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The Educational Thought of Confucius

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THE EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT OF CONFUCIUS

by

Helena Wan

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Loyola University of Chicago in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May 1980
The purpose of this study is to investigate the humanistic educational ideas of Confucius as they truly were, and to examine their role in the history of traditional Chinese education. It is the contention of this study that the process of transformation from idea into practice has led to mutilation, adaptation or deliberate reinterpretation of the original set of ideas. The example of the evolution of the humanistic educational ideas of Confucius into a system of education seems to support this contention. It is hoped that this study will help separate that which is genuinely Confucius' from that which tradition has attributed to him; and to understand how this has happened and what consequences have resulted.

The method of study is by an examination and evaluation of the educational thought of Confucius within the context of his entire philosophy and his educational practice, as well as in the broader context of Chinese culture and history. Bearing in mind the problem of historical evidence, the life and time of Confucius are examined to shed light on the sources from which Confucius derived and developed his ideas. The basic tenets in Confucius' ethical, political and social ideas are examined to provide the necessary background for the discussion of his educational ideas.
Central to Confucius' humanistic educational philosophy are his idea of man, his nature, his relationship with tao, the way that man follows to attain harmony and happiness. These are discussed in conjunction with Confucius' concepts of jen and li. The educational implications of these concepts are stressed. The educational practice of Confucius is further examined with relevance to the methods, curriculum, the concepts of learning and teaching, and the integration of thought and practice. The goal and purpose of Confucius' education are three-fold. Education is to produce the superior man, chun tse, the harmonious social order and good government. The study argues that Confucius' educational goals, contrary to what tradition held them to be, were non-materialistic, non-utilitarian, and not confined only to the intellectual or moral realm. It further contends that Confucius was an innovator rather than a transmitter. He innovated by placing traditional ideas in a new light, by selecting that which was relevant and discarding anachronistic aspects. He was aptly the creator of new educational ideals, not an apologist for an old one, as tradition held him to be.

Confucius' position in the history of Chinese education is evaluated by examining the historical impact of Confucius on the culture and education of China in the light of the relationship between Confucius, the thinker
and educator, and Confucianism the tradition. The birth and development of the Confucian tradition is traced according to two interpretations: imperial patronage of Confucius' ideas and propagation of these ideas by individuals. Various schools of Confucianism from the time of Confucius to the Ching dynasty are discussed with relevance to their educational thought and practice, their adherence to or departure from Confucius' original ideas. In particular, the system of education and the civil service examination system that had evolved down the centuries are critically examined. The findings reveal that only Mencius and the Neo-Confucianists of Sung and Ming dynasties maintained a closer representation of Confucius' educational thought. The study brings forth the issue that Confucius will remain as a subject of controversy as long as he stands for all that is associated with the long history of China's past. This is once again evident in the "Criticize Confucius Movement" of modern China.

The study concludes that the true influence of Confucius lies in the fact that his educational ideals did provide a rationale for Chinese education for twenty-five centuries. Moreover, Confucius' educational thought contains universal facts about man and society, which might yet be relevant to the education of today.
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A system of education may evolve from a set of educational ideas which precede institutional development. However, it does not necessarily follow that the system of education needs to be a mirror reflection of the original set of ideas. The process of transformation from idea into practice is a slow and complicated one, and many factors come into play. Time is a vital factor. The necessary ideas often take on new meanings and connotations when taken out of the political, socio-economic and cultural context in which they originated. Also, much depends on the manner in which these ideas have been adapted. Often ideas have been mutilated, partially adapted, or deliberately reinterpreted to suit the motives of the user. The evolution of the humanistic educational ideas of Confucius into a system of education is a perfect example of such transformation.

The Confucian tradition had for twenty-five centuries dominated the educational scene in China, and much has been attributed to its founding philosopher, Confucius. China's traditional education system, though bearing the imprint of the philosopher, reveals a certain departure from the educational ideas Confucius professed. It is the purpose of this dissertation to investigate the humanistic
educational ideas of Confucius as they truly were and to examine their role in the history of traditional Chinese education. The ultimate goal of this study is to render an objective assessment of Confucius as forerunner of an educational system that had for generations borne his name. It is hoped that this study will help separate that which is genuinely Confucius' from that which tradition has attributed to him; and to understand how this has happened and what consequences have resulted.
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CHAPTER I

CHINESE CULTURAL CONTEXT

The period in which Confucius lived was an age of transition. It was a period of political, cultural and socio-economic upheaval. The Chou dynasty (1122-255 B.C.), after a glorious civilization, was approaching decline, giving way to a new political and social system as yet to take definite shape.

The kingdom of Chou spread across the fertile plains on both sides of the River Wei, a major tributary draining into the Yellow River in its middle course: in an area equivalent to present day Shensi Province. The culture of Chou originated from the mainstream of Yin or Shang culture. The kingdom of Shang practiced a primitive religion. The people saw nature as a supernatural force, and from there was born the concept of Heaven. The primitive religion of Shang manifested the fear of Heaven, which the people regarded with despair and helplessness. Ancestral worship became the center of all religious activity; for man, who was under the control of the will of Heaven, needed the spirits of his ancestors to act as intermediaries between the gods in Heaven and himself on earth. By the time Chou had conquered Shang a growing humanistic spirit appeared in religious consciousness as
witnessed in the early culture of Chou. The birth of the concept of reverence, ching, which appeared in early documents confirms this humanistic element in Chou culture. The concept of reverence, the essence of which is a religious regard for virtuous living, was connected with a moral code of behavior which governed all human relationships. The idea behind it is the assimilation of value, virtue, purpose and meaning of life with the decree of Heaven. Man began to look to himself for answers, and to rely on his own efforts. In other words, man found himself more in control of his environment. Human nature began to adopt a moralistic element. Man alone was responsible for his actions and behavior. The concept of reverence now became a driving force, motivating man toward the betterment of the society in which he lived. This growing human consciousness in Chou culture is the earliest trace of humanism in the history of ancient China.¹

In other aspects of Chou culture, Chou was different from Shang, its predecessor. While Shang practiced human sacrifice, Chou did not. Whereas Shang maintained a system of slavery, Chou did not. The society of Chou showed definite humanitarian trends. While Shang boasted a royal lineage of god-like ancestors, Chou claimed the

¹Hsu Fu Kuan, Chung-kuo yen hsing cheh hseuh shih (History of Chinese Philosophy of Humanism) (Taipei, 1963), pp. 16-23.
mandate of Heaven and declared that its blessing was now shifted to the new regime. The throne became the symbol of power of the Son of Heaven. The king now was all virtuous and deserving to wield absolute political and religious power.²

The Chou period represented the dawn of the decorum (li) centered humanistic age, which saw the humanization of religion, and the decline of the authority of supernaturalism in religion. This is evident from the transformation in meaning of the concept of Heaven from a strictly religious connotation to a humanistic interpretation. The concept of Heaven was first crystallized through seeing nature as a supernatural force. The early concept of Heaven was a crude mixture of personal and impersonal qualities. Ancient records described Heaven as awesome and unfathomable force of limitless space, pouring forth great floods. In the earlier odes of the Book of Poetry, in which there are about eighty such usages of the term, Heaven was referred to strictly in the religious sense. By the eighth century B.C., the religious connotation of Heaven yielded to a more humanistic interpretation. The "will of Heaven" became "human fate," as recorded in the Shiao Ya Odes. This signified the detri-

oration of ancient religion. Adopting human qualities, Heaven became a source of righteous authority. Heaven was referred to as the highest ruler governing the people of the four corners of the earth to foster their well-being. In the name of Heaven were wars fought; and when the decree of Heaven was violated, warriors proclaimed themselves authorized to carry out the punitive powers of Heaven.  

This was the method used by the founder of Chou to take over the tyrannical rule of the last king of Shang. King Wen, founder of the Chou dynasty, proclaimed that he had obtained the Mandate of Heaven to carry out this duty, thereby creating the concept of the Son of Heaven, whereby the throne became a symbol of absolute political and religious power. Similarly, the concept of "li," a term denoting religious rites, took on an humanistic element by the time of Duke Chou, who in his brief but brilliant regency (1122-1115 B.C.) to young King Cheng, encouraged rites and music, and emphasized the importance of the humanistic element of rites and decorum. Li began to add to its religious connotation a humanistic quality, and became to stand for the social and moral code of behavior and the binding element in human relationships. In the Book of Poetry were nine usages of the term li, seven of

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which bear little or no relationship with religious activity. All this does not mean, however, that religion had disappeared in Confucius' times. Rather, it was the humanistic transformation of religion. The gods of the Spring and Autumn period of the sixth century B.C. were often described to have adopted earthly qualities, enabling them to relate directly to and intervene in the affairs of the humans on earth.

Another fundamental element in Chou culture is the concept of family. In the pre-Chou era, there already existed an embryonic family system in the form of kinship groups ruled by clan chiefs. Ancestral worship was a propagating force of the family system.\(^4\) By the time of Confucius, the family system, together with its rules of conduct and regulations, became not only the backbone of the socio-economic structure, but also served to regulate human relationships. Moreover, the familial structure began to merge with the political structure, which led to the formation of the concept of "tsung-fa," the vision of "under heaven all one family." All positions in life, from the king to the commoner, are a matter of birth through the application of the rule of succession. The eldest son was the head of the family as well as political overlord, while the other sons were his fiefs and vowed

\(^4\)Ibid., pp. 5-6.
allegiance to him. The essence was loyalty, a supreme virtue demanded by the king of his dukes, the dukes of his ministers and so on down the social ladder to the humble peasant who toiled in the field. This political and social system worked smoothly only when the Son of Heaven and his lords understood that it was Heaven's decree to rule for the benefit and welfare of the people. King Wen and Kuke Chou had ruled benevolently. By Confucius' time, however, the Chou monarch failed to perform his three-fold duty as chief of state, religion and family. The concept of "tsung-fa" began to disintegrate with the fractioning of power among the nobles and princes.5

The civilization of China, then, had by the Chou period assumed a definite pattern. As a matter of fact, in the pre-Chou period of the Shang dynasty, the social structure had already become quite clearly defined. Kings and nobles rules; craftsmen created artifacts, while farmers and laborers, in addition to the slaves, formed the toiling masses. The slaves were made up of captives of neighboring states, or of families reduced to slavery as a form of punishment. However, some mobility did exist within this class system, and it was possible for a person to rise from slavery to prominent positions.

Slave ownership became the basis of economic and military power.

Chou had more humanistic political policies than Shang. Chou conquered by cultural absorption. It required its subjects to adhere to the cultural pattern and socio-political system of the Chou dynasty. Being superior to Shang in its military organization, Chou was able to conquer a much larger and more populous kingdom. In order to control this vast expanse of territory with limited loyal forces, Chou expanded its feudal system by bestowing land and power on royal princes and kinsmen, Shang princes and other nobles of pre-Shang descent. In theory, the feudal system facilitated complete control by the king over his land and subjects. In practice, however, the king only administered the land in and around the capital, and exacted tributes from his dukes. The dukes followed the same manner of procedure with his ministers, who actually managed the land with assistance from their officials, or shih. Nobility was hereditary. Thus the social structure was comprised of two essential classes: the ruling class of king, dukes, ministers and officials; and the plebeians: peasants and artisans who belonged to the noble household, for whom they worked and on whom their livelihood depended.

Chou's feudal system sustained an agrarian economy, based on the "well-field," tseng-tin system. Under the
benevolent rule of Duke Chou, every peasant family was given a piece of land, and every group of eight peasant families cooperated to cultivate a ninth piece for the king. This form of tribute by agricultural produce, which was a practice of early Chou, was replaced by taxation in 594 B.C. to encourage efficiency. Beginning with the Dukedom of Lu, the native state of Confucius, a 20 percent tax was initiated. Herein was sown the seed of the breakdown of the feudal system. The farmers, in effect, became possessors of the land under this new system of taxation, since they took care of what was left of the after-tax harvest. In other quarters, pioneers reclaimed wasteland into new arable land that was free from hereditary bondage. Moreover, land was often awarded for feats of bravery at war or other accomplishments. Land became real estate, to be bought and sold. The social change of Chou had begun.

With the changes in the land system came another significant socio-economic change, brought about by a technological revolution following the invention of iron-casting. By 700 B.C., the use of iron for farm implements and weapons spread. An agrarian revolution resulted as iron farm implements allowed deep ploughing, while the advent of animal drawn ploughs in turn increased farm production. Industries and trade expanded, enabling the accumulation of capital and the amassing of private fortune.
This in turn led to the breakdown of hereditary revenues and the rise of a new social class—the nouveau riche. They began to gather huge land-holdings, forcing the poor to become landless tenants. A strong economic basis supplied the impetus for the expansion of individual militaristic states. As warfare among states increased, the tax rose to an unbearable 50 percent or more, forcing many tenants farmers to escape from their unendurable bondage to join disruptive and non-productive elements. By late Chou, every rising state was striving to bring farmers back to the soil, as the feudal system entered its last stage of disintegration. Loyalty to the ruler and the central government diminished, as individual dukedoms strove for power and dominance over one another. During the Spring and Autumn period (722-481 B.C.), weak feudal states were absorbed by strong ones who contended for leadership under the name of Chou.

As a result of the disintegration of the Chou social structure, the rigid distinction between patrician and plebeian began to break down. Nobles had fallen from their high social positions and had been integrated into the masses, resulting in as yet another new social class: the ju, a poor but cultured class, well educated in the arts and decorum of the day. The ju in the days of Confucius were the initiates in all departments of life. They were experts in customs and rituals of the day,
administrators and religious functionaries. They were the only literate people, and because of their education were employed by some lord or other to perform administrative duties, write annals and official documents, and notes on rituals or on divination and worship. 6 Apart from their ability to read and write, they also possessed knowledge in the six arts: rites, music, archery, chariot-driving, reading and arithmetic. The six arts formed the core of professional training for a member of the ju class. They were thus a professional class as distinct from the hereditary aristocrats and the toiling masses, often in the capacity of an intermediary between the two. This new social class proved to have significant influence on the cultural milieu at the time of Confucius.

Education, which had until now been a privilege solely of the noble class, began to spread among the common people. With it came a widened scope of freedom in various aspects of life, significantly in movement, occupations, in thought and speech. This age of liberation and political uncertainty encouraged a great divergence of thought, resulting in what was known as the Hundred Schools of Thought, each rivaling the other in wisdom and political intrigues. Philosophers and scholars moved about offering

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their political strategies to the princes in power, and constantly changing their allegiance from one state to another. Among the more important schools of thought were the Confucius school, with its appeal to humanistic and moral values; the Legalist school, with its resort to law and punishment; and the Taoist school, with its escapist and negative approach to culture and society. Each of these schools offered solutions to save the world from political chaos and human misery.

Education in the Chou Period

Legend has it that even in the two dynasties previous to Chou, a well established school system had existed. Although Mencius mentioned this system, this information should be treated with caution. Mencius, who lived a century after Confucius, did not provide any historical evidence to support his statement on the existence of the school system. The only reliable source would have to come from inscriptions on bronze vessels. They indicated that there were schools dated before Confucius, established to teach archery: a favorite sport of the day as well as a military skill. As to the different levels of schools, from elementary to higher education, there was no mention of their existence.

7Mencius, Bk. III, pt. 1, iii.
However, it is evident that educational practice was largely in the form of private tutorship, and education was limited to the privileged class of prospective rulers and sons of nobles. Teachers were recruited from among the officials who instructed their students in the existing patterns of government. Education, then, aimed at perpetuating the existing social and political order, and carrying on traditions as handed down from forebears. Education was to preserve the status quo.

By the time of Confucius, a new impoverished but educated class, the ju, brought education to the level of the populace and enlightened the masses. Education began to reach the lesser ranks of society. Moreover, as government became more bureaucratized, the demand for officials to carry out administrative or managerial duties increased. It required promising young men trained in the six arts to fill minor official capacities. Confucius was among the first and foremost to bring about the popularization of education to serve this practical end and others as well. The educational program of Confucius, which was altogether different from the existing practice, was intended for the training of any young men, regardless of their social position, with the ultimate purpose of bringing about a different and a much better kind of government. For Confucius, education was a means to stabilize the moral order of society, so that the nation could be saved
from anarchy and be united. This goal will be documented in subsequent chapters of this study.

Conclusion

The civilization of ancient China reached its zenith under Chou, which embarked upon the age of humanism and rationalism. Chou civilization revealed definite humanistic and rationalistic trends. This movement could be seen in the growing emphasis on human values in society, the humanization of Heaven, and the decline of supernaturalism— to be replaced by a "this-world" philosophy which emphasized logical thought. For a long period China experienced peace and stability in the midst of a glorious civilization in which rites, music and poetry flourished. The onset of the Iron Age, which brought forth a new socio-economic impetus, upset the political, socio-economic equilibrium, which up to now, had been maintained by a feudal system with its well structured class society.

The Chou feudal system was a highly ritualized socio-economic and political system, within which lay the weakness which led to its own destruction. In theory, there was to be a centralization of power, for the throne was a symbol of centralized authority. In practice, however, in place of centralization was decentralization, which took place when the vassals struggled for power over
each other, and engaged in wars against each other in the name of the Chou court.

A period of political chaos and social change ensued, which witnessed the disintegration of Chou class structure, and the gradual dismantling of the feudal system. This period of uncertainty and emancipation (722-221 B.C.) gave rise to rich intellectualism and freedom of thought. Into this age of transition Confucius was born.
CHAPTER II

THE BIOGRAPHY OF CONFUCIUS

The Problem of Historical Evidence

The mass of historical research on the life and work of Confucius produces evidence as varied as it is confusing, and represents as much an effort for modern day historians as it was for past researchers. For over two thousand years, historians in China, from the Han to the Ching dynasty, and even into the twentieth century, had laboriously undertaken the task of verifying historical evidence in various works attributed to Confucius and works on Confucius. All this stems from the fact that Confucius, who lived in the sixth century B.C., and to whom tradition had attributed major literary and historical works of ancient China, had in fact not written any work relating to his own thoughts, ideas or his own life. What Confucius had left as legacy to Chinese civilization was an oral tradition only.

In view of the problem created by the search for historical evidence on the life and work of Confucius, since much distortion and confusion of evidence has arisen in the lapse of twenty-five centuries, it is necessary to examine documentary data which might shed light on the
problem. This is done with the understanding that the greater the chronological proximity of the material is to the time of Confucius, the greater is the probability that the sources are reliable, all other things being equal.

A compilation of Confucius' sayings and aphorisms first appeared as the *Analects*, or *Lun Yu*, which is generally accepted as the most direct and reliable source on Confucius, his life and doctrines, since it represents the first records ever to appear after the death of Confucius. As it is, the *Analects* is not a work by Confucius nor by his immediate disciples. Rather it is a compilation by the disciples of the succeeding generation. This is evident from the fact that some of Confucius' immediate disciples also appeared as "Masters," a revered version for "teachers" in the text. The material comprising the *Analects* has a double tradition. It is revealed that when the Han dynasty first began to recover the ancient books, two versions of the *Analects* competed for acceptance. The one in Lu, the native state of Confucius, was accepted as closer to the original than the tradition based on the material from the neighboring state of Chi. These two sources were united to form the present day version of the *Analects*. The contents of this work were chiefly short aphorisms introduced by "the Master spoke," arranged in no chronological or philosophical order; thus, it is difficult to give correct dates to these sayings, except from internal
evidence. The Analects is widely acclaimed as the most reliable material on the life of Confucius, in spite of the fact that it, too, in parts, contains contradictions and forgeries. Later historians who engaged in historical criticism delved into these areas and as a result produced lengthy commentaries.

Another post Confucius compilation on the life and work of Confucius is the School Conversations of Confucius, or Chia Yu, by Wang Su. It is a collection of anecdotes, conversations and reports on Confucius. This book actually existed in Ch'in Chi Huang Ti's time (221-208 B.C.), but no longer extant. It was probably lost during the burning of books by the Ch'in Emperor, who regarded Confucianism as a potential danger to his legalistic rule. Today's version of the Ch'ia Yu was not published until the beginning of the third century A.D., and was suspected to have been written by Wang Su himself. This, in addition to the fact that it represents a later stage of tradition, has greatly undermined the reliability of this compilation. 8

Portions of earlier works contain biographical information on Confucius. In Mencius, a work by the author of the same name, briefly described the life of

Confucius. Mencius (372-289 B.C.), who lived almost a century after the death of Confucius, was a most devout follower of the Confucian doctrine. He was a significant representative of the Confucian School, which dated from Tseng Shen, a disciple of Confucius. Mencius followed the Confucian doctrines very closely and is regarded as a valid testimony for Confucius.\(^9\)

Two sections in the *Book of Rites*: "The Great Learning" and "The Doctrine of the Mean," contain biographical material on Confucius. The Doctrine of the Mean, first believed to have been written by Tze Sze, Confucius' grandson, proved to be a much later work. Internal evidence reveals that both of these works contain Taoist and Confucian doctrines. The general opinion is that they were the works of a much later period, and not as tradition has ascribed them to be Confucian works of an earlier date.

_Tso Chuan_, a history of the native state of Confucius, and _Kung Yang_ and _Kuh Lang_, the two commentaries of the _Spring and Autumn Annals_, described events which occurred during Confucius' lifetime. However, none of these works can be considered to be definitive biographies of Confucius. They only mentioned him in passing. Their value lies chiefly in providing the political, cultural and socio-economic milieu in which Confucius lived.

\(^9\)Ibid., p. 140.
It was chiefly based upon the above documentary sources that Sze Ma Chien, the Grand Historian of the Han period, wrote the biography of Confucius, two hundred years after Confucius' death. The biography, as contained in the Historical Records, or Shih Chih, is the first biography ever written on Confucius. For centuries Sze Ma Chien's biography has been held as authoritative and his treatment of Confucius considered definitive. However, it has also aroused a great deal of controversy among later scholars. The controversy chiefly arises from the historiography of Sze Ma Chien, the sources he used, and his chronological arrangement of events.

When Sze Ma Chien compiled the biography, he used sources of varying degrees of reliability. Although he had used the Analects extensively, he had also turned to works of doubtful reliability, such as the Book of Rites, a product of Taoist and Confucian teaching; and the Chia Yu, which represents the second and third strata of the Confucian tradition. In the same manner, he employed the work of Tso Chuan, with its legends and all, the credibility of which is highly doubtful. On top of that,

The following myths in the biography of Confucius by Sze Ma Chien were taken from the Tso Chuan: (1) story of the Fen Sheep, representing the spirit of the earth in 505 B.C.; (2) story of the great bone in 494 B.C.; (3) story of the arrow with stone head 495 B.C.; (4) story of the mythical animal chi lin.
Sze Ma Chien, whose philosophy revealed strong Taoist inclinations, had resorted to using Taoist literature and tradition in his writing. He therefore had Confucius meet Lao Tze, the advocate of Taoism, while in actual fact Lao Tze was not a contemporary of Confucius. It seemed that there was a strong tradition at hand and Sze Ma Chien willingly used it in his work.

Further undermining the credibility of Sze Ma Chien's work is the manner in which he used his data. He made little effort to arrange the sayings and aphorisms of Confucius in the Analects in any chronological order. Rather, he combined them in a mosaic fashion, at times repeating the same event twice. The result is that the chronological arrangement of events reveals obvious errors, indicating a lack of care in the use of sources. The period of the wanderings of Confucius, for example, reveals a hopelessly confused chronology.\(^{11}\)

The Grand Historian of Han offered no criticism of his sources. He did not avoid stories of doubtful reliability,\(^ {12}\) nor did he avoid Taoist or anti-Confucian writings as source material. Here and there he exaggerated

\(^{11}\)Ibid., p. 84.

\(^{12}\)The following stories are generally considered unreliable: (1) Confucius executing Shao-cheng, the troublemaker; (2) Confucius being nine feet six inches tall; (3) Confucius becoming teacher of decorum at seventeen; (4) Confucius having three thousand disciples.
his speech. Sze Ma Chien's biography began and ended with a eulogy. By his poetic license as historian of the imperial court, he promoted Confucius to the ranks of nobility, and adorned him with a kind of saintliness that raised him above ordinary humans. Confucius was not of noble birth, nor had he attained any official rank which would enable him to be placed in that social stratum. Yet Sze Ma Chien, representing a very Chinese attitude, in his desire to demonstrate his reverence and awe for a great man, might have proved overzealous in his praises.

Another criticism of Sze Ma Chien's work is that it contained evidences at variance with those recorded in the Analects, Tso Chuan and Mencius. Creel thinks that it was "a slipshod performance . . . , full of anachronisms and abound[ing] in absurdities." There was "no development of a consistent character for Confucius." It was "composed of a series of incidents gathered from Confucian, Taoist and Legalist sources in a chronological order with very little criticism or harmonization." Confucius was described as a sage of clairvoyant powers, who talks at great length about the supernatural. Sze Ma Chien was suspected to have harbored the motive of subtly undermining the character of Confucius as an admirable person, depicting him as a liar. Under the camouflage of eulogies and praises was "an attitude of
concealed but definite hostility towards Confucius."¹³
Tsui Shu, a Ching historian, agreed that the biography
contained much slandering, the reason being that Sze Ma
Chien had Taoist leanings, a philosophy which was antago-
nistic to Confucianism. Sharing a similar sentiment,
Chavannes concluded that the biography was written as a
piece of carefully veiled satire.¹⁴

It deems necessary at this point to examine the
philosophical background of Sze Ma Chien's work. In his
youth, Sze Ma Chien was educated under the guidance of
his learned father Sze Ma Tan in the philosophies of Con-
fucianism, Taoism, and the Book of Changes. However, he
managed to stay aloof from the predominance of Confucian
ideology, prevalent at the time. This led to the specu-
lation of later scholars as to the amount of bias Sze Ma
Chien might have put into his historical writings. In
actual fact, there was a certain amount of open criticism
of Confucius in his work. Sze Ma Chien remarked about the
impracticality, haughtiness, conceitedness and discontent
of the Confucian scholars who practiced too many rituals
and manifested in general, many peculiarities. Wilhelm
thinks, however, that such criticisms were representative

¹³H. G. Creel, Confucius and the Chinese Way (New
¹⁴Edouard Chavannes, Voyage Autour du Monde
of the sentiments of many of the statesmen of the time about Confucius, rather than Sze Ma Chien's personal objections.  

Admittedly, Sze Ma Chien's biography of Confucius was at best a chronology of events attributed to Confucius. There was little attempt at synchronization, interpretation or extrapolation. His eulogy seemed artificial, the sentiments expressed for Confucius were lukewarm rather than sincere. Nonetheless, while scholars may raise doubt about Sze Ma Chien's data, his sources and chronological arrangement, his work did present, on the basis of the sources used, some consistency surrounding the major events in Confucius' life: Confucius' youth spent in Lu, his native state, followed by a brief successful official career. The conjecture is that Confucius would have been indeed a brilliant politician and social reformer, if given the proper opportunity to exercise his talents, so that his success in practical politics might have put him on a level of recognition at par with his fame and reputation as teacher and philosopher. Confucius' later years of wanderings, usually seen as fruitless attempts to seek an opportunity for public employment, actually represented a period of spiritual growth. During this time he came to the realization that he could consolidate his ideas and verbalize his beliefs by an oral

15 Wilhelm, Confucius and Confucianism, p. 135.
and living tradition, through which the rules of antiquity and rites, which he so devoutly believed, could create social order and harmony among mankind. In the quiet years after his return to his native state, he settled to study the Book of Changes most carefully, and edited the Spring and Autumn Annals in which he passed historical judgement, thereby earning for himself the awesome title of the "uncrowned king."

It is within this large framework that the life of Confucius is to be examined, bearing in mind the problem of historical evidence at all times. The purpose is to try to see Confucius as he really was, rather than as tradition held him to be, so that Confucius could emerge as what he considered himself to be, a man with a keen and intuitive mind, rather than the god-like image tradition had given him. The biography of Confucius as contained in Sze Ma Chien's Historical Records will be used in so far as its contents are in agreement with those mentioned in the Analects. Similarly, other ancient texts such as the Tso Chuan and other works written earlier than the biography will be used as sources.

Confucius the Youth

The genealogy of Confucius as presented in the Tso Chuan is more legendary than historically proven, and should be treated with caution. Sze Ma Chien had it that
Confucius' ancestors were from the state of Sung. It is probable that his ancestors were aristocrats, but by Confucius' time they had descended from noble rank to a humble state. Confucius was born in the most cultured region of China at the time. The state of Lu was the dukedom of the son of the Duke of Chou. As such, Lu retained Chou rites, music, political administration and education. It was fortunate for Confucius, who had later become highly appreciative of Chou culture, to be at the opportune time and cultural milieu. This was because at the end of the Eastern Chou period, during which time the capital of Chou had moved eastward and culture had disintegrated elsewhere in China, the state of Lu was still the most cultured of all, and where much of Chou culture remained intact.

Confucius was born in 551 B.C.\(^{16}\) in the district of Chang Ping, corresponding to modern Chu-fu, in the Shantung Peninsula. Shortly after Confucius was born, his father died. Orphaned at an early age, Confucius mentioned how, in his youth because of poverty, he had to take up various trades and apprenticeships.\(^{17}\) He tended

\(^{16}\)551 B.C. as birth date of Confucius was rested on the authority of Kuh-lang and Kung Yang, the two commentators on the Spring and Autumn Annals. Sze Ma Chien's Historical Records had Confucius born in the year 550 B.C.

cattle and sheep and was employed as coach driver, warehouse clerk and bookkeeper. His early education was thus obtained from practical training. There was no record of any formal education or schooling in Confucius' youth.

Of a keen mind and inquisitive nature, Confucius was highly motivated for learning; and as a self-educated man, he found time to acquaint himself with the six arts. Observation of ceremonies performed in daily life acquainted him with the knowledge of rites. He declared a great fondness for music and never gave up the opportunity to discuss it with any visiting performer or music masters of the day. Having been a professional hunter and coach driver, he learned and practiced the skill of archery and chariot driving. In archery he showed great sportsmanship for he never aimed at a resting bird. In history, he delved into the annals of Lu, the only form of written records, containing chronologies of events. As bookkeeper he practiced his accounting skill and arithmetic. Equipped with the knowledge of reading and writing and the six arts, the education of Confucius was considered as broad and as liberal as any young man of his time could afford. His education, too, won him status as member of the ju

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18 Ibid., V. xxvii.
19 The six arts were: rites, music, archery, chariot-driving, reading and arithmetic.
20 Ibid., VII. xxvi.
class. Consequently, he was able to rise from the lowly status of apprentice to the position of government official.

Already at this early stage in life, Confucius emerged as a youth who understood the value of education, not only as a broadening life experience, but also as an avenue to greater social mobility. In a manner, education became an equalizing force, creating equality in opportunities which otherwise would be closed to him. The seeds for his later democratic ideals were sown, when he had been placed among the common people, with whom he had struggled for a livelihood, and for whom he had a certain affiliation and comradeship. Embedded in his early life experience was the democratic ideal, which he later emphasized as a teacher; namely, to give every young man, regardless of his social position, an opportunity to education.\(^{21}\)

Another indication of future personal preferences and attitudes that can be traced to his childhood and youth was his fondness for playing at sacrifices and ceremonial rites.\(^{22}\) In this is observed his inclination for formal and ritualistic behavior, which permeated his adult personality. Indeed, his daily habits of eating and sleeping, the way he was dressed and his general bearing

\(^{21}\) Ibid., XV. xxxviii.

\(^{22}\) Sze Ma Chien, *Historical Records*, p. 4.
revealed an adherence to ritual and ceremony. Later, as a grown man, he professed his love for antiquity and tradition, which apparently contradicted some of his progressive ideas.

There was little mention of Confucius' mother, who must have played a dominant role in the upbringing of Confucius and his development, since he was left in her sole care until she died, at which time Confucius was not more than seventeen years old. Confucius, according to the custom of the day, buried his mother beside his father's grave on the mountain of Fang.\(^23\) The death of his parents must have enhanced the independence and freedom of Confucius, for after the usual mourning period and a brief official career in Lu, he left his native state and began his long journey among the various states, offering his service to certain wise rulers during those chaotic days.

**Confucius' Official Career**

Seeking official appointment in Confucius' day was the path to upward social mobility. There was also a demand for the services of educated young men, for the feudal system had created a leisure class of lords and nobles who needed retainers to tend to their property, while the dukes, possessing independent rule over his

\(^23\)Ibid., p. 4.
fief, needed men to assist them in their government.

Confucius was by this time well versed in the six arts, thereby raising himself from the humble status of his early youth to become a petty official of the Chi family of Lu. While in office, his accounts and measures were always correct. Thereupon, he was made Chief Shepherd, and while he was in this official capacity, the animals grew in numbers and multiplied. Therefore he was appointed Minister of Public Works.24 Confucius' work ethics were apparently based on a high sense of responsibility, honesty and conscientiousness. Mencius quoted Confucius as saying: "As keeper of stores, my calculations must all be right: that is all I have to care about." And when in charge of public fields, "... the oxen and sheep must be fat and strong and superior: that is all I have to care about."25

Soon after, however, Confucius resigned from his official position. The reason for the termination of his brief career was inexplicit. It was probable, however, that he did so voluntarily. His decision might have stemmed from his ambition to seek fuller use of his capabilities, based on a self knowledge of his own potentials and a sense of calling: for in his mind there

24 Ibid., p. 6.

arose a vision of a harmonious society which he wanted to materialize.

An important experience happened to Confucius at this time. It took the form of a journey to the court of Chou, at Loyang, to fulfill his wish to study Chou rites. At Loyang, Confucius visited the grounds set apart for great sacrifices to Heaven and Earth, inspected the pattern of the Hall of Light, and examined the arrangements of the ancestral temple and the court. The visit to the Chou court proved to be a significant educational experience for Confucius. With his incessant desire to learn, he chose to do so by direct observation, through which he could obtain first hand information. Books were not available in his days; neither was traveling an easy task, and Loyang was some distance away. Confucius traveled by horse drawn chariot, accompanied by a servant, both given to him by the Prince of Lu, who must have known Confucius personally and was appreciative enough of him to grant him this favor. Indeed, the fame of Confucius had been quite widespread among the circle of nobility. He was seen as a promising young man who loved decorum and was well versed in the rites and the affairs of the day. It was probable that some nobleman had entrusted his offsprings to the private tutorship of Confucius, but not to the
extent of exaggeration as seen in the biography of Confucius by Sze Ma Chien. 26

Confucius was now thirty years old. He said of himself in retrospect: "... At thirty I stood firm. . . ." Confucius was conscious of his mental and intellectual growth, and his embarkment on a further stage in his life process toward personal fulfillment. To him, it was not so much a chronological age but a mental stage, a readiness to take up a new phase in life's process, a turning point in life's journey. Confucius emerged as a mature man: he felt that he was ready to launch his political career. He saw around him the chaos, the human misery, the deterioration of morals, and sought solutions to the problems of the day by seeking to right them. He therefore, set out to offer his own service to any righteous ruler who would listen to and implement his philosophy. His mission, then, was to save the nation from moral and political disorder.

The political situation at Lu at this time, around 522 B.C., was fast deteriorating. Lu was surrounded by

26 Sze Ma Chien, Historical Records, pp. 7-8. The story of Minister Meng entrusting his heir to Confucius' tutorship is a myth. The improbability stems from the fact that Confucius was only seventeen then, and the Minister's praise contained much exaggeration. Furthermore, the Analects did not record this.

27 Analects, II. iv.
stronger states waiting to conquer it. Political intrigue was everywhere. Dukes sought out wise men who could satisfactory provide solutions to the problems of government and practical politics, and to counsel them on political strategies. Confucius, whose name was quite well known by this time, was sought out by Duke Ching of Chi, a large neighboring state of Lu. In answering the Duke's questions on government, Confucius expounded his views on the importance of employing officials of righteous character. The Duke seemed to be impressed by Confucius' point of view, but he did not appoint him to a position in his government at the time.

When Lu fell into disorder, Confucius fled to Chi, whereupon he had the opportunity to discuss music with Chi's chief music master. There he heard the Shao music, and "... for three months he forgot the taste of meat." The Shao was the music of the state of Chi. It is believed to have been transmitted from antiquity and was specially cultivated.

