THE HUMANISM OF CONFUCIUS

Confucius (551-479 B.C.) can truly be said to have woveled Chinese civilization in general. It may seem far-fetched, however, to say that he woveled Chinese philosophy in particular—that he determined the direction or established the pattern of later Chinese philosophical developments—yet there is more truth in the statement than is usually realized.

Neo-Confucianism, the full flowering of Chinese thought, developed during the last eight hundred years. Its major topics of debate, especially in the Sung (960-1279) and Ming (1368-1644) periods, are the nature and principle (li) of man and things. (For this reason it is called the School of Nature and Principle, or Hsiung-Yü Hsih-hsin.) Supplementary to these topics are the problems of material force (ch'i); yin and yang (passive and active cosmic forces or elements), Ts'ai-ch'i (Great Ultimate); being and non-being; substance and function; and the unity of Nature and man. Confucius had nothing to do with these problems, and never discussed them. In fact, the words li, yin, yang, and ts'ai-ch'i are not found in the Loo-yü (Discourses of Analects). The word ch'i appears several times, but is not used in the sense of material force. And Confucius' pupils said that they could not bear the Master's views on human nature and the Way of Heaven. He did not talk about human nature except once, when he said that "by nature men are alike. Through practice they have become far apart," but the theory is entirely different from the later orthodox doctrine of the Confucian school that human nature is originally good.

The present discussion is based on the Analects, which is generally accepted as the most reliable source of Confucius' doctrines. The subject of "the investigation of things" originated in the Great Learning and most of the other topics are mentioned in the Book of Changes. But these two Classics are not generally regarded as Confucius' own works. Furthermore, even if they were, the subjects are only briefly mentioned without elaboration. It is correct then to say that the Neo-Confucians drew their inspiration from them or made use of them to support their own ideas, but it would be going too far to suggest that they provided an outline or framework for later Chinese philosophy.

However, judging on the basis of the Analects alone, we find that Confucius exerted great influence on Chinese philosophical development in that, first of all, he determined its outstanding characteristic, namely, humanism.

As pointed out in the previous chapter, the humanistic tendency had been in evidence long before his time. But it was Confucius who turned it into the strongest driving force in Chinese philosophy. He did not care to talk about spiritual beings or even about life after death. Instead, believing that man "can make the Way (T'ung) great," and not that "the Way can make man great," he concentrated on man. His primary concern was a good society based on good government and harmonious human relations. To this end he advocated a good government that rules by virtue and moral example rather than by punishment or force. His criticism of good-was righteousness as opposed to profit. For the family, he particularly stressed filial piety and for society in general, proper conduct or li (propriety, rites).

More specifically, he believed in the possibility of all men, and in this connection he radically modified a traditional concept, that of the ch'un-tzu, or superior man. Literally "son of the ruler," it came to acquire the meaning of "superior man," on the theory that nobility was a quality determined by status, more particularly a hereditary position. The term appears 107 times in the Analects. In some cases it refers to the ruler. In most cases, however, Confucius used it to denote a morally superior man. In other words, to him nobility was no longer a matter of blood, but of character—a concept that amounted to social revolution. Perhaps it is more correct to say that it was an evolution, but certainly it was Confucius who firmly established the new concept. His repeated mention of sage-emperors Yao and Shun and Duke Chou as models seems to suggest that he was looking back to the past. Be that as it may, he was looking to ideal men rather than to a supernatural being for inspiration.

Not only did Confucius give Chinese philosophy its humanistic foundation, but he also formulated some of its fundamental concepts, five of which will be briefly commented on here: the rectification of names, the Mean, the Way, Heaven, and li (humanity). In insisting on the rectification of names, Confucius was advocating the establishment of a social order in which names and ranks are properly regulated, but also the correspondence of words and action, or in its more philosophical

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1 Analects, 8:4; 10:4 and 8; 16:7. In the rest of this introduction, references to the Analects are given only in specific cases. For references on general subjects, see the analectical notes at the end of this introduction. For discussion of the Analects, see below, n.1.
2 Analects, 5:12; ibid., 17:2.
3 See these Classics, see below, ch. 4, n.5, and ch. 16, n.1.

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aspect, the correspondence of name and actually. This has been a perennial theme in the Confucian school, as well as in nearly all other schools. By the Mean, Confucius did not have in mind merely moderation, but that which is central and balanced. This, too, has been a cardinal idea in Chinese thought. In a real sense, the later Neo-Confucian ideas of the harmony of yin and yang and that of substance and function did not go beyond this concept. In his interpretation of Heaven, he departed from traditional belief even more radically. Up to the time of Confucius, the Supreme Power was called ti (the Lord) or Shang-ti (the Lord on High) and was understood in an anthropomorphic sense. Confucius never spoke of ti. Instead, he often spoke of shen (Heaven). To be sure, his Heaven is purposive and is the master of all things. He repeatedly referred to the Heavenly, the Manifest, the Will, or order of Heaven. However, with him Heaven is no longer the greatest of all spiritual beings who rules in a personal manner but a Supreme Being who only reigns, having his Moral Law to operate by itself. This is the Way according to which civilization should develop and man should behave. It is the Way of Heaven (Tien-wu), later called the Principle of Heaven or Nature (Tien-ti).

Most important of all, he evolved the new concept of jen which was to become central in Chinese philosophy. All later discussions on principle and material force may be said to serve the purpose of helping man to realize jen.1 The word jen is not found in the oracle bones. It is found only occasionally in pre-Confucian texts, and in all these cases it denotes the particular virtue of kindness, more especially the kindness of a ruler to his subjects. In Confucius, however, all this is greatly changed in the first place, Confucius made jen the main theme of his conversations. In the Analects fifty-eight of 499 chapters are devoted to the discussion of jen, and the word appears 105 times. No other subject, not even filial piety, engaged so much of the Master's and his disciples. Furthermore, instead of perpetuating the ancient understanding of jen as a particular virtue, he transformed it into general virtue. It is true that in a few cases jen is still used by Confucius as a particular virtue, in the sense of benevolence. But in most cases, to Confucius the man of jen is the perfect man. He is the true ch'an-tzu. He is a man of the golden rule, for "wishing to establish his own character, he also establishes the character of others, and wishing to be prominent himself, he also helps others to be prominent."2 In these balanced and harmonized aspects of the self and society, jen is expressed in terms of ch'iao and shu, or conscientiousness and altruism, which is the "one thread" running through Confucius' teachings, and which is in essence the golden mean as well as the golden rule. It was the extension of this idea of jen that became the Neo-Confucian doctrine of man's forming one body with Heaven, or the unity of man and Nature, and it was because of the character of jen in man that later Confucians have adhered to the theory of the original good nature of man.

It is clear, therefore, that Confucius was a creature as well as a transmitter. He was not a philosopher in a technical sense, but Chinese philosophy would be quite different if he had not lived. He was born in 551 or 552 B.C. in the state of Lu in modern Shantung. His family name was Kung, private name Chi, and he has been traditionally honored as Grand Master Kung (Kung Fu-tzu, hence the Latinized form Confucius). He was a descendant of a noble but fairly poor family. His father died when Confucius was probably three years old. Evidently a self-made man, he studied under no particular teacher but became perhaps the most learned man of his time.

He began his career in his twenties or thirties. He was the first person in Chinese history to devote his whole life, almost exclusively, to teaching. He sought to inaugurate private education, to open the door of education to all, to offer education for training character instead of for vocation, and to gather around him a group of gentlemen-scholars (thus starting the institution of the literati who have dominated Chinese history and society).

In his younger years Confucius had served in minor posts in Lu. At fifty-one he was made a magistrate, and became minister of justice the same year, perhaps serving as an assistant minister of public works in between. At fifty-six, finding his superiors uninterested in his policies, he set out to travel (for almost thirteen years) in so much attention of the Master and his disciples. Furthermore, instead of perpetuating the ancient understanding of jen as a particular virtue, he transformed it into general virtue. It is true that in a few cases jen is still used by Confucius as a particular virtue, in the sense of benevolence. But in most cases, to Confucius the man of jen is the perfect man. He is the true ch'an-tzu. He is a man of the golden rule, for "wishing to establish his own character, he also establishes the character of others, and wishing to be prominent himself, he also helps others to be prominent." In these balanced and harmonized aspects of the self and society, jen is expressed in terms of ch'iao and shu, or conscientiousness and altruism, which is the "one thread" running through Confucius' teachings, and which is in essence the golden mean as well as the golden rule. It was the extension of this idea of jen that became the Neo-Confucian doctrine of man's forming one body with Heaven, or the unity of man and Nature, and it was because of the character of jen in man that later Confucians have adhered to the theory of the original good nature of man.

