THE ANALECTS OF CONFUCIUS

A PHILOSOPHICAL TRANSLATION

A New Translation Based on the Dingzhou Fragments and Other Recent Archaeological Finds

CLASSICS OF ANCIENT CHINA

TRANSLATED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION, BY
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TRANSLATORS' PREFACE

To read the *Analects (Lunyu* 論語) is to take some initial steps along the Confucian way, or path (*dao* 道). It is an ancient and well-worn way: countless millions of human beings have traveled on it for over two thousand years. But in our opinion it is still highly navigable, eminently capable of guiding explorers, searchers, and other citizens of the world from their present state to a better one.

As a consequence, many readers might simply begin reading the translated text proffered herein, allowing Confucius and his disciples to lead the reader directly to the *dao*. For others unfamiliar with the terrain, however, we fear the signposts may not be clearly discernible. Unlike many of his Western counterparts who have attempted to philosophize in an ahistorical and acultural manner, Confucius was deeply concerned about the pressing problems of his day, and therefore the *Analects* is replete with references to people, places, and events with which the contemporary Western reader will very probably be unfamiliar.

For this reason, we have provided an introductory historical background for the text, against which it might be more easily read, and we will be pleased if it serves that purpose. This is not to say that we have described all the people, places, and events mentioned in the text, either in the historical introduction or in the endnotes; to have done so would have made for a multivolume work, much of which might not contribute to illuminating the way of Confucius. The reader who wishes greater detail on ancient Chinese history is directed to our bibli-

ography, and those more historically oriented translations that take such contextualization as their primary contribution.

We have thought it important to include as well a philosophical introduction to the text, because the Confucian way is a path through a world that differs significantly from ours in important respects. It is surely a habitable world, in our opinion, but it *is* a very different one, and we have attempted to describe that world, its human inhabitants, and their language, in the hope that the signposts for the Confucian way will come into sharper relief for the contemporary Western reader.

Our advice is that readers attend to the philosophical materials in conjunction with their own careful reading of the text. In fact, the purpose of our philosophical introduction is to enable the sensitive reader, in whatever degree possible, to take the Confucian way on its own terms without overwriting it with cultural interests and importances that are not its own. An image may help. As we mature within the milieu of a given culture, we are provided with a worldview—a range of beliefs and values—that illumines our way through life, providing our steps with the cultural purchase necessary to move ahead comfortably and securely. This worldview as a source of illumination is Plato's sun, making life stable and predictable. When, with these cultural lights shining brightly, we attempt to look through a window into a very different culture, our lights render this window a mirror, and thus what we see is familiar—it is our own reflection. That is, we tend to foreground what is familiar in our own cultural experience while leaving behind precisely those resources that would recommend the comparative exercise as a source of growth and enrichment.

It is only in becoming alert to the uncommon assumptions sedimented into Chinese ways of living and thinking that we can resist the gravitational force of cultural reductionism. This is not to suggest that there is some objective reading of the *Analects* that is innocent. An underlying premise of the *Analects* itself is that the text must be personalized and internalized by each reader. While we believe our interpretative philosophical arguments are sound, we do not wish to im-

pose and thereby claim a "final" reading of the text; the *Analects* is too rich for that. Moreover, while our historical introduction is fairly straightforward and not overly controversial—we have not endeavored to grind any scholarly axes while composing it—our philosophical materials are by no means equally straightforward and noncontroversial; a number of scholars whom we respect greatly will, in all probability, not concur with some of our interpretations of the ancient Chinese world, its people, their language, and consequently will disagree with at least parts of our own reading of the *Analects*.

Largely for these sinologists and other interested readers, we have, in defense of our interpretations, offered additional evidence and arguments for them in the appendices. We have also appended a discussion of the recently recovered archaeological manuscript—the oldest existing version of the *Analects*—which informs our translation.

This, then, is the structure of the book. The reader is invited to delve into the heart of it, the *Analects* itself; we hope to see you along the way.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In the past, each of us has participated in collaborative translations of the writings of major thinkers—i.e., Sun Bin, Leibniz—but this is the first time we have worked together on a text. It has been a richly rewarding experience for both of us, all the more so as it has validated a central theme of the text itself: we most efficaciously follow and recreate the way (dao) when we do so in the company of others.

For the most part, we have been in agreement from the outset on most issues, and it has been deeply satisfying to have one's reading, interpretation, linguistic, or philosophical argument endorsed by the other. In those areas in which we were in initial disagreement, we have each learned much from the detailed exploration of our differences, and have been able to jointly celebrate our eventual compromises because in the end neither of us has felt compromised by the result.

At the same time, both of us have felt a sense of, if not inadequacy, then at least humility, for having associated our names with a figure of the historical significance and stature of Confucius, who arguably ranks with Jesus of Nazareth, Buddha, and perhaps Plato in influencing the lives of the past and present human inhabitants of this fragile planet. Our feelings on this score are well captured in the poem from the *Book of Songs*, cited in the *Analects*: "Fearful, fearful; as if treading on thin ice, as if peering into an abyss."

