Introduction

In a culture that makes no distinction between those realms we call the heart and the mind, Mencius was the great thinker of the heart. He was the second originary sage in the Confucian tradition, which has shaped Chinese culture for over two thousand years, and it was he who added the profound inner dimensions of human being to the Confucian vision.

In the ruins of a magisterial monotheism, a situation not entirely unlike our own, Confucius (551–479 B.C.E.) recognized society as a structure of human relationships, and spoke of those relationships as a system of "ritual" that people enact in their daily lives, thus infusing the secular with sacred dimensions. There is little sense of the inner self in Confucius' thought: identity is determined by a person's ritual roles in the social fabric, and this selflessness contributes deeply to the sense of human community as a sacred rite. The explicit realm of Confucius' teachings is occupied with the practical issues of how society works as a selfless weave of caring relationships; and in the implicit realm, that ritual weave is woven into the vast primal ecology of a self-generating and harmonious cosmos.

The Confucian social vision represents the end of a devastating, millennium-long transformation from a spiritualist to a humanist culture, and Mencius (4th C. B.C.E.) invested that humanist vision with its inner dimension by recognizing that the individual too is a part of the primal ecology. He saw all the spiritual depths of that cosmology inside us, and this led to a mystical faith in the inherent nobility of human beings. In his chaotic and war-ravaged times, he was therefore passionate in his defense of the people. Indeed, he advocated a virtual democracy in which a government's legitimacy depended upon the assent of the

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people. Such is the enduring magic of the Mencian heart – full of compassionate and practical concern for the human condition, and yet so empty that it contains the ten thousand transformations of the entire cosmos.

The tangible beginnings of Chinese civilization lie in the archaic Shang Dynasty (c. 1766–1040 B.C.E.), which bridged the transition from Neolithic to Bronze Age culture. (For an outline of the early dynasties and rulers that figure prominently in Mencius' writings, see Historical Table.) The Shang was preceded by the Neolithic Hsia Dynasty, about which very little is known. It appears that in the Paleolithic cultures that preceded the Hsia, nature deities were worshiped as tribal ancestors: hence a tribe may have traced its lineage back to an originary "High Ancestor River," for instance. This practice apparently continued through the Hsia into the Shang, where evidence of it appears in oracle-bone inscriptions. Eventually, although these nature deities continued to be worshiped in their own right, religious life focused on the worship of human ancestors. By forging this religious system into a powerful form of theocratic government, the Shang was able to dominate China for no less than seven hundred years.

The Shang emperors ruled by virtue of their lineage, which was sanctified by Shang Ti ("Celestial Lord"), a supreme deity who functioned as the source of creation, order, ethics, etc. (*Shang* here represents two entirely different words in Chinese.) The Shang lineage may even have led to Shang Ti as its originary ancestor. In any case, Shang Ti provided the Shang rulers with a transcendental source of legitimacy and power: he protected and advanced their interests, and through their spirit-ancestors, they could decisively influence Shang Ti's shaping of events. All aspects of people's lives were thus controlled by the emperor: weather, harvest, politics, economics, religion, etc. Indeed, people didn't experience themselves as substantially different from spirits, for the human realm was simply an extension of the spirit realm.

Such was the imperial ideology, so convenient to the uses of power as it accorded little ethical value to the masses, who were not of select lineages. (Not surprisingly, the rise of Shang Ti seems to coincide

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with the rise of the Shang Dynasty, and later myth speaks of him as the creator of Shang civilization.) In the cruelest of ironies, it was overwhelming human suffering that brought the Chinese people into their earthly lives, beginning the transformation of this spiritualistic culture to a humanistic one. In the cultural legend, the early Shang rulers were paradigms of nobility and benevolence. But by the end of the Shang, the rulers had become cruel and tyrannical, and as there was no ethical system separate from the religious system, there was nothing to shield the people from their depredations. Meanwhile, a small nation was being pushed to the borders of the Shang realm by western tribes. This state of semi-barbarian people known as the Chou gradually adopted the cultural traits of the Shang. Eventually, under the leadership of the legendary sage-emperors Wen ("cultured") and Wu ("martial"), the Chou overthrew the tyrannical Shang ruler, thus founding the Chou Dynasty (1040–223 B.C.E.), which was welcomed wholeheartedly by the Shang people.

The Chou conquerors were faced with an obvious problem: if the Shang lineage had an absolute claim to rule the world, how could the Chou justify replacing it with their own, and how could they legitimize their rule in the eyes of the Shang people? Their solution was to redefine Shang Ti as *Heaven*, thus ending the Shang's claim to legitimacy by lineage, and then proclaim that the right to rule depended upon the Mandate of Heaven: once a ruler becomes unworthy, Heaven withdraws its mandate and bestows it on another. This was a major event in Chinese philosophy: the first investment of power with an ethical imperative. And happily, the early centuries of the Chou appear to have fulfilled that imperative admirably.

But eventually the Chou foundered because of its increasing inhumanity and its lack of the Shang's transcendent source of legitimacy: if the Mandate could be transferred to the Chou, it could obviously be transferred again. The rulers of the empire's component states (*chu hou:* "august lords") grew increasingly powerful, claiming more and more sovereignty over their lands, until finally they had established virtually independent nations. Eventually these rulers (properly called "dukes")

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even began assuming the title of emperor, thus equating themselves with the Chou emperor, who was by now a mere figurehead. The rulers of these autonomous states could at least claim descent from those who were first given the territories by the early Chou rulers. But this last semblance of legitimacy was also crumbling because these rulers were frequently at war with one another, which hardly inspired confidence in the claim that they were familial members of the ruling kinship hierarchy that was sanctioned by Heaven. More importantly, power was being usurped by a second tier of "august lords" whenever they had the strength to take it, and even by a third tier of high government officials. This history, beginning with the Chou's overthrow of the Shang, represents a geologic split in China's social structure: political power was breaking free of its family/religious context and becoming a separate entity.

The final result of the Chou's "metaphysical" breakdown was, not surprisingly, all too physical: war. In addition to constant pressure from barbarians in the north (the first devastating blow to Chou power was a barbarian invasion in 770 B.C.E.) and the Ch'u realm that dominated south China, there was relentless fighting between the empire's component states and frequent rebellion within them. This internal situation, so devastating to the people, continued to deteriorate after Confucius' time, until it finally gave an entire age its name: the Warring States Period (403–221 B.C.E.). Meanwhile, rulers caught up in this ruthless competition began looking for the most able men to help them rule their states, and this precipitated the rise of an independent intellectual class – a monumental event, for this class constituted the first open space in the cultural framework from which the imperial ideology could be challenged.

The old social order had now collapsed entirely, and these intellectuals began struggling to create a new one. Although this was one of the most virulent and chaotic periods in Chinese history, it was the golden age of Chinese philosophy, for there were a "Hundred Schools of Thought" trying to envision what this new social order should be like. These schools were founded by thinkers who wandered the coun-

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try with their disciples, teaching and trying to convince the various rulers to put their ideas into practice, for the desperate times had given them an urgent sense of political mission.

The first great figure of this intellectual class was Confucius, whose thought survives in a collection of aphoristic sayings entitled the *Analects*. Confucius' social philosophy derives from a rational empiricism, a methodology which Mencius shared and which represents a total break with Shang spiritualism. Blatant power-politics had made it impossible to believe in Heaven (let alone Shang Ti) as a transcendental source of order and legitimacy, so Confucius tried to rescue the fragmented Chou culture by putting it on a more viable rational and secular basis. He began from the empirical observation that human society is a structure, a weave of relationships between individuals who each occupy a certain locus in that structure: parent and child, ruler and subject, friend and friend, merchant and customer, and so forth. Confucius invested this anthropological observation with a philosophical dimension by recognizing that a vital community depends upon its members' fulfilling their communal responsibilities with an attitude of human caring. Always looking to the past as his source of wisdom, Confucius saw that societies flourished when their citizens (most especially their rulers) honored this moral principle, and inevitably crumbled when they ignored it: even the powerful transcendental glue of the Shang theocracy couldn't withstand the corrosive influence of the Shang emperors' depredations.

But Confucius' social philosophy goes well beyond this moral dimension, for he described the web of social responsibilities as a system of "Ritual" (*li:* see Key Terms). *Ritual* had been a religious concept associated with the worship of spirits, but Confucius extended its use to include all the caring acts by which we fulfill our responsibilities to others in the community. Hence, the entire weave of everyday social life takes on the numinous aspect of the sacred. There is little sense of the inner self in the *Analects:* the Ritual social fabric is paramount, and individual identity is defined entirely in terms of a person's social roles. All of the Confucian moral virtues (see Key Terms) apply only in the social context: one cannot speak of a person being virtuous in isolation. And

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there is indeed a kind of spiritual clarity in the selflessness of this Ritual weave, a clarity which became a defining aspect in the structure of Chinese political and spiritual consciousness throughout the ages.

Confucius located his human society within a cosmology that the Taoists described eloquently, but which he himself referred to only through silence:

> *Adept Kung said: "When the Master talks about civility and cultivation, you can hear what he says. But when he talks about the nature of things and the Way of Heaven, you can't hear a word."*
>
> (V.12)

A major component in that cosmology is the evolving concept of "Heaven." The most primitive meaning of *Heaven (t'ien)* is "sky." By extension, it also comes to mean "transcendence," for our most primal sense of transcendence may be the simple act of looking up into the sky. So it's hardly surprising that when the Chou wanted to reinvent Shang Ti in a more impersonal form, they would choose Heaven. By association with the idea of transcendence and that which is beyond us, it is natural that *Heaven* also comes to mean "fate" or "destiny." And this is precisely what we find in Confucius, where "destiny" has evolved out of the early Chou sense of an impersonal deity. But rather than destiny in the sense of a transcendental force deciding human fate, this is destiny as the inevitable evolution of things according to the principles inherent in them. Although Confucius focuses on its manifestations in human history, there is little real difference between this Confucian Heaven and that of the Taoists, who identified it with natural process proceeding according to the principle of *tzu-jan*. *Tzu-jan*'s literal meaning is "self-so" or "the of-itself" or "being such of itself," hence "spontaneous" or "natural." But a more descriptive translation might be "occurrence appearing of itself," for it is meant to describe the ten thousand things unfolding spontaneously, each according to its own nature. The Taoist ideal is to dwell as an organic part of the *tzu-jan* process. For Confucius, the mechanism of Heaven's process would be *tzu-jan*'s Confucian counterpart: *li* (Ritual).

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The Ritual structure of society is part of a much larger weave, the Ritual structure of natural process, and the Confucian ideal is for human community to dwell as an organic part of the cosmological weave of *li*.

The Confucian and Taoist Ways are traditionally described as the two poles of Chinese thought, but their shared cosmology affords them a fundamental unity, and that unity is no doubt why Chinese culture could eventually adopt both of these Ways simultaneously: the Confucian Way has defined the societal realm for Chinese intellectuals throughout the millennia, and the Way of philosophical Taoism has defined the private spiritual realm. The spiritual ecology of this shared cosmology might be seen as a return to the original spirituality of paleolithic China, for the sense of belonging to natural process is a secular version of the worship of nature deities as ancestral spirits. And it represents a complete secularization of the spiritualist regime that had dominated China since the rise of the Shang. Although ancestors continued to be attended assiduously, it was now a Confucian ritual of love and respect rather than an appeal to otherworldly powers. And although Confucius and Mencius recognized sacrifices to gods and spirits, they didn't necessarily believe any of the religious claims associated with such worship. For them, the value of such practices lay in the function they served in the Ritual structure of society. Mencius goes so far as to say that if gods and spirits don't fulfill human needs, they should be replaced (XIV.14). At the more fundamental level of the shared cosmology itself, it would appear to represent the resurgence of an ancient cosmology, a return to the culture's most primal roots – the Paleolithic and beyond. "Heaven" had become the current way of referring to its physical processes, and it was by recognizing the vast reach of Heaven within us that Mencius endowed the human with profound inner dimensions:

> *The ten thousand things are all there in me. And there's no joy greater than looking within and finding myself faithful to them.*
>
> (XIII.4)

This inner dimension also takes on ethical and political dimensions in Mencius' thought. Rather than privileged kinship relations as a basis of

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ethical value, Mencius proposes human belonging to the primal cosmology. Hence, citizens are all of equal value in and of themselves simply because they are all endowed with that vast reach of Heaven.

