



- Reading: Introduction to Confucian Thought
- Reading: What Did Confucius Say?
- Primary Source: Selections from the *Analects* of Confucius, Grouped by Topic
  1. Confucius: The Teacher, and Person
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### Introduction to Confucian Thought

Government and society in China were grounded in the Confucian philosophy, which held that there was a basic order in the universe and a **natural harmony linking man, nature, and the cosmos (heaven)**; it also held that man was by nature a social being, and that the natural order of the universe should be reflected in human relations. The family unit was seen as the primary social unit; relationships within the family were fundamental to all others and comprised three of the "five relationships" that were the models for all others: sovereign-subject; husband-wife; parent-child; elder brother-younger brother; friend-friend. In this hierarchy of social relations, each role had clearly defined duties; reciprocity or mutual responsibility between subordinate and superior was fundamental to the Confucian concept of human relations. The virtue of **filial piety**, or devotion of the child to his parents, was the foundation for all others. When extended to all human beings, it nurtured the highest virtue, **humaneness ("ren" or "jen"), or the sense of relatedness to other persons.**

In traditional China it was assumed by adherents of all schools of thought that government would be **monarchical** and that **the state had its model in the family**. The ruler was understood to be at once the Son of Heaven, and the father of the people, ruling under the Mandate of Heaven. Traditional thinkers, reflecting on the problem of government, were concerned primarily not with changing institutions and laws but with ensuring the moral uprightness of the ruler and encouraging his appropriate conduct as a father-figure. The magistrate, the chief official of the lowest level of government and the official closest to the people, was known as the "father-mother" official. Even today, under a radically different form of government, the Chinese term for state is "**guo-jia**" or "**nation-family**", **suggesting the survival of the idea of this paternal and consensual relationship**. The first and third of the "five relationships" - i.e., emperor and minister, father and son - indicate the parallels between family and state.

The notion of the **role of the state as guarantor of the people's welfare** developed very early, along with the monarchy and the bureaucratic state. It was also assumed that good government could bring about order, peace, and the good society. Tests of the good ruler were social stability, population growth (a reflection of ancient statecraft where the good ruler was one who could attract people from other states), and ability to create conditions that fostered the people's welfare. The **Mandate of Heaven** was understood as justifying the right to rule, with the corollary right to rebel against a ruler who did not fulfill his duties to the people. The state played a major role in determining water rights, famine control and relief, and insuring social stability. The state encouraged people to grow rice and other grains rather than commercial crops in order to insure and adequate food supply; it held reserves in state granaries, in part to lessen the effects of drought and floods, particularly common in northern China. For fear of losing the Mandate of Heaven governments levied very low taxes which often meant that the government could not provide all the services expected of it, and that officials ended up extorting money from the people.

### The Perfectibility of Man and the Moral Role of Government

The dominant strain of Confucian thought stressed the **perfectibility of man**. Confucius (a political philosopher who lived c. 551-479 B.C.) expressed a belief in the fundamental similarity of all persons and in the perfectibility and educability of each individual. Mencius and Hsun Tzu, two of his prominent successors, held different views on human nature, Mencius arguing that it contained the seeds of goodness, and Hsun Tzu that, in its uncultivated state, human nature tended to evil. Both, however, believed that human beings were perfectible through **self-cultivation** and the **practice of ritual**. From the 11th century onward, Neo-Confucian philosophers, engaged in the renewal and elaboration of Confucian thought, subscribed to the Mencian line, stressing the potential goodness of human nature and the importance of developing that goodness through **education**.

Belief in the innate goodness and perfectibility of man has had strong implications for the development of the Chinese political system. **The ruler's main function in the Confucian state was to educate and transform the people.** This was ideally accomplished not by legal regulation and coercion, but by **personal rule, moral example, and mediation** in disputes by the emperor and his officials. Confucian political theory emphasized conflict resolution through mediation, rather than through the application of abstract rules to establish right and wrong in order to achieve social harmony.

