CONFUCIUS, Analects
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NOTE: The format of these pages does not necessarily replicate those in the book.

PREFACE

The *Analects* is not a "book" in the sense that most modern Westerners usually understand a book—that is, a coherent argument or story presented by a single author, to be digested alone in the quiet of one's study. It is instead a record—somewhat haphazardly collected and edited together at an unknown point in history—of a dynamic process of teaching, and most likely was only committed to writing many years after the primary touchstone of the process, the Master Confucius, had passed away. It probably represents an attempt by later students and followers to keep alive the memory of his teaching, which had been conveyed both verbally and by personal example. Many, if not most, of the passages are quite cryptic, and this may be at least partially intentional. In 7.16, the Master is reported as saying, "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." As we see throughout the text, Confucius' comments are often intended to elicit responses from his disciples, which are then corrected or commented upon by the Master. Therefore, these "ordered sayings" of Confucius were originally embedded in a conversational context within which their meaning could be gradually extracted.

By the late fourth century B.C.E., with the Master gone, direct conversation was no longer possible, but this merely forced the dialogue to take a different form. It is at this point that we get the beginning of what came to be an over two thousand year old tradition of commentary on the words of Confucius. The tradition begins with such Warring States texts as the *Mencius*, *Xunzi*, and the *Record of Ritual*, and continues up to the present-day—carried on for most of this time in classical Chinese, branching out into the various vernaculars of East Asian nations in the Chinese cultural sphere, and finally expanding in the 18th century into a wide variety of Indo-European languages. For the most part, this commentarial tradition represents an attempt by later followers or admirers of the Master to find "the other three corners," no longer in dialogue with the Master himself, but rather by embracing extant clues about the Master's possible intention, the views of previous students of the text, and the opinions of contemporaries. For later students of the *Analects*, this written commentarial tradition serves as a proxy for the original conversational environment, providing context, making connections, and teasing out implications.

Since at least the Han Dynasty (202 B.C.E.–220 C.E.), no Chinese student of the text has attempted to approach the *Analects* outside of the context of this written commentarial tradition. Most modern Chinese people, of course, read

the text—originally written in classical Chinese, a purely literary language—with a translation into modern Chinese as well as extensive commentaries, but even traditionally educated Chinese conversant with the classical language find it necessary to base their understanding of the text upon the foundation of earlier commentaries. Indeed, the text of the *Analects* itself is arguably so concise as to be incomprehensible without some sort of interpretative apparatus imposed upon it. As John Makeham has noted, "Unless a reader is provided with a commentarial 'context' in which flesh is added to the very spare bones of the text, [the *Analects*] frequently reads as a cryptic mixture of parochial injunctions and snatches of dry conversation. It is the commentaries which bring the text to life and lend it definition" (1997: 261). I have therefore always found it astounding that Western readers of the *Analects* have, for the most part, been left to their own devices in understanding this exceedingly difficult text, being presented with simply the bare, original passages with usually no more than a translator's introduction and occasional textual notes to rely on. Small wonder that so many have come away from the *Analects* with their impression of cryptic, mysterious Eastern "fortune cookie" wisdom reinforced. This, however, is not how the text is read in China, and is not at all how the text itself was originally meant. The passages that make up our received *Analects* were probably originally intended to be recited aloud, with teachers and students together discussing their meaning and subtleties. The commentarial tradition that has accreted around the text merely represents a written substitute for this original verbal interaction.

What this edition attempts to do is give the English-language reader a hint of the richness of this context, a glimpse of the living text in its natural habitat, by presenting it with extensive running commentary. Perhaps the best way to characterize the experience I am trying to create is to imagine reading the *Analects* with a friend by your side who knows classical Chinese, and already has some definite opinions about how to read the text, who then proceeds to skim through vast quantities of commentaries, sub-commentaries, textual notes, and other arcana surrounding the text and occasionally shout out things he or she thinks are helpful or illuminating, as well as providing recommendations for further exploration in the English-language scholarship. Not ideal, of course, but still a far sight better than being set adrift with only a translator's introduction and the text itself, in all its cryptic glory. Of course, that actual situation is usually worse than that, for much of the cryptic quality of the original is already hidden in the translation by virtue of the choices the translator has to make in rendering the passages into intelligible English. As Alice Cheang has noted,

> The first thing to disappear in a translation of the *Analects*—its most distinctive formal characteristic—is the opacity of the text. Much that in the original is dense and abstruse becomes clear, comprehensible, and pellucidly simple. The translator, constrained by the limits of the grammatically feasible, usually has to choose among several interpretations . . . so that most of the latent ambiguity in the original is suppressed in the converted text . . . What has been added is necessary in order to render the words of Confucius intelligible in another language, but the result is a text in which the balance of power is shifted towards the author (in this case the translator) and away from the reader. (Cheang 2000: 568–569).

Another way to describe what I am trying to do, then, is that by providing alternative interpretations of individual passages and identifying where various understandings are coming from, as well as by pointing the reader in the direction of works that contain more detailed discussions of the issues at hand, I am trying to give back at least a measure of this power to the English-language reader. Not *too* much, of course, because a certain measure of control has to be exerted to avoid producing utter nonsense, but something approaching the maximum amount of power someone cut off from the text in its original language can reasonably hope. I myself have ceded a great deal of power to the editor of the four-volume critical edition of the *Analects* which this translation is based, Cheng Shude 程樹德, one of the most important of 20th-century Chinese students of the text. The reader may be reassured to know that, at the very least, the hands holding the hands into which you have put yourself are trustworthy.