For these reasons, we are deeply grateful to the many people who have assisted our work in producing this present translation of and

commentary on the *Analects*; we feel at least minimally less fearful because of their efforts. In the first instance our thanks go to Daniel Cole, for working over, then reworking, then reworking again our several drafts of the translation, and then for putting the results into a scholarly, respectable, and aesthetically pleasing camera-ready copy for the publisher; a daunting task in itself, made all the more so by the necessity of accurately juxtaposing English and Chinese text.

In the same way, we are indebted to our Random House editor Owen Lock for his most careful reading and commentary on our drafts, and to the anonymous copy editor who not only (embarrassingly) caught our grammatical lapses, but also made us mind our '*p*'s and '*q*'s in referencing the text when our '*p*'s did not match up correctly with our '*q*'s.

Early drafts of the introduction, appendices, and notes thereto were most ably prepared by the mother-daughter manuscript preparation team of Ellen and Eva Corson, who did their work with warmth, wit, and grace, and an efficiency which lightened the work of Daniel Cole for these portions of the text.

We are also indebted to the students in our seminars on the *Analects* held at the University of Hawai'i and St. Mary's College of Maryland; they not only called our attention to—again, sometimes embarrassingly—positive mistakes and/or inconsistencies in our translation and commentaries, but aided us measurably by pointing up infelicities of expression, and in addition, generated an enthusiasm for the project which was sustaining for both of us.

Our many references, both in the text and in the notes, to the work of David Keightley, signals clearly, we hope, our deep indebtedness to his work. Although he might cavil at the association, we consider him a fellow comparative philosopher, his richly deserved stature as an archaeological historian notwithstanding.

In China, our collaborators have been Yang Jin and Cai Min of Wenwu Publishing House. The meticulous and sophisticated scholarship on the Dingzhou manuscript they made available to us has been

invaluable in deciding where and/or when to alter the received texts of the *Analects* in preparing our own translation. We hope the present work is worthy of their considerable efforts.

Finally and filially, our work derives from the scholar/translators of the *Analects* who have preceded us, especially those three who first acquainted us with Confucius, from whom we have learned much, and with whom we have ventured to disagree only with trepidation: James Legge, Arthur Waley, and D. C. Lau.

All of the above deserve much of the credit for transmitting the wisdom of the past; for all failures to innovate well, the responsibility rests with the undersigned.

Roger T. Ames (Honolulu)
Henry Rosemont, Jr. (St. Mary's City)

INTRODUCTION

HISTORICAL AND TEXTUAL BACKGROUND

Master Kong 孔子 (*Confucius*)

Confucius (551–479 BCE) is probably the most influential thinker in human history, if influence is determined by the sheer number of people who have lived their lives, and died, in accordance with the thinker's vision of how people ought to live, and die. Like many other epochal figures of the ancient world—Socrates, Buddha, Jesus—Confucius does not seem to have written anything that is clearly attributable to him; all that we know of his vision directly must be pieced together from the several accounts of his teachings, and his life, found in the present text, the *Analects*, and other collateral but perhaps less reliable sources such as the *Mencius* and the *Zuo Commentary to the Spring and Autumn Annals*.[1]

Recognized as China's first great teacher both chronologically and in importance, Confucius' ideas have been the fertile soil in which the Chinese cultural tradition has been cultivated and has flourished. In fact, whatever we might mean by "Chineseness" today, some two and a half millennia after his death, is inseparable from the example of personal character that Confucius provided for posterity. And his influence did not end with China. All of the sinitic cultures—especially Korea, Japan, and Vietnam—have evolved around ways of living and thinking derived in significant measure from his ideas as set down by his

disciples and others after his death—ideas that are by no means irrelevant to contemporary social, political, moral, and religious concerns.

Confucius was born in the ancient state of Lu (in modern Shandong province) during one of the most formative periods of Chinese culture. Two centuries before his birth, scores of small city-states owing their allegiance to the imperial House of Zhou filled the Yellow River basin. This was the Zhou dynasty (traditionally, 1122–256 BCE) out of which the empire of China was later to emerge. By the time of Confucius' birth only fourteen independent states remained, with seven of the strongest contending with each other militarily for hegemony over the central plains. It was a period of escalating internecine violence, driven by the knowledge that no state was exempt, and that all comers were competing in a zero-sum game—to fail to win was to perish. The accelerating ferocity of battle was like the increasing frequency and severity of labor pains, anticipating the eventual birth of the imperial Chinese state.[2]

The landscape was diverse not only politically. Intellectually, Confucius set a pattern for the "Hundred Schools" that emerged during these centuries in their competition for doctrinal supremacy. He founded an academy in his own state of Lu and, later in his career, he began the practice of independent philosophers traveling from state to state to persuade political leaders that the particular teachings developed in their academies were a practicable formula for social and political success. In the decades that followed his death, intellectuals of every stripe—Confucians, Legalists, Mohists, Yinyang Theorists, Militarists—would take to the road, often attracted by court-sponsored academies which sprang up to host them. Within these seats of learning and at the courts themselves, the viability of their various strategies for political and social unity would be hotly debated.[3]

