

The Ethics of Confucius

By

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This book first published 2022

Ethics International Press Ltd, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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Print Book ISBN: 978-1-80441-004-2

eBook ISBN: 978-1-80441-005-9

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INTRODUCTION

The recent appearance of American, British, and French fleets in the South China Sea marked the beginning of a new era in the West, in which a new coalition is being formed to confront the ever-aggressive Chinese Communist regime claiming sovereignty over said sea and challenging the established order of the world. A tide of public opinion in the United States based on bi-partisan consensus has now turned against the Chinese Communist Party: "China... is the only competitor potentially capable of combining its economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power to mount a sustained challenge to a stable and open international system."¹ President Joe Biden of the United States in his "Interim National Security Strategic Guidance" has aptly described Communist China as the "competitor," a euphemism for "enemy." In the past few decades, unscrupulous politicians in America have ingratiated themselves with the Chinese Communist regime, acceding to nearly every request they had made, but no more. The United States has now decidedly reached a national consensus on curbing the ever-oppressive power of the Chinese Communist regime.

A titled Stanford physics professor from China, who had served, despite his professed Christian faith, the interests of the Communist regime, was found dead at the age of fifty-five, with the rumor ascribing his death to the US Government: "Zhang's death may be related to rising U.S.-China tensions and Zhang's involvement with Chinese business and government."² In its decision to stop the aggression of the Communist regime, the US Government not only targeted Chinese but also Caucasian professors. In January 2020, the chairman of Harvard University's Chemistry Department was arrested for aiding the Communist regime: "The Department of Justice announced today that the Chair of Harvard University's Chemistry and Chemical Biology Department [Charles Lieber] and two Chinese nationals have been charged in connection with aiding the People's Republic of China."³ Aside from the private sector, the Chinese Communist

¹ The White House, "Interim National Security Strategic Guidance," p. 8. <<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/NSC-1v2.pdf>>.

² Berber Jin, "Following Stanford Physics Professor's Passing, Rumors of Ties to Chinese Government Emerge," *The Stanford Daily*, 30 December 2018 <<https://www.stanforddaily.com/2018/12/30/following-stanford-physics-professors-passing-rumors-of-ties-to-chinese-government-emerge/>>.

³ The United States Department of Justice, "Harvard University Professor and Two Chinese Nationals Charged in Three Separate China Related Cases," *Justice News*, 28 January 2020 <<https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/harvard-university-professor-and-two-chinese-nationals-charged-three-separate-china-related>>.

regime has succeeded in infiltrating the US Government as well: "Candace Marie Claiborne, a former employee of the U.S. Department of State, was sentenced today to 40 months in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of \$40,000 for conspiracy to defraud the United States, by lying to law enforcement and background investigators, and hiding her extensive contacts with, and gifts from, agents of the People's Republic of China, in exchange for providing them with internal documents from the U.S. State Department."¹

In January 2021, President Biden made arrangements for his presidential inauguration ceremony in such a diplomatic way that the Taiwanese representative attended while the ambassador from the People's Republic of China abstained. On March 15, 2021, the prime ministers of Australia, India, and Japan met with President Biden to discuss all the important issues relating to the Chinese Communist regime without mentioning China by name. Evidently, another coalition is also being formed in the East, which may function as a small NATO in relation to the Communist regime. On March 18, 2021, the US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken exchanged verbal blows with the Chinese Communist delegates in Anchorage, Alaska, USA.² Some two months later, on May 25, President Biden ordered that his intelligence community report to him in three months on whether the Chinese Communist regime deliberately created the COVID-19 virus in their lab, which has killed over 800,000 Americans and caused tremendous social and economic disruption worldwide,³ for the ultimate destruction of Western Powers.⁴ Handicapped from the outset by the recalcitrant Communist Party officials' refusal to disclose the necessary data, the US intelligence community is divided over its findings: "At least one U.S. intelligence agency believes the Covid-19 virus could have emerged from a lab accident in Wuhan, China, but the U.S. intelligence community remains divided

¹ The United States Department of Justice, "Former State Department Employee Sentenced for Conspiring with Chinese Agents," *Justice News*, 28 January 2020 <<https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/former-state-department-employee-sentenced-conspiring-chinese-agents>>.

² Jennifer Hansler, Nicole Gaouette, and Kylie Atwood, "US and China trade barbs after Blinken warns of need to respect global order or face a 'more violent world,'" CNN, 18 March 2021 <<https://www.cnn.com/2021/03/18/politics/blinken-sullivan-china-alaska-meetings/index.html>>.

³ Henrik Pettersson, Byron Manley, and Sergio Hernandez, "Tracking Covid-19's global spread," CNN, 27 December 2021 <<https://edition.cnn.com/interactive/2020/health/coronavirus-maps-and-cases/>>.

⁴ Steven Nelson, "Biden orders spy agencies to review whether COVID-19 came from Wuhan lab," *New York Post*, 26 May 2021 <<https://nypost.com/2021/05/26/biden-orders-90-day-review-of-covid-origins-lab-leak-theory/>>.

on the origins of the virus.”¹ The fact that Communist China has rejected the World Health Organization’s repeated requests to probe further into the origins of the virus gives considerable weight to a conspiracy theory.² Understandably, President Biden is determined to pursue the case until the truth is fully revealed: “We will also continue to press the PRC to adhere to scientific norms and standards, including sharing information and data from the earliest days of the pandemic, protocols related to biosafety, and information from animal populations. We must have a full and transparent accounting of this global tragedy. Nothing less is acceptable.”³ Echoing the ever-strengthening anti-Communist sentiments in the United States, Canadian Premier Justin Trudeau meanwhile has also requested the resignation of Canada’s ambassador to China, a Chinese Communist sympathizer: “‘Last night I asked for and accepted John McCallum’s resignation as Canada’s Ambassador to China.”⁴

The aversion to the Chinese Communist regime appears to have taken root in Europe as well: “In Australia, the United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, the United States, South Korea, Spain and Canada, negative views [about China] have reached their highest points since the Center began polling on this topic more than a decade ago.”⁵ One of the first few European nations to open the Confucius Institute, Sweden has also become the first nation in Europe to close down all the institutes bearing the same name throughout her land: “The deteriorating bilateral ties between

¹ Ken Dilanian, “One U.S. intel agency believes Covid probably emerged from lab accident in China,” NBC NEWS, 27 August 2021 <<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/one-us-intel-agency-believes-covid-probably-emerged-from-lab-accident-in-china/ar-AANOYf6>>.

² Pratyush Kotoky, “COVID-19 origin: China rejects further WHO probe, calls it ‘political’,” NewsBytes, August 13, 2021 <<https://www.newsbytesapp.com/news/world/china-rejects-renewed-who-probe-on-covid-19-origin/story>>.

³ The White House Briefing Room, “Statement by President Joe Biden on the Investigation into the Origins of COVID-19,” 27 August 2021 <<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/08/27/statement-by-president-joe-biden-on-the-investigation-into-the-origins-of-covid-%e2%81%a019/>>.

⁴ Catharine Tunney, “John McCallum fired as ambassador to China amid diplomatic crisis,” Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 27 January 2019 <<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/mccallum-out-ambassador-1.4994492>>.

⁵ Laura Silver, Kat Devlin, and Christine Huang, “Unfavorable Views of China Reach Historic Highs in Many Countries,” Pew Research Center, 6 October 2020 <<https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/10/06/unfavorable-views-of-china-reach-historic-highs-in-many-countries/>>: “Views of China have grown more negative in recent years across many advanced economies, and unfavorable opinion has soared over the past year, a new 14-country Pew Research Center survey shows. Today, a majority in each of the surveyed countries has an unfavorable opinion of China.”