BOOK TWO

In this book, we see elaborations of a theme suggested in 1.2: political order is not obtained by means of force or government regulations, but rather by the non-coercive influence of the morally perfected person. Several descriptions of such wu-wei perfection appear in this book (including Confucius' famous spiritual autobiography in 2.4), and we also find an extended discussion of the "root" virtue of filial piety that emphasizes the importance of having the proper internal dispositions.

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."

The point of this passage is that the spontaneous harmony brought about by Heaven in the natural world is to be a model for the human ruler, who—in a wu-wei fashion—will bring the world to order silently, inevitably, and unselfconsciously through the power of his perfected moral Virtue. As Bao Xian notes, "One who possesses Virtue is wu-wei, and—like the Pole Star—does not move yet receives the homage of the myriad lesser stars." Cf. 2.3, 2.21, 12.17, 12.19, and especially 15.5.

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.'"

The quoted phrase is from Ode 297. The original reference is to powerful war horses bred to pull chariots and 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 lead astray from the Confucian Way.

2.3 The Master said, "If you try to guide the common people with coercive regulations (*zheng* 政) 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."

This passage represents another expression of the theme of ruling through the power of Virtue (wu-wei) rather than force. As Guo Xiang notes, "If you employ governmental regulations you may correct people's outer behavior, but in their hearts, they will not have submitted. Concerned only with expediency and evasion, they will behave shamelessly toward things. Is this not a superficial way of transforming people?" Zhu Xi adds, "Although they will probably not dare to do anything bad, the tendency to do bad will never leave them." Cf. 8.9.

2.4 The Master said, "At fifteen, I set my mind upon learning; at thirty, I took my place in society;[1] at forty, I became free of doubts;[2] at fifty, I understood Heaven's Mandate;[3] at sixty, my ear was attuned; and at seventy, I could follow my heart's desires without overstepping the bounds of propriety."

We have here Confucius' spiritual autobiography. We can see his evolution as encompassing three pairs of stages. In the first pair (stages one and two), the aspiring gentleman commits himself to the Confucian Way, submitting to the rigors of study and ritual practice until these traditional forms have been internalized to the point that he is able to "take his place" among others. In the second pair, the practitioner begins to feel truly at ease with this new manner of being, and is able to understand how the Confucian Way fits into the order of things and complies with the will of Heaven.[4] The clarity and sense of ease this brings with it leads to the final two stages, where one's dispositions have been so thoroughly harmonized with the dictates of normative culture that one accords with them spontaneously—that is, the state of wu-wei. Some interpretations take the ear being "attuned" to mean that Confucius at this point immediately apprehends the subtle content of the teachings he hears (Zheng Xuan), some that there is no conflict between his inner dispositions and the teachings of the sages (Wang Bi), and some both of these things. As Li Chong explains, "'Having an attuned ear' means that, upon hearing the exemplary teachings of the Former Kings, one immediately apprehended their virtuous conduct, and 'following the models of the Lord' (a reference to King Wen in Ode 241), nothing goes against the tendencies of one's heart." As Huang Kan explains, "By age seventy, Confucius reached a point where training and inborn nature were perfectly meshed, 'like a raspberry vine growing among hemp, naturally standing upright without the need for support.'[5] Therefore he could then give free rein to his heart's intentions without overstepping the exemplary standards." Or, as Zhu Xi explains it, "Being able to follow one's heart's desires without transgressing exemplary standards means that one acts with ease, hitting the mean without forcing it."

2.5 Meng Yizi asked about filial piety. The Master replied, "Do not disobey."

Later, Fan Chi was driving the Master's chariot. The Master said to him, "Just now Meng Yizi asked me about filial piety, and I answered, 'Do not disobey.'"

Fan Chi said, "What did you mean by that?"

The Master replied, "When your parents are alive, serve them in accordance with the rites; when they pass away, bury them in accordance with the rites and sacrifice to them in accordance with the rites."

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[1] That is, through mastery of the rites; cf. 8.8, 16.13 and 20.3.

[2] Cf. 9.29, 14.28.

[3] Cf. 16.8, 20.3.

[4] The link between these two stages—being without doubts and understanding the Mandate of Heaven—is also suggested by the line from 9.29, "One who understands does not doubt."

[5] A common saying emphasizing the transformative effect of environment upon one's character; see, for instance, Chapter 1 "Encouraging Learning" of the *Xunzi*: "When a raspberry vine grows among hemp, it naturally stands upright without the need for support; when white sand is mixed with mud, both of them become infused with blackness" (Knoblock 1988: 137). The idea, of course, is that the tall, straight hemp acts as a natural stake guiding the growth of the raspberry vine, which otherwise would grow into a tangled bramble.

3.13 Wang-sun Jia asked, "What do you think about the saying,

> 'It is better to pay homage to the kitchen stove
> Than to the corner shrine.'

The Master replied, "This is not so. Once you have incurred the wrath of Heaven, there is no one to whom you can pray for help."