1 These accounts are found in the first and still the standard biography of Confucius, ch. 47 of the Shih chi. See French translation by Chaunu, Les mommies historiques, Vol. 5, pp. 299-300, 341-403, or English translation by Lin Yutang, The Wisdom of Confucius, pp. 57-68, 91, 95.

2 Traditionally believed to refer to the Six Classics, i.e., the Books of History, I Ching, Ch'iao, Rites, and Music, and the Spring and Autumn Annals. The Book of Music is now lost. For three of the others, see above, ch. 1, nn. 4-6. The "six

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1 For this concept, see Chan, "The Evolution of the Confucian Concept: Jen," Philosophy East and West, 4 (1955), 295-319; also, see below, comment on Analects 12:32, and comments on the following: ch. 30, A ch. 31, sect. 1, 11; ch. 32, see 42; ch. 34, A, treatise 3.

2 Analects, 6:28.
Many Chinese scholars, especially in the last several decades, have debated such questions as whether he actually made a trip some time in his forties to see Lao Tzu to inquire about ancient texts and ceremonies, whether he wrote the Chi-mi-chih (Spring and Autumn Annals), edited the other ancient classics, and wrote the "ten wings" or commentaries of one of them, namely, the *Book of Changes*. After having once rejected these claims, many scholars are now inclined to believe them. The controversy has by no means ended. At some point, the fact that the *Analects* is the most reliable source of Confucian teachings is accepted by practically all scholars. For this reason, the following selections are made entirely from this book.

Ceremonies and Music: 1:12; 2: 5; 3:3-4, 17, 19; 6:25; 8:8
Confucius: 2:4; 5:25; 6:26; 7:1, 2, 7, 8, 16, 20-20, 37; 9:1, 4; 10:9, 14, 14:30, 37, 41; 16:6; 19:24
Fetal posture: 1:2, 6, 14; 2:9, 7:4, 18; 19:21
Literature and Art: 1:15; 6:25; 7:6, 8; 9, 5; 15:40; 17:9
Love and Golden Rule: 4:2, 15:5; 11:1; 6:28; 12:2, 2; 14:36, 15:7, 15:10
Mei and Central theory: 4:15; 15:2
Nature, human: 5:12, 6:17, 19; 16:7; 17:2, 3
Restoratives of names: 12:11, 17; 13:3, 6
Righteousness: 2:4; 4:16; 13:3, 6; 15:17
Virile: 1:4, 4, 8, 11:2, 6; 7:1; 11, 9, 9; 11:18, 19, 14; 13:21, 18, 17, 18:17, 19:6, 10, 16, 6
Way (Tao): 4:5, 8; 7:6; 12:18, 31; 17:41
Words and Acts: 2:13, 18; 4:24; 13:3; 14:29

**THE ANALECTS**

1:11. Confucius said, "Is it not a pleasure to learn and to repeat or practice from time to time what has been learned? Is it not delightful to have friends coming from afar? Is one not a superior man if he does not feel hurt even though he is not recognized?"

11 The *Analects* is a collection of sayings by Confucius and his pupils pertaining to his teachings and deeds. It was probably put together by some of his pupils and

Comment: Interpretations of Confucian teachings have differed radically in the last 2,000 years. Generally speaking, Han (206 B.C. - A.D. 220) scholars, represented in Ho Yen (d. 249), Lun-yi chi-chih (Collected Explanations of the *Analects*), were inclined to be literal and interested in historical facts. Whereas Neo-Confucians, representatives in Chu Hsi (1130-1200), Lun-yi chi-chih (Collected Commentaries on the *Analects*), were interpretive, philosophical, and often subjective. They almost invariably understand the Confucian Way (Tao) as principle (li), which is their cardinal concept, and frequently when they came to an undefined "this" or "it," they insisted that it means principle. This divergence between the Han and Sung scholars has colored interpretations of this passage. To Wang Su (195-265), quoted in Ho, *hi* (to learn) means to receive a lesson repeatedly. To Chu Hsi, however, *hi* means to follow the examples of those who are first to understand, and therefore it does not mean recitation but practice. In revolt against both extremes, Ch'ing (1644-1912) scholars emphasized practical experience. In this case, *hi* to them means both to repeat and to practice, as indicated in Liao Po-nan (1791-1855), Lun-yi cheng-i (Correct Meanings of the *Analects*). Thus Ho Yen, Chu Hsi, and Liao Po-nan nearly represent the three different periods in the three different periods. Generally speaking, the dominant spirit of Confucian teaching is the equal emphasis on knowledge and action. This dual emphasis will be encountered again and again.

12 Yu T'ai said, "Few of those who are filial sons and respectful pupils. The name Lun-yi did not appear until the 2nd century B.C. as that time there were three versions of it, with some variations. Two of these have been lost. The surviving version is that of the state of Lu, where it circulated. It is divided into two parts, with ten books each. In the Ching-chen chu-ien (<i>Explainations of Terms in the Classics</i>) by Lu T’ieh-ming (208-141 B.C.), the name is not mentioned. There are 491 chapters. Chu Hsi combined and divided certain chapters, making a total of 168 sections at which is divided into eighteen sections. In translations like Legge's *Confucian Analects* and Wade's *The Analects of Confucius*, these divisions are taken as chapters, making 499. The same numbering is used in the following selections.

The material is unorganized, in a few cases repetitive, and in some cases historically inaccurate. However, it is generally accepted as the most complete and reliable source of Confucian teachings. Chu Hsi grouped it together with the *Great Learning*, the *Great Sermon*, and the *Doctrine of the Mean* as the "Four Books." Thematically they became *Classics*. From 1313 to 900, they served as the basis for civil service examinations, replacing the earlier *Classics* in importance.

11 In the *Lun-yi chi-chih* (Commentary and Subcommentary on the *Analects*) in the *Chin Classics* Series.
12 See below, comment on *Analects*, 2:13.
13 Confucius' pupil whose private name was Niu (538-547 B.C.), thirteen years (some say thirty-three years) Confucius' junior. In the *Analects* with minor
brothers will show disrespect to superiors, and there has never been a man who is not disrespectful to superiors and yet creates disorder. A superior man is devoted to the fundamentals (the root). When the root is firmly established, the moral law (Tao) will grow. Filial piety and brotherly respect are the root of humanity (ren).”

1.3. Confucius said, “A man with clever words and an ingratiating appearance is seldom a man of humanity.”

1.4. Tseng-Tsu said: “Every day I examine myself on three points: whether in counseling others I have not been loyal; whether in intercourse with my friends I have not been faithful; and whether I have not repeated again and again and practiced the instructions of my teacher.”

1.6. Young men should be filial when at home and respectful to their elders when away from home. They should be earnest and faithful. They should love all extensively and be intimate with men of humanity. When they have any energy to spare after the performance of moral duties, they should use it to study literature and the arts (wen).”

1.8. Confucius said, “If the superior man is not grave, he will not inspire awe, and his learning will not be on a firm foundation.” Hold loyalty and faithfulness to be fundamental. Have no friends who are not as good as yourself. When you have made mistakes, don’t be afraid to correct them.

Comment. The teaching about friendship here is clearly inconsistent with Analects, 8.5, where Confucius exhorts us to learn from infidels. It is difficult to believe that Confucius taught people to be selfish. According to Hsing Ping (932-1010), Confucius meant people who are not equal to oneself in loyalty and faithfulness, assuming that one is or should be loyal and faithful; according to this exception, he and Tseng-Tsu are addressed as Tsao, an honorific for a scholar or gentleman, giving rise to the theory that the Analects was compiled by their pupils, who supplemented Confucius’ sayings with their.

10 Cf. below, 13.27.
11 Tseng Tzu (505-436 B.C.), pupil of Confucius, noted for filial piety, to whom are ascribed the Great Learning and the Book of Filial Piety.
12 He Yen’s interpretation: Whether I have transmitted to others what I myself have not practiced. This interpretation has been accepted by many.
13 Yen, literally “patterns,” is here extended to mean the embodiment of culture and the moral law (Tao) that is, the Six Arts of ceremony, music, archery, carriage-driving, writing, and mathematics.
14 To Kung An-kwo (416-340 B.C.), quoted by He Yen, 6:6 means “obscure,” not “fine.” The sentence would read, “If he studies, he will not be ignored.”
15 Lu-nü shu (Subcommentary on the Analects). This is part of the Lu-nü chap.

Kan (171-218). Confucius simply wanted us to be careful in choosing friends.

1:11. Confucius said, “When a man’s father is alive, look at the bent of his will. When his father is dead, look at his conduct. If for three years [of mourning] he does not change from the way of his father, he may be called filial.”

