

READINGS
IN
CLASSICAL
CHINESE
PHILOSOPHY

Third Edition

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CHAPTER ONE

KONGZI (CONFUCIUS)

Analects

Introduction

The *Analects* (*Lúnyǔ* 論語—literally, the “Classified Teachings”) purports to be a record of the teachings of Kǒngzǐ 孔子 or “Confucius” (551–479 BCE) and his disciples.¹ Kongzi believed that the Golden Age of humankind had been realized during the height of the Zhou dynasty, from ca. 1045 to 771 BCE (the so-called Western Zhou period).² Typified by the cultural heroes King Wen (d. ca. 1050 BCE), his son King Wu (r. 1045–1043), and the virtuous regent, the Duke of Zhou (r. ca. 1042–1036 BCE), the early Zhou rulers established and maintained a special relationship with Tiān 天, “Heaven,” by properly and sincerely observing a set of sacred practices collectively referred to as the lǐ 禮, “rites” or “rituals.” The scope of the rites was quite vast, including everything from grand state ceremonies to the proper way to sit or fasten one’s lapel—details that we might think of today as issues of etiquette. In return for such formal obedience to Heaven in all matters great and small, the Zhou royal line was rewarded

1. Some scholars have questioned the traditional view of the text as a unified work, arguing that it represents many different chronological strata and even incompatible viewpoints. The Chinese have nevertheless read it as a coherent whole for thousands of years, and this is the perspective on the text that we adopt here. This said, the reader will note that our selection gives greater weight to those portions of the text generally agreed to be earlier and most authoritative, books 1–9.

2. On the uncertainty of dates in the Western Zhou dynasty, see note 6 in the Introduction to this volume. Dates here follow Edward L. Shaughnessy, “Western Zhou History,” in *The Cambridge History of Ancient China: From the Origins of Civilization to 221 B.C.*, eds. Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 292–351.

with a *Ming* 命, “Mandate,”³ to rule China, manifested in the form of a charismatic *Dé* 德, “Virtue,” or power.⁴

By Kongzi’s time, the Zhou kings had been reduced to mere figure-heads, and real political power was in the hands of various local rulers. In Kongzi’s eyes, the “scholars” of his day—those who should properly have been motivated by a love for learning and a devotion to the culture of the Zhou—were interested only in self-aggrandizement and sensuous pleasures, and the people, who were thereby bereft of moral leadership and had grown unruly, could only be controlled through strict laws and harsh punishments. But despite the bleakness of this world, Kongzi believed that there was still hope for humanity, because the traditional Zhou ritual forms and written classics—which had been carefully preserved by a small group of cultural specialists, the *Rú* 儒, “Erudites” or “Confucians”⁵—could serve as a sort of blueprint for rebuilding the lost Golden Age. Kongzi thus dedicated his life to both transmitting these cultural forms to his contemporaries and striving to embody them in his own person, hoping in this way to lead his fallen world back to the *Dào* 道, “Way,” of Heaven.

Kongzi’s Way, which involves lifelong and sincere devotion to traditional cultural forms, eventually culminates in a kind of intuitive mastery of those forms, and one who has attained this state of consummate mastery—the *jūnzǐ* 君子, “gentleman”—is said to possess the supreme virtue of *Rén* 仁, “Goodness.” Originally referring to the strong and handsome appearance of a noble warrior, *Ren* designates for Kongzi the quality of the perfectly realized person—one who has so completely mastered the Way that it has become a sort of second nature.⁶ Such a state of spiritual perfection is referred to as *wúwéi* 無為, “effortless action” or “nonaction”:

3. By the time of the *Analects*, the term *ming* had taken on the additional meaning of “fate” or “destiny,” but was thought to be similarly decreed by Heaven. For a discussion of this term, see Edward Slingerland, “The Conception of *Ming* in Early Chinese Thought,” *Philosophy East & West* 46, no. 4 (1996): 567–81.

4. On the Confucian understanding of “Virtue” (*Dé* 德) see David S. Nivison, “The Paradox of ‘Virtue,’” in *The Ways of Confucianism: Investigations in Chinese Philosophy*, ed. Bryan W. Van Norden (Chicago, IL: Open Court Press, 1996), 31–43.

5. For *ru*, see *Important Terms* in the appendices and *Analects* 6.13 for Kongzi’s criticism of the “petty *Ru*.”

6. Part of Goodness is caring for or love of others (*Analects* 12.22). Later philosophers emphasized this aspect of Goodness, so in later chapters the same character is translated “benevolence.” See also *Ren* under *Important Terms* in the appendices.

a state of spontaneous harmony between individual inclinations and the sacred Way of Heaven.⁷ Through the power of Virtue accruing to one so perfectly in harmony with Heaven, this state of individual perfection will lead to the spontaneous and effortless ordering of the entire world. There will be no need for raising armies, instituting laws, or issuing governmental decrees, for the entire world will be as inexorably drawn to a ruler with true Virtue as the heavenly bodies are bound to their proper circuits in the sky (cf. *Analects* 2.1).



Book One

1.1 The Master said, “To learn, and then have occasion to practice what you have learned—is this not satisfying? To have friends arrive from afar—is this not a joy? To be patient even when others do not understand—is this not the mark of the gentleman?”

1.2 Master You⁸ said, “A young person who is filial and respectful of his elders rarely becomes the kind of person who is inclined to defy his superiors, and there has never been a case of one who is disinclined to defy his superiors stirring up rebellion.

“The gentleman applies himself to the roots. ‘Once the roots are firmly established, the Way will grow.’ Might we not say that filial piety and respect for elders constitute the roots of Goodness?”

1.3 The Master said, “A clever tongue and fine appearance are rarely signs of Goodness.”⁹

7. Although the term “nonaction” is often associated with Daoism, it is found in the *Analects* (15.5) and is arguably an important concept for many early thinkers. See Edward Slingerland, *Effortless Action: Wu-wei as Conceptual Metaphor and Spiritual Ideal in Early China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

8. A disciple of Kongzi.

9. Cf. 15.11 and 16.4 below. A suspicion of those who are overly glib or outwardly pleasing is a common theme in the *Analects*, which is very much concerned with distinguishing genuine virtue from “counterfeit virtue”—that is, the outward appearance of virtue without the inner substance.

1.4 Master Zeng¹⁰ said, “Every day I examine myself on three counts: in my dealings with others, have I in any way failed to be dutiful? In my interactions with friends and associates, have I in any way failed to be trustworthy? Finally, have I in any way failed to put into practice what I teach?”

1.6 The Master said, “A young person should be filial when at home and respectful of his elders when in public. Conscientious and trustworthy, he should display a general care for the masses but feel a particular affection for those who are Good. If he has any strength left over after manifesting these virtues in practice, let him then devote it to learning the cultural arts.”

1.9 Master Zeng said, “Take great care in seeing off the deceased and sedulously maintain the sacrifices to your distant ancestors, and the common people will sincerely return to Virtue.”

1.10 Ziqin asked Zigong,¹¹ “When our Master arrives in a state, he invariably finds out about its government. Does he actively seek out this information? Surely it is not simply offered to him!”

Zigong answered, “Our Master obtains it through being courteous, refined, respectful, restrained, and deferential. The Master’s way of seeking it is entirely different from other people’s way of seeking it, is it not?”¹²

1.11 The Master said, “When someone’s father is still alive, observe his intentions; after his father has passed away, observe his conduct. If for three years he does not alter the ways of his father, he may be called a filial son.”

1.12 Master You said, “When it comes to the practice of ritual, it is harmonious ease that is to be valued. It is precisely such harmony that makes the Way of the Former Kings so beautiful. If you merely stick rigidly to ritual in all matters, great and small, there will remain that which you cannot accomplish. Yet if you know enough to value harmonious ease but try to attain it without being regulated by the rites, this will not work either.”

10. A disciple of Kongzi.

11. Both disciples of Kongzi.

12. That is, Kongzi does not actively pry or seek out information but rather is so perfected in Virtue that what he seeks comes to him unbidden.

1.15 Zigong said, “Poor without being obsequious, rich without being arrogant—what would you say about someone like that?”

The Master answered, “That is acceptable, but it is still not as good as being poor and yet joyful, rich and yet loving ritual.”

Zigong said, “An ode says,

‘As if cut, as if polished;

As if carved, as if ground.’

“Is this not what you have in mind?”¹³

The Master said, “Zigong, you are precisely the kind of person with whom one can begin to discuss the *Odes*. Informed as to what has gone before, you know what is to come.”

Book Two

2.1 The Master said, “One who rules through the power of Virtue is analogous to the Pole Star: it simply remains in its place and receives the homage of the myriad lesser stars.”¹⁴

2.2 The Master said, “The *Odes* number several hundred, and yet can be judged with a single phrase: ‘Oh, they will not lead you astray.’”¹⁵

2.3 The Master said, “If you try to guide the common people with coercive regulations and keep them in line with punishments, the common people will become evasive and will have no sense of shame. If, however, you guide them with Virtue, and keep them in line by means of ritual, the people will have a sense of shame and will rectify themselves.”

13. *Odes* (Mao # 55) (see *Odes* under *Important Texts* in the appendices). Zigong’s point is that this ode seems to describe metaphorically a person who has been shaped and perfected by a long, arduous process of self-cultivation.

14. On the Confucian understanding of “Virtue” (Dé 德) see David S. Nivison, “The Paradox of ‘Virtue,’” in *The Ways of Confucianism: Investigations in Chinese Philosophy*, ed. Bryan W. Van Norden (Chicago, IL: Open Court Press, 1996), 31–43. See also the online Title Support Page for this volume at www.hackettpublishing.com/rccp-support for an image of the apparent motion of the fixed stars around the Pole Star.

15. *Odes* (Mao # 297). The original reference is to powerful war horses bred to pull chariots, who are trained not to swerve from the desired path. The metaphorical meaning is that one committed through study to the *Odes*—“yoked” to them, as it were—will not be led astray.

2.4 The Master said, “At fifteen I set my mind upon learning; at thirty I took my place in society;¹⁶ at forty I became free of doubts;¹⁷ at fifty I understood Heaven’s Mandate;¹⁸ at sixty my ear was attuned; and at seventy I could follow my heart’s desires without overstepping the bounds of propriety.”

2.7 Ziyou¹⁹ asked about filial piety. The Master said, “Nowadays ‘filial’ means simply being able to provide one’s parents with nourishment. But even dogs and horses are provided with nourishment. If you are not respectful, wherein lies the difference?”

2.8 Zixia²⁰ asked about filial piety. The Master said, “It is the demeanor that is difficult. If there is work to be done, young people shoulder the burden, and when wine and food are served, elders are given precedence, but surely filial piety consists of more than this.”

2.9 The Master said, “I can talk all day long with Yan Hui²¹ without him once disagreeing with me. In this way, he seems a bit stupid. And yet when we retire and I observe his private behavior, I see that it is in fact worthy to serve as an illustration of what I have taught. Hui is not stupid at all.”

2.10 The Master said, “Look at the means a man employs, observe the basis from which he acts, and discover where it is that he feels at ease.²² Where can he hide? Where can he hide?”

2.11 The Master said, “Both keeping past teachings alive and understanding the present—someone able to do this is worthy of being a teacher.”

2.12 The Master said, “The gentleman is not a vessel.”²³

16. That is, through mastery of the rites; cf. *Analects* 8.8, 16.13, and 20.3.

17. Cf. *Analects* 9.29.

18. Cf. *Analects* 16.8, 20.3.

19. A disciple of Kongzi.

20. A disciple of Kongzi.

21. Kongzi’s favorite disciple, who died, tragically, at an early age (cf. *Analects* 5.9, 6.3, 6.7, 6.11, and 11.9).

22. Cf. *Analects* 4.2.

23. Qi 器, literally a ritual vessel designed to serve a particular function, is also used by extension to refer to officials who are specialized in one particular task. The gentleman is not a narrow specialist (cf. *Analects* 5.4, 6.13, 9.2, 9.6, 13.4, and 19.7).

2.15 The Master said, “If you learn without thinking about what you have learned, you will be lost. If you think without learning, however, you will fall into danger.”

2.17 The Master said, “Zilu,²⁴ remark well what I am about to teach you! This is wisdom: to recognize what you know as what you know, and recognize what you do not know as what you do not know.”

2.19 Duke Ai asked, “What can I do to induce the common people to be obedient?”

Kongzi replied, “Raise up the straight and apply them to the crooked, and the people will submit to you. If you raise up the crooked and apply them to the straight, the people will never submit.”

2.21 Some people said of Kongzi, “Why is it that he is not participating in government?”²⁵

[Upon being informed of this,] the Master remarked, “The *History* says,

‘Filial, oh so filial,

Friendly to one’s elders and juniors;

[In this way] exerting an influence upon those who govern.’²⁶

Thus, in being a filial son and good brother one is already taking part in government. What need is there, then, to speak of ‘participating in government?’”

Book Three

3.1 Kongzi said of the Ji Family, “They have eight rows of dancers performing in their courtyard. If they can condone this, what are they *not* capable of?”²⁷

3.3 The Master said, “A man who is not Good—what has he to do with ritual? A man who is not Good—what has he to do with music?”²⁸

24. A disciple of Kongzi.

25. Lit., “doing government” (wéizhèng 為政). The reference is to Kongzi’s lack of an official position.

26. See James Legge, trans., *The Shoo King*, vol. 3 of *The Chinese Classics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1871; Taipei: SMC Publishing 1991), 535.

