THE SOCIAL MORALITY OF CONFUCIANISM
A CHRISTIAN APPRAISAL

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It is proposed in the following pages to make an examination of the modes of thought and springs of action that characterize the Chinese in their social relationships, and to form an estimate of them in the light of Christian ideals. This study will be based mainly on an analysis and comparison of the social teaching of the Confucian Classics and the Christian Scriptures, and the social institutions and customs of China.

THE CHIEF FORMATIVE AGENCIES IN CHINESE MORALITY

The main factors which have produced the characteristics of Chinese social morality, as well as religious life, have been the 'san chiao,' the three religions or teachings, a term which indicates the predominant influence of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. These are not to be thought of as mutually exclusive, as if their adherents could be divided numerically among the three religions after the manner of the modern census, but as not only co-existing without proselytizing rivalry, though at times there was antagonism, but intermingling without awareness of religious incompatibilities, or logical contradictions. Each has elements which have been borrowed, partly consciously, partly unconsciously, from the others. Thus, for example, Buddhist images may be seen in Taoist temples and Taoist deities in Buddhist temples. Much of later Taoism, its organization, rites, and sacred literature, is simple imitation of Buddhism. The Confucian scholars of the Sung dynasty (12th century), and not least Chu Hsi, who produced the accepted orthodox interpretation of the Classics, were strongly influenced by, though opposed to, Buddhism and Taoism. And in their daily lives practically all Chinese are influenced in

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1 From this Soothill entitles his popular book, The Three Religions of China. This phrase disregards, of course, the presence in China of Mohammedanism and Christianity, as well as Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Manichaeism which secured no real foothold.
3 Duyvendak, "Taoism," Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, vol. 14
4 Bruce, Chu Hsi and His Masters, pgs. 62, 63.
5 Bruce, ibid. pgs. 5, 6; Latourette, op. cit., vol. 1, pgs. 257-264; Shryock, The Origin and Development of the State Cult of Confucius, pgs. 149-152; Hu Shih, "The Indianization of China," Independence, Convergence, and Borrowing, pgs. 241-247.
their thought and conduct by all three religions, or even may be said to "belong to three religions at once."\(^1\) Testimony to this fact may be seen in the innumerable moral tracts, mainly edited by Confucian scholars, that circulate among the populace, in which, as Smith says, "Confucian morality, Buddhist and Taoist divinities and tenets are all equally assumed as true, and are all equally useful."\(^2\) And, without realizing any inconsistency, a Confucianist will worship in a Taoist temple using perhaps Buddhist ritual,\(^3\) or a Buddhist or Taoist will, on entering school, worship Confucius,\(^4\) and people will commonly engage the services of priests of different religions for even the same occasion. The Emperor Yung Cheng (1723-1735) who denounces Buddhism and Taoism in the Sacred Edict "was himself," says Williams, "a daily worshipper of Buddhist idols served by the lamas."\(^5\) It will be seen that the Chinese are very eclectic in their religious life.\(^6\) China possesses three religions, and yet, as De Groot remarks, these three are only one religion to most Chinese.\(^7\)

But while this is so the 'san chiao' can be distinguished from each other; syncretism has not gone so far as to rub out all dividing lines. Some features are distinctive of each, and the various religious practices and social customs of the people, where they are not explicitly taught, can usually be associated rather definitely with the teachings, or traced to the influence, of one or another of the three religions. Their sacred books are, of course, clearly different, and preserve their separate origin and primitive unmixed tradition. The Tao Te Ching is unmistakably Taoist, and the Ssu Shu Confucianist. So that Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, though thoroughly mixed in practice, may be differentiated as separate religions or systems of thought which are constituents in the composite religious and social life of China.

\(^1\) Du Bose, The Dragon, Image and Demon, pg. 29.
\(^2\) Smith, Proverbs and Common Sayings from the Chinese, pg. 260.
\(^3\) Du Bose, loc. cit.
\(^5\) Williams, The Middle Kingdom, vol. 2, pgs. 227, 228.
\(^6\) Edkins, Religion in China, chap. 5; Du Bose, op. cit., chap. 1; Soothill, op. cit., lect. 1; Smith, Chinese Characteristics, pgs. 293-298.
THE INFLUENCE OF BUDDHISM

Buddhism, chiefly of the Mahayana school, though a foreign religion, has been for many centuries a chief factor in Chinese art, culture and thought. So much so that Hu Shih speaks of the "Indianization of China."\(^1\) Introduced from India perhaps about the time of Christ and three centuries after the golden age of Chinese philosophy,\(^2\) it found a Chinese civilization and ethical tradition already well established, and a strong Confucian school increasingly dominant in the state.\(^3\) In B.C. 195 the Han emperor Kao Tsu had sacrificed at the tomb of Confucius and by that started a precedent, and in the reign of Wu Ti (B.C. 141-87) Confucian principles were adopted as the basis of the state. Confucius was in process of being established in the prestige he was to have without dispute until the 20th century. But the foreign religion grew rapidly, and won widespread popularity.\(^4\) In the course of time a great deal of Buddhist literature was translated into Chinese,\(^5\) and Buddhism became an integral part of Chinese civilization, making its influence felt in many phases of Chinese life, even as it was itself altered by the contact.\(^6\) "China's indebtedness to India can never be fully told," says Hu Shih, who speaks of "the vast scope of Chinese borrowings from India." The ideas, for instance, of accumulating merit by various practices,\(^7\) of a future life of rewards and punishments in a heaven and a hell,\(^8\) now so fundamental in Chinese belief, are probably to be regarded as a Buddhist contribution to indigenous Chinese ethical thought, since they are matters on which Confucius gave no definite answer.\(^9\) Countless ideas, too, whose roots may have been indigenous, were reshaped by Buddhism. But while the foreign religion made a strong impress on Chinese ethical ideas, it

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1 Hu Shih, "The Indianization of China," pgs. 219-247.
2 The traditional dates of Confucius are B.C. 551-479; of Mencius, B.C. 372-289; of Hsun Tzu B.C. 320-265. Buddhism was in China in the 1st century A.D.; just when it was introduced is not known. See Hodous, "The Introduction of Buddhism into China," The Macdonald Presentation Volume.
3 Though at the time Taoism was dominant politically. See Shryock, The Origin and Development of the State Cult of Confucius, chaps. 1 - 3, 7.
4 Latourette, op. cit., vol. 1, pg. 169 on.
6 Hu Shih, op. cit., pgs. 232, 233.
7 Williams, The Middle Kingdom, vol. 2, pg. 228.
8 Hu Shih, op. cit., pgs. 224, 225.
9 Latourette, op. cit., vol. 1, pg. 171.
did not become substituted for them. Chinese ethics is not Buddhistic ethics. Indeed, although Buddhism found a kinship with Taoism, and by that alliance gained a foothold in China, 1 Buddhist teachings were in most respects utterly alien to Chinese mentality and temper, 2 and the orthodox Confucians opposed their introduction. Professor Latourette summarizes their fundamental divergence by saying that Buddhism is "other-worldly", and Confucianism "essentially this-worldly." 3 The Buddhist priests, as Doolittle says, "cast off and refuse obedience to their parents; they never marry; they do not acknowledge, much less exhibit, any affection towards their brothers or sisters, or other relatives; they possess no friendships; they reject and disown any common sympathy with the rest of mankind. They profess to ignore the constant relations and duties of life. Hence the common expression 'chok-ka', which is applied to them, indicating that they have left or gone out of the house or family." 4 The general Chinese attitude to this mode of life was one of antipathy. "To the stricter Confucian formalist," says Clennel, "the Buddhist life has always seemed an evasion and denial of those social duties, that filial service of the living and the dead, which is his notion of morality. To him the nature of man is radically good; to the Buddhist the whole world of human activity is a scene of evil from which he seeks salvation in flight. What could Buddhism have to say to the famous dictum of Mencius, that of all forms of impiety the most impious is to die without leaving descendants? Indeed, all that is distinctive of Buddhism was repugnant to the Confucian mind.....Celibacy was a denial of filial gratitude and social duty." 5 The whole Buddhist outlook on life is a negation of what is fundamental in Confucian ethics, the concept of human relationships, the emphasis on the necessity for posterity, the limited concern with this world. This was also the popular sentiment which despised the priests

1 Hodous, loc. cit.
3 Latourette, op. cit. vol. 1, pg. 218; so also Hu Shih, op. cit. pgs. 228-229.
4 Doolittle, op. cit. vol. 1, pg. 240.
5 Clennel, The Historical Development of Religion in China, pgs. 103-104; so also Hu Shih, The Chinese Renaissance, pg. 85; Nevius, China and the Chinese, pg. 97.
because of their morals, and because they disregarded the relationships and
duties of life, although, as already indicated, they were much in demand to
officiate at religious rites. The literati regarded Buddhist influence as
ruinous to morals, complaining that it made the soldiers effeminate, and the
people unmindful of ordinary social obligations. Giles quotes an instance
of a memorial presented to the throne to compel priests and nuns to marry and
bring up families. "How can you," it is asked, "respect a religion which does
not recognize the tie between father and son?" The Sacred Edict (18th cen-
tury) denounces Buddhism in scathing terms, and holds it up to ridicule along
with Taoism and Christianity. "Buddhism in China," says Morrison, "is de-
crized by the learned, laughed at by the profligate, yet followed by all." It
may be debated whether or not the total influence of Buddhism on Chinese mor-
ality was to the good. The influence, however, was profound, but did not dis-
place Confucianism as the base of Chinese social morality.

THE INFLUENCE OF TAOISM

Taoism has also been a chief factor in Chinese civilization, and like
Buddhism has found favor with many emperors. Since the 14th century, after
Chu Hsi's interpretation of Confucianism was established as the orthodox sys-
tem of thought, Taoism and Buddhism declined in favor among the educated,
though they have maintained their powerful hold on the masses. "Religious
Taoism," says Duyvendak, "probably reached its height in the 15th century."
Latourette thinks that "in many ways Taoism in the past few generations has
been not nearly so vital in China as has Buddhism," and cites as evidence its
weaker organization, its greater mass of "unintelligent superstition," and
"there has not been so much scholarship in the ranks of its devotees." Its

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1 Lee, When I was a Boy in China, pg. 68.
2 Doolittle, op. cit. vol. 1, pg. 243.
5 Sheng Yu, 7th maxim.
6 Quoted with approval by Williams, The Middle Kingdom, vol. 2, pg. 227.
7 Shryock, op. cit., pg. 184; Hu Shih, "Confucianism," Encyclopedia of the
   Social Sciences, vol. 4.
9 Latourette, op. cit., vol. 2, pg. 159.
profound influence is, however, unquestioned.

Unlike Buddhism, Taoism was native to China, and the Taoist fathers, Lao Tzu (6th century B.C.?) and Chuang Tzu (3rd century B.C.), were roughly contemporary with Confucius and Mencius. The two schools are radically different. In contrast with the Confucian sages the Taoist fathers were speculative and mystical.¹ 'Tao' (Non-existence, or Non-existing Non-existence²) is their dominating metaphysical idea, and a policy of 'wu wei' (inaction, or doing everything by doing nothing,³ or effortless action⁴) as the correct conduct for men, and the way to happiness, is their fundamental ethical precept. "Loving retirement and obscurity above all," says Ssu-ma Chien, the greatest Chinese historian, "they deliberately effaced the trail of their life."⁵ This teaching of quietism, emptiness, an attitude of indifference, withdrawal from the world, has much in common with Buddhism. Hodous says that for five centuries after the coming of Buddhism "the two religions were considered as one."⁶ It is most unlike Confucianism. Their contrasting ethics is thus summarized by Hu Shih. "Whereas Lao Tzu condemned government, advocating laissez-faire; Confucius opposed only 'bad' government and tried to formulate correct principles of governing. Whereas Lao Tzu condemned civilization and knowledge as leading to evil doing, Confucius exalted the importance of learning and education as against abstract thinking. Whereas Lao Tzu was highly individualistic, Confucius based his moral philosophy on human relationships."⁷

The Taoists were very critical of Confucian ideals and morals as artificial and a matter of external rules, and advocated a "return to nature."⁸ Wieger expresses "the primitive antagonism of Taoism to Confucianism" as that "of the natural to the ritual, of the spontaneous to the formal."⁹

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¹ Zenker, Geschichte der Chinesischen Philosophie, vol. 1, pgs. 166-167, 175 on, asserts that "Confucius is not less a genuine metaphysician than Lao Tzu."
² Maclagan, Chinese Religious Ideas, pg. 88.
³ Wieger, op. cit., pgs. 151 on; 181 on; Latourette, op. cit., vol. 1, pgs. 76,77.
⁴ Duyvendak, loc. cit.
⁵ Quoted in Wieger, op. cit., pg. 146.
⁶ Hodous, "The Introduction of Buddhism into China."
⁷ Hu Shih, "Confucianism."
⁹ Wieger, op. cit., pg. 195.
Confucian attitude was critical in return, -- at least of certain aspects. Shryock says, "philosophic Taoism has always been treated by Confucians with respect."\(^1\) Whether because of this, or for some other reason,\(^2\) the Taoist philosophers are not even alluded to by Confucius or Mencius, although the latter denounces the opinions of other philosophers, such as the cynic, Yang Chu,\(^3\) and the altruist Mo Ti.\(^4\) The many magical practices of popular Taoism were despised by the Confucianist as the superstition of the vulgar, though in his personal life he was by no means unaffected by them. We have already referred to the 7th maxim of the Sacred Edict of the emperor Kang Hsi (1661-1722) and its expansion, which ridicules Taoism, along with Buddhism and Christianity. Lao Tsu and Chuang Tzu have never been honored with titles and worship and the universal regard that Confucius has received; their writings have never been admitted into the sacred canon; and their teachings were proscribed as heterodox. A syncretistic cult in whose temples Confucius, Buddha and Lao Tzu appeared together on the altar was suppressed for the reason Shryock states. "To place the images of Lao Tzu and Buddha with that of Confucius was regarded as sacrilege by the orthodox Confucians."\(^5\)

Taoism soon degenerated from its original transcendental and mystical philosophy into a mass of gross superstitions, and the practices of alchemy, magic, and demonology. Many practices which it undoubtedly did not originate, and which are native animism, became identified with Taoism, so that the name has come to include a complex of ideas.\(^6\) There is the original philosophical Taoism, the school of thought of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu, which made its appeal principally to the speculative minded. It has, however, greatly influenced both Buddhists and Confucianists.\(^7\) And there is later popular and religious

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1 Shryock, op. cit., pg. 116.
2 Wieger, op. cit., pg. 230 discusses possible motives.
4 Meng Tzu, book 3, part 1, chap. 5; and part 2, chap. 9.
5 Shryock, op. cit., pgs. 118,119, and pg. 128, note 27.
7 Bruce, Chu Hsi and His Masters, pgs. 5, 6, 62, 63.
Taoism with its hierarchical organization, its many gods and many magical practices. Its influence on the popular mind has been profound. The 't'ao shih' (its priests) have specialized in divination, fortune-telling, witchcraft, exorcism and 'feng shui' (system of geomancy), and have had, in this way, an important part in shaping Chinese beliefs and fears about the 'kuei' (evil spirits) and the next world, and Chinese social customs in connection especially with death and selecting grave and building sites which influence the fortunes of the living. There is an extensive Taoist literature, much of it for the diffusion of Taoist superstition among the masses, some of it of a higher order.

THE PREDOMINANCE OF CONFUCIANISM

Although Buddhism and Taoism have had an incalculable influence, it is Confucianism that has been the preeminent factor in making Chinese history and culture. Since the 10th and 14th centuries Buddhism and Taoism have slowly declined while the influence of Confucianism has grown stronger and stronger. Buddhism and Taoism have been entrenched in the lives of the common people, satisfying some human and religious instincts which Confucianism did not. Du Bose judges that, in the matter of popularity "probably the three are nearly equal in their hold upon the affections of the people." Williams, however, says that Buddhism is "the most popular religious sect." But "Confucianism," as Du Bose says, "is certainly the religion of the scholars and aristocracy." And although there was, as has been remarked, considerable borrowing from, and modification of, each other among the three religions, Confucianism was least adulterated, carrying down intact through the centuries a body of political and ethical teachings, which were learned by all students.

While the others have "borrowed freely," says Shryock, "the Confucianists tried

1 See De Groot, Religion in China, chap. 8; Stewart, Chinese Culture and Christianity, pgs. 139-150.
3 See Wieger, A History of the Religious Beliefs, etc., pgs. 145-612.
4 Du Bose, op. cit., pg. 37
5 Williams, The Middle Kingdom, vol. 2, pg. 217.
6 Pott, Chinese Political Philosophy, pgs. 9, 10.
not to borrow at all."¹ It is the teachings of the Confucian sages which have formed the foundation of Chinese society and government. Confucianism was not merely a sect alongside of other sects,² but for nigh twenty centuries the state religion, the orthodox moral and political philosophy of the educated, since at least the 14th century,³ and the school of "The Most Holy Ancient Teacher Confucius."⁴ Save for the Buddhist and Taoist professional priests, all Chinese called themselves Confucianists even though perhaps not strictly following the mind of Confucius, and though worshipping in the temples, and using the priests, of the other religions.⁵ "Many are ashamed of Buddhism and Taoism," says Du Bose, "while all glory in Confucianism."⁶ When the 'san chiao' are enumerated it is always 'Ju, Shih, Tao, san chiao,' Confucianism standing first as the 'ta chiao,' the great universal religion. "Its tenets," says W. A. P. Martin, "form the bedrock of Chinese civilization, whatever may be the complexion of the over-lying soil. The yellow of Buddhism and the black of Taoism may be everywhere detected, but they form only a superficial tinge on the original background. Every Buddhist or Taoist (outside of the priesthood) is, first of all, a Confucianist; but the converse is by no means true, -- the more educated Chinese in general reject both the other sects, and speak disrespectfully of their claims, though not exempt from their influence. . . . . Unlike Burma and Siam, where Buddhism is established by law, the intellectual culture of China flows apart from Buddhism. . . . The canon of Confucianism is therefore preeminently the canon of China."⁷ And similarly A. H. Smith says, "In China Confucianism is the base, and all Chinese are Confucianists. . . . To what extent Buddhist or Taoist ideas, phraseology and practices may be superimposed upon this base, will be determined by circumstances."⁸

¹ Shryock, op. cit., pgs. 115, 116.
² So Edkins, Religion in China, pg. 128, pointed out in the early days of Protestant missionary work that the great struggle of Christianity in China would be not with Taoism and Buddhism, but with Confucianism; so also Du Bose, op. cit., pg. 48.
³ Hu Shih, "Confucianism".
⁴ Title on the tablet to Confucius; Doolittle, The Social Life of the Chinese, vol. 1, pg. 360.
⁵ Lee, When I was a Boy in China, pgs. 64, 65.
⁶ Du Bose, op. cit., pg. 36.
⁷ Martin, The Lore of Cathay, pg. 241.
⁸ Smith, Chinese Characteristics, pg. 295.
Confucianism was the state religion of China with a long history from the Han dynasty (B.C. 206 - A.D. 220) to the 20th century. That the Han emperors established it as such, and each successive dynasty, even foreign conquerors, has continued to officially sponsor it and progressively exalt Confucius, was no doubt due quite often to political expediency. For Confucianism taught a conservative political doctrine which powerfully upheld the rule of the emperor, and was a bulwark of order and stability. But the imperial patronage was probably given as often from other motives, including sincere adherence to the teachings of the sages.

A principal part of the state religion was the worship of Confucius, and his seventy-two most distinguished disciples. In the temples erected in his honor throughout the empire they are each represented by a tablet, that of Confucius in the most prominent position inscribed 'The Great and Holy Sage', or 'The Most Holy Ancient Teacher,' and those of his disciples arranged about him. The ceremonies took place here twice a year at the time of the spring and autumn equinoxes (usually March and September) and at daybreak, in every town in the land. They were conducted not by priests, but by the city mandarin and the literati as an official duty. Music was provided, incense was burned and whole animals sacrificed, and profound obeisance made. "In 1912," says Williams, "There were not less than 1500 temples in China set apart for this worship." It was engaged in also most solemnly at the Hanlin Academy in Peking, the highest body of China's intellectuals, and by the Emperor in person. And apart from these official observances Confucius was worshipped daily.

1 See Shryock, The Origin and Development of the State Cult of Confucius.
4 op. Shryock, op. cit., pgs. 38, 39.
5 See Shryock, op. cit., pgs. 237-270 for a full description of these tablets.
6 For a full account of the worship and temples, see Gray, China, vol. 1, pgs. 87-94; Doolittle, The Social Life of the Chinese, vol. 1, pgs. 359-368.
7 Edkins, Religion in China, pg. 146; Nevius, China and the Chinese, pgs. 139-140.
8 Williams, China Yesterday and Today, pgs. 245, 246; Doolittle, op. cit., pg. 368, quotes an estimate of 1560 temples, and for the offerings -- 27,000 pieces of silk, 62,606 pigs, etc., annually not counting bullocks slaughtered, and fruit and vegetables presented at the altars.
with the customary prostrations before the tablet bearing his title in every
school and college in the empire, and separately by each entering pupil. This worship of Confucius by the government and in the schools had its
beginning centuries before Christ among his immediate disciples and early
followers, and his own descendants in the Kung family. His own estimate of
himself was a modest one, and he was not appreciated in his lifetime by his
contemporaries, but he made a great impression on his disciples. When it
was suggested to one of his disciples that he was the equal of Confucius,
Tzu kung replied, "For one word a man is deemed to be wise, and for one word
he is deemed to be foolish. We ought to be careful indeed in what we say.
Our Master cannot be attained to, just in the same way as the heavens cannot
be gone up to by the steps of a stair." A cult of Confucius grew up, and as
the influence of the Confucian scholars spread, the state and the schools
adopted it and the veneration became a national observance. First definite
mention of such a cult in extant literature is in A.D. 37, and from then till
the 20th century the prestige of Confucius progressively increased, temples to
the sage were erected all over the country, homage was rendered by emperors,
honorific titles were periodically decreed him and his descendants, government
examinations based on the writings associated with his name were instituted,
and he himself was canonized, until in 1906 an imperial edict raised Confucius
one more grade to equality with the Supreme God.

This high regard for Confucius as China's incomparably greatest sage was

1 Gray, China, vol. 1, pgs. 87-94.
2 Doolittle, op. cit., vol. 1, pg. 137.
3 Shryock, op. cit., chap. 1 and summary on pgs. 105, 106.
4 Lun Yu, VII, 19, 32, 33; Chung Yung, XIII.
5 Legge, The Religions of China, pgs. 146, 147.
6 Chung Yung, XXXI; Meng Tzu, II, 1, ii.
7 Lun Yu, XIX, 25.
8 Shryock, op. cit., pg. 99.
9 By imperial order of Tai Tsung, A.D. 630; Shryock, op. cit., pgs. 134 on.
10 Johnston, Confucianism and Modern China, pgs. 80, 81.
11 Williams, China Yesterday and Today, pg. 246; op. Johnston, op. cit., pgs.
76-80; Giles, Religions of Ancient China, pgs. 41, 42; Legge, The Religions
of China, pg. 148, gives the prayer used at the imperial worship of Confucius
in which occurs the address, "O Teacher, in virtue equal to Heaven and Earth,"
i.e. God; Legge, op. cit. pg. 30.
universal. "Confucius is," says Legge, "in the empire of China, the one man by whom all possible personal excellence was exemplified, and by whom all possible lessons of social virtue and political wisdom are taught." It would be difficult to overestimate his influence. By the writings associated with his name, his views on life and conduct, and his personal character, and habits, he has shaped the moral, social and political life of Chinese civilization. Whether we consider the number he has influenced, one-third of the human race, or the length of time he has held intellectual sway, over twenty centuries, the deep and lasting influence he has exerted over the minds of the Chinese is phenomenal. He is rightly called by his countrymen the 'Su Wang', the throneless, or uncrowned, king who has exerted greater influence than any seated on the dragon throne. He was "the teacher and pattern for all ages," "the teacher of ten thousand generations." Ssu-ma Ch'ien, the Herodotus of China, speaks thus of Confucius. "Countless are the princes and prophets that the world has seen in its time; glorious in life, forgotten in death. But Confucius, though only a humble member of the cotton-clothed masses, remains among us after many generations. He is the model for such as would be wise. By all, from the Son of Heaven down to the meanest student, the supremacy of his principles is fully and freely admitted. He may indeed be pronounced the Divinest of men."

Another reason for the preëminence of Confucianism besides the official support by the state, and the universal veneration of Confucius, was the unbounded reverence for the Classics of the Confucian school as the sacred repository of the truth, and the highest authority on all questions, political, social, philosophical, ethical. In the Memoirs of the Hanlin Academy it is recorded: "The Emperor K'ang Hsi, in the ninth year of his reign (the 15th of..."
his age), said to the officers of the Board of Rites, 'If one would learn the
art of government, he must explore the classic learning of the ancients. When­
ever we can find a day of leisure from affairs of state, we spend it in the
study of the Classics.'¹ "None but Buddhists and Taoists," says Bruce, "and
other thinkers, who are regarded by the Confucianists as heretics, and whose
theories are deemed subversive of the very foundations of society, -- none but
these would dream of going beyond the sacred canon for the springs of their
philosophic thought. Even the heterodox.......appeal to the sacred text
with reverence unsurpassed by their orthodox opponents. The differences be­
tween opposing camps resolve themselves largely into questions concerning the
interpretations of sacred writings accepted on both sides as the final court
of appeal."²

The Confucian Classics have been for centuries the basis of education in
China. The old classical educational system, one of the most remarkable in­
stitutions in the world, had a long history of development from its beginnings
in the 1st or 2nd century B.C.³ It came to be that the only avenue to eminence
and public honors, and the one qualification required for public office, was
the securing of one of the literary degrees, 'hsiu ts'ai', 'chü jen,' or 'chin
shih.' These were the reward of success in competitive literary examinations
held all over the empire, in which there was tremendous interest and keen com­
petition.⁴ The desire for fame and power and wealth provided the drive that
made millions of Chinese of all classes pursue learning so eagerly, (and some
to old age if success did not come before), and so covetously desire the degrees.⁵

The fact that the themes of the essays set at these civil service examinations
were taken from the Confucian Classics, and the style and substance of the
papers were judged by their resemblance to the official canon, determined the
curriculum of the preparatory schools and the character of the education. The

¹ Martin, op. cit., pg. 33.
² Bruce, Chu Hsi and His Masters, pgs. 4,5.
³ See Shryock, op. cit., chap. 5.
⁴ Williams, The Middle Kingdom, vol. 1, chap. 9; Moule, New China and Old, chap. 9.
⁵ Smith, Village Life in China, pg. 132, and chap. 10.
course of study was a long and exacting one of acquiring a classical style, and learning by rote the Confucian books. No encouragement to independent thinking was suggested. "Thorough acquaintance with the Four Books and Five Classics," says the proverb, "procures for the whole family emoluments from Heaven."¹

The effect of this monopoly of the educational system was twofold. The educated, who were the governors of China, and from whose ranks came all the hierarchy of government officials, and also the many who did not advance so far as to sit for the examinations, had for centuries been saturated in Confucianism with a mentality unreceptive to other teaching. "Certainly," says Pott, "there is no single system of any sort in the West, save perhaps the Christian religion, that corresponds to the pervasiveness of its influence in China. Confucianism... has remained virtually an unaltered doctrine imbedded as an unequivocal rule of faith and practice in the minds and hearts of countless generations of Chinese... The mentality of the ruling class is Confucianism."² The effect upon the masses was equally pervasive, if not so intense, coming as it did indirectly through the scholars upon those who were also strongly influenced by Buddhism and Taoism. "Having studied the same textbooks, and been trained under the influence of one general system," observes Nevius, "they have a homogeneous culture; and being uniformly distributed among the provinces and mingling daily with their less cultivated friends and neighbours, they impress themselves upon and mould the masses, and render the whole population homogeneous."³

Such being the position of Confucianism in China, and its influence in creating a homogeneous mental outlook and social life, it may be said that for centuries Chinese thought has conformed to the Confucian Classics, Chinese government has been based on Confucian principles, and Chinese ethics and social

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¹ Moule, op. cit., pg. 273.
² Pott, Chinese Political Philosophy, pgs. 9, 10.
³ Nevius, China and the Chinese, pg. 62
morality has been Confucian ethics. This is especially true of Chinese political and social ethics for not only is there the Confucian impress stamped on all things Chinese, but also Buddhism and Taoism, while they have, as has been said, added to, and modified, Chinese ethical ideas, have elaborated no practical system of morality. "If we are to write of Chinese ethics," says Bullock, "we must have in view only the ethics of the Confucian school; for China has no other system."\(^1\) Buddhist thought is absorbed with the spiritual world, and Buddhist practice, seeking redemption from what it calls 'hung ch'en', (lit. red dust) that is, this world with its cares, is ascetic,\(^2\) monastic, and largely occupied with imitation of Buddha, and storing up merit for the future life. Chu Hsi condemned the Buddhists for regarding the orthodox five human relationships as accidental.\(^3\) Taoist philosophy is highly speculative and mystical, while Taoist social and political theories are nihilistic and individualistic. "Taoism as a philosophy," says Duyvendak, "had nothing to offer to the state, which was a man-made artificial product."\(^4\) As for popular Taoism, it is taken up with magic and superstition. In contrast with these negative and anti-social ethics, Confucianism is primarily concerned with social and political morality, with virtue and manners and human relationships, and elaborated a full social ethic and code of conduct for this world, that is realistic and practical.\(^5\) Unlike the speculative Lao Tzu, the mystical Chuang Tzu, and the contemplative Buddha, K'ung Tzu and Meng Tzu,\(^7\) the leading sages of Confucianism, were practical teachers of a mundane morality. "Buddhism for the salvation of the soul," says Hu Shih, "Taoism for contemplation, but Confucianism for the ordering of society and government."\(^8\)

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1 Bullock, "Ethics and Morality (Chinese)", Hasting's Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics.
2 Wieger, op. cit., lesson 55, pgs. 429-437.
3 Bruce, op. cit., pgs. 255,256.
5 Duyvendak, loc. cit.
7 K'ung fu tzu, the Master Kung, has been latinized into Confucius, and Meng tzu into Mencius.
8 Hu Shih, loc. cit.
Thus the title of this thesis might well have been "Chinese Social Morality" instead of "Confucian Social Morality," except that the latter more precisely indicates the scope of this study by eliminating consideration of Taoist and Buddhist ethical teaching.

WHAT IS CONFUCIANISM?

The term "Confucianism" is a foreign invention and not altogether satisfactory. The designation universally used by the Chinese is 'Ju chiao,' the teaching of the 'Ju,' or learned, although 'K'ung chiao,' the Confucian school, is sometimes heard, and scholars of the Confucian school are commonly called 'Ju shih' or 'Ju chia.' "Confucianism" is unsatisfactory because it gives a false idea of that which is thus designated, and of Confucius' relation to it.¹

Confucius is not related to Confucianism as Buddha is to Buddhism, or Mohammed to Mohammedanism. He was in no sense a religious leader or the founder of a religion.² The question has been long debated as to whether or not Confucianism is a religion at all.³ Without entering into this at present, we may certainly say that it has religious elements. The religious features of Confucianism include ancestor worship, and the worship of the sage himself and his disciples. The former already existed long before the time of Confucius, as is evident from the inscriptions on the oracle bones of the Shang age found recently in Honan,⁴ and from the numerous mentions of the practice in the Shih Ching and Shu Ching, earliest literary sources for the religious beliefs and practices of the China of pre-Confucian antiquity.⁵ The latter was a posthumous development of which there is no evidence in Confucius' life time, for he was unappreciated by his contemporaries and died a disappointed man, and which he, without

¹ Hodous, "Confucianism," Encyclopedia Britannica, 14th edition; Hsu, Political Philosophy of Confucianism, pg.
² Hu Shih, "Religion and Philosophy in Chinese History" says Confucius was "the teacher of a new religion," that is "a new interpretation which amounted to a new creation," — "the religion of filial piety." Against this see Shryock, op. cit. pg. 11.
³ op. Williams, China Yesterday and Today, pgs. 249-251; Giles, China and the Chinese, pg. 143, and The Religions of Ancient China, pgs. 36, 37; Johnston, Confucianism and Modern China, pgs. 95, 96.
⁵ James, "Ancestor Worship," Chinese Recorder, Nov. 1925; Giles, Confucianism and its Rivals, pgs. 39, 41; Ross, The Original Religion of China.
doubt, would have disapproved of could he have foreseen it. \(^1\) Besides there were many gods, \(^2\) and many divinities of nature, \(^3\) venerated by Confucianism. "Very few foreigners," says Du Bose, \(^4\) have any conception of the amount of religious worship required of the mandarins, and how they are the Levites of the Confucian dispensation." \(^5\) Some of these deities were already being worshipped when Confucius was born, and the worship of others began in later times. \(^6\) It would be hard to trace the worship of any of them to an origin clearly emanating from Confucius himself.

As with the religious features, so also with respect to the intellectual content of Confucianism, its philosophy and its ethics. Confucius was not the creator of them. He was not a new and original thinker. \(^7\) Instead of formulating new political, social and moral principles, Confucius avowedly handed down the traditional wisdom of earlier antiquity which he regarded so highly, and constantly urged a close imitation of the past as the perfect panacea for a disordered society. \(^8\) He has told us his own conception of his position and work. "The Master said, I am not one who was born in the possession of knowledge; I am one who is fond of antiquity and earnest in seeking it there." \(^9\) He disclaims being a creator, characterizing himself as "a transmitter and not a maker, believing in and loving the ancients." \(^10\) His grandson testifies, "Chung-ni (i.e. Confucius) handed down the doctrines of Yao and Shun, as if they had been his ancestors, and elegantly displayed the regulations of Wen and Wu, taking them as his model." \(^11\) From these words we see Confucius' avowed relation to the past. His attitude was not that of an innovator or reformer, disapproving the traditions of antiquity, initiating changes. Nor was he even

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1 Shryock, op. cit. pg. vii.
2 Du Bose, The Dragon, Image and Demon, chap. 9.
3 ibid. chap. 10.
4 ibid. pg. 54.
6 Schmitt, Konfuzius, pgs. 169, 186.
7 Hirth, The Ancient History of China, pgs. 250, 251, likens Confucius to a "megaphone phonograph."
8 Lun Yu, VII, 19.
9 Lun Yu, VII, 1.
10 Chung Yung, XXX.
critically appreciative, but he wholeheartedly accepted the traditional thought and practice and taught it by precept and example. The literature of antiquity which he found in his day, probably in government archives, he edited, stamped with his highest approval and handed on to his disciples. Whether he wrote anything himself is doubted by modern scholars. To this system of thought many since his day have contributed, notably Mencius (B.C. 373-288), Hsun Tzu (B.C. 320-235), Chu Hsi (A.D. 1130-1200), Wang Yang Ming (1472-1528). In spite of their divergent views on some matters, their measure of agreement in reverencing the Classics and worshipping Confucius united them in one school, and thus the teachings of many sages throughout many ages, including the teachings of Confucius and his early followers, make up Confucianism as an intellectual system. Confucianism is then neither a system of thought nor a religion founded by Confucius. It is on one side a cult officially supported for nearly twenty centuries by the state, and on the other, a school of thought based on a collection of books, The Classics, which form the sacred canon.

Since then much that is included under the general term "Confucianism" comes from others besides Confucius, and especially since many elements in Confucianism have their roots in earliest antiquity before Confucius, the use of his name in "Confucianism" is misleading and a misnomer. Other names for indigenous and primitive Chinese beliefs have been proposed by recent scholars, such as Sinism, Siniticism, Universism, without improvement. After all, Confucius was the editor and preserver of the ancient literature, the champion of the original religious observances, the expounder of the social virtues and political wisdom of what he considered China's Golden Age, and the

1 op. Pott, Chinese Political Philosophy, pgs. 22, 23, where he contrasts "Socrates, the inquirer" and "Confucius, the transmitter."
2 See pg. 32 of this thesis.
3 Shryock, op. cit., pgs. 12, 225.
4 ibid., pg. 7.
5 Creel, Sinism.
one who established their great hold on the Chinese mind. He was the first in time of China's orthodox sages, and the only one whose sayings are introduced by the formula, "The Master said." He was also the first in universal regard and in prestige, "the equal of heaven." So that this school of thought may with reason be called by his name, "Confucianism."

Included under this name are certain religious observances and ceremonial ritual, cosmic philosophy of 'yin and yang,' political and social ethics, moral precepts and manners, or, concisely, religion, philosophy, and ethics. But the Confucian canon has little if any metaphysical or religious interest. "Confucius," as Wilhelm says, "is no philosopher in the European sense." The Chinese sages have an altogether different mentality from, for instance, the near-contemporary Greek thinkers, Plato and Aristotle. They institute no philosophical inquiries, or analyses of concepts, and definitions of terms, and do not grapple with metaphysical and epistemological problems. The sages, as they appear in the Chinese Classics, were not at all philosophically self-conscious. Scientific interest is also absent; there is no inquiry into the nature of things, no purpose to extend the bounds of human knowledge. Nor do theological problems come in for consideration; such subjects were definitely tabooed. "The subjects on which the Master did not talk," report his disciples, "were extraordinary things, feats of strength, disorder, spiritual things." Confucius disclaimed any esoteric teaching. And there are no mythological tales of gods and goddesses in the Chinese Classics. The predominating interest

1 Lao Tzu, traditionally regarded as an older contemporary of Confucius, is an historical uncertainty. Fitzgerald, China, a Short Cultural History, pgs. 75, 76, says he "cannot be regarded as an historical figure."
2 Chung Yung, XXXI.
3 op. Starr, Confucianism -- Ethics, Philosophy, and Religion.
4 Wilhelm, Kung-Tse, Leben und Werk, pg. 64.
5 op. Pott, Chinese Political Philosophy, pgs. 19, 20.
6 The Sung Neo-Confucianism, developed under the influence of Buddhism and Taoism, was more metaphysical than the Confucianism of the early sages. Hu Shih, "Confucianism," says, "Unlike classical Confucianism it is esoteric and speculative, it exalts meditation and quietism."
7 Lun Yu, VII, 20. The Chinese for "extraordinary things" is 'kuai,' and denotes what is strange and uncanny. "Spiritual things" is in the Chinese, 'shen,' the spirits. Soothill renders it "the supernatural."
8 Lun Yu, VII, 23 (Soothill).
of the Confucian Classics is ethical. Their theme is conduct, of ruler and people, in the state and the family, and personal character. Moral and political subjects form the topic of the conversations and teaching of Confucius and Mencius in the Ssu Shu, and are the motif of most of the other books of the canon. Politics is discussed from the point of view of morality; it is not political science but political ethics, for morality, as Forke says, is the basis of government. Even the portions that are historical have as their motive the pointing of a moral and the praise of virtue. "It is," says Wu, "a statement of his ethical code by way of realistic illustrations."

The result was that during all the centuries that the Confucian books were the only textbooks in the educational system, and mastery of them was all that was required for success in the official examinations, the education of the Chinese, in contrast to European intellectual interest in theology, then 'classics', and now modern science, consisted almost wholly of ethics. Through knowledge of Confucian moral philosophy, tested by examination, was the road to academic degrees and literary distinction, and the only training thought necessary for an educated man whether his occupation be government official, school master, or man of letters. "By a difference of emphasis," writes Hu Shih, "the intellectual life in China has in all these centuries been confined to the sphere of ethical, social and political philosophy."

This predominance of ethical studies in the educational system is reflected everywhere in China. In the everyday life of the common people one meets with a great deal of moral sentiment. Numberless moral proverbs, in the shape of antithetical couplets, quotations from the Classics, common sayings, circulate among the people. Moral sentences are to be found everywhere, carved on wooden

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1 Beach, "The Ethics of Confucianism," The Evolution of Ethics, edited by Sneath, pg. 41; Goodnow, China, an Analysis, pg. 130.
3 Wu, Ancient Chinese Political Theories, pg. 255.
6 For collections of such proverbs, and analyses of them, see W. Scarborough, A Collection of Chinese Proverbs; A. H. Smith, Proverbs and Common Sayings from the Chinese; C. E. Flopper, Chinese Religion seen through the Proverb.
boards hanging in temples and halls, cut in stone by bridges, inscribed on
'p'ai lou' spanning the streets, printed on paper and pasted on pillars and
walls, or finely written on scrolls in guestrooms; and homes and shops al­
most all have mottoes on the posts and lintels of the door.\(^1\) And besides,
books and tracts whose object was to exhort to virtue and denounce vice and
certain popular customs were numerous, and their distribution was an act of
merit.\(^2\) It need not be supposed from "the excessive moralism of the Chinese,"
to use a phrase of Pott's,\(^3\) that the Chinese are a peculiarly moral people as
compared with other races. Practice does not follow precept, and they do not
live up to the moral sentiments of their set phrases.\(^4\) But this strong ethical
emphasis in their Classics, in the studies of their scholars, and in general
society is most remarkable, and is to be placed to the credit of Confucianism,
to which influence it is chiefly due. It is to be noted too, that the sacred
books of China are strikingly free from the obscenities and immoral sentiments
found in the sacred books of other ancient peoples. "They may not be a peculiarly
moral people when compared with the rest of mankind," remarks Edkins,
"but they have a better system of human duty than almost any other heathen
nation, ancient or modern."\(^5\)

**THE ETHICS OF CONFUCIANISM**

The nature of Confucian ethics is eminently practical and mundane. Con­
fucius and Mencius were not speculative thinkers,\(^6\) or theorists, but practical
men concerned about the evils of society for which they believed they had a
remedy, and teachers of morality whose practical aim was, as Gray says, "to
| teach men to be virtuous that they may discharge honorably and successfully the

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\(^1\) For examples, see Gray, China, vol. 1, pg. 11; vol. 2, pgs. 45, 104; Kulp,
Country Life in China, pg. 291; Williams, China Yesterday and Today, pgs.
145, 146; and for New Year's customs, Hodous, Folkways in China, pgs. 1,2.
\(^2\) Wieger, Moral Tenets and Customs in China; Martin, The Lore of Cathay,
chap. 10, "Native Tracts in China"; Smith, Proverbs and Common Sayings
from the Chinese, pg. 259.
\(^3\) Pott, Chinese Political Philosophy, pg. 49.
\(^4\) Doolittle, op. cit. vol. 1, pg. 253; vol. 2, pgs. 268,269; Confucius him­
sell is said to have recognized this; Li Chi, XXIV.
\(^5\) Edkins, Religion in China, pg. 117.
\(^6\) Suzuki, A Brief History of Early Chinese Philosophy, pgs. 6, 7.
political and social duties of life."¹ His disciples tell us, "The Master took four subjects for his teaching, -- culture, conduct, conscientiousness, and good faith."² The sages nowhere analyse the nature and origin of our moral ideas of duty, or right and wrong, or discuss such concepts as free will and conscience, or the ethical end, or consider in the abstract what is the good life. It is the practical side of morals that engages them, the enunciation of quotable moral precepts, exhortations to follow the imperial heroes of antiquity, delineation of the virtues which characterize the 'sheng jen,' or sage, and 'chün tzu,' the princely man, and the drawing up of rules for conduct in the various social relationships.³ Confucian ethics is not a science of conduct but a pragmatic philosophy of life.

The ethical teachings of the Confucian sages are in the form of aphoristic sayings, precepts, and short chapters of a sentence or a paragraph in length, each disconnected with what precedes, and what follows, like pearls not strung together, and lacking in systematic arrangement.⁴ In this respect the Lun Yü, for instance, reminds one of the Book of Proverbs. Sometimes they are maxims of political and moral wisdom, or observations on various characters and doings past and contemporary; often they are answers to questions suggested by disciples or by feudal princes who consult the sages on current problems. The conversation is rarely of any length, being made up of question and reply. The words of Confucius are introduced by the formula, "the Master said." Mencius is said to have had a hand in compiling his "works;" Confucius, it is certain, prepared no ethical treatise. Nor do we even have notes of lectures on ethics, as Aristotle's, but occasional sayings of the sage collected by disciples. Then there are commentaries by disciples, notes on manners, and so forth. But there is little, if anything, of the nature of a well-rounded systematically presented

¹ Gray, China, vol. 1, pgs. 170, 171.
² Lun Yü, VII, 24 (Soothill).
⁴ Pott, op. cit., pgs. 3, 4.
discussion of a topic, or a sustained and connected investigation. So there is strictly no 'system' of ethics; the task of systematizing lies with the expositor, and it is sometimes difficult, as is condensation also.

A distinction commonly made in systematic ethics differentiates between personal and social ethics according as the subject is the individual character or the social order. Confucian morality easily falls into this division. A common summary that indicates to a Chinese the whole duty of man is contained in the phrase 'san kang wu ch'ang,' the three bonds of human society and the five constant virtues. The three bonds are the social relationships between ruler and subject, father and son, and husband and wife, and the five virtues to be cultivated by a 'chün tzu,' the Confucian ideal gentleman, are benevolence, justice, politeness, knowledge, and fidelity. The sages have much to say about these virtues and about the cultivation of character, self-development, and moral training, on the personal side of their teaching. And they also have much to say about correct social and political relationships, moral obligations and duties. Gray speaks of these two aspects when he says, "Although his (Confucius') moral system is founded on self-culture, it was clearly from a social and political standpoint that he dealt with man. He spent his life in promoting a reverent recognition... of the duties which belong to the several relations of society." The subject of this thesis, as indicated in the title, is confined to the social side of Confucian ethics, the ideals in human relationships associated with the Confucian school.

Confucianism teaches that there are altogether five such social relationships. These are most commonly called 'wu lun,' the five relationships; sometimes 'wu tien,' the five laws or rules or ordinances, or 'jen lun,' the human

2 Edkins, op. cit., pg. 118.
3 There is no good English equivalent for this term. It denotes "the perfect man," "the princely man," "the ideal man." Legge, in his translation of the Classics, renders it "the superior man," "the man of complete virtue," etc., Soothill, "the true philosopher," "the Scholar," etc. See Soothill, The Analects of Confucius, pgs. 111, 112.
4 See Dawson, The Ethics of Confucius, chaps. 1 and 2.
5 See the Chart of Ethics, Martin, The Lore of Cathay, pgs. 207-210.
relations, or 't'ien lun,' the natural relationships, indicating that they are the appointment of Heaven, and the foundation of society. "Man is born into these relations" on the Chinese view, as Legge says.¹ The Chung Yung states them clearly. "The Master said, . . . The duties of universal obligation are five . . . . The duties are those between sovereign and minister, between father and son, between husband and wife, between elder brother and younger, and those belonging to the intercourse of friends. These five are the duties of universal obligation."² In the Chinese they are much more terse than the English translation, and consist of ten syllables -- 'chtin ch'en fu tzu fu fu hsiung ti p'eng yu.'³ These "ten syllables," says Martin, "every boy in China has at his tongue's end. They contain the entire framework of the social fabric."⁴

The origin of this idea is unknown. It is found in the most ancient Chinese books, occurring, for instance, five times in the Shu Ching, so presumably it comes from pre-Confucian antiquity.⁵ Mencius associates the phrase with the emperor Shun, hero of pre-historic antiquity. "This was a subject of anxious solicitude to the sage Shun, and he appointed Hsieh to be the minister of instruction, to teach the relations of humanity; how, between father and son, there should be affection; between sovereign and minister, righteousness; between husband and wife, attention to their separate functions; between old and young, a proper order; and between friends, fidelity."⁶ In one of the earliest uses of the expression in Chinese literature, the ancients themselves are represented as saying that these relationships were originated by Heaven, or the Supreme God. Kao Yao, a minister of justice, in his counsels to the emperor Yü, says, "From Heaven are the social arrangements with their several duties; to us it is given to enforce these five duties, and to these five we must render our obedience. From Heaven are the social distinctions with their

¹ Legge, The Life and Teachings of Confucius, pg. 104.
² Chung Yung, XX.
³ Sometimes 'k'un,' which is the same in meaning, is substituted for 'hsiung.'
⁴ Martin, The Chinese, etc., pg. 104.
⁵ Hsti, The Political Philosophy of Confucianism, pg. 29.
⁶ Meng Tzu, III, 1, iv; Shu Ching, II, 1, v.
several ceremonies; from us proceed the observances of these five ceremonies, and then do they appear in regular practice. When sovereigns and ministers show a common reverence and respect for these do they not harmonize the moral nature of the people?\textsuperscript{1} It will be noted that the phrase is here used without any explanation which indicates that before the dawn of Chinese history it was already a well-known expression.

The "five relations" are not always all specifically enumerated, but the sages often refer to them in one way or another, sometimes by just the use of the expression, and constantly by emphasizing the idea of 'relations' and the moral obligations involved. "Confucius," says Hsü, "interprets social phenomena in terms of relationship."\textsuperscript{2} Nor are they all regarded as of equal importance. Sometimes only three of them are referred to, as in the phrase 'san kang' which denotes those three out of the full five which are most dwelt on, sovereign and subject, father and son, husband and wife. Confucius himself speaks most frequently of the first two, and says little of the others.\textsuperscript{3} "In the family, there is the relation of father and son; abroad, there is the relation of prince and minister. These are the two great relations among men."\textsuperscript{4}

The order in which the 'wu lun' usually stand is in general the order of their importance, and we will discuss them in this order, though from some aspects another might seem better for our purpose. It was recognized, for instance, that the order of the actual development of society was different.

