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Excerpts from the *Analects of Confucius* (《论语》) on relationships within the family

Filial piety (xiao, 孝) lies at the heart of Confucianism. A son must obey and respect his father. As an adult, the son must honor him even after his death. It is the son's responsibility to offer sacrifices to his father's spirit. This tradition of ancestor worship by male descendants was deeply ingrained in Chinese culture before Confucius and continued for centuries. It explains, in part, why daughters were far less valued: They could not perform these ceremonial traditions.

- 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." [Lau]
- 2.5 The master said, "When the parents are alive, serve them according to the rites; when they die, bury them and then make sacrifices to them according to the rites." [Lau]
- 2.6 When asked about being filial, Confucius replied, "The only time a dutiful son ever makes his parents worry is when he is sick." [Leys]
- 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? [Leys]
- 4.18 Confucius said, "In serving your father and mother you ought to dissuade them from doing wrong in the gentlest way. If you see your advice being ignored, you should not become disobedient but should remain [respectful]. You should not complain even if you are distressed." [Lau]
- 13.18 A governor of a region said to Confucius, "Among my people, there is a man of unbending integrity: when his father stole a sheep, he [gave evidence against] him." Confucius said, "Among my people, men of integrity do things differently; a father covers up for his son, a son covers up for his father—and there is integrity in what they do." [Leys]

Sources: Lau, D. C., translator. *Confucius: The Analects*. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2000. From *The Analects by Confucius*, translated with an introduction by D. C. Lau (Penguin Classics, 1979). Copyright © D. C. Lau, 1979. Reproduced by permission of Penguin Books Ltd. Leys, Simon, translator. *The Analects of Confucius*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1997. Copyright © 1997 by Pierre Ryckmans. Used by permission of W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.

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Excerpts from the *Analects of Confucius* (《论语》) on education

In many ways, Confucius was a revolutionary teacher even though he never described himself in this way. Besides learning skills such as writing, music and mathematics, he felt that students should learn to be virtuous, to achieve moral character, and to live a life of harmony. Education, he believed, is more than memorizing facts and learning skills. It is about learning to live a moral life. To study only so you can pass exams and be promoted would have been unacceptable to Confucius. He believed every individual could be educated. In this spirit, Confucius accepted all students, rich or poor, as long as they were serious about learning. The scholar as an example of a moral individual remains central to Chinese thought.

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

2.16 Confucius said, "I will tell you what it is to know. To say you know when you know, and to say you do not when you do not, that is knowledge." [Lau]

6.20 Confucius said, "To be fond of it is better than merely to know it; to find joy in it is better than merely to be fond of it." [Leys]

7.7 The Master said, "I have never denied instruction to anyone who, of his own accord, has given me so much as a bundle of dried meat as a present." [Lau]

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." [Lau]

7.25 Confucius made use of four things in his teaching: literature, moral conduct, doing one's best, and being trustworthy in what one says. [Lau and Leys]

7.28 The Master said, "Maybe there are people who can act without knowledge, but I am not one of them. Hear much, pick the best and follow it; see much, and keep a record of it: this is still the best substitute for innate knowledge." [Leys]

15.39 The Master said, "My teaching is addressed to all [without bias]." [Leys]

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Document 7.6

Excerpts from the *Analects of Confucius* (《论语》) on government

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." [Lau]

12.7 Zi Gong asked about government. The Master said, "Give them enough food, give them enough arms, and the common people will have trust in you."

Zi Gong said, "If one had to give up one of these three, which should one give up first? "Give up arms."

Zi Gong said, "If one had to give up one of the remaining two, which should one give up first?"

"Give up food. Death has always been with us since the beginning of time, but when there is no trust, the common people will not be able to stand on their feet." [Lau]

12.19 Ji Kangzi asked Confucius about government, saying: "Suppose I were to kill the bad to help the good, how about that?" Confucius replied: "You are here to govern; what need is there to kill? If you desire what is good, the people will be good. The moral power of the gentleman is wind, the moral power of the common man is grass. Under the wind, the grass will bend." [Leys]

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." [Lau]

13.11 The Master said, "How true is the saying that after a state has been ruled for a hundred years by good men it is possible to get the better of cruelty and to do away with killing." [Lau]

14.3 The Master said: "When the Way prevails in the state, speak boldly and act boldly. When the state has lost the Way, act boldly and speak softly." [Leys]

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Document 7.7

Excerpts from the *Analects of Confucius* (《论语》) on relationships

Moral behavior is central to Confucian thought, and much of what is recorded in the Analects addresses ren. The Chinese word can be defined as "humanity," but it is best understood by examining how it is written in Chinese: 仁. The symbol on the left means "a human being"; the one on the right 二 is the number two. Ren, defined fully, means "the way in which human beings relate to one another."

- 1.16 The Master said, "Don't worry if people don't recognize your merits; worry that you may not recognize theirs." [Leys]
- 5.10 (excerpt) The Master said: "There was a time when I used to listen to what people said and trusted that they would act accordingly, but now I listen to what they say and watch what they do." [Leys]
- 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." [Leys]
- 15.24 Confucius was asked, "Is there a single word which can be a guide to conduct throughout one's life?"
The Master said, "It is perhaps the word *shu*. Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire." [Lau]
(Note: shu captures the idea of using yourself as a way to figure out what someone else might want.)
- 15.35 The Master said: "Humanity is more essential to the people than water and fire. I have seen men [die in] water and fire. I never saw anyone lose his life by surrendering himself to humanity." [Leys]
- 16.4 Confucius said: "Three sorts of friends are beneficial; three sorts of friends are harmful. Friendship with the straight, the trustworthy, and the learned is beneficial. Friendship with the devious, the [fawning], and the glib is harmful." [Leys]

17.6 About benevolence, Confucius said, "There are five things and whoever is capable of putting them into practice . . . is certainly 'benevolent'. . . . They are respectfulness, tolerance, trustworthiness in word, quickness, and generosity. If a man is respectful, he will [be treated politely]. If he is tolerant, he will win [people over]. If he is trustworthy in word, his fellow men will entrust him with responsibility. If he is quick, he will achieve results. If he is generous, his fellow men will be willing to do [as he asks]." [Lau]

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Document 7.8

Excerpts from the *Analects of Confucius* (《论语》) on his general observations and reflections

- 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." [Leys]
- 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." [Leys]
- 7.6 The Master said: "Set your heart upon the Way; rely upon moral power; follow goodness; enjoy the arts [i.e., music, the rites, archery, carriage driving, classic books, and arithmetic]." [Leys]
- 9.4 There were four things the Master refused to have anything to do with: he refused to [consider guesses] or insist on certainty; he refused to be [rigid] or to be egotistical. [Lau]
- 15.28 The Master said: "When everyone dislikes a man, one should investigate. When everyone likes a man, one should investigate." [Leys]
- 17.2 The Master said, "Men are close to one another by nature. They drift apart through behavior that is constantly repeated." [Lau]
- 17.3 The Master said, "Only the wisest and the stupidest never change." [Leys]
- 17.25 The Master said, "Women and underlings are especially difficult to handle: be friendly and they become familiar; be distant, and they resent it." [Leys]

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