

Foundations (8000 B.C.E. to 600 C.E.)

light taxes in cash and grain are levied in order to fill granaries and the treasury so that there will be food in times of starvation and sufficient funds for the army, they consider their ruler greedy. If it is required that within the borders everybody is familiar with warfare, that no one is exempted from military service, and that the state is united in strength in order to take all enemies captive, the people consider their ruler violent. These four types of measures would all serve to guarantee order and peace, yet the

people do not have the sense to welcome them. Therefore one has to seek for an enlightened [ruler] to enforce them.

(1) The beauty of these women is proverbially famous.

(2) Ancient Chinese statesmen famous for their wisdom.

Translated by Lydia Gerber

Confucius: *Analects* (5th C. BCE?)

*The sayings of Confucius were remembered by his followers and were later compiled in a book of *Analects* (sayings), perhaps having been expanded on in the meantime. Through them we discover Confucius' notions of the virtues, i.e., the positive character traits, to which we should aspire. Foremost among these is Filial Piety, the respect which children owe to parents--and by extension, wives owe to husbands, sisters to brothers, and everyone to ancestors. When such virtue is cultivated in the home, it is supposed to carry over into one's relations in affairs of state as well.*

How does Confucius formulate the equivalent of the Golden Rule ("do unto others as you would have them do unto you")? Is his a stronger injunction or a less demanding one?

On Filial Piety

Mang I asked what filial piety is. The Master said, "It is being obedient." Soon after, as Fan Chi was driving him, the Master told him "Mang asked me what filial piety is, and I answer him 'being obedient.'" Fan Chi asked, "What exactly did you mean?" The Master replied, "That parents, when alive, should be served according to ritual; that, when dead, they should be buried according to ritual; and that they should be sacrificed to according to ritual."

Ziyu asked what filial piety is. The Master said, "The filial piety of now-a-days means providing nourishment for one's parents. But dogs and horses likewise are able to do something along that line for their own kind. Without reverence, what is there to distinguish the one support given from the other?"

On Goodness

The Master said, "A youth, when at home, should behave well toward his parents, and when abroad, respectfully to his elders. He should be earnest and truthful. He should overflow in love to all, and cultivate the friendship of the good. When he has time and opportunity, after doing those things, he should study the polite arts."

The Master said, "With coarse rice to eat, with water to drink, and my bended arm for a pillow, I still have joy in the midst of these things. Riches and honours acquired by unrighteousness are to me as a floating cloud."

Zhonggong asked about perfect virtue. The Master said, "When abroad, behave to everyone as if you were receiving an important guest; treat people as if you were assisting at a great sacrifice; do not do to others as you would not wish done to yourself. Thereby you

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will let no murmuring rise against you in the country, and none in the family. . . ."

The Master said, "The determined scholar and the man of virtue will not seek to live at the expense of humanity. They will even sacrifice their lives to preserve their humanity."

Someone said, "What do you say concerning the principle that injury should be recompensed with kindness?" The Master said, "With what then will you recompense kindness? Recompense injury with justice, and recompense kindness with kindness."

Confucius took the notion of the gentleman, as one who owned land and had some political power, and reworked it into a moral notion which captures the essence of the good life. The graciousness and self-discipline which characterize such a gentleman are fostered by, and expressed in, ritual and music. But this also leads to many detailed guidelines about how to dress and how to perform the rituals. (The counterpart would be rules of etiquette in our society.)

Why is ritual supposed to be important? What happens to otherwise virtuous traits without such ritual?

On the Gentleman

The Master said, "Riches and honours are what men desire; but if they cannot be obtained in the proper way, they should be let go. Poverty and meanness are what men dislike; but if they cannot be avoided in the proper way, they should not be avoided. If a gentleman abandons virtue, how can he fulfill the requirements of his title? A gentleman not, even for the space of a single meal, act contrary to virtue. Even in moments of haste, and in times of danger, he clings to virtue."

The Master said, "A gentleman, well studied in literature, and abiding by the rules of ritual, will not go very wrong."

"When gentlemen perform well all their duties to their relations, the people are inspired to virtue. When they remain true to their old friends, the people are preserved from irresponsible behavior."

The Master said, "A gentleman points out the admirable qualities of men and does not point out their bad qualities. A petty man does just the opposite."

The Master said, "A gentleman is distressed by his lack of ability, but he is not distressed by men's not knowing him."

The Master said, "What the gentleman demands is something of himself. What the petty man demands is something of others."

A gentleman does not wear a deep purple or a puce color, nor in his at-home clothes does he wear red. In warm weather, he wears a single-layered garment, either of coarse or fine texture, but when going out he wears it over another garment. He wears lambskin with a garment of black, fawn with white, and fox with yellow. His fur dressing gown should be long, but with the right sleeve short. His night clothes must be half again as long as his body. When staying at home, he wears thick furs of the fox or the badger. So long as he is not in mourning, he wears all the trimmings of his girdle. . . . He does not wear lamb's fur or a black cap when making a visit of condolence. And on the first day of the month he must put on his court robes and present himself at court.

The Master said, "The progress of the superior man is upwards; the progress of the mean man is downwards."