"Heaven and Earth existing, all (material) things then got their existence. All (material) things having existence, afterwards there came male and female. From the existence of male and female there came father and son. From father and son there came ruler and minister. From ruler and minister there came high and low. When (the distinction of) high and low had existence, afterwards came the arrangements of propriety and righteousness."\textsuperscript{5}

\textsuperscript{1} Shu Ching, II, 3, iii.
\textsuperscript{2} Hsü, loc. cit.
\textsuperscript{3} Legge, The Life and Teachings of Confucius, pg. 105.
\textsuperscript{4} Meng Tzu, II, 2, ii.
\textsuperscript{5} I Ching - the orderly sequence of the hexagrams, sect. 2; Hsü, The Political Philosophy of Confucianism, pgs. 34-37, discusses this passage.
These five human relationships and moral obligations constitute the whole social duty of man according to Confucianism. Morality consists in rectifying these relationships. Universal fidelity to them will usher in good government and complete social well-being. "When there is generous affection between father and son, harmony between brothers, and happy union between husband and wife, the family is in good condition. When the great ministers are observant of the laws, the smaller ministers pure, officers and their duties kept in their regular relations and the ruler and his ministers are correctly helpful to one another, the state is in good condition. When the son of Heaven moves in his virtue as a chariot, with music as his driver, while all the princes conduct their mutual intercourse according to the rules of propriety, . . . the common people guard one another with the spirit of harmony, all under the sky is in good condition." Each person must recognize and keep his place in life, performing the duties required of his station in regard to each relationship. "Let the father be indeed a father, and the son son; let the elder brother be indeed elder brother and the younger brother younger brother; let the husband be indeed husband and the wife wife; then will the family be in its normal state. Bring the family to that state and all under heaven will be established." Wang Yu-po in his paraphrase on the 7th maxim of the Sacred Edict, says, "Here is man, with his head towards heaven, and his feet planted on the earth, in the midst of all other existing things. He is endowed with the principle of rectitude all complete, and outside him there are requirements of duty in his lot; -- what is there wonderful or rare that he has to attend to? There are relations of ruler and subject, father and son, husband and wife, elder brother and younger, friend and friend, and the duties belonging to them; no one, intelligent or stupid, can dispense with these for a single day. If besides these, beyond your proper lot, you go about to seek for some refined and mysterious dogmas, and to engage in strange and marvellous performances, you will show

1 Li Chi, VII, 4.
2 I Ching - appendix 1, sect. 2, hexagram 37.
3 He refers in this to Buddhism, Taoism and Christianity.
yourselves to be very bad men."\(^1\)

The duties associated with these five relationships were taught in the Chinese child's first primer, San Tzu Ching, which he learned by heart.

"Affection between father and child
harmony between husband and wife
friendliness on the part of elder brothers
respectfulness on the part of younger
precedence between elders and youngers
respect on the part of the sovereign
loyalty on the part of the subject,
these ten obligations
are common to all men."

An outline of Confucian social teaching is thus found ready-made in the phrase, 'wu lun,' common in Chinese literature, which embraces all social duty according to Confucian thought. Ruler-subject is the political relationship, father-son, husband-wife, brother-brother are the family relations, and friend-friend the wider circle in society. We will take up these relationships in their commonest order as the framework of our study, and under each, first, explore Confucian conceptions of the moral obligations and duties involved as taught in the canonical books; secondly, study Chinese social customs which have been formed in accordance with these conceptions and serve to illustrate them; and then, thirdly, our appraisal of this social morality will be made in the light of a close exegetical study of the social teachings of the Christian Scriptures, and Christian ideals for these relationships.

But before going on with this subject, it will be necessary first to indicate our sources of information.

**SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

For the social morality of Confucianism we may turn to two possible sources: first, Confucian writings, where we get the authoritative ethical teachings of the chief exponents; and second, Confucian practices, the customs and life of a society moulded by Confucianism. It will be necessary, if we would have a true outline of Confucian social morality, to use both sources.\(^2\) To confine ourselves to the Classics and ignore the society they belong to would

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\(^1\) See Legge, The Religions of China, pgs. 105, 106.
\(^2\) So also Soothill, The Three Religions of China, pgs. 13-15; Giles, China and the Chinese, pgs. 205-206.
give an imperfect representation. The result is commonly an idealistic picture unrecognizable to those who know Confucianism as it is, for practice is usually below precept. Further, the practice illustrates the precept, and is necessary for an understanding of its true inward meaning and significance as opposed to a merely academic acquaintance with the surface. Thus it has often been easy to pick out of their context sayings of other religions that bear a perhaps only superficial resemblance to Christian teachings, ignoring the fact that the context may often change the apparent similarity to a contrast, and that, in any case, the meaning to the native with his own thought-background and social environment may be totally other than the idea conveyed to a western mind.¹ A third reason for combining these two sources is that Confucianism has had a long development since the classics of antiquity, and many things have been added to it in its course. The cosmology of Chu Hsi, for instance, and the worship of Confucius himself, are unknown to those original historical sources. And lastly, one obviously cannot accurately appraise the worth of moral conceptions without knowing the effects which they have produced in moral practices. This approach to the subject — exclusive use of ancient classics — has been common in much of comparative religion literature.² On the other hand, to confine ourselves to the second source, to the practices, and ignore the teachings and ethical conceptions of the sages, would also not give us a true picture of Confucianism as a whole.³ For in these teachings we have the original of the social life of the people. The teachings are behind the practices, and have made and moulded custom. And also, just because practice is below precept it is only fair to include in one's view the teachings and ideals of the Confucian sages. For these reasons it is proposed in this study to examine both the authoritative teachings of the school and the customs and everyday modes of behavior of the people.

¹ Dr. Maolagan, Chinese Religious Ideas, pgs. 72, 73, has recently said some very true things about "little anthologies of sayings" that have a "certain Christian ring about them" to Western ears.
² For instance, Hume, The World's Living Religions, for this reason does not give a true picture of Chinese religions, as the writer can testify, for he studied it in theological college before going to China.
³ De Groot's works are often regarded as onesided in this respect.
The scholars of the Confucian school of thought produced a vast amount of literature -- voluminous dynastic histories and chronicles, huge dictionaries and encyclopedias, commentaries on the canonical books, philosophical, moral and political works, prose and poetry and other literature. 1 Giles notes that Chinese literature is remarkable for its antiquity, the variety of subjects presented and the exhaustive treatment of them -- "literary monuments" on a "colossal scale." 2 Hummel speaks of "the sheer mass of printed and manuscript material" -- "even a thousand years ago the Chinese literati were oppressed with the mass of their literary records." 3 To this literature and stream of thought many writers and thinkers have contributed through the ages. Though belonging to the same school there has been no entire uniformity in their views. The Sung dynasty (A.D. 960-1278) Confucianists differed from the Han dynasty (B.C. 206 - A.D. 220) commentators, and their novel interpretations won against rival views of their own day. 4 Wang Yang Ming (A.D. 1472 - 1528), again, held views in opposition to the standard ideas of Chu Hsi. Or, going further back, there was the famous debate on human nature, what it is and whether it is innately good. 5 Mencius emphasized, more than Confucius, the doctrine of the goodness of human nature in combatting the view of Kao Tzu, that man's nature has no tendency to either good or bad. 6 Soon after his time, Hsün Tzu strongly upheld the view that man is by nature evil. 7 The controversy ended long afterwards in the triumph of Mencius' opinion, and the orthodox belief was stated in the first lines of the Chinese pupil's first primer, "Men at their birth are naturally good." 8 But all these divergent views are differences between members of one school, who were united in worshipping Confucius,

3 Hummel, "What Chinese Historians are doing in their own History," American Historical Review, July, 1929.
4 Latourette, The Chinese, their History and Culture, vol. 1, pgs. 257-264; Faber, A Systematical Digest of the Doctrines of Confucius, pgs. 32-34.
6 Meng Tzu, VI, 1; VI, 2, ii; II, 1, vi.
8 San Tzu Ching, line 1.
in their reverence for the canon, and in "their support," as Shryock says, "of religious, ethical and political views which had canonical support."

It will not be possible here to survey all this literature, it is too vast, nor necessary to consider further points on which Confucianists differ, since our subject is social morality. It is proposed to confine this study to the fountain of Confucian philosophy, and standard of orthodoxy, those Classics which were universally acknowledged to be of highest authority, and which were the textbooks in the old Chinese curriculum leading up to the official government examinations.

Of first importance is the Ssu Shu Wu Ching, the Four Books and Five Classics, which may be called the Bible of Confucianism. The Confucian canon was settled in the Sung dynasty (A.D. 960 - 1278). Prior to that there were various lists of Classics, the first being made during the Han period (B.C. 206 - A.D. 220). We hear of the Four Classics, the Six Classics, the Thirteen Classics, and so forth. As the canon was finally settled the nine books recognized to be of highest authority in China were listed in two groups. The Ssu Shu, Four Books, are the Lun Yü, usually called after Legge the Analects of Confucius, consisting of precepts introduced by the formula, "the Master said," replies of Confucius to questions asked by inquirers, a few sayings of followers which echo "the Master's" words, and a description in book 10 of Confucius' personal appearance and habits, the whole being compiled by disciples; the Ta Hsieh, or Great Learning, and the Chung Yung or Doctrine of the mean, two short moral and political treatises ascribed respectively to a disciple and a grandson of Confucius, which were originally sections in the Book of Rites, but came to be counted separately because of the high esteem in which they were held; and Meng Tzu, the works of Mencius, which is a record similar to the Analects, of

1 Shryock, op. cit., pg. 12. On pg. 225 Shryock seems to me to exaggerate possible differences.
4 Chapters 42 and 43.
the conversations of Menouius with various disciples and feudal princes who inquired his advice and opinions. These Four Books "took their positions above the traditional Five Classics," as Hummel puts it, in the time of Chu Hsi (died B.C. 1200).1 "Since that time," says Hsi, "every student beginning the study of the Chinese Classics reads the Four Books as the first part of his work."2 It is here that we have our chief source for the ethical teachings of Confucianism.

The Wu Ching, Five Classics, are the I Ching, Classic of Changes, an abstruse book of "divination judgments"3 of great antiquity, much admired by Confucius;4 the Shu Ching, Classic of History, a collection of the oldest historical documents of China preserved in government archives;5 the Shih Ching, Classic of Poetry, an anthology of over three hundred poems on many varied themes, said to have been selected and edited by Confucius;6 the Li Chi, Book of Rites, the Confucian social code of manners, which deals with ceremonial observances and ritual on which Confucianism lays great emphasis, and gives detailed rules of propriety for the guidance of personal conduct in every circumstance;7 and the Ch'un Ch'iu, literally, Spring and Autumn, annals of his native state of Lu and bare chronicles of events, which tradition says was

1 Hummel, loc. cit.
2 Hsi, Ti-shan, loc. cit.
4 Lun Yü, VII, 16, "The Master said, If some years were added to my life, I would give fifty to the study of the I, and then I might come to be without great faults."
6 Creel, op. cit., pgs. 270, 271; but see Legge, The Chinese Classics, vol. 4, part 1, Introduction; A. Waley, The Book of Songs, pg. 18, says, "The songs are indeed 'Confucian' in the sense that Confucius and his followers used them as texts for moral instruction ... There is no reason to suppose that Confucius had a hand in forming the collection."
7 Soothill, The Analects of Confucius, pg. 58, calls it "The Chinese Levitical;" Wilhelm, Confucius and Confucianism, pg. 122, calls it "notes on manners" of the Confucian School. There were in ancient China three Books of Ritual, all of which were at times listed as classics, but in the final Sung list the Chou Li, and I Li were dropped, leaving the Li Chi. Wilhelm, op. cit., pgs. 120-122; Legge, Sacred Books of the East, vol. 27, Introduction; Hsi, The Political Philosophy of Confucianism, pgs. 92, 93; Creel, op. cit., pg. 274; Karlsgren, "The Early History of the Chou Li and Tso Chuan Texts," The Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, bulletin #5, 1931.
composed by Confucius himself.\(^1\) But modern scholars in general think that Confucius wrote nothing of the literature extant today.\(^2\)

Before the Chinese pupil took up in school these Four Books and Five Classics, which were his chief task, he studied four primers, which he learned as everything else by heart.\(^3\) Two of these, the Pai Hsing, Hundred Surnames, and the Yu Hsüeh Shih, Odes for Children, may be set aside as having little or no ethical content, although the latter provided incentives to diligence in study and filled the pupil with admiration for the Confucian sages.\(^4\) But the other two are important. The pupil began in the primary school with the famous San Tsu Ching, Three Character Classic of Wang Ying-lin (A.D. 1223 - 1296)\(^5\) and followed this with another horn-book, the Ch'ien Tsu Wen, Thousand Character Primer,\(^6\) each of which is an elementary guide to knowledge, and an introduction to Confucian philosophy, ethics and history.

Besides these, there are two very important books, the first of which was sometimes included in the formal course of study,\(^7\) and the second was used in popular education. The Hsiao Ching, Classic of Filial Piety, is a hortatory treatise extolling filial duty as the root of all virtue to be practiced by all classes of people; and with it was often bound the Er shih ssu hsiao, or Twenty-four examples of Filial Piety. The Hsiao Ching was included among the Classics at times,\(^8\) though not in the final canon, but Hu Shih classifies it in "the New Testament of Confucianism."\(^9\) The other book is the Sheng Yü, Sacred Edict, consisting of sixteen maxims reputed to have been composed by the emperor K'ang Hsi (1662-1722), and amplified by his son and successor, the emperor Yung Cheng (1723-1735), with which is often bound a paraphrase in the


\(^2\) Wilhelm, Confucius and Confucianism, pg. 96; Hummel, "What Chinese Historians are doing in their own History"; Hsü, The Political Philosophy of Confucianism, pgs. xiii-xvi, and chap. 1; etc.

\(^3\) Lee, When I was a Boy in China, pgs. 55 on; Gray, China, vol. 1, pgs. 170-171; Moule, New China and Old, chap. 9.


\(^5\) Giles, Elementary Chinese, San Tsu Ching.


\(^7\) Gray, China, vol. 1, pgs. 170, 171.

\(^8\) Hsü Ti-shan, loc. cit.; Legge, Sacred Books of the East, vol. 3.

colloquial by Wang Yê-po. This is, to quote Wieger, "the quintessence of Confucianism." It was by imperial command ordered to be read periodically to the people by all local officers, for public instruction. Much admired for its excellence of style, it has had great influence in moulding Chinese opinion.

It is a temptation to go beyond these Confucian textbooks and take material from, for instance, the Tso Chuan, the I Li, and Chou Li, and other books. But one has to draw the line somewhere, and we propose to confine this study to the books used in the old Confucian educational curriculum which were the Classics universally regarded as of the highest authority in China.

As to critical problems in connection with these books it should be noted that our aim here is to outline the social morality of a school of thought, Confucianism, and not the teachings of any individual, whether Confucius or other. Therefore such questions as the authenticity of the text, the origin and date of ancient Chinese books, whether they are trustworthy records of a certain individual's views, or truthfully reflect the views of a particular age, and so forth, will not engage us here any more than problems of higher and lower criticism of Biblical books when we consider the social teaching of the Bible. Whether the last five books of the Lun Yê are unauthentic sayings of Confucius, whether Confucius invented out of whole cloth 'the model emperor lore' of the Shu Ching, when the Li Chi was finally compiled in its present form

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2 Wieger, Moral Tenets and Customs in China, part 1.
3 Thompson, Griffith John, pg. 306; Beach, "The Ethics of Confucianism," The Evolution of Ethics, edited by Sneath, pgs. 68-70.
5 See J. Steele, The I Li or Book of Etiquette and Ceremonial (2 vol.), London, 1917.
6 See E. Biot, Le Tcheou-Li ou Rites des Tcheou (2 vol.), Paris, 1851.
8 Hummel, loc. cit.
and what part Tai Sheng and Tai Te had in it, are matters that are no more in the scope of this thesis than the problem of Deutero-Isaiah. It is enough for our purposes that it is indisputable that all the works cited above as our sources have been in their present form for centuries, since at least the Sung period (A.D. 960-1279), the basic texts of Confucianism universally acknowledged.

The second source for the social morality of Confucianism, we have indicated, is the institutions and customs of a Confucian society. Although the writer has been resident for some years in China, the land he knows is the changing China of modern times which is undergoing a revolution in all aspects of the national life since it came in contact with the West. The centuries-old Confucian social order is disintegrating, age-honored social customs, the elaborate ritual politeness, the orthodox conceptions of filial piety and ancestor worship, the long-standing classical school curriculum, the old social relationships and obligations, clothes and styles of headdress, have undergone in the course of a quarter-century a radical pervasive change. The Chinese patriarchal family system is in partial dissolution, the force of the unwritten laws of social conventions has diminished, and restraint and deference to authority are often thrown over. The demand of "mo-teng" Chinese is for foreign clothes, foreign ideas and manners, modern inventions, and Western science. Confucianism has been hurled from its pedestal and has lost tremendously in prestige. In their present mood Chinese themselves are fiercely assailing the political views of Confucianism, and the foundation doctrine of filial piety. But also, on the other hand, there have been determined attempts at times and

1 Shryock, op. cit., pg. 99; Creel, op. cit., pg. 274; Wilhelm, Confucius and Confucianism, pgs. 120-122; Karlgron, "The Early History of the Chou Li and Tso Chuan Texts."
3 See Hu Shih, The Chinese Renaissance, esp. chap. 6, "Social Disintegration and Readjustment."
4 A popular Chinese transliteration of "modern."
5 Wilhelm, The Soul of China, pg. 366.
6 Johnston, Confucianism and Modern China, pgs. 74-75, 114; Maclagan, Chinese Religious Ideas, pgs. 53 on.
7 Johnston, op. cit., pgs. 44, 46.
with varying effect to reestablish the old traditions and ways in the new 
republic, and to adjust the old philosophy to the institutions and ideas of 
modern times, Confucianism is not yet dead, and living away from the centers 
of modernity, the vast unlettered populace, though by no means untouched by 
the disintegrating forces, persists in the old customs, and old thought-system. 
The present has its roots in the past, which is by no means wholly past, and 
cannot be understood without a knowledge of the old, for it has grown out of 
it. Our study of Confucian social morality is concerned with the old social 
order when Chinese society was Confucian, and which the writer is not old enough 
to have known. So that for descriptions of Confucian social institutions and 
interpretations of Chinese modes of behavior and morals we have relied mainly 
both on explanations by Chinese themselves, and on observations and studies by 
foreign writers. These latter include consular and customs officials, businessmen and educators most, but not all, of whom have been long resident in the 
country, and have learned the language of the people. But chiefly it is the 
missionaries who have the best opportunity to understand native customs and 
usage. Books by transient travellers, and globe-trotters, are often entertain­
ing but unreliable and have not been included as source-material. For the bib­
liography the reader is referred to the end of this thesis.

It remains to be said that for the social teachings and ideals of Christi­
anity on which is based the appraisal of Confucian social morality attempted 
in this thesis, we take the Christian Scriptures as our norm, the Christian 
rule of faith and practice. In saying this we do not fail to recognize the 
principle of development within the Scriptures, the progressive revelation and 
progressive education, and that the ethics of the New Testament is higher than 
the morality of the Old. So that the Christian social ideal is ultimately to 
be found in the life and teachings of Christ and His apostles. This social 
ideal is our present interest, and not its workings in history, so that this

1 Hu Shih, op. cit., pg. 89; Latourette, The Chinese, their History and 
Culture, vol. 1, pg. 480; vol. 2, pg. 174; Johnston, Confucianism and 
Modern China; Beach, "The Ethics of Confucianism," pgs. 71-74. 
2 Soothill, The Three Religions of China, pg. 272. 
3 Latourette, The Development of China, pg. 86.
study will be based on a close exegetical examination of the Christian sources. The plan of this thesis is to outline Confucian social morality and bring it into comparison with the social teaching principally of the New Testament. From this two results follow. First, we will find the Christian viewpoint critical of some aspects of Confucian morality. As Inge points out, the Christian ethic is not, any more than Christianity as an intellectual system, consonant or compatible with any and every ethic. So that there cannot but be points of antagonism between Christianity and Confucianism, and, if Christianity is as we believe the final religion, and Christ the absolute authority, condemnation of Confucian morality at these points is unavoidable. This, I am aware, is uncongenial to the modern mind which would "enlarge on the region of our agreement" and ignore differences. But as Dr. Maclagan finely says, there is need of "a frank recognition of incompatibility" where it exists. We will not, of course, grudge to acknowledge the good that will be found in large measure.

A second result of our plan will be that many subjects of importance in Christian ethics will not be referred to in this thesis. We are not proposing to give a complete outline of Christian social teaching, but only a discussion from the Christian view of those points raised by Confucianism. As a whole the social teaching of the Christian Scriptures is fuller, and certainly richer, than the social teaching of the Chinese Classics. The relationship of master and servant, for instance, is a problem treated in the New Testament, but it is not included in the Confucian scheme of five relationships, and so will not be mentioned. Moreover, we will not be concerned to indicate how Christian principles apply to 20th century situations, or to draw out the ethical implications of the Gospel as they relate to social problems in Western lands. International and racial relations, present-day sex questions, the modern industrial and social order, and so forth, are problems uncontemplated by Confucianism, and so will also not come in for consideration. The relevance or otherwise of the Christian ethic to the complex

1 Inge, Christian Ethics and Modern Problems, pg. 10.
society of today, and the suggestion of J. Weiss that the New Testament gives us only an 'interimsethik,' are constant themes in present discussions, but it will not be disputed by any Christian missionary that the social teaching of the Scriptures in its context of 'agrarian simplicity' often has special pertinence and direct applicability to the simple civilization of Confucian morality.

1 Weiss, Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes.
CHAPTER II
RULER AND SUBJECT

Of the five social relationships the first, the political relationship, is the most important in Confucianism. "Confucius was sitting beside duke Ai," we are told, "when the latter said, I venture to ask, according to the nature of man, which is the greatest thing. Confucius... said, According to the nature of men, government is the greatest thing for them." Confucian ethics is primarily political in its motif and in the ultimate object it has in view. Its precepts were intended for rulers and gentlemen first of all, rather than for the common people; its elaborate and time-consuming code of manners was for the court and polite society; and its illustrations of virtue were drawn from the stories of ancient kings. And "the ultimate object of Confucius' teachings," as Nevius observes, "is the promotion of good government." Cultivating of character is a frequent theme of the sages, but it is usually the character of the ruler and official, and the purpose is political. "Their persons being cultivated, their families were regulated. Their families being regulated, their states were rightly governed. Their states being rightly governed, the whole kingdom was made tranquil and happy." As Soothill says, "The aim of Confucius was not so much the renovation of the individual as the renovation

1 The Chinese for this first relationship is 'chün ch'ên.' Chün denotes a sovereign, a ruler. Ch'ên has two meanings: 1. a statesman, a minister; 2. a subject, a vassal. (Mathews' Dictionary, etc.) Creel, Birth of China, pgs. 163, 164, discusses the meaning of the term, tracing its development from "head" to "captive" to "servant, slave, retainer, and finally minister of state, in the sense that the ministers are the servants of the king." In this connection he gives it the meaning "servant." Legge constantly renders it "minister" in his version of the Chinese Classics. Ciles, San Tzu Ching, comment on line 54, says, "The term has been extended to include anyone ruled, a subject, which is the meaning here." So Eodus, "Confucianism," Encyclopedia Britannica, renders it, and Du Bose, Dragon Image and Demon, pg. 42; K. C. Wu, Ancient Chinese Political Theories, pg. 281; P. C. Hsieh, The Government of China (1644-1911), pg. 5; and others. Lyall, Mencius pg. xxiv translates the whole phrase "lord and liege." cp. Wilhelm, Kungtse, Leben und Werk, pg. 109 though he goes too far in extending the meaning.

2 Li Chi, XXIV
3 Nevius, China and the Chinese, pg. 53
4 Ta Hsüeh, text 5
of the State; his mind and object are ethico-political . . . . .".¹ Family obligations are also a frequent theme of the sages, but likewise family relationships are to be brought to a normal state in order that the nation will prosper. "Bring the family to that state, and all under heaven (the empire) will be established."² "Politics," as Kudo puts it, "is the ultimate end of (Confucian) morality."³

Confucius and Mencius were chiefly interested in government, and this is the principal subject treated of in the Classics. Frequently in the Four Books aristocratic enquirers come to the sages and "ask about government," and their precepts given in reply are fullest of advice to rulers on the art of governing. This predominant interest in political affairs was natural to the circle in which they moved. Born in the upper class of society with official connections, Confucius and Mencius are portrayed in the Classics as the political advisers of kings, princes and dukes. Their constant study was the history of the model emperors of antiquity. And "most of the traditional three thousand students and disciples whom Confucius taught through his conversations," says Beach, "were either officials or young men hoping to enter official life."⁴ But this chief interest in government was due also to a doctrine, which we will see is fundamental in Confucian ethics, that the way to create a morally good society is by imitation of the personal example of the good ruler who is the fountain of virtue. "It must always be remembered," says Soothill, "that Confucius was a courtier; hence, in his system, the gracious influences of virtue were to stream down from the lofty height of the court to the lower level of the people."⁵ For these reasons the sages have most to say about the character and duties of rulers and their ministers.

Confucius and Mencius both had practical experience in statecraft. When

¹ Soothill, The Three Religions of China, pg. 31
² I Ching, appendix 1, sect. 2 hex. 37
³ Kudo, The Ethics of Confucius, pg. 35
⁴ Beach, "The Ethics of Confucianism," The Evolution of Ethics, pg. 67
⁵ Soothill, op. cit. pg. 30
they lived, in the 6th and 4th centuries B.C., China was in a state of disorder and disintegration.\(^1\) For a remedy Confucius preached a social gospel, and a way of social salvation by a return to the virtue and practice of the golden age of antiquity. Things were worse in Mencius' time, two centuries later; the last feeble rulers occupied the tottering throne of the Chou dynasty and China was divided between warring states. Mencius is much more than Confucius a caustic critic of contemporary government. Disputing the contemporary heretical views of the cynical materialist Yang Chu, and the altruistic Mo Ti, he championed the doctrines of "the Master."\(^2\) Confucius and Mencius alike sought employment as statesmen, wandering from state to state offering their services to princes. For periods of time they were in office and in favor, but for longer periods they were unemployed and unappreciated.\(^3\) Mencius tells us, "The Record says, If Confucius was three months without being employed by some sovereign he looked anxious and unhappy."\(^4\) But through all the vicissitudes of their lives they were confident of their administrative ability and their political principles. "The Master said, If there were (any of the princes) who would employ me, in the course of twelve months, I should have done something considerable. In three years, the government would be perfected."\(^5\) When Mencius resigned his office at the court of Ch'i because he could not carry his principles into practice he lingered before returning home in the hope that the king would change his mind. "The king after all," he says, "is one who may be made to do what is good. If he were to use me, would it be for the happiness of the people of Ch'i only? It would be for the happiness of the whole empire. I am hoping that the king will change. I am daily hoping for this."\(^6\) For a period of four or five years in middle life Confucius held high office in his native state of Lu, being successively a

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1 Latourette, The Chinese, Their History and Culture, vol. 1, pgs. 45-56
2 Lyall, Mencius, Introduction, pgs. xx on
3 cp. Lun Yu, XVIII, 3
4 Meng tzu, III, 2, iii
5 Lun Yu, XIII, 10
6 Meng tzu, II, 2, xii
district governor, in the Office of Works, minister of justice, and finally prime minister. Ssu-ma Ch'ien, the great Chinese historian (the 2nd century B.C.) tells us in his Shih Chi (Historical Records) that Confucius made a great success as an official. "After Confucius had conducted the government of the state for three months, the sellers of lambs and suckling pigs no longer falsified their prices, and men and women walked on different sides of the road. Lost objects were not picked up on the streets. Strangers who came from all sides did not need to turn to the officials when they entered the city, for all were received as if they were returning to their homes." He not only made a brilliant success at home transforming Lu into a prosperous and well-governed state, but also in foreign affairs, so much so that he aroused the envy of neighbouring states. "The people of Ch'i heard of this," Ssu-ma Ch'ien's narrative continues, "and they were afraid, and said, Confucius is surely carrying on the government in such a fashion that he will obtain the hegemony. If he has the hegemony, we shall be the first to be annexed, because our land lies nearest." So they sent a present of 80 singing girls and 120 horses to the prince of Lu, which turned him from duty to debauchery and Confucius resigned in disgust, though with reluctance.

In studying Confucian political philosophy it should be remembered, as Wilhelm urges, that Confucius had practical experience as a statesman, and thus had opportunity to try out his theories. He had also wide acquaintance with the government of many states, having travelled much and observed much.

1 Soothill, The Analects of Confucius, pgs. 42-45
2 Latourette, op. cit. vol. 1, pg. 117 says "about 145 B.C." Soothill, op. cit. pg. 24 gives the dates B.C. 163-85
3 Wilhelm, Confucius and Confucianism, pg. 24
4 Wilhelm, op. cit. pgs. 84, 85
5 Wilhelm, op. cit. pg. 24
6 Lun Yü, XVIII, 4; Soothill, The Analects of Confucius, pgs. 44, 45
7 Meng tsu, V, 2, 1.4
8 Wilhelm, op. cit. pgs. 85, 86
"When our master comes to any country," his disciples report, "he does not fail to learn all about its government."¹ So we are not to think of his political views as merely those of a learned pedant.

In this connection it should also not be forgotten that for over twenty centuries, from the glorious reign of Wu Ti (B. C. 140-87) of the Han dynasty, Confucian political principles have been the basis of government in China, and that for many centuries the Confucian classics were the only textbook of political philosophy in the training of government officials, and the civil service examinations. "The rulers of China," writes S. Wells Williams, "perceived the great security the adoption and diffusion of these doctrines would give their sway. They therefore began to embody them more and more into laws, and base the institutions of government upon them; and through all the convulsions and wars which have disturbed the country, and changed the reigning families, these writings have done more than any one thing else to uphold the institutions of the Chinese and give them a character and permanence which no other people have ever had. Education being founded on them, those who as students had been taught to receive and reverence them as the oracles of political wisdom, would, when they entered upon the duties of office, endeavour to carry out, in some degree at least their principles."²

The long reigns of most dynasties in Chinese history, so different from the history of Western countries, the vast territory and population ruled over, the fact that China has survived all the other nations of antiquity, are phenomena undoubtedly in great degree due to Confucian political teaching. With justifiable pride the Chinese say, as L. S. Hafl does, "The Chinese have outlived the rise and fall of the Egyptians, the Chaldeans, the Assyrians, the Medes, the Persians, the Phoenicians, the Carthaginians, the Greeks, the Romans and many other peoples. Their civilization stands out as the evergreen pine tree towers above the hillside flowers which blossom and wither away with

¹ Lun Yü, I, 10
² Williams, The Middle Kingdom, vol. 1, pg. 297
Theory has thus been balanced by practice in Confucianism, and the feasibility of its political and social teaching tested by practical experience. This, says a Chinese scholar, P. C. Hsieh, is a reason why the Confucian theory "dominated the Chinese government to the exclusion of all others."²

Another feature of Confucian political teaching is that political principles for public administration, and ethical principles for private living are closely interwoven. Politics is not isolated from ethics, making possible the suggestion of a dual standard, but is grounded in ethics. So that the subject of this chapter cannot be treated in vacuo;³ the relation of ruler and subject is tied up in the closest possible way with the other social relationships. And while we may, for purposes of orderly exposition, differentiate precepts that have to do with personal conduct from those that relate to social morality, and in the latter between political duties, family duties, and general social relations, Confucian ethics knows no such divisions. Political, social and individual ethics; correct conduct in official, family and personal life are all bound up together. One or two characteristic passages will illustrate what we mean, and show the practical and preceptorial nature of Confucian political philosophy. "The duke (Ai) said, I venture to ask how this practice of government is to be effected? Confucius replied, Husband and wife should have their separate functions; between father and son there should be affection; between ruler and minister there should be a strict adherence to their several parts. If these three relations be correctly discharged, all other things will follow."⁴ "The Master said, What does the Shu Ching say of filial piety? -- 'You are filial, you discharge your brotherly duties. These

¹ Hsti, The Political Philosophy of Confucianism, pg. xx
² Hsieh, The Government of China, pgs. 12, 13
³ Pott, Chinese Political Philosophy, pg. 52
⁴ Li Chi, XXIV, 8
qualities are displayed in government.' This then also constitutes the
exercise of government."¹ Dr. W. A. P. Martin has drawn attention to the fact
that the whole of the little treatise, Ta Hstieh, one of the Four Books, is a
fine example of this mixture.²

We have already remarked that Confucian ethics is practical, not
scientific or philosophical. This, as the above quotations abundantly mani-
fest, describes Confucian political teachings. The sayings of the Chinese
sages do not constitute a systematic treatise on political science, setting
forth the institutions, "laws and administration of government."³ The nearest
approach to this is among the historical documents that form the Shu Ching.
What we have from Confucius and Mencius is much advice in the form of epigra-
matic precepts on the duties of rulers and the art of government, thrown to-
gether so haphazardly as to be hard to classify. We propose to set forth Con-
fucian political philosophy under the following outline -- the conception of
the state, the need for government, its functions and form; the ruler -- his
appointment, position, character, models and the nature of his rule; the
character and duties of ministers; the people -- their obligations and part
in the nation, and their right of revolt against bad government.

THE CONCEPTION OF THE STATE

Confucianism regards the state as founded upon, and patterned after, the
family.⁴ "The empire, the state, the family. The root of the empire is in
the state. The root of the state is in the family."⁵ If all is well with the
family the condition of the state will be good, for proper regulation of the
family relationships is the basis of a well-governed state. "The ancients who
wished to illustrate illustrious virtue throughout the kingdom, first ordered

¹ Lun Yu, II, 21
² Martin, The Lore of Cathay, pgs. 206-214
³ op. Legge, The Life and Teachings of Confucius, pg. 104, 105
⁴ op. Wu, Ancient Chinese Political Theories, pgs. 46-48, 62-63; Hsü, The
Political Philosophy of Confucianism, pgs. 35, 87-88
⁵ Meng tzu, IV, 1, v
well their own states. Wishing to order well their states, they first regulated their families... Their families being regulated, their states were rightly governed. Their states being rightly governed, the whole kingdom was made tranquil and happy... Thus we see how the government of the state depends on the regulation of the family.¹ And the same virtues that create a well-regulated family are those that are required in the wider association of the state. "The filial piety with which the superior man serves his parents may be transferred as loyalty to the ruler; the fraternal duty with which he serves his elder brother may be transferred as deference to elders; his regulation of his family may be transferred as good government in any official position."² Thus it is in the family that political virtues are learned. If a ruler cannot teach his own family, he cannot instruct others. "Therefore the ruler, without going beyond his family, completes the lessons for the state."³ And also filial obedience teaches the people political obedience. "There is a fundamental agreement between a loyal subject in the service of his ruler and a filial son in his service of his parents, ... in the external sphere, there is compliance with rulers and elders; in the internal sphere, the filial service of parents."⁴ "There are few," says the Analects, "who being filial and fraternal, are fond of offending against their superiors. There have been none who, not liking to offend against their superiors, have been fond of stirring up strife."⁵

The family is also the pattern of the political organization, the state being conceived as an extension on a national scale of the family. The ruler corresponds to the parents. "Heaven and Earth (that is, as Legge explains, "the Being sacrificed to at the two places distinguished as the altars to heaven and earth"⁶) is the parent of all creatures," we are told in China's

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¹ Ta Hseh, text and com. IX
² Hsiao Ching, 14
³ Ta Hseh, com. IX, 1
⁴ Li Chi, XXII
⁵ Lun Yu, I, 2, i
⁶ Legge, The Religions of China, pg. 31
earliest historical book, "and of all creatures man is the most highly endowed. The sincere, intelligent and perspicacious among men becomes the great sovereign, and the great sovereign is the father and mother of the people."\(^1\)

In "the Great Plan," following an exhortation to the prince to be upright, it is said, "All the multitudes, instructed in this amplification of the perfect excellence, and carrying it into practice will approximate to the glory of the son of Heaven, and say, The son of Heaven is the parent of the people and so becomes the sovereign of the empire."\(^2\) This phrase "the parent (literally, father and mother) of the people" is constantly found in Confucian literature, and in the mouths of Chinese.

Corresponding with this idea of the ruler as "father and mother," the people are regarded as children. "By dealing with the mass of the people as his children, they are led to exhort one another to what is good."\(^3\) "Act as if you were watching over an infant," with the feelings of a mother.\(^4\) The duke of K'ang is thus exhorted, "Deal with the people as if you were guarding your infants and the people will be tranquil and orderly."\(^5\) If the ruler badly treats his subjects it is said, "Beasts devour one another and men hate them for doing so. When a prince, being the parent of his people, administers his government so as to be chargeable with leading on beasts to devour men, where is that parental relation to the people?"\(^6\) "When the parent of the people causes the people to wear looks of distress. . . .where is his parental relation to the people?"\(^7\) On the other hand, "when a prince loves what the people love, and hates what the people hate, then is he what is called the parent of the people."\(^8\)

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1 Shu Ching, V, 1, i
2 Shu Ching, V, 4, iii
3 Chung Yung, XX, 12 and 13
4 Ta Hsüeh, IX, 2
5 Shu Ching, V, 9, iii
6 Meng tzu, I, 1, iv
7 Meng tzu, III, 1, iii.7
8 Ta Hsüeh, X, 3; cp. Meng tzu, I, 2, vii
This personal view of government as parental, found in the Classics, has persisted up to modern times. "To this day," writes Gray in the last century, "the Chinese government is only to be understood through the relationship that exists between a father and his son." The emperor was regarded as standing in loco parentis to his people, this underlying idea coming to evidence particularly when calamities befell the empire, and the emperor recognizing his responsibility, prayed to the gods to relieve drought and disaster. Similarly the local magistrates were commonly called by the people 'fu mu kuan,' father and mother officials, and they liked to be styled such for the epithet implied benevolent administration, though often enough the term did not fit. Nor were they permitted by the people to forget this parental relation. On the occasion of injustice particularly, the aggrieved was apt to say, "a strange way for parents to treat their children."

THE NEED FOR GOVERNMENT

It was recognized that an organization wider than the family, a national government, was necessary. "Heaven gives birth to the people with such desires," it is said in the Shu Ching, "that without a ruler they must fall into all disorders, and Heaven gives birth to the man of intelligence whose business it is to regulate them." "Heaven to protect the inferior people, made for them rulers, and made for them instructors, that they might be able to aid God, and secure the tranquillity of the four quarters of the empire." But the ruler and his subjects are necessarily correlative and mutually dependent. "Without the sovereign, the people cannot have that guidance which is necessary to (the comfort of their) lives; without the people, the sovereign could have no sway over the four quarters of the empire."  

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1 Gray, China, vol. 1, pg. 82
2 Williams, China Yesterday and Today, pg. 66; Gray, op. cit. vol. 1, pg. 26
3 Mateer, Mandarin Lessons, vol. 1, pg. 230; Loule, New China and Old, pgs. 22-23
4 Macgowan, Men and Manners in Modern China, pg. 54
5 Nevius, China and the Chinese, pg. 67
6 Shu Ching, IV, 2, ii
7 Shu Ching, V, 1, i
8 Shu Ching, IV, 5, i
without the people has none whom he can employ; and the people without the
sovereign have none whom they can serve. Do not consider yourself so enlarged,"
the sovereign is admonished by his minister, "as to deem others small in com­
parison. If ordinary men and women do not find the opportunity to give full
development to their virtue, the people's lord will be without the proper aids
to complete his merit."¹

THE FUNCTIONS OF GOVERNMENT

The object of the national government may be stated in a word to be the
well-being of the people. Government exists, according to Confucianism, for
the benefit of the governed. "Mencius said, The people are the most important
element in a nation; the spirits of the land and grain are the next; the sover­
eign is the lightest."² It is unlikely that Confucius would have gone so far as
to say that; Mencius lived in times of greater oppression and misery, so that
his outlook and emphasis was different.³ But Confucius also regards government
as existing for the good of the people. One of his disciples, Tzu Kung, testi­
fies, "Were our Master in the position of the ruler of a state or the chief of a
family. . . . he would plant the people, and forthwith they would be established;
he would lead them on, and forthwith they would follow him; he would make them
happy, and forthwith multitudes would resort to his dominions; he would stimu­
late them, and forthwith they would be harmonious."⁴

This well-being of the people which is the object of government it was
recognized includes, first, their material prosperity and, second, their moral
welfare. "When the Master went to Wei, Jan Yu acted as driver of his car­
riage. The Master observed, How numerous are the people! Yu said, Since
they are thus numerous, what more shall be done for them? Enrich them, was
the reply. And when they have been enriched, what more shall be done? The

¹ Shu Ching, IV, 6, iv
² Meng tzu, VII, 2, xiv
³ Lyall, Mencius, Introduction, pgs. xx on
⁴ Lun Yu, XIX, 25
Master said, Teach them."¹ Mencius likewise makes the physical well-being of
the people the first concern of the state. "A sage govern the empire," he
says, "so as to cause pulse and grain to be as abundant as water and fire.
When pulse and grain are as abundant as water and fire, how shall the people
be other than virtuous?"² The idea that virtue always goes with material
prosperity is based on the doctrine, strongly held by Mencius, that human
nature is fundamentally good. So he reiterates that the physical conditions
the moral state. "The way of the people is this," he says. "If they have a
certain livelihood, they will have a fixed heart. If they have not a certain
livelihood, they have not a fixed heart. And if they have not a fixed heart,
there is nothing which they will not do in the way of self-abandonment, of
moral deflection, of depravity, and of wild license."³ Much more than Con-
fucius, Mencius gives definite advice on the economic aspects of government,⁴
advocates that the aged be nourished by the state,⁵ discusses agriculture,⁶
the proper methods of levying taxes,⁷ and "the regulation of the livelihood of
the people" with a view "to make sure that, above, they shall have sufficient
wherewith to serve their parents, and, below, sufficient wherewith to support
their wives and children; that in good years they shall always be abundantly
satisfied, and that in bad years they shall escape the danger of perishing."⁸
The ruler is warned against self-aggrandisement at the expense of the people.
"The accumulation of wealth is the way to scatter the people, and the letting
it be scattered among them is the way to collect the people."⁹ "If the
people have plenty, their prince will not be left in want alone. If the
people are in want, their prince will not be able to enjoy plenty alone."¹⁰

1 Lun Yü, XIII, 9
2 Meng tzu, VII, 1, xxiii
3 Meng tzu, III, 1, iii
4 Meng tzu, I, 1, iii, iv, v, vii.21-24, etc
5 Meng tzu, VII, 1, xxii; op. Li Chi, VII, 1, ii
6 Meng tzu, III, 1, iii
7 Meng tzu, II, 1, v; II, 2, x; III, 2, viii; etc
8 Meng tzu, I, 1, vii.21
9 Ta Hsüeh, X, 9
10 Lun Yü, XII, 9
But promoting the material prosperity of the people is not enough. "Men possess a moral nature," says Mencius, "but if they are well fed, warmly clad, and comfortably lodged, without being taught at the same time they become almost like the beasts."\(^1\) Having "enriched them," "educate them" said Confucius, and what he refers to is not scholarship but education of the people in morality. "The object of them all (the schools enumerated) is to illustrate the human relations."\(^2\) The morals of the people was likewise "a subject of anxious solicitude to the sage Shun, and he appointed Hsieh to be the minister of instruction, to teach the relations of humanity:—how between father and son there should be affection; between sovereign and minister righteousness; between husband and wife attention to their separate functions; between old and young a proper order; and between friends fidelity."\(^3\) "Let careful attention be paid to education in schools," Mencius enjoins, "the inculcation in it especially of the filial and fraternal duties, and gray haired men will not be seen upon the roads, carrying burdens on their backs or on their heads."\(^4\)

Further, the function of government is moral correction. "Chi K'ang asked Confucius about government. Confucius replied, To govern means to rectify;" and then he added, "If you lead on the people with correctness who will dare not to be correct?" It is obvious that no one can ever rectify others unless he be correct himself. So, as we shall see, Confucian political teaching lays great stress on the character of the ruler. "Let the prince be correct, and everything will be correct. Once rectify the prince, and the kingdom will be firmly established."\(^6\) "What is meant by 'The making the whole kingdom peaceful and happy depends on the government of his state,' is this:—When the sovereign behaves to his aged, as the aged should be behaved to, the people become filial; when the sovereign behaves to his elders, as the elders should be behaved to, the people learn brotherly submission;
when the sovereign treats compassionately the young and helpless, the people
do the same. Thus the ruler has a principle with which, as with a measuring
square, he may regulate his conduct.¹ It is particularly the duty of his
ministers to "rectify what is wrong in the sovereign's mind."² With the ruler
as the example this rectification in a well-governed state extends throughout
all sections of society with two ends in view, the illustration of virtue, and
the renovation of the people. "Wishing to order well their states, they (the
ancients) first regulated their families. Wishing to regulate their families,
they first cultivated their person. Wishing to cultivate their persons, they
first rectified their hearts. Wishing to rectify their hearts, they first
sought to be sincere in their thoughts. . . . Their thoughts being sincere
their hearts were then rectified. Their hearts being rectified, their persons
were cultivated. Their persons being cultivated, their families were regulated.
Their families being regulated, their states were rightly governed. Their
states being rightly governed, the whole kingdom was made tranquil and happy."³

The "rectification of names" is also an important matter. "Tzu lu said,
The ruler of Wei has been waiting for you, in order with you to administer the
government. What will you consider the first thing to be done? The Master
replied, What is necessary is to rectify names."⁴ Tzu lu did not comprehend
this, and it is indeed hard to see the supreme importance of names being
correct. But Confucius said, "If names be not correct, language is not in
accordance with the truth of things. If language be not in accordance with the
truth of things, affairs cannot be carried on to success."⁵ Chinese scholars
themselves differ in their interpretation of just what "rectification of names"

1 Ta Hstieh, X, 1
2 Meng tzu, IV, 1, xx
3 Ta Hsüeh, text, 4, 5
4 Lun Yü, XIII, 3
5 loc. cit.
signifies.¹ Soothill takes it to be "a lesson in logic."² Legge's explanation, which is also Dr. K. C. Wu's, seems to me the correct one, that "rectification of names" means that each person in his social relations must be what the "name" of his relation requires.³ The king must be a king and fulfil his kingly functions in relation to his subjects, and the subject has his "name" and corresponding moral obligation, and so with father and son, husband and wife, and all the other social relationships. When duke Ching of Ch'i asked Confucius about government, he replied, "There is government when the prince is prince, and the minister (or subject) is minister (subject); when the father is father, and the son is son."⁴ Each one must have his relationships clearly defined and "the names rectified," or the duties pertaining to them will be confused, and the result will be a chaotic society. "Government," says Confucius, "is rectification."⁵

To turn from Confucian teaching that officials, from the emperor down, are "fathers and mothers of the people," and that the function of government is to care for the complete well-being, moral and physical, of the "children," to the actual practice of government in China is a strong contrast. It is the contrast between a paternalistic theory of government, and an actual policy of neglect. Ordinarily all that the emperor cared about was a regular and sufficient supply of revenue, and absence of insubordination and disturbance in the empire. The revenue was collected for him by the local magistrates. Since officials in China received no salaries the local magistrate paid himself as much as he dared, or as was customary for his position, and passed up the

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¹ Wu, Ancient Chinese Political Theories, pgs. 279-283; Esfahani, The Political Philosophy of Confucianism, pgs. 45-59; Kudo, The Ethics of Confucius, pgs. 36-37
² Soothill, The Analects of Confucius, pg. 606
³ Legge, The Chinese Classics, vol. 1, commentary in loco
⁴ Lun Yu, XII, 11
⁵ Li Chi, XXIV
balance to the higher official. Each in turn kept out what he dared and
finally the provincial governor forwarded the balance to the imperial
treasury. The tax itself was not large, nothing like as heavy as taxation in
Western countries. For there were no social services of the government and
few national institutions to be supported at public expense. Nor was anything
deducted from the revenue for local use since municipal administration, police
forces and other official agencies for the supervision of public life and pro-
motion of community interests were unknown. The indifference of the higher
authorities to the social, economic and moral welfare of the people was re-
flexed in the local magistrate who was in most cases as far as possible re-
moved from the picture in the Classics of a "father and mother official" who
rears and nourishes the people as parents do their children. "It is no
exaggeration to say," writes a Chinese professor, "that the traditional local
government in China has been a negative one. If an official is able to collect
the land taxes to the satisfaction of his superiors, and if he is at all con-
scientious about hearing litigations, with which a great part of his time is
occupied, he may be said to have discharged his duties satisfactorily." Even
these two functions of local government the mandarin had as little to do with
personally as possible. The taxes were collected by "rats" who oppressed the
people unscrupulously, and by all manner of extortion and wickedness collected
as much money as possible. And as to criminal proceedings Doolittle says,
"Generally speaking, cases of murder are never investigated by the mandarin
unless a formal complaint is made, on the same principle that he never arrests
thieves, unless a complaint has been made against them." In reality the

1 Giles, The Civilization of China, pgs. 53, 54; China and the Chinese,
pgs. 83, 84
2 J. Legge, "Imperial Confucianism," China Review, vol. 6, no. 6, pg. 366
3 Parker, Studies in Chinese Religion, pgs. 25, 26; Giles, The Civiliza-
tion of China, pgs. 54, 55
4 C. M. Chang, "The Chinese Standards of Good Government," Mankai Social and
Economic Quarterly, vol. 8, no. 2 (July 1935), pgs. 229 on
5 Macgowan, Men and Manners in Modern China, pgs. 19-21
6 Doolittle, Social Life of the Chinese, vol. 1, pg. 305
Chinese were governed less than almost any nation of the West. Each citizen lived his own life as custom dictated, travelled where he pleased and supported himself how he pleased, with a minimum of government restriction and interference provided he was law-abiding. Apart from collection of taxes and infliction of penal justice there was no concern of the state in the daily lives of the teeming millions of Chinese. The policy of government was laissez-faire.

This indifference was not only on the part of government, but was characteristic of the governed. The Chinese have been notoriously indifferent to public weal, lacking in national spirit and patriotism, and ignorant of anything but their own local relationships. The common people had very little acquaintance with the government, and seldom came in contact with the officials. They knew something of the local magistrate, but, unless there were lawsuits, the only representative of the government they saw was the "rat" who collected the taxes. And their experience of this unprincipled rascal taught them that the less they knew of the government the better. Except when their treatment by an official became extremely intolerable they were very apathetic to government corruption and abuses, and did not band together to insist on people's rights. They were entirely absorbed in "labor for bread or study for office," and 'lao kuei-chü' (old custom) ruled their lives. "The Chinese," says Moule, "are notoriously more easily governed than any other civilized nation."

The large degree of local self-government that existed in China made for practical democracy. It is the institution of the family and the self-government of the village and trades-guilds that made the Chinese in ordinary

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1 Holcombe, The Real Chinese Question, pg. 4
2 Goodnow, China, An Analysis, pgs. 4, 60-90, 189-190, 193-197 stresses this in detail.
3 Smith, Chinese Characteristics, chap. 13
4 Moule, New China and Old, pgs. 67-68
5 Williams, The Middle Kingdom, vol. 1, pg. 348; Williams, China Yesterday and Today, pg. 115
6 Moule, op. cit. pg. 27
circumstances independent of the national government. ¹ The merchants administered their commercial interests in their guilds. The family was governed by its head and the control was strong. Marriages and births and livelihood were entirely family affairs. Education was not a government concern, but only the holding of the civil service examinations. The clan council dealt with the larger family interests. The village governed itself, the authority being in the hands of village elders, who rule by reason of age and experience, and it was practically independent of the provincial government. Repair of roads, upkeep of the temple and the theatre, etc., if they were repaired or kept up, was paid by local assessment. The families concerned, or the headmen arbitrated in nearly all local disputes, for to go to law usually meant that both parties were ruined and so lawsuits at the yamen were diligently avoided wherever possible, and crimes hushed up. ² If the government left them alone they left the government alone. Leong and Tao say, "In China the central government plays but an infinitesimally small part in the village life. The village has perfect freedom of industry and trade, of religion, and of everything that concerns the government, regulation and protection of the locality."³ The Chinese village formed a little self-governing community, a little republic, -- and there were millions of them -- in the midst of an empire.