There are many ways to understand this passage. Taken literally, it is a "cynical piece of peasant lore" (Waley 1989: 97) meaning that it is better to be well-fed than to waste food on sacrifices to the ancestors. Despite Confucius' agnosticism concerning the existence of the spirits, such a crudely pragmatic argument against ritual traditions would clearly be anathema to him (cf. 3.17). There are also a host of metaphorical interpretations of the passage that take the folk saying as a coded reference to the current state of affairs in Wei, where the questioner, Wangsun Jia, was a minister. The corner shrine was traditionally located in the southwest corner of one's house, and was a specially venerated location where sacrifices to one's ancestors were carried out. The kitchen stove, on the other hand, was of no particular ritual significance, but was the focus of the family's everyday attention, and was therefore of much more practical importance. Some interpretations argue that the "corner shrine" refers metaphorically to the respected inner circle of ministers around the lord of Wei (Kong Anguo's view) or to the Lord of Wei himself (Zhu Xi's view), who had in fact only nominal power, and that the "kitchen stove" refers to the real wielder of power in Wei, Wangsun Jia. Under this reading, Wangsun is advising Confucius, who had just arrived in Wei (possibly seeking an official position after losing his position in Lu (1.10 and 3.24), to pay homage to him rather than to his nominal superiors. This, however, would be a violation of ritual (and thus a crime against Heaven), and Confucius therefore rebukes him. Other interpretations see this saying as Wangsun's attempt to justify his abandoning service under the remnants of the Zhou royal line to take up a position with the much more powerful feudal lord of Wei. As Luan Zhao explains,

> [The saying means that, in theory,] the corner shrine is honored, but is not actually served in practice, whereas the kitchen stove—nominally not worthy of respect—is where one focuses one's attention. At the time the house of Zhou was weak and in decline, and real power was in the hands of the feudal lords. Wangsun gave up service under the Zhou to take up a position under the Wei, and therefore uses this saying as a way to justify his actions to Confucius. Confucius' answer . . . is intended to make it clear that, just as there is nothing greater than Heaven and the spirits, no one should be honored more than one's king—that is, that one should in fact serve that which one honors in theory and not pay homage to that which is not worthy of respect.

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

The metaphoric image of the Zhou gazing down upon the Xia and Shang Dynasties, as if from a summit, is meant to express the fact that its culture incorporated elements of the cultures that preceded it—presumably the best elements. Lu represented the depository of Zhou culture during Confucius' age, and a related passage in the *Record of Ritual* ("Confucius said, 'I look toward the Way of Zhou . . . Were I to abandon Lu, where would I go?'")[9] suggests that part of the purpose of this passage is to emphasize the moral and cultural preeminence of Lu among the feudal states of the time, even though Lu was in fact relatively small and comparatively weak politically, economically, and militarily.

3.15 When the Master went into the Great Ancestral Temple, he asked questions about everything that took place.

Someone said, "Who said that this son of a man from Zou understands ritual? When he went into the Great Ancestral Temple, he had to ask questions about everything."

The Great Ancestral Temple was located in the state of Lu, was dedicated to the Duke of Zhou, and was the site of the traditional *di* sacrifice mentioned in 3.10 and 3.11. Confucius' father was supposedly from Zou.

When this comment was reported to the Master, his reply was, "This asking is, in fact, part of ritual."

The simplest way to understand this passage is that ritual demands that one ask polite questions upon entering someone else's ancestral temple, or that one not display one's superior knowledge of ritual. As Kong Anguo puts it, "Although Confucius knew the ritual, it was appropriate for him to ask questions about it nonetheless—this is the height of carefulness." Others read it together with 3.10 and 3.11 as a subtle condemnation of the manner in which the *di* sacrifice was being performed in Lu. As Liu Fenglu explains,

> From the time of Duke Xi the rulers of Lu began usurping the [Zhou king prerogative] of practicing the *di* sacrifice in the Great Ancestral Temple. They employed ritual vestments, vessels, and officers of the Four Dynasties [appropriate only to the Son of Heaven], and were subsequently emulated by their ministers, who also usurped the great rituals. By asking about everything when he entered the Great Ancestral Temple, Confucius avoided directly criticizing this usurpation: he pretended to ask innocently, out of ignorance, such things as, "When was the precedent for this practice established?" or "What is the justification for this practice?" in order to indicate obliquely that Lu had no right to usurp the practices of the Son of Heaven.

[9] Chapter 9 ("Ritual Usages"); Legge 1967, vol. 1: 372.

5.16 The Master said of Zichan, "Of the virtues that constitute the Way of the gentleman, he possessed four: in the way he conducted himself, he displayed reverence; in the way he served his superiors, he displayed respect; in the way he cared for the common people, he displayed benevolence; and in the way he employed the people, he displayed rightness."

Zichan is the style-name of Gongsun Qiao (d. 521 B.C.E.), a minister in the state of Zheng. Even as a young man he stood out for his virtue; *Zuo's Commentary* reports that after Zheng carried out a successful military action against another state, everyone in the state rejoiced with the sole exception of the still officeless Zichan, who declared, "for a small state [like Zheng], there is no greater misfortune than to lack civil/cultural Virtue (*wende* 文德) but to have military success." He went on to predict dire consequences for Zheng's unvirtuous behavior.[3] On his deathbed, after thirty years of virtuous rule, he gave his son and successor sagely advise about ruling the people with the proper balance of mildness and severity, and when he died, Confucius wept and declared, "In him, we could see the love passed down from the ancients."[4] Although Confucius stops short of declaring Zichan to have been a full gentleman or to have possessed the supreme virtue of Goodness, from his example we learn about important qualities that the gentleman must possess.

