[Template:Pp-vandalism](/wiki/Template:Pp-vandalism" \o "Template:Pp-vandalism) [Template:Confucianism](/wiki/Template:Confucianism) [Template:Infobox Chinese](/wiki/Template:Infobox_Chinese) [thumb|200px|](/wiki/File:Jiangyin_wenmiao_dachengdian.jpg)[Temple of Confucius](/wiki/Temple_of_Confucius) of [Jiangyin](/wiki/Jiangyin), [Wuxi](/wiki/Wuxi), [Jiangsu](/wiki/Jiangsu). This is a *wénmiào* (文庙), that is to say a temple where [Confucius](/wiki/Confucius) is worshipped as *Wéndì* (文帝), "God of Culture". [thumb|200px|Gates of the *wénmiào* of](/wiki/File:Datong_Wenmiao_2013.08.29_11-33-25.jpg) [Datong](/wiki/Datong), [Shanxi](/wiki/Shanxi). **Confucianism**, also known as **Ruism**,[[1]](#cite_note-1)[[2]](#cite_note-2) is a system of [philosophical](/wiki/Philosophical) and "ethical-sociopolitical teachings" sometimes described as a [religion](/wiki/Religion).[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn) Confucianism developed during the [Spring and Autumn Period](/wiki/Spring_and_Autumn_Period) from the teachings of the [Chinese philosopher](/wiki/Chinese_philosophy) [Confucius](/wiki/Confucius) (551–479 BCE), who considered himself a retransmitter of [Zhou](/wiki/Zhou_dynasty) values.[[3]](#cite_note-3) Its [metaphysical](/wiki/Metaphysics) and [cosmological](/wiki/Cosmology) elements developed in the [Han Dynasty](/wiki/Han_Dynasty) following the replacement of its contemporary, the more Taoistic [Huang-Lao](/wiki/Huang-Lao), as the official ideology.[[4]](#cite_note-4) More privately, Chinese emperors would still make use of [Legalism](/wiki/Legalism_(Chinese_philosophy)). The disintegration of the Han in the second century CE opened the way for the [soteriological](/wiki/Soteriology) doctrines of [Buddhism](/wiki/Buddhism) and [Taoism](/wiki/Taoism) to dominate intellectual life at that time.

A Confucian revival began during the [Tang dynasty](/wiki/Tang_dynasty) of 618-907. In the late Tang, Confucianism developed in response to Buddhism and Taoism and was reformulated as [Neo-Confucianism](/wiki/Neo-Confucianism). This reinvigorated form was adopted as the basis of the [imperial exams](/wiki/Imperial_exams) and the core philosophy of the [scholar official class](/wiki/Scholar-officials) in the [Song dynasty](/wiki/Song_dynasty) (960-1297). The abolition of the examination system in 1905 marked the end of official Confucianism. The [New Culture](/wiki/New_Culture_Movement) intellectuals of the early twentieth century blamed Confucianism for China's weaknesses. They searched for new doctrines to replace Confucian teachings; some of these new ideologies include the "[Three Principles of the People](/wiki/Three_Principles_of_the_People)" with the establishment of the [Republic of China](/wiki/Republic_of_China_(1912-1949)), and then [Maoism](/wiki/Maoism) under the [People's Republic of China](/wiki/People's_Republic_of_China). In the late twentieth century, some people[Template:Which](/wiki/Template:Which) credited Confucianism with the rise of the [East Asian](/wiki/East_Asia) economy and it enjoyed a rise in popularity both in China and abroad.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

With particular emphasis on the importance of the family and social harmony, rather than on an otherworldly [soteriology](/wiki/Soteriology),[[5]](#cite_note-5) the core of Confucianism is [humanistic](/wiki/Humanism).[[6]](#cite_note-6) According to [Herbert Fingarette's](/wiki/Herbert_Fingarette) concept of "the [secular](/wiki/Secularity) as [sacred](/wiki/Sacred)", Confucianism regards the ordinary activities of human life — and especially in human relationships as a manifestation of the sacred,[[7]](#cite_note-7) because they are the expression of our moral nature (*xìng* 性), which has a transcendent anchorage in Heaven (*tiān* 天) and a proper respect of the [gods](/wiki/Deity) ([*shén*](/wiki/Shen_(Chinese_religion))).[[8]](#cite_note-8) While Heaven (*tiān*) has some characteristics that overlap the category of deity, it is primarily an *impersonal* absolute, like [*dào*](/wiki/Tao) (道) and *Brahman*.[[9]](#cite_note-9)[[10]](#cite_note-10)[[11]](#cite_note-11) Confucian liturgy (that is called 儒 *rú*, or sometimes 正統/正统 *zhèngtǒng*, meaning "[orthoprax](/wiki/Orthopraxy)" ritual style) led by Confucian priests or ritual masters (禮生/礼生 *lǐshēng*) to worship the gods in public and ancestral [Chinese temples](/wiki/Chinese_temple), is preferred[Template:By whom](/wiki/Template:By_whom) in special occasions over Taoist or popular ritual.[[12]](#cite_note-12) The this-worldly concern of Confucianism rests on the belief that human beings are fundamentally good, and teachable, improvable, and perfectible through personal and communal endeavor especially self-cultivation and self-creation. Confucian thought focuses on the cultivation of virtue and maintenance of ethics. Some of the basic Confucian ethical concepts and practices include *rén*, *yì*, and *lǐ*, and *zhì*. *Rén* (仁, "benevolence" or "humaneness") is the essence of the human being which manifests as compassion. It is the virtue-form of Heaven.[[13]](#cite_note-13) *Yì* (義/义) is the upholding of righteousness and the moral disposition to do good. *Lǐ* (禮/礼) is a system of ritual norms and propriety that determines how a person should properly act in everyday life according to the law of Heaven. *Zhì* (智) is the ability to see what is right and fair, or the converse, in the behaviors exhibited by others. Confucianism holds one in contempt, either passively or actively, for failure to uphold the cardinal moral values of *rén* and *yì*.

Traditionally, cultures and countries in the [East Asian cultural sphere](/wiki/East_Asian_cultural_sphere) are strongly influenced by Confucianism, including mainland [China](/wiki/Culture_of_China), [Taiwan](/wiki/Culture_of_Taiwan), [Hong Kong](/wiki/Culture_of_Hong_Kong), [Macau](/wiki/Culture_of_Macau), [Korea](/wiki/Culture_of_Korea), [Japan](/wiki/Culture_of_Japan), and [Vietnam](/wiki/Culture_of_Vietnam), as well as various territories settled predominantly by [Chinese people](/wiki/Han_Chinese), such as [Singapore](/wiki/Culture_of_Singapore). In the 20th century Confucianism's influence reduced greatly. More recently,[Template:When](/wiki/Template:When) there have been talks of a "Confucian Revival" in the academic and the scholarly community[[14]](#cite_note-14)[[15]](#cite_note-15) and there has been a grassroots proliferation of various types of [Confucian churches](/wiki/Confucian_churches).[Template:Sfnb](/wiki/Template:Sfnb) In late 2015 many Confucian [leaders](/wiki/Leader)[Template:Which](/wiki/Template:Which) formally established a national [Holy Confucian Church](/wiki/Holy_Confucian_Church) (孔聖會/孔圣会 *Kǒngshènghuì*) in China to unify the many Confucian congregations and civil society organisations.