Goodnow attributes this laissez-faire policy of the Chinese government to the influence of Confucianism.⁴ But the Confucian sages would certainly have condemned it if we judge by their recorded sayings.⁵ For in the Four Books, as we have seen, they advocate government regulation and promotion of many things that pertain to the welfare of the people, both their economic

¹ Kulp, Country Life in South China; Smith, Village Life in China; Lin, Ly Country and Ly People, pgs. 204-205; Williams, China Yesterday and Today, pg. 136
² Leong and Tao, Village and Town Life in China, pgs. 71, 72; Macgowan, Men and Manners in Modern China, chap. 13; Lin, Ly Country and Ly People, pgs. 204-205
³ Leong and Tao, op. cit. pgs. 4-5
⁴ Goodnow, op. cit. pgs. 67, 68
⁵ Hsü, The Political Philosophy of Confucianism, pgs. 157-159
well-being and their moral instruction and renovation. And we may think that they would surely approve of the manifold activities of modern governments in promoting commercial interests, subsidizing private enterprise, trying to find employment for all, providing free education at public expense and regulating the economic and social life of the country. Modern Chinese critics of the government of the past who demand an expansion of the functions of the state are in line with classical Confucianism.

THE FORM OF GOVERNMENT

The form of government is nowhere discussed, for the idea of monarchy was never challenged. But it is explicitly taught that there can be only one head, the source of all political authority, in the state. "The Master said, There are not two suns in the sky, nor two kings in a territory, nor two masters in a family, nor two superiors of equal honor; and the people are shown how the distinction between ruler and subject should be maintained." Mencius reiterates this idea of the oneness of the ruler in a state corresponding to the oneness of the sun in the heavens. So in the Shu Ching the model emperors frequently style themselves, "I, the one man," or "the solitary man." "Affairs may be ruined by a single sentence; a kingdom may be settled by its One man." And Confucianists entitled the emperor Yuan Shou, the original or first Head.

In accordance with the conception of the state as an enlarged family, which we have seen has underlain all Chinese political thought since the dawn of history, the character of the government of China as it existed up to 1912 when the republic was inaugurated, should be described as a patriarchal monarchy. The persistence and pervasiveness of this patriarchal character were alike unique. "No where," says Williams, "has it been systematized so

2 Fitzgerald, China, a Short Cultural History, pg. 73
3 Li Chi, XXVII
4 Meng tzu, V, 1, iv
5 Ta Hstieh, IX, 3; Lun Yü, XX, 1, v
6 Hsü, The Political Philosophy of Confucianism, pg. 74
thoroughly, and acted upon so consistently and for so long a period as in China.\(^1\) No doubt in ancient times Western peoples too had a patriarchal government, but this is regarded as a primitive stage from which the modern state has evolved.\(^2\) But for twenty-four centuries Confucianism has taught the Chinese to regard the empire as a vast family and the emperor as parent of his people.

The sovereign has the central place in Confucian political philosophy and ethics, and particularly in Confucius' thinking. The stability and political order which he desired in his time when disintegration and weakness characterized the government, and feudal princes usurped the prerogatives of the emperor, he believed could come only through an all-powerful imperial rule.\(^3\) And in his ethics, it is a fundamental doctrine, as we have already observed, that renovation of the moral condition of the people begins at the top and comes through the example and influence of the good king.\(^4\) "He made the monarch," writes P. C. Hsieh, "the center of his philosophy. Every phase of his political discussion took place on or around the monarch. By so doing he aimed to make the institution of a monarch the commencement of stabilization."\(^5\)

It is chiefly on this score that Confucianism has lost prestige and popularity in republican China. It is charged with conservatism and imperialism.\(^6\) "Large numbers of mo-teng Chinese," says Johnston, "believe that Confucianism is incompatible with a democratic form of government. They think that so long as Confucianism is allowed to exist there will be an ever-present danger of a revival of monarchic hopes and ideas. The main reason generally given for this belief is that Confucius taught the duty of loyalty to the

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1 Williams, The Middle Kingdom, vol. 1, pg. 296
2 Pott, Chinese Political Philosophy, pgs. 64, 65
3 Lyall, Mencius, Introduction, pgs. xx-xxi
4 Soothill, The Three Religions of China, pgs. 226, 227
5 Hsieh, The Government of China, pg. 2
6 Maclagan, Chinese Religious Ideas, pg. 53
sovereign.⁷¹

THE RULER

The throne of China, according to Confucian theory, came to the
sovereign not by heredity, nor by imperial gift, nor by the acclaim of the
people, though their will found expression, for "Heaven sees according as my
people see; Heaven hears according as my people hear."² Nor could it be
obtained by an act of usurpation. It is "the gift of Heaven."³ Wang Chang
said, Was it the case that Yao gave the empire to Shun? Mencius said, No.
The emperor cannot give the empire to another. Yes;—but Shun had the
empire. Who gave it to him? Heaven gave it to him, was the answer."⁴ The
following poem, celebrating the virtues of King Wen, who founded the new
dynasty of Chou after the fall of Yin, shows how the appointment is said to be
made:

"Heaven is not readily to be relied on;
It is not easy to be king
Yin's rightful heir to the heavenly seat
Was not permitted to possess the kingdom.

Wen's virtue was without deflection
And in consequence he received the allegiance of
the states from all quarters.
Heaven surveyed this lower world
And its appointment lighted on King Wen.

The favouring appointment was from Heaven
Giving the throne to our King Wen."⁵

The emperor alone in all the empire is thus appointed. "The Master said, It
is only the son of Heaven who receives his appointment from Heaven; officers
receive their appointments from the ruler."⁶ So the sovereign, by virtue of
his appointment, is "the vice-regent of God,"⁷ and "as ruling over all under
the sky the king is called T'ien Tzu, the son of Heaven."⁸

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1 Johnston, Confucianism and Modern China, pg. 114
2 Shu Ching, IV, 1, ii.7; Meng tzu, V, 1, v
3 Meng tzu, V, 1, v.7
4 Meng tzu, V, 1, v
5 Shih Ching, III, 1, ii
6 Li Chi, XXIX
7 Shu Ching, V, 12, xiv
8 Li Chi, I, 2, i
Heaven was infallibly correct in its appointment, but its decree was not unchangeable. The gift was not necessarily a permanent gift, either to a dynasty or to an individual. "Take warning from the house of Yin. The great decree is not easily preserved." It is constantly said in the Shu Ching and Shih Ching, "The appointments of Heaven are not constant," and "Heaven is not readily to be relied on." For the appointment was not given unconditionally as an absolute divine right to rule according to personal caprice. "Heaven gave it to him," echoes Wan Chang; "did Heaven confer its appointment on him with specific injunctions? Mencius replied, No. Heaven does not speak. It simply showed its will by his personal conduct, and his conduct of affairs." In other words, the appointment by Heaven is conditioned on character. It is made on account of virtue, it is preserved by good behavior, and if the ruler does not carry on the virtue of his ancestors he cannot rely on Heaven's appointment, for it may be withdrawn and Heaven chooses the man to displace him. "In the Announcement of K'ang it is said, The decree indeed may not always rest on us; that is, goodness obtains the decree, and the want of goodness loses it." An emperor of Chou thus resolves:

"Brilliant and illustrious is the house of Chou

I will cultivate admirable virtue
And display it throughout these great regions;
Truly will the king preserve the appointment."

This doctrine of the decree of Heaven, so similar to the Stuart divine right of kings and yet different, goes back to the oldest historical documents, the Shu Ching, which is full of it. Obviously it strengthened the hand of autocracy and despotism and gave great security to the dynasty on the throne until after centuries of rule the inevitable degeneration of the reigning

1 See Ross, The Original Religion of China, pgs. 107-120, 135, 136; Creel, The Birth of China, chap. 28
2 Ta Hsüeh, X
3 Meng tsu, V, 1, v
4 Shu Ching, IV, 6
5 Meng tsu, V, 1, v
6 Ta Hsüeh, X
7 Shih Ching, I, 2, viii
house set in, and the succession ended in incapable and tyrannical rulers who were overthrown by a new dynasty. Then the new appointment of Heaven was revealed, and this doctrine, as Creel puts it, threw over the new reign "a mantle of legitimacy." But also the doctrine was a check on irresponsible absolutism, for it made the emperor responsible to Heaven. Russel has pointed out how different is the Japanese conception of the emperor.

The idea of responsibility pervades all Chinese society. The family is responsible for its members, the headmen for the village, the magistrate for his district, and each higher official is responsible for those below him. This pervasive idea of mutual responsibility with all its ramifications binds Oriental society together and holds down the people by fear of each other and mutual surveillance. It contrasts strongly with the individualism of the West and gives rise to phenomena incomprehensible to the Westerner. Relatives will be executed for the crime of a member of the family. Headmen are accountable for village disturbances of the peace. Local mandarins are disgraced for disorders in their district, and high officials will commit suicide, or voluntarily hand in their resignation and ask for punishment, for circumstances with which they can be only remotely connected and over which they have no control. At the top the emperor too is held to be accountable, and responsible to Heaven which appointed him. This idea finds expression in connection with extraordinary calamities befalling the empire, or the appearance of strange natural phenomena. The following is from a lamentation over the prodigies

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1 Holcombe, Chinese Problem, Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, vol. 3, pg. 431
2 Creel, The Birth of China, pg. 374
3 Russel, The Problem of China, pgs. 35, 36
4 See Haagowm, Men and Manners in Modern China, chap. 2; Leong and Tao, Village and Town Life in China, pg. 46; Smith, Chinese Characteristics, chaps. 24 and 25
5 Williams, The Middle Kingdom, vol. 1, pgs. 296, 296
6 Smith, Chinese Characteristics, chap. 24; Gray, China, vol. 1, pgs. 237-238
7 Moule, New China and Old, pgs. 27, 38
betokening the ruin of the Chou dynasty:

"The sun and moon announce evil,
Not keeping to their proper paths
All through the kingdom, there is no proper government,
Because the good are not employed.
For the moon to be eclipsed
Is but an ordinary matter
Now that the sun has been eclipsed, --
How bad it is!

... ... ...
High banks become valleys
Deep valleys become hills.
Alas for the men of this time!
How does the king not stop these things?"¹

Examples, from antiquity and from modern times, may be given to illustrate the emperor's own sense of responsibility in time of calamity. After seven years of drought and famine during his reign it was suggested to the emperor T'ang that a human sacrifice should be offered to Heaven. The emperor said, "If a man must be the victim I will be he." He dressed himself in mourning and drove out to a grove in a plain cart, and there asked Heaven to reveal to what crime of his the calamity was due.² In 1644 when rebellion brought the Ming dynasty to an end, and Peking fell to the rebels, the last emperor ascended the hill in the palace grounds and hanged himself after writing a last decree. "We, poor in virtue and of contemptible personality, have incurred the wrath of God on high... I am ashamed to meet my ancestors and therefore I myself take off my crown and with my hair covering my face, await dismemberment at the hands of the rebels. Do not hurt a single hair of my people!"³ In 1832 a severe drought wrung from the emperor the following prayer: "Oh! alas! Imperial Heaven!... this year the drought is most unusual. Summer is past, and no rain has fallen -- I, the minister of Heaven, am placed over mankind, and am responsible for keeping the world in order... .The sole cause is the daily deeper atrocity of my sins... .Hence I have been unable to move Heaven's heart, and bring down abundant blessings... .I examine myself and

¹ Shih Ching, II, 4, ode 9; III, 3, ode 1
² Legge, The Religions of China, pgs. 54-55; Du Bose, Dragon, Image and Demon, pg. 52
³ Giles, History of Chinese Literature, pg. 337
consider my errors, looking up and hoping that I may obtain pardon. . . . Prostrate I beg Imperial Heaven to pardon my ignorance and stupidity and to grant me self-renovation, for myriads of people are involved by me, the One man. My sins are so numerous it is difficult to escape from them." 1 "When Heaven sends down calamities," says Mencius, "it is still possible to escape from them; when we occasion the calamities ourselves, it is not possible any longer to live." 2

This sense of responsibility ultimately to Heaven is vaguely realized by all ranks of officials. Plagues of locusts, visitations of tigers, bad floods, drought, eclipses, etc., 3 were often charged to the misconduct of the officials, and when they continued they called forth confessions by the mandarins. 4 Many instances could be given of Chinese officials praying for deliverance of the people from the calamity and professing that it was due to their sins. 5 Macgowan narrates one such. "On one occasion, in a large southern town, the people were dying in large numbers from the effects of a very deadly fever that had appeared amongst them. . . . The town was in a panic for the fear of death was in the heart of everyone. . . . At last the chief mandarin of the town, oppressed by the calamities, and with a sense that he was in some measure responsible for them determined to appeal to Heaven. He accordingly next morning at the earliest dawn, stood out in the open and lifted up his eyes to the grey sky, pleaded with Heaven to take away the disease from the town. 'I know that I am at fault,' he said, 'that I have misgoverned, and that thou art sending down death upon the people for my misdeeds. . . . '" 6

This interpretation of calamities and fearful prodigies as an indication of Heaven's displeasure with the rulers, and a punishment brought on by

1 Du Bose, op. cit. pgs. 52, 53
2 Meng tzu, II, 1, iv
3 Creel, Sinism, pgs. 116-118; Giles, Confucianism and its Rivals, pg. 54
4 Williams, The Middle Kingdom, vol. 1, pgs. 368-371
5 Leong and Tao, Village and Town Life in China, pg. 57
6 Macgowan, Men and Manners in Modern China, pgs. 37, 38
misgovernment, provided a warning that "the great decree is not easily preserved," and a reminder of his great responsibility.

Appointed by Heaven "the vice-regent of God," the position of the ruler in the state was supreme, and his authority absolute; he was the fountain of all political power, chief executive, supreme justice, head of the intelligentsia, and the high priest of the state religion. "The One man" corresponded to "the one sun in the sky." Confucius would have his power unlimited. "The Master said, . . . .When constraint is put upon a ruler, that is the disowning of his superiority. . . .this paves the way to anarchy." He is to maintain his power, and surrender none of his authority, for when those of lesser rank than the son of Heaven presume to control affairs of state the empire will rapidly go to ruin. "When right principles prevail in the kingdom government will not be in the hands of the great officers." And lesser officers certainly have no right of direction. The lower the rank of those who usurp control of the government the more rapid will be the ruin, a noble in ten generations, a noble's minister in five, and a minister's minister in three. "There is government," said Confucius, "when the prince is prince, and the minister is minister." The royal prerogatives included regulation of religion and society, forms and dimensions of buildings, carriages, and all measurements, language, civil ordinances, and the making of war. "To no one but the son of Heaven does it belong to order ceremonies, to fix the measures, and to determine the written characters." "When good government prevails in the empire, ceremonies, music, and punitive military expeditions proceed from the son of Heaven." These sayings are to be read against the background of the times when the emperors were increasingly losing their power, and the feudal princes

1 Ross, The Original Religion of China, pgs. 121-123
2 Hsiao Ching, XI
3 Lun Yü, XVI, 2
4 idem
5 Lun Yü, XII, 11
6 Chung Yung, XXVIII
7 Lun Yü, XVI, 2
were usurping control. Confucius was keenly sensitive to the evils of such
impropriety and insubordination. "The Master said,. . . .It is better to be
mean than to be insubordinate." And what he hoped was that order and
prosperity would be recovered to the empire by the emperor regaining full
authority and control over his vassals. He was through and through a
monarchist. And his own great deference to authority is seen in his demeanor
at court.

The emperor was regarded in China with unbounded veneration and awe, and
everything was done to enhance the prestige and sacredness of his person. He
lived far removed from the people in the spacious grounds of the Tzu Chin
Ch'eng, the Purple Prohibited City, best known in the West as the Forbidden
City, which was surrounded by high red painted walls, and situated within the
Huang Ching, or Imperial City, also enclosed by high walls, and itself a city
within the Tatar city of Peking. Even the people of the capital rarely saw
him. He infrequently left the inner enclosure of the palace and then almost
entirely on occasions of ceremony. Strict guard was of course kept at the
gates of the cities within the city, and no unauthorised persons dared approach
and the authorised passed in on foot. His ministers had audience with the
emperor before daylight and court etiquette required elaborate prostrations.
Because foreign envoys refused to perform the kowtow they were forbidden
audience, until they forced their wishes by war. Pomp and ceremony of course
attended him everywhere. Things used by him or associated with him were
sacred and taboo to the common people. "The vacant throne, or even a screen
of yellow silk thrown over a chair, is worshipped equally with his actual
presence, and a dispatch is received in the provinces with incense and
prostrations." Thus an atmosphere of mystery and awe were created about him.

1 Lun Yü, VII, 35, but Soothill refers this passage to personal self-control
2 Lyall, Mencius, Introduction, pgs. xx-xxi
3 Lun Yü, X, 1-5, 13
4 Williams, The Middle Kingdom, vol. 1, pg. 314; cp. Douglas, Society in
China, pgs. 11, 12
He was usually referred to as "huang ti," or august ruler, which is defined, says Williams, as "the appellation of one possessing complete virtues, and able to act on heavenly principles." He had many other titles, -- the son of Heaven, the heavenly august one, the wise and august one, the heavenly king, and so forth. Supreme in the state he was also higher than the gods. He granted promotion and titles of honor to deities, and was petitioned to deify benevolent genii. He also sometimes forbade the transmigration of the soul of an official who incurred his displeasure. All the land under the wide heaven is the king's land, and all are the king's subjects. The latter claim was the assumption underlying all dealings with foreign envoys in the last century. That the people's land and houses belong to the emperor is taught in the Classics. It is held by the people in consideration of a land tax. But when the government requires any property for public use it simply demands it, perhaps sometimes paying the owner a nominal sum for consolation. Williams says, "No acknowledgment on the part of the sovereign of certain well-understood rights belonging to the people has ever been required, and is not likely to be demanded or given by either party until the Gospel shall teach them their respective rights."

An autocratic monarch and an imperial power that has no constitutional limitations is the teaching of Confucian political theory. It is not surprising that for twenty centuries it was the official doctrine at the basis of government, nor that it is now assailed by modern republicans. But it is not a careful use of language to speak of the Chinese autocracy, as some have done,
as "irresponsible despotism."¹

On the one hand, Confucianism encouraged the development of absolute monarchy by its high view of the ruler as "son of Heaven" and "vice-regent of God" appointed by decree of Heaven to rule "the black-haired people," and by its insistence on the fundamental virtue of loyalty in ministers and implicit obedience by all subjects.² Autocracy was also promoted by the conception of the empire as a family.³ The obligations of filial piety in respect to his parents, and habits of subordination to his elders in the family and clan, were inculcated in the child's mind not only by precept and school text-book, but by all the customs of the social order in which he grew up. Recognition of the authority over him of the pater familias and the elders of his family, even though he may have long since reached maturity himself, or even acquired gray hairs, would make him regard with supreme veneration "the father and mother" of "all under Heaven." The full force of this can only be realized when one knows the place the grandfather, or father, holds in a Chinese family.

The solidarity of the Chinese family, as Goodnow points out, tends in the same direction.⁴ The sense of obligation to his immediate family, and loyalty to his clan, is so exaggerated that the Chinese feel little or no obligation to other social groups, and there is a complete lack of public spirit or national consciousness. And so combining with others of a different surname and from other parts of China for resistance against the government or the assertion of the people's rights, is as very rare, if not non-existent, as is the willingness to sacrifice oneself in the interests of a group not made up of relatives. "Every individual," says Williams, "submits to multiplied insults, oppressions and cruelties without thinking of combining with his fellows to resist."⁵

Yet, on the other hand, though the emperor's power was unlimited, and no

¹ e.g. Giles, The Civilization of China, pg. 43
² Shryock, op. cit., pg. 38
³ Goodnow, China, An Analysis, pgs. 183, 184
⁴ Goodnow, loc. cit.
⁵ Williams, The Middle Kingdom, vol. 1, pg. 324
one in the state exercised control over him, unless he was weak in character, in actual practice there were checks on autocratic abuse of power. In the first place, though the Chinese government was a hierarchy with the emperor at the head down through viceroys, intendants, prefects to local magistrates, and control was maintained by the universal sense of responsibility and mutual suspicion, already referred to, and by the powerful hold of custom and social habits of subordination to rank and age, yet in the last analysis he had no efficient military power to enforce his decrees. Confucianism taught that the emperor should rule by moral force, not physical. "No edict or decree of any emperor in Chinese history," says Holcombe, "has been generally enforced by direct means if it failed to meet with approval, or, at least, careless indifference. It might not be actively opposed, but would be evaded, ignored and then allowed to die of neglect." Public opinion is also a check on the emperor’s despotism. The Chinese people are docile and uncomplaining to a fault. They will put up with inconvenience and inequitable customs long after Western people would demand a change. The traditional customs of government have the force of unwritten law. What is customary may be unjust, but it is submitted to as custom. But tyrannical deviation from custom, general and long-continued injustice will incite a local uprising and secure the recall of the mandarin, or, in the extreme instance, the overthrow of the reigning dynasty.

Also, the emperor is bound to rule the empire in accordance with the laws. "The laws of China form an edifice," says Williams, "the foundations of which were laid by Li Kuei twenty centuries ago. Successive dynasties have been building thereon ever since, adding, altering, pulling down and building up, as circumstances seemed to require." This Code is highly regarded, and Williams

1 Little, Gleanings from Fifty Years in China, pg. 39; Williams, The Middle Kingdom, vol. 1, pg. 309
2 Holcombe, The Real Chinese Question, pg. 27
3 Nevius, China and the Chinese, pgs. 73-75
4 Smith, Chinese Characteristics, pgs. 156-161; 222-225
5 Williams, The Middle Kingdom, vol. 1, pgs. 299, 300
endorses the opinion of Staunton, an authority on the penal code of China, when he says: "That the laws of China are very frequently violated by those who are their administrators, there can, unfortunately, be no question. . . . at the same time. . . . there are substantial grounds for believing that neither flagrant nor repeated acts of injustice do, in point of fact, often in any rank or station, ultimately escape with impunity." ¹

Fourthly, the Confucian Classics studied by all who would be officials, strongly condemn oppression and teach most emphatically, as we will shortly note, that the emperor must exercise benevolence toward his subjects. If it teaches autocracy, it also teaches the benevolent autocracy of a pater familias. So we are not to think of imperial rule in China as an arbitrary despotism after the manner of other Oriental countries. ²

It should be mentioned, too, that in accord with the Confucian teaching that a minister's chief duty is to correct his sovereign, there was a Board of Censors, one of the six administrative boards in the supreme government in Peking. The censors have sometimes administered reproof to the emperor with great frankness and frequently have suffered for it when the emperor could not bear the censure. But fear of the imperial displeasure had deprived this check on his conduct of any great strength. ³

But the most important limitation to capricious and irresponsible despotism was the emperor's sense of responsibility to Heaven. In its doctrine that calamities were an indication of Heaven's displeasure with the ruler, and that "the appointment of Heaven is not easily preserved," Confucianism supplied the most effective corrective to its doctrine of the unconstrained autocracy and absolutism of the ruler. Government in China was a despotism of a modified character. ⁴

¹ Stanton, The Penal Code, Ta Tsing Lou Lee, introduction
³ Gray, China, vol. 1, chap. 2; Williams, The Middle Kingdom, vol. 1, chap. 7
Having outlined the emperor's political position as absolute ruler there remains to mention his religious position. "What distinguishes the emperor," says Russel, "is not so much his political power, which fluctuates with the strength of his personality, as certain religious prerogatives." Because he is head of the state he is also the head of the state religion. As a religion Confucianism included the worship of Confucius and his disciples, ancestor worship, the veneration of many lesser deities, the imperial sacrifice at the altar of Heaven, and many other sacrifices. This state religion had no priesthood; the head of the state, the heads of families, and government officials acted as priests, performing the ceremonies. Of the various religious observances in the system of the state religion two could be performed only by the emperor. As a filial son he worshipped the imperial ancestors, and as the head of the state he worshipped Shang Ti, the Supreme Ruler, God, universally regarded as the chief deity in the Chinese pantheon, and offered the most important state sacrifice at the Temple of Heaven. Ancestor worship will be considered in the following chapter; the worship of Shang Ti must be noticed here.

It was the emperor's prerogative to worship the Supreme Ruler; others could only worship lesser gods. "Confucius said,. . . .The rule is that only the son of Heaven sacrifices to Heaven and Earth, and the princes of states sacrifice at the altars of the spirits of the land and grain." The people do not worship Shang Ti and the reason they give when questioned, is, Shang Ti is too exalted for them to worship, only the emperor was worthy to do so.

Edkins, agreeing with unanimous testimony, states this fact, but elsewhere

1 Russel, The Problem of China, pg. 17
2 De Groot, "Confucian Religion," Hastings's Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics
3 Ross, The Original Religion of China, pgs. 134, 135
4 The discussion as to the nature of T'ien, Heaven, and Shang Ti, the Supreme Ruler, and whether they are equivalent has produced an enormous literature, see Creel, Yenching Journal, December 1935
5 Li Chi, VII, 2; op. XXI, 1
6 Martin, The Chinese, their Education, Philosophy and Letters, pgs. 98, 99
Some Confucianists, he says, did offer incense to Heaven under the open sky on the occasion of the new and full moons. "Yet," he goes on, "it is common to hear the Chinese say that Heaven should be worshipped only by the emperor in the name of the nation." I have been unable to find confirmation of this worship, so it would seem to have been not extensively practiced, and Edkins indicates that it was regarded as irregular. So the statement stands that it was the sole prerogative of the head of the state, as the representative of the nation, to worship at the altar of Heaven. "The public offering of this sacrifice," says Ross, "was the chief evidence of the right to rule. On this account the practice has been strictly observed and jealously guarded by the ruling sovereign all down the ages." It is common to speak of him as the "high-priest." But the term is inappropriate, for, as we have said, there was no priesthood. The worship was a state affair and performed by the emperor in person attended by high officials. It was one of the most important and solemn imperial functions, and had been performed for milleniums.

The worship of Shang Ti was performed each year at the winter solstice with great ceremony. It took place at the Temple of Heaven, situated in the southeast part of Peking in an extensive grove surrounded by a wall that shut out the people, and on the Altar of Heaven, a large circular marble platform, with three terraces, detached from any buildings and open to the sky. There were no idols in this area, and no image of Shang Ti. The Supreme Ruler was represented on the upper terrace by a tablet inscribed with the characters Shang Ti, and on each side were the tablets of the emperor's ancestors. On

1 Edkins, Religion in China, pgs. 60 and 92
2 ibid, pg. 92
3 Ross, The Original Religion of China, pg. 295
4 e.g. Martin, The Chinese, Their Education, Philosophy and Letters, pgs. 98, 99; Headland, Court Life in China, pg. 151; Soothill, The Three Religions of China, pg. 274
5 Legge, The Religions of China, pgs. 57, 58
6 Suzuki, A Brief History of Early Chinese Philosophy, pg. 141
7 Very early ritual is described in the Li Chi, XXI
the second terrace stood tablets for the spirits of numerous heavenly bodies and divinities of nature. Before each tablet sacrificial food was placed and during the ceremony other offerings were made, and animal sacrifices burned. Here for himself, as the son of Heaven the protector of his throne, on behalf of his dynasty, and as the representative of the millions of his people, the emperor prostrates himself, and engages in a ritual and prayer that expresses obligation, dependence, and gratitude to Shang Ti. It was the high point of Chinese religious life, and the visitor today to the Altar of Heaven feels a sense of awe and reverence there.

The religious significance of this worship, says Ross, "has been completely lost. Search in ancient books and inquiry of the foremost literary men have alike failed to ascertain the rationale of this most ancient and interesting ceremony. The only response elicited by inquiry is that it is 'old custom'." The character of the prayer, as Soothill points out, is the best indication of its meaning. Legge concludes, "The offerings are oblations, and not sacrifices in our common acceptation of that term. There is not and never was any idea of propitiation or expiation in them. They are the tributes of duty and gratitude, accompanied with petitions and thanksgivings. They do not express a sense of guilt, but the feeling of dependence. The idea of substitution is not in the solstitial, or in any other of the religious services of the Chinese people; nor is the idea of consecration on the part of the worshipper symbolised by any part of the worship."

The personal character of the ruler is fundamental in Confucian ethics, and more important than laws and regulations. "The Lanner said, ... Let there

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1 The Lanchu ritual is given in Ross, The Original Religion of China, chap. 7, with diagrams of the altar, platforms, and shrine, the position of the tablets, attendant officials, and so forth. See also De Groot, "Confucian Religion," Hastings' Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics
2 Ross, op. cit. pg. 295
3 Soothill, The Three Religions of China, pg. 279
4 Legge, The Religions of China, pgs. 53-58
5 Legge, The Life and Teachings of Confucius, pgs. 106-108
be men, and the government will flourish; but without men, their government decays and ceases.\textsuperscript{1} This is a cardinal point in politics. "The Master said, He who exercises government by means of his virtue may be compared to the north polar star, which keeps its place and all the stars turn towards it."\textsuperscript{2} The obligation resting on the ruler to cultivate goodness of character is constantly reiterated throughout the Confucian Classics. "The ruler will first take pains about his own virtue. Possessing virtue will give him the people. Possessing the people will give him the territory. Possessing the territory will give him its wealth. Possessing the wealth, he will have resources for expenditure. Virtue is the root; wealth is the result. If he make the root his secondary object, and the result his primary, he will only wrangle with his people, and teach them rapine."\textsuperscript{3} "From the son of Heaven down to the masses of the people, all must consider the cultivation of the person the root of everything besides."\textsuperscript{4} "Let the prince be correct, and everything will be correct. Once rectify the prince and the kingdom will be firmly settled."\textsuperscript{5} Here is the secret of success in governing. "Tzu-lu asked about government. The Master said, 'Go before the people with your example, and be laborious in their affairs.'"\textsuperscript{6} The oldest historical documents are full of the same themes. "When a sovereign's virtue is being daily renewed he is cherished throughout the myriad states; when he is full of his own will, he is abandoned by the nine classes of his kindred. 'Exert yourself, 0 King,' says Tang's minister, 'to make your great virtue illustrious, and set up the pattern of the Mean before your people. . . .so shall you transmit a grand example to posterity.'"\textsuperscript{7} E Yin counsels his sovereign:-- "To cultivate his person, and by being sincerely virtuous, bring all below to harmonious concord with him; -- this is the work

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{1} Chung Yung, XX, 2
  \item \textsuperscript{2} Lun Y\&\textasciitilde, II, 1
  \item \textsuperscript{3} Ta Hs\&eh, X
  \item \textsuperscript{4} Ta Hs\&eh, text 6
  \item \textsuperscript{5} Meng tsu, IV, 1, xx
  \item \textsuperscript{6} Lun Y\&\textasciitilde, XIII, 1
  \item \textsuperscript{7} Shu Ching, IV, 2, iv
\end{itemize}
of the intelligent sovereign. 0 King, zealously cultivate your virtue. Regard
the example of your meritorious ancestor."\(^1\) In "the Great Plan" outlining in
nine divisions the way to govern an empire, the fifth is on "royal perfection,"
which is the supreme of excellence, serving as an example and influencing all
below,\(^2\) and in the Announcement to the prince of K'ang it is emphasised that
the virtue of the sovereign is the most important thing in the government of
the people, and rulers should seek by virtue to supersede the necessity for
using punishments.\(^3\)

The following passage indicates how Confucius regarded character as the
root of a social and political Utopia: "The Ancients who wished to illustrate
illustrious virtue throughout the kingdom, first ordered well their own states.
Wishing to order well their states, they first regulated their families.
Wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated their persons.
Wishing to cultivate their persons, they first rectified their hearts. Wishing
to rectify their hearts, they first sought to be sincere in their thoughts.
Wishing to be sincere in their thoughts, they first extended to the utmost
their knowledge. Such extension of knowledge lay in the investigation of
things. Things being investigated, knowledge became complete. Their knowledge
being complete, their thoughts were sincere. Their thoughts being sincere,
their hearts were then rectified. Their hearts being rectified their persons
were cultivated. Their persons being cultivated, their families were regulated.
Their families being regulated, their states were rightly governed. Their
states being rightly governed, the whole kingdom was made tranquil and happy."\(^4\)

Virtue is not only the means to peace, but the best protection in war.

Duke Wen of T'ang, anxious about the warlike preparations of a neighboring
state, asks Mencius what he should do in the situation. He is advised that

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1 Shu Ching, IV, 5
2 Shu Ching, V, 4, ii
3 Shu Ching, V, 9, iv
4 Ta Hsüeh, text 4, 5; also IX, X; see Martin, The Lore of Cathay, pg. 211
   on this passage
virtue is his best defence. "Be strong to do good. That is all your business."¹

Certain qualities of character are specially insisted on. In conformity with his position the ruler must be kingly; his bearing dignified, his clothes and manners correct. The sovereign must carefully regulate his dress.² He "must not make a movement contrary to the rules of propriety."³ "He maintains a dignified ease without being proud; he is majestic without being fierce."⁴ "He adjusts his clothes and cap, and throws a dignity into his looks, so that, thus dignified, he is looked at with awe."⁵ This was the character of the model emperors. "How majestic was the manner in which Shun and Yu held possession of the empire, as if it were nothing to them. . . . Great indeed was Yao as a sovereign. How majestic was he."⁶ "The Master said, 'May not Shun be instanced as having governed efficiently without exertion? What did he do? He did nothing but gravely and reverently occupy his royal seat.'"⁷

The Chinese sages do not admire the democratic king. Mencius emphatically refutes the notion that a ruler may with propriety engage in physical work.³ "Great men have their proper business and little men have their proper business." There must be a division of labor. "Those who labor with their minds govern others; those who labor with their strength are governed by others. Those who govern others are supported by them." So it was in the days of Yao and Shun, who "did not employ their minds on the cultivation of the ground," and "this is a universally recognized principle." Nor should the ruler serve others, for "if he were to seek to serve men, he would be giving up his position."⁹

The ruler must be correct in his private family relations. "Wishing to

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¹ Meng tzu, I, 2, xiv  
² Chung Yung, XX  
³ loc. cit.  
⁴ Lun Yu, XX, 2, 1  
⁵ Lun Yu, XX, 2, ii  
⁶ Lun Yu, VIII, 18 and 19  
⁷ Lun Yu, XV, 4  
⁸ Meng tzu, III, 1, iv; op. Lun Yu, XIII, 4  
⁹ Li Chi, VII, 2
cultivate his character, he may not neglect to serve his parents;" he must "ever think of his ancestors." "Let the ruler discharge his duties to his elder and younger brothers, and then he may teach the people of the state." "The virtuous prince does not neglect his relatives." For "when the ruler as a father, a son, and a brother is a model, then the people imitate him. This is what is meant by saying, The government of his kingdom depends on his regulation of the family." The influence of the royal family is great. "From the loving example of one family a whole state becomes loving, and from its courtesies the whole state becomes courteous."

In relation to Heaven, whose son he is, and who preserves his throne, the ruler must be reverent and obedient; "always striving to accord with the will of Heaven." "Heaven loves the people; and the sovereign should reverence Heaven." "In order to know men, he may not dispense with a knowledge of Heaven." "They who accord with Heaven are preserved, and they who rebel against Heaven perish."

It is essential that the ruler cultivate the confidence of his people. "Tzu Kung asked about government. The Master said, The requisites of government are that there be sufficiency of food, sufficiency of military equipment, and the confidence of the people in their ruler. Tzu Kung said, If it cannot be helped, and one of these must be dispensed with, which of the three should be foregone first? The military equipment, said the Master. Tzu Kung again asked, If it cannot be helped, and one of the remaining two must be dispensed with, which of them should be foregone? The Master answered, Part with the food. From of old, death has been the lot of all men; but if the people have no faith in their rulers, there is no standing for the state." So he must be reverent to duty. "The Master

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1 Chung Yung, XX, 7
2 Shih Ching, III, 1, ode 1 stanza 6; and often
3 Ta Hsueh, IX, 7
4 Lun Yü, XVIII, 10; Chung Yung, XX
5 Ta Hsueh, IX, 8 and 9
6 Ta Hsueh, IX, 3
7 Shih Ching, III, 1, ode 1
8 Shu Ching, V, 1, 2
9 Chung Yung, XX, 7
10 Meng tzu, IV, 1, vii
11 Lun Yü, XII, 7
12 Shu Ching, V, 12; San Tzu Ching, line 103
said, To rule a country of a thousand chariots, there must be reverent attention to business, and sincerity; economy in expenditure, and love for men; and the employment of the people at the proper seasons.¹

"The art of governing is to keep its affairs before the mind without weariness, and practice them with undeviating consistency."² 

"Tzu Lu asked about government. The Master said, Go before the people with your example, and be laborious in their affairs."³

The models after which the ruler is to pattern his personal character and his conduct of public affairs are the ancient kings.⁴ They are regarded as possessing all the virtues ascribable to good and great rulers. The Classic of History portrays them — their qualities and deeds, and the addresses in which they and their ministers set forth their moral and political creed. The Classic of History sings their praises, as does all Confucian literature. And in the Four Books exhortations to study the example and follow the principles of these model emperors are among the commonest pieces of political advice that Confucius and Mencius have to give. "By the sages," says Mencius, "the human relations are perfectly exhibited. He who as a sovereign would perfectly discharge the duties of a sovereign, and he who as a minister would perfectly discharge the duties of a minister, have only to imitate — the one Yao, and the other Shun. He who does not serve his sovereign as Shun served Yao, does not respect his sovereign, and he who does not rule his people as Yao ruled his, injures his people."⁵ Rulers who have the very best intentions in the world, "who have benevolent hearts, and a reputation for benevolence," yet fail to

¹ Lun Yu, I, 5
² Lun Yu, XII, 14
³ Lun Yu, XIII, 1
⁴ Yao, Shun, Yu, Wen, Wu, and the Duke of Chou are commonly referred to. Present-day historians regard them as legendary heroes of prehistoric times. Hirth, The Ancient History of China, pgs. 76, 77, says that the social and political views of these early emperors in this ancient literature are only put in their mouths by Confucius and his school. "The old emperor lore, divested of this chronological framework, may be regarded as dramatised social philosophy of the 6th and 5th century B. C."
⁵ Meng tzu, IV, 1, ii
make a success "all because they do not put into practice the ways of the ancient kings."¹ "Never has anyone fallen into error who followed the laws of the ancient kings."² These "ways prescribed by the ancient kings" are to be imitated "in things small and great."³ In reply to Yen Yüan, who asked about the administration of government, "the Master said, Follow the seasons of Hsia. Ride in the state chariot of Yin. Wear the ceremonial cap of Chou."⁴ But antiquity not only furnished models of supreme excellence, it also furnished warnings. Dynasties that began with model rulers became degenerated and ended with a dissolute and infamous king. "The tiger's head," to use a Chinese metaphor, was followed by "the snake's tail." So rulers are exhorted to learn from the fate of ancient tyrants, such as Chieh and Chou Hsin, the necessity of virtue and benevolence.⁵

The Confucian exhortation to "pattern yourselves after the ancients," and appeal to the ancient kings for example and proof and argument, has been a major reason for the ultra-conservatism of the Chinese and their ingrained belief that their ancestors are to be imitated but can never be surpassed. Until the 20th century, writes Headland, "their faces had ever been turned backward and their highest hopes were that they might approximate the golden ages of the past, and be equal in virtue to their ancestors."⁶ Only one passage in the Classics expresses a progressive sentiment, and it sounds strange on the lips of Confucius who described himself as but a lover of antiquity.⁷ In this we are told that he said "let a man who is living in the present age go back to the ways of antiquity," and on him who acts thus "calamities will be sure to come."⁸

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¹ Meng tzu, IV, 1, i.2  
² Meng tzu, IV, 1, i.4  
³ Lun Yu, I, 12  
⁴ Lun Yu, XV, 10  
⁵ e.g. Shu Ching, V, 12, xvii and xviii  
⁶ Headland, Court Life in China, pg. 121; Maclagan, Chinese Religious Ideas, pg. 53  
⁷ Lun Yu, VII, 19  
⁸ Chung Yung, XXVIII, 1
the whole effect of his teaching, and his constantly reiterated advice is just the opposite.  A Confucian could desire no better encomium than those words in the poem extolling the great virtues of King Wen:

"He conformed to the example of his ancestors."  

As regards the nature of the sovereign's rule Confucianism teaches two things; first, that it should be a rule by moral power of example, not by force, and second, that it should be benevolent.

The great stress that Confucianism lays on the ruler's personal character has already been noticed. It means everything to his administration. "The Master said, When a prince's personal conduct is correct, his government is effective without the issuing of orders. If his personal conduct is not correct, he may issue orders but they will not be followed."  

Outstanding talents will not compensate for deficiency of character. "Though a man have abilities as admirable as those of the duke of Chou, yet if he be proud and niggardly, those other things are really not worth being looked at."  But the importance of his character is not so much in reference to the ruler himself, as in reference to the people over which he rules. A good ruler will make a good people. He is to take the lead in the improvement of the morals of his people by the example of his character and conduct. "To govern means to rectify," says Confucius. "If you lead on with correctness, who will dare not to be correct?"  

It is recognized that example is more effective than precept. "The Master said, Inferiors in serving those over them, do not follow what they command, but what they do. When a ruler loves a given thing, his subjects will do so, more than he. Therefore he who is in authority should be careful about what he likes and what he dislikes; for these will be examples in the eyes of the people."  And the Confucian sages are confident that if the ruler but set the

1 Creel, The Birth of China, pgs. 347-348
2 Shih Ching, III, 1, ode 6
3 Lun Yü, XIII, 6
4 Lun Yü, VIII, 11
5 Lun Yü, XII, 17; op. Lun Yü, XIII, 1
6 Li Chi, XXX, 4; op. Ta Hsüeh, IX, 4
example the people will infallibly follow. "If a superior love propriety, the
people will not dare not to be reverent. If he love righteousness, the people
will not dare not to submit. If he love good faith, the people will not dare
not to be sincere."¹ "What the superior loves, his inferiors will be found to
love exceedingly. The relation between superiors and inferiors is like that
between the wind and grass. The grass must bend, when the wind blows upon it.
The business depends on the prince."² This view that the renovation of
society begins at the top, and reaches from the top down, is basic in Confucian
ethics.³ And such is the power of the ruler's example that the transformation
will take place in a comparatively short time. "The Master said, If good men
were to govern a country for a hundred years, they would be able to transform
the violently bad, and dispense with capital punishments. True indeed is this
saying."⁴ However, "if a truly royal ruler were to arise, it would require a
generation (thirty years) and then virtue would prevail."⁵

But the imitation by the people is a blind following without reasoning
why. "The people may be made to follow a path of action, but they may not be
made to understand it."⁶ So that in the same sure way that they will follow
the good, they will imitate a bad example. "When a man who is over others
transgresses in his words, the people will fashion their speech accordingly;
when he transgresses in his conduct, the people will imitate him as their model.
If in his words he does not go beyond what should be said, nor in his acts be-
yond what should be done, then the people, without direction so to do, will
revere and honor him."⁷ "Yao and Shun led on the kingdom with benevolence, and
the people followed them. Chieh and Chou led on the kingdom with violence, and

¹ Lun Yü, XIII, 4; cp. Lun Yü, II, 20
² Meng tsu, III, 1, ii
³ Zenker, Geschichte der Chinesischen Philosophie, pgs. 167-168; Soothill,
The Three Religions of China, pgs. 30-52
⁴ Lun Yü, XIII, 11
⁵ Lun Yü, XIII, 12
⁶ Lun Yü, VIII, 9
⁷ Li Chi, XXIV, 13
the people followed them. So the responsibility lies with the ruler, and Y'ang realizes this when he says, "If you in the myriad regions commit offenses, these offenses must rest on my person." Chi Y'ang distressed about the number of thieves in the state, inquired of Confucius how to do away with them. Confucius said, If you, sir, were not covetous, although you should reward them to do it, they would not steal.

"Confucian ethics," writes Beach, "may be described very briefly as a system of imitation." It is proposed to transform society by imitation of the example of the good ruler. "Let the prince be correct, and everything will be correct. Once rectify the prince, and the kingdom will be firmly settled." A kingdom may be settled by its One man. Thus it was in the good old days, when the ancient kings "by means of their own enlightenment made others enlightened." The operation of the ruler's influence is as easy and as efficient as the forces of nature, and the response to it as spontaneous. "Confucius said, ... Let your desires be for what is good, and the people will be good. The relation between superiors and inferiors is like that between the wind and the grass. The grass must bend when the wind blows across it.

With this unbounded confidence in the power of example, the Chinese sages oppose the employment of physical force by government, and teach that example and instruction are more effective than law and punishment, and the ruler should rule by moral suasion. Good government is measured in terms of virtue, and bad government in terms of might. Virtue secures loyalty where force cannot.

"When one by force subdues men they do not submit to him in heart. They submit

1 Ta Hsieh, IX, 4
2 Lun Yu, XX, 1
3 Lun Yu, XIII, 16
4 Beach, "The Ethics of Confucianism," pg. 67
5 Meng tsu, IV, 1, xx
6 Ta Hsieh, IX, 3
7 Meng tsu, VII, 2, xx
8 Lun Yu, XIII, 19; and quoted in Meng tsu, III, 1, 11
9 Meng tsu, IV, 1, xii
because their strength is not adequate to resist. When one subdues men by 
virtue, in their heart's core they are pleased, and sincerely submit, as was 
the case," says Mencius, "with the seventy disciples in their submission to 
Confucius." The use of rewards and punishments are ineffective. "Rank and 
emoluments are unfit to stimulate the people to good and the infliction of pun-
ishments and penalties is unfit to make them ashamed of evil." Virtuous ex-
ample is better than legal provisions and penalties. "The Master said, If the 
people be led by laws, and uniformity sought to be given them by punishments, 
they will try to avoid the punishment but have no sense of shame. If they be 
led by virtue and uniformity sought to be given them by the rules of propriety, 
they will have the sense of shame, and moreover will become good." And such 
a government by moral rather than physical force will make capital punishment un-
necessary. "Chi K'ang asked Confucius about government saying, What do you say 
to killing the unprincipled for the good of the principled? Confucius replied, 
Sir, in carrying on your government, why should you use killing at all? Let 
your desires be for what is good, and the people will be good." 

Government by moral influence is easy. "A ruler has only to be careful 
of what he likes and dislikes. What the ruler likes his ministers will prac-
tice; and what superiors do their inferiors follow. To lead the people is 
very easy." It requires no exertion, or effort on the ruler's part. Shun 
did nothing but gravely and reverently occupy his royal seat." It is effect-
ive without issuing orders. The ruler who practices his religious and filial 
duties "would find the government of a kingdom as easy as to look into his 
palm." But it should be mentioned that other passages could be quoted showing 
that there is an art of governing that has to be learned by study and practice.

1 Meng tsu, II, 1, iii 
2 Li Chi, XXX 
3 Lun Yu, II, 3 
4 Lun Yu, XII, 19 
5 Li Chi, XVII, 3; ep. Meng tsu, II, 1, vi 
6 Lun Yu, XIV, 4 
7 Chung Yung, XIX, 6 
8 Lun Yu, XX, 2; XIII, 17; Meng tsu, IV, 1, i; etc.
The Confucian emphasis on the influence of the ruler's example does not seem to find its counterpart in actual life. The emperor lived a secluded life in the Forbidden City in distant Peking, far removed from his people who knew very little of his personal habits and life. He was a venerated mystery. As Pott says, "In theory there was a very intimate relation between ruler and subject. In practice the ruler figured very little in men's thoughts and actions."\(^1\)

As a matter of fact his private life, if known, would have probably been a bad example. Williams touches on one point when he says, "Every third year his majesty reviews the daughters of the Manchu officers over twelve years of age and chooses such as he pleases for concubines, there are only seven legal concubines, but an unlimited number of illegal. The latter are restored to liberty when they reach the age of twenty-five unless they have borne children to his majesty."\(^2\)

The second characteristic of the sovereign's rule stressed by Confucianism is that it should be benevolent. The fate of empires and destiny of men depend on this. "It was by benevolence that the three dynasties gained the empire, and by not being benevolent, that they lost it. . . . If the emperor be not benevolent, he cannot preserve the empire (from passing from him). If a sovereign of a state be not benevolent he cannot preserve his kingdom. If a high noble or great officer be not benevolent, he cannot preserve his ancestral temple. If a scholar or common man be not benevolent, he cannot preserve his four limbs."\(^3\)

"There are instances of individuals without benevolence, who have got possession of a single state," observes Mencius, "but there has been no instance of the whole empire's being got possession of by one without benevolence."\(^4\) And contrariwise, if there is only one benevolent prince among the states, "although he wished not to become emperor, he could not avoid becoming so," for "the people turn to a benevolent rule as water flows downward, and as

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1 Pott, Chinese Political Philosophy, pgs. 66, 67
2 Williams, The Middle Kingdom, vol. 1, pg. 318
3 Meng tzu, IV, 1, iii
4 Meng tzu, VII, 2, xiii
wild beasts fly to the wilderness."¹ When King Hsüan of Ch'i asked the sage, "What virtue must there be in order to the attainment of imperial sway?" the sage replied, "The love and protection of the people; with this there is no power which can prevent a ruler from attaining it."²

Rulers as the parents of the people, are exhorted to "love the people as their sons."³ They must cultivate "a reputation for kindness,"⁴ Sharing their pleasures with the people.⁵ If he does not "make enjoyment a thing common to the people and himself," he will "do wrong."⁶ There should be a strong bond of sympathy. "When a prince loves what the people love, and hates what the people hate, then is he what is called the parent of the people."⁷ "When a ruler rejoices in the joy of his people, they also rejoice in his joy; when he grieves at the sorrow of his people, they also grieve at his sorrow. A sympathy of joy will pervade the empire; a sympathy of sorrow will do the same: -- in such a state of things, it cannot be but that the ruler attain to the imperial dignity."⁸ The people are one of the three "precious things of a prince."⁹ If he overlooks these, and instead values as most precious "pearls and stones, calamity is sure to befall him." But if the sovereign's end in view is evidently the people's good, they will not murmur at him. "They have an air of contentment. Though he slay them they do not murmur."¹⁰ "If you will put in practice a benevolent government," Mencius counsels a royal visitor, "this people will love you and all above them, and will die for their officers."¹¹

In short, "the love of what is good is more than a sufficient qualification for

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¹ Meng tzu, IV, 1, ix
² Meng tzu, I, 1, vii.3
³ Li Chi, XXX
⁴ Meng tzu, VII, 1, xiv
⁵ Meng tzu, I, 1, ii
⁶ Meng tzu, I, 2, iv
⁷ Ta Hsüeh, X
⁸ Meng tzu, I, 2, iv
⁹ Meng tzu, VII, 2, xxviii
¹⁰ Meng tzu, VII, 1, xii and xiii
¹¹ Meng tzu, I, 2, xii
the government of the empire."  