The belief that the state was the moral guardian of the people was reflected in a number of institutions. Most important among these was the **merit bureaucracy, or civil service**, in which all officials were to be selected for their moral qualities, qualities that would enable them not only to govern, but to set a moral example that would transform the people. Because Confucianism was a moral system, the Confucian classics had to be mastered by prospective officials. Official position and examination degree, not wealth or business acumen, were universally recognized marks of status.

## Legalism and a Strong State

A complementary philosophical strain in Chinese thought was Legalism, first applied in the short-lived dynasty of the first emperor, Qin Shi Huangdi (Ch'in Shih Huang-ti, 221-207 B.C.). Proponents of Legalism stressed an administrative approach to efficient and pragmatic government; universal and codified law rather than morality (in contrast to the Confucian emphasis); and state power as an end in itself. As first applied, Legalism proved too harsh and disruptive, but for two millennia thereafter the Chinese state combined aspects of the Legalist structure with the Confucian spirit, recognizing the effectiveness of a **centralized, bureaucratic rule** which could oversee massive public works, state monopolies, standardized weights, measures, and even script, attempt intellectual control, and enforce social order by suppressing revolt.

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## What Did Confucius Say?

If power, prestige, and wealth were taken as the standards of achievement, Confucius would hardly be considered to have been a success in his own lifetime. K'ung Ch'iu, or Master Kung, the man who later became known in the West by the Latinized name of Confucius, was born in the state of Lu in northeastern China about the middle of the sixth century B.C. This was a period when China was divided into several feudal kingdoms.

Not much is known about Confucius's personal life. Even his traditional dates, 551-479 B.C., are only approximate. It appears that his family, which probably once ranked among the aristocracy, had fallen on hard times and may even have been quite poor. While he was an educated person, Confucius never held high political office. His highest aspiration was to contribute to the cause of civilization as he knew it. For him, this meant being employed by a ruler and having the opportunity to translate his ideas into action. Though many years of his life were spent traveling from one feudal state to another trying to gain an audience for his ideas, he never was rewarded with a high post. Eventually he returned to his native state of Lu and died without knowing the impact his ideas and his example as a teacher would have for centuries to come, not only in China but in all of East Asia.

During the Han dynasty (206 B.C.-220 A.D.), Confucius came to be recognized as a great teacher. In time his teachings became the basis of the Chinese educational system, which in turn was used to select government officials throughout much of Chinese history down to the twentieth century. Equally important, the ideas of Confucius and his followers penetrated to the very core of the lives of ordinary Chinese people. These ideas became the guiding principles of Chinese life. They gave structure and focus to the Chinese sense of what it means to be human.

When we want to know what Confucius said, we turn to a small book that records some of the conversations he had with his students and their accounts of his actions of particular occasions. The Chinese name for this book is the **Lun-y?**, which means *discussions or conversations*. This title is usually translated into English as the **Analects**, meaning *selection or choice*. Since the **Analects of Confucius** is **not** a philosophical or religious treatise with a single point of view but rather a selection of words and deeds of Confucius that his followers found most impressive, this English translation is quite appropriate.

One of the distinctive features of Confucius's teaching is the confidence that he expressed that human beings are essentially alike by nature. Confucius thought that the important differences in human beings are determined by environment and education, by the habits and preferences they develop and the lives they lead. For this reason Confucius put great emphasis on learning. But because he saw people as constantly changing and growing, his teaching was not the same for everyone. Readers of the **Analects** are always struck by the fact that Confucius never failed to take into account the personality of each individual and his particular stage of development. Even the principles of humaneness and filial piety (devotion to one's parents and family members), which are so fundamental to Confucius's view of human relations, were not set doctrines or fixed rules of behavior. What Confucius offered was a guide to the way human beings ought to feel about themselves and others and to the way that feelings and actions should be related.

The selections from the **Analects** that appear below have been grouped under five headings. In the first section you will find a number of the sayings of Confucius himself and descriptions of him by others. These reveal something of what he was like as a person and as a teacher. In the following sections you will find statements that reflect his thoughts about humaneness, filial piety, government, and religious life. Following each section are a number of questions that you may want to ask yourself. Once you have thought through your own answers to the questions, try going back and rereading the selections so that you can give examples to support your opinions in class discussion.