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## Names and terminology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

[thumb|150px|](/wiki/File:Konfuzius-1770.jpg)[Confucius](/wiki/Confucius), circa 1770. Strictly speaking, there is no term in Chinese which directly corresponds to "Confucianism". In the Chinese language, the character *rú* 儒 meaning "scholar" is generally used both in the past and the present to refer to things related to Confucianism. The character *rú* in ancient China has diverse meanings. Some examples include, "weak", "soft", "to tame", "to comfort" and "to educate".[[16]](#cite_note-16) Several different terms are used in different situations, several of which are of modern origin:

* "School of the scholars" ([Template:Zh](/wiki/Template:Zh))
* "Teaching of the scholars" ([Template:Zh](/wiki/Template:Zh))
* "Study of the scholars" ([Template:Cjkv](/wiki/Template:Cjkv))
* "Teaching of Confucius" ([Template:Zh](/wiki/Template:Zh))
* "Kong Family's Business" ([Template:Zh](/wiki/Template:Zh))[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn)

Three of these use *rú*. These names do not use the name "Confucius" at all, but instead center on the figure or ideal of the Confucian scholar; however, the suffixes *jiā*, *jiào* and *xué* carry different implications as to the nature of Confucianism itself.

*Rújiā* contains the character *jiā*, which literally means "house" or "family". In this context, it is more readily construed as meaning "school of thought", since it is also used to construct the names of philosophical schools contemporary with Confucianism: for example, the Chinese names for [Legalism](/wiki/Legalism_(philosophy)) and [Mohism](/wiki/Mohism) end in *jiā*.

*Rújiào* and *Kǒngjiào* contain the Chinese character *jiào*, the noun "teach", used in such terms as "education", or "educator". The term, however, is notably used to construct the names of religions in Chinese: the terms for Islam, Judaism, Christianity, and other religions in Chinese all end with *jiào*.

*Rúxué* contains *xué*, "study". The term is parallel to "-ology" in English, being used to construct the names of academic fields: the Chinese names of fields such as physics, chemistry, biology, political science, economics, and sociology all end in *xué*.

The use of the term Confucianism has been avoided by some modern scholars, who favor *Ruism* or *Ruists* in lieu of Confucianism. Robert Eno argues that the term has been "burdened... with the ambiguities and irrelevant traditional associations". Ruism, as he states, is more faithful to the original Chinese name for the school.[[17]](#cite_note-17)

### The Five Classics (五经, ''Wǔjīng'') and the Confucian vision[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

Traditionally, Confucius was thought to be the author or editor of the [Five Classics](/wiki/Four_Books_and_Five_Classics) which were the basic texts of Confucianism. The scholar [Yáo Xīnzhōng](/wiki/Xinzhong_Yao) allows that there are good reasons to believe that Confucian classics took shape in the hands of Confucius, but that “nothing can be taken for granted in the matter of the early versions of the classics.” Yáo reports that perhaps most scholars today hold the “pragmatic” view that Confucius and his followers, although they did not intend to create a system of classics, “contributed to their formation.” In any case, it is undisputed that for most of the last 2,000 years, Confucius was believed to have either written or edited these texts.[[18]](#cite_note-18) The scholar [Tu Weiming](/wiki/Tu_Weiming) explains these classics as embodying “five visions" which underlie the development of Confucianism:

* [I Ching](/wiki/I_Ching) or [Classic of Change](/wiki/Classic_of_Change) or *Book of Changes,* generally held to be the earliest of the classics, shows a metaphysical vision which combines divinatory art with numerological technique and ethical insight; philosophy of change sees cosmos as interaction between the two energies yin and yang, universe always shows organismic unity and dynamism.
* [Classic of Poetry](/wiki/Classic_of_Poetry) or *Book of Songs* is the earliest anthology of [Chinese poems](/wiki/Chinese_poetry) and songs. It shows the poetic vision in the belief that poetry and music convey common human feelings and mutual responsiveness.
* [Book of Documents](/wiki/Book_of_Documents) or *Book of History* Compilation of speeches of major figures and records of events in ancient times embodies the political vision and addresses the kingly way in terms of the ethical foundation for humane government. The documents show the sagacity, filial piety, and work ethic of Yao, Shun, and Yu. They established a political culture which was based on responsibility and trust. Their virtue formed a covenant of social harmony which did not depend on punishment or coercion.
* [Book of Rites](/wiki/Book_of_Rites) describes the social forms, administration, and ceremonial rites of the Zhou Dynasty. This social vision defined society not as an adversarial system based on contractual relations but as a community of trust based on social responsibility. The [four functional occupations](/wiki/Four_occupations) are cooperative (farmer, scholar, artisan, merchant).
* [Spring and Autumn Annals](/wiki/Spring_and_Autumn_Annals) chronicles the period to which it gives its name, [Spring and Autumn Period](/wiki/Spring_and_Autumn_period) (771–476 BCE) and these events emphasize the significance of collective memory for communal self-identification, for reanimating the old is the best way to attain the new.[[19]](#cite_note-19)

## Doctrines[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

### Theory and theology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

By the words of [Tu Weiming](/wiki/Tu_Weiming) and other Confucian scholars, who recover the work of [Kang Youwei](/wiki/Kang_Youwei), Confucianism revolves around the pursuit of the unity of the self and [*Tiān*](/wiki/Tian) ([Heaven](/wiki/Heaven), or the [God](/wiki/God) of the Universe in European terminology, although in a [nontheistic](/wiki/Nontheism) sense),[[20]](#cite_note-20) and the relationship of humankind to the Heaven.[[21]](#cite_note-21) The principle of Heaven (*Tiān lǐ* 天理 or [*Dào*](/wiki/Tao) 道), is the order of the creation and divine authority, [monistic](/wiki/Monism) in its structure.[[21]](#cite_note-21) Individuals can realise their humanity and become one with Heaven through the contemplation of this order.[[21]](#cite_note-21) This transformation of the self can be extended to the family and society to create a harmonious fiduciary community.[[21]](#cite_note-21) The moral-spiritual ideal of Confucianism conciles both the inner and outer polarities of self-cultivation and world redemption, synthesised in the ideal of "sageliness within and kingliness without".[[21]](#cite_note-21) *Rén*, translated as "humaneness" or the essence proper of a human being, is the character of compassionate mind; it is the virtue endowed by Heaven and at the same time what allows man to achieve oneness with Heaven—in the *Dàtóng shū* (《大同書/大同书》) it is defined as "to form one body with all things" and "when the self and others are not separated ... compassion is aroused".[[13]](#cite_note-13)