A ruler cannot hope to bind his people to him by force, he must win their hearts. "A people is bounded in, not by the limits of dikes and borders; a kingdom is secured, not by the strengths of mountains and rivers; the empire is overawed not by the sharpness and strength of arms." "Chieh and Chou, (the two infamous tyrants of antiquity) losing the empire, arose from their losing the people, and to lose the people means to lose their hearts. There is a way to get the empire: -- get the people and the empire is got. There is a way to get the people: -- get their hearts, and the people are got. There is a way to get their hearts: -- it is simply to collect for them what they like, and not to lay on them what they dislike."

Confucian teaching on this subject deals more in generalities than in concrete proposals. The carrying out of the kindly heart insisted on is left up to the ruler. King Wen, as an example, "simply took this heart and exercised it towards those parties." But in one place Mencius speaks of the two great elements of benevolent government as 1) "being sparing in the use of punishments and fines," and 2) "making the taxes and levies light." Where these exist, he says, other things will come -- the fields will be worked, and filial piety, fraternal respectfulness, sincerity and other virtues, will be cultivated.

But there is a wrong kind of benevolence, a mistaken expression of kindness, which Mencius exposes. Hsi Hsien, for instance, taught that "wise and able princes should cultivate the ground equally and along with their people and eat (the fruit of their labor). They should prepare their own meals, morning and evening, while at the same time they carry on their government." This idea is refuted at some length. Mencius holds that the ruler must preserve

1 Meng tzu, VI, 2, xiii  
2 Meng tzu, II, 2, 1  
3 Meng tzu, IV, 1, ix  
4 Meng tzu, I, 1, vii.12  
5 Meng tzu, I, 1, v  
6 Meng tzu, III, 1, iv
the proprieties of his position. Another instance of well-meaning but mistaken policy was the case of Tzu-chen. He was chief-minister of the state of Ching, and would convey people across the Ch'in and Wei rivers in his own carriage. "Mencius said, 'It was kind, but showed that he did not understand the practice of government'. . . . It follows that if a governor will try to please everybody, he will find the days not sufficient for his work."¹

The Chinese sages strongly disapprove of oppressive and tyrannical government. Mencius, especially, denounces the princes of his time and the evils of bad government.² He has more to say about benevolent rule and the need for government that will make the well-being of the people its first consideration, than Confucius. The difference in emphasis was due to the more degenerate times in which Mencius lived.³ "He who does not rule his people as Yao ruled his, injures his people," is Mencius' message to the rulers of his day as he points them to a model ruler of antiquity, and he goes on to indicate the fatal consequences to the sovereign who carries on oppressively.⁴ And the following is an incident from the life of Confucius. "In passing by the side of Mount T'ai, Confucius came on a woman who was wailing bitterly by a grave. The Master bowed forward to the crossbar, and hastened to her; and then sent Sze-lu to question her. Your wailing, said he, is altogether like that of one who has suffered sorrow upon sorrow. She replied, It is so. Formerly my husband's father was killed here by a tiger. My husband was also killed (by another) and now my son has died in the same way. The Master said, Why do you not leave the place? The answer was, There is no oppressive government here. The Master then said (to the disciples), Remember this, my little children. Oppressive government is more terrible than tigers."⁵

The importance of good and able ministers and officials is stressed in

¹ Meng tzu, IV, 2, ii
² Meng tzu, II, 1, v; IV, 1, xiv; IV, 2, iii; VII, 1, xlvi; IV, 1, viii and ix; I, 2, xii; I, 1, vi
³ Lyall, Mencius, introduction, pgs. XX-XXII
⁴ Meng tzu, IV, 1, ii
⁵ Li Chi, II, 2, iii
Confucian political philosophy. Once again we note the emphasis on moral character and personality rather than on legal provisions and institutions. "The Master said, . . . Let there be men and the government will flourish; but without the men, their government decays and ceases. With the right men the growth of government is rapid, just as vegetation is rapid in the earth; and, moreover, their government might be called an easily-growing rush. Therefore the administration of government lies in getting proper men."\(^1\) Confucius indicates the value of good ministers of state when speaking of the wickedness of the duke of Wei. A disciple asks, "Since he is of such a character, how is it he does not lose his state?", and Confucius, naming over the ministers of Wei, replies, "With such officers as these how should he lose his state?"\(^2\)

The personal character of the ruler's appointees must be superior. He must "raise to office men of virtue and talents."\(^3\) Two results will follow. He will win the loyalty of the people. "The duke Ai asked saying, What should be done in order to secure the submission of the people? Confucius replied, Advance the upright and set aside the crooked then the people will submit. Advance the crooked and set aside the upright, then the people will not submit."\(^4\) A further result of "employing the upright" is that "in this way the crooked can be made to be upright,"\(^5\) and society transformed. So it was in antiquity. When Shun employed Kao Yao and T'ang similarly selected E Yin, "all who were devoid of virtue disappeared."\(^6\) "Mencius said, If men of virtue and ability be not confided in, a state will become empty and void."\(^7\)

The ruler must accord his officers "kind and considerate treatment."\(^8\) "He does not cause the great ministers to repine at his not employing them. Without

\(^1\) Chung Yung, XX, 2-4
\(^2\) Lun Yu, XIV, 20
\(^3\) Lun Yu, XIII, 2
\(^4\) Lun Yu, II, 19
\(^5\) Lun Yu, XII, 22
\(^6\) ibid
\(^7\) Meng tzu, VII, 2, xii
\(^8\) Chung Yung, XX, 13
some great cause, he does not dismiss from their offices the members of old families. He does not seek in one man talents for every employment." And "a prince," says Confucius, "should employ his minister according to the rules of propriety."  

In summary, what constitutes good government, and when does it exist? As complete a statement as can be found in the Classics is summarized in the nine rules which Confucius gave to duke Ai of his native state of Lu. "All who have the government of the kingdom with its states and families have nine standard rules to follow; -- viz. the cultivation of their own characters; the honouring of men of virtue and talents; affection towards their relatives; respect towards the great ministers; kind and considerate treatment of the whole body of officers; dealing with the masses of the people as children; encouraging the resort of all classes of artisans; indulgent treatment of men from a distance; and the kindly cherishing of the princes of the states."  

THE CHRISTIAN APPRAISAL  
The foregoing outline of Confucian teaching as to the relationship of ruler and subject, on its governmental side, shows how full the Chinese Classics are of political interest. As we remarked at the beginning, Confucius and Lencius are chiefly concerned to create good government and a tranquil and happy empire. In this they differ basically from Christ and His apostles. Jesus was not a teacher of political philosophy, nor interested in political action. The story of His life shows Him on a number of occasions refusing to be drawn into political discussion, or forced into a partisan position on the burning issues of the day, declining political leadership, and avoiding being involved in political agitation of any sort. He uttered no criticism of the form of government under which His countrymen writhed, and proposed no political remedy. Contrary to the earnest expectations of those who regarded Him, or had hopes that  

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1 Lun Yu, XVIII, 10
2 Lun Yu, III, 19
3 Chung Yung, XX, 12 and 13
5 John 6:15; op. John 12:12-19
He might prove to be, their national Messiah and political champion, Jesus at all times refused to commit Himself to a political rôle. When, in spite of this, He was accused to the government of having pretensions to a throne, He said plainly, "My kingdom is not of this world." Much the same may be said of Christ's apostles. Paul has little to say about political institutions and government, although he does write of the duties of the Christian citizen. Peter, also, although at the time he wrote his Epistles the state was far less favorable to Christianity, acquiesced in the political situation he found existing. The Revelation of John depicts the ultimate triumph of the church, but not by political means. The whole New Testament, unlike the Ssu Shu Wu Ching of Confucianism, is not directly concerned with sociology and political philosophy, but with the religious life. The Gospel aims at moral and spiritual regeneration, not political reconstruction. Further, Confucius and Mencius were aristocratic in their associations and interests, and addressed their teachings to princes and dukes, whereas Christ made friends with all classes, and "the common people heard Him gladly."

As Inge says, "Christ and His disciples stood entirely outside all political and social agitation." At the same time their conduct, and their attitude towards the civil authorities as well as much of their teaching on non-political themes, carry political implications. And Smyth reminds us that "the entire Old Testament ground, on which Christianity rests, was political history. . . .If Jesus' own saying is to be made good that he came not to destroy but to fulfil, the political truth also of Israel will in some large way be taken up into the ethics of Christianity." So that there is a political ethic to be

1 Luke 24:21; Acts 1:6, 7
2 e.g. Matthew 4:8, 9
3 John 18:36
4 Romans 13:1-7; I Timothy 2:1-2; Titus 3:1
5 I Peter 2:13-17
6 Mark 12:37
7 Inge, Christian Ethics and Modern Problems, pg. 242
8 Smyth, Christian Ethics, pg. 416
found in the Christian Scriptures. But lacking political interest and any full
discussion of political subjects the Christian sources have no specific teaching
to give on many subjects treated in Confucian political philosophy, as has been
outlined in the foregoing pages.

The functions of government, for instance, are only incidentally touched
on in the New Testament when Paul and Peter, citing reasons why Christians should
submit to the authorities, state in general terms that government exists for the
promotion of good, the enforcement of right and justice, and the suppression of
wrongdoing. Confucianism seems to recognize this function in its doctrine that
"to govern means to rectify." Unlike the Confucian sages, the Christian teach­
ers address no exhortations to rulers to promote the well-being of the people.
"The circumstances in which the converts of the Apostles were actually living,"
writes Henson, "dictated the character and limited the range of the morality
which they were required to acknowledge. Christians then formed an obscure and
unpopular sect living in the midst of a pagan society despically governed." However, in the Old Testament the obligations and duties of rulers are spoken
of in many passages in the historical books and in the writings of the prophets.

As to the form of government Christianity is indifferent, no one form,
whether monarchy or otherwise being exclusively sanctioned by Scripture. Christ's
injunction to "render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's" implies no ap­
proval of the Roman system. The Christian life may be lived under all forms
of political organization, and inferior forms will be changed as the Christian
spirit permeates society. Confucianism, on the other hand, has been so bound
up with monarchism, the sovereign, as we have seen, having a quite central
place in Confucian ethics, though Lencius has more democratic sentiment, that
it has been altogether discredited as conservative and imperialistic in modern

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1 Romans 13:3, 4; I Peter 2:14
2 Henson, Christian Morality, pg. 172
3 See Kent, The Social Teachings of the Prophets and Jesus
4 Matthew 22:21
5 Schmidt, The Social Results of Early Christianity, pg. 182
China. An easy identification of Christianity with any one form of government from Stuart absolutism to American democracy is a snare.¹

As to the policy of government, whether it should be paternalistic, as taught in the Confucian Classics, or laissez faire, as was the actual practice, Christianity has no certain rule.² It has no specific political, social or economic program, but insists on certain principles.³ This, as Scott points out, is the strength of Christ's teaching.⁴ Had Christ drawn up such a program its relevance for the Palestine of His time would have robbed it of value for all time. This is precisely what has happened to Confucianism in the modern world, and here is where Christianity is superior to other faiths and ethics. "The ethical development of mankind," says Henson, "does not in their case, as in the case of Christianity bring out their true principle into freer expression and more illuminating prominence, but strikes the principles themselves with an absoluteness which is apparent, extreme and irrecoverable."⁵

However, the Christian finds much to admire in Confucian political philosophy especially when it is remembered that it comes from the fifth and fourth centuries B. C., and in substance from an earlier antiquity, and much of it is pertinent today. The concern for good government, insistence on humanitarian and benevolent rule with the well-being of the people as its object, conception of the state as a vast family and the basis of government as moral not physical force, the close connection of politics and ethics, and emphasis on the personal character and example of the sovereign and his ministers, the teaching that the ablest and best should be appointed to office, and the sharing by the commoner in the administration of government if he qualifies in the examinations, are among the most attractive features of Confucian social

¹ Scott, The Ethical Teaching of Jesus, pg. 82
² Cunningham, Christianity and Social Questions, pgs. 72-77
³ Cunningham, loc. cit.; Inge, op cit., pgs. 242-243; Henson, op. cit., pg. 150
⁴ Scott, op. cit., pgs. 81-82, 93
⁵ Henson, op. cit., pgs. 175-176
morality. The high conception also that the ruler is appointed by and responsible to Heaven, is confirmed by Scripture references to the origin and justification of governmental authority though it lacks the Christian-theistic connotation. Jesus told the Roman governor, before whose judgment seat He stood, that no power could exist apart from God's will. Paul, also, in a comprehensive statement, which like our Lord's, makes no exception in the case of bad governments, says, "The powers that be are ordained of God," and draws the logical conclusion that "he that resisteth the power withstandeth the ordinance of God."

It is not intended to appraise Confucian teaching from the standpoint of political science. The thesis could be developed that Confucian political philosophy is inadequate. It is almost entirely a matter of moral precept instead of specifying what exactly good government consists in, and what machinery is necessary to make it operative. The whole problem is stated in too general terms. Or it could be argued that the political institutions of China have great stability but leave no room for amendment and progress. It is also problematic whether a government based on the idealistic doctrine of rule by moral not physical force could long endure. Christianity recognizes the right of the state to coerce, and take life. The Chinese have never been a military people, but in the face of the present aggression they are being taught to war. Long ago Han Fei-tzu and the legalist school asserted that the patriarchal form of government would not work, that a state should be based on law not on personal relations. Modern Chinese denounce Confucianism for its monarchial doctrines. Leaving aside any consideration of the force of such criticisms it is necessary to point to certain defects in the Confucian theory from the Christian standpoint.

The Confucian doctrine of the power of example to transform society can-

1 John 19:10, 11
2 Romans 13:1, 4, 2
3 Pott, Chinese Political Philosophy, pgs. 69-71
4 Romans 13:4; I Peter 2:14; Genesis 9:6
5 Lin, My Country and My People, pgs. 206-209
not be allowed to pass unchallenged. It is the great merit of the Chinese sages that they emphasize good example in place of force, and no one who knows basic psychological facts would deny its potency. But the influence of example is not so omnipotent, as Confucian ethics regards it. It does not operate so immediately, nor so infallibly and completely as the wind on the grass which "must bend when the wind blows upon it." Or if the more realistic statements be taken that "in a generation," or even "a hundred years," virtue will prevail and the "violently bad" be transformed, experience questions the power of example to do this and Christianity denies that human nature is so simple and morally neutral as "grass," or that its bent to evil can be so readily turned to good. Even though it be the example of an emperor its influence is greatly exaggerated.¹

Nor, from the other side, is imitation of their superiors by inferiors so certain as Confucianism assumes. Again no one would question the imitative instinct in man. The apostle Paul, who had a more penetrative knowledge of human nature and social forces than Confucius, and Mencius, appeals to this instinct. He tells us that his own object is to imitate Christ, and he exhorts his readers to imitate him in this and other respects,² and to imitate God,³ and he speaks of the influence of example.⁴ But the supposition of Confucianism that simply by the example of superiors and imitation by inferiors society can be transformed is, as Schmitt says, "naive optimism."⁵ And it is extreme and untenable to say, "let the prince be correct and everything will be correct."

This boundless confidence in the transforming power of good example proceeds from the fundamental Confucian doctrine that the human heart is naturally good. This is expressed in famous lines, the first two of the first school primer every boy in China learned by heart, "the nature of man at birth is fundamentally good." And here is radical divergence between Christianity and Confucianism. Giles lists this tenet as one of the "three real obstacles to the spread of

¹ Legge, The Life and Teachings of Confucius, pg. 31; Faber, A Systematical Digest of the Doctrines of Confucius, pg. 128
² I Corinthians 11:1; 4:16; I Thessalonians 1:6
³ Ephesians 5:1
⁴ I Timothy 4:12
⁵ Schmitt, Konfuzius, pg. 192
Christianity in China.\textsuperscript{1}

As the people imitate the ruler so the ruler is constantly enjoined to imitate the model emperors, and "follow the ways of the ancient kings." Confucianism finds all its models in the past and does not allow the possibility of surpassing them. This has, as we have already remarked, turned the face of the Chinese towards the past, instead of to the future, and has produced an exaggerated reverence for antiquity and old age which has effectively hindered growth. The Chinese have been unprogressive and ultraconservative. It may perhaps be rejoined that the Christian doctrine of the imitation of Christ is also a backward look. But that there is a difference is manifest from the vastly different effects of Christianity and Confucianism upon the races that have adopted these faiths. The Confucian ethical paragons were not perfect examples, and copying of their limitations as well as goodness must result from such strong insistence upon an imitation that was a literal and simple duplication of their character, views and ways. The Christian is free and encouraged to progress beyond Christ's human limitations in knowledge, and art, and science. And while His perfect example on earth is in the past, He himself is ever present, and the Christian life is conceived of as a pressing on to a goal ahead, "looking unto Jesus."\textsuperscript{2} The Christian hope turns the Christian's look to the future.

It is to be observed that while Confucius endeavoured to renovate the morality of his countrymen through the instrumentality of the prince, Christ selected fishermen and publicans as the first preachers of His gospel. Addressing itself to the educated and the aristocratic Confucianism begins at the top of society and hopes by a process of example and imitation to transform the masses. It has always remained the faith of the literati and officials, and "never was popular," says Y. P. Lee, "in the sense that people generally accepted it and practiced it."\textsuperscript{3} Christianity offers its salvation

\textsuperscript{1} Giles, Confucianism and its Rivals, pg. 262
\textsuperscript{2} Hebrews 12:2; Philippians 3:12-14; I Corinthians 9:24-27
\textsuperscript{3} Lee, When I was a Boy in China, pgs. 64, 65
to the "lowly in heart," and its greatest triumphs have been among the common people.

THE SUBJECTS

Since Confucian political teaching is addressed primarily to rulers, it has less to say to subjects. But the character and duty of ministers of state are referred to. And while Confucius emphasizes the ruler, Mencius stresses the people and underlines the duty of a king to his subjects. 1 We will consider first, the ministers of state, and then the part of the people in the ruler-subject relationship.

As with the ruler, Confucianism emphasizes the personal character of "the ministers of the son of Heaven." 2 "The Master said, If a minister make his own conduct correct, what difficulty will he have in assisting in government? If he cannot rectify himself, what has he to do with rectifying others?" 3 Goodness of character is, as Forke points out, the only necessary qualification for office; "scientific and technical qualifications are of no importance." 4 As "a superior" the influence of his example will affect "his inferiors." But his association with his sovereign is the chief thing stressed, and the importance of his influence in encouraging his master to virtue and benevolent government. 5 The personal quality most desired in a minister of the state was 'chung,' meaning loyalty, faithfulness, devotedness. 6 "The duke Ting asked how a prince should employ his ministers, and how ministers should serve their prince. Confucius replied, A prince should employ his minister according to the rules of propriety; ministers should serve their prince with faithfulness." 7 To that service he is to devote his life, 8 and wherever he be sent, "he will not

1 Forke, Geschichte der alten chinesischen Philosophie, pg. 208
2 Li Chi, I, 2, ii
3 Lun Yu, XIII, 13
4 Forke, op. cit., pgs. 136-137
5 Meng tsu, III, 2, vi
7 Lun Yu, III, 19
8 Lun Yu, I, 7
disgrace his prince's commission."¹ But he will not support what is wrong. He is called "a great minister," says Confucius, "who serves his prince according to what is right, and when he finds he cannot do so, resigns."²

The chief duty of the minister, as Creel says, was to the ruler, not to the state or people.³ He was to advise and remonstrate where necessary. "The Master said, . . . Can loyalty refrain from admonition?"⁴ King Hsuan of Ch'i once asked Mencius to indicate the official duties of chief ministers, and in reply the sage differentiated between two classes of ministers. "There are the chief ministers who are noble and relatives (of the prince) and there are those of a different surname. The king said, I beg to ask about the chief ministers who are noble and relatives of the prince. Mencius answered, If the prince have great faults, they ought to remonstrate with him, and if he do not listen to them after they have done so again and again, they ought to dethrone him. The king on this looked moved and changed countenance. Mencius said, Let not your majesty be offended. You asked me and I dare not answer but according to truth. The king's countenance became composed, and he then begged to ask about chief ministers who were of a different surname from the prince. Mencius said, When the prince has faults, they ought to remonstrate with him, and if he do not listen to them after they have done this again and again, they ought to leave the state."⁵

This duty of the chief ministers of the empire, to remonstrate with and seek to correct the ruler, and lecture him on the art of government, is fully described as to the obligation and manner of it in the Book of Rites,⁶ and it is copiously illustrated all through the Classic of History.⁷ In case of

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¹ Lun Yü, XIII, 20
² Lun Yü, XI, 23
³ Creel, The Birth of China, pg.363
⁴ Lun Yü, XIV, 8 (Soothill)
⁵ Meng tzu, V, 2, ix
⁶ Especially Li Chi, XXIX
⁷ Shryock, The Origin and Development of the State Cult of Confucius, chap. 4 translates a portion of the speech of Tung Chung-shu, minister to king Wu
serious imperial vices or errors, he is to reprove his sovereign even at the risk of his life. He is to be frank and without deception. But he should not reprove with annoying frequency. His concern is not with details of government but with character, with correcting "what is wrong in the sovereign's mind." The manner of his reproof is fully regulated. "According to the rules of propriety for a minister he should not remonstrate with his ruler openly. If he have thrice remonstrated and is still not listened to, he shall leave his service." "A minister in the service of his ruler will first offer his words of counsel and (when they are accepted) he will bow and voluntarily offer his person to make good his sincerity. Hence, whatever service a ruler requires of his minister, the minister will die in support of his words." "One in the position of a minister might remonstrate, but not speak ill of him; might withdraw from the state but not hate its head; might praise him but not flatter; might remonstrate, but not give himself haughty airs (when his advice was followed)." He "must be careful at the beginning and respectful to the end."

The Confucian ideal was a reality, as Schmitt says, in the days of the ancient kings when famous ministers like Kao Yao and E Yin lectured their rulers. But Confucius regarded the ministers of his own time an inferior lot, and Mencius is very caustic in criticism of those of his day. But in accordance with Confucian teaching there has existed from very early times a unique governmental institution, called the Tu Ch'a Yuan, or Board of Censors, one of the six administrative boards at the Chinese capital, whose duty it was originally to correct

1 Lun Yu, XIV, 23
2 Lun Yu, IV, 26
3 Meng tzu, IV, 1, xx
4 Li Chi, I, 2, iii
5 Li Chi, XXIX
6 Li Chi, XV
7 Li Chi, XXIX
8 Schmitt, Konfuzius, pg. 188
9 In the Shu Ching
10 Lun Yu, XIII, 20
11 Meng tzu, IV, 1, xiv; VI, 2, ix; etc
the words and actions of the sovereign. Later developments enlarged its functions to include also the censoring of all officials. The censor, says Hsieh, "became a spy on the mandarins."\(^1\) But while this became the chief duty of the Censorate, censors have sometimes performed their original duty of reproving the emperor with great frankness, and frequently have suffered dismissal, exile or execution for their temerity.\(^2\)

The people of the empire are related to the ruler as the body is to the heart. "The Master said, To the people the ruler is as their heart; to the ruler the people are as his body. When the heart is composed, the body is at ease; when the heart is reverent, the body is respectful; when the heart loves anything the body is sure to rest in it. When the ruler loves anything, the people are sure to desire it. The body is the complement of the heart, and a wound in it makes the heart also suffer. So the ruler is preserved by the people, and perishes also through the people."\(^3\) This concluding sentence indicates that in the last analysis government is, on the Confucian view, by consent of the governed. Confucianism does not express it this way but several passages teach that a ruler stands or falls according to the people's desire. "By gaining the people the kingdom is gained, and by losing the people the kingdom is lost. On this account, the ruler will first take pains about virtue. Possessing virtue will give him the people. Possessing the people will give him the territory."\(^4\) "Chieh and Chou's losing the empire, arose from their losing the people, and to lose the people means to lose their hearts. There is a way to get the empire: -- get the people, and the empire is got."\(^5\) It is true, as we have already noted, that Confucianism teaches that the sovereign is appointed by decree of Heaven. "Shun had the empire. Who gave it to him?" asks an

\(^{1}\) Hsieh, The Government of China (1644-1911), pg. 88

\(^{2}\) Hsieh, op. cit., pgs. 87-98; Williams, The Middle Kingdom, vol. 1, chap. 7; Gray, China, vol. 1, chap. 2

\(^{3}\) Li Chi, XXX

\(^{4}\) Ta Hsieh, X, 5 and 6

\(^{5}\) Meng tzu, IV, 1, ix; VII, 1, xiv
enquirer of Mencius. "Heaven gave it to him," was the answer.¹ But also the people give it. Mencius reports the following conversation which he had with King Hsiang of Lian. "Abruptly he asked me, How can the empire be settled? I replied, It will be settled by being united under one sway. Who can so unite it? I replied, He who has no pleasure in killing men can so unite it. Who can give it to him? I replied, All the people of the empire will unanimously give it to him."² That Heaven gives it, and the people also give it, is possible because "Heaven sees according as my people see; Heaven hears according as my people hear."³ So that ultimately it rests with the people. Vox populi, vox Dei. When Ch'i conquered the state of Yen, king Hsuan of Ch'i indicated to Mencius his belief that it was the will of Heaven that he take possession of the conquered territory, and asked the sage's opinion. Mencius indicates that the will of Heaven is to be determined by the will of the people. "If the people of Yen will be pleased with your taking possession of it, then do so... If the people of Yen will not be pleased with your taking possession of it, then do not do so."⁴ So that Mencius clearly says, "The people are the most important element in a nation; the spirits of the land and grain are the next; the sovereign is the lightest."⁵

This view of the people's place in a nation, and that the voice of the people is the voice of Heaven, is especially taught by Mencius. Confucius does not go so far. He was impressed by the need of strengthening the emperor's power to prevent anarchy. By Mencius' time the government was so bad, and the dynasty so decayed, that he lays the stress on the need for benevolent rule and emphasizes the people above the ruler. However, he also said, "There never has been a man trained to righteousness who made his sovereign an after consideration."⁶ But his shift of emphasis makes Mencius more democratic than

¹ Meng tzu, V, 1, v
² Meng tzu, I, 1, vi
³ Shu Ching, IV, 1, ii, 7; Meng tzu, V, 1, v
⁴ Meng tzu, I, 2, x
⁵ Meng tzu, VII, 2, xiv
⁶ Meng tzu, I, 1, i
Confucius. Because of these sentiments Mencius has been in disfavour with some Emperors.¹ Thus Hung Wu (1368-1398), first emperor of the Ming dynasty, had him removed from his place of honor in the Confucian temple because he was disrespectful to monarchs. But the strong protest of Confucian scholars soon resulted in the revoking of the decree of degradation.² The emperor's feeling with regard to Mencius was not a general hostility to Confucianism which he established for his new dynasty and did much to strengthen.³

The duties of the ruler's subjects correspond to their relationship. The ministers and officials must loyally serve their sovereign and the people must render implicit submission to the will of "the son of Heaven." This is the first of the 'San Shun,' or Three Obediences, -- the subject obeys the sovereign, the son his father, the wife her husband.⁴ This doctrine of subordination of rank, of the lower to the higher, is inculcated in every phase of Chinese life, and submission to the ruler is taught from the first in the San Tzu Ching. This first primer put in the pupil's hand when he goes to school enumerates "ten obligations" between relations, the last couplet of which is:

"respect on the part of the sovereign,
loyalty on the part of the subject."⁵

And the following primer, Ch'ien Tzu Wen, reiterates this:

"In aiding a father and in serving a prince,
Are alike required both gravity and respect.
The duty of filial piety demands every energy;
And fidelity to one's prince extends even to a sacrifice of life."⁶

The emperor is one of the "five objects of veneration." These are Heaven, earth, the prince, parents and teachers.⁷ Confucius' own extreme reverence and respect for the ruler is delineated in the Analects, and his prompt obedience.

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¹ Legge, The Life and Works of Mencius, pgs. 38, 39
² Johnston, Confucianism and Modern China, pgs. 64, 65
³ Latourette, The Chinese, their History and Culture, vol. 1, pg. 302
⁴ Mayers, The Chinese Reader's Manual, part 2, no. 52
⁵ San Tzu Ching, lines 103, 104
⁶ Ch'ien Tzu Wen, lines 61-64
⁷ Martin, The Chinese, pg. 98 footnote
"When the prince's order called him, without waiting for his carriage to be yoked, he went at once." He strongly denounced insubordination. The superior man, he said, "when occupying a high position is not proud, and in a low position he is not insubordinate. . . . Let a man without rank be fond of assuming a directing power to himself" and on such an one "calamities will be sure to come." The first three of the 'shih wu,' or ten heinous offences, are rebellion, conspiracy against a sovereign's person, and treason or revolt. Regicides are to be summarily executed. "When a minister kills his ruler all who are in office with him should kill him without mercy." Once in Confucius' lifetime the sovereign of the neighboring state of Ch'i was murdered. Feeling the sacrilege of it Confucius ceremonially purified himself, and went to court to beg his own prince to avenge the murder, and punish the assassin. He declined to take action and others Confucius interviewed also refused. The whole incident shows the sage's horror of rebellion as utterly subversive of all order.

The people of China had no voice in the government, and never until the 20th century demanded the right. "They have been taught," writes Griffith John, "to think that their superiors alone have a right to think on public matters; they say that as the mandarins are paid for attending to politics it is no business of theirs; and they feel that it is for them simply to obey orders whenever issued. The Government can do with them what it likes." This indifference to the government over them, and utter lack of patriotism and public spirit, has often been commented on. It was due to the government's own neglect of public affairs, and to the Chinese family system which made the banding together of strangers to obtain redress difficult to achieve. So the

1 Lun Yü, X, 13
2 Chung Yung, XX, 27 and 28
4 Li Chi, II, 2, iii
5 Lun Yü, XIV, 22
6 Thompson, Life of Griffith John, pg. 257
7 See Smith, Chinese Characteristics, chap. 13
docile people put up with a great deal of injustice and oppression before thinking of resisting.\(^1\) And the Classics teach that "the superior man," when the empire is badly governed "is sure by his silence to command forbearance to himself."\(^2\) But if injustice and corruption become general and long continued the people are goaded to extremities, local insurrections may secure the recall of a magistrate, and widespread revolt the overthrow of the reigning dynasty. A local mandarin could not with impunity disregard the traditional customs. What is customary may be highly unjust, but it is submitted to as old custom. But deviation from this unwritten law, such as increasing the taxes, would be resisted unless consent of the people were first obtained.\(^3\) If the official is notoriously avaricious or unjust, some incident sooner or later will cause a popular uprising, and the magistrate will be roughly handled. The ringleaders of the mob will probably be executed. But such popular demonstrations of discontent may result in the removal of the mandarin by the higher authorities, and a worse fate if news of the disturbance reach the emperor's ears. So that the officials avoid such incidents, even to the point of evading unwelcome instructions from above. By this means the people, though they have no voice in the appointment of their magistrates, have a practical way of demanding redress and recall.\(^4\)

Further, the Confucian Classics teach that subjects have the right to dispose of an intolerable ruler. This is implied in the doctrine already referred to that the decree of Heaven which appoints the ruler "is not constant," and "not easily preserved" but is conditioned on character and may be revoked.\(^5\) "Heaven does not speak,"\(^6\) but it does reveal its will, and that in two ways.

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1 Williams, The Middle Kingdom, vol. 1, pg. 324
2 Chung Yung, XXVII
3 Giles, The Civilization of China, pgs. 42-43, 174
4 Goodnow, China, an Analysis, pg. 189; Louie, New China and Old, pg. 25
5 See pg. 59 of this thesis
6 Meng tzu, V, 1, v
First, Heaven shows its displeasure by sending calamities and portents which are a warning omen to bad rulers.\(^1\) Second, the will of Heaven is manifested in the will of the people.\(^2\) "Heaven sees according as my people sees; Heaven hears according as my people hear."\(^3\) "Heaven compassionates the people. What the people desire Heaven will be found to give effect to."\(^4\)

It was on these grounds that the famous rebels of antiquity, T'ang and Wu, justified their rebellions as recorded in the Shu Ching. When T'ang led the rebellion against Chieh of the Hsia dynasty he appealed to the people to support him by enumerating the crimes of the infamous tyrant, and asserting that Chieh was a criminal condemned by Heaven, and that he himself was "the minister of Heaven" appointed to punish him. "Assist, I pray you, me the One man, to carry out the punishment appointed by Heaven." Having dethroned Chieh, T'ang is fearful of how posterity will regard his deed, and is encouraged and vindicated by his minister who says that what he has done was by the will of Heaven and the wishes of the people. And after T'ang had overthrown the Hsia dynasty and established his own, "he made a grand announcement to the myriad regions" in which he claims the events were the work of Heaven. "Heaven send down calamities on Hsia to make manifest its crimes," and "I was charged with the decree of Heaven."\(^5\)

Similarly centuries later T'ang's own dynasty ended with the infamous Chou Hsin, who, when his minister remonstrated with him, replied, "O, is not my life secured by the decree of Heaven?"\(^6\) Wu of Chou led a successful rebellion against him, and a number of his addresses to the confederate princes and his army are recorded in which he justifies his revolt by recounting in detail the crimes of the tyrant. "He says that he is the decree of Heaven; he says that a reverent care of his conduct is not worth observing; -- he says that tyranny is

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1 See pgs. 60-63 of this thesis
2 See pgs. 97-98 of this thesis
3 Shu Ching, V, 1, ii; Meng tzu, V, 1, v
4 Shu Ching, V, 1, i
5 Shu Ching, IV, 1-3
6 Shu Ching, IV, 10
no matter." "Heaven sees as my people see; Heaven hears as my people hear. The people are blaming me, the One man, for my delay; I must now go forward."

"Do ye support," he appeals, "with untiring zeal me, the One man, reverently to execute the punishment appointed by Heaven."¹

Whether this is real history edited by Confucius, or drama intended to inculcate his political views, Confucius without doubt accepted these justifications of rebellion as legitimate. But he nowhere says so explicitly. One of the four things he would not discuss, we are told, was 'luan,' lawlessness, disorder, rebellion,² and, as we have seen, he had a horror of regicide.³ Instead of speaking of the right of revolution he advises rulers how to secure the submission of their subjects and avoid "losing the people," and warns of ruin if the ruler is not benevolent. But there is a hint of what was in the background in his words, "the ruler is preserved by the people and perishes also through the people."⁴ This is echoed in the Great Learning, "Take warning from the house of Yin. The great decree is not easily preserved. . . . By losing the people the kingdom is lost."⁵ In the Book of Rites also, in speaking of the minister's duty to remonstrate with his ruler, it is said, "if (the government) were going to wreck, he might sweep it away, and institute a new one."⁶ But it is Mencius who is most explicit on this subject. He told king Hsüan of Ch'i that if a ruler did not listen to the repeated remonstrances of his chief ministers "they ought to dethrone him." "The king on this looked moved," we are told, "and changed countenance."⁷ On another occasion the same king asked Mencius if it was true that T'ang banished Chieh, and Wu smote Chou as recorded in the Shu Ching. On receiving an affirmative reply he then asked, "May a minister then put his sovereign to death?" Mencius said, "He who outrages

¹ Shu Ching, V, 1-3
² Lun Yü, VII, 20
³ Lun Yü, XIV, 22
⁴ Li Chi, XXX
⁵ Ta Hsueh, X, 5 and 6
⁶ Li Chi, XV, 21
⁷ Meng tzu, V, 2, ix
benevolence is called a robber; he who outrages righteousness is called a ruffian. The robber and ruffian we call a mere fellow. I have heard of the cutting off of the fellow Chou, but I have not heard of the putting a sovereign to death, (in his case)."¹ In other words, when a ruler outrages benevolence and righteousness he ceases to be a king and becomes "a mere fellow" and as such may be "cut off" legitimately.

This right of revolution, as Reid points out, is not a right to overthrow a good ruler, or a right to change the form of government, or demand recognition of people's rights by rebellion. "The countenance he gives to revolutions is with limitations." It is the right to rebel against misrule and oppression, and to overthrow a tyrant.² By teaching this, Confucian theory contrasts with the absolutism of the Japanese conception of the emperor.³ Japanese history has not witnessed the rise and fall of dynasties as in China.⁴

THE CHRISTIAN APPRAISAL

While the Confucian Classics have more to say about the ruler than his subjects, and the sages address their political teachings to kings and princes, the New Testament has more to say to the Christian citizen about his duties to the authorities. Here Christianity confirms Confucianism in teaching the duty of political obedience, but with the difference that it is not a slavish obedience, and that it is an obedience to be rendered from religious motives. The comprehensive duty enjoined on the Christian citizen is "subjection to the higher powers," and "every ordinance of man."⁵ This is not enjoined, as Hodge observes, "on the ground of the personal merit of those in authority but on the ground of their official station."⁶ Both Paul and Peter point out that this

¹ Meng tzu, I, 2, viii; cp. also the conversation in I, 2, vi
² Reid, "Revolution as Taught by Confucianism," International Journal of Ethics, vol. 33 (1923), pgs. 188-201
³ Russel, The Problem of China, pgs. 35, 36
⁴ Hu, The Chinese Renaissance, pgs. 18, 19
⁵ Romans 13:1; I Peter 2:13
⁶ Hodge, Commentary on Romans, in loco
'necessary' obedience is, for the Christian, not only a civil duty enforced by law, but a religious duty; it is an obedience to be voluntarily rendered "for conscience's sake," and "for the Lord's sake." On the same principles "tribute," "custom," "fear," and "honor," and whatever is due the magistrate is to be paid. Christ taught the same with reference to those "things that are Caesar's." It is not merely "lawful," the word His questioner used, to render to Caesar his due, it involves a moral obligation. For where the questioner asked about "giving tribute" Jesus in reply changed the verb to "pay," indicating that it was a debt to be discharged. Christians were not to think that their peculiar relationship to heaven exempted them from allegiance to even a heathen emperor. Rulers are to be respected and honored, and prayer is enjoined "for kings and all that are in high place," so that Christians might have a quiet and peaceable life. And Christian citizens, on their part, are directed to stay in their own spheres leading quiet industrious lives, and to cultivate a peaceful disposition. In times of persecution and in face of misrepresentation they are charged by the apostle Peter to be especially careful of their conduct, and by fulfilling their duties to the government "muzzle" their enemies.

Christian practice supported Christian teaching. Christ, though He suffered much at the hands of the authorities, at all times showed respect towards the officers of the state, was submissive to their power, and by paying the temple tax as well as saying that "the things of Caesar" should be "rendered unto

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1 ὁσιὰ, Romans 13:5
2 Romans 13:5; I Peter 2:13
3 Romans 13:6, 7
5 Titus 3:1
6 Romans 13:4, 6, 7; I Peter 2:17
7 I Timothy 2:1, 2; cp. Ezra 6:10
8 I Thessalonians 4:11; II Thessalonians 3:10-12
9 Romans 14:19; II Corinthians 13:11; I Thessalonians 5:13
10 I Peter 2:15; 3:16; 4:15, 16
11 Matthew 17:27
Caesar" implied that the authorities had the right to tax, and the citizen the duty to pay. When brought to trial before the officials He reminded them, as Alexander says, "of truth and justice of which they were the chosen representatives."¹ In the course of his widespread activities, the apostle Paul sometimes came in collision with the authorities when he and his companions were charged with being public enemies.² But Paul also always conducted himself as a law-abiding subject with respect for the authorities, while at the same time insisting on his civil rights as a Roman citizen.³ He apologized on one occasion for denouncing the high priest.⁴ This same civil obedience, respect for officials, and peaceful temper characterized the other apostles and early Christians.

There is, then, no encouragement in either Christian teaching or example, of rebellion in matters not affecting conscience. This is confirmed by the conduct of the early Christians who were cruelly treated by the state but did not resist the established order and the apologists contended that they were in every respect model citizens superior to others.⁵ We cannot think that the early church was never silent about moral evils,⁶ but whether a tyrannical ruler should be dethroned as in Confucian teaching of the right of revolution, is a subject not referred to in the Christian sources. In general they are more concerned with duties than with rights, and contemplate the changing of evil circumstances not by violence, but by permeation of society with the spirit of Christ. At the time that the New Testament was written, too, the church was not strong enough to challenge or impress the state,⁷ a circumstance which determined the political subjects referred to in the Christian writings, many questions not arising that concern Christians in a state in

¹ Alexander, Christianity and Ethics, pg. 230
² Acts 16:20; 17:6
⁴ Acts 23:2-5
⁵ Schmidt, The Social Results of Early Christianity, pgs. 182-184
⁶ Inge, Christian Ethics and Modern Problems, pgs. 242-243
⁷ Chadwick, The Social Teaching of St. Paul, pg. 125
which citizens have wider responsibilities for public affairs, and so enlarged civic duties.¹

But that there is a limit to civic obedience and loyalty to the government is clearly taught. This limitation is not based on the character of the ruler and government, as in Confucianism, but on conflict with a higher loyalty. A qualification is implied in the very injunction to submit to "every ordinance of man," for this obedience is to be voluntarily rendered from religious motives, "for conscience's sake," "for the Lord's sake." Our Lord laid it down that "there are things that are Caesar's" and "things that are God's," to each of which what is due must be rendered as a moral obligation. He did not specify what God's rights are, but left the subject with the declaration that there are two spheres over one of which Caesar, representing government and the state, has rightful jurisdiction, and another in which God alone is King and Head, and that there are thus two sets of debts to be discharged by everyone. Where there is a conflict of duties the higher takes precedence. Peter and John's refusal to obey the authorities when they were forbidden to preach was for the expressed reason, "We must obey God rather than men."² If obedience to the ruler becomes disobedience to God, then refusal to submit to the authorities becomes the Christian duty.

¹ Henson, Christian Morality, pgs. 172-176
² Acts 4:19, 20
CHAPTER III
FATHER AND SON

Following the political relationship of ruler and subject are three family relationships, the relations, namely, between father and son, husband and wife, and brothers, listed next in the 'wu lun' as fundamental in Confucian social morality. Of these three the first and last are often associated together, "filial piety" and "fraternal submission" being stressed as the two basically important family virtues, which find their equivalent also in the political and social spheres as obedience to the 'parents of the people,' and respect for elders and old age. Thus at the beginning of the Analects it is said, "The superior man bends his attention to what is fundamental¹... Filial piety and fraternal submission -- are they not the foundation² of all benevolence?" And Mencius indicates the political significance of these two virtues. "If each man would love his parents and show the due respect to his elders, the whole empire would enjoy tranquillity."³ As Bullock says, "These two duties formed the corner-stone of both the ethical and social system of Confucius."⁴

The Chinese family is a larger group than the European family. It is composed not merely of a man with his wife and their children, but of several generations, -- the ideal of blessedness included five,⁵ living all together under one roof, sharing the same property, and recognizing the authority of the paterfamilias.⁶ This, in contrast to Western individualism, is the unit of Chinese society,⁷ the base upon which the empire is built and the pattern after which the state is constituted.

As the most important relationship in the family group, to which the others are subordinate, Confucianism stresses the relation between father and son. The subject naturally divides into first, the relation of the parents to the children,

¹ The Chinese word 'pen' means root, source, origin, what is essential, original.
² Lun Yu, I, 2.
³ Meng tsu, IV, 1, xi.
⁴ Bullock, "Ethics and Morality (Chinese)," Hastings' Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics.
⁵ Parker, Studies in Chinese Religion, pg. 32.
⁷ Schmitt, Konfuzius, pg. 199.
and second, the relation of the children to their parents.

THE RELATION OF PARENTS TO CHILDREN

One of the first impressions of the traveller in China must be the swarms of children seen in the streets and courtyards of every town and village. And on every side he will see evidence of parental fondness and over-indulgence for children in their early years. In line with the famous dictum of Mencius, "There are three things which are unfilial and to have no posterity is the greatest of them," the Chinese have a passion for large families with many children. Families that have sons of sons, like the celebrated Chang Kung-ni who had nine generations living together in the same dwelling, are much envied and admired. "The desire for posterity," says Smith, "is the one ruling passion in which, next to the love of money, the Chinese race is most agreed." Creel notes the same desire expressed on the bronzes of the Shang period in the recent archaeological finds in Honan. Analysis of over 300 inscriptions, he writes, "shows that the most universal prayer is: 'May my sons and grandsons forever treasure and use this vessel.'" "Children without limit" are requested. This intense desire for children and a continuous family line is expressed in many ways in Chinese social life. It is expressed very frankly, for instance, in certain wedding customs and presents. Many marriage symbols as much as say, "May you soon give birth to a son." Or it may be seen in the crowds of childless women who seek relief from their very hard lot in worshipping at the numerous and popular temples of Kuan Yin, the goddess of mercy, who is generally represented with a child in her arms, and is supposed to have the power to grant sons. Other idolatrous customs have the same object in view.

The social customs of polygamy, concubinage and adoption are all due to the

1 Smith, Chinese Characteristics, pg. 145.
2 Meng Tzu, IV, 1, xxvi.
4 Sheng Yü, II, op. Lin, My Country and My People, pg. 47.
5 Smith, Chinese Characteristics, pg. 146.
6 Creel, The Birth of China, pg. 332.
7 ibid., pg. 333.
8 Doolittle, Social Life of the Chinese, vol. 1, pgs. 75-77, 83.
9 ibid., vol. 2, pgs. 31, 32.
10 ibid., vol. 2, pgs. 31-37, 68, 365.
necessity for children. And it is to have children that every Chinese, with few exceptions, marries, and marries early.\(^1\) Strong cursing, of which there is a good deal in China, includes conspicuously imprecations on another's posterity, indicating that childlessness in the thought of a Chinese is one of the very worst calamities that can befall one.\(^2\) Thus in innumerable ways is expressed the abhorrence of dying childless with no one to continue the family line and burn incense to one's departed spirit.

The desire for offspring was very definitely a desire for male offspring. There is no doubt about the relative value of sons and daughters to a Chinese. Kulp, who made a sociological study of a typical village in south China, found that the first "village value" was sons, and the first "negative value" was daughters.\(^3\) Smith, in his study of village life in north China, says the same thing.\(^4\) The Chinese view is expressed in the proverb "Eighteen Lohan daughters," (i.e. girls who in attractiveness are models comparable to the eighteen personal disciples of Buddha) "are not equal to a boy with a limp." "It is to be gathered from this," Smith remarks, "that the best girls are not equal to the worst boys."\(^5\) The same relative estimation obtained in antiquity as stated in the following two verses from the Classic of Poetry:

"Sons shall be born to him: --
They will be put to sleep on couches;
They will be clothed in robes;
They will have sceptres to play with;
Their cry will be loud
They will be resplendent with red knee-covers,
The (future) king, the princes of the land.

Daughters shall be born to him: --
They will be put to sleep on the ground;
They will be clothed, with wrappers;
They will have tiles to play with;
It will be theirs neither to do wrong nor to do good
Only about the spirits and the food will they have to think,
And cause no sorrow to their parents."\(^6\)

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1 Leong and Tao, Village and Town Life in China, pg. 10.
2 Doelittle, op. cit., vol. 2, pg. 274.
3 Kulp, Country Life in South China, pg. 514.
4 Smith, Village Life in China, pgs. 237-239, 258; etc.
5 Smith, Proverbs and Common Sayings from the Chinese, pg. 302.
6 Girls, (see next verse) receive no such marks of distinction.
7 Waley translates "loom-whorl."
The reception accorded girl babies at birth is very different from that received by sons. It would be going too far to say that girls are invariably unwanted. But "it is safe to make the assertion," says Maogowan, "that in all the countless homes that exist in the huge population of China, not one of them is prepared to welcome a girl or feel that she could ever take the place of a boy." The strong hope is for a son, and when the baby arrives and proves to be a girl there is great disappointment. The unlucky mother weeps over her sorrow and refuses to look at the little one. Dismay is felt by all the family, and the neighbours who were ready to offer congratulations in the event of a son discreetly retire. "No congratulations are ever uttered by anyone on her birth," says Maogowan. "To do so would be looked upon as an insult marked and offensive." It is probably in the first moments of disappointment and anger that many baby girls are done away with. If the infant is spared till feelings cool down natural parental feeling returns and the child is accepted and cherished.

