

READINGS
IN
CLASSICAL
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PHILOSOPHY

Second Edition

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■ CHAPTER ONE ■

KONGZI (CONFUCIUS)

“The Analects”

Introduction

The *Analects* (*Lunyu* 論語—literally, the “Classified Teachings”) purport to be a record of the teachings of Kongzi 孔子 or “Confucius” (551–479 B.C.E.) and his disciples.¹ Kongzi believed that the Golden Age of humankind had been realized during the height of the Zhou dynasty, from c. 1045–771 B.C.E. (the so-called Western Zhou period). Personified as the cultural heroes King Wen (d. c. 1050 B.C.E.), his son King Wu (r. 1045–1043), and the virtuous regent, the Duke of Zhou (r. c. 1043–1036 B.C.E.), the early Zhou rulers established and maintained a special relationship with *tian* 天, “Heaven,” by properly and sincerely observing a set of sacred practices collectively referred to as the *li* 禮, “rites” or “rituals.” The scope of the rites was quite vast, including everything from grand state ceremonies to the proper way to sit or fasten one’s lapel—details that might be thought of as issues of etiquette. In return for such formal obedience to Heaven in all matters great and small, the Zhou royal line was rewarded

¹Some scholars have questioned the traditional view of the text as a unified work, arguing that it represents many different chronological strata and even incompatible viewpoints. Chinese have nevertheless read it as a coherent whole for thousands of years, and this is the perspective on the text that we adopt here. This said, the reader will note that our selection gives greater weight to those portions of the text generally agreed to be earlier and more authoritative, books 1–9.



with a *ming* 命, "Mandate,"² to rule China, manifested in the form of a charismatic *de* 德, "Virtue," or power.

By Kongzi's age, the Zhou kings had been reduced to mere figureheads, and real political power was in the hands of various local rulers. In Kongzi's eyes, the "scholars" of his day—those who should properly be motivated by a love for learning and a devotion to the culture of the Zhou—were interested only in self-aggrandizement and sensuous pleasures, and the people, thereby bereft of moral leadership and grown unruly, could only be controlled through strict laws and harsh punishments. Despite the bleakness of this world, Kongzi believed that there was still hope for humanity, because the traditional Zhou ritual forms and written classics—which had been carefully preserved by a small group of cultural specialists, the *Ru* 儒, "Erudites"³—could serve as a sort of blueprint for rebuilding the lost Golden Age. Kongzi thus dedicated his life to both transmitting these cultural forms to his contemporaries and striving to embody them in his own person, hoping in this way to lead his fallen world back to the *dao* 道, "Way," of Heaven.

Involving lifelong and sincere devotion to traditional cultural forms, Kongzi's Way is to culminate eventually in a kind of intuitive mastery of those forms, and one who has attained this state of consummate mastery—the *junzi* 君子, "gentleman"—is said to possess the supreme virtue of *ren* 仁, "Goodness." Originally referring to the strong and handsome appearance of a noble warrior, *ren* designates for Kongzi the quality of the perfectly realized person—one who has so completely mastered the Way that it has become a sort of second nature.⁴ Such a state of spiritual perfection is referred to as *wuwei* 無為, "effortless action" or "nonaction": a state of spontaneous harmony between individual inclinations and the sacred Way of Heaven.⁵ Through the power of Virtue accruing to one so perfectly in

²By the time of the *Analects*, the term *ming* had taken on the additional meaning of "fate" or "destiny," but was thought to be similarly decreed by Heaven. For a discussion of this term, see Edward Slingerland, "The Conception of *Ming* in Early Chinese Thought," *Philosophy East & West* 46.4: 567–81.

³See *Important Terms* and *Analects* 6.13 for Kongzi's criticism of the "petty *Ru*."

⁴Part of Goodness is caring for or love of others (*Analects* 12.22). Later philosophers emphasized this aspect of Goodness, so in later chapters the same character is translated "benevolence." See also *ren* under *Important Terms*.

⁵Although the term "nonaction" is often associated with "Daoism," it is found in the *Analects* (15.5) and is arguably an important concept for many early thinkers. See Edward Slingerland, *Effortless Action: Wu-wei as Conceptual Metaphor and Spiritual Ideal in Early China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

harmony with Heaven, this state of individual perfection is to lead to the spontaneous and effortless ordering of the entire world. There will be no need for raising armies, instituting laws, or issuing governmental decrees, for the entire world will be as inexorably drawn to a ruler with true Virtue as the heavenly bodies are bound to their proper circuits in the sky (cf. *Analects* 2.1).

Book One

1.1 The Master said, "To learn, and then have occasion to practice what you have learned—is this not satisfying? To have friends arrive from afar—is this not a joy? To be patient even when others do not understand—is this not the mark of the gentleman?"

1.2 Master You⁶ said, "A young person who is filial and respectful of his elders rarely becomes the kind of person who is inclined to defy his superiors, and there has never been a case of one who is disinclined to defy his superiors stirring up rebellion."

"The gentleman applies himself to the roots. 'Once the roots are firmly established, the Way will grow.' Might we not say that filial piety and respect for elders constitute the root of Goodness?"

1.3 The Master said, "A clever tongue and fine appearance are rarely signs of Goodness."⁷

1.4 Master Zeng⁸ said, "Every day I examine myself on three counts: in my dealings with others, have I in any way failed to be dutiful? In my interactions with friends and associates, have I in any way failed to be trustworthy? Finally, have I in any way failed to put into practice what I teach?"

1.6 The Master said, "A young person should be filial when at home and respectful of his elders when in public. Conscientious and trustworthy, he

⁶A disciple of Kongzi.

⁷Cf. 15.11 and 16.4 below. A suspicion of those who are overly glib or outwardly pleasing is a common theme in the *Analects*, which is very much concerned with distinguishing genuine virtue from "counterfeit virtue"—that is, the outward appearance of virtue without the inner substance.

⁸A disciple of Kongzi.

should display a general care for the masses but feel a particular affection for those who are Good. If he has any strength left over after manifesting these virtues in practice, let him then devote it to learning the cultural arts."

1.9 Master Zeng said, "Take great care in seeing off the deceased and sedulously maintain the sacrifices to your distant ancestors, and the common people will sincerely return to Virtue."

1.10 Ziqin asked Zigong,⁹ "When our Master arrives in a state, he invariably finds out about its government. Does he actively seek out this information? Surely it is not simply offered to him!"

Zigong answered, "Our Master obtains it through being courteous, refined, respectful, restrained, and deferential. The Master's way of seeking it is entirely different from other people's way of seeking it, is it not?"¹⁰

1.11 The Master said, "When someone's father is still alive, observe his intentions; after his father has passed away, observe his conduct. If for three years he does not alter the ways of his father, he may be called a filial son."

1.12 Master You said, "When it comes to the practice of ritual, it is harmonious ease that is to be valued. It is precisely such harmony that makes the Way of the Former Kings so beautiful. If you merely stick rigidly to ritual in all matters, great and small, there will remain that which you cannot accomplish. Yet if you know enough to value harmonious ease but try to attain it without being regulated by the rites, this will not work either."

1.15 Zigong said, "Poor without being obsequious, rich without being arrogant—what would you say about someone like that?"

The Master answered, "That is acceptable, but it is still not as good as being poor and yet joyful, rich and yet loving ritual."

Zigong said, "An Ode says,

'As if cut, as if polished;

As if carved, as if ground.'

⁹Both disciples of Kongzi.

¹⁰That is, Kongzi does not actively pry or seek out information but rather is so perfected in Virtue that what he seeks comes to him unbidden.

Is this not what you have in mind?"¹¹

The Master said, "Zigong, you are precisely the kind of person with whom one can begin to discuss the *Odes*. Informed as to what has gone before, you know what is to come."

Book Two

2.1 The Master said, "One who rules through the power of Virtue is analogous to the Pole Star: it simply remains in its place and receives the homage of the myriad lesser stars."

2.2 The Master said, "The *Odes* number several hundred, and yet can be judged with a single phrase: 'Oh, they will not lead you astray.'¹²

2.3 The Master said, "If you try to guide the common people with coercive regulations and keep them in line with punishments, the common people will become evasive and will have no sense of shame. If, however, you guide them with Virtue, and keep them in line by means of ritual, the people will have a sense of shame and will rectify themselves."

2.4 The Master said, "At fifteen I set my mind upon learning; at thirty I took my place in society;¹³ at forty I became free of doubts;¹⁴ at fifty I understood Heaven's Mandate;¹⁵ at sixty my ear was attuned; and at seventy I could follow my heart's desires without overstepping the bounds of propriety."

¹¹In the standard received edition of the *Odes*, this poem is # 55. Zigong's point is that this Ode seems to describe metaphorically a person who has been shaped and perfected by a long, arduous process of self-cultivation.

¹²*Odes* (*Mao* # 297). The original reference is to powerful war horses bred to pull chariots, who are trained not to swerve from the desired path. The metaphorical meaning is that one committed through study to the *Odes*—"yoked" to them, as it were—will not be led astray.

¹³That is, through mastery of the rites; cf. *Analects* 8.8, 16.13, and 20.3.

¹⁴Cf. *Analects* 9.29.

¹⁵Cf. *Analects* 16.8, 20.3.

2.7 Ziyou¹⁶ asked about filial piety. The Master said, "Nowadays 'filial' means simply being able to provide one's parents with nourishment. But even dogs and horses are provided with nourishment. If you are not respectful, wherein lies the difference?"

2.8 Zixia¹⁷ asked about filial piety. The Master said, "It is the demeanor that is difficult. If there is work to be done, young people shoulder the burden, and when wine and food are served, elders are given precedence, but surely filial piety consists of more than this."

2.9 The Master said, "I can talk all day long with Yan Hui¹⁸ without him once disagreeing with me. In this way, he seems a bit stupid. And yet when we retire and I observe his private behavior, I see that it is in fact worthy to serve as an illustration of what I have taught. Hui is not stupid at all."

2.10 The Master said, "Look at the means a man employs, observe the basis from which he acts, and discover where it is that he feels at ease.¹⁹ Where can he hide? Where can he hide?"

2.11 The Master said, "Both keeping past teachings alive and understanding the present—someone able to do this is worthy of being a teacher."

2.12 The Master said, "The gentleman is not a vessel."²⁰

2.15 The Master said, "If you learn without thinking about what you have learned, you will be lost. If you think without learning, however, you will fall into danger."

2.19 Duke Ai asked, "What can I do to induce the common people to be obedient?"

¹⁶A disciple of Kongzi.

¹⁷A disciple of Kongzi.

¹⁸Kongzi's favorite disciple, who tragically died at an early age (cf. *Analekts* 5.9, 6.3, 6.7, 6.11, and 11.9).

¹⁹Cf. *Analekts* 4.2.

²⁰*Qi* 器, literally a ritual vessel designed to serve a particular function, is also used by extension to refer to officials who are specialized in one particular task. The gentleman is not a narrow specialist (cf. *Analekts* 5.4, 6.13, 9.2, 9.6, 13.4, and 19.7).

Kongzi replied, "Raise up the straight and apply them to the crooked, and the people will submit to you. If you raise up the crooked and apply them to the straight, the people will never submit."

2.21 Some people said of Kongzi, "Why is it that he is not participating in government?"²¹

[Upon being informed of this,] the Master remarked, "The *History* says,

'Filial, oh so filial,

Friendly to one's elders and juniors;

[In this way] exerting an influence upon those who govern."²²

Thus, in being a filial son and good brother one is already taking part in government. What need is there, then, to speak of 'participating in government'?"

Book Three

3.1 Kongzi said of the Ji Family, "They have eight rows of dancers performing in their courtyard. If they can condone this, what are they *not* capable of?"²³

3.3 The Master said, "A man who is not Good—what has he to do with ritual? A man who is not Good—what has he to do with music?"²⁴

²¹Lit., "doing government" (*weizheng* 為政). The reference is to Kongzi's lack of an official position.

²²See Legge, *The Shoo King*, p. 535.

²³The Ji Family had usurped power from the rightful authorities in Kongzi's home state of Lu 魯 and was for Kongzi representative of the ritual, moral, and political improprieties of his age. Later ritual texts describe the "eight rows of dancers" as a ritual prerogative of the emperor; presumably in Kongzi's time it was viewed as the prerogative of the Zhou kings. In either case, the Ji Family's use of eight rows of dancers is obviously an egregious violation of ritual propriety.

²⁴Cf. *Analekts* 3.12 and 17.11. *Analekts* 3.3 is probably also directed at the head of the Ji Family criticized in 3.1.

3.4 Lin Fang²⁵ asked about the roots of ritual.

The Master exclaimed, "What a noble question! When it comes to ritual, it is better to be spare than extravagant. When it comes to mourning, it is better to be excessively sorrowful than fastidious."

3.8 Zixia asked, "[The *Odes* say:]

'Her artful smile, with its alluring dimples,
Her beautiful eyes, so clear,
The unadorned upon which to paint.'²⁶

What does this mean?"

The Master said, "The application of colors comes only after a suitable unadorned background is present."

Zixia said, "So it is the rites that come after?"²⁷

The Master said, "It is you, Zixia, who has awakened me to the meaning of these lines! It is only with someone like you that I can begin to discuss the *Odes*."

3.11 Someone asked for an explanation of the *di* sacrifice.²⁸ The Master said, "I do not understand it. One who understood it could handle the world as if he had it right here," and he pointed to the palm of his hand.

3.12 "Sacrifice as if [they were] present" means that, when sacrificing to the spirits, you should comport yourself as if the spirits were present.

²⁵Lin Fang is usually identified as a man of Lu and presumably shares Kongzi's concern that his fellow countrymen were neglecting the "roots" and attending to the superficial "branches" of ritual practice.

²⁶The first two lines appear in the present version of the *Odes* (*Mao* # 57) while the third does not.

²⁷That is, the adornment provided by the rites is meant to build upon appropriate native emotions or tendencies. Just as all the cosmetics in the world are of no avail if the basic lines of the face are not pleasing, so is the refinement provided by ritual practice of no help to one lacking in *zhi* 質, "native substance." Cf. *Analects* 3.4, 5.10, and 6.18.

²⁸An important sacrifice to the earliest known ancestor of the reigning dynasty, the performance of which was the prerogative of the presiding ruler. By Kongzi's time, the performance of this rite had degenerated to the point that he could no longer bear to look upon it.

The Master said, "If I am not fully present at the sacrifice, it is as if I did not sacrifice at all."²⁹

3.14 The Master said, "The Zhou gazes down upon the two dynasties preceded it."³⁰ How brilliant in culture it is! I follow the Zhou."

3.17 Zigong wanted to do away with the practice of sacrificing a lamb to announce the beginning of the month.³¹

The Master said, "Zigong! You regret the loss of the lamb, where regret the loss of the rite."

3.18 The Master said, "If in serving your lord you are careful to observe every detail of ritual propriety, people will [wrongly] think you are obsequious."³²

3.19 Duke Ding asked, "How should a lord employ his ministers? If he should employ a minister to serve his lord?"

Kongzi replied, "A lord should employ his ministers with ritual, and ministers should serve their lord with dutifulness."

3.20 That Master said, "The 'Cry of the Osprey'³³ expresses joy with becoming licentious, and expresses sorrow without falling into excess and pathos."

3.23 The Master was discussing music with the Grand Music Master of Lu. He said, "What can be known about music is this: when it first begins, it resounds with a confusing variety of notes, but as it unfolds, these notes

²⁹Although some commentators take "not fully present" in the literal sense (i.e., not being physically present at the sacrifice, and sending a proxy in one's stead), the preceding comment would suggest that what is at issue is psychological or spiritual presence.

³⁰That is, the Xia and Shang dynasties.

³¹Apparently this sacrifice had originally been part of a larger ritual to welcome the moon. By Kongzi's time the ritual itself had fallen into disuse in Lu, whereas the sacrifice being the responsibility of a particular government office—had survived. Zigong does see the point of continuing this vestigial, materially wasteful practice in the absence of its original ritual context.

³²Ritual practice had so degenerated by Kongzi's age that a proper ritual practitioner viewed with suspicion or disdain.

³³The first of the *Odes*, and sometimes used to refer to the *Odes* as a whole.

are reconciled by means of harmony, brought into tension by means of counterpoint, and finally woven together into a seamless whole. It is in this way that music reaches its perfection."³⁴

3.24 A border official from the town of Yi requested an audience with the Master, saying, "I have never failed to obtain an audience with the gentlemen who have passed this way." Kongzi's followers thereupon presented him.

After emerging from the audience, the border official remarked, "You disciples, why should you be concerned about your Master's loss of office? The world has been without the Way for a long time now, and Heaven intends to use your Master like the wooden clapper for a bell."³⁵

Book Four

4.1 The Master said, "To live in the neighborhood of the Good is fine. If one does not choose to dwell among those who are Good, how will one obtain wisdom?"³⁶

4.2 The Master said, "Without Goodness, one cannot remain constant in adversity and cannot enjoy enduring happiness.

"Those who are Good feel at home in Goodness, whereas those who are wise follow Goodness because they feel that they will profit from it."

4.3 The Master said, "Only one who is Good is able to truly love others or despise others."

4.4 The Master said, "Merely set your heart sincerely upon Goodness and you will be free of bad intentions."

³⁴Music thus serves as a model or metaphor for the process of self-cultivation: starting in confusion, passing through many phases, and culminating in a state of perfection.

³⁵That is, to wake up the fallen world. Some commentators believe that the bell referred to is the kind used by itinerant collectors and transmitters of folk songs, and that the border official's point is thus that Heaven has deliberately caused Kongzi to lose his official position so that he might wander throughout the realm, spreading the teachings of the Way.

³⁶Other translators would give the sense as, "With regard to neighborhoods, it is the presence of those who are Good that makes them desirable. How could someone who does not choose to dwell in Goodness be considered wise?"

4.5 The Master said, "Wealth and social eminence are things that all people desire, and yet unless they are acquired in the proper way I will not abide them. Poverty and disgrace are things that all people hate, and yet unless they are avoided in the proper way I will not despise them.

"If the gentleman abandons Goodness, how can he merit the name? The gentleman does not go against Goodness even for the amount of time required to finish a meal. Even in times of urgency or distress, he necessarily accords with it."

4.6 The Master said, "I have yet to meet a person who truly loved Goodness or hated a lack of Goodness. One who truly loved Goodness could not be surpassed, while one who truly hated a lack of Goodness would at least be able to act in a Good fashion, insofar as he would not tolerate that which is not Good being associated with his person.

"Is there a person who can, for the space of a single day, simply devote his efforts to Goodness? I have never met anyone whose strength was insufficient for this task. Perhaps such a person exists, but I have yet to meet him."

4.7 The Master said, "People are true to type with regard to what sort of mistakes they make. Observe closely the sort of mistakes a person makes—then you will know his character."

4.8 The Master said, "Having in the morning heard the Way [was being put into practice], one could die that evening without regret."

4.9 The Master said, "A scholar who has set his heart upon the Way but who is still ashamed of having shabby clothing or meager rations is not worth engaging in discussion."

4.10 The Master said, "With regard to the world, the gentleman has no predispositions for or against [any person]. He merely seeks to be on the side of [those he considers] right."

4.12 The Master said, "If in your affairs you abandon yourself to the pursuit of profit, you will arouse much resentment."

4.13 The Master said, "If a person is able to govern the state by means of ritual propriety and deference, what difficulties will he encounter? If, on

the other hand, a person is not able to govern the state through ritual propriety and deference, of what use are the rites to him?"

4.14 The Master said, "Do not be concerned that you lack an official position, but rather concern yourself with the means by which you might become established. Do not be concerned that no one has heard of you, but rather strive to become a person worthy of being known."

4.15 The Master said, "Zeng! All that I teach can be strung together on a single thread."³⁷

"Yes, sir," Master Zeng responded.

After the Master left, the disciples asked, "What did he mean by that?" Master Zeng said, "All that the Master teaches amounts to nothing more than dutifulness [*zhong* 忠] tempered by sympathetic understanding [*shu* 恕]."³⁸

4.16 The Master said, "The gentleman understands rightness, whereas the petty person understands profit."

4.17 The Master said, "When you see someone who is worthy, concentrate upon becoming their equal; when you see someone who is unworthy, use this as an opportunity to look within yourself."

4.18 The Master said, "In serving your parents you may gently remonstrate with them. However, once it becomes apparent that they have not taken your criticism to heart you should be respectful and not oppose them, and follow their lead diligently without resentment."

³⁷The word rendered here as "teach" (dao 道) also means "the Way," and a double entendre is almost certainly intended: "all that I teach" is also "my Way."

³⁸To be *zhong*, "loyal" or "dutiful," involves fulfilling the duties and obligations proper to one's ritually defined role (see *Analekts* 5.19 below for a description of someone deemed *zhong* by Kongzi). This virtue is to be tempered by the virtue of *shu*, "sympathetic understanding": the ability, by means of imaginatively putting oneself in the place of another, to know when it is appropriate or *yü*, "right," to bend or suspend the dictates of role-specific duty. (This interpretation is developed in Philip J. Ivanhoe, "The 'Golden Rule' in the *Analekts*," in *Contemporary Encounters with Confucius*, David Jones, ed. (Open Court Press, forthcoming). Cf. *Analekts* 5.12, 6.30, 12.2, 15.3, and 15.24.)

4.19 The Master said, "While your parents are alive, you should not travel far, and when you do travel you must keep to a fixed itinerary."

4.20 The Master said, "One who makes no changes to the ways of his father for three years"³⁹ after his father has passed away may be called a filial son."

4.21 The Master said, "You must always be aware of the age of your parents. On the one hand, it is a cause for rejoicing, on the other a source of anxiety."

4.22 The Master said, "People in ancient times were not eager to speak, because they would be ashamed if their actions did not measure up to their words."

4.23 The Master said, "Very few go astray who comport themselves with restraint."

4.24 The Master said, "The gentleman wishes to be slow to speak, but quick to act."

4.25 The Master said, "Virtue is never solitary; it always has neighbors."⁴⁰

Book Five

5.1 The Master said of Gongye Chang, "He is marriageable. Although he was once imprisoned as a criminal, he was in fact innocent of any crime. The Master gave him his daughter in marriage."⁴¹

5.4 Zigong asked, "What do you think of me?"

The Master replied, "You are a vessel."

"What sort of vessel?"

"A precious ritual vessel."⁴²

³⁹The length of the mourning period for parents, equivalent to twenty-five months to Western reckoning. Cf. *Analekts* 17.21 and the note to that passage.

⁴⁰The reference is to the attractive power of Virtue.

⁴¹The social stigma attached to former criminals in early China was enormous and inescapable, since criminals were prominently branded or tattooed. In giving his daughter in marriage to a former criminal, Kongzi is flouting conventional mores and making powerful statement concerning the independence of true morality from conventional social judgments.

⁴²Cf. *Analekts* 2.12 and see the note to that passage.

5.8 Meng Wubo⁴³ asked, "Is Zilu Good?"

The Master replied, "I do not know."