27. The Ji Family had usurped power from the rightful authorities in Kongzi’s home state of Lǔ 魯 and was for Kongzi representative of the ritual, moral, and political improprieties of his age. Later ritual texts describe the “eight rows of dancers” as a ritual prerogative of the emperor; presumably in Kongzi’s time it was viewed as the prerogative of the Zhou kings. In either case, the Ji Family’s use of eight rows of dancers is obviously an egregious violation of ritual propriety.

28. Cf. *Analects* 3.12 and 17.11. *Analects* 3.3 is probably also directed at the head of the Ji Family criticized in 3.1.

3.4 Lin Fang²⁹ asked about the roots of ritual.

The Master exclaimed, “What a noble question! When it comes to ritual, it is better to be spare than extravagant. When it comes to mourning, it is better to be excessively sorrowful than fastidious.”

3.8 Zixia asked, “[The *Odes* say,]

‘Her artful smile, with its alluring dimples,
Her beautiful eyes, so clear,
The unadorned upon which to paint.’³⁰

“What does this mean?”

The Master said, “The application of colors comes only after a suitable unadorned background is present.”

Zixia said, “So it is the rites that come after?”³¹

The Master said, “It is you, Zixia, who has awakened me to the meaning of these lines! It is only with someone like you that I can begin to discuss the *Odes*.”

3.11 Someone asked for an explanation of the *di* sacrifice.³² The Master said, “I do not understand it. One who understood it could handle the world as if he had it right here,” and he pointed to the palm of his hand.

3.12 “Sacrifice as if [they were] present” means that, when sacrificing to the spirits, you should comport yourself as if the spirits were present.

The Master said, “If I am not fully present at the sacrifice, it is as if I did not sacrifice at all.”³³

29. Lin Fang is usually identified as a man of Lu and presumably shares Kongzi’s concern that his fellow countrymen were neglecting the “roots” and attending to the superficial “branches” of ritual practice.

30. The first two lines appear in the present version of the *Odes* (*Mao* # 57), while the third does not.

31. That is, the adornment provided by the rites is meant to build upon appropriate native emotions or tendencies. Just as all the cosmetics in the world are of no avail if the basic lines of the face are not pleasing, so too is the refinement provided by ritual practice of no help to one lacking in *zhi* 質, “native substance.” Cf. *Analects* 3.4, 5.10, and 6.18.

32. An important sacrifice to the earliest known ancestor of the reigning dynasty, the performance of which was the prerogative of the presiding ruler. By Kongzi’s time, the performance of this rite had degenerated to the point that he could no longer bear to look upon it.

33. Although some commentators take “not fully present” in the literal sense (i.e., not being physically present at the sacrifice, and sending a proxy in one’s stead), the preceding comment would suggest that what is at issue is psychological or spiritual presence.

3.14 The Master said, “The Zhou gazes down upon the two dynasties that preceded it.³⁴ How brilliant in culture it is! I follow the Zhou.”

3.17 Zigong wanted to do away with the practice of sacrificing a lamb to announce the beginning of the month.³⁵

The Master said, “Zigong! You regret the loss of the lamb, whereas I regret the loss of the rite.”

3.18 The Master said, “If in serving your lord you are careful to observe every detail of ritual propriety, people will [wrongly] think you obsequious.”³⁶

3.19 Duke Ding asked, “How should a lord employ his ministers? How should a minister serve his lord?”

Kongzi replied, “A lord should employ his ministers with ritual, and ministers should serve their lord with dutifulness.”

3.20 That Master said, “The ‘Cry of the Ospreys’³⁷ expresses joy without becoming licentious, and expresses sorrow without falling into excessive pathos.”

3.23 The Master was discussing music with the Grand Music Master of Lu. He said, “What can be known about music is this: when it first begins, it resounds with a confusing variety of notes, but as it unfolds, these notes are reconciled by means of harmony, brought into tension by means of counterpoint, and finally woven together into a seamless whole. It is in this way that music reaches its perfection.”³⁸

3.24 A border official from the town of Yi requested an audience with the Master, saying, “I have never failed to obtain an audience with the gentlemen who have passed this way.” Kongzi’s followers thereupon presented him.

34. That is, the Xia and Shang dynasties.

35. Apparently, this sacrifice had originally been part of a larger ritual to welcome the new moon. By Kongzi’s time the ritual itself had fallen into disuse in Lu, whereas the sacrifice—being the responsibility of a particular government office—had survived. Zigong does not see the point of continuing this vestigial, materially wasteful practice in the absence of its original ritual context.

36. Ritual practice had so degenerated by Kongzi’s age that a proper ritual practitioner was viewed with suspicion or disdain.

37. The first of the *Odes*, and sometimes used to refer to the *Odes* as a whole.

38. Music thus serves as a model or metaphor for the process of self-cultivation: starting in confusion, passing through many phases, and culminating in a state of perfection.

After emerging from the audience, the border official remarked, “You disciples, why should you be concerned about your Master’s loss of office? The world has been without the Way for a long time now, and Heaven intends to use your Master like the wooden clapper for a bell.”³⁹

Book Four

4.1 The Master said, “To live in the neighborhood of the Good is fine. If one does not choose to dwell among those who are Good, how will one obtain wisdom?”⁴⁰

4.2 The Master said, “Without Goodness, one cannot remain constant in adversity and cannot enjoy enduring happiness.

“Those who are Good feel at home in Goodness, whereas those who are wise follow Goodness because they feel that they will profit from it.”

4.3 The Master said, “Only one who is Good is able to truly love others or despise others.”

4.4 The Master said, “Merely set your heart sincerely upon Goodness and you will be free of bad intentions.”

4.5 The Master said, “Wealth and social eminence are things that all people desire, and yet unless they are acquired in the proper Way I will not abide them. Poverty and disgrace are things that all people hate, and yet unless they are avoided in the proper Way I will not despise them.

“If the gentleman abandons Goodness, how can he merit the name? The gentleman does not go against Goodness even for the amount of time required to finish a meal. Even in times of urgency or distress, he necessarily accords with it.”

4.6 The Master said, “I have yet to meet a person who truly loved Goodness or hated a lack of Goodness. One who truly loved Goodness could not be surpassed, while one who truly hated a lack of Goodness would at least be able to act in a

39. That is, to wake up the fallen world. Some commentators believe that the bell referred to is the kind used by itinerant collectors and transmitters of folk songs, and that the border official’s point is thus that Heaven has deliberately caused Kongzi to lose his official position so that he might wander throughout the realm, spreading the teachings of the Way.

40. Other translators would give the sense as, “With regard to neighborhoods, it is the presence of those who are Good that makes them desirable. How could someone who does not choose to dwell in Goodness be considered wise?”

Good fashion, insofar as he would not tolerate that which is not Good being associated with his person.

“Is there a person who can, for the space of a single day, simply devote his efforts to Goodness? I have never met anyone whose strength was insufficient for this task. Perhaps such a person exists, but I have yet to meet him.”

4.7 The Master said, “People are true to type with regard to what sort of mistakes they make. Observe closely the sort of mistakes a person makes—then you will know his character.”

4.8 The Master said, “Having in the morning heard the Way [was being put into practice], one could die that evening without regret.”

4.9 The Master said, “A scholar who has set his heart upon the Way but who is still ashamed of having shabby clothing or meager rations is not worth engaging in discussion.”

4.10 The Master said, “With regard to the world, the gentleman has no predispositions for or against [any person]. He merely seeks to be on the side of [those he considers] right.”

4.12 The Master said, “If in your affairs you abandon yourself to the pursuit of profit, you will arouse much resentment.”

4.13 The Master said, “If a person is able to govern the state by means of ritual propriety and deference, what difficulties will he encounter? If, on the other hand, a person is not able to govern the state through ritual propriety and deference, of what use are the rites to him?”

4.14 The Master said, “Do not be concerned that you lack an official position, but rather concern yourself with the means by which you might become established. Do not be concerned that no one has heard of you, but rather strive to become a person worthy of being known.”

4.15 The Master said, “Zeng! All that I teach can be strung together on a single thread.”⁴¹

“Yes, sir,” Master Zeng responded.

41. The word rendered here as “teach” (Dào 道) also means “the Way,” and a double entendre is almost certainly intended: “all that I teach” is also “my Way.”

After the Master left, the disciples asked, “What did he mean by that?”

Master Zeng said, “All that the Master teaches amounts to nothing more than dutifulness [zhōng 忠] tempered by sympathetic understanding [shù 恕].”⁴²

4.16 The Master said, “The gentleman understands rightness, whereas the petty person understands profit.”

4.17 The Master said, “When you see someone who is worthy, concentrate upon becoming their equal; when you see someone who is unworthy, use this as an opportunity to look within yourself.”

4.18 The Master said, “In serving your parents you may gently remonstrate with them. However, once it becomes apparent that they have not taken your criticism to heart you should be respectful and not oppose them, and follow their lead diligently without resentment.”

4.19 The Master said, “While your parents are alive, you should not travel far, and when you do travel you must keep to a fixed itinerary.”

4.20 The Master said, “One who makes no changes to the Ways of his father for three years⁴³ after his father has passed away may be called a filial son.”

4.21 The Master said, “You must always be aware of the age of your parents. On the one hand, it is a cause for rejoicing, on the other a source of anxiety.”

4.22 The Master said, “People in ancient times were not eager to speak, because they would be ashamed if their actions did not measure up to their words.”

4.23 The Master said, “Very few go astray who comport themselves with restraint.”

42. To be *zhong*, “loyal” or “dutiful,” involves fulfilling the duties and obligations proper to one’s ritually defined role (see *Analects* 5.19 below for a description of someone deemed *zhong* by Kongzi). This virtue is to be tempered by the virtue of *shu*, “sympathetic understanding”: the ability, by means of imaginatively putting oneself in the place of another, to know when it is appropriate or *yì* 義, “right,” to bend or suspend the dictates of role-specific duty. (This interpretation is developed in Philip J. Ivanhoe, “The ‘Golden Rule’ in the *Analects*,” in *Confucius Now: Contemporary Encounters with Confucius*, ed. David Jones [Open Court Press, 2008], 81–107.) Cf. *Analects* 5.12, 6.30, 12.2, 15.3, and 15.24; *Mean* 13 (in chapter 11 of this volume).

43. The length of the mourning period for parents, equivalent to twenty-five months by Western reckoning. Cf. *Analects* 17.21 and note 157 to that passage.

4.24 The Master said, “The gentleman wishes to be slow to speak, but quick to act.”

4.25 The Master said, “Virtue is never solitary; it always has neighbors.”⁴⁴

Book Five

5.1 The Master said of Gongye Chang, “He is marriageable. Although he was once imprisoned as a criminal, he was in fact innocent of any crime.” The Master gave him his daughter in marriage.⁴⁵

5.4 Zigong asked, “What do you think of me?”

The Master replied, “You are a vessel.”

“What sort of vessel?”

“A precious ritual vessel.”⁴⁶

5.8 Meng Wubo⁴⁷ asked, “Is Zilu Good?”

The Master replied, “I do not know.”

Meng Wubo repeated his question.

The Master said, “In a state of one thousand chariots, Zilu could be employed to organize the collection of military taxes, but I do not know whether or not he is Good.”

“What about Ran Qiu?”

“In a town of one thousand households, or an aristocratic family of one hundred chariots, Ran Qiu could be employed as a steward, but I do not know whether or not he is Good.”

“What about Zihua?”

“Standing in his proper place at court with his sash tied, Zihua could be employed to converse with guests and visitors, but I do not know whether or not he is Good.”

44. The reference is to the attractive power of Virtue.

45. The social stigma attached to former criminals in early China was enormous and inescapable, since criminals were prominently branded or tattooed. In giving his daughter in marriage to a former criminal, Kongzi is flouting conventional mores and making a powerful statement concerning the independence of true morality from conventional social judgments.

46. Cf. *Analects* 2.12 and see the note to that passage.

47. The son of a minister of Lu, who also appears in *Analects* 2.6 (not in this volume). The three figures he asks about—Zilu, Ran Qiu, and Zihua—are all disciples of Kongzi.

5.9 The Master said to Zigong, “Who is better, you or Yan Hui?”

Zigong answered, “How dare I even think of comparing myself to Hui? Hui learns one thing and thereby understands ten. I learn one thing and thereby understand two.”

The Master said, “No, you are not as good as Hui. Neither of us is as good as Hui.”

5.10 Zai Wo was sleeping during the daytime. The Master said, “Rotten wood cannot be carved, and a wall of dung cannot be plastered. As for Zai Wo, what would be the use of reprimanding him?”⁴⁸

The Master added, “At first, when evaluating people, I would listen to their words and then simply trust that the corresponding conduct would follow. Now, when I evaluate people, I listen to their words but then closely observe their conduct. It is my experience with Zai Wo that has brought about this change.”