The question of the prevalence of infanticide is a difficult one, authorities being divided as to the extent of the practice. It is naturally done privately and a foreign resident in China especially would not often see cases of it. Further, the mortality rate from natural causes is high, and as the Chinese do not bury dead infants with care, one needs to be cautious in judging from the number left wrapped in matting by the wayside, and the "baby towers" which are frequently found for their disposal. The practice also seems to vary considerably, being much more prevalent in certain sections of China, and at different periods. These considerations explain the divergent accounts. Some writers, both foreign and Chinese, deny with some heat that this practice is

1 Lee, When I was a Boy in China, pg. 8.
2 Smith, Village Life in China, pg. 258.
3 Maogowan, Sidelights on Chinese Life, pgs. 47-50; Men and Manners in Modern China, pgs. 253-254.
4 loc. cit., Maogowan, from whose testimony I have condensed this account of the reception of girl babies, was for 50 years a missionary in China, and gives what seems to me at once the fairest and most sympathetic statement I have read.
5 Couling, The Encyclopedia Sinica, art. "Infanticide."
6 Werner, China of the Chinese, pg. 56.
7 Ross, The Changing Chinese, pg. 103.
8 Novius, China and the Chinese, pg. 252.
9 Moule, New China and Old, pg. 179; Werner, op. cit., pgs. 54-56, 59.
carried on to any great extent. ¹ Giles argues against the possibility of any widespread destruction of girl babies from the fact that all men marry and some have several wives. ² But Werner examines this at some length and concludes that there is a greater mortality among male children, and that this may be one excuse for killing females.³ The testimony of reliable and sympathetic observers to the prevalence of infanticide is too definite to be set aside.⁴ It seems to have been practiced more or less in most parts of China. And confirmation of this is found in the protests of certain sections of the Chinese people against the practice. Magistrates occasionally posted proclamations condemning it,⁵ but doing nothing more to stamp out the crime or punish the murderers, the government practically condoned it.⁶ Doolittle says "the crime of female infanticide is often mentioned with levity by the common people."⁷ But there was a sentiment of disapproval among the intelligentsia. The extensive distribution of moral tracts and pamphlets designed to "admonish the age," has already been referred to. The prominence among these of condemnation of the drowning of female infants is evidence of this disapproval and the prevalence of the practice.⁸ Societies supported by the gentry existed in some places for the prevention and suppression of infanticide.⁹ But, as Moule points out, neither Confucianism nor the other religions officially disapproved of the crime.¹⁰ It is of course only girl-babies that are done away with, for sons are precious and valuable.¹¹ And it is practiced not only by the poor,¹² though it is commonest

¹ Lee, When I was a Boy in China, pgs. 43, 44; Wilhelm, The Soul of China, pg. 321; Giles, The Civilization of China, pg. 98, and China and the Chinese, pg. 193; but op. Niewius, China and the Chinese, pg. 253.
³ Werner, China of the Chinese, pgs. 56-59.
⁵ See one issued in 1838 in The Chinese Repository, vol. 7, pgs. 54, 55.
⁶ Williams, China Yesterday and Today, pg. 58.
¹⁰ Moule, op. cit., pg. 180.
¹² See official proclamation, The Chinese Repository, vol. 7, pgs. 54, 55; Werner, China of the Chinese, pg. 54.
in times of famine and other calamity. The real cause is resentment that a girl instead of a boy has been born, and selfish considerations of the trouble of bringing up a girl to become by marriage the servant of another family.

Wieger gives in full one of the above-mentioned moral tracts, entitled "Ruling the Family," in which the sort of exhortation employed may be seen, and the arguments adduced that children are due to the will of heaven and that there are after all certain advantages in having a daughter. Objections based on the cost of rearing, feeding, and supplying the bridal equipment of a girl only to lose her by marriage, are answered. It is this latter fact that caused the saying, "There is no thief like a family of five daughters."

The ancestors of the family were not informed of the arrival of a girl baby. She grew up with a very slim chance of ever seeing the inside of a school. The Chinese were opposed on principle to schools for girls. For they could not be officials, and so expenditure on their education would bring no return. In 1902 when modern education was officially introduced, girls were admitted to only the lowest primary schools. Kulp found "the taboo upon education for girls no weaker today (1925) than in 1905." Popular opinion," wrote Martin in 1881, "regards reading and writing as dangerous arts in female hands." Instances could be given of prejudice existing today among educated men in favour of taking for a wife a girl trained only in domestic services. But it should be added that co-education is now common.

The sort of training advocated for girls may be seen in the tract, "Ruling the Family" already referred to. It consisted entirely in teaching them how to sweep, sew, spin, etc. Let them be trained in the works they will have to do in their husband's house." Moral education is especially necessary.

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1 Moule, op. cit., pg. 179.
2 Wieger, Moral Tenets and Customs in China, pgs. 165-167.
4 Williams, China Yesterday and Today, pgs. 442, 443.
5 Kulp, Country Life in South China, Pg. 249.
6 Martin, The Chinese, pg. 73.
7 Lim, My Country and My People, pgs. 153-155.
8 op. also Kulp, Country Life in South China, pgs. 253-255.
9 cp. also Sheng Yu, Xi; NH Hsieh, or Female Instructor, reviewed in The Chinese Repository, vol. 9, pgs. 537-559.
maid must be taught, before all, to be grave and to work without sparing her-
self. The parents must teach them the three duties of submission and the four
virtues of women. The three duties read thus: at home, obey your father;
when married, obey your husband; when a widow, obey your son. Which are the
four virtues? They are conjugal fidelity, proper speech, proper demeanour,
proper employment." Social contacts are denied them. "When they are five or
six," says the tract, "their hair is to be dressed, their feet are to be bound,
they must stay at home and must not be allowed to run here and there to play."

One of the very important responsibilities of parents is to find husbands
for their daughters, for the sole object in life of a girl is to marry and bear
sons, as it is a man's chief concern to continue his family line. Daughters are
betrothed, and a husband contracted for, while they are children. ¹ Frequently a
daughter is sent long before marriage to the home of her future husband. ² The ad-
vantages of this arrangement that appeal to the Chinese are that her own family
does not have the financial burden of rearing her, while the boy's family has an-
other slave to work, and can early train her in the ways of her new family. Girls
are a marketable commodity, and may be sold as concubines and slaves. ³ It is un-
necessary to add that they have no share in the division of the family property. ⁴

"In the selfish nature of the relations between Chinese parents and their
children," says Smith, "is to be found an explanation of the otherwise inexplic-
able dislike of daughters. 'Men rear sons,' says one of their proverbs, 'to
provide for old age; they plant trees, because they want the shade.' But this
holds true of sons only, not of daughters. By the time a girl would begin to
repay the trouble expended in rearing her, she is betrothed and becomes an addi-
tional burden. Her wedding is a drain on the family resources for which there is
no compensation. After her marriage she is the exclusive property of the husband's
family . . . If her mother is old, helpless and widowed, the daughter cannot care
for her. 'Wild grain does not go for grain taxes, a daughter does not support her
mother.' ⁵

¹ Kulp, Country Life in South China, Introduction, Summary of Findings.
² Leong and Tao, Village and Town Life in China, pg. 98; Kulp, op. cit., pg. 161.
⁴ MacGowan, Men and Manners in Modern China, pgs. 26, 27
⁵ Smith, Proverbs and Common Sayings from the Chinese, pg. 302.
In contrast with a daughter's reception and treatment, the birth of a boy-baby is a time of great rejoicing and congratulation in all the family.\(^1\) His arrival is announced to the ancestors with ceremony. The mother's position is now assured in the family and her treatment by everyone is more kindly, and respectful.\(^2\) The boy as he grows up is surrounded with every care, and showered with attention. His mother becomes his slave, and he is usually thoroughly spoiled. Charms are worn by him to preserve his life. Malicious spirits are deceived, when the parents are particularly fearful, by calling the boy by a girl's name so that the spirits will not molest him, or by having him live part time with another family so that the spirits are perplexed as to which family really owns the child.\(^3\)

His education is the best that the family resources allow. Pride is taken in his achievements, and in every way the whole emphasis of the family is upon the precious boys. If he is born early in the parents' life so much the better. He will have reached maturity when they have arrived at old age, and can serve and support them. But the proverb says, "If one's destiny is to have sons, what signifies early or late, provided they do but live?"\(^4\)

The desire for male progeny and fear of childlessness seems to be caused by two chief ideas, one economic, and the other religious.\(^5\) First, the dread of an old age of weakness and poverty creates the desire to be provided for in one's last days. Second, ancestor worship demands an heir to offer sacrifices to one's spirit after death. And because sons alone can qualify in these respects the Chinese want sons, not daughters. Sons stay in the old home and support their parents as long as they live, while daughters by marrying join another family group, and their services are lost to their own family. "Lacking our opportunities for saving and investments," says Ross, "the Chinese rely upon the earning of their sons to keep them in their old age. A man looks upon his sons as his

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1 Lee, When I was a Boy in China, pg. 8.
2 Maegowan, Sidelights on Chinese Life, pgs. 43, 44.
3 Smith, Village Life in China, pg. 238.
4 Smith, Proverbs and Common Sayings from the Chinese, pg. 299.
5 Leong and Tao, Village and Town Life in China, pg. 10.
old age pension."  

But it is ancestor worship chiefly that makes sons so precious for sons alone inherit the family property, perpetuate the family name, and perform the rites before the tablets and at the graves of their forefathers. Upon the performance or neglect of these rites depends the happiness of all his ancestors. One who has no heir, or is neglected by his living descendants, becomes together with the whole family line before him an orphan spirit or hungry ghost roaming around unattached in the next world. So strong is this belief that it obstructs justice. A magistrate before sentencing a man will usually inquire of his parents or brothers to ascertain if he is an only son on whom sacrifice to the dead depends and accordingly punish him lightly. He is afraid of the responsibility of making a man neglect this supreme filial duty.  

"The three kinds of abundance to be wished for," says the common Chinese saying, are 1) abundance of sons, 2) many years of life, 3) abundance of good fortune.

The running out or discontinuance of a family line is regarded as exceedingly undesirable. If there are no sons various expedients are resorted to to perpetuate the family. The most common is the adoption of a son and heir. The choice is ordinarily made from among the children of brothers. So the proverb, "One who has nephews cannot become an orphan spirit," is used to comfort one who has no sons. Children of sisters are not considered nearly so suitable. It is not so usual to adopt a son from another clan with a different patronymic name. But other more distant relatives may be adopted if there are no suitable persons of closer kinship, and even occasionally an entire stranger. Adoptions are hastily arranged at a death bed if a man takes ill suddenly who is unmarried or childless. Should a childless man die without designating an heir a fictitious adoption is made, a young relative coming forward and performing all the

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1 Ross, op. cit., pg. 98.  
4 Leong and Tao, op. cit., pg. 10.  
5 Plopper, Chinese Religion seen through the Proverb, pg. 100.  
7 Lee, When I was a Boy in China, pgs. 15, 16.
mournning rites and customs. This often leads to disputes over the inheritance. And indeed the whole custom of adoption so extensively practiced in China introduces great confusion into family relationships, and causes intricate lawsuits and clan disputes. For though the practice is directly due to ancestor worship, the desire to secure title and possession of a dead man's property enters into it.

Another method of securing a son, but not so common, is to adopt a son-in-law. Not infrequently a rich man having only daughters, will advertise for a husband to marry his daughter, and be adopted into the family as a son. Literary graduates who may become mandarins are very desirable and receive in addition to the wife a valuable dowry. Such adopted sons-in-law much prefer to retain their own ancestral name, but will sometimes agree to take the name of the father-in-law. "Only a poor family," says Doolittle, "will allow a talented and literary son to ignore his own family name in this way."

The adopted son has all the rights and privileges of a natural-born son, and cannot be displaced by later-born true sons, and he also takes up all the onerous duties of an heir in connection with funeral ceremonies and worship of his adopted ancestors' tablets.

A less common expedient than adoption to perpetuate a family branch is polygamy. If his principal wife bears him no sons, a man will often take a concubine into his home. Naturally this is more common among the well-to-do. It was a less expensive practice to hire a wife to bear a son to him. Another plan was for one man to raise up sons and heirs for two branches of a family, his own and perhaps a childless deceased brother, or an uncle, which necessitated his dividing his time and attention between two partners and households. In the last half of the last century the direct succession of the imperial line became extinct, and the following expedients were resorted to. The emperor Hsien Feng

1 Leong and Tao, op. cit., pgs. 14, 15.
2 See Smith, op. cit., pgs. 251-255.
3 ibid., pg. 252.
4 Doolittle, op. cit., vol. 1, pgs. 99-100.
5 Kulp, Country Life in South China, pgs. 143-144; Wieger, Moral Tenets and Customs in China, pgs. 187-188; Werner, China of the Chinese, pg. 53.
6 See phrase 'tien lao p'o,' Giles' Chinese-English Dictionary.
7 Smith, Village Life in China, pg. 254.
secured an heir by a concubine and when he died left this five-year old boy to succeed him. But unfortunately before T'ung Chih had grown to manhood he died, of course without issue. Another minor was chosen, since the successor must be younger than his predecessor to worship him. And since there were two links in the family chain to be supplied Kuang Hsu was to raise up successors to both Hsien Feng and T'ung Chih. He himself was therefore constituted the heir of Hsien Feng, and his first son was to be heir of T'ung Chih. Sons the Chinese must have one way or another. The three great misfortunes of life, they say, are, in youth, to bury one's father; at middle age, to lose one's wife; and being old, to have no sons.

The authority of the head of the family over his children was absolute, and included the power of life and death. "Parents are like heaven," says the Sacred Edict. "Heaven produces a blade of grass. The arrival of spring causing it to germinate, and autumn coming to kill it with frost, are equally by the will of heaven. In like manner, the power of life and death over the body which they have begetten, lies with the parents." The proverb says, "When a father wants his son to die, he dies." There was no law restricting the right and authority of parents in managing their children. They could sell them, and sometimes they were taken in payment of the father's debts. They could be beaten almost to the point of death, or killed. Douglas recites a case reported in the Peking Gazette, 1882, in which a mother accomplished the death by brutal means of her unfilial son. The court of investigation decided that the death was deserved and the mother was absolved from blame. The law only provided that if an innocent son or grandson was put to death on the basis of a false accusation there should be punishment. This was light -- the accuser got seventy blows of the bamboo and a year and a half's exile, the parents sixty blows and a year's

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2 Plepper, op. cit., pg. 97.
3 Werner, China of the Chinese, pg. 54; Creel, The Birth of China, pg. 301; Forks, Geschichte der alten chinesischen Philosophie, pg. 134.
4 Sheng Yü, I, 6.
5 Plepper, op. cit., pg. 229.
6 Douglas, Society in China, pgs. 78-81.
exile from his native place. With this should be contrasted the severely cruel punishment of a lingering death ordered for the son who kills his father.

Though the parents could thus take the matter into their own hands, the law provided a legal way for punishing unruly children. It was evidently rightly thought that though there was no restriction, in practice the natural affection of a father, especially for his precious son, would prevent extreme cruelty. The legal method was that anyone cursing or railing at his or her parents, or father's parents, should be strangled, provided that the parents had themselves heard the abusive language, and took the initiative in complaining to the magistrates. This provisional clause considerably modified the law. Williams says, "the power here given the parent does not seem to be productive of evil."

It should be remembered that there was one authoritative restriction on a father doing as he pleased with his children. He was member of a patriarchal family system. If he were a younger brother he was subject to the eldest, if their father was no longer living, as the head of the clan. Public opinion, also, where natural affection was not strong enough, checked excessively harsh use of the parental despotic power.

The authority of the mother was subordinate to that of the father, and generally increased with age. If she was the mother of sons her prestige was increased, and when she became a mother-in-law she ruled the new family branch. If her husband died the mother of the eldest generation became supreme, the old grandmother having ruling authority in the Chinese family.

This control over all that concerned the children included the right of betrothing them. Though they were the parties most concerned they had nothing whatever to say about the choice of a partner, and were not consulted. This was solely the parents' prerogative. Indeed they were still children when betrothed,

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1 E. T. Williams, China Yesterday and Today, pgs. 55-56.
2 S.W. Williams, The Middle Kingdom, vol. 1, pg. 65.
3 Section 329 of the Manchu Penal Code.
4 Williams, The Middle Kingdom, vol. 1, pg. 305.
5 Williams, China Yesterday and Today, pg. 58.
6 Lin, My Country and My People, pgs. 145-146; Leong and Tao, op. cit. pg. 7.
for Chinese parents settle the marriage question for them when they are very young. This engagement was absolutely binding and the children when they came to marriageable age without questioning fell in with their parents' arrangements.\(^1\) Usually the bride and groom had never seen each other until the wedding day. They accepted each other as the appointment of fate.

A son was said to come of age at the age of sixteen, but that did not mean that he then became his own master, unless his father and grandfather were deceased. In that case he could manage family affairs much as he pleased; his widowed mother was supposed to obey him. However, the amount of freedom or interference he had, depended on the character and disposition of his mother and his relatives.\(^2\) But as long as the pater-familias lived the son never became a free agent.\(^3\) Parental authority, including infliction of punishment, and filial obedience continued throughout life though the son had a family of his own. So also the authority of uncles and elder brothers.\(^4\) The son's wives were subject to the same authority. There was one exception to parental authority -- if and while the son was an official in the service of the emperor.\(^5\)

In the case of the daughter the parents' authority was even greater, but once married she was no longer under their control, but subject to her husband's parents. In the new family she joined as wife and daughter-in-law, she was little better than a slave.

Very little is said anywhere in the Confucian Classics about the general relation or duties of parents to children. The whole emphasis, as we shall see is on the other side, on the obligations of children to their parents. One passage refers to a mother and her daughter. "At the marriage of a young woman, her mother admonishes her, accompanying her to the door on her leaving, and cautioning her with these words, 'You are going to your home. You must be respectful; you must be careful. Do not disobey your husband.'"\(^6\) A very few scattered

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1 Kulp, Country Life in South China, pgs. 170-172.
2 Smith, Village Life in China, pg. 256.
3 See Doolittle, Social Life of the Chinese, vol. 1, pgs. 138-139.
5 Williams, China Yesterday and Today, pg. 57.
6 Meng tsu, III, 2, ii.
references to a father's attitude towards his son may be found. The most definite is an isolated statement in the Classic of History where "the father who can no longer love his son, but hates him" is classed with the unfilial and unbrotherly as the worst of criminals. Of the model emperor, King Wen, it is said in one place that "as a father he rested in kindness." In the primer San Tsu Ching "affection between father and child" is listed as one of the ten obligations. But the sterner virtues of a father are more emphasized by the Chinese sages. "The mother," it is observed, "deals with sons on grounds of affection rather than of pride; the father on grounds of pride rather than affection." He should be exacting toward his sons. "The Master said, Can there be love which does not lead to strictness with its object?" "At the capping of a young man his father admonishes him."

From the following account of Confucius' relation to his son may be seen the Confucian model of strictness and reserve on the part of a father, who keeps his son at a distance. "Ch'en K'ang (a disciple) once asked Po-yü (Confucius' son) saying, Have you heard any lessons from your father different from what we have all heard? Po-yü replied, No. He was standing alone once, when I passed below the hall with hasty steps, and said to me, Have you learned the Odes? On my replying, Not yet, he added, If you do not learn the Odes you will not be fit to converse with. I retired and studied the Odes. Another day, he was in the same way standing alone, when I passed by below the hall with hasty steps, and said to me, Have you learned the rules of Propriety? On my replying, Not yet, he added, If you do not learn the rules of Propriety, your character cannot be established. I then retired, and learned the rules of Propriety. I have heard only these two things from him. Ch'en K'ang retired, and quite delighted, said, I asked one thing, and I have got three things. I have heard about the Odes, I have heard about the rules of Propriety. I have also heard that the superior man maintains a distant reserve towards his son."

1 Shu Ching, V, 9.
2 Ta Hsüeh, III, 3.
3 Li Chi, XXIX, 29.
4 Lane Yü, XIV, 8.
5 Meng tsu, III, 2, 11.
6 Lane Yü, XVI, 13.
It is a proverbial saying taken from the elementary primer that "to feed but not teach is the father's fault,"¹ and in harmony with this sentiment the Sacred Edict exhorts fathers and elder brothers to be examples and give instruction as to their duties, to the younger.² Confucius in one place uses the phrase "regulate one's family," which is explained to mean "teach one's own family," but no further details are given.³ Mencius is more explicit. "Between father and son there should be no reproving admonitions to what is good. Such reproofs lead to alienation, and than alienation there is nothing more inauspicious." So he laid it down as a rule that a father should not himself teach his son. The circumstances of the case forbid it. The teacher follows up his lessons, when they are not practiced, by being angry. But a father cannot act the part of a teacher, for a father and son may not be "offended at each other." So "the ancients," he says, "exchanged sons, and one taught the son of another."⁴ Martin remarks that in spite of this authority some fathers do take pride in teaching their sons.⁵

Y. P. Lee tells us of his own upbringing. "Obedience and respect," he says, "rather than affection, are required of the Chinese child ... The boy attains to the ideal character only when he habitually checks his affectionate impulses, suppresses his emotions and is uniformly respectful to his superiors, and uniformly dignified with his inferiors. Therefore the child is early taught to walk respectfully behind his superiors, to sit only when he is bidden, to speak only when questions are asked him, and to salute his superiors with the correct designations ... If he is taken to task for anything he has done, he must never contradict, never seek to explain ... Among the lower and less educated classes we find family discipline less strict ... I lived the years of my childhood in a shrinking condition of mind ... by fear of my elders. My father was a stern man as was his father before him. I remember him vividly by the beatings I got from him."⁶

¹ San Tzu Ching, lines 17, 18.
² Sheng Yê, XI.
³ Ta Hsêh, text 4, and chap. IX.
⁴ Meng tsu, IV, 1, xviii.
⁵ Martin, The Chinese, pg. 61.
⁶ Lee, When I was a Boy in China, pgs. 17-21.
In the average Chinese home, as he indicates, child training is largely absent. Without venturing a generalisation, one could say much from personal observation about the general absence of discipline. Chinese parents seem mostly over-indulgent, especially to the boys. "He begins life," says Smith, "on the theory that whatever he wants, that he must have; this theory is also the one acted upon by those who have him in charge."\(^1\) There is very little correction administered, or intelligent training. But when things come to a crisis Chinese parents are known to beat their children with great severity.\(^2\) One constantly hears them threatening their children in a violent way: "I'll smash you to death," spat out with vehemence, is a very common way of scolding. Children soon learn of course to take it for what it is worth.

In another passage in the Classics Confucius teaches that father and son should mutually screen each other, concealing each other's wrongdoing. "The duke of She informed Confucius, saying, Among us are those who may be styled upright in their conduct. If their father have stolen a sheep, they will bear witness to the fact. Confucius said, Among us, in our part of the country, those who are upright are different from this. The father conceals the misconduct of the son, and the son conceals the misconduct of the father. Uprightness is to be found in this."\(^4\)

THE CHRISTIAN APPRAISAL

Christ, as we saw, did not discuss public affairs, and only incidentally referred to political subjects. He was not a political leader or a social reformer. But one social institution He dealt with explicitly, the family, expressing Himself very positively on certain aspects of the relations of husband and wife and parents and children. From His emphatic assertions on these matters it is evident that He regarded the integrity of the family as the foundation of social morality. Taking the New Testament as a whole, also, more express guidance is given on family relationships than on the political.

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1 Smith, Village Life in China, pgs. 237-238; op. also pgs. 78, 241; Giles, The Civilization of China, pg. 98.
2 Gray, China, vol. 1, pg. 255.
3 'Ta ssu ni!' and also 'Ta ssu ni', I'll kill you!
4 Lun Yi, XIII, 18.
The importance of the family in Christianity is also to be seen in the constant use in the Scriptures of family terms to express the spiritual and ideal relations between God and man, and man and man. God is often in the Old Testament likened to a father and mother,¹ and the father-son relationship describes by analogy the relation of Jehovah to His people Israel.² Christ and His apostles in their teaching also used the vocabulary of the family. Our Lord oftenest spoke of God as Father, and thus, as Stalker says, He "honoured the relation of parenthood by using it as the earthly image for His own relation, as well as His people's to the Father in heaven."³ Childbirth He spoke of as illustrative of regeneration, and children are symbolical of the regenerated.⁴ The apostles likewise speak of God as the Father of His believing children, and there are allusions to child life by way of illustration in the epistles.⁵

A very high regard for children without respect to their sex is expressed in the Old Testament, as also in the New. They are spoken of as the gift of God,⁶ and "the heritage of Jehovah,"⁷ both fruitfulness and barrenness being from Jehovah.⁸ God has a special interest in and care for children, and will avenge their wrongs as He also makes special provision for the support of the fatherless.⁹ Children shared in the benefits of the covenant privileges guaranteed to their parents by God,¹⁰ and they were also bound to keep the covenants of parents.¹¹ This family solidarity is seen too in the fact that children became involved in the guilt of their parents,¹² and suffered when the whole family was punished,¹³ a point of view that is part and parcel of Oriental and Chinese social organization, where the family, not the individual, is regarded as the

² Exodus 4:22 on; Deuteronomy 32:6; Isaiah 64:7; 65:16; Jeremiah 31:9; etc.
³ Stalker, The Ethics of Jesus, pg. 348.
⁴ Matthew 18:4,5; John 3:3,7; etc.
⁵ I Corinthians 3:1; Galatians 3:23 - 4:7; etc.
⁶ Genesis 29:32-35; 33:5; etc.
⁷ Psalm 127:5.
⁹ Exodus 22:22-24; Deuteronomy 10:18; 14:29; Psalm 10:14,17,18; 27:10; 68:5; 146:9; Malachi 3:45.
¹¹ Genesis 17:9-14.
¹² Exodus 20:5; Jeremiah 32:18, etc.
¹³ Leviticus 20:5; Exodus 34:7; etc.
social and legal unit. But the day is coming, the Hebrew prophets foretold, when the children will no longer be punished for their parents' sins. Christ loved children for He blessed them, and said that they not only had a share in His kingdom but were the pattern of discipleship. Many of His miracles were wrought on children, and on His way to the Cross He expressed deep sympathy with infants and their mothers in the trial that was to come.

With this in mind it will be seen that the Christian finds the Chinese love of children one of their most appealing racial characteristics, and a point of kinship. The desire to have children is a normal human and parental instinct, many expressions of which, as well as maternal joy at the birth of a child, are found in Scripture. The Psalmist says that man is happy who has "his quiver full of them." But the intensity of the passion to have children, and more children, in China goes beyond natural instinct, and is directly due to the requirements of ancestor worship. It must be condemned as gross exaggeration to say with Mencius that to have no posterity is "the greatest unfilial thing," especially when it is remembered that "unfilial" to a Chinese mind denotes a heinous crime. And Christianity, which teaches that in Christ "there can be no male and female," and values each individual regardless of sex as a potential "son of God," cannot but regard the excessive appreciation of boys and depreciation of girls as other than a serious evil. The extreme desire for male offspring, fostered by Confucian teaching, as absolutely necessary for maintaining perpetual ancestor worship and an unbroken family line, has serious economic and social consequences in the dense over-population and the resultant dire poverty. Without considering this aspect it is pertinent to our theme to draw attention to serious moral consequences -- the cheap estimation of girls and neglect to give them opportunities for education and social contacts and pleasures, the low view of woman as a saleable commodity, and of marriage as existing for the

1 Jeremiah 31:29, 30; Ezekiel 18:1-30.
2 Matthew 19:15-16; Mark 10:15-16; Luke 18:15, 16.
5 Psalm 127:5.
propagation of sons, the abuse of childless wives, and resort to polygamy and concubinage to attain the desired end, and all their attendant evils. Add to these the crime of female infanticide condemned as murder by Christian morality, even as it was also disapproved by the best sentiment among the Chinese, though not by China's religions, or sages.

Parental authority and control is not discussed but is presupposed in the Christian sources, and children are frequently enjoined to respect it. It is presupposed, for instance, in the matter of the betrothal of a daughter. In answering a question from Corinth about the duty of a father who has a marriageable daughter the apostle Paul incidentally recognizes the father's responsibility in the matter and sanctions the controlling influence of the father's judgment. But this authority is coupled with love, and must not be harsh. The father of a household is enjoined by the apostle not to rule so rigorously as to "irritate" or "exasperate" his children, for to be over-severe with a child will make him "dispirited" and morose. The father's power thus limited by love, is also limited in two other ways. As the child's obedience is only "in the Lord," parental authority can demand no submission that violates religious principles. Further, the duration of this authority does not extend beyond marriage, for at that time, according to the original constitution of marriage, a man "leaves father and mother and cleaves to his wife." The Chinese man, on the contrary, cleaves to his parents and brings his wife to live with him in the parental dwelling. In that household the authority of the pater-familias is so long-enduring that there is no distinction for the son between a minor and an adult, and at no time until his parents' death is the son free from control. It is so comprehensive that the youth has no independence of thinking and acting. It is so absolute and unlimited that the children are brought up or disposed of at the parents' will.

We have noted that on the relation and duties of parents to children

1 I Corinthians 7:36-38.
2 Colossians 3:21; Ephesians 6:4.
3 Ephesians 6:1.
4 Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:4, 5; Ephesians 5:31.
Confucian teaching is meagre, the whole stress being placed on the obligations of children in connection with filial piety and ancestor worship. The inequality of Confucian morality in this regard is illustrated in the fact that parents could kill their children without punishment but the parricide was sentenced to the severest punishment in the penal code. In this extreme one-sidedness Confucianism falls short.

The deficiencies of the Classics in the matter of child-training are obvious. Not only is there little reference to a parent's responsibility in this regard, but Mencius denies the responsibility to the parent and makes it the business of a teacher, on the ground that parental reproof causes alienation. This mistaken view, we saw, is not followed in such books as the Sacred Edict which partially makes up for the deficiencies of the canon on this subject. The education of children in religion and morality as a parental responsibility is of great importance in the Christian view. It is constantly emphasized in Deuteronomy,¹ is taught in Proverbs,² and elsewhere, and is enjoined in the New Testament. Paul exhorts parents to "nurture" their children "in the chastening and admonition of the Lord," and these words include instruction, correction, and the general training of the child's mind, morals and religious life.³ The word "nurture" would suggest a warmer relationship than the Confucian father's aloofness and reserve towards his son.

Christianity teaches, also, the responsibility of parents to provide in a material way for their children.⁴ Fathers who do not do so, come under the condemnation of the apostle Paul as those who have been untrue to the Christian faith, and who, more than that, are worse than an infidel.⁵ This is contrary to the Chinese doctrine of filial piety. Confucianism, as Ross points out, places the burden of support and service on the son not on the parent, who receives his son's wages though he be a grown man with a family.⁶ Children live for their

¹ Deuteronomy 6:6-9; 20-25; etc.
³ Ephesians 6:4.
⁴ II Corinthians 12:14.
⁵ I Timothy 6:18.
parents, not the parents for their children. Legge says that he never quoted II Corinthians 12:14, "the children ought not to lay up for the parents but the parents for the children," without "encountering a storm of opposition." Christianity also recognizes that there are circumstances in which children should help their parents, and Jesus condemns evasion of this responsibility.

If they refuse they also come under that same Pauline condemnation of those who do not provide for their own kin.

As for the Confucian doctrine that the father-son relationship demands the mutual concealment of wrong-doing, this is subversive of morality.

THE RELATION OF CHILDREN TO PARENTS

While Confucianism says very little about the duties of parents to children, it places a great emphasis on the obligations of children to parents, particularly of sons to fathers. The comprehensive duty here is 'hsiao,' which means as a verb, to be filial, to honor one's parents, and as a noun, filial piety. The Chinese character 考, 'hsiao,' is a composite of two primitive symbols, 老, 'lao,' meaning old, aged, and beneath it, 子, 'tsu,' a son. "It thus, according to the Shuo Wen, the oldest Chinese dictionary (A.D. 100)," says Legge, "presents to the eye 'a son bearing up an old man,' that is, a child supporting his parent."

Hsiao is "the great and first commandment" of Confucianism.

This filial duty is constantly reiterated in Chinese literature. It was inculcated in all the textbooks the pupil studied in school from the primers to the Classics. Thus the first primer that the pupil recited contains these lines:

"Hsiaŋ, at nine years of age

could warm his parents’ bed.

Filial piety towards parents

is that to which we should hold fast.

• • • • •

Begin with filial piety and fraternal love

and then see and hear."?

The pupil proceeded to the Thousand Character Primer and learned:

2 Legge, The Religions of China, pgs. 255-257.
5 San Tzu Ching, lines 33-36, 41-42.
"In aiding a father and in serving a prince,
Are alike required both gravity and respect.
The duty of filial piety demands every energy;
... ...
Be watchful as though near an abyss or walking on ice
Always rising early to attend to the comforts of your parents.
Then your virtue will rival the Epidendrum in fragrance
And in rich exuberance, be like the luxuriant pine."\(^1\)

And the advanced pupil who studied the Confucian canon, the San Shu Wu Ching, finds them full of the same insistence on the primacy of filial duty alike in the words and doings of the model emperors of remote antiquity and in the sayings of Confucius and Mencius. "The fundamental lesson for all," says the canon, "is filial piety."\(^2\)

One of the Confucian Classics is entirely devoted to the subject, Hsiao Ching, or Classic of Filial Piety. This was an immensely popular book in China among all classes. Emperors have written commentaries on it, the children at school recited it.\(^3\) It sets forth in eighteen chapters the practice of filial piety by the son of Heaven, the princes of the states, the high ministers and great officers, the lesser officers, and the common people, in relation to governing the empire, serving the ruler, mourning for parents, and in the daily life of the family, and points out that this virtue was characteristic of the sage-emperors of antiquity. It explains what it consists of, and the power of its influence, and characterizes filial piety as "the perfect virtue, and all-embracing rule of conduct." "The Master said, Now filial piety is the root of (all) virtue, and (the stem) out of which grows (all moral) teaching."\(^4\) "This book," says Martin, "is the corner-stone of the social fabric" of China.\(^5\)

Associated with this Classic was a popular book entitled Er Shih Ssu Hsiao, the Twenty-four Examples of Filial Piety, depicting in so many stories the models of this virtue. Chen declines to translate some of them for English readers,\(^6\) but they were all widely known in China, printed age after age, read eagerly by the people, and told to the children.\(^7\) "To the babies," says Leong and Tao, "are

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1 Ch'ien Tzu Wen, lines 61-63, 65-68.
2 Li Chi, XXX, 2.
3 Chen, The Book of Filial Piety, pg. 8.
4 Hsiao Ching I
5 Martin, The Lore of Cathay, pg. 94.
7 Macgowan, Sidelights on Chinese Life, pg. 37; Martin, The Lore of Cathay, pg. 155-156.
taught the lives of men and women distinguished for their filial piety instead of nursery rhymes. The virtues of filial piety are so ingrained into us that to our mind there is no greater moral fault than offence against one's parents.¹

One of these classic examples was a man named Lao lai-tzu, who was over seventy and had lost nearly all his teeth, but made every effort to gladden his parents' hearts. He dressed in gaudy coloured garments and "would frisk and cut capers like a child in front of his parents. He would also take up buckets of water and try to carry them into the house; but, feigning to slip, would fall to the ground wailing and crying like a child; and all these things he did in order to divert his parents." Another worthy, in order to secure deer's milk recommended to cure the sore eyes of his aged father and mother, would disguise himself in hairy garments and deer's skin and join the wild herds in the forests to procure it fresh from the teats of deer. Another was a poor man who sold himself so as to get enough money to bury his father's remains. In one family there lived an aged grandmother, who had no teeth and so could eat nothing, but sucked the breasts of her daughter along with an only child. But the mother had not enough milk to nourish both and it was apparent that one had to be parted with, so the husband suggested, "Why not bury this child? Another may be born to us, but a mother once gone, will never return." His wife agreed, and they dug a hole, when lo! they struck a pot of gold which "Heaven had deposited there," and on it an inscription, "Heaven bestows this treasure on Kuo Chü, the dutiful son." One of the examples is of a dutiful son whose mother when alive was much afraid of thunder. After her death when a thunderstorm came up he would rush to her grave in the forest, reverently kneel, saying, "Mother, I am here, do not be afraid." Another, named Wang Hsiang, whose mother loved to eat fresh fish, would go out in winter, strip and sleep on the ice to melt it in order to catch the desired carp. A very noted lad of eight, Wu Meng by name, whose parents were so poor they could not afford mosquito curtains on their beds, was much grieved at the "legions of mosquitoes fiercely attacking them." So he lay down near his

¹ Leong and Tao, Village and Town Life in China, pgs. 16, 17.
parents, threw off his clothes, and attracted all the insects to himself, exulting in the pain. "Other stories are equally foolish, and some of them positively wicked," says Martin, "yet Chinese artists vie with each other in embellishing this precious nonsense, and the greatest men of China make a merit of writing out the text for engraving on wood."

To encourage performance of the obligations of filial piety was the purpose of innumerable hortatory essays and moral tracts and pamphlets, which were so widely distributed as an act of merit. They praise the virtue, extol the example set by filial sons, and admonish the reader, "You should not disobey your parents," "You should not neglect the family graves," and so forth. The Chinese delight in numerical categories, classifications by fives and fours, and other numbers, having a prominent place in Chinese thought and literature. Among these filial piety is prominently listed as second of the five relationships, second of the three forms of obedience, and the three cardinal objects of duty, first of the six obligations of conduct, while unfilial conduct constitutes three of the ten heinous crimes, and so on. This duty is the theme, also, of numerous proverbs. "Of the myriad virtues filial piety is the first." "Filial piety should be the fountain of all actions." "Of a myriad vices, adultery is the chief; of a hundred virtues, filial piety is the first." "Though you have the thousand classics, and ten thousand canons, yet filial piety and righteousness are of the first importance."

"It would be quite impossible," as Macgowan remarks, "for anyone who has not been brought up in China to comprehend how this great virtue has saturated Chinese society through the teaching of this famous sage." Every family has its family shrine and every village its ancestral hall. Memorials were addressed to the Throne and published in the official Gazette mentioning with honour

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1 Martin, The Lore of Cathay, pg. 156.
4 ibid, part 2, nos. 26, 52, 136, 149, 184, 298.
5 Plepper, Chinese Religion Seen through the Proverb, pgs. 229-230.
7 Macgowan, Men and Manners in Modern China, pg. 67.
examples of superlative filial conduct. Memorial arches spanning city streets, and stone tablets by the roadside, erected by official authorization and help, commemorate persons distinguished for special reverence to their parents. The magistrates were supposed not only to punish the bad but also to reward the good, and unusually filial children especially deserved their commendation. Thus the government promoted filial piety. From the emperor down through all the ranks of officials examples of regard for parents were set before the people. One often sees in official documents, says Martin, a phrase from the Hsiao Ching, "to rule the empire by filial piety." A mandarin would immediately resign from office on receiving news of the death of a parent. He did not need to await permission. Though the prescribed time of mourning was three years, actually twenty-seven months, and the journey home from a distant post sometimes added greatly to the expense, thus often causing serious confusion in the administration of government, as well as personal inconvenience, filial piety was recognized as the higher obligation. Or if a mandarin heard that a parent was ill, or aged, or he had been absent from home for a long time, it was filial of him to petition for release for a year or two. This at times became a convenient excuse. "There are few officials in China," says Faber, "who have not in times of danger an old father or mother far away at home, who urgently require the immediate return of their son." "It will not answer," Doolittle says, "for a high mandarin to fail in the exhibition of filial piety if he wished to stand well with the imperial government, or with the people whom he governs." It is the ingrained sentiment of filial piety that binds a Chinese to his home, makes the emigrant to foreign parts send remittances to his ancestral village, and though far away be ever mindful of this fundamental perfect virtue.

Conversely, the greatest sin, and the gravest accusation in Chinese eyes, is 'pu hsiao,' unfilial. The unfilial, says the Classic of History, are more

1 Douglas, Society in China, pgs. 182-185.
2 Leong and Tao, Village and Town Life in China, pgs. 59, 60.
3 Martin, The Lore of Cathay, pg. 94.
4 Douglas, op. cit., pgs. 44, 45.
5 Faber, The Mind of Mencius, pgs. 166, 167.
7 Kulp, Country Life in South China, pg. 51.
detestable than those who rob and plunder.1 "The Master said, 'There are three thousand offenses against which the five punishments are directed and there is not one of them greater than being unfilial. When constraint is put upon a ruler, that is the disowning of his superiority; when the authority of the sages is disallowed, that is the disowning of law; when filial piety is put aside, that is the disowning of the principle of affection. These three things pave the way to anarchy.' In line with this teaching of the Classics punishment for unfilial conduct was exceedingly severe. In antiquity it was said, "When a son kills his father, all who are in the house with him should kill him without mercy. The man should be killed; his house should be destroyed; the whole place should be laid under water and reduced to a swamp. And his ruler should let a month elapse before he raises a cup to his lips." In modern times, "in cases of extreme unfilial conduct," says Doolittle, "parents sometimes accuse their children before the magistrate, and demand his official aid in controlling or punishing them; but such instances are comparatively rare. Public sentiment is so strong against the individual who will not treat his parents with the customary respect and obedience, and the want of filial piety is taught to be a crime of such enormity, that few Chinese are found who have the hardihood to lay themselves open to the disgrace of a public prosecution."4

In the Penal Code of the last dynasty disobedient sons or grandsons were to be beaten one hundred heavy blows and banished for three years; those who accused their parents or grandparents were to receive the same punishment and "if the charge is false, they are strangled." Those who used abusive language to their parents were to be strangled, and those who struck them were to be beheaded.5 In this Penal Code there were six classes of punishment.6 The severest, known as 'l'ing oh'ih,' or lingering death, was inflicted on those who killed their parents, and similar most heinous crimes. It consisted of cutting

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1 Shu Ching, V, 9, xv and xvi.
2 Hsiao Ching, XI.
3 Li Chi, II, 2, iii. Cp Meng tsu, VI, 2, vii.
4 Doolittle, op. cit. vol. 1, pgs. 139, 140; Cp. Mateer, Mandarin Lessons, vol. 1, pg. 495.
5 Sheng Yi, I, 10.
6 See Gray, China, vol. 1, pgs. 59-73.
the criminal's body into small pieces and then beheading him.\(^1\) Gray tells of an instance that included flogging and exiling of relatives, demotion and banishment of the local magistrates, razing the offender's house to the ground and suspension of the literary examinations for all students in the district for three years.\(^2\) Such severity should be contrasted with the lightness of punishment, when there was any, and there was none for female infanticide, inflicted on parents who murdered their children. "Throughout the whole code," as Douglas says, "sons and daughters, as well as daughters-in-law, stand at a marked disadvantage with regard to their parents."\(^3\)

Dr. Hu Shih has recently asserted that Confucius was "the teacher of a new religion," in that he created "the religion of filial piety," or rather, gave it "a new interpretation which amounted to a new creation."\(^4\) It may be doubted however whether Confucius' exposition of filial piety is so novel as this. The same high view of filial duty is found in the oldest historical documents and has existed from the dawn of Chinese history. In the Classic of History it is recorded that the sage-emperors of antiquity apostrophised their forefathers, extolled their virtues, issued edicts in their name, and engaged in the cult of the dead in the ancestral hall.\(^5\) They appointed officers of instruction to teach the fundamental virtue of filial piety to princes and commoners, and in their addresses and those of their chief ministers they exhort and praise each other for "reverently and carefully discharging filial duties."\(^6\)

"O Fang," says a king, "such great criminals (robbers, thieves, traitors, murderers) are greatly abhorred and how much more detestable are the unfilial."\(^7\)

In the Classic of Poetry are many odes expressing filial sentiment. The following, for instance, is that of a son forced to be away from home on government service, who deplores his hard fate in being prevented from performing his filial

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1 For instances, which are comparatively rare, see Douglas, Society in China, pgs. 221, 140, 78-81; Gray, China, vol. 1, pgs. 237-239.
2 Gray, op. cit., vol. 1, pg. 237.
3 Douglas, op. cit., pgs. 80, 81.
5 Shu Ching, II, 2, i; IV, 5; V, 1 and 3; etc.; op. Wu, Ancient Chinese Political Theories, pg. 45.
6 Shu Ching, V, 8.
7 Shu Ching, V, 9.
duties and enlarges on the parental claim:

"Long and large grows the ngo;  
It is not the ngo but the haou.  
Alasi alasi my parents,  
With what toil ye gave me birth.

Cold and bleak is the southern hill;  
The rushing wind is very fierce.  
People all are happy; --  
Why am I alone thus miserable?

The southern wind is very steep  
The rushing wind is blustering  
People all are happy; --  
I alone have been unable to finish my duty."  

Confucius is thus not the originator of these doctrines of filial piety and ancestor worship. They were pre-Confucian tradition which he accepted, making filial piety the fundamental virtue and obligation in his ethical system.  

What developments he may have introduced is beyond the scope of this study to inquire.

As conceived by Confucianism filial piety is not merely a family virtue, but is, as Creel says, "at once the social, the political and the religious duty of every individual." This comprehensive application of filial piety is possible because the family is the basic unit of Chinese society, and the pattern of the political organization. Since, for example, the father is the prototype of all authority, filial piety in political terms becomes political obedience to the emperor, "the parent of the people." "The Master said, The filial piety with which the superior man serves his parents may be transferred as loyalty to the ruler." And by being filial in the family circle the people learn to be obedient to government and law. "They are few who, being filial and fraternal, are fond of offending against their superiors." "There are many services," says Mencius, "but the service of parents is the root of all others." But even more than this, filial piety is a duty of the widest reach. It is "the all-embracing

1 Shih Ching, II, 5, viii.  
3 Creel, The Birth of China, pg. 303; op. Forke, Geschichte der alten chinesischen Philosophie, pg. 135.  
4 Hsiao Ching, XIV.  
5 Lun Yu, I, 2.  
6 Meng tzu, IV, 1, xix.  
7 Johnston, Confucianism and Modern China, pgs. 43, 44; Martin, The Lore of Cathay, pgs. 106, 213.
rule of conduct" and the root of (all) virtue and (the stem) out of which grows (all moral) teaching."¹ "From it flows all goodness and righteousness."² "The superior man bends his attention to what is fundamental. That being established all practical courses naturally grow up. Filial piety and fraternal submission, -- are they not the root of all benevolent actions?"³  

Therefore, to treat one's body with contumely is unfilial; to be unfaithful as a minister of state "is the same as defrauding their parents and is unfilial;" to be an oppressive magistrate is unfilial; to be lacking in sincerity so as to be despised by everyone is to be unfilial; to be cowardly as a soldier in battle, this too is to be unfilial. "It is evident from this passage of the philosopher Tseng," says the Sacred Edict, "that the principle of filial piety is very inclusive."⁴ "The Master said, 'To fell a single tree or kill a single animal, not at the proper season, is contrary to filial piety.'"⁵ The Classic of Filial Piety emphasizes this. In every situation in life the son's motive for and performance of every act must be with reference to his parents. This is the chief moral sanction felt in all duty, and the motive urged in all exhortations to good behavior. Anything done well brings glory on one's parents and ancestors; anything dishonourable disgraces one's parents. "The son carefully watches over his actions so that a bad name involving his parents shall not be handed down. . . . True love is love of this; true propriety is the doing of this; true righteousness is the rightness of this; true sincerity is being sincere in this; true strength is being strong in this. Joy springs from conformity to this; punishments spring from the violation of this."⁶ As a contemporary Chinese scholar says, "Filial piety is the alpha and omega of Confucius' ethics. It includes and logically presupposes every other virtue under heaven. Thus, honesty, justice, courage, self-control, modesty, and loyalty all come under the single rubric of devotion to parents."⁷  

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¹ Hsiao Ching, I; op. Ta Hsfeh, IX.  
² Li Chi, XIV.  
³ Lun Yü, I, 2.  
⁴ Sheng Yü, I, 5.  
⁵ Li Chi, XXI, 2.  
⁶ Li Chi, XI, 2.  
⁷ Yung-chi Hoe, quoted by Johnston, Confucianism and Modern China, pg. 217.
In the following conversation Confucius gives a definition of filial piety. "Meng I Tsu asked what filial piety was. The Master said, It is not being disobedient. Soon after, as Fan Ch'ih was driving him, the Master told him, saying, Meng Sun asked me what filial piety was and I answered him, Not being disobedient. Fan Ch'ih said, What did you mean? The Master replied, That parents, when alive, should be served according to propriety, that, when dead, they should be buried according to propriety; and that they should be sacrificed to according to propriety." From this it is clear that filial duty does not cease with the death of the parents. In speaking of certain ceremonies Confucius said that they were "designed to teach the filial to continue their filial duty even to the dead." Filial piety is thus incumbent on the son all through his own life, and ends not at his parents' death but only at his own death. The obligation of the son to his father continues uninterrupted, only the form is changed. Filial piety before their death is service of "the two living divinities placed in the family," and after their death assumes the form of ancestor worship. The former is filial piety in its ethical form, and the latter is filial piety in its religious form. In these two aspects filial piety is seen as at once the center of Confucian ethics, and the religion of the whole Chinese race. "The services of love and reverence to parents when alive, and those of grief and sorrow to them when dead: -- these completely discharge the fundamental duty of living men. The righteous claims of life and death are all satisfied, and the filial son's service of his parents is completed."

We will take up, first, the obligations of children to living parents, or filial piety in the narrower sense, and secondly, the obligations to deceased parents, ancestor worship.

THE REQUIREMENTS OF FILIAL PIETY

"The filial heart," says the Book of Rites, "is a storehouse of all filial duties." We may list as the first of these duties demanded by filial piety the

1 Lun Yü, II, 5; Meng tsu, III, 1, ii; op. Li Chi, XX.
2 Li Chi, XXVII.
3 Williams, The Middle Kingdom, vol. 2, pg. 228.
4 Williams, The Soul of China, pg. 327.
5 Hsiao Ching, XVIII.
6 Li Chi, XIII.
support of the parents; "to put their minds at rest and to care for their bodies." How should this be done? "To the extent of your ability," says the Sacred Edict, "to the limit of your means, sedulously cherish the aged couple. Rather eat less and use less yourself, that they may have all they want to eat and to use. Take a little trouble for your father and mother. Bear some of their burdens. If they are ill call a doctor to attend them; this is to care for their bodies."¹ Mencius condemns as unfilial "laziness in the use of one's four limbs, without attending to the nourishment of his parents -- gambling and chess playing, and being fond of wine, without attending to the nourishment of his parents. . . being fond of goods and money, and selfishly attached to his wife and children, without attending to the nourishment of his parents."² The parents have the first claim to support, and "in his nourishing of them, his endeavour is to give them the utmost pleasure."³ The law of China was severe with those who abandoned their parents, even at the call of official duty, and on the other hand freed a criminal under sentence of death if he was the only support of aged parents.⁴

But filial piety means much more than "nourishing the mouth and body;" what is further necessary is "nourishing the will,"⁵ that is, carrying out their wishes. Pride, insubordination, quarrelsomeness -- "if those three things be not put away though a son every day contribute beef, mutton and pork to nourish his parents, he is not filial."⁶ Confucius criticizes his contemporaries for making material sustenance the limit of filial piety. "The Master said, The filial piety of nowadays means the support of one's parents. But dogs and horses likewise are able to do something in the way of support; -- without reverence what is there to distinguish the one support given from the other?"⁷ The filial son, therefore, in "his general conduct to his parents manifests the utmost reverence."⁸

¹ Sheng Yü, I, 4.
² Meng tzu, IV, 2, xxx.
³ Hsiao Ching, X; op. Meng tzu, IV, 1, xix.3.
⁵ Meng tzu, IV, 1, xix.
⁶ Hsiao Ching, X.
⁷ Lun Yü, II, 7.
⁸ Hsiao Ching, X.
Obedience to parents is thus required by filial piety, an obedience that does not end when the son is grown and has a family, but includes his wife. "Sons and their wives, when ordered to do anything should immediately respond and reverently proceed to do it." They "should not refuse nor be dilatory to execute it." ¹ Whatever work he had in hand, he laid aside. He ejected the meat that was in his mouth and ran, not contenting himself with a measured though rapid pace.² In everything he should comply with his parents' will. "While a man's father is alive, look at the bent of his will,"³ and you may tell if he is filial or not. Indeed "what the superior man calls filial piety is to anticipate the wishes and carry out the mind of his parents."⁴

But the filial piety of the models of antiquity went farther than this, and included carrying out the wishes and following the ways of the deceased. "Filial piety is seen in the skillful carrying out of the wishes of our forefathers, and the skillful carrying forward of their undertakings... They occupied the places of their forefathers, practiced their ceremonies, and performed their music. They reverenced those whom they honored, and loved those whom they regarded with affection. Thus they served the dead as they would have served them alive; they served the departed as they would have served them had they been continued among them."⁵ Should any changes be made in one's father's ways the son should wait three years after his decease -- this is a test of filial piety. "The Master said, If the son for three years does not alter from the way of his father, he may be called filial."⁶ This in Confucius' judgment was the great merit of Meng Chuang Tsu; during the three years of mourning he did not change "the ministers of his father nor his father's mode of government," though they were bad.⁷

A further requirement of filial piety is the constant service of the parents. "Men邱 said, The richest fruit of benevolence is this; -- the service

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¹ Li Chi, X.
² Li Chi, XI, 3.
³ Lun Yu, I, 11.
⁴ Li Chi, XXI, 2, xiv; op. Meng tsu, IV, 1, xix.
⁵ Chung Yung, XIX, 2 and 5.
⁶ Lun Yu, I, 11; IV, 20.
⁷ Lun Yu, XIX, 18.
of one's parents. Of services which is the greatest?" asks the sage, and answers, "The service of parents is the greatest. There are many services, but the service of parents is the root of all others." In his service, Confucius says, "a son of all-comprehensive virtue serves his parents as he serves Heaven, and serves Heaven as he serves his parents." Confucius expressed regret that he could not serve his own father, who had been long dead, as he would require his son to serve him. But perfunctory service is not filial piety; the manner in which the son performs his filial duties is more important than what is done. He serves his parents with a cheerful countenance.