5.17 The Master said, "Yan Pingzhong is good at interacting with other people—even after long acquaintance he continues to treat them with respect."

Yan Pinzhong (6th c. B.C.E.) was a virtuous minister in the state of Qi and a contemporary of Confucius, in whose name the *Annals of Master Yan* was compiled. Some versions of the final half of this passage read "even after long acquaintance others continue to treat him with respect." Huang Kan's commentary is based on this reading: "Generally speaking, human relationships are easily broken, and yet Pingzhong could associate with others for a long time and their respect for him would only become greater." Sun Chuo adds, "When it comes to relationships . . . it is easy to have an auspicious beginning, but hard to have a successful ending. The way to make a relationship endure is by means of frankness, honesty, and consistency, which are difficult to achieve. This is why Confucius holds up Pingzhong as a exemplar."

5.18 The Master said, "Zang Wenzhong housed his sacred tortoises in a hall where the column capitals were carved in the shape of mountains and the roof beams were decorated with images of water plants. How could he be considered wise?"

Zang Wenzhong is the posthumous title of the Lu minister Zang Sunchen (fl. 7th c. B.C.E.), who apparently was known by his contemporaries as a man of wisdom. Han Dynasty commentators claim that Zang's possession of the sacred tortoises was a usurpation of the prerogatives of a feudal lord. However, Zhu Xi and others argue—based on evidence from the *Family Sayings of Confucius* (hereafter *Family Sayings*) and the *Zuo Commentary*—that housing the sacred tortoises constituted part of Zang's

[3] Duke Xiang, Year 8 (564 B.C.E.); Legge 1994d: 435

[4] Duke Zhao, Year 20 (521 B.C.E.); Legge 1994d: 684–685

official ministerial duties, and that his sole mistake was decorating the hall with motifs that were the ritual prerogative of the Son of Heaven. Confucius' criticism seems to have less to do with Zang's ritual violations than his lack of judgment. The giant tortoises were used in divination: the tortoise was sacrificed, questions were posed to the spirits by carving them into the tortoise shell, and a hot poker was applied to the shell. The resulting pattern of cracks revealing the spirits' answers. Zang apparently felt that lavish decorations in the divination hall would impress the spirits—an attempt at flattery that Confucius dismisses as both foolish and inappropriate. Zang Wenzhong comes in for criticism again in 15.14 below.

6.15 The Master said, "Meng Zhifan is not given to boasting. When his forces were retreating he stayed behind to defend the rear, but as they were about to enter the city gates he spurred his horses ahead, saying, 'It was not my courage that kept me back, but merely that my horses would not advance.'"

Meng Zhifan was a minister of Lu whose forces were routed by the army of Qi in a battle outside the Lu capital in 485 B.C.E. Like a true gentleman, he was virtuous in action but self-deprecating in presenting himself to others. We are to see him as a contrast to the majority of Confucius' contemporaries, who exaggerate their meager achievements and boast of qualities that they do not actually possess.

6.16 The Master said, "These days it is hard to get by without possessing either the glibness of Priest Tuo or the physical beauty of Song Chao."

Both of these figures were ministers of Wei, Priest Tuo being famous for his eloquence and Song Chao (originally an aristocrat from the state of Song) for his good looks. This utterance no doubt dates from the Master's stay in the state of Wei. Priest Tuo is accorded limited praise in 14.19, but we have already seen Confucius' suspicion of both of these qualities. Superficial appeal is rarely a sign of true virtue (1.3), and the Master's point here is to lament his contemporaries penchant for flash over substance. As Fan Ning explains,

> Priest Tuo utilized flattery in order to win the favor of Duke Ling [of Wei], and Song Chao relied upon his physical beauty in order to gain the affection of Nanzi.[7] In an age that lacks the Way, it is these two qualities than win approval. Confucius detested the corruption and confusion that characterized the people of his age, who valued nothing but glibness and beauty and would not accept or approve of genuinely dutiful and correct men.

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?"

We have here an eloquent expression of the exasperation Confucius felt with his contemporaries' perverse refusal to follow the Way of the ancients. Fan Ning understands the passage as having to do with learning: "When walking, all people know that they have to go out by means of the door, and yet none realize that it is only by means of learning that they can be truly accomplished." The *Record of Ritual* relates it to the ritualization of everyday life: "Ritual encompasses the great and the small, the manifest and the subtle . . . Therefore the primary rites number three hundred, and the everyday rites number three thousand, but the destination to which they ultimately lead one is the same. There has never been a person who has entered a room without using the door."[8] In either case, the point is the same: the Way of the ancients is the only way to live a proper human life.

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[7] The notoriously corrupt and decadent consort of Duke Ling; see 6.28.

[8] Chapter 10 ("Ritual Vessels"); Legge 1967, vol. 1: 404.

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."

This passage is perhaps the earliest expression of an ideal that later became very important in Confucian writings: the doctrine of holding fast to the "mean" (*zhong* 中), introduced explicitly in 6.29. A perfect balance between native substance and cultural refinement is the ideal state, although if one is to err it should be on the side of substance (3.4, 3.8, 5.10, 5.22, 7.33, 13.27). For the ideal of the "mean," see also 1.12, 13.21, 17.8, and 20.1.

