencius said, "The five kinds of grain are considered good plants, but if they are not ripe, they are worse than poor grains. So the value of humanity depends on its being brought to maturity."

6A:20. Mencius said, "When Master I⁴⁸ taught people to shoot, he always told them to draw the bow to the full. The man who wants to learn [the way]⁴⁹ must likewise draw his bow (his will) to the full. When a great carpenter teaches people, he always tells them to use squares and compasses. The man who wants to learn must likewise use squares and compasses (or moral standards)."

ADDITIONAL SELECTIONS

1A:1. Mencius replied [to King Hui at Liang],⁵⁰ "Why must Your Majesty use the term profit? What I have to offer are nothing but humanity and righteousness. If Your Majesty ask what is profitable to your country, if the great officers ask what is profitable to their families, and if the inferior officers and the common people ask what is profitable to themselves, then both the superiors and the subordinates

⁴⁵ A high official of the Chin state.

⁴⁶ Ode no. 247.

⁴⁷ This is Chiao Hsün's interpretation. Chao Ch'i and Chu Hsi, however, interpret *yü* not as "the same as" but as "to help," that is, it greatly helps (encourages) the inhumane.

⁴⁸ An ancient famous archer.

⁴⁹ Insertion according to Chao Ch'i.

⁵⁰ Mencius arrived in Liang in 320 B.C. King Hui (r. 370-319 B.C.) assumed the title of king by usurpation.

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sorry that his corn was not growing, and so he pulled it up. Having been tired out he went home and said to his people, 'I am all tired. I have helped the corn to grow.' When his son ran to look at it, the corn had already withered."

Comment. To Zen Buddhism, the mind must always remain sensitive and sharp. One of their slogans is "Be always alert." Under its impact, Neo-Confucianists similarly stressed "Always be doing something." This is especially true of Wang Yang-ming.⁶⁵ The difference between the Buddhists and the Confucianists is that the former emphasize the state of mind while the latter emphasize activity.

2A:3. Mencius said, "A ruler who uses force to make a pretense at humanity is a despot. Such a despot requires a large kingdom. A ruler who practices humanity with virtue is a true king. To become a true king does not depend on a large kingdom. T'ang became, so with only seventy *li*, and King Wen with only a hundred. When force is used to overcome people, they do not submit willingly but only because they have not sufficient strength to resist. But when virtue is used to overcome people, they are pleased in their hearts and sincerely submit, as the seventy disciples submitted to Confucius. The *Book of Odes* says:

From the west, from the east,
From the south, from the north,
None wanted to resist.⁶⁶

This is what is meant."

Comment. The foundation of Confucian political philosophy is "humane government," government of the true king, who rules through moral example.⁶⁷ His guiding principle is righteousness, whereas that of the despot is profit.⁶⁸ This contrast between kingship and despotism has always remained sharp in the minds of Confucian political thinkers.

2A:5. Mencius said, "If a ruler honors the worthy and employs the competent so that offices are occupied by the wisest, then scholars throughout the world will be delighted to stand in his court. If in the city he levies a rent but does not tax the goods, or enforces certain reg-

⁶⁵ *Ch'uan-hsi lu* (Instructions for Practical Living), secs. 147, 163, 186. See Chan, trans., *Instructions for Practical Living*.

⁶⁶ Ode no. 244.

⁶⁷ See above, Additional Selections, 1A:1, 5; and below, Additional Selections, 2A:5, 3A:3-4, 7A:13.

⁶⁸ The contrast is strongly brought out in 1A: 1.

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ulations but does not levy a rent, then traders throughout the world will be delighted to store goods in his city. If at his frontier passes there will be inspection but no tax, then travelers throughout the world will be delighted to travel on his highways. If farmers are required to give their mutual aid to cultivate the public field but not required to pay tax, then all farmers throughout the world will be delighted to farm in his land. If there is no fine for the idler or the family that fails to meet a certain quota of cloth products, then all people throughout the world will be delighted to become his subjects. If a ruler can truly practice these five things, then the people in the neighboring states will look up to him as a parent. Ever since there has been mankind, none has succeeded in leading children to attack their parents. Thus such a ruler will have no enemy anywhere in the world, and having no enemy in the world, he will be an official appointed by Heaven. There has never been such a person who did not become the true king of the empire."

2A:6. Mencius said, "All men have the mind which cannot bear [to see the suffering of]⁶⁹ others. The ancient kings had this mind and therefore they had a government that could not bear to see the suffering of the people. When a government that cannot bear to see the suffering of the people is conducted from a mind that cannot bear to see the suffering of others, the government of the empire will be as easy as making something go round in the palm.

"When I say that all men have the mind which cannot bear to see the suffering of others, my meaning may be illustrated thus: Now, when men suddenly see a child about to fall into a well, they all have a feeling of alarm and distress, not to gain friendship with the child's parents, nor to seek the praise of their neighbors and friends, nor because they dislike the reputation [of lack of humanity if they did not rescue the child]. From such a case, we see that a man without the feeling of commiseration is not a man; a man without the feeling of shame and dislike is not a man; a man without the feeling of deference and compliance is not a man; and a man without the feeling of right and wrong is not a man. The feeling of commiseration is the beginning of humanity; the feeling of shame and dislike is the beginning of righteousness; the feeling of deference and compliance is the beginning of propriety; and the feeling of right and wrong is the beginning of wisdom. Men have these Four Beginnings just as they have their four limbs. Having these Four Beginnings, but saying that they cannot develop them is to destroy themselves. When they say that their ruler cannot develop them, they are destroying their ruler. If anyone with these Four Beginnings in him knows how to give them the fullest ex-

⁶⁹ According to Chao Ch'i, "cannot bear to do evil to others."

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