Meng Wubo repeated his question.

The Master said, "In a state of one thousand chariots, Zilu could be employed to organize the collection of military taxes, but I do not know whether or not he is Good."

"What about Ran Qiu?"

"In a town of one thousand households, or an aristocratic family of one hundred chariots, Ran Qiu could be employed as a steward, but I do not know whether or not he is Good."

"What about Zihua?"

"Standing in his proper place at court with his sash tied, Zihua could be employed to converse with guests and visitors, but I do not know whether or not he is Good."

5.9 The Master said to Zigong, "Who is better, you or Yan Hui?"

Zigong answered, "How dare I even think of comparing myself to Hui? Hui learns one thing and thereby understands ten. I learn one thing and thereby understand two."

The Master said, "No, you are not as good as Hui. Neither of us is as good as Hui."

5.10 Zai Wo was sleeping during the daytime. The Master said, "Rotten wood cannot be carved, and a wall of dung cannot be plastered. As for Zai Wo, what would be the use of reprimanding him?"⁴⁴

The Master added, "At first, when evaluating people, I would listen to their words and then simply trust that the corresponding conduct would follow. Now when I evaluate people I listen to their words but then closely observe their conduct. It is my experience with Zai Wo that has brought about this change."

⁴³The son of a minister of Lu, who also appears in *Analekts* 2.6 (not in this volume). The three figures he asks about—Zilu, Ran Qiu, and Zihua—are all disciples of Kongzi.

⁴⁴That is, Zai Wo, a disciple of Kongzi, obviously lacks the *zhi* 質, "native substance" (see *Analekts* 6.18), that serves as the background upon which the "color" of Confucian self-cultivation is to be applied (see *Analekts* 3.8).

5.12 Zigong said, "What I do not wish others to do unto me, I also wish not to do unto others."

The Master said, "Ah, Zigong! That is something quite beyond you."

5.13 Zigong said, "The Master's cultural brilliance is something that readily heard about, whereas one does not get to hear the Master expounding upon the subjects of human nature or the Way of Heaven."⁴⁵

5.19 Zizhang⁴⁷ said, "Prime Minister Ziwen⁴⁸ was given three times the position of prime minister, and yet he never showed a sign of pleasure; he was removed from this office three times and yet never showed a sign of resentment. When the incoming prime minister took over, he invariably provided him with a complete account of the official state of affairs. What do you make of Prime Minister Ziwen?"

The Master said, "He certainly was dutiful."

"Was he not Good?"

"I do not know about that—what makes you think he deserves to be called Good?"

"When Cuizi assassinated the Lord of Qi, Chen Wenzhi—whose estate amounted to ten teams of horses—abandoned all that he possessed and left the state.⁴⁹ Upon reaching another state, he said, 'The officials here are as

⁴⁵Zigong's aspiration—what has been referred to as the "negative Golden Rule"—is a formulation of the virtue of *shu*, "sympathetic understanding": the ability to temper the strict dictates of loyalty to one's *zhong* "duty," by imaginatively placing oneself in another's place. See *Analekts* 4.15. Zigong's aspiration to the virtue of *shu* is particularly amusing to Kongzi because Zigong is the most unimaginative and rigid of all the disciples. In *Analekts* 5.4, for instance, his fastidious adherence to the rites leads Kongzi to dub him a "ritual vessel" of limited capacity, and in *Analekts* 14.29 he is criticized by Kongzi for being too strict and judgmental with others (i.e., for not moderating his duty-defined demands upon others with understanding). Zigong thus functions in the *Analekts* as an excellent example of how the virtue of loyalty goes awry when not tempered with sympathetic understanding, and this is perhaps why Kongzi singles out Zigong in *Analekts* 15.24 for his message that "sympathetic understanding" is the one teaching that can serve as a lifelong guide.

⁴⁶That is, in his teachings Kongzi did not concern himself much with such theoretical, esoteric subjects as human nature or the Way of Heaven, but rather tried to focus his disciples' attention upon the task at hand, acquiring the cultural refinement necessary to become gentlemen.

⁴⁷A disciple of Kongzi.

⁴⁸A prime minister of the state of Chu who was renowned for his integrity and devotion to the state.

⁴⁹Cuizi and Chen Wenzhi were both officials in the state of Qi. The former is said to have assassinated Lord Zhuang of Qi in 548 B.C.

bad as our Great Officer Cuizi,' and thereupon left that state. Again, after going to another state, he said, 'The officials here are as bad as our Great Officer Cuizi,' and thereupon left that state as well. What do you make of Chen Wenzhi?"

The Master said, "He certainly was pure."

"Was he not Good?"

"I do not know about that—what makes you think he deserves to be called Good?"

5.22 When the Master was in the state of Chen, he sighed, "Oh, let us go home! Let us go home! Our young followers back in Lu are wild and ambitious—they put on a great show of brilliant culture, but they lack the means to prune and shape it."⁵⁰

5.26 Yan Hui and Zilu were in attendance. The Master said to them, "Why do you not each speak to me of your aspirations?"

Zilu answered, "I would like to be able to share my carts and horses, clothing and fur with my friends and associates, without feeling regret."

Yan Hui answered, "I would like to avoid being boastful about my own abilities or exaggerating my accomplishments."

Zilu then said, "I would like to hear of the Master's aspirations."

The Master said, "To bring comfort to the aged, to inspire trust in my friends, and be cherished by the youth."⁵¹

5.27 The Master said, "I should just give up! I have yet to meet someone who is able to perceive his own faults and then take himself to task inwardly."

5.28 The Master said, "In any village of ten households there are surely those who are as dutiful or trustworthy as I am, but there is no one who matches my love for learning."

Book Six

6.3 Duke Ai⁵² asked, "Who among your disciples might be said to love learning?"

⁵⁰Cf. *Mengzi* 7B37.

⁵¹Cf. the more elaborate version of a similar conversation in *Analekts* 11.26.

⁵²Duke Ai (r. 494–468 B.C.E.) was the nominal ruler of Lu, which was in fact controlled by the Ji Family.

Kongzi answered, "There was one named Yan Hui who loved learning. He never misdirected his anger, and never made the same mistake twice. Unfortunately, his allotted lifespan was short, and he has passed away. Now that he is gone, there are none who really love learning—at least, I have yet to hear of one."

6.5 When Yuan Si was serving as steward, he was offered a salary of nine hundred measures of millet, but he declined it.

The Master said, "Do not decline it! [If you do not need it yourself], could you not use it to aid the households in your neighborhood?"⁵³

6.7 The Master said, "Ah, Yan Hui! For three months at a time his heart did not stray from Goodness. The rest could only sporadically maintain such a state."

6.10 Boniu⁵⁴ fell ill, and the Master went to ask after his health. Grasping his hand through the window, the Master sighed, "That we are going to lose him must be due to fate! How else could such a man be afflicted with such an illness, and we left with nothing we can do?"⁵⁵ How else could such a man be afflicted with such an illness?"

6.11 The Master said, "What a worthy man was Yan Hui! Living in a narrow alley, subsisting upon a basket of grain and gourd full of water—other people could not have born such hardship, yet it never spoiled Hui's joy. What a worthy man was Hui!"

6.12 Ran Qiu said, "It is not that I do not delight in your Way, Master, it is simply that my strength is insufficient."

⁵³In light of the many injunctions against seeking office for the sake of material benefit that are found in Kongzi's teachings, the disciple Yuan Si no doubt expected to be praised by the Master for declining to be paid a salary. Kongzi's response reflects the fact that the proper course of action cannot be determined by a simple formula but should rather be the result of careful reflection and consideration of the needs of others. The Master may also have detected a note of spiritual pride in Yuan Si's grandiose gesture and seen the need to deflate his feeling of self-importance.

⁵⁴A disciple of Kongzi.

⁵⁵The latter half of the sentence is not present in the received text of the *Analekts* but is present in the Dingzhou version, and it is also part of the *Record of the Historian* version of this story.

The Master said, "Someone whose strength is genuinely insufficient collapses somewhere along the Way. As for you, you deliberately draw the line."⁵⁶

6.13 The Master said to Zixia, "Be a gentlemanly *Ru*. Do not be a petty *Ru*."⁵⁷

6.17 The Master said, "Who is able to leave a room without going out through the door? How is it, then, that no one follows this Way?"

6.18 The Master said, "When native substance overwhelms cultural refinement, the result is a crude rustic. When cultural refinement overwhelms native substance, the result is a foppish pedant. Only when culture and native substance are perfectly mixed and balanced do you have a gentleman."

6.20 The Master said, "One who knows it is not the equal of one who loves it, and one who loves it is not the equal of one who takes joy in it."⁵⁸

6.21 The Master said, "You can discuss the loftiest matters with those who are above average, but not with those who are below average."

6.22 Fan Chi⁵⁹ asked about wisdom.

The Master said, "Working to ensure social harmony among the common people, respecting the ghosts and spirits while keeping them at a distance—this might be called wisdom."

He then asked about Goodness.

The Master said, "One who is Good sees as his first priority the hard-ship of self-cultivation, and only after thinks about results or rewards. Yes, this is what we might call Goodness."

⁵⁶That is, Ran Qiu has already decided he cannot do it, and so he does not even try.

⁵⁷The term "petty *Ru*" refers to someone content to serve as a narrow technician or "vessel" (*Analects* 2.12) or to a moral hypocrite such as the "village worthy" (*Analects* 17.13). See also *Ru* under *Important Terms*.

⁵⁸"It" is presumably the Way.

⁵⁹One of Kongzi's younger disciples.

6.23 The Master said, "The wise take joy in rivers, while the Good take joy in mountains. The wise are active, while the Good are still. The wise are joyful, while the Good are long-lived."⁶⁰

6.25 The Master said, "A *gu* that is not a proper *gu*—is it really a *gu*? Is it really a *gu*?"⁶¹

6.27 The Master said, "Someone who is broadly learned with regard to culture, and whose conduct is restrained by the rites, can be counted upon to not go astray."

6.28 The Master had an audience with Nanzi, and Zilu was not pleased.⁶² The Master swore an oath, saying, "If I have done anything wrong, may Heaven punish me! May Heaven punish me!"

6.29 The Master said, "Acquiring Virtue by applying the mean—is this no best? And yet among the common people few are able to practice this for long."

⁶⁰This is a famously cryptic passage. Perhaps the most plausible interpretation is provided by the Han dynasty commentator Bao Xian 包咸: "The wise take joy in actively exercising their talent and wisdom in governing the world, just as water flows on and on and knows no cease. The Good take joy in the sort of peace and stability displayed by mountains, which are naturally inactive and yet give birth to all of the myriad things."

⁶¹A *gu* 罍 was a ritual drinking vessel, and commentators generally agree that Kongzi's sight of displeasure was provoked by the fact that the sort of *gu* being used by his contemporaries was not a proper *gu* (i.e., not in accordance with Zhou dynasty standards), although there is disagreement over the question of what precisely was wrong—some claiming that the offending *gu* was not of the proper shape, others that it was not of the proper size. In any case, this passage serves to illustrate Kongzi's strict adherence to ancient practices, his dissatisfaction with the practices of his contemporaries, and his concern for the proper use of names (cf. *Analects* 13.3). For an image of a *gu*, see the web page for this volume.

⁶²Nanzi was the wife of Lord Ling of Wei, and a woman of bad repute. Zilu is not pleased that Kongzi would seek an audience with such a person. As many commentators point out, however, it is likely that ritual dictated that when arriving in a state one request an audience with certain minor local officials. In having an audience with Nanzi upon arriving in Wei, Kongzi was therefore merely observing the dictates of ritual propriety, which is more important than avoiding unsavory company. Zilu might thus—like Chen Wenzhi in *Analects* 5.19 above—be characterized as "pure," but such rigid fastidiousness falls rather short of Goodness.

6.30 Zigong said, "If there were one able to bestow much upon the common people and bring succor to the multitudes, what would you make of him? Could such a person be called Good?"

The Master said, "Why stop at Good? Such a person should surely be called a sage! Even someone like Yao or Shun would find such a task daunting. Desiring to take his stand, one who is Good helps others to take their stand; wanting to realize himself, he helps others to realize themselves. Being able to take what is near at hand as an analogy⁶³ could perhaps be called the method of Goodness."

Book Seven

7.1 The Master said, "I transmit rather than innovate. I trust in and love the ancient ways. I might thus humbly compare myself to Old Peng."⁶⁴

7.2 The Master said, "Remaining silent and yet comprehending, learning and yet never becoming tired, encouraging others and never growing weary—these are tasks that present me with no difficulty."

7.3 The Master said, "That I fail to cultivate Virtue, that I fail to inquire more deeply into that which I have learned, that upon hearing what is right I remain unable to move myself to do it, and that I prove unable to reform when I have done something wrong—such potential failings are a source of constant worry to me."

7.4 In his leisure moments, the Master was composed and yet fully at ease.

7.5 The Master said, "How seriously I have declined! It has been so long since I last dreamt of meeting the Duke of Zhou."⁶⁵

⁶³This sounds like a formulation of the virtue of *shu*, "sympathetic understanding." See *Analects* 4.15.

⁶⁴The most plausible explanation of this reference is that of Bao Xian: "Old Peng was a great worthy of the Yin dynasty who was fond of transmitting ancient tales. In comparing himself to Old Peng, Kongzi indicates his reverence for those who merely transmit [and do not innovate]."

⁶⁵[Ideally, one's immersion in the culture of the Zhou is to be so complete that it pene-

7.6 The Master said, "Set your heart upon the Way, rely upon Virtue, lean upon Goodness, and explore widely in your cultivation of the arts."

7.7 The Master said, "I have never denied instruction to anyone who, of their own accord, offered up as little as a bundle of silk or bit of cured meat."⁶⁶

7.8 The Master said, "I will not open the door for a mind that is not already striving to understand, nor will I provide words to a tongue that is not already struggling to speak. If I hold up one corner of a problem, and the student cannot come back to me with the other three, I will not attempt to instruct him again."

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

7.12 The Master said, "If wealth were something worth pursuing, then I would pursue it, even if that meant serving as an officer holding a whip at the entrance to the marketplace. Since it is not worth pursuing, however, I prefer to follow that which I love."

7.14 When the Master was in the state of Qi he heard the Shao music, and for three months after did not even notice the taste of meat. He said, "I never imagined that music could be so sublime."⁶⁷

7.16 The Master said, "Eating plain food and drinking water, having only your bent arm as a pillow—certainly there is joy to be found in this! Wealth and eminence attained improperly concern me no more than the floating clouds."⁶⁸

⁶⁶There is some debate over the exact meaning of this passage, with some (such as the Han commentator Zheng Xuan 鄭玄) claiming that it refers to the fact that Kongzi would not deny instruction to anyone over fifteen years of age, and others arguing that the term *shuxiu* 束脩 (usually taken to mean "bundle of silk and cured meat" or "bundle of cured meat") actually refers to the *bearing* of the person seeking instruction—that is, an attitude of respect and self-discipline. In either case, the point is that Kongzi does not select students on the basis of their wealth or social standing.

⁶⁷The Shao is the court music of the sage-king Shun.

⁶⁸"Improperly" is literally in a "not right (*yi* 義)" fashion.

7.17 The Master said, "If I were granted many more years, and could devote fifty of them to learning, surely I would be able to be free of major faults."

7.18 The Master used the classical pronunciation when reciting the *Odes* and the *History*, and when conducting ritual. In all of these cases, he used the classical pronunciation.⁶⁹

7.19 The Duke of She asked Zilu about Kongzi. Zilu had no reply.

[Upon Zilu's return], the Master said, "Why did you not just say: 'He is the type of person who is so passionate that he forgets to eat, whose joy renders him free of worries, and who grows old without noticing the passage of the years.'"

7.20 The Master said, "I am not someone who was born with knowledge. I simply love antiquity, and diligently look there for knowledge."

7.22 The Master said, "When walking with two other people, I will always find a teacher among them. I focus on those who are good and seek to emulate them, and focus on those who are bad in order to be reminded of what needs to be changed in myself."

7.23 The Master said, "It is Heaven itself that has endowed me with Virtue. What have I to fear from the likes of Huan Tui?"⁷⁰

7.24 The Master said, "Do you disciples imagine that I am being secretive? I hide nothing from you. I take no action, I make no move, without sharing it with you. This is the kind of person that I am."

⁶⁹Chinese characters are not directly phonetic in the manner of an alphabet, and the same character can be pronounced differently by speakers of different dialects. In Kongzi's age, people were apparently aware that the spoken languages of the various regions of China differed significantly from the "classical pronunciation," which Liu Baonan argues must have been the dialect spoken in the Western Zhou capital. We must assume that knowledge of these pronunciations was kept alive, at least in the state of Lu, through use in formal and ritual contexts. This passage suggests, though, that Kongzi's contemporaries had begun to ignore this tradition and eschew the classical pronunciations in favor of local dialect—a Christian analogy would be the abandonment of Latin in favor of services in the vernacular. This represents a departure from the Way of the Zhou that Kongzi characteristically resists.

⁷⁰Huan Tui was a minister in the state of Song who apparently wished to do Kongzi harm; cf. *Analects* 9.5 and 14.36.

7.28 The Master said, "No doubt there are those who try to innovate without acquiring knowledge, but this is a fault that I do not possess. I listen widely, and then pick out that which is excellent in order to follow it; I see many things, and then remember them. This constitutes a second-best sort of knowledge."

7.30 The Master said, "Is Goodness really so far away? If I simply desire Goodness, I will find that it is already here."

7.32 Whenever the Master was singing in a group and heard something that he liked, he inevitably asked to have it sung again, and only then would harmonize with it.

7.33 The Master said, "There is no one who is my equal when it comes to cultural refinement, but as for actually becoming a gentleman in practice, this is something that I have not yet been able to achieve."⁷¹

7.34 The Master said, "How could I dare to lay claim to either sageliness or Goodness? What can be said about me is no more than this: I work at it without growing tired and encourage others without growing weary."

Gong Xihua observed, "This is precisely what we disciples are unable to learn."

7.35 The Master was seriously ill, and Zilu asked permission to offer a prayer.

The Master said, "Is such a thing done?"

Zilu said, "It is. The *Eulogy*⁷² reads, 'We pray for you above and below, to the spirits of Heaven and of earth.'"

The Master said, "In that case, I have already been offering up my prayers for some time now."⁷³

⁷¹This is perhaps merely a polite demurral (cf. *Analects* 7.34), but it serves to emphasize the difficulty of obtaining in practice the proper balance between *wen*, "cultural refinement," and *zhi*, "native substance" (cf. *Analects* 6.18), and is no doubt meant as a warning against falling into "foppish pedantry"—the more insidious and common of the two failings described in *Analects* 6.18 above.

⁷²The title of a traditional prayer text.

⁷³That is, through his life's work. Any sort of direct appeal for Heaven's aid or bartering with Heaven is unnecessary.

7.37 The Master said, "The gentleman is self-possessed and relaxed, while the petty man is perpetually full of worry."

7.38 The Master was affable yet firm, awe-inspiring without being severe, simultaneously respectful and relaxed.

Book Eight

8.2 The Master said, "If you are respectful but lack ritual you will become exasperating; if you are careful but lack ritual you will become timid; if you are courageous but lack ritual you will become unruly; and if you are upright but lack ritual you will become inflexible."

"If the gentleman is kind to his relatives, the common people will be inspired toward Goodness; if he does not neglect his old acquaintances, the people will honor their obligations to others."

8.7 Master Zeng said, "A scholar-official must be strong and resolute, for his burden is heavy and his way [*dao* 道] is long. He takes up Goodness as his own personal burden—is it not heavy? His way ends only with death—is it not long?"

8.8 The Master said, "Find inspiration in the *Odes*; take your place through ritual, and achieve perfection with music."

8.9 The Master said, "The common people can be made to follow it, but they cannot be made to understand it."

8.12 The Master said, "It is not easy to find someone who is able to learn for even the space of three years without a thought given to official salary."

8.13 The Master said, "Be sincerely trustworthy and love learning, and hold fast to the good Way until death. Do not enter a state that is endangered, and do not reside in a state that is disordered. If the Way is being realized in the world, then show yourself; if it is not, then go into reclusion. In a state that has the Way, to be poor and of low status is a cause for shame; in a state that is without the Way, to be wealthy and honored is equally a cause for shame."

8.19 The Master said, "How great was Yao as a ruler! So majestic! It is

Among the common people there were none who were able to find words to describe him.⁷⁴ How majestic in his accomplishments, and glorious in cultural splendor!"

Book Nine

9.2 A villager from Daxiang⁷⁵ remarked sarcastically, "How great is Kongzi! He is so broadly learned, and yet has failed to make a name for himself in any particular endeavor."

When the Master was told of this, he said to his disciples, "What art, then, should I take up? Charioteering? Archery? I think I shall take up charioteering."⁷⁶

9.3 The Master said, "A ceremonial cap made of linen is prescribed by the rites, but these days people use silk. This is frugal, and I follow the majority. To bow before ascending the stairs is what is prescribed by the rites, but these days people bow after ascending. This is arrogant, and—though it goes against the majority—I continue to bow before ascending."⁷⁷

9.5 The Master was surrounded in Kuang.⁷⁸ He said, "Now that King Wen 文 is gone, is not culture [*wen* 文] now invested here in me? If Heaven intended this culture to perish, it would not have given it to those of us who live after King Wen's death. Since Heaven did not intend that this culture should perish, what can the people of Kuang do to me?"

9.6 The Prime Minister asked Zigong, "Your Master is a sage, is he not? How is it, then, that he is skilled at so many menial tasks?"

⁷⁴That is, the influence of Yao's Virtue was so subtle and pervasive that the people were transformed naturally, without being aware of what was happening. Cf. *Analects* 17.19, where Heaven is said to rule without the need for words.

⁷⁵The name of a small hamlet.

⁷⁶Kongzi's response is equally sarcastic, expressing his contempt for limited or merely technical skills. Cf. *Analects* 2.12, 9.6, and 19.7.

⁷⁷Kongzi is referring to ascending the stairs when approaching a ruler or other superior. To bow after ascending puts one on the same level as one's superior and hence is less respectful.

⁷⁸The most common explanation is that the target of the Kuang troops was a certain Yang Hu, who had in the past caused some trouble in the state of Kuang. Kongzi appar-

Zigong replied, "Surely Heaven not only not intends him for sagehood, but also gave him many other talents."

When the Master heard of this, he remarked, "How well the Prime Minister knows me! In my youth I was of humble status, so I became proficient in many menial tasks. Is the gentleman broadly skilled in trivial matters? No, he is not."⁷⁹

9.10 Whenever the Master saw someone who was wearing mourning clothes, was garbed in full official dress, or was blind, he would always rise to his feet, even if the person was his junior. When passing such a person, he would always hasten his step.⁸⁰

9.11 With a great sigh Yan Hui lamented, "The more I look up at it the higher it seems; the more I delve into it, the harder it becomes. Catching a glimpse of it before me, I then find it suddenly at my back."⁸¹

"The Master is skilled at gradually leading me on, step by step. He broadens me with culture and restrains me with the rites, so that even if I wanted to give up I could not. Having exhausted all of my strength, it seems as if there is still something left, looming up ahead of me. Though I desire to follow it, there seems to be no way through."