Confucius said of himself that "Following the proper way, I do not forge new paths" (7.1),[4] allowing that he was a transmitter rather than an innovator, a classicist rather than a philosopher. This autobiographical statement is not altogether accurate—Confucius was an

original thinker by any standard—but the statement captures a basic characteristic of what came to be called Confucianism: a deep respect and affection for the rich cultural Chinese past, what in the *Analects* is called "the love of learning (*haoxue* 好學)." Confucius saw human flourishing as definitive of the reigns of the ancient sage kings, and he advocated a reauthorization of their ways of governing that had been passed on. According to Confucius—and the other two ancient texts he cites, the *Book of Documents* and the *Book of Songs*[5]—the ancient sage kings who governed by observing ritual propriety and custom (the *li* 禮) rather than by law and force, were themselves reverent toward their past, were more concerned to insure the material and the spiritual well-being of the people than to accumulate personal wealth, and saw as their main task the maintenance of harmony between their community and the rest of the natural order. Confucius wished to reanimate this tradition, and pass it on to succeeding generations.

As a teacher, Confucius expected a high degree of commitment to learning from his students. On the one hand, he was tolerant and inclusive. He made no distinction among the economic classes in selecting his students, and would take whatever they could afford in payment for his services (7.7). His favorite student, Yan Hui, was desperately poor, a fact that simply added to Confucius' admiration for him (6.11, 6.3). On the other hand, Confucius set high standards, and if students did not approach their lessons with seriousness and enthusiasm, Confucius would not suffer them (7.8).

Over his lifetime, Confucius attracted a fairly large group of such serious followers, and provided them not only with book learning, but with a curriculum that encouraged personal articulation and refinement on several fronts. His "six arts" included observing propriety and ceremony (*li*), performing music, and developing proficiency in archery, charioteering, writing, and calculation, all of which, in sum, were directed more at cultivating the moral character of his charges than at any set of practical skills. In the Chinese tradition broadly,

proficiency in the "arts" has been seen as the medium through which one reveals the quality of one's personhood.

Although Confucius enjoyed great popularity as a teacher and many of his students found their way into political office, his enduring frustration was that he personally achieved only marginal influence in the practical politics of the day. He was a *philosophe* rather than a theoretical philosopher; he wanted to be actively involved in intellectual and social trends, and to improve the quality of life that was dependent upon them. Although there were many occasions on which important political figures sought his advice and services during his years in the state of Lu, he held only minor offices at court. When finally Confucius was appointed as police commissioner late in his career, his advice was not heeded, and he was not treated by the Lu court with appropriate courtesy. Earlier, Confucius had made several brief trips to neighboring states, but, after being mistreated in the performance of court sacrifices at home, he determined to take his message on the road again, this time more broadly.

These were troubled times, and there was great adventure and much danger in offering counsel to the competing political centers of his day. In his early fifties, he traveled widely as an itinerant counselor, and several times came under the threat of death (9.5). He was not any more successful in securing preferment abroad than he had been at home, to which he eventually returned and lived out his last few years as a counselor of the lower rank and, according to later accounts, continued his compilation of the classics. He died in 479 BCE, almost surely believing his life had been, on the whole, politically and practically worthless.

The Disciples

Although, like his Western philosophical counterparts, Confucius had a "vision" of the way the world was, he did not, could not, attempt to convey that vision—unlike many of his Western counterparts—solely

in purely descriptive language (about which, more follows). His vision was not simply one to be *understood*, and then accepted, modified, or rejected on the basis of its congruence with the world "objectively" perceived by his students. On the contrary, his vision was one that had to be felt, experienced, practiced, and lived. He was interested in how to make one's way in life, not in discovering the "truth."[6]

If this is an accurate account of what Confucius was about as a teacher, and appreciating that his students differed in age, background, education, and temperament, then we can begin to understand why, in the *Analects*, Confucius occasionally speaks in generalizations, but much more often gives a specific answer to a specific question asked by one of the disciples. At times, the Master gives different answers to the same question, which may all too easily suggest that he was not a particularly consistent thinker. But when we read more closely, and see that it was different disciples who asked the same question, we might reasonably postulate that Confucius based his specific response to the question on the specific perspective—lived, learned, experienced—from which he thought the disciple asked it. (cf. 11.22).