5.12 Zigong said, “What I do not wish others to do unto me, I also wish not to do unto others.”

The Master said, “Ah, Zigong! That is something quite beyond you.”⁴⁹

5.13 Zigong said, “The Master’s cultural brilliance is something that is readily heard about, whereas one does not get to hear the Master expounding upon the subjects of human nature or the Way of Heaven.”⁵⁰

48. That is, Zai Wo, a disciple of Kongzi, obviously lacks the zhì 質, “native substance” (see *Analects* 6.18), that serves as the background upon which the “color” of Confucian self-cultivation is to be applied (see *Analects* 3.8).

49. Zigong’s aspiration—what has been referred to as the “negative Golden Rule”—is a formulation of the virtue of *shu*, “sympathetic understanding”: the ability to temper the strict dictates of loyalty to one’s *zhong*, “duty,” by imaginatively placing oneself in another’s place. (See *Analects* 4.15 on these concepts.) Zigong’s aspiration to the virtue of *shu* is particularly amusing to Kongzi because Zigong is the most unimaginative and rigid of all the disciples. In *Analects* 5.4, for instance, his fastidious adherence to the rites leads Kongzi to dub him a “ritual vessel” of limited capacity, and in *Analects* 14.29 he is criticized by Kongzi for being too strict and judgmental with others (i.e., for not moderating his duty-defined demands upon others with understanding). Zigong thus functions in the *Analects* as an excellent example of how the virtue of loyalty goes awry when not tempered with sympathetic understanding, and this is perhaps why Kongzi singles out Zigong in *Analects* 15.24 for his message that “sympathetic understanding” is the one teaching that can serve as a lifelong guide.

50. That is, in his teachings Kongzi did not concern himself much with such theoretical, esoteric subjects as human nature or the Way of Heaven, but rather tried to focus his disciples’ attention upon the task at hand, acquiring the cultural refinement necessary to become gentlemen. For a discussion of other interpretations of this passage and how it relates to *Analects* 17.2 (later in this chapter), see Philip J. Ivanhoe, “Whose Confucius? Which *Analects*?” in *Confucius and the “Analecets”*: *New Essays*, ed. Bryan W. Van Norden (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 119–33.

5.19 Zizhang⁵¹ said, “Prime Minister Ziwen⁵² was given three times the post of prime minister, and yet he never showed a sign of pleasure; he was removed from this office three times and yet never showed a sign of resentment. When the incoming prime minister took over, he invariably provided him with a complete account of the official state of affairs. What do you make of Prime Minister Ziwen?”

The Master said, “He certainly was dutiful.”

“Was he not Good?”

“I do not know about that—what makes you think he deserves to be called Good?”

“When Cuizi assassinated the Lord of Qi, Chen Wenzi—whose estate amounted to ten teams of horses—abandoned all that he possessed and left the state.⁵³ Upon reaching another state, he said, ‘The officials here are as bad as our Great Officer Cuizi,’ and thereupon left that state. Again, after going to another state, he said, ‘The officials here are as bad as our Great Officer Cuizi,’ and thereupon left that state as well. What do you make of Chen Wenzi?”

The Master said, “He certainly was pure.”

“Was he not Good?”

“I do not know about that—what makes you think he deserves to be called Good?”

5.22 When the Master was in the state of Chen, he sighed, “Oh, let us go home! Let us go home! Our young followers back in Lu are wild and ambitious—they put on a great show of brilliant culture, but they lack the means to prune and shape it.”⁵⁴

5.26 Yan Hui and Zilu were in attendance. The Master said to them, “Why do you not each speak to me of your aspirations?”

Zilu answered, “I would like to be able to share my carts and horses, clothing and fur with my friends and associates, without feeling regret.”

Yan Hui answered, “I would like to avoid being boastful about my own abilities or exaggerating my accomplishments.”

Zilu then said, “I would like to hear of the Master’s aspirations.”

The Master said, “To bring comfort to the aged, to inspire trust in my friends, and be cherished by the youth.”⁵⁵

51. A disciple of Kongzi.

52. A prime minister of the state of Chu who was renowned for his integrity and devotion to the state.

53. Cuizi and Chen Wenzi were both officials in the state of Qi. The former is said to have assassinated Lord Zhuang of Qi in 548 BCE.

54. Cf. *Mengzi* 7B37 (in chapter 4 of this volume).

55. Cf. the more elaborate version of a similar conversation in *Analects* 11.26.

5.27 The Master said, “I should just give up! I have yet to meet someone who is able to perceive his own faults and then take himself to task inwardly.”

5.28 The Master said, “In any village of ten households there are surely those who are as dutiful or trustworthy as I am, but there is no one who matches my love for learning.”

Book Six

6.3 Duke Ai⁵⁶ asked, “Who among your disciples might be said to love learning?”

Kongzi answered, “There was one named Yan Hui who loved learning. He never misdirected his anger, and never made the same mistake twice. Unfortunately, his allotted lifespan was short, and he has passed away. Now that he is gone, there are none who really love learning—at least, I have yet to hear of one.”

6.5 When Yuan Si was serving as steward, he was offered a salary of nine hundred measures of millet, but he declined it.

The Master said, “Do not decline it! [If you do not need it yourself], could you not use it to aid the households in your neighborhood?”⁵⁷

6.7 The Master said, “Ah, Yan Hui! For three months at a time his heart did not stray from Goodness. The rest could only sporadically maintain such a state.”

6.10 Boniu⁵⁸ fell ill, and the Master went to ask after his health. Grasping his hand through the window, the Master sighed, “That we are going to lose him must be due to fate! How else could such a man be afflicted with such an illness, and we left with nothing we can do?⁵⁹ How else could such a man be afflicted with such an illness?”

56. Duke Ai (r. 494–468 BCE) was the nominal ruler of Lu, which was in fact controlled by the Ji Family.

57. In light of the many injunctions against seeking office for the sake of material benefit that are found in Kongzi’s teachings, the disciple Yuan Si no doubt expected to be praised by the Master for declining to be paid a salary. Kongzi’s response reflects the fact that the proper course of action cannot be determined by a simple formula but should rather be the result of careful reflection and consideration of the needs of others. The Master may also have detected a note of spiritual pride in Yuan Si’s grandiose gesture and seen the need to deflate his feeling of self-importance.

58. A disciple of Kongzi.

59. The latter half of the sentence is not present in the received text of the *Analects* but is present in the Dingzhou version, and it is also part of the *Records of the Historian* version of this story.

6.11 The Master said, “What a worthy man was Yan Hui! Living in a narrow alley, subsisting upon a basket of grain and gourd full of water—other people could not have borne such hardship, yet it never spoiled Hui’s joy. What a worthy man was Hui!”

6.12 Ran Qiu said, “It is not that I do not delight in your Way, Master, it is simply that my strength is insufficient.”

The Master said, “Someone whose strength is genuinely insufficient collapses somewhere along the Way. As for you, you deliberately draw the line.”⁶⁰

6.13 The Master said to Zixia, “Be a gentlemanly *Ru*. Do not be a petty *Ru*.”⁶¹

6.17 The Master said, “Who is able to leave a room without going out through the door? How is it, then, that no one follows this Way?”

6.18 The Master said, “When native substance overwhelms cultural refinement, the result is a crude rustic. When cultural refinement overwhelms native substance, the result is a foppish pedant. Only when culture and native substance are perfectly mixed and balanced do you have a gentleman.”

6.20 The Master said, “One who knows it is not the equal of one who loves it, and one who loves it is not the equal of one who takes joy in it.”⁶²

6.21 The Master said, “You can discuss the loftiest matters with those who are above average, but not with those who are below average.”

6.22 Fan Chi⁶³ asked about wisdom.

The Master said, “Working to ensure social harmony among the common people, respecting the ghosts and spirits while keeping them at a distance—this might be called wisdom.”

He then asked about Goodness.

60. That is, Ran Qiu has already decided he cannot do it, and so he does not even try.

61. For the general term *Rú* 儒, see the introduction to this chapter, as well as *Ru* under *Important Terms* in the appendices. The phrase “petty *Ru*” refers to someone content to serve as a narrow technician or “vessel” (*Analects* 2.12) or to a moral hypocrite such as the “village worthy” (*Analects* 17.13).

62. “It” is presumably the Way.

63. One of Kongzi’s younger disciples.

The Master said, “One who is Good sees as his first priority the hardship of self-cultivation, and only after thinks about results or rewards. Yes, this is what we might call Goodness.”

6.23 The Master said, “The wise take joy in rivers, while the Good take joy in mountains. The wise are active, while the Good are still. The wise are joyful, while the Good are long-lived.”⁶⁴

6.25 The Master said, “A *gu* that is not a proper *gu*—is it really a *gu*? Is it really a *gu*?”⁶⁵

6.27 The Master said, “Someone who is broadly learned with regard to culture, and whose conduct is restrained by the rites, can be counted upon to not go astray.”

6.28 The Master had an audience with Nanzi, and Zilu was not pleased.⁶⁶ The Master swore an oath, saying, “If I have done anything wrong, may Heaven punish me! May Heaven punish me!”

6.29 The Master said, “Acquiring Virtue by applying the mean—is this not best? And yet among the common people few are able to practice this for long.”

64. This is a famously cryptic passage. Perhaps the most plausible interpretation is provided by the Han dynasty commentator Bào Xián 包咸: “The wise take joy in actively exercising their talent and wisdom in governing the world, just as water flows on and on and knows no cease. The Good take joy in the sort of peace and stability displayed by mountains, which are naturally inactive and yet give birth to all of the myriad things.” Cf. *Analects* 9.17.

65. A *gū* 觚 was a ritual drinking vessel, and commentators generally agree that Kongzi’s sigh of displeasure was provoked by the fact that the sort of *gu* being used by his contemporaries was not a proper *gu* (i.e., not in accordance with Zhou dynasty standards), although there is disagreement over the question of what precisely was wrong—some claiming that the offending *gu* was not of the proper shape, others that it was not of the proper size. In any case, this passage serves to illustrate Kongzi’s strict adherence to ancient practices, his dissatisfaction with the practices of his contemporaries, and his concern for the proper use of names (cf. *Analects* 13.3). For an image of a *gu*, see the Title Support Page for this volume at www.hackettpublishing.com/rccp-support.

66. Nanzi was the wife of Lord Ling of Wei, and a woman of ill repute. Zilu was not pleased that Kongzi would seek an audience with such a person. As many commentators point out, however, it is likely that ritual dictated that when arriving in a state one request an audience with certain minor local officials. In having an audience with Nanzi upon arriving in Wei, Kongzi was therefore merely observing the dictates of ritual propriety, which is more important than avoiding unsavory company. Zilu might thus—like Chen Wenzhi in *Analects* 5.19 above—be characterized as “pure,” but such rigid fastidiousness falls rather short of Goodness.

6.30 Zigong said, “If there were one able to bestow much upon the common people and bring succor to the multitudes, what would you make of him? Could such a person be called Good?”

The Master said, “Why stop at Good? Such a person should surely be called a sage! Even someone like Yao or Shun would find such a task daunting. Desiring to take his stand, one who is Good helps others to take their stand; wanting to realize himself, he helps others to realize themselves. Being able to take what is near at hand as an analogy⁶⁷ could perhaps be called the method of Goodness.”

Book Seven

7.1 The Master said, “I transmit rather than innovate. I trust in and love the ancient ways. I might thus humbly compare myself to Old Peng.”⁶⁸

7.2 The Master said, “Remaining silent and yet comprehending, learning and yet never becoming tired, encouraging others and never growing weary—these are tasks that present me with no difficulty.”

7.3 The Master said, “That I fail to cultivate Virtue, that I fail to inquire more deeply into that which I have learned, that upon hearing what is right I remain unable to move myself to do it, and that I prove unable to reform when I have done something wrong—such potential failings are a source of constant worry to me.”

7.4 In his leisure moments, the Master was composed and yet fully at ease.

7.5 The Master said, “How seriously I have declined! It has been so long since I last dreamed of meeting the Duke of Zhou.”⁶⁹

7.6 The Master said, “Set your heart upon the Way, rely upon Virtue, lean upon Goodness, and explore widely in your cultivation of the arts.”

67. This sounds like a formulation of the virtue of *shu*, “sympathetic understanding.” (See *Analects* 4.15.)

68. The most plausible explanation of this reference is that of Bao Xian: “Old Peng was a great worthy of the Yin dynasty who was fond of transmitting ancient tales. In comparing himself to Old Peng, Kongzi indicates his reverence for those who merely transmit [and do not innovate].”

69. Ideally, one’s immersion in the culture of the Zhou is to be so complete that it penetrates even one’s dream life.

7.7 The Master said, “I have never denied instruction to anyone who, of their own accord, offered up as little as a bundle of silk or bit of cured meat.”⁷⁰

7.8 The Master said, “I will not open the door for a mind that is not already striving to understand, nor will I provide words to a tongue that is not already struggling to speak. If I hold up one corner of a problem, and the student cannot come back to me with the other three, I will not attempt to instruct him again.”

7.9 When the Master dined in the company of one who was in mourning, he never ate his fill.

7.12 The Master said, “If wealth were something worth pursuing, then I would pursue it, even if that meant serving as an officer holding a whip at the entrance to the marketplace. Since it is not worth pursuing, however, I prefer to follow that which I love.”