Sweden and China has resulted in closure of all Confucius Institutes in Sweden – making the Scandinavian country the first country in Europe to close all institutes and classrooms.”¹ The recent appearance of American, British, and French fleets in the South China Sea as mentioned earlier not only commanded the support of European nations but also countries across the globe:

Over the coming 28 weeks, from May to December 2021, we will see our carrier strike group travel over 26,000 nautical miles from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea, from the Gulf of Aden to the Arabian Sea and from the Indian Ocean to the Philippine Sea. Besides the full integration of units from the UK, US and the Netherlands, the carrier strike group will operate with air and maritime forces from a wide number of international partners including Australia, Canada, New Zealand, France, Japan, the United Arab Emirates, Denmark, Greece, Italy, Turkey, Israel, India, Oman and the Republic of Korea.”²

Never in human history has a naval operation seen the participation of so many nations for so long a period of time. Even Lithuania, which is situated 3820 thousand miles away from China at the western end of Russia, began to identify Communist China in 2019 as its potential enemy for the first time ever in its history: “Lithuania published its National Threat Assessment 2019, an intelligence report that listed China as a security threat for the first time.”³ The world appears to have suddenly awakened from a deep slumber to its perils.

For the first time in history, the G-7 Summit Communiqué concerns itself specifically with the threat the Chinese Communist regime poses to its century-old nemesis the Republic of China, commonly known as Taiwan: “We underscore the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait, and encourage the peaceful resolution of cross-Strait issues. We remain seriously concerned about the situation in the East and South China Seas and strongly oppose any unilateral attempts to change the status quo

¹ Sophia Flittner, “Sweden has closed all Confucius Institutes and Classrooms,” *ScandAsia*, 20 May 2020 <<https://scandasia.com/sweden-has-closed-all-confucius-institutes-and-classrooms/>>.

² George Allison, “British Carrier Strike Group to sail through South China Sea,” *UKDJ*, 28 April 2021 <<https://ukdefencejournal.org.uk/british-carrier-strike-group-to-sail-through-south-china-sea/>>.

³ “Lithuania-Taiwan Relations,” *Wikipedia*, 13 August 2021 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lithuania%E2%80%93Taiwan_relations>. Cf. State Security Department of the Republic of Lithuania and Second Investigation Department under the Ministry of National Defence, “National Threat Assessment,” <<https://www.vsd.lt/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/2019-Gresmes-internetui-EN.pdf>>.

and increase tensions.”¹ Apparently at the behest of the United States, Japan has so amended her defense policy in July 2021 that she could—for the first time in her post-war history—bring Taiwan under her protective umbrella: “Japan has vowed to join the U.S. in defending Taiwan if it is invaded by China because - it said - Japan could be next.”² The purpose of this monumental change in Japanese defense strategy is evidently to enable the Japanese troops to come legitimately to the aid of Taiwan, helping it hold off the envisioned Communist invasion, before the US forces at the naval base of Guam, which is situated 1711 miles away from Taiwan, could reach the said isle for a timely counterstrike. To strengthen its defensive capability, the United States has also formed in September 2021 a new alliance with Great Britain and Australia, coining the new acronym AUKUS.³ As Great Britain refused to let German battleships break out into the Atlantic Ocean during World War II, so the United States feels anxious lest the Chinese naval strike forces may occupy Taiwan and use it as a bridgehead to sally forth into the Pacific Ocean.

The sudden rise of Taiwan to strategic pre-eminence is due, not so much to the politicians’ sense of righteousness, which appears to have changed little over time, as to the dramatic advancements of the semiconductor manufacturing technologies particularly including those of computer chips in Taiwan: “U.S. fabless companies now almost exclusively rely on Asian producers for leading-edge, 7-nm-and-below chip production, something that has been highlighted by policymakers as a national security concern.”⁴ Self-interest or the national interest evidently motivates the West to treat Taiwan favorably. Politicians in the West especially in America have now woken up to the stark reality that if China gets to control Taiwan’s facilities to produce the most advanced computer chips, it may become the world’s hegemon in this century and thereby bring the United States and other nations to their knees: “U.S. officials and lawmakers have underscored the potential security implications of the country’s reliance on other countries

¹ The White House Briefing Room, “Carbis Bay G-7 Summit Communiqué,” 13 June 2021 <<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/06/13/carbis-bay-g7-summit-communication/>>.

² Ap, Reuters, and Charlotte Mitchell, “Japan vows to defend Taiwan alongside the US if China invades,” *Daily Mail*, 6 July 2021 <<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/japan-vows-to-defend-taiwan-alongside-the-us-if-china-invades/ar-AALPZ4v>>.

³ The White House, “Joint Leaders Statement on AUKUS,” 15 September 2021 <<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/09/15/joint-leaders-statement-on-aukus/>>.

⁴ SIA (Semiconductor Industry Association), “2020 State of the US Semiconductor Industry,” p. 12, <<https://www.semiconductors.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/2020-SIA-State-of-the-Industry-Report-FINAL-1.pdf>>.

for semiconductors. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said in February that ‘semiconductor manufacturing is a dangerous weak spot in our economy and in our national security.’”¹ Holding a computer chip between his thumb and index finger in the Oval Office on April 12, 2021, President Biden issued a blunt and grievous warning to the United States in general and the US semiconductor industry in particular: “We’ve been falling behind on research and development and manufacturing... We have to step up our game.”² The US Government has recently taken punitive actions against some companies in Taiwan, which had provided Communist China with the necessary chips for them to deliver, among others, the spaceships into outer space and ballistic missiles to military targets: “The Department of Justice today announced that United Microelectronics Corporation, Inc. (UMC), a Taiwan semiconductor foundry, pleaded guilty to criminal trade secret theft and was sentenced to pay a \$60 million fine, in exchange for its agreement to cooperate with the government in the investigation and prosecution of its co-defendant, a Chinese state-owned-enterprise.”³ Moreover, the largest semiconductor company in Taiwan has been persuaded recently by the US Government to build a new plant in Arizona with the capability to produce a hundred thousand computer chips every month, using the most advanced 5 nanometer (0.000,000,005 m) technology: “Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company has selected Arizona for its new advanced semiconductor factory.”⁴ Barely a few months ago, when the Semiconductor Industry Association, part of whose mission is to counsel the US Government, presented its report, “2020 State of the US Semiconductor Industry,” in the early part of 2021 on the future of the industry, 10 nanometer technology was still viewed as the cutting edge of industrial development: “Today’s most advanced ICs for leading-edge logic applica-

¹ Lauren Feiner and Thomas Franck, “White House set to host Google, Intel CEOs to discuss computer chip supply chain,” CNBC, 9 April 2021 <<https://www.cnbc.com/2021/04/09/white-house-set-to-host-google-intel-ceos-to-discuss-computer-chip-supply-chain.html>>.

² Steven Overly, “Why the president can’t quickly solve the computer chip shortage,” *Politico*, 12 April 2021 <<https://www.politico.com/news/2021/04/12/chip-shortage-president-biden-481079>>.

³ US Department of Justice, “Taiwan Company Pleads Guilty To Trade Secret Theft In Criminal Case Involving PRC State-Owned Company,” *Justice News*, 28 October 2020 <<https://www.justice.gov/usao-ndca/pr/taiwan-company-pleads-guilty-trade-secret-theft-criminal-case-involving-prc-state-owned>>.

⁴ Office of Doug Ducey, “TSMC to Build Advanced Semiconductor Factory in Arizona,” 14 May 2020 <<https://azgovernor.gov/governor/news/2020/05/tsmc-build-advanced-semiconductor-factory-arizona>>. Originally, TSMC planned to produce only twenty-thousand chips per month; later, apparently under the pressure of the US Government, TSMC agreed to raise the manufacturing output to one hundred thousand per month.

tions use 10 nanometer technology and pack over 20 billion transistors on chips about the size of a quarter.”¹ Within only a few months’ time, Taiwan has already succeeded in developing 5 and even 2 nanometer technologies: “As Intel Corp. gears up to challenge established foundry leaders, Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co. (TSMC), the leading chip foundry, is making moves to keep its competitive edge by getting approval to build a 2 nm fab in Hsinchu, Taiwan.”² In the struggle between the United States and China for survival or supremacy, Taiwan obviously will play an indispensable role in the years to come.