Except as otherwise indicated, all translations from the **Analects** are taken or adapted from those of Wing-tsit Chan in **A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy** (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963). The other source for the translations is **Sources of Chinese Tradition** (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960). The number of the section in the complete text of the **Analects** follows in parentheses.

**Acknowledgment:** The consultant for this unit was Dr. Irene Bloom, a specialist in Chinese intellectual history.

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## Confucius, The Teacher and Person

For centuries Confucius has been a source of inspiration to the people of China and East Asia, educated and illiterate. He has served as an example of how life can be well lived. This is not only because of his words and deeds but because of the total personality expressed in those words and deeds. As you read the following selections, try to imagine how Confucius's students or disciples must have felt about him, and how you might have felt about him if you had been among them.

1. Confucius said, "At fifteen my mind was set on learning. At thirty I had no more perplexities. At fifty I knew the will of Heaven. At sixty I was at ease with whatever I heard. At seventy I could follow my heart's desires without transgressing moral principles." (24)
2. Tzu-kuna (one of Confucius's disciples) asked about the superior man. "He acts before he speaks and then speaks according to his

- action," Confucius said. (2:15)
3. Confucius said, "He who learns but does not think is lost; he who thinks but does not learn is in danger."
  4. Confucius said, "Yu (another disciple, also called Tzu-lu), shall I teach you (the way to acquire) knowledge? To say that you know when you do know and say that you do not know when you do not know – that is (the way to acquire) knowledge." (2:17)
  5. Confucius said, "In the morning, hear the Way; in the evening, die content!" (4:8)
  6. Confucius said, "A superior man in dealing with the world is not for anything or against anything. He follows righteousness as the standard." (4:10)
  7. Confucius said, "Ts'an (another name for disciple Tseng Tzu), there is one thread that runs through my doctrines." Tseng Tsu said, "Yes." After Confucius had left, the disciples asked him, "What did he mean?" Tseng Tzu replied, "The Way of our Master is none other than loyalty and reciprocity." (4:15) (Note: reciprocity involved not treating others in a way you would not want to be treated.)
  8. Confucius said, "The superior man understands righteousness; the inferior man understands profit." (4:16)
  9. Tzu-kung said, "What I do not want others to do to me, I do not want to do to them." Confucius said, "Ah, Tzu! That is beyond you." (5:11)
  10. Confucius said, "I transmit but do not create. I believe in and love the ancients. I venture to compare myself to our old P'eng (an official of the Shang dynasty, 1766-1122 B.C., who loved to recite old stories)." (7:1)
  11. Confucius said, "There has never been anyone who came with as little a present as dried meat (for tuition) that I have refused to teach him something." (7:7)
  12. Confucius said, "With coarse rice to eat, with water to drink, and with a bent arm for a pillow, there is still joy. Wealth and honor obtained through unrighteousness are but floating clouds to me." (7:15)
  13. Confucius said, "I do not enlighten those who are not eager to learn, nor arouse those who are not anxious to give an explanation themselves. If I have presented one corner of the square and they cannot come back to me with the other three, I should not go over the points again." (7:8)
  14. The Duke of She asked Tzu-lu about Confucius, and Tzu-lu did not answer. Confucius said, "Why didn't you say that I am a person who forgets his food when engaged in vigorous pursuit of something, is so happy as to forget his worries, and is not aware that old age is coming on?" (7:18)
  15. Confucius said, "I am not one who was born with knowledge; I love ancient (teaching) and earnestly seek it." (7:10)
  16. Confucius said, "When walking in a party of three, I always have teachers. I can select the good qualities of the one for imitation, and the bad ones of the other and correct them in myself." (7:21, translation from **Sources of Chinese Tradition**)
  17. Confucius taught four things: culture, conduct, loyalty, and faithfulness. (7:24)
  18. Confucius was gently yet firm, dignified but not harsh, respectful yet well at ease. (7:37, translation from **Sources of Chinese Tradition**)
