

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

to resist it; he conformed to the wisdom of the ancients; occupying the highest position, he displayed intelligence; occupying an inferior position, he displayed his loyalty; he allowed the good qualities of the men whom he employed and did not seek that they should have every talent....

"He extensively sought out wise men, who should be helpful to you, his descendant and heir. He laid down the punishments for officers, and warned those who were in authority, saying, 'If you dare to have constant dancing in your palaces, and drunken singing in your chambers, -- that is called the fashion of sorcerers; if you dare to see your hearts on wealth and women, and abandon yourselves to wandering about or to the chase, -- that is called the fashion of extravagance; if you dare to despise sage words, to resist the loyal and upright, to put far from you the aged and virtuous, and to seek the company of...youths, - that is called the fashion of disorder. Now if a high noble or officer be addicted to one of these three fashions with their ten evil ways, his family will surely come to ruin; if the prince of a country be so addicted, his state will surely come to ruin. The minister who does not try to correct such vices in the sovereign shall be punished with branding.' ...

"Oh! do you, who now succeed to the throne, revere these warnings in your person. Think of

them! -- sacred counsels of vast importance, admirable words forcibly set forth! The ways of Heaven are not invariable: -- on the good-doer it sends down all blessings, and on the evil-doer it sends down all miseries. Do you but be virtuous, be it in small things or in large, and the myriad regions will have cause for rejoicing. If you not be virtuous, be it in large things or in small, it will bring the ruin of your ancestral temple."

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. How does a monarch lose the Mandate of Heaven, and what are the consequences of this loss?
2. What evidence can you find here of the Chinese cult of reverence for the ancestors?
3. What evidence can you find to support the conclusion that classical Chinese political philosophy perceived the state as an extended family?
4. What sort of harmony does the monarch maintain?
5. Would Yi Yin accept the notion that there can be a distinction between ruler's private morality and public policies?
6. What does the theory of the Mandate of Heaven suggest about the nature of Chinese society?
7. American politicians often promise "innovative answers to the challenge of tomorrow." What would Yi Yin think about such an approach to statecraft? What would Yi Yin think about modern politicians who attempt to appear youthful? What would he think of popular opinion polls?

Han Fei-tzu (d. 233 BCE): Legalist Views on Good Government

The Confucian ideal of "government through virtue" and the tendency of Confucianists to seek guidance in the rule of former kings was strongly criticized by another school of thought: the Legalists or School of Law. According to the Legalists, neither the wisdom of ancient kings nor an ethical code would make a state strong. Instead "good" and "bad" were defined by whatever the self-interest of the ruler demanded. A system of harsh punishments and rewards, regulated through laws and enforced without exceptions, should guarantee good behavior within the state. The Legalists considered military service and agriculture as the only occupations beneficial to the welfare of the state and discouraged all scholarship.

The state of Qin in Western China was the first to adopt Legalist doctrines. The Qin were so successful that by 221 BCE they had conquered the other Chinese states and unified the empire after centuries of war. The following paragraph was taken from Han Fei-tzu, The "[book of] Master Han Fei," chapter 50.

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Han Fei-tzu had studied under the Confucian scholar Hsun-tzu and became the major theorist of the Legalist school. Confucian scholars vigorously denounced his teachings in all subsequent generations; yet his harsh pragmatism, often compared to that of Machiavelli and Kautilya, more accurately explains the actions of many rulers than does the idealistic Confucian model.

What attitude does Han Fei express toward the common people? What kinds of stern measures does he suggest should be enacted for their own good?

When a sage governs a state, he does not rely on the people to do good out of their own will. Instead, he sees to it that they are not allowed to do what is not good. If he relies on people to do good out of their own will, within the borders of the state not even ten persons can be counted on [to do good]. Yet, if one sees to it that they are not allowed to do what is not good, the whole state can be brought to uniform order. Whoever rules should consider the majority and set the few aside: He should not devote his attention to virtue, but to law.

If it were necessary to rely on a shaft that had grown perfectly straight, within a hundred generations there would be no arrow. If it were necessary to rely on wood that had grown perfectly round, within a thousand generations there would be no cart wheel. If a naturally straight shaft or naturally round wood cannot be found within a hundred generations, how is it that in all generations carriages are used and birds shot? Because tools are used to straighten and bend. But even if one did not rely on tools and still got a naturally straight shaft or a piece of naturally round wood, a skillful craftsman would not value this. Why? Because it is not just one person that needs to ride and not just one arrow that needs to be shot. Even if without relying on rewards and punishments there would be someone doing good out of his own will, an enlightened ruler would not value this. Why? Because a state's law must not be neglected, and not just one person needs to be governed. Therefore, the skilled ruler does not go after such unpredictable goodness, but walks the path of certain success. . . .

Praising the beauty of Ma Ch'iang or Hsi shih (1) does not improve your own face. But using oil to moisten it, and powder and paint will make it twice as attractive.

Praising the benevolence and righteousness of former kings does not improve your own rule. But making laws and regulations clear and rewards and punishments certain, is like applying oil, powder and paint to a state.

An enlightened ruler holds up facts and discards all that is without practical value. Therefore he does not pursue righteousness and benevolence, and he does not listen to the words of scholars. These days, whoever does not understand how to govern will invariably say: "Win the hearts of the people." If winning the hearts of the people is all that one needs in order to govern, a Yi Yin or a Kuan Chung (2) would be useless. Listening to the people would be enough. But the wisdom of the people is useless: They have the minds of little infants! If an infant's head is not shaved, its sores will spread, and if its boil is not opened, it will become sicker. Yet while its head is being shaved and its boil opened, one person has to hold it tight so that the caring mother can perform the operation, and it screams and wails without end. Infants and children don't understand that the small pain they have to suffer now will bring great benefit later.

Likewise, if the people are forced to till their land and open pastures in order to increase their future supplies, they consider their ruler harsh. If the penal code is being revised and punishments are made heavier in order to wipe out evil deeds, they consider their ruler stern. If

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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."

Ziyou 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