Unwilling to give up the opportunity to be in the service of Duke Ching of Chi, Confucius again entered into political discussions with him. During this conference, Confucius put forth to Duke Ching another aspect

28 Sze Ma Chien, Historical Records, p. 8.
29 Analects, III. xxv; VII. xxiii.
of his political theory: the importance of the "rectification of names." He said: "Let the prince be prince; the minister, minister; the father, father; the son, son." The idea behind this is that each man be given a designated social role in society. If each man acts according to his designated role, then there will be orderliness in society. While Duke Ching seemed to approve of his answer, he still did not employ Confucius. Disappointed, Confucius returned to his native state.

At home, Confucius was yet to face another disillusionment. Lu's ducal house had fallen into the hands of subordinate vassals. Morality and ethics were at the lowest ebb, for everyone was grasping for power. Confucius decided to retire temporarily from politics, for much of what he saw was against his ethical principle and ideals. Not wanting to accept any office, he spent most of his time teaching and studying. This marks a significant intellectual period in Confusius' life. Confucius was about forty years old.

"... At forty I was free from doubts, ..." Confucius reminisced. His convictions seemed to have become firmer with increased introspection, philosophical thinking and fuller life experiences. During this period of self retirement, tradition had it that Confucius arranged the Odes, the records, the rites and music, while

\[\text{Ibid., XII. ii.}\]
from all sides and from far distant regions, disciples flocked to him. In all probability, Confucius devoted much of his time teaching and studying. His fame grew as thinker and teacher.

Confucius' intellectual circle grew with the increase in followers, who flocked to him to study the art of politics. Among the more brilliant students were disciples Tse Lu, Tse Kung and Yen Yuan, who later took up important official positions in Chi, which was politically strong in addition to being a neighboring state of Lu. Confucius taught them the importance of moral education in the making of a politician, which he considered more important than a knowledge of books or practical skills.

Confucius' teaching activity was considered by many scholars to be equivalent to modern day professional training. However, the emphasis of Confucius' educational endeavor was not on professional skill, but rather the philosophical, moral and spiritual foundation on which the art of politics and government rest. Confucius was convinced that the necessary skills could be derived naturally once the ethical and moral code of behavior had

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31 Sze Ma Chien, Historical Records, pp. 15-16. Sze Ma Chien's chronology puts this period of intellectual activity prior to the wanderings of Confucius. Other sources tend to place this period after Confucius' wanderings.
been established. He taught the art of leadership and good government. A good leader, he believed, must set a good example to his subjects and followers; good government rests on the welfare and benefit of the people.

There was no fixed classroom in the school of Confucius. The students traveled with Confucius wherever he went, so that the teacher student relationship was a close one.

In 501 B.C., when Confucius was about fifty years old, he embarked upon what tradition held to be a short but brilliant period of official activity in his life. Duke Ting of Lu, having long heard about Confucius, decided to appoint him as chief magistrate of Cheng Tu. In the Family Sayings of Confucius is mentioned how, in a very short time, the town of Cheng Tu became such a model city that neighboring states wanted to copy its example, as a result of Confucius' brilliant administration. There were differential rites for the living and the dead. The old and the young, the strong and the weak, were properly taken care of by differential treatment and modes of living. There was no theft or covetousness in the city, and harmony and order prevailed. However, one may regard this period of Confucius' political career as an exaggeration rather than the truth. Neither the Analects no Mencius mentions anything about Confucius as a high official. Again, tradition upheld that the success of Confucius in Cheng Tu led to a promotion as Minister of Public Works.
and from there to the position of Minister of Justice. Confucius was said to have performed both duties with remarkable capability and thereby achieved instant fame as reformer. Once again, this is, in all probability, an exaggeration on the part of the historian who apparently intended to eulogize rather than report the truth.

However, by this time Confucius was able to extend his influence through the official appointments of some of his disciples. Among them, the most noted ones were Tse Lu and Tze Yu, who entered the employment of the Chi house. Confucius hoped that he might achieve his political ideals through them. Noting that the increase in power of the ministers over the ducal house had destroyed the balance of power necessary in maintaining peace and order, Confucius had his disciple, Tse Lu, the steward of the Chi house, attack the fortified cities of Pi, Hou and Cheng, which belonged to the three rebellious clans of Ke, Shu-sun and Meng respectively. The cities of Pi and Hou were razed, but the city of Cheng was not taken. This event in 497 B.C., marked Confucius' successful attempt in executing his political and ethical

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32 Ibid., p. 17. Other sources supporting this are Mo Tzu, Mencius and Tso Chuan. However, later commentaries in Mo Tzu and Tso Chuan dismissed the matter lightly, and Mencius only explained why he resigned from his office.

33 Ibid., pp. 21-22.
principle of rectifying names\textsuperscript{34} by strengthening the ducal house and depressing the ministers. In this manner, their respective roles and designated status were restored.

Confucius' fame and influence at home and abroad soon brought fear and jealousy among the neighboring states of Lu, particularly the state of Chi which lay nearest to Lu, and thus faced the greatest danger of being annexed, if Lu were to become powerful. Thereupon the Duke of Chi devised a scheme to counteract the influence of Confucius. He sent a gift of eighty beautiful dancing girls and a hundred and twenty of the finest steeds to the Prince of Lu. Of weak character, the Prince of Lu began to neglect affairs of state, notwithstanding the counsel of Confucius. True to his ethical principle of only entering into the service of righteous rulers, Confucius knew his time to withdraw from office was near. Accompanied by his disciples Tze Lu and Yen Hui, Confucius set out for what was to become a most restless period of his life: nine years of wandering from state to state, attempting in vain to put his ideas into practice. Considering that Confucius was by now close to sixty years of age, his energy and zeal must have surpassed most men.

\textsuperscript{34}In essence, the principle of rectifying names states that man should conform in action to the normative implication of his name. In this case, the ministers, striving for supremacy over their overlords, were considered overriding their status and therefore unrectified.
in his day and age. Confucius professed, "Since King Weng (of antiquity) is no longer alive, this civilization is entrusted to my care! . . ." Undaunted in spirit and full of confidence, Confucius set off on his mission to save the nation from further chaos.

Confucius' Period of Wandering

Confucius left Lu, his native state, with regret. Yet the imminence of the situation compelled him to leave, in order that the civilization be saved from destruction. His dream was to revive the glory of civilization attained by Chou and to seek human happiness. His hope was to find a prince who would grant him opportunity to put his ideas into practice.

Confucius first sojourn was to the state of Wei, where he was well received and assisted financially by Ling, its duke. When Ling did not offer him a government position, he left Wei. The year was not later than 492 B.C. On his way south to the state of Chen, Confucius was waylaid and held prisoner by the people of Kuang, who mistook him for Yang Hu of Lu, who had recently ravaged Kuang. Confucius managed to escape from harm. His reaction, on the other hand, reflected much confidence that his days were not yet over. He said,

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35 Analects, XI. xxii., IX. v.
36 Sze Ma Chien, Historical Records, p. 27.
Since King Wen is no longer alive, this civilization is entrusted to my care! If Heaven wished to destroy this civilization, a mortal like me would not have obtained such a connection with it. But if Heaven does not wish to destroy this civilization, what can the people of Kuang do to me?\(^{37}\)

Shortly after, Confucius returned to Wei. His return did not bring him any opportunity of official appointment. After a month there, Confucius left. He was much disappointed with the fallen moral standard of the day. In the year following, Confucius passed through the state of Tsao on his way to Sung, but he was not welcomed there. So he went to the state of Cheng, where he stayed for three years. Again, he found no sympathetic audience.

As full of hope as before, Confucius set off to the state of Chen. The plight of Chen was pitiful. It had suffered ceaseless plunderings from the states of Chin, Chu and Wu, in their fight for political supremacy over each other. Confucius could not stay on. He and his disciples passed through Pu, where it was believed that they met with obstacles and had to fight their way through. Finally, Confucius returned to Wei.

The Duke Ling of Wei, now in his old age, gave Confucius a warm welcome. Nonetheless, Confucius' counsels once again had no effect upon the duke. Confucius, tired and disappointed, yet still confident in his ideas

\(^{37}\)Analects, XI. xxii., IX. v.
of government, sighed, "Were any prince to employ me, in twelve months something could have been done, but in three years the work could be completed." 

Confucius soon discovered that Duke Ling, like all the others, was covetous of power, for his main interest was military tactics, on which he asked Confucius' advice. Confucius replies, "With the appurtenances of worship I have indeed an acquaintance, but as to military matters, I have never studied them." 

Confucius, true to his ethical principle, refused to discuss political strategies with an unprincipled ruler.

On the way to the state of Chen, their supplies failed; and the followers of Confucius were so ill that they could not tolerate the suffering. Tzu Lu with some irritation asked Confucius, "Does also a man of higher order have to suffer want?" "The superior man bears want unshaken," replied Confucius, "the inferior man in want becomes demoralized." Herein lies the principle of superior man, or chuntze, a man of great moral strength and character, an ideal which Confucius strove to achieve in himself and his disciples. The rich life experiences in this period of wandering became a practicing ground for learning and a basis of principles for teaching, even though they did not bring about any visible success and

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38 Ibid., XIII. x. 39 Ibid., XV. i.
40 Ibid., XV. i.
achievement in the manner Confucius had desired.

The old Duke Ting of Lu had died. This was the third year of the rule of Duke Ai of Lu. Confucius was now in the state of Chen. The new chancellor of Lu, Baron Kang, according to the last wishes of his father, had intended to invite Confucius back to Lu to help him with the government. In the end, however, it was Confucius' disciple, Jan Chiu, who received the invitation.

It is a paradox that while the disciples of Confucius attained important official appointments, their Master enjoyed no similar opportunities. This leads to speculation that it may have been Confucius' personality and not his teaching, that hindered his pursuit of a political career. Confucius was by temperament not suited to a political life. He preached reform by persuasion rather than by violence and rebellion, yet he was not gifted with the kind of eloquence to talk to practical men. Neither would he resort to flattery to gain listeners, nor hide his displeasure with unprincipled men. Unrighteous men feared the frankness of his criticisms, while men of moral character were difficult to find at such times. Unable to flatter, Confucius drove many prospective employers away. Moreover, his remarks and judgement were harsh, so that men of lesser morals avoided him. The Analects recorded how, in one instance, a powerful noble, Chi Kang Tzu, who was plagued with robbers, consulted
Confucius on this problem, to which Confucius replied: "If you, Sir, be free from the love of wealth, although you pay them, they will not steal." In another instance, Confucius' advice to him was: "To govern means to guide right. If you, Sir, will lead the way rightly, who will dare to deviate from the right?"\(^41\)

Confucius was an uncompromising man, willing to serve only those who met with his moral standards. Under no circumstances would he allow himself to betray his own principles. One such instance recorded how the governor of Chung Mou, himself a rebel and thus considered unrighteous in the eyes of Confucius, had invited him to take up office in his government; Confucius, in spite of his great desire to be of service after many fruitless years of wanderings, decided not to accept this very tempting offer.\(^42\)

On the other hand, the followers of Confucius did not suffer the same difficulties as he did. It was not that they did not follow closely to the teaching of Confucius, but that they enjoyed an advantageous position as the pupils of a greater thinker. As such, they were equipped with certain desirable qualities favorable to their obtaining official appointments. The princes knew that the pupils of Confucius had attained a high standard of moral discipline. Good men were difficult to come by,

\(^41\)Ibid., XII. xviii.  \(^42\)Ibid., XVII. vii.
and the conditions of the times increased the need for trustworthy officials who would be loyal to their overlords. There were numerous other schools of thought, but none preached non-violence in a constructive way like the Confucian school. The school of Mo Ti, which also had a prevalent philosophy at the time, preached universal love. However, its ideas were highly impractical. Whereas the Taoist school, with Lao Tze as leader, upheld non-involvement and represented a negative view toward culture and society. Followers of the Confucian school held positive and realistic views on human affairs. The disciples of Confucius, therefore, possessed the necessary intellectual, moral and spiritual makeup, a realistic orientation and the skill of government, qualities which an overlord would look for in their subordinates. Moreover, Confucius' fame helped to bring about employment for his students, who had most opportunities with the Chi family. Though Confucius personally disapproved of Chi who had usurped power in Lu, he nevertheless did not in any way thwart the chances that came to his disciples in terms of official appointment. Tse Lu was made steward to the Chi family, the highest post in Lu ever attained by non-hereditary means.

Confucius' travels offered no visible outcome or in any manner fulfilled his political ambition. It is important to remember that Confucius did not travel in
peaceful times, and that his journeys were often interrupted by vissicitudes of war and plunder, which greatly endangered his safety. The fact that Confucius had not cut short his plans of travel to seek a more comfortable mode of life was enough to indicate his courage and strength, propelled by his sense of mission and determination to save the world from appalling misery. Nevertheless, near the end of the long period of traveling, the Analects recorded that there were moments in which Confucius was overcome with homesickness.43

Yet in the philosophical sense, the wanderings of Confucius proved to be an important experience in his intellectual and spiritual growth. It was a broadening experience to see the world. His followers benefited greatly from this practical experience which formed a vital part of their education. Though unable to put his principles into practice, Confucius probably reached a higher plane of moral attainment through this life experience. His set a moral example to a demoralized world: a man of moral and ethical principles who was unwilling to compromise his beliefs, and whose integrity remained untainted in an age of temptations. In any event, his wanderings helped spread the fame of Confucius as thinker and teacher, if not as politician. It was a period of

43 Ibid., V. xxi.
personal growth, for Confucius admitted in retrospect: "At sixty my ear was docile. At seventy I could follow the desires of my heart without transgressing the right." Although Confucius was not yet seventy at the time, nevertheless, he had reached a stage of transcendence and internalization of truth and beauty as an integral part of his being.

In about 484 B.C., Confucius returned to the state of Lu at the invitation of his disciples who were active in government. Confucius' counsel was frequently sought by the duke of Lu, but in the end no office was given to him. This time, however, Confucius did not strive for official position. The state of affairs in Lu was that the duke wanted to raise taxation upon the already burdened people, and Jan Chiu, Confucius' disciple, assisted in collecting it. This met with Confucius' disapproval; he openly repudiated Chiu. Though he had ceased to be involved actively in politics, Confucius never ceased to be a much feared critic of the times.

Confucius' closing years portrayed him as a devotee of scholarship and teaching. Tradition held him to be the editor and author of the six classics, namely, the Book of Poetry, the Book of History, I Ching, the Book of Rites, the Book of Music and the Spring and Autumn Annals. There has been a great deal of controversy amongst

\[44\text{Ibid., II. iv.}\]
scholars regarding the authorship of these works. The fact is that Confucius was not the author of any of these. Undoubtedly, Confucius was one of the most learned men of his days, and perhaps one of the most widely traveled men as well. It did not occur to him, however, to propagate his ideas and thinking through a written tradition, but rather through the living tradition of his disciples.

It is now believed that the six Classics, namely: the Book of Poetry, the Book of History, I Ching, the Book of Rites, the Book of Music and the Spring and Autumn Annals, were already in existence at the time of Confucius. At best, what Confucius did was to rearrange the contents or re-edit some of them. Sze Ma Chien claimed that Confucius reduced the Book of Poetry from one thousand to three hundred and five pieces. There has been a great deal of controversy among later scholars with regards to this. It is quite questionable as to the veracity of it because there is little evidence as to the existence of the poems outside the corpus of three hundred and five in early literature. As to the Book of History, which is a fixed group of documents, Mencius warned scholars of the truth therein; so it is quite unlikely that Confucius could have written it himself. As regards the I Ching, or the Book of Changes, it is certain that Confucius had no part in its composition. He did study it, however, and
regarded it as a profound body of knowledge existing. Later Confucians studied it with such intensity that achieved the status of one of the Classics. As to the Book of Rites, there was no evidence as to the fact that Confucius had written any book on rites, though he had emphasized their importance in education, and had probably studied Chou rites while he visited the Chou capital. Similarly, Confucius regarded music very highly in education, yet there is little evidence that he had written any book on the subject.

Perhaps the only work that bears any imprint of Confucius' originality is the Spring and Autumn Annals, a brief chronicle of events that happened in the period 722-479 B.C. in the state of Lu. It is the history of the twelve dukes that reigned in Lu, spanning a period of some two hundred and forty years, beginning with Duke Yin (722-712 B.C.), and down to the fourteenth year in the rule of Duke Ai. Before Confucius, any written history was in the form of chronological records. Confucius was the first to attempt some kind of historiography, the chief feature of which was the use of clues bearing subtle and far-reaching meanings. The need to employ such a method probably stemmed from the necessities of the times, when freedom of speech was thwarted by autocratic rule. Apparently, the records of events, written by court his-

45 Ibid., VII. xvi.
torians, represented a view favorable to those in power. Confucius felt the need to tell history as it really happened. What he did was to make these annals specific and exact, through which we can deduce Confucius' judgement passed on those events.

Mencius was of the opinion that after the annals were completed by Confucius, "rebellious ministers and villanous sons were struck with terror." Sze Ma Chien was of the opinion that Confucius wished to be known to posterity by means of the Spring and Autumn Annals. His authority probably rested on the hint of a wish on the part of Confucius for posterity as attested in the Analects, and also on Mencius, which quoted Confucius as saying, "If anyone recognizes my greatness in future generations, it will be because of the Spring and Autumn Annals. If anyone condemns me in future generations, it will likewise be because of the Spring and Autumn Annals. Creel doubted the validity of this statement, since convincing evidence is lacking. However, as upholder of truth and justice, and as a keen and critical observer of the times, Confucius could very well have felt the need to tell history as it really happened. That he was editor

46 Sze Ma Chien, Historical Records, p. 63.
47 Analects, XV. xix.
of the *Spring and Autumn Annals* has the highest probability over every other form of literary work that tradition had attributed to Confucius. In the historiography of Confucius lies the basic assumption that is to be found in traditional Chinese historiography: that of objectivity and the pursuit of truth.

During his last years, the disciples of Confucius came to him with the aim of scholarship in mind; they were different from the earlier pupils, who came with the intention of learning the art of government from Confucius. Thus, this later group of disciples yielded several brilliant scholars, who propagated Confucius' ideas through a living tradition by establishing the Confucian school and by having disciples of their own.

Very little was recorded about the last days of Confucius. It was said that he had a presentiment of his own death, which he verbalized to his disciple Tse Kung. Confucius died at the age of seventy-three. The year was 479 B.C. Two hundred years later, Sze Ma Chien wrote this epilogue to his biography of Confucius. Chien quoted a verse from the *Book of Poetry*:

"The high mountain, he looked toward it; The distant road, he walked along it."

Confucius, he said, was "a simple man of the people, and of humble birth, yet he had become the nation's Master for two centuries on end." The Grand Historian declared,
"That can be designated the highest possible sanctity."\(^{49}\)

**Confucius the Man**

Tradition describes Confucius as a man conforming to a great extent to the rules, decorum and convention of his day. Indeed, Confucius admitted that he was a lover of antiquity,\(^{50}\) a statement that might have implied Confucius as a man upholding tradition and its ideals. The fact that his personality revealed a kind of rigidity and adherence to conventional behavior further enhanced this impression. Confucius is often described as a formalist, a meticulous personality with fastidious habits. He was particular about the way he was dressed, and was meticulous about his food, its quality and the way it was cooked: for he would not eat anything in the least unfresh, tainted or not properly cut. He was said to have never appeared fully relaxed even with his own family. His public bearing was punctilious to a degree, and in private, he permitted himself no undue freedom. It was likely that he deemed it necessary to rigorously repress his expression of affection. All this creates an image of a rather rigid, austere and idiosyncratic personality.

\(^{49}\)Sze Ma Chien, *Historical Records*, p. 70.

\(^{50}\)The *Analects*, VII. i.
It was based upon this impression that Legge denounced the greatness that was due to Confucius. 51

Paradoxically, Confucius was known to his disciples as a man who was entirely free from preconceptions, predeterminations, obduracy and egoism. 52 In other words, Confucius was a man with an open mind, who valued objectivity and personal freedom above everything else. His idiosyncrasies were actually an indication of his individualistic behavior, which suggested that he was not willing to conform to the conventional code of behavior. The truth is that he did not adhere unquestioningly to conventional attitude and behavior. The Analects attested to the fact that in some circumstances, Confucius made sensible alterations of the prescribed decorum and rites that existed during his time:

"A linen cap is the prescribed form, but nowadays silk is worn. This saves expense and I follow the general usage. Salutation below is the prescribed form, but nowadays they salute above. This is going too far, and therefore, though infringing the general usage, I follow the rule of bowing below." The Master said. 53

Perhaps tradition remembers Confucius best as a man of compassion. A great humanitarian, he strove all his life for the betterment of his fellow human beings. He valued human life and the importance of happiness. In

52 The Analects, IX. iv. 53 Ibid., IX. iii.
his daily dealings with people he revealed a great deal of love and compassion. Once his stable was burnt down and Confucius, on coming forth, asked if anyone was hurt. He did not ask about the horses.\textsuperscript{54} And when a friend died, he would always see to his funeral.\textsuperscript{55} He did not, as tradition suggested, repress his emotions and feelings. He loved his disciples dearly, and when Yen Yuan died, his grief was carried to excess, so great was his loss.\textsuperscript{56}

Confucius was a lover of learning and sought much pleasure therein, "... so eager for improvement that he forgets his food, so happy therein that he forgets his sorrow and so does not observe that old age is at hand."	extsuperscript{57} He was also a willing giver of knowledge to whoever had the desire to learn. His democratic views on education were well ahead of his time. For him, the ultimate goal of learning was to cultivate a man of superior intellectual and moral qualities. His disciples believed that Confucius had reached this goal, to which remark he replied with modesty: "In letters perhaps I may compare with others, but as to my living the noble life, to that I have not yet attained."\textsuperscript{58} Again, he said, "As to being a Sage, or a man of Virtue, how dare I presume to such a
claim! But as to striving thereafter unwearingly, and teaching others therein without flagging--that can be said of me, and that is all."

It can be safely assumed that Confucius was most aptly his true self when he was with his disciples, who shared his life with a great degree of closeness. The Master, they said, was affable yet disdainful, commanding yet not overbearing, courteous yet easy. When at leisure, the Master's manner was informal and cheerful.

Conclusion

The society in which Confucius lived was in a state of flux. It was at the crossroad of two eras, one on the point of vanishing and the other fast encroaching upon it, and with it came rapid social changes. The old order of Chou, once a flourishing civilization, sponsoring a well-defined feudal class system, was giving way to a new social order. It threatened to break down this feudal system with its class structure of nobles and peasants and simple agricultural economy. This new social order promised greater social mobility and a more complex economy made possible by the invention of ironworking. The power of the king was greatly weakened by the increase in power of the vassals. The uncertainty of the age and

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59 Ibid., V. xxvii.  
60 Ibid., VII. iv.  
61 Ibid., VII. v.
human degradation were very disturbing to Confucius, who joined with other thinkers to search for a solution, and having found it, set upon a life's journey seeking some wise rulers who would use him, with the aim of restoring peace and harmony to a chaotic world of change.

Born in the state of Lu, a most cultured region in China at the time, Confucius had the opportunity to immerse himself in the culture of Chou. The traditions of the past that was Chou gave him the wisdom and knowledge he eagerly sought after, for even as a youth Confucius had a great inclination toward learning. His education and social status allowed him the objectivity to be selective of the old and critical of the new.

Confucius was born in the age of Enlightenment, which saw the rise of rationalism. Supernaturalism was gradually replaced by human interpretation of the laws and statutes of Heaven. It was an age of liberation and emancipation. Men wrestled free of the old traditions and customs that bound them. Their scope of freedom was widened, allowing them freedom of thought and of movement. Intellectualism arose as a consequence and many thinkers and philosophers were born. The rise of intellectual activity was initiated by the men at the bottom of the ruling class, known as ju. It became possible for a member of this class, with Confucius as a typical example, to rise to ministerial status, though not born into
nobility. A majority of the progressive thinkers came from this class. Confucius was amongst their ranks, of what is known as the "Hundred Schools of Philosophy," and became the leader of the first and most influential school of thought for centuries to come.

Confucius' thoughts and ideas were rooted in the past. Even as a child, he practiced old ceremonies at play. Of his formal education, little is known. Confucius might be aptly called a self-educated man. As a youth he practiced many trades, which led him into all walks of life, the experience of which proved to be of great influence on his thinking, particularly on his educational ideas.

As a young man, Confucius was able to rise from apprenticeship to the position of a minor official, in which capacity he performed his duties with great ability and uprighteousness. However, Confucius was not satisfied with a simple life of a lowly official. His personal life goal was the moral life of a superior man. The steps leading to this ideal were set in with several mental stages. The stages of self-cultivation were setting the mind upon learning, followed by the stage of standing firm in decisions, of freedom from doubts, of understanding the laws of Heaven, culminating in the state of internalization of righteousness. Throughout his life Confucius strove to reach the highest stage of moral life, and in
the eyes of his disciples, he did it with a great degree of success. This personal goal of Confucius was to march in step with yet another colossal goal in his life. Confucius envisaged a moral social order maintained by humanistic principles, and presided over by men of moral character. He proclaimed himself the intellectual heir of Chou, and the possessor of the solution to the chaos of the world. Opposing rebellion and violence, he needed the authority of a wise ruler to support him; without such authority, he could not put his ideas into practice. The framework of his system of political theory was based on the ethics of the "rectification of names," in which the king was allowed to be king; minister, minister; father, father; and son, son. A moral world order with well defined social roles, respect for each other, and cooperation for the common good of all was his political ideal. Unable to be of use in his native state, he set upon a long and tedious journey which marked the period of wandering and restlessness in the latter part of Confucius' life. This period of wandering from state to state brought few tangible results. The dukes and princes of the day who wanted quicker and more effective methods, were not convinced by his political insight and point of view. Confucius' method of reforming by persuasion and education was regarded as too gradual and time consuming.
Though politically unsuccessful, Confucius' fame as a philosopher and critic spread with the increase in the number of followers, who first flocked to him to learn the skill of government and to obtain training in the political arts. Some of his earlier disciples later obtained high official positions, which helped spread the influence of Confucius. When his political ambitions had subsided, Confucius devoted the rest of his life to scholarship and teaching. Some of his later pupils became famous scholars. It was through them that the thoughts of their Master were propagated. It was through them that Confucius was known to posterity as teacher and thinker.

Describing himself as a transmitter and not a creator, Confucius was indeed not the author of the Classics which tradition attributed to him, except for the Spring and Autumn Annals, which is said to bear the marks of his editing and interpretations. He left little to the world in the form of the written word except his thoughts which he orally transmitted to his disciples, fragments of which were recorded in the Analects by the latter. Little did he know that he had left behind an important living tradition that pervaded China throughout the ages.

Thus lived in ancient China a thinker and teacher whose influence was to continue for 2,500 years. Confucius' philosophical thought that impregnated this
tradition indeed deserves examination, not only in view of its influence and significance in the history of China, but also in view of how tradition had, during this great expanse of time, transformed the original thoughts of Confucius.
CHAPTER III

THE ETHICAL, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL

IDEAS OF CONFUCIUS

Introduction

In order to understand the educational ideas of Confucius, it is necessary to examine them in the broader context of his entire philosophy. In this chapter, the basic tenets of Confucius' ethical, political and social thought will be discussed. The relationship between Confucius' ethical system and his political and social ideas will also be examined, as the former seems to be inseparable from the latter.

Ethical Ideas

Permeating the entire philosophical system of Confucius is the idea of human rectitude in the nature of man. In times of moral, political and social disorder, when the baser qualities of man were fully exposed, Confucius appealed to the more noble instincts of human nature, which when properly cultivated, could bring forth rich fruits of peace, order and harmony in society.

In his conception of human nature, Confucius took no firm stand on the question of whether man is naturally good or bad. His optimism and confidence in man, however,
seemed to indicate that man possesses a propensity toward good and a great capacity to be influenced by education. Confucius did explicitly say that "men are by nature very similar, but by practice come to be very different," and that "man is born for uprightness, without it he is lucky to escape with his life." Human rectitude, or uprightness, therefore, is the fundamental point of ethics for Confucius. Man is essentially a moral being, for he possesses a moral sense of obligation to himself and to society. This propensity to good in human nature needs be brought forth and developed by education. The ultimate goal is to create the morally superior man, or chun tse, who has attained the highest ideal of human morality. The superior man is the moral man, who is defined as a cooperating member of the society. He is the altruist, who makes the general interest his own business.

In Confucius' ethical system, there is no thought of the purgation or extirpation of feelings and emotions with which man is naturally endowed. Yet the egotistical passions and desires, born of such feelings and emotions, need to be properly regulated and coordinated so that they do not influence man's judgement or warp his mind. Egoism is the source of evil, for it leads to the pursuit of man's own interest and selfish-

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62 Analects, XVII. ii.
63 Ibid., VI. xvii.
ness. Evil is produced in man by an error of valuation, the result of emotional excesses impeding his judgements and rational thinking. Fortunately, however, evil is always artificial and thus contrary to nature, and is communicated to others by bad example and teaching. The moral man has no ego, but rather nobility of character. He is a man of principle, who practices tao with courtesy, modesty and perfects it with sincerity.\(^{64}\) Tao is a term never clearly defined by Confucius. There are numerous renditions of tao, itself being a very encompassing term, which sums up the totality of the philosophy of Confucius. It suffices at this point to adopt this interpretation: that of tao as the embodiment of all virtues, such as benevolence, righteousness, humility, loyalty and filial piety.

In his attempt to substantiate his ethical views, Confucius expounded the principle of jen: the embodiment of his ethical system. The etymology of the word jen is derived from the words "two" and "person" or "man." Jen can be expressed only when there is more than one person involved, a necessary condition for the existence and manifestation of jen. Jen is the totality of morals, the summation of ethics. The Analects gave numerous explanations of jen. "Jen is the denial of self and response to what is right and proper."\(^{65}\) The denial of self is self-restraint,  

\(^{64}\)Ibid., XV. xvii. \(^{65}\)Ibid., XII. i.
not the suppression of self, but of the selfish desires within. **Jen** is thus the perfect virtue of the heart. It forms the principles of conduct, governing both private and public life. "In private life be courteous, in handling public affairs be serious, with all men be conscientious. . . ."\(^{66}\) **Jen** is so important to a man of principles that in no circumstances would he abandon his principles or act against them. **Jen** is consideration for others. "Do not do to others what you would not do to yourself,"\(^ {67}\) culminates in the principle of reciprocity or **shu**, which is **jen** in action, the rule of which is to be able to draw from one's own self a parallel for the treatment of others.\(^ {68}\)

**Jen** manifests itself in man by way of firmness in spirit, resoluteness in character, simplicity in manner and modesty in speech.\(^ {69}\) **Jen** is part of man: it is his spiritual nature, which elevates man above all living things because of the moral mind he possesses.\(^ {70}\) It is the highest ideal of human nature, attainable through cultivation, good teaching and good example.\(^ {71}\) The more encompassing idea of **jen** is the compassion of man for man.\(^ {72}\)

\(^{66}\) Ibid., XV. viii.
\(^{67}\) Ibid., XII. ii., XV. xxiii., VIII. xiii.
\(^{68}\) Ibid., VI. xxvii., XV. xxiii.
\(^{69}\) Ibid., XIII. xxvii.
\(^{70}\) Ibid., XV. xxiv.
\(^{71}\) Ibid., XV. ix.
\(^{72}\) Ibid., XII. xxii.
The concept of *jen* did not originate with Confucius. The *Book of History* had utilized this concept in connection with the benevolent rule of the kings and rulers of antiquity. *Jen* was the term used to denote the kindness and love of the ruler toward his subjects, and *jen* in connection with politics was geared toward the welfare and benefit of the people. Confucius took this concept and enlarged its meaning, so that *jen* became a basic moral quality sought for by men; this quality was necessary in the makeup of a harmonious social order.

In as much as the concept of *jen* was enlarged and expounded upon by Confucius, the concept of *li* was similarly given a new rendering from its customary denotation. *Li* was the term designated for religious rites and rules for worship, ceremonial observances and festivities, and of the official rites and ritualistic behavior practiced at Chou court, as stated in the *Chou Li*, or the *Official Rites of Chou*. *Li*, to Confucius, has an ethical rendition, and coexists with *jen*, one complementing the other. *Jen* becomes concrete with *li*, which in essence is a body of rules governing human conduct, so as to give *jen* full behavioral expression. *Li* at once ceased to be a social norm governing the behavior and conduct at court, nor was it merely rigid and hollow ritualistic behavior. It became part of Confucius' ethical system, and adopted humanistic qualities.
The Analects best described Confucius' new interpretation of li in the following incidence:

Lin Fang asked Confucius what was the chief principle in ceremonial observances, to which Confucius replied: "A great question indeed! In ceremonies in general, it is better to be simple than lavish; and in the rites of mourning, heartfelt distress is better than observances of detail." 73

In other words, mere ritual without sincerity and genuineness has no meaning. External rites should symbolize the internal feelings. Thus the basis of li is the substantial or genuine feelings, not outward ritualistic formality.

The relationship between jen and li is thus comprehensible: "A man who does not abide by jen, what has he to do with li?" 74 Li therefore becomes an attribute of the moral man: it is the code of conduct governing proper behavior. The moral man abides by the principles of jen, and fulfills his obligations towards himself, his family and the society through this code of conduct or li. Li becomes the tool for regulating egoistical desires, so that such excesses of emotions could be moderated, for selfishness is the source of evil, and it stands in the way for the attainment of jen. Li applied to society becomes the regulating force not only of individual behavior and conduct, but also of society; for it embodies a concrete plan of a social hierarchy, governing human relationships and provides norms of social behavior. Orderliness in human conduct was

73 Ibid., III. iv. 74 Ibid., III. iii.
urgently needed in the time of Confucius.

His ethical system puts men into two broad categories: the superior or moral men and the inferior or unethical men. He formulated this categorization by way of his observation of human character and behavior around him. The emphasis of Confucius' ethical categorization, however, is on the morally superior man. The moral man is termed chun tze, or true gentleman, and the unethical man, siao jen, or mean man. The translation of chun tze as "superior man" emphasizes the chun tze's superiority of moral character and aptitude. The translation of chun tze as "true gentleman" focuses on chun tze's relation with the cultural setting of his actions, his ability to fulfill the stylistic requirements of a form of life. 75

The chun tze has to abide by different requirements for a life of moral excellence. He is a man of moral virtues pervaded by a deep concern for jen, which is the whole purpose of his self cultivation. For this he requires knowledge of reflective desirability of actions and human affairs. 76 In other words he cultivates certain particular virtues that would promote the realization of a life of jen


without which undesirable consequences would result, hampering such a realization.

On the discussion of these particular moral virtues, Confucius proposed that a man of jen practices five things: gravity, generosity of mind, sincerity, liberality and kindness. These propositions seem to be rooted in the idea of avoidance of an undesirable state of affairs: "If you are grave," continued Confucius,

you will not be treated with disrespect. If you are generous, you will win them all. If you are sincere, people will repose trust in you. If you are earnest, you will accomplish much. If you are kind, this will enable you to employ the service of others.77

Knowledge and courage78 are also recognized as having moral values pertaining the realization of jen. These particular moral virtues deal with the internal aspect of jen, in that they emphasize self-cultivation rather than the outward form of conduct. "What the superior man seeks, is in himself. What the mean man seeks, is in others."79 This remark by Confucius might serve to illustrate the internal aspect of jen-morality.

The chun tze is also a man of propriety, li and righteousness, i. These are moral virtues dealing with the outward form of conduct or external aspects of jen, for they relate more to the style and manner of moral perfor-

77 Analects, XVII. vi.
78 Ibid., XV. xvii. 79 Ibid., XV. xx.
mance. Propriety and righteousness are characteristics of correct performance and behavior as governed by the social milieu and the appropriateness of these to concrete situations.  

In chun tze, then, is the realization of the ideal of moral excellence, that is, jen, which portrays the inner aspect of Confucian ethics, the focus of which is on man himself; as well as what he can morally accomplish in relations to others. This latter focus deals with the outer aspect of Confucian ethics: the ritual context, li, in which interpersonal relationships take place in a locale of restraining conditions and behavioral norms for the achievement of the moral ideal. Li becomes the cultural setting in which jen can be practiced, and the judgement of the relevance of jen and li to concrete situations of moral performance.  

The chun tze is a man of catholicity and neutrality. "The superior man is broadminded and not partisan; the inferior man is partisan but not broadminded." The superior man is not like a vessel, intended only for a narrow and specific purpose. Instead, he is a man of broad

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80 Cua, "Paradigmatic Individuals in Confucius," p. 43.  
81 Ibid., p. 46.  
82 Ibid.  
83 Analects, II. xiv., VII. xxx.  
84 Ibid., II. xii.
vision, wide interests, and sufficient ability to do many things. He is a man of moral integrity that exemplifies itself even in the face of great danger.\textsuperscript{85} The practical effect of the moral attitude and broad-mindedness of the chun tze serves as an exemplary guide to the conduct of other men. The moral conduct of the chun tze is contagious, for he "seeks to perfect the good qualities of men, and does not seek to perfect their bad qualities."\textsuperscript{86} A moral man not only wishes to establish his own character, but also the character of others.

The attitude of the moral man is one of neutrality. In the world, he does not set his mind either for anything or against anything: what is right, he will follow.\textsuperscript{87} He is content and composed,\textsuperscript{88} and free from anxiety, fear and perplexities. Being a man of jen, he is free from anxiety about acting contrary to morality; being a man of courage, he is free from fear; being a man with knowledge of human affairs, he is free from perplexities.\textsuperscript{89} "His easeful life is more a matter of attitude and confidence in his ability to deal with difficult and varying situations; rather than an exemplification of his infallible judgement and

\textsuperscript{85} Ibid., VIII. viii.
\textsuperscript{86} Ibid., XII. xvi. \textsuperscript{87} Ibid., IV. x.
\textsuperscript{88} Ibid., VII. xxxvi.
\textsuperscript{89} Ibid., XIV. xxx.
authority." The chun tze's neutrality is his freedom of action. He is free within the cultural milieu of his lifestyle. Yet, in a manner, he is free in his judgement and interpretation of moral rules. Circumstances may arise that alter their force or appropriateness. In this case, flexibility in application of moral rules is expected of the chun tze. The rigidity in the standard of Confucian morality is offset by a flexibility of application. The superior man reserves his independence of judgement and acts according to the circumstances of the times; which explains why he is not obstinate, has no predetermined course of action and is ready to serve or withdraw whenever it is proper to do so.

Thus in Confucian ethics, there is no straightforward application of moral and ritual rules. Indeed, Confucius did deal with the particular moral virtues and emphasized their consequents, yet in teaching this body of rules, he made sure to point out that in the dynamic situations of human life one needs to make rulings even in the absence of given rules. Contrary to what tradition has of Confucian ethics being characterized by rigidity, Cua believes that Confucian ethics is an ethics of flexi-

90 Cua, "Paradigmatic Individuals in Confucius," p. 47.

bility. Indeed, Confucius himself was an exemplar of neutrality in attitude and behavior. He would, when he thought appropriate, alter the rules of rituals according to a common sense guided by the principles of jen and li. He was free to adapt to changing and varying circumstances within a common form of life:

The neutrality of the chun tze is related to Confucius' ethical theme on the harmony of words and deeds. If dealt with individually, Confucius would place greater emphasis on the importance of action over that of words. The superior man, he said, is modest in what he says, but surpasses in what he does. A superior man is chary of speech. Words and eloquence are of no particular import without the accompanying actions. In other words, it is the suiting of one's words to the action that is important. A chun tze must live up to his name. This is related to the Confucian doctrine of the rectification of names. To rectify names is to conform in action to the normative implication of these names. A chun tze sets a moral example in both his words and deeds.

In conclusion, the concept of chun tze is Confucius' ideal of a superior man who functions as a living exemplar.

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92 Ibid., p. 53. 93 Analects, XIV. xxix.
94 Ibid., IV. xxiv.
95 Cua, "Paradigmatic Individuals in Confucius," p. 49.
for practical conduct. Men can look to a chun tze for guidance and may become one themselves. In contrast, a mean man is a morally inferior man whose attitude and behavior are dictated by egoism, a self-oriented egoistic personality of bad influence to society. The existence of mean men is the chief cause of moral disorder.

The ethical system of Confucius was not speculation, but affirmation. His goals were practical. He never lost perspective, in the sense that his ideas were pertinent to the actual conditions and the needs of society at the time. The chaos that pervaded society during his time was actually a moral disorder. Moral men were needed to make society upright again. The ethical system of Confucius was equipped with the principles of jen and li, which formed the basis of the political superstructure. Ethics and politics are thus inseparable, as with ethics and education.

**Political Ideas**

It is erroneous to interpret Confucius' ethical philosophy as advocating practical morality, for in actual fact, the ethical and political systems of Confucius are inseparable. His politics were derived from his ethics, which forms the backbone of his entire philosophy. Confucian morality, intended to govern private and public

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96 Ibid., p. 50.
life, and used as a measure of personal obligation within oneself, the family and society, becomes political as soon as it is turned into a regulating force in the society and the world at large.

For Confucius, the fundamental point of politics is moral example and teaching, which is the first and foremost duty of the government. Good government does not need the tools of constraint and of repression, if it has performed its duty well; because man, who has the natural propensity to goodness, would not deviate from the good if he is well taught and well guided. The moral edifice of the prince is of utmost importance to the moral well being of his country. Under his benevolent sway and influenced by his moral rectitude, the people would turn toward him for guidance and enlightenment.\(^{97}\) He is to rule with the interest and welfare of the people in mind, that is, to ensure that his subjects have a peaceful and stable life, and that they are not to be taken away from their seasonal occupations at the whim and fancy of the prince to be engaged in works that are of little relevance to their subsistence.\(^{98}\) The first priority in government is to relieve the people of poverty: "To enrich them, then educate them."\(^{99}\) Education becomes another important duty of government.

\(^{97}\) Analects, XIII. xvii.  
\(^{98}\) Ibid., I. v.  
\(^{99}\) Ibid., XIII. ix.
To assist the ruler in his duty of enlightening and edifying his people, there arises the necessity of having ministers. It is the duty of the ruler, therefore, to recognize the capable and the talented, and promote the upright and the virtuous; for good government depends on the moral rectitude of those who govern. Those who are thus chosen to assist in government must, through their own sense of moral duty, place service above reward. For to fill the office of ruler is difficult; to fill the office of minister is equally so.\textsuperscript{100} The minister should therefore devote his attention to service and consider emolument as a matter of secondary importance.\textsuperscript{101}

To offset the political power of the ruler, Confucius proposed that it was the duty of the ministers to correct their ruler boldly when he had faults. This was the only way in which a ruler should be served, by being loyal to principle, not blind obedience to the man. It seems that Confucius demanded of his ministers even higher moral responsibility than of the ruler.

Confucius was the first to advocate granting political authority to the ministers and officials, unprecedented in China's history. For the first time, the ministers were given the right to share in the decision making of the ruler. It may be argued that good government still

\textsuperscript{100} Ibid., XIII. xv. \textsuperscript{101} Ibid., XV. xxxvii.
depended on the rulers, for they alone held the power to choose their ministers.\(^\text{102}\) However, it is important to note that Confucius did not uphold the Decree of Heaven on the Divine Right of Kings. Confucius was revolutionary in this sense. The moral demands he made on the ruler implied that to rule by hereditary means would soon be outmoded, for the system would not work under the new moral consciousness by which the justice of the action of the ruler would be tested.

On the other hand, Confucius did not concede political power to the masses, because he did not think that the common people possessed the capability of intellectually understanding the course of action. Although Confucius advocated general education, he was fully aware of the fact that education is a slow process. Literacy in his days was only limited to the nobility and the ruling class, the masses being illiterate, except for the members of the ju class, who were the first among the common people to be educated. However, it is undeniable that Confucius' political theory invested the people with an important political role. He believed that "Heaven sees as the people see, and Heaven hears as the people hear."\(^\text{103}\) It was based upon

\(^{102}\) Creel, Confucius and the Chinese Way, p. 161.

such implications that Mencius later expounded his democratic political theory.

In Confucius' political program, the family was to become a basic political unit. The head of the familial unit, that is, the father, is responsible for the moral education of his family members. The father's first and foremost duty is to educate his sons who in turn educate their sons. Through the family system, the political and social mores are to be handed down from generation to generation. In turn, all the families of the empire come under one ruler. This is the concept of the empire-family, the basic tenet for a well-knit political system with its hierarchical power structure, in that the relationship between the king and the minister would be equivalent to that between the father and son. Confucius' system of government, therefore, is essentially patriarchal. Although the ultimate end is to have no government at all, which is Confucius' political ideal; in the interim period, there is a clear distinction of those who govern and those who are governed. The family unit is the foundation of Confucius' politics, and must be strengthened through education. Eyeing the violence existing in his times, Confucius sought for peaceful solution by means of education rather than revolution as the means of bringing unity and peace. Essentially anti-war and anti-violence, Confucius preached political reform through counseling and persuasion on the part
of the enlightened ministers to their rulers rather than revolution. Creel is of the opinion that Confucius was not a pacifist. He thinks that Confucius believed that, regrettably there are times when force must be used by moral men, in order to prevent themselves and the world from being enslaved by those for whom force is the only argument and the only sanction.\textsuperscript{104} Although Confucius might have implied this, it was Mencius who made a firm stand for this position in his justification for rebellion against a tyrannical ruler.\textsuperscript{105}

Confucius' political processes were decidedly slow, and might not answer to the urgent needs of the society at the time. Yet from historical hindsight, when China came under the influence of Confucian philosophy, it is clear that Confucius was not without foresight. He seemed to be able to foretell the future political trends of China. An investigation into the sources of his political ideas might shed some light on the political insight of Confucius. The question now is: To what extent was his political system his own? Secondly, what were the basic influences on Confucius' political thought? A look at the Chou administrative machine and the political trends existing at the time helps to shape an answer.

\textsuperscript{105} Mencius, II B-I.
First of all, the source of Confucius' idea of moral rule must be examined. This concept of moral rule was found to a large extent in the Book of History, which recorded the benevolent rule and virtues of the rulers of antiquity. King Yao was believed to have abdicated from his rule in favor of Shun, a man of great virtue. It seems that Confucius' political ideas on the virtuous rule of kings were in accordance with those in the Book of History, which may have greatly influenced his political thought. Confucius was quoted to have praised the benevolent rule of the kings Yao and Shun.\(^{106}\) The Book of Poetry also contained verses singing in praise of their exemplars. Often misunderstood for desiring to return to the Golden Age of Antiquity, and thus being criticized as reactionary, Confucius was in actual fact employing the technique of using historical examples as found in the ancient classics to illustrate his point: it is better to rule by moral rather than by hereditary means. Chou practiced hereditary rule at the time, and Confucius was speaking in criticism of it. The implication was that political upheaval was wrought by the deterioration of morals from the king down to the ministers, and that only by correcting them could there be peace in the nation. It also implied that good government rested upon the faith of the people. Confidence

\(^{106}\) Analects, VIII. xviii., xix., xxi.
of the people was more important than sufficient food and sufficient arms, which were necessary, but not sufficient conditions for good government. Confucius said: "He who governs by his moral excellence may be compared to the Pole-star, which abides in its place, while all the stars bow towards it." 107

Secondly, the origin of the concept of the family as the basis for a well-oiled political machine must also be considered. The family system had by the time of Confucius become a well established institution, which operated within the "well-field" system. Confucius must have realized the solidarity of the system as crucial to the political and social foundation of the society, and thus sought to perpetuate it and emphasize its significance. China was already a patriarchal society at the time.

During the Chou dynasty, it was the duty of the officers of the Grand Director, one of the six ministries in Chou government, to ensure that all men lived in families. All bachelors of thirty years old and spinsters of twenty, unmatched widower or widow, were officially married by them. 108 Ancestral worship, a method of perpetuating the family system, was already in practice in the preceding

107 Ibid., II. i.

108 Chou Li, or Book of Chou Rites, dealing with the institutions of the Eastern Chou period, was written about the end of the Warring States period.
reign of Shang. The political wisdom and foresight of Confucius lay in the realization that the family had already become a Chinese tradition, firmly rooted in the social system and was here to stay. Unlike the negative and non-involvement of the Taoists, who denounced all political and social systems, Confucius was a positivist, and sought to perpetuate those institutions which were of political and social significance to his moral order.

Confucius' success as political thinker lay in the ability to recognize these trends. The question now is: Did the resort to traditions for the development of his political order make Confucius a conservative and a traditionalist? To a certain extent, Confucius was a political conservative. In so far as his ideas of preserving existing traditions, namely the family, the patriarchal system, and continuing the monarchial regime with the king as head of the political state, Confucius was no progressive. Yet there was more to the Chou political system than this. Chou practiced feudalism. Confucius never compared the favorability of feudalism over other forms of government; nor did he express his desire to perpetuate it. His chief concern was to launch a group of enlightened ministers into politics, through whom his political ideal of moral order could be materialized. He was not, as tradition held him to be, a spokesman for feudalism. In fact, he could well have been the critic of it, as seen from his
opposing view on hereditary rule, which was the essential perpetuating force for feudalism.

Within Chou's political machinery at the time of Confucius were six ministries, each with its ministers and officials, and each responsible for its designated administrative task in government. Confucius did not invent the ministerial or ju system. Confucius was himself a member of the ju class. His merit lay in perpetuating the existence of the ju class, and bestowing on them a moral mission, that of ensuring moral government and setting moral examples to the people, apart from their normal ministerial functions.

As to his negative views on law and punishment, Confucius was perhaps critical of the existing legal system, which hampered the freedom of thought and speech. Capital punishment at the time was bestowed upon those who made any attempts at material innovation, and upon those who introduced any new doctrine. Not able to speak out openly against the system, Confucius sought to create his moral order through a more gentle and subtle process: persuasion and education.

Thus seen, Confucius was both an originator and transmitter. He selected for his political system features which were favorable and relevant, rendering them a fresh interpretation, thus giving them a new political significance. He subtly created a new political order without
many outward changes, yet the new political system had been fundamentally reformed. This was an example of his political wisdom. Another example is seen in the fact that he never lost sight of perspective: by carefully examining the past and observing the present, he derived his insight for the future, predicting its trends and needs. Moreover, what Confucius regarded as important in politics was independent of a time factor. The ideas of moral rule, and the importance of education in perpetuating the political order, are not for any particular time and age, but for all times.

Another basic theme underlying Confucius' political philosophy is the power of moral example. The assumption is that there is a contagion in the conduct of the moral man, which conduces him to become the model of men. The intention of Confucius was to have moral men preside in government, men to whom the people look for guidance in their conduct and daily dealings with others. It is thus important for the leader of men to act as a model for moral conduct and behavior. Example is better than precept or penalty. It is more important for the individual to retain his sense of honor than it is for him to fear penalty and punishment by law. Confucius was skeptical of the effectiveness of laws ensuring good behavior, as they represent a negative force at best. People in trying to avoid the penalties, also lose their sense of shame and dishonor. Contrarily, the example of moral excellence and decorous
conduct set by the ruler would act as standard with which the people can judge their own actions, and induce in them a desire to become morally good, like their prince. 109 This desire to be good, however, has to be motivated and directed, for though to emulate is a natural human tendency, to be able to distinguish good from evil needs guidance and education. The power of example works both ways: people can be swayed both by good and bad influence. Thus, the moral obligations of the ruler are great, for his immediate duties are to the people: to enrich them, and to educate them. In order to perform in such capacities as benevolent ruler and educator, the first and foremost duty of the prince is self-cultivation in the moral virtues of jen and li, in order that his conduct may serve as a guide for his people, and in order that his rule too, becomes in accordance with the principle of jen or humanity. Good politics require good men. Moral character becomes the necessary and sufficient condition for effective government. Only men of virtue and ability can transform the cruel and cause them to cease from evil, and such transformation cannot be brought about by any law or capital punishment. 110

Thus in the system of Confucius, the spirit of morality and political thought are fused into one. The

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109 Analects, II. iii.
110 Ibid., XIII. xi.
mode of political life is the mode of moral life. The political order must necessarily be a moral order presided by moral men. To govern means to rectify; to rule means to regulate and guide the people toward good. No ruler has ever rectified others unless he is correct himself.

Government means order and harmony, and a good moral government has the magnetic force of causing distant nations to succumb to its influence. The art of inspiring the people requires no technique or expertise. It lies within the ruler himself. The virtues attained by him through proper education have significant consequences. If the ruler leads the country with dignity, the people will be respectful; if the ruler is himself filial and kind, the people will be loyal; and if the ruler promotes those who excel and teach the incompetent, then the people will encourage each other, emulating in each case what the prince does to them and for them.

Of particular significance in the art of politics is promoting the upright. This is indeed very crucial to effective government, for the ruler shall need other moral men to assist him. Moreover, the contentment of the people rests on whether the upright are promoted and whether the

112 Analects, XII. xvii. 113 Ibid., XIII. xvi.
114 Ibid., II. xx., XIII. iv.
ill-doers are dismissed. The assumption is that the ruler, being upright and virtuous himself, knows what is required of his ministers. The method of selection is by recommendation. This idea of promoting good men to assist in government led to the later development of the civil service examination system. Confucius played no part in its formulation, but tradition has held him responsible, particularly where it has failed.

The moral obligation of a good ruler requires him to look to himself for the causes to problems existing in his country. Thus, he is held personally responsible for any moral lassitude in his country. This makes politics a personal responsibility. The enormity of this responsibility may seem overpowering. Yet to Confucius, a moral man can assume such duty with ease, since his political life will be one and the same as his moral life; the one flows naturally from the other. Confucius believed that it is not difficult to govern, as long as the personal conduct of the ruler is correct. However, making the nation upright is a time consuming process. "If a kingly ruler were to arise," he said, "it would take a generation before virtue prevailed among the people."

Change is a sure but slow process, for the kind of change Confucius advocated

115 Ibid., II. xix. 116 Ibid., XIII. xiii. 117 Ibid., XIII. xii.
cannot be brought about by superficial measures, but a complete re-education of the people in the moral principles of *jen* and *li*. This type of change, a fundamental and basic one, has to be time-consuming.

As to specific political administration, tradition often described Confucius as an upholder of antiquity. An incident recorded in the *Analects* might have lent itself to this misconception. Confucius was once asked by his disciple Yen Yuan as to the administration of a state, to which he replied,

> Adopt the calendar of Hsia, ride in the state carriage of Yin, wear the cap of Chou, in music adopt the Shao dances, banish the songs of Cheng and avoid specious men, for the songs of Cheng are licentious, and specious men are dangerous.\(^{118}\)

The problem is: Was Confucius really advocating ancient rules for modern government, or was he merely looking to history for examples to illustrate what he believed to be effective government administration?

An interpretation here seems necessary. The calendar of Hsia was noted for its relation to human affairs, which is Confucius' main concern: the well being of the people. The state carriage of Yin was made of wood, that of Chou was ornate with gold and jewelry, hence showy and extravagant. It appears that Confucius merely advised against luxury and extravagance on the part of the govern-

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\(^{118}\) Ibid., XV. x.
ment. As for the music of Shao, it was considered to have moral influence, hence possessing intrinsic educational value. On the other hand, the songs of Cheng were charged with evil influence and needed to be censored. Confucius, far from being upholder of antiquity, was merely illustrating the importance of censorship of music as a media of communication to ensure that only good influence dwelled among the people.

Confucius' scheme of political reform, then, proceeds from the top downwards, first by ensuring the moral character in the leader, then in the ministers who serve in government. The ruler and ministers, in turn, act as exemplars of conduct for the people. There are particular moral requirements on the part of the ministers, to ensure that the political hierarchy works smoothly. An important quality of the ministers is loyalty. This is reciprocated with courtesy from his lord.\(^{119}\) This loyalty, however, is related to another moral requisite of the minister: a sensibility to dishonor, so as to merit his name and not disgrace his prince's commission.

To Confucius, there are several grades of ministers according to their moral attainment. Ministers possessing ability together with a sense of divine shame are first grade officials. On the next lower grade are ministers of

\(^{119}\)Ibid., III. xix.
established character but restricted ability; and further
down the scale are those bent on doing, pertinacious
beings, whose capacity is shallow but who have personal
honor. It appears that the basic moral quality re-
quired of ministers is a sense of personal honor. Ability
alone is not a sufficient condition. In essence, the sense
of personal honor demanded so highly of the ministers
places public service before reward. Dishonor is to be
thinking only of emolument, no matter whether one's country
is well governed or not.

Similarly, the sense of honor of the minister is
manifested in rendering his service to his prince only
according to the right principle, and when that cannot be,
the minister resigns. A man of honor must know when he can
enter into service and when he should withdraw from office.
Thus it is not blind loyalty that is demanded of ministers
to their princes, but loyalty to principle. Confucius'
personal experience in practical politics might well have
pertained to this moral rule: Confucius was not without
his chances to be of public service, yet he did not succumb
to the lure of emolument when the prince in question was
not of upright character.

Politics, however, are not only the concern of
those who govern. The people too, play an important role

\[^{120}\text{Ibid., XIII. xx.}\quad ^{121}\text{Ibid., XIV. i.}\]
in politics. This is contrary to the traditional view which some hold regarding Confucius; namely, that he wished to keep the people in ignorance, the notion of which might have stemmed from Confucius' remark that the people may be made to follow a course, but not to understand the reason why. The love of Confucius for humanity together with his belief in general education disprove the idea that "ignorance is bliss." Indeed, his greatest educational effort lies in the attempt to inculcate moral virtues in man—a goal which cannot be accomplished without an understanding of what is right and wrong. The idea that Confucius kept the people ignorant is a bad case of interpreting a remark out of its proper context.

Another example of misinterpretation is in Confucius' teaching about war: Confucius never taught blind military exploit of the common people. To allow the people to go to battle without first training them in the martial arts and informing them about the justification of war was to betray them. Such an education implies that the common soldiers of today need to be informed about why they are fighting and be convinced of the justice of the cause. Morale is dependent on moral conviction.

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122 Ibid., VIII. ix. 123 Ibid., VIII. xix. 124 Creel, Chinese Thought from Confucius to Mao Tze Tung, p. 41. 125 Ibid.
Without the faith and confidence of the people in their rulers there can be no government. Confidence is far more important than sufficient food and sufficient armed forces. Implying that a breach of faith would lead to the downfall of government, Confucius placed political power in the hands of the people, whom he believed were the standard by which the actions of those in government were to be judged. "If a ruler is himself upright, his people will do their duty without orders; but if he himself be not upright, although he may order they will not obey." Certainly this is not blind obedience or blind faith. The people are given a will, and in essence are free. They can be led and guided, but not controlled. This is an important legacy of Confucius to political thought; in addition, though Confucius was opposed to revolution as means of reform and change, he inadvertently had given political sanction for this type of action. This theme was later elaborated and consolidated by Mencius, whose rationale gave the people the political sanction to revolt.

Other important evidence supporting Confucius' disapproval of the ignorance of the people can be seen in his fear of the danger of weapons placed in ignorant hands. "An unenlightened army," he said, "is extremely dangerous. For not knowing right from wrong, how can they be fit to

126 Analects, XII. vii. 127 Ibid., XIII, vi,
bear arms?" It appears, therefore, that Confucius could not have advocated ignorance for the people. Rather, he was simply distinguishing those who govern from the governed, the leader from the follower, knowing that there are some who must decide upon a course of action, the purpose of which might not be readily comprehensible to every common man, for not every man is possessed with the ability to understand the abstract, which is the philosophy upon which a course of action is based. It is necessary, therefore, that the ruler must possess the wisdom and moral virtue to guide his course of action, which needs be for the common good and in the interest of the people.

Confucius' political theory was certainly not without pertinence to his times. He interpreted political chaos during his time as a moral disorder. Rather than searching for external causes for political and social problems, he sought for the answers within man himself. He was a moral critic of his time. He held the princes and rulers responsible for the unhappiness of the people. The heavy taxations levied, the military exploitation of the people, and the demoralization of society and the disruption of family life were all caused by the moral lassitude of those who governed. Greed, the hunger for power and the absence of moral integrity pervaded the empire; and human

128 Ibid., XIII. xxix.
suffering was at its worst. Confucius sought to make up-right the unrighteous and restore order and harmony to society. Society is orderly only when morality prevails, for society is a community of moral beings, each with well defined moral obligations and social roles, living in social harmony within an accepted code of conduct and be-

Confucius was revolutionary in the sense that he considered an educated and enlightened citizenry the neces-sary foundation for the state, and that political power should only be in the hands of moral men. His democratic and humanistic ideals could not possibly make him an ad-vocate of totalitarian rule, nor an upholder of feudalism. In no respect was he a reactionary, for he did not follow traditions blindly nor in any way sought the revival of antiquity. As to his fondness for traditions, he upheld them in so far as he recognized their contribution to social harmony and cultural stability. Very seldom would he uphold a tradition for its own sake. Knowledge of human nature, of man's needs as a social and moral and political being, are the major directions to which his ethical and political philosophy was directed.

A major criticism is that Confucius might have lost sight of the pertinence of other factors which might have been responsible for the political and social disorder of his time. The economic factor, the advent of the iron age
with its effect on the socioeconomic scene, for example, seemed to be ignored in Confucius' political thoughts. This will be further examined in Confucius' social and economic theories.

Social Ideas

Apart from being a moral and political being, man is also conceived by Confucius as a social being. He is born with social instincts, which are an integral part of his nature. One dominant social instinct of man is the desire to live in harmony with his fellow beings. Harmony is obtained through the media of cooperation and reciprocity, both performed with man's own volition and free will, for man is essentially a free agent. His possession of a free will which is his nature makes him a free man.

Yet, man's subjective will may not always be in tune with nature's course of things, nor in conformity with nature's ordinances, which govern the course of things. As such, social harmony, which is part of nature's harmonious order, cannot be maintained unless man's will conforms to nature's ordinances. The ordinances, or nature's principle, cannot be imposed upon by any existing being, for they are the true path of things. Thus, man's volitions are legitimate only if they are in conformity with the ordinances. In other words, man's freedom of will have to

come within limitations in order that social harmony be maintained. Interpreted essentially as a system of well ordered interpersonal relationships and maintained through well defined social roles by an established code of social conduct and behavior, social harmony flourishes upon man's benign social instincts, in accordance with the sentiments of benevolence, righteousness, propriety and wisdom which constitute his nature. Thus man does not forfeit his freedom through coercion or fear, rather he gives it up voluntarily or naturally, as partial fulfillment of his nature.

Each individual, therefore, has a personal and social obligation. His personal obligation is to see that he attains the path of righteous and moral living, and his social obligation is to see that this righteous and moral life is extended to other members of the society, in order to contribute to the maintenance of this perfect harmony or social order. Some men have attained their private virtue more successfully and at a faster rate than others. Thus it is the social responsibility of virtuous men to seek a means of communicating their private virtue to the society at large. It is desirous, therefore, that virtuous men should seek office and be given the authority to perform their social responsibility. Hence, Confucius conjured a social hierarchy in which the most virtuous should preside at the top. At the very top of this social ladder is the virtuous ruler or king, whose duty is to create a moral
environment in order to educate his people to live in accordance with their benign social instincts.

The basic social unit is the family, the social importance of which was greatly emphasized by Confucius. The family is essential in the preservation of the social order, because it is the microcosm of society. It is well ordered and structured, composed of a set of social relationships and contains a hierarchy. Presiding over this social unit is the head of the family, the father, who is directly responsible for the moral well being of his son, who in turn responsible for his son. The set of human relationships includes that of father and son, husband and wife, older and younger brother. Outside the familial relationships are another two sets of relationships: that of king and minister, and friend and friend. These five sets of social relationships which encompass society are arranged hierarchically, that of king and minister being the most important, then father and son and so on down the line.

Confucius' society, furthermore, is patriarchal, the social responsibilities of the king and the father being essentially identical.

The social relationships within the hierarchy are maintained by a code of social conduct and behavior governing society. Confucius termed it "li" or propriety. Confucius spoke on the following rules of propriety: loyalty, courtesy, filial piety and friendship, culminating
in the principle of reciprocity that governs all relationships. Loyalty is the propriety demanded of the minister to the king. In return, the king shows courtesy toward his ministers. Filial piety is the propriety demanded of the son toward his parents. A filial son loves his parents and is concerned with their well being and happiness. Filial piety includes filial remonstrance and physical presence. A roving son is unfilial. With regards to the propriety governing friendship, Confucius deemed it the duty of friends to advise conscientiously and guide each other discreetly. The basic rule of conduct is faith or shun. Binding each set of social relationship is the principle of reciprocity, which is the core of Confucius' thought. "Do not do to others what you would not do to yourself," is man's lifelong rule of conduct. Reciprocity or shu is the extension of oneself to the other party, putting oneself in another's place. Thus, social behavior is derived from ethics. In as much as the political philosophy of Confucius is a derivation of his ethical system, his social philosophy, too, is founded on his ethical system.

The common good pertaining to human happiness,

130 Analects, III. xix.
131 Ibid., IV. xviii., IV. xix., IV. xxi.
132 Ibid., XII. xxiv. 133 Ibid., XV. xxiii.
therefore, is attained when society achieves harmony (1) in which each member has a well defined social role with its related social status; and (2) in which each member's actions and doings fall within a proper code of social conduct, the essence of which is in tune with man's benign social instincts, that is, the desire to live harmoniously and the love for his own kind.

Confucius' primary concern was the preservation of social equilibrium and attainment of social harmony. As a social reformer, this was his ultimate goal. As to his approach, he seemed to emphasize the importance of subordination to authority as a workable formula that is not against human nature. To uphold a social hierarchy based on subordination to authority seemed to imply social inequality. Confucius was never committed to a theory of human inequality. In fact, he believed that all men were basically alike in their natural endowment, and only by practice did they grow apart. However, similarity may not be the same as equality. This is a question that Confucius had never raised and thus is never answered. It seemed to Confucius that there be a distinction between those who govern and those who were governed. His social machine needed to be within well defined boundaries of human relationships; as were his social roles which needed

\[134\] Ibid., XVII. ii.
to be clearly spelled out and governed by rules of propriety. Men in his society are free agents, but only within limits. These limitations are set by man himself, thus he succumbs to them by his own volition. It is only by each individual doing his own part and working for the common good that man can find happiness and fulfill those instincts which have made him human; and in the fulfillment of himself, he fulfills others.

The extension of self toward others, from individual to society was the only workable way for Confucius. In his social philosophy lies the core of his humanism, his concern for the human world, his answer to complex human problems and his solution to human misery that he witnessed during his day. Society disintegrated as the binding force of social relationships weakened and deteriorated, as social roles became muddled and social responsibilities undefined. The reestablishment of social hierarchy and its roles was his working formula; this was to be put to execution through education, so that once again, man could reenter into his original human state and follow the right path that is the natural course of things.

Tradition was of the opinion that Confucius was a conservative, loyal to traditions, and that his intention was to revive the system of Chou.\textsuperscript{135} This statement

perhaps needs clarification, and part of the answer seems to be found in the sources of Confucius' ideas about society. Society, according to Confucius, is man-centered. The social view at the time of Chou had already seen the family established as the basic socio-economic unit. Men lived in families, each member of which shared in the responsibilities of cultivating the soil both for their livelihood and for the country. The "well-field" system was based on the idea of eight families each cultivating their own parcel of land but also mutually laboring for the ninth lot, the produce of which was to be levied as taxes to their overlord. The solidarity of the socio-economic structure was thus maintained. The concept of the family had taken a firm footing by the Chou period. To Confucius, the family was a pattern of orderly subordination to authority, the son subordinate to the father, and the younger brother subordinate to the older brother. Theoretically, there is no conflict of interest between the family and the state. Confucius noted this trend of social development around the family system, and sought to strengthen the position of the family in society, not only as an important socio-economic unit, but as a necessary attribute to the establishment of his moral social order. The family became the practicing ground for moral education, itself being a microcosm of society. In this manner, he aimed not at reviving Chou's system,
but at materializing his social ideal of a moral society.

In Confucius' vision of society, man is responsible for his own fate. Man attains positions of fame and authority, not through hereditary means or from the blessing of his ancestral spirits, but by his own efforts. Man is the measure of man. His moral attainments are the standard by which he moves up or down the social ladder. Confucius had granted mobility to his society in a manner unprecedented in history. This action was far from being conservative or loyal to tradition. Under this new system of social mobility, man, regardless of his birth, could by education and his own efforts in self cultivation ascend to the upper strata of society and join the ranks of those who govern. This is Confucius' revolutionary social idea, based on his confidence in man as well as his skepticism in the power of spirits in controlling human affairs. This blends in with his democratic ideal of man being basically the same and thus having equal opportunities. Man alone controls and guides his own destiny. Seen against this light, Confucius becomes more of a liberal and less of a conservative.

In seeking to determine Confucius' impacts as a social critic, there is a tendency to form the opinion that

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136Creel, Confucius and the Chinese Way, p. 121.
137Analects, VI. xx.
Confucius launched his criticism of the period in terms of the classical ideal. This ideal was formed around the classical example of the benevolent government of the rulers Yao and Shun of antiquity. These ancient rulers were said to have reigned by the golden rule, or tao, the righteous way, whereby the populace benefited from their virtue and society flourished. It was a model that worked and was thus considered by Confucius as the ideal way. The Analects did indeed quote Confucius eulogizing the golden rule of the ancients and the well ordered society existed at the time.

However, it may be suggested that Confucius was only using this classical example to give authority to his viewpoints, and to avoid being persecuted as a radical. Confucius did not lack courage. It was his personal conviction that he should seek reform through persuasion and education of those in power by appealing to their sense of moral responsibility, rather than by the radical means of revolution from the masses. He had desired change to come from the top, rather than from the people. Change had to come from the enlightened. Power in the hands of the uninformed masses could be very dangerous, and unless there


139 Shryock, The Origin and Development of the State Cult of Confucius, p. 5.
was widespread education, it was inadvisable for the common people to lead in social change. This is the basic concept of Confucius concerning social change, which is a gradual process and attained by peaceful means.

Confucius' concept of culture and society revealed certain departures from the concept of culture existing at the time. To Confucius, culture is governed by the social attitude and beliefs, behavior and conduct and their expression thereof in various forms of art. In Confucius' times, culture was expressed predominantly through rites, poetry and music. Culture, according to Confucius, is a refinement of the sentiments and feelings rather than an artificial adornment. As such, culture needs to reflect genuine feelings and sentiments rather than the affected, artificial, and ritualistic behavior that had come to dominate the society of late Chou. Furthermore, culture reflects the moral standards of the society, as morality can be induced through education, which in turn guides the direction of cultural change. Thus, it can be seen that the traditional holds view about Confucius; namely, that he was an advocate of a complex system of social rites and ritualistic behavior, with little or no meaning, needs to be reevaluated. In reality, Confucius was strongly opposed to formality of behavior without genuineness of feelings.\textsuperscript{140} As regards to his idea of the revival of the

\textsuperscript{140} Analects, III. iv.
music of antiquity, Confucius had his legitimate reason. He advocated the classical music of shao because its moral influence was as good as its form.¹⁴¹ Confucius believed that culture should reflect the morality of the society. He was of the opinion that culture is both the means and ends of education, one enhancing the other. It is the product of education as well as an educating force of society. It has to be guided along the right path by the enlightened and virtuous men.

Economic Ideas

It remains to be seen whether in fact Confucius had devised an economic system for his ideal social order. Confucius envisaged that the happiness of the people and the stability of the social order depended to a very large extent on a sound economic system, by means of which the people can be "enriched."¹⁴² Unfortunately, Confucius never elaborated on his statement; nor did the disciple Jan Yu, who held this discourse with Confucius pursue it further. It was not until Mencius, that the intentions of the Master were interpreted. Eyeing the anarchy around him, Mencius too, saw the urgent need for reform. He envisaged a political regime of benevolent rule; in which

¹⁴¹Ibid., III. xxv. The music of shao was attributed to the ruler Shun (2255-2205 B.C.).
¹⁴²Ibid., XIII. ix.
an important element was the ability to make the people prosperous. Mencius suggested regulation of agriculture and commerce.

Let it be seen to that their fields of grain and hemp are well cultivated, and make the taxes on them light, so the people may be made rich. Let it be seen to that they use their resources of food seasonably and expend their wealth only on the prescribed ceremonies, so their wealth will be more than can be consumed. 143

To Mencius, a sound economy depended on good agrarian efforts, light taxation, the proper distribution of goods, and frugality. One of the major factors responsible for the deterioration of the feudal structure at the time of Confucius was the heavy taxation levied on the people to support the extravagance of the overlords and the constant wars. Taxes were no longer paid in terms of the harvest of the ninth parcel of land shared in effort by the eight families. As bureaucratization became more and more complex, the well-field system, which was originally designed for a more simple economic and social system, was insufficient to accommodate the complexity of social change. Taxes, rather than agricultural produce, were levied against the people in order to achieve greater efficiency. As society became more and more sophisticated, its rituals in turn became more and more complex; large resources were spent on ceremonial rites, and life became extravagant. Also, from time to time the farmers were

143 Mencius, Bk. VII, pt. 1, xxiii.
drawn from the fields for public works, or for military feats, and this contributed greatly to the deterioration of agriculture. Confucius witnessed all this, as did Mencius. Confucius was a vehement opponent of heavy taxation and constant disruption of the routine of rural life. Human happiness, Confucius believed, rested on a prosperous and stable life.

Another important idea of Confucius was that of economic distribution. Poverty is caused not so much by the lack of resources as the unequal distribution of these resources. Unfortunately, however, Confucius did not elaborate on how equal distribution of resources could be achieved. Was he advocating a kind of social democracy in which an averaging of wealth among the people could be carried out, or was he aiming merely at an improved means of distribution? In light of the social and political context of his statement, it could well have implied the former, for in his times, there was great inequality of wealth: the lords and princes possessed great wealth, contributed to them by the common people in the form of heavy taxes, so that poverty reigned among the populace.

The economic system of Confucius is a cooperative system, in which each member of society contributes his

144 Analects, XVI. i.

share and does his best for the benefit of the whole. The virtuous men help govern the state; and the populace in turn work in the fields to support the nation, each contributing to the happiness and welfare of the whole nation. When each member performs his designated duty and fulfills his social role, the socio-economic machine will run smoothly.

Confucius conceived of his economic ideas in broad sweeping statements, so much so that they lacked a coherent and systematic structure. As a social reformer, Confucius might seem to have placed insufficient emphasis on the importance of a well built economic structure. Confucius' main concern about the economics of a country did not stem from a desire simply to make the nation rich and resourceful, so as to attain happiness by material means. Confucius was never materialistic in this sense. His economic ideas were born rather of having witnessed human misery in the hands of bad government. Poverty was a result of war and forced military recruitment of the people by their overlords; this took them away from their fields, resulting in poor harvests and famine. Poverty was also due to the luxurious living of their overlords who imitated their princes, flaunting their wealth and indulging in an extravagant lifestyle, the upkeep of which resulted in heavy taxation on the population. Forced labor also took men away from their fields and interrupted their seasonal
activities. All this was the consequence of decentralized government, which became powerless over the vassals, who did what they pleased. The selfish pursuits of the nobles, and especially the officials, caused them to neglect their duties, and put the welfare and happiness of the people behind their greed for power, wealth and fame. This was one of the main causes for the poverty seen throughout the nation. Moral degradation led to political as well as socio-economic chaos.

With good government, things would be different. Since the righteous king has the happiness of his people as his goal of government, it would be his first and foremost duty to enrich his people by relieving them from poverty, that is, restoring men to their fields, regulating labor according to seasonal activity, reducing taxation when government adopted frugality as its policy, and re-distributions of wealth so that it would not be in the possession of a few. In other words, the economic order would right itself if first the moral order was achieved through the positioning of enlightened and educated men in government, and through moral rectification of the ruler himself. Education, then, becomes the most imminent issue, for unless properly educated princes, ministers and officials rule the country, the happiness of the whole population continues to be at stake.

Again one might ponder, in terms of the historical
context, whether Confucius had been sensitive to the eco-
nomic changes rampaging in China at the time. The approach 
of the Iron Age, with the invention of the iron process, 
brought tremendous economic changes which affected agri-
cultural production, trade and commerce. Indeed, eco-
nomic production could have increased rapidly if not for 
the constant wars, while the invention of the iron process 
only facilitated improved weapons which intensified the 
struggle for power. The common people, rather than benefi-
ting from this economic change, suffered more because of 
it. The new social class, equipped with its new wealth, 
joined in with the forces of the officials, ministers and 
nobles in their public as well as "private" wars. Confu-
cius must have witnessed this change and saw the ill-
effects of it. It was not that he was against change, 
or that he was oblivious to it. He realized the inevi-
tability of change, as much as he understood the un-
ceasing progressive changes of Nature. But change itself 
is transient and is only a phenomenon in the eternal and 
permanent tao, an eternal law at work in all change.\textsuperscript{141} 
When compared to the permanency of tao, change itself, 
though inevitable, is insignificant.

Confucius' concept of change as inevitable and 
yet insignificant in the ultimate progress of humanity 
may explain his seeming ignorance of socio-economic change.

\textsuperscript{146}Analects, IX. xvi.
He simply ignored it, unconcerned of its influence in human affairs, which are not so much determined by external factors as they are in fact controlled by the morality of men. Man alone, by his moral sense and behavior expressed thereof, controls the direction of humanity, the quality and attainment of human happiness. The perfection of man by means of education, in order to develop and cultivate morally, to expand and strengthen the natural good qualities endowed in man by nature, seemed to be the only answer for the day.
CHAPTER IV

THE EDUCATIONAL IDEAS OF CONFUCIUS

Introduction

Confucius, a man who had spent the prime of his life on the periphery of the realm of practical politics, was at heart and in essence an educator, and a successful one at that. Perhaps Confucius had desired to be remembered as a great politician, and not so much as a teacher, whose ideas had not had the chance to be tested in his lifetime. However, if Confucius lacked the necessary qualities that would have given him a successful political career, such as the willingness to compromise, an articulating tongue, a gift of oratory and tact, he certainly did not lack the personality that made him a great teacher. His was a persuasive personality, so donned with sincerity in speech and action that he proved to be a great influence over the young and aspiring of his times. Students were attracted to him not only because of their personal ambitions to obtain the skills and knowledge of practical politics from Confucius (which would lead to official positions in government), but also because of the magnetic qualities of his personality. The humanitarian attributes of Confucius, which stemmed from his understanding and knowledge of man
and society, flowed through his streams of thought to form a humanistic educational philosophy that was distinctly his own.

Central to his educational philosophy are his ideas of man, his nature, his relationship with tao, the cosmic order, and the way that man follows in order to attain harmony and happiness, the latter being the ultimate goal of education, and as such the ultimate goal in life. As a prerequisite to the understanding of these important ideas, it is necessary to place them in proper historical perspective. Pertinent to the problem is the understanding of the concept of Heaven as generally perceived at the time of Confucius, as compared with Confucius' own conception.

The Concept of Heaven

Heaven was generally expressed by the word tien, which denotes the cosmic order, or universe, of which man is a part. Long before the time of Confucius, man in China had sought to solve the two basic problems of cosmology, the structure of the universe, and cosmogeny, the creative origin of the universe. The problem of cosmology was reflected in the "Grand Norm" hung fan section of the Book of History, and the "Monthly Commands" yueh ling section of the Lu Shih Chin Chiu, the Annals of Lu Shih. Both of these texts described the action of the Five
Elements, generally known as the Five Elements Theory. This theory was attributed to the viscount of Chi, a prince of the Shang period at the end of the twelfth century B.C., who in turn attributed his ideas to the Great Yu of Hsia dynasty in antiquity (2200 B.C.). According to this theory, each of the Five Elements had its period of ascendancy during the four seasons of the year. In spring time, wood; in summer, fire; in autumn, metal; in winter, water;


In the "Counsels of the Great Yu" of Hsia dynasty, Heaven was conceived as a personal force presiding over the affairs of man and government. It had the power to protect, to grant favors, or to destroy. Heaven rewards and punishes according to whether men act virtuously or not. Yu, in voicing his opinion on the misgovernment of the lord of Miao to the other lords, was quoted to have said: "... Superior men are kept by him in obscurity, and mean men fill all the offices. The people reject him and will not protect him. Heaven is sending down calamities upon him. I, therefore, along with you, ... bear the instructions of the Ti, to punish his crimes. ..."

And Yi, who came to the help of Yu in his campaign against the lord of Miao, was believed to have said, "It is virtue that moves Heaven; there is no distance to which it does not reach. Pride brings loss, and humility receives increase; this is the way of Heaven."

Here and there in the Book of History, glimpses of Heaven as an ethical force are seen. In other instances, Heaven took on human qualities. It was endowed with benevolent feelings and emotions, wisdom and will, with which to judge and guide the affairs of man:

The benevolent ruler of Shun of Tang dynasty was praised by Yi, "Oh! Your virtue, Oh Ti, is vast and incessant... Great Heaven regarded you with its favor, and bestowed on you its appointment..."
and during the third month of the year, soil. From Chou onwards, the general affairs of government and the details of running the imperial household were rigidly determined according to the elemental power in ascendancy during any particular month of the year. Thus by late Chou, this theory had become more than a simple explanation of the physical world. It had come to assume an intimate relation between the laws of nature and human affairs, especially those of the ruling class.\textsuperscript{148} In other words, Heaven, or \textit{tien}, had gradually assumed human qualities, and interceded in the affairs of the human world. Duke Chou proclaimed that the Chou king ruled by the Decree of Heaven, and that Heaven was the most important diety, who had the power to accept or reject rulers by bestowing or withdrawing from them its decree. Despite the plausibility that it might have been the motive of Duke Chou to use Heaven to launch his propaganda in order to justify the conquest of Chou over Hsia by military power, most sources suggest that Heaven as diety, assuming great power over man, was a popular belief at the time.

It was documented in the \textit{Book of Poetry} that, in the realm of Heaven dwelled the spirits, of which the spirits of ancestors held great influence over the affairs of man, particularly those of the ruling class. It was

believed that the spirits of ancestors bestowed blessings upon their descendants, who in return for these favors offered sacrifices to them. Heaven with its spirits dominated the supernatural realm, and their relationship with human beings became closer as time went on. This was the religious heaven, a concept which prevailed at the time of Confucius.

On a philosophical level, Heaven was the term employed to indicate a mode of production which is independent and distinguished from all production grounded on man's activity and doings. Tien denotes the energy pervading all natural things and acts as their organizing principle, operating silently, incomprehensible to the human mind. Yet the immensity of its power can be assumed to be comparative to the magnitude of the universe. 149

The Concept of Heaven thus, by the time of Confucius, was well rooted in society as a presiding or ruling force, at once a supernatural and personal power.

Confucius conceived Heaven somewhat differently. To him, Heaven, or tien, could be aptly taken to mean the universe, i.e., heaven and earth. Although he did not openly deny the supernatural qualities of Heaven, he felt strongly that a more important aspect of Heaven was that it was an impersonal ethical force, a cosmic counterpart

149 Creel, Confucius and the Chinese Way, p. 117.
of the ethical sense in man. Heaven was the origin of virtue. The activity of Heaven was regular and constant, viewed by man as a predetermined ordinance, tien ming. The concept of tien ming as proposed by Confucius frequently subjected him to being criticized as advocating "fatalism," a matter of great controversy in Chinese thought over the centuries. It serves therefore to understand the cause of this controversy. It appears that, to Confucius, this activity of Heaven, being regular and constant, and thus acquiring a form of permanency, could not be imposed upon or altered by man. In fact, man did not need to impose upon Heaven's ordinance, for man's nature, being produced and arranged by the principle that is Heaven, partook of the qualities and modes of the latter. The relationship between Heaven and man is in perfect harmony. As such, man's activity does not follow a predetermined path, as a fatalistic view would uphold, but a path guided by man's own talents and abilities which are inherent in man, and which are harmonious with the qualities and modes of Heaven. The relationship between Heaven and man, as perceived by Confucius, assumed a new dimension. Man is

151 Shryock, The Origin and Development of the State Cult of Confucius, p. 6.
152 Analects, IX. xi.
not only pervaded and kept by the "virtue" of Heaven, he is also given powers or abilities and their relative laws. These powers, together with the laws pertaining to them, are actually the talents of man.153

Confucius, in perceiving Heaven both as an impersonal ethical force and as a personal being, with whom he was seen to relate at times, seemed to have put himself in a philosophical dilemma. Heaven as a personal being carries with it supernatural and religious connotations, which seems to oppose the idea of Heaven as an impersonal and ethical force. It appears that on a religious level, Confucius felt that his relationship with Heaven was intimate and personal.154 In moments of desperation and grief, he had appealed to Heaven for solace and peace of mind. Lamenting on his lack of opportunity in pursuing a political career after years of wandering from state to state, he expressed his frustrations thus: "Alas! There is no one that knows me. . . . But there is Heaven, that knows me!"155 Again, on the occasion of the death of his favorite disciple, Yen Hui, he grieved, "Heaven has forsaken me! . . . ."156

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153 Ibid., VIII. xix.
155 Analects, XIV, xxxvii.
156 Ibid., XI, viii.
believed that Heaven had bestowed upon him the mission to foster and perpetuate the moral social order, of which Heaven was the author and guardian. All this seemed to point to the direction of the religiosity of Confucius, which was further evidenced by the religious respect he manifested at ceremonial rites and worship, which played a significant role in the daily life of his times. The question now is not whether Confucius was agnostic, but how religious he was and what effect his religiosity had on his basically this-worldly and humanistic idea, in which supernaturalism was nonexistent.

With regard to the exactitude and respect Confucius paid toward religious rites and forms of worship, evidence indeed shows that Confucius was a religious man, but only perhaps in the sense that he respected the rules laid down for society and the world by a decree from an authority which is above man. His attitude towards the spiritual realm, significantly the spirits of ancestors and spirits other than human, was even more restrained. No doubt Confucius respected the unknown and matters relating to the spiritual, but his reluctance to discuss these matters, and particularly his unwillingness to discuss the problem of life after death vastly eroded

\[157\text{Ibid., IX. v.}\]
\[158\text{Ibid., VII. xx.}\]
\[159\text{Ibid., IX. xi.}\]
the traditional attitude that Confucius was an upholder of worship and supernatural beliefs. In his attempt to explain Confucius' tolerance of the phenomenon of the belief in the spirits, Finazzo believed that it was because Confucius acknowledged this phenomenon simply as a deficient mode of fulfillment in man, owing to man's want of personality and transcendence. As such, this position did not question nor threaten the fundamentals of his doctrines. This was explained as Confucius' basically pragmatic and realistic mode of evaluating the reality of man and his world.\textsuperscript{160} Heaven, then, viewed by Confucius, was not the supernatural realm of spirits and gods, a belief which seemed to prevail at the time. To Confucius, Heaven as a personal force was strictly a personal matter, and did not carry over to his conception of man and society. Thus Confucius perceived Heaven, on a personal level, as a power that stood on the side of the lonely man who struggled for the right. In no circumstances did he use his religious convictions as a basis for his philosophy.\textsuperscript{161} As to his enthusiastic participation in religious rituals, not only did he oppose lavish rites as extravagant and thus at variance with the general welfare of the society, but he had in fact given this religious concept of \textit{li} a

\textsuperscript{160}Finazzo, \textit{The Principle or Tien}, pp. 98-100.

\textsuperscript{161}Creel, \textit{Chinese Thought from Confucius to Mao Tse-tung}, p. 50.
non-religious interpretation, and in so doing created a very important concept that was his own. The concept of li with its new connotations became a central principle in his educational philosophy. Pertinent to the understanding of the educational concept of li is Confucius' concept of man and its educational implications.

Confucius' Concept of Man

To Confucius, man is composed of three powers: moral, intellectual and emotional. It is the moral mind that finally decides the path which man's life and actions shall take, for it is moral power that distinguishes the good from the bad, the right from wrong. The intellectual mind, endowed with intelligence, executes the decisions of the moral mind and manifests them in appropriate thoughts and actions. The affective domain, which is composed of emotions and feelings, impulses and desires, is the source of both good and evil. Through proper guidance and direction of his emotions and feelings, man is capable of manifesting his love for humanity, jen, which is latent in him. However, if man is left to the dictates of his raw impulses and desires, he could become selfish and ugly. It is crucial, therefore, that the moral will of man must preside over the intellectual and the affective domains of man's mind.

As it is man's moral will, not his emotions or
intellect, that must decide whether man becomes good or bad, the education of the moral mind assumes the utmost importance and topmost priority. The fact that man possesses a moral will implies that environment, though given an important role in the educational ideas of Confucius, is not the deciding factor in the educational outcome. It is neither nature nor nurture but man's own will that decides man's future. Knowledge, which develops the intellectual power of man and increases his wisdom, is not an end in itself, and should not be sought after for its own sake. The mind needs to be sharpened and disciplined in order that man's will be strengthened to hold firm what is morally right for man to do, as laid down by tao, the way of Heaven. "Men can enlarge the Way, but the Way does not (by itself) enlarge the man." It is really up to the will of man to become good, and in doing so glorifies his humanity through tao. (The concept of tao will be dealt with in its educational context later in the chapter.) Education, therefore, is not for the intellect alone, though wisdom is a requisite of a complete man. Intellectual training is necessary so that man can think for himself and discriminate the way of Heaven from the way that lesser men would follow. The impulses and desires of man need to be regulated and coordinated so that they blend

162 Analects, XV. xxviii.
into a harmonious whole with the moral realm. The genu-
ineness of man, which is latent in him, needs to be brought forth by an education which aims at bringing out full humanistic values. The education of the intellect, chi, the education of the moral realm, li, and the education for humaneness, jen, form the basic tenets of Confucius' edu-
cational philosophy. Pervading the entire educational philosophy of Confucius, however, and embodying these basic tenets, is the concept of tao, or the concept of the Way.

The Concept of Tao and Its Educational Implications

The word tao, employed in the capacity of a noun, appeared frequently in the Analects and the Mencius, the latter work generally acknowledged as having rendered a close interpretation of Confucius' ideas. Often denoted as the way, or road, tao was sometimes employed to mean "rules of conduct and behavior in general," or "any possible way or manner in human life." Confucius often discussed the concept of tao as three different, though related, concepts: tao as the way of nature or Heaven; tao as the way of man according to the arrange-

163 Ibid., VI. xv.; XVII. xiv.
164 Ibid., XV, xli.
165 Mencius, VII. i., xii.
ments of nature, or Heaven; and tao as the way that man actually follows, as the issue of his decision or of his subjective nature. Of the three, the concept of tao as the way of man according to the arrangements of nature has the greatest significance because of its relationship with man.

The tao of nature, or the way of Heaven, expresses harmony. According to Confucius, experience shows us that the natural course of nature and the universe is smooth and without opposition. Man, as a being of cosmic origin, partakes of its character, which implies that he is originally endowed with the goodness of nature. This is manifested in the understanding of what is right and what is wrong. Thus, the way prescribed to man by nature would be a way of goodness, this being in accordance with the feelings and sentiments which pertain to his natural constitution. In other words, the tao of man is the way of man in accordance with his nature. Tao becomes then, the only true path which man must pursue, not to be abandoned for a moment. The man who pursues this way complies with the great ordinances, ming, which pervade and regulate all things.

Theoretically speaking, the way of man as prescribed by nature lies within the original possibilities

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166 Analects, VII. vi.
167 Ibid., VI. xvii.
168 Ibid., VIII. xiii.
of man. The path is in fact not far from man, being rooted in man himself. But tao is lifelong and burdensome, and not every man, in reality, succeeds in pursuing it. In fact, only a handful of exceptional man can pursue it by nature, that is, without effort and without instruction. To Confucius, those who are born with the knowledge of tao are the most superior of all men. Others who come to know and obtain tao through learning and instruction come next, and those who go through instruction and learning without obtaining tao are the most inferior of men. In other words, not everyone pursues tao, only the superior man will make tao the main object of his thought and doing. Setting his will upon it, he pursues tao day and night without stop. Once tao has been firmly established, Confucius believed that it will lead men on without end. When tao flourishes, its benefits will shower on the state and society, so it is up to men to let tao flourish and dispense its benefits to other men. The populace, instructed in tao needs no legal system of government, for tao is more constant and enduring than law, and there is no central authority over tao, having its origin in nature, which rides over all.

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169 Ibid., VIII. vii.  
170 Ibid., XVI. ix.  
171 Ibid., VII. vi.  
172 Ibid., XII. xxiii.  
173 Ibid., XV. xxviii.
By the virtuous example of superior men, the people would practice what is good in emulation. The ultimate educational goal of Confucius, in which a vision of a better world could be realized, could be achieved through tao. Tao would become the ideal way of life for the individual and the state; in other words, the way to achieve the ideal social order. Tao is superior to law and is independent of any form of government. Tao is above any form of power or authority. It is the principle which guides and directs the affairs of man. Tao in the philosophical sense, is happiness in life, the goal of all human endeavors. This is the new significance given to the meaning of tao by Confucius.

Tao, in a pragmatic sense, is conceived as the way which man actually follows in daily life. Confucius' observances of human behavior and his evaluation of the reality of man and his world led him to conclude that man practices the good way and the crooked way. The good way is the straight and upright way grounded on moral virtue and practiced by superior men; while the crooked way is the small way grounded on self interest and covetousness. From this observance was derived Confucius' classification theory of men into two genre: the superior man and the inferior man. The former generally designates the good

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174 Ibid., XVIII. ii.; XIX. iv.
175 Ibid., XIII. xxii.; XVI. ix.
and educated man, who practices virtue and attains tao; and the latter, a man of baser qualities, uneducated in the wisdom of tao, or who has failed in tao, or has given up tao in the middle of the way.176

Confucius' classification of men according to their adherence to tao or departure from it seemed to imply, firstly, that there is inequality in man, in which case the previous assumption that men are essentially equal will be contradicted. Secondly, Confucius seemed to imply that there are certain deficiencies in man's nature which are subsequently manifested in the behavior of inferior men. If these deficiencies are explained in terms of the lack of will or environmental circumstance, then Confucius volunteers no explanation as to the origin of these deficiencies or why, despite the fact that all men are basically equal by nature, the will of some men moves them to follow the good way, while the will of others directs them to evil thoughts and doings. On the other hand, if it is a question of environment, which implies that existence might degrade men, there is no explanation of why some men are degraded, and others not. These are questions for which Confucius did not claim to have answers. He did make clear his position, nevertheless, that he did not possess the truth, and that in the pursuit

176 Ibid., XIX. xix.; VI. x.
of it, he asked men to join him and learn to think for themselves. It is probable that such questions might have run through his mind, thus accounting for his reluctance to take a firm stand on the natural goodness of human nature.

It suffices at this point, however, to realize that the disparity between the thought and behavior of men is not, according to Confucius, a result of a difference in their natural endowments. All men are within the original possibilities of becoming good. All men are educable in the direction of tao.

To conclude, tao is not something mystical, as the Taoists later rendered it. To them, tao is the primal stuff of the universe or the totality of all things. To Confucius, tao was the Way, that is, the way above all other ways that men should follow. Its goal was happiness in this life for all mankind. Tao included the ethical code of the individual and the pattern of government that should bring about the fullest possible measure of well being and self-realization for every human being. The Confucian tao was a way of action, the action animated by the ideal of justice and motivated by love for all men. It was loyalty to principle, that is, loyalty to tao, not to any form of authority or power, that Confucius demanded of his fellow men.

Tao, the way of Heaven, which paves, directs and
guides the way of man, has important educational implications. Tao becomes the goal for all educational endeavors: it directs all human efforts, aiming at arriving at a spiritual plane which transcends the material world. Only in this manner can humanity blossom forth, revealing and fulfilling the true value of man, who alone is master of his own destiny. Tao has no materialistic aim; it promises happiness in this life, not after death. Happiness is not founded on any materialistic gain or reward. It is an immense sense of satisfaction, fulfillment and harmony that alone man, as part of the cosmic order, could feel as one with Heaven and earth. Education, then, founded on the principle of tao, does not aim at arriving at materialistic prosperity or reward, or at producing any particular skills pertaining to materialistic progress and advancement, or at directing man's potentials to any particular training, wherein lurks the danger of turning man into "vessels or machines." Education aims at perfecting man himself. His spiritual, mental and affective attributes will be brought forth, well regulated and coordinated through a liberal education, the ultimate goal of which is to produce the complete man, chun tze. Such men, who follow tao, are destined to be leaders of men, and who, in turn, enlarge tao to include the nation and the world.

177 Ibid., II. xii.
According to man's nature and what man is, Confucius outlined his educational scope to contain under one big umbrella the education of the intellect, the education of the emotions, and the education of the rational and moral powers. The outcome of education is an intelligent, humane, rational and moral man. An intelligent man is free from doubts; a humane man is free from care; a rational and moral man, having in his possession mental courage and strength, is free from fear. In Confucian education, there is an all pervading unity between the intellectual and moral powers: the same kind of pervading unity as seen between the universal and human order to which all educational efforts are directed.

**Education of the Intellect and the Concept of Knowledge**

Knowledge, to Confucius, if apart from the main stream of humanity, serves little purpose except as an adornment. It becomes a kind of cultural refinement, which adorns a "gentleman," but without any essence. The concept of knowledge as perceived by Confucius is a unique one. Knowledge, he professed, is to know man. The search for knowledge is related to the search for humanity and thus is concerned with the search for happiness.

178 Ibid., XIV. xxx. 179 Ibid., IV. xvi. 180 Ibid., XII. xxii.
edge becomes a stepping stone to the state of humanity. This is achieved through a direct application of knowledge to action. Knowledge thus applied becomes practical reasoning which is humanity, as distinguished from pure reason, or speculation. Confucius placed humanity, or practical reasoning above pure reason. Wit is important, but without humanity man becomes empty and unscrupulous. To attain tao intellectually is not enough. If man's moral character is undeveloped, or if man allows his personal interests to intervene (even though he is intelligent enough to understand the principles of tao), then man actually has no possession of these principles. Intellectual achievement cannot be separated from moral attainment. "The scholar who is widely versed in letters and who restrains his learning within the bounds of li is not likely to get off the track." Confucius implied that the acquisition of knowledge without the acquisition of moral judgement was dangerous.

It is obvious because of the subdued emphasis of Confucius on the acquisition of intellectual knowledge, that his education could not have been highly book-centered, as tradition transformed it. Neither did Confucius place


182 Analects, XV. xxxii. 183 Ibid., VI. xxv.
an importance on any forms of knowledge other than those pertaining to humanity and to the understanding of men. He did not seek to specify any one form of intellectual knowledge as essential to education. Yet Confucius was not anti-intellectual, as the other extreme view might suggest. He simply placed book knowledge in its proper perspective: that it should be used and applied to the understanding of man and society, and not to be sought after for its own sake. It is applied knowledge; its purpose is to serve man.

Confucius' Humanistic Educational Concept of Jen and Its Educational Implications

Confucius built his entire philosophy around the concept of *jen*, and as such, this concept serves as the basis for his educational philosophy as much as it does for his political and ethical philosophy. A broad and sweeping concept, *jen* assumes numerous connotations and various forms of manifestation, none of which can aptly serve as the definition of *jen*. Confucius never defined it himself, probably envisaging the difficulty of narrowly defining such an embracing idea.

It serves, therefore, not to attempt to define *jen*, but instead to examine the aspects of the concept of *jen* that pertain to the educational ideas of Confucius. The word *jen*, composed of the radicals "two" and "persons," first appeared quite frequently in the *Book of*
Poetry and Tso Chuan, an historical record. Jen in those contexts carried a specific meaning: beneficent love. Confucius borrowed the word and enlarged its scope to mean the manifestation of the genuine nature of man, virtue in its entirety, the moral qualities governing human relations, a basis for self cultivation, and a measure for personality development. Under this semantic transformation, jen no longer retained its specificity. In any event, Confucius probably did not intend jen to be a concept capable of narrow definition.

Jen, the basis for Confucius' humanistic education, is at once the motivation, direction, process, and goal of learning.\(^{184}\) Man is motivated toward jen because it is in his nature. By nature man is compassionate, which is his humaneness. This compassion, or love of his fellow men, needs to be brought forth by education, for the end of jen is human happiness and harmony with the universal order, tao. Man's consciousness of being human needs to be aroused through education as much as his intellect needs to be sharpened. The education of jen is an education of the emotions.\(^ {185}\) In as much as intellectual training is an education of the rational. Thus is created


a harmony between emotions and reason, a requisite for the educated man. Jen is action oriented, and together with li, constitutes the dynamics of education. The nurturing ground for jen begins with self, and the practicing ground is the family, society and the nation. To begin with self, jen assumes the educational role of personality development and self cultivation, the process of which is to sublimate man's selfish impulses and harmful desires by channeling all energy into bringing forth the genuineness and goodness that is in man's nature.\(^\text{186}\) Jen is a positive educational goal: the unfolding of man's humanness for the benefit of all. The educational process of jen is not an individual process. It does not end with the self, for the essence of jen is not static. Jen exudes forth from the self to the other person; the relationship that exists between the self and others is the practicing ground for jen, and as such, the dynamics of Confucius' humanistic education. Jen proceeds from within and cannot be imposed from without. In other words, jen is an internalizing process.

To achieve jen is to have reached the goal of education, which is to return to genuine goodness, whereby man is made civilized and truly human. No other educational concept of Confucius than the concept of jen

\(^{186}\) Analects, XII. i.
embraces simultaneously the process and the goal of education. Jen, an undefinable concept, defines the nature of Confucius' humanistic education and represents it in its entirety.

The Moral Educational Concept of Li and Its Educational Implications

Environment, though not the only factor in determining man's behavior and personality development, nevertheless plays an important part in Confucius' education. In his educational philosophy, it is the moral environment that guides and molds human behavior. A basic assumption underlying this tenet is the power of example: man has a tendency to learn through emulation and is subject to the influence of other men. In other words, good models of behavior are essential in education. Of utmost significance, then, is to create the appropriate moral environment in which man learns and perfects himself. This moral environment is governed by a code of conduct which guides social behavior and which in turn, is governed by a set of morals, li.

The educational concept of the self cultivation of man by means of li, which forms the core of education, owes its origin to Confucius. Man returns to his natural propriety by "binding" himself according to a frame of conduct governed by li. Only in this way can man

\[187\] Ibid., XII. i.
restrain himself from the subjectivity which is also part of his nature, that is, the raw impulses of man. The theory behind this frame of conduct governing man's behavior is the corollary of the principle of man's necessary adherence to nature. The stronger the urge to "go back" to the original goodness that is peculiar to man's nature, the greater the need to "bind" his subjectivity.\(^{188}\) The subjectivity of man can be interpreted as the desires or passions that man is naturally endowed with, which might be largely responsible for his departure from tao. These desires and passions are harmful when carried to excesses. However, Confucius' suggestion was not to purge or extirpate man's emotions and feelings, for doing so would create a contradiction in his humanistic views. Instead, man's feelings and emotions are to be regulated and properly channeled, so that they come within the moral sphere in the process of man's quest for moral excellence, wherein lies his happiness in the fulfillment of his nature, of which the moral component is the most important. However, man's pursuit of tao in the process of the fulfillment of his nature is not primarily directed toward his spiritual development and enrichment alone. Man cannot grow beyond the limits set by nature;\(^{189}\) yet man, in

\(^{188}\) Finazzo, The Principle or Tien, p. 100.

\(^{189}\) Analects, XV. xxviii.
fulfilling his own nature, also fulfills the nature of others. The education of man is the path for the attainment of social harmony among men. As a social process, one of the functions of education is to restrain man's activities according to certain predetermined limits, whereby man is taught to accept this restraint as something necessary and worthy for the happiness of the whole.

In accordance with the humanistic ideas of Confucius, men are essentially free. The restraining function of education seems to pose a problem upon man's freedom, for education is to limit this freedom by means of li which requires man to check his raw impulses, to cultivate himself in order to become fully human. In the pursuit of happiness for all, man needs to surrender his personal freedom, and as such, becomes less free. Tradition conceived of Confucius' educational philosophy as advocating the binding of man in a rigid frame of conduct, thus robbing man of his freedom and conforming him to a special mold. It could not have been Confucius' intention to limit man's freedom in this manner, or in any way to stifle his individualism. In fact, his own life had been a witness of individual freedom. First of all, Confucius values freedom of thought as necessary for human happiness. All of his educational endeavors were directed toward

\[^{190}\text{Ibid., VI. xx.; XIII. iv.; XIV. xlv.; XVI. i.; XVII. iv.}\]
teaching man how to think and to think for himself through observation and analysis. Secondly, in his daily functions Confucius revealed a certain departure from conventional behavior and conduct, when he felt that such departure was justified by reasons of common sense and good taste. As a matter of fact, the code of conduct Confucius advocated was based on a genuine respect for the freedom of others, and was different from the rigid and ritualistic social behavior prevailing at the time. As a teacher, Confucius let his disciples be individuals and guided them accordingly. His educational practice was catered to individual teaching and learning, acknowledging individual differences. Under no circumstances would he set a limit on individual freedom as long as it was in accordance with tao. For the sake of tao, he was willing not only to surrender his freedom, but even his own life. It was through adherence to li that greater human freedom could be achieved: freedom from human misery brought about by bad government and constant wars caused by man's neglect of his personal ethical code and obligations of one social being to another. In this respect, the men of Confucius are free within limits which they willingly set for themselves.

Li, thus, becomes the core of education for Confucius. Having profoundly altered the character of an

191 Ibid., II. xviii.
ancient institution which upheld li as the rituals practiced in sacrifices and then to cover every sort of ceremony and the courtesy that characterized the conduct at court, Confucius endowed li with a moral connotation that has important cultural and educational implications. Li was no longer a mere ostentatious display of extravagance in worship or sedulous aping of the behavior of others, of which Confucius was contemptuous. To excel in li, it is the spirit that counts. Confucius remarked: "A man who is not virtuous, what has he to do with worship?"

Although li is proper conduct in general, it is no simple matter of propriety. Traditions and customs tend to emphasize the outward manifestation of li and not the more inherent quality, namely, the inward spiritual grace which manifests itself in visible outward conduct and behavior. Li becomes the mode for the expression of emotions and feelings in a socially sanctioned manner. In other words, it is the function of li to conduct behavior into socially accepted and useful channels. Emotions and feelings are regulated and disciplined by means of li, which becomes the method of guiding and facilitating human relationships.

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192 Creel, Confucius and the Chinese Way, pp. 82-87.
193 Analects, III. iii.
Thus at the base of li is the knowledge and acquaintance of traditional practices of society which serve as the measure of social acceptability. However, to Confucius, the practice of li based upon this knowledge alone is not enough. In order to practice li and excel in it, one must also possess the ability to modify these conventional practices as circumstances and common sense might dictate. To follow rigidly traditional forms of behavior without questioning their validity and suitability to the present day and age is to ignore the basic here and now essence of li as a way to express present emotions and feelings in a contextual situation. Confucius had diligently studied Chou li, the body of social conduct and religious rites revived by Duke Chou, and found it very worthy of praise. However, he found that it had become degraded over time to mere rigid practices and lavish display. The spirit was lacking in the later Chou li. Hence to hold Confucius responsible as promoter of ancient rites and one who sought vehemently to revive those ancient practices of social behavior, is to misunderstand his motives. He sought only to revive the spirit of li, to render it alive again in human hearts, and to replace anachronistic and rigid social practices with a code of conduct that had as its base genuine feel-

194 Creel, Confucius and the Chinese Way, pp. 82-87.
ings and emotions which had become refined; for li is refinement, or culture, an expression of a very human quality in man.

The importance of li rendered by Confucius to education is therefore very clear. Through education in li, every aspiring young man, regardless of his social origin, could be equipped with the means to express good behavior and proper etiquette which facilitated social relationships. Li was brought down from the educational pedestal, which once had favored only the rich and noble, to be extended to all social classes. Any young man, even of the most humble social origin, could, by education, become a "gentleman." The education of li, through which character cultivation could be achieved, became the criterion for determining the social status of a man.

The Nature of Confucius' Education

A study of the key concepts underlying the educational ideas of Confucius reveals that Confucius was perhaps the only thinker during the period of turmoil and human infliction of late Chou who had turned to positive and optimistic means to achieve human happiness, and in doing so, founded his system of humanistic thought which proved to be of tremendous influence for Chinese education. The Taoists sought negative action and retreat from
society, while the legalists resorted to harsh measures of law and punishment as remedies for human vice and deviations, methods which Confucius deplored. Confucius' educational philosophy, in comparison, was nothing else than humanism, motivated by his faith in man. Every branch of human knowledge and every sort of human activity was a means to an end—the welfare, happiness and peace of the people. Education was to achieve that end. His humanistic education was centered around the love of man and knowledge of mankind. The love of man consisted in understanding man, while the knowledge of man was the objective of all knowledge. Confucius' humanism in education was both on the personal and the social level, ultimately uniting the two. This unity between the personal and the social was embodied in the concept of jen which formed, together with li, the greater concept of tao.

Education as an Individual Process

On the personal level, Confucius' humanistic education became a process through which man realizes his intrinsic value and dignity as an individual human being, and seeks to arrive at a state of harmony with humanity and nature. Jen and li are realized in the product of the complete man or chun tze, a man who possesses peace of

195 Analects, XII. xxii.
196 Hu Cheng-tu, Chinese Education under Communism, p. 15.
mind, majestic autonomy and independence of character, with which he can best fulfill the duty of man, which is to think and act according to the way, tao. Education, then, is not to train men, but to educate, "to develop and cultivate mentally or morally, to expand, strengthen and discipline." The gentleman, chun tze, product of education, aiming at the development of human nature and perfection of human character, has respect for the settled order, adherence to moral duty and esteem for intellectual eminence. He is a man whose life functions within daily human relationship, yet transcends life's normal functions.

Education as a Social Process

On the social level, Confucius' humanism in education manifested itself distinctly in jen, the principle of reciprocity. The relation between man and man is jen, bound by the love of humanity and humanity itself that is man's nature. Jen is the quality of humaneness cultivated to achieve universal tranquility, peace and harmony, the ideal moral order of which Confucius conceived. The genuineness and goodness of men thus fully cultivated in

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197 Creel, Confucius and the Chinese Way, p. 130.
198 Creel, Chinese Thought from Confucius to Mao Tze Tung, p. 130.
jen and the emotions and impulses well regulated and expressed in li culminate in the complete man, in whom a harmonious and peaceful society can be materialized.

To achieve this end, Confucius felt the need for some degree of universal education to enlighten and to socialize men. Confucius was the first man in the history of China who popularized education. This stemmed from his humanistic belief that, first of all, all men are educable. The educability of man is based on his conviction that human nature has a propensity for goodness, that evil was mostly wrought by practice and bad environment. Education could alone provide the proper moral environment whereby men can perfect their nature. Secondly, Confucius, recognizing the fact that all men are basically equal, and that men are endowed with more or less the same qualities regardless of birth, was convinced that education should therefore not be the privilege of those of noble birth, but the right of all those who desired it. This is the democratic nature of Confucius' education. The qualities of a man, and not his social origin, are what counts. Based on this conviction, Confucius profoundly altered the meaning of chun tze from its original usage: a man of noble birth. From now on, any man could become a gentleman, chun tze, regardless of his birth, provided that his conduct was noble, unselfish, just and kind. The measure

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of a gentleman lay not in his social class, but solely in his conduct and character. The historical impact derived from this principle can be seen in the rise of a new social class, shih, a scholarly class who played a significant role in guiding the destiny of China throughout the centuries that followed.

Admittedly, the road to human perfection is a long and slow process. Confucius must have recognized this. In other words, education too, becomes a life-long process of self cultivation. Education is the foundation for the entire political, social, economic and cultural life of the nation. The ideal moral and social order, which is the ultimate goal of education, is dependent upon the perfection of man. This ultimate goal, though not unattainable, is however a very distant one. Confucius was also aware of that. He also realized that, during his lifetime, very little could be achieved toward attaining this goal. On top of that, Confucius realized that he lacked the authority to put his ideas into action. He therefore appealed to a higher authority by making education the first and foremost duty of the head of state. "Enrich them [the people], educate them," was his counsel to the princes.

Hence education became intertwined with government; this was another aspect of education as a socio-political process. Education became a great social force to be controlled and directed by government. Gov-
arning and educating were to be so integrated as to have almost undifferentiated functions. To govern was to educate. Government was by education rather than by strict and corrective legal processes. Confucius also provided a psychological method: emulation and the power of example. Underlying this learning principle is the assumption that man, who has the propensity toward goodness, would lean toward the direction of goodness. In other words, the good example of one man serves as the standard or model for another. The principle of reciprocity also leads itself to the workability of the principle. Man reciprocates goodness with goodness, benevolence with kindness and so on. There is also the assumption that those who rule, lead, and those who are governed, follow. There is thus a distinction between those who rule and those who are governed. A benevolent leader, by the power of this influence and example, would sway the whole nation, as grass would bend low in the gentle blowing of the breeze. Education, far from being a corrective measure, becomes a humanitarian way of governing the people. Subsequently, it would replace law and punishment as a measure in governing the nation.

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201 Analects, XII. xix.

202 Shyrock, Origin and Development of the State Cult of Confucius, p. 6.
Another aspect of Confucian education is that it had a very practical yet idealistic nature. Education was to serve a significant and distinct political end. The immediate goal of education was to train men of good qualities to bring about a different and better kind of government. The objective of education, in this respect, was a practical one, though not necessarily narrow, for the end of education was not simply the successful training of efficient administrators, but educated men in every sense of the word. A truly educated man would be liberally educated, not simply trained in some technique or practical expertise. His goal lay not in pursuing a successful career, but in helping to achieve a broader aim, that of good government, which would bring peace and harmony to the nation. This was Confucius' idealistic view of education: education as a vehicle to bring about the perfect society.

Yet another distinct aspect of the nature of Confucius' education lies in the emphasis on morality over intellectualism, which is revealed not only through his ideas on moral education and intellectual training, but also in his broader perspective of education as enculturation. Confucius placed moral education above all forms of education, the assumption being that the moral sphere in the makeup of a man is more important than the intellectual sphere; and also that, in essence, moral attainment is a
more difficult task than intellectual achievement. If a man intellectually attains to a given principle, but his moral character does not enable him to live up to it, even though he has obtained it, he will certainly lose it.  

In this respect, the kind of education advocated by Confucius deviated from the conventional educational practice at the time, which was centered around the six arts, the procuring of which knowledge was essential in the education of a "gentleman." Confucius himself was proficient in the six arts as a young man. He termed them the "polite studies," serving essentially in the capacity of adornment and refinement of a person. As such, the educational significance of the six arts was limited indeed, unless the training in the six arts was combined with character education. Only then would the education of a "gentleman" be complete. In this manner Confucius minimized the predominant influence of the study of the six arts, and granted character education overriding significance, and thus changed the entire concept of the function of schooling.

When a youth is at home let him be filial, when abroad respectful to his elders, let him be circumspect and truthful, and while exhibiting a comprehensive love for all men, let him ally himself with the good. Having so acted, if he has energy to spare, let him employ it in polite studies.

\[203\] Analects, XV. xxxii. \[204\] Ibid., I. vi.
Refinement is therefore a quality of an educated man, but this outward adornment must necessarily reflect an inward grace. Confucius recognized that without training in the six arts, a coarser type of man would emerge. He therefore advocated that the training could be retained, but cautioned that it must be carried out appropriately. "When nature exceeds training (in the six arts), you have the rustic. When training exceeds nature you have the clerk. It is only when nature and training are proportionally blended that you have the higher type of man." 205

To Confucius, the "higher type of man" is someone who is properly enculturated to live in a civilized manner. To do so, he is required to subjugate his passion and desires and to learn to refine his thoughts and actions and to behave according to a socially accepted code of conduct. In a society where a formal school system did not yet exist, the greater part of the education of a young man was procured through an informal educational process. The culture of a society represents the cumulative thought, behavior, experience of its members past and present, as such, enculturation is a means whereby society attempts to mold and form its young members, as well as pass on to them the cumulative wisdom and experiences.

Recognizing the effectiveness of enculturation as

205 Ibid., IV. xvi.
an educational process, Confucius wanted to make certain that the cultural influences of a society must be of a moral nature. He wanted to make sure that the society was composed of living examples of men who could provide the necessary moral environment. He cautioned that all forms of cultural media and communication, particularly music and poetry, must go through some form of censorship in order to make sure that they attain the necessary moral standard. Culture and education are interrelated. In effect, enculturation is education itself. Education viewed from the broader cultural perspective is also a process of transmission. It passes onward into the future what past generations had achieved; and at the same time it develops the habit of searching the past for the accumulated wisdom and rich experience of human life. It serves in this capacity to link the past with the future, and becomes a process of social heredity, a stabilizer of society and culture. 206

Thus the nature of Confucius educational process can be seen not only as an individual and social process, but also as a formal and informal process as well. It serves to achieve one thing—to educate man to become a cooperative member of a harmonious and peaceful society.

Education for the Ideal Social Order

It has been established that the educational thought of Confucius was inseparable from his political, ethical and social systems. Education is to achieve political, ethical and social ends, namely, good government, good men and good society. Good government is to be run by men of virtuous character. Education is to prepare one for government, for to be educated is to rule. The ideal social order, on the other hand, dwells in harmony and peace. A harmonious society is best achieved through some measure of universal education through which its citizenry would be taught the importance of morality as the chief means of achieving human happiness on this earth. To Confucius, moral education became the only defensible educational goal for a society, the assumption being that only through moral education could men become self-disciplined and good, qualities which are in accordance with their nature.

The fact that human nature shows an inclination toward goodness is because the natural genuineness that is in man is embodied in the all pervading tao, the way of Nature, that is good. However, man's natural genuineness is often tainted by the environment. The moral surroundings in which a man lives have great bearing on his subsequent character; for he who does not choose to live in virtuous surroundings will lose his discriminating sense
of right and wrong. Education, therefore, is called upon to reinstall the state of natural genuineness both by appealing to the latent goodness that is in man, as well as by creating the proper moral environment in which man may live. The latent goodness is conceived of by Confucius as *jen*, manifested as the love of fellow men. The moral environment, on the other hand, is *li*, a moral code of behavior set by society, founded on man's willingness of spirit to set limits on their own subjectivity for the love and consideration of his fellow men. To achieve moral harmony in man is thus the role of self cultivation in a proper moral setting.

The educational process of self cultivation, then, is the process of searching for the best on one's heart. It is an intuitive as well as introspective process, kept alive by a spirit of inquiry, as well as a keen observation of the behavior and action of other men. Self cultivation needs to be put to daily practice, so that education becomes part of living: an integration of thought and action and a vital process of putting knowledge into practice. To have knowledge is to know and understand man. To live righteously and virtuously was prized by Confucius over intellectual training and book learning. This is the essence of Confucius' humanistic educational ideas.

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207 *Analects*, IV. i.
Society becomes the best practicing ground for Confucius' educated men. The end product of education is a harmonious social order. The harmony of society is to be kept in perfect balance by means of a hierarchical arrangement of social relationships, by means of which the individual finds his proper place and identity in the society, enabling him to function in a social context and perform his social and personal obligations as a fellow human being. The basic principle enhancing the balance and harmony of this hierarchical social order is the principle of reciprocity. The benevolence of the ruler, for example, is reciprocated by loyalty from his minister; the love of the parent is reciprocated by filial piety from his son; the gentility of an elder brother is reciprocated by respect from his younger brother, and so on. Each set of human relationship is thus kept in perfect harmony by means of reciprocity, wherein the greater harmony of the society can be maintained in this delicate balance.

To conclude, the goal and purpose of Confucius' educational endeavors is three-fold. The ideal end product of education in an individual is the superior man, chun tse; the ideal end product of education on a social scale is the harmonious social order. On the political level, the ideal end product of education is good government, headed by men of illustrious and virtuous character.
The democratic nature of Confucius' education has important socio-political implications. It aims at revolutionizing the socio-political system by allowing only those who are morally fit to rule. Indeed, Confucius did not conceive of an egalitarian society, since he was convinced that the degree of moral attainment in men would not be the same. As such, the new social order will be stratified according to the moral differences in men. The moral men will govern, while lesser men will be governed.

In attempting to achieve this socio-political state, Confucius was aware, however, that realistically, virtuous rulers were rare within the existing system of hereditary rule. A second measure must be taken with immediate expediency, that of educating men of good material to become ministers who would assist the sovereign in government, and guide the nation to peace and harmony. It was this immediate aim that motivated Confucius to become a teacher. His educational practice thus carried with it an important mission, that of achieving through education moral men, the ideal state of good government and good society.
CHAPTER V

THE EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE OF CONFUCIUS

Introduction

Confucius' important principle in his educational theory, that of the unity of thought and action, can best be revealed by the personal example of Confucius as teacher. The underlying principle of the unity of thought and action is that the behavior and actions of a moral man should be in harmonious unity with his beliefs and thinking, without departing from each other. In other words, the outward character of a moral man should be the manifestation of his inner thoughts and ideas.

Confucius devoted a major portion of his lifetime—some fifty years of his life—to teaching. Throughout the entire period of his educational endeavors he set out to prove the validity of this idea of unity—and with considerable success. This unity of thought and action is to be realized in the moral man, a man of "sageliness within and kingliness without." 208 Confucius strove to be such a man. Perhaps that explained his tremendous success and popularity as a teacher, setting the standard for generations of teachers to follow. Confucius demonstrated in

208 Analects, XIII. xxviii.

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person what he advocated in theory: to teach and influence by example. Through cultivating a moral life for himself, Confucius influenced the young by his moral action, which was the exemplification of his inner thoughts and convictions. Confucius became the first teacher in China to have demonstrated a living example of moral unity between thought and practice; and to have established an important educational viewpoint that was to last for centuries to come: the validity of a man's thinking can be established by examining his conduct. The power to influence is not by one's intellectual perception or by what he thinks alone, but by what he does. This was Confucius' legacy to the Chinese philosophy of teaching. The role of the teacher is a moral one. His duty is not simply to dispense knowledge or merely to create a proper environment for learning, but to be a living exemplar of what he teaches. This perhaps helps explain the absence in Confucius' writings of long educational treatises with elaborate arguments, hypotheses or theories. The educational thought of Confucius was not born of philosophical speculation, but of actual practice. Confucius' educational philosophy is philosophy lived, as demonstrated by Confucius the thinker and teacher himself. It is therefore not difficult to understand why Confucius gave the teacher the predominant role in the education of the young.
The Concept of Teacher

In the educational practice of Confucius, the teacher plays a very important role. The broadest definition of "teacher" attempted by Confucius was: Any man could be the teacher of another--by virtue of his moral character, which seemed to be the necessary professional qualification required of a teacher. As to professional training, Confucius made very little specification. This might have stemmed from the fact that Confucius never had a regular teacher in his youth. Perhaps a more valid reason might be that Confucius was not convinced that mere professional training qualifies one to become a teacher. A teacher needs to be a living exemplar of virtue. The training that is required of him would be in the form of self-cultivation.

To Confucius, the teacher must possess certain qualities that are considered desirable and necessary. First of all, he must have a sincere concern for the proper education of the young. He should be a sincere seeker after knowledge, constantly learning as well as teaching, understanding that learning and teaching complement each other and are the basis for new knowledge. He should help

209 Ibid., VII. xxi.

210 Ibid., IX. vi., VII. xxvi.
his students to "complete their nature," or to develop fully the natural genuineness latent in their nature. The teacher himself should be a man of high moral principle, as well as high intellectual calibre, since he is to give inspiration and act as model to his pupils. He should delight in teaching, and unceasingly perform this duty well. Confucius spoke of himself as teacher:

"... The sage and the man of perfect virtue--how can I presume to class myself with them? It may just be said of me, that I strive to become such myself without intermission, and teach others without flagging." 211

The teacher should be a broad-minded individual, democratic in spirit, who would not refuse to teach anyone who wants to learn from him. As a professional, a teacher needs to understand that men by nature are essentially equal, so that in his teaching, he should not be biased by the social background of his pupils. He needs to share the democratic belief that all men have a right to education, regardless of their class distinctions. 212 Only in believing in this equal right as well as the equalizing power of education can he truly perform his role as teacher. On the other hand, the teacher must recognize individual differences. Socially, men are basically equal, but intellectually, men are endowed differently. Teaching needs

211 Ibid., VII. xxxiii. 212 Ibid., XV. xxxviii.
therefore to adjust to individual differences. Teaching is not to fit the learners in a common mold, but to develop each pupil's talents, abilities and inclinations, so that the learner, in fully developing his own personality, might bring to maturity and perfection the natural endowments with which he is gifted.

In order to observe clearly the aspirations, hopes and fears of his pupils, their individual strengths and weaknesses, the teacher needs to relate to his pupils and establish a good rapport with them. Never must a teacher allow his pupils to treat him with deference, nor should the relationship between pupil and teacher be one of arbitrary tyranny on the part of the teacher. There should be, instead, a mutual respect existing between teacher and pupil: the pupil respecting the teacher for his moral integrity and wisdom, and the master respecting the young for their potentials. With regard to the latter, Confucius remarked, "The young should inspire one with respect. How do we know that their future will not be equal to our present?"\(^{213}\)

Another professional attitude that was required by Confucius of a teacher is that he needs to expand his realm of knowledge constantly. The teacher does that by reviewing old knowledge and acquiring new knowledge. Confucius believed that old knowledge is the key to new

\(^{213}\)Ibid., IX. xxii.
knowledge. Confucius, himself researched the books of antiquity in order to obtain new knowledge. He was a devout scholar of the Book of Poetry, the Book of History, and the I Ching, sifting the knowledge therein, drawing conclusions, extrapolating and formulating new ideas accordingly.

Though possessing book knowledge, the teacher is not a dispenser of knowledge, for fear of cramming the growing mind with material it cannot fully digest, and in doing so, would extinguish the spark of desire for inquiry and motivation for learning and discovery. Instead, the teacher would exercise the mind by giving it a broad background of the various branches of studies and culture, and directing its reading, so that the mind will be able to choose its proper path. Gradually, the mind will be able to discern what is good and true, or evil and false, what is useful or useless. The teacher, rather than treating the learner simply as a receptacle of knowledge, should recognize him as an active participant in the search for truth. The task of the teacher, is therefore, to guide the mind of the young to appreciate what is good, true and noble, to carefully guide the learner along a proper path, knowing that gradually, by his careful guidance and by the learner's own effort, the latter will eventually reach the goal of a fully developed human being. The role

\[214\] Ibid., II. xi.
of the teacher, therefore, is to teach pupils to think for themselves, to find for themselves solutions to problems and to make the necessary effort to conquer difficulties, and only as a last resort would he show them the way. In other words, the teacher directs and guides, encourages and stimulates thinking, instead of handing out information and providing solutions.

The concept of teaching as derived from the actual practice of Confucius, was revolutionary in the sense that teaching at the time was predominantly a handing down of a body of knowledge, skills or etiquette from one generation to another, preparing the young members of noble families for hereditary rule. Confucius taught sons of commoners. He also taught pupils, not subject matter, or a certain kind of expertise. The image of the teacher as a model for men created by Confucius proved to be a lasting one throughout the centuries that followed.

The Concept of Learning

A significant observation that Confucius obtained from his educational practice was the realization that learning takes place as a result of the learner's own effort. The learner is responsible for his own learning through the acquisition of a proper attitude as well as correct methods of learning. Successful learning takes

215 Ibid., VII. viii.
place when the learner is self motivated or "fond of learning." However, a learner, by his diligence and studiousness alone, can achieve learning with the same result. Confucius proclaimed that he was a self motivated learner, who delighted in learning, and was not merely fond of it.  

A correct learning attitude is thus the initial requirement toward effective learning. A good learner must have honesty. He is honest to himself as to what he knows and what he does not know. This honesty is knowledge in itself. Conceit is a hindrance to learning. "A scholar," said Confucius, "who is not grave, will not inspire respect, and his learning will therefore lack stability. His chief principles should be conscientiousness and sincerity." Again he said, "Learn as if you were not reaching your goals, and as though you were afraid of missing it." Learning is thus a very serious business; it is one's moral responsibility to himself. Confucius, by placing this responsibility on the learner, seems to have provided the solution to the problem of motivation. Successful learning is chiefly a matter of willingness to learn and deliberate effort.

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216 Ibid., V. xiv.  
217 Ibid., VI. xviii.  
218 Ibid., VI. ii.  
219 Ibid., XVII. viii.  
220 Ibid., I. viii.  
221 Ibid., VIII, xvii.
The motive for learning is another important consideration in the final outcome of learning. The only justifiable motive for learning is to know the truth, to love it, and to delight in it.\textsuperscript{222} In other words, one learns in order to understand that his duty is to his fellow men. Confucius emphasized the ethical aspect of learning for he was fully aware of the economic opportunities that accompanied scholarship in his days. "The wise man makes duty, not a living, his aim; \ldots \text{while there is emolument in scholarship; but the wise man is anxious about his duty, not about poverty.}^\text{223}\ On the other hand, Confucius admitted that it was not easy to find a man who "has studied three years without aiming at pay."\textsuperscript{224} The motive for learning, to Confucius, had to be so pure that even non-materialistic reward in the form of praise and honor, was an impure motive for learning, and must be discouraged. Education is strictly for self improvement and character development.\textsuperscript{225} It is a moral duty to oneself to undertake the pursuit of truth while learning how to become a complete man. Learning in this context carries a broad meaning. It is more than obtaining information from books, or training in some skill or expertise, but is a life long process of self discipline,

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{222}\textit{Ibid.}, VI. xviii.
\item\textsuperscript{223}\textit{Ibid.}, XV, xxxi.
\item\textsuperscript{224}\textit{Ibid.}, VIII. xii.
\item\textsuperscript{225}\textit{Ibid.}, XIV. xxv.
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perseverance, conscious effort and constant practice in the direction of tao, in order to perfect one's humanity. Confucius was perhaps the first philosopher in China who advocated placing the responsibility for learning on the learner himself. The essence of his educational principle is that the learner, having taken up learning as his own responsibility, becomes self motivated by his conscious effort backed by an internalized sense of duty, and in doing so provides the rationale for effective learning to take place. In short, a built-in motivational process activates the learning process.

In point of fact, there is a risk factor involved in the above-mentioned principle of learning. The imposition of learning on the learner in the name of duty has the danger of being misinterpreted as giving the learner a passive role in education. As it was, in the centuries that followed, when education had been reduced to mere book knowledge and rote learning, the learner could no longer question the validity of such an education, but blindly obeyed his sense of duty as a learner to do his best to learn whatever was required of him. Inadvertently, as the unquestioning passivity on the learner's part increased, it was easier for the learner to fall prey to an educational system which adhered only formally to Confucian ideals, but which in reality had diminished to a system of education upholding rote learning of the
Confucian classics in order to pass a series of civil service examinations, the philosophy of which departed greatly from the original spirit of the educational thought of Confucius.

The motive behind learning, as it has been discussed, was important to Confucius, but so was how to learn. The methods of learning advocated by Confucius are considered to be well ahead of his time. First of all, he proclaimed, let learning be acquired naturally. Conscious effort is not the same as forced inquiry. To strain the mind in forced inquiry is not as good as yielding the will and acquiring naturally. Just as tao cannot be imposed upon, neither can learning be forcefully induced. Confucius himself tried and came to this realization. Learning has to come naturally. Being thus convinced, Confucius could not possibly have approved of rote learning, which is a form of imposition upon the mind to memorize a body of factual knowledge. Confucius saw little use of mere words in learning without understanding their meaning and implications. The rote learning method, which became more and more popular in the post-Confucian era, could not have been a method of learning advocated by Confucius.

Once knowledge has been acquired, Confucius wanted

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226 Ibid., XV. xxx.
to make sure that it stayed with the learner. To know, he said, is not enough; one needs to put his knowledge into practice. This can be achieved through constant and consistent practice, which should reward great joy to the learner, knowing that learning has taken place successfully. Moreover, knowledge that has been acquired needs to be reviewed in order that new knowledge can be gained. This is both a principle of learning as well as teaching, for they complement each other. In this way, the learner becomes the teacher of others. The teacher, in turn, by acquiring new knowledge, becomes the learner. Confucius' conception of a good learner was:

The scholar who in his food does not seek the gratification of his appetite, nor in his dwelling is solicitous of comfort, who is diligent in his work, and guarded in his speech, who associates with the high principles and thereby rectifies himself;--such a one may really be said to love learning.

As can be seen, a devoted learner seeks learning for its own sake, with the sole purpose of rectifying his character. Confucius spoke of himself as having pursued this objective in his entire life.

Confucius demanded of his pupils loyalty to the principles by which they rectify themselves.

The learner will keep to the death his excellent principles. He will not enter a tottering state nor dwell in a rebellious one. When law and order prevail

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227 Ibid., I. i.  
228 Ibid., II. xi.  
229 Ibid., I. xiv.
in the Empire, he is in evidence. When it is without law and orders, he withdraws. When law and order prevail in his state, he is ashamed to be needy and of no account. When law and order fail, he is ashamed to be in affluence and honor.\textsuperscript{230}

This is the learner's moral duty to himself and to his society.

As to the means by which knowledge can be gained, Confucius was an adamant advocate of the spirit of inquiry. This seemed to fit in with the spirit of the times, when freedom of thought and speech was sought after by men of wisdom. Confucius spoke of his own method of inquiry:
". . . I hear much, select the good and follow it. I see much and treasure it up. . . ."\textsuperscript{231} Keen observation thus becomes the requisite of learning. The process of learning, beginning with observation, continues with the selection and discrimination of information, retaining that which is relevant and discarding that which is not, to be followed by application of the good and useful knowledge. The three steps of this process of learning by inquiry are: observation, discrimination and application. This is a far cry from the rote learning method attached to later Confucian education. Confucius was most concerned that his learners must learn how to think. "If a man does not ask himself, 'what am I to make of this?' . . . there is nothing whatever I can make of him."\textsuperscript{232}

\textsuperscript{230}Ibid., VIII. xiii.  
\textsuperscript{231}Ibid., VII. xxvii.  
\textsuperscript{232}Ibid., XV. xv.
To sum up, the Confucian ideal of a learner is a scholar and gentleman, the culmination of which personality is the superior man, chuntze. The Confucian scholar-gentleman is humble and sincere, modest and self controlled, simple in taste and in needs, and untiring in moral and intellectual pursuits, valuing the cultivation of character above everything else. Only can such a personality be in harmony with the cosmic order, tao, and can perfect his life according to the perfection therein. "A scholar whose mind is set on the truth, but who is ashamed of poor clothes and poor food is not fit to be discoursed with."

Confucius thus created China's lasting image of the scholar gentleman as one who lives modestly in the pursuit of truth.

Confucius' theory of learning by observation implies that much learning can take place informally. No formal educational edifice catered to learning nor was a regular teacher required for learning to take place. Though Confucius became China's first professional teacher in charge of China's first "school without walls," he himself had had no formal schooling. Yet being equipped with a keen sense of observation and a discriminating mind experience taught him that learning was possible. As for teachers, Confucius professed that they were every-

\[233\text{ Ibid., VII. xv.}\]
where, for even in the company of three, there would be someone from whom one could learn. "When walking in a party of three, my teachers are always present. I can select the good qualities of the one and copy them, and the unsatisfactory qualities of the other, and correct them in myself."234

The ability to discriminate good from bad, to see oneself in the mirror of others, to emulate good behavior and correct oneself accordingly are effective ways of learning. "When you see a man of worth, think how to rise to his level. When you see an unworthy man, then look within and examine yourself."235 This insight of Confucius sums up the principle of learning by emulation, with introspection and reflection an integral part of it. The educational implications of the Confucian concept of learning by emulation are twofold. Firstly, it implies that the learner, using his independent judgement, selects that which is good in a man and follows the example in him. This selection is facilitated by virtue of the fact that a man's virtue shines and stands out from amongst men. His conspicuousness draws others toward him. By the magnetic power of example, he serves as a living model of teaching, which is more effective than moral precepts written in books. Consequently to learn directly from a

234 Ibid., VII. xxi. 235 Ibid., IV. xvii.
live and concrete example is more effective than to acquire knowledge indirectly from books. The concept of emulation suggests that an environment conducive to moral education is necessary and desirable. "It is the moral character of a neighborhood that constitutes its excellence, and how can he be considered wise who does not elect to dwell in moral surroundings?" The power of influence and example, together with emulation, constitute one and the same educational idea.

The learner, during the learning process, is bound to make mistakes. To err is a necessary component of learning, but effective learning occurs only when erring is followed by correction. To reform needs courage and effort on the part of the learner. Confucius recognized the problem, and made a point in his teaching to urge his pupils to develop the proper attitude for effective learning. This and the educational ideas discussed above were reflected in Confucius' practical teaching, from which he drew his educational ideas and formulated his theory of education.

The Teaching Career of Confucius

When Confucius took to his wanderings, he had in his entourage some devoted disciples who traveled with him and stayed by his side, sharing a close relationship that

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\(^{236}\)Ibid., IV. i.
facilitated much interaction between master and pupil. It enabled Confucius to carry out his teaching in the most informal of manners and with a high degree of effectiveness, as much of his teaching was part of actual life experience and daily living. Long before Confucius set out on his travels, he had attracted to his side a large number of aspiring young men, a student body made up of every social class. As a matter of fact, with the exception of two pupils who were of noble descent, all of Confucius' disciples were sons of commoners, who flocked to Confucius with the hope of gaining some kind of knowledge and training that would enable them to rise in the world. Confucius might not have had the vast number of disciples which tradition claimed that he had: a number amounting to three thousand; but he certainly had had some brilliant disciples, some of whom became famous politicians, occupying important positions in government, and others who were known for their scholarship, the group of disciples who were largely responsible for propagating and transmitting the teachings of their master.

The long teaching career of Confucius, which he had unwittingly taken up for probably it had never been his serious intention to make teaching his lifelong profession, could be divided into two periods: the first corresponding to the period prior to his wanderings, during which time Confucius was actively involved in practical
politics; and the second period beginning with his wanderings and lasting throughout his old age. Correspondingly, the disciples of Confucius fell into two groups. The more renowned members of the first group were Yen Hui, Tsu Lu, Jan Ch'ui, Tsu Kung, Tsai Wo, Jan Yu, Kung Hsi Hua, Jan Po Niu, Yuan Hsien, Tsu Kou, Miu Tsu Ch'ien and Ch'ung Kung, who took up significant offices in government, achieving and sharing their master's aspirations and ambitions in a political career. The later disciples, who might not have become what their master had wanted them to be, nevertheless became very influential in their own achievements, for it was through them that the teachings of Confucius were propagated and transmitted. The chief propagators and transmitters were Tsu Yu, Tsu Hsia, Tsu Chang and Tseng Tsu.

Tsu Yu, who took to the democratic ideals of Confucius, was one of the earliest advocates and practitioners of mass education in the town in which he was governor; whereas Tsu Hsia became the tutor to Marquis Wen of Wei State. Tsu Chang, another disciple, took up the teaching of Confucian doctrines fervently after Confucius' death, and became the founder of a philosophical school within Confucianism. Tseng Tsu, who had ninety disciples of his own, was renowned for his filial piety, a virtue that Confucius had expounded on and greatly stressed in his educational theory of character cultivation. Tseng Tsu's
treatise on filial piety, Hsiao Ching, became incorporated later in the Confucian classics.

Confucius often spoke highly of these disciples, praising their individual strengths and moral attainments. "Noted for moral character there were Yen Yuan, Miu Tsu Ch'ien, Jan Niu and Chung Kung; for gifts of speech Tsai Wo and Tsu Kung; for administrative ability Jan Yu and Tsu Lu; and for literature and learning, Tsu Yu and Tsu Hsia." 237

It had always been the first and foremost thought in Confucius' mind when he was teaching his pupils not simply to train them as efficient administrators, which implied a training in vocational skills, nor to turn them out to be prospective philosophers of a particular school, in which case they would become intellectuals; but to educate them, whereby fully developing their potentials as a human being, both morally and mentally. This was done in order that each individual might become a complete man, capable of carrying out the important task which demanded his moral and intellectual accomplishments--that of bringing out a better form of government and better society. It would hardly do Confucius justice, therefore, to consider his teaching from the narrow point of view of professional or career training. This misunderstanding and misinterpretation might have arisen out of an aphorism

237 Ibid., XI. ii.
recorded in the *Analects*, in which Confucius was quoted as saying: "To learn well in order to become an official in government."\(^{238}\) This saying, taken out of the larger context of Confucius' political and educational ideas, has often been interpreted as advocating a utilitarian goal of education. The same quotation had led to another criticism: that Confucius was a political reactionary, whose actions were largely responsible for preserving the status quo by training officials to perpetuate the existing political order and serve the existing system of government. In reality, Confucius demanded that his disciples renounce rank and power or materialistic ends, and hold on to their principles so that, "when the state had the Way, tao, to take office; when the state lacked the Way, to roll up his principles and preserve them in his bosom."\(^{239}\) In similar strains, Confucius had often been wrongly accused of defending a system of education based on book knowledge, that is, the doctrines of the six classics, which Confucius had used in his instructions. He was being criticized as having defended an education which expounded inflexible and rigid doctrines whose authority and efficacy were highly questionable. Neither of these two motives is at the basis of Confucius' educational thought. In fact, he would have been in vehement

\(^{238}\) Ibid., XV. xxxi. \(^{239}\) Ibid., XIV, i.
opposition to the highly book centered and examination centered educational practices which developed out of the misinterpretations and misuse of his educational ideas.

Confucius' conception of the function of schooling was at variance with the educational practice existing at the time. The purpose of education was to preserve the status quo by handing down traditional practices in order to enable sons of aristocrats to carry on their hereditary functions and duties as rulers and overlords in the same manner as their fathers and grandfathers did before them. Similarly, minor officials studied as apprentices to their superiors, obtaining their training in administrative skills, and they became functionaires to the existing government. Confucius inspired his pupils to take up a much more dynamic role of revolutionizing government, a role they would be capable of upholding when they had cultivated their character and learned how to think.

The function of schooling as conceived by Confucius was a revolutionary one. Confucius' democratic and humanistic ideals in education were reflected in his personal example as teacher. Convinced that modeling behavior was an effective method of teaching, Confucius sought to embody his own educational ideals. Indeed, Confucius' disciples had noted his behavior, habits and manners diligently. They noted, for example, that there
were four qualities from which their master was entirely free: he had no forgone conclusions; he was not over-positive, not obstinate; and he never saw things from his own point-of-view alone. Confucius offered no absolute truth in his teachings, nor did he find the truth in the existing body of knowledge which later became the classics, and which later Confucians sought to regard with the utmost veneration as the embodiment of truth, much against the essence of Confucius' own teaching.

Under no circumstance did Confucius regard his own words as the ultimate authority. This might have explained why Confucius never defined some of his key concepts. He did not define human nature, for instance, nor the concept of jen, but only gave applicable opinions as to what they might have been. Moreover, fearing that his disciples would idolize him as sage, which they later did, Confucius sought to dispel the image from their minds. There was more than one instance in which Confucius tried to explain to his pupils that, apart from his unflagging interest in learning, he was not above any man spiritually and mentally. "The sage and the man of perfect virtue—how can I presume to class myself with them? It may just be said of me, that I strive to become such myself without intermission, and teach others without flagging."  

\[240\] Ibid. IX. iv. \[241\] Ibid., V. xxvii.
Humility and openness was what Confucius sought, not awe, blind faith and obedience, knowing that through humility would his disciples seek self improvement for the betterment of themselves and society, and through openness would they learn to think for themselves and to find the truth. Confucius did not consider himself above other men mentally, for he replied his disciple thus: "Tsu, you regard me as a man of multifarious study who retains all in mind, eh?" "Yes," answered Tsu. "No," was the reply, "I have one principle connecting all."\textsuperscript{242} Jen was the one-connecting principle Confucius referred to, the all encompassing subject of his teaching. He did not claim that he had exceptional wisdom.

As much as it was not the intention of Confucius to impose his own personality upon his pupils, the magnetism of his personality, as witnessed from his humility, sincerity, honesty, genuineness and wit, together with his wisdom and knowledge, continued to draw to his side an admiring crowd of young learners. Apart from the attractive personality of Confucius, which contributed to the makeup of a great teacher, another reason for the success of Confucius as teacher was due to the effective methods he employed in his teaching.

Confucius knew his pupils. This insight or in-

\textsuperscript{242} Ibid., XV. ii.
tuition into the personality of his pupils was a secret to his successful teaching, and it was based upon this insight that the important principles of teaching were formulated. Individualized instruction was one, guidance as teaching was another. Teaching became a process of closely observing and analyzing the character, inclinations, motives and background of the students, of diagnosing, correcting and pruning away deviations from goodness, and of strengthening, disciplining and directing them on the way toward perfection of character. As each person is unique, instruction needs to be tailored to suit individual aptitudes, inclinations, ability and ambitions. In terms of practical teaching techniques, Confucius employed informal discussions, in which he would converse with one or a few at a time, expressing his views when asked or sometimes questioning his pupils, or throw their questions back to them.

One of the techniques Confucius used was to ask his pupils to speak of their aspirations freely and without reserve. Confucius would not interrupt during the self disclosures, but would listen intently, storing away impressions, while at the same time analyzing each pupil and then shaped his instruction accordingly. He would give feedback at the close of the discussions, sometimes invited, other times of his own initiation.

An example of the application of this teaching
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Technique was noted in the Analects, when one day Yen Hui and Tsu Lu were standing by Confucius, who suggested that they each tell his wishes. "I should like," said Tsu Lu, "to have carriages and horses and light furs to wear, so as to share them with my friends, nor would I feel any annoyances if they spoilt them."

"I should like," said Yen Yuan, "never to make a display of any good qualities, nor a parade of my merits. . . ." The different answers revealed to Confucius the extent of virtue in the character of the two disciples. Tsu Lu had to strive to be unselfish, while Yen Yuan had to fix his mind on it.

At another time, disciples Tsu Lu, Tseng Tsu, and Jan Yu and Kung Hsi Hua were each asked to state his aspirations. A common theme for self disclosure was suggested by Confucius: "Now suppose some prince were to take notice of you, what would you like to do?" Each gave his views, followed by feedback from Confucius, who noted Tsu Lu's self assurance and lack of modesty, though Confucius acknowledged his ability. Confucius noted Kung Hsi Hua's ability and modesty, but Jan Yu's modesty surpassed Kung. All three had political ambitions, except Tseng Tsu, whose forte was li and music, with whose non-political aspirations Confucius identified his own. 244

243 Ibid., V. xxv. 244 Ibid. XI. xxv.
The above discourses were typical examples of how master and pupils interacted and freely spoke their minds with genuineness and personal freedom in a democratic atmosphere. Confucius was the kind of teacher who, being on such a personal relationship with his pupils, let them share his life and aspirations, laying bare his actions and behavior to scrutiny, and obtained from time to time, feedback from his disciples.

Confucius considered that teaching should be carried out on an individual basis. An example of individualized instruction was seen in Confucius giving different students entirely different answer to the same questions, each pertinent to the needs of the individual and situation at hand, or suited to the mental aptitude of the learner. Hence, for example, the various answers Confucius gave on the subject of *jen* and *chun tze*, as can be seen from the following discourse between master and pupils. Tsu Kung asked Confucius about the nobler type of man. The master said: "He first practices what he preaches and afterwards preaches according to his practice." Then Kung's weakness was not in the difficulty of saying, but in the difficulty of doing. Hence the reply. When Shih Ma Niu asked the same question, Confucius remarked that a *chun tze* had neither anxiety nor fear. This reply was directed at the worry and anxiety

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245 Ibid., II. xiii.
of Shih Ma Niu, which was apparently caused by his brother Hsiang T'ui plotting against the Prince of Sung. Once when Tsu Lu asked whether he should put what he heard into immediate practice, Confucius held him back. But when Jan Niu asked the same question, Confucius urged him to put what he had heard at once into practice. "Chiu (Jan Niu)," explained the master, "lags behind, so I urged him forward, but Yu (Tsu Lu) has energy for two men, so I held him back." 

Confucius was outspoken and honest in his opinion of his disciples. He would not hesitate to praise and criticize according to what he truly thought of them. Confucius the teacher seemed to be gifted in deciphering personality and his disciples were duly impressed, accepting his criticisms with humility and acted upon correcting their weaknesses. Once Jan Chiu, a disciple who found his master's teaching too laborious and difficult for him, said to Confucius, "It is not that I have no pleasure in your teaching, sir, but I am not strong enough."

"He who is not strong enough," answered Confucius, "gives up half way, but you are drawing the line already." Note Confucius' insight into Jen Chiu's un-

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246 Ibid., XII. iv. 247 Ibid., XI. xxi. 248 Ibid., VI. x.
willingness to change. When praise was due, Confucius would not hesitate to give it. Tsu Kung, noted for his gift of speech and ability in practical politics, once asked Confucius as to his opinion of him. "You are a vessel," said the master. "What sort of a vessel?" Tsu Kung asked. "A jewelled temple vessel." was the reply. 249

Confucius also encouraged his disciples to look into themselves and make self assessments of their personal character, so that they knew where they were along the path of virtue and where their strive should be heading. Once Confucius addressed Tsu Kung, "Which is the superior, you or Hui?"

"How dare I look at Hui?" The disciple answered, "Hui hears one point and from it apprehends the whole ten. I hear one point and apprehend a second therefrom."

The master said, "You are not equal to him. I grant you, you are not equal to him." 250 Note that Confucius did not say that one was superior to the other, but only acknowledged their differences.

One merit of individualized instruction is that it would not lack relevance to the learner. Confucius never lost sight of the pertinence of his teaching, nor the relevance of it to the learner's life situation, his ability and aptitude. Once Tsu Lu asked Confucius what qualities

249 Ibid., V. iii. 250 Ibid., V. viii.
distinguished an educated man, to which question Confucius replied, "He who is earnest in spirit, persuasive in speech, and withal of gracious bearing may be called an educated man. Earnest in spirit and persuasive on speech with his friends, and of gracious bearing toward his brothers." 251 All these qualities were apparently lacked by Tsu Lu, and which Confucius had wanted him to acquire. In another instance, when Tsu Hsia, who was magistrate of Chu Ju, asked Confucius what his policy should be, Confucius replied, "Do not be in a hurry, do not be intent on minor advantages. When in a hurry nothing is thorough, and when intent on minor advantages nothing great is accomplished." 252 Apparently, Tsu Hsia's weakness was haste, lack of breadth and exaggeration of detail, which Confucius had appropriately pointed out. The teachings of Confucius were thus mostly in the form of observations, or of approbation or disapprobation of certain conduct or deeds, or of definition of what is right and what is wrong, or of answers to questions on fundamental problems of life. 253 His students learned from practical situations, and from Confucius' political discussions with dukes and nobles, from which they gained first hand

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knowledge on practical politics and learned to form their own political judgement. In traveling from state to state, Confucius' disciples gained ample life experience and were able to have direct involvement in moral decisions.

Although he gave praises or rebukes to whom they were due, Confucius was not a disciplinarian or authoritarian as a teacher. There was an absence of strict discipline on his pupils, yet each and everyone of them knew what was expected of them, and strove to reach their goal diligently. This can be perhaps explained by Confucius' emphasis on positive rather than negative reinforcement in his instruction. He employed stimulus and reward for right doing and not punishment for wrong doing.  

At worst the pupil would receive an honest reproach from the master, never punishment or withdrawal of favor. Confucius favored justice and fairness. He acknowledged the importance of intellectual ability for moral and scholastic achievement, but more important still, was the pupil's diligent effort and motivation to learn. Acknowledging intellectual differences, he adjusted his instruction accordingly. Every pupil was required to learn to think logically; however, for "he who had been pointed out one point and not knowing the other three, Confucius refused to go with his lesson."  

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254 Creel, Confucius and the Chinese Way, p. 80.
255 Analects, VII. viii.
Confucius' vision of an ideal student was realized in his disciple Yen Yuan, on whom he had showered many praises. Confucius was delighted with the receptiveness of Yen Yuan, and his constant strive for perfection. He was the perfect example of the unflagging student on whom no lesson was wasted. His character revealed constant, not spasmodic virtue, closely following jen. Confucius was also very impressed by his fondness of learning and pursuit in moral goodness, his unusual intellectual calibre and transcending spirit. "What a man of worth was Hui! A single bamboo bowl of millet, a single ladle of cabbage soup, living in a mean alley! Others could not have borne his distress, but Hui never abated his cheerfulness. What a worthy man was Hui! To Confucius' deepest grief and regret, this model of virtue, to whom he could find no equal, died at a young age of thirty-two. "... Now there is none like him, nor have I heard of one who is fond of learning."

Confucius' individualized method of instruction, informal discussions and discourse resembled the modern day tutorial method. Pupils were taught to study by themselves with appropriate guidance from the teacher.

256 Ibid., XI. iii. 257 Ibid., IX. xx.
258 Ibid., IX. xix.
259 Ibid., VI. ii.; XI. vi.
260 Ibid., VI. ix. 256 Ibid., VI. ii.
Private and independent study occupied an important place in the educational practice of Confucius. He suggested what his pupils should study, selected passages for reading and held discussions on them afterwards. He offered guidance abundantly, and never simply "dished out" information to his pupils. His aim was to teach young men, not subjects, hence his curriculum, though containing book learning, was not book-centered. A study of the curriculum used by Confucius in his teaching might throw more light on the issue.

Confucius' Curriculum

An education catering to humanistic values and goals must have an equally broad curriculum in order that these educational goals might be attained. This curriculum must fulfill two purposes: firstly, to broaden the learner's scope of knowledge, and secondly, to offer a certain amount of restraint or discipline, so as to achieve harmonious development of the mind, body and soul. Yen Yuan's remark aptly summed up the contents of Confucius' teaching: "... He has broadened my by culture, and restrained me by the usages of li."^262

A scholar gentleman is a mark of refinement within and without. He is a man of culture, well versed in the literature of the time, with his energy harnessed in the

^262 Ibid., IX. x.
intellectual pursuits of music and poetry. His private and public conduct adheres to the code of li, and his personality manifests sincerity, veracity, kindness and conscientiousness. His impulses and passions are adequately checked or restrained, but not purged or forcefully suppressed. He is a generalist, not a specialist nor expert in any particular branch of learning. To produce this product of education, Confucius had chosen as his themes of teaching the following: culture, conduct, conscientiousness and good faith, with the latter two as the foundation of all. He considered, however, that his teaching contained but one pervading principle—that of conscientiousness to self and consideration for others. This was the principle of jen on which all education was based.

Confucius advocated a balanced education, hence his curriculum catered to this end. It was composed of the study of history, poetry, music and li, subjects on which Confucius most frequently discoursed, in addition to reading and the study of I Ching. Confucius had chosen his teaching materials from a body of existing knowledge which represented an accumulation of wisdom and traditions from antiquity. The Book of History and the Spring and

263 Ibid., VII. xxiv. 264 Ibid., IV. xv.
265 Ibid., VII. xvii.
Autumn Annals formed the core of the history curriculum; the Book of Poetry, a collection of three hundred and five odes handed down from antiquity, the records of Chou rites and music of various ages and localities constituted the main trunk of Confucius' curriculum. Indeed, in the selection of subject matter, Confucius professed, "Chou had the advantage of surveying the two preceding dynasties. How replete was its culture! I follow Chou." He also declared that there was nothing new in what he taught, and that this work was chiefly that of a transmitter, not that of a creator.

Confucius had reasons for his choice of classical subject matter. He revered the past for the vast accumulation of human experience and wisdom, which knowledge he considered to be the key to the understanding of the present. Besides, such a treasure of knowledge had hitherto been locked to the general public; only the sons of nobility had had the privilege to such knowledge. For the first time, men of common ranks and sons of commoners were able to receive such an education, and literacy was beginning to spread among the masses.

Confucius, however, was concerned with more than just literacy and general education. He was more con-

\[266\text{Ibid., III. xiv.}\]  \[267\text{Ibid., VII, xxiii.}\]  \[268\text{Ibid., VII. i.}\]
cerned with the perfectibility of man's nature and character. He was, therefore, not satisfied with just any body of knowledge or literature. It was with utmost care that Confucius selected, edited or revised the body of knowledge that he had chosen for his teaching. Consequently, all knowledge handed down by Confucius had been subject to screening and judgment, together with his own interpretation, extrapolation and commentary. For example, not all the odes and verses of poetry from antiquity, excepting those whose influence he considered proper and pure, met his standard of requirement. Neither were all types and forms of music acceptable, excepting those which created desirable effects on the sentiments and emotions. Similarly, not the entirety of Chou rites was taken as the standard of measures for good conduct without having considered their relevance to the present day and age. In other words, Confucius would have approved of the censorship of mass media in terms of music, poetry and literature, with a view toward protecting the young mind from moral corruption and sheltering the young from crude tastes and coarse habits.

On the other hand, Confucius also upheld objectivity and a questioning attitude as pertinent to the selection of teaching material and the organization and
development of the curriculum. Confucius remarked, "In the arts of civilization our forerunners are esteemed uncultivated, while in those arts, their successors are looked upon as cultured gentlemen. But when I have need of those arts, I follow our forerunners." It appeared that refinement had become dominant at the end of the Chou dynasty. Confucius, though approving of cultural refinement as the mark of gentleman, deplored artificiality and rigid formality, which characterized the culture at the time. Instead, he would, in the selection of themes for teaching, choose simplicity which characterized the culture of the forebears of Chou. The care with which Confucius developed his curriculum can be seen by examining its contents in greater depth.

The Curriculum of Confucius

History Education

History occupied an important place in the curriculum of Confucius. He believed that the only way to understand the present was to understand the past. The Book of History, Shu Ching, was the means to this understanding. This was a book containing documentary material dated from ancient records of the rule of Tang, Yao and Yu of Hsia, and also records of the dynasties of Shang and early Chou. Confucius regarded these records as

269 Ibid., XI. i.
important documents of human experience containing valuable lessons, particularly those of good deeds and benevolent government, which were to be noted diligently. Records of bad deeds and human calamities too, conveyed important moral messages.

The Shu Ching also contained important political ideas. Among them, the political ideas particularly favored and emphasized by Confucius were those of a democratic and liberal nature. Confucius often quoted from the Shu Ching, or illustrated his lessons with incidences taken from the records. The story of the abdication of ruler Tang in favor of Shun, a man of great wisdom and virtue, but not the heir to the throne, had been used by Confucius in his teaching. Again there was the conquest of Chou, ending the cruel rule of the last Shang king, which action justified the breaking of the "decree of Heaven" for the sake of the common good. This Confucius had used in his lessons on government. Confucius also praised the benevolent rule of king Tang and Yao, eulogizing this period of peace and prosperity as the "golden age," employing the examples of virtuous conduct of these rulers of antiquity as material for his moral and political teaching. In other words, the Shu Ching contained valuable moral examples of justice done by men, from which Confucius developed his moral and political doctrines for his lessons in moral and political ideas. The Shu
Ching, then, offered lessons in ethics and politics, as well as lessons in culture. It was most probable that Confucius had gained much political insight from the Shu Ching. The Shu Ching stressed that good government was the consequence of benevolent rule, with peace and prosperity dependent upon the virtue of the king. It also upheld the idea that government should be designed for the welfare of the people. These were familiar themes used by Confucius in his instruction, which also formed the backbone of Confucius' political system.

The Spring and Autumn Annals, generally believed to have been edited by Confucius, a work based on the annals of important events in the period from 792 B.C. to 481 B.C. of the Lu State, offered another source material for history education. In editing these annals, Confucius used the technique of historical judgement, the basis of which was an unbiased attitude, so that he became the first historian in China to lay down authority and objectivity as the principles of Chinese historiography and set the style for subsequent histories. Such principles of historiography must have been passed on to his disciples by Confucius himself, who had explained to them the commentaries containing subtle but powerful historical judgement. Since the Spring and Autumn Annals represented a later work, it was the later disciples of Confucius who might have benefitted from the historical and political
lessons contained therein. Mencius said that the *Spring and Autumn Annals* was created by Confucius as a result of the decline of humanitarian rule. Like the *Shu Ching*, the work emphasized ethics and political ideals, which was what history education was all about to Confucius.

**Poetry Education**

Confucius designated an important educational role to poetry. "Poetry," he declared,

> will stimulate your emotions, help you to be more observant, enlarge your sympathies and express your resentment of injustice. It is useful at home in the service of one's father; abroad in the service of one's prince. It will widen your acquaintance with the names of birds, beasts, plants and trees.\(^{270}\)

Poetry then, was an important tool of communication, a reservoir of common knowledge as well as a channel for the expression of emotions and feelings. Of the various roles poetry played, Confucius considered the role in affective education the most important. He remarked, "The *Book of Poetry* will lift you up. The *Book of Rites* will put your two feet on the ground. And music will make you complete."\(^{271}\) Poetry, then, provides a proper outlet for human feelings and sentiments, moderating them and channeling them in the right direction.

The selection of poetry for reading and appreciation was very important to ensure that its influence was

\(^{270}\) Ibid.  
\(^{271}\) Ibid., VII. viii.
proper. Reportedly, Confucius selected from the existing collection of poetry three hundred odes, which he considered pure in thought and influence. "You can gather up in one sentence the whole three hundred poems. 'Have no twisty thoughts.'" Poetry possesses a moralizing effect on society and helps to purify as well as to arouse emotions and sentiments.

Poetry had an important social and political function in the society in which Confucius lived. The Tso Chuan described the use of poetry in diplomatic circles to express one's thoughts and to detect the motives of others. It was an important but subtle means of communication. That was perhaps why Confucius urged his own son, Po Yu, to study poetry. "... If you do not study the Odes, you won't be able to use words." Among his disciples, Tsu Kung and Tsu Hsia reaped the greatest benefits from poetry education.

Among the collection of odes existing in the days of Confucius were verses in praise of the five sets of human relationships. The odes of Kuan Chu sang in praise of the close relationship between husband and wife. Confucius' comment was: "The Kuan Chu Ode is passionate without being sensual, is plaintive without being morbid."
The odes of Mao Ngor eulogized the love of parents for their children and the filial piety of children for their parents. The odes of Tang Ti on the other hand, praised brotherly love. The role played by poetry in humanistic education was significant. Apart from everything else, poetry is a source of general knowledge. Education, after all, is a broadening of experience and personal enrichment morally and intellectually.

Music Education

Music education played a more encompassing role in Confucius' curriculum. Music was inseparable from poetry in that poetry at the time was set in music. Music was also associated with li, for it accompanied many ceremonies, rites and decorum. Music, together with poetry and li, played an important part in affective education. The pedagogical role of music lay in the building up of moral character, with a primary role of harmonizing emotions. Confucius believed that the excesses of emotions need be regulated and moderated, but not purged. Good music alone can bring this into effect. "... Music completes a man." A knowledge of music, therefore, helps bring the perfection of character to completion. Confucius was a lover and connoisseur of music, the study to which he had devoted a great amount of his time. Good

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275 Ibid., VIII. viii.
music, he confessed, had given him so much joy that "for three months he had forgotten the taste of meat."\textsuperscript{276} The Analects recorded how "the master spoke of the music of Shao as perfectly beautiful in its form and perfectly good in its influence. He spoke of the music of Wu as perfectly beautiful in its form but not perfectly good in its influence."\textsuperscript{277} Music and moral education were closely associated. Shao was a piece of music attributed to Ruler Shun (2255-2205 B.C.), sung in praise of his benevolent rule and virtue, hence the beauty and good influence; while Wu was attributed to King Wu (1122-1115 B.C.) who was equally virtuous as Shun, but whose political activity differed from him. Shun succeeded Yao peacefully, whereas Wu, by virtue of his goodness, overcame the tyrant Chou by force of arms. Hence the music of Shao was the music of peace, while the music of Wu was that of strife and victory. Confucius, being a pacifist, valued peace and harmony over revolution, however justified.

It has not been proven whether Confucius himself taught music. He did, however, discuss music appreciation with his pupils and stressed its educational importance. "The art of music," he said, "may be readily understood. The attack should be prompt and united, and as the piece proceeds it should do so harmoniously, with clearness of

\textsuperscript{276} Ibid., VII. xiii. \textsuperscript{277} Ibid., III. xxv.
tone, and continuity of time, and so on to its conclusion."

At the time of Confucius, the culture of late Chou had fallen into decadence. Confucius, returning from his years of wanderings, set upon the task of reviving and correcting these cultural matters of music, poetry and li. He spoke of his own work, "It was only after my return from Wei to Lu that music was revised, and that the secular and sacred pieces were properly discriminated." Unfortunately, the ancient music did not survive the passage of time to provide historical evidence for Confucius' work.

Being aware of its moralizing and regulating influence of music on emotions and sentiments, Confucius might have advocated the popularization of education through the medium of music. In doing so, he probably would have approved of censorship of music by the state, banishing all music which might prove to be of bad influence on the young, in the manner he had banished from his curriculum the music of Cheng, whose inhabitants reportedly exhibited poor moral standards.

Education in Li

If poetry is expressed in words, and music in sound and rhythm, then li, which is closely associated

\(^{278}\)Ibid., III. xxiii. \(^{279}\)Ibid., IX. xiv.
with the two, finds its expression in the bearing and
conduct of an educated man. All of them played comple­
mentary roles in Confucius' program of education of the
complete man, chun tse.

Confucius stressed the motives, purpose and es­
sence of li rather than its form. Li is an expression
of inner feelings, desires and emotions, not simply rigid
conventional behavior. Li must be accompanied with sin­
cerity and genuineness, without which behavior becomes in­
sincere, mechanical and meaningless. Chou rites had
deteriorated to a mere formal and rigid code of conduct,
complicated, outdated and lavish in nature. Confucius
abhored this form of li education. He recreated the es­
sence of li and gave it a new connotation: li should be
an outward expression of an inner grace, jen, the genuine
goodness that can be cultivated in man. Apart from its
moral significance in education, li also served a practical
purpose in Confucius' curriculum. He needed to equip his
pupils with the proper etiquette and conventional mode of
behavior that would be required of them when they took up
official positions. Li became part of Confucius' sociali­
zation program in education, for man, a social being, must
know the proper ways of group interaction.

The core of Confucius' curriculum was li, which
formed the pivot of all branches of knowledge, and was
given due importance, "... The Book of Rites will put
your two feet on the ground," \(^{280}\) sums up the role of li in Confucius' educational program.

**Education in Language**

Language, the tool of communication existed in two different forms in Confucius' days. The official language, representing the proper and correct form of communication, and the popular language, or colloquial, used among the masses, separated the ruling class from the general populace, and resulted in a communication barrier between the two classes. Confucius sought to promote a wider use of the official language among the common people, thereby establishing a communication channel between the two as well as providing a means of upward mobility for sons of commoners. Confucius was well aware that the popularization of education and the spread of literacy must begin at the language level.

It appeared that the upper class at the time of Confucius used a very ornate form of language, and eloquence was considered to be an accomplishment among the political elite. Confucius opposed these practices. The purpose of language, he conceded, was for lucidity. "In language perspicuity is everything." \(^{281}\) Words should simply be used for conveying the meaning. As for eloquence, it was certainly not a mark of virtue. At a time,

\(^{280}\)Ibid., VIII. viii. \(^{281}\)Ibid., XV. xi.
of political intrigues and cunning a gift of eloquence was a sure way to success. Confucius recognized this, and remarked that the virtue of a man lies in his action, not in his words alone. The study of language, to Confucius, was to obtain a tool whereby one could clearly communicate with others, and not a training in the art of persuasive speech.

**Education in the I Ching**

Very little was mentioned about the use of this branch of knowledge in the teachings of Confucius, though the master himself had devoted his later years in the study of it, and acknowledged it as a valuable source of human experience. He declared that human errors could be minimized with the knowledge of the I Ching, which contained principles of righteous and benevolent government, which he recommended for the education of prospective rulers. The I Ching, as is well known, contains a mystical and superstitious aspect. Confucius did not, however, dwell on this mysterious function of the I Ching. He was only concerned with the basic philosophical tenets of the work. True to what his disciples had said of him, "The master would not discuss prodigies, prowess, lawlessness or the supernatural." The pedagogical value that Confucius had rendered the I Ching lay in deemphasizing

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282 Ibid., VII. xvi.  
283 Ibid., VII. xx.
it as a work of superstitions by emphasizing its humanistic qualities instead.

Thus Confucius did not include in his teaching discussions of things he did not fully comprehend, which included the subjects on Heaven and human nature. As was previously pointed out, Confucius did not claim to comprehend what human nature really is, as nature is that part of the Divine Principle, with which man is endowed; and not understanding Heaven, he could not, therefore, understand its endowment to man. His curriculum dealt only with matters of this world, with man and society as he knew them. Decidedly it was not a book-oriented curriculum, as later Confucians implied. To Confucius, the study of books was only a small part of education. He remarked:

A man may be able to recite the three hundred odes, but if when given a post in the administration, he proves to be without practical ability, or when sent anywhere on a mission, he is unable of himself to answer a question. Although his book knowledge is extensive, of what use is it? In other words, it was useless to memorize books, for it was inconsequential to the cultivation of character, or to learning how to live as a social being, which was what education was all about.

Conclusion

In many respects, the pedagogical practice of

\[284\text{Ibid., XIII. v.}\]
Confucius revealed principles and methods of teaching well advanced of his time. His idea of liberal education, conducted in an informal manner, employing the method of individualized teaching, proved to be a revolutionary educational experience in Chinese history. "The Master, by orderly method, skillfully led men on. . . ." Confucius was the first professional teacher whose influence proved to last for generations to come, for he was the inauguration of a school, the members of which were young men of high calibre, taken from the common ranks, who in turn, created schools of their own, propagating and transmitting the teachings of their master, and spread the fame of Confucius in their renown.

Confucius' methods of discipleship had created in China a new form of social relationship, that of teacher and pupil, with the teacher, in loco parentis, playing the role of parent, took up the responsibility of perfecting morally and intellectually the youngster in his care. The personality, conduct and behavior of the teacher also became a standard with which the pupils compared their achievement. The teacher became the leader of men, and by the power of personal example, induced his followers to emulate him.

As to the curriculum, Confucius took the ancient classics, and sifting and reordering their contents, made

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285 Ibid., IX. x.
them as groundwork for his teaching so as to pass on, not without discrimination, the best wisdom of former kings and wise men. Thus he based his instruction upon the broad foundations of national history, tradition, culture and language with which he helped build up in his students good character and moral worth; to enable them to become ready to serve in government when the proper time came, and to take up their rightful place in society.

Confucius did not cram the young receptive mind with a memorized mass of book knowledge, although book learning was given its proper place. Instead, he exercised the mind, livening it and guiding it along the proper path to become refined with good knowledge and proper thinking. The pupil was guided not only to appreciate good poetry and literature, fine music and to develop proper conduct and behavior, but also to develop discernment, so that he would not accept all that he hears and sees, but would be able to make sound and accurate independent judgement. His mind would be alert and his attitude keen and sincere. Confucius' teaching methods were a result of his insight into human character and the human mind. Consequently, they took on a quality that was in congruence with his humanistic education.

Confucius strove to educate a person balanced in culture and character, hence he advocated a balanced curriculum, aiming at developing harmony in mind, body and
spirit by directing the natural instincts and impulses into proper channels through the education of music, poetry and \( li \). Confucius demanded of his disciples as much effort as he had demanded of himself as teacher. The teacher had an important task to do and must see to it that he has all the necessary qualities. His work is to know his pupils, to inspire them, to lead them on and to influence them by his personal example. The teacher must be of high moral and intellectual calibre and diligence; he must be a sincere learner and seeker of knowledge, who has a sincere concern for the proper education of youth.

The disciples of Confucius were given the responsibility to learn, to do their utmost, and to make the best effort. They were urged to be honest with themselves, to admit what they knew and what they did not know, and to examine themselves from time and time as to their progress. Intellectual gifts were preferred, but not sufficient in achieving success. Diligent effort and perseverance could make up for the lack of talent, as seen in the success of Tseng Tsu, who followed the instructions of Confucius diligently, though he was not highly talented, and won the regard of his teacher for his virtuous character. Tseng Tsu was noted for his work on filial piety.

The accomplishments of the disciples reflected the ability and success of Confucius as teacher. This would be observed through the continuation of his work by
his disciples Tsu Chang, who became founder of a school within Confucianism; and Tsu Hsia, Tseng Tsu, who had disciples of their own; and Tsu Yu, who took up the grand task of mass education in the town he governed. It was also through their renown that Confucius' teaching lived on generation after generation. The image of a great teacher in China for centuries to come belonged to Confucius alone.

**Evaluation of Confucius Educational Ideas**

A not too uncommon reaction in the evaluation of Confucius' educational thought is to think that Confucius had too narrowly confined the scope of education to what is called moral or character education, thereby confining the concept of knowledge to the study of the spiritual well-being of the individual. Knowledge is for the mind alone, the tool for building an ethical edifice. If education is for living, a notion which Confucius upheld, then it should cater to much more than the spiritual well being of the individual. Living requires practical skills and training pertaining to the physical as well as the mental well being of a man, a fact to which Confucius apparently gave little attention. It seems that, to him, nothing was worthwhile beyond the moral horizon. It has also been pointed out that Confucius' educational hierarchy

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was crowned by moral education, second to which ranked literature and the arts; or intellectual training, and at the bottom of the educational ladder, practical skill and training. \(^{287}\) However, the truth is that Confucius never formulated an educational hierarchy as such. To imply that Confucius was an intellectual aristocrat is to take him out of context, with little regard to the exigency of the times and the temporal situation in which Confucius formulated his educational ideas.

Indeed, the educational goal of Confucius was a high and lofty one, yet realistic. He employed education as a means of restoring society to stability and of redirecting society according to the laws of nature, tao, whereby a humanistic social order could be established. Confucius derived his educational ideas from his observation and analysis of nature, man and society and their interrelationships. The result was that he discovered in education not only an answer to the problems of his day, but a solution for his time and for all times. Education became the solution for human happiness. To Confucius, happiness is a sense of spiritual well being based upon a sense of fulfillment as a human being, who nurtures and cultivates his humanity to the full, and who fulfills his

obligations to himself and other fellow human beings. The ethical edifice supporting this spiritual well being must be well laid and fortified through education. In the process of education, man is taught how to think then act. To know how to think requires mental training, and to show congruence in thought and action requires practice. Practice, to Confucius, is living, which requires interaction with other fellow men in society. What more practical aim can education have than social living, yet what is more idealistic than in wanting to create a humanistic social order in which human values are exalted?

The educational goals of Confucius were non-materialistic and non-utilitarian. Material goals corrupt man, while utilitarian goals turn men into mere vessels. Both have the tendency to dehumanize man. Confucius abhored a utilitarian view of education, which regards schooling chiefly as the means of obtaining a livelihood. Instead, he sought to achieve a balanced development of man's spiritual, mental and physical powers, placing his priority on the spiritual achievement of man, knowing that this was the only way to bring about a fully human man whose actions, being in accordance with the laws of nature, alone would bring about a humane world order.

Another criticism was directed at Confucius' emphasis on book learning. This is due to the fact that
Confucius, in placing equal emphasis on knowledge and action, put action at the end of knowledge rather than its source.\textsuperscript{288} The consequence was an overdependence on book learning rather than active experiment. In all fairness to Confucius, he never advocated a dependence on books as his sole source of knowledge. Knowledge, he said, is to know man. To obtain knowledge requires observation, investigation and analysis of facts and information. To be educated is to be able to think, to formulate ideas based on observation and analysis, then act accordingly. As to the criticism that Confucius tended to put action at the end of knowledge rather than its source, the \textit{Analects} recorded Confucius as having said: "He (chun tze) first practices what he preaches and afterwards preaches according to his practice."\textsuperscript{289} Confucius' own system of educational thought was formulated from his educational practice.

It has been argued that Confucius' system of thought represented the summation of traditional Chinese thought, and so his work was little more than that of a transmitter. Indeed, Confucius, the first professional teacher in China, never claimed that he was innovator of his ideas. Instead, he spoke of himself as transmitter

\textsuperscript{288}Chan, \textit{A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy}, p. 611.

\textsuperscript{289}\textit{Analects}, II. xiii.
and not originator, a man who loved antiquity. This position of Confucius might be clarified by examining the source of his chief educational concepts. Central to the educational philosophy of Confucius are the concept of Heaven, and the concept of tao, formed around the concepts of jen and li. It seemed that these various concepts already existed at the time of Confucius, but Confucius rendered to them a new significance and meaning by giving them fresh interpretations. Confucius had eliminated from the traditional concept of Heaven its religious and superstitious connotations; neither did he use his own religious conviction as a basis of his philosophy. Instead, he upheld Heaven as a moral force, whose ethical qualities served as a measure for man and his actions.

Likewise, Confucius rendered to tao an ethical and action-oriented quality, altering the traditional connotation of tao as a way of conduct, good or bad, to a new significance: tao is the way above all other ways that man should follow, its action animated by the ideal of justice and motivated by love of humanity. The concept of jen, which appeared frequently in the Shu Ching, had a simple meaning of love and benevolence, but Confucius turned it into an encompassing concept of reciprocity and humanity with important educational implications. In doing so Confucius enlarged these concepts.

\[\text{290 Ibid., VII. i.}\]
which were rooted in antiquity. As to the concept of li, he rendered it a total transformation by changing it from its original ritualistic and religious connotation to a secular, ethical and educational concept. Li became the basis of Confucius' affective as well as moral education.

The conclusion, therefore, is that Confucius was not simply a transmitter, but to a large measure an innovator. He innovated by placing traditional ideas in a new light, by selecting that which was relevant and discarding anachronistic aspects, or that which was irrelevant to the problem at hand. His humanistic educational philosophy, born as a consequence of such innovations, was not so much a product of Confucius' scholastic labors as it was the result of his keen observation and analytical study of man and society as he knew them. Confucius was aptly the creator of new political, social and educational ideals, not an apologist for an old one, as tradition held him to be.
CHAPTER VI

HISTORICAL IMPACT ON THE CULTURE
AND EDUCATION OF CHINA

Introduction

The Confucian tradition, which for twenty-five centuries had permeated China's culture and education, held Confucius responsible for the development of Chinese culture and the educational system and philosophy throughout the imperial period, a period which stretched from the time of Confucius to the beginning of the twentieth century. While the Confucian tradition had in fact dominated the cultural and educational scene of imperial China (and even some of its trailing influence can be traced to the present), it remains to be seen as to whether these cultural and educational developments were indeed justly ascribed to the personal concepts of Confucius; and if so, to what extent was the attribution made to Confucius, and how and why had it come about. In other words, the historical impact of Confucius on the culture and education of China needs be evaluated in the light of the relationship between Confucius, the thinker and educator, and Confucianism the tradition, which with the accretion of centuries, had acquired much that would have surprised Confucius himself.
There exist two interpretations of the birth and development of the Confucian tradition in the centuries that followed Confucius. One suggests that Confucianism rose and blossomed during the different stages of the imperial period, forming the cultural and educational backbone of China because of imperial patronage, and giving sanctity to the sayings of Confucius and the classical Confucian texts by those rulers of China who utilized Confucian ideas as a means of political control. In this manner, the precepts of Confucius fell into the hands of those who willfully and purposely manipulated the teachings of Confucius to execute political control and justify their systems of government and political rule; and in doing so, they altered the original intentions of the thinker.

The other trend of thought, which tended to oppose the first, attributed the rise of Confucianism to various individuals: intellectuals, politicians and educators who were followers and supporters of Confucius, and who, through their individual and combined efforts, had propagated the teachings of Confucius. Their work consisted of interpretation, elaboration and amplification of the precepts of Confucius, in the process of which the Confucian texts had, throughout the imperial age, continually undergone reassessment and reinterpretation. These combined efforts of twenty-five centuries, which had caused certain aspects of Confucius' teachings to be emphasized at the
expense of others according to the pertinence of the times, each time rendered with different interpretations, had helped as much in propagating Confucius' teachings as in transforming it. These two major viewpoints, then, help shed some light on the birth and development of the Confucian tradition and offer an explanation as to how and why Confucianism exhibited a certain departure from Confucius' original teachings. Indeed, the departure arose soon after the death of Confucius, when his devoted disciples labored in continuing efforts to carry on with what Confucius had left unaccomplished, and spread his ideas to followers of their own.

The Early School of Confucianism and Its Impact on Education

Soon after the customary period of mourning, the disciples of Confucius dispersed, each returning to his native state, or traveled among the feudal states. Some sought positions as instructors with noble households, others, the "vulgar Confucians," sought fame and lucrative careers, and so created a moral lassitude which marred the reputation of the Confucian School. The lofty humanistic and moral principles of Confucius were bent "into something more comprehensible and more practically useful to men of limited understanding." Still other Confucians, eager

to spread the principle of virtuous rule, after the manner of ancient sage kings in the "Golden Age," began to forge historical documents, chiefly the Shu Ching, which now became a combination of fact and fiction, and the legends of ancient sage kings multiplied rapidly. As the literary legacy of Confucius was very meager, such forgeries did the harm of distorting facts about Confucius' life and thought, which might have caused Mo Tzu to criticize the Confucians as imitators of the past and followers of the doctrine of fatalism.

The transformation of Confucian thought was also the result of certain external factors. In the period of the "Hundred Schools of Thought," there was much rivalry among the schools, and also much infiltration of other schools of thought into the mainstream of Confucianism. The infiltration of Taoist and Legalist thought into the Confucian works, for example, accelerated the transformation process and created camps of thought and internal factions among Confucians, so that by the time of Mencius and Hsun Tse, eminent Confucians two generations after Confucius, some of the fundamental principles in Confucius' teaching had already undergone transformation, and had departed from their original versions. A study of the individual philosophical position of Mencius and Hsun Tse might illustrate the nature of this transformation.
Mencius and Confucius

Mencius, born one hundred and seven years after the death of Confucius, had studied with the disciples of Tsu Szu, grandson of Confucius. Mencius considered it his mission to perpetuate and propagate Confucius' teachings. Mencius, a work probably put together by his disciples, contained his ideas on human nature and politics, which varied from those of Confucius.

Mencius declared that human nature is good, that all men are by nature good and therefore equal. The goodness of human nature is clothed in the feelings of commiseration, sense of shame and dislike, of modesty and yielding, and sense of right and wrong. These four beginnings, if allowed to develop fully, will lead to sagehood. Conversely, the evil of man lies in the suppressions and destruction of these beginnings, and not in the fault of his natural powers. Mencius seemed to think that virtues have a natural foundation in man, and that the nature of man possesses the ability to pursue virtues.

The educational impact of this precept was an important one. Education, Mencius claimed, was a means to follow this goodness of human nature and cultivate it, not so much by intellectual effort, but simply through searching into one's heart, where goodness lies inert. In other

292 Fung Yu Lan, A History of Chinese Philosophy, pp. 120-22.
words, rather than imposing a moral training upon the learner, education is fully to bring out the good qualities latent in him, and attain perfection which is man's nature.

This position was different from that of Confucius, who, by not defining human nature, gave education an important role in shaping man's mind and character, and in developing man's intellectual and moral capacities through an internal as well as external process. Education became an external as well as internal effort, whereas the role of education given by Mencius seemed to emphasize a self-initiating process and less of a restraint or imposition of an external standard on the individual, while Confucius recognized the importance of restraint by means of li upon human conduct. Mencius, by declaring that man is by nature good, placed an even greater emphasis on individual freedom, since to Mencius the individual has a right to his own moral judgement. 293

The freedom of man was further expounded in Mencius' democratic principles of government, which urged rulers to cherish his people. By giving them a proper education is one way to show the ruler's concern for the well being of his subjects. Thus there was a recurrence of Confucius' idea of "Enrich them, educate them." Again, it is the duty

293 Ibid., p. 297.
of the head of state to establish a school system for the education of the masses.

Establish hsiang, hsu, hsueh and hsia for their instruction. The hsiang is to nourish, the hsiao is to teach, and the hsu is for archery. . . . All these serve to make clear the human relationships. When these human relationships are made clear by superiors, there will be kindly feelings among the lesser people below. 294

Mencius was advocating general education and a public system of education sponsored by the state. "Let careful attention be paid to education in the school, with stress on inculcation of filial piety and fraternal duty, and there will be no grey-haired men on the roads carrying burdens on their backs or heads." 295 Confucius' humanistic educational principle once again found expression in Mencius' thought. The State was urged to recognize again the importance of education in politics as well as in human happiness. Generally, Mencius managed to remain true to the basic educational principles of Confucius.

Hsun Tsu and Confucius

Hsun Tsu and his school represented a Confucian philosophy blended with legalist thought. Hsun Tsu, a native of Chao, a state whose territory lay in modern Shansi province, spread his teachings abroad in Chi. His teaching was largely motivated by the corruption he witnessed in the government of his time, which probably had

294 Mencius, IIIa. 3. 295 Ibid., Ia. 3.
undermined his faith in human nature. Unlike Confucius and Mencius, Hsun Tsu considered that man's nature was evil, and that his goodness was only the result of acquired training. Human nature, *hsing*, is that which cannot be learned and cannot be acquired, while acquired training, *wen*, is that human quality which can be learned so that man can act, and which can be acquired to produce a proper effect on behavior. Human nature is the original unwrought material, while what is acquired is culture, *wen*, and the code of proper conduct, *li*. Without nature, there would be nothing upon which to add the acquired, and without the acquired, nature could not become beautiful of itself.296 The perfection of man is acquired through cumulative effort, for man possesses the faculty of intellect, which makes it possible for him to learn, to discriminate and to accumulate knowledge. The accumulation of learning over a prolonged period of time results in internalization of that which has been acquired through learning, and correct habits are formed. Sagehood therefore can come about only through prolonged learning and cumulative effort.

The educational implications of Hsun Tsu's conception of human nature are important in that this was where Hsun Tsu differed from Confucius. Hsun Tsu stressed the importance of education as a corrective measure, a means by

which man can be saved from his natural depravity. Thus Hsun Tsu stressed the importance of li in education as a restraining and corrective element more so than Confucius. Consequently, while Confucius did but point out the value of li in education, Hsun Tsu greatly developed the theory of its role in education. Li is to make man good. Li became a mode for defining and maintaining the various gradations of human society.

The theory of music, too, was first discussed in the work of Hsun Tsu. The function of music, the author declared, was to regulate human emotions, inducing them to be expressed in accordance with their right principles.

Inadvertently, the educational precepts of music and li of Confucius were elaborated by Hsun Tsu, and greatly enhanced their significance in education. This is perhaps a good example of how certain educational aspects of Confucius were developed and elaborated upon at the expense of others. Scholars took that which would support their line of argument and used it to their advantage, and by appealing to the authority of Confucius, made him responsible for the consequences of their doings.

Hsun Tsu was the first Confucian to prescribe a fixed body of knowledge for his own disciples. He professed that study began with reciting the classics and ended with learning li. This represented a far cry from the liberal and broader curriculum of Confucius. In the
hands of Hsun Tsu, Confucianism was developed into an authoritarian system, which stressed imposition of ideas and prescription of rules and regulations to restrain men. Unlike Confucius, who disliked the use of negative reinforcement since he distrusted its effects on man's behavior, Hsun Tsu's legalist strain stressed the importance of authority, law and punishment as necessary to maintain order. In Hsun Tsu's political thought, traces of legalist totalitarianism could be seen. Rulers, he believed, ought to deal with the people with authority, guide them in the way, and restrain them by punishment.

Confucius' idea of a cooperative society of free men cemented with the love of mankind, Jen, and Li was overshadowed by Hsun Tsu's vision of a society of rigid class distinctions, wherein human freedom was restricted by a rigid system of law and punishment. The society would be composed of the poor and rich, noble and plebeian. The nobles should be regulated by Li and music, the common people by the law. Hsun Tsu's educational system was one which catered to the interest of the members of the upper social strata, unlike the more democratic educational ideal of Confucius, who advocated that in education there should be no class distinctions.

Confucius had never relinquished his position as the model for scholars, though the latter tended to depart from his methods of teaching. This change in methods may
be traced directly to Hsun Tsu, who preferred that "the superior man knows that his knowledge is not complete, so he recites the classics sentence by sentence in order to make them a part of himself."\(^{297}\) The teaching methods of Hsun Tsu, based on a delimited curriculum of classics, emphasized the repetition of the classics and memory work, much unlike those of Confucius, who desired his pupils to learn how to think and to seek the truth for themselves. In the rigid educational framework of Hsun Tsu was sown the seed of a Confucian educational system, later to triumph in a different political epoch; for such was the inspiration for the Han system of education, indicating both its methods and its subject matter.\(^{298}\)

Meanwhile, during this time of political upheaval and degradation of human integrity, compassion and faith, it was the legalist strain in Hsun Tsu's thought that provided impetus for legalistic control. Consequently, at the end of the Warring States period, when Emperor Ch'in Shih-Huang had unified China and put an end to feudal rule, it was legalism that had triumphed under his absolute power. This was due to the fact that Li Ssu, the great prime minister of the Ch'in Emperor, was Hsun Tsu's pupil. It was he who advocated the standardization of thought, the measure

\(^{297}\) Subs, Works of Hsun Tsu, p. 31.

\(^{298}\) Shryock, The Origin and Development of the State Cult of Confucius, p. 68.
of which culminated in the famous Burning of Books in 213 B.C., an act which had led to a brief submergence of the more humanistic Confucian thought, only to emerge again when Han took over the Empire in 206 B.C.

Han Educational Thought and Educational System

The educational endeavor during Confucius' time was basically a private venture, without government supervision or aid. Confucius had advocated the benefits of a state system of education under the supervision of the head of state, one of whose important duties was to educate the people. However, the feudal period with its continual warfare and political unrest was not a time for the development of an efficacious educational system.

During the period of the triumph of legalistic thought, the doctrines of which dominated the period of the Warring States and the rule of Ch'in in the third and fourth century B.C., education was replaced by a system of law and punishment, since legalistic thought was basically opposed to education, particularly that of a humanistic nature. Its emphasis was on corrective instead of preventive measures. In spite of this, learning increased, chiefly carried on by Confucians, who devoted much energy in the compilation of writings on Confucius and in propagating his teachings by conducting private schools and instructing disciples of their own. The Discourses of the
Confucian School, Kung Tse Chia Yu, a book on Confucius and his teaching, and the Tso Chuan, a history of the Warring States, though eager to portray a sagelike image of Confucius as the model for scholars, nevertheless contained very little historical value due to the lack of authenticity of the fanciful anecdotes contained therein. However, their influence upon the generally accepted image of Confucius was greater than that portrayed in the Analects, and thus succeeded in producing a distorted picture of Confucius and his teachings that had begun the gulf separating Confucius from the Confucians, so that by the time the Grand Historian of Han, Ssu Ma Chien, wrote a biography on Confucius, he too, had used them as his sources, and began to consolidate a Confucian tradition which further departed from the original precepts of Confucius.

The earlier failure of Emperor Ch'in in his attempt to conciliate the Confucians, thereby being forced into an attempt to destroy the Confucian literature, had actually stimulated Confucianism under the Han Emperors by reviving the interest in the burned classics. As a matter of fact, the early Han rulers continued the Ch'in legalist policies in most matters, thus the central government of early Han gave very little attention to education until the decree of Wu Ti, who followed the recommendation of his prime minister Tung Chung Shu, a Confucian. Tung was the first Confucian who succeeded in counseling the emperor into taking
up his duty as educator, establishing a state system of schools, bringing Confucian scholars to teach the people and devising a method of selecting the best and most learned men as officials. In other words, Tung had followed the heed of Confucius in advocating education as a means to achieve the ideal Confucian social order; in which good government depended on the service of uprighteous and educated men of ability. Where Confucius had lacked, Tung Chung Shu had provided. He provided a system of general education while Confucius merely suggested its benefits. Similarly, Tung provided for the selection of officials by examination where Confucius had lacked a method. Tung's treatise on education stimulated the Chinese Examination System that later developed as an integral part of the Confucian educational system. For some time the examination system remained well integrated with the school system, but later began to diverge from it, and did not again become an integral part of it until well into the Ching period. However, the essence of the examination system had by that time been so transformed and its purpose and nature so distorted that it had become a great controversial issue and a subject of criticism.

To trace back to Han, in 140 B.C., Emperor Wu Ti officially adopted Confucian principles as state policy. The eventual form of government combined features of both the Legalist and Confucian system. The chief Confucian
features adopted by the government were the importance of education, the recovered Confucian classics as the basis of education and as the core of curriculum, and the participation of the virtuous and the learned in the administration of the government. The result was the development of a remarkable school system under the Han Emperors who followed Wu Ti. It was a system of higher education catering mainly to the selection of officials. Scholars were subsidized by the government, which ensured the continuation of a scholar class, which in turn ensured the recruitment of capable men for government service. Scholars, while revering Confucius as their model, owed their loyalty to the emperor who promised them a rewarding future in terms of position and renumerations. A devout follower of the Confucian tradition, Emperor Wu Ti also inadvertently sowed the seeds for the establishment of the State cult of Confucius by offering sacrifices to great men of the past who now became deified. By 59 A.D., Emperor Ming Ti, a follower of Wu Ti, issued a decree ordering that sacrifices should be paid to Confucius, the sage, in all government schools. This marked the true beginning of the State cult of Confucius as patron of education and scholars.299

At the same time, various individuals contributed greatly to the prominence of Confucius either by their

299 Ibid., pp. 227-29.
educational or literary efforts. Imperial patronage alone
without the efforts of zealous Confucian scholars and
statesmen would not have led to the success of a Confucian
system of education. The efforts of Tung Chung Shu ren-
dered a good illustration. Excerpts from Tung's treatise
will serve to clarify his ideas on the importance of an
education based on Confucian principles:

Education is needed, for without education, you (Wu Ti)
cannot make the people upright. They are selfish and
seek their own profit; as water seeks its level. You
must educate them, even as you build a dam to stop the
flow of water. If you establish education, evil will
vanish; while if you abolish education, evil will grow,
and even punishments will not prevent it, for the dam
will be broken. The ancient ruler knew this, and so
they emphasized education as the first duty of a gov-
ernment. They turned the people gradually toward bene-
volence, stimulated what was right, and modeled them by
good customs. Therefore they had little need of punish-
ment, and the people observed the law. Education was
general, and the customs were beautiful. . . .

A good emperor tries to learn while he is still
young, so that when he becomes mature, he will be able
to employ the right men, and undertake the responsi-
bility for the state. High position is an opportunity
to display virtue. . . .

Your majesty wishes to secure scholars. The way to
do this is to establish an imperial academy, for then
there will be a place to develop and attract them.
Schools are the means of education. . . . I beg your
majesty to establish an imperial academy and bring
great scholars to teach the people. Give examinations
in order to secure learned men. . . . If these teachers
are not efficient, education will not develop and your
principles will not reach the people. When there are
no able officials, the people will receive less and
less education, and the officials will resort to
cruelty in order to preserve order. . . . Then dis-
turbances will occur. . . . These troubles will be due
to the lack of educated officials.

A real ruler simply listens to Heaven and follows
its decree. He educates the people continually and
upholds the law in order to maintain the distinctions
of the social order. Listen to Heaven, educate the
people, and enforce good laws. If you can do these three things, the foundation on which you build will be strong.\textsuperscript{300}

In 124 B.C., Wu Ti, acting on the advice of Tung Chung Shu, founded the imperial academy, \textit{ta hseuh}, for the study of the Confucian classics, administered by a board of fifty scholars. At the beginning the board was composed of members of royalty. Later, the academy was enlarged to one hundred members under Chao Ti (86-74 B.C.), and grew to a size of one thousand scholars.

As Confucianism became further patronized by the emperor, who exempted from taxation all who knew the Confucian classics, the position of the Confucian texts was firmly established in the Han educational system, and doctors of the Five Classics, \textit{po shih}, were appointed to lecture on the texts.

The chief credit for the founding of a school system in the Han period, however, should go to Wen Weng, governor of a part of Szechuan province in the reign of Ching Ti. Himself a Confucian, he was expert in the knowledge of the Spring and Autumn Annals. As an official, he possessed the Confucian virtues. He was benevolent in his administration and was assigned the duties of State education. He trained officials of education at the \textit{ta hseuh}, and appointed them to higher official positions. He established

\textsuperscript{300} Ibid., pp. 51-52.
a department of education staffed by these trained men in Cheng-tu, the chief city of Szechuan, and invited young men of outlying districts to come and study under them. The best students then became candidates for official position. In the still barbaric Szechuan, the educational system of Wen Weng was said to have managed to produce scholars of calibre comparable to those of Lu, a highly cultured state since the Chou period. 301

This microcosm of a government educational system, which marked the effort of a Confucian statesman, represented the beginning of a State system of education created for the recruitment of officials. Weng Meng's recruitment system by examination represented a systematic and a more objective means of screening candidates. Before this, the method of recruitment was by recommendation, a method used by Confucius himself to obtain public office for his disciples. The criteria Confucius used were moral character and ability, in order of priority. The first Han Emperor employed similar measures. Men of moral character, possessing the virtues of being good, square and upright, hsien-liang fang-cheng, filial and incorrupt, hsiao-lien, and those who possessed a good knowledge of the Confucian classics, statecraft, law or military affairs were considered qualified for officialdom. In 165 B.C., the Han

301 Chien Han Shu [A History of Early Han], Chapter 89, Section 59.
Emperor administered written examinations to determine the worthiness of the candidates. At the beginning, special knowledge and ability were the basic criteria for choosing candidates, but the edict of 132 A.D. by a succeeding emperor stated that those recommended for outstanding virtue were also worthy of public office. Early examinations tested practical knowledge in government administration, later it was the mastery of the Confucian classics. Consequently, the bond between bureaucratic appointment, official examinations and the mastery of Confucian classics was established. The link between Confucian-oriented state educational institutions and civil service examinations was also established. 302

The edict of Emperor Ching Ti in 25 B.C. stated that the founding of the ta hseuh was for the purpose of transmitting the sacred ways of the ancient rulers, as well as for the moral and intellectual improvement of the empire. The scholars were to study and make clear things ancient and modern in order that they might be initiated into the principles of administration. They were under the supervision of the po shih, received support of the state and were regularly examined.

Han documents recorded the nature and method of

examination. It appeared that the criteria for successful attainment in examinations were an expertise in the knowledge of the classics, possession of practical administrative skill, proficiency in reading and writing, and good personal conduct and character. The Grand Historian examined the scholars. They must be able to write at least nine thousand characters and be capable of performing the duties as historians and secretaries. They were examined on the Book of Change, I Ching, the Book of History, Shu Ching, the Book of Filial Piety, and the Analects. Examination questions involved explanation of classical passages. As for candidates applying for the position of po shih or instructor, they were also examined on their filial piety and conformation to li, wherein the moral education of Confucius was enhanced.

Meanwhile, literary efforts were made in the compilation of great works by Confucians. Tai Te, a Han scholar, compiled the writings of Tsu Chang, Tsu Sau and Yen Hui, disciples of Confucius, as well as those of Mencius, Chi-tao, Chung Liang, Hsun Tsu and Yo Cheng, into a single work of eighty-five sections. Tai Sheng, the nephew of Tai Te, reduced it to forty-six sections which formed the Book of Rites, Li-chi. It contained theories of various rites as well as a section on education, a treatise

on the moral instruction of the people, and even special instruction for the blind.

In the area of research, fourteen po shih, doctors of the Confucian classics, devoted their efforts solely in proving the authenticity of the classics and writing commentaries, for there had been much forgery since the Burning of Books by the Ch'in Emperor, which led to the rise of opposing schools of the Old Text and New Text, each claiming their version of the classics as the authentic texts.

While much of Confucius' scholastic efforts were devoted to popularizing culture and editing an existing body of literature so far unarranged nor properly edited, the later Confucian scholars spent their whole lifetime in proving the authenticity of the Confucian texts. Thus very little new knowledge was added to the existing body of knowledge. Education, too, became centered around a conservative and narrow curriculum. Education became one of book learning and passing the examinations, so that the meaning of the former became more and more narrow and restricted as time perfected the latter.

Confucius had thought of education as a right rather than a privilege, and not so much as a means of upward mobility than as a means of bringing about the perfection of man and society. Yet it seemed that along with the development of schools there came the growth of a privileged scholar class, largely supported by the State and exempted
from the fiscal burden of taxation. An examination of Han social structure reveals that there was a distinct division of labor between the mental and the physical sectors of work. Mental labor, which required a great deal of learning, was indispensable for the maintenance of social and political order. Those who assumed such responsibilities were considered superior and deserving greater social esteem and material rewards than those who performed physical labor, which required little literary knowledge. Mental labor thus became a symbol of superior social status and physical labor a status disqualification.

The Confucian ideal of superior man, chun tze, provided a theoretical basis for the superior-inferior relationship between the two groups. Education became for the first time in China, an essential criterion of status evaluation. An educated social class, called literati, was highly respected by society. It turned out that propertyless scholars were more respected than wealthy merchants. In addition, political power, rather than wealth and money, was the basis for social stratification. The higher the position in the political hierarchy, the higher was the status in society. At the top of the social hierarchy ranked the scholar officials, who, having in their possession the two basic criteria for social respect and position, namely, political power and a literary education, developed a superiority complex which dominated the official way of
life and attitudes toward the people. Education, therefore, which began in the form of royal patronage and government support, became eagerly sought after by private avenues, so much so that, with the increased popularity of education, only the system of examination remained as a State function of education, while the public school system and the imperial academy were diminished to a mere name under the booming system of private education. The head of State, having thus been derelict in his duty as chief educator, was reduced to the position of the State's chief examiner only.

The triumph of Confucianism beginning with the Han Empire marked the departure of the Confucian school from the original teachings of Confucius. This period witnessed two Confucian schools of thought. One school regarded Confucius as prophet, which was probably responsible for the later development of the State cult of Confucius, and the other regarded him as arch-Statesman who had discovered the eternal principles of right government. A gulf now existed not only between Confucius and the Confucian tradition, but also between the different Confucian camps. Paradoxically, it was their departure from the original

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precepts of Confucius that had sustained the Confucian tra-
dition. It remains to be seen how this tradition underwent
further changes in the dynasties that followed.

Confucius and Neo-Confucianism of
T'ang and Sung Dynasties

In the interim period known as the Six Dynasties,
an era after Han and before the ascendance of T'ang, Taoism
and Buddhism (the latter being an imported system of thought
from India) coexisted with Confucianism. The T'ang period
saw the beginning of the development of the Neo-Confucian
system of thought which took shape in the later Sung
period, in which Confucianism, intermingled with a foreign
system of thought that was Buddhism, transformed itself and
emerged, surprisingly, even closer to the original system
of Confucius' thought, in spite of its foreign elements.

Confucius and Neo-Confucianism

The period of revival of the original thought of
Confucius corresponded to the period of strongest Buddhist
influence and infiltration into Chinese society. As a
counteraction against the corrupting influence of Buddhism,
the rediscovery of Confucian thought, which began in the
latter part of T'ang dynasty and lasted throughout Sung and
Ming periods, gave birth to a new school of thought, known
as Neo-Confucianism.

Neo-Confucianism of eleventh and twelfth century
China was primarily a reaction against the escapism of Taoism and the other-worldliness of Buddhism, which taught man to escape from involvement in life, and to accept passively the imperfection and suffering in this world. The reaction against this form of escapism and passivism was seen in the return to the more positive spirit of Confucius. This deliberate attempt made by Sung and Ming philosophers to free themselves from Buddhist and Taoist thought signified a need to rediscover the real significance of Confucius' ideas by attempting to discern the nature of his philosophy as it had existed before the onset of Buddhist influence. Neo-Confucianism, which was born of this attempt, asserted the importance of true moral standards and genuine self-cultivation as expounded by Confucius, and the importance of a conscientious concern with the problem of human conduct and behavior in a social context. In another respect, Neo-Confucianism was also a reaction against the utilitarian exploitation of Confucian doctrines by those who sought bureaucratic advancement through the examination system.  

The basic tenet in Neo-Confucian philosophy is the Principle, **li**, which is the foundation of all truth and  

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307 **Li** here is the transliteration of 理 (principle), as differed from that of 禮 (rites); a word whose transliteration is also **li**.
values. This concept was founded on the Confucian assumption that, firstly, the natural order is constructed of harmonious elements, and, secondly, that social harmony must reflect the greater harmony of nature itself. Thus the Neo-Confucian school is known in Chinese as the School of the Principle, Li. The Principle, the law of being, is for everything that exists. It has its being through the interaction of two material forces, yin, the force of tranquility, and yang, the force of activity. The Principle is self-evident, self-sufficient, eternal, concrete, definite, unalterable and correct. It is in all things. Li is the Principle of the production and reproduction of things. Since Li pervades all, it is the source of goodness and the standard of measure for right and wrong. It is, in short, the Principle of Nature, which in essence, was very close to the Confucian tao. Since the Principle is good, and since it pervades all things, human nature, which partakes of the Principle, is also good. Evil arises in man only because of material force.

The foundation of goodness in man is the Confucian principle of jen, which involves love for all and also specific virtues in human interrelationships. Jen involves the cultivation of the virtue of seriousness and righteousness, the latter being a sense of right and wrong, and the

308Grieder, Hu Shih and the Chinese Renaissance, pp. 15-16.
understanding of correct ways to do things. Ultimately, the feeling of jen will grow from self to others, and become so extensive as to enable man to form one body with Heaven, Earth and all things, which is the doctrine of the unity of all. 309 Chu Hsi, a Sung Neo-Confucianist, whose work Reflection of Things at Hand (Chin-Ssu Lu) expounded this theory of the Principle, and reiterated much of Confucius' thinking on education, ethics and politics. It represented the major work of the rationalistic wing of Neo-Confucianism, which distinguished itself from the idealistic wing headed by Wang Yang-Ming.

The rationalistic wing of Neo-Confucianism is best distinguished from the idealistic wing in its theory on learning. Cheng I, a member of the Rationalistic School, urged one to cultivate his character and to study. Self-cultivation, he professed, required seriousness, while the pursuit of learning depended on the extension of knowledge. The extension of knowledge, that is, the study of the Principle (Li), lay in the investigation of things, go wu. The purpose of studying was that only an understanding of the workings of the natural order would enable man to create and maintain a harmonious social order. 310 The investiga-

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310 Grieder, Hu Shih and the Chinese Renaissance, p. 16.
tion of things, go wu, implies the understanding of the Principle, Li, to seek to know the reason for which things and affairs are as they are and the reason according to which they should be.\textsuperscript{311} The consequence of this new approach to learning was "the flowering of the pure and applied sciences in the Sung."\textsuperscript{312} This methodology of learning is new to the Confucian tradition. Knowledge thus obtained is external to the self. This idea of truth and wisdom being derived from knowledge which is external to man was directly opposed to the theory of knowledge of the Idealistic School of Neo-Confucianism, which believed in an innate knowledge of the good, and that the way to wisdom was through the examination of one's own self. The Idealistic School of the Mind in the Sung period was made known by Wang Yang-Ming, whose \textit{Instructions on Practical Living} was the major work of the idealistic wing. In any event, whether the pursuit of knowledge was performed in the manner of investigation of things, or by introspection of self, the Neo-Confucian School was critical of the prevalent habits of memorization, and of the passive and narrow learning of the classics. True to Confucian thought, the Neo-Confucianists upheld the equal importance of knowledge and action, believing that the achievement of knowledge

\textsuperscript{311} Wang Gung Hsing, \textit{The Chinese Mind}, p. 54.

\textsuperscript{312} Needham, \textit{Science and Civilization}, 2:494-95.
through the specified means was the beginning of learning, while practicing knowledge is its end.

In Neo-Confucian educational practice, the Sung thinkers revived Confucius' method of teaching by discussion and discourse between master and disciple. This method had been largely abandoned in the formal school system developed under the Han Empire, and even less used in the T'ang period. Small scholarly groups began to form around philosopher-teachers, who believed that small informal and private groups were most inducive to independence of thought, and that large school systems with their standardization and conformity, tended to inhibit free thinking, even though they might raise the level of general education and popular literacy.

In historical hindsight, the Sung philosophers could well have made a point. The period of the least originality in Chinese thought coincided with the period of the most thorough development of a government system of education. Numerous private academies, shu yuan, sprang up during the Sung-Ming period, where Neo-Confucian thinkers and scholars delivered lectures and conducted symposiums. This period saw the flowering of China's most famous private education system, which coexisted with the State system of education and examinations. Retaining the

313 Shryock, Origin and Development of the State Cult of Confucius, p. 152.
ethical approach, these philosophers revitalized the teachings of Confucius and Mencius, giving their doctrines a more rational theoretical foundation, and developed new methods of moral cultivation and study. Critical of the prevalent habits of memorization, recitation of texts and devotion to literary studies and flowery composition, the Neo-Confucianists denounced such approaches to learning as demoralizing and destroying one's purpose of life. Instead, they advocated that one must look for and understand the Principle, Li, in the written word. In other words, one must, instead, probe and examine the principles of things. To do so, one needed to reflect repeatedly over one thing after another to gain profound understanding. One also must know how to doubt. There was no one fixed interpretation of the classics, so that there was no harm in differing from others in the interpretation of the Confucian texts. The main thing was to acquire knowledge in a natural way. \[314\] This fresh approach to inquiry led to a new evolution of the classics. As a result, the Four Books (Analects, Mencius, Great Learning and Doctrines of the Means, the latter two taken out of the Book of Rites) were raised to the level of the Classics. This implied a challenge to the traditional acceptance of the Five Classics (Book of History, Book of Poetry, I Ching, Book of Rites

\[314\] Chu Hsi, Reflections of Things at Hand, xxiv.
and *Spring and Autumn Annals*) as the standard texts.

The Neo-Confucianists also managed to rescue from oblivion the essential elements of Confucius' social-ethical-political theory, and transmitted them to later generations. They helped propagate anew the idea of the superior man, *chun tze*, and the power of virtuous example. They made known once again the social responsibility of the virtuous man. Chou Tun I, a Sung Neo-Confucianist, claimed, "The sage institutes education so as to enable people to transfer their evil by themselves. . . . (The superior man) first transmits what is small and near at hand and then teaches people what is great and distant." 315 And, reiterating Confucius, the Neo-Confucianists upheld that good government depended on the moral rectitude of those who governed. When the superior man goes forward in public life, he will promote the way to enlighten the world. When he retires to private life, he will illuminate the way to make his pupils virtuous. In other words, men of moral character and wisdom were to follow the footsteps of Confucius.

The Neo-Confucian philosophy, with its innovations inspired by Confucius, gave a new vigor and complexion to Confucianism, and was largely responsible for its survival under the challenge of rival ideas. This it did by being

315 Ibid., pp. 260, 264.
strikingly openminded in its exploration of ideas from the rival traditions, and by being able to interpret the Confucian classics in an unconsciously eclectic spirit. Yet, in the process of doing so, it managed to remain closer to the original thinking of Confucius than any other period of Confucianism throughout the traditional history of China. It also managed to stay aloof from the Chinese examination system that proved to engulf the entire system of education as time went on.

The Chinese Examination System

An important development in education occurred during the Six Dynasties. The year 605 A.D. saw the beginning of a system of civil service examinations, which was perfected during T'ang Dynasty (618-906 A.D.). This examination system was to last for over one thousand years until its abolition in 1905, a period spanning five dynastic epochs.

Confucius had provided the theoretical groundwork for the scholar-official system which was to be perfected and perpetuated by the civil service examination system. Confucius had wanted men of virtue and ability to serve in government, but he did not provide a systematic method for the selection of suitable candidates. Confucius himself had used the method of recommendation. In the feudal states where territories were small, and in those early years when
education was not general, the method of selection by recommendation was effective. However, with increased centralization and bureaucratization of government since the unification of China under one empire, and with government control and participation in matters of education, the simple and direct method of recommendation was insufficient for and unsuited to a more complex situation. And as education became more widely recognized as a means of upward social mobility, the competition for critical positions increased. The earlier method used by Han emperors, who originated the method of selection by recommendation and examination, developed in complexity and sophistication into a highly organized examination system, which now became the principal key to officialdom.

During T'ang times, the civil service examination became institutionalized. After mid-T'ang period, the effect of this examination system on social mobility became more apparent. Theoretically it was meant to be a democratic measure, in that academic success and subsequent position in the bureaucratic government were no longer necessarily dependent on family status, a principle true to Confucius' democratic educational ideal. In practice, however, as history progressed, state policy gradually changed from one of extreme leniency and sympathy toward humble commoners at the beginning of M'ing period to one of un-
usual restriction at the height of Manchu power. 316

While Confucius would have agreed to the principle and theory behind the examination system, he would not have approved of its contents and method. First of all, the examination system was based on a book-centered education, involving a great deal of rote memory and training in literary skills. Secondly, the examination system was a poor means of assessing moral character, to which Confucius had given the first and foremost priority in assessing the suitability of candidates. A thorough knowledge of the Confucian classics and an orthodox interpretation of them, in addition to the use of accepted forms of literary expression, now became the criteria for success in the examinations. Besides, there was very little provision for the assessment of practical knowledge so that, as time went on, practical knowledge became redundant to scholar-officials, and so was relegated to clerks and artisans. The all-round image of an educated man, who was to be a product of liberal education, was reduced to that of an intellectual, whose education was now narrowly confined to the study of the Confucian classics, based on the assumption that the truth contained therein could provide the solution to all problems of life. Meanwhile, the scholarly quest for the orthodoxy of the classics continued under the

leadership of Han Yu, a T'ang official and member of the literati who regarded those versions of classics closest to the time of Confucius, which corresponds to the Three Dynasties and Han period, as the orthodox versions. Subsequently, members of the literati who were interested in the pursuit of orthodoxy of the classics spent much of their literary labor in proving their authenticity, while those who were interested in officialdom spent years of their mental labor in the preparation for the civil service examinations.

Structurally, the civil service examinations were arranged in a regular hierarchy. Preliminary tests were given in succession by the district magistrate and the prefect to determine the suitability of candidates. Then twice every three years candidates sustained prefectural examinations, yuan kao, sponsored by the provincial director of studies, with a one to two percentage pass. Successful candidates were awarded the first degree, sheng-yuan. The second degree, chu-jen, was awarded to one to two percent of the sheng-yuan who took the provincial examination. The third and highest degree, chin-shih, was awarded to those who successfully sustained the triennial metropolitan examination held in the capitol. This system of three formal academic degrees and qualifications, namely, sheng-yuan, chu-jen and chin-shih, were educational innovations of the Ming period. Almost all government officials
were selected from the body of chin-shih and chu-jen, that is, graduates of the second and third degrees, though some of the sheng-yuan, who failed to pass the next higher examination, were nevertheless recommended to the central government because of unusual scholastic competence.\(^{317}\)

During the Ming period, in association with the examination system, there began a rudimentary but nationwide scholarship system based on the Confucian principle of individual merit. All undergraduates, sheng-yuan, were enrolled in prefectural or country schools and subjected to instruction, periodic reviewing tests and the discipline of school officials. They were entitled to free lodging and a monthly stipend of six-tenths of a shih (Chinese bushel) of rice, which was increased to a whole shih in 1382. Generally, this stipend was sufficient to enable a young man to concentrate on his studies.\(^{318}\) The early Ming State maintained very strict school discipline and constantly attempted to reduce the cumulative number of students, in addition to making the first academic degree difficult to obtain. The idea was to prevent over-congestion at higher level examinations and subsequent excessive wastage of social effort. This restriction, however, later slackened,


\(^{318}\) Ho Ping-ti, *The Ladder of Success in Imperial China*, p. 173.
due to the nation's steady population growth and the growing awareness of the importance of education as the main avenue of upward mobility.

In the early Ming period, however, the examination system, though revived and integrated with the school system, was not the only channel for the selection of officials; and its importance was less than that of ad hoc recommendations of men of ability by officials. The founder of the Ming empire repeatedly issued orders that men of merit be recommended by central and provincial officials for public office, with almost no consideration given to the social status of the recommended. These new officials, who in 1380 numbered eight hundred and sixty, a number equivalent to the aggregate of several third degree chih-shih examinations, were recommended on the basis of their learning, literary skill or personal integrity. They were selected from all walks of life and social strata. It was not until the third decade of the fifteenth century that the examination system assumed overwhelming significance as the most important institutionalized channel for bureaucratic recruitment.\(^{319}\) It was also then that public education and the examination system became a tool of the government in controlling the candidate quota by freezing or moderately increasing them at long intervals, and by

\(^{319}\text{Ibid., p. 216.}\)
securing a fair geographical representation of provincial graduates. The purpose of education became narrowly confined to one of recruitment on the part of the State and a means of social and political advancement on the part of the people. The State was more concerned with the selection of the elite than with the education of the people. Moreover, the system of education that existed within the system of civil service examinations did much to restrict intellectual freedom and to destroy the moral priorities that had been so much emphasized by Confucius. The concept of knowledge now took on the meaning of a knowledge of the Classics, while the Confucian dualism of knowledge and action tended to become generally separate and unrelated entities. The gulf between Confucius' educational thought and Chinese education continued to widen.

In 1369, the founder of the Ming Dynasty, Tai Tsu, issued a decree that in every prefecture and country, a school was to be set up, staffed by government appointed teachers and permanently supported by state funds. During his reign, about 1,200 schools had been established in areas within his effective administration. This was the first major attempt in general education ever carried out in the history of traditional Chinese education. At the beginning a good deal of genuine interest in elementary education was found among enthusiastic and conscientious local officials. Repeated exhortations from the emperor in
1436, 1465 and 1504 made it obligatory for provincial educational and local officials to expand facilities for elementary education. In the long run, however, many community schools became derelict owing to financial difficulties or diminished official and community zeal.\textsuperscript{320}

The well integrated educational system of early Ming, namely, the integration between school and examination systems, was maintained only with the interest of controlling socio-economic mobility and as a means of official recruitment rather than for the education of the people. However, as far as the propagation of Confucian ideology was concerned, the Ming educational system, with its establishment of nationwide schools, scholarship system and a curriculum centered around the Confucian classics, did much to perpetuate the Confucian value system.

