

Document 3.2: Excerpts from the *Analects of Confucius*

Confucius is believed to have been born around 551 B.C.E., during the time of the Warring States and great political disorder in China. He became a scholar and traveled from province to province hoping to spread his ideas about good moral behavior and the proper way for rulers to treat their subjects. While he never had the impact he hoped for during his lifetime, Confucius's thoughts were recorded by his students in the Analects. Since the Han dynasty (206 B.C.E.– 220 C.E.), Confucius's ideas have shaped Chinese society and were used as the foundation for political and social life in dynastic China long after his death.

1.2 You Zi (a disciple of Confucius') said, "It is rare for a man whose character is such that he is good as a son and obedient as a young man to [go against] his superiors;... Being good as a son and obedient as a young man is perhaps the root of a man's character."

1.6 The Master said: "At home, a young man must respect his parents; abroad, he must respect his elders. He should talk little, but with good faith; love all people, but associate with the virtuous. Having done this, if he still has energy to spare, let him study literature."

1.16 The Master said, "Don't worry if people don't recognize your merits; worry that you may not recognize theirs."

2.3 The Master said, "Guide them by edicts, keep them in line with punishments, and the common people will stay out of trouble but will have no sense of shame. Guide them by virtue, keep them in line with the rites, and they will, besides having a sense of shame, reform themselves."

2.7 Nowadays people think they are dutiful sons when they feed their parents. Yet they also feed their dogs and horses. Unless there is respect, where is the difference?

2.15 Confucius said, "To study without thinking is futile. To think without studying is dangerous."

4.5 The Master said, "Riches and rank are what every man [wants]; yet if the only way to [get] them goes against his principles, he should not [try for them]. Poverty and [not being famous] are

what every man hates; yet if the only escape from them goes against his principles, he should accept his lot. If a gentleman [gives up his] humanity, how can he make a name for himself? Never for a moment does a gentleman part with his humanity; he clings to it through [all difficulties].”

4.14 The Master said: “Do not worry if you are without a position; worry [in case] you do not deserve a position. Do not worry if you are not famous; worry [in case] you do not deserve to be famous.”

4.17 The Master said, “When you meet someone better than yourself, turn your thoughts to becoming his equal. When you meet someone not as good as you are, look within and examine your own self.”

7.22 The Master said, “Even when walking in the company of two other men, I am bound to be able to learn from them. The good points of the one I copy; the bad.. points of the other I correct in myself.”

13.6 The Master said, “If a man is correct in his own person, then there will be obedience without orders being given; but if he is not correct in his own person, there will not be obedience even though orders are given.”

13.19 Asked about humanity, the Master said: “Be courteous in private life; reverent in public life; loyal in personal relations. Even among barbarians [foreigners], do not depart from this attitude.”

17.14 Confucius said, “To gossip and spread rumors is to abandon virtue.”

Sources:

1.2, 2.3, 4.17, 7.22, 13.6, 17.14: Lau, D. C., ed. and trans. *Confucius: The Analects*. New York: Penguin, 1979. Copyright D.C. Lau, 1979. Reproduced by permission of Penguin Books Ltd.

1.6, 1.16, 2.7, 2.15, 4.5, 4.14, 13.19 Leys, Simon, ed. and trans. *The Analects of Confucius*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1997. Copyright 1997 by Pierre Ryckmans. Used by permission of W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.