In order, then, to read the *Analects* and get the most out of it, we must learn something about the questioners of the Master.[7]

Yan Hui is far and away Confucius' favorite. Living on a daily bowl of rice and a ladle of water (6.11), Yan Hui's eagerness to learn and his sincerity endear him to the Master (6.3). Of a somewhat mystical bent (9.11), Yan Hui is nevertheless seen by Confucius as highly intelligent and exceptional among his students, such that "learning one thing he will know ten" (5.9). Yan Hui is three decades younger than Confucius and heir apparent to his teachings—certainly one reason why the latter was so devastated by his young disciple's untimely death (11.7–11). In fact, as D. C. Lau speculates, classical Confucianism might have had a somewhat different style if it had been Yan Hui rather than the five disciples in the last five books who had been responsible for its earliest transmission.[8]

Zilu is another well-known disciple of the Master, and among his favorites, although not portrayed as uniformly exemplary as Yan Hui. Zilu is a courageous activist who is sometimes upbraided by Confucius for being too bold and impetuous (11.22). When he asks the Master whether courage is indeed the highest human excellence, Confucius replies that a bold person lacking a sense of appropriateness would be unruly, and a lesser person, a thief (17.23). At the same time, it is clear that Confucius respects Zilu's courage (5.7), and no less clear that Zilu in his own way is attempting to grasp the Confucian vision, especially when Confucius is speaking not only with him, but with Yan Hui as well (5.26).

Zigong excels as a statesman and as a merchant. Although Confucius twits him for being stingy (3.17), he does believe Zigong can be entrusted with an administrative position (6.8). Despite his occasional officiousness, Zigong asks the important questions (7.15, 17.19), and it is clear that Confucius is fond of him (1.15).

Zengzi, or "Master Zeng," is the foremost exponent of the filial virtues (*xiao* 孝) among the disciples (1.9, 8.3–7), and, as evidenced by the number of times in the *Analects* he is referred to as "Master Zeng" (8:3-7 19:16 -19), he clearly became leader of a Confucian school after the Master's death. He is not among the sharpest of the disciples (11.18), but can at least occasionally elaborate on an unusual remark by his teacher (14.26).

Zixia is a man of letters, and is remembered by tradition as having had an important role in establishing the early canonical texts. His name appears in the early strata of the *Analects* (6.13) as one who is capable of treading the way (*dao*), and Confucius weighs his shortcomings as no worse than another disciple, Zizhang, whom he is willing to instruct at length (2.18). The Master calls attention to Zixia's timidity (11.16), but also to his apprehending the richness of the cultural tradition (3.8).

Zizhang himself often asks detailed questions about the significance of past historical events (5.19), but clearly wishes to learn the an-

swers to his questions so that he can attempt to realize the Confucian vision in practice (2.18, 2.23).

Ranyou has a rather curious profile in the *Analects.* On the one hand, he is a mediocre student lacking in initiative (11.22). On the other hand, Confucius has no question concerning his administrative abilities (5.8), nor qualms about recommending him for office (6.8). In many ways, Ranyou's failures are a fair demonstration of perhaps the main theme of the text: real education is the cultivation of one's character, not the accumulation of administrative skills. At the end of the day, Ranyou is not able to move the usurping Ji clan, which he serves, in the direction of appropriate conduct because, as a person, he is not worthy of deference (3.6 and 16.1).

Other disciples are either well described in the text and in our notes thereto, or their qualities made known by the kinds of questions they ask, and the answers given. At times Confucius can be seen as a harshly exacting mentor with his students (14.43), but on other occasions, depending on his audience and the circumstances, as a warm, modest, and entirely human partner on a quest. In fact, he evidences a wonderful sense of humor in his interactions with his young followers (for example, 5.7, 5.20, 11.19, 17.1, and 17.4). A generalization about his interaction with his students is found in 7.38: "The Master was always gracious yet serious, commanding yet not severe, deferential yet at ease."

The Text

Beginning shortly after he died, a few of the disciples of Confucius began setting down briefly what they remembered the Master saying to them. Some disciples of the first generation of his students continued this process, so that, as the story goes, within a century of the founder's demise there were at least ten such little "books" about his life and teachings. Another dozen or more were compiled by we know-not-whom during the following century, and it was to be yet another hundred years before a number of these "books" were gathered together to

make up the volume we now know as the *Analects*—or "Sayings of Confucius."[9]

Thus the present work in twenty books was over three centuries in the making, and there were numerous difficulties in editing it into a coherent whole. In the first place, the savage civil wars plaguing China during Confucius' lifetime greatly intensified after his death: to this day, the Chinese refer to their historical times 403–221 BCE as "The Period of the Warring States." The disciples—and their disciples in turn—scattered; some were killed, some formed their own schools; undoubtedly much was written, but only a few copies of each text would be circulated, and of course, all were subject to loss or destruction.

Worse, in 213 BCE, less than a decade after the country had been unified by the First August Emperor of the Qin—he of the terra cotta army of tomb soldiers—the then Prime Minister Li Si ordered a general burning of all writings not dealing with the practical arts. Fair copies of each title destroyed were kept in an imperial library, but as the dynasty began to disintegrate after the death of the First Emperor, the imperial library was burned to the ground.[10]

From the ashes of the Qin dynasty the House of Han arose. It was one of China's longest reigning dynasties (202 BCE–220 CE), and within the first century of its rule, a syncretically fortified version of the philosophical and religious thought of what was then loosely called "Confucianism" came to dominate the intellectual life of the realm, beginning its ascendancy after Emperor Wu (140–87 BCE) took the throne. It was during this early Han period that the reconstitution of all surviving materials attributed to Confucius and his disciples took place, with one result being the text of the *Analects* as we have it today.