Like politicians, many Western tycoons have also descended upon China, eager to exploit the cheap labor and share the market therein. The result is by no means a tale of invariable success. For example, the world’s largest electric vehicle company, Tesla, had cherished the prospect of booming profits after it began its venture in China: “Elon Musk celebrated Tesla’s new, cozy relationship with the Chinese regime on a trip to Beijing, where he met with top government officials and was treated like a rock star by the local media.”³ No sooner had Tesla settled into the new environment than the Communist regime’s sociopolitical screws began to tighten on the company, which ended in its unconditional surrender to the Communist demand: “Tesla issued a series of increasingly contrite late-night statements, from Monday’s ‘no compromise’ to Tuesday’s ‘apology and self-inspection.’ By Wednesday night, Tesla said it was ‘working with regulators for investigation.’”⁴ On the home front in the United States, Tesla fared no better at present. The adulatory remark by Tesla’s founder Elon Musk on the Communist regime sits ill with the American public: “Elon Musk has come under fire for praising China and its economic prosperity as ‘truly amazing’ on the 100th anniversary of the Communist Party’s rule.”⁵ His

¹ SIA (Semiconductor Industry Association), “2020 State of the US Semiconductor Industry,” p. 9, <<https://www.semiconductors.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/2020-SIA-State-of-the-Industry-Report-FINAL-1.pdf>>.

² Peter Brown, “TSMC plans to build 2 nm chip fab in Taiwan,” *Electronics 360*, 30 July 2021 <<https://electronics360.globalspec.com/article/17005/tsmc-plans-to-build-2-nm-chip-fab-in-taiwan>>.

³ Charles Morris, “Tesla Complicated and Special History in China,” *CleanTechnica*, 19 February 2021 <<https://cleantechnica.com/2021/02/19/teslas-complicated-unusual-history-in-china/>>.

⁴ Reuters, “Tesla’s bad week in China was months in the making,” *MSN*, 25 April 2021 <<https://www.msn.com/en-us/autos/news/tesla-s-bad-week-in-china-was-months-in-the-making/ar-BB1g2l8R>>.

⁵ Emily Crane, “Elon Musk is slammed for praising China’s economic prosperity as ‘truly amazing’ on 100th anniversary of Communist rule: ‘He’s just repeating propaganda from a genocidal regime,’” *Daily Mail*, 1 July 2021 <<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9746669/Elon-Musk-slammed-praising-China-truly-amazing>>.

close partnership with Communist China may have even cost him the opportunity to develop the electric vehicle industry in cooperation with the US Government: "President Joe Biden celebrated ambitious electric vehicles goals by automakers at the White House on Thursday. But he did so without the world's largest maker of EVs: Tesla."¹ Tesla now may be compelled to fight a losing battle both at home and abroad in Communist China if it chooses to continue its partnership with the Communist regime.

While the world powers in the West as represented by the United States and Western Europe are changing their perspective on the Chinese Communist regime, my book which changes the orthodox perspective on Confucius is brought to fruition to coincide with the dramatic turn of world events. The timing of the book could not be more perfect and vital. In offering to anatomize the traditional Chinese mentality, this book may fulfill the role of helping major Western powers, including the United States and Great Britain, to hasten the demise of the autocracy championed by the Chinese Communist regime. In the past, many have noted the hideous effectiveness of the Communist Party machine in exerting control over China and the Chinese people; none has perceived, however, the equally, if not even more, effective Chinese familial system based on Confucius' teachings in keeping the Chinese people under firm control. Working side by side with the bureaucracy of the government to keep a tight rein on the Chinese people, the ruling system based on the family was first crafted by the Duke of Zhou (? -1032 BC) and his feudal lords, and then refined and justified centuries later by Confucius. In a most intricate way, China had been ruled for more than three thousand years up to modern times jointly by two systems, one governmental and the other familial.

After overthrowing the Qing dynasty, Sun Yat-sen availed himself of the Soviet assistance, which helped to plant a third ruling system based on political affiliations in China: "In his frustration, he found the sparkling success of the Bolshevik Revolution doubly inspiring."² Under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek, the Republic of China operated three ruling systems based on the Nationalist Party (Kuomintang), state, and family, whereas the People's Republic of China under Mao's dictatorship utilizes similarly three systems based on the Communist Party, state, and family. Since the creation of the familial system as a ruling machine, it leads,

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¹ Chris Isidore, "Tesla just got snubbed by Biden's electric vehicle summit," MSN, 5 August 2021 <<https://www.msn.com/en-us/money/news/tesla-just-got-snubbed-by-biden-s-electric-vehicle-summit/ar-AAMZ2aE>>.

² Immanuel Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 519.

guides, and informs the bureaucratic system of the government. Instead of one controlling machine, the Chinese Communist regime therefore avails itself of three ruling systems, namely, family, party, and state. Although the ideologies of the Nationalist and Communist Parties have nominally eclipsed Confucianism in modern times, Confucianism remains in reality the predominant force in the life of nearly every Chinese, guiding, informing, and controlling nevertheless their thoughts and actions alike.

Like proselytizing Communism, which aims for the subjugation of the West based on capitalism, Confucianism seeks to banish all the other philosophies which are different from itself. Confucius himself viewed all the ideologies that differ from his theory as baleful: “The Master said, ‘The study of different doctrines is injurious indeed 子曰：「攻乎異端，斯害也已！」”¹ allowing no disciples of his to pursue a different way of life from the one he promoted. To achieve his purpose, Confucius would not hesitate to slaughter even innocent performers such as the singers, dancers, and dwarfs whose mission was to entertain the feudal lords at a peace conference. Since Confucianism was exalted by Emperor Wu of Han (141-87 BC) at the expense of all the other philosophical schools more than two millennia ago,² Confucius has towered over all the other thinkers as an infallible human being, if not a demigod, in Chinese culture. None has consequently exerted in Chinese history a deeper and more lasting influence upon Chinese culture than Confucius. Understandably, following the government policy in favor of Confucianism, traditional scholars have routinely painted a flattering portrait of Confucius, thereby leading inevitably to the distortion of Confucius’ philosophy as it devolved upon the modern generation. Instead of a flattering portrait, the image of Confucius this book portrays will be as objective as my sentiments prescribe and as faithful to the historical character as my intellect permits.

¹ “Weizheng,” *Lunyu* 論語, *Sishu jizhu* 四書集註, annotated by Zhu Xi (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1966), chap. 2, p. 10. Unless otherwise indicated, all the translations in this book are mine. When a passage is cited from the *Lunyu* (*Analects*), the name of the chapter along with the page number is given so as to facilitate the process of locating the original text. Following the format of biblical citation, the current format of citing a passage from the *Analects* relying on the numbers of chapters and passages can be time-consuming and confusing. Unlike the Bible, which provides a specific number for every verse therein, the original text of *Lunyu* offers no such convenience. A reader must count and sometimes recount the passages from the beginning of the chapter to the passage cited. The process of counting and re-counting, especially when the citations are many, can be lengthy and tedious. Therefore, I follow the conventional wisdom of offering the names of the chapter and the page number for the documentation.

² Ban Gu 班固, “Wudi” in *Hanshu* 漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1970), vol. 1, *juan* 6, p. 212.

Like all orthodox scholars who received a Confucian education, Mencius (372-289 BC) had been trained as a staunch defender of Confucian tenets and as such fully conditioned to denounce adverse criticisms of Confucianism or, better still, to mount a counterattack against any ideas hostile to Confucian teachings: "Whoever is able to speak against Yang and Mo is a disciple of the sage 能言距楊墨者，聖人之徒也."¹ The autocratic spirit of Confucius' philosophy arrested the particular attention of the renowned Confucian Xunzi (c. 316-c. 238 BC), who gave a lengthy account of Confucius' rationale for the execution of his political foe, who committed no crime. His detailed analysis of Confucius' autocratic decision in turn inspired his disciple Li Si (280-208 BC) in his capacity later as a prime minister of the Qin dynasty to initiate the policy of eliminating all thoughts that are out of line with his own. Modeling his approach on Li Si's policy inspired by Confucius, Mencius, and Xunzi, the influential Confucian scholar Dong Zhongshu (179-104 BC) of the Han dynasty suggested that "Confucianism alone be exalted, and all other hundred schools of philosophy be banished 獨尊儒術，罷黜百家."² Confucianism not only aims for its own ascendancy but also for the elimination of all the divergent ideas, forces, and powers. Except for a few interruptions, all the governments after the Han dynasty continued to pursue this selfsame policy of exalting Confucianism at the expense of all other schools of philosophy.