#### ''Tiān'' and the gods[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

[150px|thumb|right|](/wiki/File:天-oracle.svg)[Zhou period](/wiki/Zhou_dynasty) [oracle bone script](/wiki/Oracle_bone_script) for *Tian*. [Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) *Tiān* (天), commonly translated as "[Heaven](/wiki/Heaven)" or "Sky", but philologically meaning the "Great One", "Great Whole", is a key concept in Confucianism.[[22]](#cite_note-22)[[23]](#cite_note-23) It denotes the [source of reality](/wiki/Absolute_(philosophy)), the [cosmos](/wiki/Cosmos), and [nature](/wiki/Nature) in [Chinese religions](/wiki/Chinese_folk_religion) and [philosophies](/wiki/Chinese_philosophy).[[23]](#cite_note-23) The Confucians mean by *Tiān* (天) and *lǐ* (理, order) what the [Taoists](/wiki/Taoists) mean by [*Tao*](/wiki/Tao) (or Dào, 道).[[24]](#cite_note-24) The *Tiān* can also be compared to the [*Brahman*](/wiki/Brahman) of [Hindu](/wiki/Hinduism) and [Vedic](/wiki/Veda) traditions.[[20]](#cite_note-20) In [*Analects*](/wiki/Analects) 9.5 Confucius says that a person can know the movement of the Tiān, and speaks about his own sense of having a special place in the universe.[[23]](#cite_note-23) In 7.19 he says that he is able to understand the order of Tiān.[[25]](#cite_note-25) [Zǐgòng](/wiki/Duanmu_Ci), a disciple of Confucius, said that Tiān had set the master on the path to become a wise man (*Analects* 9.6).[[23]](#cite_note-23) In *Analects* 7.23 Confucius says that he has no doubt left that the Tiān gave him life, and from it he had developed the virtue (Dé, 德).[[23]](#cite_note-23) In *Analects* 8.19 he says that the lives of the sages and their communion with Tian are interwoven.[[23]](#cite_note-23) Regarding personal [gods](/wiki/Deity) ([*shén*](/wiki/Shen_(Chinese_religion)), energies who emanate from and reproduce the *Tiān*) enliving nature, in *Analects* 6.22 Confucius says that it is appropriate (義/义, *yì*) for people to worship (敬, *jìng*) them,[[25]](#cite_note-25) though through proper [rites](/wiki/Rite) (禮/礼, *lǐ*), implying respect of positions and discretion.[[25]](#cite_note-25) Confucius himself was a ritual and [sacrificial](/wiki/Sacrifice) master.[[26]](#cite_note-26) In *Analects* 3.12 he explains that religious rituals produce meaningful experiences.[[27]](#cite_note-27) Rites and sacrifices to the gods have an [ethical](/wiki/Ethics) importance: they generate good life, because taking part in them leads to the overcoming of the self.[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn) Analects 10.11 tells that Confucius always took a small part of his food and placed it on the sacrificial bowls as an offering to his [ancestors](/wiki/Ancestor).[[26]](#cite_note-26) In original Confucianism the concept of Tiān expresses a form of [pantheism](/wiki/Pantheism). Other philosophical currents, like [Mohism](/wiki/Mohism), developed a more [theistic](/wiki/Theism) idea of the Tiān.[[28]](#cite_note-28)

### Ethics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

[thumb|150px|](/wiki/File:Famous_Confucian_Statue_of_the_Ashikaga_Gakko.JPG)[Confucius](/wiki/Confucius) and disciples, statues of the [Ashikaga Gakko](/wiki/Ashikaga_Gakko), a Confucian school and oldest academy of [Japan](/wiki/Japan). Confucian ethics are described as [humanistic](/wiki/Humanism).[[6]](#cite_note-6) This ethical philosophy can be practiced by all the members of a society.[[29]](#cite_note-29) Confucian ethics is characterized by the promotion of virtues, encompassed by the Five Constants, or the *wǔ cháng* (五常), extrapolated by Confucian scholars during the [Han Dynasty](/wiki/Han_Dynasty).[[30]](#cite_note-30) The Five Constants are:[[30]](#cite_note-30)\*[*Rén*](/wiki/Ren_(Confucianism)) (仁, benevolence, humaneness);

* [*Yì*](/wiki/Yi_(Confucianism)) (義/义, righteousness or justice);
* [*Lǐ*](/wiki/Li_(Confucianism)) (禮/礼, proper rite);
* *Zhì* (智, knowledge);
* *Xìn* (信, integrity).

These are accompanied by the classical *Sìzì* (四字), that singles out four virtues, one of which is included among the Five Constants:

* *Zhōng* (忠, loyalty);
* [*Xiào*](/wiki/Xiào) (孝, filial piety);
* *Jié* (節/节, continency);
* *Yì* (義/义, righteousness).

There are still many other elements, such as *chéng* (誠/诚, honesty), *shù* (恕, kindness and forgiveness), *lián* (廉, honesty and cleanness), *chǐ* (恥/耻, shame, judge and sense of right and wrong),*yǒng* (勇, bravery), *wēn* (溫/温, kind and gentle), *liáng* (良, good, kindhearted), *gōng* (恭, respectful, reverent), *jiǎn* (儉/俭, frugal), *ràng* (讓/让, modestly, self-effacing).

#### Humaneness[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) *Rén* ([Template:Zh](/wiki/Template:Zh)) is the Confucian virtue denoting the good feeling a virtuous human experiences when being [altruistic](/wiki/Altruistic). It is exemplified by a normal adult's protective feelings for children. It is considered the essence of the human being, endowed by Heaven, and at the same time the means by which man can act according to the principle of Heaven (天理, *Tiān lǐ*) and become one with it.[[13]](#cite_note-13) [Yán Huí](/wiki/Yan_Hui_(disciple_of_Confucius)), Confucius's most outstanding student, once asked his master to describe the rules of *rén* and Confucius replied, "one should see nothing improper, hear nothing improper, say nothing improper, do nothing improper".[[31]](#cite_note-31) Confucius also defined *rén* in the following way: "wishing to be established himself, seeks also to establish others; wishing to be enlarged himself, he seeks also to enlarge others".[[32]](#cite_note-32) Another meaning of *rén* is "not to do to others as you would not wish done to yourself".[[33]](#cite_note-33) Confucius also said, "*rén* is not far off; he who seeks it has already found it". *Rén* is close to man and never leaves him.

#### Rite, right[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

[thumb|150px|](/wiki/File:Korean_Confucianism-Chugyedaeje-02.jpg)[Korean Confucian](/wiki/Korean_Confucianism) rite in [Jeju](/wiki/Jeju_Province). [Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) *Li* (禮/礼) is a classical Chinese word which finds its most extensive use in [Confucian](/wiki/Confucian) and post-Confucian [Chinese philosophy](/wiki/Chinese_philosophy). *Li* is variously translated as "[rite](/wiki/Rite)" or "[reason](/wiki/Reason)", "ratio" in the pure sense of [Vedic](/wiki/Veda) [*ṛta*](/wiki/Ṛta) ("right", "order") when referring to the [cosmic](/wiki/Cosmos) law, but when referring to its realisation in the context of human individual and social behavior it has also been translated as "[custom](/wiki/Convention_(norm))", "[mores](/wiki/Mores)", and "rules", among other terms.

*Li* embodies the entire web of interaction between humanity, human objects, and nature. Confucius includes in his discussions of *li* such diverse topics as learning, tea drinking, titles, mourning, and governance. [Xunzi](/wiki/Xun_Kuang) cites "songs and laughter, weeping and lamentation... rice and millet, fish and meat... the wearing of ceremonial caps, embroidered robes, and patterned silks, or of fasting clothes and mourning clothes... spacious rooms and secluded halls, soft mats, couches and benches" as vital parts of the fabric of *li*.

Confucius envisioned proper government being guided by the principles of *li*. Some Confucians proposed the perfectibility of all human beings with learning *li* as an important part of that process. Overall, Confucians believed governments should place more emphasis on *li* and rely much less on penal punishment when they govern.

#### Loyalty[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

Loyalty ([Template:Zh](/wiki/Template:Zh), *zhōng*) is particularly relevant for the social class to which most of Confucius' students belonged, because the most important way for an ambitious young scholar to become a prominent official was to enter a ruler's civil service.