9.12 The Master was gravely ill, and Zilu instructed his fellow disciples to attend Kongzi as if they were his ministers.⁸²

During a remission in his illness, the Master [became aware of what was happening and] rebuked Zilu, saying, "It has been quite some time now, has it not, that you have been carrying out this charade! If I have no ministers and yet you act as if I have, who do you think I am going to fool? Am I going to fool Heaven?"⁸³ Moreover, would I not rather die in the arms

⁷⁹Cf. *Analects* 2.12, 9.2, and 19.7.

⁸⁰As a sign of respect.

⁸¹"It" refers to the Way.

⁸²That is, following the rites proper to a minister attending to a ruler—which, of course, Kongzi was not.

⁸³As the Jin dynasty commentator Li Chong 李充 notes, Kongzi's concern over the ritual abuses of the Ji Family—who were usurping the ritual prerogatives of the Zhou kings in an attempt to impress their contemporaries and curry favor with Heaven (see *Analects* 3.1)—no doubt accounts for some of the harshness in his rebuke of Zilu.

of a few of my disciples than in the arms of ministers? Even if I do not merit a grand funeral, it is not as if I would be left to die by the side of the road!"

9.13 Zigong said, "If you possessed a piece of beautiful jade, would you hide it away in a locked box, or would you try to sell it at a good price?"

The Master responded, "Oh, I would sell it! I would sell it! I am just waiting for the right offer."⁸⁴

9.14 The Master expressed a desire to go and live among the Nine Yi Barbarian tribes. Someone asked him, "How could you bear their uncouthness?"

The Master replied, "If a gentleman were to dwell among them, what uncouthness would there be?"⁸⁵

9.17 Standing on the bank of a river, the Master said, "It passes on like this—does it not? Never stopping day or night!"⁸⁶

9.18 The Master said, "I have yet to meet a man who loves Virtue as much as he loves sex."

9.19 The Master said, "[The task of self-cultivation] might be compared to the task of building up a mountain: if I stop even one basketful of earth short of completion, then I have stopped completely. It might also be compared to the task of leveling ground: even if I have only dumped a single basketful of earth, at least I am moving forward."⁸⁷

⁸⁴The gentleman should surely share his Virtue with the world by taking public office. Kongzi, however, refuses to actively peddle his wares on the market, but rather waits for his Virtue to be recognized by the right ruler.

⁸⁵The Yi were a group of "barbarians" (i.e., non-Chinese) who lived along the east coast of present-day China. Kongzi's comment is a testament to the transformative power of the gentleman's Virtue. Cf. *Xunzi*, chapter 2, p. 265.

⁸⁶Many traditional commentators take this passage to be a lament on the passage of time (and perhaps a reflection of Kongzi's sense of personal failure). Others see the river's unrelenting and thorough progress toward the sea as a metaphor for the ideal student's progress toward Goodness.

⁸⁷A bit of . . .

9.22 The Master said, "Surely there are some sprouts that fail to flower, just as surely as there are some flowers that fail to bear fruit!"

9.23 The Master said, "We should look upon the younger generation with awe, because how are we to know that those who come after us will not prove our equals? Once, however, a man reaches the age of forty or fifty without having learned anything, we can conclude from this fact alone that he is not worthy of being held in awe."

9.24 The Master said, "When a man is rebuked with exemplary words after having made a mistake, he cannot help but agree with them. However, what is important is that he change himself in order to *accord* with them. When a man is praised with words of respect, he cannot help but be pleased with them. However, what is important is that he actually *live up* to them. A person who finds respectful words pleasing but does not live up to them, or agrees with others' reproaches and yet does not change—there is nothing I can do with one such as this."⁸⁸

9.28 The Master said, "Only after Winter comes do we know that the pine and cypress are the last to fade."

9.29 The Master said, "The wise are not confused, the Good do not worry, and the courageous do not fear."⁸⁹

Book Ten⁸⁹

10.2 At court, when speaking with officers of lower rank, he was pleasant and affable; when speaking with officers of upper rank, he was formal and

⁸⁸Nominal assent to the Way is insufficient—one must *love* the Way and strive to embody it in one's person. The problem is what the teacher is to do with a student who intellectually understands or superficially agrees with the Way but cannot summon up the genuine commitment required of the gentleman. Cf. *Analects* 5.10, 6.12, 9.18, and 15.16.

⁸⁹Based upon their style, lack of explicit subject, and parallels to be found in other early ritual texts such as the *Record of Ritual* or *Book of Etiquette and Ritual*, scholars have concluded that most of the passages in this book were probably culled from a lost ritual text that provided anonymous guidelines and injunctions for the aspiring gentleman. From earliest times, however, this book has been viewed by commentators as an extended description of the ritual behavior of Kongzi in particular, and it was in fact probably intended by the editors of the earliest stratum of the *Analects* (books 1–10) to be understood that way.

proper. When his lord was present, he combined an attitude of cautious respect with graceful ease.

10.3 When called upon by his lord to receive a guest, his countenance would become alert and serious, and he would hasten his steps. When he saluted those in attendance beside him—extending his clasped hands to the left or right, as their position required—his robes remained perfectly arrayed, both front and back. Hastening forward, he moved smoothly, as though gliding upon wings. Once the guest had left, he would always return to report, "The guest is no longer looking back."

10.10 He would not instruct while eating, nor continue to converse once he had retired to bed.⁹⁰

10.11 Even though a meal was only of coarse grain or vegetable broth, he invariably gave some as a sacrificial offering, and would do so in a grave and respectful manner.

10.12 He would not sit unless his mat was straight.

10.17 One day the stables burned. When the Master returned from court, he asked, "Was anyone hurt?" He did not ask about the horses.⁹¹

10.19 When he was sick, and his lord came to visit him, he would lay with his head to the east, draped in his court robes, with his ceremonial sash fastened about him.⁹²

guidelines, book 10 serves as a sort of capstone for the first stratum, providing a series of descriptions of the Master effortlessly embodying in his words, behavior, and countenance the lessons imparted throughout the rest of the text. What is being emphasized in this book is the ease and grace with which the Master embodies the spirit of the rites in every aspect of his life—no matter how trivial—and accords with this spirit in adapting to new and necessarily unforeseeable circumstances.

⁹⁰That is, he remained thoroughly focused in all of his activities.

⁹¹Considering that horses were quite valuable commodities and stable hands easily replaceable, Kongzi's response is both unexpected and moving.

⁹²Being sick, he could not rise to greet his ruler or properly dress himself in court attire, but it would also be unseemly for him to receive his guest in civilian garb. He thus had himself arranged in bed so that he would be both ritually presentable and facing the door when the ruler entered.

10.20 When summoned by his lord, he would set off on foot, without waiting for his horses to be hitched to the carriage.⁹³

10.21 Upon entering the Grand Ancestral Temple, he asked questions about everything.

10.23 When receiving a gift from a friend—even something as valuable as a cart or a horse—he did not bow unless it was a gift of sacrificial meat.⁹⁴

10.25 When he saw someone fasting or mourning, he invariably assumed a changed expression, even if they were an intimate acquaintance. When he saw someone wearing a ritual cap or a blind person, he would invariably display a respectful countenance, even if they were of low birth.

When riding past someone dressed in funeral garb, he would bow down and grasp the crossbar of his carriage.⁹⁵ He would do so even if the mourner was a lowly peddler.

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

He would also assume a solemn expression upon hearing a sudden clap of thunder or observing a fierce wind.⁹⁶

10.27 Startled by their arrival, a bird arose and circled several times before alighting upon a branch. [The Master] said, "This pheasant upon the mountain bridge—how timely it is! How timely it is!" Zilu saluted the bird, and it cried out three times before flying away.⁹⁷

⁹³A sign of respect and humbleness.

⁹⁴A gift of sacrificial meat carries with it a sort of ritual solemnity not possessed by a nonreligious gift, no matter how sumptuous it might be.

⁹⁵As a sign of respect.

⁹⁶As a sign of respect for Heaven's power.

⁹⁷While it is not entirely clear *why* the pheasant is being praised for timeliness (perhaps because it knows when to arise, when to alight, and when to fly off), it would seem that the ideal of timeliness—according perfectly with the demands of the situation at hand—sums up fairly well what is, in one interpretation, the general theme of book 10: that the Master's actions accorded perfectly with the demands of ritual propriety, no matter what the

Book Eleven

11.4 The Master said, "Yan Hui is of no help to me—he is pleased with everything that I say."⁹⁸

11.8 When Yan Hui died, Yan Lu, his father, requested the Master's carriage, so that it could be used for Yan Hui's coffin enclosure.

The Master replied, "Everyone recognizes his own son, whether he is talented or not. When Bo Yu, my own son, passed away, he had a coffin, but no enclosure. I did not go on foot in order to provide him with an enclosure. Having held rank below the ministers, it is not permissible for me to go on foot."

11.9 When Yan Hui passed away, the Master lamented, "Oh! Heaven has bereft me! Heaven has bereft me!"

11.12 Zilu asked about serving ghosts and spirits. The Master said, "You are not yet able to serve people—how could you be able to serve ghosts and spirits?"

"May I inquire about death?"

"You do not yet understand life—how could you possibly understand death?"

11.17 The Master said, "The head of the Ji Family is wealthier than even the Duke of Zhou ever was, and yet Ran Qiu collects taxes on his behalf to further increase his already excessive wealth. Ran Qiu is no disciple of mine. If you disciples were to sound the drums and attack him, I would not disapprove."

11.22 Zilu asked, "Upon learning of something that needs to be done, should one immediately take care of it?"

The Master replied, "As long as one's father and elder brothers are still alive, how could one possibly take care of it immediately?"⁹⁹

[On a later occasion] Ran Qiu asked, "Upon learning of something that needs to be done, should one immediately take care of it?"

⁹⁸The comment would seem to be meant ironically—cf. *Analects* 2.9.

⁹⁹That is, you should continue to defer to their judgment and not take the initiative.

The Master replied, "Upon learning of it, you should immediately take care of it."

Zihua inquired, "When Zilu asked you whether or not one should immediately take care of something upon learning of it, you told him one should not, as long as one's father and elder brothers were still alive. When Ran Qiu asked the same question, however, you told him that one should immediately take care of it. I am confused, and humbly ask to have this explained to me."

The Master said, "Ran Qiu is overly cautious, and so I wished to urge him on. Zilu, on the other hand, is too impetuous, and so I sought to hold him back."¹⁰⁰

11.26 Zilu, Zengxi, Ran Qiu, and Zihua were seated in attendance. The Master said to them, "I am older than any of you, but do not feel reluctant to speak your minds on that account. You are all in the habit of complaining, 'No one appreciates me.' Well, if someone were to appreciate you, what would you do?"

Zilu spoke up immediately. "If I were given charge of a state of a thousand chariots—even one hemmed in between powerful states, suffering from armed invasions and afflicted by famine—before three years were up I could infuse its people with courage and a sense of what is right."

The Master smiled at him.

He then turned to Ran Qiu. "You, Ran Qiu!" he said, "What would you do?"

Ran Qiu answered, "If I were given charge of a state sixty or seventy—or even fifty or sixty—square *li* in area, before three years were up I could see that the people would have all that they needed. As for instructing its people in ritual practice and music, this is a task that would have to await the arrival of a gentleman."

The Master then turned to Zihua. "You, Zihua! What would you do?"

Zihua answered, "I am not saying that I would actually be able to do it, but my wish, at least, would be to learn it. I would like to serve as a minor functionary—properly clad in ceremonial cap and gown—in ceremonies at the ancestral temple, or at diplomatic gatherings."

¹⁰⁰This is a paradigmatic example of how the Master's teachings were variously formulated depending upon the individual needs of his students—a Confucian version of the Buddhist practice of *upāya*, or "skillful means."

The Master then turned to Zengxi. "You, Zengxi! What would you do?" Zengxi stopped strumming his zither, and as the last notes faded away he set the instrument aside and rose to his feet. "I would choose to do something quite different from any of the other three."

"What harm is there in that?" the Master said. "We are all just talking about our aspirations."

Zengxi then said, "In the third month of Spring, once the Spring garments have been completed, I should like to assemble a company of five or six young men and six or seven boys to go bathe in the Yi River and enjoy the breeze upon the Rain Dance Altar, and then return singing to the Master's house."¹⁰¹

The Master sighed deeply, saying, "I am with Zengxi!"

The other three disciples left, but Master Zeng stayed behind. He asked, "What did you think of what the other disciples said?"

"Each of them was simply talking about their aspirations."

"Then why, Master, did you smile at Zilu?"

"One governs a state by means of ritual. His words failed to express the proper sense of deference, and that is why I smiled at him."

"Was Ran Qiu, then, not concerned with statecraft?"

"Since when did something sixty or seventy—even fifty or sixty—square *li* in area not constitute a state?"

"Was Zihua, then, not concerned with statecraft?"

"If ancestral temples and diplomatic gatherings are not the business of the feudal lords, what then are they? If Zihua's aspiration is a minor one, then what would be considered a major one?"¹⁰²

Book Twelve

12.1 Yan Hui asked about Goodness.

The Master said, "Restraining yourself and returning to the rites constitutes Goodness. If for one day you managed to restrain yourself and return

¹⁰¹According to traditional commentators, the Yi River was near Kongzi's home, and the Rain Dance Altar was located just above the river.

¹⁰²The Master is thus equally disapproving of Zilu's, Ran Qiu's, and Zihua's aspirations—all of which are overly focused upon statecraft techniques—although only Zilu's response is audacious enough to provoke a smile. The point is that true government is effected through the superior Virtue gained by ritual practice, and the task of the gentleman is thus to focus upon self-cultivation and attain a state of joyful harmony with the Way. Such harmony with the Way is exemplified by Zengxi's musical bent, his reluctance to speak about his aspirations, and the sense of spontaneous joy in the cultivated life.

to the rites, in this way you could lead the entire world back to Goodness. The key to achieving Goodness lies within yourself—how could it come from others?"

Yan Hui asked, "May I inquire as to the specifics?"

The Master said, "Do not look unless it is in accordance with ritual; do not listen unless it is in accordance with ritual; do not speak unless it is in accordance with ritual; do not move unless it is in accordance with ritual."

Yan Hui replied, "Although I am not quick to understand, I ask permission to devote myself to this teaching."

12.2 Zhonggong¹⁰³ asked about Goodness.

The Master said, "When in public, comport yourself as if you were receiving an important guest, and in your management of the common people, behave as if you were overseeing a great sacrifice.' Do not impose upon others what you yourself do not desire. In this way, you will encounter no resentment in your public or private life."¹⁰⁴

Zhonggong replied, "Although I am not quick to understand, I ask permission to devote myself to this teaching."

12.5 Anxiously, Sima Niu remarked, "Everyone has brothers, I alone have none."¹⁰⁵

Zixia replied, "I have heard it said, 'Life and death are governed by fate, wealth and honor are determined by Heaven.' A gentleman is respectful and free of errors. He is reverent and ritually proper in his dealings with

¹⁰³ A disciple of Kongzi.

¹⁰⁴ One interpretation is that the first set of advice concerns the virtue of *zhong*, "loyalty," the second that of *shu*, "sympathetic understanding." Cf. *Analects* 4.15.

¹⁰⁵ Sima Niu came from a prominent military family in Song and in fact left behind several brothers when he went abroad. Huan Tui (*Analects* 7.23) planned and carried out an unsuccessful revolt against the rightful lord of Song in 483 B.C.E., and was forced to flee the state. Another of Sima Niu's elder brothers, Xiang Chao, was also a military official (Minister of the Left) in Song; he was apparently a somewhat arrogant and self-aggrandizing man and was forced to flee the state after Huan Tui's attempted revolt, along with the remaining elder Xiang brothers. Sima Niu—apparently uninvolved in the revolt or its aftermath—resigned his official post in disgust and emigrated, ending up eventually in Lu, where he presumably had the conversation with Zixia recorded here. His comment that "he alone has no brothers" is thus not meant literally: the point is either that he has no brothers truly worthy of being considered brothers, or that all of his brothers are in exile or in constant danger of losing their lives, and therefore as good as dead. Sima Niu is thus bemoaning the fate that has left him effectively without family, an exile from his home state.

others. In this way, everyone within the Four Seas is his brother.¹⁰⁶ How could a gentleman be concerned about not having brothers?"

12.7 Zigong asked about governing.

The Master said, "Simply make sure there is sufficient food, sufficient armaments, and that you have the confidence of the common people."

Zigong said, "If sacrificing one of these three things became unavoidable, which would you sacrifice first?"

The Master replied, "I would sacrifice the armaments."

Zigong said, "If sacrificing one of the two remaining things became unavoidable, which would you sacrifice next?"

The Master replied, "I would sacrifice the food. Death has always been with us, but a state cannot stand once it has lost the confidence of the people."

12.8 Ji Zicheng¹⁰⁷ said, "Being a gentleman is simply a matter of having the right native substance, and nothing else. Why must one engage in cultural refinement?"

Zigong replied, "It is regrettable, Sir, that you should speak of the gentleman in this way—as they say, a team of horses cannot overtake your tongue.' A gentleman's cultural refinement resembles his native substance, and his native substance resembles his cultural refinement. The skin of a tiger or leopard, shorn of its fur, is no different from the skin of a dog or sheep."¹⁰⁸

12.9 Duke Ai said to Master You, "The harvest was poor and I cannot satisfy my needs. What should I do?"

¹⁰⁶ "Within the Four Seas" means the entire world; China was viewed as being surrounded on all sides by oceans.

¹⁰⁷ Ji Zicheng is described as a minister of Wei, but nothing else is known about him. Zigong served as an official in Wei for some time, and this is probably when this exchange took place.

¹⁰⁸ Zigong's response invokes an interesting metaphor for the relationship of native substance and cultural refinement: although native substance is required (as an animal requires a hide), a gentleman possessing substance but unadorned by cultural refinement would be like a tiger or leopard shaved of its beautiful pelt—indistinguishable from any ordinary creature. Cf. *Analects* 6.18.

Master You said, "Why do you not try taxing the people one part in ten?"¹⁰⁹

"I am currently taxing them two parts in ten, and even so I cannot satisfy my needs. How could reducing the tax to one part in ten help?"

Master You answered, "If the common people's needs are satisfied, how could their lord be lacking? If the common people's needs are not satisfied, how can their lord be content?"

12.11 Duke Jing of Qi asked Kongzi about governing.

Kongzi responded, "Let the lord be a true lord, the ministers true ministers, the fathers true fathers, and the sons true sons."¹¹⁰

The Duke replied, "Well put! Certainly if the lord is not a true lord, the ministers not true ministers, the fathers not true fathers, and the sons not true sons, even if there is sufficient grain, will I ever get to eat it?"

12.13 The Master said, "When it comes to hearing civil litigation, I am as good as anyone else. What is necessary, though, is to bring it about that there is no civil litigation at all."

12.17 Ji Kangzi¹¹¹ asked Kongzi about governing.

Kongzi responded, "To 'govern' [*zheng* 政] means to be 'correct' [*zheng* 正]. If you set an example by being correct yourself, who will dare to be incorrect?"

¹⁰⁹This was a traditional Zhou practice. According to the *Annals*, the traditional tenth-century tithe on agricultural production was doubled by Duke Xuan of Lu in 593 B.C.E., and then continued as standard practice. It is possible that this exchange between Duke Ai and Master You took place during the Lu famine of 484 B.C.E. (Year 14 of Duke Ai's reign), which occurred after back-to-back plagues of locusts in 484 and 483 B.C.E. Master You is thus suggesting a return to a taxation rate over one hundred years old—quite a radical cutback.

¹¹⁰In 516 B.C.E., Kongzi arrived in Qi to find that Duke Jing, near the end of his reign, was in dire straits. His nominal minister, Chen Qi, had usurped control of the state, and the Duke's plan to pass over his eldest son for the succession had set off contention among his sons. Kongzi's advice is thus very topical. His point is that if everyone would simply concentrate on conscientiously fulfilling their role-specific duties, order would result naturally—there is no need for some special technique or theory of "governing" (cf. *Analects* 2.21). Many commentators have seen this passage as concerned with the theme of "rectifying names" (*zhengming* 正名) mentioned in *Analects* 13.3, whereby the actualities of one's behavior should be made to accord with the standard set by one's social role ("name").

¹¹¹A member of the Ji Family (cf. *Analects* 3.1), and senior minister in the state of Lu,

12.18 Ji Kangzi was concerned about the prevalence of robbers in Lu, and asked Kongzi about how to deal with this problem.

Kongzi said, "If you could just get rid of your own excessive desires, the people would not steal even if you rewarded them for it."

12.19 Ji Kangzi asked Kongzi about governing, saying, "If I were to execute those who lacked the Way in order to advance those who possessed the Way, how would that be?"

Kongzi responded, "In your governing, Sir, what need is there for executions? If you desire goodness, then the common people will be good. The Virtue of a gentleman is like the wind, and the Virtue of a petty person is like the grass—when the wind moves over the grass, the grass is sure to bend."

12.22 Fan Chi asked about Goodness.

The Master replied, "Care for others."

He then asked about wisdom.

The Master replied, "Know others."

Fan Chi still did not understand, so the Master elaborated: "Raise up the straight and apply them to the crooked, and the crooked will be made straight."

Fan Chi retired from the Master's presence. Seeing Zixia, he said, "Just before I asked the Master about wisdom, and he replied, 'Raise up the straight and apply them to the crooked, and the crooked will be made straight.' What did he mean by that?"

Zixia answered, "What a wealth of instruction you have received! When Shun ruled the world, he selected from amongst the multitude, raising up Gao Yao, and those who were not Good then kept their distance. When Tang ruled the world, he selected from amongst the multitude, raising up Yi Yin, and those who were not Good then kept their distance."

12.24 Master Zeng said, "The gentleman acquires friends by means of cultural refinement, and then relies upon his friends for support in becoming Good."

Book Thirteen

13.3 Zilu asked, "If the Duke of Wei¹¹² were to employ you to serve in the government of his state, what would be your first priority?"

¹¹²This probably refers to Zhe, the grandson of Lord Ling of Wei (who appears in *Analekts* 15.1 below), who took over the throne in 493 B.C.E.

The Master answered, "It would, of course, be the rectification of names."¹¹³

Zilu said, "Could you, Master, really be so far off the mark? Why worry about rectifying names?"