Since Emperor Wu of Han exalted Confucianism at the suggestion of Dong Zhongshu, the philosophy of Confucius as devolved upon the modern generation has mostly been idolized and distorted by the Chinese governments and scholars alike throughout the past two thousand years or so. All orthodox scholars who adhered to the established ideologies of the governments in the bygone eras have eulogized Confucius' teachings to a man. In the eyes of these conventional scholars, as mentioned, Confucius was a demigod and his philosophy without blemish and beyond all praise. Falling under the Chinese influence, all Westerners who are enamored of Confucius have understandably paid unfailing tribute to him so much so that their devotion to his thought never ceases to impress even the staunch Confucian scholars in China. The American poet and critic Ezra Pound, who translated the Confucian treatises *The Great Digest*, *The Unwobbling Pivot*, and the *Analects*, served Benito Mussolini, and supported Adolph Hitler during World War II, will always be seen as a cultural marvel in the eyes of Chinese Confucians. The winsome, if not fulsome, title of Michael Nylan and Thomas A. Wilson's book, *Lives of Confucius: Civilization's Greatest Sage through the Ages*, may even make some solemn Confucian scholars in China blush in embarrassment.

¹ Mencius, in *Sishu jizhu*, chap. 6, p. 92.

² Ban Gu, "Wudi," *Hanshu*, vol. 1, *juan* 6, p. 212.

Writing truthfully and critically about Confucius in China and the West alike therefore can be starkly unpopular and odiously unpalatable in the academic world dominated by Confucians. However adverse the response may be, a critic true to his mission, unlike an unprincipled politician seeking personal gain, must of course tell the truth before the tribunal of history, in hopes that regret would grip no one at the end of one's journey to Cathay, as it did Ezra Pound:

I have tried to write Paradise
Do not move
Let the wind speak
that is paradise.
Let the Gods forgive what I
have made
Let those I love try to forgive
what I have made. (*The Cantos* CXX)¹

One of the goals of this book is to spare the Western readers who are as devoted as Pound to Confucianism the future agony of falling victim unwittingly to the Confucian maze.

How? By first debunking the more-than-two-thousand-year-old myth that exalts Confucius as "Civilization's Greatest Sage through the Ages." Taking exception to the orthodox view, this study aims to lay bare the essence of Confucius' thinking in its true colors free of adulatory, nay, sycophantic, embellishments compiled over the last two thousand years or so, revealing the contorted complexities of his arguments and exposing the fateful drawbacks of his ideas alike. In debunking the myth surrounding Confucius, I feel it incumbent upon me to dispel some inanities concerning Chinese culture in general and Confucius in particular. Published in 2019 by Oxford University Press, Edward Slinger's view naturally caught my attention:

Hegel and Montesquieu, for instance, believed that the holistic nature of Chinese thought rendered the Chinese people psychologically and politically infantile. The "servile consciousness" of the Chinese, Hegel explained, was the mark of a spiritually immature people, one which "has not yet matured itself so far as to recognize distinctions" (Hegel 1899/2007: 138). On the other hand, thinkers such as Leibniz and Voltaire came to see Chinese mind-body holism, including its supposed lack of distinction between the secular and religious, as precisely the medicine needed to jolt sick European thought out of

¹ Ezra Pound, *The Cantos of Ezra Pound* (New York: New Directions, 1998), p. 803.

its doldrums. Voltaire held up Chinese thought as an existence proof that one could have a robust ethics without religion, while Leibniz saw a resonance between Chinese matter-spirit holism and his own anti-Cartesian arguments.¹

The citing of such names as Montesquieu, Hegel, Leibniz, and Voltaire, who were non-specialists in Chinese philosophy and culture, in Slingerland's serious study of Confucius and Chinese culture appears to be out of place and fails to conform to the professionalism of scholarship. Should anyone plan to study French and German languages, literatures, philosophies, or cultures, I would be sure to refer the interested student to the aforesaid writers. With regard to the study of the substance of Chinese philosophy and culture, however, the focus of the discourse should be on, not the cited French and German philosophers, but on pertinent Chinese writers. Furthermore, due to the limited contact between Europe and China, the ideas the said eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European thinkers formed about Confucius and Chinese culture are unsurprisingly naïve and childish. Just as the meekness of Jews during the holocaust is not a sign of the spiritual immaturity of the Israelites, so the "servile consciousness" of Chinese cannot be viewed as a mark of "spiritually immature" people. Neither does the so-called "Chinese mind-body holism" exist in mainstream Chinese thought, nor do the Chinese people fail to see the distinctions between body and mind or the secular and religious.² To strengthen the authenticity of his approach, Slingerland as expected introduced some Chinese names. However, the names he cited, such as Zhang Longxi and Zhang Xuezhi, are non-specialists in ancient Chinese philosophy in general and Confucius' thought in particular. A scholar of comparative literature, for example, Zhang Longxi is known in China mainly for his work, 文學·記憶·思想:東西比較隨筆集 (Literature, Memories, and Thoughts: Random Notes on the East and the West),³ desultory remarks about literature and his life tying up the East and the West. By comparison, Zhang Xuezhi's expertise is a little closer to the philosophy of the period before the Qin dynasty (221-207 BC), but again he specializes in the thought of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), which differs from the philosophy of the Pre-Qin era. In a rigorous philosophical study of the substance of ancient Chinese philosophy, as Slingerland strives to make, the discussion should undoubt-

¹ Edward Slingerland, *Mind and Body in Early China: Beyond Orientalism and the Myth of Holism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 2.

² Yang Dongsheng 楊東聲 (Michael Vincent Yang), *Xianqin siwei wenhua yanxi* 先秦思維文化研析 (Taipei: Xuesheng chubanshe, 2019).

³ Zhang Longxi 張隆溪, *Wenxue jiyi sixiang* 文學記憶思想 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2019).

edly engage mainly with the ideas of bone fide specialists. Like any other academic disciplines, ancient Chinese philosophy ought to be studied in a professional fashion. Slingerland's citing of the aforesaid men of letters, East or West, appeared to have breached the fundamental principle of professionalism marking credible scholarship.

Having discussed the unprofessionalism in current scholarship, I shall turn to my own approach. In my endeavor to expound and interpret Confucius' philosophy, I avail myself, when necessary, of the texts written before the Qin Dynasty. Aside from and in competition with Confucianism, many schools of philosophy blossomed during the Warring States period (475-221 BC) preceding the Qin Dynasty. Prominent among these widely divergent schools were Moism 墨家 and Daoism 道家, the unwavering opponents of Confucianism. Free from the ideological control of the state, Moists and Daoists made it their standing mission to attack Confucianism. Despite, or perhaps because of, their stance on the state, Legalists who swear absolute allegiance to a sovereign, also joined Moists and Daoists in their attack upon Confucianism, which espouses a half-hearted, conditional tribute based on self-interest to the head of a state. My detailed analysis of Confucius' philosophy, however, shows the stark reality that the three representative figures of Moist, Daoist, and Legalist schools, Mozi, Zhuangzi, and Hanfeizi, and for the same matter, a good number of critics after them, may be correct after all in their criticisms of Confucius and that Confucianism may be flawed intrinsically. Based partly on the early scholars' criticisms of Confucius and partly on my own observations, my study not only analyzes systematically how Confucius' theory is limited but also why it is flawed—a task which has never been fully and methodically attempted before.

If one may use a word to epitomize the essence of Confucius' philosophy, it is the word "change." Essentially, all tenets in Confucius' theory are subject to change according to self-interest, pending the development of circumstances surrounding them. The fluidity of Confucius' teachings conceivably contributes to the complexity of his theory. The pliant character of Confucius' thought is such that none of his disciples could satisfactorily define the central concept of his philosophy, namely "ren 仁 (humanity)." The failure of his disciples to depict successfully the fundamental idea of his theory not only corroborates the fluid character of Confucius' philosophy on the one hand but also betrays Confucius' intention to keep it resiliently pliant on the other. Understandably, the idea of transcendence holds little, if any, attraction for Confucius. The ever-changing character of Confucius' theory occurs as a result of his focus on secular matters, which are in an incessant state of flux, and on his advocacy of an individual's cultivation

of positive and fruitful relationships with all types of people including the wicked living in such a state of flux. Few animals in the world can be as complex and complicated as human beings, who are capable of creating drastically different personae in an instant, and few issues in a human community can be as unstable and volatile as interpersonal relationships, which require constant attention, adaptation, and re-orientation. This explains why a Confucian classic is titled *Yijing* 易經 (*Book of Changes*). To change like a chameleon in response to the flux is, according to Confucius, a key to success.