Confucius himself did not propose that "might makes right", but rather that a superior should be obeyed because of his moral rectitude. In addition, loyalty does not mean subservience to authority. This is because reciprocity is demanded from the superior as well. As Confucius stated "a prince should employ his minister according to the rules of propriety; ministers should serve their prince with faithfulness (loyalty)".[[34]](#cite_note-34) Similarly, [Mencius](/wiki/Mencius) also said that "when the prince regards his ministers as his hands and feet, his ministers regard their prince as their belly and heart; when he regards them as his dogs and horses, they regard him as another man; when he regards them as the ground or as grass, they regard him as a robber and an enemy".[[35]](#cite_note-35) Moreover, Mencius indicated that if the ruler is incompetent, he should be replaced. If the ruler is evil, then the people have the right to overthrow him.[[36]](#cite_note-36) A good Confucian is also expected to remonstrate with his superiors when necessary.[[37]](#cite_note-37) At the same time, a proper Confucian ruler should also accept his ministers' advice, as this will help him govern the realm better.

In later ages, however, emphasis was often placed more on the obligations of the ruled to the ruler, and less on the ruler's obligations to the ruled. Like filial piety, loyalty was often subverted by the autocratic regimes in China. Nonetheless, throughout the ages, many Confucians continued to fight against unrighteous superiors and rulers. Many of these Confucians suffered and sometimes died because of their conviction and action.[[38]](#cite_note-38) During the Ming-Qing era, prominent Confucians such as Wang Yangming promoted individuality and independent thinking as a counterweight to subservience to authority.[[39]](#cite_note-39) The famous thinker Huang Zongxi also strongly criticized the autocratic nature of the imperial system and wanted to keep imperial power in check.[[40]](#cite_note-40) Many Confucians also realized that loyalty and filial piety have the potential of coming into conflict with one another. This can be true especially in times of social chaos, such as during the period of the Ming-Qing transition.[[41]](#cite_note-41)

#### Filial piety[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

[thumb|150px|Fourteenth of](/wiki/File:尝粪心忧.JPG) [*The Twenty-four Filial Exemplars*](/wiki/The_Twenty-four_Filial_Exemplars) [Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) In Confucian philosophy, filial piety ([Template:Zh](/wiki/Template:Zh), *xiào*) is a virtue of respect for one's parents and ancestors. The Confucian classic [Xiao Jing](/wiki/Xiao_Jing) or *Classic of Xiào*, thought to be written around the Qin-Han period, has historically been the authoritative source on the Confucian tenet of *xiào* / "filial piety". The book, a conversation between Confucius and his student Zeng Shen (曾參, also known as [Zengzi](/wiki/Zengzi) 曾子), is about how to set up a good society using the principle of *xiào* (filial piety). The term can also be applied to general obedience, and is used in religious titles in Christian Churches, like "filial priest" or "filial vicar" for a cleric whose church is subordinate to a larger parish. Filial piety is central to Confucian [role ethics](/wiki/Role_ethics).[[42]](#cite_note-42) In more general terms, filial [piety](/wiki/Piety) means to be good to one's parents; to take care of one's parents; to engage in good conduct not just towards parents but also outside the home so as to bring a good name to one's parents and ancestors; to perform the duties of one's job well so as to obtain the material means to support parents as well as carry out sacrifices to the ancestors; not be [rebellious](/wiki/Rebellious); show love, respect and support; display courtesy; ensure male heirs, uphold fraternity among brothers; wisely advise one's parents, including dissuading them from moral unrighteousness, for blindly following the parents' wishes is not considered to be *xiao*; display sorrow for their sickness and death; and carry out [sacrifices](/wiki/Sacrifice) after their death.

Filial piety is considered a key virtue in [Chinese culture](/wiki/Chinese_culture), and it is the main concern of a large number of stories. One of the most famous collections of such stories is [*The Twenty-four Filial Exemplars*](/wiki/The_Twenty-four_Filial_Exemplars) (*Ershi-si xiao* [二十四孝](/wiki/Zh:二十四孝)). These stories depict how children exercised their filial piety in the past. While China has always had a diversity of religious beliefs, filial piety has been common to almost all of them; historian Hugh D.R. Baker calls respect for the family the only element common to almost all Chinese believers.[[43]](#cite_note-43)

### Relationships[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

Social harmony results in part from every individual knowing his or her place in the natural order, and playing his or her part well. When Duke Jing of [Qi](/wiki/Qi_(state)) asked about government, by which he meant proper administration so as to bring social harmony, [Confucius](/wiki/Confucius) replied:

There is government, when the prince is prince, and the minister is minister; when the father is father, and the son is son. (*Analects* XII, 11, trans. Legge)

Particular duties arise from one's particular situation in relation to others. The individual stands simultaneously in several different relationships with different people: as a junior in relation to parents and elders, and as a senior in relation to younger siblings, students, and others. While juniors are considered in Confucianism to owe their seniors reverence, seniors also have duties of benevolence and concern toward juniors. The same is true with the husband and wife relationship where the husband needs to show benevolence towards his wife and the wife needs to respect the husband in return. This theme of mutuality still exists in East Asian cultures even to this day.

The Five Bonds are: ruler to ruled, father to son, husband to wife, elder brother to younger brother, friend to friend. Specific duties were prescribed to each of the participants in these sets of relationships. Such duties are also extended to the dead, where the living stand as sons to their deceased family. The only relationship where respect for elders isn't stressed was the friend to friend relationship, where mutual equal respect is emphasized instead. In all other relationships, high reverence is usually held for elders.

### ''Junzi''[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) The *junzi* ([Template:Zh](/wiki/Template:Zh), *jūnzǐ*, "[lord's son](/wiki/Prince)") is a [Chinese philosophical](/wiki/Chinese_philosophy) term often translated as "[gentleman](/wiki/Gentleman)" or "superior person"[[44]](#cite_note-44) and employed by [Confucius](/wiki/Confucius) in his works to describe the ideal man. In the [*I Ching*](/wiki/I_Ching) it is used by the [Duke of Wen](/wiki/King_Wen_of_Zhou).

In Confucianism, the sage or wise is the ideal personality; however, it is very hard to become one of them. Confucius created the model of *junzi*, gentleman, which can be achieved by any individual. Later, [Zhu Xi](/wiki/Zhu_Xi) defined *junzi* as second only to the sage. There are many characteristics of the *junzi*: he can live in [poverty](/wiki/Poverty), he does more and speaks less, he is [loyal](/wiki/Loyalty), obedient and knowledgeable. The *junzi* disciplines himself. *Ren* is fundamental to become a *junzi*.[[45]](#cite_note-45) As the potential leader of a nation, a son of the ruler is raised to have a superior ethical and moral position while gaining inner peace through his virtue. To Confucius, the *junzi* sustained the functions of government and social stratification through his ethical values. Despite its literal meaning, any righteous man willing to improve himself can become a *junzi*.

On the contrary, the *xiaoren* (小人, *xiăorén*, "small or petty person") does not grasp the value of virtues and seeks only immediate gains. The petty person is [egotistic](/wiki/Egotistic) and does not consider the consequences of his action in the overall scheme of things. Should the ruler be surrounded by *xiaoren* as opposed to *junzi*, his governance and his people will suffer due to their small-mindness. Examples of such *xiaoren* individuals can range from those who continually indulge in sensual and [emotional](/wiki/Emotion) pleasures all day to the [politician](/wiki/Politician) who is interested merely in [power](/wiki/Power_(social_and_political)) and [fame](/wiki/Celebrity); neither sincerely aims for the long-term benefit of others.