6.19 The Master said, "A person survives by being upright. If you try leading a crooked life, only blind luck will allow you to get by."

This seems to be a partner passage to the exasperated 6.16: despite the depravity of the current age, moral rectitude will see one through. As Ma Rong comments, "The point is that rectitude and uprightness are what allow one to live in the world and come to a natural end." Liu Baonan elaborates, "A crooked person expends all of his energy deceiving himself in order to deceive other people. This is what it means to turn yourself into a monster, to make your life unlivable. If you are not punished by your superiors, you will surely suffer some natural misfortune—only sheer luck would allow you to escape this fate."

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."

The "it" referred to is most likely the Confucian Way. There are several slightly different ways to take this passage, but what is being referred to is the increasing level of unselfconsciousness and ease that characterizes the true Confucian gentleman. Bao Xian takes the "it" in the more narrow sense of learning: "One who knows about learning lacks the sincerity of one who loves learning, and one who loves learning lacks the depth of one who takes joy in it." Zhang Shi invokes an analogy to food:

> It is like the five cultivated grains. "One who knows it" knows that they are edible. "One who loves it" has eaten them and found them delicious. "One who takes joy in it" has found them delicious and has moreover eaten his fill. If you know it but are not able to love it, this means that your knowledge is not yet complete, and if you love it but are not able to take joy in it, this means that your love has not yet been consummated. Is not [joy in the Way] what strengthened the resolve of the ancients and allowed them to go forward without rest?

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."

Although some commentators understand "average" to refer to overall moral character, in an alternate version of this passage in the *Guliang Commentary* it explicitly refers to level of understanding, and this is the most likely meaning here. Most commentators see this as a rationale for Confucius' practice of "skillful means": altering his teachings to accord with the level of understanding of his listeners (11.22). As Zhang Shi says, "Altering one's teachings to fit the level of understanding of one's audience is to means by which one allows them to ask and think about issues that are relevant to them, and is also the way one leads them gradually into higher levels of understanding."

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."

There is some debate over the exact meaning of the terms *shu* 束 and *xiu* 脩, literally "restraint/bundle" and "strip," here taken separately to mean "bundle of silk and strips [of cured meat]." The terms could also be taken as a compound, either as "bundle of cured meat" or (as in some early texts) the strip with which a man can bind his hair. Zheng Xuan explains that *shuxiu* means "over fifteen years of age," presumably because this is the age when men in ancient times began binding their hair when going out in public. In this case, the point would be that Confucius would accept anyone over age fifteen as a student. Others take the term as a metaphoric extension of the "hair tie" sense (again, relying upon precedents in early texts), understanding it as a reference to the bearing of the person seeking instruction—that is, an attitude of self-restraint and self-discipline. As Mao Qiling observes, however, the verb "offering up" in the text strongly suggests that *shuxiu* refers to a literal object, and many early texts mention *shuxiu* in a context where it is clear that the term refers to small, symbolic, ritually-dictated offerings made by a student seeking instruction. Most likely, then, we should follow Kong Anguo in seeing the point as being that Confucius' door was open to anyone who came willingly and in a ritually correct manner—that is, he did not discriminate on the basis of social status or wealth.

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."

As Zhu Xi notes, this represents the flip side of Confucius' contribution as a teacher mentioned in 7.2 ("encouraging others and never growing weary"): for education to work, the student must also contribute to the process. The ideal student should come to the project possessed by an inchoate need for what study is able to provide—something like the passion for learning that causes Confucius himself to forget to eat (7.19). While Confucius certainly saw the role of traditional knowledge as being much more essential than Socrates did, there is nonetheless a similar maieutic quality to his method. Cf. 15.16.

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

7.10 The Master would never sing on a day when he had wept.

These two passages fit together so neatly that some commentators argue that they should be read as one passage. One way to understand them is as examples of ritually proper behavior, and the *Record of Ritual* actually quotes both lines as models for proper mourning practice.[2] It is unlikely, however, that either of the behaviors described were explicitly dictated by the ritual standards of the time, and most commentators (from He Yan down to Zhu Xi) understand the point to be about sincerity and depth of feeling. That is, while others might observe the superficial niceties of the mourning rituals and then get on with their day, Confucius *felt* the rituals (even if they were being enacted by someone else), and remained profoundly affected by the emotions they evoked. Understood this way, the point is not that Confucius consciously refrained from eating his fill or singing, but that he was actually rendered unable to eat a full meal or engage in light-hearted activities.

7.11 The Master remarked to Yan Hui, "It is said, 'When he is employed, he moves forward; when he is removed from office, he holds himself in reserve.' Surely this applies only to you and me?"

Zilu interposed, "If you, Master, were to lead the three armies[3] into battle, who would you want by your side?"

The Master replied, "I would not want by my side the kind of person who would attack a tiger barehanded or attempt to swim the Yellow River,[4] because he was willing to 'die without regret.' Surely I would want someone who approached such undertakings with a proper sense of trepidation, and who came to a decision only after having thoroughly considered the matter."