There are different stories told on the compilation of the *Analects*. D. C. Lau stands with traditional wisdom: this text was compiled shortly after the death of Confucius. He suggests that the first fifteen books were assembled relatively soon after the death of the Master, and

rulers were historical figures will probably never be known (apart from the legends, we have little direct evidence for their existence), but Confucius and the tradition that followed in his footsteps surely believed that they were. We know that Chinese civilization was already highly developed by the time Confucius was born, and had been so for at least a thousand years. And Confucius devoted his life to celebrating, renewing, and recommending that development. Thus, while it would not make much sense to speak of a Buddhism before the Buddha, or a Christianity before Christ, it actually does make good sense to speak of a "Confucianism" before Confucius: he articulated clearly and championed compellingly a great many of the artistic, social, ritual, religious, and other practices that had already defined the Chinese cultural tradition for a millennium.

Two of the books descriptive of that tradition predate Confucius, and are cited by him in the *Analects*. The first of these is the *Shujing* 書經—usually translated as the *Book of History* or the *Book of Documents*.[13] It is thought by some scholars that parts of the *Book of Documents* might well be China's oldest written work, predating even the oracle bones of the late Shang (traditionally 1766–1122 BCE), while other scholars would not allow that it is earlier than the Zhou dynasty (traditionally 1122–256 BCE). It is made up of a series of short essays, memorials, and documents which record parts of the reigns of several of the sage-kings and rulers of the early three dynasties (see *Analects* 2.23): the Xia (traditionally 2205–1766 BCE), the Shang or Yin, and the early Zhou. The book is by no means a complete account of antiquity, and even the oldest parts of it are generally thought to have been written long after the events they describe.[14]

Although parts of the *Book of Documents* are simply chronicles of events, other parts of it are the charges of rulers to their successors, and to their ministers. The themes repeated consistently in these exhortations had moral, political, and religious qualities that came to be definitive of the Confucian persuasion (which is probably why many

later commentators believed Confucius edited the text). Many of the practices described in the *Book of Documents* were surely informed by early beliefs in the supernatural, but these beliefs are not emphasized in the book as much as, for example, the exhortations to govern responsibly, and were largely ignored by the Master and his disciples when discussing the text.

In addition to Yao, Shun, and Yu, many personages are mentioned or quoted in the *Book of Documents*, and three deserve special mention here because of the esteem in which they were held by Confucius. They were the founders of the Zhou Dynasty: King Wen, his son King Wu, and the latter's younger brother, the Duke of Zhou. King Wen 文王—whose name means at once "culture," "refinement," "embellishment," and "literature"—is best known as the loyal vassal of the last Shang dynasty ruler, a tyrannical despot who oppressed the people. Wen constantly remonstrated with this ruler, attempting to get him to mend his evil ways, but was unsuccessful in this effort. When Wen died, his son Wu 武—which means "martial"—led a successful rebellion against the Shang, formally establishing the Zhou dynasty. As a filial son, the "Martial King" claimed his father as the posthumous first ruler of the House of Zhou.

By championing both of these early kings, Confucius bequeathed to two thousand years of Chinese officialdom a way of coming to terms with a great tension many of them had to confront directly: what is a moral minister to do in the service of an immoral ruler? Those who believed their ruler was reformable through remonstrance and example, could claim King Wen as their exemplar; those who believed otherwise could at least retire, or, more strongly, raise the flag of rebellion in the name of good King Wu.

It was toward the third member of this royal trio, however, that Confucius appears to have felt the closest personal bond (see especially 7.5). The Duke of Zhou was exemplary in at least two respects. First, in a very moving passage, the *Book of Documents* records the duke's offer-

ing sacrifice and prayers to the ancestors on behalf of his seriously ill elder brother, King Wu, in which he implores the ancestors to heal his brother, and take him (the duke) instead, if a royal death be necessary. These entreaties eventually proved fruitless; the king succumbed, leaving as his patrimony to the throne a three-year-old son. The duke of Zhou thereupon assumed the regency, but instead of usurping the throne himself, turned it over to his nephew as soon as the latter achieved his majority and was capable of assuming royal responsibility. Thereafter, like Cincinnatus, the duke retired to his own estate to live out his days; a worthy cultural hero indeed.

The second canonical work quoted more than any other source in the *Analects* is the *Shijing* 詩經, variously translated as the *Book of Poetry*, *Book of Odes*, or *Book of Songs*.[15] Although regularly cited in support of some weighty aesthetic, moral, or political point that Confucius wished to make, the original 305 poems that comprise the *Songs* are just that: poems to be intoned and chanted aloud. While some of them do indeed have a moral import that can be read out of them, the majority are simply reflective of life in earliest historical China. There are love poems, and poems lamenting a son or husband going off to war; poems dealing with nature, with hunting and fishing, with friendship, with festivals; and there are poems dealing with legends and ancient rituals. Collectively the poems of the *Songs* paint what must be the most accurate picture we have of the everyday life of the Chinese—aristocrats and commoners alike—living in approximately the ninth century BCE.