  19. Confucius was completely free from four things: He had no arbitrariness of opinion, no dogmatism, no obstinacy, and no egotism. (9: 4)
  20. Yen Hui (Confucius's favorite disciple) heaved a sigh and said: "You look up to it and it seems so high. You try to drill through it and it seems so hard. You seem to see it in front of you, and all of a sudden it appears behind you. The Master is very good at gently leading a man along and teaching him. He has broadened me with culture, restrained me with ritual. I just could not stop myself. But after I have exhausted every resource, there still remains something standing distinct and apart from me. Do what I can to reach his position, I cannot find the way." (9:10, translation from **Sources of Chinese Tradition**)
  21. Tzu-lu asked, "Should one immediately practice what one has heard?" Confucius said, "There are father and elder brother (to be consulted). Why immediately practice what one has heard?" Jan Yu (the disciple) asked, "Should one immediately practice what one has heard?" Confucius said, "One should immediately practice what one has heard." Kung-hsi Hua (another disciple, also called Tzu-hua) said, "When Yu (Tzu-lu) asked you, 'Should one immediately practice what one has heard?' you said, 'There are father and elder brother.' When Ch'iu (Jan Yu) asked you, 'Should you immediately practice what one has heard?' you said, 'One should immediately practice what one has heard.' I am perplexed, and venture to ask you for an explanation." Confucius said, "Ch'iu is retiring; therefore I urged him forward. Yu has more than one man's energy; therefore I kept him back." (11:21)
  22. Confucius said, "It is man that can make the Way great, and not the Way that can make man great." (15:28)
  23. Confucius said, "In education there should be no class distinction." (15:38)
  24. Confucius said, "The superior man has nine wishes. In seeing, he wishes to see clearly. In hearing, he wishes to hear distinctly. In his expression, he wishes to be warm. In his appearance, he wishes to be respectful. In his speech, he wishes to be sincere. In handling affairs, he wishes to be serious. When in doubt, he wishes to ask. When he is angry, he wishes to think of the resultant difficulties. And when he sees an opportunity for gain, he wishes to think of righteousness." (16:10)
  25. Ch'ang-chu and Chieh-ni were cultivating their fields together. Confucius was passing that way and told Tzu-lu to ask them where the river could be forded. Ch'ang-chu said, "Who is the one holding the reins in the carriage?" Tzu-lu said, "It is K'ung Ch'iu (Confucius)." "Is he the K'ung Ch'iu of Lu?" "Yes." "Then he already knows where the river can be forded!" Tzu-lu asked Chieh-ni. Chieh-ni said, "The whole world is swept as though by a torrential flood. Who can change it? As for you, instead of following one who flees from this man or that man, is it not better to follow those who flee the world altogether?" And with that he went on covering the seed without stopping. Tzu-lu went to Confucius and told him about their conversation. Confucius said ruefully, "One cannot herd with birds and beasts. If I do not associate with mankind, with whom shall I associate? If the Way prevailed in the world, there would be no need for me to change it." (18:6)
  26. Confucius said: "By nature men are pretty much alike; it is learning and practice that set them apart." (17:2, translation from the **Sources of Chinese Tradition**.)

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### Discussion Questions

1. What qualities of Confucius do you think might have made him a good teacher? Do you think he would still be considered a good teacher if he were alive today in our own society? Why or why not? (Note: What do you learn in particular about his teaching from passage 21?)
2. What qualities do you think Confucius would look for in an educated person?
3. How do you think Confucius saw his own role? (See, for example, passages 10 and 25.)

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### Humanity

If we were to identify the virtue that Confucius and his followers regarded as most important, it would be that of **jen** (pronounced **ren**) or humanity.

Though it is at the very heart of his teaching, Confucius never defined **jen**. When one of his disciples asked him if a certain person or a certain kind of conduct exemplified **jen**, Confucius would usually reply that the person or the conduct in question fell somewhat short of being **jen**. On the one hand he tells us that **jen** is not far away from us, and on the other he suggests that very few people are able to keep it constantly in mind.