The first remark refers to the virtue of timeliness (*shi* 時): responding flexibly and appropriately to the situation with which one is confronted. As Kong Anguo puts it, it is the ability to "advance when it is appropriate to advance, and remain still when it is appropriate to remain still." Such sensitivity to context and effortless grace is the hallmark of an accomplished gentleman. Most likely Confucius' comment was intended not only to praise Yan Hui, but also to indicate to Zilu the areas in which he might best develop himself morally. Zilu misses the point, though; presumably jealous of this praise for Yan Hui, he tries to win approval from the Master for his own characteristic reckless courage (cf. 5.7). Of course, it is precisely Zilu's recklessness that the Master was trying to rein in with his initial statement, and so the Master is forced to explicitly reprimand him.

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[2] 7.9 is repeated in Chapter 3 ("Tan Gong") of the *Record of Ritual* (Legge 1967, vol. 1: 147), and 7.10 is paraphrased ("on a day when one has wept [in mourning], one should not sing"), without reference to Confucius himself, in Chapter 1 ("Summary of Ritual") (Legge 1967, vol. 1: 89).

[3] I.e., the combined military force of a large state.

[4] A reference to Ode 195: "They do not dare to attack a tiger barehanded/Or swim the Yellow River/They know one thing/And one thing only:/To be apprehensive and careful/As if on the brink of a deep abyss/Or as if treading upon thin ice."

10.22 When a friend died without relatives able to take care of the funeral arrangements, he would say, "I will see to burying him properly."

Kong Anguo comments, "He valued the kindness shown to him by his friend," but probably this is simply what should be expected of a friend. A related and slightly more elaborate passage in the *Record of Ritual* expands the sphere of concern further: "When a strange guest arrived and had nowhere to lodge, the Master said, 'While he is alive in my care, I will take care of lodging him, and should he pass away in my care, I will take responsibility for burying him properly.'"[10]

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.

A gift of sacrificial meat carries with it a sort of ritual solemnity not possessed by a non-religious gift, no matter how sumptuous it might be. As Kong Anguo comments, "Not bowing signifies that all that has transpired is an exchange of goods." There is probably no specific clause in the rites that dictate particular response; rather, Confucius, by virtue of his sensitivity to the ritual value of sacrificial meat relative to a sumptuous—but nonsacred—gift, simply *knows* how to respond properly.

10.24 He would not sleep rigidly like a corpse, nor would he assume a formal posture when sitting at leisure.

There is some debate over the sense of the first phrase. Some, such as Bao Xian and Zhu Xi, see it as a form of superstitious avoidance of invoking the appearance of a dead person. Something like Fan Ziyu's explanation is more likely: "'Not sleeping rigidly like a corpse' has nothing to do with hating the appearance of death. The point is that if you do not allow relaxed, restful vital essence to establish itself in your body, you will never be refreshed, even if you do manage to stretch out your limbs." As for the second phrase, commentators explain that there were different traditional seating postures that corresponded to different levels of formality; what we have translated as "formal posture"—literally "sitting as if a guest" (*kezuo* 客坐)—probably refers to kneeling against a mat and then sitting with one's legs folded beneath the buttocks, still a formal seating posture in modern Japan. The point, as in the first phrase, seems to be that Confucius did not maintain rigid, formal postures at all times, but knew when and how to relax. Again, Fan Ziyu: "It is not that he sat in an indolent fashion, just that he did not sit the way he would if he were offering a sacrifice or receiving a guest—he was 'composed and yet fully at ease.'" "Composed and yet fully at ease" is a reference to 7.4, where we find a very similar theme.

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 (*xie* 亵).

[10] Chapter 3 ("Tan Gong"); Legge 1967, vol. 1: 155.

The translation follows Huang Kan, who takes *xie* as referring to someone of low birth. "Respect has to do with one's position, and ancestry does not make the man" he remarks. "Therefore one must always show a respectful countenance." This accords with the passage below where Confucius shows respect to a commoner, but an alternate reading that accords better with the phrase immediately preceding is that of Mr. Zhou, who takes *xie* as "intimate, acquainted," giving us the reading: "even if they were well-known to him" (cf. 9.10).

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

Facing downward and grasping the crossbar of the chariot is a sign of respect. The translation follows Yu Yue's suggestion that the obscure *fuban* 負版 ("carrying tablets") should be read as *fufan* 負販 ("porter" or "peddler"), which makes this passage accord with a related comment in the *Record of Ritual*: "Ritual has to do with humbling oneself and showing respect to others—even porters and peddlers must be shown respect, how much more so the wealthy and noble!"[11] Kong Anguo, however, understands the term *fuban* to refer to someone carrying official state documents; on this reading, the second phrase would be translated: "He would do the same when passing a messenger carrying official documents."

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

A related passage in the *Record of Ritual* says, "When attending an elder at a meal, if the host offers one food with his own hands, one then bows and eats it. If the host does not offer the food with his own hand, then one eats it without bowing."[12] When presented with food by the host himself, then, Confucius would invariably respond with a gesture of respect.

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

This is understood as a sign of respect for Heaven's power.

10.26 When mounting his carriage, he would always stand facing it directly while grasping the mounting strap. Once in his carriage, he would not let his gaze wander past the crossbar in front of him or to either side, he would not speak rapidly, nor would he point with his hand.

Many of these items of ritual etiquette are to be found in the *Record of Ritual*.[13] As in many cultures, pointing was considered rude.