The Master replied, "How bootish you are, Zilu! When it comes to matters that he does not understand, the gentleman should remain silent. If names are not rectified, speech will not accord [with reality]; when speech does not accord [with reality], things will not be successfully accomplished. When things are not successfully accomplished, ritual practice and music will fail to flourish; when ritual and music fail to flourish, punishments and penalties will miss the mark. And when punishments and penalties miss the mark, the common people will be at a loss as to what to do with themselves. This is why the gentleman only applies names that can be properly spoken, and assures that what he says can be properly put into action. The gentleman simply guards against arbitrariness in his speech. That is all there is to it."

13.4 Fan Chi asked to learn about plowing and growing grain [from Kongzi].

The Master said, "When it comes to that, any old farmer would be a better teacher than I."

He asked to learn about growing fruits and vegetables.

The Master said, "When it comes to that, any old gardener would be a better teacher than I."

Fan Chi then left. The Master remarked, "What a common fellow that Fan Chi is! When a ruler loves ritual propriety, then none among his people will dare to be disrespectful. When a ruler loves rightness, then none among his people will dare to not obey. When a ruler loves trustworthiness, then none of his people will dare to not be honest. The mere existence of such a ruler would cause the common people throughout the world to bundle

¹¹³On *zheng ming* 正名, "rectification of names" or "correction of names," cf. *Analekts* 6.25, 12.11, and 12.17 as well as Xunzi's "On Correct Naming" (see *Xunzi*, chapter 22, pp. 292-98). Reading this passage in light of *Analekts* 12.11 ("Let the fathers be true fathers, the sons true sons"), it can be seen as a barb against the ruling family of Wei, whose disordered family relations eventually threw the state into chaos. The Duke doted upon his notorious wife, Nanzi (see *Analekts* 6.28), whom his resentful son, Prince Kuai Kui, then attempted to kill. This attempt having failed, the son was forced to flee Wei, and the grandson, Zhe, subsequently took over the throne upon the Duke's death. Prince Kuai Kui then returned to Wei with the backing of a foreign army in an attempt to oust his son.

their children on their backs and seek him out. Of what use, then, is the study of agriculture?"

13.5 The Master said, "Imagine a person who can recite the three hundred *Odes* by heart but, when delegated a governmental task, is unable to carry it out, or when sent abroad as an envoy, is unable to engage in repartee. No matter how many *Odes* he might have memorized, what good are they to him?"¹¹⁴

13.6 The Master said, "When the ruler is correct, his will is put into effect without the need for official orders. When the ruler's person is not correct, he will not be obeyed no matter how many orders he issues."

13.12 The Master said, "If a true king were to arise, we would certainly see a return to Goodness after a single generation."¹¹⁵

13.16 The Duke of She asked about governing.

The Master said, "[Act so that] those near to you are pleased, and those who are far from you are drawn closer."

13.18 The Duke of She said to Kongzi, "Among my people there is one we call 'Upright Gong.' When his father stole a sheep, he reported him to the authorities."

Kongzi replied, "Among my people, those who we consider 'upright' are different from this: fathers cover up for their sons, and sons cover up for their fathers. 'Uprightness' is to be found in this."¹¹⁶

13.20 Zigong asked, "What does a person have to be like before he could be called a true scholar-official?"

¹¹⁴The point of learning is not mere scholastic knowledge, but rather the ability to apply this knowledge flexibly in a situation-specific manner. Cf. *Analekts* 2.11.

¹¹⁵Because a true king rules through the gradual transformative power of Virtue rather than through harsh laws and punishments, which may achieve more immediate—but short-lived—results.

¹¹⁶Cf. *Analekts* 17.8, where the danger of an overly rigid or strict sense of honesty or uprightness is described as being "harmful"—the harm being, presumably, to such natural relationships as that between father and son.

The Master said, "Conducting himself with a sense of shame, and not dishonoring his ruler's mandate when sent abroad as a diplomat—such a person could be called a scholar-official."

"May I ask what the next best type of person is like?"

"His lineage and clan consider him filial, and his fellow villagers consider him respectful to his elders."

"And the next best?"

"In his speech he insists on being trustworthy, and with regard to his actions, he insists that they bear fruit. What a narrow, rigid little man he is! And yet he might still be considered the next best."

"How about those who today are involved in government?"

The Master exclaimed, "Oh! Those petty functionaries are not even worth considering."

13.21 The Master said, "If you cannot manage to find a person of perfectly balanced conduct to associate with, I suppose you must settle for the wild or the fastidious. In their pursuit of the Way, the wild plunge right in, while the fastidious are always careful not to get their hands dirty."¹¹⁷

13.24 Zigong asked, "What would you make of a person whom everyone in the village likes?"

The Master said, "I would not know what to make of him."

"What about someone whom everyone in the village hates?"

"I would still not know. Better this way: those in the village who are good like him, and those who are not good hate him."

Book Fourteen

14.1 Yuan Si asked about shame.

The Master said, "When the state has the Way, accept a salary; when the state is without the Way, to accept a salary is shameful."

"To refrain from competitiveness, boastfulness, envy, and greed—can this be considered Goodness?"

The Master said, "This can be considered difficult, but as for its being Good, that I do not know."

14.4 The Master said, "Those who possess Virtue will inevitably have something to say, whereas those who have something to say do not necessarily possess Virtue. Those who are Good will necessarily display courage, but those who display courage are not necessarily Good."

14.5 Nangong Kuo¹¹⁸ said to Kongzi, "Yi was a skillful archer, and Ao was a powerful naval commander, and yet neither of them met a natural death. Yu and Hou Ji, on the other hand, did nothing but personally tend to the land, and yet they both ended up with possession of the world."¹¹⁹

The Master did not answer.

After Nangong Kuo left, the Master sighed, "What a gentlemanly person that man is! How he reveres Virtue!"¹²⁰

14.12 Zilu asked about the complete person.

The Master said, "Take a person as wise as Zang Wuzhong, as free of desire as Gongchuo, as courageous as Zhuangzi of Bian, and as accomplished in the arts as Ran Qiu, and then acculturate them by means of ritual and music—such a man might be called a complete person."¹²¹

He then continued: "But must a complete person today be exactly like this? When seeing a chance for profit he thinks of what is right; when confronting danger he is ready to take his life into his own hands; when enduring an extended period of hardship, he does not forget what he had professed in more fortunate times—such a man might also be called a complete person."

¹¹⁸Most commentators identify him as an official in the state of Lu.

¹¹⁹Both Yi and Ao were legendary martial heroes of the Xia dynasty with questionable morals: Yi usurped the throne of one of the kings of the Xia dynasty, and Ao was the son of one of Yi's ministers. Ao himself subsequently murdered and dethroned Yi, and was in turn slain and overthrown by one of his own ministers. Yu and Hou Ji were moral worthies and heroes of civilized arts: Yu tamed the Yellow River and introduced irrigation, receiving the rulership of the world from Shun in return, while Hou Ji ("Lord Millet") is the mythical founder of agriculture and progenitor of the Zhou royal line.

¹²⁰The world is won, not through martial prowess, but through careful and patient cultivation. Commentators suggest that Nangong Kuo meant to compare Kongzi himself to Yu and Hou Ji, and that Kongzi thus remained silent out of modesty.

¹²¹Zang Wuzhong and Meng Gongchuo were both respected officials in Lu, and Zhuangzi of Bian was an official in the state of Bian who was legendary for his courage. (The latter is no relation to the Daoist philosopher whose work is included in this volume.) On Ran Qiu, cf. *Analects* 5.8, 6.12, 11.17, 11.22, and 11.26.

¹¹⁷Cf. *Mengzi* 7B37.

14.13 The Master asked Gongming Jia about Gongshu Wenzi, saying, "Is it really true that your Master did not speak, did not laugh, and did not take?"¹²²

Gongming Jia answered, "Whoever told you that was exaggerating. My master only spoke when the time was right, and so people never grew impatient listening to him. He only laughed when he was genuinely full of joy, and so people never tired of hearing him laugh. He only took what was rightfully his, and so people never resented his taking of things."

The Master said, "Was he really that good? Could he really have been that good?"

14.24 The Master said, "In ancient times scholars learned for their own sake; these days they learn for the sake of others."

14.25 Qu Boyu¹²³ sent a messenger to Kongzi. Kongzi sat down beside him and asked, "How are things with your Master?"

The messenger replied, "My Master wishes to reduce his faults, but has not yet been able to do so."

After the messenger left, the Master said, "Now that is a messenger! That is a messenger!"¹²⁴

14.27 The Master said, "The gentleman is ashamed to have his words exceed his actions."

14.29 Zigong was given to criticizing others.

The Master remarked sarcastically, "What a worthy man that Zigong must be! As for me, I hardly have the time for this."¹²⁵

14.30 The Master said, "Do not worry that you are not recognized by others; worry rather that you yourself lack ability."

¹²²Gongshu Wenzi was an official in the state of Wei, and Gongming Jia presumably was his disciple.

¹²³An official in the state of Wei.

¹²⁴Kongzi is praising Qu Boyu's noble intentions and realistic evaluation of himself as well as the modesty of his envoy's words. Cf. *Analekts* 14.27.

¹²⁵The Master is entirely focused upon cultivating and correcting himself; only someone who has mastered the Way has the luxury to begin evaluating others, and Zigong is hardly such a person.

14.34 Someone asked, "What do you think of the saying, 'Require injury with kindness'?"¹²⁶

The Master replied, "With what, then, would one require kindness? Require injury with uprightness, and kindness with kindness."

14.35 The Master sighed, "No one understands me—do they?"

Zigong replied, "How can you say that no one understands you, Master?"

"I am not bitter toward Heaven, nor do I blame others. I study what is below in order to comprehend what is above. If there is anyone who could understand me, perhaps it is Heaven."

14.36 Gongbo Liao submitted an accusation against Zilu to the head of the Ji Family. Zifu Jingbo reported this to Kongzi, adding, "That master [i.e., Ji Kangzi] has certainly been led astray by Gongbo Liao, but my influence with him is still sufficient to see to it that Gongbo Liao's corpse is displayed at court or in the marketplace."¹²⁷

The Master said, "Whether or not the Way is to be put into action is a matter of fate. Whether or not the Way is to be discarded is also a matter of fate. What power does Gongbo Liao have to affect fate!"

14.38 Zilu spent the night at Stone Gate. The next morning, the gatekeeper asked him, "Where have you come from?"

Zilu answered, "From the house of Kongzi."

"Isn't he the one who knows that what he does is impossible and yet persists anyway?"¹²⁸

14.39 The Master was playing the stone chimes in the state of Wei.

A man with a wicker basket strapped to his back passed by the door of the Kong Family residence and remarked, "Whoever is playing the chimes like that certainly has something on his mind!" After listening for a

¹²⁶"Kindness" here is *de* 德, which elsewhere is translated as "Virtue." The quoted phrase appears in chapter 63 of the *Laozi* or *Daodejing*—and Kongzi's response to it is certainly anti-Laozian in flavor—but it was likely a traditional saying not necessarily identified with the *Daodejing* itself.

¹²⁷Zifu Jingbo, an official in the state of Lu, is claiming here that he has enough influence with his master, the de facto ruler of Lu, that he can both convince him of Zilu's innocence and see to it that his fellow minister, Gongbo Liao, is executed for his slander.

¹²⁸Cf. *Analekts* 18.7. That is, Kongzi persists in his efforts to reform the world even though it appears hopeless. Later Confucians embraced this *derisive* comment with pride.

moment, he added, "How despicable is this petty stubbornness! If no one understands you, just tend to yourself."

"If the river ford is deep, use the stepping-stones;
If it is shallow, simply raise your hem."¹²⁹

The Master [hearing these comments] responded, "Such resoluteness! Who could take issue with that!"¹³⁰

Book Fifteen

15.1 Duke Ling of Wei asked Kongzi about military formations.

Kongzi replied, "I know something about the arrangement of ceremonial stands and dishes for ritual offerings, but I have never learned about the arrangement of battalions and divisions."
He left the next day.

15.2 [When Kongzi was besieged] in the state of Chen, all of the provisions were exhausted, and his followers were so weak from hunger that they could not even stand. Upset, Zilu appeared before the Master and said, "Does even the gentleman encounter hardship?"

The Master said, "Of course the gentleman encounters hardship. The difference is that the petty man, encountering hardship, is overwhelmed by it."

15.3 The Master said, "Zigong, do you regard me as simply one who learns much and remembers it?"

Zigong said, "I do. Is that not the case?"

The Master said, "It is not. I string it together on a single thread."¹³¹

¹²⁹From the *Odes* (*Mao* # 54).

¹³⁰Kongzi's critic is wearing a wicker basket strapped to his back—the sign of a farmer or manual laborer—and yet has an ear for classical music and can quote from the *Odes*. No ordinary commoner, he is more likely a scholar who has gone into reclusion, whether for philosophical or political reasons. Like the gatekeeper in *Analects* 14.38, he is annoyed at Kongzi's persistence in the face of an indifferent world, and advises him to simply accord with the times—as he himself has presumably done. Kongzi's sarcastic response expresses contempt for such passivity and lack of resolution. Cf. *Analects* 8.7, 18.6, and 18.7.

¹³¹Cf. *Analects* 4.15.

15.5 The Master said, "Is Shun not an example of someone who ruled by means of nonaction? What did he do? He made himself reverent and took his proper [ritual] position facing south, that is all."¹³²

15.9 The Master said, "No scholar-official of noble intention or Good person would ever pursue life at the expense of Goodness, and in fact some may be called upon to give up their lives in order to fulfill Goodness."

15.11 Yan Hui asked about running a state.

The Master said, "Follow the calendar of the Xia, travel in the carriages of the Shang, and clothe yourself in the ceremonial caps of the Zhou."¹³³ As for music, listen only to the Shao and Wu."¹³⁴ Prohibit the tunes of Zheng, and keep glib people at a distance—for the tunes of Zheng are licentious, and glib people are dangerous."

15.16 The Master said, "I have never been able to do anything for a person who is not himself constantly asking, 'What should I do? What should I do?'"

15.18 The Master said, "The gentleman takes rightness as his substance, puts it into practice by means of ritual, gives it expression through modesty, and perfects it by being trustworthy. Now that is a gentleman!"

15.21 The Master said, "The gentleman seeks it in himself; the petty person seeks it in others."

15.24 Zigong asked, "Is there one teaching that can serve as a guide for one's entire life?"

¹³²The ruler faces south, thus serving as the earthly correlate to the Pole Star (cf. *Analects* 2.1). On "nonaction" see *wuwei* in *Important Terms*.

¹³³The calendar of the Xia—which was in fact something like a combination calendar and almanac, providing instructions for what to do at various points in the year—began the year in the spring and was apparently particularly well adapted to the cycles of the seasons and the needs of farmers. The state carriage of the Shang, according to commentators, was stately but relatively unadorned, while the ceremonial cap of the Zhou was elegant and practical; according to Bao Xian, it shielded both the eyes and the ears, making it easier to resist distractions and concentrate upon ritual.

¹³⁴The music of King Shun and King Wu, respectively.

The Master answered, "Is it not 'sympathetic understanding' (*shu* 恕)? Do not impose upon others what you yourself do not desire."

15.28 The Master said, "When the multitude hates a person, you must examine them and judge for yourself. The same holds true for someone whom the multitude love."¹³⁵

15.29 The Master said, "Human beings can broaden the Way—it is not the Way that broadens human beings."¹³⁶

15.30 The Master said, "To make a mistake and yet to not change your ways—this is what is called truly making a mistake."

15.31 The Master said, "I once engaged in thought for an entire day without eating and an entire night without sleeping, but it did no good. It would have been better for me to have spent that time in learning."¹³⁷

15.36 The Master said, "When it comes to being Good, defer to no one, not even your teacher."

15.37 The Master said, "The gentleman is true, but not rigidly trustworthy."¹³⁸

15.39 The Master said, "In education, there are no differences in kind."¹³⁹

15.41 The Master said, "Words should convey their point, and leave it at that."

15.42 The [blind] Music Master Mian came to see Kongzi. When they came to the steps, the Master said, "Here are the steps." When they reached his seat, the Master said, "Here is your seat." After

¹³⁵Cf. *Analects* 13.24.

¹³⁶As Cai Mo 蔡謨 (Jin dynasty) explains, "The Way is silent and without action, and requires human beings to be put into practice. Human beings can harmonize with the Way—this is why the text reads: 'Human beings are able to broaden the Way.' The Way does not harmonize with humans—this is why the text reads: 'It is not the Way that broadens human beings.'"

¹³⁷Cf. *Analects* 2.15.

¹³⁸Cf. *Analects* 19.11.

¹³⁹For a discussion of this passage, see the commentary on the basic edition.

everyone was seated, the Master informed him as to who was present, saying, "So-and-so is seated here, and So-and-so is seated over there."

When the Music Master left, Zizhang asked, "Is this the way to converse with a Music Master?"

The Master replied, "Yes, this is indeed the way to assist a Music Master."¹⁴⁰

Book Sixteen

16.4 Kongzi said, "Beneficial types of friendship number three, as do harmful types of friendship. Befriending the upright, those who are true to their word, or those of broad learning—these are the beneficial types of friendship.¹⁴¹ Befriending clever flatterers, skillful dissemblers, or the smoothly glib—these are the harmful types of friendship."

16.5 Kongzi said, "Beneficial types of joy number three, as do harmful types of joy. Taking joy in regulating yourself through the rites and music, in commending the excellence of others, or in possessing many worthy friends—these are the beneficial types of joy. Taking joy in arrogant behavior, idle amusements, or decadent licentiousness—these are the harmful types of joys."

16.7 Kongzi said, "The gentleman guards against three things: when he is young, and his blood and *qi* are still unstable, he guards against the temptation of female beauty; when he reaches his prime, and his blood and *qi* have become unyielding, he guards against being contentious; when he reaches old age, and his blood and *qi* have begun to decline, he guards against being acquisitive."¹⁴²

16.8 The Master said, "The gentleman stands in awe of three things: the Mandate of Heaven, great men, and the teachings of the sages. The petty

¹⁴⁰The post of Music Master was traditionally filled by blind persons in ancient China, both in order to give them a trade in which they could excel and because their sense of hearing was considered more acute than that of the sighted. Music Master Mian has presumably been brought to Kongzi's residence by an assistant, who then leaves him in Kongzi's care. The point of this passage seems to be the economy of expression of the Master, who puts aside the normal ritual behavior of a host in order to deftly and respectfully serve as a guide for the blind Music Master without being overly fussy or condescending.

¹⁴¹"True to one's word" is *lian* 廉, which had a negative connotation ("rigidly trustworthy") in previous passages (e.g., 15.37) but clearly has a positive sense here.

person does not understand the Mandate of Heaven, and thus does not regard it with awe; he shows disrespect to great men, and ridicules the teachings of the sages."

16.9 Kongzi said, "Those who are born understanding it are the best; those who come to understand it through learning are second. Those who find it difficult to understand and yet persist in their studies come next. People who find it difficult to understand but do not even try to learn are the worst of all."

16.13 Ziqin asked Boyu, "Have you acquired any esoteric learning?"¹⁴³

Boyu replied, "I have not. My father was once standing by himself in the courtyard and, as I hurried by with quickened steps, he asked, 'Have you learned the *Odes*?'¹⁴⁴ I replied, 'Not yet.' He said, 'If you do not learn the *Odes*, you will lack the means to speak.' I then retired and learned the *Odes*."

"On another day, my father was once again standing by himself in the courtyard and, as I hurried by with quickened steps, he asked, 'Have you learned ritual?'¹⁴⁵ I replied, 'Not yet.' He said, 'If you do not learn ritual, you will lack the means to take your place.' I then retired and learned ritual."

"These two things are what I have been taught."

Ziqin retired and, smiling to himself, remarked "I asked one question and got three answers: I learned about the *Odes*, I learned about ritual, and I learned how the gentleman keeps his son at a distance."

Book Seventeen

17.2 The Master said, "By nature people are similar; they diverge as the result of practice."

¹⁴³Boyu is Kongzi's son, and Ziqin is wondering whether or not—as the Master's own flesh and blood—Boyu received any special instruction withheld from the other disciples.

¹⁴⁴Boyu quickened his steps as a sign of respect; cf. 10.3.

¹⁴⁵Some commentators suggest that *li* 禮 is meant here as the title of a text ("the Rites"), which would indicate the existence of formal ritual texts—such as the *Record of Ritual*—at the time 16.13 was recorded. This, in turn, would be a sign of a quite late date for this passage.

17.8 The Master said, "Zilu! Have you heard about the six [virtuous] words and their six corresponding vices?"¹⁴⁶

Zilu replied, "I have not."

"Sit! I will tell you about them."

"Loving Goodness without balancing it with a love for learning will result in the vice of foolishness. Loving wisdom without balancing it with a love for learning will result in the vice of deviance. Loving trustworthiness without balancing it with a love for learning will result in the vice of harmful rigidity. Loving uprightness without balancing it with a love for learning will result in the vice of intolerance. Loving courage without balancing it with a love for learning will result in the vice of unruliness. Loving resoluteness without balancing it with a love for learning will result in the vice of willfulness."

17.9 The Master said, "Little Ones, why do none of you learn the *Odes*? The *Odes* can be a source of inspiration and a basis for evaluation; they can help you to come together with others, as well as to properly express complaints. In the home, they teach you about how to serve your father, and in public life they teach you about how to serve your lord. They also broadly acquaint you with the names of various birds, beasts, plants, and trees."

17.10 The Master said to Boyu, "Have you mastered the *Odes* from the 'South of Zhou' and the 'South of Shao'?"¹⁴⁷ A man who has not mastered the 'South of Zhou' and the 'South of Shao' is like someone standing with his face to the wall, is he not?"

17.11 The Master said, "When we say, 'the rites, the rites,' are we speaking merely of jade and silk? When we say, 'music, music,' are we speaking merely of bells and drums?"¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶The literal meaning of *li* 蔽—the word translated here as "vice"—is "to cover over" or "obscure." Mengzi uses it to describe how the mind can be "led astray" by things in *Mengzi* 6A15; in "Undoing Fixations," Xunzi uses it with the sense of "fixations" that can lead us to endorse inferior doctrines or ways of life (see *Xunzi*, chapter 21, pp. 286–92).

¹⁴⁷These are the first two sections of the *Odes* and are used here to refer to the *Odes* as a whole. Cf. *Analects* 16.13.

¹⁴⁸Just as true music requires not merely instruments but sensitive musicians to play them, so true ritual requires not merely traditional paraphernalia but also emotionally committed, sensitive practitioners. Cf. *Analects* 2.7, 3.3, and 3.12.

17.13 The Master said, "The village worthy is the thief of virtue."¹⁴⁹

17.18 The Master said, "I hate that purple has usurped the place of vermilion, that the tunes of Zheng have been confused with classical music, and that the clever of tongue have undermined both state and family."¹⁵⁰

17.19 The Master sighed, "Would that I did not have to speak!"

Zigong said, "If the Master did not speak, then how would we little ones receive guidance from you?"

The Master replied, "What does Heaven ever say? Yet the four seasons are put in motion by it, and the myriad creatures receive their life from it. What does Heaven ever say?"