As with most intellectual figures in ancient China, very little is known of Mencius' life. He was born in Tsou, which was a dependency of Lu, the homeland of Confucius where the Chou cultural tradition was especially strong. His Chinese name was Meng K'o, and he is known as Meng Tzu, meaning "Master Meng," from which the latinized *Mencius* derives. According to tradition, he received his education first under the tutelage of a sagely mother and then under a disciple of Master Szu, who was Confucius' grandson and the reputed author of *The Doctrine of the Mean (Chung Yung),* a book which came to be associated with the book of Mencius' writings, the *Mencius.* Sharing with most other philosophers of the time a faith in the political mission of the intellectual, he traveled with his disciples to the various states advising their rulers, hoping his ideas would be adopted and so lead to a more humane society. A number of rulers welcomed him, some even becoming benefactors, but his ideas were too radical and threatening. Few, if any, showed much inclination to put them into practice.

The book which bears Mencius' name probably represents the teachings of his mature thought. Unlike the *Analects,* which is largely made up of short aphoristic fragments without any supporting context, the *Mencius* is composed of longer and more developed passages, which makes it a fuller exposition of Confucian thought. It is entirely possible that Mencius wrote part or all of the book himself, though it is perhaps more likely that it was composed by his disciples. But if this is the case, it appears to be a compilation of carefully taken notes that represent pretty exactly the master's actual words. So, unlike the *Analects,* much of which is clearly not written by the historical Confucius, the *Mencius* seems almost entirely authentic. Indeed, it is considered a paragon of literary eloquence and style. The book contains fourteen chapters, arranged in seven pairs. Each pair shares the same title, which is taken from whatever personage happens to appear in the first sentence, a seemingly arbitrary method devised by a later editor. The only

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exception to this is the final pair: "To Fathom the Mind." This title, also drawn from the first sentence, is expressive of the unique character of these final chapters, for they seem to be an especially late and eloquent distillation of Mencius' ideas, containing many of his most striking and radical statements. An uncanny fact about Mencius is that his most distinctive and fundamental departures are found in only a handful of statements, which suggests that Mencius would appear an even more radical thinker if only more of his teachings had survived.

The inner dimension of human being was a central topic for the early Taoist masters, and they shared Mencius' cosmological view of the inner self; but for Mencius this was part of a political vision, and that is what makes him so important. As the human heart-mind is part of the fabric of Heaven, it is therefore inherently good and moral. Given this central belief in the inherent goodness of human nature, Mencius found the key to a flourishing society in a government that allows our inborn nobility to flourish of itself (here the similarity to Taoist thought is again unmistakable). And spiritual self-cultivation is the key both to that inner flourishing and to a benevolent government. The importance of self-cultivation among intellectuals was paramount in Confucius, who advocated government by a class of highly educated professionals. But in Mencius' cosmological context it takes on a decidedly spiritual dimension, reflecting the unity of self and cosmos:

> *To fathom the mind is to understand your nature. And*
> *when you understand your nature, you understand Heaven.*
>
> (XIV.1)

This idea of spiritual self-cultivation as a political act proved very appealing to the Neo-Confucianists of the Sung Dynasty. Although he was certainly influential, Mencius was not considered a preeminent figure until the rise of Neo-Confucianism, about 1,500 years after his death. Hoping to inspire people in the reconstruction of a beleaguered society, the Neo-Confucianists felt a need to give Confucian philosophy something of the spiritual depth that had made Buddhism (especially Ch'an

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or Zen Buddhism) so compelling in their culture. To do this they redefined the Confucian tradition by supplementing the *Analects* with three lesser-known texts which added a spiritual depth to Confucius' teachings, thus forming the canonical "Four Books": *The Analects, Mencius, The Great Learning,* and *The Doctrine of the Mean*. The Neo-Confucianists expanded Confucian self-cultivation to emphasize Ch'an meditation and the practice of the arts. Indeed, the monumental landscape painting that arose during the Sung was conceived in these Neo-Confucian terms: to look deeply into the ten thousand things is to look deeply into oneself. And, following Mencius, to look deeply into oneself is to look deeply into Heaven.

Given Mencius' faith in the inherent nobility of human beings, it is no surprise that he focuses so resolutely on the responsibility of rulers and intellectuals to create a society in which that nobility can flourish. For Mencius, the Mandate of Heaven is revealed through the will of the people:

> *Heaven sees through the eyes of the people. Heaven hears through the ears of the people.*
>
> (IX.5)

Indeed, the Mencian polity is a virtual democracy, for the emperor only has authority to rule so long as he has the people's approval. Once he loses their approval, he loses the Mandate of Heaven. Then, if they must, the people have every right to overthrow him.

The Mandate of Heaven remained the standard against which rulers were measured throughout the ages, though it was of course a standard they rarely met. Two millennia after Mencius, rulers of dubious repute felt compelled to commission paintings like Auspicious Grain (see cover illustration, right side, and interior illustration), as if they could mask reality by associating themselves with a monumental totemic image representing the people's prosperity under a ruler who is fulfilling the Mandate of Heaven. However rare the society it depicts may be, it is indeed a beautiful image: a sacred human community flourishing in the shimmering weave of Heaven's natural process.

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1 To Learn, and Then

1 The Master said: "To learn, and then, in its due season, put what you have learned into practice – isn't that still a great pleasure? And to have a friend visit from somewhere far away – isn't that still a great joy? When you're ignored by the world like this, and yet bear no resentment – isn't that great nobility?"

2 Master Yu[1] said: "It's honoring parents and elders that makes people human. Then they rarely turn against authority. And if people don't turn against authority, they never rise up and pitch the country into chaos.

"The noble-minded cultivate roots. When roots are secure, the Way[2] is born. To honor parents and elders – isn't that the root of Humanity?"[3]

3 The Master said: "Clever words and sanctimonious looks: in such people, Humanity is rare indeed."

4 Master Tseng[4] said: "Each day I ask three things of myself: Have I been trustworthy in all that I've done for other people? Have I stood by my words[5] in dealing with friends? Have I practiced all that I've been taught?"

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5 The Master said: "To show the Way for a nation of a thousand war-chariots, a ruler pays reverent attention to the country's affairs and always stands by his words. He maintains economy and simplicity, always loving the people, and so employs the people only in due season."

6 The Master said: "In youth, respect your parents when home and your elders when away. Think carefully before you speak, and stand by your words. Love the whole expanse of things, and make an intimate of Humanity. Then, if you have any energy left, begin cultivating yourself."

7 Adept Hsia[6] said: "Cherishing wisdom as if it were a beautiful woman, devoting their strength to serving parents and their lives to serving a ruler, standing by their words in dealing with friends – such people may say they've never studied, but I would call them learned indeed."

8 The Master said: "If you're grave and thoughtful, people look to you with the veneration due a noble. And if you're learned, too, you're never inflexible.

"Above all else, be loyal and stand by your words. Never befriend those who are not kindred spirits. And when you're wrong, don't be afraid to change."

9 Master Tseng said: "Be thorough in mourning parents, and meticulous in the ancestral sacrifices, then the people's Integrity[7] will return to its original fullness."

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10 Adept Ch'in asked of Adept Kung:[8] "Whenever the Master visits a country, he learns all about its government. Does he have to search out this information, or is it just given to him?"

Adept Kung replied: "Congenial, good-natured, reverent, frugal, deferential – that's how he learns so much. It's altogether different from the way others inquire, don't you think?"

11 The Master said: "Consider your plans when your father is alive, then see what you do when he dies. If you leave your father's Way unchanged for all three years of mourning, you are indeed a worthy child."

12 Master Yu said: "The most precious fruit of Ritual is harmony. The Way of the ancient Emperors found its beauty in this, and all matters great and small depend upon it.

"Still, things go wrong. You may understand this harmony and even instill things with it, but if you fail to shape harmony with Ritual, you'll never make things right."

13 Master Yu said:

"Make standing by words your Duty,[9]
and your words will last and last,

make reverence an everyday Ritual,
and you'll stay clear of all disgrace –

then kindred spirits remain kindred,
and you're worthy to be their ancestor."

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14 The Master said: "The noble-minded are content without a full belly or the comforts of home; they're quick in action but cautious in word; they rectify themselves by seeking out a master of the Way. And so they can be called lovers of learning."

15 Adept Kung said: "*When poor, never fawning; when rich, never arrogant*. How does that sound?"

The Master replied: "Not bad. But not so good as *When poor, delighting in the Way; when rich, devoted to Ritual*."

Adept Kung said: "In *The Book of Songs*, the noble-minded are perfected

> *as if cut, as if polished,*
> *as if carved, as if burnished.*[10]

Is that what you mean?"

The Master replied: "Only with a person like you can I even begin to talk about the *Songs*. When they tell you about the past, you understand the future."

16 The Master said: "Don't grieve when people fail to recognize your ability. Grieve when you fail to recognize theirs."

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11 The Master said: "Consider your plans when your father is alive, then see what you do when he dies. If you leave your father's Way unchanged for all three years of mourning, you are indeed a worthy child."

12 Master Yu said: "The most precious fruit of Ritual is harmony. The Way of the ancient Emperors found its beauty in this, and all matters great and small depend upon it.

"Still, things go wrong. You may understand this harmony and even instill things with it, but if you fail to shape harmony with Ritual, you'll never make things right."

13 Master Yu said:

"Make standing by words your Duty,[9]
and your words will last and last,

make reverence an everyday Ritual,
and you'll stay clear of all disgrace –

then kindred spirits remain kindred,
and you're worthy to be their ancestor."

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14 The Master said: "The noble-minded are content without a full belly or the comforts of home; they're quick in action but cautious in word; they rectify themselves by seeking out a master of the Way. And so they can be called lovers of learning."

15 Adept Kung said: "*When poor, never fawning; when rich, never arrogant*. How does that sound?"

The Master replied: "Not bad. But not so good as *When poor, delighting in the Way; when rich, devoted to Ritual*."

Adept Kung said: "In *The Book of Songs*, the noble-minded are perfected

> *as if cut, as if polished,*
> *as if carved, as if burnished.*[10]

Is that what you mean?"

The Master replied: "Only with a person like you can I even begin to talk about the *Songs*. When they tell you about the past, you understand the future."

16 The Master said: "Don't grieve when people fail to recognize your ability. Grieve when you fail to recognize theirs."

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II In Government, the Secret

1 The Master said: "In government, the secret is Integrity. Use it, and you'll be like the polestar: always dwelling in its proper place, the other stars turning reverently about it."

2 The Master said: "There are three hundred songs in *The Book of Songs,* but this one phrase tells it all: *thoughts never twisty.*"[1]

3 The Master said: "If you use government to show them the Way and punishment to keep them true, the people will grow evasive and lose all remorse. But if you use Integrity to show them the Way and Ritual to keep them true, they'll cultivate remorse and always see deeply into things."

4 The Master said: "At fifteen I devoted myself to learning, and at thirty stood firm. At forty I had no doubts, and at fifty understood the Mandate of Heaven. At sixty I listened in effortless accord. And at seventy I followed the mind's passing fancies without overstepping any bounds."

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5 When Lord Meng Yi[2] asked about honoring parents, the Master said: "Never disobey."

Later, when Fan Ch'ih[3] was driving his carriage, the Master said: "Meng asked me about honoring parents, and I said *Never disobey.*"

"What did you mean by that?" asked Fan Ch'ih.