7.14 When the Master was in the state of Qi he heard the Shao music, and for three months after did not even notice the taste of meat. He said, “I never imagined that music could be so sublime.”⁷¹

7.16 The Master said, “Eating plain food and drinking water, having only your bent arm as a pillow—certainly there is joy to be found in this! Wealth and eminence attained improperly concern me no more than the floating clouds.”⁷²

7.17 The Master said, “If I were granted many more years, and could devote fifty of them to learning, surely I would be able to be free of major faults.”

7.18 The Master used the classical pronunciation when reciting the *Odes* and the *History*, and when conducting ritual. In all of these cases, he used the classical pronunciation.⁷³

70. There is some debate over the exact meaning of this passage, with some (such as the Han commentator Zhèng Xuán 鄭玄) claiming that it refers to the fact that Kongzi would not deny instruction to anyone over fifteen years of age, and others arguing that the term shùxiū 束修 (usually taken to mean “bundle of silk and cured meat” or “bundle of cured meat”) actually refers to the *bearing* of the person seeking instruction—that is, an attitude of respect and self-discipline. In either case, the point is that Kongzi does not select students on the basis of their wealth or social standing.

71. The Shao is the court music of the sage-king Shun.

72. “Improperly” is literally in a “not right (yì 義)” fashion.

73. Chinese characters are not directly phonetic in the manner of an alphabet, and the same character can be pronounced differently by speakers of different dialects. In Kongzi’s age, people were apparently aware that

7.19 The Duke of She asked Zilu about Kongzi. Zilu had no reply.

[Upon Zilu's return], the Master said, "Why did you not just say: 'He is the type of person who is so passionate that he forgets to eat, whose joy renders him free of worries, and who grows old without noticing the passage of the years?'"

7.20 The Master said, "I am not someone who was born with knowledge. I simply love antiquity, and diligently look there for knowledge."

7.22 The Master said, "When walking with two other people, I will always find a teacher among them. I focus on those who are good and seek to emulate them, and focus on those who are bad in order to be reminded of what needs to be changed in myself."

7.23 The Master said, "It is Heaven itself that has endowed me with Virtue. What have I to fear from the likes of Huan Tui?"⁷⁴

7.24 The Master said, "Do you disciples imagine that I am being secretive? I hide nothing from you. I take no action, I make no move, without sharing it with you. This is the kind of person that I am."

7.28 The Master said, "No doubt there are those who try to innovate without acquiring knowledge, but this is a fault that I do not possess. I listen widely, and then pick out that which is excellent in order to follow it; I see many things, and then remember them. This constitutes a second-best sort of knowledge."

7.30 The Master said, "Is Goodness really so far away? If I simply desire Goodness, I will find that it is already here."

7.32 Whenever the Master was singing in a group and heard something that he liked, he inevitably asked to have it sung again, and only then would harmonize with it.

the spoken languages of the various regions of China differed significantly from the "classical pronunciation," which Liu Baonan argues must have been the dialect spoken in the Western Zhou capital. We must assume that knowledge of these pronunciations was kept alive, at least in the state of Lu, through use in formal and ritual contexts. This passage suggests, though, that Kongzi's contemporaries had begun to ignore this tradition and eschew the classical pronunciations in favor of local dialect—a Christian analogy would be the abandonment of Latin in favor of services in the vernacular. This represents a departure from the Way of the Zhou that Kongzi characteristically resists.

74. Huan Tui was a minister in the state of Song who apparently wished to do Kongzi harm; cf. *Analects* 9.5 and 14.36.

7.33 The Master said, “There is no one who is my equal when it comes to cultural refinement, but as for actually becoming a gentleman in practice, this is something that I have not yet been able to achieve.”⁷⁵

7.34 The Master said, “How could I dare to lay claim to either sageliness or Goodness? What can be said about me is no more than this: I work at it without growing tired and encourage others without growing weary.”

Gong Xihua observed, “This is precisely what we disciples are unable to learn.”

7.35 The Master was seriously ill, and Zilu asked permission to offer a prayer.

The Master said, “Is such a thing done?”

Zilu said, “It is. The *Eulogy*⁷⁶ reads, ‘We pray for you above and below, to the spirits of Heaven and of earth.’”

The Master said, “In that case, I have already been offering up my prayers for some time now.”⁷⁷

7.37 The Master said, “The gentleman is self-possessed and relaxed, while the petty man is perpetually full of worry.”

7.38 The Master was affable yet firm, awe-inspiring without being severe, simultaneously respectful and relaxed.

Book Eight

8.2 The Master said, “If you are respectful but lack ritual you will become exasperating; if you are careful but lack ritual you will become timid; if you are courageous but lack ritual you will become unruly; and if you are upright but lack ritual you will become inflexible.

“If the gentleman is kind to his relatives, the common people will be inspired toward Goodness; if he does not neglect his old acquaintances, the people will honor their obligations to others.”

75. This is perhaps merely a polite demurral (cf. *Analects* 7.34), but it serves to emphasize the difficulty of obtaining in practice the proper balance between wén 文, “cultural refinement,” and zhì 質, “native substance” (cf. *Analects* 6.18), and is no doubt meant as a warning against falling into “foppish pedantry”—the more insidious and common of the two failings described in *Analects* 6.18 above.

76. The title of a traditional prayer text.

77. That is, through his life’s work. Any sort of direct appeal for Heaven’s aid or bartering with Heaven is unnecessary.

8.7 Master Zeng said, “A scholar-official must be strong and resolute, for his burden is heavy and his Way [Dào 道] is long. He takes up Goodness as his own personal burden—is it not heavy? His way ends only with death—is it not long?”

8.8 The Master said, “Find inspiration in the *Odes*, take your place through ritual, and achieve perfection with music.”

8.9 The Master said, “The common people can be made to follow it, but they cannot be made to understand it.”

8.12 The Master said, “It is not easy to find someone who is able to learn for even the space of three years without a thought given to official salary.”

8.13 The Master said, “Be sincerely trustworthy and love learning, and hold fast to the good Way until death. Do not enter a state that is endangered, and do not reside in a state that is disordered. If the Way is being realized in the world, then show yourself; if it is not, then go into reclusion. In a state that has the Way, to be poor and of low status is a cause for shame; in a state that is without the Way, to be wealthy and honored is equally a cause for shame.”

8.19 The Master said, “How great was Yao as a ruler! So majestic! It is Heaven that is great, and it was Yao who modeled himself upon it. So vast! Among the common people there were none who were able to find words to describe him.⁷⁸ How majestic in his accomplishments, and glorious in cultural splendor!”

Book Nine

9.2 A villager from Daxiang⁷⁹ remarked sarcastically, “How great is Kongzi! He is so broadly learned, and yet has failed to make a name for himself in any particular endeavor.”

When the Master was told of this, he said to his disciples, “What art, then, should I take up? Charioteering? Archery? I think I shall take up charioteering.”⁸⁰

78. That is, the influence of Yao's Virtue was so subtle and pervasive that the people were transformed naturally, without being aware of what was happening. Cf. *Analects* 17.19, where Heaven is said to rule without the need for words. For the sage-king Yao, see under *Important Figures* in the appendices.

79. The name of a small hamlet.

80. Kongzi's response is equally sarcastic, expressing his contempt for limited or merely technical skills. Cf. *Analects* 2.12, 9.6, and 19.7.

9.3 The Master said, “A ceremonial cap made of linen is prescribed by the rites, but these days people use silk. This is frugal, and I follow the majority. To bow before ascending the stairs is what is prescribed by the rites, but these days people bow after ascending. This is arrogant, and—though it goes against the majority—I continue to bow before ascending.”⁸¹

9.5 The Master was surrounded in Kuang.⁸² He said, “Now that King Wén 文 is gone, is not culture [wén 文] now invested here in me? If Heaven intended this culture to perish, it would not have given it to those of us who live after King Wen’s death. Since Heaven did not intend that this culture should perish, what can the people of Kuang do to me?”

9.6 The Prime Minister asked Zigong, “Your Master is a sage, is he not? How is it, then, that he is skilled at so many menial tasks?”

Zigong replied, “Surely Heaven not only intends him for sagehood, but also gave him many other talents.”

When the Master heard of this, he remarked, “How well the Prime Minister knows me! In my youth I was of humble status, so I became proficient in many menial tasks. Is the gentleman broadly skilled in trivial matters? No, he is not.”⁸³

9.10 Whenever the Master saw someone who was wearing mourning clothes, was garbed in full official dress, or was blind, he would always rise to his feet, even if the person was his junior. When passing such a person, he would always hasten his step.⁸⁴

9.11 With a great sigh Yan Hui lamented, “The more I look up at it the higher it seems; the more I delve into it, the harder it becomes. Catching a glimpse of it before me, I then find it suddenly at my back.”⁸⁵

“The Master is skilled at gradually leading me on, step by step. He broadens me with culture and restrains me with the rites, so that even if I wanted to give up I could not. Having exhausted all of my strength, it seems as if there is still something

81. Kongzi is referring to ascending the stairs when approaching a ruler or other superior. To bow after ascending puts one on the same level as one’s superior and hence is less respectful.

82. The most common explanation is that the target of the Kuang troops was a certain Yang Hu, who had in the past caused some trouble in the state of Kuang. Kongzi apparently physically resembled Yang Hu and—to add to the confusion—one of Kongzi’s disciples was a known associate of Yang Hu’s.

83. Cf. *Analects* 2.12, 9.2, and 19.7.

84. As a sign of respect.

85. “It” refers to the Way.

left, looming up ahead of me. Though I desire to follow it, there seems to be no way through.”

9.12 The Master was gravely ill, and Zilu instructed his fellow disciples to attend Kongzi as if they were his ministers.⁸⁶

During a remission in his illness, the Master [became aware of what was happening and] rebuked Zilu, saying, “It has been quite some time now, has it not, that you have been carrying out this charade! If I have no ministers and yet you act as if I have, who do you think I am going to fool? Am I going to fool Heaven?⁸⁷ Moreover, would I not rather die in the arms of a few of my disciples than in the arms of ministers? Even if I do not merit a grand funeral, it is not as if I would be left to die by the side of the road!”

9.13 Zigong said, “If you possessed a piece of beautiful jade, would you hide it away in a locked box, or would you try to sell it at a good price?”

The Master responded, “Oh, I would sell it! I would sell it! I am just waiting for the right offer.”⁸⁸

9.14 The Master expressed a desire to go and live among the Nine Yi Barbarian tribes. Someone asked him, “How could you bear their uncouthness?”

The Master replied, “If a gentleman were to dwell among them, what uncouthness would there be?”⁸⁹

9.17 Standing on the bank of a river, the Master said, “It passes on like this—does it not? Never stopping day or night!”⁹⁰

86. That is, following the rites proper to a minister attending to a ruler—which, of course, Kongzi was not.

87. As the Jin dynasty commentator Li Chōng 李充 notes, Kongzi’s concern over the ritual abuses of the Ji Family—who were usurping the ritual prerogatives of the Zhou kings in an attempt to impress their contemporaries and curry favor with Heaven (see *Analects* 3.1)—no doubt accounts for some of the harshness in his rebuke of Zilu.

88. The gentleman should surely share his Virtue with the world by taking public office. Kongzi, however, refuses to actively peddle his wares on the market, but rather waits for his Virtue to be recognized by the right ruler.

89. The Yi were a group of “barbarians” (i.e., non-Chinese) who lived along the east coast of what is now present-day China. Kongzi’s comment is a testament to the transformative power of the gentleman’s Virtue. Cf. *Xunzi* chapter 2 (in chapter 9 of this volume).

90. Many traditional commentators take this passage to be a lament on the passage of time (and perhaps a reflection of Kongzi’s sense of personal failure). Others see the river’s unremitting and thorough progress toward the sea as a metaphor for the ideal student’s progress toward Goodness. Cf. *Mengzi* 4B18 (in chapter 4 of this volume).

9.18 The Master said, “I have yet to meet a man who loves Virtue as much as he loves sex.”

9.19 The Master said, “[The task of self-cultivation] might be compared to the task of building up a mountain: if I stop even one basketful of earth short of completion, then I have stopped completely. It might also be compared to the task of leveling ground: even if I have only dumped a single basketful of earth, at least I am moving forward.”⁹¹

9.22 The Master said, “Surely there are some sprouts that fail to flower, just as surely as there are some flowers that fail to bear fruit!”

9.23 The Master said, “We should look upon the younger generation with awe, because how are we to know that those who come after us will not prove our equals? Once, however, a man reaches the age of forty or fifty without having learned anything, we can conclude from this fact alone that he is not worthy of being held in awe.”

9.24 The Master said, “When a man is rebuked with exemplary words after having made a mistake, he cannot help but agree with them. However, what is important is that he change himself in order to *accord* with them. When a man is praised with words of respect, he cannot help but be pleased with them. However, what is important is that he actually *live up* to them. A person who finds respectful words pleasing but does not live up to them, or agrees with others’ reproaches and yet does not change—there is nothing I can do with one such as this.”⁹²

9.28 The Master said, “Only after Winter comes do we know that the pine and cypress are the last to fade.”

9.29 The Master said, “The wise are not confused, the Good do not worry, and the courageous do not fear.”

91. A bit of encouragement to balance out Yan Hui’s lament in *Analects* 9.11.

92. Nominal assent to the Way is insufficient—one must *love* the Way and strive to embody it in one’s person. The problem is what is the teacher to do with a student who intellectually understands or superficially agrees with the Way but cannot summon up the genuine commitment required of the gentleman. Cf. *Analects* 5.10, 6.12, 9.18, and 15.16.