The *junzi* enforces his rule over his subjects by acting virtuously himself. It is thought that his pure [virtue](/wiki/Virtue) would lead others to follow his example. The ultimate goal is that the government behaves much like a [family](/wiki/Family), the *junzi* being a beacon of filial piety.

### Rectification of names[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=13)]

[thumb|150px|Priest paying homage to Confucius' tablet, circa 1900.](/wiki/File:Tablet_of_Confucius.jpg) [Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) Confucius believed that social disorder often stemmed from failure to perceive, understand, and deal with [reality](/wiki/Reality). Fundamentally, then, social disorder can stem from the failure to call things by their proper names, and his solution to this was *zhèngmíng* ([Template:Zh](/wiki/Template:Zh)). He gave an explanation of *zhengming* to one of his disciples.

Zi-lu said, "The vassal of Wei has been waiting for you, in order with you to administer the government. What will you consider the first thing to be done?"  
The Master replied, "What is necessary to rectify names."  
"So! indeed!" said Zi-lu. "You are wide off the mark! Why must there be such rectification?"  
The Master said, "How uncultivated you are, Yu! The superior man [Junzi] cannot care about the everything, just as he cannot go to check all himself!  
        If names be not correct, language is not in accordance with the truth of things.  
        If language be not in accordance with the truth of things, affairs cannot be carried on to success.  
        When affairs cannot be carried on to success, proprieties and music do not flourish.  
        When proprieties and music do not flourish, punishments will not be properly awarded.  
        When punishments are not properly awarded, the people do not know how to move hand or foot.  
Therefore a superior man considers it necessary that the names he uses may be spoken appropriately, and also that what he speaks may be carried out appropriately. What the superior man requires is just that in his words there may be nothing incorrect."  
(*Analects* XIII, 3, tr. Legge) </blockquote>

[Xun Zi](/wiki/Xun_Zi) chapter (22) "On the Rectification of Names" claims the ancient sage-kings chose names ([Template:Zh](/wiki/Template:Zh)) that directly corresponded with actualities ([Template:Zh](/wiki/Template:Zh)), but later generations confused terminology, coined new nomenclature, and thus could no longer distinguish right from wrong. Since [social harmony](/wiki/Harmonious_society) is of utmost importance, without the proper rectification of names, society would essentially crumble and "undertakings [would] not [be] completed." [[46]](#cite_note-46)

## History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=14)]

Confucianism can be traced even before the birth of its namesake, [Confucius](/wiki/Confucius) (an Anglicization of his actual name, Kong Qiu), to the general culture of the [Zhou Dynasty](/wiki/Zhou_Dynasty), which emphasized politeness and consideration, though generally with more of a spiritual bent.[[47]](#cite_note-47) Thought to be a real historic figure, Confucius was born on September 28, 551 BC. He reportedly grew up in a time of instability in the region that would someday be known as China, and failed in his ambitions to become a high minister of the national government. But he did become known for his attempts to analyze and codify rules of society and behavior. The system of "virtue" he proposed was one of respect for others, including for their position in society, focusing on this as a system of principles, not mysticism.

The Analects that are generally attributed to Confucius actually appear to have been compiled after his death, by followers one or two generations removed, perhaps during the [Warring States period](/wiki/Warring_States_period) (476 BC-221 BC), though no copies exist older than 50 BC, with some scholars saying the document may have been compiled as recently as 140 BC.[[48]](#cite_note-48) Confucianism went through a number of phases of being repressed or unpopular, as in the earlier part of the [Han dynasty](/wiki/Han_dynasty), or being tolerated, even accepted, with the later Han years being an example of this. It is not until the 12th century AD, though, that it has become such an accepted part of the state that the Analects themselves are integrated into civil service tests.[[49]](#cite_note-49) In fact, this success came via [Neo-Confucianism](/wiki/Neo-Confucianism), an attempt to reform the philosophy, which had been influenced by [Taoism](/wiki/Taoism) and [Buddhism](/wiki/Buddhism) and was seen as moving toward [mysticism](/wiki/Mysticism) and superstition. This movement started as early as the 8th century AD, and was dominant by the 12th. While still influenced by Taoism and Buddhism, it worked to restore Confucianism to what were seen as its secular roots.

The influence of Confucianism increased after the conquest of the region by the [Mongol](/wiki/Mongol) empire, whose [Khans](/wiki/Khan_(title)) were convinced to adopt its philosophy for their own government.[[50]](#cite_note-50)

## Organisation and liturgy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=15)]

[Template:Further](/wiki/Template:Further) [thumb|150px|left|A Temple of the God of Culture (文庙 *wénmiào*) in](/wiki/File:柳州市孔庙_Liuzhou_Confucius_Temple.jpg) [Liuzhou](/wiki/Liuzhou), [Guangxi](/wiki/Guangxi), where [Confucius](/wiki/Confucius) is worshiped as *Wéndì* (文帝), "God of Culture". [thumb|150px|left|Temple of the Filial Blessing (孝佑宫 *Xiàoyòugōng*), an](/wiki/File:Temple_of_the_Filial_Blessing_in_Ouhai,_Wenzhou,_Zhejiang,_China_(1).jpg) [ancestral temple](/wiki/Ancestral_temple) of a [lineage church](/wiki/Lineage_church), in [Wenzhou](/wiki/Wenzhou), [Zhejiang](/wiki/Zhejiang). Since the 2000s, some intellectuals and students in China have become increasingly identified with Confucianism.[[51]](#cite_note-51) In 2003 the Confucian intellectual Kang Xiaoguang published a manifesto in which he made four suggestions: Confucian education should enter official education at any level, from elementary to high school; the state should establish Confucianism as the state religion by law; Confucian religion should enter the daily life of ordinary people through standardization and development of doctrines, rituals, organisations, churches and activity sites; the Confucian religion should be spread through non-governmental organisations.[[51]](#cite_note-51) Another modern proponent of the institutionalisation of Confucianism in a [state church](/wiki/State_church) is Jiang Qing.[[52]](#cite_note-52) In 2005 the Center for the Study of Confucian Religion was established,[[51]](#cite_note-51) and [*guoxue*](/wiki/Guoxue) education started to be implemented in public schools. Being well received by the population, even Confucian preachers started to appear on television since 2006.[[51]](#cite_note-51) The most enthusiast New Confucians proclaim the uniqueness and superiority of Confucian Chinese culture, and have generated some popular sentiment against Western cultural influences in China.[[51]](#cite_note-51) The idea of a "[Confucian Church](/wiki/Confucian_Church)" as the [state religion](/wiki/State_religion) of [China](/wiki/China) has roots in the thought of [Kang Youwei](/wiki/Kang_Youwei), an exponent of the early New Confucian search for a regeneration of the social relevance of Confucianism, at a time when it was de-institutionalised with the collapse of the [Qing dynasty](/wiki/Qing_dynasty) and the Chinese empire.[[53]](#cite_note-53) Kang modeled his ideal "Confucian Church" after European national Christian churches, as a hierarchical and centralised institution, closely bound to the state, with local church branches, devoted to the worship and the spread of the teachings of [Confucius](/wiki/Confucius).[[53]](#cite_note-53) In contemporary China, the Confucian revival has developed into different, yet interwoven, directions: the proliferation of Confucian schools or academies ([*shuyuan*](/wiki/Shuyuan) 书院),[[52]](#cite_note-52) the resurgence of Confucian rites (*chuantong liyi*),[[52]](#cite_note-52) and the birth of new forms of Confucian activity on the popular level, such as the Confucian communities (*shequ ruxue* 社区儒学). Some scholars also consider the reconstruction of [lineage churches](/wiki/Lineage_churches) and their [ancestral temples](/wiki/Ancestral_temples), as well as cults and temples of natural and national gods within broader Chinese traditional religion, as part of the revival of Confucianism.[[54]](#cite_note-54) Other forms of revival are folk religious[[55]](#cite_note-55) or [salvationist religious](/wiki/Chinese_salvationist_religion)[[56]](#cite_note-56) groups with a specifically Confucian focus, or [Confucian churches](/wiki/Confucian_churches), for example the *Yidan xuetang* (一耽学堂) based in [Beijing](/wiki/Beijing),[[57]](#cite_note-57) the *Mengmutang* (孟母堂) of [Shanghai](/wiki/Shanghai),[[58]](#cite_note-58) the [Way of the Gods according to the Confucian Tradition](/wiki/Way_of_the_Gods_according_to_the_Confucian_Tradition) or phoenix churches,[[59]](#cite_note-59) the Confucian Fellowship (儒教道坛 *Rújiào Dàotán*) in northern Fujian which has spread rapidly over the years after its foundation,[[59]](#cite_note-59) and [ancestral temples](/wiki/Ancestral_temples) of the Kong (Confucius) kin operating as well as Confucian-teaching churches.[[58]](#cite_note-58) Also, the Hong Kong [Confucian Academy](/wiki/Confucian_Academy) has expanded its activities to the mainland, with the construction of statues of Confucius, Confucian hospitals, restoration of temples and sponsorship of other activities.[Template:Sfnb](/wiki/Template:Sfnb) In 2009 Zhou Beichen founded another institution that inherits the idea of Kang Youwei's Confucian Church, the Holy Hall of Confucius (孔圣堂 *Kǒngshèngtáng*) in [Shenzhen](/wiki/Shenzhen) affiliated with the Federation of Confucian Culture of [Qufu](/wiki/Qufu) City,[Template:Sfnb](/wiki/Template:Sfnb) the first of a nationwide movement of congregations and civil organisations that was unified in 2015 by the [Holy Confucian Church](/wiki/Holy_Confucian_Church) (孔圣会 *Kǒngshènghuì*). The first spiritual leader of the Holy Church is the renowned scholar [Jiang Qing](/wiki/Jiang_Qing_(Confucian)).