[11] Chapter 1 ("Summary of Ritual"); Legge 1967, vol. 1: 65.

[12] Chapter 1 ("Summary of Ritual"); Legge 1967, vol. 1: 80.

[13] Chapter 1 ("Summary of Ritual"); Legge 1967, vol. 1: 94–97.

> regulated their trustworthiness by means of models and regulations, so that their trustworthiness is clear for all to see. For the model set by the actions of their superiors is what the common people will turn to."[6]

Again, the key to political order is personal self-cultivation on the part of the ruler.

12.19 Ji Kangzi asked Confucius 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?"

Confucius 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."

An alternate version of this story is found in the *Exoteric Commentary*:

> The state of Lu had a case of a father and son filing civil complaints against each other, and Ji Kangzi wanted to have them executed. Confucius said, "You cannot execute them . . . When the common people do something that is not right, it is only because their superiors have lost the Way . . . If the superiors make manifest their teachings and then take the lead in obeying these teachings, the common people will then follow as if being impelled by a wind."[7]

We also find this wind metaphor for the virtuous influence of the ruler[8] in a passage from the *Garden of Persuasions*—"Those below are transformed by those above like grass bending in the wind . . . the direction from which the wind is blowing will determine the direction in which the grass bends. This is why the ruler of men must be very careful about his behavior"—and it also appears in a warning to a ruler in a portion of the *Book of Documents*: "You are the wind, and the people below are the grass."[9] In this passage, we see again a suspicion of recourse to legal means and reliance on punishment—widespread disorder among the common people is a sign of immorality among the ruling class, and in such a situation it is actually cruel and unfair to punish the people for their transgressions. Throughout traditional Chinese texts on rulership the common people are portrayed as childlike and easily influenced by their superiors, and therefore not totally accountable for their behavior. Some modern scholars of Confucianism present passages such as *Analects* 12.17–12.19 as examples of how traditional China had something like the modern Western liberal-democratic ideal of governmental accountability, but it is important not to lose sight of how distinct from modern liberal ideals the early Confucian conception actually was.

12.20 Zizhang inquired, "What must a scholar-official be like before he can be considered accomplished (*da* 達)?"

The Master replied, "What do you mean by 'accomplished'?"

"Sure to be renowned (*wen* 聞), whether serving the state or a noble family."

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[6] Duke Xiang, Year 21 (551 B.C.E.); Legge 1991d: 490.

[7] Chapter 3.22; Hightower 1952: 100–101; see also 3.24: 105–106.

[8] Cf. the "press-frame" metaphor in 2.19 and 12.22.

[9] Book 21 ("Jun Chen"); Legge 1991a: 539. Most scholars believe that this book is a forgery dating to the fourth century B.C.E. Also cf. the quotation of 12.19 in *Mencius* 3:A:2.

The Master said, "That is merely being 'renowned,' not being 'accomplished.' Someone who is accomplished is upright in his native substance and fond of rightness. He examines other people's words and observes their demeanor, and always takes the interests of his inferiors into account when considering something—no matter whether serving the state or a noble family. Someone who is renowned, on the other hand, adopts the appearance of Goodness but violates it in his actual conduct, all the while never doubting that he deserves to be called Good. Thus, he is sure to be renowned, whether serving the state or a noble family."

Here we see again the concern with moral hypocrisy briefly raised in 11.21, which is related as well to the suspicion of public reputation voiced in 13.24 and 15.28 and the condemnation in 17.13 of the "village worthy"—the counterfeit version of the true gentleman, who adopts the external appearance of Goodness and thereby wins the praise of others. Confucius is probably also concerned that Zizhang focus on the substance of self-cultivation rather than the appearance, and we might read this passage as an elaboration of 4.14: "Do not be concerned that no one has heard of you, but rather strive to become a person worthy of being known." The accomplished person's genuine concern for others as described here also echoes the 1.16 injunction to "not be concerned about whether or not others know you; be concerned about whether or not you know others." In *Dai's Record*, a disciple asks Zizhang's question about how to be "accomplished" of Master Zeng and receives the following answer:

> When unable, then learn; when in doubt, ask; in your desires and conduct, emulate the worthies; and even though you have a dangerous way before you, simply follow it until you reach the end (*da* 達).[10] Nowadays, on the other hand, you disciples dislike humbling yourself below others, are ignorant of how to serve a worthy person, are ashamed of not knowing something and therefore refuse to ask, desire to innovate even when your knowledge is insufficient, and thereby accomplish nothing but confusing, darkening, and bringing about the demise of our age.

12.21 Fan Chi was on an excursion with the Master, wandering below the Rain Dance Altar, when he asked, "May I ask what it means to, 'Accumulate Virtue, reform vice, and resolve confusion'?"

For the Rain Dance Altar, see 11.26. The quoted phrase rhymes and may be part of a traditional catechism. Li Baonan suggests that it formed part of the invocation sung during the Rain Dance ceremony, which is why Fan Chi brings it up on this particular excursion. Fan Chi's question is similar to that of Zizhang in 12.10.

The Master replied, "A noble question indeed! Put service first and reward last—is this not the way to accumulate Virtue? Attack the bad qualities in yourself rather than the badness in others—is this not the way to remedy vice? To forget yourself in a moment of anger and thereby bring ruin upon both you and your family—is this not an example of confusion?"