*Book Ten*⁹³

10.2 At court, when speaking with officers of lower rank, he was pleasant and affable; when speaking with officers of upper rank, he was formal and proper. When his lord was present, he combined an attitude of cautious respect with graceful ease.

10.3 When called upon by his lord to receive a guest, his countenance would become alert and serious, and he would hasten his steps. When he saluted those in attendance beside him—extending his clasped hands to the left or right, as their position required—his robes remained perfectly arrayed, both front and back. Hastening forward, he moved smoothly, as though gliding upon wings. Once the guest had left, he would always return to report, “The guest is no longer looking back.”

10.10 He would not instruct while eating, nor continue to converse once he had retired to bed.⁹⁴

10.11 Even though a meal was only of coarse grain or vegetable broth, he invariably gave some as a sacrificial offering, and would do so in a grave and respectful manner.

10.12 He would not sit unless his mat was straight.

10.17 One day the stables burned. When the Master returned from court, he asked, “Was anyone hurt?” He did not ask about the horses.⁹⁵

93. Based upon their style, lack of explicit subject, and parallels to be found in other early ritual texts such as the *Record of Ritual* or *Book of Etiquette and Ritual*, scholars have concluded that most of the passages in this book were probably culled from a lost ritual text that provided anonymous guidelines and injunctions for the aspiring gentleman. From earliest times, however, this book has been viewed by commentators as an extended description of the ritual behavior of Kongzi in particular, and it was in fact probably intended by the editors of the earliest stratum of the *Analekts* (books 1–10) to be understood that way. Seen as an actual description of the Master’s behavior rather than a set of impersonal ritual guidelines, book 10 serves as a sort of capstone for the first half of the *Analekts*, providing a series of descriptions of the Master effortlessly embodying in his words, behavior, and countenance the lessons imparted throughout the rest of the text. What is being emphasized in this book is the ease and grace with which the Master embodies the spirit of the rites in every aspect of his life—no matter how trivial—and accords with this spirit in adapting to new and necessarily unforeseeable circumstances.

94. That is, he remained thoroughly focused in all of his activities.

95. Considering that horses were quite valuable commodities and stable hands easily replaceable, Kongzi’s response is both unexpected and moving.

10.19 When he was sick, and his lord came to visit him, he would lay with his head to the east, draped in his court robes, with his ceremonial sash fastened about him.⁹⁶

10.20 When summoned by his lord, he would set off on foot, without waiting for his horses to be hitched to the carriage.⁹⁷

10.21 Upon entering the Grand Ancestral Temple, he asked questions about everything.

10.23 When receiving a gift from a friend—even something as valuable as a cart or a horse—he did not bow unless it was a gift of sacrificial meat.⁹⁸

10.25 When he saw someone fasting or mourning, he invariably assumed a changed expression, even if they were an intimate acquaintance. When he saw someone wearing a ritual cap or a blind person, he would invariably display a respectful countenance, even if they were of low birth.

When riding past someone dressed in funeral garb, he would bow down and grasp the crossbar of his carriage.⁹⁹ He would do so even if the mourner was a lowly peddler.

When presented food with full ritual propriety, he would invariably assume a solemn expression and rise from his seat.

He would also assume a solemn expression upon hearing a sudden clap of thunder or observing a fierce wind.¹⁰⁰

10.27 Startled by their arrival, a bird arose and circled several times before alighting upon a branch. [The Master] said, “This pheasant upon the mountain bridge—how timely it is! How timely it is!” Zilu saluted the bird, and it cried out three times before flying away.¹⁰¹

96. Being sick, he could not rise to greet his ruler or properly dress himself in court attire, but it would also be unseemly for him to receive his guest in civilian garb. He thus had himself arranged in bed so that he would be both ritually presentable and facing the door when the ruler entered.

97. A sign of respect and humbleness.

98. A gift of sacrificial meat carries with it a sort of ritual solemnity not possessed by a nonreligious gift, no matter how sumptuous it might be.

99. As a sign of respect.

100. As a sign of respect for Heaven's power.

101. While it is not entirely clear *why* the pheasant is being praised for timeliness (perhaps because it knows when to arise, when to alight, and when to fly off), it would seem that the ideal of timeliness—according perfectly with the demands of the situation at hand—sums up fairly well what is, in one interpretation, the

Book Eleven

11.4 The Master said, “Yan Hui is of no help to me—he is pleased with everything that I say.”¹⁰²

11.8 When Yan Hui died, Yan Lu, his father, requested the Master’s carriage, so that it could be used for Yan Hui’s coffin enclosure.

The Master replied, “Everyone recognizes his own son, whether he is talented or not. When Bo Yu, my own son, passed away, he had a coffin, but no enclosure. I did not go on foot in order to provide him with an enclosure. Having held rank below the ministers, it is not permissible for me to go on foot.”

11.9 When Yan Hui passed away, the Master lamented, “Oh! Heaven has bereft me! Heaven has bereft me!”

11.12 Zilu asked about serving ghosts and spirits. The Master said, “You are not yet able to serve people—how could you be able to serve ghosts and spirits?”

“May I inquire about death?”

“You do not yet understand life—how could you possibly understand death?”

11.17 The Master said, “The head of the Ji Family is wealthier than even the Duke of Zhou ever was, and yet Ran Qiu collects taxes on his behalf to further increase his already excessive wealth. Ran Qiu is no disciple of mine. If you disciples were to sound the drums and attack him, I would not disapprove.”

11.22 Zilu asked, “Upon learning of something that needs to be done, should one immediately take care of it?”

The Master replied, “As long as one’s father and elder brothers are still alive, how could one possibly take care of it immediately?”¹⁰³

[On a later occasion] Ran Qiu asked, “Upon learning of something that needs to be done, should one immediately take care of it?”

The Master replied, “Upon learning of it, you should immediately take care of it.”

Zihua inquired, “When Zilu asked you whether or not one should immediately take care of something upon learning of it, you told him one should not, as

general theme of book 10: that the Master’s actions accorded perfectly with the demands of ritual propriety, no matter what the circumstances.

102. The comment would seem to be meant ironically—cf. *Analects* 2.9.

103. That is, you should continue to defer to their judgment and not take the initiative.

long as one's father and elder brothers were still alive. When Ran Qiu asked the same question, however, you told him that one should immediately take care of it. I am confused, and humbly ask to have this explained to me."

The Master said, "Ran Qiu is overly cautious, and so I wished to urge him on. Zilu, on the other hand, is too impetuous, and so I sought to hold him back."¹⁰⁴

11.26 Zilu, Zengxi, Ran Qiu, and Zihua were seated in attendance. The Master said to them, "I am older than any of you, but do not feel reluctant to speak your minds on that account. You are all in the habit of complaining, 'No one appreciates me.' Well, if someone were to appreciate you, what would you do?"

Zilu spoke up immediately. "If I were given charge of a state of a thousand chariots—even one hemmed in between powerful states, suffering from armed invasions and afflicted by famine—before three years were up I could infuse its people with courage and a sense of what is right."

The Master smiled at him.

He then turned to Ran Qiu. "You, Ran Qiu!" he said, "What would you do?"

Ran Qiu answered, "If I were given charge of a state sixty or seventy—or even fifty or sixty—square *li* in area, before three years were up, I could see that the people would have all that they needed. As for instructing its people in ritual practice and music, this is a task that would have to await the arrival of a gentleman."

The Master then turned to Zihua. "You, Zihua! What would you do?"

Zihua answered, "I am not saying that I would actually be able to do it, but my wish, at least, would be to learn it. I would like to serve as a minor functionary—properly clad in ceremonial cap and gown—in ceremonies at the ancestral temple, or at diplomatic gatherings."

The Master then turned to Zengxi. "You, Zengxi! What would you do?"

Zengxi stopped strumming his zither, and as the last notes faded away, he set the instrument aside and rose to his feet. "I would choose to do something quite different from any of the other three."

"What harm is there in that?" the Master said. "We are all just talking about our aspirations."

Zengxi then said, "In the third month of Spring, once the Spring garments have been completed, I should like to assemble a company of five or six young men

104. This is a paradigmatic example of how the Master's teachings were variously formulated depending upon the individual needs of his students—a Confucian version of the Buddhist practice of *upāya*, or "skillful means." On the distinctive characters of Ran Qiu and Zilu, compare *Analects* 6.12 and 9.12, respectively.

and six or seven boys to go bathe in the Yi River and enjoy the breeze upon the Rain Dance Altar, and then return singing to the Master's house."¹⁰⁵

The Master sighed deeply, saying, "I am with Zengxi!"

The other three disciples left, but Master Zeng stayed behind. He asked, "What did you think of what the other disciples said?"

"Each of them was simply talking about their aspirations."

"Then why, Master, did you smile at Zilu?"

"One governs a state by means of ritual. His words failed to express the proper sense of deference, and that is why I smiled at him."

"Was Ran Qiu, then, not concerned with statecraft?"

"Since when did something sixty or seventy—even fifty or sixty—square *li* in area not constitute a state?"

"Was Zihua, then, not concerned with statecraft?"

"If ancestral temples and diplomatic gatherings are not the business of the feudal lords, what then are they? If Zihua's aspiration is a minor one, then what would be considered a major one?"¹⁰⁶

Book Twelve

12.1 Yan Hui asked about Goodness.

The Master said, "Restraining yourself and returning to the rites constitutes Goodness. If for one day you managed to restrain yourself and return to the rites, in this way you could lead the entire world back to Goodness. The key to achieving Goodness lies within yourself—how could it come from others?"

Yan Hui asked, "May I inquire as to the specifics?"

The Master said, "Do not look unless it is in accordance with ritual; do not listen unless it is in accordance with ritual; do not speak unless it is in accordance with ritual; do not move unless it is in accordance with ritual."

105. According to traditional commentators, the Yi River was near Kongzi's home, and the Rain Dance Altar was located just above the river.

106. The Master is thus equally disapproving of Zilu's, Ran Qiu's, and Zihua's aspirations—all of which are overly focused upon statecraft techniques—although only Zilu's response is audacious enough to provoke a smile. The point is that true government is effected through the superior Virtue gained by ritual practice, and the task of the gentleman is thus to focus upon self-cultivation and attain a state of joyful harmony with the Way. Such harmony with the Way is exemplified by Zengxi's musical bent, his reluctance to speak about his aspirations, and the sense of spontaneous joy in the cultivated life conveyed by his answer. Zengxi is a disciple of Kongzi, but also the father of Master Zeng (see *Analects* 4.15, above).

Yan Hui replied, “Although I am not quick to understand, I ask permission to devote myself to this teaching.”

12.2 Zhonggong¹⁰⁷ asked about Goodness.

The Master said, “‘When in public, comport yourself as if you were receiving an important guest, and in your management of the common people, behave as if you were overseeing a great sacrifice.’ Do not impose upon others what you yourself do not desire. In this way, you will encounter no resentment in your public or private life.”¹⁰⁸

Zhonggong replied, “Although I am not quick to understand, I ask permission to devote myself to this teaching.”

12.5 Anxiously, Sima Niu remarked, “Everyone has brothers, I alone have none.”¹⁰⁹

Zixia replied, “I have heard it said, ‘Life and death are governed by fate, wealth and honor are determined by Heaven.’ A gentleman is respectful and free of errors. He is reverent and ritually proper in his dealings with others. In this way, everyone within the Four Seas is his brother.”¹¹⁰ How could a gentleman be concerned about not having brothers?”

12.7 Zigong asked about governing.

The Master said, “Simply make sure there is sufficient food, sufficient armaments, and that you have the confidence of the common people.”

107. A disciple of Kongzi.

108. One interpretation is that the first set of advice concerns the virtue of *zhong*, “loyalty,” the second that of *shu*, “sympathetic understanding.” Cf. *Analects* 4.15 on these terms.

109. Sima Niu came from a prominent military family in Song and in fact left behind several elder brothers when he went abroad. One of his brothers, Huan Tui (*Analects* 7.23), planned and carried out an unsuccessful revolt against the rightful lord of Song in 483 BCE, and was forced to flee the state. Another of Sima Niu’s brothers, Xiang Chao, was also a military official in Song; he was apparently a somewhat arrogant and self-aggrandizing man and was forced to flee the state after Huan Tui’s attempted revolt, along with the remaining elder brothers. Sima Niu—apparently uninvolved in the revolt or its aftermath—resigned his official post in disgust and emigrated, ending up eventually in Lu, where he presumably had the conversation with Zixia recorded here. His comment that “he alone has no brothers” is thus not meant literally: the point is either that he has no brothers truly worthy of being considered brothers, or that all of his brothers are in exile or in constant danger of losing their lives and therefore as good as dead. Sima Niu is thus bemoaning the fate that has left him effectively without family, an exile from his home state.

110. “Within the Four Seas” means the entire world; China was viewed as being surrounded on all sides by oceans.