The kind of service required is given in great detail in the Book of Rites, book 10. "Sons in serving their parents, on the first crowing of the coock, should all wash their hands and rinse their mouths, comb their hair, etc. Thus dressed, they (sons and their wives) should go to their parents and parents-in-law. On getting to where they are with bated breath and gentle voice, they should ask if their clothes are too warm or too cold, whether they are ill or pained, or uncomfortable in any part; and if they be so they should proceed reverently to stroke or scratch the place. They should in the same way, going before and following after, help and support their parents in quitting or entering the apartment. In bringing in the basin for them to wash, the younger will carry the stand and the elder the water; they will beg to be allowed to pour out the water, and when the washing is concluded, they will hand the towel. All this they will do with an appearance of pleasure to make their parents feel at ease. They should bring gruel ... The filial son and his wife are his parents! slaves from morning till night. "In winter time see that they be warm, in summer time that they keep cool; in the morning, inquire about them; in the evening wish them peace. When going out tell them, when returning, see them; ...

However small an affair may be, act not according to your own fancy; if you do

1 Meng tsu, IV, 1, xxvii.
2 Meng tsu, IV, 1, xix.
3 Li Chi XXIV.
4 Chung Yung, XIII.
5 Lun Yü, II, 8.
6 Li Chi, X, 1.
so you will infringe the filial piety."¹ In this service the son must persevere. "There are three degrees of filial piety: the least, seen in the employment of one's strength (in the service of parents); the second, seen in the endurance of toil (for them); and the greatest, seen in its never-failing."² While his parents live, such service is to last to the end of the son's own life,³ long beyond the time he is married and has a family of his own. Nor may the son "while his parents are alive" "go abroad to a distance" where he cannot serve them. "If he does go abroad, he must have a fixed place to which he goes."⁴ A wandering son is unfilial.

Even as his time is not his own, so also his possessions are not his. While his parents are alive, a filial son should not dare to consider his wealth as his own, nor to hold any of it as for his own private use.⁵ "A son and his wife should have no private goods, nor animals nor vessels; . . If anyone give the wife an article of food or dress, a piece of cloth or silk, a handkerchief for her girdle, an iris or orchid, she should receive and offer it to her parents-in-law."⁶

A strongly emphasized duty demanded by filial piety is the preservation entire of one's body which is derived from the parents. "The Master said, . . . Our bodies, to every hair and bit of skin, are received by us from our parents, and we must not presume to injure or wound them -- this is the beginning of filial piety."⁷ The sixteenth maxim of the Sacred Edict is, "Settle animosities, that lives may be duly valued," and this is amplified to mean that men must not fight or quarrel and so endanger injury to their bodies and loss of life. "The ancients dared not, in moving a foot, forget their parents, lest they should fall down and wound that body which was derived from them."⁸ The filial son will not mourn to the excess of endangering his life.⁹ Nor will he undertake

² Li Chi, XXI, 2.
³ Li Chi, X, 2.
⁴ Lun Yü, IV, 19.
⁵ Li Chi, XXVII.
⁶ Li Chi, X, 1.
⁷ Hsiao Ching, I.
⁸ Sheng Yü, XVI, paraphrased by Wang Yü-po.
⁹ Li Chi, II, 2, iii.
anything hazardous. "A son should not forget his parents in a single lifting up of his feet, and therefore he will walk in the highway and not take a by-path, he will use a boat and not attempt to wade through a stream; -- not daring, with the body left him by his parents.\(^1\) "He should not ascend a height, nor approach the verge of a depth."\(^2\) Thus in every way the filial son avoids causing anxiety to his parents. Their only anxiety should be when he is ill.\(^3\) "His parents give birth to his person all complete, and to return it to them all complete may be called filial duty." Several of the sages are recorded as being particularly anxious to set a good example in this respect.\(^4\)

The filial son must consider his parents before his wife. It is a great fault for a man to lay by money for his wife and children to the neglect of his parents.\(^5\) And if there is a conflict of desire, "he is an unfilial son who loves his wife and disobeys his mother."\(^6\) In a tract by Chu Pai-lu on family instructions, it is said, "If you give ear to the slanders of your wife, and set aside your parents (lit. 'ku jou,' bones and flesh, i.e. nearest relationship), are you behaving like a husband? If you overestimate goods and wealth, and are shabby for your parents, you are not a good son."\(^7\) These injunctions have great significance when one remembers that in the Chinese family all sons with their families live together with the parents. The Confucian formula for domestic harmony is to always obey the parents. He is an unfilial son who is "selfishly attached to his wife and children," and puts them above his parents.\(^8\)

The duty required by filial piety of having sons to continue the family, and the consequences of this requirement have already been mentioned. To fail to raise up grandsons is the most unfilial conduct. "Mencius said, 'There are three things which are unfilial, and to have no posterity is the greatest of them.'"\(^9\) Faber comments on this, "The son marries not for himself, but in order

1 Li Chi, XXI, 2.
2 Li Chi, I, 1, ii.
3 Lun Yü, II, 6.
4 Li Chi, XXI, 2; Lun Yü, VIII, 3.
6 Flopper, Chinese Religion seen through the Proverb, pg. 229, no. 1389.
7 Wieger, Moral Tenets and Customs in China, pgs. 235-240.
8 Meng tzu, IV, 2, xxx; Sheng Yü, I, 4 and 6.
9 Meng tzu, IV, 1, xxvi.
to provide his parents with posterity; it is thus the interest of his parent which guides him. 1

There is disagreement among the Confucianists as to whether or not filial piety permits remonstrance with a parent. "In serving his parents," Confucius said, "a son may remonstrate with them, but gently; when he sees that they do not incline to follow his advice, he shows an increasing degree of reverence, but does not abandon his purpose; and should they punish him he does not allow himself to murmur." 2 Mencius seems to disagree with his master at this point. Just as he disapproved, as we have seen, of a father admonishing his son, 3 so he disapproved of a son "reproving his father to urge him to what was good." 4 And for the same reason. "Such urging between father and son is the greatest injury to the kindness which should prevail between them." The Sacred Edict says, "Sons ought not to discuss right and wrong with their parents. Parents are like Heaven," 5 and quotes the proverb "Under heaven there are no parents in the wrong." 6 The Hsiao Ching, however, devotes a chapter to this subject, entitled, "Filial Piety in relation to Reproof and Remonstrance." 7 And we are told, "when a case of unrighteous conduct is concerned a son must by no means keep from remonstrating with his father," even as it is the duty of a chief minister to remonstrate with his sovereign. The manner of the remonstrance is carefully laid down in the Book of Rites. "If a parent have a fault the son should with bated breath and bland aspect, and gentle voice, admonish him. If the admonition do not take effect, he will be the more reverential and the more filial, and when the father seems pleased, he will repeat the admonition. If he should be displeased with this, rather than allow him to commit an offence against anyone in the neighbourhood or countryside, the son should strongly remonstrate. If the parent be angry and more displeased, and beat him till the blood flows, he should not presume to be

1 Faber, The Mind of Mencius, pg. 166.
2 Lun Yu, IV, 18.
3 Meng tzu, IV, 1, xviii.
4 Meng tzu, IV, 2, xxx.
5 Sheng Yu, I, 6.
7 Hsiao Ching, XIV.
angry or resentful, but be more reverential and filial."¹

But if the father commits crime filial piety requires the son to conceal it. "The duke of She informed Confucius, saying, 'Among us here are those who may be styled upright in their conduct. If their father have stolen a sheep, they will bear witness to the fact.' Confucius said, 'Among us, in our part of the country, those who are upright are different from this. The father conceals the misconduct of the son and the son conceals the misconduct of the father. Uprightness is to be found in this.' ² And elsewhere Mencius teaches the same. If the father of the emperor Shun, the pre-eminent example of filial piety, had committed murder, which required to be punished according to the law, "Shun would have regarded abandoning the empire as throwing away a worn-out sandal. He would privately have taken his father on his back and retired into concealment, living somewhere along the sea coast. There he would have been all his life, cheerful and happy, forgetting the empire."³

Another important requirement of filial piety, "the richest fruit of benevolence,"⁴ was blood revenge for the murder of one's father. "Sze-hsia asked Confucius, saying, How should a man conduct himself with reference to the man who has killed his father or mother? The Master said, He should sleep on straw, with his shield for a pillow; he should not take office; he must be determined not to live with the slayer under the same heaven. If he meet with him in the market place or the court, he should not have to go back for his weapon, but instantly fight with him."⁵ Mencius says, "When a man kills another's father, that other will kill his father; when a man kills another's elder brother, that other will kill his elder brother."⁶ Legge comments, "It is a maxim of Chinese society, that 'a man may not live under the same heaven with the slayer of his father, nor in the same state with the slayer of his elder brother.'⁷ This tradition was

1 Li Chi, I, 1; op. I, 2, iii; II, 1, i; XXVII.
2 Lun Yü, XIII, 18.
3 Meng tzu, VII, 1, xxxv.
4 Meng tzu, IV, 1, xxvii.
5 Li Chi, II, 1, ii; also I, l, v; op. Legge, Life and Teachings of Confucius, pgs. 113-114; and for an instance, Giles, History of Chinese Literature, pg. 148.
6 Meng tzu, VII, 2, vii.
7 Legge, translation of Mencius' works, com. in loco.
operative as recently as 1933, as the following Reuter's dispatch in the Peiping Chronicle shows: "Hanking, 14th March. The government today formally issued a mandate pardoning Cheng Chi-cheng, the man who killed General Chang Tsung-chang, former Tupan of Shantung on Tsinan railway platform. The mandate says that, in consideration of the fact that Cheng committed murder to avenge his uncle and father, he should be exempt from serving the sentence passed on him of seven years' imprisonment."\(^1\)

The exalted position of parents in China and the great reverence accorded to them is apparent in such a phrase as speaks of them as "the two living divinities placed in the family."\(^2\) Parents are one of the five objects of veneration,\(^3\) and the proverb says, "Stay at home and reverence your parents, why travel afar to worship the gods?"\(^4\) In an attack on Buddhism the Sacred Edict shows that worship in the temples is unnecessary by the following argument: "If men were aware that at the present time there are two 'Living Buddhas' placed in their own homes, why need they go elsewhere to worship on the mountains and to seek happiness from idols? The common saying puts it well, 'If you fulfil your duty to your parents at home, what need is there to go to a distance to burn incense?'\(^5\) Part of the celebration of each New Year was profound obeisance made by the younger members of the family to living parents and grandparents as an expression of reverence. Those to be honored sat side by side in chairs, if husband and wife, and the worshippers knelt and made prostrations, and expressed congratulations. Doolittle points out that no incense was used. "The same Chinese term, "pai," is applied to worshipping deceased ancestors and living parents; but there is this essential difference between the two ceremonies; in regard to the dead, incense and candles, and mock-money, and some tiny offerings of food, are made; while in regard to the living, neither incense nor candles, nor mock-money, nor offerings of food are ever made."\(^6\) In the honors parents

\(^1\) Creel, The Birth of China, pgs. 205-207.
\(^2\) Williams, The Middle Kingdom, vol. 2, pg. 228.
\(^3\) Martin, The Chinese, pg. 98.
\(^4\) Giles, The History of Chinese Literature, pg. 437.
\(^5\) Sheng Yu, VII.
receive they are to be associated with Heaven. "The Master said, . . . Of all the actions of man there is none greater than filial piety. In filial piety there is nothing greater than the reverential awe of one's father. In the reverential awe shown to one's father there is nothing greater than the making him the correlate of Heaven." And sons are exhorted, "Serve your parents, as you would serve Heaven." "The grace and virtue of father and mother is as great as that of Heaven." 1

Reverence for his father, say the Classics, requires an official who is promoted to a rank higher than his father in social position to decline the honor. In actual life what the dutiful son does is to petition the emperor to confer on his father a title of honor one degree higher than his own, and give his mother a corresponding title. "Whether living or dead," says Doolittle, "the parent must be honored." For instance, when a new dynasty was founded by a conqueror it was customary to confer titles on his forefathers, raising them also to the imperial rank. When Sir Robert Hart, chief of the Chinese customs died, his ancestors for five generations back were ennobled by imperial command.

The duties dictated by filial piety in connection with a parent's death were onerous and most important. Probably it is correct to say that it is at this time that filial piety in the life of most Chinese is first clearly exhibited. The existence of proverbial sayings to the effect that it is better to serve living parents than to sacrifice to them when deceased testify presumably that the prevailing practice was otherwise. The Chinese sages also observed this fact. A disciple of Confucius says, "I heard this from our master: -- Men may not have shown what is in them to the full extent, and yet they will be found to do so, on occasion of mourning for their parents." And Mencius encouraged this by saying

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1 Hsiao Ching, IX; see Legge, Sacred Books of the East, vol. 3, footnote, pgs. 476, and 99.
2 Plopper, op. cit., nos. 1391, 1392.
3 Li Chi, I, 1, 11.
5 Clemmel, The Historical Development of Religion in China, pg. 23.
6 Clemmel, loc. cit.
7 Maegowan, Sidelights on Chinese Life, pgs. 41, 42; Smith, Chinese Characteristics, chap. 19; Bridgman, Daughters of China, pgs. 78, 79.
8 Plopper, op. cit., pgs. 97-98.
9 Lan Yü, XIX, 17.
that caring for the living was not a great thing; "it is only in the performing of their obsequies when dead that we have what can be considered the great thing."¹

Filial sons, who can afford it, buy handsome coffins and present them to their parents long before they are deceased. These are highly prized by the parents who feel great pleasure in the assurance that a good coffin is ready for them,² believing that the style in which they leave this world has an important bearing on their circumstances in the next.³ The coffins are placed in a prominent position in the home, if there is room, or kept in the temple, until they are required.

Without describing the funeral ceremonies,⁴ it is enough to say that the proprieties of the occasion make elaborate and burdensome demands. It is regarded as a matter of great importance. The Chinese on the occasion of the death of a father go to the limit of their means and often far beyond their means, in lavish expenditure, for a costly show.⁵ If the family at the time of death is not able to carry out the funeral ceremonies properly, the parent is put in his coffin which is hermetically sealed and left in the home unburied for months and years⁶ until a fortunate site for the grave has been found or till the family circumstances allow observance of all the funeral customs. However, Confucius can be quoted as not requiring the poor who hadn't the means to perform all the mourning and burial rites.⁷

In the Classics there are prescribed rules as to the length of time, and the different degrees of mourning, and the clothes to be worn for each degree, depending on the nearness or distance of the relationship.⁸ The mourning for parents belongs to the first degree, is the longest, and the highest expression of grief. "The Master said, ... The mourning for a father lasts for three years."⁹ The reason for this length of time is stated, "Confucius said, 'A son, three years

¹ Meng tsu, IV, 2, xiii.
² Gray, China, vol. 1, pg. 284; Moule, New China and Old, pgs. 236-237.
³ Mateer, Mandarin Lessons, vol. 1, pg. 468.
⁴ See Werner, China of the Chinese, pgs. 66-77.
⁵ Blodgett, Christianity and Ancestral Worship, pg. 21.
⁶ Maogowan, Sidelights on Chinese Life, pgs. 73, 74.
⁷ Li Chi, II, 2, ii.
⁹ Li Chi, XXVII.
after his birth, ceases to be carried in the arms of his parents. The mourning of three years is the universal rule of all under heaven. For this same reason Confucius opposed the suggestion of a disciple that the three years' mourning was too long and should be shortened to one year. Mencius also opposed shortening the period of mourning. As a matter of fact, however, it has come to be limited in practice to twenty-seven months. There should be strong and loud manifestations of grief. It is regarded as an offence against filial piety to mourn for a parent "in such a way that the people heard nothing of it." When a father has just died, the son should appear quite overcome, and as if he were at his wits' end; when the corpse has been put into the coffin, he should cast quick and sorrowful glances around . . ; when the burial has taken place he should look alarmed and restless . . ; at the end of the first year's mourning he should look sad and disappointed, and at the end of the second year's he should have a vague and unreliant look." During the time of mourning members of the family wear white on their persons, candidates do not attend the examinations, and officials obtain leave of absence from duty. It is also unfilial during this period to beget children. Failure to observe the proper rites was punished by law.

It is at this point, the death of the parent, that filial piety changes into ancestor worship.

ANCESTOR WORSHIP

Chinese conceptions of the after-life are vague and very confused, being chiefly a mixture of Buddhist and Taoist beliefs. Confucianism had little if anything to say about the next world. Parker says, "There is only one conception of after-life in the Chinese mind as unaffected by Buddhism, Islam, Christianity or other foreign religion" and "that conception is of a life exactly like the

1 Li Chi, XXXV.
2 Lun Yu, XVII, 21.
3 Meng tsu, VII, i, xxxix and xlvi.
4 Doolittle, op. cit., vol. 1, pgs. 189-190.
5 Li Chi, II, i, ii.
6 Li Chi, II, i, 1.
7 Leong and Tao, Village and Town Life in China, pgs. 110-111.
8 Doolittle, op. cit., vol. 1, pgs. 210, 211.
9 Maeilagan, Chinese Religious Ideas, pg. 170.
present life."  

To this may be added the belief that the dead take an interest in the living and that communication with them by sacrifice and divination is possible.  

Since the future life is a replica of the present the dead are thought of as craving and needing the same things they enjoyed in this world. For these things which make up their comfort and happiness they are dependent upon the living. For this reason paper models of sedan-chairs and coolies, servants, wives and concubines, chests of clothes, money made of tinfoil, and whatever is necessary are provided at the funeral, and transferred to the parent by burning. "A dead man must not go empty-handed," says a proverb. Food also is laid out on tables set before the ancestral shrine for the use of the spirits who partake of the flavor of the dishes, which are not consumed. The further idea that the deceased are dependent upon the living for deliverance from a purgatory is due to the influence of Taoism, not Confucianism.  

Though dependent on the living for these things, the ancestors, having at death joined the spirits, are regarded as having a vast power to affect their descendants for good or ill. So it is necessary to gratify their wishes. Confucius is said to have refused to commit himself on whether the dead had knowledge of the services rendered by the living, but from the earliest times the Chinese believed that the dead are interested in and have power over, the living. The Shu Ching, for instance, records that the ancient kings often made announcements and appeals to their ancestors. And the recently dug up oracle bones reveal the Shang rulers calling on their ancestors for help. The dead thus could influence the fortunes of the living. If they are contented and happy with the offerings, and the worship and the graves are carefully attended to, they give

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1 Parker, Studies in Chinese Religion, pg. 17.  
2 Walshe, "Communion with the Dead," Hastings Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics.  
3 Du Bose, The Dragon, Image and Demon, pg. 80.  
4 Plopper, op. cit., pg. 98.  
5 Legge, The Religions of China, pgs. 87, 88.  
6 Creel, The Birth of China, pgs. 126, 175.  
7 Soothill, The Three Religions of China, pgs. 200, 201.  
8 Bledgett, Christianity and Ancestral Worship, pgs. 1-6; Soothill, The Three Religions of China, pg. 201.  
9 Creel, op. cit., pgs. 161, 162, 178.
protection and prosperity to their descendants. 1 But if their necessities are 
not supplied, and they are forgotten and their graves neglected they could pun­
ish the living with misfortune. So the Chinese are intensely concerned with 
their graves. Removal of them in the early days of railway building caused riots 
and tearing up of the tracks, and today, as Creel found, archeologists have trouble 
exavating ancient graves. 2 Taoism especially underlined these ideas and developed 
from them the whole system of 'feng shui,' or geomancy, by which auspicious sites 
were chosen for graves or buildings that would induce the spirits to influence 
the people for good, 3 and the priests capitalized on the fear of the spirits in 
mumberless ways to squeeze money from the people. The living thus have to be con­
stantly on the qui vive to avoid offending a world of spirits. From this came 
the custom of worshipping the ancestral spirits of those family lines which had 
become extinct, or who for other reasons had no friends or descendants among the 
living who attended to their necessities. 4 These neglected spirits were called 
'o kuei,' hungry ghosts, or 'ku hun,' orphan spirits, or 'yu hun,' wandering or 
roaming ghosts, and though they were thus forlorn and desolate they were powerful 
and greatly feared. Unless repeatedly propitiated they were regarded as inflicting 
grievous harm on the living, and so community worship of them, supported by 
public subscription, was engaged in three times each year, but particularly every 
August. 5 All of these concepts as to the relation of the dead to the living had 
as corollaries innumerable superstitions on which priestcraft fattened, and which 
bond the living under the tyranny of the dead hand of ancestors. 6

Here, then, in these ideas that the dead are dependent upon the living for 
their happiness, and can influence the fortunes of the living, are the motivating 
forces of ancestor worship. First is a motive of reverent regard, a filial piety 
that desires to supply the departed parents with the things they need, and to con­
tinue to serve them. "To serve the dead as though they were living; to serve the

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1 Maegowan, Sidelights on Chinese Life, pgs. 74-76; Du Bose, op. cit., pg. 80.
2 Creel, op. cit., pg. 28.
3 Stewart, Chinese Culture and Christianity, chap. 6.
4 Stewart, op. cit., pgs. 85-87.
5 Stewart, op. cit., pg. 92; Maegowan, Men and Manners in Modern China, pg. 102.
6 For details of present-day practices of ancestor worship see De Groot, The 
Religious System of China.
departed as though they were still in our midst; this is the acme of filial piety.\(^1\) To treat the dead as if they were entirely alive, said the sage, would show want of wisdom, but "if we treat them as if they were entirely dead, that would show a want of affection."\(^2\) Second are self-regarding motives, of hope that the powerful spirits of the ancestors will give prosperity and aid to their filial son, and of fear which urgently impels the descendant to avoid everything that will displease his ancestors and bring punishment on him, and to placate the offended spirits in time of sickness and trouble. Fear "is undoubtedly," says Yates, "the predominant feeling."\(^3\) Besides these personal motives a strong sense of clan loyalty,\(^4\) and the force of old custom and social opinion made for the perpetuation of ancestor worship.\(^5\) Each individual is a link in a family chain the continuity of which, for his own sake, and for the sake of his family and clan as well as of their ancestors, must on no account be broken by any neglect to faithfully perform the ceremonies and sacrifices during his lifetime, or by not providing male offspring to carry on the worship when the son in his turn becomes an ancestor.\(^6\) Ancestor worship thus powerfully promotes family solidarity. The living and the dead of the same surname are regarded as still inseparably united in one family\(^7\) and the living members of the clan are bound together by their united worship of a common ancestor.\(^8\)

One's parents, though deceased, the Classics teach, are to be constantly present in one's thoughts. "The filial piety taught by the ancient kings required that the eyes of the son should not forget the looks of his parents, nor his ears their voices; and that he should retain the memory of their aims, likings and wishes. As he gave full play to his love, they seemed to live again; and to his reverence, they seemed to stand out before him. So seeming to live and stand out, so unforgotten by him, how could his sacrifice be without the accompaniment of

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1 Plepper, op. cit., pg. 93; Li Chi, XXI, 1.
2 Li Chi, II, 1, iii.
3 Yates, Ancestral Worship, pg. 32.
4 Creel, The Birth of China, pg. 126.
5 Maclagan, Chinese Religious Ideas, pgs. 165-167.
6 Parker, Studies in Chinese Religion, pgs. 12, 35.
7 Shryock, Origin and Development of the State Cult of Confucius, pg. 83.
In the Classic of Poetry we read:

"When early dawn unseals my eyes,
Before my mind my parents rise."²

Every filial son regarded himself as living and acting in the sight of his ancestors, and thought of them, the Classics teach, should govern his conduct.

"Although his parents be dead, when a son is inclined to do what is good, he should think that he will thereby transmit the good name of his parents and so carry his wish into effect. When he is inclined to do what is not good, he should think that he will thereby bring disgrace on the name of his parents and in no wise carry his wish into effect."³ "When his parents are dead and the son carefully watches over his actions so that a bad name involving his parents may not be handed down, he may be said to be able to maintain his piety to the end."⁴

The living were thus always looking to the dead past instead of to the future, and the thought of parents and ancestors, not of children and descendants, controlled their actions. "Bad descendants involve ancestors in disgrace," says the proverb.⁵ The strongest incentive to good conduct, and to the pursuit of distinction and honor, the Chinese feels, and the chief moral sanction to which Confucian ethics appeals, is that of glorifying one's ancestors.⁶ For the superior man's "chief thought is how, to the end of life, not to disgrace them."⁷ The Chinese constantly keep in remembrance their deceased forefathers. Every event of importance in the family was announced to them, -- the birth of boy babies, the capping of the young man, betrothals, the marriage of a son, at which time the couple presented themselves in the ancestral hall,⁸ the death of a parent, and so on.⁹ Ross points out that one of the primary purposes of the ancestral sacrifices recorded in the Shu Ching was "to inform."¹⁰ And the ancestors were

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1 Li Chi, XXI, 1.
3 Li Chi, X, 1, xvii.
4 Li Chi, XXII, 2, xii.
5 Plopper, op. cit., pg. 96.
7 Li Chi, XXI, 1.
8 Werner, China of the Chinese, pgs. 49, 50.
10 Ress, The Original Religion of China, pg. 189.
constantly being worshipped in practically every home in the land from the emperor to the peasant, by Confucianist, Taoist and Buddhist at frequent stated periods, and besides on all important occasions and events. 1 "The ancestral temple," says Creel, "was the centre of the life and affairs of the family." 2

The visible object of worship in this cult of the dead is the ancestral tablet, a small painted board about five inches wide and twelve to fifteen inches high set upright on an oblong base, and usually surrounded by a carved frame. On this tablet is written the name of the deceased. Sometimes there are also painted portraits in addition. 3 There are no idols or images of ancestors. 4 The tablet, as the Chinese explain, has two uses, first to keep the departed in constant remembrance by means of an object placed before the eyes of descendants, and second, to give the souls of the ancestors an abiding place without which they would be unsettled and desolate. 5 The piece of wood is consecrated by a ceremony in which as the central act some important person is called upon to dot the character 王 making it 王 , with a red pencil or sometimes the blood of the sons of the deceased. 6 This usually occurs the day before the burial. It then becomes the abode of the ancestral spirit and a highly sacred object. "The seemingly harmless wooden tablet in the guest room," says Stewart, "is too often the final seat of authority in the homes and hearts of the nation more to be feared than any other power of heaven or earth." 7 The tablet is thus certainly more than a memorial. 8 Jackson says, "The tablet is not in any sense a fetish, but it is more than a memorial." 9 Legge argues that the tablet is not a fetish and the use of the tablet is not fetishism, because the spirit of the deceased possesses the tablet only temporarily while the worship is being performed. 10

On the other hand Stewart says that the people believe the second of the three

1 Yates, Ancestral Worship, pg. 1; Du Bose, op. cit., pg. 77.
2 Creel, op. cit., pg. 336
3 Hewius, China and the Chinese, pgs. 130, 131.
4 Lin, My Country and My People, pgs. 105-106.
5 China Centenary Missionary Conference Records, 1907, pg. 228.
6 Jackson, op. cit., pg. 228; Blodgett, Christianity and Ancestral Worship, pgs. 17, 18.
7 Stewart, Chinese Culture and Christianity, pg. 59.
8 Maelagan, op. cit., pgs. 164-165.
9 Jackson, op. cit., pg. 227.
10 Legge, The Religions of China, pgs. 21 and 63.
souls each person has, goes at death to reside in and animate the tablet.\(^1\) Chinese theories of the souls of the departed are hopelessly confused,\(^2\) and were derived, says Legge, from Taoist not Confucian sources.\(^3\) So that beliefs as to the relation of the spirits to the tablet would vary from the agnostic among the intelligentsia,\(^4\) who halt between superstition and common sense, to the undoubting superstitious masses, and what is a fetish to the multitude may not be to the few.\(^5\)

The invisible objects of worship are, of course, the spirits of ancestors, those of more immediate kinship being worshipped much more frequently than the remote. According to Confucian teaching every family was to worship only its own ancestors; Confucius spoke expressly against the worship of ancestral spirits by any except their own descendants.\(^6\) "The Master said, For a man to sacrifice to a spirit which does not belong to him is flattery."\(^7\) The cult of the dead according to Confucianism was thus a family cult; to go beyond the family line was unauthorized. There was in Confucius' day, as there has been since, as we have mentioned, the practice of worshipping the world of spirits in general, and especially the hungry ghosts who are neglected by their living relatives or whose family lines have become extinct. This is due to fear of them. In this worship of the spirits of one's ancestors no distinction is made between the good and the bad. So that good men worship bad, or the bad the good. Legge points out an instance in the Classic of Poetry. "One of the finest poems in the Shih\(^8\) is a prayer by King Hsian of the 9th century B.C. in a time of excessive drought. He prays to his parents for succour though his father had been notoriously worthless and wicked."\(^9\) But regardless of the life they had lived the filial son worships his deceased parents. Indeed he would not recognize any

\(^2\) Jackson, op. cit., pgs. 223-224; Stewart, loc. cit.
\(^3\) Legge, op. cit., pgs. 200-201.
\(^4\) Jackson, op. cit., pg. 224; but op. Yates, op. cit., pg. 2.
\(^5\) Records of the General Conference, 1890, pg. 691.
\(^6\) Shryock, op. cit., pgs. 86-87.
\(^7\) Lun Yu, II, 24.
\(^8\) Shih Ching, III, 3, iv.
\(^9\) Legge, The Religions of China, pg. 115.
fault in them. Leong and Tao say, "To claim that the ancestors have sinned is to the Chinese the biggest scandal that one can ever imagine. Such hypocrisy as to deny the sins of parents or ancestors, even if sins there are, is not uncommon in China."

The worship of ancestors is engaged in at three places: in the home, at the graves, and in the ancestral hall of the clan. In the home ancestral tablets representing four or five generations back are worshipped, the tablets of ancestors more remote than the fifth generation being placed in the ancestral hall of the clan and deposited on shelves. Thus in practically every family throughout the length and breadth of the land from the emperor to the peasant there was an object of worship. Before this tablet worship is engaged in many times throughout the year. It begins right after death. From the 9th to the 17th day after death the spirit of the departed in company with a host of others returns to the home and is entertained by the family. Subsequently, the rites are performed at the times of the national festivals. At the celebration of New Year's day, prostrations, we have already mentioned, are made before living parents and grandparents. This, the great time of family reunion in China, is a reunion not only of the living but also with the dead. At this season ancestor worship in the home takes place on New Year's eve, on New Year's day, and on each of the following five days. On the fifth day of the fifth month is the Dragon Boat Festival, when an offering of food is placed before the ancestral tablets. The festival of the Ruler of Earth in the seventh month is especially associated with worshipping of ancestors. Besides offerings of food, paper money, pictures of warm garments, houses made of bamboo and paper, paper servants and sedan-chairs are transferred to the needy ancestors by burning. The ancestors are especially remembered with a bountiful offering and moon cakes at the Harvest Festival in the eighth month. The festival of the winter solstice held on the longest night of

1 Leong and Tao, Village and Town Life in China, pg. 135
2 Doolittle, op. cit., vol. 1, pg. 222; Plopper, op. cit., pgs. 93, 94; Soothill, The Three Religions of China, pgs. 216, 217, says the tablets of only three generations are kept in the house of the senior member.
3 Doolittle, op. cit., vol. 2, pg. 81.
the year, is one of the most important. "It is essentially the festival of the family circle," says Hodous, "every member of the family turns homeward if he can possibly do so."¹ All the members of the family gather before the ancestral tablets and engage in prostrations, prayers and the presentation of offerings. Besides these times of national festivals worship in the home is engaged in at the new and full moons, the 1st and 15th of every month, and on the occasions of all important family affairs -- births and their anniversaries, events connected with betrothals and marriages and deaths, and the anniversary of the death of an ancestor, etc.² On the occasion of a wedding the groom and bride worship separately and together at the ancestral tablets of both families,³ and the marriage was solemnized in their presence.

The worship of the dead at the graves occurs at least twice a year. The principal time is at the season of Ch'ing Ming which usually falls in April, and this, as are many of these customs, is still widely observed. On this occasion everyone, old and young, seems to go to the graves, all only sons, even highway robbers, return home, and government officials may be excused from important duties if the ceremonies would be otherwise neglected.⁴ "It is a duty," says Yates, "that takes precedence of all others, and the faithful performance of it is a virtue that hides a multitude of sins."⁵ The graves are repaired by pulling weeds and earthing them up, and they are ornamented with white or red paper. Offerings of food are spread out before the grave, paper clothes, and money and servants are burned, and libations of wine are poured out. Prostrations are made by all members of the family, even the children. On the ninth day of the ninth month the people also go out to the graves. But this autumn ceremony is not so strictly observed. The Ch'ing Ming season is the great time each year when the populace turns out to the graves in the fields and hills.⁶

The tablets of more remote ancestors are deposited row on row in the clan

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¹ Hodous, Folkways in China, pg. 198. See this work for complete description of all the Chinese festivals.
² Doolittle, op. cit., vol. 1, pg. 224.
³ Doolittle, op. cit., vol. 1, pgs. 77, 86, 92, 94-96.
⁴ Yates, Ancestral Worship, pg. 32.
⁵ ibid., pg. 32.
⁶ Hodous, Folkways in China, pgs. 92 on; Gray, China, vol. 1, pgs. 320-322.
ancestral hall, a temple more or less imposing according to the wealth of the community. This is the focal point of the life and activities of the clan, where the ancestors of those having the same ancestral surname and claiming relationship are worshipped. 1 Where the clan is very large branch ancestral halls exist, erected by a particular branch of the family. 2 In this case the original ancestral temple is used for the tablets of the remotest ancestors. In these halls the wider family units assemble on stated occasions to reverence their forefathers. Doolittle says that in Foochow, where he lived, worship of ancestors in these halls was observed five or six times each year. 3 Ancestor worship is thus not only the worship of parents or grandparents but takes in all generations previous to the worshipper.

The worship was not only engaged in by all the people. The emperor punctiliously performed the rites and offered prayers for prosperity and blessing in the Temple of Imperial Ancestors in the palace grounds at the capital, as one of the most important parts of the state worship. "This ceremony being so burdensome," says Edkins, "as to entail on the emperor the necessity of kneeling sixteen times and knocking the forehead thirty-six times against the ground is an indication of the importance attached to filial piety and to the character of the emperor as an example of virtue to all his subjects." 4 The emperor also made annual pilgrimages at Ch'ing Ming to the tombs of his fathers, one hundred miles north of Peking, where vast sums were expended on the imperial mausolea of the Ming emperors, to report the events of his life and give an account of his reign. 5 Besides, at the worship of Shang Ti in the Temple of Heaven, which has already been mentioned, the ancestors of the emperor were present on the Altar of Heaven. The tablet of Shang Ti, the Supreme Ruler, was placed on the upper terrace of the Altar facing south, and arranged in two rows on the east and west sides of the same terrace were the tablets of the emperor's ancestors who shared with Shang Ti

1 Kulp, Country Life in South China, pgs. 80, 81.
2 Leong and Tao, op. cit., pgs. 22, 50; Soothill, op. cit., pgs. 216, 217.
3 Doolittle, op. cit., vol. 1, pg. 228.
4 Edkins, Religion in China, pgs. 36, 37.
5 Martin, "The Worship of Ancestors," pg. 622; Blodget, Christianity and Ancestral Worship, pg. 21.
the tributes of worship. Prayers were read to them as part of the ritual and offerings placed before each tablet.\(^1\) Lesser deities were represented by tablets on the lower terraces. Soothill says that the emperor "does not offer sacrifices to his ancestors equal with those offered to Shang Ti. True, in most respects these offerings are similar in character and number, consisting . . . of the food and materials known in ancient times. But while only one piece of silk is offered to the ancestors, twelve pieces are offered to Shang Ti, and while the ancestors each have four lamps, Shang Ti has six." And only Shang Ti receives a sceptre of blue jade and the sacrifice of a whole burnt-offering.\(^2\)

"The ancestors," says Legge, "are there only from the deep conviction of the solidarity of the family, which is characteristic of the Chinese. They and their descendants are the representatives of the family which was called by the divine decree to rule the empire."\(^3\) If the imperial ancestors are not the equal of Shang Ti, they have a rank exalted enough to entitle them to be associated in worship with the Supreme Ruler.\(^4\)

Confucius was a great stickler for ceremony. "Tzu-kung wished to do away with the offering of a sheep connected with the inauguration of the first day of each month. The Master said, Tzu, you love the sheep; I love the ceremony."\(^5\) With regard to filial piety and ancestor worship Confucius insisted on decorum, saying it was required, "that parents, when alive, should be served according to propriety; that when dead, they should be buried according to propriety; and that they should be sacrificed to according to propriety."\(^6\) The ritual of ancestor worship has changed in details with the passing of centuries as may be seen by comparing the Book of Rites, which gives minute directions as to the conduct of worship and all that pertains to the burial and mourning for the dead,\(^7\) with present practice. MacIagan notes four changes: 1) human sacrifices have ceased;

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1 Edkins, op. cit., pgs. 23-56; Hodous, Folkways in China, chap. 37.
2 Soothill, op. cit., pgs. 278-279.
3 Legge, The Religions of China, pgs. 55-56.
4 Blodget, op. cit., pg. 2; Hsiao Ching IX.
5 Lan Yu, III, 17.
6 Lan Yu, II, 15.
7 Cp. Blodget, op. cit., pg. 5.
2) the custom of having a personator of the dead has been abandoned; 3) present day requirements are much more scrupulously observed than in the time of Confucius; 4) the ancestral tablet is "a comparative novelty." Walshe thinks that the ancestral tablet was invented to take the place of the personator of the dead, a practice that ceased in the Chou dynasty; others, as Blodget, find the use of the tablet in earliest Chinese history. The necessities of practical life have introduced changes, the three years of mourning prescribed by the Book of Rites, for instance, was modified in practice to twenty-seven months. But though there have been changes, and customs vary somewhat in different parts of the country, and there is less ceremony and expenditure of money among the common people, Martin lists three essential elements in Chinese ancestor worship which are universal: 1) the posture of kneeling and prostration; 2) prayers to the dead, which asked for protection, for the blessings of posterity, riches and honor, and that one's posterity might be prosperous and happy; 3) offerings of food and wine, etc.

It should be noted that there is no professional priesthood in connection with this worship. Of course at times, such as the burial of the dead, when ancestor worship is performed, Buddhist or Taoist priests are likely to be engaged to perform masses and ceremonies in conjunction with it. But at the rites before the ancestral tablet or grave the living head of the family officiates. The emperor officiated in the worship of his imperial ancestors, the peasant officiates in his.

Ancestor worship was thus a universal domestic and clan cult in China engaged in by practically all the people in all parts of the land, in the home, at the graves, in the temples constantly throughout the year with ceremonies which

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1 Walshe, "Communion with the Dead," Hasting's Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics.
2 Maclagan, Chinese Religious Ideas, pg. 162.
3 Walshe, Confucius and Confucianism, pg. 19.
4 Blodget, op. cit., pg. 6.
6 Jackson, op. cit., pgs. 228-231.
8 Creel, op. cit., pg. 338.
9 Goodnow, China, an Analysis, pgs. 111-113.
were the most important of all to the Chinese and which were performed with
careful attention and much ostentation. It will be apparent how much ancestor
worship there was in China. And the aggregate expense was enormous. The elab-
orate and expensive burial customs were not the end. Long lines of ancestors
had to be provided for perpetually. The objects burned for their use were not
costly, but there was food to be offered, incense and candles to be lighted,
feasts and entertainments to be provided, and the care of graves and upkeep of
ancestral temples. Yates estimates that each family expended annually an average
of $150, and that the national total was $120,000,000 expended annually in ances-
tral worship. These figures are staggering to one who knows the poverty of the
Chinese masses. To support this burden the accumulation and preserving of family
property from generation to generation was imperative. Sometimes property was
set aside as a perpetual endowment for the family ancestor worship by the wealthy,
which was considered the property of the dead, and the income from it was known
as the "ancestral fund." But in addition to the amount expended in the worship
of the family's own ancestors, contributions had to be made to public funds for
the worship of the destitute dead and annual feasts to appease the hordes of or-
phan spirits. "They worship them," says Yates, "just as they worship devils or
demons, to keep them away." Fear of the spirit causes people to impoverish
themselves perpetually to care for the dead and placate the spirits. The Taoist
and Buddhist priests make great capital out of this, profess to know the condi-
tion of the ancestral spirits, and add to the people's burden by squeezing extor-
tionate exactions. "The number is legion," says Stewart, "of those who are
called upon to move a grave, change the opening to a room, sell or buy a new site
at a sacrifice, make a pilgrimage to some distant temple or mountain, or pay end-
less public and private sums for this fear of some presumably suffering ancestor."

3 Stewart, Chinese Culture and Christianity, pgs. 96-97.
4 Kulp, Country Life in South China, pg. 86.
6 ibid., pg. 383.
7 Plopper, op. cit., pgs. 95-96.
8 Yates, op. cit., pgs. 380-381; Stewart, op. cit., pgs. 88-91.
9 Stewart, op. cit., pg. 91.
Ancestor worship is not peculiar to China, it is found also among the Bantu negroes and many Melanesian tribes. Japan derived it from China. The Chinese and Japanese, says Radin, are "the classic examples of ancestor worshipers." Its origin in China is unknown. The oldest literary remains and archeological finds are full of it and do not indicate its origin, but its already well-established existence in China's earliest ages. The first recorded act of worship in Chinese history is the emperor Shun's worship on his accession to the throne, "in the Temple of the Accomplished Ancestor." The frequent mention of ancestral temples in the Shu Ching shows their importance in highest antiquity. In this temple, the records frequently state, the new king was proclaimed. At Shun's court, we are told, there was an official called "the arranger of the ancestral temple," and the emperor periodically sacrificed to his ancestors. It was evidently already a prominent part of the state religion. An early emperor of the Hsia dynasty encourages his warriors by saying, "You who obey my orders shall be rewarded before my ancestors." Wu, founder of the Chou dynasty, before and after defeating the last emperor of Yin, sacrificed to his father, to Shang Ti, and the Earth. Blodget counts "not less than twenty-one passages" in the Shu Ching that refer to ancestor worship. The duke of Chou was the first, Confucius is quoted as saying, to make his father "the correlate of Heaven," and "sacrificed to him as the correlate of God," giving the tablet of his father a place on the Altar of Heaven. He conferred the royal title on his immediate forefathers, a practice maintained by all subsequent dynasties. In the Classic of Poetry are a number of accounts of elaborate sacrifices to ancestors, and

2 Shu Ching, II, 1, iv.
3 Shu Ching, II, 1, v.23.
4 Blodget, op. cit., pg. 1.
5 Shu Ching, III, 2, i.6.
6 Shu Ching, V, 1, i.10; V, 3, iii.
7 Blodget, op. cit., pg. 1.
8 Hsiao Ching, IX; see Legge, Sacred Books of the East, vol. 3, pgs. 476-477; Blodget, op. cit., pg. 2.
9 Legge, The Religions of China, pgs. 79-80.
10 Ching Yung, XVIII.
prayers to ancestors in times of drought and calamity, prayers expressing gratitude for blessings conferred, resolves not to disgrace one's ancestors, odes describing the performance of services in the ancestral temple, communications from ancestors in the spirit world announcing the blessings they will grant to the living, and so forth. "The worship of ancestors," says De Groot, "is mentioned in the ancient classics so often, and in such detail, that we cannot doubt it was also the core of the ancient religion." Inscriptions on the vast number of oracle bones which have been found at Anyang, Honan, confirm that ancestor worship was a highly developed cult in the Shang, or Yin dynasty. "If we may judge from the oracle bones," says Creel, "the Shang people called upon their ancestors for aid, and sacrificed to them, more than all their other deities put together." They considered their ancestors and deities of supreme importance, and were very anxious that they should understand the needs and difficulties of their worshippers, and help and advise them. Advice could be got from the spirits by divination.

Hu Shih conjectures that the ancient civilization of China was a combination of the cultures of the Shangs, who were ancestor worshippers, and the Chous, who were monotheistic and worshipped Shang Ti. The Chous conquered the Shangs, and "the two currents gradually became merged into one national religion which recognized a Supreme God and also accepted the general worship of ancestors." Without entering into the highly debatable question as to "the original religion of China," we are only concerned to emphasize that ancestor worship is not a late development, but has characterized the religion of the Chinese from the earliest dawn of their history. These earliest literary remains and the oracle

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1 Shih Ching, III, 3, iv.
2 Shih Ching, IV, 1, vii.
3 Shih Ching, III, 3, x.
4 Shih Ching, II, 6, v.
5 Shih Ching, III, 2, xi.
7 Creel, The Birth of China, pg. 178.
8 ibid., pg. 162.
10 Ross, The Original Religion of China, argues for monotheism; De Groot, Religion in China, etc. for animism.
11 Creel, op. cit., pg. 174; Ross, op. cit., pgs. 199-200; Legge, The Religious of China, pgs. 75 on gives a historical sketch of ancestor worship.
bones refer, of course, to royal practices and tell us little about the religious life of the common people, 1 but Legge's statement is without doubt substantially correct. "The worship of their forefathers has always been the practice of all the Chinese people." 2

Apparently in Confucius' time there was great laxity in the observance of the cult of the dead for we are told that he was already in adult life before he learned for the first time of the burial place of his father. 3 He regretted this as coming short of his ideal of "the superior man." "To serve my father, as I would require my son to serve me: to this I have not attained." 4 He was all for strictness in these matters. As to the unseen world Confucius maintained an agnostic reserve. He would not talk about 'kuai,' strange uncanny things, or 'shen,' spirits, the supernatural. 5 "When Chi Lu asked about his duty to the spirits" Confucius evaded this important question. "The Master replied, While still unable to do your duty to the living, how can you do your duty to the dead?" And when the disciple ventured to ask about death, "Confucius answered, Not yet understanding life how can you understand death?" 6 But nevertheless Confucius, as all his school has done since, reverenced his ancestors and as Soothill says, "maintained with scrupulous care, all the forms of worship." 7 He opposed sacrificing by proxy, holding that absentee worship is no worship. "The Master said, I consider my not being present at a sacrifice, as if I did not sacrifice." 8 He was able to combine this attitude toward the spirits with this conscientious worship of the spirits by a philosophy of the 'as if.' "He sacrificed (to his forefathers) as if they were present; he sacrificed to the gods as if the gods were present." 9 In this he established a principle of worship which made it possible for everyone, agnostic or superstitious, believing or unbelieving, to faithfully

1 Creel, op. cit., pg. 178; Blodget, op. cit., pg. 1.
2 Legge, The Religions of China, pg. 79.
3 Li Chi, II, 1, 1.
4 Chang Yung, XIII, 4.
5 Lun Yü, VII, 20.
6 Lun Yü, XI, 11. (Soothill)
7 Soothill, The Three Religions of China, pg. 206; Soothill, The Analects of Confucius, pg. 520.
8 Lun Yü, III, 12.
9 Lun Yü, III, 12. (Soothill)
carry out the forms of ancestor worship. Confucius, as he said of himself, "believed in and loved the ancients," and "the ways of the ancient kings" were his criterion of conduct. He noted their worship of ancestors, and recommended the traditional practice to his followers. "The Master said, How far extending was the filial piety of King Wu and the duke of Chou!... In spring and autumn they repaired and beautified the temple halls of their fathers, set forth their ancestral vessels, displayed their various robes, and presented the offerings of the several seasons. By means of the ceremonies of the ancestral temple, they distinguished the royal kindred according to their order of descent.... Thus they served the dead as they would have served them alive; they served the departed as they would have served them had they continued among them... He who understands the ceremonies of the sacrifices to Heaven and Earth, and the meaning of the several sacrifices to ancestors, would find the government of a kingdom as easy as to look into his palm." If Confucius cannot be directly blamed for all the later practices associated with ancestor worship, yet the scrupulous observance of the requirements of filial piety, and the strictness in performing the rites and customs of mourning and ancestor worship that has prevailed continuously since his day are due to the great sage who constantly talked about the importance of 'li,' propriety and ceremony, and who made filial piety the keystone of his ethical system, and, since he was agnostic about God, promoted ancestor worship, as Martin says, to provide the moral and religious sanctions necessary to enforce it.

