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The Doctrine Of The Mean

By Confucius



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The Doctrine Of The Mean By Confucius

The Doctrine Of The Mean (Chung Yung)

By James Legge

"In the The Doctrine of the Mean, one of the writings attributed to Confucius, many of the central doctrines of Confucianism are elaborated. The characteristic of jen is articulated in terms of a cluster of related moral terms including the Five Relationships, the principle of reciprocity (the Golden Rule), and various forms of virtue. The heart of Confucianism is explained here as the adoption of the policies of inculcating virtue in people by the example of tradition and the jen of the superior person. Confucius (551-479 B.C.) sought to impose an integrated socio-ethical order in an attempt to secure the peace among warring states in China. Several talented and influential disciples adopted Confucius' philosophy during his time, but apparently Confucius, himself, never obtained the opportunity to apply his cultural changes from high office. Confucius thought the foundation of social order is to be based on the jen or "human-heartedness" of the chun tzu or "superior man." The path to jen, the highest virtue, is reached through the practice of li, the principles of social order. The ruler is an ideal man or superior man, a chun tzu, who governs by jen. Confucius' ideas gained influence through successive generations of his students and were finally adopted during the Han dynasty six centuries later."

About the Author:

"K'ung-fu Tzu - Confucius, lit. "Master Kung," (551 BCE - 479 BCE) was a Chinese thinker and social philosopher, whose teachings and philosophy have deeply influenced Chinese, Korean, Japanese, and Vietnamese thought and life.

His philosophy emphasized personal and governmental morality, correctness of social relationships, justice and sincerity. These values gained prominence in China over other doctrines, such as Legalism or Taoism during the Han Dynasty. Confucius' thoughts have been developed into a system of philosophy known as Confucianism. It was introduced to Europe by the Jesuit Matteo Ricci, who was the first to Latinise the name as "Confucius."

His teachings may be found in the Analects of Confucius, a collection of "brief aphoristic fragments", which was compiled many years after his death. Modern historians do not believe that any specific documents can be said to have been written by Confucius, but for nearly 2,000 years he was thought to be the editor or author of all the Five Classics such as the Classic of Rites (editor), and the Spring and Autumn Annals (author)."

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Burton Watson has taught at Columbia, Stanford, and Kyoto Universities and is one of the world's best-known translators of Chinese and Japanese works. His translations include *The Tales of the Heike*; *The Lotus Sutra*; the writings of Zhuangzi, Mozi, Xunzi, and Han Feizi; *The Columbia Book of Chinese Poetry*; and *Records of the Grand Historian*.

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Scottie Hicks:

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Kathleen Jones:

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Effie Steger:

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