Zigong said, “If sacrificing one of these three things became unavoidable, which would you sacrifice first?”

The Master replied, “I would sacrifice the armaments.”

Zigong said, “If sacrificing one of the two remaining things became unavoidable, which would you sacrifice next?”

The Master replied, “I would sacrifice the food. Death has always been with us, but a state cannot stand once it has lost the confidence of the people.”

12.8 Ji Zicheng¹¹¹ said, “Being a gentleman is simply a matter of having the right native substance, and nothing else. Why must one engage in cultural refinement?”

Zigong replied, “It is regrettable, Sir, that you should speak of the gentleman in this way—as they say, ‘a team of horses cannot overtake your tongue.’ A gentleman’s cultural refinement resembles his native substance, and his native substance resembles his cultural refinement. The skin of a tiger or leopard, shorn of its fur, is no different from the skin of a dog or sheep.”¹¹²

12.9 Duke Ai said to Master You, “The harvest was poor and I cannot satisfy my needs. What should I do?”

Master You said, “Why do you not try taxing the people one part in ten?”¹¹³

“I am currently taxing them two parts in ten, and even so I cannot satisfy my needs. How could reducing the tax to one part in ten help?”

Master You answered, “If the common people’s needs are satisfied, how could their lord be lacking? If the common people’s needs are not satisfied, how can their lord be content?”

111. Ji Zicheng is described as a minister of Wei, but nothing else is known about him. Zigong served as an official in Wei for some time, and this is probably when this exchange took place.

112. Zigong’s response invokes an interesting metaphor for the relationship of native substance and cultural refinement: although native substance is required (as an animal requires a hide), a gentleman possessing substance but unadorned by cultural refinement would be like a tiger or leopard shaved of its beautiful pelt—indistinguishable from any ordinary creature. Cf. *Analects* 6.18.

113. This was a traditional Zhou practice. According to the *Annals*, the traditional ten percent tithe on agricultural production was doubled by Duke Xuan of Lu in 593 BCE, and that higher rate was then continued as standard practice. It is possible that this exchange between Duke Ai and Master You took place during the Lu famine of 481 BCE (Year 14 of Duke Ai’s reign), which occurred after back-to-back plagues of locusts in 484 and 483 BCE. Master You is thus suggesting a return to a taxation rate over one hundred years old—quite a radical cutback.

12.11 Duke Jing of Qi asked Kongzi about governing.

Kongzi responded, “Let the lord be a true lord, the ministers true ministers, the fathers true fathers, and the sons true sons.”¹¹⁴

The Duke replied, “Well put! Certainly, if the lord is not a true lord, the ministers not true ministers, the fathers not true fathers, and the sons not true sons, even if there is sufficient grain, will I ever get to eat it?”

12.13 The Master said, “When it comes to hearing civil litigation, I am as good as anyone else. What is necessary, though, is to bring it about that there is no civil litigation at all.”

12.17 Ji Kangzi¹¹⁵ asked Kongzi about governing.

Kongzi responded, “To ‘govern’ [zhèng 政] means to be ‘correct’ [zhèng 正]. If you set an example by being correct yourself, who will dare to be incorrect?”

12.18 Ji Kangzi was concerned about the prevalence of robbers in Lu, and asked Kongzi about how to deal with this problem.

Kongzi said, “If you could just get rid of your own excessive desires, the people would not steal even if you rewarded them for it.”

12.19 Ji Kangzi asked Kongzi about governing, saying, “If I were to execute those who lacked the Way in order to advance those who possessed the Way, how would that be?”

Kongzi responded, “In your governing, Sir, what need is there for executions? If you desire goodness, then the common people will be good. The Virtue of a gentleman is like the wind, and the Virtue of a petty person is like the grass—when the wind moves over the grass, the grass is sure to bend.”

114. In 516 BCE, Kongzi arrived in Qi to find that Duke Jing, near the end of his reign, was in dire straits. His nominal minister, Chen Qi, had usurped control of the state, and the Duke’s plan to pass over his eldest son for the succession had set off contention among his sons. Kongzi’s advice is thus very topical. His point is that if everyone would simply concentrate on conscientiously fulfilling their role-specific duties, order would result naturally—there is no need for some special technique or theory of “governing” (cf. *Analects* 2.21). Many commentators have seen this passage as concerned with the theme of “rectifying names” (zhèng míng 正名) mentioned in *Analects* 13.3, whereby the actualities of one’s behavior should be made to accord with the standard set by one’s social role (“name”).

115. A member of the Ji Family (cf. *Analects* 3.1), and senior minister in the state of Lu, who held power from 492 to 468 BCE.

12.22 Fan Chi asked about Goodness.

The Master replied, "Care for others."

He then asked about wisdom.

The Master replied, "Know others."

Fan Chi still did not understand, so the Master elaborated: "Raise up the straight and apply them to the crooked, and the crooked will be made straight."

Fan Chi retired from the Master's presence. Seeing Zixia, he said, "Just before I asked the Master about wisdom, and he replied, 'Raise up the straight and apply them to the crooked, and the crooked will be made straight.' What did he mean by that?"

Zixia answered, "What a wealth of instruction you have received! When Shun ruled the world, he selected from among the multitude, raising up Gao Yao, and those who were not Good then kept their distance. When Tang ruled the world, he selected from among the multitude, raising up Yi Yin, and those who were not Good then kept their distance."¹¹⁶

12.24 Master Zeng said, "The gentleman acquires friends by means of cultural refinement, and then relies upon his friends for support in becoming Good."

Book Thirteen

13.3 Zilu asked, "If the Duke of Wei¹¹⁷ were to employ you to serve in the government of his state, what would be your first priority?"

The Master answered, "It would, of course, be the rectification of names."¹¹⁸

116. Gao Yao was Minister of Crime under Shun. See *Mengzi* 7A35 (in chapter 4 of this volume) for another reference to him. On Shun, Tang, and Yi Yin, see under *Important Figures* in the appendices.

117. This probably refers to Zhe, the grandson of Duke Ling of Wei (who appears in *Analects* 15.1 below), who took over the throne in 493 BCE.

118. On zhèng míng 正名, "rectification of names" or "correction of names," cf. *Analects* 6.25, 12.11, and 12.17 as well as Xunzi's "On Correct Naming" (*Xunzi* chapter 22, in chapter 9 of this volume). For a defense of the importance of this concept in the *Analects*, see Loy Hui-chieh, "*Analects* 13.3 and the Doctrine of 'Correcting Names,'" in Jones, *Confucius Now*, 37–48. Reading this passage in light of *Analects* 12.11 ("Let the lord be a true lord . . . the fathers true fathers, and the sons true sons."), it can be seen as a barb against the ruling family of Wei, whose disordered family relations eventually threw the state into chaos. The Duke doted upon his notorious wife, Nanzi (see *Analects* 6.28), whom his resentful son, Prince Kuai Kui, then attempted to kill. This attempt having failed, the son was forced to flee Wei, and the Duke's grandson, Zhe, subsequently took over the throne upon the Duke's death. Prince Kuai Kui then returned to Wei with the backing of a foreign army in an attempt to oust his son.

Zilu said, “Could you, Master, really be so far off the mark? Why worry about rectifying names?”

The Master replied, “How boorish you are, Zilu! When it comes to matters that he does not understand, the gentleman should remain silent. If names are not rectified, speech will not accord [with reality]; when speech does not accord [with reality], things will not be successfully accomplished. When things are not successfully accomplished, ritual practice and music will fail to flourish; when ritual and music fail to flourish, punishments and penalties will miss the mark. And when punishments and penalties miss the mark, the common people will be at a loss as to what to do with themselves. This is why the gentleman only applies names that can be properly spoken, and assures that what he says can be properly put into action. The gentleman simply guards against arbitrariness in his speech. That is all there is to it.”

13.4 Fan Chi asked to learn about plowing and growing grain [from Kongzi].

The Master said, “When it comes to that, any old farmer would be a better teacher than I.”

He asked to learn about growing fruits and vegetables.

The Master said, “When it comes to that, any old gardener would be a better teacher than I.”

Fan Chi then left. The Master remarked, “What a common fellow that Fan Chi is! When a ruler loves ritual propriety, then none among his people will dare to be disrespectful. When a ruler loves rightness, then none among his people will dare to not obey. When a ruler loves trustworthiness, then none of his people will dare to not be honest. The mere existence of such a ruler would cause the common people throughout the world to bundle their children on their backs and seek him out. Of what use, then, is the study of agriculture?”

13.5 The Master said, “Imagine a person who can recite the three hundred *Odes* by heart but, when delegated a governmental task, is unable to carry it out, or when sent abroad as an envoy, is unable to engage in repartee. No matter how many odes he might have memorized, what good are they to him?”¹¹⁹

13.6 The Master said, “When the ruler is correct, his will is put into effect without the need for official orders. When the ruler’s person is not correct, he will not be obeyed no matter how many orders he issues.”

119. The point of learning is not mere scholastic knowledge, but rather the ability to apply this knowledge flexibly in a situation-specific manner. Cf. *Analects* 2.11.

13.12 The Master said, “If a true king were to arise, we would certainly see a return to Goodness after a single generation.”¹²⁰

13.16 The Duke of She asked about governing.

The Master said, “[Act so that] those near to you are pleased, and those who are far from you are drawn closer.”

13.18 The Duke of She said to Kongzi, “Among my people there is one we call ‘Upright Gong.’ When his father stole a sheep, he reported him to the authorities.”

Kongzi replied, “Among my people, those whom we consider ‘upright’ are different from this: fathers cover up for their sons, and sons cover up for their fathers. ‘Uprightness’ is to be found in this.”¹²¹

13.20 Zigong asked, “What does a person have to be like before he could be called a true scholar-official?”

The Master said, “Conducting himself with a sense of shame, and not dishonoring his ruler’s mandate when sent abroad as a diplomat—such a person could be called a scholar-official.”

“May I ask what the next best type of person is like?”

“His lineage and clan consider him filial, and his fellow villagers consider him respectful to his elders.”

“And the next best?”

“In his speech he insists on being trustworthy, and with regard to his actions, he insists that they bear fruit. What a narrow, rigid little man he is! And yet he might still be considered the next best.”

“How about those who today are involved in government?”

The Master exclaimed, “Oh! Those petty functionaries are not even worth considering.”

13.21 The Master said, “If you cannot manage to find a person of perfectly balanced conduct to associate with, I suppose you must settle for the wild or the fastidious. In their pursuit of the Way, the wild plunge right in, while the fastidious are always careful not to get their hands dirty.”¹²²

120. Because a true king rules through the gradual transformative power of Virtue rather than through harsh laws and punishments, which may achieve more immediate—but short-lived—results.

121. Cf. *Analects* 17.8, where the danger of an overly rigid or strict sense of honesty or uprightness is described as being “harmful”—the harm being, presumably, to such natural relationships as that between father and son. For a different account of this event, see *Han Feizi* chapter 49 (in chapter 10 of this volume).

122. Cf. *Mengzi* 7B37 (in chapter 4 of this volume).

13.24 Zigong asked, “What would you make of a person whom everyone in the village likes?”

The Master said, “I would not know what to make of him.”

“What about someone whom everyone in the village hates?”

“I would still not know. Better this way: those in the village who are good like him, and those who are not good hate him.”

Book Fourteen

14.1 Yuan Si asked about shame.

The Master said, “When the state has the Way, accept a salary; when the state is without the Way, to accept a salary is shameful.”

“To refrain from competitiveness, boastfulness, envy, and greed—can this be considered Goodness?”

The Master said, “This can be considered difficult, but as for its being Good, that I do not know.”

14.4 The Master said, “Those who possess Virtue will inevitably have something to say, whereas those who have something to say do not necessarily possess Virtue. Those who are Good will necessarily display courage, but those who display courage are not necessarily Good.”

14.5 Nangong Kuo¹²³ said to Kongzi, “Yi was a skillful archer, and Ao was a powerful naval commander, and yet neither of them met a natural death. Yu and Hou Ji, on the other hand, did nothing but personally tend to the land, and yet they both ended up with possession of the world.”¹²⁴

The Master did not answer.

After Nangong Kuo left, the Master sighed, “What a gentlemanly person that man is! How he reveres Virtue!”¹²⁵

123. Most commentators identify him as an official in the state of Lu.

124. Both Yi and Ao were legendary martial heroes of the Xia dynasty with questionable morals: Yi usurped the throne of one of the kings of the Xia dynasty, and Ao was the son of one of Yi's ministers. Ao himself subsequently murdered and dethroned Yi, and was in turn slain and overthrown by one of his own ministers. Yu and Hou Ji were moral worthies and heroes of civilized arts: Yu tamed the Yellow River and introduced irrigation, receiving the rulership of the world from Shun in return, while Hou Ji (“Lord Millet”) is the mythical founder of agriculture and progenitor of the Zhou royal line.

125. The world is won, not through martial prowess, but through careful and patient cultivation. Commentators suggest that Nangong Kuo meant to compare Kongzi himself to Yu and Hou Ji, and that Kongzi thus remained silent out of modesty.

14.7 The Master said, “If you really care for others, can you then fail to put them to work? If you are really dutiful to someone, can you then fail to instruct him?”