Comment. Critics of Confucius have asserted that Confucian authoritarianism holds an oppressive weight on the son even after the father has passed away. Fan Tzu-yi (1041-1006 B.C.) did not say the son should observe the father’s will and past conduct, but he was almost alone in this. All prominent commentators, from K’ung An-kwo to Cheng Hui (127-200), Chu Hsi, and Liu Pao-man have interpreted the passage to mean that while one’s father is alive, one’s action is restricted, so that his intention should be the criterion by which his character is to be judged. After his father’s death, however, when he is completely autonomous, he should be judged by his conduct. In this interpretation, the way of the father is of course the moral principle which has guided and should have guided the son’s conduct.

1:12. Yu Tzu said, “Among the functions of propriety (li) the most valuable is that it establishes harmony. The excellence of the ways of ancient kings consists of this. It is the guiding principle of all things great and small. If things go amiss, and you, understanding harmony, try to achieve it without regulating it by the rules of propriety, they will still go amiss.”

1:14. Confucius said, “The superior man does not seek fulfillment of his appetite nor comfort in his lodging. He is diligent in his duties and careful in his speech. He associates with men of moral principles and thereby realizes himself. Such a person may be said to love learning.”

1:15. Tsao-kung said: “What do you think of a man who is poor and yet does not falter, and the rich man who is not proud?” Confucius replied, “They will do. But they are not as good as the poor man who is happy and the rich man who loves the rules of propriety (li).” Tsao-kung said: “The Book of Odes says:"

16Cheng hui (Treatise on the Men), pt. 1, sec. 5, sps. 1:21b.
17Quoted in Chu Hsi’s Lun-yü hao-wen (Questions and Answers on the Analects), 1.220, in Chu Tzu Tzu (Surviving Works of Chu Tzu Tzu), 1.220.
18Lun-yü chu (Commentary on the Analects).
19Confucius’ pupil, whose family name was Tsao, private name Tsao, and courtesy name Tsao-kung (520-450 B.C.). He was noted for eloquence and was thirty-one years younger than the Master. See Analects, 5.8 about him.
20An old edition has “happy with the Way.”
As a thing is cut and filed, as a thing is carved and polished... Does that not mean what you have just said?"

Confucius said, "Ah! Tzu-kung. Now I can begin to talk about the odes with you. When I have told you what has gone before, you know what is to follow." 1:16. Confucius said, "[A good man] does not worry about not being known by others but rather worries about not knowing them." 2:1. Confucius said, "A ruler who governs his state by virtue is like the north polar star, which remains in its place while all the other stars revolve around it." 3:2. Confucius said, "All three hundred odes can be covered by one of their sentences, and that is, 'Have no depraved thoughts.'"

2:3. Confucius said, "Lead the people with governmental measures and regulate them by law and punishment, and they will avoid wrongdoing but will have no sense of honor and shame. Lead them with virtue and regulate them by the rules of propriety (j), and they will have a sense of shame and, moreover, set themselves right." 2:4. Confucius said, "At fifteen my mind was set on learning. At thirty my character had been formed. At forty I had no more perplexities. At fifty I knew the Mandate of Heaven (T'ien-ming). At sixty I was at ease with what I heard. At seventy I could follow my heart's desire without transgressing moral principles." 3:2. Comment. What T'ien-ming is depends upon one's own philosophy. Ode no. 55. Describing the eloquence of a lover, but here taken by Tzu-kung to mean moral effort. Similar ideas are found in Analects, 14:32; 15:18, 20. See Ho Yen's Luen-ya chi-hu and Chu Hsi's Luen-ya chi-chu. Cf. Analects, 13:4 and Lao Tzu, ch. 57. Odes, lines 747-748. The word 305 odes in the book. The word 305 means "Ah!" in the poem but Confucius used it in its sense of "thought." For discussion of the Book of Odes, see above, ch. 1 n. 5. The word 305 means both to rectify (according to Ho Yen and most other commentators) and to arrive (according to Cheng Huan). In the latter sense it may mean either "the people will arrive at goodness" or "the people will come to the ruler." See below, ch. 32, comment on sec. 44.

In general, Confucians before the T'ang dynasty (618-907) understood it to mean either the descent of God, which determines the course of one's life, or the rise and fall of the moral order, whereas Sung scholars, especially Chu Hsi, took it to mean "the operation of Nature which is endowed in things and makes things as they are." This latter interpretation has prevailed. The concept of T'ien-ming which can mean Mandate of Heaven, decree of God, personal destiny, and course of order, is extremely important in the history of Chinese thought. In religion it generally means fate or personal order of God, but in philosophy it is practically always understood as moral destiny, natural endowment, or moral order.

2:5. Meng I Tzu asked about filial piety. Confucius said: "Never disobey." [Latter] when Fan Chih asked him, "Meng-sun asked me about filial piety, and I answered him, 'Never disobey.'" 2:2. Fan Chih asked what does that mean?" Confucius said, "When parents are alive, serve them according to the rules of propriety. When they die, bury them according to the rules of propriety and sacrifice to them according to the rules of propriety." 2:6. Meng Wu-po asked about filial piety. Confucius said, "Especially be anxious lest parents should be sick." 2:7. Tzu-yu asked about filial piety. Confucius said, "Filial piety nowadays means to be able to support one's parents. But we support even dogs and horses. If there is no feeling of reverence, wherein lies the difference?" 2:11. Confucius said, "A man who reviews the old so as to find out the new is qualified to teach others." 23 See Cheng Shu-te Lane-ya chi-chu (Collected Explanations of the Analects), 1945. Chu Hsi, Lane-ya chi-chu. A young noble, also styled Meng-sun, once studied ceremonies with Confucius. Confucius' pupil, whose family name was Fan, private name Hsi, and courtesy name Tzu-chi (515 B.C.). Not to disobey the principle of propriety, according to Hsing Ping; not to disobey moral principles, according to Chu Hsi; or not to obey parents, according to Hsiung K'un (448-545), Lane-ya jukta (Commentary on the Meanings of the Analects). See of Meng I Tzu. Another interpretation by Ma Jung (179-186), quoted by Ho Yen: A filial son does not do wrong. His parents' only worry is that he might become sick. About half of the commentators have followed him. Confucius' pupil. His family name was Yan, private name Yu, and courtesy name Tzu-chi (506 B.C.). Alternative interpretations: (1) Even dogs and horses can support men; (2) Even dogs and horses can support their parents.
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3.4. Lin Fang asked about the foundation of ceremonies. Confucius said, "An important question indeed! Rituals or ceremonies, be they rather than extravagant, and in funeral, be deeply sorrowful rather than shallow in sentiment." 3.12. When Confucius offered sacrifice to his ancestors, he felt as if his ancestral spirits were actually present. When he offered sacrifice to other spirits, he felt as if they were actually present. He said, "If I do not participate in the sacrifice, it is as if I did not sacrifice at all." 3.13. Wang-sun Chia asked, "What is meant by the common saying, 'It is better to be on good terms with the God of the Kitchen who cooks our food than with the spirits of the shrine (ancestors) at the southwest corner of the house'?" Confucius said, "It is not true. He who commits a sin against Heaven has no god to pray to." 3.17. Tzu-kung wanted to do away with the sacrificing of a lamb at the ceremony in which the beginning of each month is reported to ancestors. Confucius said, "Te". You love the lamb but I love the ceremony." 3.19. Duke Ting asked how the ruler should employ his ministers and how the ministers should serve their ruler. Confucius said, "A ruler should employ his ministers according to the principle of propriety, and ministers should serve their ruler with loyalty." 3.24. The guardian at I (a border post of the state of Wei) was requested to be presented to Confucius, saying, "When gentlemen come here, I have never been prevented from seeing them." Confucius' followers introduced him. When he came out from the interview, he said, "Sirs, why are you disheartened by your master's loss of office? The Way has not prevailed in the world for a long time. Heaven is going to use your master as a bell with a wooden tongue [to awaken the people]." 4.2. Confucius said, "One who is not a man of humanity cannot endure adversity for long, nor can he enjoy prosperity for long. The man of humanity is naturally at ease with humanity. The man of wisdom cultivates humanity for its advantage." 4.3. Confucius said, "Only the man of humanity knows how to love people and hate people." 4.4. Confucius said, "If you set your mind on humanity, you will be free from evil." 4.5. A native of Lu, most probable not a pupil of Confucius. 4.6. Great officer and commander-in-chief in the state of Wei. 4.7. Tzu-kung's private name. 4.8. Ruler of Confucius' native state of Lu (r. 529–485 B.C.). 4.9. Here he means dislike, without any connation of ill will. See Great Learning, ch. 10, for an elaboration of the saying. 4.10. The word e, evil, can also be read we to mean hate or dislike, but it is hardly ever done.