The change of dynasty in 1644 sought to preserve the old social order, and with that, the old educational system that complemented it. Confucianism continued to be patronized by the Manchu emperors when China came under this alien rule. The dynastic interests of the early Ching state dictated that it would be wise to appease, placate and win the support of the most influential social class of the conquered land, namely, the scholar-official class. Some of the Manchu emperors even became dedicated Confucians,\textsuperscript{320}

\textsuperscript{320}Ibid., p. 169.
genuinely devoted to the teachings of the Classics, and upheld the examination system as the most effective system of official recruitment and means of assessment of scholarship. The Ching-chao tung-chih, a history compiled under imperial auspices in 1767, praised the system of civil service examinations and claimed it was the most efficient means of selecting officials. It stated the aim of the examinations as follows: "In the literary arts, elegance and refinement is the aim. In military examinations, familiarity with riding and shooting is important, . . . the truly profound meaning of practical application is expected. How excellent!" However, the praise was decidedly an exaggerated one, for there was a wide gulf between theory and practice, especially in nineteenth-century Chinese education.

The curriculum of study for the examinations still emphasized the Confucian classics. In the early Ching period, there had been a display of practicality and toleration of ideological discussion by setting some of the examination questions on memorials, verdicts and Sung Neo-Confucianism, but questions of this nature were dropped from the examinations in 1757. After the late eighteenth century, the discussion questions turned toward philological issues, and candidates were discouraged from discussing

321 Ching-Chao Tung Chih. 72/125.
current affairs. During the nineteenth century, there was complete domination of the Confucian classics in examination questions. The emphasis, however, shifted from scholarship to examination writing as a technique. Form rather than content was stressed in the writing of examination papers. Candidates were bound by many regulations and had to follow definite schemes of presentation. Even the length of the essay was defined. Rhyme pattern, dexterity in poetical composition and calligraphy were stressed. This tendency to move away from scholarship toward examination writing technique was even more pronounced in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Formalized writing, with rigid form and restrictions, rhyme and phraseology in composition, elegant poetical expression and good calligraphy were the main criteria for passing the examinations. Hsueh Fu Cheng, a vehement critic of the examination system at the time, stated that the system "drove several hundred thousand to several millions of scholars to exhaust their physical and mental energy in formalized writings, without studying the art of regulating the world or the cases in history."  

Meanwhile, the break from the original Confucian educational theory and practice was made complete by the

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323 Hsueh Fu-cheng, Yung-an chuan-chi Wen-Wai Pien, 1/1a. 3b.
move away from the Confucian educational principle of equality based on individual merit. More and more, the advantages of success were heavily in favor of those who had wealth and influence. The situation was mitigated by the Ching government's laissez-faire policy toward the sale of Imperial Academy studentships, in addition to a lack of concern and sympathy for humble commoners to rise to official positions when the primary interest of the State was to acquiesce the official class. Moreover, unlike the Ming educational system, in which the examination system was well integrated with the school system, there was a decadence of schools as well as an absence of a public educational system under Ching rule. Candidates preparing for the sheng-yuan examinations had to study with private tutors. Besides, the long years of preparation for the examinations was a major deterrent to the humble and poor candidates, who could afford neither time nor money in the long preparation and successful completion of examinations.

The examination system, with its affiliated educational system, became a tool for the perpetuation of official ideology in which the aspects of authority, discipline, loyalty and service in the Confucian tradition were emphasized, but which had by now been transformed from their original connotations. The original precept of loyalty to principle was replaced by that of loyalty to the emperor who represented the ultimate authority. This transforma-
tion could be dated back to the influence of a T'ang scholar, Han Yu, who advocated that the political line must be the same as the ethical, for the emperor could do no wrong. From then on, the function of scholars became one of upholding the emperor and obeying his orders. The image of the "real" scholar as a man loyal only to the principle, tao, surrendered to a much lesser image of obeisance and subservience.

**Abolition of the Examination System**

While the examination system with its related school system represented largely an official view of education, the "genuine" Confucians of imperial China adhered to a different educational view based on the original Confucian vision of a balanced moral order. These Confucians, who clung to a moral value system that was partly independent of the state, launched their criticism against the examination system. There were two Confucian camps of protest. One denounced the system as ineffective and urged a return to the system of recommendation. The other, eyeing the impossibility of a return to antiquity, sought to reform the existing system. Both camps, however, denounced the examination system as deflecting men from the study and reflection that would reveal to them the essentials of the moral order and perfect their character. Education, they criticized, was no more a search for moral truths. Instead,
it encouraged literary flipperies and "empty discussions." The examination system, which was supposed to decide who were qualified to serve in government and to foster moral worth, became an institution which corrupted men. It made fame and emolument rather than moral standards the goal of education, and it put "study" on the market, to be obtained not by those who merited it, but by those who could afford it. 324

Still others sought to modify the content of the examination. The formal eight-legged essays were to be replaced by a composition on current affairs. In 1887 mathematics was adopted as an examination subject. Two years after the Sino-Japanese war, in 1897, Yen Hsin, the provincial director of education of Kweichow, requested the introduction of a special examination in political economy. In the following year, K'ang Yu Wei, Liang Ch'i Chao and more than a hundred other provincial graduates submitted a joint memorial requesting the abolition of the whole civil service examination system. K'ang Yu Wei, a Confucian reformist, also presented memorials strongly supporting the proposal. K'ang managed to have an audience with the Emperor early in 1898. As a consequence, the edict of Emperor Kwang-hsu on June 24, 1898, proclaimed the rearrangement of the three parts of the provincial and metro-

politan examinations. The first part was in Chinese history and current political issues, the second part in foreign and technological knowledge, and the third part in the classics, now occupying the least important position in the examination.

The impetus for educational reform, however, did not stem from the desire to return to the original Confucian educational theory and practice, but was a reaction to the changes in the political scene brought about by the onslaught of western influences and foreign invasions. The conservatism that was the essence of Confucian tradition and ideology was now greatly challenged. No longer were the Classics sufficient to provide the solutions to the nation's mounting problems and the vast changing world. Something had to be done to rescue the nation. The effort of K'ang Yu Wei in this reform movement illustrates how Confucian thought was further interpreted and used to remedy the human ills of the day.

K'ang Yu Wei and Confucius

In the last decade on the nineteenth century, the highly educated Confucian scholars were actively involved in the problems of China, a nation beseeched with the problem of survival under the pressure of foreign powers: the defeat by Japan (1894-1895), the threatening encroachment of Russia, Germany and other powers (1897-1898), a situa-
tion made worse by the internal political corruption of the Manchu government. These Confucians, who put forth their arguments for reform by appealing to the authority of Confucius, were nevertheless influenced by western political and social thought. They published warnings and urged reforms. Among them notably was K'ang Yu Wei, a follower of the "modern text" school, chin wen, of Confucian scholars and who was also widely read in Buddhist and western literature. His association with Confucius was somewhat special, in that, in his political thought, Confucius was exalted as a political reformer. In his startling book Confucius as Reformer, K'ung-tzu kai chih kao, K'ang argued that Confucius had actually created the theory of a Golden Age of Antiquity in order to persuade contemporary rulers to make reforms, in the manner of the ancient sage kings Yao and Shun. It followed, then, that if Confucius himself had favored reforms, all Confucianists following his ideas, should also favor change.

K'ang's political thought had been branded "utopian," based on his idea of ta-tung, a universal commonwealth which he developed from the ta-tung section of the Book of Rites. Confucius had created the term to signify a world social order of peace and harmony. K'ang borrowed the idea and developed it into an utopian political theory, in which he proposed a world government under which all national states and boundaries should be abolished. In this commonwealth all men and women would be
born free, equal and independent. There would be no property and no class distinctions. In short, K'ang's commonwealth was to be an example of true emancipation from national boundaries, from distinctions of class, race, sex, family, property and profession, and from all injustice and unhappiness. The materialization of this utopia was to be carried out in successive stages: "the displaying of the three epochs," so to speak, by which K'ang referred to a progression from the existing epoch of disorder, through an epoch of minor peace, hsiao-kang, to the final epoch of world peace, ta-tung.  

Reform was the key word in K'ang's political and social thought. In his proposal for educational reform, K'ang urged relaxing the strict traditional qualifications in order to promote able men, reform civil service examinations, establish more schools, and provide more translation of western books, and create agriculture and business schools to improve the national economy. In short, he proposed an educational system that would free China from the bondage of the conservatism of Confucianism which hindered progress, and to pave the way for the modernization of China in the twentieth century. 

In a manner, K'ang trumpeted forth vigorously the

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democratic ideal of Confucius. This was yet another illustration of how one Confucian theme was emphasized at the expense of others, and how Chinese political and educational reformers sought to use Confucian doctrines to justify and support their actions. The name of Confucius was once again brought into prominence in China's modern history.

The reform movement was a slow and tedious one. Orders made to modify the examinations were often unexecuted. Finally, in 1903, a joint memorial by Chang Chih-Tung, Governor-General at Nanking, and Yuan Shih-K'ai, Governor-General at Tientsin, effected the gradual abolition of the examination system. The memorial stated:

... The greatest and most obvious evil, which is the enemy and hindrance to the school system, is the civil service examination. In general, a school is a place to train men of ability, and the civil service examination is to test men of ability. If the civil service examination and school system are coordinated, then the school will be prosperous without our urging. If the school and civil service examination are uncoordinated, then the school will eventually be a mere name without any substance. Why? Because the multitude compete on the path toward benefits and emoluments, and people are afraid to take up complicated and difficult tasks. The period needed to complete the course in the schools is settled in advance, and it is necessary for one to spend years before he becomes well-qualified in his field; on the other hand, one may be successful by sheer chance in taking advantage of the tricks and malpractices in the civil service examination. Even though the eight-legged essays are abolished and replaced by essays on current policies and classical principles, yet, after all, one's writings are based on the strength of one day

\[326\] Ibid., p. 205.
and these empty words cannot be compared to actual achievements.

... Thus, as long as the civil service examination is not abolished, there is no chance for the schools to be very prosperous, and our students will go on without gaining any actual knowledge, our nation will have no men of ability to meet the crisis of the time, China will be unable to advance to wealth and power, and she will never be able to compete with other nations. ...

... We earnestly hope that the civil service examination will be gradually but completely abolished and that schools will be established as numerous as the teeth of a comb and the trees of the forest.

In 1905, the civil service examination disappeared from the educational scene of China, and with it, the imperial system of traditional education that for centuries had borne the name of Confucius, but not the essence of his teachings.

Education in Republican China

The abolition of the civil service examination marked the deterioration of the imperial social structure. The revolution led by Sun Yat Sen in 1911, which ended the imperial era, resulted in the establishment of a democracy. The educational system now faced another problem: the problem of choice of models for a vastly changing society. As a result of the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) and the later abolition of the examination system, educational thought and practice in China began to undergo significant changes in response primarily to external

327 Ibid., pp. 147-49.
demands. By 1905, Chinese education had adopted the Japanese model both in structure and in content. The general curriculum followed the Japanese pattern, comprising the study of the classics, history, geography, morals and sciences. In this period of educational vacuum, so to speak, there was a need to reevaluate the position of Confucius in the educational, political and cultural realms. The former exalted position of Confucius as sage and prophet had fallen to that of moralist, whose moral teaching was recommended to blend with western knowledge and branches of study. T'sai Yuan Pei, the leading liberal educator of early Republican China, favored this view. T'sai, the first modern minister of education of the Republic, campaigned for freedom in education, fostered the May Fourth Movement in 1919, and made possible the "new-tide" of thought. T'sai also was a synthesizer of Confucian and Western thought. T'sai, who had received a traditional Confucian education, had been a member of the highest institute of learning, the Han-lin Academy. Yet, he revolted against the formality of Confucianism, proposed the abolition of the Confucius cult in schools, and promoted the scientific study of the Confucian classics under the new academic departments of Chinese literature, history and philosophy, but not as a compulsory subject for every student.

Unlike Confucius, who looked to the government as
sponsor of education by making the head of state an educator, thereby subjecting the education system to government control, T'sai believed that schools should be free from government control or interference. Like Confucius who said, "Enrich them. Educate them," T'sai recognized the importance of enriching the nation, and considered moral education the answer to peace and harmony. He conceived the aim of education to be the cultivation of moral character in the young, supplemented by an industrial and military training and rounded out by an aesthetic education. He defined proper ethical education as that which instills a right knowledge of liberty, equality and fraternity, which corresponded to Confucius' ethical principle of jen and righteousness.

In his essay, "Views on the Aims of Education" (1912), T'sai considered these Confucian principles as "really the foundation of all morality and should be included in the moral education of citizens." He proposed an "education for a world view," which followed the general rule of freedom of thought and freedom of expression, and did not allow any one branch of philosophy or any one tenet of religion to confine the mind, but always aimed at a lofty universal point of view which was valid without regard to space and time. Confucius would have approved of such an education himself: the ideas of his

328 Ibid., pp. 236-37.
seemed to have come back with a resounding resonance. However, in the same tone, T'sai denounced the respect for Confucius as "contradictory to the freedom of belief."

Indeed, such due respect apparently belonged to an era past, an era of moral decadence, of formalism, traditionalism and stubborn conservatism, all of which Confucius had not stood for.

In 1913, the government schools of all levels of the Republic had in their curricula the subject of morals and ethics amongst various other Chinese and Western studies. The influence of Confucius as moral philosopher lingered on, though the dominance of the classics in the modern schools of China lasted only for a very short time. The classics, which formerly constituted the core of the curriculum, were by 1911 largely set aside. But even in the period of transition, ethical education had a prominent place in the curriculum and received increased emphasis since the inauguration of the Republic. 329

Conclusion

Though in many respects Confucianism was contradictory to Confucius' basic pedagogical thought and practice, there were certain areas which revealed remarkable consistency between the two. Those concepts of education, 329

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therefore, can be justly attributed to Confucius. First of all, there was a permeating humanistic element in Chinese education from the time of Confucius to the Ching Dynasty, pivoting around the key concepts of *jen* and harmony among men and within human relationships. This concept of *jen* and harmony became a universal ideal for the nation throughout the imperial period. Secondly, Confucianism was the one ideology among all others which emphasized in particular the power of education to improve society and citizenship both in the intellectual, social and moral sense. Education could transform people morally, intellectually and socially, and in doing so, lead to peace and prosperity. This was consistent with Confucius' educational goal. Thirdly, since education could bring about a just and harmonious social order, the educational system needed be a broadly based one. This was in tune with Confucius' democratic ideal of equal educational opportunity. It was upon this theoretical groundwork that the subsequent system of education was built. Fourthly, Confucius had set the stage for the emergence of a scholar-official class which proved to become a dominant social force in government. The intellectual pattern which began from the time of Confucius was to continue well into the imperial period, to be perpetuated by a state system of higher education with its accompanying civil service examination.
Confucius and Communist Chinese Education

The Chinese educational system, with the onset of Communism in 1949, once again plunged into an era of transformation. The era of Confucian influence seemed to be completely over, for the new regime criticized the old system of education with its outmoded methods of teaching and learning as unsuited to a politically revolutionized and culturally modernized nation. Point Ten of the Sixteen Points adopted by the Chinese Communist Party on August 8, 1966 declared:

In the Great Proleterian Cultural Revolution a most important task is to transform the old education system and the old principles and methods of teaching. . . .

The period of schooling should be shortened. Courses should be fewer and better. The teaching material should be thoroughly transformed, in some cases beginning with simplifying complicated material. . . .

Confucianism as political ideology and educational philosophy was being replaced by dialectical materialism, which now became the nation's new-found ideology and headed by its political leader Mao Tze Tung. The new educational theory, which revolves around this new political and socio-economic theory, must regard the traditional educational theory and practice as the major obstacle in the path of the new society. This was seen in the effort

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made to stamp out the elite intellectual class.

However, the new educational theory under Mao was not entirely inconsistent with the traditional one. Certain areas of harmony between Confucius' and Mao's educational thought could be detected. For instance, Mao saw man as central, both shaping and being shaped by the human and non-human environment. This question of nature and nurture had been a recurrent theme in Confucius' educational theory. He and Mao both refused to separate man from nature, nor to separate the individual man from the social man. Both considered man to be a moral, social and political being, so that a moral-political education was best suited to be man's life-long training. The concept of education as moral, political, life-long and involving all that man does was shared by both leaders, as much as they shared the view of good government being necessarily dependent on the moral and humane qualities of the one who rules.

Mao's writings were imbued with repeated moral exhortations. In some instances, Mao put moral-political education before everything else.\textsuperscript{331} It can be argued that some of Mao's educational ideas were in close alliance with those of Confucius. Mao had received a

traditional education in his early years. His intellectual development was influenced by two great traditions: Confucianism and Marxism. Much of his earlier schooling consisted of classical education. At the same time, he experienced the early stages of transformation which had begun to take place in China's educational system following the revolution in 1911, which ended the imperial period. Mao was thus in a position to choose acceptable elements from the two cultures, and integrate them with Marxism, using the latter as a guide rather than as dogma. A man of the past and present, Mao was astride two apparent incompatible cultural and political realms. Yet somewhere within the realm of pedagogical thought, he and Confucius met.

A further parallelism existed in the educational ideas of Mao and Confucius. Both considered that the purpose of education was to build a new culture and a new social order. The power of education in transforming man and society was recognized by both. In 1937, Mao wrote the well known essay "On Practice," in which he dealt with the relationship between knowledge and practice, between knowing and doing. 332 Article 46, Chapter V of the "Common Program" in 1949, which dealt specifically with

education, stated: "The method of education in the People's Republic of China is the unity of theory and practice. . . . "333 The dualism of knowledge and practice, of knowing and doing, are recurrent themes of Confucius. Mao's attack on the "book learning intellectuals" could not be viewed so much as an assault on Confucius' position as educator but more of an attack on the product of Confucianism, the tradition. Mao's article of February, 1942, dealt directly with the position and role of the conventional intellectual and his failure to be relevant to the new society:

How can those who have only book-learning be turned into intellectuals in the true sense? The only way is to get them to take part in practical work and to become practical workers, to get those engaged in theoretical work to study practical problems. In this way our aim can be attained.334

Undoubtedly, the routes which Confucius and Mao undertook to achieve their individual goals of education and society were vastly different. One resorted to cultivating the goodness of self and others, and the other to constant revolutionary practice consistent with the communist ideology.

The "Criticize Confucius"
Movement in China

Confucius and Confucianism had been the targets of attack by reformers and revolutionaries time after time

333 Ibid., p. 17. 334 Ibid., p. 15.
throughout the history of modern China. In the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s, in connection with the attack on the late Lin Pao, a new wave of criticism rose against Confucius and his philosophical school. This recent attack was considered more incisive than that of the earlier decades because it was embedded in a scientific class analysis of ancient Chinese history. It also embodied a new, positive appreciation of the opponents of Confucianism, the Legalists, who stood for strong centralized bureaucratic rule, written legal codes and the breakup of the patriarchal order of ancient China. Legalism had in fact always been present in the structure of Imperial Chinese government from the time of Han, and had coexisted with Confucianism. Thus in the context of ancient China, the Legalists were seen as "progressive" in relation to the "reactionary" Confucianists.

This "struggle between the reactionary Confucianists and the progressive Legalists" had been present throughout China's past and continued into the present. Renewed interest in ancient history led to a renewal in the interest of Confucian philosophy and Confucian classics, which were read again in order to be criticized. On all levels of society there was an intensive historical study.

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The "Criticize Confucius, Movement" was under sway, the forms of which ranged from serious research of the classical texts to the use of colloquial translations at the lower literary level.

It is all very well to say that this is all pre-cooked research, and that the critical standards are determined by higher authority. Yet there is something inherently encouraging about a municipal library being used with this intensity, with such a broad section of the populace participating, and with universal study a publicly supported social norm. 336

The themes of attack were not too unfamiliar compared with those of earlier periods, though there was a tendency to interpret Confucius' thought in the political context of the present regime. As far as education is concerned, Confucius' educational thought was considered reactionary, catering to the interest of the ruling class. His education system was designed for a class society and for maintaining the status quo. As to his aims and content of education, Confucius was criticized for having relegated knowledge and ability to second place in favor of spreading upper class morality. His educational practice and methods of teaching stressed "book learning and self cultivation and were separated from practice," while productive labor was looked down upon with a demeaning attitude. A rather familiar line of attack was that "only with good learning could one rise to officialdom and get rich." All in all Confucius' thought was criticized for

336 Ibid., p. 27.
for having hindered progress because, in essence, it was resistant to change. 337

The Present Position of Confucius in China

Up to the point of writing this study, there have been signs of reinstating the position of Confucius in Chinese culture and society. First of all, there have been signs of acknowledging once again the position of Confucius as philosopher. Liao Shao Chi, as early as 1960, published a book, *Self Cultivation*, in which the themes of "love of humanity," the cessation of class struggle, of peace and harmony within the Communist Party and "education for the official" 338 revealed an inclination toward classical Chinese thought. The *People's Daily News* of June 28, 1969 had this comment in its editorial: "*Self Cultivation* by Liao Shiao Chi, is a recall of the spirit of Confucius." To date, the "Criticize Confucius Movement" had already ceased its attack.

In the realm of education, there is a practice of reinstating the scholastic award system in education, particularly in higher education. Intellectual ability rather than political purity is to be once again the criterion

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for college placement. The age-old respect for scholarship seems to rear its head once again. Education for the training of the talented and able becomes the first and foremost goal of education. The once abandoned college entrance examination has been reinstated, offering equal opportunity for those who are intellectually qualified to benefit from higher education and special training. The democratic educational ideal of Confucius, and the importance he gave to education in the making of a new social order, seem to be reiterated.
CHAPTER VII

EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

The position of Confucius in Chinese culture has often been subjected to evaluation. An abundance of literature has been written on the exalted position and the influence which Confucius had held in the history of Chinese culture. By contrast, very little has yet been written on the position of Confucius in the history of Chinese education. Therefore, it seems best, first, to review some of the existing literature on the position of Confucius in Chinese culture, and then to comment on his position in education.

It is a general opinion that Confucius was the first to give unity to Chinese culture and civilization. Confucius' diligent effort resulted in adding deeper meaning and significance to every idea that existed during his time. He organized and restructured Chinese thought and gave it a definite and new humanistic ideal. He emphasized, explored, expressed, and laid the foundation for the phi-


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losophy of human nature. Fung Yu Lan considered that Confucius' greatest contribution to Chinese culture rested in having supplied a rationale for past institutions.

As to Confucius' influence on political thought, his greatest legacy to China is the democratic ideal contained in his theory of good government and the rule of the virtuous. He advocated a political system resembling social democracy. His government by the virtuous was largely responsible for the scholar-rule system in the second century B.C., and henceforth the scholar class had been a major offset to monarchial power.

Confucius' greatest impact on Chinese culture and society was seen in that he had given China a much needed ideological fortification by formulating a dignified system of thought from the folklore. The reasons why Confucius had such great influence, according to Wang Gung Hsing, are: firstly, Confucius' thoughts were most typical of China; he was what the Chinese are like; what they appreciate and understand. Secondly, his teaching was nothing spectacular, but was only the result of careful study of the existing idealism of his time. Thirdly, the Golden Rule as the way of life was reality, already existing since antiquity. Fourthly, his teaching on a proper code of con-

341 Chang Chi Kuan, Kung-tse Hsieuh Hsioh, p. 27.
duct for interpersonal relationships was best suited to the complicated Chinese family organization, which demands well ordered behavior and conduct for such a complexity of human relationships under the same roof. Confucius' teaching thus became the "steering wheel of China's mental and institutional development." On the other hand, Chang Chung Li asserts that the socio-political theory of Confucius was largely responsible for the creation of the Chinese gentry class, typified by its being non-hereditary, socially mobile and scholarly in its ideal. The relationship of the gentry class to the state was of a dual nature. It sustained the state and yet was controlled by it. The state depended on the gentry for social control and management, and for its supply of administrative staff, while the state examination system controlled the membership to the gentry class by a fixed quota of undergraduate and graduates of the various degrees. For centuries, the gentry represented the upper stratum of society, a social position much aspired to by every promising young man.

The opinions put forth above by renowned Chinese scholars are highly favorable to Confucius. Other opinions,
however, are not as favorable. James Legge came to this conclusion:

... but after long study of his character and opinions, I am unable to regard him as a great man. He was not before his age, though he was above the mean of the officers and scholars of his time. He threw no light on any of the questions which have a world interest. He gave no impulse to religion. He had no sympathy with progress. His influence has been wonderful, but it will hence forth wane. My opinion is, that the faith of the nation in him will speedily and extensively pass away.\footnote{347 James Legge, Confucius and His Doctrines, pp. 114-15.}

At a later date, when Legge was in a more neutral position, he retracted his former words for a much more favorable opinion of Confucius.\footnote{348 James Legge, trans., Text of Confucianism (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899), p. 249.} Legge's judgement was not unlike that of many of Western missionary scholars who had attempted to compare Confucius with Christ and Confucianism with Christianity. Their opinions cannot be passed over as unbiased toward their own philosophical and religious beliefs.

Durant, a Western philosopher, spoke of Confucius in this manner:

... The history of China might be written in terms of that influence. ... The stoic conservatism of the ancient sage sank almost into the blood of the people, and gave to the nation, and to its individuals, a dignity and profundity unequaled elsewhere in the world or in history. With the help of this philosophy China developed a harmonious community life, a zealous admiration for learning and wisdom, and a quiet and stable
culture which made Chinese civilization strong enough to survive every invasion, and to remould every invader in its own image. . . .

But that philosophy could not be a complete nourishment in itself. It was well fitted to a nation struggling out of chaos and weakness into order and strength, but it would prove a shackle upon a country compelled by international competition to change and grow. The rules or propriety, destined to form character and social order, became a strait jacket forcing almost every vital action into a prescribed and unaltered mould. There was something prim and puritan about Confucianism which checked too thoroughly the natural and vigorous impulses of mankind; its virtue was so complete as to bring sterility. No room was left in it for pleasure and adventure, and little for friendship and love. It helped to keep women in supine debasement, and its cold perfection froze the nation into a conservatism as hostile to progress as it was favorable to peace.

We must not blame all this upon Confucius, one cannot be expected to do the thinking for twenty centuries. We ask of a thinker only that, as the result of a lifetime of thought, he shall in some way illuminate our path to understanding. . . .

Durant's statement, written in 1936, during a period of the lowest ebb of Confucianism in China, in which Confucius was made the culprit for many of China's problems, echoed the opinion of the time. In similar refrain, Legge had said:

There has been a tendency to advance, and Confucius has all along been trying to carry the nation back. . . . The consequence is that China has increased beyond its ancient dimensions, while there has been no corresponding development of thought. Its body politic has the size of a giant, while it still retains the mind of a child. . . .

The historic injustice done to Confucius by Chinese and Western scholars alike, seems to have been committed


350 Legge, Confucius and His Doctrines, p. 109.
through a lack of consideration of the workings involved in
the transformation of a philosophy into an ideology, that
is, the evolution of the philosophy of Confucius into the
ideology of Confucianism, during which process much of the
original ideas have either been deliberately misused and
misinterpreted, or, having been taken out of context, they
have lost their efficacy and relevance to new situations.
It is unfortunate that Confucius should be remembered for
things that he had not done.

A renewed interest in Confucius and his philosophy
in recent years has produced the great work, Confucius and
the Chinese Way, by H. G. Creel, a work in which the author
undertook to correct the impression which tradition holds
about Confucius. In an objective manner, unbiased by any
personal, political, religious or philosophical precepts,
Creel attempted to effect a better understanding of Con­
fucius and his ideas within the proper historical context,
with the intention of lifting Confucius out of the myths
that had surrounded him for centuries, to enable him to
come forth as he actually was.

The basic lack in Confucius' philosophy, Creel
argued, was an absence of method. Without a workable for­
mula, it was difficult to put into effect those ideas which
were very pertinent to the problems facing China. Creel
also implied that, without a method, a philosophy could
easily fall prey to rulers and governments who would use it
to their own advantage. The best historical example, perhaps, is the examination system, which became not so much a social equalizer as a tool of political and intellectual control. Would Confucius have approved of the examination system as a method of selection and as a means of educational assessment? Had he foreseen the consequences of a state controlled system of education? How would he measure virtue as an outcome of self-cultivation? These questions call for an evaluation of the position of Confucius in the history of Chinese education.

The long history of traditional Chinese education, with the exception of the period of Neo-Confucianism, held an educational philosophy and practice that Confucius had not stood for. First of all, though advocating the importance of education and manifesting his great love for learning, Confucius did not stand for intellectualism, which the traditional educational system had fostered. It was an intellectualism based on book-learning, the perfection of literary skill and memory work. It was a theory-oriented education, unrelated to practice, while Confucius advocated the equal importance of knowledge and action. Secondly, Confucius advocated intellectual freedom and independent thinking. The traditional education system seemed to stifle those by advocating a standardization of thought. Thirdly, Confucius looked to general education as a means of bringing about social equality and cultivating
talented and virtuous young men to serve in government for the betterment of society. This high ideal, though maintained in theory, was lacking in practice in the traditional education system, which was reduced to no more than a ladder to success and officialdom. Education, to Confucius, was to foster virtue in the individual. In the traditional education system, it was to foster ideological belief.

However, despite the disparity between theory and practice, Confucius' position in the history of Chinese education is an exalted one. Undeniably, Confucius was China's first professional teacher and educator. He was the first man to institute learning in China and to provide it with a method and philosophy. He had given a new meaning to learning and knowledge which had never before, in the history of China, assumed such a broad perspective. Knowledge became that which is the written word and human wisdom as well as the summation of all moral qualities. It is education in the broadest sense of the word: to develop and cultivate oneself intellectually and morally. Intellectually it aims at training one how to think rather than how much one's mind can retain the written word or how to perform certain skills; while morally it aims at perfecting oneself and others and so leading to a harmonious social order. In so defining education, Confucius gave it a new impetus and meaning, and affirmed its value and importance.
in society. Moreover, Confucius was the first man to popularize literary knowledge which until then belonged exclusively to the ruling class; in doing so, he popularized culture and education among all strata of society. He also structured and organized national thought and gave it a definite and new ideal, jen.\(^1\) He emphasized, explored and expressed human nature with relevance to education, and gave a much needed reassurance to mankind, particularly in his time.

Confucius was more than an educationist in his capacity.\(^2\) Education, with its high ideal and long range objective he had given to it, was to bring out the best of humanity and to attain human happiness. Confucius was the first man to democratize education by bringing culture and literacy to the populace. This was a giant step toward human emancipation. This principle was in part applied in China's subsequent educational development.

The creation of a gentry or scholar class of imperial China, who claimed Confucius as patron, was often attributed to Confucius. At least it appeared so in the first instance. The gentry class was frequently linked with Confucius because it represented a socially distinct group, non-hereditary in nature and not belonging to the

\(^{351}\) Chang Chi Kuan, Kung-Tse Hsienh Hsioh, p. 27.

\(^{352}\) Fung Yu Lan, A History of Chinese Philosophy, p. 48.
nobility, yet possessing a qualification that pertained to that status group, who alone had the right to receive an education in the days of Confucius. Moreover, the gentry was often maintained to have been patterned after the scholarly group that had formed around Confucius in his teaching days. This tradition of an intellectual status group dominating the society persisted throughout the centuries of imperial rule, so that even with the death of the institution at the end of the imperial Chinese state, the trends of the past persisted in the social transformation that took place. However, Confucius was not truly responsible for the creation of this social as well as intellectual tradition, let alone for its longevity. The gentry of imperial China represented an institution created to nourish and perpetuate the official ideology. Membership to the gentry was determined by the quotas of the examination system, and was thus under the control of the imperial government. The influence Confucius had on the members of the gentry class perhaps lay in having provided some of them with the ideal of a complete man, chun tse, as the educational goal of many, "hard-core" Confucian scholars, who by their moral attainment and virtuous conduct, served as living exemplars of the teachings of Confucius. In turn, the educational ideals of Confucius were kept alive and

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propagated throughout the centuries. These ideals provided a rationale for education which is perhaps one of Confucius' most important contributions to Chinese education.

The most unique contribution which Confucius made to the philosophy of Chinese education can probably be seen in his definition of an educated man. The measure of educational attainment, Confucius professed, lies not only in one's intellectual and scholastic achievement, but in his moral attainment. It is important, therefore, to judge a person not by how much he knows, but by how much his action is in congruence with his morals. An educated man is a moral man, a man of principle as well as wisdom, the two being complementary to one another. It follows, therefore, that the worth of a man is not in his external achievements, but in his internal moral attainment, namely, his humanness. This educational concept is unique to Confucius in his time. On the other hand, this same concept, which implies that no knowledge is worthwhile beyond the moral horizon, has put Confucius in a position of blame for having induced an obstacle to progress in scientific investigation in the centuries that followed.354

Confucius' educational philosophy was tailored to the exigency of the nation at the time. China was urgently in need of peace and moral order, as well as emancipation

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from the old feudal system. The political direction of China was very uncertain, so were the directions of human endeavors. Confucius was trying to supply a rationale for a new society, in which he perceived order and peace as the most important issues. Such peace and order, however, could not be maintained without the cooperation of individuals who understand and truly appreciate the value of peace and harmony. An education in these humanistic values would prepare the individual in this direction. As a result, Confucius decided upon a humanistic education, which was pertinent to the needs of the times, and in fact, to all times, for in it are contained universal facts about man and society that are applicable to all societies. The history of the Chinese educational system represented the attempt in part to do this, although the sum total of the Chinese educational experience was not an actual reflection of the educational ideas of Confucius. Nevertheless, the democratic and humanistic educational ideals did in fact serve as a constant reminder of what Chinese education should have been. The situation would probably have been different if there had been some kind of methodological frame around the ideas generated by Confucius. In the absence of a working formula and machinery, as shown in the historical example of China, any philosophy can easily be subject to misinterpretation and misuse.

The age of Confucianism is a phenomenon of the past,
and with it, the Confucian tradition in education. It sig-
naled the end of a tradition of more than two thousand
years, a tradition that had placed humanistic values above
everything else. It also signaled the end of an era of
education which had prized book-learning and mental labor
above all other forms of human activity. Many thinkers
were born out of this tradition of intellectualism, so were
many exemplars of moral integrity and strength. It was a
tradition in which the education system had been criticized
for having been a tool for channeling thought and conform-
ing behavior. It was a tradition that had allegedly fos-
tered conservative and undemocratic beliefs. Moreover, it
was a tradition that had constantly looked to Confucius as
patron, and as such, had made him responsible for the con-
sequence of its doings. The longevity of the tradition had
given China much cultural stability, enabling its civiliza-
tion to blossom forth and bear rich fruit. The standardi-
zation of knowledge and the narrowly confined curriculum,
however, had led to much specialization and an indulgence
in scholasticism, particularly near the end of the Con-
fucian era, a period which marked the widest drift away
from the original thought of Confucius. The age of uncer-
tainty and controversy arose when China was beset with
domestic and external problems, and once again China looked
to Confucius for answers; not finding them there, she turned
to the West for solutions.
The Confucian tradition resisted and finally gave way. Representing the conservative stream, Confucianism was regarded as a major drawback to modernization, which was critical for the survival of the nation. With the onset of the new democracy, the position of Confucius in Chinese culture and education was greatly lowered and so remained until the present day. The recent surge of new interest in Confucius in modern China, nevertheless has brought forth a renewed interest in the philosophy of Confucius in the minds of the people. Some have already been exposed to his teaching; others have not. This incidence may serve to indicate that Confucius will remain as a subject of controversy as long as he stands for all that is associated with the long history of China's past.

The time has come to look at Confucius in the proper historical perspective, and to reassess his position and influence, particularly in the area of education, where his thoughts have been most influential. Perhaps with a new understanding of his teachings one may find a relevance in his work to issues in modern education: issues that transcend political and cultural boundaries. The humanistic manifestations of Confucius' educational philosophy might yet be relevant to our time and age, for this is an age of empiricism and technological advancement, in which human values tend to become subordinate to scientific inventions, as man tries to overcome nature, to which he
intrinsically belongs. Moreover, as long as man continues to live in a society, harmony and order cannot be maintained in proper balance except by a certain moral code of conduct and behavior, a code that cannot be imposed upon man and society by sheer external force, but by a genuine internal compassion of man for man.
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The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

April 10, 1980
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