It will help you as you read the following selections to know that the Chinese word for **jen** is



The symbol on the left , means "a human being," while the symbol on the right, , is the number two. So the basic ideas has to do with the way in which human beings relate to one another in society. See if you can develop a feeling for **jen** on the basis of what follows.

1. Confucius said, "One who is not a man of humanity (**jen**) cannot endure adversity for very long, nor can he enjoy prosperity for long. The man of humanity is naturally at ease with humanity. The man of wisdom cultivates humanity for its advantage." (4:2)
2. Confucius said, "If you set your mind on humanity, you will be free from evil." (4:4)
3. Confucius said, "Wealth and honor are what every man desires. But if they have been obtained in violation of moral principles, they must not be kept. Poverty and humble station are what every man dislikes. But if they can be avoided only in violation of moral principles, they must not be avoided. If a superior man departs from humanity, how can he fulfill that name? A superior man never abandons humanity even for the lapse of a single meal. In moments of haste, he acts according to it. In times of difficulty and confusion, he acts according to it." (4:5)
4. Confucius said, "I have never seen one who really loves humanity or who really hates inhumanity. One who really loves humanity will not place anything above it. One who really hates inhumanity will practice humanity in such a way that inhumanity will not have a chance to get at him. Is there anyone who has devoted his strength to humanity for as long as a single day? Perhaps there is such a case but I have never seen it." (4:6)
5. Confucius said, "The man of wisdom delights in water; the man of humanity delights in mountains. The man of wisdom is active; the man of humanity is tranquil. The man of wisdom enjoys happiness; the man of humanity enjoys long life." (6:21)
6. Tzu-kung said, "If a ruler extensively confers benefit on the people and can bring salvation to all, what do you think of him? Would you call him a man of humanity?" Confucius said, "Why only a man of humanity? He is without doubt a sage. Even (sage-emperors) Yao and Shun fell short of it. A man of humanity, wishing to establish his own character, also establishes the character of others, and wishing to be prominent himself, also helps others to be prominent. To be able to judge others by what is near to ourselves may be called the method of realizing humanity." (6:28)
7. Confucius said, "Is humanity far away? As soon as I want it, there it is right by me." (7:29)
8. Fan Ch'ih asked about humanity. Confucius said, "It is to love men." He asked about knowledge. Confucius said, "It is to know men." (12:22)
9. Confucius said, "A resolute scholar and a man of humanity will never seek to live at the expense of injuring humanity. He would rather sacrifice his life in order to realize humanity." (15:8)
10. Tzu-chang asked Confucius about humanity. Confucius said, "One who can practice five things wherever he may be is a man of humanity." Tzu-chang asked what the five -are. Confucius said, "Earnestness, liberality, truthfulness, diligence, and generosity. If one is earnest, one will not be treated with disrespect. If one is liberal, one will win the hearts of all. If one is truthful, one will be trusted. If one is diligent, one will be successful. And if one is generous, one will be able to enjoy the service of others." (17:6)

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### Discussion Questions

1. What kind of quality or virtue is **jen** or humanity, and what kind of person could be called a person of humanity?
2. Do you find any similarities between the humanity of Confucius and the guiding principles of another religious tradition with which you may be familiar—for example, love or charity in Christianity, social responsibility in Judaism, or compassion in Buddhism? Any differences?

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### Filial Piety

Filial piety, devotion to one's parents and family members, has always been a central element in Chinese life and thought. It remains so to the present day. The English expression "charity begins at home," from a Chinese point of view, is quite literally true. This is because the Confucian idea is that a person learns to be loving through experiencing life in his family. Becoming a moral person depends on extending to others in an ever widening circle the love and consideration that are fostered in a natural way in the family itself. For Confucius, our being moral is grounded in the most basic human feelings.