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\ 2.12. Confucius said, "The superior man is not an implement (chhi)." 2.14. Confucius said, "The superior man is broad-minded but not partisan; the inferior man is partisan but not broad-minded." 2.15. Confucius said, "He who learns but does not think is lost; he who thinks but does not learn is in danger." 2.17. Confucius said, "Yu, shall I teach you [the way to acquire] knowledge?" To say that you know when you do not know and say that you do not know when you do not know—that is [the way to acquire] knowledge." 2.18. Tzu-chang was learning with a view to official emolument. Confucius said, "Hear much and put aside what's doubtful while you speak cautiously of the rest. Then few will blame you. See much and put aside what seems pretentious while you are cautious in carrying the rest into practice. Then you will have few occasions for regret. When one's words give few occasions for blame and his acts give few occasions for repentance—there lies his emolument." 2.24. Confucius said, "It is flattering to offer sacrifices to ancestral spirits other than one's own. To see what is right and not to do it is cowardice." 3.3. Confucius said, "If a man is not humane (jen), what has he to do with ceremonies (li)? If he is not humane, what has he to do with music?"
4:5. Confucius said, "Wealth and honor are what every man desires. But if they have been obtained in violation of moral principles, they must not be kept. Poverty and humble station are what every man dislikes. But if they can be avoided in violation of moral principles, they must not be avoided. If a superior man departs from humanity, how can he fulfill that name? A superior man never abandons humanity even for the lapse of a single meal. In moments of haste, he acts according to it. In times of difficulty or woe, he acts according to it."

4:6. Confucius said, "I have never seen one who really loves humanity or one who really hates humanity. One who really loves humanity will not place anything above it. One who really hates humanity will practice humanity in such a way that humanity will have no chance to get at him. Is there any one who has devoted his strength to humanity for as long as a single day? I have not seen any one without sufficient strength to do so. Perhaps there is such a case, but I have never seen it."

4:8. Confucius said, "In the morning, hear the Way; in the evening, die content!"

4:10. Confucius said, "A superior man in dealing with the world is not for anything or against anything. He follows righteousness as the standard.

Comment. This is a clear expression of both the flexibility and rigidity of Confucian ethics—flexibility in application but rigidity in standard. Here lies the basic idea of the Confucian doctrine of chung-ch’ien, or the standard and the exceptional, the absolute and the relative, or the permanent and the temporary. This explains why Confucius was not obstinate, had no predetermined course of action, was ready to serve or to withdraw whenever it was proper to do so, and, according to Mencius, was a sage who acted according to the circumstances of the time.

The words shih and mao can be interpreted to mean being near to people and being distant from people, or opposing people and admiring people, respectively, and some commentators have adopted these interpretations. But the majority follow Chu Hsi, as I have done here. Chu Hsi was thinking about the superior man's dealings with things. Chang Shih (Chang Nan-ts’ien, 1133-1180), on the other hand, thought Confucius was talking about the so-

perior man's state of mind. This difference reflects the opposition between the two wings of Neo-Confucianism, one inclining to activity, the other to the state of mind.

4:11. Confucius said, "The superior man thinks of virtue; the inferior man thinks of possessions. The superior man thinks of sanctions; the inferior man thinks of personal favors."

4:12. Confucius said, "If one's acts are motivated by profit, he will have many enemies."

4:15. Confucius said, "Ts’ian, there is one thread that runs through my doctrines." Tseng Tzu said, "Yes." After Confucius had left, the disciples asked him, "What did he mean?" Tseng Tzu replied, "The Way of our Master is none other than conscientiousness (chung) and altruism (shu)."

Comment. Confucian teachings may be summed up in the phrase "one thread" (i-kuan), but Confucians have not agreed on what it means. Generally, Confucianists of Han and T’ang times adhered to the basic meaning of "thread" and understood it in the sense of a system or a body of doctrines. Chu Hsi, true to the spirit of Neo-Confucian speculative philosophy, took it to mean that there is one mind to respond to all things. In the Ch’ing period, in revolt against speculation, scholars preferred to interpret kuan as action and affair, that is, it is only one moral principle for all actions. All agree, however, on the meanings of chung and shu, which are best expressed by Chu Hsi, namely, chung means the full development of one’s (originally good) mind and shu means the extension of that mind to others. As Ch’eng I (Ch’eng I-cha’an, 1033-1107) put it, chung is the Way of Heaven, whereas shu is the way of man; the former is substance, while the latter is function. Liu Pao-nan is correct in equating chung with Confucia’s saying, “Establish one’s own character, and shu with “Also establish the circumstances of the other.” Here is the positive version of the Confucian golden rule. The negative version is only one side of it.

See Ch’eng Shuh, Lun-yü ch’u-chu, on this point.
Literally "band," or one’s shelter, food, etc.
Private name of Tseng Tzu.
The Ch’ing viewpoint is best represented in Wang Nien-nan (1744-1832).
Kuang-yao-shu-chang (Textual Commentary on the Kaung-yao-shu (Dictionary).
Chu Hsi, Lun-yü ch’u-chu. For discussion of chuang-shu-cheng, see Appendix.
Jia (Surviving Works), 2:18b-19b, in text.
Lun-yü ch’u-chu. He is referring to Analects, 6:28.
See other positive versions in Analects, 14:45; The Mean, ch. 13; Mencius,

4.16. Confucius said, "The superior man understands righteousness; (i) the inferior man understands profit."

Comment. Confucius contrasted the superior man and the inferior in many ways, but this is the fundamental difference for Confucianism in general as well as for Confucius himself. Chu Hsi associated righteousness with the Principle of Nature (Tien-ti) and profit with the feelings of man, but later Neo-Confucians strongly objected to his views contrasting principle and feelings.

4.18. Confucius said, "In serving his parents, a son may gently reprove them. When he sees that they are not inclined to listen to him, he should assume an attitude of reverence and not abandon his effort to serve them. He may feel worried, but does not complain.

4.19. Confucius said, "When his parents are alive, a son should not go far abroad; or if he does, he should let them know where he goes."

4.21. Confucius said, "A son should always keep in mind the age of his parents. It is an occasion for joy (that they are enjoying long life) and also an occasion for anxiety [that another year is gone]."

4.24. Confucius said, "The superior man wants to be slow in word but diligent in action."

5.11. Tzu-kung said, "What I do not want others to do to me, I do not want to do to them." Confucius said, "Ah Tzu-kung! That is beyond you."

5.12. Tzu-kung said, "We can hear our Master's [views] on culture and its manifestation, but we cannot hear his views on human nature and the Way of Heaven [because these subjects are beyond the comprehension of most people]."

5.25. Yen Yüan and Chi-hu were in attendance. Confucius said, "Why don't you each tell me your ambition in life?" Tzu-lu said, "I wish to have a horse, a carriage, and a light for court; and share them with friends, and shall not regret if they are all worn out." Yen Yüan said, "

with never to boast of my good qualities and never to brag about the trouble I have taken [for others]"

"Tzu-lu said, "I wish to hear your ambition." Confucius said, "It is my ambition to comfort the old, to be faithful to friends, and to cherish the young."

5.27. Confucius said, "In every hamlet of ten families, there are always some people as loyal and faithful as myself, but none who love learning as much as I do."

6.5. Confucius said, "About Hui (Yen Yüan), for three months there would be nothing in his mind contrary to humanity. The others could (or can) attain to this for a day or a month at the most."

Comment. On the basis of this saying alone, some philosophers have concluded that Yen Yüan was a mystic and that Confucius praised epicureanism.

6.16. Confucius said, "When substance exceeds refinement (wen), one becomes rude. When refinement exceeds substance, one becomes urbane. It is only when one's substance and refinement are properly blended that he becomes a superior man.

6.17. Confucius said, "Man is born with uprightness. If one loses it he will be lucky if he escapes with his life."

Comment. Although the Confucian tradition in general holds that human nature is originally good, Confucius' own position is not clear. We have read that his doctrine of nature could not be heard, and we shall read his statement that by nature men are alike. But how they are alike is not clear. The saying here can be interpreted to mean that man can live throughout life because he is upright. This is the interpretation of Ma Jun (79-166), which is followed by Wang Chi'ung (27-1007). Most people followed Chu Hsi. He had the authority of Ch'eng Hao (Ch'eng Ming-tao, 1032-1085), who echoed Ch'eng Hsiao's interpretation that Confucius said that man is born upright. This means that Confucius was not only the first man in Chinese philosophy to assume a definite position about human nature, but also the first to teach that human nature is originally good.

1A. The negative version is found in Analects 5:11; 12:2; 15:23; in The Moon, ch. 13; and in the Great Learning, ch. 10.
3A. Cf. Great Learning, ch. 10.
4A. The term wen-chung can also mean literal heritage or simply the ancient Classics.
5A. The word "nature" is mentioned elsewhere in the Analects only once. See 17:2.
6A. Confucius' favorite pupil, whose family name was Yen, private name Hsi, and courtesy name Te-yüan (521-491 B.C.). He died at 32.
7A. Te-yu.
8A. The word "light" does not appear in the stone-carved Classic of the Tang dynasty and is probably a later addition.