"In life, serve them according to Ritual," replied the Master. "In death, bury them according to Ritual. And then, make offerings to them according to Ritual."

6 When Lord Meng Yi's son, Wu-po, asked about honoring parents, the Master replied: "The only time you should cause your mother and father to worry is when you are sick."

7 When Adept Yu[4] asked about honoring parents, the Master said: "These days, being a worthy child just means keeping parents well-fed. That's what we do for dogs and horses. Everyone can feed their parents – but without reverence, they may as well be feeding animals."

8 When Adept Hsia asked about honoring parents, the Master said: "It's the way you do things that matters. When there's work, children may make it easy for their parents. And when there's wine and food, they may serve their parents first. But isn't there more to honoring parents than this?"

9 The Master said: "I can talk with Yen Hui[5] all day, and he never disagrees. He seems like a fool. But thinking about how he is when alone, I realize that he reveals my most essential principles. Hui is no fool."

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10 The Master said: "If you look at their intentions, examine their motives, and scrutinize what brings them contentment – how can people hide who they are? How can they hide who they really are?"

11 The Master said: "If you can revive the ancient and use it to understand the modern, then you're worthy to be a teacher."

12 The Master said: "A noble-minded man is not an implement."

13 Adept Hsia asked about the noble-minded, and the Master said: "Such people act before they speak, then they speak according to their actions."

14 The Master said: "The noble-minded are all-encompassing, not stuck in doctrines. Little people are stuck in doctrines."

15 The Master said: "To learn and never think – that's delusion. But to think and never learn – that is perilous indeed!"

16 The Master said: "Devote yourself to strange doctrines and principles, and there's sure to be pain and suffering."

17 The Master said: "Shall I explain understanding for you, Lu? When you understand something, know that you understand it. When you don't understand something, know that you don't understand it. That's understanding."

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18 Adept Chang was studying, hoping for rewards. The Master said: "Listen to all that you can – then, if you forget the deficiencies and speak about the rest cautiously, you'll avoid trouble. See all that you can – then, if you forget the perilous and act upon the rest cautiously, you'll avoid regret. In speech avoid trouble, in action avoid regret – then rewards will come of themselves."

19 Duke Ai[6] asked: "What must I do to make the people willing subjects?"

"If you raise up the straight and cast out the crooked," replied Confucius, "the people will honor you. If you raise up the crooked and cast out the straight, they'll never honor you."

20 Lord Chi K'ang[7] asked how he could persuade the people to be reverent and loyal. The Master said: "Preside over them with solemn dignity, then the people will be reverent. Honor your parents and cherish your children, then the people will be loyal. Promote the worthy and instruct the feckless, then the people will be persuaded."

21 Someone asked Confucius: "Why aren't you in government?"

The Master replied: "*The Book of History* says: *Honor your parents, simply honor your parents and make your brothers friends – this too is good government*. That's really being in government, so why govern by serving in government?"

22 The Master said: "Unless you stand by your words, you'll never know what you're capable of. A large cart with no yoke-bar for the harness, a small cart with no collar-bar for the harness – what use are they?"

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23 Adept Chang asked if we can know what will come ten generations from now. The Master replied: "The first of our dynasties was the Hsia. Although changes were made, the Hsia rituals were continued in the Shang, and so the Shang could be known. Although changes were made, the Shang rituals were continued in the Chou, and so the Chou could be known. Whatever follows our own Chou Dynasty, even if it comes a hundred generations from now, we can know it in the same way."

24 The Master said: "Sacrificing to the spirits of ancestors not your own is mere flattery. And to recognize a Duty without carrying it out is mere cowardice."

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X His Native Village

1 In his native village, Confucius was simple and sincere, as if he couldn't speak. But at court or ancestral temple, though always cautious and reverent, he spoke openly and easily.

At court, speaking with lower officials, he was forthright. Speaking with high officials, he was diplomatic. And speaking with the sovereign, he was wary – wary and self-assured.

2 When his sovereign summoned him to receive a guest, his demeanor suddenly changed and his steps grew reverent. When he bowed to his waiting colleagues, his right arm reached out, then his left, but his robes hung straight and true. Then he'd hurry forward, sleeves speading like noble wings. And once the guest had departed, he promptly returned to report: "The guest is no longer looking back."

3 Entering the palace gates, he closed in on himself, as if the gates weren't big enough. Stopping, he never stood in the middle of the gate, and passing through, he never stepped on the threshold.

Passing the royal platform, his demeanor suddenly changed, his steps grew reverent, and words seemed to fail him.

Raising his robe on ascending to the hall, he closed in on himself, focusing his *ch'i*[1] until he scarcely seemed to breathe. And leaving, his

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expression relaxing on descending the first step, he seemed happy and content. At the bottom of the steps, he'd hurry forward as if borne on noble wings. And then, returning to his station, he grew wary again.

4 Carrying his official scepter, he closed in on himself, as if it were too heavy. He held the top as if bowing, and the bottom as if making an offering. His demeanor turned solemn, and he walked attentively, as if his steps were preordained.

In making Ritual offerings, he looked tranquil. And alone with his sovereign, he was at ease and cheerful.

5 Such a noble-minded man never wore purple or maroon trim. And in his informal robes, he never wore red or chestnut brown.

In summer heat, he chose thin open-weave robes, worn over something light to set them off.

With black silk, he wore lambskin furs. With undyed silk, he wore deerskin furs. And with yellow silk, he wore fox furs.

His informal furs were long, with the right sleeve cut short so his hand was free. And for sleeping, he always wore robes half as long as he himself was.

Because fox and badger furs are so thick, he wore them at home.

Unless in mourning, he wore all his waist-jewels.

Other than ceremonial skirts, his robes were all sewn pieces.

When offering condolences, he never wore lavish lambskin furs or caps of black silk. For the new moon, he went to court in his full court regalia. And during purification for the sacrifice, he wore bright robes of plain linen.

6 During purification for the sacrifice, he changed what he ate and where he sat. Polished rice was fine, and minced meat. He

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didn't eat sour rice or rancid fish or spoiled meat. He didn't eat anything that looked or smelled bad. He didn't eat food that wasn't well-cooked and in season, or food that wasn't properly sliced and served with the proper sauce. Even when there was plenty of meat, he only ate enough to balance the *ch'i* of rice. Only in wine did he set no limits, but he never drank himself into confusion. He wouldn't drink wine from a wineshop or eat meat from a market. And though he didn't refuse ginger, he ate it only sparingly.

After the state sacrifice, he never kept the meat overnight. And he never kept meat more than three days after the family sacrifice. After three days, he wouldn't eat it.

He didn't speak at meals, and he didn't talk in bed.

He made an offering of even the simplest rice and vegetable, broth and melon – and he did so with the greatest solemnity.

7 If the mat wasn't laid straight, he wouldn't sit.

When the people of his village were drinking wine, he left only after the elders with walking-sticks had left.

8 When the villagers were out driving evil spirits away, he put on his court robes and stood like a host on the eastern steps.

9 When sending his regards to someone in another country, he bowed twice as the messenger set out.

10 When Lord Chi K'ang sent a certain medicine to him as a gift, Confucius bowed twice, then accepted it, saying: "I'm not familiar with this, so I dare not try it."

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11 One day the stables burned down. When he returned from court, the Master asked: "Was anyone hurt?" He didn't ask about the horses.

12 When the sovereign sent a gift of food, he straightened his mat and dined immediately. When the sovereign sent a gift of uncooked food, he cooked it and made an offering. When the sovereign sent a gift of live animals, he always raised them.

When serving at the royal table, he always began with rice once the sovereign had made offerings.

13 When he was sick and his sovereign came to visit, he laid facing east with his court robes draped over him and his sash trailed out across the bed.

14 When summoned by his sovereign, he set out at once, without even waiting for his horses to be harnessed.

15 When he was in the Grand Temple, the Master asked questions about everything he saw.

16 When a friend died and there was no home to which the body could be sent, he said: "Let the funeral be in my home."

17 A friend might send a gift, even something so lavish as a horse and carriage, but he never bowed unless it was sacrificial meat.

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18 In bed, he never lay facing north like a corpse.

At home, he moved without formality.

19 Whenever he met someone in mourning garments, even if it was someone he knew well, his expression turned solemn. If his robes were sometimes informal when he met those who were blind or wearing ceremonial caps, his demeanor was always appropriate. For those in mourning and those carrying official documents, he bowed down to the crossbars of his carriage.

When a lavish feast was served, his expression changed and he rose to his feet in reverence for the host.

Startled by a sudden thunderclap or violent wind, his expression always turned solemn.

20 When mounting the carriage, he stood square and gripped the mounting-cord. And while riding in the carriage, he always looked outside but never shouted or pointed.

21 Seeing such an expression, it startled away. It drifted and soared, then settled down again.

He said:

> *"A pheasant on the mountain bridge:*
> *Such omens! Such omens it brings!"*

When Adept Lu presented offerings, it sniffed three times and set off.

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IV Of Villages, Humanity

1 The Master said: "Of villages, Humanity is the most beautiful. If you choose to dwell anywhere else, how can you be called wise?"

2 The Master said: "Without Humanity, you can't dwell in adversity for long, and you can't dwell in prosperity for long. If you're Humane, Humanity is your repose. And if you're wise, Humanity is your reward."

3 The Master said: "Only the Humane can love people, and only they can despise people."

4 The Master said: "Those who aspire to Humanity – they despise no one."

5 The Master said: "Wealth and position – that's what people want. But if you enjoy wealth and position without following the Way, you'll never dwell at ease. Poverty and obscurity – that's what people despise. And if you endure poverty and obscurity without following the Way, you'll never get free.

"If you ignore Humanity, how will you gain praise and renown? The noble-minded don't forget Humanity for a single moment, not even in the crush of confusion and desperation."

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6 The Master said: "I've never seen a person who really loves Humanity and despises Inhumanity. Those who love Humanity know of nothing more essential. And those who despise Inhumanity act with such Humanity that Inhumanity never touches them.

"Can people devote their full strength to Humanity for even a single day? I've never seen anyone who isn't strong enough. There may be such people, but I've never seen them."

7 The Master said: "A person's various faults are all of a piece. Recognizing your faults is a way of understanding Humanity."

8 The Master said: "If you hear the Way one morning and die that night, you die content."

9 The Master said: "Aspiring to the Way, but ashamed of bad clothes and bad food: such a person knows nothing worth discussing."

10 The Master said: "In their dealings with all beneath Heaven, the noble-minded do not themselves favor some things and oppose others. They form judgments according to Duty."

11 The Master said: "While the noble-minded cherish Integrity, little people cherish territory. And while the noble-minded cherish laws, little people cherish privilege."

12 The Master said: "If profit guides your actions, there will be no end of resentment."

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13 The Master said: "If you can found a nation on Ritual and yielding, what more is there? If you cannot found a nation on Ritual and yielding, what's left of Ritual?"

14 The Master said: "Don't worry if you have no position: worry about making yourself worthy of one. Don't worry if you aren't known and admired: devote yourself to a life that deserves admiration."

15 The Master said: "Tseng! There's a single thread stringing my Way together."

"There is indeed," replied Master Tseng.

When the Master left, some disciples asked: "What did he mean?"

"Be loyal to the principles of your heart, and treat others with that same loyalty,"[1] answered Master Tseng. "That is the Master's Way. There is nothing more."

16 The Master said: "The noble-minded are clear about Duty. Little people are clear about profit."

17 The Master said: "In the presence of sages, you can see how to perfect your thoughts. In the presence of fools, you must awaken yourself."

18 The Master said: "In serving your mother and father, admonish them gently. If they understand, and yet choose not to follow your advice, deepen your reverence without losing faith. And however exhausting this may be, avoid resentment."