1. Yu Tzu (a disciple named Yu Jo) said, "Few of those who are filial sons and respectful brothers will show disrespect to superiors, and there has never been a man who is not disrespectful to superiors and yet creates disorder. A superior man is devoted to the fundamental (the root). When the root is firmly established, the moral law (Tao) will grow. Filial piety and brotherly respect are the root of humanity (**jen**). (1:2)
2. Young men should be filial when at home and respectful to their elders when away from home. They should be earnest and faithful. They should love all extensively and be intimate with men of humanity. When they have any energy to spare after the performance of moral duties, they should use it to study literature and the arts." (1:6)
3. Tzu-yu asked about filial piety. Confucius said, "Filial piety nowadays means to be able to support one's parents. But we support even dogs and horses. If there is not feeling of reverence, wherein lies the difference? (2:7)
4. Confucius said, "In serving his parents, a son may gently remonstrate with them. When he sees that they are not inclined to listen to him, he should resume an attitude of reverence and not abandon his effort to serve them. He may feel worried, but does not complain." (4:18)
5. The Duke of She told Confucius, "In my country there is an upright man named Kung. When his father stole a sheep, he bore witness against him." Confucius said, "The upright men in my community are different from this. The father conceals the misconduct of the son and

the son conceals the misconduct of the father. Uprightness is to be found in this."

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### Discussion Questions

1. In the exchange between Confucius and the Duke of She recorded in selection 5 above, we find two very different views of what "uprightness" means. What do you think being "upright" means to the Duke of She, and what does it mean to Confucius? What advantages and disadvantages do you find in each view?
  2. What do you think of the suggestion that people who are deeply respectful of parents and family members are likely to act as a stabilizing influence in society?
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### Government

For Confucius, morality and government were so closely related that it was scarcely possible to think about them separately. As you read the following selections, try to form your own idea about the kind of government Confucius was advocating and its possible strengths and weaknesses.

1. Confucius said, "Lead the people with governmental measures and regulate them with laws and punishment, and they will avoid wrongdoing but will have no sense of honor and shame. Lead them with virtue and regulate them by the rules of propriety, and they will have a sense of shame and, moreover, set themselves right." (2:3)
  2. Tzu-kung asked about government. Confucius said, "Sufficient food, sufficient armament, and sufficient confidence of the people." Tzu-kung said, "Forced to give up one of these, which would you abandon first? Confucius said, "I would abandon the armament." Tzu-kung said, "Forced to give up one of the remaining two, which would you abandon first?" Confucius said, "I would abandon food. There have been deaths from time immemorial, but no state can exist without the confidence of the people." (12:7)
  3. Duke Ching of Ch'i asked Confucius about government. Confucius replied, "Let the ruler **be** a ruler, the minister **be** a minister, the father **be** a father, and the son **be** a son." The duke said, "Excellent! Indeed when the ruler is not a ruler, the minister is not a minister, the father not a father, the son not a son, although I may have all the grain, shall I ever get to eat it?" (12:11)
  4. Chi K'ang Tzu (a great official of Confucius's native state of Lu) asked Confucius about government. Confucius replied, "To govern, (**cheng**) is to rectify (**cheng**). If you lead the people by being rectified yourself, who will dare not be rectified?" (12.17)
  5. Chi K'ang Tzu asked Confucius about government, saying, "What do you think of killing the wicked and associating with the good?" Confucius replied, "In your government what is the need of killing? If you desire what is good, the people will be good. The character of a ruler is like wind and that of the people is like grass. In whatever direction the wind blows, the grass always bends." (12:19)
  6. Confucius said, "If a ruler sets himself right, he will be followed without his command. If he does not set himself right, even his commands will not be obeyed." (13:6)
  7. When Confucius was traveling to Wei, Jan Yu drove him. Confucius observed, "What a dense population!" Jan Yu said, "The people having grown so numerous, what next should be done for them?" "Enrich them," was the reply. "And when one has enriched them, what next should be done?" Confucius said, "Educate them." (13: 9)
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### Discussion Questions

1. If you were a ruler during the time of Confucius, would you have accepted his advice about government? Why?
  2. Do you think any of Confucius's thoughts about government could be useful to government leaders today? If so, what do you think could be helpful? If not, what are some of the most important problems involved in his perspective?
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### Religious Life

It is often said that the Chinese people are not religious. The reason given for this is that traditional Chinese society was essentially Confucian, and Confucius did not teach people to have faith in a higher being or power. As you read the following selections, try to form your own opinion about whether this view is valid or not.