Confucius attaches enormous importance to *li* 禮 (etiquette or rites) in his philosophy: “Control yourself and conform to etiquette ... If it does not conform to etiquette, don’t look; if it does not conform to etiquette, don’t listen; if it does not conform to etiquette, don’t speak; if it does not conform to etiquette, don’t act 克己復禮...非禮勿視，非禮勿聽，非禮勿言，非禮勿動.”¹ Like the wheel of a vehicle, the etiquette as prescribed in the *Liji* 禮記 (the *Book of Etiquette*) complements Confucius’ theory in an instrumental fashion. “Without studying etiquette 不學禮” Confucius opined, “One simply cannot stand 無以立.”² Without the said etiquette, Confucius’ teachings would crumble. An objective study of Confucius’ philosophy therefore should always take the *Liji* into proper account. However, due to the appalling character of the etiquette as prescribed in the *Liji*: “The sight of the *Book of Etiquette*, which contains numerous vexing rules, is truly appalling 再看一部《禮儀》[《儀禮》]那種繁瑣的禮儀，真可令今人駭怪，”³ nearly all modern scholars shy away from exploring in depth the specific leverage which ancient etiquette exercises in the interpretation of Confucius’ theory. A chapter in my book is thus devoted to a discussion of the character of ancient etiquette and its significance to Confucius.

Of the many defects of Confucianism, autocracy stands at the forefront. The most destructive policy regarding Chinese culture that has ever been implemented in Chinese history could have been none other than the exaltation of Confucianism and the banning of all other different philosophical schools as mentioned previously. The exaltation of Communism at the expense of different philosophical ideas is essentially a replica of the policy first established during the reign of Emperor Wu of Han. While nearly every educated Chinese is well aware that the origin of the autocracy of Confucianism in Chinese history can be traced to Dong Zhongshu in the

¹ “Yan Yuan 顏淵” in *Lunyu*, chap. 12, p. 77.

² “Jishi 季氏” in *Lunyu*, chap. 16, p. 118.

³ Hu Shi 胡適, *Zhongguo zhhexueshi dagang: gudai zhhexueshi* 中國哲學史大綱：古代哲學史 (Taipei: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2008), p. 155.

Han dynasty, none realized that its roots are to be found in the very thought of Confucius. As a Confucian scholar, Dong Zhongshu merely gave effective political expression to his Confucian beliefs. To the destruction of such deep-rooted autocracy I devote my book, which aims to prevent Confucius, a curse of China, from becoming the curse of humanity.

Many readers would perhaps like to think that COVID-19 may be the worst disaster Communist China could ever inflict upon the world, which, apart from claiming numerous lives, has drastically altered human behavior. In my view, COVID-19 would only be the tip of an iceberg that foreshadows the full destruction that is yet to come if the Chinese Communist regime triumphed in its struggle for world hegemony. A few years ago, the scientists in Communist China reportedly endeavored to clone human beings with edited genes and supposedly created “at least 30 cloned human embryos,”¹ a new form of life which may prove to be another factor in determining the outcome of the struggle between Western democracies and the Chinese Communist regime for survival and supremacy. Just as the Roman Empire had trained Arminius the Cheruscan in the art of war, an event that led to the total annihilation of three Roman legions,² so the Western nations to their own loss have educated countless Chinese who devoted themselves to the destruction of Western civilization.³ The statement Jesus made in Matthew 7:6 in this case is prophetic: “Μὴ δῶτε τὸ ἅγιον τοῖς κυσίν, μηδὲ βάλητε τοὺς μαργαρίτας ὑμῶν ἔμπροσθεν τῶν χοίρων, μήποτε καταπατήσουσιν αὐτοὺς ἐν τοῖς ποσὶν αὐτῶν καὶ στραφέντες ῥήξωσιν ὑμᾶς Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces” (NIV).⁴ Jesus himself refused to grant a favor

¹ “Chinese ‘have cloned 30 human embryos,’” *Daily Mail*, 22 December 2021 <<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-127836/Chinese-cloned-30-human-embryos.html>>.

² Martin M. Winkler, *Arminius the Liberator: Myth and Ideology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015): “Arminius had the heads of slain legionaries stuck on spears and let his men advance on the Romans displaying them, a psychological stratagem to break their resistance” (p. 28).

³ In July 2021, for the first time since the United States recognized the Chinese Communist regime, the U.S. government systematically denied entry visas to all the Chinese students who are linked to Chinese military organizations: “The United States has revoked visas for more than 1,000 Chinese nationals under a presidential measure denying entry to students and researchers deemed security risks, the State Department said on Wednesday” (Humeyra Pamuk, David Brunnstrom, Ryan Woo, “U.S. cancels visas of more than 1,000 Chinese nationals deemed security risks,” *Reuters*, 15 September 2020 <<https://www.reuters.com/article/usa-china-visas-idUSKBN2602SH>>).

⁴ *The Greek New Testament* (Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1998), p. 22.

to a Gentile woman unless she professed her faith in God and submitted herself to God's people:

καὶ ἰδοὺ γυνὴ Χαναναία ἀπὸ τῶν ὁρίων ἐκείνων ἐξελθοῦσα ἔκραζεν λέγουσα, Ἐλέησόν με, κύριε, υἱὸς Δαυὶδ· ἡ θυγάτηρ μου κακῶς δαιμονίζεται. ὁ δὲ οὐκ ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῇ λόγον. καὶ προσελθόντες οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ ἠρώτουν αὐτὸν λέγοντες, Ἀπόλυσον αὐτήν, ὅτι κράζει ὀπισθεν ἡμῶν. ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν, Οὐκ ἀπεστάλην εἰ μὴ εἰς τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἀπολωλότα οἴκου Ἰσραὴλ. ἡ δὲ ἐλθοῦσα προσεκύνει αὐτῷ λέγουσα, Κύριε, βοήθει μοι. ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν, Οὐκ ἔστιν καλὸν λαβεῖν τὸν ἄρτον τῶν τέκνων καὶ βαλεῖν τοῖς κυναρίοις. ἡ δὲ εἶπεν, Ναί, κύριε, καὶ γὰρ τὰ κυνάρια ἐσθίει ἀπὸ τῶν ψιχίων τῶν πιπτόντων ἀπὸ τῆς τραπέζης τῶν κυρίων αὐτῶν. τότε ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτῇ, Ὡ γύναι, μεγάλη σου ἡ πίστις· γενηθήτω σοι ὡς θέλεις. καὶ ἰάθη ἡ θυγάτηρ αὐτῆς ἀπὸ τῆς ὥρας ἐκείνης.

A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is demon-possessed and suffering terribly." Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, "Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us." He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel." The woman came and knelt before him. "Lord, help me!" she said. He replied, "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs." "Yes it is, Lord," she said. "Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table." Then Jesus said to her, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed at that moment. (Matt 15:22-28)

In Jesus' reply to the Gentile woman, who sought his favor, Jesus compared her to a dog and refused to lend her his assistance for the very reason that the bread was meant for God's believers: "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs." In contradistinction to Jesus' teachings, today's Christians had no qualms about diverting the invaluable resources, which, in Jesus' view, rightfully belong to the faithful children of the Christian kingdom, to the godless subjects of the Chinese Communist regime instead. The biblical exegete Craig A. Evans expressed his puzzlement over the implication of Jesus' teachings concerning showering the unbelievers with favors: "Jesus warns his disciples not to give Gentiles things that are truly holy, much as some Rabbis warn against teaching the Torah to Gentiles. But is this correct? Matthew is not only open to sharing the gospel and the teachings of Jesus to Gentiles, [sic] the risen

Lord expressly commands it.”¹ Evans’ confusion came primarily from his misunderstanding of the dynamic interaction between believers and unbelievers in general and the Gentile’s response or lack thereof to the gospel in particular. As suggested by the word “βάλητε (throw)” in the original context, the pig shows no willingness let alone desire to receive the gospel, which, like the pearl, was inane thrown to such an unworthy creature. Jesus granted the Gentile woman a favor because she willingly sought him, earnestly besought him, and wholeheartedly submitted to him, whereas the dog and swine not only scornfully rejected the favor but, worse still, also savagely attacked the helper.