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19 The Master said: "While your mother and father are alive, never travel to far-off places. Or if you must, always follow a definite plan."

20 The Master said: "If you leave your father's Way unchanged for all three years of mourning, you are indeed a worthy child."

21 The Master said: "Never forget your parents' age. Though it fills you with dread, it also fills you with joy."

22 The Master said: "The ancients spoke little. They were too ashamed when their actions fell short of their words."

23 The Master said: "To lose by caution is rare indeed."

24 The Master said: "This is what the noble-minded aspire to: slow to speak and quick to act."

25 The Master said: "Integrity's never alone. It always has neighbors."

26 Adept Yu said: "If you scold your sovereign too often, you'll end up disgraced. If you scold your friend too often, you'll end up alone."

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VII Transmitting Insight, But

1 The Master said: "Transmitting insight, but never creating insight, standing by my words and devoted to the ancients: perhaps I'm a little like that old sage, P'eng."[1]

2 The Master said: "To understand through dark silence, to study without tiring, to teach without faltering: how could such things still be difficult for me?"

3 The Master said: "These are the kinds of things I find troubling:

possessing Integrity without cultivating it
and possessing knowledge without deepening it,

knowing Duties without following them
and knowing failings without changing them."

4 At leisure, the Master was loose and breezy.

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5 The Master said: "I've gotten so feeble! It's been forever since I dreamed of the sage Duke Chou."[2]

6 The Master said: "Devote yourself to the Way, depend on Integrity, rely on Humanity, and wander in the arts."

7 The Master said: "I never refuse to teach anyone, not even those so lowly they come offering nothing but a few strips of dried meat."

8 The Master said: "I never instruct those who aren't full of passion, and I never enlighten those who aren't struggling to explain themselves.

"If I show you one corner and you can't show me the other three, I'll say nothing more."

9 If he was seated next to someone in mourning, the Master never ate his fill.

10 If he'd already wept that day, the Master wouldn't sing.

11 Speaking to Yen Hui, the Master said:

"A leader when appointed to office
and a recluse when sent away.

Only you and I have perfected this."

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"If you were leading the Three Armies," asked Adept Lu, "who would you take with you?"

"A man who attacks tigers unarmed and crosses rivers without boats, willing to die without the least regret – that's a man I'd never take with me. The man I'd take always approaches difficulties with due caution and always succeeds by planning carefully."

12 The Master said: "If there were an honorable way to get rich, I'd do it, even if it meant being a stooge standing around with a whip. But there isn't an honorable way, so I just do what I like."

13 The Master treated three things with the greatest care: fasting, war, and sickness.

14 In Ch'i, after hearing the music of Emperor Shun, it was three months before the Master noticed the taste of food again. He just kept saying, "I never dreamed music was capable of such things."

15 Jan Ch'iu said: "Does our Master support the Wei ruler?"[3]

"Yes, I should ask him about that," replied Adept Kung.

So Kung went in to see the Master and asked: "Who were Po Yi and Shu Ch'i?"

"Wise men of ancient times," replied Confucius.

"Did they harbor any resentments?"

"They devoted themselves to Humanity, and so became Humane. How could they harbor any resentments?"

Kung returned to Jan Ch'iu and said: "No, the Master doesn't support him."

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16 The Master said: "Poor food and water for dinner, a bent arm for a pillow – that is where joy resides. For me, wealth and renown without honor are nothing but drifting clouds."

17 The Master said: "Grant me a few more years. After studying Change[4] for fifty years, I'll surely be free of serious flaws."

18 The Master never used Lu dialect[5] for *The Book of Songs, The Book of History,* or the observance of Ritual. Never.

19 When Duke She[6] asked Adept Lu about Confucius, Lu ignored him.

Later, the Master said: "Why didn't you just say something like this: *He's a man so full of passion that he forgets to eat, and so full of joy that he forgets to worry. He's never even noticed old age coming over him.*"

20 The Master said: "I am not one who was born with great wisdom. I love the ancients and diligently seek wisdom among them."

21 The Master never spoke of the supernatural, violence, disorder, or gods and spirits.

22 The Master said: "Out walking with two companions, I'm sure to be in my teacher's company. The good in one I adopt in myself; the evil in the other I change in myself."

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23 The Master said: "My Integrity is born of Heaven. So what can Huan T'ui's[7] assassins do to me?"

24 The Master said: "My students, do you think I'm being secretive? But I'm hiding nothing from you. I share my entire life with you, my friends. And that is who I am."

25 The Master taught four things: culture, conduct, loyalty, and standing by your words.

26 The Master said: "I have no hope of meeting a true sage. To meet someone noble-minded would be enough."

The Master said: "I have no hope of meeting a truly virtuous and benevolent person. To meet someone who's mastered constancy would be enough. But constancy is impossible if you imagine yourself having when you have not, full when you're empty, prosperous when you're destitute."

27 The Master fished with hooks, not nets, and he never shot roosting birds.

28 The Master said: "I suppose there are some who don't need wisdom to live wisely. I am not so lucky. I've heard countless things, choosing what is good and adopting it in myself. I've seen countless things and remembered them well. This is a lesser form of wisdom."

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29 The people of Hu Village had no interest in the teachings of Confucius. A young boy came to see the Master. When the Master saw that his disciples were perplexed, he said: "Accepting this boy's visit does not mean accepting his entire life. Why be so demanding? If someone purifies himself to come here, we can accept that purification without accepting his entire past."

30 The Master said: "Is Humanity really so far away? We need only want it, and here it is!"

31 The Minister of Justice in Ch'en asked whether Duke Chao of Lu understood Ritual.

"Yes, he does," replied Confucius.

After Confucius left, the minister bowed to Wu-ma Ch'i,[8] inviting him to approach, and said: "I have heard that the noble-minded show no partiality, and yet it seems that some are very partial indeed. The woman Chao married is from the royal house of Wu, and so belongs to his own clan. He just renamed her Lady Wu Meng. If he understands Ritual, who doesn't?"

When Wu-ma Ch'i told him about this, the Master said: "How lucky I am. If I make a mistake, someone is sure to recognize it."

32 When someone sang a song that he liked, the Master always asked them to sing it again before he joined in.

33 The Master said: "No one has been so devoted to learning and culture. But when it comes to the practices of a noble-minded life, I haven't done so well."

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34 The Master said: "That I've become a sage and mastered Humanity? How could I say that of myself? I work at it and teach it, never tiring. You could say that much. But no more."

"And that's exactly what we students have failed to learn," said Adept Hua.

35 The Master was terribly sick. Adept Lu asked if he might offer a prayer, and the Master said: "Is there such prayer?"

"There is," replied Lu. "*The Book of Eulogies* says: *We pray for you to the gods and spirits above and below.*"

"My life has been my prayer," responded the Master.

36 The Master said: "The extravagant are soon pompous, and the frugal soon resolute. Better resolute than pompous."

37 The Master said: "The noble-minded are calm and steady. Little people are forever fussing and fretting."

38 The Master was genial and yet austere, awesome and yet not fierce, reverent and yet content.

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IX The Master Rarely

1 The Master rarely spoke of profit or destiny or Humanity.

2 A villager in Ta Hsiang said: "Great indeed is Confucius! His erudition is truly vast – and still, he's lived without fame and renown."

When the Master heard this, he said to his disciples: "What shall I be – a charioteer or an archer? I'll be a charioteer!"

3 The Master said: "Ritual calls for caps of linen, but now everyone uses black silk. It's more frugal, so I follow the common practice.

"Ritual calls for bowing before ascending the stairs, but now everyone bows only at the top of the stairs. That's too presumptuous, so even though it violates the common practice, I bow before ascending."

4 The Master had freed himself of four things: idle speculation, certainty, inflexibility, and conceit.

5 When he was ambushed in K'uang, the Master said: "Emperor Wen[1] is long since dead, but doesn't culture *[wen]* still live

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here in me? If Heaven wanted this culture to end, it wouldn't survive such deaths. But Heaven's let this culture continue, so what can these K'uang people do to me?"

6 Speaking to Adept Kung, a grand minister asked: "Your master is a great sage, isn't he? And yet, he's learned so many useful skills!"

"It's true Heaven meant him to be a sage," Kung replied, "but he learned many useful skills, too."

When the Master heard this, he said: "That grand minister knows me well! We were humble and poor when I was young: that's why I can do so many practical things. But do the noble-minded need all these skills? No, not so many as this."

7 According to Lao, the Master said: "I was never appointed to office: that's why I'm so handy."

8 The Master said: "Am I a man of great wisdom? Hardly! Even when a simple person brings me a question, my mind goes utterly blank. I just thrash it out until I've exhausted every possibility."

9 The Master said: "The Phoenix hasn't come and the river hasn't revealed its divine chart.[2] This is the end of me."

10 Whenever he met someone in mourning, someone in ceremonial robes, or someone blind – the Master would stand or humbly step aside.

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11 Sighing heavily, Yen Hui said: "The more I gaze up into it, the higher it gets, and the more I bore down into it, the harder it gets. In reverence, I see it before me, and suddenly it's behind me.

"The Master is good at luring people on, step by step. He uses culture to broaden us, and Ritual to secure us. Though I often feel like quitting, I can't, because whenever it seems I've reached my limit, something seems to rise before me, lofty and majestic. But however much I long to go there, the path remains a mystery."

12 The Master was terribly sick, so Adept Lu had the disciples dress up as the kind of retainers he had as a minister. The sickness let up for a time, and the Master said to them: "Lu's always been conjuring these deceits. If I pretend to have retainers when I have none, who am I deceiving? Am I deceiving Heaven?

"Don't you think I'd rather face death in your arms than in the arms of strange clerks? I may not have a grand funeral, but I'm hardly dying in some roadside ditch."

13 Adept Kung said: "If I have a beautiful piece of jade, what should I do – lock it away in a case or look for the best price and sell it?"

"Sell it!" was the Master's answer. "Sell it! I'm just waiting to get the right offer for mine!"

14 The Master wanted to go live among the nine wild tribes in the east.

Someone asked: "How could you bear such vulgarity?"

"If someone noble-minded lived there," replied the Master, "how could vulgarity be a problem?"

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15 The Master said: "After returning from Wei to Lu, I trued up music and returned the *Songs* to its original form."

16 The Master said: *"Serve family elders when home, serve ruling officials when away, leave nothing undone when mourning, never drink yourself into a stupor* – how could such things still be difficult for me?"

17 Standing beside a river, the Master said: "Everything passes away like this, day and night, never resting."

18 The Master said: "I've never seen anyone for whom loving Integrity is like loving a beautiful woman."

19 The Master said: "It's like building a mountain: even if I don't stop until I'm only short one last basket of dirt – still, I've stopped. It's like leveling ground: even if I'm just starting out with the first basketful – still, I'm forging ahead."

20 The Master said: "If there's anyone who was never careless about what I said, it was Yen Hui."

21 Speaking of Yen Hui, the Master said: "How sad – to watch him forge ahead so resolutely, and never see how far he could go."[3]

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22 The Master said: "There are, indeed, sprouts that never come to flower. And there are flowers that never bear fruit."

23 The Master said: "Hold the young in awe. How can we know their generation will not equal our own? Only when they've lived to be forty or fifty without any distinction – only then are they no longer worthy of our awe."

24 The Master said: "Worthy admonitions cannot fail to inspire us, but what matters is changing ourselves. Reverent advice cannot fail to encourage us, but what matters is acting on it. Encouraged without acting, inspired without changing – there's nothing to be done for such people."

25 The Master said: "Above all, be loyal and stand by your words. Befriend only those who are kindred spirits. And when you're wrong, don't be afraid to change."

26 The Master said: "Vast armies can be robbed of their commander, but even the simplest people cannot be robbed of their free will."

27 The Master said: "To wear threadbare hemp robes and stand without shame among those wearing lavish furs of fox and badger – isn't that what Adept Lu is like?