In the West, probably the best-known ancient Chinese work is, if not the *Analects*, then the *Yijing* 易經, or *Book of Changes*.[16] Although parts of it, like the *Book of Documents*, probably date from early Western Zhou (1122–771 BCE), the work as we have it today, with accretions spanning many centuries, only came together many generations after the death of Confucius. Originally a book of divination—and never ceasing to be such—the *Book of Changes* became the first among the canonical classics, and certainly influenced later Confucian thinking. It

may well have been read in some form by the authors of the "books" that now make up the *Analects*. At the very least, Confucius is explicitly quoted as interpreting one of the hexagrams in this text (13.22). There is also one version of the *Analects* suggesting that Confucius late in his life was himself a student of the *Book of Changes* (7.17) that is gaining increased credibility from the Confucian commentaries recovered at Mawangdui in 1973. Although we still follow the Dingzhou text which does not reference the *Book of Changes*, the appearance of this variant speaks to the sustained importance that this text came to have in the intellectual life of China.[17]

Other texts now included in the Confucian canon—parts of which were probably extant while Confucius was alive—are three texts on ritual: the *Zhouli* 周禮 (*Rituals of Zhou*), *Yili* 義禮 (*Appropriateness and Rituals*), and the *Liji* 禮記 (*Records of Rituals*).[18] Another historical work, the *Chunqiu* 春秋 (*Spring and Autumn Annals*) is a chronicle of events at the court of Lu 722–481 BCE, an era which subsequently came to be known as the "Spring and Autumn" period after the chronicle's title. A series of commentaries written on this laconic record of court events were to become the focus of interpretative exegetical studies during the Han dynasty.[19] There also appears to have been a *Yuejing* 樂經 (*Book of Music*), but no copies or even significant fragments thereof have been extant for some two thousand years.

We see the beginning of the succession to Confucius in the last books of the *Analects* in which several of his now mature disciples pronounce on the meaning of Confucius' teachings. But the most famous successor to Confucius was the later "Master Meng" (Mengzi 孟子), Latinized as "Mencius," who flourished one hundred and fifty years after the Master (ca. 372–289 BCE). Mencius was himself supposed to have studied with a follower in the school of Zisi 子思 (491–431 BCE), a grandson of Confucius who is associated with the *Zhongyong* 中庸 , the *Doctrine of the Mean*, and several of the newly recovered texts at the

1993 Guodian find in which he is named explicitly. In the book that bears his name, Mencius elaborated upon and embellished the views of Confucius, defending them against all comers with skill, passion, and grace.[20] He later was canonized as the "Second Sage" of Confucianism, in no small part because of his claim that human beings are naturally inclined toward good conduct. A number of passages in the *Mencius* are explicit commentary on the *Analects*, and have been included in the notes to this translation.

The next most famous successor to Confucius before the Han dynasty was "Master Xun" or Xunzi 荀子 (ca. 310–238 BCE), who, like Mencius, defended the Confucian vision against its rivals among the "Hundred Schools" of thought that were contending during the Warring States period. If perhaps less passionate in his thinking than Mencius, he was equally graceful, and far more rigorous (at least from a Western philosophical perspective). Given his role in co-opting much of the competing wisdom of his day for "Confucianism" and his unparalleled influence on the establishment of Confucianism as the state ideology a century after his death, Xunzi has, not inaccurately, been referred to as "the molder of ancient Confucianism."[21]

Although we cannot be sure that either of these famous successors to Confucius had available to them the *Analects* as we have it today, both of them regularly cite the Master as saying things that, while sometimes not found in the current text, are generally compatible with its philosophical spirit, at least as, *mutatis mutandis*, it would inform the intellectual world of the day. The recently recovered commentaries to the *Book of Changes* at Mawangdui (1973) that cite Confucius' reflections explicitly add to our store of Confucius-related materials. These references provide evidence for believing that there were several more "books" about Confucius in circulation during this period, and further, that Mencius and Xunzi deserve the interpretative successor status they achieved.

Confucius Campaign" (*pikong* 批孔) orchestrated a nationwide critique of Confucius that had the entire literate Chinese population studying the *Analects* in order to call it into question—a strategy that did more to reauthorize this classic than to stem its influence.

In summary, it is essential for the reader of the *Analects*—and Confucian writings more generally—to appreciate the singular role played by the Master in shaping Chinese thought, government, culture, and daily life. The importance of Daoism and Buddhism notwithstanding, Confucianism has been the dominant cultural resource transmitted and elaborated upon by the literati for over two millennia, and because government officials were drawn from the ranks of the literati, it served as the official state ideology as well. Moreover, because it celebrated tradition, rituals, filial obligations, ancestor reverence, and other such popular institutions, Confucianism was exemplified in the lives of Chinese commoners, who were thereby followers of the Master in practice even though they had no firsthand knowledge of the *Analects* and related texts.