17.21 Zai Wo asked about the three-year mourning period, saying, "Surely one year is long enough. If the gentleman refrains from practicing ritual for three years, the rites will surely fall into ruin; if he refrains from music for three years, this will surely be disastrous for music. After the lapse of a year the old grain has been used up, while the new grain has ripened, and the four different types of tinder have all been drilled in order to rekindle the fire."¹⁵¹ One year is surely long enough."

The Master asked, "Would you feel comfortable then eating your sweet rice and wearing your brocade gowns?"¹⁵²

"I would."

The Master replied, "Well, if you would feel comfortable doing so, then by all means you should do it. When the gentleman is in mourning, he gets no pleasure from eating sweet foods, finds no joy in listening to music, and feels no comfort in his place of dwelling. This is why he gives up these things. But if you would feel comfortable doing them, then by all means you should!"

¹⁴⁹See *Mengzi* 7B37 for an elaboration of this passage.

¹⁵⁰Vermillion—the color of the Zhou—is the traditional and proper color for ceremonial clothing while purple is a more "modern" and increasingly popular variant. On the "tunes of Zheng," see *Analects* 15.11.

¹⁵¹An annual ritual of renewal.

¹⁵²While mourning, one is restricted to a diet of plain rice and water and wearing rough hemp for clothing. One is to suspend most normal social activity, maintain particular demeanors and refrain from familiar pleasures. A child was to maintain three years (often understood as into the beginning of the third year—i.e., approximately twenty-five months) of mourning for a deceased parent. These things were thought to express respect for the dead

After Zai Wo left, the Master remarked, "This shows how lacking in Goodness this Zai Wo is! A child is completely dependent upon the care of his parents for the first three years of his life—this is why the three-year mourning period is the common practice throughout the world. Did Zai Wo not receive three years of care from his parents?"

17.23 Zilu asked, "Does the gentleman admire courage?"

The Master said, "The gentleman admires rightness above all. A gentleman who possessed courage but lacked a sense of rightness would create political disorder; while a common person who possessed courage but lacked a sense of rightness would become a bandit."

17.25 The Master said, "Women and servants are particularly hard to manage: if you are too familiar with them, they grow insolent, but if you are too distant, they grow resentful."¹⁵³

Book Eighteen

18.6 Kongzi passed Chang Ju and Jie Ni, who were yoked together pulling a plow through a field. He sent Zilu to ask them where the ford was to be found.¹⁵⁴

Chang Ju inquired, "That fellow holding the reins there—who is he?"

Zilu answered, "That is Kongzi."

"Do you mean Kongzi of Lu?"

"The same."

"Then *he* should know where the ford is."¹⁵⁵

Zilu then asked Jie Ni.

Jie Ni also replied with a question: "Who are you?"

¹⁵³Some later commentators have tried—with little success—to soften this infamously misogynous passage. Its sense is probably that, considering their potentially dangerous sexual power and inability to control themselves, household women (i.e., wives and concubines), like servants, need to be managed firmly, but with respect, if they are to remain obedient and not overstep their proper roles.

¹⁵⁴Kongzi and his entourage were apparently attempting to cross a nearby river, but this passage is also to be read allegorically: the "ford" is the way out of the "great flood of chaos" mentioned below. The use of self-consciously primitive technology by these two figures (most plows were ox-drawn by this time), as well as their knowledge of Kongzi's identity revealed below, makes it clear that they are no ordinary commoners, but rather educated primitivist recluses who have deliberately rejected society and culture (cf. *Analects* 14.39). Like many of the figures in the *Zhuangzi*, their names appear to be allegorical ("Standing Tall in the Marsh" and "Prominent in the Mud," respectively); the appearance of this literary technique and the complex narrative quality of this passage mark it as quite late.

"I am Zilu."

"The disciple of Kongzi of Lu?"

"Yes."

"The whole world is as if engulfed in a great flood, and who can change it? Given this, instead of following a scholar who merely avoids the bad people [of this age],¹⁵⁶ wouldn't it be better for you to follow scholars like us, who avoid the age itself?" He then proceeded to cover up his seeds with dirt and did not pause again.

Zilu returned and reported this conversation to Kongzi. The Master was lost in thought for a moment, and then remarked, "A person cannot flock together with the birds and the beasts. If I do not associate with the followers of men, then with whom would I associate? If the Way were realized in the world, then I would not need to change anything."¹⁵⁷

18.7 Zilu was traveling with Kongzi, but had fallen behind. He encountered an old man carrying a wicker basket suspended from his staff. Zilu asked, "Have you seen my Master?"

The old man answered,

"Won't soil his dainty hands

Can't tell millet from barley."¹⁵⁸

Who, then, might your master be?" He then planted his staff in the ground and began weeding. [Not knowing how to reply], Zilu simply remained standing with his hands clasped as a sign of respect.

The old man subsequently invited Zilu back to his house to stay the night. After killing a chicken and preparing some millet for Zilu to eat, he presented his two sons to him. On the next day Zilu caught up to Kongzi and told him what had happened.

"He must be a scholar recluse," the Master said. He sent Zilu back to the old farmer's house to meet with him again, but by the time Zilu got

¹⁵⁶Referring to Kongzi's itinerant seeking after a ruler who would put his Way into practice.

¹⁵⁷Kongzi's compassion for the suffering of the world is such that he cannot take what he views as the easy way out—simply withdrawing from society and living the life of a noble, unsullied recluse (cf. *Analekts* 18.8)—although his mission as the "bell-clapper of Heaven" (*Analekts* 3.24) is grueling and fraught with difficulties and frustrations.

¹⁵⁸This comment is a rhyming verse in the Chinese—an indication that again we are not dealing with an ordinary, illiterate farmer.

there the man had already disappeared. Zilu then remarked, "To avoid public service is to be without a sense of what is right. Proper relations between elders and juniors cannot be discarded—how, then, can one discard the rightness that obtains between ruler and minister?"¹⁵⁹ To do so is to wish to keep one's hands from getting dirty at the expense of throwing the great social order into chaos. The gentleman takes office in order to do what is right, even though he already knows that the Way will not be realized."¹⁶⁰

18.8 Those men who went into seclusion include Bo Yi, Shu Qi, Yu Zhong, Yi Yi, Zhu Zhang, Liuxia Hui, and Shao Lian.¹⁶¹

The Master said, "Unwilling to lower their aspirations or bring disgrace upon their persons—such were Bo Yi and Shu Qi."

Of Liuxia Hui and Shao Lian he said, "Although they lowered their aspirations and brought disgrace upon their persons, at least their speech was in accord with their status and their actions were in accord with their thoughts."

Of Yu Zhong and Yi Yi he said, "Living in seclusion and freely speaking their minds, their persons remained pure and their resignations from office were well-considered."

He concluded, "I, however, am different from all of them in that I have no preconceived notions of what is permissible and what is not."¹⁶²

Book Nineteen¹⁶³

19.6 Zixia said, "Learning broadly and firmly retaining what one has learned, being incisive in one's questioning and able to reflect upon what is near at hand—Goodness is to be found in this."

¹⁵⁹The point is that the old recluse recognizes the first set of relationships in requiring Zilu's expression of respect (of a younger man for an elder) with proper hospitality and in formally presenting his sons, but ignores the second by living in seclusion and avoiding any sort of official contact.

¹⁶⁰Cf. *Analekts* 14.38.

¹⁶¹These men were all famous recluses who withdrew from public service on moral grounds. For more on Bo Yi and Shu Qi, see *Important Figures*.

¹⁶²Cf. *Analekts* 4.10.

¹⁶³This book consists entirely of sayings from Kongzi's disciples. Many of these sayings are summaries or elaborations of themes already seen in earlier books.

19.7 Zixia said, "The various artisans dwell in their workshops in order to perfect their crafts, just as the gentleman learns in order to reach the end of his Way."

19.11 Zixia said, "As long as one does not transgress the bounds when it comes to important Virtues, it is permissible to cross the line here and there when it comes to minor Virtues."¹⁶⁴

19.12 Ziyou said, "Among the disciples of Zixia, the younger ones are fairly competent when it comes to tasks such as mopping and sweeping, answering summons, and entering and retiring from formal company, but these are all superficialities.¹⁶⁵ They are completely at a loss when it comes to mastering the basics. Why is this?"

When Zixia heard of this, he remarked, "Alas! Ziyou seems to have missed the point. Whose disciples will be the first to be taught the Way of the gentleman, and then in the end grow tired of it? It is like the grass and the trees: you make distinctions between them according to their kind.¹⁶⁶ The Way of the gentleman, how can it be slandered so? Starting at the beginning and working through to the end—surely this describes none other than the sage!"

19.14 Ziyou said, "Mourning should fully express grief and then stop at that."¹⁶⁷

19.21 Zigong said, "A gentleman's errors are like an eclipse of the sun or the moon: when he errs, everyone notices it, but when he makes amends, everyone looks up to him."

Book Twenty

20.3 Kongzi said, "One who does not understand fate lacks the means to become a gentleman. One who does not understand ritual lacks the means to take his place.¹⁶⁸ One who does not understand words lacks the means to evaluate others."

¹⁶⁴Cf. *Analects* 15.37.

¹⁶⁵Literally, "the branches" (*mo* 末), contrasted with the "basics"—the "root" (*ben* 本)—below.

¹⁶⁶That is, the true potential gentleman can be recognized by how he handles the small matters taught at the beginning of the course of instruction.

¹⁶⁷Cf. *Analects* 15.41

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■ CHAPTER THREE ■

MENGZI (MENCIUS)

Introduction

Mengzi 孟子 was a Chinese Confucian philosopher who lived in the fourth century B.C.E. He was born after Kongzi died, so he never studied under Kongzi, or even met him. However, Mengzi tried to teach, practice, and defend the Way of Kongzi as he understood it. Although he is not nearly as well known in the West as Kongzi, Mengzi has long been regarded in China (and throughout East Asia) as second only to Kongzi himself in importance as a Confucian thinker.

The collection of Mengzi's sayings, dialogues, and debates with others is known simply as the *Mengzi* (or, following the Jesuit Latinization of his name, the *Mencius*). It is divided into seven "books," each of which is subdivided into two parts (called the "A" and "B" parts), which are then further divided into "chapters." So, for example, *Mengzi* 1B3 is book 1, second part, chapter 3.

Mengzi saw the main intellectual opponents of the Way of Kongzi as being the teachings of Yang Zhu and Mozi (3B9, 7A26). Mozi, as we saw in Chapter 2, advocated a kind of universalistic consequentialism. There are few, if any, texts that have survived to the present day that we can confidently identify as presenting the teachings of Yang Zhu, so we do not know exactly what his philosophy was. However, it seems clear that Yang Zhu emphasized following one's *xing* 性, "nature" (see *Important Terms*), and claimed that the teachings of both Mohism and Confucianism ask us to act contrary to our natures by making what Yang Zhu saw as excessive sacrifices for others. (See the Supplemental Text on *Yangism* ["Robber Zhi"], pp. 369–75.) On this basis, Mengzi accused Yang Zhu (perhaps unfairly) of being a sort of extreme egoist.



Mengzi agrees with Yang Zhu that humans have a nature, which they should follow. Indeed, he criticizes a rival philosopher, Gaozi, for suggesting that ethical cultivation must involve violating one's nature (*Mengzi* 6A1). However, Mengzi argues against Yang Zhu that there are incipient virtuous inclinations in one's nature (*Mengzi* 6A6). He frequently describes these inclinations using a metaphor of "sprouts," and compares ethical cultivation to tending these sprouts (*Mengzi* 2A6, 2A2, 6A7–8). Mengzi presents various kinds of evidence for the existence of ethical "sprouts" in humans, including the "giveaway" actions of adults who spontaneously manifest these inclinations (such as King Xuan, whose sympathy for an ox being led to slaughter shows his nascent compassion [*Mengzi* 1A7]), and "thought experiments" (such as asking us what our intuitions are about how a normal human would react to the sight of a child about to fall into a well [*Mengzi* 2A6], or to the sight of the corpses of loved ones rotting by the roadside [*Mengzi* 3A5]).

It is important to understand that, although the presence of the sprouts guarantees the goodness of *human nature*, this does not entail that most *humans* are actually good. Mengzi stresses that a bad environment (and failure to cultivate oneself) can almost destroy one's original nature (*Mengzi* 6A8). Furthermore, our compassion for others and disdain to do what is wrong are innate, but only incipient. Thus the task of moral cultivation is to "extend" or "fill out" the reactions from the paradigmatic cases where we already have them to the relevantly similar cases where we do not yet have them, but ought to (*Mengzi* 7A15, 7A17, 7B31).

Mengzi thinks that most people will be unable to develop their nature without having their basic needs for things such as food met (*Mengzi* 7A27). Indeed, Mengzi provides specific advice about proper farm management (*Mengzi* 3A3), showing his concern with the practicalities of governing. Once their fundamental needs are met, basic—but universal—ethical education is crucial (*Mengzi* 1A7, 3A4). However, Mengzi recognizes that, while everyone has the capacity to become a sage, not everyone will realize that ability.

Advanced ethical cultivation requires education under a wise teacher. Mengzi's students pose him questions, often involving conundrums from two works that were already quite old and almost canonical by Mengzi's time: the *History* and the *Odes* (*Mengzi* 5A2, 7B3, see also *Important Texts*). It is significant that much of Mengzi's teaching is based on concrete cases, rather than abstract principles. Although he clearly thinks that there is a best Way to live, and a best choice in every situation (*Mengzi* 4B29), his

approach is "particularistic" in emphasizing the context-sensitivity of virtue (*Mengzi* 4A17). Thus, he tries to cultivate in his students a skill that goes beyond any simple tool or technique (*Mengzi* 7B5). This is perhaps part of his reason for suggesting that you should "seek for in your heart" what "you do not get from doctrines" (*Mengzi* 2A2).

Mengzi uses his particular conception of human nature to provide a response to both Mohism and Yangism. As we have seen, Mengzi agrees with the Yangists that humans have a nature that they should follow, but argues that the Yangists have supplied an impoverished account of the contents of that nature. Against the Mohists, Mengzi argues that there is a natural order of development of human compassion, and that, as a matter of psychological fact, humans must learn to love members of their own family before they can learn to love strangers (*Mengzi* 7A15, 7A45). Some Mohists in Mengzi's era seem to have conceded this point, but argued that the feeling of compassion cultivated in the family should be extended outward to love everyone equally. However, Mengzi claims that, given the way in which our compassion develops out of love of kin, any effort to love everyone equally violates our naturally greater compassion for family members (*Mengzi* 3A5). Finally, Mengzi argues that the effort to base one's actions on *li* 利, "benefit" or "profit," even if it is the profit of one's kingdom as a whole, will be self-defeating (*Mengzi* 1A1).

Book One

1A1 Mengzi had an audience with King Hui of Liang. The King said, "Sir, you have come, not regarding one thousand *li* as too far. Surely you will have something to profit my state?"

Mengzi said in response, "Why must Your Majesty say, 'profit'? Let there be benevolence and righteousness and that is all. Your Majesty says, 'How can my state be profited?' The Counsellors say, 'How can my family be profited?' The scholars and commoners say, 'How can I be profited?' Those above and those below mutually compete for profit and the state is endangered."

"In a case where the ruler of a state that can field ten thousand chariots is murdered, it must be by a family that can field a thousand chariots. In a case where the ruler of a state that can field a thousand chariots is murdered, it must be by a family that can field a hundred chariots. One thousand out of ten thousand, or one hundred out of a thousand, cannot be

considered to not be a lot. But if righteousness is put behind and profit is put ahead, one will not be satisfied without grasping from others.

"There have never been those who were benevolent who abandoned their parents. There have never been those who were righteous who put their ruler last. Let Your Majesty say, 'Benevolence and righteousness,' and that is all. Why must you say 'profit'?"

1A3 King Hui of Liang said, "In relation to the state, We exert our heart to the utmost. When there is a famine in the region inside the river, then We move people to the region east of the river, and move grain to the region inside the river. When there is a famine in the region east of the river, We do the converse. When We examine the government of neighboring states, there is none that exerts itself as We do. Yet the people of neighboring states do not grow fewer, and Our people do not grow more numerous. How is this?"

Mengzi responded, "Your Majesty is fond of war. Allow me to use an illustration from warfare: Thunderingly, the drums beat the soldiers forward; their swords have already clashed; casting aside their armor and trailing their weapons they run away. Some run a hundred paces and then stop; others run fifty paces and then stop. How would it be if those who ran fifty paces laughed at those who ran a hundred paces?"

He responded, "That is unacceptable. They simply did not run a hundred paces. But what they did is running away too."

Mengzi said, "If Your Majesty understands this, then you will not expect your people to be more numerous than those of neighboring states." . . .

1A7 King Xuan of Qi asked, "May I hear from you of the actions of the Lord Protectors Huan of Qi and Wen of Jin?"

Mengzi said in response, "The disciples of Zhongni [i.e., Kongzi] did not give accounts of the actions of Huan and Wen. Because of this, they were not passed on to later generations, and I, your servant, have not heard of them.¹ But, if you insist, then may we talk about being a genuine king?"²

Xuan said, "What must one's Virtue be like so that one can become a king?"

¹Mengzi is not being truthful here. In *Mengzi* 4B21 (not in this volume) Mengzi says there are historical records of Huan and Wen. See *Mengzi* 4B11 on honesty.

²Xuan is a king in name only. See *Important Terms*.

Mengzi said, "One cares for the people and becomes a king. This is something no one can stop."

Xuan said, "Can one such as I care for the people?"

Mengzi said, "He can."

Xuan said, "How do you know that I can?"

Mengzi said, "I heard your attendant Hu He say,

'The King was sitting up in his hall.³ There was an ox being led past below. The King saw it and said, 'Where is the ox going?' Someone responded, 'We are about to consecrate a bell with its blood.' The King said, 'Spare it. I cannot bear its frightened appearance, like an innocent going to the execution ground.' Someone responded, 'So should we abandon the consecrating of the bell?' The King said, 'How can that be abandoned? Exchange it for a sheep.'

Mengzi continued, "I do not know if this happened."

Xuan said, "It happened."

Mengzi said, "This feeling is sufficient to be a king.⁴ The commoners all thought Your Majesty was being stingy. But I knew that Your Majesty could not bear the frightened appearance of the ox."

The King said, "That is so. There really were commoners like that. Although Qi is a small state, how could I be stingy about one ox? It was just that I could not bear its frightened appearance, like an innocent going to the execution ground. Hence, I exchanged it for a sheep."

Mengzi said, "Let Your Majesty not be surprised at the commoners' taking you to be stingy. You took a small thing and exchanged it for a big thing. How could they understand? If Your Majesty were pained at its being innocent and going to the execution ground, then what is there to choose between an ox and a sheep?"

The King laughed, saying, "What was this feeling really?! It's not the case that I grudged its value and exchanged it for a sheep. But it makes sense that the commoners would say I was stingy."

³Since ancient times in China, royal palaces have included halls raised above the ground, often looking out onto the courtyard below. See the web page for this volume for an image of such a hall. Cf. *Zhuangzi*, chapter 13, p. 244.

⁴"Feeling," *xin*, 心, here and below, is literally "heart." See *Important Terms*.

Mengzi said, "There is no harm. This is just the way benevolence works. You saw the ox but had not seen the sheep. As for the relation of gentlemen to birds and beasts, if they see them living, they cannot bear to see them die. If they hear their cries, they cannot bear to eat their flesh. Hence, gentlemen keep their distance from the kitchen."

The King was pleased and said, "The *Odes* say,

Another person had the heart,
But I measured it.⁵

This describes you. I was the one who did it. I reflected and sought it out, but did not understand my heart. You spoke, and in my heart there was a feeling of compassion. In what way does this heart accord with being a king?"

Mengzi said, "Suppose there were someone who reported to Your Majesty, saying, 'My strength is sufficient to lift five hundred pounds, but not sufficient to lift one feather. My eyesight is sufficient to examine the tip of an autumn hair,⁶ but I cannot see a wagon of firewood.' Would Your Majesty accept that?"

Xuan said, "No."

Mengzi said, "In the present case your kindness is sufficient to reach birds and beasts, but the benefits do not reach the commoners. Why is this case alone different? Hence, not lifting one feather is due to not using one's strength. Not seeing a wagon of firewood is due to not using one's eyesight. The commoners not receiving care is due to not using one's kindness. Hence, Your Majesty's not being a genuine king is due to not acting; it is not due to not being able."

Xuan said, "What is the difference between concrete cases of not doing and not being able?"

Mengzi said, "'Pick up Mount Tai and leap over the North Sea.' If you say, 'I cannot,' this is truly not being able. 'Massage the stiff joints of an elderly person.' If you say, 'I cannot,' this is not acting; it is not a case of not being able. So Your Majesty's not being a king is not in the category of picking up Mount Tai and leaping over the North Sea. Your Majesty's not being a king is in the category of massaging the stiff joints of an elderly person."

⁵*Mao* # 198.

⁶An animal's hair is most fine (and hence thin) during the autumn.

"Treat your elders as elders, and extend it to the elders of others; treat your young ones as young ones,⁷ and extend it to the young ones of others; then you can turn the whole world in the palm of your hand. The *Odes* say,

He set an example for his wife,
It extended to his brothers,
And so he controlled his family and state.⁸

This means that he simply took this feeling and applied it to that. Hence, if one extends one's kindness, it will be sufficient to care for all within the Four Seas. If one does not extend one's kindness, one will lack the wherewithal to care for one's wife and children. That in which the ancients greatly exceeded others was no other than this. They were simply good at extending what they did. In the present case your kindness is sufficient to reach birds and beasts, but the benefits do not reach the commoners. Why is this case alone different? Weigh, and then you will distinguish the long and the heavy. Measure, and then you will distinguish the long and the short. Things are all like this, the heart most of all. Let Your Majesty measure it.

"Perhaps Your Majesty can only be happy in his heart by rallying soldiers, endangering his scholars and ministers, and incurring the resentment of the other lords?"

Xuan said, "No. How could I be happy about these things?"

Mengzi said, "Could I hear Your Majesty's greatest desire?" The King smiled and did not speak.

Mengzi said, "Is it because your hearty and sweet foods are insufficient for your mouth? Are your light and warm clothes insufficient for your body? Or yet because the beautiful and charming sights are insufficient for your eyes to look at? The melodies are insufficient for your ears to listen to? The servants are insufficient to order about in front of you? Your Majesty's various ministers *are* sufficient to serve you. Does Your Majesty actually do what you do for these things?!"

Xuan said, "No. It is not for the sake of these things."

Mengzi said, "Then Your Majesty's greatest desire can be known. You desire to govern the land, bring to your court the states of Qin and Chu, oversee the Central Kingdom, and dominate the barbarians. By means of

⁷That is, "Treat your elders and young ones as elders and young ones *should* be treated."

⁸*Mao* # 240.

such things as you do, to seek such things as you desire, is like climbing a tree in search of a fish."

The King said, "Is it as extreme as that?"