He hates nothing and covets nothing.
How could he be anything but good?"[4]

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Adept Lu began chanting these lines to himself over and over. Finally, the Master said: "That isn't enough to make someone all that good, is it?"

28 The Master said: "Only after the seasons turn cold can we truly know the resolve of pine and cypress."

29 The Master said: "The wise never doubt. The Humane never worry. The brave never fear."

30 The Master said: "Some can study with you, but not follow the Way with you. Some can follow the Way with you, but not stand firm with you in its principles. And some can stand firm with you in its principles, but not join you in putting them into practice."

31 *Lavish aspen-plum blossoms*
tremble and sway alone:

I haven't stopped loving you,
but your home is so far away.[5]

The Master said: "If he'd really loved her, he wouldn't have worried about the distance."

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XIII Adept Lu

1 Adept Lu asked about governing, and the Master said: "Put the people first, and reward their efforts well."

When Lu asked further, he said: "Never tire."

2 When he was a regent for the House of Chi, Jan Yung asked about governing, and the Master said: "Depend on the lesser officials. Forgive their minor offenses and raise up worthy talents."

"How will I recognize worthy talents and raise them up?"

"If you raise up those you recognize," replied the Master, "do you think people will let you ignore those you don't recognize?"

3 Adept Lu said: "If the Lord of Wei wanted you to govern his country, what would you put first in importance?"

"The rectification of names," replied the Master. "Without a doubt."

"That's crazy!" countered Lu. ""What does rectification have to do with anything?"

"You're such an uncivil slob," said the Master. "When the noble-minded can't understand something, they remain silent.

"Listen. If names aren't rectified, speech doesn't follow from reality. If speech doesn't follow from reality, endeavors never come to fruition. If endeavors never come to fruition, then Ritual and music cannot

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flourish. If Ritual and music cannot flourish, punishments don't fit the crime. If punishments don't fit the crime, people can't put their hands and feet anywhere without fear of losing them.[1]

"Naming enables the noble-minded to speak, and speech enables the noble-minded to act. Therefore, the noble-minded are anything but careless in speech."

4 Fan Ch'ih asked to learn about farming, and the Master said: "Any old farmer could teach you that better than me."

Then Fan Ch'ih asked to learn about growing vegetables, and the Master said: "And any old gardener could teach you that better than me."

After Fan Ch'ih left, the Master said: "Fan Ch'ih's such a small-minded person! If leaders love Ritual, the people cannot be anything but reverent. If leaders love Duty, the people cannot be anything but humble. If leaders love standing by their words, the people cannot be anything but sincere. Once this is done, people from all four corners of the earth will come carrying babies wrapped on their backs. So why is he worried about farming?"

5 The Master said: "A man may be able to chant all three hundred *Songs* from memory, and still falter when appointed to office or waver when sent on embassies to the four corners of the earth. What good are all those *Songs* if he can't put them to use?"

6 The Master said: "A ruler who has rectified himself never gives orders, and all goes well. A ruler who has not rectified himself gives orders, and the people never follow them."

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7 The Master said: "These two states, Lu and Wei: in politics, they're like brothers."

8 Of Ching, son to the Duke of Wei, the Master said: "He lived in his house nobly. When he moved in, he said: *Quite nice.* When he made it comfortable, he said: *Quite adequate.* And when it was lavishly appointed, he said: *Quite beautiful.*"

9 The Master journeyed to Wei with Jan Ch'iu driving for him. When they arrived, the Master said: "So many people!"

"Once a people has flourished like this," said Jan Ch'iu, "what more could be done for them?"

"Give them prosperity."

"And once they grow prosperous, what then?"

"Educate them."

10 The Master said: "If someone employed me for even a single year, a great deal could be done. And in three years, the work could be complete."

11 The Master said: "They say: *If a country had wise rulers for a hundred years, violence would be conquered and killing vanquished.* And it's so true."

12 The Master said: "Even if a true Emperor arose, it would still take a generation – but then Humanity would rule."

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13 The Master said: "Once you've rectified yourself, you can serve in government without difficulty. But if you haven't rectified yourself, how can you rectify the people?"

14 Jan Ch'iu returned from the Chi family's royal court, and the Master said: "Why so late?"

"Urgent government business."

"It must have been family business," replied the Master. "I may not hold any office, but I would have been consulted if it were really government business."

15 Duke Ting asked if there is a precept that could lead a country to prosperity, and the Master said: "Precepts cannot do such things. But they say: *To be a ruler is difficult indeed, and to be a subject is hardly easy.* If a man understands how difficult it is to rule, isn't that close to a single precept leading a country to prosperity?"

"Is there a precept that could destroy a country?" asked the Duke.

"Precepts cannot do such things. But they say: *In ruling, there is but one joy: no one dares defy you.* If a ruler is good and no one dares defy him, isn't that good? But if a ruler is evil and no one dares defy him, isn't that close to a single precept destroying an entire country?"

16 Duke She asked about governing, and the Master said: "When those nearby are pleased, those far away come and gather round."

17 When he was regent in Chü Fu, Adept Hsia asked about governing, and the Master said: "Don't rush things, and don't think about

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small gains. If you rush around, your efforts will lead nowhere. If you worry about small gains, your great endeavors will go unrealized."

18 Speaking to Confucius, the Duke She said: "In my village there was a man called Body-Upright. When his father stole a sheep, he testified against him."

"In my village," said Confucius, "to be upright was something else altogether. Fathers harbored sons, and sons harbored fathers – and between them, they were upright."

19 Fan Ch'ih asked about Humanity, and the Master said: "Dwell at home in humility. Conduct your business in reverence. And in your dealings with others, be faithful.

"Even if you go east or north to live among wild tribes, these are things you must never disregard."

20 Adept Kung asked: "To be called a noble official, what must a person be like?"

"Always conducting himself with a sense of shame," replied the Master, "and when sent on embassies to the four corners of the earth, never disgracing his sovereign's commission – such a person can be called a noble official."

"May I ask about those in the next lower rank?"

"Their family elders praise them as filial children," replied the Master, "and their fellow villagers praise them as brothers."

"May I ask about those in the next rank?"

"They always stand by their words and bring their undertakings to completion. They may be stubborn, small-minded people, but still they can be accorded the next rank."

"And those who are running the government now – what do you

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think of them?" asked Kung.

"Nothing but utensils!" sighed the Master. "Peck-and-hamper people too small even to measure."

21 The Master said: "I can't find students who steer the middle course, so I turn to the impetuous and the timid. The impetuous forge ahead, and the timid know what to avoid."

22 The Master said: "In the south it is said: *Without constancy, people cannot be shamans or doctors*. That says it well."

Integrity without constancy brings disgrace.[2] "Yes, yes," commented the Master, "you don't need a fortune-teller to see that!"

23 The Master said: "A noble-minded person is different from others, but at peace with them. A small-minded person is the same as others, but never at peace with them."

24 Adept Kung asked: "What do you think of *All the villagers love him*?"

"That is not enough," replied the Master.

"What do you think of *All the villagers hate him*?"

"That isn't enough either. It should be: *All the good villagers love him, and all the evil villagers hate him*."

25 The Master said: "The noble-minded are easy to serve, but difficult to please. If you ignore the Way in trying to please them, they won't be pleased. But they recognize the limits of those who serve them.

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"Little people are difficult to serve, but easy to please. If you ignore the Way in trying to please them, they'll be pleased nonetheless. And they demand perfection from those who serve them."

26 The Master said: "The noble-minded are stately, but never arrogant. Little people are arrogant, but never stately."

27 The Master said: "Enduring, resolute, simple, slow to speak – that's nearly Humanity."

28 Adept Lu asked: "To be called a noble official, what must a person be like?"

"Earnest and exacting, but also genial," replied the Master. "Such a person can be called a noble official. Earnest and exacting with friends, genial with brothers."

29 The Master said: "The people should be broadly educated by a wise teacher for seven years – then they can take up the weapons of war."

30 The Master said: "Sending people to war without educating them first: that is called *throwing the people away*."

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XIV Yüan Szu Asked About

1 Yüan Szu asked about disgrace, and the Master said: "To enjoy a salary when your country abides in the Way – that is fine. But to enjoy a salary when your country ignores the Way – that is a disgrace."

"Never domineering or arrogant, free of resentment and desire – is that Humanity?" asked Yüan.

"It's certainly difficult," replied the Master. "But I don't know if it's Humanity."

2 The Master said: "A thinker who cherishes the comforts of home isn't much of a thinker."

3 The Master said: "When your country abides in the Way, let your words and actions be daring. When your country ignores the Way, let your actions be daring and your words cautious."

4 The Master said: "Masters of Integrity are sure to be well-spoken, but the well-spoken aren't necessarily masters of Integrity. The Humane are sure to be courageous, but the courageous aren't necessarily Humane."

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5 Speaking to Confucius, Nan-kung Kuo asked: "Yi was a mighty archer and Ao could push a boat over dry land, but neither of these legendary warriors lived out their full years. Yü and Chi, on the other hand, devoted themselves to farming and inherited all beneath Heaven in the end."[1]

The Master said nothing.

After Nan-kung Kuo had left, the Master said: "How truly noble-minded he is! And O, how deeply he reveres Integrity!"

6 The Master said: "The noble-minded may not always be Humane. But the small-minded – they never are."

7 The Master said: "How can you love people without encouraging them? And how can you be loyal to people without educating them?"

8 The Master said: "To compose a royal communiqué – P'i Ch'en first drafted the text; Shih Shu reviewed and discussed it; Lord Yü, the minister of foreign embassies, revised and polished it; and finally, Prime Minister Ch'an filled it with beauty."

9 Someone asked about Prime Minister Ch'an, and the Master said: "He was generous."

Asked about Prime Minister Hsi, the Master said: "O, that one! That one!"

Asked about Kuan Chung, the Master said: "In Pien, he seized the Po family's three hundred villages, but even though the family was reduced to eating meager fare, they never uttered a word of resentment. That's what kind of person he was."

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10 The Master said: "To be poor and free of resentment is difficult. To be rich and free of arrogance is easy."

11 The Master said: "Meng Kung-ch'uo[2] would have been fine as senior advisor for some family like Chao or Wei,[3] but not as high minister for an actual country, even a tiny one like T'eng or Hsüeh."

12 Adept Lu asked about the realized person, and the Master said: "One who possesses Tsang Wu-chung's wisdom, Meng Kung-ch'uo's desirelessness, Master Chuang of Pien's courage, and Jan Ch'iu's accomplishments, and who refines these virtues with Ritual and music – that is a realized person.

"But," he added, "perhaps it isn't necessary to ask so much of a realized person these days. If you think of Duty upon seeing profit, risk your life upon seeing danger, and maintain your principles through long hardship – then you, too, are a realized person."

13 Asking Kung-ming Chia about Kung-shu Wen-tzu,[4] the Master said: "Is it really true that your master never spoke, never laughed, and never chose?"

"Whoever told you that was wrong," replied Kung-ming. "The Master spoke only at the proper time, so people never tired of his words. He laughed only when he was happy, so people never tired of his laugh. And he chose only what was right, so people never tired of his choices."

"If that's who he was," responded the Master, "then who was he?"

14 The Master said: "On his way into exile, Tsang Wu-chung[5] occupied his ancestral lands, insisting that the Lu duke leave it in the

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hands of his family. People may say this wasn't coercion, but I don't believe it."

15 The Master said: "Duke Wen of Chin was scheming and not at all upright. Duke Huan of Ch'i, on the other hand, was upright and not at all scheming."

16 Adept Lu said: "When Duke Huan[6] had his brother, Chiu, put to death, Shao Hu died trying to save Chiu, but Kuan Chung did not."

"In this," he added, "Kuan Chung fell short of Humanity, did he not?"