Confucius, then, was not simply one great thinker among many in China; his defense and enhancement of the early heritage established him as the enduring symbol of Chinese civilization. As a consequence, he has been honored even by those whose views were different (Daoists and Buddhists), and by those who could not read the writings which expressed those views. Thus the spirit of the *Analects* has been consistently reflected in the writings and actions of later Confucian philosophers, and continues to color the entire fabric of Chinese culture.

Finally, the contemporary Western reader of the *Analects* must bear in mind that the early emerging "Confucianism" was challenged at its inception by Daoists, Mohists, Legalists, and proponents of others of the "Hundred Schools" of classical Chinese thought. In the course of time, it was overshadowed by Buddhism for several centuries. And again later, it was challenged by Christianity, first by the Jesuits, Franciscans, and Dominicans of the late sixteenth and seventeenth

centuries, and afterward by both Protestant and Catholic missionaries in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The earliest incursions of missionaries were buttressed by what they believed to be the unassailable rationality of classical Western learning, while the later reinforcements relied on the gunboat diplomacy of the imperialistic Western powers as they laid claim to China. And, of course, liberal democratic, capitalist, and Marxist ideas have contributed much to the Western onslaught against the resilient Confucian tradition. But in the face of all these challenges Confucianism has not only persisted, it has repeatedly risen and reasserted itself with renewed strength and substance derived from its appropriation of precisely those forces that would undermine it. Thus it would be presumptuous—and very probably false—to suggest that it cannot have any purchase on us today.

This endurance is not merely evidenced by the fact that the most successful—in strictly economic terms—of non-Western nations in modernizing their societies have been those heavily influenced by the Confucian tradition: Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, and more recently, China itself. The "Confucian Hypothesis"[24] which is regularly invoked to describe this success, often depicts an authoritarian Confucius who, in our opinion, is a very different one from the sagely teacher found in the *Analects*. Our Confucius is undogmatic (9.4), not concerned with personal profit (4.16, 7.7), dislikes competitiveness (3.7), sets little store by material possessions (1.15), and is more concerned about equitable distribution of wealth than wealth itself (16.1); it is neither an authoritarian nor a capitalist Confucius that is met in the pages of the present book.

For all these reasons, then, the *Analects* should not be read merely for antiquarian interest, or for modern economic insight either. Rather should the reader consider seriously the possibility that there might be much in this text that speaks not only to East Asians, but perhaps to everyone; not only to the scholars of the past, but perhaps to all those who wish to help shape a more decent and humane future today.

Metaphysics, With Reference to Language[25]

In order for the reader to appreciate fully the sophisticated depth of the Analects, we as translators must first attempt to describe the world as experienced by the ancient Chinese who walk through its pages. This is a daunting task, because underlying the grammar of the contemporary English language is a rather different "world." To say this is not to suggest Chinese exoticness: trees, birds, flowers, mountains, rivers, and most everything else in China do not differ radically from their counterparts closer to home. Nor is it to say that all ancient Chinese beliefs and attitudes differ radically from our own: many different Chinese held many different beliefs and attitudes, and a great many of them have Western counterparts.

Rather we are saying that there are *presuppositions* underlying all discourse about the world, about beliefs, and about attitudes, which are sedimented into the specific grammars of the languages in which these discourses take place. Proceeding from an awareness that the only thing more dangerous than making cultural generalizations is the reductionism that results from not doing so, we need to identify and elaborate some of these presuppositions. To establish some initial terms for comparison, we want to claim that English (and other Indo-European languages) is basically *substantive* and *essentialistic*, whereas classical Chinese should be seen more as an eventful language.

If this be so, then experiencing a world of *events*, seen as persistently episodic, will perhaps be different from experiencing a world of *things*, seen interactively.

To take an example, the tree seen in one's front yard is clearly the same tree all year long; its *substance*—underlying reality—remains the same, despite differing appearances throughout the year. But in the world of lived experience, it is not forced on us to focus on the tree's sameness, substance, or essence. Rather can we experience a tree with flowers and buds, a tree with green leaves, then with brown leaves, and finally, a tree with no leaves at all. The tree *appears* differently, and why can't the appearances be "real"? The tree can be perceived eventfully, relationally, with respect to the seasons, other natural phenomena, and with respect to ourselves as well: only during certain times will the tree shade us, and there are other times to rake its relentless crop of falling leaves, still another time to prune it.

This example will almost surely seem odd to anyone unfamiliar with the idea of being able to experience the world "nonsubstantially." A part of the reason for the oddness, however, lies not in any unreasonableness of the Chinese orientation—if we are right, their orientation is eminently reasonable—but rather lies at least partially in the grammatical rules of English which we cannot significantly violate in attempting to describe that orientation. The definite article in English signals "the one and only," and the use of the same pronoun in a sentence must refer to the same object. Thus when we say "*the* tree" it must be a "one and only" tree, and when we refer to "it," it must be the *same* tree, no matter what the season. Similarly, the boy who purportedly chopped down a cherry tree and confessed to the deed must be the *same* George Washington who served as the first president of the United States.