As Mao Zedong’s wife Jiang Qing declared in the Supreme People’s Court in China when she was standing trial for being a counter-revolutionary: “I am a dog of Chairman Mao. Whoever he wants me to bite, I will bite 我是毛主席的一條狗，他叫我咬誰，我就咬誰.”² She remained defiant even before her death, showing no regret at inflicting pain, suffering, disaster, and death upon millions of people during the Cultural Revolution. Even by the Chinese Communist own standard, she was deemed an unworthy dog. Jesus’ visions of dogs and pigs turning fiercely and ruthlessly upon the believers who waste invaluable resources, which are sorely needed by the children of God, on unbelieving blasphemers of God have proved to be prophetically illuminating.

¹ Craig A. Evans, *Matthew* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 165.

² Li Bihua 李碧華, *Lanping yefang Jiang Qing* 藍蘋夜訪江青 (Hong Kong: Tiandi tushu gongsi, 2013).

AN ILLEGITIMATE CHILD

The influence of Confucius' childhood on his later life cannot be over-emphasized. The ignominious union of his father and mother apparently left an indelible mark on his mind which urged him later in his life, perhaps partly out of an unconscious desire to whitewash his sinful birth, to promote etiquette in a fastidious and fanatical fashion to the disbelief of some of his contemporaries. As he grew up, his suffering during his childhood haplessly hardened his heart toward his community in general as well as the less fortunate and privileged, particularly women. Only when placed in the context of his suffering during childhood does Confucius' slighting view of women make the most sense. His self-centered philosophy about life in general and non-committal approach to the well-being or disaster of the state both derived from the upbringing and hardship in his early life. Therefore, some of the important events in his early life merit a reader's particular attention.

Confucius was born in the state of Lu, a descendant of the royal family of the Shang dynasty (c. 1600- c. 1046 BC). By the time his parents were married, if married at all, his father, Shuliang He 叔梁紇, was already sixty-six years of age, fast approaching the end of his life. A warrior of remarkable physical strength, he was noted once for holding up a descending portcullis, which his enemies had released in order to trap the invading force inside their city, until his troops had broken free and made their escape. Confucius' father first married a woman née Shi 施氏, who bore him nine daughters but no son. Although his concubine gave birth to a son, the child was crippled from birth. Perhaps longing for a healthy male heir, or perhaps simply growing tired of the company of his old mate, or both, he supposedly, according to a conventional account, divorced his first wife and married Confucius' mother née Yan 顏氏. As will be shown later, the said marriage to Yan likely never occurred.

The union of Confucius' parents appeared to have taken place, again if they were ever married, outside their marriage. The renowned work *Shiji* 史記 (Historical Records) indicates vaguely that Confucius might have been born out of wedlock: "He (Shuliang) copulated with the daughter of the Yan family in the field, and thereby sired Confucius 紇與顏氏女野合而生孔子."¹ Concerned lest the adverse effect of the said statement might

¹ Sima Qian 司馬遷, "Kongzi shijia," *Shiji* 史記, annotated by Zhang Dake 張大可 (Xi'an: Sanqin chubanshe, 1990), vol. 2, *juan* 47, p. 1167.

smear Confucius' name, many orthodox scholars later on have interpreted the term “野合 yehe” as an “unruly match,” which is descriptive, in these scholars' view, of an elderly man's marriage to a young lass.¹ This interpretation, however, finds no support in *Liji* 禮記 (the Book of Etiquette), which champions the cause of the elderly people. The fact that a renowned lyricist by the name of Zhang Xian 張先 in the Song dynasty was noted with pronounced goodwill for his effort in his eighties to seek a female companion proves that an elderly man could, if need be, rightfully marry a young woman in ancient China: “Zhang Ziyi (Xian) is at the age of eighty-five; I heard that he is still looking for a concubine 張子野年八十五，尚聞買妾。”² Therefore, the word “野 ye” should refer to, not the breach of the ritual of Confucius' time, but the field in which the union of Confucius' parents occurred. In light of the evidence the *Shiji* presents, Confucius most likely was born out of wedlock, namely, an illegitimate child.

The fact that Confucius was an illegitimate child was corroborated implicitly by a legend that has passed down from ancient times to the current generation. As the legend has it, after Confucius' parents finished praying to the deity of Mount Ni for a son, they descended from the mountain top, and on their journey down, entered a cave to rest. While there, the pregnant mother gave birth to Confucius, and the cave was later named “Master's Cave 夫子洞.”³ A few details in the aforesaid legend sound rather outlandish. First, people normally pray for an heir long before the birth of the child, sometimes even before the mother conceived, as in the case of the biblical figure Hannah: “And she made a vow, saying, “LORD Almighty, if you will only look on your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head” (1 Sam 1:11 NIV). It sounds quite odd, if not unlikely, that Confucius' parents would wait until nearly the last minute before they approached the deity for a son. Second, a long and arduous journey into the mountains when the child was due sounds rather excessive. Third, a good place to rest on a fair day in the mountains is expectedly an open space at the roadside in the shade of a tree. A dark, hidden cave in the mountains may be anything

¹ Sima Zhen 司馬貞, *Shiji suoyin* 史記索引 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), vol. 6, p. 1906; Qian Mu 錢穆, *Kongzi zhuanlue* 孔子傳略 (Taipei: Guangxueshe yinshuguan, 1975), p. 1.

² Wang Wengao 王文誥, *Su Wenzhong gong shi bianzhu jicheng* 蘇文忠公詩編註集成 (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1979), vol. 4, p. 2017. Cf. Yang Dongsheng 楊東聲, *Su Shi de xinlulicheng: yidai zongshi de zuoping shengping yu xiangguan shishi* 蘇軾的心路歷程：一代宗師的作品生平與相關史實 (Taoyuan: National Central University Press; Taipei: Yuanliu Publishing Co., 2017), p. 20.

³ Kuang Yaming 匡亞明, *Kongzi pingzhuan* 孔子評傳 (Ji'nan: Qilu shushe, 1985), p. 37.

but safe. The legend in the current form may thus likely be a beautification of what was originally an odious tale, namely, a comely explanation of the illicit affair of Confucius' parents. The Master's Cave might originally signify, not the place of Confucius' birth, but the place where his parents held their secret tryst or where their union first occurred.

Another odd incident recorded in the *Shiji* appears to confirm the fact that Confucius' parents might not have married at all. When Confucius' mother died, according to the *Shiji*, Confucius had no idea where his father was buried: "Confucius was unclear about the place of his father's tomb because his mother avoided mentioning it 孔子疑其父墓處，母諱之也。"¹ A local resident, who took pity on him, informed him about the site of his father's tomb. Conventional critics have offered the explanation that his mother knew nothing about where his father was buried because she, being young at the time of Shuliang's death, was, according to them, forbidden to attend the funeral.² *The Book of Etiquette* (Liji), however, forbids no widow to attend her husband's funeral on account of her young age. Even if she was forbidden to attend the funeral, which could not have been the case, she could always inquire about the site of her husband's tomb either before or after the funeral. Evidently, she had no interest in finding out the burial site of Confucius' father, nor did she wish, if she was aware of its location, to share the information with Confucius. Similarly odd is the fact that none of his relatives revealed to Confucius his father's burial site. Only an illegitimate son might likely be kept by his own mother and relatives away from his father's tomb during the rest of his mother's life. His status as an illegitimate child also helps explain the departure of his mother along with him from his father's native town, Zou, to Qufu, shortly after his father's death. Had Confucius been a legitimate son, his mother would expectedly have stayed with her in-laws rather than leave his kin, and Confucius himself would have been accepted into his father's family rather than forced to depart with his mother.

A few words need to be said about the idealized, orthodox account of the marriage between Confucius' parents. According to the *Kongzi jiayu* 孔子家語 (Records Kept by the Household of Confucius), Confucius' maternal grandfather Yan Xiang 顏襄 strongly urged his three daughters to marry Confucius' father:

The Yan family had three daughters, the youngest of whom was Zhengzai. The father of the Yan family said to his three daughters:

¹ Sima Qian, "Kongzi shijia," *Shiji*, vol. 2, *juan* 47, p. 1169.