8A. Another interpretation: For his own moral effort.
9A. This is Chu Hsi's interpretation. According to Hsiung Ping, it would mean this: The old should be satisfied with me, friends should trust me, and the young should come to me.
10A. We don't know whether this was said before or after Yen Yüan's death.
11A. Analects, 5:12.
12A. Analects, 17:2.
13A. Quoted by Ho Yen.
14A. Lam-kung (Balanced Inquisition), ch. 5, 40:2; 2:2a. For English translation, see Furukawa, Lam-kung, vol. 1, p. 152.
15A. See Lam-yü ch'ing-chu.
6:18. Confucius said, "To know it [learning or the Way] is not as good as to love it, and to love it is not as good as to take delight in it." 6:19. Confucius said, "To those who are above average, one may talk of the higher things, but may not do so to those who are below average."

6:20. Fan Ch'ih asked about wisdom. Confucius said, "Devote yourself earnestly to the duties due to men, and respect spiritual beings; but do not consider them at a distance. This may be called wisdom." Fan Ch'ih asked about humanity. Confucius said, "The man of humanity first of all considers what is difficult in the task and then thinks of success. Such a man may be called humane."

Comment. Many people have been puzzled by this passage, some even doubting the sincerity of Confucius' religious attitude—all quite unnecessarily. The passage means either "do not become improperly informal with spiritual beings," or "emphasize the way of man rather than the way of spirits."^62

6:21. Confucius said, "The man of wisdom delights in water; the man of humanity delights in mountains. The man of wisdom is active, the man of humanity is tranquil. The man of wisdom enjoys happiness, the man of humanity enjoys long life."

Comment. In the Confucian ethical system, humanity and wisdom are like two wings, one supporting the other. One is substance, the other is function. The dual emphasis has been maintained throughout history, especially in Tung Chung-shu (c.179–c.104 B.C.) and in a certain sense in K'ang Yu-yei (1858–1927). Elsewhere, courage is added as the third virtue, and Mencius grouped them with righteousness and propriety as the Four Beginnings. ^63

6:23. Confucius said, "When a cornered vessel no longer has any corner, should it be called a cornered vessel? Should it?"

Comment. Name must correspond to actuality. ^64

6:25. Confucius said, "The superior man extensively studies literature (wen) and restrains himself with the rules of propriety. Thus will he not violate the Way."

^^ Meaning especially ancestors. ^65 According to Lanyü chüeh-chih.
^66 According to Cheng Hsiian, Chu Hsi, and most commentators. ^67 See also Analects, 4:2; 12:22; 15:32.
^68 See below, ch. 14, E, sec. 3; ch. 39, sec. 3.
^69 See Analects, 9:28; 14:30; The Mean, ch. 20.
^71 For the Confucian doctrine of the rectification of names, see below, comment on 13:3.

6:26. When Confucius visited Nan-tzu (the wicked wife of Duke Ling of Wei, r. 533–490 B.C.) [in an attempt to influence her to persuade the duke to effect political reform], Tzu-lu was not pleased. Confucius swore an oath and said, "If I have said or done anything wrong, may Heaven forsake me! May Heaven forsake me!"

6:28. Tzu-kung said, "If a ruler excessively confers benefit on the people and can bring salvation to all, what do you think of him? Would you call him a man of humanity?" Confucius said, "Why only a man of humanity? He is without doubt a sage. Even the (sage-emperors) Yao and Shun fell short of it. A man of humanity, wishing to establish his own character, also establishes the character of others, and wishing to be prominent himself, also helps others to be prominent. To be able to judge others by what is near to ourselves may be called the method of realizing humanity."^72

Comment. The Confucian golden rule in a nutshell.

7:1. Confucius said, "I transmit but do not create. I believe in and love the ancients. I venture to compare myself to our old P'eng."^73

Comment. This is often cited to show that Confucius was not creative. We must not forget, however, that he "goes over the old so as to find out what is new."^74 Nor must we overlook the fact that he was the first one to offer education to all. Moreover, his concepts of the superior man and of Heaven were at least partly new.

7:2. Confucius said, "To remember silently [what I have learned], to learn untrustingly, and to teach others without being wearied—that is just natural with me."^75

7:6. Confucius said, "Set your will on the Way. Have a firm grasp on virtue. Rely on humanity. Find recreation in the arts."

7:7. Confucius said, "There has never been anyone who came with as little a present as dried meat (for tuition)"^76 that I have refused to teach him something. ^76

7:8. Confucius said, "I do not enlighten those who are not eager to learn, nor arouse those who are not anxious to give an explanation themselves. If I have presented one corner of the square and they cannot

^62 This episode took place when Confucius was 57.
^63 See above comment on 4:15.
^64 An official of the Shang dynasty (1751–1112 B.C.) who loved to recite old stories.
^65 Analects, 2:11.
come back to me with the other three, I should not go over the point again."

7:15. Confucius said, "With coarse rice to eat, with water to drink, and with a bent arm for a pillow, there is still joy. Wealth and honor obtained through unrighteousness are but fleeting clouds to me."

7:16. Confucius said, "Give me a few more years so that I can devote fifty years to study Change. I may be free from great mistakes."

7:17. These were the things Confucius often talked about—poetry, history, and the performance of the rules of propriety. All these were what he often talked about.

7:18. The Duke of Shao asked Tsze-lu about Confucius, and Tsze-lu did not answer. Confucius said, "Why didn't you say that I am a person who forgets his food when engaged in vigorous pursuit of something, so happy as to forget his worries, and is not aware that old age is coming on?"

7:19. Confucius said, "I am not one who was born with knowledge. I love ancient teaching and earnestly seek it.

7:20. Confucius never discussed strange phenomena, physical excrescences, disorder, or spiritual beings.

7:22. Confucius said, "Heaven produced the virtue that is in me; what can Huan T'ui do to me?"

7:24. Confucius taught four things: culture (wen), conduct, loyalty, and faithfulness.

7:26. Confucius fished with a line but not a net. While shooting he would not shoot a bird at rest.

7:27. Confucius said, "There are those who act without knowing (what is right)." But I am not one of them. To hear much and select

The traditional interpretation of the word (change) is the Book of Changes. The ancient Lu version of the Analects. however, has 1 (change) instead of 1 (change). Some scholars have accepted this version, which reads "1", to study them I may be...", Modern scholars prefer this reading because they do not believe that the Book of Changes existed at the time. However, the fact that Confucius was thinking of the system of Change instead of the Book should not be ruled out.

The word ya (often) was understood by Ch'eng Hsian as standard, that is, the meaning that Confucius recited the Books of Odes, History, and Rites in correct pronunciation.

8:1. Marquis of the district She in the state of Chu, who assumed the title of duke by usurpation.


8:4. A military officer in the state of Sian who attempted to kill Confucius by setting a fire. Confucius was then 59 years old.

8:8. He would not take unfair advantage.

Other interpretations: Act without the necessity of knowledge; invent stories about history without real knowledge of its writer without knowledge.

what is good and follow it, to see much and remember it, is the second type of knowledge (next to innate knowledge)."

7:29. Confucius said, "Is humanity far away? As soon as I want it, there it is right by me."

Comment. This is simply emphasizing the ever-present opportunity to do good. There is nothing mystical about it. The practice of humanity starts with oneself.

8:3. Confucius was very ill. Tsze-lu asked that prayer be offered. Confucius said, "Is there such a thing?" Tsze-lu replied, "There is. A Eolus says, 'Pray to the spiritual beings above and below.'" Confucius said, "My prayer has been for a long time (that is, what counts is the life that one leads)."

8:7. Confucius is allable but dignified, austere but not harsh, polite but completely at ease.

Comment. The Confucian Mean in practice.

8:5. Tseng Tsu said, "Gifted with ability, yet asking those without ability: possessing much, yet asking those who possess little; having, yet seeming to have none; full, yet seeming vacuous; offended, yet not contesting—long ago I had a friend (Confucius' most virtuous pupil Yen Yuan) who devoted himself to these ways."

Comment. The similarity to Taoist teachings is striking.

8:6. Tseng Tsu said, "A man who can be entrusted with an orphaned child, delegated with the authority over a whole state of one hundred li, and whose integrity cannot be violated even in the face of a great emergency—is such a man a superior man? He is a superior man indeed!"

8:7. Tseng Tsu said, "An officer must be great and strong. His burden is heavy and his course is long. He has taken humanity to be his own burden—is that not heavy? Only with death does his course stop—is that not long?"

8:8. Confucius said, "Let a man be stimulated by poetry, established by the rules of propriety, and perfected by music."

8:9. Confucius said, "The common people may be made to follow (the Way) but may not be made to understand it."