Chinese folk religion's temples and kinship ancestral shrines on special occasions may choose Confucian liturgy (that is called 儒 *rú*, or sometimes 正统 *zhèngtǒng*, meaning "[orthoprax](/wiki/Orthopraxy)" ritual style) led by Confucian priests (礼生 *lǐshēng*) to worship the gods enshrined, instead of Taoist or popular ritual.[[12]](#cite_note-12) "Confucian businessmen" (*rushang*, also "learned businessman"), is a recently recovered term that defines people of the entrepreneurial or economic elite that recognise their social responsibility and therefore apply Confucian culture to their business.[[60]](#cite_note-60)

## Governance[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=16)]

[thumb|150px|](/wiki/File:Yushima_Seido_002.jpg)[Yushima Seidō](/wiki/Yushima_Seidō) in [Bunkyō](/wiki/Bunkyō), [Tokyo](/wiki/Tokyo), [Japan](/wiki/Japan).

To govern by virtue, let us compare it to the North Star: it stays in its place, while the myriad stars wait upon it. (*Analects* 2.1)

A key Confucian concept is that in order to govern others one must first govern oneself according to the universal order. When actual, the king's personal virtue (*de*) spreads beneficent influence throughout the kingdom. This idea is developed further in the [Great Learning](/wiki/Great_Learning), and is tightly linked with the [Taoist](/wiki/Taoism) concept of [wu wei](/wiki/Wu_wei) ([Template:Zh](/wiki/Template:Zh)): the less the king does, the more gets done. By being the "calm center" around which the kingdom turns, the king allows everything to function smoothly and avoids having to tamper with the individual parts of the whole.

This idea may be traced back to the ancient [shamanic](/wiki/Shamanism) beliefs of the [king](/wiki/King) being the [axle between the sky, human beings, and the Earth](/wiki/Axis_mundi), reflected in the Chinese idea of the [Mandate of Heaven](/wiki/Mandate_of_Heaven).

## Meritocracy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=17)]

In teaching, there should be no distinction of classes. (*Analects* 15.39)

Although Confucius claimed that he never invented anything but was only transmitting ancient knowledge (*Analects* 7.1), he did produce a number of new ideas. Many European and American admirers such as [Voltaire](/wiki/Voltaire) and [H. G. Creel](/wiki/H._G._Creel) point to the revolutionary idea of replacing nobility of blood with nobility of virtue. *Jūnzǐ* (君子, lit. "lord's child"), which originally signified the younger, non-inheriting, offspring of a noble, became, in Confucius' work, an epithet having much the same meaning and evolution as the English "gentleman".

A virtuous plebeian who cultivates his qualities can be a "gentleman", while a shameless son of the king is only a "small man". That he admitted students of different classes as disciples is a clear demonstration that he fought against the feudal structures that defined pre-imperial Chinese society.

Another new idea, that of [meritocracy](/wiki/Meritocracy), led to the introduction of the [imperial examination](/wiki/Imperial_examination) system in China. This system allowed anyone who passed an examination to become a government officer, a position which would bring wealth and honour to the whole family. The Chinese imperial examination system started in the [Sui dynasty](/wiki/Sui_dynasty). Over the following centuries the system grew until finally almost anyone who wished to become an official had to prove his worth by passing written government examinations. The practice of meritocracy still exists today in the Chinese cultural sphere, including [China](/wiki/China), [Taiwan](/wiki/Taiwan), [Singapore](/wiki/Singapore) and so forth.

## Influence[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=18)]

### In 17th-century Europe[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=19)]

[thumb|150px|"Life and works of Confucius, by](/wiki/File:LifeAndWorksOfConfucius1687.jpg) [Prospero Intorcetta](/wiki/Prospero_Intorcetta), 1687 The works of Confucius were translated into European languages through the agency of [Jesuit](/wiki/Jesuit) scholars stationed in China.[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn) [Matteo Ricci](/wiki/Matteo_Ricci) was among the very earliest to report on the thoughts of Confucius, and father [Prospero Intorcetta](/wiki/Prospero_Intorcetta) wrote about the life and works of Confucius in [Latin](/wiki/Latin) in 1687.[[61]](#cite_note-61) Translations of Confucian texts influenced European thinkers of the period,[[62]](#cite_note-62) particularly among the [Deists](/wiki/Deists) and other philosophical groups of the [Enlightenment](/wiki/Age_of_Enlightenment) who were interested by the integration of the system of morality of Confucius into [Western civilization](/wiki/Western_world).[[61]](#cite_note-61)[[63]](#cite_note-63) Confucianism influenced [Gottfried Leibniz](/wiki/Gottfried_Leibniz), who was attracted to the philosophy because of its perceived similarity to his own. It is postulated that certain elements of Leibniz's philosophy, such as "simple substance" and "preestablished harmony", were borrowed from his interactions with Confucianism.[[62]](#cite_note-62) The French philosopher [Voltaire](/wiki/Voltaire) was also influenced by Confucius, seeing the concept of Confucian rationalism as an alternative to Christian dogma.[[64]](#cite_note-64) He praised Confucian ethics and politics, portraying the sociopolitical hierarchy of China as a model for Europe.[[64]](#cite_note-64)[Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