"It was Kuan Chung's strength that allowed Duke Huan to unite the nine lords without force, and so save the empire," replied the Master. "What Humanity! What amazing Humanity!"

17 Adept Kung said: "Kuan Chung was hardly Humane, was he? He didn't die trying to save Chiu when Duke Huan had him put to death – in fact, he became Huan's Prime Minister!"

"As Prime Minister, Kuan Chung enabled Huan to lead the nine lords and unite all beneath Heaven," replied the Master. "Even today, our people still enjoy the blessings he bestowed. If it weren't for him, we'd still let our hair hang loose and button our robes to the left like barbarians.

"Why should such a man commit suicide out in some ditch, with no one the wiser, all in blind obedience to the small fidelities of commoners?"

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18 Chuan was a retainer in Kung-shu Wen-tzu's household. Later, he was promoted to a high state office, becoming Kung-shu Wen-tzu's colleague. Hearing of this, the Master said: "Wen:[7] a name well-chosen indeed."

19 The Master was talking about how Duke Ling of Wei had so completely ignored the Way, when Lord Chi K'ang asked: "If that's true, how is it he never came to grief?"

"He trusted foreign affairs to Lord K'ung Wen," replied Confucius, "his ancestral temple to Priest T'o, and his military to Wang-sun Chia. So how could he come to grief?"[8]

20 The Master said: "Immodest words are not easily put into action."

21 When Ch'en Heng[9] assassinated Duke Chien, Confucius bathed according to Ritual and went to court. There, informing Duke Ai, he said: "Ch'en Heng has assassinated his sovereign. I would encourage you to punish him."

"Inform the three family leaders," said the duke.

"I only inform you of such things," replied Confucius, "because I serve under the high ministers, and it is therefore my duty. Now you say *Inform the three family leaders*?"

He thereupon went to inform the three family leaders. When they refused to take action against Ch'en Heng, he said: "I only inform you of such things because I serve under the high ministers, and it is therefore my duty."

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22 Adept Lu asked about serving a sovereign, and the Master said: "If you challenge his decisions, do it with honest loyalty."

23 The Master said: "The noble-minded influence those above them. Little people influence those below them."

24 The Master said: "The ancients studied in order to rule themselves. These days, people study in order to rule others."

25 Ch'ü Po-yü[10] sent an emissary to see Confucius. Once they were seated, Confucius asked: "What is your master working on?"

"He's trying to reduce his faults," replied the man, "but he isn't having much luck."

After the emissary left, the Master said: "What an emissary! What an amazing emissary!"

26 The Master said: "Unless you've been appointed to office, don't fuss and fret over the business of government."

And Master Tseng added: "The noble-minded always keep to their place, even in their thoughts."

27 The Master said: "The noble-minded say little and achieve much."

28 The Master said: "The Way of a noble-minded person has three facets, all of which are beyond me: the Humane have no worries; the wise have no doubts; and the courageous have no fear."

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"But that," protested Adept Kung, "is precisely the Way you've mastered."

29 Adept Kung was forever comparing and criticizing people. The Master said: "To have time for such things, Kung must have already perfected himself completely! As for me, I am not so lucky."

30 The Master said: "Don't grieve when people fail to recognize your ability. Grieve for your lack of ability instead."

31 The Master said: "One who never anticipates deceit or expects duplicity, and yet is the first to recognize such things – is that not a sage indeed?"

32 Wang-sheng Mu said to Confucius: "Why all this anxious equivocation? It isn't that you're only trying to please people, is it?"

"No, it isn't that," replied Confucius. "It's just that I can't bear stubborn self-righteousness."

33 The Master said: "A legendary horse is praised not for its strength, but for its Integrity."

34 Someone asked: "What do you think of *Answer resentment with Integrity*?"

"Then how do you answer *Integrity?"* responded the Master. "Answer resentment with justice, and use Integrity to answer Integrity."

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35 The Master said: "No one's ever understood me."

"Why not?" asked Adept Kung.

"I never resent Heaven or blame people," replied the Master. "In learning the ways of this world, I've fathomed Heaven. So perhaps Heaven, at least, understands me."

36 Speaking to Chi Sun,[11] Kung-po Liao[12] slandered Adept Lu. Telling the Master of this, Tzu-fu Ching-po[13] said: "My master's been taken in by these deceits. But I still have the power to add Kung-po's corpse to the market's display of criminals."

"When the Way abides, it's destiny," said the Master. "And when the Way's cast aside, it's destiny. How could Kung-po Liao alter destiny?"

37 The Master said: "A sage is one who lives beyond his day and age. Next come those who live beyond the place they inhabit. After that, those who live beyond beauty. And after that, those who live beyond words."

The Master said: "There have been only seven."

38 Adept Lu spent a night at Stone Gate, and the gatekeeper asked: "Where are you from?"

"From the House of Confucius," replied Lu.

"Isn't he the one who knows it's hopeless, but keeps trying anyway?"

39 The Master was playing stone chimes at the house where he was staying in Wei. Just then, a passerby carrying a basket stopped at the gate and said: "There's so much passion in that music!"

Then he quickly added: "So much petty urgency in all that stubborn clacking! If no one understands you, then that's that.

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When it's deep – you wade through, clothes and all.
When it's shallow – you lift your robes and step across."[14]

"Of course!" said the Master. "Anything else would be difficult indeed!"

40 Adept Chang said: "*The Book of History* says *Kao Tsung*[15] *kept to his mourning hut for three years and never spoke.* What does this mean?"

"Why single out Kao Tsung?" replied the Master. "The ancients were all like that. When a sovereign died, the hundred officers all joined together and for three years trusted government to the Prime Minister."

41 The Master said: "If leaders love Ritual, the people will be easy to rule."

42 Adept Lu asked about the noble-minded, and the Master said: "They cultivate themselves, and so master reverence."

"Is that all it takes?" asked Lu.

"They cultivate themselves, and so bring peace to others."

"Is that all it takes?"

"They cultivate themselves, and so bring peace to the people. If you cultivate yourself, and so bring peace to the people, how could even Yao or Shun criticize you?"

43 Yüan Jang sat waiting on his haunches.

When he arrived, the Master said: "Showing no deference or respect when young, accomplishing nothing worth handing down when grown, and refusing to die when old – such people are nothing but pests."

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At that, flicking his walking-stick, the Master cracked Yüan on the shin.

44 A boy from Ch'üeh Village had been hired as the Master's messenger. Asking about him, someone said: "Is he making progress?"

"I've seen him sit and walk among his elders," replied the Master, "as if he were already their equal. He has no interest in making progress. He wants it all right now."

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XIX Adept Chang

1 Adept Chang said: "Willing to give up life when seeing danger, and thinking first of Duty when seeing a chance to profit; full of reverence during sacrifices, and full of grief during mourning: Fine enough! Fine enough!"

2 Adept Chang said: "Halfhearted in embracing Integrity and capricious in trusting the Way: how can they even *have it* or *have it not*?"

3 Adept Hsia's disciples asked Adept Chang about fellowship.

"What does Adept Hsia say about it?" said Chang.

"He says *Join with those who are capable and avoid those who are not*."

"That isn't what I've heard," replied Chang. "I've heard that the noble-minded honor the wise, but make room for everyone; that they admire the virtuous and benevolent, but pity those who fall short. If I am a person of great wisdom, how can I fail to make room for everyone? And if I am less than wise, people will avoid me, so how could I think of avoiding them?"

4 Adept Hsia said: "There are lesser Ways, and there's much to be said for them. But if you follow them very far, there's sure to be mud and mire – so the noble-minded stay clear of them."

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5 Adept Hsia said: "All day knowing what is beyond you, and all month never forgetting what you've mastered – then you can indeed be called a lover of learning."

6 Adept Hsia said: "Broad learning with resolute purpose, earnest inquiry with attentive reflection on things at hand – therein lies Humanity."

7 Adept Hsia said: "To perfect the hundred crafts, artisans live in their shops. To perfect the Way, the noble-minded work tirelessly at learning."

8 Adept Hsia said: "Little people always disguise their faults with pretense."

9 Adept Hsia said: "The noble-minded have three different aspects: Seen from a distance, they're majestic. Face to face, they're genial. And when they speak, they're incisive."

10 Adept Hsia said: "When the noble-minded stand by their words, they can put the people to work. When they don't stand by their words, the people call work grinding oppression.

"When the noble-minded stand by their words, they can advise the sovereign. When they don't stand by their words, the sovereign calls their advice slander."

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11 Adept Hsia said: "Keep within the bounds of great Integrity. Then, in matters of small Integrity, you needn't worry about a little coming and going."

12 Adept Yu said: "Adept Hsia's disciples are so small-minded! They're fine when it comes to dusting and sweeping, replies and rejoinders, greetings and farewells. But these are frivolous things. When it comes to the deep essentials, they don't have a clue. How can this be?"

When Adept Hsia heard this, he said: "That's crazy! Yu doesn't know what he's talking about. If you start teaching the noble-minded Way too soon, people are sick of it before they're ready to learn. It's like plants and trees: you need to gauge differences. The noble-minded Way never disappoints anyone – but still, only a great sage can embrace it right through from beginning to end."

13 Adept Hsia said: "When you're an official with free time, study. When you're a student with free time, take office."

14 Adept Yu said: "In mourning – grieve fully, and then stop."

15 Adept Yu said: "My friend Adept Chang can master the most difficult things, but he still hasn't mastered Humanity."

16 Master Tseng said: "Chang is great and venerable indeed: it's impossible to work beside him cultivating Humanity."

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17 Master Tseng said: "I once heard the Master say *If you haven't yet faced yourself, you will when the time comes to mourn your parents.*"

18 Master Tseng said: "I once heard the Master say *Lord Meng Chuang's filial piety might be equaled in many ways. But leaving his father's policies and advisors unchanged – that seems beyond compare.*"

19 When Yang Fu was appointed judge by the House of Meng, he went to Master Tseng for advice. Master Tseng said: "Our leaders lost the Way long ago, abandoning the people to ruin. So don't feel happy when you manage to untangle the facts of a case; grieve in sympathy for everyone involved."

20 Adept Kung said: "Even Tyrant Chou wasn't as depraved as he's made out to be. So it is that the noble-minded keep to the high ground: everything hateful on earth flows back down to low places."

21 Adept Kung said: "Mistakes of the noble-minded are like eclipses of sun and moon: they make a mistake, and it's there for everyone to see; they make it right, and everyone looks up in awe."

22 Kung-sun Ch'ao of Wei asked Adept Kung: "Where did Confucius acquire such learning?"

"The Way of Emperors Wen and Wu never fell into ruins," replied Kung. "It abides in the people. The sage sees that greatness; others see only smallness. Something of the Way is there in everyone, so where could Confucius go without learning of it? And why would he spend years studying with some master teacher?"

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23 Speaking with the ministers at court, Shu-sun Wu-shu[1] said: "Adept Kung is a greater sage than Confucius."

When Tzu-fu Ching-po reported this to him, Adept Kung said: "It's like courtyard walls. Mine stand shoulder-height, so people can look over and see how lovely the house is. But the Master's wall is fifteen or twenty feet high. Unless they're admitted through the gate, people never see the beauty of his temple and the splendor of his hundred rooms. And those who are admitted are very few indeed. So it makes perfect sense for your master to say that, doesn't it?"

24 Shu-sun Wu-shu was speaking ill of Confucius. Adept Kung said: "It's no use. There's nothing bad to say about Confucius. Others are certainly wise, but they're like mounds and hillocks, easy to scale. Confucius is like the sun and moon. How could anyone scale such heights?

"People may choose to live in darkness, but sun and moon suffer no harm. And the folly of it all is apparent to everyone."

25 Adept Ch'in said to Adept Kung: "It's just your reverent humility. How can Confucius be a greater sage than you?"

"The noble-minded reveal their wisdom in a single word," replied Kung, "and in a single word they reveal their ignorance. So you can't afford to speak carelessly.