Comment. Confucianists have taken great pains to explain this saying. Ch'eng Hsüan said "the common people" refers to ignorant

112 See Analects, 12:1.
113 According to Ma Joung, quoted by Ho Yen, Yen Yuin had died long before.
114 About one-third of a mile.
people and Chu Hsi said that ordinary people do things without understanding why. There can be no denial that Confucius reflected the feudal society in which it was the duty of ordinary people to follow the elite.

8:13. Confucius said, "Have sincere faith and love learning. Be not afraid to die for pursuing the good Way. Do not enter a tottering state nor stay in a chaotic one. When the Way prevails in the empire, then show yourself; when it does not prevail, then hide. When the Way prevails in your own state and you are poor and in a humble position, be ashamed of yourself. When the Way does not prevail in your state and you are wealthy and in an honorable position, be ashamed of yourself." 1

8:14. Confucius said, "A person not in a particular government position does not discuss its policies."

9.1. Confucius seldom talked about profit, destiny (ming or the Mandate of Heaven), and humanity.

Comment. Few passages in the Analects have given commentator as much trouble as this one. It is true that the topic of profit is mentioned in the Analects only six times and destiny or fate only ten times, but fifty-eight of the 498 chapters of the Analects are devoted to humanity and the word 'jen' occurs 105 times. Confucians have tried their best to explain why Confucius can be said to have seldom talked about them. Huang K’ai said these things are so serious the Confucius seldom expected people to live up to them. This line of thought was followed by Juan Yulan (1764-1849). 144 Ho Yee thought that Confucius seldom talked about them because jen people could reach those high levels. Hung P’ing, who commented on Ho’s commentary, reiterated it. Chu Hsi, quoting Ch’eng I, said that Confucius seldom talked about profit, for example, because it is injurious to righteousness, and seldom talked about the other because the principle of desiring is subtle and that of humanity is great.

Other scholars have tried to change the meaning of the passage Shih Sheng-tsa (fl. 1230) in his Hsiung-chai chien pin (Simple Observations) interpreted yü not as "and" but as "give forth," thus making the sentence say that Confucius seldom talked about profit but gave forth (instructs) on jen and humanity. Bodde accepts this view. 145 Laufer thinks it should be read: "The Master rarely discussed material gains compared with the will of Heaven and compared with humaneness." 146 Chu Hsi (1753-1820), in his Lun-yü panchu (Supplementary Commentary on the Analects) said that when Confucius occasionally talked about profit, he spoke of it together with destiny or humanity, that is, in the light of either of them. Han Yu (766-824) thought that what Confucius seldom talked about was the way of profit, jen, or humanity, not the three subjects themselves (Lun-yü pi-chien, or Explanations of the Analects). According to Huang Shih-mun’s Lun-yü hou-an (Recent Examinations of the Analects, 1844), the word han does not mean "selbom," but is an alternate for hsin, "elucidation." While this is possible, it seems to be going too far. Most scholars leave the difficulty alone. As K’ang Yu-wei, in his Lun-yü chen, says, Confucius talked about the three subjects a great deal, since they are inherently important subjects for discussion.

9.3. Confucius said, "The linen cap is prescribed by the rules of ceremony (li) but nowadays a silk one is worn. It is economical and I follow the common practice. Bowing below the hall is prescribed by the rules of ceremony, but nowadays people bow after ascending the hall. This is arrogant and I follow the practice of bowing below the hall things that is opposite to the common practice."

9.4. Confucius was completely free from four things: He had no arbitrariness of opinion, no dogmatism, no obstinacy, and no egoism.

9.5. When Confucius was in personal danger in K’ang, he said, "Since the death of King Wen, 147 is not the course of culture (wen) in my keeping? If it had been the will of Heaven to destroy this culture, it would not have been given to a mortal (like me). But if it is the will of Heaven that this culture should not perish, what can the people of K’ang do to me?"

9.6. A great official asked T’au-kung, "Is the Master a sage? How is it that he has so much ability (in practical, specific things)?" T’au-kung said, "Certainly Heaven has endowed him so liberally that he is to become a sage, 148 and furthermore he has much ability." When Confucius heard this, he said, "Does the great official know me? When I was young, I was in humble circumstances, and therefore I acquired much ability to do the simple things of humble folk. Does a superior

144 "Lun-yü IX, 11." (Ibid., 54 (1934), 83.)
145 The people of K’ang, mistaking Confucius for Yang Ho, their enemy whom Confucius resembled in appearance, surrounded him. This happened when Confucius was 56.
146 Founded of the Chou dynasty.
147 The term ch’eng-sheng is also understood to mean a great sage, or almost a sage.
man need to have so much ability? He does not." His pupil Lao said, "The Master said, 'I have not been given official employment and therefore I [acquired the ability] for the simple arts.'" 11.9:13 Confucius wanted to live among the nine barbarous tribes of the East. Someone said, "They are rude. How can you do it?" Confucius said, "If a superior man lives there, what rudeness would there be?" 11.9:14 Confucius, standing by a stream, said, "It passes on like this, never ceasing day by night!"

**Comment:** What was Confucius thinking about? Was he thinking of the unceasing operation of the universe (Chu Hsi and Ch'eng I)? Was he lamenting over the fact that the past cannot be recovered (Hsing Ping)? Was he comparing the unifying effort of a superior man's moral cultivation (Liu Pao-nan)? Was he praising water because its springs continuously push out (Mercier 1815 and Tung Chung-shu 1809)? Was he praising water because it has the qualities of purity, righteousness, courage, and so forth (Hsin Tsu, 289-285 b.c.).115 One thing is fairly sure: water to him meant something quite different from what it meant to Indian and Western philosophers, and to some extent to Lao Tzu.116

11.9:25 Confucius said, "The commander of three armies may be taken away, but the will of even a common man may not be taken away from him."

10:9. When his mat was not straight [Confucius] did not sit on it. 10:12. A certain table was burned down. On returning from court, Confucius asked, "Was any man hurt?" He did not ask about the horse. 10:14. On entering the Ancestral Temple, he asked about everything.

11:8. When Yen Yuan died, Confucius said, "Alas, Heaven is destroying me! Heaven is destroying me!"

11:11. Ch'u-ku (Tzu-hu) asked about serving the spiritual beings. Confucius said, "If we are not yet able to serve man, how can we serve spiritual beings?" "I venture to ask about death." Confucius said, "If we do not yet know about Me, how can we know about death?"

**Comment:** A most celebrated saying on humanism.

11:15. Tzu-ku-kw asked who was the better man, Shih124 or Shang.125 Confucius said, "Shih goes too far and Shang does not go far enough." Tzu-ku-kw said, "Then is Shih better?" Confucius said, "To go too far is the same as not to go far enough.

11:21. Tzu-lu asked, "Should one immediately practice what one has heard?" Confucius said, "There are father and elder brother (to be consulted). Why immediately practice what one has heard?" Jan Yu (Jan Tzu) asked, "Should one immediately practice what one has heard?"

Confucius said, "One should immediately practice what one has heard." Kung-hsi Hua126 said, "When Yu (Tzu-lu) asked you, 'Should one immediately practice what one has heard?' you said, 'These are father and elder brother.' When Ch'iu (Jan Yu) asked you, 'Should one immediately practice what he has heard?' you said, 'One should immediately practice what one has heard.' I am perplexed, and venture to ask you for an explanation." Confucius said, "Chiu is reticent; therefore I urged him forward. Yu has more than one man's energy; therefore I kept him back." 11:25. Tzu-lu, Tseng Hsi,127 Jan Yu, and Kung-hsi Hua were in attendance. Confucius said, "You think that I am a day or so older than you are. But do not think so. At present you are out of office and think that you are denied recognition. Suppose you were given recognition. What would you prefer?" Tzu-lu promptly replied, "Suppose there is a state of a thousand chariots, hemmed in by great powers, in addition invaded by armies, and as a result drought and famine prevail. Let me administer that state. In three years' time I can endow the people with courage and furthermore, enable them to know the correct principles." Confucius smiled at him [with disapproval]. "Chiu, how about you?" Jan Yu replied, "Suppose there is a state the size of which are sixty or seventy½ wide, or one of fifty or sixty½. Let me administer that state. In three years' time I can enable the people to be sufficient in their livelihood. As to the promotion of ceremonies and music, however, I shall have to wait for the superior man."

How about you, Ch'iu?" Kung-hsi Hua replied, "I do not say I can do it but I should like to learn to do so. At the services of the royal ancestral temple, and at the concistances of the feudal lords, I should like to wear the dark robe and black cap (symbols of correctness) and be a priest assistant."

[Turning to Tseng Hsi], Confucius said, "How about you, Tien?" Tseng Hsi was then softly playing the zither. With a bang he laid down the instrument, rose, and said, "My wishes are different from what the
12: 2. Chung-kung presented a question about humanity. Confucius said, “When you go abroad, behave to everyone as if you were receiving a great guest. Employ the people as if you were assisting at a great sacrifice." Do not do to others what you do not want them to do to you. Then there will be no complaint against you in the state or in the family (the ruling clan).” Chung-kung said, “Although I am not intelligent, may I just your saying into practice.”