² Sima Zhen, *Shiji suoyin*, vol. 6, p. 1906.

"Although the father and grandfather of the official of Zou were of somewhat low status between nobles and commoners, they were nevertheless the descendants of a sage king. He was ten [Chinese] foot tall and showed great martial prowess among his peers. I have my mind set on it [a marriage]. Although he is advanced in age and stern in temperament, I have no doubt about his character. Who of you would like to marry him?" The two older daughters remained silent, but Zhengzai advanced and said: "I follow your decision. Why should you even ask us?" The father said: "Only you are able to honor me." Consequently, he gave his daughter to him as his wife. 顏氏有三女，其小曰徵在。顏父問三女曰：「陬大夫雖父祖為士，然其先聖王之裔。今其人身長十尺，武力絕倫，吾甚貪之，雖年大性嚴，不足為疑。三子孰能為之妻？」二女莫對。徵在進曰：「從父所制，將何問焉？」父曰：「即爾能矣。」遂以妻之。¹

The prevalence of such an idealized, orthodox account in Chinese academe enabled the tale to make its way into Western sinology with ease. Casting no doubt upon the authenticity of the account in question, Jonathan Clements offered the same old tale with a few variations to Western readers as follows:

The Yan girls' father reminded his daughters that, although the man before them was old, he had had a long and distinguished career. His immediate forebears were "mere scholars", but father Yan also talked up Shuliang's distant aristocratic ancestors in the Shang aristocracy. It would seem that none of this particularly impressed the Yan girls, who regarded the tall old man in stony silence.

Eventually, father Yan reminded his daughters that he was keen on the alliance himself, and asked them straight who was prepared to accept Shuliang's offer of marriage. The elder girls were wise enough to keep their mouths shut, but the youngest, Zheng-zai, retorted sulkily: 'Why do you ask us, father? It is for you to determine.' That was good enough for father Yan, and he promptly told the girl that she would do – the name Zheng-zai can imply someone who is particularly outspoken and argumentative; there is a chance that this was not the first time the girl had answered back.²

¹ "Benxing jie 本姓解" in *Kongzi jiayu* 孔子家語, *Siku quanshu cunmu congshu zibu* 四庫全書存目叢書子部 (Ji'nan: Qilu shushe, 1995), v.1, pp. 74-75.

² Jonathan Clements, *Confucius: A Biography* (Gloucestershire, England: Sutton Publishing, 2008), pp. 8-9.

Unlike what Clements wrote, Shuliang, like his father and grandfather, had a none too impressive career, which failed to impress the father, the two older daughters, and likely the youngest daughter of the Yan family as well. Furthermore, the youngest daughter's reply as registered in the original text of *Kongzi jiayu*, which idolizes Confucius unreservedly, cannot be taken as a sulky remark: "But the youngest, Zheng-zai, retorted sulkily." Zhengzai's answer to her father is in actuality meant to be an expression of filial piety, showing her willingness to sacrifice herself at her father's bidding. Semantically, the daughter's name "徵在 Zhengzai" means "hereby summon or request," rather than, in Clements' words, "someone who is particularly outspoken and argumentative." So much for the introduction of this prevalent, traditional account.

Having presented this orthodox account of Confucius' birth, which is a beautiful, if not pathetic, tale of sacrifice owing to filial piety, I may now proceed to examine its authenticity. Initiated by the father and seconded by the bride herself, the marriage in question seemed to signify nothing but a joyful union. A few questions, however, throw this traditional account into grave doubt. In the prime of his life, Shuliang He was admittedly a warrior of prowess; however, as the patriarch of the Yan family indicated, Shuliang He's life in his late sixties was then on the ebb and his martial prowess might have already vanished. That Confucius' maternal grandfather should make the fading martial prowess of an aging man who would soon bid farewell to the world an important qualification for being his son-in-law is simply unrealistic, if not preposterous. Furthermore, although the founder of the Shang dynasty had been commonly viewed as a sage king, he had already been dead for more than a thousand years by the time Confucius' grandfather spoke to his daughters about the merit of the proposed union. It is therefore equally unrealistic for Yan Xiang to bring the outdated information into the discussion of his daughter's marriage. The most questionable detail in the orthodox account is perhaps the incompatibility between the obedience of Confucius' mother to her father and her estrangement from her husband and her husband's family. In all likelihood, the orthodox account may have been forged centuries later after Confucius became a cultural icon in the Han dynasty. More of this anon.

The questionable, if not unsavory, character of Confucius' mother might not only have led to their unfavorable treatment by his father's clan but also have adversely affected Confucius' view of women later in his life. After Confucius grew up, he evidently thought rather unkindly of his opposite sex: "The Master said, 'Only women and mean men are difficult to deal with. If you are close to them, they lose their humility. If you maintain a reserve toward them, they complain' 子曰：「唯女子與小人為難養

也，近之則不孫，遠之則怨」。¹ In Confucius' mind, women and mean men fall within the same rubric of problems. Apparently disconcerted at Confucius' derogatory view of women, the Confucian scholar He Yan 何晏 (196-249 AD) of the Han dynasty (202 BC -220 AD) argued that the term “女子 nūzi (women)” in Confucius' statement as cited above refers to but base women: “Here the term ‘nūzi (women)’ refers to women in general. Virtuous women such as King Wen's wife are not meant here 此言『女子』，舉其大率耳。若其稟性賢明，若文母之類，則非所論也。”² Unlike what He Yan suggested, the Chinese term “女子 nūzi (women)” indicates, not just base women, but all women including of course Confucius' own mother. Instead of faulting Confucius for his biased remark upon women, He Yan chose to modify the definition of the term Confucius had used in his statement. Following He Yan's approach, Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200) of the Song dynasty (960-1279) opted further to modify the definitions of both the term “女子 nūzi (women)” and that of “小人 xiaoren (mean man)” as well in the cited statement: “Here the term ‘xiaoren (mean man)’ also refers to servants. As for ministers and concubines, if a king treats them with solemnity and kindness, they will present no problem 此小人亦謂僕隸下人也，君子之於臣妾，莊以蒞之，慈以畜之，則無二者之患矣。”³ Zhu Xi's modified version of the aforesaid terms enables him on the one hand to interpret the whole remark of Confucius as a comment upon and advice to only the king and on the other hand to divest the comment simultaneously of its applicability to the people of a different standing aside from the king. Most importantly, by changing the definitions of the two terms Zhu Xi succeeded in removing the stigma long attached to Confucius, making him an ever more perfect cultural icon. Although neither “concubine” nor “servant” is the correct denotation of the terms in the original text, the orthodox scholars decided nevertheless to impose their reading on the text. Evidently, language in a Confucian mind can and should, when occasion serves, be changed to fit one's purpose, a theme that will be discussed further in a later chapter.

While the term “女子 nūzi” denotes exclusively women, the term “小人 xiaoren” has, aside from the meaning of “mean men,” a few more denotations. The meaning of “servants,” however, is not the one Confucius meant in his remark cited above. A look at the usages of the term of the *Analects* in question may help define Confucius' utilization thereof:

¹ “Yang Huo,” *Lunyu*, chap. 17, pp. 125-126.

² He Yan 何晏 and Xing Bing 邢昺, *Lunyu zhushu* 論語注疏 (Taipei: Hongyi chubanshe, 1994), v. 2, pp. 747-748.

³ “Yang Huo,” *Lunyu*, chap. 17, p. 125.

The Master said, "The gentleman man is catholic and not partisan. The mean man is partisan and not catholic." 子曰：「君子周而不比，小人比而不周。」¹

The Master said, "The superior man thinks of virtue; the mean man thinks of comfort. The superior man thinks of punishment; the small man thinks of favors which he may receive." 子曰：「君子懷德，小人懷土；君子懷刑，小人懷惠。」²

The Master said, "A gentleman understands righteousness; but a mean man understands monetary gain." 子曰：「君子喻於義，小人喻於利。」³

The Master said to Zixia, "Do you be a scholar after the style of the superior man, and not after that of the mean man." 子謂子夏曰：「女為君子儒，無為小人儒。」⁴

The Master said, "The superior man is composed; the mean man is always full of distress." 子曰：「君子坦蕩蕩，小人長戚戚。」⁵

The Master said, "The superior man helps people to bring about their beautiful vision, but does not help them bring about ugly schemes. The mean man does the opposite of this." 子曰：「君子成人之美，不成人之惡。小人反是。」⁶

Ji Kangzi asked Confucius about government, saying, "If I kill evil people to help good people, how about that?" Confucius replied, "Sir, in carrying on your government, why should you use killing at all? Let your evinced desires be for what is good, and the people will be good. The relation between officials and commoners is like that between the wind and the grass. The grass must bend, when the wind blows across it." 季康子問政於孔子曰：「如殺無道，以就有道，何如？」孔子對曰：「子為政，焉用殺？子欲善，而民善矣。君子之德風，小人之德草。草上之風，必偃。」⁷

Fan Chi requested to be taught husbandry. The Master said, "I am

¹ "Weizheng," *Lunyu*, chap. 2, p. 10.