Ancestor worship has thus been for milleniums the universal and essential religion of the Chinese. It was universal because engaged in by all classes, high and low, emperor and peasant, educated and illiterate, and by Confucianists, Buddhists and Taoists alike. Only the professional celibate priests and the

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1 Blodget, op. cit., pg. 20.
2 Luan T'ai, VII, 19.
3 Chung Yung, XIX.
4 Bulloch, "Ethics and Morality (Chinese)," Hastings's Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics.
5 Martin, The Chinese, etc., pg. 263.
6 Nevius, China and the Chinese, pg. 130.
7 Du Bose, op. cit., pg. 77.
Mohammedans\(^1\) were not ancestor worshippers. And it was the essential and real religion of China, for the highest reverence and strongest religious feelings of the Chinese were associated with it.\(^2\) A man might worship the idols or not, as he pleased, and society would not condemn him. He might turn Taoist or Buddhist or Confucianist, but he dared not neglect his ancestors.\(^3\) On this depended his own happiness, the well-being of his family, his clan, and the comfort of his forefathers. "The real atheism of China," says Soothill, "is the refusal to worship at the ancestral shrine. Nearly everything else may be forgiven, but this never."\(^4\) With ancestor worship also was connected all the important affairs of family life and the loyalties of home and clan. So strong was the hold of ancestor worship on the minds of the people that the man who neglected these observances was cut off by his family and community. "The bitterest taunt that the Chinese can hurl against the convert to Christianity," says Macgowan, "and the one that stings him the most is the sneering statement that he has no ancestors."\(^5\) The influence of ancestor worship upon the history and civilization of China both for good and evil, an influence that has been greater than that of all the other religions combined,\(^6\) is incalculable.

THE CHRISTIAN APPRAISAL

Since ancestor worship is the extension beyond death of the filial piety due living parents the two aspects of the same subject cannot well be discussed separately. It will be more convenient to consider the subject, first, from the ethical, and secondly, from the religious point of view.

The general teaching of Confucianism that children should honor and obey their parents is strongly endorsed by Christian ethics. One of the severest indictments of the Pharisees of His time uttered by Jesus was that by their "tradition" they deprived of all force and authority "the commandment of God": "Honor thy father and thy mother." They taught children to evade the obligation to care

\(^1\) Blodget, op. cit., pg. 10.
\(^2\) Parker, Studies in Chinese Religion, pgs. 11, 12.
\(^3\) Yates, op. cit., pg. 32.
\(^4\) Soothill, op. cit., pgs. 212, 213.
\(^5\) Macgowan, Men and Manners in Modern China, pg. 9.
\(^6\) Stewart, Chinese Culture and Christianity, pg. 265.
for their parents and justified such unfilial conduct by declaring any funds or property from which parents might hope to derive material assistance to be 'corban,' consecrated to other purposes. Thus they "made void the word of God" by their tradition.\(^1\) Jesus Himself grew up as a child in His home, rendering obedience to His parents.\(^2\) And in the last hour of His agony He was mindful of His mother and made provision for her support.\(^3\) Christ thus emphasizes the obligation to parents which in the Old Testament ranked among the duties of the first table of the Ten Commandments,\(^4\) and was associated with religious precepts,\(^5\) and which was "the first commandment with promise."\(^6\) This duty was impressed upon Israelite children by a liturgy which pronounced a curse on unfilial conduct,\(^7\) and the Book of Proverbs is full of injunctions to sons to receive appreciatively parental instruction and discipline,\(^8\) and to be respectful.\(^9\) The same duty of subjection to parental authority is enjoined in the New Testament. For children to obey their parents, says the apostle Paul, is "right," it accords with nature and with moral law;\(^10\) and it is also "well-pleasing in the Lord," "as judged by a Christian standard."\(^11\) He states this absolutely, obedience "in all things," for he is not considering exceptional cases, and his abhorrence of insubordination is seen from his classing the "disobedient to parents" with the wicked.\(^12\)

That the obedience is not unlimited, however, is evident because it is stated to be an obedience "in the Lord," a qualification that characterizes the obedience as Christian.\(^13\) And Christian obedience includes the principle of "obeying God rather than man" if the subordinate comes in conflict with the higher duty. The heavenly Father takes precedence of the earthly parent. God's

\(^{1}\) Mark 7:6-13; Matthew 15:13-16.
\(^{3}\) John 19:26, 27.
\(^{4}\) Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16.
\(^{5}\) Leviticus 19:3; op. Oehler, The Theology of the Old Testament.
\(^{6}\) Ephesians 6:2.
\(^{7}\) Deuteronomy 27:16.
\(^{8}\) Proverbs 13:1; 23:22; etc.
\(^{9}\) Proverbs 20:20; 19:26.
\(^{10}\) Ephesians 6:1.
\(^{11}\) Colossians 3:20; op. Lightfoot, Commentary, in loco.
\(^{12}\) Romans 1:30; II Timothy 3:2.
\(^{13}\) Colossians 3:20; Ephesians 6:1.
prior claim on children had been inculcated in Old Testament times in His command to Abraham to offer Isaac, but especially in the regulations for the redemption of the firstborn. Jesus also emphasized that the claims of family relationships are subordinate, and if necessary, must give way to the call of the Gospel. He said that His advent would cause the disruption of the family relationships. He encouraged men to leave "house or brethren, or sisters, or mother, or father, or children," and follow Him, and showed no sympathy for the man who excused himself because of family obligation, "Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father." Emphatically He said, "He that loveth father and mother more than me is not worthy of me." This aspect of Christ's teaching was shocking to those whose highest loyalties were centered in the family, and who regarded filial piety, especially in relation to a deceased parent, as the greatest virtue. Christian missionaries often met violent opposition on this point, and Christianity was generally regarded as destructive of filial piety and so of the foundations of social morality. It was not understood, and had it been understood the explanation would have been no more acceptable, that Christianity also taught the obligations of children to their parents but regarded these as subordinate to duty to God.

The long existence of the Chinese nation has been referred to as a verification of the promise of length of days attached to the command, "Honor thy father and thy mother," which Confucianism has so strongly emphasized. The insistence on filial piety as "the first of a hundred virtues" has been a powerful influence in Chinese individual and national life making for great family cohesion and social stability. It taught the young that filial duty did not end with mere material support and inculcated habits of reverence for parents, and so deference to

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1 Genesis 22.
2 Numbers 18:16; Exodus 13:15.
4 Mark 10:29,30; Matthew 19:29.
6 Matthew 10:57.
9 For instance, Legge, The Religions of China, pg. 88.
age and all authority. Especially in the form of ancestor worship it greatly strengthened the ties of kinship creating a strong family and clan loyalty and a keen group consciousness with a sense of mutual responsibility for the behavior of members and the care of the aged and helpless. It kept deceased parents in perpetual remembrance among the living. And it bound the emigrant to foreign parts to his native village to which he sent remittances, and to which he always expected to return whether alive or dead. The good in all this can be especially appreciated in these days of social disintegration.

But the virtue of filial piety is stressed out of all proportion. The lack of balance is seen, for instance, in that a son's duties to his parents receive such great emphasis while next to nothing is said of parents' responsibilities to their children. Socially and legally children stand at great disadvantage in relation to parents. It will be noticed too that no definite mention is made of mothers and daughters. The statement of Wilhelm that the five relationships are "concrete names for abstract ideas" and so the relationship called "Father and Son" includes in it the relation of mother and daughter, ignores the fact that women are rarely and then only incidentally mentioned in the Classics and are not taken account of by Confucianism. Sons not daughters fill the mental vision. That filial piety is stressed to excess is seen also in the opinion that to be unfilial, the worst instance of which is to have no male posterity, is more criminal than murder and adultery, and in the fact that while enormous sums are expended on the funeral of parents little consideration is given to the burial of a child, or of a wife who dies before her husband, or without bearing a son.

Looked at as an ethical system Confucianism has greatly over-exaggerated the virtue of filial piety till it dwarfs, as Martin points out, all the other virtues. Filial piety cannot be made the center of a scheme of morals as in Confucian ethics. The result is seen to be a lack of proportion that is often

2 Kulp, Country Life in South China, pg. 51.
3 Stewart, Chinese Culture and Christianity, pgs. 84-85.
5 Martin, The Lore of Cathay, chap. 10.
grotesque, a distortion of the whole, and an excess that turns much of the merit of the Confucian doctrine of filial piety into demerit. Thus, obedience and service on the part of children is rightly enjoined, but the obedience is so unlimited and the service so slavish and one-sided that it fostered a parental tyranny which blighted the young, destroying initiative, independence, self-reliance and freedom, by keeping the son under suppression like a child for so long as his father lived. Courage and enterprise were stifled by teaching that it is unfilial to go away from home, or hazard one's physical being. The inveterate subordination and deference to the aged bred an extravagant veneration for the teachings and practices of the forefathers, and adherence to age-honored traditions and customs, fatal to progress and improvement. The burden of support, also fell too exclusively upon the children. Reverence for parents as such was so extreme as to require undiscriminating worship of good and bad alike, a practice making for moral indifference. Remonstrance with a parent was regarded by some as not incompatible with filial piety, but crime was to be concealed and the wrongdoer protected. The exaggerated sense of family loyalty greatly strengthened the ties of kinship but correspondingly weakened other social and national loyalties. The Chinese were notoriously clannish, especially in the south, and lacking in public spirit and patriotism. Blood revenge Creel defends as a crime deterrent, but in a society of law and order it must be regarded as a vicious doctrine. Because sons alone can perform the ancestral rites ancestor worship brought about the low view of marriage and the degredation of women, and, if there were no sons, the evils of polygamy and concubinage and much family misery. The condemnation of those who do not give their parents first consideration in all things as "selfishly attached to wife and children" is directly counter to the oft-repeated Scripture injunction that a man in the nature of things should "leave his father and his mother and cleave unto his wife." According to Confucian ethics

2 Ross, The Changing Chinese, pg. 98.
3 Smith, Chinese Characteristics, chap. 13.
5 Stewart, op. cit., pgs. 98-108.
6 Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5; Mark 10:7-8; Ephesians 5:31.
the interests of his parents, living or dead, guide the son all through his life. He is born in order to serve and worship them, he marries to provide his parents grandsons, he turns his wages and possessions over to them, he does nothing venturesome for fear of hurting the body he derived from them, and he does no evil in order not to disgrace them. Filial piety has been, we noted, the strangest motive for conduct the Chinese experiences. "This filial piety," says Williams, "affords the strongest sanction of the moral law of which he has any knowledge. Take away his reverence for his ancestors and what is there to bind him to moral living?" One has only to contrast this basis for morality with such Christian motives as, "the love of Christ constraineth us," "this is well-pleasing to God," "be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect," to realize how far short filial piety as the incentive to morality falls. "Glorify your father and mother; shed lustre on your ancestors," is the Confucian substitute for "Glorify your Father which is in heaven." Remembrance of the dead may be a beautiful and helpful thing but such constant thought and expensive outlay as the Confucian conception of filial piety requires, constitutes slavery of the living to the dead, is unhealthy for the living, and a perpetual and onerous economic burden. It has turned the face of a quarter of the human race backwards to the past, and fostered the bondage of old custom and deep-rooted conservatism characteristic of the Chinese people. But it should be added that modern Chinese themselves are now strongly criticizing the old ideas of filial piety.

From these ethical considerations we proceed to inquire as to the religious significance of ancestor worship. Does the cult of the dead constitute worship in the same sense as the worship of idols? This question, in one form or another, has been debated for several centuries, and different views have been taken of it.

The most extreme view, maintained by Parker, and E. T. Williams, is that

1 Williams, China Yesterday and Today, pg. 64; op. Doolittle, Social Life of the Chinese, vol. 2, pg. 373.
2 San Tzu Ching, lines 346, 347.
4 Hu Shih, The Chinese Renaissance, pgs. 102-104; Johnston, Confucianism and Modern China, pgs. 44-46.
5 Parker, Studies in Chinese Religion, pg. 28.
6 E. T. Williams, China Yesterday and Today, pgs. 213-214, 261.
the Chinese cult of ancestors is like the Christian Easter, and is similar to Western customs of laying wreaths on coffins and graves, or of holding memorial services in honor of the dead, being no more worship of the dead than these. It makes us wonder if the significance of worship can have been understood when Parker after asserting his view adds, "Even if it be worship what does that matter?" Similarly Johnston dismisses the charge of idolatry as not worth discussing, the word 'worship' used in connection with this cult of ancestors, he says, is "far too strong a word."

In the light of the sketch of ancestor worship we have already given, it is unnecessary to show in detail that these comparisons are erroneous and this view untenable. Not only are the rites observed before the ancestral tablet and the act of laying a wreath dissimilar, but the associations and motives which give meaning to the ceremonial, are totally different. Further, this view, that the ancestral rites are nothing more than "a mark of filial respect," cannot account for the powerful influence that ancestor worship exerts on all Chinese life, intellectual, social, political, moral, and religious. Creel in his recent book says that this idea of ancestor worship "may be true for a few Chinese at the present day, but it is in no sense true of the attitude of the ancient Chinese nor of that of the great majority of the people today." With this De Groot agrees. And Giles is emphatic in several places in his books. It is, he says, "an act of worship pure and simple, so that only superficial observers could make the mistake of classifying ancestor worship . . . with such acts as laying wreaths." "Those who compare the offerings of meat and wine by Confucian mourners with the tribute of flowers placed upon graves by Christian mourners, 'do greatly err.'"

If, then, Chinese ancestor worship signifies more than a form of paying respect to the dead similar to laying flowers on a coffin or a grave, does it signify less than the worship which must be condemned by Christianity? This

1 Parker, loc. cit.
2 Johnston, Confucianism and Modern China, pg. 57.
3 Creel, The Birth of China, pgs. 174, 175.
5 Giles, China and the Chinese, pgs. 199-201; The Civilization of China, pg. 68; Confucianism and its Rivals, pg. 17.
question as to the true significance of the cult of ancestors agitated the early Roman Catholic missionaries to China from the early 17th to the early 18th centuries. The majority of the Jesuits supported Ricci's view that the rites were merely civil and secular, and allowed their converts to continue to observe them, while the Dominicans and Franciscans strongly and unanimously denounced them as idolatrous and sinful, and carried the matter to the higher authorities. A papal decree of 1645 condemned the rites, but subsequent popes vacillated, issuing opposite decrees according as they were impressed by the Jesuit delegates, or the Dominican. The controversy was carried on for a full century at Rome and in the Far East with great persistence and high feeling on both sides, and was only ended in 1742 by the bull Ex quo singulari in which Benedict XIV reviewed the whole dispute, condemned ancestor worship in no uncertain terms and demanded the obedience of all missionaries to the papal decree. This decided the Roman Catholic position.

Ancestor worship was a leading topic in the Protestant missionary conferences held in Shanghai in 1877, 1890, and 1907, for it was a matter of the greatest practical importance to all. It was a momentous question for the Chinese inquirer and convert to Christianity, for if Christian conviction required refusal to perform the ceremonies before the tablet, at the graves, and in the clan hall, he severed all his family and social ties and became an outcaste. "The result," says Moule, "is a monstrous crime in Chinese eyes." Especially serious was the repudiation of ancestor worship by an only son, for by doing so, he not only endured social reproach and opposition, but, according to the Chinese view, he consigned all his ancestors to the unhappy condition of wandering and hungry ghosts.

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2 Blodget, Christianity and Ancestral Worship, pgs. 10-15.
3 But op. Muirhead's remarks, Records of the General Conference (1890), pg. 656.
4 See Records of the General Conference of the Protestant Missionaries of China, 1877, pgs. 387-387.
6 China Centenary Missionary Conference Records, 1907, pgs. 215-246, 604-624.
7 Moule, op. cit., pg. 206.
This was the great barrier that kept many especially of the educated and official class from entering the church.\(^1\) It was likewise a momentous question for the Christian evangelist, for the cult of ancestors according to unanimous testimony was the chief point of conflict between Christianity and Confucianism, and the greatest hindrance to the spread of the Gospel.\(^2\) Giles lists the rules and practice of filial piety and ancestor worship as two of the three real obstacles to Christianity.\(^3\) Protestant opinion was almost unanimous in holding that ancestor worship as practiced in China was idolatrous.\(^4\) On the practical problem of allowance of the practice and methods of dealing with the native custom, three views may be distinguished: 1) toleration, 2) reformation, 3) opposition. At the General Conference of 1890 Martin read a paper entitled "The Worship of Ancestors -- A Plea for Toleration"\(^5\) which gave great offence to many of the delegates, provoked strong feeling, and almost unanimous repudiation.\(^6\) This position was not again championed at the 1907 Conference. Those who advocated purging the Chinese rites of all superstitions but not abolishing them were a larger group. It was maintained that ancestor worship in the time of Confucius was merely a commemorative rite, and that it is the later developments from this harmless and praiseworthy original which are objectionable.\(^7\) By the excision of these idolatrous accretions modern practice, it was said, could be made to conform to the original.\(^8\) Since at least the finding of the oracle bones

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3 Giles, Confucianism and its Rivals, pg. 262.
8 Moule, New China and Old, pgs. 205-222, argues this position.
with their numerous inscriptions, however, it may be doubted if the original was so innocent. Creel says "it is in no sense true of the attitude of the ancient Chinese." "The farther back we go in our investigation of Chinese religion, the greater is the part played by ancestors." Many of the objectionable features of later practice are already present in the earliest known rites. Aside from this it is more than doubtful whether such reformation is at all possible in actual life. The old rites though purged would in the nature of the case be performed in the old environment by one familiar with all the old ideas and could not be so simply emptied of all their former motives and thought-contents, or divorced from the millenniums-old accumulation of associations. Further, excision of the bad elements would mean a major surgical operation that left little remaining. Williamson, who seems favorable to this view, says, "I fully believe that this system is as to nine-tenths of it idolatry, and an error from top to bottom." The third view, that of the great majority of Protestant missionaries in China, has been that ancestor worship being idolatry is to be opposed as incompatible with the Christian Faith, and cannot be tolerated as a practice among Christians.

The attitude of the Chinese themselves to this question is of greatest importance. "After all," says Soothill, "it is not the foreigner who will settle the matter. The Chinese will do that for themselves." As we would expect, the non-Christian defended ancestor worship as right. The Christian Chinese, on the other hand, universally denounced the cult as idolatrous, and were opposed to every compromise with it. This fact was stated by several speakers during the discussion at the 1890 General Conference, and was not challenged. Especially notable was the speech by a Chinese minister in the course of which he said, "the

1 Creel, The Birth of China, pgs. 174-175.
2 ibid., pgs. 176-180.
3 Maclagan, Chinese Religious Ideas, pgs. 173-175.
4 Records of the General Conference, 1890, pgs. 693, 702.
5 China Centenary Missionary Conference Records, pg. 623; for a good recent discussion, see Maclagan, op. cit., pgs. 160-175.
6 Soothill, The Three Religions of China, pg. 213.
7 Moule, op. cit., pgs. 194-195.
8 John, quoted in Thompson, Life of John, pg. 466; Moule, op. cit., pg. 200.
belief is an idolatrous belief, and the worship is an idolatrous worship."¹

This universal conviction of Christian Chinese Moule calls "a remarkable phenom-

ena," and admits that "if unbiased by foreign training they surely are the best
judges of the system."²

The urgency and pressing practical importance of the question has greatly
diminished. Writing in 1875 Faber spoke of ancestor worship as "an almost insur-
mountable bulwark" against the progress of Christianity.³ In present-day China
this bulwark is breached and rapidly crumbling under the force of modern social
and intellectual influences and with the weakening of the constraint of Confucian
moral sanctions.⁴ This is especially true of young educated Chinese today. It
is no longer a point of objection constantly thrown up against the Christian church,
nor a main topic of earnest discussion among missionaries since the Centenary Con-
ference of 1907.⁵ In the more distant perspective and changed circumstances of
the present it should be easier to appraise the merit of the different views ex-
pressed in the great debate, and to estimate the true religious significance of
Chinese ancestor worship. Such a valuation must take into account the following
facts: 1) As to the form of worship, the ritual and offerings and prayers are
not essentially different from those connected with idol worship. In the case of
both there is bowing and prostration, lit candles and burning incense, offerings
of food and wine, invocation, and a visible object before which these rites are
performed, in the one case a tablet, in the other an image. "The worship of an-
cestors," says Nevius, "differs very little in its character from that of idols."⁶
2) As to the object of worship, there is a close parallel, as Maclagan points out,
between the ancestral tablet and the idol.⁷ Each is consecrated to use in worship.
Each is inhabited by spirits. "We should not go far wrong," writes Maclagan, "in
saying that as is the idol to the spirit it represents so is the tablet to the

¹ Records of the General Conference, 1890, pgs. 690-692.
² Moule, op. cit., pg. 200.
³ Faber, A Systematical Digest of the Doctrines of Confucius, pg. 82.
⁴ Hu Shih, The Chinese Renaissance, pgs. 102-104.
⁵ Latourette, A History of Christian Missions in China, pg. 797.
⁶ Nevius, China and the Chinese, pg. 151.
⁷ Maclagan, Chinese Religious Ideas, pgs. 164-165.
manes of the deceased." And it is to the spirits connected with each, whether ancestor or deity, that the invocation, offerings and prostrations are made.

"Confucian worship and sacrifice, then," says De Groot, "being actually addressed to animate images is idolatry. Certainly it is quite inconsistent with the Chinese spirit to think of such tablets and images as mere wood and paint." As to the motives of worship, and the ideas associated with the ceremony, we have noted that the spirits of the dead are regarded as having the same desires and needs as the living, and as dependent for the satisfaction of these upon the offerings of the living. They are aware of the faithful performance or negligence of these rites and have vast power to control the fortunes of the living for good or for evil. Accordingly fear of the spirits, desire to propitiate them and remove calamities, becomes a powerful motive in ancestor worship, and a fruitful source of geomancy and superstitions. The power of the ancestral spirits is invoked for protection and blessing, and prayers of gratitude to the dead are offered. Divine attributes are thus ascribed to the spirits, and the tablets, as also the idols, have in the Chinese mind the value of God, and evoke religious feelings and attitudes. Possibly a very few among the literati performed the rites before the tablet devoid of these ideas, but the simple and believing mind of the vast majority of devoted Chinese ancestor worshippers could not divest itself of these associations which had captured and enslaved the soul of China.

Radin defines ancestor worship as "the equation of one's ancestors, both remote and immediate, or of persons standing in the place of ancestor or titular household head, with spirits and gods, and the transference to them of all specifically religious acts and attitudes which are usually associated with the worship of the spirits and gods." This characterizes the Chinese cult of the dead and makes patent the greatest Christian objection to ancestor worship, that it is

1 Maolagan, Chinese Religious Ideas, pgs. 163-164.
3 See Faber's seventeen points, Records of the General Conference, 1890, pgs. 654-655.
4 But Yen doubts this; see Records of the General Conference, 1890, pgs. 690-691; Creel, The Birth of China, pgs. 174-175.
to "worship and serve the creature rather than the Creator."¹

¹ Romans 1:25.
CHAPTER IV
HUSBAND AND WIFE

Having reviewed the two principal subjects stressed in Confucian social ethics, the ruler and his duties and the son's obligations to his parents, we have next to deal with the relation of husband and wife. This relationship is not largely dwelt upon. 1 The Confucian sages are almost silent on the subject of women, 2 and obviously contemplate a man's world in which woman is of secondary importance. The parental relation, we noted, is that of 'father and son,' with scarcely a reference to mothers and daughters. Similarly, the following relation is between 'elder and younger brother,' with no mention of sisters. 3 So here, Confucius and Mencius scarcely refer to the relation of husband and wife; only in the Confucian book of manners is the wife mentioned in two or three chapters which give the rules for the marriage ceremony, and regulations for the family. Mao says that in ancient times the relationship of husband and wife was not included among the five social relationships, because the union of husband and wife is from man, not from Heaven. 4

The relationship of husband and wife is regarded by Confucianism as subordinate to the other family relationships, those of father and son, and of elder and younger brother. 5 That the claims of the parental relationship are outstandingly more important than the relation of husband and wife has already been remarked on. For the sake of his parents the son marries and has sons or takes a concubine; his parents above his wife and children are all their lives to receive his constant care and obedience; his wages and possessions are not his but for their use; his wife is their slave; and if he fails in these regards he is rebuked for "selfish attachment to wife and children." One passage would seem to contradict this subordination of the conjugal to the parental and filial relationship, that in which Mencius says, "That male and female should dwell together is

1 Nevius, China and the Chinese, pg. 51
2 Legge, "Imperial Confucianism," The China Review, vol. 6, no. 6, pg. 308
3 Faber, A Systematical Digest of the Doctrines of Confucius, pg. 83
4 Quoted by Legge, footnote to Chung Yung, IX
5 Nevius, op. cit., pg. 238
the greatest of human relations."¹ But that he does not mean this in any ab-
solute sense is obvious from the context. If Shun, he explains, had not married
he would have "insured his parents' resentment" by allowing the family line to
become extinct; his marriage was thus for the sake of his parents. That Men-
cius, like all Confucianists, regarded a man's wife as of lesser importance than
his parents he makes explicit a few lines above. "When the youth becomes con-
scious of the attraction of beauty, his desire is towards young and beautiful
women. When he comes to have a wife and children, his desire is towards them. .
. . But the man of great filial piety to the end of his life has his desire to-
wards his parents."²

The conjugal relationship is also subordinate to the fraternal, a man's
brothers being closer to him, on the Chinese view, than his wife. "Brothers are
near to us, while wife and children are more remote."³ "After parents brothers
come next in order," says the commentator on the Sacred Edict, "the bones and
flesh of their bodies are of the same bones and flesh as my own. . . The most
intimate of all relations among men in the world, is that of a wife; but sup­
pose that your wife die, you may still marry another. But if a brother die,
where will you go to seek for another?"⁴ Thus "our wives are not on the same
footing with us; we are of the same parents -- what do they know of the rights
of things?"⁵ "Brothers are from the same root, forming, indeed, one stem. Broth­
ers like the hands and feet form one body, and should not be looked at as two in-
dividuals, like husband and wife, who are but the union of two surnames."⁶ And
so a popular proverb says, "Brothers are like hands and feet; wives and children
are but like wearing apparel."⁷

Before considering the relation of man and wife in the home it may be in
order at this point to observe that in the general social intercourse of men

¹ Meng tzu, V, 1, ii
² Meng tzu, V, 1, i
³ Quoted in Legge's footnote to Chung Yung, XV
⁴ Sheng Yu, I; op. Mateer, op. cit., pg. 384
⁵ Sheng Yu, loc. cit.
⁷ Leong and Tao, Village and Town Life in China, pg. 17
and women Confucianism teaches strict separation of the sexes. This is said to be in accord with "the ancient kings" who "maintained the separation that should exist between male and female."¹ The Li Chi, the Confucian book of etiquette, gives detailed rules for the regulation of their relations. "Male and female should not sit together, nor have the same stand or rack for their clothes, nor use the same towel or comb, nor let their hands touch in giving and receiving. A sister-in-law and a brother-in-law do not interchange inquiries. None of the concubines in a house should be employed to wash the lower garment (of a son). . . .When a young lady is promised in marriage, she wears the strings; and unless there be some great occasion, no (male) enters the door of her apartment. When a married aunt, or sister, or daughter returns home (on a visit), no brother should sit with her on the same mat or eat with her from the same dish. The father and daughter should not occupy the same mat. Male and female without the intervention of the matchmaker do not know each other's name. Unless the marriage presents have been received there should be no communication nor affection between them. . . .With the son of a widow unless he be of acknowledged distinction, one should not associate himself as a friend."² Men and women "should not ask or borrow anything from one another."

"Except at sacrifices and funeral rites, they should not hand vessels to one another. In all other cases when they have occasion to give or receive anything, the woman should receive it in a basket. If she have no basket they should both sit down, and the other put the thing on the ground, and she then take it up."³ Only on some such "great occasion" as calamity or death could these rules be relaxed. Such an occasion is indicated by Mencius. A famous sophist once asked him about the rule, and when Mencius reiterated it he then inquired, "If a man's sister-in-law be drowning shall he rescue her with his hand?" To his credit Mencius replied, "He who would not so rescue a drowning woman is a wolf. For males and females not to allow their hands to touch in

¹ Li Chi, XVII, 1, xiii
² Li Chi, I, 1, iii
³ Li Chi, X, 1, xii
giving and receiving is the rule; when a sister-in-law is drowning, to rescue her with the hand is a peculiar exigency."¹

The reason for these strict rules of separation is stated. "The Master said, According to the rules male and female do not give the cup to one another, excepting at sacrifice. This was intended to guard the people."² The ceremonial usages serve as dykes to the people against bad excesses. They display the separation which should be maintained that there may be no occasion for suspicion, and the relations of the people be well defined."³ The refusal to associate with a widow's son is for the same reason. "The Master said, With the son of a widow one does not have interviews:—this would seem to be an obstacle to friendship but a superior man will keep apart from intercourse in such a case, in order to avoid (suspicion). Hence, in the intercourse of friends, if the master of the house be not in, a visitor, unless there is some great cause does not enter the door. This was intended to preserve the people."⁴

In the actual life of Chinese society the strictness of this separation of the sexes of course varies. Among the poor who live in crowded quarters it is impossible to carry it out completely, but it is strictly observed in genteel and better class society.⁵ In some places again it is more rigorous than in others.⁶ But society in China anywhere, aside from those parts touched by modernity, is a man's society with the women secluded in a limited domestic circle. Husbands and fathers, and men in general do not appear in public in the company of women even of their own families. They walk ahead of them or stand apart from them if they must be out of doors together, and at assemblages men and women sit by themselves. Should male visitors call at the house the women retire to another room, and the visitor does not inquire about his

¹ Meng tzu, IV, 1, xvii
² Li Chi, XXVII, 35
³ Li Chi, XXVII, 33
⁴ Li Chi, XXVII, 36
⁵ Headland, Court Life in China, pg. 247
⁶ Nevius, op. cit., pgs. 237-238
host's wife or daughters. They are ignored in conversation, and social life is exclusively among men. If a feast is given it is male guests who are invited, and the women are not expected to put in an appearance even if it is in their own home. They stay in the kitchen and eat by themselves. From early times "the presence of the wife at the grand entertainments was disallowed." Only men are eligible to leadership in the community, the women being confined to the home and domestic duties. Usually only on the occasion of visits to temples and fairs do they go any distance from the house, the custom of crippling their feet in itself limiting their activities. The separation of the sexes prevails also in the home. Brothers and sisters are not allowed to freely associate after the boy begins to go to school about the age of seven. From her betrothal, usually by the same age, the girl is required to be in seclusion and she knows few, if anyone, beyond the circle of her relatives and near neighbors. Her fiancé is a stranger to her, and perhaps unknown. Lin says that it is "shocking" to the Chinese to learn that the statue of a woman stands aloft in New York harbour, and that she represents Liberty. "And why should Victory and Justice and Peace be represented by women?" The position of women, Nevius estimates, "is intermediate between that which she occupies in Christian and in Mohammedan and other heathen countries."

Lin, in his recent book, My Country and My People, asserts that in pre-Confucian times there was not the same strictness, the seclusion of women and the extreme separation of the sexes in Chinese society is directly due, he says, to Confucian teaching. A comparison of the rules of propriety laid down in

1 op. Moule, op. cit., pgs. 155-156; Wilhelm, The Soul of China, pg. 330; Giles, China and the Chinese, pg. 189
2 Li Chi, XXVII, 35
3 Kulp, Country Life in South China, pg. 107
4 Bridgman, Daughters of China, pgs. 79-81; Wilhelm, The Soul of China, pg. 330
5 Williams, The Middle Kingdom, vol. 1, pg. 54; Giles, China and the Chinese, pg. 197
6 Lin, My Country and My People, pg. 149
7 Nevius, op. cit., pgs. 237-238; Giles, op. cit., pgs. 196-197
8 Lin, op. cit., pgs. 138-140
the Li Chi with some of the poems in the Shih Ching would seem to bear out this statement, for in the Classic of Poetry there are a number of love poems which indicate a greater social freedom.¹

The separation of the sexes is not between equals, but emphasizes the distinction between superiority and inferiority. The position of woman in China is greatly inferior to the man's, and has always been so.² It is a principle rooted in nature in the view of the Confucian cosmic philosophy of 'yin yang' with its fundamental dualistic outlook, according to which 'yang' is the male and positive element in nature, and 'yin' is the female and negative element. What was regarded as the correct feminine position is expressed in the phrase 'san ts'ung ssu ts,' the woman's three obediences and four virtues.³ The former are, when a girl, obedience to her father; when married, obedience to her husband; when a widow, obedience to her son. And the four virtues desired in a woman are proper behaviour, that is, to be chaste and docile, proper speech, proper demeanour, that is to be pleasing and submissive, and proper employment, that is, handiwork and domestic duties. How the Chinese woman regards her lot may be judged from her devotion to the worship of Buddha by which she hopes that in the transmigration of souls she may escape the great misfortune of being a woman, and in the future state become a man. Buddhism promises in the Divine Panorama that if the soul in purgatory "succeeds in doing five virtuous acts, then he shall escape all punishment and be born again in some happy state; if a woman, she shall be born as a man."⁴ Her inferior status in Chinese society and Confucian teaching will be seen in its details as we proceed.

¹ Ross, The Original Religion of China, pg. 30; Creel, The Birth of China, chap. 21
² Lin, op. cit., pg. 137
³ Mayers, Chinese Reader's Manual, part 2, nos. 70 and 88; Lin, op. cit., pg. 140
⁴ Legge, The Religions of China, pgs. 192, 263-264; Nevius, op. cit., pgs. 103-104, 237-238
THE RELATION OF HUSBAND TO WIFE

"As far as our knowledge goes," writes Su, "there was" (before the 20th century) "no clear and complete legal definition of the status of husband and wife in China and of their relationship to each other. Even the law code of the late Ching dynasty contains only a few scattered and inadequate references to the husband-wife relationship. For the most part, custom and tradition, from the beginning of Chinese civilization through thousands of generations determined the conjugal status." But besides custom, the teaching of Confucianism though not abundant is plain. "In the sky there are not two suns, nor in a land two kings, nor in a state two rulers, nor in a family two equally honorable: one principle regulates all these conditions." Therefore, it is explained, whereas the wife's mourning period for her husband was that of the highest degree, namely, three years, her husband's mourning for her was only of the second degree, lasting one year -- "showing that there are not in the family two equally honorable." As the husband in the family is like the sun in the sky so the wife is like the earth. If the inferior "be successful, he will not claim that success for himself -- this is the way of the earth, of a wife, of a minister. The way of the earth is not to claim the merit of achievement, but on behalf (of heaven) to bring things to their proper issue." Husband and wife are thus related as the sun and the earth, a view based on the dualistic philosophy of 'yin yang,' already mentioned, according to which 'yang,' the male principle, is symbolized by the sun, and 'yin,' the female principle, by the earth. The man is the "more important." He is the 'chia chang,' the head of the house, and the Chinese wife frequently designates her husband as the 'tang chia ti,' him who acts as head of the family, the master of the house. The "harmony between

1 Su, The Chinese Family System, pg. 65
2 Li Chi, XLVI
3 I Ching, appendix IV, 2, ii
4 I Ching, appendix III, 1, i; Hsü, The Political Philosophy of Confucianism, pg. 70
5 Li Chi, V, 1
6 Mateer, Mandarin Lessons, vol. 1, pg. 94
husband and wife," which, the Classics teach, should characterize the conjugal relationship, ¹ will exist if, as every small boy learned in his primer, --
"when the husband sings, the wife joins in chorus,"² or as the proverb has it:

"Harmonious above, united below
the husband sings, the wife accompanies."³

This is that "happy union with wife and children" which "is like the music of lutes and harps."⁴ The example of such family concord is to be set by the imperial family. "From the son of heaven there were learned the lessons for men; and from the queen the obedience proper to women... The teachings (of the one) and the obedience (of the other) perfected the manners and ways (of the people); abroad and at home harmony and natural order prevailed."⁵ Thus in the relation of husband and wife, just as in the relations of ruler and subject, father and son, and older and younger brothers, there is rule and authority on the side of the first, and obedience and submission by the latter, according to Confucian teaching.

The authority of the husband over his wife, like that of a father over his children, was absolute, the power of life or death.⁶ He was restrained not by any legal limitation, for the law did not mention women's rights,⁷ but only by the force of public opinion. "Men frequently sell their wives," says Mateer, "though it is not regarded as a proper or lawful thing to do."⁸ Very poor families, says Doolittle, unable to find reputable girls to marry their sons, or unable to defray the expenses of a regular wedding according to custom, may purchase much more cheaply the wife of a living man who for some reason wants to sell her. This custom, he says, is not very common.⁹ But if the wife is

¹ San Tzu Ching, line 98; Sheng Yu, IX; etc.
² Ch'ien Tzu Wen, line 84
³ Smith, Proverbs and Common Sayings from the Chinese, pg. 41
⁴ Chung Yung, XV
⁵ Li Chi, XLI
⁶ Kulp, Country Life in South China, pg. 127
⁷ Su, op. cit., pg. 65
⁸ Mateer, Mandarin Lessons, vol. 1, pg. 243
⁹ Doolittle, op. cit., vol. 1, pgs. 107-108
guilty of serious misconduct she may be sold with the consent of the magistrate.\footnote{Mateer, loc. cit.}

In the case of adultery a husband could kill her and her paramour if he caught them.\footnote{Williams, China Yesterday and Today, pgs. 82-83; Kulp, op. cit., 127} The husband's power of divorce, which was not common in China, could be exercised for any one of seven\footnote{Su, op. cit., pg. 71} or nine\footnote{Williams, loc. cit.} causes and entirely on his own authority. It depended on the will of the husband, the woman having no right to seek divorce.\footnote{Meng tzu, IV, 2, xxx} Chinese men frequently beat their wives; Macgowan reports the Chinese themselves declaring that in six or seven families out of every ten the husbands regularly beat their wives.\footnote{Macgowan, Sidelights on Chinese Life, pgs. 32-35} "The forty per cent," he says, "that treat their wives with courtesy and respect are occasionally influenced to join the ranks of the wife-beaters, simply to avoid the imputation that they are afraid of them and dare not use the stick to them." He recounts the story of a woman who was so badly beaten that she committed suicide. No one complained to the magistrate and there was no punishment. "Public opinion had nothing to say against him excepting that he had carried his beating a little too far, for which he was a fool, for he would be simply so much out of pocket when he came to purchase another wife."

With respect to the husband's attitude and feelings toward his wife the Confucian canon mentions affection in connection with the marriage ceremony in only two or three passages in the Book of Rites, and they are inadequate. "The ceremony of marriage," it is said, "was intended to be a bond of love between two (persons of different) surnames" with a view to securing male offspring.\footnote{Li Chi, XLI, and XXIV, 10} When the marriage took place "the bridegroom in his square-topped cap went in person to meet the bride; thus showing his affection. It was his doing this himself that was the demonstration of his affection."\footnote{Li Chi, XXIV, 9}
stands by and hands to her the strap, showing his affection. Having that affection, he seeks to bring her near to him. It was by such reverence and affection for their wives that the ancient kings obtained the kingdom. In passing out from the great gate he precedes and she follows and with this the right relation between husband and wife commences. The woman follows the man.\(^1\)

It is very difficult to estimate how much affection actually exists between a Chinese man and wife.\(^2\) Their union is not based on mutual choice and love, and is preceded by no romance of courtship, though love may grow between them after marriage.\(^3\) Further, they never appear in society together, and, besides being a phlegmatic race, the Chinese are excessively reserved and distant towards their wives when in the presence of others even in the home among relatives and friends.\(^4\) In public he walks in a lordly way several feet ahead of her, and when they pass through a door leaves her unnoticed to follow behind in striking contrast to his extreme politeness to a fellowman. She is looked on as inferior, and is the servant rather than the companion of her husband.\(^5\) His beating her would hardly be expected to promote affection. But, says Macgowan, "it must not be supposed that Chinese husbands because they beat their wives do not love them, for that is not the case."\(^6\) The low regard for women in the estimation of men is seen also in their great callousness and indifference to her when she is ill. She is allowed to drag on in suffering, and medical help is grudged her.\(^7\) She takes at best a secondary place in her husband's thought and regard for, as a filial son, he gives his parents' wishes, not his wife's, first consideration in all matters in the home. The proverb says, "He is an undutiful son who loves his wife and disobeys his mother."\(^8\) In

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1 Li Chi, IX, 3, x
2 cp. Moule, op. cit., pg. 155
3 Leong and Tao, Village and Town Life in China, pg. 100
4 Smith, Village Life in China, pgs. 302-303
5 Nevius, op. cit., pg. 51
6 Macgowan, Sidelights on Chinese Life, loc. cit.
7 ibid, pgs. 35-36; see the denunciation of this in the tract 'Ch'i Chia;'
8 Wieger, Moral Tenets and Customs in China, pgs. 159-185
9 Plopper, Chinese Religion seen through the Proverb, no. 1339
a quarrel the Chinese husband invariably takes his mother's part against his wife. Many exhortations warn husbands not to listen to "the slanders" of their wives.¹ "The Chinese say," says Lee, "that all depends on the son and husband; if he be dutiful to his parents and strict in family discipline, he can prevent domestic broils; if he only shut his ear against the complaints of his wife, peace will be preserved."² Moreover, a man's affections are to be determined by his parents' preferences. If, for instance, says the Confucian canon, he has two concubines he does not dare to treat with favor the one he loves, if his parents approve rather of the other. And conversely, "if he very much approves of his wife and his parents do not like her he should divorce her."³ It would seem as if in these circumstances love of the first quality could not be between husband and wife. Yet testimony to real affection between them is not wanting. The most generous statement I have found is from Macgowan, who lived for fifty years in China, and says, "There is no doubt that husband and wife in the great majority of homes in China are bound to each other by genuine undoubted love. At first sight this is difficult to believe... China is not a loveless land."⁴

As there was inequality in the social status of man and wife, so there was definitely a double standard in morals.⁵ The demand for chastity was only required of the woman. Kulp, in his sociological study of a village in south China found sex delinquency unusual and attributes this fact to the customs of early marriage and concubinage.⁶ But Lin, who ought to know best his own people, says, "On the other hand, there is no sexual repression for men, especially those of the richer class," -- there had been no courtship in their youth before marriage and they sought romance with the sing-song girl.⁷

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1. op. Sheng Yu, I
2. Lee, When I was a Boy in China, pgs. 31-32
3. Li Chi, X
4. Macgowan, Men and Manners in Modern China, pgs. 255-257. But he contradicts this in Sidelights on Chinese Life, pgs. 32-33
5. Lin, My Country and My People, pg. 144
6. Kulp, op. cit., pg. 329
7. Lin, op. cit., pgs. 160-162
THE CHRISTIAN APPRAISAL

In strong contrast with the general silence of the Confucian sages regarding women, a silence that indicates their insufficient appreciation of her, women have a prominent place in the Christian Scriptures. One has but to think of the many events in Biblical history, beginning with Genesis, in connection with which women are prominently mentioned — wives and mothers, poetesses, prophetesses and judges, — the eminence of women in gospel history and in the life of the early church as recorded in Acts and the epistles, and recall also how much of Scripture teaching relates to her sex in Proverbs, and the prophets, from the lips of Christ, and in the writings of the apostles, Paul and Peter and John, and with this in mind read through the Confucian Classics, to appreciate the truth of this significant contrast. The higher esteem of women in Christianity is patent on the surface. "Woman certainly has no occasion to bless the religion of China," says Legge. "No generous sentiment tending to the amelioration of the social position of woman ever came from either" (Confucius or Mencius).  

Christian ethics also, unlike Confucian, gives prominence to the relationship of husband and wife. This was the subject of one of the earliest lessons man is recorded to have been taught by God, and one of the most important in the regard of Christ and His apostles who often refer to it as setting forth the original intention of the relation of the sexes.  It is recorded how by a review of the animals it was impressed upon man that there was no creature among them fitted to be his helpmate, and he was made aware of his need for an associate who would be his equal in dignity.  It was "not good that the man should be alone," and so God "made a woman and brought her unto the man."  

"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto

1 Legge, The Religions of China, pg. 111
2 Matthew 19:4-6; Mark 10:6-9; I Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 5:31
3 Genesis 2:19, 20
4 Genesis 2:18, 22
his wife: and they shall be one flesh."¹ In this account two facts pertinent to Confucian social morality are emphasized. First, the relation of husband and wife is not subordinate to, but in the Christian view takes precedence of, the parental and filial relationship.² According to Confucianism a man's chief duty is towards his parents as long as they live. But the Christian sources reiterate that husband and wife become "one flesh;" a closer and more consequential relation, with superior claims, exists between them than any other human relationship, and by virtue of their union each becomes of the first importance to the other. This is a fundamental cleavage of doctrine, and the Christian injunction to leave father and mother and cleave to one's wife would rid the Confucian family system of many of its evils and bring in a new day for Chinese womanhood.

Secondly, as to the general social relation of the sexes it should be said of the strict separation of men and women in Confucian society that, while the reasons were good, the rules were very extreme and the rigidity of the separation was productive of evil only partially compensated for by good because it disregarded the fundamental truth that the sexes are complementary. That it is not good for either man or woman to be alone and that their association is a mutual benefit could not be demonstrated clearer than by Chinese society.

Mrs. Bridgman thus describes the effect of segregation on the women. "By long-established custom, woman in China is confined to the inner apartments, her feet are cramped, and she never goes out except on some particular idolatrous days. . . . She must have no will of her own but be entirely subordinate to her mother-in-law. Not treated as a companion by her husband, untaught in books, what are her resources? Alas! her mind becomes a prey to unmeaning superstitious rites, her temper often sour and irritable, and her household a scene of jargon and discord."³ The effect on the men is described by Williams. "The separation of the

1 Genesis 2:24
2 Sheffield, "The Ethics of Christianity and Confucianism Compared," The Chinese Recorder, vol. 17, October 1886, pgs. 365 on
3 Bridgman, Daughters of China, pgs. 80-81
sexes modifies and debases the amusements, even of the most moral, leads the men to spend their time in gambling, devote it to the pleasures of the table, or dawdle it away when the demands of business, study or labour do not arouse them... Unoccupied with the intellectual enjoyments found in books and the conversation of learned men, and having no taste for them, deprived of general and virtuous female society, and suspicious of all around him, the Chinese resorts to the dice box, the opium-pipe, or the brothel, for his pleasure.¹

The strict separation of the sexes so rigorously carried out in China did not accomplish even its purpose to maintain social purity, as Confucius himself admitted.²

In the New Testament church there was a frank relationship between men and women of free and equal comradeship. Christ first proclaimed His Messiahship to a woman,³ He performed miracles at the suggestion and for the benefit of women,⁴ women were present in the crowds that hung on His teaching, and notice was taken of them. Women ministered to Him of their substance, He rejoiced in women's companionship in a home,⁵ and championed a woman who poured ointment over Him.⁶ He spoke to women on His way to death, and on the Cross.⁷ Women were last at the Cross,⁸ first at the tomb,⁹ and first to see the risen Lord.¹⁰ Women joined in the worship and society of the church from the outset,¹¹ and some of them were very prominent as converts and in aiding the spread of the Gospel.¹² Paul in his epistles makes mention of many women who were "fellow-workers" and speaks with affectionate regard of some of them.¹³ He

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1 Williams, The Middle Kingdom, vol. 1, pg. 54
2 Li Chi, XXVII, 33-38
3 John 4:26
4 John 2:3; Luke 8:43-48; 4:38-41
6 Luke 7:36-50
8 Matthew 27:55, 56
9 John 20:1
10 John 20:14-18
11 Acts 1:14
12 Acts 16:14, 15; 18:26; 21:9
13 Romans 16:1, 3; Philippians 4:2, 3; II Timothy 1:5
enjoins Timothy to regard "the elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, in all purity."\(^1\) And John addresses an apostolic letter to an "elect lady."\(^2\) So all through the New Testament one gets the impression of a free association and cooperation between the sexes uplifting to both and characterized by love and purity. The Chinese sages are not, of course, to be reproached for doing the best they knew how in their circumstances to prevent vice and safeguard virtue. But the Christian solution of the social problem is not by rules of strict separation, but by effective change of heart.

In Christianity, then, a very high position is accorded to women. That they are the equal of men in dignity is brought out in the record of creation by the fact that both were created in the image of God,\(^3\) and both have dominion over every living thing,\(^4\) and in marriage the two complements become "one flesh"\(^5\) each needed by the other. There is also religious equality of the sexes. The same salvation, and the promises, are accessible to men and women alike, and are offered to all on equal terms. Both may be jointly "heirs of the grace of life."\(^6\) And "in Christ" "there can be no male and female."\(^7\) The moral equality of men and women is also taught. The same sins are condemned in each and they will be judged according to the same moral law. There can be no double standard in Christianity that insists on chastity in women, and allows license to men, as in the Chinese moral code. In view of this equality there must be reciprocity in all the relations of the sexes, and the strict application of the golden rule.

At the same time, men and women are regarded as having different functions and spheres, and here there is a subordination of the woman to the man. In the regulations with regard to church worship and order, and in its teaching

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1 I Timothy 5:2
2 II John
3 Genesis 1:27; 5:1, 2
4 Genesis 1:26-30
5 Genesis 2:24; Ephesians 5:31
6 I Peter 3:7
7 Galatians 3:28
with respect to the relation of husband and wife, the New Testament asserts man's responsible leadership. While the position and valuation of women was raised infinitely above the common estimate of man and she was given the liberty "for which Christ did set us free," the apostle Paul, confronted with practical problems having to do with women's conduct in the public worship of the churches, opposed a false emancipation that would disregard the natural order and shock social convention, and the claim of some women to equality of function with men. In the family, which like every other social group must have a leader, Paul teaches that "a husband is head of his wife." This aspect of Christian teaching endorses the Confucian view of the husband's position in the family, and man's place in society. But in the course of his argument on the rightness of this Paul pauses to guard against misunderstanding. Men are not to look down upon women, because "the woman is of the man," for they are mutually dependent, each sex is incomplete without the other. The Christian subordination of woman, that is, in no sense means inferiority. For by the divinely appointed order "the head of the woman is the man," even as in the Trinity "the head of Christ is God." Christ is subordinate to the Father but not inferior, and so with man and wife.