Confucius said, "There are three things of which the superior man stand in awe. He stands in awe of the ordinances of Heaven. He stands in awe

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of great men. He stands in awe of the words of the sages. The mean man does not know the ordinances of Heaven, and consequently does not stand in awe of them. He is disrespectful to great men. He makes sport of the words of the sages."

The Master said, "The superior man is modest in his speech, but exceeds in his actions."

Education is, of course, important to Confucius, as one needs to learn the traditions and profit from the wisdom of the past. Government can then be carried on by "moral force," as opposed to requiring military or legal force. As to religion, Confucius does not challenge it, but he doesn't put his hope in it either. His stress is always on living well, which means living properly, here and now and by our own actions.

Which is more important for an orderly state: food, weapons, or a government that one can trust.

On Education

The Master said, "Anyone learning without thought is lost; anyone thinking but not learning is in peril."

The Master said, "Yu, shall I teach you what knowledge is? When you know a thing, to realize that you know it; and when you do not know a thing, to allow that you do not know it: this is knowledge." The Master said, [I have been] "a transmitter and not a maker, believing in and loving the ancients. . ."

When the Master went to Wei, Ran Yu acted as driver of his carriage. The Master observed, "How numerous the people are!" Ran Yu asked, "When they are more numerous, what more shall be done for them?" "Enrich them," was the reply. "And when they have been enriched, what more shall be done?" The Master said, "Instruct them."

On Government

The Master said, "To rule a country of a thousand chariots requires reverent attention to business, sincerity, economy in expenditures, and love for men, as well as the employment of the people only in the right seasons."

The Master said, "If the people are governed by laws and punishment is used to maintain order, they will try to avoid the punishment but have no sense of shame. If they are governed by virtue and rules of propriety [ritual] are used to maintain order, they will have a sense of shame and will become good as well."

Zigong asked about government. The Master said, "The requisites of government are that there be sufficient food, sufficient military equipment, and the confidence of the people in their ruler." Zigong said, "If one had to dispense with one of those three, which should be given up first?" "The military equipment," said the Master. Zigong again asked, "If one had to dispense with one of the two remaining, which should be given up?" The Master answered, "Give up the food. From of old, death has always been the lot of men; but if the people have no faith in their rulers, they cannot stand."

Chi K'ang-tzu asked Confucius about government, saying, "What do you say to killing unprincipled people for the sake of principled people?" Confucius replied, "Sir, in carrying on your government, why should you use killing at all? Let your evinced desires be for what is good, and the people will be good. The relation between superiors (*chün-tzu*) and inferiors is like that between the wind and the grass. The grass must bend, when the wind blows across it.

The Master said, "When a prince's personal conduct is correct, his government is effective without the issuing of orders. If his personal conduct is not correct, he may issue orders, but they will not be followed."

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Tzu-lu asked how a sovereign should be served. The Master said, "Do not impose on him, and, moreover, withstand him to his face.

The Master said, "The full observance of the rules of propriety in serving one's prince is accounted by people to be flattery.

What is called a great minister, is one who serves his prince according to what is right, and when he finds he cannot do so, retires.

Hsien asked what was shameful. The Master said, "When good government prevails in a state, to be thinking only of one's salary. When bad government prevails, to be thinking, in the same way, only of one's salary. That is what is shameful."

When a country is well governed, poverty and mean condition are things to be ashamed of. When a country is poorly governed, riches and honor are things to be ashamed of.

On Religion

Someone asked the meaning of the great sacrifice. The Master said, "I do not know. Anyone who knew its meaning would find it as easy to govern the kingdom as to look on this," and he pointed to the palm of his hand.

Zilu asked about serving the ghosts of the dead. The Master said, "Until you are able to serve men, how can you serve their ghosts?" When Zilu ventured to ask about death, the answer was: "While you do not know life, how can you [hope to] know about death?"

Lao Tzu: Tao te Ching

The Tao te Ching (literally, "the classic of the way of virtue") is attributed to Lao Tzu, though scholars disagree about his actual existence. In its very poetic form it teaches that there is a dynamic, cosmic structure underlying everything that happens in the world. We humans need to discover that Way (Tao), which is immanent in all aspects of the world, not a rule imposed from without; and we need to fit into it, letting things take their course, not exerting ourselves in opposition to it by trying to bend things to our will.

Our naming (describing) of things always falls short of the way things are, since things are not limited as our language presupposes. Even the Tao which we are trying to talk about here eludes our words. The original polarity is that of being and non-being, and it will be found to interplay throughout the world, with non-being (emptiness, what is not) having as much significance as does being (the fullness of things, what is). Thus the notion of the Tao recaptures the earlier Chinese concept of Yin and Yang, the polarities running through all things.

What price is paid when people come to know beauty and goodness? (i.e., what comes along with such knowledge?) Is that bad, according to Taoism?

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The Tao that can be spoken of is not the enduring and unchanging Tao. The name that can be named is not the enduring and unchanging name.

Having no name, it is the Originator of heaven and earth; having a name, it is the Mother of all things.

We should rid ourselves of desires if we wish to observe its subtlety; we should allow our