14.12 Zilu asked about the complete person.

The Master said, “Take a person as wise as Zang Wuzhong, as free of desire as Gongchuo, as courageous as Zhuangzi of Bian, and as accomplished in the arts as Ran Qiu, and then acculturate them by means of ritual and music—such a man might be called a complete person.”¹²⁶

He then continued: “But must a complete person today be exactly like this? When seeing a chance for profit, he thinks of what is right; when confronting danger, he is ready to take his life into his own hands; when enduring an extended period of hardship, he does not forget what he had professed in more fortunate times—such a man might also be called a complete person.”

14.13 The Master asked Gongming Jia about Gongshu Wenzhi, saying, “Is it really true that your master did not speak, did not laugh, and did not take?”¹²⁷

Gongming Jia answered, “Whoever told you that was exaggerating. My master only spoke when the time was right, and so people never grew impatient listening to him. He only laughed when he was genuinely full of joy, and so people never tired of hearing him laugh. He only took what was rightfully his, and so people never resented his taking of things.”

The Master said, “Was he really that good? Could he really have been that good?”

14.24 The Master said, “In ancient times scholars learned for their own sake; these days they learn for the sake of others.”

14.25 Qu Boyu¹²⁸ sent a messenger to Kongzi. Kongzi sat down beside him and asked, “How are things with your Master?”

The messenger replied, “My Master wishes to reduce his faults, but has not yet been able to do so.”

After the messenger left, the Master said, “Now that is a messenger! That is a messenger!”¹²⁹

126. Zang Wuzhong and Meng Gongchuo were both respected officials in Lu, and Zhuangzi was an official in the state of Bian who was legendary for his courage. (The latter is no relation to the Daoist philosopher whose work is included in chapter 8 of this volume.) On Ran Qiu, cf. *Analects* 5.8, 6.12, 11.17, 11.22, and 11.26.

127. Gongshu Wenzhi was an official in the state of Wei, and Gongming Jia was presumably his disciple.

128. An official in the state of Wei.

129. Kongzi is praising Qu Boyu's noble intentions and realistic evaluation of himself as well as the modesty of his envoy's words. Cf. *Analects* 14.27.

14.27 The Master said, “The gentleman is ashamed to have his words exceed his actions.”

14.29 Zigong was given to criticizing others.

The Master remarked sarcastically, “What a worthy man that Zigong must be! As for me, I hardly have the time for this.”¹³⁰

14.30 The Master said, “Do not worry that you are not recognized by others; worry rather that you yourself lack ability.”

14.34 Someone asked, “What do you think of the saying, ‘Requite injury with kindness?’”¹³¹

The Master replied, “With what, then, would one requite kindness? Requite injury with uprightness, and kindness with kindness.”

14.35 The Master sighed, “No one understands me—do they?”

Zigong replied, “How can you say that no one understands you, Master?”

“I am not bitter toward Heaven, nor do I blame others. I study what is below in order to comprehend what is above. If there is anyone who could understand me, perhaps it is Heaven.”

14.36 Gongbo Liao submitted an accusation against Zilu to the head of the Ji Family. Zifu Jingbo reported this to Kongzi, adding, “That master [i.e., Ji Kangzi] has certainly been led astray by Gongbo Liao, but my influence with him is still sufficient to see to it that Gongbo Liao’s corpse is displayed at court or in the marketplace.”¹³²

The Master said, “Whether or not the Way is to be put into action is a matter of fate. Whether or not the Way is to be discarded is also a matter of fate. What power does Gongbo Liao have to affect fate!”

130. The Master’s sarcastic response indicates that he is entirely focused upon cultivating and correcting himself; only someone who has mastered the Way has the luxury to begin evaluating others, and Zigong is hardly such a person.

131. “Kindness” here is Dé 德, which elsewhere is translated as “Virtue.” The quoted phrase appears in *Daodejing* 63 (in chapter 6 of this volume)—and Kongzi’s response to it is certainly anti-Laozian in flavor—but it was likely a traditional saying not necessarily identified with the *Daodejing* itself.

132. Zifu Jingbo, an official in the state of Lu, is claiming here that he has enough influence with his master, the de facto ruler of Lu, that he can both convince him of Zilu’s innocence and see to it that his fellow minister, Gongbo Liao, is executed for his slander.

14.38 Zilu spent the night at Stone Gate. The next morning, the gatekeeper asked him, "Where have you come from?"

Zilu answered, "From the house of Kongzi."

"Isn't he the one who knows that what he does is impossible and yet persists anyway?"¹³³

14.39 The Master was playing the stone chimes in the state of Wei.

A man with a wicker basket strapped to his back passed by the door of the Kong Family residence and remarked, "Whoever is playing the chimes like that certainly has something in his heart!" After listening for a moment, he added, "How despicable is this petty stubbornness! If no one understands you, just tend to yourself.

'If the river ford is deep, use the stepping-stones;
If it is shallow, simply raise your hem.'"¹³⁴

The Master [hearing these comments] responded, "Such resoluteness! Who could take issue with that!"¹³⁵

Book Fifteen

15.1 Duke Ling of Wei asked Kongzi about military formations.

Kongzi replied, "I know something about the arrangement of ceremonial stands and dishes for ritual offerings, but I have never learned about the arrangement of battalions and divisions."

He left the next day.

15.2 [When Kongzi was besieged] in the state of Chen, all of the provisions were exhausted, and his followers were so weak from hunger that they could not even

133. Cf. *Analects* 18.7. That is, Kongzi persists in his efforts to reform the world even though it appears hopeless. Later Confucians embraced this derisive comment with pride.

134. From the *Odes* (*Mao* # 54).

135. Kongzi's critic is wearing a wicker basket strapped to his back—the sign of a farmer or manual laborer—and yet has an ear for classical music and can quote from the *Odes*. No ordinary commoner, he is more likely a scholar who has gone into reclusion, whether for philosophical or political reasons. Like the gatekeeper in *Analects* 14.38, he is annoyed at Kongzi's persistence in the face of an indifferent world, and advises him to simply accord with the times—as he himself has presumably done. Kongzi's sarcastic response expresses contempt for such passivity and lack of resolution. Cf. *Analects* 8.7, 18.6, and 18.7.

stand. Upset, Zilu appeared before the Master and said, “Does even the gentleman encounter hardship?”

The Master said, “Of course the gentleman encounters hardship. The difference is that the petty man, encountering hardship, is overwhelmed by it.”

15.3 The Master said, “Zigong, do you regard me as simply one who learns much and remembers it?”

Zigong said, “I do. Is that not the case?”

The Master said, “It is not. I string it together on a single thread.”¹³⁶

15.5 The Master said, “Is Shun not an example of someone who ruled by means of nonaction? What did he do? He made himself reverent and took his proper [ritual] position facing south, that is all.”¹³⁷

15.9 The Master said, “No scholar-official of noble intention or Good person would ever pursue life at the expense of Goodness, and in fact some may be called upon to give up their lives in order to fulfill Goodness.”

15.11 Yan Hui asked about running a state.

The Master said, “Follow the calendar of the Xia, travel in the carriages of the Shang, and clothe yourself in the ceremonial caps of the Zhou.¹³⁸ As for music, listen only to the Shao and Wu.¹³⁹ Prohibit the tunes of Zheng, and keep glib people at a distance—for the tunes of Zheng are licentious, and glib people are dangerous.”

15.16 The Master said, “I have never been able to do anything for a person who is not himself constantly asking, ‘What should I do? What should I do?’”

136. Cf. *Analects* 4.15.

137. The ruler faces south, thus serving as the earthly correlate to the Pole Star (cf. *Analects* 2.1). On “nonaction” see the introduction to this chapter and *wuwei* under *Important Terms* in the appendices.

138. The calendar of the Xia—which was in fact something like a combination calendar and almanac, providing instructions for what to do at various points in the year—began the year in the spring and was apparently particularly well adapted to the cycles of the seasons and the needs of farmers. The state carriage of the Shang, according to commentators, was stately but relatively unadorned, while the ceremonial cap of the Zhou was elegant and practical; according to Bao Xian, it shielded both the eyes and the ears, making it easier to resist distractions and concentrate upon ritual.

139. The music of King Shun and King Wu, respectively.

15.18 The Master said, “The gentleman takes rightness as his substance, puts it into practice by means of ritual, gives it expression through modesty, and perfects it by being trustworthy. Now that is a gentleman!”

15.21 The Master said, “The gentleman seeks it in himself; the petty person seeks it in others.”

15.24 Zigong asked, “Is there one teaching that can serve as a guide for one’s entire life?”

The Master answered, “Is it not ‘sympathetic understanding’ (shù 恕)? Do not impose upon others what you yourself do not desire.”

15.28 The Master said, “When the multitude hates a person, you must examine them and judge for yourself. The same holds true for someone whom the multitude loves.”¹⁴⁰

15.29 The Master said, “Human beings can broaden the Way—it is not the Way that broadens human beings.”¹⁴¹

15.30 The Master said, “To make a mistake and yet to not change your ways—this is what is called truly making a mistake.”

15.31 The Master said, “I once engaged in thought for an entire day without eating and an entire night without sleeping, but it did no good. It would have been better for me to have spent that time in learning.”¹⁴²

15.36 The Master said, “When it comes to being Good, defer to no one, not even your teacher.”

15.37 The Master said, “The gentleman is true, but not rigidly trustworthy.”¹⁴³

140. Cf. *Analects* 13.24.

141. As Cài Mó 蔡謨 (Jin dynasty) explains, “The Way is silent and without action, and requires human beings to be put into practice. Human beings can harmonize with the Way—this is why the text reads: ‘Human beings are able to broaden the Way.’ The Way does not harmonize with humans—this is why the text reads: ‘It is not the Way that broadens human beings.’”

142. Cf. *Analects* 2.15 and *Xunzi* chapter 1 (in chapter 9 of this volume).

143. Cf. *Analects* 19.11.

15.39 The Master said, “In education, there are no differences in kind.”¹⁴⁴

15.41 The Master said, “Words should convey their point, and leave it at that.”

15.42 The [blind] Music Master Mian came to see Kongzi.

When they came to the steps, the Master said, “Here are the steps.” When they reached his seat, the Master said, “Here is your seat.” After everyone was seated, the Master informed him as to who was present, saying, “So-and-so is seated here, and So-and-so is seated over there.”

When the Music Master left, Zizhang asked, “Is this the way to converse with a Music Master?”

The Master replied, “Yes, this is indeed the way to assist a Music Master.”¹⁴⁵

Book Sixteen

16.4 Kongzi said, “Beneficial types of friendship number three, as do harmful types of friendship. Befriending the upright, those who are true to their word, or those of broad learning—these are the beneficial types of friendship.¹⁴⁶ Befriending clever flatterers, skillful dissemblers, or the smoothly glib—these are the harmful types of friendship.”

16.5 Kongzi said, “Beneficial types of joy number three, as do harmful types of joy. Taking joy in regulating yourself through the rites and music, in commending the excellence of others, or in possessing many worthy friends—these are the beneficial types of joy. Taking joy in arrogant behavior, idle amusements, or decadent licentiousness—these are the harmful types of joy.”

144. This passage has traditionally been understood as a commentary on the basic educability of all people; cf. *Analects* 7.7, 17.2.

145. The post of Music Master was traditionally filled by blind persons in ancient China, both in order to give them a trade in which they could excel and because their sense of hearing was considered more acute than that of the sighted. Music Master Mian has presumably been brought to Kongzi's residence by an assistant, who then leaves him in Kongzi's care. The point of this passage seems to be the economy of expression of the Master, who puts aside the normal ritual behavior of a host in order to deftly and respectfully serve as a guide for the blind Music Master without being overly fussy or condescending.

146. “True to one's word” is liàng 諒, which had a negative connotation in previous passages (e.g., “rigidly trustworthy” in 15.37) but clearly has a positive sense here.

16.7 Kongzi said, “The gentleman guards against three things: when he is young, and his blood and *qi* are still unstable, he guards against the temptation of female beauty; when he reaches his prime, and his blood and *qi* have become unyielding, he guards against being contentious; when he reaches old age, and his blood and *qi* have begun to decline, he guards against being acquisitive.”¹⁴⁷

16.8 The Master said, “The gentleman stands in awe of three things: the Mandate of Heaven, great men, and the teachings of the sages. The petty person does not understand the Mandate of Heaven, and thus does not regard it with awe; he shows disrespect to great men, and ridicules the teachings of the sages.”

16.9 Kongzi said, “Those who are born understanding it are the best; those who come to understand it through learning are second. Those who find it difficult to understand and yet persist in their studies come next. People who find it difficult to understand but do not even try to learn are the worst of all.”

16.13 Ziqin asked Boyu, “Have you acquired any esoteric learning?”¹⁴⁸

Boyu replied, “I have not. My father was once standing by himself in the courtyard and, as I hurried by with quickened steps, he asked, ‘Have you learned the *Odes*?’¹⁴⁹ I replied, ‘Not yet.’ He said, ‘If you do not learn the *Odes*, you will lack the means to speak.’ I then retired and learned the *Odes*.