### On Islamic thought[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=20)]

From the late 17th century onwards a whole body of literature known as the [Han Kitab](/wiki/Han_Kitab) developed amongst the [Hui Muslims](/wiki/Hui_people) of China who infused [Islamic](/wiki/Islam) thought with Confucianism. Especially the works of [Liu Zhi](/wiki/Liu_Zhi_(scholar)) such as *Tiānfāng Diǎnlǐ*（天方典禮）sought to harmonize Islam with not only Confucianism but also with [Daoism](/wiki/Daoism) and is considered to be one of the crowning achievements of the Chinese Islamic culture.[[65]](#cite_note-65)

### On Sex[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=21)]

Many authors mistakenly describe Confucianism as opposed to sex. It should be noted right upfront that Confucius himself never expressed any negative sentiments towards sex. More than that, the I-Ching contains several remarks of Confucius, which imply a positive outlook toward sex. Confucian classics contain several comments, approving sexual desires and rights to engage in sexual activities, which are essential and not contrary to human nature. According to Analects, book IX, chapter 17, “the master said I have not seen one who loves virtue as he loves sex ”. Confucius said in The Li chi (The book of rites): ‘Neglect of one’s wives and columbines is an offence against the harmony of heaven, earth and Man.”( Charles Humana and Wang Wu p. 23) In The Works of Mencius, a major Confucian classic Gaozi is quoted as saying, “Eating food and having sex is the nature of human beings.” In addition Menciuous himself remarked, “To enjoy sex is the desire of all human beings” As far as Confucianism was concerned, the filial relationship between a man and a woman was an obligation to society. Sex was an act sustaining the natural order of nature- balancing Yin and Yang. Such ‘acts’ invariably would end up in a very important social function of procreation. Therefore, Mencious could rightly say: “That a male and female should dwell together, is the greatest of human relations”(Translated by Legge, 1983)

### In modern times[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=22)]

Important military and political figures in modern Chinese history continued to be influenced by Confucianism, like the Muslim warlord [Ma Fuxiang](/wiki/Ma_Fuxiang).[[66]](#cite_note-66) The [New Life Movement](/wiki/New_Life_Movement) in the early 20th century was also influenced by Confucianism.

Referred to variously as the Confucian hypothesis and as a debated component of the more all-encompassing Asian Development Model, there exists among political scientists and economists a theory that Confucianism plays a large latent role in the ostensibly non-Confucian cultures of modern-day East Asia, in the form of the rigorous work ethic it endowed those cultures with. These scholars have held that, if not for Confucianism's influence on these cultures, many of the people of the East Asia region would not have been able to modernize and industrialize as quickly as [Singapore](/wiki/Singapore), [Malaysia](/wiki/Malaysia), [Hong Kong](/wiki/Hong_Kong), [Taiwan](/wiki/Taiwan), [Japan](/wiki/Japan), [South Korea](/wiki/South_Korea) and even [China](/wiki/China) has done.

For example, the impact of the [Vietnam War](/wiki/Vietnam_War) on Vietnam was devastating, however over the last few decades Vietnam has been re-developing in a very fast pace. Most scholars attribute the origins of this idea to futurologist [Herman Kahn's](/wiki/Herman_Kahn) *World Economic Development: 1979 and Beyond*.[[67]](#cite_note-67)[[68]](#cite_note-68) Other studies, for example Cristobal Kay's *Why East Asia Overtook Latin America: Agrarian Reform, Industrialization, and Development*, have attributed the Asian growth to other factors, for example the character of agrarian reforms, "state-craft" (state capacity), and interaction between agriculture and industry.[[69]](#cite_note-69)

### On Chinese martial arts[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=23)]

After Confucianism had become the official 'state religion' in China, its influence penetrated all walks of life and all streams of thought in Chinese society for the generations to come. This did not exclude martial arts culture. Though in his own day, Confucius had rejected the practice of Martial Arts (with the exception of Archery), he did serve under rulers who used military power extensively to achieve their goals. In later centuries, Confucianism heavily influenced many educated martial artists of great influence, such as [Sun Lutang](/wiki/Sun_Lutang),[[70]](#cite_note-70) especially from the 19th century onwards, when empty-handed martial arts in China became more widespread and had begun to more readily absorb philosophical influences from Confucianism, [Buddhism](/wiki/Buddhism) and [Daoism](/wiki/Daoism). Some argue therefore that despite Confucius' disdain with martial culture, his teachings became of much relevance to it.[[71]](#cite_note-71)

## Criticism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=24)]

For many years since the era of Confucius, various critiques of Confucianism have arisen, including [Laozi's](/wiki/Laozi) philosophy and [Mozi's](/wiki/Mozi) critique. [Lu Xun](/wiki/Lu_Xun) also criticised Confucianism heavily for shaping Chinese people into the condition they had reached by the late [Qing Dynasty](/wiki/Qing_Dynasty): his criticisms are well portrayed in two of his works, "[A Madman's Diary](/wiki/A_Madman's_Diary)" and [*The True Story of Ah Q*](/wiki/The_True_Story_of_Ah_Q).

In modern times, waves of critique along with vilification against Confucianism arose. The [Taiping Rebellion](/wiki/Taiping_Rebellion), [New Culture Movement](/wiki/New_Culture_Movement) and [Cultural Revolution](/wiki/Cultural_Revolution) are some upsurges of those waves in China. Taiping rebels described many sages in Confucianism as well as gods in [Taoism](/wiki/Taoism) and [Buddhism](/wiki/Buddhism) as mere legends. Marxists during the [Cultural Revolution](/wiki/Cultural_Revolution) described Confucius as the general representative of the class of slave owners. Numerous opinions and interpretations of Confucianism (of which many are actually opposed by Confucianism) were invented.

In [South Korea](/wiki/South_Korea), there has long been criticism of Confucianism. Some South Koreans believe Confucianism has not contributed to the modernization of South Korea. For example, South Korean writer Kim Kyong-il wrote an essay entitled "Confucius Must Die For the Nation to Live" (공자가 죽어야 나라가 산다, *gongjaga jug-eoya naraga sanda*). Kim said that [filial piety](/wiki/Filial_piety) is one-sided and blind, and if it continues social problems will continue as government keeps forcing Confucian filial obligations onto families.[[72]](#cite_note-72)[[73]](#cite_note-73)

### Women in Confucian thought[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=25)]

Confucianism "largely defined the mainstream discourse on gender in China from the [Han dynasty](/wiki/Han_dynasty) onward."<ref name=Adler/> The often strict, obligatory gender roles based on Confucian teachings became a cornerstone of the family, and thus, societal stability. Starting from the Han period onward, Confucians in general began to gradually teach that a virtuous woman was supposed to follow the lead of the males in her family, especially the father before her marriage and the husband after she marries. In the later dynasties, more emphasis was placed on women to uphold the virtue of chastity when they lost their husbands. Chaste widows were revered as heroes during the [Ming](/wiki/Ming_Dynasty) and [Qing](/wiki/Qing_dynasty) periods. This "cult of chastity" accordingly, "condemned many widows to poverty and loneliness by placing a social stigma on remarriage by women."<ref name=Adler>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

Confucianism was usually characterized by Western scholarship, up until the mid-1990s, as a sexist, patriarchal ideology that was responsible for the severe subjugation and oppression of women in pre-modern China.[[74]](#cite_note-74) However, recent reexaminations of Chinese gender roles suggest that some women can flourish within Confucianism.[[75]](#cite_note-75) During the Han dynasty period, the important Confucian text [Lessons for Women](/wiki/Lessons_for_Women) (Nüjie), was written by [Ban Zhao](/wiki/Ban_Zhao) (45–114 CE): by a woman, for women.