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[10] Playing on the literal and metaphorical senses of *da*, which means both to reach a physical destination and to attain a metaphorical goal.

BOOK SIXTEEN

This is a stylistically somewhat strange Book, and it is here that one begins to find the sort of anomalies—fragmentary passages, unusually long narratives, concern with numbers, Confucius being referred to as "Kongzi" rather than "the Master"—that mark Books Sixteen–Twenty as belonging to the latest stratum of the text.

16.1 The Ji Family was about to attack Zhuanyu.

Zhuanyu was a small vassal state located within the borders of Lu. It was controlled by a minor line of nobility, surnamed Feng, who claimed descent from the legendary sage-king Fu Xi. Kong Anguo speculates that the Ji Family, resenting Zhuangyu's independence and coveting its land, wished to destroy it. As Liu Fenglu notes, there is no record of an attack on Zhuangyu in the *Annals*, which indicates that the attack never occurred—conceivably as a result of the rebuke recorded here dissuading the Ji Family.

Ran Qiu and Zilu came to see Confucius and told him, "The Ji Family is about to take action regarding Zhuanyu."

Confucius replied, "Ran Qiu! Is this not, after all, your fault? Long ago, our former king appointed the rulers of Zhuanyu to preside over the sacrifices to Mount Dongmeng. Moreover, Zhuanyu lies within the boundaries of the state of Lu, and its ruler is a minister dedicated to our altars to the soil and grain. What possible reason could there be to attack him?"

As Kong Anguo explains, both Ran Qiu and Zilu were serving the Ji Family at the time, which is why they came to report this news to Confucius, but Ran Qiu—as the Ji Family steward—was senior to Zilu in their service, and thus particularly implicated in this dubious undertaking. This is why Confucius directs his criticism at Ran Qiu alone. The ruler of Zhuanyu was directly appointed by a Zhou king (King Cheng, according to commentators) to serve the altars of Lu, and thus presented no threat to the state. Of course, the Ji Family is not at all interested in the public good of Lu, only in their own personal power, but Confucius is pointing out their lack of legitimate justification for an attack.

Ran Qiu replied, "Our Master desires it. We two ministers are against it."

Confucius replied, "Ran Qiu! Zhou Ren had a saying, 'He who can display his power should step into the ranks, he who is unable to do so should retire.' Of what use is an assistant who cannot support someone when they are tottering on the brink of disaster, or steady them when they are about to fall? Furthermore, what you have just said is incorrect, for when a tiger or rhinoceros escapes from his cage, or a tortoise shell or piece of jade is ruined in its case, whose fault is it?"

Ran Qiu attempts to foist the responsibility on the Ji Family, but Confucius will not have it. As a minister, it is Ran Qiu's duty to guide his masters and help them to make the right decision; moreover, like someone entrusted with the care of a dangerous or precious object, a minister must take responsibility for the errors committed during his tenure. Zhou Ren was a legendary, wise historian whose sayings also appear in the *Zuo Commentary*.

Ran Qiu said, "Well, Zhuanyu is well-fortified and close to the Ji Family stronghold of Bi. If it is not taken now, it will certainly be a source of anxiety for the Ji Family descendents in later generations."

Confucius replied, "Ran Qiu! The gentleman despises those who, declining to say that they want something, turn around and argue in favor of it."

After failing to foist responsibility on Ji Kangzi, Ran Qiu now tries another tack, attempting to justify Ji Kangzi's plan as mere self-defense. The flimsiness of this argument is immediately apparent, and the Master is further infuriated by Ran Qiu's shameless flip-flopping—first he denies desiring the attack on Zhuanyu, and now he defends it as justified.

"I have heard it said that those who possess a state or noble house are not concerned about whether their people are scarce, but rather about whether their people are content; they are not concerned about poverty, but rather concerned that what wealth they have is fairly distributed.[1] If wealth is fairly distributed, there should be no poverty; if your state or house is in harmony, there should be no scarcity; and if your people are content, there should be no instability. This being the case, if those who are distant will not submit, simply refine your culture and Virtue in order to attract them. Once you have attracted them, you should make them content."

After rebuking Ran Qiu for his lack of scruples, Confucius then discredits his attempted justification of the Ji Family. If the Ji Family were genuinely concerned about Zhuanyu as a potential threat, the proper response would not be a military campaign. Instead, the Ji Family should cultivate their own Virtue in order to bring about the voluntary submission of Zhuanyu.

"Now, you two, Ran Qiu and Zilu, are supposed to be assisting your masters. Yet those who are far away will not submit, and they are unable to attract them; the state is partitioned and crumbling, and they are unable to preserve it; and now you are planning to move with spears and shields against your own countrymen. I am afraid that the source of the Ji Family's troubles lies not in Zhuanyu, but rather within their own chambers."

The point is that Ji Family's troubles are the result of the bad advice they are getting from their own ministers, rather than any external threat. Both Ran Qiu and Zilu are failing shamefully in their duties as ministers, thereby endangering Lu; contrast this situation with that described in 14.19, where the weak and corrupt Duke of Wei enjoys stability and safety because of his able ministers.

[1] Transposing two characters that have apparently been misplaced, as is confirmed in the lines that follow, as well as alternate versions of this comment attributed to Confucius in the *Luxuriant Dew* and the *History of the Wei*.