"Now, we can't reach Confucius any more than we can reach Heaven: you can't just climb a set of stairs into the sky. If Confucius were in charge of a country or noble house, it would be like the saying: *He raised them up and they stood; he showed them the Way and they set out; he offered them peace and they came; he roused them and they carried through in harmony.* He was exalted in life and mourned deeply in death. So how could we ever reach him?"

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III Eight Rows of Dancers

1 Speaking of the Chi family patriarch, Confucius said: "Eight rows of dancers at his ancestral temple, as if he were an Emperor: If this can be endured, what can't be?"[1]

2 As they cleared sacrificial vessels from the temple, the Three Families sang the Yung hymn. The Master mimicked its words:

the great lords in attendance,
the Emperor august and majestic,[2]

then asked: "What has this to do with the temple of these Three Families?"

3 The Master said: "If you're human without Humanity, you know nothing of Ritual. If you're human without Humanity, you know nothing of music."

4 Lin Fang[3] asked about the root of Ritual. The Master replied: "What a huge question! In Ritual, simplicity rather than extravagance. In mourning, grief rather than repose."

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5 The Master said: "Those wild tribes in the far north and east – they still honor their sovereigns. They're nothing like us: we Chinese have given up such things."

6 The Chi family patriarch went to perform the imperial sacrifice on Exalt Mountain. The master said to Jan Ch'iu:[4] "That is for Emperors alone to perform. Can't you save us from this?"

"No, I cannot," replied Jan Ch'iu.

"Ohhh," groaned the Master. "And how could the god of Exalt Mountain know even less than Lin Fang about such things?"

7 The Master said: "The noble-minded never contend. It's true that archery is a kind of contention. But even then, they bow and yield to each other when stepping up to the range. And when they step down, they toast each other. Even in contention, they retain their nobility."

8 Adept Hsia asked: "What does it mean when the *Songs* say

Dimpled smile so entrancing,
glancing eyes so full of grace:
purest silk so ready for color?"[5]

"For a painting," replied the Master, "you need a ground of pure silk."

"And for Ritual – what ground do you need?"

"How you've lifted my spirits, Hsia!" exclaimed the Master. "With you, I can truly discuss the *Songs*!"

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9 The Master said: "I can speak of the Hsia Dynasty's rituals, though evidence is scarce among the Hsia's descendants in Ch'i. And I can speak of the Shang's rituals, though records and scholars are scarce among the Shang's descendants in Sung. Without such scarcity, I could prove what I say."

10 The Master said: "As for what follows the opening libation at the Imperial Sacrifice, I'd rather not see how they do it these days."

11 Someone asked about the theory of the Imperial Sacrifice. The Master replied: "I've never understood it. If there were someone who understood, he could reveal the workings of all beneath Heaven this easily," and he pointed a finger to the palm of his hand.

12 *Sacrifice as if present* means *Sacrifice to spirits as if the spirits were present*. So the Master said: "If I'm not there at my own ancestral sacrifice, it's as if there were no sacrifice at all."

13 Wang-sun Chia[6] inquired of the Master: "What does it mean to say

As for homage at the household shrine,
homage pays better at the kitchen stove?"

"That's wrong," responded the Master. "Once you've offended Heaven, there's nowhere to turn."

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14 The Master said: "The Chou Dynasty looked to its predecessors, the Shang and Hsia. How elegant and majestic Chou culture was – and now, we follow the Chou."

15 When he was in the Grand Temple, the Master asked questions about everything he saw. Someone said: "Who says this son of a Tsou villager understands Ritual? When he was in the Grand Temple, he asked questions about everything he saw."

When he heard this, the Master said: "That questioning is itself Ritual."

16 The Master said: *"People's strength differs. So, in archery, shooting* through *the target-skin isn't the point.* That is the way of the ancients."

17 As the ceremony had fallen into neglect, Adept Kung wanted to do away with sacrificing sheep to announce a new moon to the ancestors. The Master said: "You love sheep, Kung, but I love Ritual."

18 The Master said: "If you make a Ritual of serving your sovereign, people will call it mere flattery."

19 Duke Ting[7] asked how the sovereign should employ ministers and how ministers should serve the sovereign. Confucius replied: "The sovereign should make employing ministers a matter of Ritual. And ministers should make serving their sovereign a matter of loyalty."

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20 The Master said: "In the first of the *Songs,* there's joy without abandon and grief without laceration."

21 Duke Ai asked Tsai Yü[8] about altars to the earth god. Tsai Yü said: "The Hsia Dynasty used a pine grove. The Shang used cedar. And the Chou used chestnut, saying *Then the people will tremble like the chestnut in wind.*"

When he heard this, the Master said: "Never speak of what has already happened. Never criticize what has already run its course. Never condemn what is already done and gone."

22 The Master said: "Kuan Chung[9] was truly an implement of little use!"

Someone asked: "But wasn't Kuan Chung terribly frugal?"

"Kuan had three separate homes," replied the Master. "And his officers never did double duty. Is that frugal?"

"But still, Kuan Chung understood Ritual, didn't he?"

"A sovereign screens his gate with trees. But Kuan also built such a screen. After sovereigns meet and toast their friendship, they place the cups on a ceremonial stand. Kuan also had such a stand. If Kuan understood Ritual, who doesn't?"

23 When he was talking about music with the great music-master of Lu, the Master said: "This is what we can know of music: It begins in the sounds of harmony – then, pure and clear and unbroken, it swells into completion."

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24 Asking to see the Master, a border-guard at Yi said: "Of all the noble-minded men who've traveled this way, none have declined to see me." So the disciples took him to see the Master.

As he was leaving, the border-guard said: "My friends, why mourn what's been lost? The Way's been unknown everywhere under Heaven for a very long time, and Heaven's about to use your Master like the clapper in a bell."

25 The Master said Emperor Shun's[10] music was perfectly beautiful, and perfectly virtuous, too. He said Emperor Wu's[11] music was perfectly beautiful, but not perfectly virtuous.

26 The Master said: "Governing without generosity, Ritual without reverence, mourning without grief – how could I bear to see such things?"

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XV Duke Ling of Wei

1 Duke Ling of Wei asked Confucius about tactics, and Confucius said: "I've learned something about the conduct of worship and sacrifice. But as for the conduct of war – that is something I've never studied."

2 Confucius left the next day.

In Ch'en, when supplies ran out, the disciples grew so weak they couldn't get to their feet. Adept Lu, his anger flaring, asked: "How is it the noble-minded must endure such privation?"

"If you're noble-minded, you're resolute in privation," the Master replied. "Little people get swept away."

3 The Master said: "Kung, do you think of me as someone who studies widely and remembers what he learns?"

"Yes," replied Adept Kung. "Aren't you?"

"No. I've just found a single thread stringing it all together."[1]

4 The Master said: "Those who understand Integrity are rare indeed, Lu."

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5 The Master said: "If anyone has managed to rule by doing nothing,[2] surely it was Shun. And how did he do so much by doing nothing? He just sat reverently facing south,[3] that's all!"

6 Adept Chang asked about action, and the Master said: "If you stand by your words, and they're loyal, your actions will be reverent and true. Then you can put your words into action, even in a barbarian country. But if you don't stand by your words, and they aren't loyal, your actions won't be reverent and true. Then how could you ever put your words into action, even in your own neighborhood?

"Keep this precept before you, even when standing or riding, and you'll make your words into actions."

Thereupon Adept Chang wrote it on his sash.

7 The Master said: "How straight and true Shih Yü[4] is! When the country abides in the Way, he's true as an arrow. And when the country ignores the Way, he's still true as an arrow.

"How noble-minded Ch'ü Po-yü is! When the country abides in the Way, he takes office. And when the country ignores the Way, he hides himself away and embraces it alone."

8 The Master said: "When a person is capable of understanding your words, and you refuse to speak, you're wasting a person. When a person isn't capable of understanding your words, and you speak anyway, you're wasting words. The wise waste neither words nor people."

9 The Master said: "As for noble officers of purpose and Humanity – they never wound Humanity to secure life. Indeed, to perfect Humanity, they often endure death."

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10 Adept Kung asked about the practice of Humanity, and the Master said: "If a craftsman wants to do good work, he must first sharpen his tools. If you want to settle in a country, you must cultivate its wise ministers and befriend its Humane officials."

11 Yen Hui asked about governing a country, and the Master said: "Follow the Hsia's dynastic calendar, ride the Shang's dynastic carriage, wear the Chou's dynastic cap, and for music, choose the music of Emperors Shun and Wu. Banish the songs of Cheng, and send clever tongues far away. The songs of Cheng are dissolute and clever tongues a peril."

12 The Master said: "If things far away don't concern you, you'll soon mourn things close at hand."

13 The Master said: "It's all over. I've never seen anyone for whom loving Integrity is like loving a beautiful woman."

14 The Master said: "Tsang Wen-chung stole his high position, didn't he? He knew how wise and worthy Liu-hsia Hui[5] was, and yet didn't offer the position to him."

15 The Master said: "If you expect great things of yourself and demand little of others, you'll keep resentment far away."

16 The Master said: "There's nothing to be done for a person who isn't constantly asking *What should be done? What should be done?*"

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17 The Master said: "For people to talk all day, enthralled with their clever chitchat, and never once mention right or wrong – that must be difficult indeed!"

18 The Master said: "The noble-minded make Duty their very nature. They put it into practice through Ritual; they make it shine through humility; and standing by their words, they perfect it. Then they are noble-minded indeed!"

19 The Master said: "The noble-minded worry about their lack of ability, not about people's failure to recognize their ability."

20 The Master said: "Leaving a name that carries no honor through the ages following their death – that is what the noble-minded dread."

21 The Master said: "The noble-minded seek within themselves. Little people seek elsewhere."

22 The Master said: "The noble-minded stand above the fray with dignity. And when they band together with others, they never lose track of themselves."

23 The Master said: "The noble-minded don't honor a person because of something he's said, nor do they dismiss something said because of the person who said it."

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24 Adept Kung asked: "Is there any one word that could guide a person throughout life?"

The Master replied: "How about *'shu': never impose on others what you would not choose for yourself*?"

25 The Master said: "Who have I condemned, and who praised? If there are those I have praised, it's easy enough to test them: for it was through the people that the Three Dynasties[6] put this straight Way into practice, and the people are no different today."

26 The Master said: "I can remember when scribes would leave a blank space if they weren't sure of a character, and people would loan their horses to friends. But that's all over now."

27 The Master said: "Clever talk ruins Integrity, and even a little impatience can ruin great plans."

28 The Master said: "When everyone hates a person, you should investigate thoroughly. And when everyone loves a person, you should also investigate thoroughly."

29 The Master said: "People can make the Way great and vast. But the Way isn't what makes people great and vast."

30 The Master said: "To be wrong without trying to change, that is called *wrong* indeed."

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31 The Master said: "I've spent days without food and nights without sleep, hoping to purify thought and clarify mind. But it's never done much good. Such practices – they're nothing like devoted study."

32 The Master said: "The noble-minded devote themselves to the Way, not to earning a living. A farmer may go hungry, and a scholar may stumble into a good salary. So it is that the noble-minded worry about the Way, not poverty and hunger."

33 The Master said: "You may understand it, but if you can't sustain it with Humanity, it will slip from your grasp.

"You may understand it and sustain it with Humanity, but if you don't govern with solemn dignity, there'll be no reverence among the people.

"You may understand it, sustain it with Humanity, and govern with solemn dignity, but if you don't put it into practice according to Ritual, no good will come of it."

34 The Master said: "The noble-minded aren't easily known, but they're worthy of great responsibilities. The small-minded aren't worthy of great responsibilities, but they're easily known."

35 The Master said: "Humanity is more essential to the people than fire and water. I've seen people die trying to purify themselves by walking through fire or over water. But I've never seen anyone die because they've walked in Humanity."