“On another day, my father was once again standing by himself in the courtyard and, as I hurried by with quickened steps, he asked, ‘Have you learned ritual?’¹⁵⁰ I replied, ‘Not yet.’ He said, ‘If you do not learn ritual, you will lack the means to take your place.’ I then retired and learned ritual.

“These two things are what I have been taught.”

Ziqin retired and, smiling to himself, remarked “I asked one question and got three answers: I learned about the *Odes*, I learned about ritual, and I learned how the gentleman keeps his son at a distance.”

147. On *qi* 氣, see *Important Terms* in the appendices.

148. Boyu is Kongzi's son, and Ziqin is wondering whether or not—as the Master's own flesh and blood—Boyu received any special instruction withheld from the other disciples.

149. Boyu quickened his steps as a sign of respect; cf. 10.3.

150. Some commentators suggest that “ritual” (lǐ 禮) here meant the title of a text—such as the *Record of Ritual*. This, in turn, would be a sign of a quite late date for the composition of this passage.

Book Seventeen

17.2 The Master said, “By nature people are similar; they diverge as the result of practice.”

17.8 The Master said, “Zilu! Have you heard about the six [virtuous] words and their six corresponding vices?”¹⁵¹

Zilu replied, “I have not.”

“Sit! I will tell you about them.

“Loving Goodness without balancing it with a love for learning will result in the vice of foolishness. Loving wisdom without balancing it with a love for learning will result in the vice of deviance. Loving trustworthiness without balancing it with a love for learning will result in the vice of harmful rigidity. Loving uprightness without balancing it with a love for learning will result in the vice of intolerance. Loving courage without balancing it with a love for learning will result in the vice of unruliness. Loving resoluteness without balancing it with a love for learning will result in the vice of willfulness.”

17.9 The Master said, “Little Ones, why do none of you learn the *Odes*? The *Odes* can be a source of inspiration and a basis for evaluation; they can help you to come together with others, as well as to properly express complaints. In the home, they teach you about how to serve your father, and in public life they teach you about how to serve your lord. They also broadly acquaint you with the names of various birds, beasts, plants, and trees.”

17.10 The Master said to Boyu, “Have you mastered the *Odes* from the ‘South of Zhou’ and the ‘South of Shao’?”¹⁵² A man who has not mastered the ‘South of Zhou’ and the ‘South of Shao’ is like someone standing with his face to the wall, is he not?”

17.11 The Master said, “When we say, ‘the rites, the rites,’ are we speaking merely of jade and silk? When we say, ‘music, music,’ are we speaking merely of bells and drums?”¹⁵³

151. The literal meaning of *bì* 蔽—the word translated here as “vice”—is “to cover over” or “obscure.” Mengzi uses it to describe how the heart can be “led astray” by things in *Mengzi* 6A15 (in chapter 4 of this volume); Xunzi uses it with the sense of “fixations” that can lead us to endorse inferior doctrines or ways of life (see *Xunzi* chapter 21, “Undoing Fixation,” in chapter 9 of this volume).

152. These are the first two sections of the *Odes* and are used here to refer to the *Odes* as a whole. Cf. *Analects* 16.13.

153. Just as true music requires not merely instruments but sensitive musicians to play them, so true ritual requires not merely traditional paraphernalia but also emotionally committed, sensitive practitioners. Cf. *Analects* 2.7, 3.3, and 3.12.

17.13 The Master said, “The village worthy is the thief of virtue.”¹⁵⁴

17.18 The Master said, “I hate that purple has usurped the place of vermilion, that the tunes of Zheng have been confused with classical music, and that the clever of tongue have undermined both state and family.”¹⁵⁵

17.19 The Master sighed, “Would that I did not have to speak!”

Zigong said, “If the Master did not speak, then how would we little ones receive guidance from you?”

The Master replied, “What does Heaven ever say? Yet the four seasons are put in motion by it, and the myriad creatures receive their life from it. What does Heaven ever say?”

17.21 Zai Wo asked about the three-year mourning period, saying, “Surely one year is long enough. If the gentleman refrains from practicing ritual for three years, the rites will surely fall into ruin; if he refrains from music for three years, this will surely be disastrous for music. After the lapse of a year the old grain has been used up, while the new grain has ripened, and the four different types of tinder have all been drilled in order to rekindle the fire.”¹⁵⁶ One year is surely long enough.”

The Master asked, “Would you feel comfortable then eating your sweet rice and wearing your brocade gowns?”¹⁵⁷

“I would.”

The Master replied, “Well, if you would feel comfortable doing so, then by all means you should do it. When the gentleman is in mourning, he gets no pleasure from eating sweet foods, finds no joy in listening to music, and feels no comfort in his place of dwelling. This is why he gives up these things. But if you would feel comfortable doing them, then by all means you should!”

After Zai Wo left, the Master remarked, “This shows how lacking in Goodness this Zai Wo is! A child is completely dependent upon the care of his parents for the first three years of his life—this is why the three-year mourning period is the

154. See *Mengzi* 7B37 (in chapter 4 of this volume) for an elaboration of this passage.

155. Vermilion—the color of the Zhou—is the traditional and proper color for ceremonial clothing while purple is a more “modern” and increasingly popular variant. On the “tunes of Zheng,” see *Analects* 15.11.

156. An annual ritual of renewal.

157. While mourning, one was restricted to a diet of plain rice and water and wearing rough hemp for clothing. One was to suspend most normal social activity, maintain particular demeanors, and refrain from familiar pleasures. A child was to maintain three years (often understood as into the beginning of the third year—i.e., approximately twenty-five months) of mourning for a deceased parent. These rigors were thought to express respect for the dead and serve as a spiritual exercise for the living.

common practice throughout the world. Did Zai Wo not receive three years of care from his parents?”

17.23 Zilu asked, “Does the gentleman admire courage?”

The Master said, “The gentleman admires rightness above all. A gentleman who possessed courage but lacked a sense of rightness would create political disorder, while a common person who possessed courage but lacked a sense of rightness would become a bandit.”

17.25 The Master said, “Women and servants are particularly hard to manage: if you are too familiar with them, they grow insolent, but if you are too distant, they grow resentful.”¹⁵⁸

Book Eighteen

18.6 Kongzi passed Chang Ju and Jie Ni, who were yoked together pulling a plow through a field. He sent Zilu to ask them where the ford was to be found.¹⁵⁹

Chang Ju inquired, “That fellow holding the reins there—who is he?”

Zilu answered, “That is Kongzi.”

“Do you mean Kongzi of Lu?”

“The same.”

“Then *he* should know where the ford is.”¹⁶⁰

Zilu then asked Jie Ni.

Jie Ni also replied with a question: “Who are you?”

“I am Zilu.”

158. Some later commentators have tried—with little success—to soften this infamously misogynous passage. Its sense is probably that, considering their potentially dangerous sexual power and inability to control themselves, household women (i.e., wives and concubines), like servants, need to be managed firmly, but with respect, if they are to remain obedient and not overstep their proper roles.

159. Kongzi and his entourage were apparently attempting to cross a nearby river, but this passage is also to be read allegorically: the “ford” is the way out of the “great flood of chaos” mentioned below. The use of self-consciously primitive technology by these two figures (most plows were ox-drawn by this time), as well as their knowledge of Kongzi’s identity revealed below, makes it clear that they are no ordinary commoners, but rather educated primitivist recluses who have deliberately rejected society and culture (cf. *Analects* 14.39). Like many of the figures in the *Zhuangzi* (in chapter 8 of this volume), their names appear to be allegorical (“Standing Tall in the Marsh” and “Prominent in the Mud,” respectively); the appearance of this literary technique and the complex narrative quality of this passage mark it as quite late.

160. The comment is sarcastic. Kongzi should know, given that he is reputed to be so wise.

“The disciple of Kongzi of Lu?”

“Yes.”

“The whole world is as if engulfed in a great flood, and who can change it? Given this, instead of following a scholar who merely avoids the bad people [of this age],¹⁶¹ wouldn't it be better for you to follow scholars like us, who avoid the age itself?” He then proceeded to cover up his seeds with dirt and did not pause again.

Zilu returned and reported this conversation to Kongzi. The Master was lost in thought for a moment, and then remarked, “A person cannot flock together with the birds and the beasts. If I do not associate with the followers of men, then with whom would I associate? If the Way were realized in the world, then I would not need to change anything.”¹⁶²

18.7 Zilu was traveling with Kongzi, but had fallen behind. He encountered an old man carrying a wicker basket suspended from his staff. Zilu asked, “Have you seen my Master?”

The old man answered,

“Won't soil his dainty hands
Can't tell millet from barley.”¹⁶³

“Who, then, might your master be?” He then planted his staff in the ground and began weeding. [Not knowing how to reply,] Zilu simply remained standing with his hands clasped as a sign of respect.

The old man subsequently invited Zilu back to his house to stay the night. After killing a chicken and preparing some millet for Zilu to eat, he presented his two sons to him. On the next day Zilu caught up to Kongzi and told him what had happened.

“He must be a scholar recluse,” the Master said. He sent Zilu back to the old farmer's house to meet with him again, but by the time Zilu got there the man had already disappeared. Zilu then remarked, “To avoid public service is to be without a sense of what is right. Proper relations between elders and juniors cannot be discarded—how, then, can one discard the rightness that obtains between ruler and

161. Referring to Kongzi's itinerant seeking after a ruler who would put his Way into practice.

162. Kongzi's compassion for the suffering of the world is such that he cannot take what he views as the easy way out—simply withdrawing from society and living the life of a noble, unsullied recluse (cf. *Analects* 18.8)—although his mission as a “wooden clapper” (*Analects* 3.24) is grueling and fraught with difficulties and frustrations.

163. This comment is a rhyming verse in the Chinese—an indication that again we are not dealing with an ordinary, illiterate farmer.

minister?¹⁶⁴ To do so is to wish to keep one's hands from getting dirty at the expense of throwing the great social order into chaos. The gentleman takes office in order to do what is right, even though he already knows that the Way will not be realized."¹⁶⁵

18.8 Those men who went into seclusion include Bo Yi, Shu Qi, Yu Zhong, Yi Yi, Zhu Zhang, Liuxia Hui, and Shao Lian.¹⁶⁶

The Master said, "Unwilling to lower their aspirations or bring disgrace upon their persons—such were Bo Yi and Shu Qi."

Of Liuxia Hui and Shao Lian he said, "Although they lowered their aspirations and brought disgrace upon their persons, at least their speech was in accord with their status and their actions were in accord with their thoughts."

Of Yu Zhong and Yi Yi he said, "Living in seclusion and freely speaking their minds, their persons remained pure and their resignations from office were well-considered."

He concluded, "I, however, am different from all of them in that I have no preconceived notions of what is permissible and what is not."¹⁶⁷

*Book Nineteen*¹⁶⁸

19.6 Zixia said, "Learning broadly and firmly retaining what one has learned, being incisive in one's questioning and able to reflect upon what is near at hand—Goodness is to be found in this."

19.7 Zixia said, "The various artisans dwell in their workshops in order to perfect their crafts, just as the gentleman learns in order to reach the end of his Way."

164. The point is that the old recluse recognizes the first set of relationships in requiting Zilu's expression of respect (of a younger man for an elder) with proper hospitality and in formally presenting his sons, but ignores the second by living in reclusion and avoiding any sort of official contact.

165. Cf. *Analects* 14.38.

166. These men were all famous recluses who withdrew from public service on moral grounds. For more on Bo Yi and Shu Qi, see *Important Figures* in the appendices.

167. Cf. *Analects* 4.10.

168. This book consists entirely of sayings from Kongzi's disciples. Many of these sayings are summaries or elaborations of themes already seen in earlier books.

19.11 Zixia said, “As long as one does not transgress the bounds when it comes to important Virtues, it is permissible to cross the line here and there when it comes to minor Virtues.”¹⁶⁹

19.12 Ziyou said, “Among the disciples of Zixia, the younger ones are fairly competent when it comes to tasks such as mopping and sweeping, answering summons, and entering and retiring from formal company, but these are all superficialities.¹⁷⁰ They are completely at a loss when it comes to mastering the basics. Why is this?”

When Zixia heard of this, he remarked, “Alas! Ziyou seems to have missed the point. Whose disciples will be the first to be taught the Way of the gentleman, and then in the end grow tired of it? It is like the grass and the trees: you make distinctions between them according to their kind.¹⁷¹ The Way of the gentleman, how can it be slandered so? Starting at the beginning and working through to the end—surely this describes none other than the sage!”

19.14 Ziyou said, “Mourning should fully express grief and then stop at that.”¹⁷²

19.21 Zigong said, “A gentleman’s errors are like an eclipse of the sun or the moon: when he errs, everyone notices it, but when he makes amends, everyone looks up to him.”

Book Twenty

20.3 Kongzi said, “One who does not understand fate lacks the means to become a gentleman. One who does not understand ritual lacks the means to take his place.¹⁷³ One who does not understand words lacks the means to evaluate others.”

169. Cf. *Analects* 15.37.

170. Literally, “the branches” (mò 末), contrasted with the “basics”—the “root” (běn 本)—below.

171. That is, the true potential gentleman can be recognized by how he handles the small matters taught at the beginning of the course of instruction.

172. Cf. *Analects* 15.41.

173. Cf. *Analects* 2.4.