As you read, you will find references to "sacrifices" and "rituals." Sacrifices were ceremonies performed before, during, and long after the time of Confucius in honor of ancestors who had died. The ceremonies took different forms at different times and places, but the unifying element was that the person performing the sacrifice felt a debt of love and gratitude to those who had gone before them. Rituals included a whole variety of practices that had to do with all aspects of life, from eating and sleeping to receiving guests and offering prayers for good crops. You might try to think about whether these practices can be considered "religious" or not, and, if so, in what sense.

1. When Confucius offered sacrifices to his ancestors, he felt as if his ancestral spirits were actually present. When he offered sacrifices to other spiritual beings, he felt as if they were actually present. He said, "If I do not participate in the sacrifice, it is as if I did not sacrifice at all." (3:12)
2. Tzu-kung said, "We can hear our Master's views on culture and its manifestation, but we cannot hear his views on human nature and the Way of Heaven (because these subjects are beyond the comprehension of most people)." (5:12)

3. Fan Ch'ih asked about wisdom. Confucius said, "Devote yourself earnestly to the duties due to men, and respect spiritual beings but keep them at a distance. This may be called wisdom." Fan Ch'ih asked about humanity. Confucius said, "The man of humanity first of all considers what is difficult in the task and then thinks of success. Such a man may be called humane." (6:20)
  4. Confucius never discussed strange phenomena, physical exploits, disorder, or spiritual beings. (7:20)
  5. Confucius was very ill. Tzu-lu asked that a prayer be offered. Confucius said, "Is there such a thing?" Tzu-lu replied, "A eulogy says, 'Pray to the spiritual beings above and below.'" Confucius said, "My prayer has been for along time (that is, what counts is the life that one leads)." (7:34)
  6. When Confucius was in personal danger in K'uang, he said, "Since the death of King Wen, is not the course of culture (**wen**) in my keeping? If it had been the will of Heaven to destroy this culture, it would not have been given to a mortal like me. But if it is the will of Heaven that this culture should not perish, what can the people of K'uang do to me?" (9:5)
  7. Though his food might be coarse rice and vegetable broth, Confucius invariably offered a little in sacrifice, and always with solemnity. (10:8, translation from **Sources of Chinese Tradition**)
  8. Chi-lu (Tzu-lu) asked about serving the spiritual beings. Confucius said, "If we are not yet able to serve man, how can we serve spiritual beings?" (Chi-lu then said), "I venture to ask about death." Confucius said, "If we do not yet know about life, how can we know about death?" (11:11)
  9. Ssu-ma Niu, worrying, said, "All people have brothers but I have none." Tzu-hsia said, "I have heard (from Confucius) this saying: 'Life and death are the decree of Heaven; wealth and honor depend on Heaven. If a superior man is reverential (or serious) without fail, and is respectful in dealing with others and follows the rules of propriety, then all within the four seas (the world) are brothers.' What does the superior man have to worry about having no brothers?" (12:5)
  10. Confucius said, "Alas! No one knows me!" Tzu-kung said, "Why is there no one that knows you?" Confucius said, "I do not complain against Heaven. I do not blame men. I study things on the lower level but my understanding penetrates the higher level. It is Heaven that knows me." (14:37)
  11. Confucius said, "I do not wish to say anything." Tzu-kung said, "If you do not say anything, what can we little disciples ever learn to pass on to others?" Confucius said, "Does Heaven say anything? The four seasons run their course and all things are produced. Does Heaven say anything?" (17:19)
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### Discussion Questions

1. What do you think religion is, and what does it mean to be a religious person? Is Confucius religious? Give your reasons for thinking what you think.
  2. What do Confucius's statements about Heaven suggest about his idea of the relation between Heaven and man? How does this compare with your ideas about the relation between Heaven and man or God and man in Judaism or Christianity or another religious tradition with which you are familiar?
  3. Finally, try to write two or three of your own "analects" or selections and see if you can capture a similar feeling to the ones in the **Analects** of Confucius. See whether your classmates can tell the "analects" you have written from the real thing.
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