12: 5. Su-ma Chin criticized the saying, “All people have brothers but I have none.” Tru him, “I have heard from Confucius” this saying: “Life and death are the decree of Heaven (ming); wealth and home depend on Heaven. If superior man is reverential (or serious) without fail, and is respectful in dealing with others and follows the rules of propriety, then all within the four seas (the world) are brothers.”

12: 7. Tru-kung asked about government. Confucius said, “Sufficient food, sufficient armor, and sufficient confidence of the people.” Tru-kung said, “Forced to give up one of these, which would you abandon first?” Confucius said, “I would abandon the people.” Tru-kung said, “Forced to give up one of the remaining two, which would you abandon first?” Confucius said, “I would abandon food. There have been deaths from time immemorial, but no state can exist without the confidence of the people.”

12: 11. Duke Ching of Chi asked Confucius about government. Confucius replied, “Let the ruler be a ruler, the minister be a minister, the father be a father, and the son be a son.” The duke said, “Excellent! Indeed when the ruler is not a ruler, the minister not a minister, the father not a father, and the son not a son, although I may have all the grain, shall I ever get to eat it?”

12: 16. Confucius said, “The superior man brings the good things of others to completion and does not bring the bad things of others to completion. The inferior man does just the opposite.”

12: 19. Confucius’ pupil, whose family name was Jan, private name Yue, and courtesy name Chung-kung. He was noted for excellent character.


12: 21. See above, comment on 4: 15.

12: 22. Confucius’ pupil, whose family name was Yueh. Meaning that his brother Huan Tui (see above, 7: 22) was not worthy to be a brother.

12: 23. Insertion according to Liu Pao-san.

12: 24. Ordinarily meaning China, more doubts that here it means the entire world.

12: 25. Some say that the last sentence is Tru-kung’s utterance.

12:17. Chi K'ang Tsu asked Confucius about government. Confucius replied, "To govern (ch'eng) is to rectify (ch'ing). If you lead the people by being rectified yourself, who will dare not to be rectified?"

12:18. Chi K'ang Tsu asked Confucius about government, saying, "What do you think of killing the wicked and associating with the good?" Confucius replied, "In your government what is the need of killing? If you desire what is good, the people will be good. The character of a ruler is like wind and that of the people is like grass. If what ever direction the wind blows, the grass always bends."

12:22. Fan Ch'yi asked about humanity. Confucius said, "It is to love men." He asked about knowledge. Confucius said, "It is to know man."

Comment. As a general virtue, jen means humanity, that is, that which makes a man a moral being. As a particular virtue, it means love. This is the general interpretation during the Han and T'ang times. Later in Neo-Confucianism, it was modified to mean man and Nature forming one body. The doctrine that knowledge of men is power has been maintained throughout the history of Confucianism. This humanistic interest has to a large degree prevented China from developing the tradition of knowledge for its own sake.

13:3. Tzu-li said, "The ruler of Wei is waiting for you to serve in his administration. What will be your first measure?" Confucius said, "It will certainly concern the rectification of names." Tzu-li said, "Is that so? You are wise of the mark. Why should there be such a rectification?" Confucius said, "Yi! How uncultivated you are! With regard to what he does not know, the superior man should maintain an attitude of reserve. If names are not rectified, then language will not be in accord with truth. If language is not in accord with truth, then things cannot be accomplished. If things cannot be accomplished, then ceremonies and music will not flourish. If ceremonies and music do not flourish, then punishment will not be just. If punishments are not just, then the people will not know how to move hand or foot. Therefore the superior man will give only names that can be described in speech and say only what can be carried out in practice. With regard to his speech, the superior man does not take it lightly. That is all."

Comment. Most ancient Chinese philosophical schools had a theory about names and humanity. In the Confucian school, however, it assumes special importance because its focus is not metaphysical

12:17. Chi K'ang Tsu asked Confucius about government. Confucius replied, "To govern (ch'eng) is to rectify (ch'ing). If you lead the people by being rectified yourself, who will dare not to be rectified?"

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13:30. Confucius said, "To allow people to go to war without first instructing them is to betray them."

14:2. [Yuan Hsien] said, "When one has avoided aggressiveness, pride, resentment, and greed, he may be called a man of humanity." Confucius said, "This may be considered as having done what is difficult, but I do not know that it is to be regarded as humanity."

14:24. Confucius said, "The superior man understands the higher things [moral principles]; the inferior man understands the lower things [profit]."

14:29. Confucius said, "The superior man is ashamed that his words exceed his deeds."

14:30. Confucius said, "The way of the superior man is threefold, but I have not been able to attain it. The man of wisdom has no pre- locks; the man of humanity has no worry; the man of courage has no fear." Tsu-kung said, "You are talking about yourself."

14:33. Confucius said, "He who does not anticipate attempts to deceive him nor predict his being distrusted, and yet is the first to know [when these things occur], is a worthy man."

14:36. Some one said, "What do you think of repaying hatred with virtue?" Confucius said, "In that case what are you going to repay virtue with? Rather, repay hatred with uprightness and repay virtue with virtue."

Comment. The word for uprightness, chih, is not to be understood as severity or justice, which would imply repaying evil with evil. The idea of repaying hatred with virtue is also found in the Lao Tzu, ch. 63, and some have therefore theorized that the question was a Taoist or that the saying was a prevalent one at the time. In any case, by uprightness Confucians mean absolute impartiality, taking guidance from what is right instead of one's personal preference, however admirable. Obviously this does not satisfy followers of the Christian doctrine of loving one's enemy. As to the golden rule, see above, comment on 4:15.

14:37. Confucius said, "Alas! No one knows me!" Tsu-kung said, "Why is there no one that knows you?" Confucius said, "I do not complain against Heaven. I do not blame men. I study things on the lower level but my understanding penetrates the higher level. It is Heaven that knows me.

14:41. When Tsu-lu was stopping at the Stone Gate for the night, the gate-keeper asked him, "Where are you from?" Tsu-lu said, "From Confucius." "Oh, is he the one who knows a thing cannot be done and still wants to do it?"

14:45. Tsu-lu asked about the superior man. Confucius said, "The superior man is one who cultivates himself with seriousness (chung)." Tsu-lu said, "Is that all?" Confucius said, "He cultivates himself so as to give the common people security and peace." Tsu-lu said, "Is that all?"

Comment. Confucius said, "He cultivates himself so as to give all people security and peace. To cultivate oneself so as to give all people security and peace, even Yao and Shun found it difficult to do."

15:2. Confucius said, "Tao's (Tzu-kung), do you suppose that I am one who learns a great deal and remembers it?" Tzu-kung replied, "Yes. Is that not true?" Confucius said, "No. I have a thread (i-kwun) that runs through it all."

15:4. Confucius said, "To have taken no [unnatural] action and yet have the empire well governed, Shun was the man! What did he do? All he did was to make himself reverent and correctly face south [in his royal seat as the ruler]."

15:8. Confucius said, "A resolute scholar and a man of humanity will never seek to live at the expense of injuring humanity. He would rather sacrifice his life in order to realize humanity."

15:17. Confucius said, "The superior man regards righteousness (i) as the substance of everything. He practices it according to the principles of propriety. It orients it forth in modesty. And he carries it to its conclusion with faithfulness. He is indeed a superior man!"

15:20. Confucius said, "The superior man seeks [room for improvement or occasion to blame] in himself; the inferior man seeks it in others.

15:22. Confucius said, "The superior man (ruler) does not promote..."
mote (put in office) a man on the basis of his words; nor does he reject his words because of the man."
15:23. Tzu-kung asked, "Is there one word which can serve as the guiding principle for conduct throughout life?" Confucius said, "It is the word altruism (chiao). Do not do to others what you do not want them to do to you."
15:28. Confucius said, "It is man that can make the Way great, and not the Way that can make man great."

Comment. Humanism is the extreme! Commentators from Huang K'iu to Chu Hsi said that the Way, because it is tranquil and quiet and lets things take their own course, does not make man great. A better explanation is found in the Doctrine of the Mean, where it is said, "Unless there is perfect virtue, the perfect Way cannot be materialized."138-139

15:31. Confucius said, "The superior man seeks the Way and not a mere living. There may be starvation in farming, and there may be riches in the pursuit of studies. The superior man worries about the Way and not about poverty."
15:32. Confucius said, "When a man's knowledge is sufficient for him to attain (his position)140 but his humanity is not sufficient for him to hold it, he will lose it again. When his knowledge is sufficient for him to attain it and his humanity is sufficient for him to hold it, if he does not approach the people with dignity, the people will not respect him. If his knowledge is sufficient for him to attain it, his humanity sufficient for him to hold it, and he approaches the people with dignity, yet does not influence them with the principle of propriety, it is still not good."
15:35. Confucius said, "When it comes to the practice of humanity, one should not defer even to his teacher."
15:38. Confucius said, "In education there should be no class distinction."