She wrote the *Nüjie* ostensibly for her daughters, instructing them on how to live proper Confucian lives as wives and mothers. Although this is a relatively rare instance of a female Confucian voice, Ban Zhao almost entirely accepts the prevailing views concerning women's proper roles; they should be silent, hard-working, and compliant. She stresses the complementarity and equal importance of the male and female roles according to yin-yang theory, but she clearly accepts the dominance of the yang-male. Her only departure from the standard male versions of this orthodoxy is that she insists on the necessity of educating girls and women. We should not underestimate the significance of this point, as education was the bottom line qualification for being a junzi or "noble person,"...her example suggests that the Confucian prescription for a meaningful life as a woman was apparently not stifling for all women. Even some women of the literate elite, for whom Confucianism was quite explicitly the norm, were able to flourish by living their lives according to that model.[[75]](#cite_note-75)

Joseph A. Adler has also indicated that even with the Neo-Confucians who have the reputation of discriminating against women, the actual situation was in fact quite complicated. As he writes, "Neo-Confucian writings do not necessarily reflect either the prevailing social practices or the scholars' own attitudes and practices in regard to actual women."<ref name=Adler/> There had been a difference between textual teaching and the actual social practice by the Confucians and society in general throughout all of China's dynasties.

Matthew Sommers has also indicated that during the Qing dynasty, the imperial government began to realize the utopian nature of enforcing the "cult of chastity." As a result, by the late Qing period, Qing officials became more tolerant and allowed practices such as widow remarrying to stand.[[76]](#cite_note-76) Finally, some Confucian texts like the *Chunqiu Fanlu* 春秋繁露 also has passages which suggest a more equal relationship between a husband and his wife. All of these things add to the complexity of the issue of women in Confucian teaching.[[77]](#cite_note-77) In 2009, for the first time women (and ethnic minorities and people living overseas) were officially recognized as being descendants of Confucius.[[78]](#cite_note-78) These additions more than tripled the number of officially recognized descendants of Confucius.[[78]](#cite_note-78)

## Catholic controversy over Chinese rites[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=26)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) Ever since Europeans first encountered Confucianism, the issue of how Confucianism should be classified has been subject to debate. In the 16th and the 17th centuries, the earliest European arrivals in China, the Christian [Jesuits](/wiki/Jesuits), considered Confucianism to be an ethical system, not a religion, and one that was compatible with Christianity.[[79]](#cite_note-79) The Jesuits, including [Matteo Ricci](/wiki/Matteo_Ricci), saw Chinese rituals as "civil rituals" that could co-exist alongside the spiritual rituals of Catholicism.[[79]](#cite_note-79) By the early 18th century, this initial portrayal was rejected by the [Dominicans](/wiki/Dominican_Order) and [Franciscans](/wiki/Franciscans), creating a dispute among Catholics in [East Asia](/wiki/East_Asia) that was known as the "Rites Controversy".[[80]](#cite_note-80) The Dominicans and Franciscans argued that [Chinese ancestral worship](/wiki/Chinese_ancestral_worship) was a form of idolatry that was contradictory to the tenets of Christianity. This view was reinforced by [Pope Benedict XIV](/wiki/Pope_Benedict_XIV), who ordered a ban on Chinese rituals.[[80]](#cite_note-80) Confucianism is definitively [pantheistic](/wiki/Pantheism), [nontheistic](/wiki/Nontheism) and [humanistic](/wiki/Humanism), in that it is not based on the belief in the supernatural or in a personal god that doesn't impact reality.[[7]](#cite_note-7)[[81]](#cite_note-81) On spirituality, Confucius said to Chi Lu, one of his students: "You are not yet able to serve men, how can you serve spirits?"[[82]](#cite_note-82) Attributes such as [ancestor worship](/wiki/Ancestor_worship), [ritual](/wiki/Ritual), and [sacrifice](/wiki/Sacrifice) were advocated by Confucius as necessary for social harmony; these attributes can be traced to the traditional [Chinese folk religion](/wiki/Chinese_folk_religion).

Scholars recognize that classification ultimately depends on how one defines religion. Using stricter definitions of religion, Confucianism has been described as a moral science or philosophy.[[83]](#cite_note-83)[[84]](#cite_note-84) But using a broader definition, such as Frederick Streng's characterization of religion as "a means of ultimate transformation",[[85]](#cite_note-85) Confucianism could be described as a "sociopolitical doctrine having religious qualities."[[81]](#cite_note-81) With the latter definition, Confucianism is religious, even if non-theistic, in the sense that it "performs some of the basic psycho-social functions of full-fledged religions".[[81]](#cite_note-81)

## See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=27)]

[Template:Portal](/wiki/Template:Portal)

* [Chinese folk religion](/wiki/Chinese_folk_religion)
* [Confucian art](/wiki/Confucian_art)
* [Confucian church](/wiki/Confucian_church)
* [Confucian view of marriage](/wiki/Confucian_view_of_marriage)
* [Confucianism in Indonesia](/wiki/Confucianism_in_Indonesia)
* [Edo Neo-Confucianism](/wiki/Edo_Neo-Confucianism)
* [Family as a model for the state](/wiki/Family_as_a_model_for_the_state)
* [Korean Confucianism](/wiki/Korean_Confucianism)
* [Neo-Confucianism](/wiki/Neo-Confucianism)
* [Temple of Confucius](/wiki/Temple_of_Confucius)
* [Vietnamese folk religion](/wiki/Vietnamese_folk_religion)—[Vietnamese philosophy](/wiki/Vietnamese_philosophy)
* [Political thought in ancient China](/wiki/Political_thought_in_ancient_China)

## Notes[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=28)]

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## References[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=29)]

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## Bibliography[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=30)]

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## Translations of texts attributed to Confucius[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=31)]

### The Analects (''Lun Yu'')[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=32)]

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## External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=33)]

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* [Template:Cite IEP](/wiki/Template:Cite_IEP)
* [Template:Cite IEP](/wiki/Template:Cite_IEP)
* [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy Entry: Confucius](http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/confucius/#ConPol/)
* [Interfaith Online: Confucianism](http://www.interfaith.org/confucianism/)
* [Confucian Documents](http://www.sacred-texts.com/cfu/index.htm) at the Internet Sacred Texts Archive.
* [Oriental Philosophy, "Topic:Confucianism"](http://philosophy.lander.edu/oriental/confucism.html)

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* [China Confucian Philosophy](http://www.rujiazg.com/)
* [China Confucian Religion](http://www.rjzg.net/)
* [China Confucian Temples](http://www.chinakongmiao.org/)
* [Confucius Institutes of China](http://www.chinesecio.org/)
* [China Kongzi Network](http://www.chinakongzi.org/)

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