

# CONFUCIANISM

The Philosophy Explained



埃米莉



# MAIN TENETS OF CONFUCIANISM

- **The Sacred Past:** Confucius believed people should study the past to understand how to behave and be virtuous. Emulate the actions of the most virtuous figures of the past, like the legendary sage Yao and Shun (before the Zhou Dynasty) and the Duke of Zhou.
- **The Social Code (Relationships):** Political relationships are like family relationships, but larger. Rulers should behave toward their subjects the way fathers do with their children. Certain rituals of the past should be followed with this code.
- **Self-Improvement:** Strive to become a virtuous man. If all become virtuous, there will be harmony in society.

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## THE KEY RELATIONSHIPS:

- **Ruler and Minister/Subjects**
- **Father and Son**
- **Elder brother and younger brother**
- **Husband and wife**
  
- **Friend and Friend** - *Added later by the followers of Confucius  
(The egalitarian relationship)*



## RULER AND SUBJECT

*Confucius say...*

- *To govern is to correct. If you set an example by being correct, who would dare to remain incorrect?*
- *The Master said about government, “Encourage the people to work hard by setting an example yourself. Do not allow your efforts to slacken.”*
- *In serving one’s lord, one should approach one’s duties with reverence (respect) and consider one’s pay as of secondary importance.*

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## FATHER AND SON

*Confucius say...*

- *Being good as a son and obedient as a young man is, perhaps, the root of a man's character.*
- *Honor your parents and make your brothers friends – this too is good government*
- *Everyone speaks up for his own son whether he is talented or not*
- *Nowadays for a man to be filial means no more than that he is able to provide his parents with food. Even hounds and horses are, in some way, provided with food. If a man shows no reverence (respect), where is the difference?*

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# ELDER BROTHER AND YOUNGER BROTHER

*Confucius say...*

- *What a good son Min Tzu-ch'ien is! No one can find fault with what his parents and brothers have to say about him.*
- *Ju Yu asked the Master, "Should one immediately put into practice what one has heard?" "As your father and elder brothers are still alive, you are hardly in a position immediately to put into practice what you have heard."*

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## HUSBAND AND WIFE

*Confucius say...*

- *In one's household, it is the women and the small men that are difficult to deal with. If you let them get too close, they become insolent (disrespectful). If you keep them at a distance, they complain.*

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## FRIEND TO FRIEND

*Confucius say...*

- *Make it your guiding principle to do your best for others and to be trustworthy in what you say. Do not accept as friend anyone who is not as good as you. When you make a mistake do not be afraid of mending your ways.*
- *Is it not a joy to have friends come from afar?*
- *A gentleman makes friends through being cultivated, but looks to friends for support in benevolence (goodwill).*

**This relationship was added after the death of Confucius.**

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# CONFUCIAN CODE OF RELATIONSHIPS

## Heirarchy of Professions under Confucianism:

- **Ruler**
- **Scholars**
- **Peasants (Farmers)**
- **Artisans and Merchants**



# THE CONFUCIAN VIRTUES

- ***Ren*** – Be polite.
- ***Li*** – Have good manners.
- ***Shu*** – Think of others.
- ***Wen*** – Be cultured.



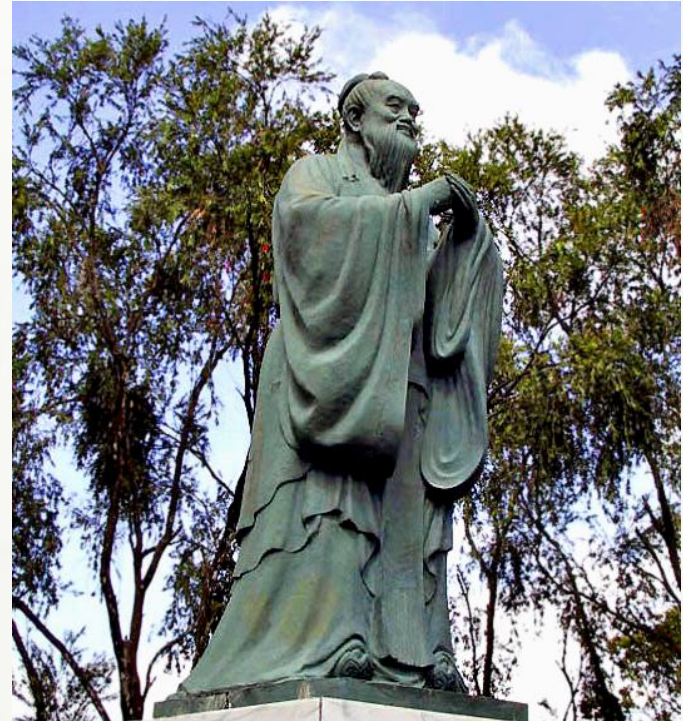
## VIRTUE: REN

- It is translated in numerous ways: sympathy, empathy, benevolence, kindness, and consideration. One must be considerate of the other person through one's actions and words. Be polite.



# LI – GOOD MANNERS

**This word relates to doing what is appropriate for the situation. For each situation, there are appropriate words to say, proper ways to dress and correct things to do. Self-control is a sign of strength. In Western culture, which values individualism, the notion of li might seem oppressive.**



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# SHU – BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHERS



**The common translation of shu is reciprocity, but its essence addresses the question, how will my action affect the other person? One is to consider his/her actions from the other person's viewpoint.**

# WEN – BE CULTURED



The term wen means “culture” and includes all the arts. Confucianism has a special love for poetry and literature, as well as a fondness for calligraphy, painting and music. The educated person is expected to not only have knowledge of these arts but also to have an amateur skill in them as well.



## *THE CARDINAL VALUES FOR PERFECT HUMANITY*

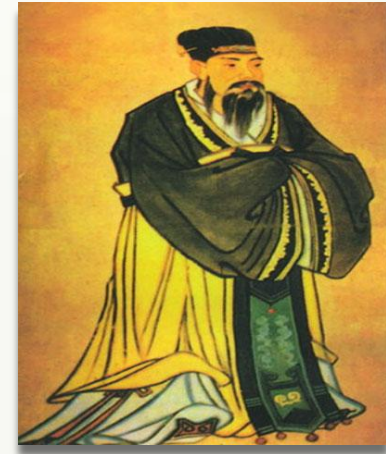
- **Jen** – Benevolence in terms of sympathy for others.
- **Yi** – Duty reflected in the shame felt after doing something wrong.
- **Li** – Manners and proper behavior.
- **Chih** – Wisdom in knowing what is right v. wrong.
- **Hsin** – Loyalty and good faith.

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# JUNZI – SUPERIOR MAN (THE GENTLEMAN)

## Factors of High Station of Virtue:

- *When he sees, he sees clearly and without prejudice.*
- *When he listens, he hears everything without twisting the speakers words.*
- *When he looks at the world, his face is kind and sympathetic.*
- *When you observe his manners, you see that he is always respectful.*





# JUNZI – SUPERIOR MAN (THE GENTLEMAN)

## Factors of High Station of Virtue (Continued):

- *When he speaks, his is serious.*
- *When he is in doubt, he asks questions.*
- *When he is angry, he considers the consequences before he acts.*
- *When he sees the chance for gain, he always considers the right and wrong of his actions.*





## FILIAL PIETY

- This is the MOST important Confucian duty.
- Follow the teachings of the elders and the elders have the duty to teach the young.
- Confucius taught to worship one's parents while they were living and honor them after their death.
- In ancient times, a son was expected to honor his deceased father by occupying a hut by his grave and abstaining from meat, wine and sex for 25 months.



## HONORING THE ANCESTORS

- Confucius stated that the afterlife was beyond human comprehension.
- Ancestor worship is one of the oldest practiced traditions in China that pre-dates Confucius.
- Filial Piety, to Confucius, is about the living.
- Neo-Confucianism incorporated formal ancestor worship (temples) and detailed genealogical record-keeping.



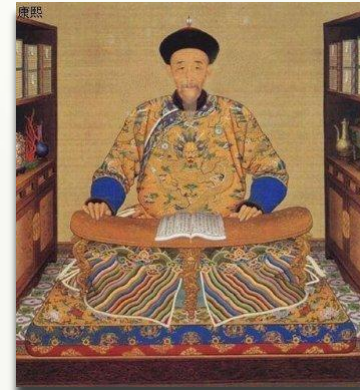
## ON GOVERNING

- ***“If you govern by regulations and keep them in order by punishment, the people will avoid trouble but have no sense of shame. If you govern them by moral influence, and keep them in order by a code of manners, they will have a sense of shame and will come to you of their own accord.”***

# THE MANDATE OF HEAVEN – *TIAN MING*

## Four principles of the Mandate of Heaven:

- *The right to rule is granted by Heaven.*
- *There is only one Heaven therefore there can be only one ruler.*
- *The right to rule is based on the virtue of the ruler.*
- *The right to rule is not limited to one dynasty.*





# THE IDEAL GOVERNMENT

- **First Priority:** Confidence of the people/subjects.
- **Second Priority:** Enough food for the people/subjects.
- **Third Priority:** Enough arms to protect the people/subjects.

*Without a virtuous leader that holds the confidence of his subjects, it is not worth sustaining or defending.*

# SUBJECTS OF CONFUCIAN SCHOOLS

**Socratic Method** – The right to question and argue points with the teacher, respectfully, of course.

- Poetry
- Archery
- Music
- Rites



# HIS LEGACY – NEO (NEW) CONFUCIANISM



Many philosopher came after Confucius and preached his words, but with some changes. Scholars such as Mencius, Zhu Xi, among many other in China, Korea, and Japan, blended Confucianism with Taoism, Buddhism, and Shintoism to form a new form of Confucianism . Hence the word Neo-Confucianism.