

THE
WISDOM
OF
CONFUCIUS

Edited and translated
with notes by
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big proportions. (Probably a proverb, like "A fat man is good-natured.") Therefore a superior man must make his will sincere.

V. ON SETTING THE HEART RIGHT AND PERSONAL CULTIVATION

What is meant by saying that "the cultivation of the personal life depends on setting one's heart right" is this: When one is upset by anger, then the heart is not in its right place; when one is disturbed by fear, then the heart is not in its right place; when one is blinded by love, then the heart is not in its right place; when one is involved in worries and anxieties, then the heart is not in its right place (or the mind has lost its balance). When the mind isn't there, we look but do not see, listen but do not hear and eat but do not know the flavor of the food. This is what is meant by saying that the cultivation of the personal life depends on setting the heart right.

VI. ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERSONAL AND FAMILY LIFE

What is meant by saying that "the regulation of the home life depends on the cultivation of one's personal life" is this: People usually lose their sense of judgment toward those whom they love, toward those whom they despise or dislike, toward those whom they fear, toward those whom they pity and toward those whom they pamper or are proud of. Therefore, there are few people in this world who can see the bad in those whom they

like and see the good in those whom they dislike. Hence the saying that "People do not know their own children's faults, as they do not know the imperceptible growth of the rice plants in their fields." That is why it is said that those who do not cultivate their personal life cannot regulate their home life.

VII. ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAMILY AND NATIONAL LIFE

What is meant by the saying that "those who would order their national life must set about ordering their home life" is this: There is no one who fails in teaching the members of his own family and yet is capable of teaching others outside the family. Therefore the superior man spreads his culture to the entire nation by merely remaining at home. The teaching of filial piety is a preparation for serving the ruler of the state; the teaching of respect to one's elder brothers is a preparation for serving all the elders of the country; and the teaching of kindness in parents is a training for ruling over the people. In the *Announcement to K'ang*, it is said, "Act as if you were watching over an infant." No girl ever needs to learn about nursing a baby before she marries. If your instinct is correct (or sound or normal), you will not be far from the highest ideal, although you may not exactly achieve it. When the individual families have learned kindness, then the whole nation has learned kindness. When the individual families have learned courtesy, then the whole nation has learned courtesy.

When one man is greedy or avaricious, then the whole country is plunged into disorder. Such is the law of things. That is why it is said that "A single word may spoil an affair, and a single man can set the country in order." The Emperors Yao and Shun set an example of kindness to the world and the people followed them. The Emperors Chieh and Chou set an example of cruelty to the world, and the people also followed them. The people did not follow what they commanded, if their command was contradicted by what they themselves did. Therefore, the superior man searches himself first before he demands it of others, and makes sure first that he himself is not a transgressor before he forbids transgressions to others. There is never a man who does not apply the principle of reciprocity (or the Golden Rule) in laying the foundation for his own personal conduct, and yet is able to influence others to his way of thinking. Therefore, the ordering of the national life depends on the regulation of one's home life.

The *Book of Songs* says, "Look at that peach tree, so fresh and pretty! How green and thick are its leaves! The girl (a princess) is going to her husband's house, and she will live in harmony with the people of her husband's home." By living in harmony with the people in one's home, one is qualified then to be an example to the people of the nation. Again the *Book of Songs* says, "They (the rulers) live in harmony with their elder brothers and their younger brothers." By living in harmony with their elder and younger brothers, they are then qualified to serve as examples to the people of the

nation. The *Book of Songs* also says, "The deportment of the prince is all correct, and he set a country in order." Because he himself served as a worthy example as a father, son, an elder brother and a younger brother, therefore the people took him for their model. That is why it is said the "Ordering of the national life depends upon regulating one's home life."

VIII. ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NATIONAL LIFE AND WORLD PEACE

What is meant by saying that "the restoration of peace in the world depends on ordering the national life" is this: When those in authority are respectful toward the old people, then the common people learn to be good sons. When those in authority show respect to their superiors, then the common people learn respect and humility. When those in authority show kindness to the young and helpless, then the common people do not follow the opposite course. Therefore the superior man (or prince) has a principle with which, as with a measuring square, he may regulate his conduct.

What a man dislikes in his superiors, let him not display in his own dealings with his inferiors; what he dislikes in his inferiors, let him not display in his service to his superiors; what he dislikes in those in front of him, let him not display toward those behind; what he dislikes in those following behind, let him not display toward those in front; what he dislikes in those on his right, let him not display toward those on his left; and