Comment. Confucius was the first to pronounce this principle in Chinese history. Among his pupils there were commoners as well as nobles, and stupid people as well as intelligent ones.141
15:40. Confucius said, "In words all that matters is to express the meaning."
16:1. Confucius said, "I have heard that those who administer a state or a family do not worry about there being too few people, but worry about unequal distribution or wealth. They do not worry about poverty, but worry about the lack of security and peace on the part of the people. For when wealth is equally distributed, there will not be poverty; when there is harmony, there will be no problem of there being too few people; and when there are security and peace, there will be no danger to the state."
16:4. Confucius said, "There are three kinds of friendship which are beneficial and three kinds which are harmful. Friendship with the upright, with the truthful, and with the well-informed is beneficial. Friendship with those who flatter, with those who are mock and who compromise with principles, and with those who talk cleverly is harmful."
16:8. Confucius said, "The superior man stands in awe of three things. He stands in awe of the Mandate of Heaven; he stands in awe of great men;142 and he stands in awe of the words of the sages. The inferior man is ignorant of the Mandate of Heaven and does not stand in awe of it. He is disrespectful to great men and is contemptuous toward the words of the sages."
16:9. Confucius said, "Those who are born with knowledge are the highest type of people. Those who learn through study are the next. Those who learn through hard work are still the next. Those who work hard and still do not learn are really the lowest type."143
16:10. Confucius said, "The superior man has nine wishes. In seeing, he wishes to see clearly. In hearing, he wishes to hear distinctly. In his expression, he wishes to be warm. In his appearance, he wishes to be respectful. In his speech, he wishes to be sincere. In handling affairs, he wishes to be serious. When in doubt, he wishes to ask. When he is angry, he wishes to think of the resultant difficulties. And when he sees an opportunity for a gain, he wishes to think of righteousness."
17:2. Confucius said, "By nature men are alike. Through practice they have become far apart."

Comment. This is the classical Confucian dictum on human nature. Neo-Confucians like Chu Hsi and Ch'eng144 strongly argued that Confucius meant physical nature, which involves elements of evil, for since every man's original nature is good, men must be the same and therefore cannot be alike. Others, however, think that the word elue (near or alike) here has the same meaning as in

138 The Mean, ch. 37.
139 According to Pao Hsien (6 B.C.-A.D. 65), quoted by Ho Yen.
140 Cf. above, 7:7.
141 The historical background in this chapter may be inaccurate, but the teaching in this selection has never been questioned.
142 Variously interpreted as sages or rulers. It is more likely a Platonic philosopher-king, for in the Confucian system, the sage should be a ruler and the ruler should be a sage.
143 Cf. The Mean, ch. 20.
144 I-cho, 8:2a.
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Mencius' saying, 'All things of the same kind are similar to one another.' However, on the surface this saying is indisputably neutral, but all of Confucius' teachings imply the goodness of human nature.16

17:3. Confucius said, "Only the most intelligent and the most stupid do not change."

Comment. Advocates of the theory of three grades of nature, notably Wang Ch'ung,167 Chia I (201-169 B.C.),168 and Han Yu,169 have drawn support from this saying by equating the most intelligent with those born good, the most stupid with those born evil, and the rest born neutral. They overlooked the passage has to do not with nature but only with intellectually all modern Confucianists are agreed on this point.170 Wang Yang-ming,171 Tai Chen (Tai Tung-y 1777),172 and Juan Yüan173 all pointed out, it is not the not change. It is simply that they are too intelligent to change or too stupid to change upward.

17:4. Confucius went to the city of Wu [where his disciple Tsu-yu was the magistrate] and heard the sound of stringed instruments and singing. With a gentle smile, the Master said, "Why use an ox-knife to kill a chicken [that is, why employ a serious mode like music to rule such a small town]?" Tsu-yu replied, "Formerly I heard you say, 'When the superior man has studied the Way, he loves men. When the inferior man has studied the Way, he is easy to employ.'" Confucius said, "My disciples, what I just said was only a joke.

17:6. Tsu-chang asked Confucius about human nature. Confucius said, "One who can practice five things wherever he may be is a man of humanity." Tsu-chang asked what the five are. Confucius said, "Earnestness, liberality, truthfulness, diligence, and generosity. If one is earnest, one will not be treated with disrespect. If one is liberal, one will win the hearts of all. If one is truthful, one will be trusted. If one is diligent, one..." 165

THE HUMANISM OF CONFUCIUS will be successful. And if one is generous, one will be able to enjoy the service of others."

17.8. Confucius said, "Yu (Tzu-li), have you heard about the six virtues174 and the six obsessions?" Tzu-li replied, "I have not." Confucius said, "Sit down, then, I will tell you. One who loves humanity will be obscured by ignorance. One who loves wisdom but not learning will be obscured by lack of principle. One who loves but not learning will be obscured by heartlessness. One who faithfulfulness but not learning will be obscured by violence. One who loves unrighteousness but not learning will be obscured by strength of character but not learning will be obscured by ignorance."

"Confucius said, "My young friends, why do you not study the trees can stimulate your emotions, broaden your observation, fellowship, and express your grievances. They help you in service to your parents and in your more remote service. They widen your acquaintance with the names of birds, plants."

17:19. Confucius said, "I do not wish to say anything." Tzu-kung said, "If you do not say anything, what can we little disciples ever learn to pass on to others?" Confucius said, "Does Heaven (T'ien, Nature) say anything? The four seasons run their course and all things are produced. Does Heaven say anything?"

Comment. This is usually cited to support the contention that Confucius did not believe in an anthropomorphized God but in Heaven which reigns rather than rules. In Neo-Confucianism, Heaven came to be identified with principle (Tao).182

17:23. Tzu-lu asked, "Does the superior man183 esteem courage?" Confucius said, "The superior man considers righteousness (1) as the most important. When the superior man has courage but no righteousness, he becomes turbulent. When the inferior man has courage but no righteousness, he becomes a thief."

17:25. Confucius said, "Women and servants are most difficult to deal with. If you are familiar with them, they cease to be humble. If you keep a distance from them, they resent it."

Comment. From Confucius down, Confucianists have always considered women inferior.184 The "good" man, ordinarily meaning "noble," here refers to the virtues mentioned below.

175 Cf. Ho Tzu, ch. 23.

176 In the Analectes sometimes "superior man" means a ruler and "inferior man" means a common person. It is not clear which is meant here. But the moral is the same. 
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18:6. Ch'ang-chu and Chieh-ni were cultivating their fields together. Confucius was passing that way and told Tzu-ju to ask there where the river could be forded. Ch'ang-chu said, "Who is the one holding the reins in the carriage?" Tzu-ju said, "It is K'ung Chi'ru (Confucius)." "Is he the K'ung Chi'ru of Lu?" "Yes." Then he already knows where the river can be forded!" Tzu-ju asked Chieh-ni. Chieh-ni said, "Who are you, sir?" Tzu-ju replied, "I am Chung-yu (name of Tzu-ju)." "Are you a follower of K'ung Chi'ru of Lu?" "Yes." Chieh-ni said, "The whole world is swept as though by a torrential flood. Who can change it? As for you, instead of following one who flees from this man or that man, is it not better to follow those who flee the world altogether?" And with that he went on covering the seed without stopping. Tzu-ju went to Confucius and told him about their conversation. Confucius said ruefully, "One cannot heed with birds and beasts. If I do not associate with mankind, with whom shall I associate? If the Way prevailed in the world, there would be no need for me to change it." 19:6. Tzu-hsi said, "To study extensively, to be steadfast in one's purpose, to inquire earnestly, and to reflect on what is at hand (that is, what one can put into practice)—humanity consists in these." 19:7. Confucius said, "The hundred artsman work in their works to perfect their craft. The superior man studies to reach to the utmost of the Way." 19:11. Tzu-hsi said, "So long as a man does not transgress the boundary line in the great virtues, he may pass and repass it in the small virtues."

Comment. Even Chu Hsi quoted someone who pointed out that this passage is not free from defect.

19:13. Tzu-hsi said, "A man who has energy to spare after studying should serve his state. A man who has energy to spare after serving his state should study." 19:24. Shu-shun Wu-shou slandered Chung-ni (Confucius). Tzu-kung said, "It is no use. Chung-ni cannot be slandered. Other worthies are like mounds or small hills. You can still climb over them. Chung-ni, however, is like the sun and the moon that cannot be climbed over. Although a man may want to shut his eyes to the sun and the moon, what harm does it do to them? It would only show in large measure that he does not know his own limitations."