Thus it is important to note here—we will have more to say about the Chinese language in the next section—that classical Chinese has no definite articles (or any articles at all), and its pronouns do not function just as modern English pronouns do. Essentialism is virtually built

into English—indeed, into all Indo-European languages—by the way things, essences, substances, (nouns) *do* something (they are verbed), or have something else attributed to them (*via* being auxiliary verbed). Consequently, moving from Chinese as our object language, which may properly be described as eventful, into an essentialistic target language, English, will require a stretching of the latter in order to better convey the former—as we have done in our translation of the *Analects* (and in the preceding sentence).

Aristotle's categories demand from us that experiences be factored into things, actions, attributes of things, and modalities of actions—nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Hence, our first impulse in encountering the unfamiliar is to make such a determination. *Dao* 道 becomes reified and objectified as "the *dao*." Yet *dao* has as much to do with subject as it does with object, and as much to do with the subject's quality of understanding as it does with the various aspects of the felt experience. Said another way, *dao* defies Aristotle's categories, being all of them at once. And our experience of the tree is constitutive of *dao*, one experience among many which in sum make up one's day.

Some of the "eventful" properties of classical Chinese can be discerned in modern spoken Mandarin, or *Putonghua*. The very expression "thing," for example—*dongxi* 東西 , literally, "east-west,"—is a nonsubstantial relationship.[26] Again, noun phrases are, in linguistic terms, head-initial in English, and head-final in Mandarin. Thus the English sentence:

> The young woman who just entered the room is very bright.

would have a very different word order in Chinese:

> Just now room-inside enter that-young-woman very bright.
> *Gangcai wuzili laide xiaojie feichang congming.*
> 剛才屋子裡來的小姐非常聰明。

For the two of us at least, the "English" young woman is considerably more substantial, but much less dynamic (more thingful/essential *vs.*

these patterns of thought not only in early Chinese philosophical writings, but in all other writings as well. The Chinese *materia medica* describes the chest as *yin* (receptive, soft, submissive) with respect to the back, which is *yang* (creative, hard, aggressive). But in relation to the abdomen, the chest is *yang*. But these relations, too, can be changed, depending on anatomical conditions (a broken leg, a pinched nerve, and so on). That is to say, nothing is altogether *yin* or *yang* in and of itself, but only in relation to one or more other "things," temporally contextualized.[27] (We can note here in passing that if there are no essences, there cannot be any peculiarly masculine or feminine essences, and consequently we must refrain from imposing Western concepts of gender on early Chinese thinkers despite the patriarchal structure of classical and imperial Chinese society.)[28]

It is significant, we believe, that although working with very different texts, the distinguished historian of Chinese science Nathan Sivin has made much the same point, not only about medicine, but all scientific pursuits as undertaken in China:

> Scientific thought began, in China as elsewhere, with attempts to comprehend how it is that although individual things are constantly changing, always coming to be and perishing, nature as a coherent order not only endures but remains conformable to itself. In the West the earliest such attempts identified the unchanging reality with some basic stuff out of which all the things around us, despite their apparent diversity, are formed.
>
> In China the earliest and in the long run the most influential scientific explanations were in terms of time. They made sense of the momentary event by fitting it into the cyclical rhythms of natural process.[29]

We would extend Sivin's observation to include not only scientific, but Chinese ethical discourse as well. The "basic stuff" of the scientific West resembles the enduring self, or soul ("strict self-identity") of the moral and religious West, whereas the Chinese made sense of personal identity "by fitting it into the cyclical rhythms of natural [and social]

process." Many factors enter into the analysis of what we have referred to as benefactor-beneficiary roles, but time is fundamental. A common lament among the elderly in the West is that "I'm not the person I used to be." In the Chinese context, the statement is quite literally true. General Washington differed from President Washington, and neither bore a close resemblance to the boy who supposedly chopped down the cherry tree.

To elaborate these points in a Western philosophical context, first, the "basic stuff" of the scientific West came to be seen as *substances* (noun phrases), in which attributes inhere (auxiliary verbs) or which are active (transitive and intransitive verbs). Thus Heraclitus could ask how it was possible to step into the *same* river twice when all of its substance (water) was different. In attempting to get to the bottom of things, Descartes argued for two substances which share no predicates because they are absolutely distinct: body (that which is extended) and mind (that which thinks). But Cartesian efforts to account for how the two substances could interact were not persuasive to Descartes' successors. Like Spinoza, Leibniz believed that substances could not, in fact, interact, but while the former concluded there could therefore only be a single substance (with many modes and attributes), the latter instead argued for an indefinitely large number of them. These individual substances, "monads," could not causally affect each other, but could all dance to the same tune played in a preestablished harmony composed by God.

Metaphysically astigmatic, perhaps, the early Chinese thinkers never seem to have perceived any substances that remained the *same* through time; rather in our interpretation they saw "things" relationally, and related differently, at different periods of time. *Dao*, the totality of all things (*wanwu* 萬物), is a process that requires the language of both "change (*bian* 變)" and "persistence (*tong* 通)" to capture its dynamic disposition. This processional nature of experience is captured in the *Analects* 9.17: