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The Analects

Translated with an Introduction and Notes by
RAYMOND DAWSON

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BOOK 2

1. The Master said: 'The practice of government by means of virtue may be compared with the pole-star,* which the multitudinous stars pay homage to while it stays in its place.'
2. The Master said: 'The *Songs* number three hundred, but I will cover their meaning with a single quotation: "Let there be no depravity in your thoughts."**'
3. The Master said: 'If you lead them by means of government and keep order among them by means of punishments, the people are without conscience in evading them. If you lead them by means of virtue and keep order among them by means of ritual, they have a conscience and moreover will submit.'
4. The Master said: 'At fifteen I set my heart on learning, at thirty I was established, at forty I had no perplexities, at fifty I understood the decrees of Heaven, at sixty my ear was in accord, and at seventy* I followed what my heart desired but did not transgress what was right.'
5. Meng Yi Zi* asked about filial piety and the Master said: 'Avoid breaking the rules.' When he was being driven by Fan Chi, the Master told him: 'Meng asked me about filial piety and I replied saying: "Avoid breaking the rules."' Fan Chi said: 'What did you mean?' The Master said: 'When you serve them while they are alive do so in accordance with the rites; and after they are dead, when you bury them, do so in accordance with the rites and, when you sacrifice to them, do so in accordance with the rites.'
6. Meng Wu Bo asked about filial piety and the Master said: 'It is when father's and mother's only worry is about one being ill.'
7. Ziyou* asked about filial piety. The Master said: 'As far as present-day filial piety is concerned, this means being able to provide sustenance; but even dogs and horses are all able to receive sustenance. If reverence is not shown, how does one tell the difference?'
8. Zixia asked about filial piety. The Master said: 'It is the

demeanour that is difficult. If the young people bear the brunt of their elders' labours when there is work to be done, and if the elders are provided with sustenance when there is wine and food available, then does one consider that this constitutes filial piety?'

9. The Master said: 'I spend the whole day talking with Hui,* and he does not put any counter-arguments but seems stupid; but when he is no longer with me and I study his private conduct, he is after all capable of setting an example. Hui is certainly not stupid.'

10. The Master said: 'See how he operates, observe what path he follows, examine what he is satisfied with, and how can a man remain inscrutable, how can a man remain inscrutable!'

11. The Master said: 'If by keeping the old warm one can provide understanding of the new, one is fit to be a teacher.'

12. The Master said: 'A gentleman does not behave as an implement.'*

13. Zigong asked about the gentleman. The Master said: 'He puts his sayings into action before adopting them as guidelines.'

14. The Master said: 'The gentleman has universal sympathies and is not partisan. The small man is partisan and does not have universal sympathies.'

15. The Master said: 'If one studies but does not think, one is caught in a trap. If one thinks but does not study, one is in peril.'

16. * The Master said: 'If one is attacked from different starting points, it is indeed damaging.'

17. The Master said: 'You,* shall I teach you about understanding something? When you understand something, to recognize that you understand it; but when you do not understand something, to recognize that you do not understand it—that is understanding.'

18. Zizhang was studying with an official career in view. The Master said: 'If you hear much but omit doubtful points and speak cautiously about the rest of it, then you will seldom be to blame. If you see much but omit what is dangerous and cautiously put into practice the rest of it, then

you will seldom feel regret. If your words are seldom blamed and your actions are seldom regretted, then an official career will be open to you.'

19. Duke Ai* asked: 'What action does one take so that the people will be obedient?' Master Kong replied saying: 'If you promote the straight and set them above the crooked, then the people will be obedient. If you promote the crooked and set them above the straight, then the people will not be obedient.'

20. Ji Kang Zi* asked how the people might be induced to be respectful and loyal so that they might be properly encouraged. The Master said: 'If you oversee them with dignity, they will be respectful. If you are dutiful towards your parents and kind to your children, then they will be loyal. If you promote the good and instruct the incompetent, then they will be encouraged.'

21. Someone said to Master Kong: 'Why do you not take part in government?' The Master said: 'The *Book of Documents** mentions filial piety, doesn't it? "Only be dutiful towards your parents and friendly towards your brothers, and you will be contributing to the existence of government." These virtues surely constitute taking part in government, so why should only that particular activity be regarded as taking part in government?'

22. The Master said: 'If someone is untrustworthy in spite of being a man, I do not know that he will do. If carriages have no means of yoking horses* to them, how are they ever made to go?'

23. Zizhang asked whether ten generations hence could be known about. The Master said: 'The Yin* based itself on the Xia ritual and what they subtracted or added may be known. The Zhou based itself on the Yin ritual and what they subtracted or added may be known. The Zhou's possible successors even in a hundred generations may be known about.'

24. The Master said: 'To sacrifice to the spirits of ancestors who are not one's own is obsequiousness, and to see what is right and not do it is cowardice.'

BOOK 3

1. Master Kong said: 'The Ji family has eight rows of dancers* performing in the courtyard. If this can be endured, what cannot be endured?'

2. The Three Families cleared the sacrificial vessels accompanied by the *Yong*.* The Master said:

"In attendance are the lords and princes.
The Son of Heaven is awesome and majestic."

What has this got to do with the halls of the Three Families?'

3. The Master said: 'If someone is not humane in spite of being a man, what has he to do with ritual? If someone is not humane in spite of being a man, what has he to do with music?'

4. Lin Fang asked about the root of ritual. The Master said: 'An important question indeed! In ritual it is better to be frugal rather than lavish, but in mourning it is better to be sorrowful rather than unmoved.'

5. The Master said: 'Barbarian peoples with rulers are not as good as the various Chinese states without them.'

6. The Ji family was sacrificing to Mount Tai. The Master said to Ran You:* 'Can you not go to their rescue?' 'I cannot', he replied. 'Alas and alack!' said the Master. 'Then do you mean that Mount Tai is not as good as Lin Fang?'

7. The Master said: 'There is nothing which gentlemen compete over. If competition were inevitable, it would be in archery, wouldn't it? But they go up, bowing and making way for each other; and when they come down, they have a drink. So even in their competition with each other, they are gentlemen.'

8. Zixia asked the meaning of the lines:

The entrancing smile dimpling,
The beautiful eyes shining,
Plain silk which is made into finery.*

The Master said: 'The decoration comes after the plain silk.' 'Is ritual secondary?' he said. 'Shang is the one who takes my point', said the Master. 'Now it is definitely possible to talk about the *Songs* with him.'

9. The Master said: 'The Xia ritual I can talk about although Qi* is not worth taking as evidence. The Yin ritual I can talk about although Song is not worth taking as evidence. This is because both the documents and the men of learning are not adequate to be taken as a basis. If they were adequate, then I could take them as evidence.'

10. The Master said: 'At the *di* sacrifice* I do not wish to witness what comes after the libation.'

11. Someone enquired about the meaning of the *di* sacrifice. 'This is something I do not understand', said the Master. 'The relationship to all under Heaven of one who did understand its meaning would be like putting this here.' And he put his finger on the palm of his hand.

12. 'Sacrifice as if present'* means 'Sacrifice to the spirits as if the *spirits* were in one's presence'; but the Master said: 'If I myself do not take part in a sacrifice, it is as if no sacrifice is made.'

13. Wangsun Jia asked: 'What is the meaning of

"Better to fawn on the stove
Than to fawn on the south-west corner"?"*

The Master said: 'It is not so. If you offend against Heaven, there is no one to pray to.'

14. The Master said: 'Zhou observes the example set by two dynasties, so how splendid is its culture! And we take Zhou as our model.'

15. When the Master entered the grand temple,* he asked about every single thing. Someone said: 'Who says that the son of the man from Zou knows the ritual? When he enters the grand temple, he asks about every single thing.' When the Master heard this, he said: 'This is the ritual.'

16. The Master said: 'In archery it was the Way of antiquity not to stress the leather,* because strength is not evenly matched.'

17. Zigong wished to do away with the sacrificial sheep at

the announcement of the new moon. The Master said: 'Si, you begrudge the sheep used in this, but I begrudge the ritual involved in it.'

18. The Master said: 'The full observance of ritual in serving a ruler is regarded by others as sycophancy.'

19. Duke Ding* asked how rulers should employ ministers, and how ministers should serve rulers. Master Kong replied: 'Rulers in employing ministers do so in accordance with ritual, and ministers in serving rulers do so in accordance with loyalty.'

20. The Master said: 'In the *Guan ju** they are joyful but not wanton, they suffer grief but are not harmed.'

21. Duke Ai asked Zai Wo* about the altar to the earth god. Zai Wo replied saying: 'The Xia used the pine, the men of Yin used the cypress, and the men of Zhou used the chestnut, saying that it would make the people tremble.*' When the Master heard this, he said: 'What is over and done with one does not discuss, what has taken its course one does not complain about, and what is already past one does not criticize.'

22. The Master said: 'Guan Zhong's capacity was small indeed.' Someone said: 'Guan Zhong* was thrifty, was he?' He said: 'Guan Zhong kept three establishments, and in his official business he did not take over other people's duties, so how does he get a reputation for thrift?' 'Nevertheless Guan Zhong did understand the rites, didn't he?' He said: 'Rulers of states erect gate-screens, and Guan also erected a gate-screen; rulers of states, when they held a friendly meeting with another ruler, had a stand for inverted cups, and Guan also had a stand for inverted cups. If even Guan Zhong understood the rites, who does not understand the rites?'

23. The Master talked about music to the Grand Music-master of Lu saying: 'Their music, insofar as it may be known about, tended to be in unison when they started to play. Following upon this, it was somewhat harmonious, clear, and unbroken right through until it was finished.'

24. The boundaryman at Yi requested to be presented, saying: 'When gentlemen come here, I have never failed to get presented.' The followers presented him, and as he came

out, he said: 'What have you gentlemen to be disheartened at in his failure? It is a long time since the Way prevailed in the world, but Heaven is about to use your Master as a wooden warning-bell.'

25. The Master said that the *shao** was perfectly beautiful and also perfectly good. He said of the *wu* that it was perfectly beautiful, but not perfectly good.'

26. The Master said: 'Intolerance when occupying a high position, irreverence when performing ritual, and being unsorrowful in the conduct of mourning—how am I to contemplate these things?'

BOOK 7

1. The Master said: 'I transmit but do not create. Being fond of the truth, I am an admirer of antiquity. I venture to be compared with our old Peng.'*
2. The Master said: 'I silently accumulate knowledge of things; when I study, I do not get bored; in teaching others I do not grow weary—for these things surely present me with no difficulty.'
3. The Master said: 'The failure to cultivate virtue, the failure to put into practice what I have learnt, hearing what is right and being unable to move towards it, being unable to change what is not good—these are my worries.'
4. When the Master was at leisure, he was relaxed and comfortable.
5. The Master said: 'Extreme is my decline; it is long since I last dreamt I saw the Duke of Zhou!'
6. The Master said: 'Set your heart on the Way, base yourself on virtue, rely on humaneness, and take your relaxation in the arts.'
7. The Master said: 'From the bringer of a bundle of dried meat* upwards, I have never once refused instruction to anyone.'
8. The Master said: 'To those who are not eager to learn I do not explain anything, and to those who are not bursting to speak I do not reveal anything. If I raise one angle and they do not come back with the other three angles, I will not repeat myself.'
9. When the Master was eating alongside someone in mourning, he never ate his fill.
10. If on a certain day he had wept the Master did not sing.
11. The Master said to Yan Hui: 'To take action when employed and to remain in store* when dismissed—surely only you and I have this capacity.' Zilu said: 'If you, Master, were leading the three armies,* then who would go with you?' The Master said: 'I would not go with anyone who

had no regrets if he died tackling a tiger with his bare hands or crossing the Yellow River without a boat. What would be necessary would be someone who was apprehensive when approaching a task and liked achieving success through planning.'

12. The Master said: 'If even riches might properly be sought, I would surely make them my aim, even if it meant being a fellow carrying a whip;* but if they may not be properly sought, I shall pursue those things which I admire.'

13. What the Master took trouble over were fasting, war, and sickness.

14. When the Master was in Qi, he heard the *shao*, and for three months did not notice the taste of meat. He said: 'I did not imagine that music-making reached such perfection.'

15. Ran You said: 'Is our Master in favour of the Lord of Wei?*' Zigong said: 'All right, I shall ask about that.' He went in and said: 'What sort of men were Bo Yi and Shu Qi?' He said: 'They were men of quality from ancient times.' He said: 'Did they feel resentment?' He said: 'They sought humaneness and obtained humaneness, so what would they resent?' When he came out he said: 'Our Master is not in favour.'