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36 The Master said: "Abide in Humanity, and you need not defer to any teacher."

37 The Master said: "The noble-minded are principled, but never dogmatic."

38 The Master said: "In serving your sovereign, be reverent about your duties and casual about your salary."

39 The Master said: "In worthy teaching, all things are related."[7]

40 The Master said: "If you don't follow the same Way, don't make plans together."

41 The Master said: "Language is insight itself."

42 Music-master Mien[8] arrived for a visit. When he reached the steps, the Master said: "Here are the steps."

Leading him to the mat, the Master said: "Here's the mat."

Once they were seated, the Master told him: "So-and-so is here. So-and-so is there. . . ."

After Music-master Mien left, Adept Chang asked: "Talking like this to a master musician – is that the Way?"

"Yes," replied the Master. "With a master musician, that is indeed the Way."

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XVI The House of Chi

1 The House of Chi was about to attack Chuan-yü.[1] Jan Ch'iu and Adept Lu went to see Confucius and said: "Our Lord Chi is about to settle things with Chuan-yü."

"Aren't you to blame for this?" responded Confucius. "Long ago, the early Emperors put Chuan-yü in charge of worship and sacrifice at Tung-meng Mountain. And besides, it's part of our own territory: its rulers serve these same gods of earth and grain. How can Chi think of attacking them?"

"It's our master's wish," replied Jan Ch'iu, "not ours."

"Chou Jen had a saying: *The capable join forces; the incapable step aside.* What good are counselors who don't steady him when he's stumbling and support him when he's falling? And besides, what you say is wrong. Isn't someone to blame if tigers and wild bulls escape from their cages, or jewelry of tortoiseshell and jade is crushed in its box?"

"But Chuan-yü has grown very strong," said Jan Ch'iu, "and it's so near the Chi capital. If it isn't dealt with now, it will terrorize the Chi descendants for ages to come."

"The noble-minded can't bear people who hedge around instead of saying what they want," countered Confucius. "This is what I've learned: leaders of countries and noble houses don't worry about having too few people, they worry about equitable rule; and they don't worry about the people living in poverty, they worry about the people living in peace. If rule is equitable, there's no poverty. If there's harmo-

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ny, there's no lack of people. And if there's peace, there's no rebellion.

"If a ruler's like this, and people in far-off lands still don't turn to him, he cultivates his Integrity to attract them. And after they're attracted, he brings them peace.

"Now you two are this man's high counselors. People in far-off lands haven't turned to him, but you haven't shown him how to attract them. And the country's falling into utter ruins, but you haven't shown him how to preserve it. Instead, you're busy plotting war against your own country! If you want to know what will terrorize the descendants of Chi, don't go looking for it in Chuan-yü: look for it in the palace of Lord Chi himself."

2 Confucius said: "When all beneath Heaven abides in the Way – Ritual, music, and war all emanate from the Son of Heaven.

"When all beneath Heaven ignores the Way – Ritual, music, and war emanate from lords and princes. It's rare for such a nation to outlast ten generations. If they emanate from state ministers, it's rare for a nation to outlast five generations. And once officials start issuing imperial commands, it's rare for a nation to outlast three generations.

"When all beneath Heaven abides in the Way, governing is not left to ministers. And when all beneath Heaven abides in the Way, common people need not discuss politics."

3 Confucius said: "It's been five generations since the Lu rulers lost control of the treasury, and four generations since state ministers took control of the government. No wonder these descendants of the Three Families are in such decline!"

4 Confucius said: "There are three kinds of friends that bring profit, and three kinds that bring ruin. Forthright friends, trustworthy

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friends, well-informed friends: these bring profit. Obsequious friends, compliant friends, clever-tongued friends: these bring ruin."

5 Confucius said: "There are three kinds of joy that bring profit, and three kinds that bring ruin. The joy of following Ritual and music, the joy of praising people's virtue and benevolence, the joy of having many wise friends: these bring profit. The joy of extravagant pleasures, the joy of dissolute living, the joy of convivial pleasures: these bring ruin."

6 Confucius said: "In serving a noble-minded leader, there are three common mistakes: speaking without being asked, which is called impetuous; refusing to speak after being asked, which is called aloof; speaking without considering his demeanor, which is called blindness."

7 Confucius said: "The noble-minded guard against three things: in youth, when *ch'i* and blood are unsettled, they guard against beautiful women; in their prime, when *ch'i* and blood are unbending, they guard against belligerence; and in old age, when *ch'i* and blood are withering, they guard against avarice."

8 Confucius said: "The noble-minded stand in awe of three things: the Mandate of Heaven, great men, and the words of a sage. Little people don't understand the Mandate of Heaven, so they aren't awed by it. They scorn great men, and they ridicule the words of a sage."

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9 Confucius said: "To be born enlightened: that is highest. To study and so become enlightened: that is next. To feel trapped and so study: that is third. To feel trapped and never study: that is the level of the common people, the lowest level."

10 Confucius said: "The noble-minded have nine states of mind: for eyes, bright; for ears, penetrating; for countenance, cordial; for demeanor, humble; for words, trustworthy; for service, reverent; for doubt, questioning; for anger, circumspect; and for facing a chance to profit, moral."

11 Confucius said: *"I clutch good as if it were eluding me, and touch evil as if testing hot water:* I have seen such people and heard such claims.

"I live as a recluse to realize my aspirations, and put Duty into practice to extend the Way's influence: I have heard such claims, but never seen such people."

12 Duke Ching of Ch'i had a thousand teams of horses, but when he died the people couldn't find a single excuse to praise him. But Po Yi and Shu Ch'i starved below Shou-yang Mountain, and the people praise them to this day.

Isn't that what this means?[2]

13 Asking of Po-yü, the son of Confucius, Adept Ch'in said: "You must have learned things we've never been taught."

"No," replied Po-yü. "Once, when my father was standing alone, I was crossing the courtyard. I was hurrying, out of reverence, but he stopped me and asked: *Have you studied the* Songs*?* When I told him

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that I hadn't, he said: *Unless you study the* Songs*, you'll have nothing to say.* I withdrew and began studying the *Songs*.

"Another day, he was standing alone again. And again I was hurrying reverently across the courtyard, when he asked: *Have you studied Ritual?* When I told him that I hadn't, he said: *Unless you study Ritual, you'll have nowhere to stand*. I withdrew and began studying Ritual.

"These are the two things I have learned."

Adept Ch'in withdrew in delight, and said: "One question, three answers! I've learned about the *Songs*. I've learned about Ritual. And I've learned that a noble-minded man keeps his son at a distance."

14 The true sovereign calls his wife *lady*. The lady calls herself *little girl*. The people call her *our lord's lady*. But when visiting other countries, they call her *our little lord*. And people in other countries also call her *our lord's lady*.

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XVIII The Lord of Wei

1 The Lord of Wei fled the Tyrant Chou.[1] The Lord of Chi became his slave. Pi Kan tried to advise him and was put to death.

Confucius said: "In them, the Shang had three men of great Humanity."

2 When Liu-hsia Hui was Chief Judge, he was dismissed three times. People said: "Why haven't you gone somewhere else, master?"

"If I follow the straight Way in serving people," replied Hui, "where could I go that I wouldn't be dismissed three times? If I follow a twisty Way in serving people, why should I leave this land of my parents?"

3 Waiting for Confucius to arrive, Duke Ching of Ch'i said: "I certainly can't honor him like a patriarch from the House of Chi. I'll receive him like a patriarch from a house greater than Meng but not so great as Chi.

Then he said: "I'm so old now, I can't see how to use his ideas."

Confucius thereupon left Ch'i.

4 Ch'i sent a gift of singing courtesans to Lu. Lord Chi Huan[2] accepted them and held no court for three days. Confucius thereupon left Lu.

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5 A madman of Ch'u named Convergence Crazy-Cart passed by Confucius singing:

> *"Phoenix![3] Hey, sage phoenix,*
> *how's Integrity withered away so?*
>
> *What's happened can't be changed,*
> *but the future's there to be made.*
>
> *Give it up! Give it all up!*
> *High office – these days, that's the gravest of dangers."*

Confucius stepped down from his carriage, wanting to speak with this man. But Crazy-Cart ignored him and hurried away, so Confucius never spoke with him.[4]

6 As Confucius passed by, Settled-Constant and Brave-Seclusion were in the field plowing together. He sent Adept Lu to ask them about the river crossing.[5]

"Who's that you're driving for?" asked Settled-Constant.

"Confucius," replied Adept Lu.

"You mean Confucius of Lu?"

"Yes."

"Then he must know the river crossing well."

Adept Lu then asked Brave-Seclusion, but Brave-Seclusion replied, "So who are you?"

"I am Chung Yu," replied Adept Lu.

"You mean Chung Yu who follows Confucius of Lu?"

"Yes."

"It's all surging and swelling," continued Brave-Seclusion. "All beneath Heaven's foundering deep, and who's going to change it? To follow a man who stays clear of one person or another – how could that ever compare with following one who stays clear of the world?"

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And folding earth back over seed, he went on working without pause.

Adept Lu went back and told Confucius what had happened. The Master seemed lost in troubled thought, then said: "Flocks of birds, herds of animals – we can't go roaming with them. So who can I live with, if not these humans? It's all beneath Heaven that ignores the Way: if it didn't, I wouldn't be trying so hard to change things."

7 Adept Lu was traveling with Confucius and fell behind. Meeting an old man with a basket slung from a walking-stick over his shoulder, he asked: "Have you seen the Master pass by here?"

"Your four limbs have never known work," the old man replied, "and you can't even tell the five grains apart. Who could be your Master?"

At this, he planted his walking-stick and began pulling weeds.

Adept Lu bowed and stood by reverently. So the old man invited him to stay the night. He killed a chicken and cooked up some millet. He served dinner and introduced his two sons.

The next day, Lu caught up with the Master and told him what had happened.

"Such is the recluse," responded the Master.

Then he sent Lu back to see the man again. But when Lu got there, the old man had vanished.

"To refuse office is to ignore Duty," pronounced Adept Lu. "The obligations of youth and age cannot be abandoned. And the Duty of rulers and officials – what would happen if that were abandoned? In such devotion to self-purification, the great bonds of human community are thrown into confusion. The noble-minded put Duty into practice: they serve in office, though they know full well this world will never put the Way into practice."

8 Po Yi, Shu Ch'i, Yü Chung, Yi Yi, Chu Chang, Liu-hsia Hui, Shao Lien: of these recluse scholars, the Master said: "Perhaps it's true

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that Po Yi and Shu Ch'i remained free of compromise and disgrace. It's said that Liu-hsia Hui and Shao Lien were compromised and disgraced, though their words were at least true to the bonds of human community and their actions true to their principles. And it's said that Yü Chung and Yi Yi lived in seclusion and gave up speech altogether, keeping themselves pure and turning exile into a position of authority.

"But I'm not like them. I have no use for the strictures of *You must. You must not.*"

9 Chih, Grand Music-master for banquet music, left for Ch'i. Kan, Music-master for the second course, left for Ch'u. Liao, Music-master for the third course, left for Ts'ai. And Ch'üeh, Music-master for the fourth course, left for Ch'in.

Fang Shu, master of the drum, went to live north of the Yellow River. Wu, master of the hand-drum, went to live beyond the Han River. Yang, the Grand Music-master's deputy, and Hsiang, master of the stone chimes – they went to live beyond the sea.

10 Speaking to Duke Lu, Duke Chou said: "The noble-minded never neglect their own family, and they never give their ministers cause for resentment. Unless the crimes are huge, they never abandon those they've long trusted, and they never expect perfection from anyone."

11 The great Chou had its eight noble ones:[6] elder brothers Ta and Kua, middle brothers T'u and Hu, young brothers Yeh and Hsia, younger brothers Sui and Kua.

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