Mengzi said, "The danger is greater than that! If one climbs a tree in search of a fish, although one will not get a fish, there will not be any disaster afterward. By means of such things as you do, to seek such things as you desire, if one exhausts the strength of one's heart in doing it, afterward there must be disaster."

Xuan said, "Could I hear of this?"

Mengzi said, "If the people of Zou and the people of Chu fought, who does Your Majesty think would win?"

Xuan said, "The people of Chu would win."

Mengzi said, "So the small definitely cannot match the big, the few definitely cannot match the many, the weak definitely cannot match the strong. The region within the seas is nine thousand square *li*. Qi amounts to one thousand. To take on eight with one, how is this different from Zou matching Chu?"

"Simply return to the fundamentals. Suppose Your Majesty were to bestow benevolence in governing. This would cause all under Heaven who serve others to all want to take their place in Your Majesty's court, those who plough to all want to plough in Your Majesty's uncultivated fields, merchants to all want to place their goods in Your Majesty's markets, those who travel to all wish to use Your Majesty's roads: All under Heaven who wish to complain of their rulers would all desire to report to Your Majesty. If it were like this, who could stop it?"⁹

The King said, "I am ignorant and unable to undertake this. But I am willing for you, Master, to redirect my resolution, enlighten, and instruct me. Although I am not clever, please let me try."

Mengzi said, "To lack a constant livelihood, yet to have a constant heart—only a scholar is capable of this. As for the people, if they lack a constant livelihood, it follows that they will lack a constant heart. And if one simply fails to have a constant heart, dissipation and evil will not be avoided. When they thereupon sink into crime, to go and punish them is to trap the people. When there are benevolent people in positions of authority, how is it possible to trap the people? For this reason, an enlightened ruler, in regulating the people's livelihood, must ensure that it is sufficient,

on the one hand, to serve one's father and mother, and on the other hand, to nurture wife and children. In good years, one is always full. In years of famine, one escapes death. Only when the people have a regulated livelihood do they rush toward the good, and thus the people follow the ruler easily.

"Nowadays, in regulating the people's livelihood, on the one hand it is insufficient to serve one's father and mother, on the other it is insufficient to nurture wife and children. In good years, one is always bitter. In years of famine, one cannot escape death. This is a case in which one fears not having the means to save people from death. How could one have leisure for teaching ritual and righteousness?"

"If Your Majesty wishes to put benevolent government into effect, then simply return to the fundamentals. Plant every household of five *mu* with mulberry trees, and fifty-year-olds can wear silk. Let the nurturing of chickens, pigs, and dogs not be neglected, and seventy-year-olds can eat meat. If you do not disturb the seasonal work in each field of one hundred *mu*, a household with eight mouths to feed need not go hungry. If you are careful about the teachings of the schools, explaining the righteousness of filial piety and fraternal respect, then those with gray hair will not be carrying loads on the roads. For the old to wear silk and eat meat, and the black-haired people¹⁰ to be neither hungry nor cold, yet for their ruler not to become a king—such a thing has never happened."

1B5

... King Xuan of Qi said, "Your teachings are excellent!"

Mengzi responded, "If Your Majesty regards them as excellent, then why do you not put them into practice?"

The King said, "We have a weakness. We are fond of wealth."

He responded, "In former times, Duke Liu was fond of wealth.¹¹ The *Odes* say,

He stacked, he stored,

He bundled up dried meat and grain,

In bags, in sacks,

Thinking to gather together and bring glory.

¹⁰That is, the Chinese people.

¹¹Duke Liu and King Tai (referred to below as Duke Danfu) are ancestors of the Zhou royal family, and are considered paradigms of virtuous rulers.

⁹That is, who could stop such a ruler from eventually becoming king of all the world?

His bows and arrows were displayed,
With shields, spears, and battle-axes,
He commenced his march.¹²

Hence, those who stayed at home had loaded granaries, and those who marched had full provisions. Only then could he 'commence his march.' If Your Majesty is fond of wealth but allows the common folk to possess wealth, what difficulty is there in being a genuine king?"

The King responded, "We have a weakness. We are fond of sex."

He responded, "In former times, King Tai was fond of sex, and loved his wife. The *Odes* say,

The Ancient Duke Danfu
Came in the morning, riding his horse,
Following the banks of the Western waters,
He came to the foot of Mount Qi,
With his Lady Jiang.
They came and both settled there."¹³

At that time, there were no dissatisfied women in private, or any unmarried men in public. If Your Majesty is fond of sex but accords the common folk the same privileges, what difficulty is there in being a genuine king?"

1B6 Mengzi spoke to King Xuan of Qi, saying, "If, among Your Majesty's ministers, there were one who entrusted his wife and children to his friend, and traveled to the state of Chu, and when he returned, he discovered that his friend had let his wife and children become cold and hungry—how should one deal with this?"

The King said, "Abandon him."

Mengzi said, "If the Sergeant-at-Arms is not able to keep order among the scholars, how should one deal with this?"

The King said, "Discharge him."

Mengzi said, "If the region within the four borders is not well ordered, then how should one deal with this?" The King turned toward his attendants and changed the topic.

¹² *Mao* # 250.

¹³ *Mao* # 237.

1B8 King Xuan of Qi asked, "Is it the case that Tang banished Jie, and that Wu struck down Zhou?"

Mengzi responded, saying, "There are such accounts in the historical records."

The King said, "Is it acceptable for subjects to kill their rulers?"

Mengzi said, "One who violates benevolence should be called a 'thief.' One who violates righteousness is called a 'mutilator.' A mutilator and thief is called a mere 'fellow.' I have heard of the execution of a mere fellow 'Zhou,' but I have not heard of the killing of one's ruler."

Book Two

2A2 Gongsun Chou asked, "Suppose that you, Master, were to be appointed to the position of high noble or prime minister in Qi and were able to put the Way into practice there. If it were so, it would not be surprising at all if the ruler of Qi were to become a lord protector or a genuine king. If it were like this, would it perturb your heart or not?"

Mengzi said, "It would not. My heart has been unperturbed since I was forty."

Gongsun Chou said, "In that case, you, Master, have far surpassed Meng Ben."¹⁴

Mengzi said, "This is not difficult. Gaozi had an unperturbed heart before I."¹⁵

Gongsun Chou said, "Is there a way of cultivating an unperturbed heart?"

Mengzi said, "There is. As for Bogong You's cultivation of courage, his body would not shrink, his eyes would not blink. He regarded the least slight from someone like being beaten in the market place. Insults he would not take off of a common fellow coarsely clad¹⁶ he also would not take off of a ruler who could field ten thousand chariots. He looked upon running a sword through a ruler who could field ten thousand chariots as like running through a common fellow. He did not treat the various lords with deference. If an insult came his way he had to return it.

¹⁴The Qing dynasty commentator Jiao Xun reports that "Meng Ben, when traveling by water, did not avoid serpents, and, when traveling by land, did not avoid rhinoceroses and tigers."

¹⁵Gaozi is a rival philosopher whom Mengzi debates in *Mengzi* 6A1 ff.

¹⁶I borrow this well-turned phrase from D. C. Lau's translation.

"As for Meng Shishe's cultivation of courage, he said, 'I look upon defeat the same as victory. To advance only after sizing up one's enemy, to ponder whether one will achieve victory and only then join battle, this is to be in awe of the opposing armies. How can I be certain of victory? I can only be without fear.'

"Meng Shishe resembled Zengzi. Bogong You resembled Zixia.¹⁷ Now, as for the courage of the two, I do not really know which was better. Nonetheless, Meng Shishe preserved something important.

"Formerly, Zengzi speaking to Zixiang said, 'Are you fond of courage? I once heard about great courage from the Master,¹⁸

If I examine myself and am not upright, although I am opposed by a common fellow coarsely clad, would I not be in fear? If I examine myself and am upright, although I am opposed by thousands and tens of thousands, I shall go forward.'

Meng Shishe's preservation of his *qi* was still not as good as Zengzi's preservation of what is important."

Gongsun Chou said, "I venture to ask whether I could hear about your unperturbed heart, Master, and Gaozi's unperturbed heart?"

Mengzi answered, "Gaozi said, 'What you do not get from doctrines, do not seek for in your heart. What you do not get from your heart, do not seek for in the *qi*.' 'What you do not get from your heart, do not seek for in the *qi*,' is acceptable. 'What you do not get from doctrines, do not seek for in your heart,' is unacceptable.

"Your resolution is the commander of the *qi*. *Qi* is that which fills up the body. When your resolution is fixed somewhere, the *qi* sets up camp there. Hence, it is said, 'Maintain your resolution. Do not injure the *qi*.'"¹⁹

¹⁷On Zengzi, see *Analekts* 8.7. On Zixia, see *Analekts* 3.8, 6.13, and 19.12.

¹⁸By "the Master" he means Kongzi. What follows may be intended as a direct quotation from Kongzi, but it may also be Zengzi paraphrasing the Master's teaching.

¹⁹Recall that, according to Mengzi, the heart (*xin* 心, see *Important Terms*) is the seat of our ethical inclinations (*Mengzi* 2A6 and 6A6). The *zhi* 志, "resolution," is not a separate faculty, but is simply the heart directed toward a certain goal or object. Contrast what Zhuangzi suggests in "The Human Realm," about the relationship of what one hears, one's heart, and the *ai*. See *Zhuangzi*, chapter 4, v. 228. (On *ai*, see *Important Terms*.)

Gongsun Chou asked, "Since you have already said, 'When your resolution is fixed somewhere, the *qi* sets up camp there,' why do you add, 'Maintain your resolution. Do not injure the *qi*?'"

Mengzi said, "When your resolution is unified it moves the *qi*. When the *qi* is unified it moves your resolution. Now, stumbling and running have to do with the *qi*, but nonetheless they perturb one's heart."

Gongsun Chou said, "I venture to ask wherein you excel, Master."

Mengzi said, "I understand words. I am good at cultivating my flood-like *qi*."

Gongsun Chou said, "I venture to ask what is meant by 'floodlike *qi*.'"

Mengzi said, "It is difficult to put into words. It is a *qi* that is supremely great and supremely unyielding. If one cultivates it with uprightness and does not harm it, it will fill up the space between Heaven and earth. It is a *qi* that unites righteousness with the Way. Without these, it starves. It is produced by accumulated righteousness. It cannot be obtained by a seizure of righteousness. If some of one's actions leave one's heart unsatisfied, it will starve. Consequently, I say that Gaozi never understood righteousness, because he regarded it as external.²⁰

"One must work at it, but do not aim at it directly. Let the heart not forget, but do not help it grow. Do not be like the man from Song.²¹ Among the people of the state of Song there was one who, concerned lest his grain not grow, pulled on it. Wearily, he returned home, and said to his family, 'Today I am worn out. I helped the grain to grow.' His son rushed out and looked at it. The grain was withered. Those in the world who do not help the grain to grow are few. Those who abandon it, thinking it will not help, are those who do not weed their grain. Those who help it grow are those who pull on the grain. Not only does this not help, but it even harms it."

Gongsun Chou said, "What is meant by 'understanding words'?"²²

Mengzi said, "If someone's expressions are one-sided, I know that by which they are deluded.²³ If someone's expressions are excessive, I know that by which they are entangled. If someone's expressions are heretical, I know

²⁰On the externality of righteousness, see *Mengzi* 6A4–5.

²¹The people of Song were the butt of many jokes. Cf. *Zhuangzi*, chapter 1, p. 212, and *Han Feizi*, chapter 49, p. 340.

²²Cf. *Analekts* 20.3.

²³The notion that people can be deluded (or "fixated") by seeing only part of the Way also appears in *Analekts* 17.8, and becomes a central notion in Xunzi's thought. See *Xunzi*, chapter 21, "Undoing Fixation," pp. 286–92.

that by which they are separated from the Way. If someone's expressions are evasive, I know that by which they are exhausted. When these states grow in the heart, they are harmful in governing. When they are manifested in governing, they are harmful in one's activities. When sages arise again, they will surely follow what I have said."

Gongsun Chou said, "Zai Wo and Zigong were good at rhetoric. Ran Niu, Minzi, and Yan Yuan were good at discussing virtuous actions.²⁴ Kongzi combined all these excellences, but said, 'When it comes to rhetoric, I am incapable.' In that case, are you, Master, already a sage?!"

Mengzi said, "Oh, what kind of talk is that? Long ago, Zigong asked Kongzi, 'Are you, Master, really a sage?' Kongzi replied, 'As for being a sage, I am incapable of that. I study without tiring and teach without wearying.'²⁵ Zigong said, 'To study without tiring is wisdom; to teach without wearying is benevolence. Being benevolent and wise, the Master is certainly already a sage!' So, to be a sage is not something Kongzi was comfortable with. What kind of talk was what you just said?!"

Gongsun Chou said, "Formerly, I heard the following: Zigong, Ziyou, and Zizhang all had one aspect of a sage. Ran Niu, Minzi, and Yan Yuan had all aspects of a sage, but in miniature. I venture to ask in which group you would be comfortable?"

Mengzi said, "Leave this topic for now."

Gongsun Chou said, "What about Bo Yi and Yi Yin?"

Mengzi said, "Their Ways were different. If he was not his ruler, he would not serve him; if they were not his subjects, he would not direct them; if things were orderly, he would advance; if they were chaotic, he would retreat. This was Bo Yi. Whom do I serve who is not my ruler? Whom do I direct who are not my subjects? If things were orderly, he would advance, and if they were chaotic he would also advance. This was Yi Yin. When one should take office, he would take office; when one should stop, he would stop; when one should take a long time, he would take a long time; when one should hurry, he would hurry. This was Kongzi. All were sages of ancient times. I have never been able to act like them, but my wish is to learn from Kongzi."

Gongsun Chou asked, "Were Bo Yi and Yi Yin at the same level as Kongzi?"

Mengzi said, "No. Since humans were first born there has never been another Kongzi."

Gongsun Chou said, "In that case, were there any similarities?"

Mengzi said, "There were. If any became ruler of a territory of a hundred *li*, he would be able to possess all under Heaven by bringing the various lords to his court. And if any could obtain all under Heaven by performing one unrighteous deed, or killing one innocent person, he would not do it. In these things they are the same."

Gongsun Chou asked, "I venture to ask wherein they differed?"

Mengzi said, "Zai Wo, Zigong, and You Ruo had wisdom sufficient to recognize a sage. Even if they exaggerated, they would not have done so to the extent of flattering someone they were fond of. Zai Wo said, 'In my view of Kongzi, he is far more noble than Yao and Shun!' Zigong said, 'He sees their rituals and appreciates their government; he hears their music and appreciates their Virtue; from a hundred generations later, through the succession of a hundred kings, nothing gets away from him. Since humans were first born, there has never been another like the Master.' You Ruo said, 'Is it only true of people? The unicorn among beasts, the phoenix among birds, Mount Tai among hills, and rivers and seas among flowing waters, are all of a kind. The sage among people is also of the same kind. Some stand out from this kind; some stick up from the row; since humans were first born, there has never been one who does this more so than Kongzi.'"

2A6 Mengzi said, "Humans all have hearts that are not unfeeling toward others. The former kings²⁶ had hearts that were not unfeeling toward others, so they had governments that were not unfeeling toward others. If one puts into practice a government that is not unfeeling toward others by means of a heart that is not unfeeling toward others, bringing order to the whole world is in the palm of your hand.

"The reason why I say that humans all have hearts that are not unfeeling toward others is this. Suppose someone suddenly saw a child about to fall into a well: everyone in such a situation would have a feeling of alarm and compassion—not because one sought to get in good with the child's parents, not because one wanted fame among their neighbors and friends, and not because one would dislike the sound of the child's cries.

"From this we can see that if one is without the heart of compassion, one is not a human. If one is without the heart of disdain, one is not a

²⁴These people are disciples of Kongzi, as are the additional people in the next list below.

²⁵Similar comments are attributed to Kongzi in *Analects* 7.2 and 7.34.

²⁶That is, the sage-kings of antiquity, such as Yao and Shun.

human. If one is without the heart of deference, one is not a human. If one is without the heart of approval and disapproval,²⁷ one is not a human. The heart of compassion is the sprout of benevolence. The heart of disdain is the sprout of righteousness. The heart of deference is the sprout of propriety. The heart of approval and disapproval is the sprout of wisdom.²⁸

"People having these four sprouts is like their having four limbs. To have these four sprouts but to say of oneself that one is unable to be virtuous is to steal from oneself. To say that one's ruler is unable to be virtuous is to steal from one's ruler. In general, having these four sprouts within oneself, if one knows to fill them all out, it will be like a fire starting up, a spring breaking through! If one can merely fill them out, they will be sufficient to care for all within the Four Seas. If one merely fails to fill them out, they will be insufficient to serve one's parents."

2B13 Mengzi left the state of Qi.²⁹ While on the road, Chongyu asked, "It seems that you, Master, have an unhappy countenance. The other day, I heard it from you, Master, that [Kongzi said], 'The gentleman does not resent Heaven for his troubles, nor does he cast aspersions upon other people.'³⁰

Mengzi said, "That time [in which Kongzi spoke] is the same as this time. Every five hundred years, there must arise a sage-king. Between them, there must be those whose names are known to a generation for their accomplishments. From the founding of the Zhou dynasty, it has already been more than seven hundred years. Numerically, this is excessive. And if one examines it in terms of the conditions of the world, then it is possible that a new sage-king will arise. Now, Heaven does not yet desire to pacify the world. If it desired to pacify the world, who besides me in the present time is there to help do it? Why would I be unhappy?!"

²⁷The words here rendered "approval" and "disapproval" are *shi* 是 and *fei* 非, respectively. A common meaning of these terms is "right" and "wrong" but in this context Mengzi intends not only knowledge but approval of what is right and disapproval of what is wrong.

²⁸Mengzi also discusses these four cardinal virtues in *Mengzi* 4A27 and 6A6. For more on *ren* 仁, "benevolence," see *Mengzi* 1A7. For more on *yi* 義, "righteousness," see *Mengzi* 6A10. For more on *zhi* 智, "wisdom," see *Mengzi* 5A9. On Mengzi's general view of self-cultivation, see *Mengzi* 7A17 and 7B31. "Propriety" here is the same as the character for "ritual" elsewhere. Mengzi is suggesting that an inclination toward ritual activity is innate in us. See *Mengzi* 3A5 for a possible illustration of this.

²⁹Mengzi left the state of Qi because his efforts to persuade the ruler to implement the "benevolent government" policies he advocated had failed. See *Mengzi* 1A7, 1B5, 1B6, and 1B8.

Book Three

3A3

... Mengzi said, "The well-field system takes a one *li* square piece of land, amounting to 900 *mu*.³¹ At its center is the public field. Eight families each keep privately 100 *mu*, and jointly cultivate the public field. Only after the public work is completed do they dare do their private work. This is the distinctive role of the rural people."

3A4 There was a certain Xu Xing who, on account of the doctrines of Shennong, went from the state of Chu to Teng, and, going in person to his gate, told Duke Wen, "People from distant parts have heard that you, My Lord, practice benevolent government. I wish to receive a homestead and become one of your subjects." Duke Wen gave him a place. His followers were a few dozen people, all of whom wore coarse clothing and made sandals and mats for a living.

Chen Liang's disciple Chen Xiang and his younger brother Xin carried their ploughs on their backs and went from Song to Teng, saying, "We have heard that you, My Lord, practice the government of a sage. This is to be a sage. I wish to become the subject of a sage."

Chen Xiang met Xu Xing and was delighted. He completely abandoned his former studies and studied with him instead. Chen Xiang met Mengzi and discoursed on the doctrines of Xu Xing, saying, "The ruler of Teng is truly a worthy ruler. Nonetheless, he has not yet heard the Way. The worthy plough with their subjects and then eat, eating breakfast and dinner with them and then governing. In the present case, Teng has granaries and treasures; this is to harm the people in order to nurture oneself. How can this be worthy?"

Mengzi said, "Xuzi must plant his grain first and only then eat."

Chen said, "That is so."

Mengzi said, "Xuzi must weave his cloth and only then wear clothes?"

Chen said, "No. Xuzi wears hemp."

Mengzi said, "Does Xuzi wear a cap?"

Chen said, "He does."

Mengzi said, "What sort does he wear?"

Chen said, "He wears plain silk."

³¹The "well-field system" begins with the idea of taking a square region of land and subdividing it into nine equal fields. The boundaries between these regions would then look something like this: # This happens to be the character for "well" in Chinese hence the

Mengzi said, "Does he weave it himself?"

Chen said, "No. He exchanges millet for it."

Mengzi said, "Why does Xuzi not weave it himself?"

Chen said, "That would interfere with farming."

Mengzi said, "Does Xuzi use clay pots for cooking, and an iron plough?"

Chen said, "That is so."

Mengzi said, "Does he make them himself?"

Chen said, "No. He exchanges millet for them."

Mengzi said, "Exchanging millet for tools does not harm the blacksmith. And when the blacksmith exchanges tools for millet, does this really hurt the farmer? Why does Xuzi not become a blacksmith, and only get everything from his own household to use? Why does he exchange things in such confusion with the various artisans? Why does Xuzi not avoid all this trouble?"

Chen said, "The activities of the various artisans inherently cannot be done along with farming."

Mengzi said, "In that case, can governing the world alone be done along with farming? There are the affairs of great people, and the affairs of lesser people. Furthermore, the products of the various artisans are available to each person. If one can make use of them only after one has made them oneself, this will lead the whole world to exhaustion. Hence it is said, 'Some labor with their hearts; some labor with their physical strength.' Those who labor with their hearts govern others; those who labor with their physical strength are governed by others. Those who are governed by others feed those others; those who govern others are fed by those others. This is righteousness throughout the world."³²

"It is the way of people that if they are full of food, have warm clothes, and live in comfort, but are without instruction, then they come close to being animals. Sage-king Shun was anxious about this too, so he instructed Xie to be Minister of Instruction, and instruct them about human relations: the relation of father and children is one of love, ruler and minister is one of righteousness, husband and wife is one of distinction, elder and younger is one of precedence, and that between friends is one of trust. Yao said, 'Encourage them, draw them forward, straighten them, rectify them, help them, make them practice, assist them, make them get it themselves, and

then benefit them.' Since the sage's anxiousness for his subjects was like this, could he have the free time to farm?"

[Chen said,] "If we follow the Way of Xuzi, market prices will never vary, and there will be no artifice in the state. Even if one sends a child to go to the market, no one will cheat him. Cotton cloth or silk cloth of the same length will be of equal price. Bundles of hemp or silk of the same weight will be of equal price. The same amount of any of the five grains will be the same price. Shoes of the same size will be of equal price."

Mengzi said, "It is the essence of things to be unequal.³³ One thing is twice or five times more than another, another ten or a hundred times more, another a thousand or ten thousand times more. If you line them up and identify them, this will bring chaos to the world. If a great shoe and a shoddy shoe are the same price, will anyone make the former? If we follow the Way of Xuzi, we will lead each other into artifice. How can this bring order to the state?"

