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ANALECTS OF CONFUCIUS BOOK 1: NEW ENGLISH TRANSLATION

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Read this new English translation of the Analects of Confucius Book 1 to learn more about the teachings of China's most famous philosopher. Its main themes include learning, filial devotion, self-cultivation, and leadership

Chapter 1

Confucius said: "Isn't it a pleasure to study and constantly apply the lessons that you've learned? Isn't it a joy to have friends visit from afar? Isn't it the mark of a leader to remain unconcerned when others don't recognize your talents?"

Chapter 2

Youzi said: "A man who practices filial and fraternal devotion is unlikely to question the authority of his superiors. Such a man will never provoke disorder. A leader focuses on the root; once this takes hold the way appears. Filial and fraternal devotion is the root of goodness."

Chapter 3

Confucius said: "Smooth talk and an affected manner are seldom signs of goodness."

Chapter 4

Zengzi said: "I examine myself three times every day. Have I been true to other people's interests when acting on their behalf? Have I been sincere in my interactions with friends? Have I practiced what I have been taught?"

Chapter 5

Confucius said: "The way to rule a thousand-chariot state is to devote yourself to its affairs and fulfill your commitments; be economical in expenditure and love

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your people; and mobilize the common people for labor at the right times of the year.”

Chapter 6

Confucius said: “A young man should be devoted to his parents at home and respectful to his elders outside it. He should be cautious and truthful, love everyone, but only develop close relationships with good people. If he still has energy to spare after all this, he should study the classics.”

Chapter 7

Zixia said: “A man who values character over beauty, who devotes himself to serving his parents, who dedicates his life to his ruler, and who is true to his word with his friends: I’ll insist he’s learned even if others think otherwise.”

Chapter 8

Confucius said: “A leader who has no seriousness of purpose lacks dignity and a solid foundation for learning. Hold loyalty and trustworthiness as your highest principles; don’t make friends with people who are not your equal. When you make a mistake, don’t be afraid to correct yourself.”

Chapter 9

Zengzi said: “When the dead are shown proper reverence and the memory of distant ancestors is kept alive, the people’s virtue is at its highest.”

Chapter 10

Ziqin asked Zigong: “When the Master arrives in another state and needs to find out about the affairs of its government, does he have to ask for this information

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or do people give him it of their own accord?” Zigong replied: “The Master obtains it by being warm, kind, courteous, unassuming, and deferential. He has a very different way of seeking out information than other people, hasn’t he?”

Chapter 11

Confucius said: “When the father is alive, observe his son’s intentions. When the father is dead, watch his son’s actions. If after three years he has not deviated from his father’s path, then he may be called a filial son.”

Chapter 12

Youzi said: “When practicing ritual, harmony matters most. This is what made the way of the ancient kings so admirable and inspired their every action, no matter how great or small. But they also knew where to draw the line: seeking harmony for its own sake without it being regulated by ritual won’t work.”

Chapter 13

Youzi said: “If your commitments conform to what is right, you will be able to keep your word. If your manners conform to ritual, you will be able to avoid shame and disgrace. Only if you associate with reliable people will you be successful.”

Chapter 14

Confucius said: “A leader eats without filling his stomach; chooses a home without demanding comfort; is diligent in his work and cautious in his speech; and keeps the company of others who possess the way to make sure that he stays on the right path. This is what it means to truly love learning.”

Chapter 15

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Zigong said: “‘Poor but not subservient; wealthy but not arrogant.’ What do you think of that?” Confucius said: “Not bad, but this would be better still: ‘Poor but content; wealthy but loves ritual.’” Zigong said: “In the Book of Songs it is said: ‘Like carving and polishing stones, like cutting and grinding gems.’ Is this not the same idea?” Confucius said: “Wonderful, Zigong! At last I can discuss the Book of Songs with you! Based on what I’ve already said, you can work out what’s coming next!”

Chapter 16

Confucius said: “Don’t be concerned about other people failing to acknowledge your merits; be concerned about failing to acknowledge their merits.”