16. The Master said: 'Even in the midst of eating coarse rice and drinking water and using a bent arm for a pillow happiness is surely to be found; riches and honours acquired by unrighteous means are to me like the floating clouds.'

17. The Master said: 'Give me a few more years so that I am studying at fifty, and surely I may avoid major errors.'

18. What the Master used the standard pronunciation* for were the *Songs*, the *Documents*, and the performance of the rites. For all these he used the standard pronunciation.

19. The Duke of She asked Zilu about Master Kong. Zilu did not reply. The Master said: 'Why did you not just say that he is the sort of person who gets so worked up that he forgets to eat, is so happy that he forgets anxieties, and is not aware that old age will come.'

20. The Master said: 'I am not one who knew about things at birth; I am one who through my admiration of antiquity is keen to discover things.'

21. The Master did not speak of* prodigies, force, disorders, or spirits.
22. The Master said: 'When I walk with two others, I always receive instruction from them. I select their good qualities and copy them, and improve on their bad qualities.'
23. The Master said: 'Heaven produced virtue in me, so what will Huan Tui* have to do with me?'
24. The Master said: 'My friends, do you consider me secretive? I definitely have no secrets. I am one who shares with you, my friends, every step he takes. Such a one am I.'
25. The Master took four subjects for his teaching: culture, conduct, loyalty, and good faith.
26. The Master said: 'A sage I have not been able to meet, but a person who manages to meet a gentleman will do.' The Master said: 'A good man I have not been able to meet, but a person who manages to meet a man of constancy will do. But when people pretend to possess things they do not have, pretend to be full when they are empty, pretend to be prosperous when they are in straitened circumstances, it is indeed difficult to maintain constancy.'
27. The Master used a line, but did not trawl for fish; he used a corded arrow,* but did not shoot at sitting targets.
28. The Master said: 'Surely there are people who achieve something without knowledge, but I for my part lack this characteristic. To hear much and select the good points from it and copy them, to see much and remember it constitutes an inferior variety of knowledge.*'
29. In Hu village it was difficult to hold conversations with the people; so when a lad presented himself, the disciples had their doubts. The Master said: 'I shall be associating with his coming into my presence, not with what he does after he has withdrawn from it. Just what are you being so serious about? If a man purifies himself* in order to be admitted into my presence, I am associating with the fact that he has been purified, and I am not vouching for his past.'
30. The Master said: 'Is humaneness really so far away? If we ourselves wanted humaneness, then humaneness would arrive.'
31. The Minister of Crime of Chen asked whether Duke

- Zhao understood the rites. Master Kong said: 'He understood the rites.' When Master Kong withdrew, he bowed to Wuma Qi and made him come forward. He said: 'I have heard that gentlemen do not have favourites, but surely the gentleman does? The ruler took to wife a lady of Wu with the same surname as himself, but called her Wu Meng Zi.* If even he understood the rites, who does not understand the rites?' Wuma Qi reported this. The Master said: 'I am fortunate. If I have faults, other people are certain to be aware of them.'
32. When the Master was singing with others, he always had the good bits repeated before joining in.
33. The Master said: 'In making an effort I am comparable with others, but as to myself being a gentleman in practice, I have never yet managed to achieve that.'
34. The Master said: 'As for being a sage or a humane man, I would surely not presume to be such? On the other hand it may simply be said that I do not get tired of aiming for this and do not grow weary of teaching others.' Gongxi Hua said: 'It is just that we disciples are incapable of following your example.'
35. The Master was gravely ill and Zilu requested to say a prayer. The Master said: 'Does such a thing happen?' Zilu replied: 'Yes, it does. The prayer for the dead says: "We pray thus to the spirits above and below."' The Master said: 'My prayers have been going on for a long time.*'
36. The Master said: 'If one is extravagant, then one becomes imprudent; if one is frugal, then one becomes inflexible. It is better for one to be set in one's ways than imprudent.'
37. The Master said: 'The gentleman is calm and peaceful; the small man is always emotional.'
38. The Master was genial and yet strict, imposing and yet not intimidating, courteous and yet at ease.