3A5 The Mohist Yi Zhi sought to see Mengzi through the help of Xu Bi.³⁴ Mengzi said, "I am definitely willing to see him, but today I am still ill. When my illness improves, I will go and see him. Yi Zhi does not have to come." The next day, he again sought to see Mengzi. Mengzi said, "Today I [still] can [not] see him. [But] if one is not upright, the Way will not be manifest. I will make him upright."³⁵

"I have heard that Yizi is a Mohist. Mohists, in regulating mourning, take frugality as their Way. Yizi longs to change the world to the Mohist Way. Could it be that he honors the Mohist practice, while regarding it as not right? Nonetheless, Yizi buried his parents lavishly, so he served his parents by means of what he deems."

Xuzi told Yizi this. Yizi said, "As for the Way of the Confucians, the ancients tended the people like caring for children."³⁶ What does this saying

³³Zhuangzi may be implicitly criticizing this passage in "On Equalizing Things." See *Zhuangzi*, chapter 2, pp. 213–24.

³⁴For more on Mohism, see *Mengzi* 3B9 and 7A26, as well as Chapter 2 of this volume, pp. 59–113.

³⁵Notice that the conversation between Mengzi and Yi Zhi—who is referred to below as Yizi ("Master Yi")—is conducted using Xu Bi as an intermediary (presumably because Mengzi is ill). Cf. *Analects* 10.19.

³⁶This is a line from the *Hittite San I enne The Shun King* n 389

³²What follows in the original text is a historical narrative (similar to that in *Mengzi* 3B9) that explains the achievements of the sage-rulers of old in making civilization possible.

mean? I take it to mean that love is without distinctions, but it is bestowed beginning with one's parents."

Xuzi told Mengzi this. Mengzi said, "Does Yizi truly hold that one's affection for one's elder brother's son is like one's affection for one's neighbor's child? There is only one thing to be gleaned from that saying: when a crawling child is about to fall into a well, it is not the child's fault. Furthermore, Heaven, in producing the things in the world, causes them to have one source, but Yizi gives them two sources."³⁷

"Now, in past ages, there were those who did not bury their parents. When their parents died, they took them and abandoned them in a ditch. The next day they passed by them, and foxes were eating them, bugs were sucking on them. Sweat broke out on the survivors' foreheads. They turned away and did not look. Now, it was not for the sake of others that they sweated. What was inside their hearts broke through to their countenances. So they went home and, returning with baskets and shovels, covered them. If covering them was really right, then when filial children and benevolent people cover their parents, it must also be part of the Way."

Xuzi told Yizi this. Yizi looked thoughtful for a moment and said, "He has taught me."

3B2

... Mengzi said, "When a daughter marries, her mother instructs her. Sending her off at the gate, she cautions her, saying, 'When you go to your family, you must be respectful, and you must be cautious. Do not disobey your husband.' To regard obedience as proper is the Way of a wife or concubine."³⁸ ...

3B9 Gongduzi said, "Outsiders all say that you are fond of disputation, Master. I venture to ask why?"

Mengzi said, "How could I be fond of disputation? I simply have no choice. The people of the world were born long ago, and have alternated between being orderly and chaotic. In the time of Yao, the waters overflowed their courses, inundating the central states. Serpents occupied the land, and the people were unsettled. In low-lying regions, they made nests

³⁷Nivison ("Two Roots or One?" in his 1996) argues that the two sources (*ben* 本, literally "roots") Yizi accepts are (1) our innate sense of benevolence, which is first directed at our parents (cf. *Mengzi* 7A15), and (2) a doctrine of universalization that instructs us to extend this innate feeling so that it applies to everyone equally.

in trees. On the high ground, they lived in caves. The *History* says, 'The deluge warned us.'³⁹ 'The deluge' refers to the flooding water. Yu was directed to regulate the waters. Yu dredged out the earth and guided the water into the sea, chasing the reptiles into the marshes. The waters flowed out through the channels, and these became the Jiang, Huai, He, and Han rivers. The dangers to people having been eliminated, birds and beasts harmful to humans were destroyed, and only then were humans able to live on the plains.

"After Yao and Shun passed away, the Way of the sages decayed. Cruel rulers arose one after another, destroying homes to make ponds, so that the people had nowhere they could rest."⁴⁰ They made people abandon the fields so that they could be made into parks, so that the people could not get clothes and food. Evil doctrines and cruel practices also arose. As parks, ponds, and marshes became more numerous, the birds and beasts returned. By the time of Zhou, the world was again in great disorder. The Duke of Zhou assisted King Wu in punishing Zhou; he attacked the state of Yan, and after three years executed its ruler; he drove Feilian to a corner by the sea and terminated him; he eliminated fifty states; he drove tigers, leopards, rhinoceroses, and elephants far off, and the whole world rejoiced. The *History* says, 'Splendid indeed were the plans of King Wen! Great indeed were the achievements of King Wu! They assist and instruct us descendants. In all things they are correct, and lack nothing.'⁴¹

"With the decay of the Way, evil doctrines and cruel actions again arose. Ministers murdering their rulers—this happened. Sons murdering their fathers—this happened. Kongzi was afraid, and composed the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. The *Spring and Autumn Annals* is the activity of the Son of Heaven."⁴² For this reason, Kongzi said, 'Those who appreciate me, will it not be because of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*? Those who blame me, will it not be because of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*?'

"Once again, a sage-king has not arisen; the various lords are dissipated; pundits engage in contrary wrangling; the doctrines of Yang Zhu and Mo

³⁹See Legge, *The Shoo King*, p. 60.

⁴⁰The ponds referred to in this line, and the parks referred to in the next, were for the use of the ruler only, and not for the benefit of the people.

⁴¹See Legge, *The Shoo King*, p. 581.

⁴²The Chinese line here is ambiguous. It could mean that the *Spring and Autumn Annals* contains accounts of the activities of the ruler or that commencing it is the prerogative of the

Di fill the world.⁴³ If a doctrine does not lean toward Yang, then it leans toward Mo. Yang is 'for ourselves.' This is to not have a ruler. Mo is 'impartial caring.' This is to not have a father. To not have a father and to not have a ruler is to be an animal. Gongming Yi said, 'In your kitchens there is fat meat, and in your stables there are fat horses. Your people look gaunt, and in the wilds are the bodies of those dead of starvation. This is to lead animals to devour people.'

"If the Ways of Yang and Mo do not cease, and the Way of Kongzi is not made evident, then evil doctrines will dupe the people, and obstruct benevolence and righteousness. If benevolence and righteousness are obstructed, that leads animals to devour people. I am afraid that people will begin to devour one another! If we defend the Way of the former sages, fend off Yang and Mo, and get rid of specious words, then evil doctrines will be unable to arise. If they arise in one's heart, they are harmful in one's activities. If they arise in one's activities, they are harmful in governing. When sages arise again, they will certainly not differ with what I have said.

"Formerly, Yu suppressed the flood, and the world was settled. The Duke of Zhou incorporated the barbarians, drove away ferocious animals, and the common people were at peace. Kongzi completed the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, and disorderly ministers and brutal sons were afraid. The *Odes* say,

The barbarians of the west and north, these he chastised.

Jing and Shu, these he punished.

Thus no one dared to take us on."⁴⁴

Those who have no father and no ruler, these the Duke of Zhou chastised. I, too, desire to rectify people's hearts, to bring to an end evil doctrines, to fend off bad conduct, to get rid of specious words, so as to carry on the work of these three sages. How could I be fond of disputation? I simply have no choice. Anyone who can with words fend off Yang and Mo is a disciple of the sages."

⁴³On the philosophy of Mo Di (Mozì), see also *Mengzi* 3A5 and 7A26, as well as chapter 2 of this volume, pp. 59–113. On the philosophy of Yang Zhu, see *Mengzi* 7A26 and the Supplemental Text on *Yangism* ("Robber Zhi"), pp. 369–75.

⁴⁴*Mao* # 300. Jing is another name for the state of Chu. Shu was a small state located in what is now Anhui province.

3B10 Kuang Zhang said, "Wasn't Cheng Zhongzi an uncorruptible scholar?⁴⁵ While living in Wuling, he did not eat for three days, until his ears did not hear, and his eyes did not see. Above a well there was a plum tree whose fruit had been half-eaten by worms. Crawling, he went over to eat from it, and only after three bites could his ears hear and his eyes see."

Mengzi said, "Among the scholars of the state of Qi, Zhongzi is someone I would have to regard as standing out like a thumb among the fingers. Nonetheless, how could Zhongzi be uncorruptible? To fill out what Zhongzi attempts, one would have to be an earthworm."⁴⁶ Now, an earthworm eats dry earth above and drinks muddy water below. The house in which Zhongzi lives, was it built by Bo Yi, or was it in fact built by Robber Zhi? Was the millet that he eats planted by Bo Yi, or was it in fact planted by Robber Zhi? This cannot be known."

Kuang said, "Why is that a problem? He himself weaves sandals of hemp, his wife spinning the hemp, in exchange for these other things."

Mengzi said, "Zhongzi comes from a great family of Qi. His elder brother Dai received a salary of ten thousand bushels of grain from estates at Ge. He regarded his brother's salary as an unrighteous salary, and would not live off of it. He regarded his brothers' dwelling as an unrighteous dwelling, and would not live in it. He left his elder brother, distancing himself from his mother, and lived in Wuling. On a later day, he visited home, and someone had given a live goose to his elder brother as a gift. He knitted his brow and said, 'What will you use this cackling thing for?!' After that, his mother killed the goose, and gave it to him to eat. His elder brother came home and said, 'This is the meat of that "cackling thing." He went out and threw it up. If it comes from his mother, he doesn't eat, but if it comes from his wife, then he eats it. If it's his elder brother's dwelling, then he won't live in it; if it's in Wuling, then he lives in it. Is this really being able to fill out the category of action that he considers righteous?! Someone like Zhongzi must be an earthworm in order to fill out what he attempts."

Book Four

4A10 Mengzi said, "One cannot have a discussion with those who are destroying themselves. One cannot act with those who throw themselves away. Those whose words are opposed to propriety and righteousness are

⁴⁵Cheng Zhongzi may be another follower of Xu Xing (see *Mengzi* 3A4).

⁴⁶Compare the notion of "filling out" the sprouts in *Mengzi* 2A6.

who I mean by 'those who are destroying themselves.' Those who say, 'I myself am unable to dwell in benevolence and follow righteousness' are who I mean by 'those who throw themselves away.' Benevolence is people's peaceful abode. Righteousness is people's proper path. For one to vacate one's peaceful abode and not dwell in it, or for one to set aside one's proper path and not follow it—how sad!"

4A11 Mengzi said, "The Way lies in what is near, but people seek it in what is distant; one's task lies in what is easy, but people seek it in what is difficult. If everyone would treat their kin as kin, and their elders as elders, the world would be at peace."

4A15 Mengzi said, "Of what is present within a person, nothing is more ingenuous than the pupils of the eyes. The pupils cannot hide one's evil. If, in one's bosom, one is upright, the pupils will be bright. If, in one's bosom, one is not upright, the pupils will be shady. If one listens to people's words and looks at their pupils, how can they hide?"

4A17 Chunyu Kun said, "That men and women should not touch in handing something to one another—is this the ritual?"⁴⁷

Mengzi said, "It is the ritual."

Chunyu Kun said, "If your sister-in-law were drowning, would you pull her out with your hand?"

Mengzi said, "To not pull your sister-in-law out when she is drowning is to be a beast. That men and women should not touch in handing something to one another is the ritual, but if your sister-in-law is drowning, to pull her out with your hand is discretion."⁴⁸

Chunyu Kun said, "Currently, the world is drowning! Why is it that you, sir, do not pull it out?"

Mengzi said, "When the world is drowning, one pulls it out with the Way; when one's sister-in-law is drowning, one pulls her out with one's hand. Do you want me save the world with a pull of my hand?"

4A27 Mengzi said, "The core of benevolence is serving one's parents. The core of righteousness is obeying one's elder brother. The core of wisdom is knowing these two and not abandoning them. The core of ritual is to regulate and adorn these two. The core of music is to delight in these two.

⁴⁷Chunyu Kun was a rival philosopher.

⁴⁸On the 48 "discretion" literally means "weighing" as on a balance. On "discretion," see

"If one delights in them then they grow. If they grow then how can they be stopped? If they cannot be stopped, then without realizing it one's feet begin to step in time to them and one's hands dance according to their rhythms."⁴⁹

4B2 When Zichan was in charge of the government of the state of Zheng, he used his own carriage to carry people across the Zhen and the Wei rivers. Mengzi said, "He was kind, but did not understand how to govern. By September, the foot bridges are to be repaired, and by October, the carriage bridges are to be repaired, so the people no longer face the difficulty of wading across the rivers."⁵⁰ If gentlemen are equitable in governing, it is acceptable even to order people out of their way while they travel. How can they carry every single person across? Hence, there will simply not be enough days if, in governing, one tries to make everyone happy."

4B6 Mengzi said, "The propriety that is not propriety, the righteousness that is not righteousness—the great person will not practice these."⁵¹

4B8 Mengzi said, "People must have some things that they do not do, and only then can they really do anything."

4B11 Mengzi said, "As for great people, their words do not have to be trustworthy,⁵² and their actions do not have to bear fruit. They rest only in righteousness."

4B12 Mengzi said, "Great people are those who do not lose the hearts of their children."⁵³

⁴⁹I owe the translation of these last lines to Philip J. Ivanhoe.

⁵⁰The rivers have fords that are shallow enough to wade across on foot, or drive through on a carriage. The bridges are damaged each year by the heavy rains in the spring and summer. Consequently, they must be repaired in the autumn.

⁵¹Cf. *Mengzi* 7B37.

⁵²To illustrate a case in which a great person's words do not have to be trustworthy, the Han dynasty commentator Zhao Qi refers to *Analekts* 13.18 in which upright "sons cover up for their fathers." Compare also *Mengzi* 1A7, n. 1 and *Analekts* 13.20.

⁵³I translate this line according to the interpretation of the Han dynasty commentator Zhao Qi, where "children" is a metaphor for the ruler's subjects. (Cf. 3A5, in which Mengzi says that good rulers treat their subjects like "children," using the same term as in this passage.) However, many interpreters follow the reading of the Song dynasty commentator Zhu Xi: "Great people are those who do not lose the hearts of their children." Cf. 1A7, n. 1.

4B18 Xuzi said, "Zhongni several times spoke of water, saying, 'Ah water! Ah water!'⁵⁴ What did he find so worthy about water?" Mengzi said, "It gushes from the springs, not letting up day or night, only advancing after filling up the hollows, and going on to the four seas. Things that have a source are like this."⁵⁵ It was simply this that he found so worthy. If it merely fails to have a source, the rain collects during the spring months, and the drainage ditches are all full. However, you can just stand and wait and it will become dry. Hence, gentlemen are ashamed to have their reputation exceed what they genuinely are."

4B19 Mengzi said, "That by which humans differ from birds and beasts is slight. The people abandon it. The gentleman preserves it. The sage-king Shun was insightful about things. He was perceptive about human relationships. He acted out of benevolence and righteousness. He did not act out benevolence and righteousness."

4B24

... Mengzi said, "The people of the state of Zheng sent Zizhuo Ruzi to invade the state of Wei. Wei sent Si of Yugong to pursue him. Zizhuo Ruzi said, 'Today my illness is acting up. I am unable to hold my bow. I suppose I shall die.' He asked his chariot driver, 'Who is it that chases me?' His driver said, 'It is Si of Yugong.' He said, 'I shall live!' His driver said, 'Si of Yugong is the best archer of the state of Wei. What do you mean, Master, when you say, 'I shall live'?' He said, 'Si of Yugong studied archery under Tuo of Yingong. Tuo of Yingong studied archery under me. Now, Tuo of Yingong is an upright person. Those whom he chooses for friends must be upright.' Si of Yugong arrived and said, 'Why do you not hold your bow, Master?' He said, 'Today my illness is acting up. I am unable to hold my bow.' He replied, 'I, petty person that I am, studied archery under Tuo of Yingong. Tuo of Yingong studied archery under you, Master. I cannot bear to take your Way and turn it against you, Master. Nonetheless, what I do today is my ruler's business. I dare not cast it aside.' He pulled out some arrows and hit them against the wheel of his chariot, breaking off their tips. He then shot off a set of four arrows and only then returned."

⁵⁴Cf. *Analects* 6.23.⁵⁵On the notion of one's *ben* 本 ("source," or what is "fundamental"), see also *Mengzi* 3A5 and 6A10.

4B28 Mengzi said, "That by means of which gentlemen differ from others is that they preserve their hearts. Gentlemen preserve their hearts through benevolence and through propriety. The benevolent love others, and those who have propriety respect others. Those who love others are generally loved by others. Those who respect others are generally respected by others."

"Here is a person who is harsh to me. A gentleman in this situation will invariably examine himself, saying, 'I must not be benevolent. I must be lacking in propriety. How else could this situation have come upon me?'" If he examines himself and *is* benevolent, and if he examines himself and *has* propriety, yet the other person is still harsh, a gentleman will invariably examine himself, saying, 'I must not be loyal.' If he examines himself and *is* loyal, yet the other person is still harsh, a gentleman says, 'This person is simply incorrigible! What difference is there between a person like this and an animal?! What point is there in rebuking an animal?'" . . .

4B29 Yu and Hou Ji were in a peaceful era, yet they were so busy governing that they passed the doors of their homes three times without entering. Kongzi deemed them worthy. Yan Hui was in a chaotic era, lived in a narrow alleyway, subsisting upon meager bits of rice and water—other people could not have borne such hardship, and yet it never spoiled Yan Hui's joy. Kongzi deemed him worthy.⁵⁶

Mengzi said, "Yu, Hou Ji, and Yan Hui had the same Way. Yu thought that, if there were anyone in the world who drowned, it was as if he had drowned them himself. Hou Ji thought that, if there were anyone in the world who was starving, it was as if he had starved them himself. Hence, their urgency was like this. If Yu, Hou Ji, and Yan Hui had exchanged places, they all would have done as the others."

"Now, suppose there is someone from your household involved in an altercation outside. It is acceptable to go and help even though you are disheveled and not fully dressed. But if there is someone from your village involved in an altercation outside, it is foolish to go and help when you are disheveled and not fully dressed. Even bolting your door is acceptable in this case."

4B33 There was a man of the state of Qi who lived in a home with his wife and concubine. When the husband went out, he would always return full of wine and meat. His wife asked whom he ate with, and they were those

⁵⁶Cf. *Analects* 6.11.

of the highest wealth and rank. His wife told his concubine, "When our husband goes out, he always returns full of wine and meat. When I ask whom he ate with, it is always those of the highest wealth and rank. Yet no one noteworthy ever comes here. I shall go and spy on where our husband goes."

Arising early, she discreetly followed where her husband went. Throughout the city, there was no one who stopped to chat with him. In the end, he approached those performing sacrifices among the graves beyond the East Wall of the city, and begged for their leftovers. If this was not enough, he would then look around and approach others. This was his way of getting his fill.

His wife returned home and told his concubine, saying, "A husband is someone whom we look toward till the ends of our lives. And he's like this!" And with the concubine she cursed her husband, and they cried together in the middle of the courtyard. But their husband did not know this, and came happily home, strutting before his wife and concubine.

From the perspective of a gentleman, it is rare indeed that the means by which people seek wealth, rank, profit, and success would not make their wives and concubines cry together in shame!⁵⁷

Book Five

5A2 Wan Zhang asked, "The *Odes* say,

How should one proceed in taking a wife?

One must inform one's parents."⁵⁸

If this saying is trustworthy, it seems that no one would follow it more than the sage Shun. How is it that Shun took a wife without informing them?"

Mengzi said, "If he had informed them he would have been unable to take a wife. For a man and a woman to dwell together in one home is the greatest of human relations."⁵⁹ If he had informed them, he would

be abandoning the greatest of human relations, which would have caused resentment toward his parents. Because of this he did not inform them."

Wang Zhang said, "I have now received your instruction regarding Shun's taking a wife without informing his parents. But how is it that the Emperor gave his daughter to Shun as a wife and did not inform them?"

Mengzi said, "The Emperor knew too that if he informed them he would not be able to give his daughter to him as a wife."

Wang Zhang said, "His parents made Shun repair the grain silo, and then they took the ladder away and his father set fire to the silo, but Shun escaped. Then they made him dig a well. He left the well, but, not knowing this, they covered up the well. His brother Xiang said, 'The credit for the plot to kill this ruler is all mine! His oxen and sheep, his granaries and silos shall be my parents', but his spear and shield, his lute, and his bow are mine! And I shall make my two sisters-in-law service me in bed!' So Xiang went into Shun's room, but Shun was on his bed playing his lute. Xiang, looking embarrassed, said, 'I was worried and thinking of you!' Shun said, 'The various ministers of mine—help me to direct them.' But surely Shun did not fail to understand that Xiang planned to murder him?"

Mengzi said, "How could he not understand? But when Xiang was anxious, he was also anxious; when Xiang was happy, he was also happy."

Wan Zhang asked, "In that case, did Shun feign happiness?"

Mengzi said, "No. Formerly, someone made a gift of a live fish to Zichan of the state of Zheng. Zichan had the pondkeeper take care of it in the pond. But the pondkeeper cooked it, and reported back to Zichan, 'When I first let it go, it seemed sickly, but in a little while it perked up, and went off happily.' Zichan said, 'It's where it should be! It's where it should be!' The pondkeeper left and said, 'Whoever said that Zichan was wise! I have already cooked and eaten it, and he says, 'It's where it should be! It's where it should be!'' Hence, gentlemen can be tricked by what is in accordance with their practices, but it is hard to ensnare them with what is not the Way. Xiang came in accordance with the Way of one who loves his elder brother. Hence, Shun genuinely trusted him and was happy about him. How could he have feigned it?"

5A9 Wan Zhang asked, "Someone said that the sage Boli Xi sold himself to a herder in the state of Qin for five ramskins, and fed cattle, because he sought to meet Duke Mu of Qin. Is this story trustworthy?"

⁵⁷A sense of shame is probably related to the "sprout of disdain" (see *Mengzi* 7A7). Consequently, this passage suggests that women, too, have the sprouts or hearts of virtue (see *Mengzi* 2A6). On the ethical status of women, see also *Mengzi* 3B2.

⁵⁸*Mao* # 101.

⁵⁹On the "human relations," see also *Mengzi* 3A4 and 4B19.