² "Liren," *Lunyu*, chap. 4, p. 22.

³ "Liren," *Lunyu*, chap. 4, p. 23.

⁴ "Yongye," *Lunyu*, chap. 6, p. 36.

⁵ "Shu'er," *Lunyu*, chap. 7, p. 49.

⁶ "Yan Yuan," *Lunyu*, chap. 12, p. 83.

⁷ "Yan Yuan," *Lunyu*, chap. 12, p. 83.

not as good as an old husbandman." He requested also to be taught gardening, and was answered, "I am not as good as an old gardener." After Fan Chi left, the Master said, "A small man, indeed, is Fan Xu [Chi]! If a superior man loves etiquette, the people will not dare not to be reverent. If he loves righteousness, the people will not dare not to submit to him. If he loves faithfulness, the people will not dare not to be sincere. Now, when these things obtain, the people from all quarters will come to him, bearing their swaddled children on their backs. What use does he have for husbandry?" 樊遲請學稼，子曰：「吾不如老農。」請學為圃。曰：「吾不如老圃。」樊遲出。子曰：「小人哉，樊須也！上好禮，則民莫敢不敬；上好義，則民莫敢不服；上好信，則民莫敢不用情。夫如是，則四方之民襁負其子而至矣，焉用稼？」¹

The Master said, "The superior man is amicable, but not partisan; the mean man is partisan, but not amicable." 子曰：「君子和而不同，小人同而不和。」²

The Master said, "The superior man is easy to serve and difficult to please. If you try to please him in any way which is not accordant with right, he will not be pleased. But in his employment of men, he uses them according to their capacity. The mean man is difficult to serve, and easy to please. If you try to please him, though it be in a way which is not accordant with right, he may be pleased. But in his employment of men, he wishes them to be equal to everything." 子曰：「君子易事而難說也：說之不以道，不說也；及其使人也，器之。小人難事而易說也：說之雖不以道，說也；及其使人也，求備焉。」³

The Master said, "The superior man has a dignified ease without pride. The mean man has pride without a dignified ease." 子曰：「君子泰而不驕，小人驕而不泰。」⁴

The Master said, "A gentleman may not always achieve humanity, but a mean man never achieves humanity." 子曰：「君子而不仁者有矣夫，未有小人而仁者也。」⁵

The Master said, "The progress of the superior man is upwards; the

¹ "Zilu," *Lunyu*, chap. 13, pp. 87-88.

² "Zilu," *Lunyu*, chap. 13, p. 92.

³ "Zilu," *Lunyu*, chap. 13, p. 93.

⁴ "Zilu," *Lunyu*, chap. 13, p. 93.

⁵ "Xianwen," *Lunyu*, chap. 14, p. 95.

progress of the mean man is downwards.” 子曰：「君子上達，小人下達。」¹

When he was in Chen, their provisions were exhausted, and his followers became so ill that they were unable to rise. Zilu, with evident dissatisfaction, said, “Has the superior man likewise to endure in this way?” The Master said, “The superior man may indeed have to endure want, but the mean man, when he is in want, gives way to unbridled license.” 在陳絕糧，從者病，莫能興。子路慍見曰：「君子亦有窮乎？」子曰：「君子固窮，小人窮斯濫矣。」²

The Master said, “What the superior man seeks, is in himself. What the mean man seeks, is in others.” 子曰：「君子求諸己，小人求諸人。」³

The Master said, “The superior man cannot be known in little matters; but he may be entrusted with great concerns. The small man may not be entrusted with great concerns, but he may be known in little matters.” 子曰：「君子不可小知，而可大受也；小人不可大受，而可小知也。」⁴

Confucius said, “There are three things of which the superior man stands in awe. He stands in awe of fate. He stands in awe of great men. He stands in awe of the words of sages. The mean man does not know fate, and consequently does not stand in awe of it. He is disrespectful to great men. He makes sport of the words of sages.” 孔子曰：「君子有三畏：畏天命，畏大人，畏聖人之言。小人不知天命而不畏也，狎大人，侮聖人之言」⁵

The Master said, “He who assumes looks of stern firmness, while inwardly he is weak, is like one of the small, mean people. Is he not like the thief who breaks through, or climbs over, a wall?” 子曰：「色厲而內荏，譬諸小人，其猶穿窬之盜也與？」⁶

Zilu said, “Does the superior man value valor?” The Master said, “The superior man holds righteousness to be of highest importance. A man in a superior situation, having valor without righteousness,

¹ “Xianwen,” *Lunyu*, chap. 14, p. 100.

² “Weilinggong,” *Lunyu*, chap. 15, p. 105.

³ “Weilinggong,” *Lunyu*, chap. 15, p. 109.

⁴ “Weilinggong,” *Lunyu*, chap. 15, p. 111.

⁵ “Jishi,” *Lunyu*, chap. 16, p. 116.

⁶ “Yang Huo,” *Lunyu*, chap. 17, p. 122.

will be guilty of insubordination; one of the lower people having valor without righteousness, will commit robbery.” 子路曰：「君子尚勇乎？」子曰：「君子義以為上。君子有勇而無義為亂，小人有勇而無義為盜。」¹

With the exception of three out of the eighteen examples cited above, Confucius used the term “小人 xiaoren” consistently in the antithesis between good and evil with derogatory connotations: “The mind of the gentleman is conversant with righteousness; the mind of the mean man is conversant with profitableness.” Even in those two separate instances where he used the said term alone, he either coupled it with an evil character: “like the thief,” or simply meant it to be a rebuke: “A worthless man, indeed!” Never in all the other statements of the *Analects* is the word “小人 xiaoren” used in the sense of a servant. Assuming the term at issue denotes the meaning of a servant, which is not to be the case, it still appears in a negative context. Since the selfsame word “xiaoren” assumes pejorative connotations consistently in the *Analects*, it makes more sense to translate it into the expression “mean men” with negative connotations rather than the term “servants” in its neutral denotation. Zhu Xi’s modified version of the said term, therefore, fails to agree with the general usage thereof in the *Analects*. Inheriting Zhu Xi’s view, the Qing scholar Liu Baonan 劉寶楠 (1791-1855) expectedly took Confucius’ statement on women as a specific warning against the king’s consorts: “This is a warning issued to those who possess a nation 此為有家國者戒也.”²

Lest women might lodge a complaint against Confucius, the influential modern scholar Qian Mu 錢穆 (1895-1990) embraced Zhu Xi’s revamped definitions of the words “xiaoren (servants)” and “nūzi (women)”: “To be able to lord over servants and concubines well is a notable matter in the management of a household 善御僕妾，亦齊家之一事也.”³ Again, as mentioned before, the word “women” is not to be equated with “concubines.” Furthermore, even if the term at issue refers to “concubines,” which may not be the case, Confucius’ statement quoted above is still overtly discriminatory. Pressured by the Chinese Communist ideology, the contemporary scholar Fu Peirong 傅佩榮 finally acknowledged the discriminatory character of Confucius’ statement: “This is a problem of the age. Now is the twenty-first century, and there is no more discrimination against women 這是時代的問題，現在是二十一世紀，女性已不再受到歧

¹ “Yang Huo,” *Lunyu*, chap. 17, p. 125.

² Liu Baonan 劉寶楠, *Lunyu Zhengyi* 論語正義 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007), v. 2, p. 709.

³ Qian Mu 錢穆, *Lunyu xinjie* 論語新解 (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 1985), p. 437.