Mengzi said, "It is not. That is not the case. This was fabricated by those obsessed with taking office. Boli Xi was a person of the state of Yu."⁶⁰ The people of the state of Jin, in exchange for jade from Chui Ji and a team of horses from Qu, gained right of passage through Yu to attack the state of Guo.⁶¹ Qi of Gong remonstrated against this, but Boli Xi did not remonstrate against it. He knew that the Duke of Yu could not be remonstrated with, so he left and went to Qin. He was already seventy years old. If he did not yet know that it would be base to feed oxen in order to seek to meet Duke Mu of Qin, could he have been called wise? He knew that the Duke of Yu could not be remonstrated with so he did not remonstrate with him. Can this be called unwise? He knew that the Duke of Yu was about to perish, so he abandoned him first. This cannot be called unwise. When he was, in good time, raised to prominence in Qin, he knew that Duke Mu was someone with whom he could work, so he became his minister. Can this be called unwise? He was a minister in Qin and made his ruler distinguished throughout the world, so that he is an example for later ages. Is this something he would be capable of if he were not a worthy person? To sell oneself so as to accomplish things for one's lord—even a villager who cared for himself would not do this. Can one say that a worthy person would do it?"

Book Six

6A1 Gaozi said, "Human nature is like a willow tree; righteousness is like cups and bowls. To make human nature benevolent and righteous is like making a willow tree into cups and bowls."⁶²

Mengzi said, "Can you, sir, following the nature of the willow tree, make it into cups and bowls? You must violate and rob the willow tree, and only then can you make it into cups and bowls. If you must violate and rob the willow tree in order to make it into cups and bowls, must you also violate and rob people in order to make them benevolent and righteous? If there

⁶⁰A small state in which the ancestors of Shun were said to be enfeoffed. It was located in what is now the northeast part of Pinglu county in modern Shanxi province.

⁶¹A small state ruled by the descendants of King Wen's younger brother. It was located in what is now Pinglu county in modern Shanxi province.

⁶²Gaozi was a rival philosopher (see also *Mengzi* 2A2). Compare his comment here (as well as his statement in 6A4 below that the desires for food and sex are nature) with Xunzi's comments in "An Exhortation to Learning" and "Human Nature Is Bad." See *Xunzi*, channer

is something that leads people to regard benevolence and righteousness as misfortunes for them, it will surely be your doctrine, will it not?"

6A2 Gaozi said, "Human nature is like swirling water. Make an opening for it on the eastern side, then it flows east. Make an opening for it on the western side, then it flows west. Human nature's not distinguishing between good and not good is like water's not distinguishing between eastern and western."

Mengzi said, "Water surely does not distinguish between east and west. But does it not distinguish between upward and downward? Human nature's being good is like water's tending downward. There is no human who does not tend toward goodness. There is no water that does not tend downward."

"Now, by striking water and making it leap up, you can cause it to go past your forehead. If you guide it by damming it, you can cause it to remain on a mountaintop. But is this the nature of water? It is that way because of the circumstances. That humans can be caused to not be good is due to their natures also being like this."

6A3 Gaozi said, "Life is what is meant by 'nature.'"⁶³

Mengzi said, "Is *life* is what is meant by 'nature' the same as *white* is what is meant by 'white'?"⁶⁴

Gaozi said, "It is."

Mengzi said, "Is the white of a white feather the same as the white of white snow, and is the white of white snow the same as the white of white jade?"

Gaozi said, "It is."

Mengzi said, "Then is the nature of a dog the same as the nature of an ox, and is the nature of an ox the same as the nature of a human?"

6A4 Gaozi said, "The desires for food and sex are nature. Benevolence is internal; it is not external. Righteousness is external; it is not internal."⁶⁵

⁶³The Song dynasty commentator Zhu Xi remarks, "Life' refers to that by means of which humans and animals perceive and move." The Han dynasty commentator Zhao Qi suggests that Gaozi's comment means that, "In general, things that are the same in being alive will all be the same in nature."

⁶⁴In ancient Chinese dialectic, "white" was the stock example of a term that functions the same way regardless of the context of its occurrence. See Graham (1989), pp. 150–55.

⁶⁵Cf. *Confucius*, *Book*

Mengzi said, "Why do you say that benevolence is internal and righteousness is external?"

Gaozi said, "They are elderly, and we treat them as elderly. It is not that they are elderly because of us. Similarly, that is white, and we treat it as white, according to its being white externally to us. Hence, I say it is external."

Mengzi said, "[Elderliness] is different from whiteness. The whiteness of a [white] horse is no different from the whiteness of a gray-haired person. But surely we do not regard the elderliness of an old horse as being no different from the elderliness of an old person.⁶⁶ Furthermore, do you say that the one who is elderly is righteous, or that the one who treats another as elderly is righteous?"

Gaozi said, "My younger brother I love; the younger brother of a person from Qin I do not love. In this case, it is I who feel happy [because of my love for my brother]. Hence, I say that it is internal. I treat as elderly an elderly person from Chu, and I also treat as elderly my own elderly. In this case, it is the elderly person who feels happy. Hence, I say that it is external."⁶⁷

Mengzi said, "Savoring the roast of a person from Qin is no different from savoring my roast. So what you describe is also the case with objects. Is savoring a roast, then, also external?"

6A5 Meng Jizi asked Gongduzi, "Why do you say that righteousness is internal?"⁶⁸

Gongduzi said, "I act out of my respect, hence I say that it is internal."

Meng Jizi said, "If a fellow villager is older than your eldest brother by a year, then whom do you respect?"

Gongduzi said, "I respect my brother."

Meng Jizi said, "When you are pouring wine, then whom do you serve first?"

Gongduzi said, "I first pour wine for the fellow villager."⁶⁹

⁶⁶Because an elderly person deserves to be treated with deference and respect, while an elderly horse is, in Mengzi or Gaozi's view, almost worthless.

⁶⁷The Song dynasty commentator Zhu Xi explains, "He means that the love is determined by me, hence benevolence is internal; respect is determined by elderliness, hence righteousness is external."

⁶⁸Meng Jizi is a follower of Gaozi. Gongduzi is a follower of Mengzi.

⁶⁹Because ritual dictates that the elder person be served first.

Meng Jizi said, "The one whom you respect is the former, but the one whom you treat as elder is the latter. Hence, it really is external. It does not come from [how you feel] internally."

Gongduzi was not able to answer. He told Mengzi about it. Mengzi said, "Next time, ask him, 'Do you respect your uncle? or do you respect your younger brother?' He will say, 'I respect my uncle.' Then you say, 'When your younger brother is playing the part of the deceased in the sacrifice, then whom do you respect?' He will say, 'I respect my younger brother.' Then you say, 'What happened to the respect for your uncle?' He will say, 'The reason [why my respect changes] has to do with the role my younger brother occupies.' Then you also say, 'In the case you asked about in our previous discussion, the reason why my respect changes has to do with the role the fellow villager occupies. Ordinary respect is directed toward my brother, but temporary respect is directed toward the fellow villager.'"

Meng Jizi, upon hearing all this, said, "If you respect your uncle, then it is respect. If you respect your younger brother, then it is respect. So it really is external. It does not come from [how you feel] internally."

Gongduzi said, "On a winter day, one drinks broth. On a summer day, one drinks water. Are drinking and eating also, then, external?"

6A6 Gongduzi said, "Gaozi says, 'Human nature is neither good nor not good.' Some say, 'Human nature can become good, and it can become not good.' Therefore, when Wen and Wu arose, the people were fond of goodness. When You and Li arose, the people were fond of destructiveness. Some say, 'There are natures that are good, and there are natures that are not good.' Therefore, with Yao as ruler, there was Xiang. With the Blind Man as a father, there was Shun.⁷⁰ And with Zhou as their nephew, and as their ruler besides, there were Viscount Qi of Wei and Prince Bi Gan. Now, you say that human nature is good. Are all those others, then, wrong?"

Mengzi said, "As for their essence, they can become good. This is what I mean by calling their natures good. As for their becoming not good, this is not the fault of their potential. Humans all have the heart of compassion. Humans all have the heart of disdain. Humans all have the heart of respect. Humans all have the heart of approval and disapproval. The heart of compassion is benevolence. The heart of disdain is righteousness. The

⁷⁰See *Mengzi* 5A2 for a story illustrative of the evil of Shun's brother Xiang and his father, the so-called "Blind Man."

fettering is repeated, then the evening *qi* is insufficient to preserve it. If the evening *qi* is insufficient to preserve it, then one is not far from a bird or beast. Others see that he is a bird or beast, and think that there was never any capacity there. Is this what a human truly is?!

"Hence, if it merely gets nourishment, there is nothing that will not grow. If it merely loses its nourishment, there is nothing that will not vanish. Kongzi said, 'Grasped then preserved; abandoned then lost. Its goings and comings have no fixed time. No one knows its home.'⁷⁶ Was it not the heart of which he spoke?"

6A10 Mengzi said, "Fish is something I desire; bear's paw⁷⁷ is also something I desire. If I cannot have both, I will forsake fish and select bear's paw. Life is something I desire; righteousness is also something I desire. If I cannot have both, I will forsake life and select righteousness. Life is something I desire, but there is something I desire more than life. Hence, I will not do just anything to obtain it. Death is something I hate, but there is something I hate more than death. Hence, there are calamities I do not avoid. If it were the case that someone desired nothing more than life, then what means that could obtain life would that person not use? If it were the case that someone hated nothing more than death, then what would that person not do that would avoid calamity? From this we can see that there are means of obtaining life that one will not employ. From this we can also see that there are things that would avoid calamity that one will not do. Therefore, there are things one desires more than life and there are also things one hates more than death. It is not the case that only the worthy person has this heart. All humans have it. The worthy person simply never loses it."⁷⁸

"A basket of food and a bowl of soup—if one gets them then one will live; if one doesn't get them then one will die. But if they're given with contempt, then even a homeless person will not accept them. If they're trampled upon, then even a beggar won't take them. However, when it comes to a salary of ten thousand bushels of grain, then one doesn't notice propriety and righteousness and accepts them. What do ten thousand bushels add to me? Do I accept them for the sake of a beautiful mansion? for the

obedience of a wife and concubines? to have poor acquaintances be indebted to me? In the previous case, for the sake of one's own life one did not accept what was offered. In the current case, for the sake of a beautiful mansion one does it. In the previous case, for the sake of one's own life one did not accept what was offered. In the current case, for the obedience of a wife and concubine one does it. In the previous case, for the sake of one's own life one did not accept what was offered. In the current case, in order to have poor acquaintances be indebted to oneself one does it. Is this indeed something that one can't stop doing? This is what is called losing one's fundamental heart."⁷⁹

6A12 Mengzi said, "Suppose someone has a ring finger that is bent and will not straighten, and it is not the case that it hurts or that it interferes with one's activities. But if there is something that can straighten it, one will not consider the road from one end of the world to the other too far, because one's finger is not as good as other people's. If one's finger is not as good as other people's, one knows to dislike it. But if one's heart is not as good as other people's, one does not know to dislike it. This is what is called not appreciating the categories of importance."

6A15 Gongduzi asked, "We are the same in being humans. Yet some become great humans and some become petty humans. Why?"

Mengzi said, "Those who follow their greater part become great humans. Those who follow their petty part become petty humans."

Gongduzi said, "We are the same in being humans. Why is it that some follow their greater part and some follow their petty part?"

Mengzi said, "It is not the office of the ears and eyes to reflect, and they are misled by things. Things interact with things and simply lead them along. But the office of the heart is to reflect. If it reflects, then it will get [Virtue]. If it does not reflect, then it will not get it."⁸⁰ This is what Heaven has given us. If one first takes one's stand on what is greater, then what is lesser will not be able to snatch it away. This is how to become a great human."

⁷⁶No quotation like this is found in the received text of the *Analekts*.

⁷⁷A culinary delicacy.

⁷⁸Cf. Xunzi's "On Correct Name." See *Xunzi*, chapter 22, p. 297.

⁷⁹"Fundamental" is literally *ben* 本, "root." Cf. *Mengzi* 3A5.

⁸⁰On *si* 思, "reflection" or "concentration," see also *Mengzi* 6A6 and *Important Terms*.

Book Seven

7A1 Mengzi said, "To fully apply one's heart is to understand one's nature.⁸¹ If one understands one's nature, then one understands Heaven. To preserve one's mind and nourish one's nature is the means to serve Heaven. To not become conflicted over the length of one's life, and to cultivate oneself to await it is the means to stand and await one's fate."

7A3 Mengzi said, "'If one seeks, one will get it; if one abandons it, one will lose it.'⁸² In this case, seeking helps in getting, because the seeking is in oneself. 'There is a way to seek it, and getting it depends on fate.' In this case, seeking does not help in getting, because the seeking is external."⁸³

7A4 Mengzi said, "The ten thousand things are all brought to completion by us.⁸⁴ To turn toward oneself and discover integrity—there is no greater delight than this. To firmly act out of sympathetic understanding⁸⁵—there is nothing closer to benevolence than this."

7A7 Mengzi said, "A sense of shame is indeed important for people! Those who are crafty in their contrivances and schemes have no use for shame. If one is not ashamed of not being as good as others, how will one ever be as good as others?"⁸⁶

7A15 Mengzi said, "That which people are capable of without studying is their best capability. That which they know without pondering is their best knowledge."

"Among babes in arms there is none that does not know to love its parents. When they grow older, there is none that does not know to respect

⁸¹This should be read in the light of *Mengzi* 6A6.

⁸²Cf. *Mengzi* 6A6.

⁸³The Song dynasty commentator Zhu Xi says, "'In oneself' means that benevolence, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom are all things that my nature has. . . . 'Is external' means that riches, honor, profit, and success are all external things."

⁸⁴Many other translators follow the reading of the Song dynasty commentator Zhu Xi, according to which the sentence means, "The ten thousand things are all complete within us."

⁸⁵See *Analects* 15.24 on "sympathetic understanding."

⁸⁶The Song dynasty commentator Zhu Xi says, "A sense of shame is the heart of disdain that we have inherently" (cf. *Mengzi* 6A6 and 2A6).

its elder brother. Treating one's parents as parents⁸⁷ is benevolence. Respecting one's elders is righteousness. There is nothing else to do but extend these to the world."⁸⁸

7A17 Mengzi said, "Do not do that which you would not do; do not desire that which you would not desire. Simply be like this."⁸⁹

7A26 Mengzi said, "Yangzi favored being 'for ourselves.' If plucking out one hair from his body would have benefitted the whole world, he would not do it. Mozi favored 'impartial caring.' If scraping himself bare from head to heels would benefit the whole world, he would do it. Zimo held to the middle.⁹⁰ Holding to the middle is close to it. But if one holds to the middle without discretion,⁹¹ that is the same as holding to one extreme. What I dislike about those who hold to one extreme is that they detract from the Way. They elevate one thing and leave aside a hundred others."

7A27 Mengzi said, "Those who are starving find their food delicious; those who are parched find their drink delicious. They have no standard for food and drink because their hunger and thirst injure it. Is it only the mouth and belly that hunger and thirst injure? Human hearts too are subject to injury. If one can prevent the injury of hunger and thirst from being an injury to one's heart, then there will be no concern about not being as good as other people."

7A35 Tao Ying asked, "When Shun was Son of Heaven, and Gao Yao was his Minister of Crime, if 'the Blind Man' had murdered someone, what would they have done?"⁹²

Mengzi said, "Gao Yao would simply have arrested him!"

⁸⁷That is, as parents should be treated (including having the proper feelings toward them).

⁸⁸Cf. *Mengzi* 7A17 and 7B31.

⁸⁹This passage should be read in the light of *Mengzi* 7B31.

⁹⁰On Mozi, see *Mengzi* 3A5 and 3B9, as well as Chapter 2 of this volume. On Yangzi (Yang Zhu), see *Mengzi* 3B9 and the Supplemental Text on *Yangism* ("Robber Zhi"). We know nothing about Zimo beyond what this passage tells us.

⁹¹On "discretion," see *Mengzi* 4A17 and n. 48.

⁹²Tao Ying is a follower of Mengzi. On Shun's father, the "Blind Man," see *Mengzi* 5A7.

Tao Ying asked, "So Shun would not have forbidden it?" Mengzi said, "How could Shun have forbidden it? Gao Yao had a sanction for his actions."

Tao Ying asked, "So what would Shun have done?"

Mengzi said, "Shun looked at casting aside the whole world like casting aside a worn sandal. He would have secretly carried him on his back and fled, to live in the coastland, happy to the end of his days, joyfully forgetting the world."

7A39 King Xuan of Qi wanted to shorten the period of mourning. Gongsun Chou said, "Isn't mourning for a year better than stopping completely?"

Mengzi said, "This is like if someone were twisting his elder brother's arm, and you simply said to him, 'How about doing it more gently?' Simply instruct him in filial piety and brotherly respect."

One of the imperial sons had a mother who died. His tutor asked on his behalf to let him mourn for a few months.⁹³ Gongsun Chou said, "How about this case?"

Mengzi said, "In this case, he desires to mourn the full period but he cannot. Even doing it one extra day would be better than stopping completely. What I had been talking about before was a case in which he did not do it, even though nothing prevented it."

7A45 Mengzi said, "Gentlemen, in relation to animals, are sparing of them, but are not benevolent toward them. In relation to the people, they are benevolent toward them, but do not treat them as kin. They treat their kin as kin, and then are benevolent toward the people. They are benevolent toward the people, and then are sparing of animals."⁹⁴

7B3 Mengzi said, "It would be better to not have the *History* than to completely believe it. I accept only two or three passages in the 'Completion of the War' chapter. A benevolent person has no enemies in the world. When the one who was supremely benevolent [King Wu] attacked the one who

was supremely unbenevolent [Tyrant Zhou], how could the blood have flowed till it floated the grain-pounding sticks?"⁹⁵

7B5 Mengzi said, "A carpenter or a wheelwright can give another his compass or T-square, but he cannot make another skillful."

7B11 Mengzi said, "If one is fond of making a name for oneself, one may be able to relinquish a state that can field a thousand chariots. But if one is just not that kind of person, relinquishing a basket of rice or a bowl of soup would show in one's face."

7B16 Mengzi said, "Benevolence is being a human. To bring them into harmony and put it into words is the Way."⁹⁶

7B24 Mengzi said, "The mouth in relation to flavors, the eyes in relation to sights, the ears in relation to tones, the nose in relation to odors, the four limbs in relation to comfort—these are matters of human nature, but they are mandated.⁹⁷ A gentleman does not refer to them as 'human nature.' Benevolence in relation to father and son, righteousness in relation to ruler and minister, propriety in relation to guest and host, wisdom in relation to value, the sage in relation to the Way of Heaven—these are mandated, but they involve human nature. A gentleman does not refer to them as 'mandated.'"

7B31 Mengzi said, "People all have things that they will not bear. To extend this reaction to that which they will bear is benevolence. People all have things that they will not do. To extend this reaction to that which they will do is righteousness. If people can fill out the heart that does not desire to harm others, their benevolence will be inexhaustible. If people can fill out the heart that will not trespass, their righteousness will be inexhaustible. If people can fill out the core reaction⁹⁸ of not accepting being addressed disrespectfully, there will be nowhere they go where they do not do what is righteous. If a scholar may not speak and speaks, this is flattering by

⁹⁵See Legge, *The Shoo King*, p. 315.

⁹⁶Alternative translation: "To bring them into harmony is called the Way."

⁹⁷That is, they are mandated (or required) by Heaven.

⁹⁸Compare *Mengzi* 4A27 on the notion of a "core" reaction

⁹³Chinese commentators explain that the son's mother was a secondary wife of the king, and the king's primary wife opposed letting him mourn for the full three-year period. On the three-year mourning period, see *Analekts* 17.21.

⁹⁴Cf. *Mengzi* 3A5 and 1A7.

speaking. If one should speak but does not speak, this is flattering by not speaking. These are both in the category of trespassing."

7B37 Wan Zhang asked, "When in the state of Chen, Kongzi said, 'Perhaps I should return home. The scholars of my school are wild and hasty, advancing and grasping, but do not forget their early behavior.'⁹⁹ When in Chen, why did Kongzi think of the wild scholars of his home state of Lu?"

Mengzi said, "Kongzi said, 'If I do not get to associate with those who attain the Way, then must it not be those who are wild or squeamish? Those who are wild advance and grasp. Those who are squeamish have some things that they will not do.'¹⁰⁰ Did Kongzi not want those who attained the Way? He could not be sure of getting them. Hence, he thought of the next best."

Wan Zhang said, "I venture to ask what one must be like, such that one can be called 'wild.'"

Mengzi said, "Those like Qin Zhang, Zeng Xi, and Mu Pi are the ones Kongzi called 'wild.'¹⁰¹"

Wan Zhang said, "Why did he call them 'wild'?"

Mengzi said, "Their resolutions were grand. They said, 'The ancients! The ancients!' But if one calmly examines their conduct, it does not match their resolutions and words. If he also failed to get those who are wild, he desired to get to associate with those who disdain to do what is not pure. These are the squeamish. They are the next best."

"Kongzi said, 'The only ones who pass by my door without entering my home whom I do not regret getting as associates are the village worthies. The village worthies are the thieves of virtue.'¹⁰²"

Wan Zhang said, "What must one be like, such that one can be called a 'village worthy'?"

Mengzi said, "The village worthies are those who say,

Why are [the resolutions of the wild scholars] so grand? Their words take no notice of their actions, and their actions take no notice of their words. Then they say, "The ancients! The

⁹⁹Compare *Analects* 5.22.

¹⁰⁰Compare *Analects* 13.21.

¹⁰¹Unfortunately, we know almost nothing about these three individuals. However, there is an interesting and revealing anecdote involving Zeng Xi in *Analects* 11.26.

ancients!" And why are the actions [of the squeamish] so solitary and aloof? Born in this era, we should be for this era. To be good is enough.

Eunuch-like, pandering to their eras—these are the village worthies."

Wan Zhang said, "If the whole village declares them worthy people, there is nowhere they will go where they will not be worthy people. Why did Kongzi regard them as thieves of virtue?"

Mengzi said, "If you try to condemn them, there is nothing you can point to; if you try to censure them, there is nothing to censure. They are in agreement with the current customs; they are in harmony with the sordid era in which they live. That in which they dwell seems to be loyalty and trustworthiness; that which they do seems to be blameless and pure. The multitude delight in them; they regard themselves as right. But you cannot enter into the Way of Yao and Shun with them. Hence, Kongzi said they are 'thieves of virtue.'"

"Kongzi said, 'I hate that which seems but is not. I hate weeds out of fear that they will be confused with grain.'¹⁰³ I hate cleverness out of fear that it will be confused with righteousness. I hate glibness out of fear that it will be confused with trustworthiness. I hate the tunes of the state of Zheng out of fear that they will be confused with genuine music. I hate purple out of fear that it will be confused with vermillion.¹⁰⁴ I hate the village worthies, out of fear that they will be confused with those who have Virtue.'

"The gentleman simply returns to the standard. If the standard is correct, then the multitudinous people will be inspired. When the people are inspired, then there will be no evil or wickedness."

¹⁰³Note that "grain" is also used in *Mengzi* 2A2 as a metaphor for one's incipient, natural virtues. Compare also the use of "sprouts" in *Mengzi* 2A6.

¹⁰⁴Cf. *Analects* 17.18 and 15.11.