Where Confucianism fails so flagrantly to point out any obligations of husbands towards their wives, Christianity insists that married persons have mutual obligations; there must be a reciprocal paying of what is due. Neither is to "defraud" the other of conjugal rights. And the use of the same expressions respecting both husband and wife, puts them on an equality in their reciprocal obligation. The husband is required not to be harsh, and to find the

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1 Galatians 5:1
2 I Corinthians 11:2-16; 14:33-36
3 cp. Spencer, Civilization Remade by Christ, pg. 166
4 Ephesians 5:23
5 I Corinthians 11:8
6 I Corinthians 11:11
7 I Corinthians 11:3
8 I Corinthians 7:3-5
9 I Corinthians 7:4
10 Colossians 3:19
pattern of his authority and his love in the relation of Christ and the Church. The duty of the man is "to love" his wife, and much is said of this. What Christian love is the apostle Paul had already analysed in I Corinthians 13. But he here uses an analogy. He tells husbands at considerable length that the sort and quality of love he requires of them in the conjugal relationship is like that of Christ who loved the church so greatly that He died for it. In Christ's "nourishing and cherishing" the church, the husband is to find his model. And besides these specific injunctions the union of husband and wife is governed by the union of each with Christ. Without the qualifications that give to the Christian view its fine balance, Confucian teaching as to the relation of husband and wife is so onesided in that all the rights and powers and prerogatives are appropriated to the husband, and all the accommodation and yielding and subjection are expected from the wife, as to foster tyranny by the one and slavery of the other.

THE RELATION OF WIFE TO HUSBAND

Chinese parents select wives for their sons while they are yet children, without the consent, and usually without the knowledge, of those whom we regard as principally concerned. Frequently the children reach years of discretion before they learn about their betrothal. A suitable match is arranged through a middleman to the satisfaction of the parents or guardians of the boy and girl. The Classics frequently lay down the rule that a go-between is necessary in every case.

"How do we proceed in taking a wife?
Without a go-between it cannot be done."

"Male and female, without the intervention of the matchmaker do not know each

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1 Ephesians 5:23-25
2 Ephesians 5:25-33; Colossians 3:19
3 Doolittle, op. cit., vol. 1, pg. 65
5 Li Chi, XXVII, 33; Shih Ching, I, 8, vi
other's name."\(^1\) The age at which betrothal is effected varies. Kulp found in south China that the children were between eight and ten years of age.\(^2\) But it is sometimes very much earlier. Doolittle says, "Occasionally, in the case of families very intimate and friendly, an engagement in marriage between unborn children is entered into by those who expect soon to become mothers, turning only on the circumstance that the children are of different sexes."\(^3\) This was proscribed by law.\(^4\) On the other hand some parents defer engaging their daughters till they are grown and the boy has proved himself suitable and worthy.\(^5\) But it is not usual to take so much care in the matter, and early engagements are the rule.\(^6\) Once it has been concluded by the appropriate ceremonies between the families the marriage engagement is regarded as a contract unbreakable except for most serious reasons, and is very rarely cancelled.\(^7\) If the girl has a reputation for immorality, or either of them becomes leprous, or is physically deformed, or if he is a notorious thief, the other party may demand cancellation. "Immorality on his part," says Doolittle, "is not taken into account, but her character must be above suspicion."\(^8\) The engagement is a legal obligation,\(^9\) and breaking off of it may involve a serious lawsuit.\(^10\) The party that demands release even for adequate reasons usually has to pay a large sum to obtain it. Breach of contract or elopement is very rare: the young people practically always fulfil the contracts made by their parents. They firmly believe that it is Fate that ultimately decides who are to become husband and wife.\(^11\)

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1 Li Chi, I, 1, iii
2 Kulp, Country Life in South China, Introduction, Summary of Findings, no. 25
3 Doolittle, Social Life of the Chinese, vol. 1, pg. 98
4 Su, op. cit., pg. 60
5 Williams, The Kiddle Kingdom, vol. 1, pg. 64
6 Smith, Village Life in China, pg. 267
7 Doolittle, op. cit., vol. 1, pg. 68; Williams, op. cit., vol. 1, pg. 64
8 Doolittle, op. cit., vol. 1, pg. 106
9 Williams, op. cit., vol. 1, pg. 61
10 Smith, op. cit., pg. 268
11 Gray, China, vol. 1, pg. 191
12 Doolittle, op. cit., vol. 1, pg. 69; cp. Plopper, Chinese Religion seen through the Proverb, chapter on "Fate"
From the time of her betrothal until her marriage the girl is required to be in strict seclusion, to retire when male visitors call at the house, and to maintain the strictest reserve toward even her brothers, being scrupulously careful to guard all her conduct. 1 "A girl at the age of ten," says the Book of Rites, "ceased to go out." 2 She is confined to the limited circle of her family and immediate neighbours, has no social or educational advantages, and no association with her fiancé. Courtship, romance, and exchange of letters or visits are all unknown. 3 She might happen to catch a sight of him, or learn things about him through the gossip of others. But the rules of society are very strict. They do not meet till the day of the marriage. Mencius said, "When a son is born what is desired for him is that he may have a wife; when a daughter is born, what is desired for her is that she may have a husband. This feeling of the parents is possessed by all men. If the young people without waiting for the order of their parents, and the arrangements of the go-betweens, shall bore holes to steal a sight of each other or get over the wall to be with each other, then their parents and all other people will despise them." 4 Because of these customs it is not difficult to deceive the bridegroom by substituting another daughter, who because perhaps of age or deformity is not so marriageable, for the one originally contracted for, and this is sometimes done. 5 As a general rule the young people never see each other until the wedding day on which the bride, unaccompanied by her family, steps out of the red sedan chair in her new home a complete stranger in a chill and formal atmosphere. Then it is not uncommon to find out for the first time that they are totally unsuited to each other. He may find that she is an idiot, or not the party contracted for, or she may find that she has married an insane man, a

1 Williams, The Middle Kingdom, vol. 1, pgs. 55-56
2 Li Chi, X, 2
3 Macgowan, Men and Manners in Modern China, pg. 249
4 Meng tzu, III, 2, iii
5 Doolittle, op. cit., vol. 2, pg. 379; cp. Genesis 29
dissipated rascal, a cruel husband or one far beneath her in ability.\(^1\) In such a case, while he has means of relief, the unhappy girl has no other course, if threat of suicide does not change her lot, but to escape from her present sufferings and future prospects by taking her life.\(^2\) Suicide committed by women is common, and is usually by drowning.\(^3\)

Such is the customary procedure, but there are other arrangements found among the poor. Baby girls may be bought or exchanged, and reared in the home of the future parents-in-law growing up with the baby sons until they are marriageable. This is called adopting a baby daughter-in-law.\(^4\) Or it is agreed when the betrothal is made that the girl shall go to her mother-in-law if her own mother dies.\(^5\) Or if the girl's parents become poor, or for other reasons are tired of keeping her, she may be sent to her future home, months or years before marriage, to be reared and married when convenient.\(^6\) "Such a course," says Mateer, "is considered very ungenteel."\(^7\) This custom is called 't'ung yang,' to support a betrothed girl before her marriage. The reasons for these arrangements are that it is much cheaper for all concerned, the girl's parents do not have the cost of rearing her until she becomes the property of another family, and the parents-in-law are not put to such expense for the wedding, or the purchase of an older girl. Also her future home thus secures her services much earlier, and she is trained to suit the desires of her mother-in-law.\(^8\)

Chinese ideas of the prohibited degrees of marriage are too complicated.

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\(^1\) Ross, The Changing Chinese, pgs. 194-195; Williams, The Middle Kingdom, vol. 1, pg. 64; Kulp, Country Life in South China, pgs. 182-183
\(^2\) Williams, op. cit., vol. 1, pgs. 64-65
\(^3\) Ross, op. cit., pgs. 149, 198-201; Smith, Village Life in China, pg. 286
\(^4\) Kulp, op. cit., pg. 165; Williams, op. cit., vol. 1, pg. 58
\(^5\) Mateer, op. cit., pg. 207
\(^6\) Smith, Village Life in China, pg. 280; Williams, op. cit., vol. 1, pg. 58
\(^7\) Mateer, op. cit., pg. 207
\(^8\) Kulp, op. cit., pgs. 165-166
and comprehensive to be expressed in a few words. They differ greatly from Western ideas, and everyone who studies the Chinese language knows that they have separate names for every imaginable relation of kinship, near and distant, to the great confusion of the simple minded foreigner. There is one relationship constantly prohibited in the Classics and taboo in Chinese society, the marriage of two persons of the same surname. "The Master said, A man in taking a wife does not take one of the same surname with himself." "The ceremony of marriage was intended to be a bond of love between two surnames." Thus, cousins of different surnames may marry, but not persons perhaps not related even remotely, if their surnames are the same. Doolittle gives the explanation for this. "The Chinese say that marriages among those of the same ancestral name would 'confound the human relations,' just as though incest had anything to do with the names of individuals and not the degree or nearness of blood relationship."

Boys and girls are married in their teens. Smith says it is not uncommon for boys to be married at the age of ten, although this is regarded as a trifle premature. Kulp found the age was usually sixteen to eighteen. "The physical, intellectual, or moral development of the parties concerned," says Smith, "has nothing whatever to do with the matter of their marriage, which is an affair controlled by wholly different considerations."

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1 See Sacred Books of the East, edited by Müller, vol. 27, pgs. 202-208 for a lengthy quotation from Bedhurst, "Marriage, Affinity, and Inheritance in China," 1853, and several pages of diagrams; Kulp, Country Life in South China, pgs. 332, 81; Gray, China, vol. 1, pg. 186; Creel, The Birth of China, pg. 239; etc.
2 Su, The Chinese Family System, pg. 61
3 Li Chi, XXVII
4 Li Chi, XLI
5 Doolittle, op. cit., vol. 1, pg. 99
6 Gray, China, vol. 1, pg. 186
7 Smith, Village Life in China, pg. 248
8 Kulp, Country Life in South China, Introduction, Summary of Findings, no. 25
9 Smith, op. cit., pgs. 248-249
the parents want it before they die, or because an additional servant is needed, or for other reasons of convenience. Boys will ask to be excused from school, or return home from a distance for a little while to be married or because a baby has been born to them, and then return to their lessons.¹ "Mating," says Kulp, "is not a personal, but a conventional matter of familist perpetuity and ancestor worship."²

Practically all Chinese are required by their parents to marry.³ Williams says it is "not compulsory,"⁴ but social opinion regards celibacy as a disgrace.⁵ According to the Book of Rites it is improper to remain unmarried after thirty for a man, and after twenty, or at most twenty-three, for a girl.⁶ There are practically no spinsters in all China,⁷ and there is no word for 'bachelor' in the language -- the word usually given in English-Chinese dictionaries is 'kuang kun,' literally, 'a bare pole,' which means, a swindler, a scoundrel. Lin quotes Confucius as saying that an ideal society is one in which there are "no unmarried men or women," and he adds, "In Chinese eyes the greatest sin of Western society is the large number of unmarried women."⁸ "Were a grown-up son or daughter to die unmarried," says Gray, "the parents would regard it as most deplorable."⁹

Marriage to a Chinese is the great affair of his life,¹⁰ and it has always been regarded as a ceremony to be performed with all seriousness and formality.¹¹ "The respect, the caution, the importance, the attention to secure correctness in all the details, and then (the pledge of) mutual affection, --

¹ Mateer, op. cit., vol. 1, pg. 89; Wilhelm, The Soul of China, pg. 325
² Kulp, op. cit., pgs. xxiii-xxx, no. 22
³ Kulp, op. cit., pgs. 182-183; Gray, China, vol. 1, pg. 186
⁴ Williams, China Yesterday and Today, pg. 71; cp. Giles, China and the Chinese, pg. 196
⁵ Kulp, op. cit., pgs. 182-183
⁶ Li Chi, X, 2
⁷ Lin, op. cit., pg. 144
⁸ ibid., pg. 152
⁹ Gray, op. cit., vol. 1, pg. 186
¹⁰ Mateer, op. cit., vol. 1, pg. 68; but cp. Wilhelm, The Soul of China, pg. 325
¹¹ Williams, China Yesterday and Today, pg. 70
these were the great points in the ceremony,"¹ says the Li Chi, which cannot be "made too great."² "The ceremony of marriage is the root of the other ceremonial observances."³ Accordingly there is no informality about a Chinese wedding, no expression of affection between bride and groom, and the principals are as grave and solemn as a judge. The bride arrives at her new home, where it takes place, on the day determined as lucky. She comes alone and a stranger, fetched from her parents in a red sedan chair, to go through the ordeal with no loving sympathy or solicitude extended to her.⁴ She is the object of curiosity to the family and the rabble who swarm about, and public comments on her appearance and demeanour, often vulgar, are passed in her presence. She does not smile, but casts her eyes down. No joyfulness is expressed by bride or bridegroom, but everyone else expresses his feelings by firecrackers and horseplay.

The events connected with a marriage include ceremonies on the eve of the wedding, the marriage ceremony, the wedding feast, certain religious rites, and other banquets and customs in the next few days.⁵ The most important ceremony, the centre of the whole ritual by which they become husband and wife, is the worship of the husband's ancestors by both bride and bridegroom.⁶ Having announced the marriage to the ancestral spirits, she bows to her new parents, and thus declares that she has given up her own family and has transferred her allegiance and services to her husband's parents. She inherits no property in her own family, has no contribution to make to them in need, and does not have her name among their ancestors. She revisits them, but her husband's relatives are more to her henceforth than her own. The prescribed mourning of a married woman for her husband's parents is the first degree lasting three years, and

¹ Li Chi, XLI
² Li Chi, XXIV
³ Li Chi, XLI
⁴ Macgowan, Men and Manners in Modern China, pgs. 249-250
⁵ See Gray, China, vol. 1, pgs. 190-212; Doolittle, Social Life of the Chinese, vol. 1, chap. 3; Werner, China of the Chinese, pgs. 45-51
⁶ Williams, The Middle Kingdom, vol. 1, pgs. 59-60; Kulp, op. cit., pgs. 179-180; Gray, op. cit., vol. 1, pg. 209
for her own parents the second degree lasting one year.¹

The Book of Rites devotes a chapter to "The Meaning of the Marriage Ceremony," which begins, "The ceremony of marriage was intended to be a bond of love between two surnames with a view, in its retrospective character, to secure the services in the ancestral temple, and in its prospective character, to secure the continuance of the family line. Therefore the superior men set a great value upon it."² The following conversation is reported to have taken place between Confucius and duke Ai. "Confucius said,...Marriage is the union of two different surnames in friendship and love, in order to continue the posterity of the former sages, and to furnish those who shall preside at the sacrifices to heaven and earth, at those in the ancestral temple, and at those at the altars of the land and grain, -- how can your lordship say that the ceremony is made too great? The duke said, I am stupid. . . .I beg you to go on a little further. Confucius said, If there were not the united action of heaven and earth, the world of things would not grow. By means of the grand rite of marriage, the generations of men are continued through myriads of ages. How can your lordship say that the ceremony in question is too great?"³

From this the Chinese conception of marriage is plain. The allusions to "friendship and love" were never made prominent, and forgotten, while the central object of rearing sons for ancestor worship "still prevails in China."⁴ Leong and Tao in their study of their native village and town life, say, "propagation of the family remains the chief object in view."⁵ Similarly in Kulp's investigation, -- "The chief familial objective is male offspring. Sons and many of them is the principal family value. To produce sons -- is the function of the natural-family. It has no other end in itself."⁶ If one will take such

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¹ Sacred Books of the East, edited by Müller, vol. 27, pgs. 204-205
² Li Chi, XLI; cp. also Li Chi, XXII
³ Li Chi, XXIV
⁴ Su, The Chinese Family System, pg. 55
⁵ Leong and Tao, Village and Town Life in China, pg. 99
a volume as Folkways in China by L. Hodous, which describes in detail all the
national festivals of the Chinese year, and note down each time the desire for
male progeny is expressed verbally, or children symbolized by the offerings of
food, the decorations, the presents, and various symbols connected with them,
he will find abundant evidence of this greatest object in life in connection
with the ceremonies of New Year's eve, New Year's day, the fourth day after
New Year, the Birthday of the Pearly Emperor, the Lantern Festival, the wor­
ship of Lin Shui Nai, or Mother, the God of War, and the Goddess of Mercy, the
Harvest Festival, and the Winter Solsticial Festival. It is impossible in the
space at our disposal here to indicate the nature or extent of the expression
of this desire. Marriage it is clear is not a personal matter, it is for the
sake of the family, and the ancestors.

"The rule for the relation of husband and wife," says the I Ching, "is
that it should be long-enduring." Dissolution of marriage is usually only by
death. Very few divorces occur in China. Kulp reports, in his study of
country life in south China, that "no single case of divorce was found, nor
could one be remembered by any of the informants." Moral tracts sometimes
mentioned divorce with condemnation. Where it did occur the power was all in
the husband's hands; the wife had no legal appeal against her husband no
matter what his offences might be. Her only resource was suicide. Seven
grounds justified divorce: childlessness, adultery, undutiful conduct towards
her husband's parents, talkativeness, thievishness, jealousy and malignant dis­
ease. These would seem comprehensive enough, and divorce easy since the

1 I Ching, The Orderly Sequence of the Hexagrams, II
2 Doolittle, op. cit., vol. 1, pg. 107
3 Kulp, op. cit., pgs. 184-185
4 Wieger, Moral Tenets and Customs in China, pgs. 181-183
5 Giles, The Civilization of China, pgs. 101-102; Doolittle, op. cit., vol. 1,
   pgs. 106-107; Gray, op. cit., pg. 8
6 Called the 'ch'i ch'u.' See Mayers, The Chinese Reader's Manual, part 2,
   no. 220
procedure was simple, the husband doing it on his own authority. However, there were three qualifying conditions which almost nullified these: she could not be divorced if her parents-in-law were dead, and she had kept the three year's mourning for them, or if her husband had risen from poverty to affluence and honor since marriage, or if, her parents being dead, she had no home to which to return.

The young married couple do not set up a new household; the boy continues to live with his parents and the girl joins his family group. They form, says Smith, "not a new family, but the latest branch in a tall family tree independent of which they have no corporate existence." Besides the parents, the family might consist of several men with their wives and concubines and children and perhaps grandchildren. The ruler of the domestic side of this household, who directs all the women, is the wife of the 'chia chang,' the head of the family. The relation of the new bride to her husband is subordinate to her relation to his parents, even as his relation to her is subordinate to his filial relationship. "When a girl is first married," says Mateer, "and for some years, at least, her duty as a daughter-in-law completely overshadows her duty as a wife; hence she is not usually called a wife, but a daughter-in-law." The common idiomatic expression for 'to marry a wife' is 'ch'ü hsi fu,' which means literally 'to marry a daughter-in-law,' and when a son is born to her it is said 'a grandson has been born.'

The comprehensive duty required of her is "deferential obedience" to her husband, and her husband's parents. Chinese moralists lay great stress on this.

1 Gray, op. cit., vol. 1, pgs. 222-223; Wieger, op. cit., pgs. 192-193
2 Hu, The Chinese Renaissance, pgs. 104-105; Williams, The Middle Kingdom, vol. 1, pg. 62
3 Lee, When I was a Boy in China, pgs. 31-32
4 Smith, Village Life in China, pg. 248
5 Stewart, Chinese Culture and Christianity, pg. 104
6 Kulp, op. cit., pg. 150
7 Mateer, op. cit., vol. 1, pg. 45
8 See The Chinese Repository, vol. 9, pgs. 537-559
Mencius said, "At the marriage of a young woman, her mother admonishes her, accompanying her to the door on her leaving, and cautioning her with these words, You are going to your home. You must be respectful; you must be careful. Do not disobey your husband. Thus, to look upon compliance as their proper course is the rule for women."¹ Her fiancé similarly teaches her her place. "In passing out from the great gate he precedes and she follows, and with this the right relation between husband and wife commences. The woman follows the man: in her youth, she follows her father and elder brother; when married, she follows her husband; when her husband is dead she follows her son."² The various wedding ceremonies inculcate the same lesson. "The ceremony establishing the young wife in her position, (followed by) that showing her obedient service, and both succeeded by that showing how she now occupied the position of continuing the family line, all served to impress her with a sense of the deferential duty proper to her. When she was thus deferential she was obedient to her parents-in-law, and harmonious with all the occupants of the women's apartments; she was the fitting partner of her husband. . . .In this way when the deferential obedience of the wife was complete, the internal harmony was secured; and when the internal harmony was secured, the long continuance of the family could be calculated on."³

The new bride was to be entirely subject to her parents-in-law in her new home. "No daughter-in-law, without being told to go to her own apartment, should venture to withdraw from that (of her parents-in-law). Whatever she is about to do, she should ask leave from them. A son and his wife should have no private goods, nor animals, nor vessels. . . .If anyone give the wife an article of food or dress, . . .an iris or orchid, she should receive and offer it to her parents-in-law. . . .If she want to give it to some of her own cousins, she must ask leave to do so, and that being granted, she will give it."⁴

"Sons' wives should serve their parents-in-law as they served their own."⁵

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¹ Meng tzu, III, 2, ii
² Li Chi, IX, 3
³ Li Chi, XLI
⁴ Li Chi, X
⁵ Li Chi, X
She should rise at cockcrow, dress herself and go to her new parents to ask after their welfare, help them with their toilet and bring them their breakfast; and so throughout the day she is to be at their beck and call, and to wait on them like a slave. The character of the service to be rendered by husband and wife to his parents from dawn to night has already been indicated in the previous chapter by a quotation from the Book of Rites, chapter 10, and need not be repeated here. She is a menial in the home, finds little sympathy and love, and lives a life that is usually monotonous in the extreme, though having been reared in domestic slavery she knows no better life. Whether her lot is a reasonably happy one or not depends very largely on the disposition of her mother-in-law, and, if she be married to a younger son, on her relations with her sisters-in-law. The amount of domestic happiness in a Chinese home is estimated differently by different writers. Some say that the unhappy lot of the young wife has been greatly exaggerated. It is beyond shadow of doubt, however, that in a great many homes the mother-in-law exercises an arbitrary tyranny, and the daughter-in-law 'eats a great deal of bitterness.' No matter how ill-treated she is she dare not appeal to her husband and he would not defend her against his mother. The law gave her no rights. "Wives or concubines who bring a charge against the husband or his parents or grandparents, are beaten one hundred heavy blows, and banished for three years; if the charge is false, they are strangled." "Wives or concubines who abuse the husband's parents or grandparents, are alike strangled; those who strike them are beheaded; those who kill them are put to death by slow degrees." 

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1 See pg. 140-141 of this thesis
2 Macgowan, Men and Manners in Modern China, pg. 252; Williams, China Yesterday and Today, pg. 82
3 Hu, The Chinese Renaissance, pg. 104; Lin, My Country and My People, pgs. 144-149; Williams, The Middle Kingdom, vol. 1, pg. 63; Macgowan, Side-lights on Chinese Life, pg. 32; and Men and Manners in Modern China, pgs. 249-252; Headland, Court Life in China, pg. 247; Bridgman, Daughters of China, pgs. 79-81; Wilhelm, The Soul of China, pg. 326; etc.
4 Macgowan, Men and Manners in Modern China, pgs. 250-251
5 Sheng Yü, I
severe flogging of wives who strike their parents-in-law.\(^1\) Her only solace is
the reflection that she will be a mother-in-law herself some day, and, if she
has no powerful kinsmen to make trouble on her behalf, her only resort is to
threaten suicide. The potency of such a threat lies in its nuisance-value, for
suicide entails scandal and the loss of a slave, but if threats do not bring
alleviation of her sufferings, they are frequently carried into effect.\(^2\)

As a wife in relation to her husband she is in theory allotted a separate
sphere; he, direction of external affairs, she, the management of internal
affairs.\(^3\) "Between father and son there should be affection; between sovereign
and minister righteousness; between husband and wife, attention to their sepa­
rate functions."\(^4\) "The men should not speak of what belongs to the inside,
nor the women of what belongs to the outside."\(^5\) The wife's only "proper busi­
ness" is with domestic occupations,\(^6\) and this is indicated by the Chinese word
for wife,\(^7\) meaning woman and \(\text{chou}\), denoting a broom. The mother of Mencius,
who was quite an unusual woman, and is held up as the model of what a woman
and mother should be,\(^7\) speaks thus of a woman's place: "It is a woman's duty
to be skilful in the preparation of food and careful in the preservation of
household articles; to look after the comfort of her parents-in-law and to sew
and weave. To these things her sphere of activity is limited. It is her pro­
vince to maintain order within the house; but her thoughts ought not to wander
beyond the boundaries of her home. In the Book of Changes it is said: Let her
attend to the preparation of food within the rooms allotted to her, and take

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1 Gray, op. cit., pg. 223
2 Lateer, op. cit., vol. 1, pg. 301; Wieger, Moral Tenets and Customs in
China, pg. 193; Gray, China, vol. 1, pgs. 328-337; Ross, The Changing
Chinese, pgs. 198-201
3 Legge, The Religions of China, pgs. 107-108
4 Meng tzu, III, 1, iv
5 Li Chi, X, 1
6 Sheng Yb, X
7 See Lyall, Mencius, pgs. xix-xx; Legge, The Life and Work of Mencius,
pgs. 16-18
nothing else on herself. And in the Book of Poetry it is said: It is theirs neither to do wrong, nor to shine by prominent good actions; let them limit their thoughts to the wine and the food. This means that it does not belong to a woman to determine anything of herself, but she is subject to the rule of the three obediences.¹ There is no doubt that this is the traditional and usual position of the wife. But sometimes there are women of strong personalities who have something to say about other than domestic affairs. Smith says, "the Chinese are fond of bantering descriptions of the hen-pecked man (chu nei ti)."² In the same strain Hu says, "woman has always been the despot of the family. . . . the wife is always the terror of the husband."³

The great desideratum in the relations of husband and wife is harmony, and in a large family where parents and sons, wives, concubines and children, live together it is easy to appreciate the emphasis on this. "Harmony between husband and wife" is one of the three bonds of society,⁴ and one of the ten obligations,⁵ as the Chinese boy learned at school. But as we have already noticed, the only contribution to the harmony desired is demanded of the wife in the form of absolute obedience to husband and parents-in-law.

It is when the wife becomes the mother of a son that her position is improved.⁶ To have a daughter only makes matters worse for her, for a daughter is not wanted.⁷ "Married life in China, unless attended with male children," says Doolittle, "is seldom happy. The wife is exceedingly anxious to present her husband with sons, who will perpetuate his name and burn incense before his tablet after his death."⁸ If no sons are born to her she resorts to all kinds

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¹ Hirth, The Ancient History of China, pgs. 283-284
² Smith, Proverbs and Common Sayings from the Chinese, pg. 179; Hu, The Chinese Renaissance, pg. 104
³ Hu, loc. cit.
⁴ The 'san kang,' San Tzu Ching, lines 53-56
⁵ The 'shih i,' San Tzu Ching, line 96
⁶ Legge, The Religions of China, pg. 108; Laogowan, Men and Manners in Modern China, pg. 252
⁷ Laogowan, op. cit., pg. 253
⁸ Doolittle, op. cit., vol. 1, pg. 113
of superstitious expedients and not infrequently engages a sorcerer or sorceress. It is when a son is born to her that her status in the household and the ancestral temple is secure, she ceases to be a menial, and she now has a share in the property when her husband is deceased. In the home the mother, Chinese writers say, becomes "the supreme arbiter of the household." The children naturally turn to the mother rather than to the 'chia yen,' the family severe one, as the father is called. "When a man is in trouble," says Mateer, "he calls on his mother, and when one man wishes to revile another he reviles his mother." Her position improves as she grows older. When she becomes a mother-in-law she attains a status which she had long looked forward to as a persecuted daughter-in-law, and usually makes the most of her position by tyrannizing over the next generation. When she reaches old age and becomes a grandmother she has great influence and authority, being without dispute the domestic head of the household, and the younger members of the family make prostrations before her.

It is said that a mother is on a level with her husband. At her decease a mother is mourned to the same degree as her husband, namely, the first degree lasting three years, by her sons, and her name is inscribed on an ancestral tablet and worshipped along with the father's in the home and ancestral temple by their descendants in perpetuity. However, while she mourns his decease for three years, the husband's mourning for his wife is for only one year indicating relationship of the second degree. And a woman never quite attains to a man's rank even in the rites of ancestor worship. "Tzeng tzu asked, If the

1 ibid., pgs. 113-115
2 Kulp, op. cit., pgs. 150-151; Rudd, Chinese Social Origins, pgs. 121-122
3 Lin, op. cit., pgs. 145-146; Leong and Tao, op. cit., pg. 7
4 Mateer, op. cit., vol. 1, pg. 558
5 Lee, When I was a Boy in China, pg. 26
6 Leong and Tao, op. cit., pg. 7; Legge, The Religions of China, pg. 108
7 Müller, Sacred Books of the East, vol. 27, pgs. 204-205; Kulp, op. cit., pgs. 147-148; Giles, China and the Chinese, pg. 199
8 Sacred Books of the East, vol. 27, loc. cit.; Lin, op. cit., pgs. 139-140
funerals of both parents take place together, what course is adopted? Which is first and which last? Confucius said, The rule is that the burying of the less important (mother) should have the precedence, and that the more important (father) follow. . . . It is the rule that the sacrifice of repose should first be offered to the more important (father) and afterwards to the less important (mother)." 1

THE CONCUBINE

Monogamy, in the strict sense of the term, is the form of mating prevalent in China. 2 This is due not to religious or ethical principles, -- the Confucian sages have nothing to say against a man having two or more wives, -- but is a necessity because an increase of wives is an expense, and because the number of the sexes is about equal and every man marries. 3 Bigamy is very rare. Kulp found some cases of it in south China among emigrants who had left a wife at home and taken another while abroad. 4 Social opinion condemned this irregularity. A bigamous marriage was arranged for the last Chinese emperor, Hsüan T'ung, who had to have two wives to raise up two lines of descendants for the emperors Kuang Hsü and T'ung Chih respectively. "This is the only case under the old Chinese law," says Williams, "in which bigamy was made legal." 5 In China, then, each man has one wife. But he may have as many concubines as he can afford to purchase and support. Hence some writers speak of the prevalence of polygamy. 6 But strictly speaking, a Chinese does not take two wives, but only one wife. He does not marry the concubine. She is a case of purchase with no more formality than a contract with her parents. 7 Obviously concubinage is rare among the laboring masses, but it is a frequent practice among those in

1 Li Chi, V, 1
2 Williams, China Yesterday and Today, pg. 71
3 Kulp, op. cit., pgs. 181-182
4 ibid., pgs. 50-51
5 Williams, China Yesterday and Today, pgs. 74, 465-466; op. Werner, China of the Chinese, pg. 38
6 Edkins, Religion in China, pg. 122; Gray, China, vol. 1, pg. 184
7 Kulp, op. cit., pgs. 170, 181-182
easier circumstances. Williams estimates "perhaps two-fifths of such families have them."\(^1\) Kulp found fourteen cases out of 182 marriages in Phoenix Village. It was "a symbol of wealth and honor."\(^2\)

The reasons for the practice are various, but are in general two, the first a universal one, and the second a peculiarity of China. If a man is not satisfied or happy with his wife he may add one or more concubines to his family according to his pleasure.\(^3\) His parents chose his wife for him, in the case of a concubine he chooses to suit himself.\(^4\) The proverb says, "in choosing a wife choose virtue, in choosing a concubine choose beauty."\(^5\) She is always socially inferior to himself, usually a female slave, or a courtesan; respectable families do not like their daughters to become some man's secondary wife, and this provides an incentive to early betrothal.\(^6\) A proverb expresses this opinion, "Rather patch clothes as a poor man's wife than be a rich man's concubine."\(^7\) An official who is to be absent from home at a distant post frequently takes along a concubine as a travelling companion.\(^8\) It is considered somewhat discreditable, says Williams, for a man to take a concubine into his home if his wife has borne him sons.\(^9\) He is expected to maintain his concubine in a separate residence\(^10\) between which and home he divides his time. But taking a concubine may be a virtue, a filial duty, and even urged by his wife,\(^11\) because the greatest unfilial thing is to have no male descendants. The insistence on the need for sons to continue the family line and ancestral worship is

1 Williams, The Middle Kingdom, vol. 1, pg. 61
2 Kulp, op. cit., pg. 182
3 Gray, China, vol. 1, pg. 184-185
4 Kulp, op. cit., pgs. 169-170
5 Edwards, A Collection of Chinese Proverbs, no. 338
6 Doolittle, op. cit., vol. 1, pg. 108; Mateer, op. cit., vol. 1, pg. 337; Williams, The Kiddle Kingdom, vol. 1, pg. 60-61
7 Edwards, op. cit., no. 341
8 Giles, The Civilization of China, pgs. 193-194; Smith, Village Life in China, pg. 301
9 Williams, The Middle Kingdom, vol. 1, pg. 60
10 op. Kulp, op. cit., pg. 161
11 Lim, op. cit., pg. 163; Giles, The Civilization of China, pg. 194; Mateer, op. cit., vol. 1, pg. 337
responsible in part for concubinage just as, we have seen, it is responsible for the system of adoption, and child-betrothal and early marriage. The law authorized a man to take a concubine if he had no sons at the age of forty.

The concubine's position in the family, though she may be her husband's favorite, is definitely subordinate to that of the wife, who is the head of the household, and can easily be recognized by the visitor from the deference paid to her by all. She is the 'ta p'o tz,' the principal wife, and the concubine is the 'hsiao p'o tz,' the small or inferior wife. All the concubine's children belong legally to the principal wife, she counts them as her own and they call her 'mother,' and mourn for her the prescribed period of three years (actually twenty-seven months) due a mother. At the New Year festivities husband and wife, being of the same social rank, do not worship each other but "the concubine living in the house," says Doolittle, "must worship the husband and wife by kneeling before them." The relationship of husband, wife, and concubines is considered to be analagous to that of the sun around which the moon and the stars revolve. The concubine had legal status; her children were legitimate, and, if she had sons, she might share in the property on the decease of her husband. But he could sell her, and she, like the wife, could own nothing while he lived. If the concubine has no sons her position remains the same, or if the wife and she both have sons her position is still inferior. But if she bears her husband his first son her status is considerably raised, according to her personality, she may eclipse the principal wife. The Empress

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1 Doolittle, op. cit., vol. 1, pg. 108; Goodnow, China, an Analysis, pgs. 164-167; Gray, China, vol. 1, pgs. 184-185
2 Nevius, China and the Chinese, pg. 251; Lin, op. cit., pg. 163
3 Headland, Court Life in China, pg. 257; Bridgman, Daughters of China, pgs. 51, 70
4 Mateer, op. cit., vol. 1, pgs. 337, 370
5 Williams, China Yesterday and Today, pg. 73
6 Doolittle, op. cit., vol. 1, pg. 26
7 Williams, The Middle Kingdom, vol. 1, pg. 61
8 Williams, China Yesterday and Today, pgs. 71-74; Kulp, op. cit., pgs. 150-152; Smith, Village Life in China, pg. 300
9 Kulp, op. cit., pg. 152
Dowager of Boxer fame, who ruled all the Chinese empire, began as a concubine in the imperial household.¹

Concubinage has been practiced from China's earliest antiquity as the Classic of History and Classic of Poetry reveal,² and it was recognized by the Confucian sages who had nothing to say against it.

THE WIDOW

It is considered very bad form for a widow to marry again. The Li Chi says, "Once mated with her husband, all her life she will not change, and hence when the husband dies she will not marry again,"³ and in the Classic of Poetry a widow protests against being urged to marry again in a poem in which she appeals to her mother and Heaven: "I swear that till death I will not do the evil thing."⁴ One of the prominent subjects in the innumerable moral tracts and books designed to "admonish the age" distributed throughout China was condemnation of the remarriage of a widow. "You should not be the go-between in regard to the marriage of a widow," is put in a class with "You should not commit murder," "You should not commit fornication," "You should not smoke opium, or open a gambling shop."⁵ Widows who remain such are praised for "continence," one of the "two virtues which deserve the greatest respect."⁶ The government strongly encouraged it, the local gentry and mandarin informing the emperor of women in their district who had through a long life of widowhood established a local reputation.⁷ By special order and sometimes partly at public expense commemorative portals or gateways were built across the street, or stone tablets erected by the highway, in honor of "chaste and faithful" widows and virgins, usually to their memory and sometimes during their life-

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¹ Headland, Court Life in China, pgs. 97-109; Williams, China Yesterday and Today, pgs. 467-468
² Creel, The Birth of China, chap. 21
³ Li Chi, IX, 3
⁴ Shih Ching, I, 4, 1
⁵ Doolittle, op. cit., vol. 2, pg. 164-166
⁶ Wieger, Moral Tenets and Customs in China, pgs. 181-183
⁷ Giles, China and the Chinese, pg. 201; Doolittle, op. cit., vol. 1, pgs. 110-112; Williams, China Yesterday and Today, pg. 127; Kateer, op. cit., vol. 2, pg. 364; Leong and Tao, op. cit., pgs. 59-60
These are seen everywhere in China. Societies exist to afford financial aid to widows, so that poverty might not be an excuse for remarriage, and they go to the trouble and expense of bringing meritorious cases to the notice of the emperor. Relatives and friends often support widows rather than have them remarry, or they may support themselves by their own exertions. Confucianism, says Lin, "had erected chaste widowhood into a religion." It was this doctrine of chaste widowhood that caused Confucianism to be denounced during the "Renaissance" of 1917 as a 'man-eating religion.' Hu Shih says it is due rather to Buddhism. "The prohibition of the remarriage of widows," he says, "had never been the practice of pre-Buddhist China." Sentiment against a widow marrying again is, however, found in the Classic of Poetry, which we have quoted above, and the burial of wives with their husbands was a custom in pre-Buddhist China.

In practice, while in upper circles no family would have a son marry a widow, most widows of middle and lower classes do marry again. There is much less expense and formality attendant with marrying a widow and this induces poorer families to make such an arrangement. But, says Doolittle, "it is considered a disgrace to a family for one of its sons to marry a widow, no matter how intelligent, interesting, and handsome she may be, as well as a disgraceful and shameful step on the part of the widow to consent to marry again." Many widows absolutely refuse a second engagement and even commit suicide rather than be forced by relatives or circumstances to marry again. Giles

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1 Doolittle, op. cit., vol. 2, pg. 299
3 Williams, The Middle Kingdom, vol. 1, pg. 62
4 Lin, op. cit., pgs. 140-141
5 Hu, "The Indianization of China," Independence Convergence and Borrowing, pgs. 245-246
6 See Creel, The Birth of China, chap. 21
7 ibid., pgs. 208-209
8 Mateer, op. cit., pg. 167; Giles, China and the Chinese, pg. 201
9 Doolittle, op. cit., vol. 1, pgs. 100-101
10 Doolittle, loc. cit.
tells of one of the poorer class who cut off a finger to seal such a vow, and placed it in her husband's coffin.\(^1\) Even betrothed girls, whose fiancés die before their marriage, will likewise refuse a second engagement, retiring into seclusion, or committing suicide.\(^2\) Sometimes she regards herself, though never married, as a widow, and, dressing in widow's mourning clothes, attends the funeral, and worships the ancestors of her affianced husband. Then she is taken into his home as his widow.\(^3\) The deceased man's family, as well as her own, however, is not always happy with this arrangement -- she is an expense, and would have a share in the family property, and if she broke her resolution of perpetual widowhood, she would bring disgrace on them. Parents often try to conceal the fact that her fiancé has died from the girl and from the public, and try to engage her to another person.\(^4\) Such strenuous objection of widows and fiancées to attempts to remarry or reengage them are found more commonly in higher society. The reasons for suicide are various; poverty and inability to earn a livelihood, insistence by her relatives that she remarry, the prospect of harsh treatment by her husband's family, or sometimes because of real devoted attachment to her dead husband. Public sentiment encouraged this practice by regarding it as highly meritorious, officials sent up memorials to the throne, and posthumous honors were decreed.

There is no such sentiment with regard to the remarriage of a widower. "A widower," says Williams, "is not restrained by any laws, and weds one of his concubines or whoever he chooses, nor is he expected to defer the nuptials for any period of mourning for his first wife.\(^5\) Confucius said, "The eldest son, even though seventy, should never be without a wife to take her part in

\(^1\) Giles, China and the Chinese, pg. 202
\(^2\) Headland, Court Life in China, pgs. 278-280; Williams, The Middle Kingdom, vol. 1, pg. 62; Douglas, Society in China, pg. 191; Williams, China Yesterday and Today, pgs. 83-84; Doolittle, op. cit., vol. 1, pg. 110
\(^3\) Headland, op. cit., pg. 208; Doolittle, op. cit., vol. 1, pgs. 102-104
\(^4\) Doolittle, op. cit., pgs. 103-104
\(^5\) Williams, The Middle Kingdom, vol. 1, pg. 62
presiding at the funeral rites."¹

The burial of living wives with their dead husbands occurred in the China of antiquity,² and also at several imperial funerals in modern times.³ Confucianism condemned the practice. Two proposals to bury the living with the dead, which were not, however, carried into effect, are recounted in the Book of Rites with disapprobation.⁴ "To bury the living with the dead is contrary to propriety." It is recorded that Confucius said that the making of straw effigies for use at the grave was good, but not the making of a wooden image or the use of vessels that resembled those actually used by the living, for the reason that there was "a danger of this leading to the interment of the living with the dead."⁵ Survival of these customs exists today in the custom of burning paper models of women, as well as horses, sedan chairs, houses, money and so forth at the grave of the deceased for his use in the next world.

THE CHRISTIAN APPRAISAL

Confucian teaching on the relation of wife to husband conserves some points of morality which are fundamental to the well-being of society. Marriage is regarded as of great importance, and a union to be entered upon with seriousness and gravity consonant with its importance. It is also a true sentiment which holds that a man should have only one wife, and condemns bigamy, and the universal custom of marrying prevents many social evils. Confucianism has not recommended child-marriage, and has explicitly condemned another practice of Hinduism, the immolation of widows. The modesty of dress and demeanor of Chinese women is without doubt the result of the emphasis on female chastity

¹ Li Chi, V, 1
² Creel, The Birth of China, chap. 14; Shryock, The Origin and Development of the State Cult of Confucius, pg. 84; cp. pgs. 29, 90-91; Clennel, The Historical Development of Religion in China, pgs. 29-32; Giles, Confucianism and its Rivals, pgs. 48-51; The Civilization of China, pgs. 32-34; The History of Chinese Literature, pgs. 107-108; Religions of Ancient China, pgs. 39-40; Martin, The Chinese, pgs. 260-261
³ Williams, China Yesterday and Today, pg. 254
⁴ Both in Li Chi, II, 2, ii; cp. Giles, History of Chinese Literature, pgs. 45-46
⁵ Li Chi, II, 1, iii.3, 19; II, 2, i.45, 46
and virtue. "The rule for the relation of husband and wife that it should be long enduring," and the disapproval and infrequency of divorce in China contrasts most favorably with the facile dissolution of marriage prevalent in some quarters in the West. The teaching that a wife should obey her husband so far accords with the Christian Scriptures. And, finally, it can be said that a mother, the mother of a son, holds an honored position in the Confucian household.

But Confucianism comes far short in its general view of woman as inferior -- unwanted at birth, subordinated through life to man's priority, robbed of all rights, treated without a trace of chivalry, "cabined, cribbed, confined." From this, one of the most deplorable aspects of Confucian social morality, has flowed such a train of evil as to more than affect the good that has been mentioned: -- the careless settling of a girl's fate by the practice of child-betrothal; the segregation of a betrothed couple by which mutual love and esteem as the basis of the marriage union is made impossible, and such atrocities as marrying a stranger who is insane are made possible; the sale of girls and purchase of brides which makes woman a chattel and as a means for the gratification of man's desire instead of a personality:¹ the practice of rearing marriage by which a betrothed girl is brought up in the home of her affianced husband; the seclusion of girls and women in a narrow circle where they are foot-bound and mind-bound,² and baring them from social diversion and pleasure which is all reserved for men, and from education for which they were not considered fit; the denial of any freedom of thought or action to women, who are completely dominated when children by their parents, and when adult by their husbands and parents-in-law to whom they must render implicit obedience as to the will of masters; the slavish service expected the daughter-in-law and the lack of any idea of companionship between husband and wife as between equals; the view that domestic harmony is produced by the self-effacement of the wife

¹ cp. Lindsay, The Moral Teaching of Jesus, pgs. 166-167
² Ross, The Changing Chinese, pg. 205
alone who may not be defended by her husband from abuse and the tyranny of a
dread mother-in-law; the estimate of marriage as a failure without sons, and
the pitiable condition of the sonless wife; the institution of concubinage with
all its attendant evils and the prejudice that men should remarry but widows
may not. Anyone who has lived in inland China and heard the wailing of Chinese
women can realize the tragedies that take place in many a Chinese household.
From the Christian point of view the inferiority and unequal treatment of wo­
men and all its consequences falls under condemnation. Christ and His apostles
do not appear in the rôle of champions of women's rights, even as they did not
directly attack the social evil of slavery. But the doctrine they taught, the
principles they affirmed and the standards they set as well as their regard
for women makes inferiority manifestly incompatible with the Christian Gospel.
Further, by raising in value and esteem the gentler virtues of meekness, gentle­
ness, longsuffering and love, qualities more naturally possessed by women than
men, they profoundly affected man's estimate of the worth of woman.

But not only does the bad offset the good in those aspects of Confucian
social morality that relate to womanhood, none of the good we have acknowledged
is an unqualified good, at each point one must make reservations.

Christianity, for instance, we have said, endorses the Confucian teaching
that the wife should obey her husband. The apostle Paul directs wives to "be
in subjection to" and "fear" their husbands, recognizing man's responsible
leadership in the family,¹ and Peter teaches the same duty in even the worst
supposable case of a Christian woman united in marriage to a man who opposes
the Gospel. Even so, he says, the wife by her conduct, even without preaching
to him, may gain her husband.² But the Christian subjection differs in quality
and character from the slavish obedience to the will of husbands and parents-
in-law of Confucianism. The doctrine of the "Three Obediences," that a woman

¹ Ephesians, 5:22, 33; Colossians 3:18; I Timothy 2:11
² I Peter 3:1-6
is never free, but is subject, first to her father, then to her husband, and finally to her son, was not carried out in its last clause. But until marriage, girls were at the disposal of their fathers, and then, as one writer puts it, "in order to become good wives they ought to become abject slaves." But Paul finds the pattern of the submission on the one side, as well as the authority on the other, in the relation of Christ and the church. And he tells wives to view their submission in relation to the Lord, Who is the supreme Master of every Christian household and the Lord alone of the conscience. Thus it is not an implicit and entire submission, that takes no account of a higher obedience, and the whole husband-wife relationship is put on a different basis and transformed by Christ-like love.

Then again, we have credited Confucianism with a view of marriage in some respects true. Monogamy is prevalent in China, and public opinion condemns marrying more than one principal wife. But then, one may take any number of concubines, which if not strictly polygamy is virtually such. And this is not only sanctioned, but may be a filial duty. The evils of concubinage, the strife and jealousy in the home which it gives rise to, are recognized by the Chinese. But what we are concerned to note is not the inconveniences of it but the fundamental wrongness of it in the view of Christianity. In its original state and intention, the marriage union is an exclusive union between one man and one woman. Referring to this original intention, Christ emphasized that marriage is a union of two so close and intimate that the two become "one flesh," that is, in marriage they cease to be two and are henceforth one person, a man "leaving behind" father and mother becomes "cemented and fastened together" with his wife. The believer's relation to God is spoken of as a spiritual union

1 The Chinese Repository, vol. 2, pgs. 313 on
2 Ephesians 5:22; Colossians 3:18
3 Headland, Court Life in China, pgs. 249-250; Smith, Village Life in China, pgs. 300-302; Gray, China, vol. 1, pgs. 185-186
4 Genesis 2:23, 24; I Corinthians 6:16; Lark 10:6
5 Matthew 19:4-6
nearest of human analogies to marriage, in both the Old Testament and the New.\(^1\)
Paul likens the love of a husband to that of Christ, and finds the pattern of
the conjugal relationship in that which subsists between Christ and the church.\(^2\)
Christ is the heavenly Bridegroom, and John on Patmos saw the church "made
ready as a bride adorned for her husband," and a marriage supper in the New Jerusalem.\(^3\) A union of this quality and character excludes all extra-marital
connections, and is impossible of realization where concubinage and polygamy exist.

By impelling everyone to marry Confucianism put a check on the extent of concubinage and other social evils. But by regarding the unmarried state as a
disgrace it encouraged parents to make early engagements for their children.
The evils of child-betrothal have already been indicated.\(^4\) As character has
not yet been formed, or capacity proved, the compatibility of the children, upon which much of their future happiness depends, cannot be judged. And it shuts out love and mutual choice as the basis of the marriage union. Marriage in the Christian view is not obligatory for all, though that it is the normal state for most people, is evident from its institution in the beginning,\(^5\) and Paul says that it is right that each should have his own partner.\(^6\) "Forbidding to marry" is condemned severely,\(^7\) but celibacy is not depreciated indeed Paul advises it in certain circumstances. Celibacy, he says, may be "good" for a man, a single life is not wrong,\(^8\) and he gives his "judgment" that because of troubles and calamities that were coming it would be better for persons, male or female, married or single, to remain without change of the state they were in.\(^9\)

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1 Hosea 2:19, 20; Isaiah 64:5; 62:4, 5; Jeremiah 3:14; 31:32; Revelation 19:7-9
2 Ephesians 5:23-33
3 Revelation 21:2; 19:6-9
4 cp. Smith, Village Life in China, pgs. 267-268
5 Genesis 1:28
6 I Corinthians 7:2
7 I Timothy 4:3
8 I Corinthians 7:1
9 I Corinthians 7:26, 27
He could wish that others were as he was, "howbeit each man hath his own gift from God."\(^1\) Celibacy is a gift, and marriage is a gift, each man has his own gift, and these gifts have their source in God. Jesus differentiates two kinds of celibacy; some cases are for physical reasons, others have voluntarily renounced marriage "for the kingdom of heaven's sake."\(^2\) Neither state of celibacy or marriage is regarded per se as superior to the other.\(^3\)

Confucianism regards marriage as of great importance and with this Christianity concurs. That Christ so regarded it is clear from the fact that while He refused and evaded discussion of political and social questions such as tribute to Caesar, and inheritance, He made a single exception in the case of the relation of men and women in marriage speaking most plainly and emphatically, and instead of indicating general principles, as so often, He laid down strict injunctions.\(^4\) When questioned about divorce He referred to God as the author of matrimony,\(^5\) and quoted from the account of creation which makes it plain that the institution of marriage is to be regarded not as a social convention or a blind physical urge, but as ordained of God, who made the race "male and female," who gave away the first bride to her husband, and who directed that a man should "cleave unto" his wife.\(^6\) Paul in opposing a low view of marriage states the Christian conviction that depreciation of matrimony is to be condemned and that sex, marriage, and family life are holy and must be "held in honor."\(^7\)

But when we go beyond the agreement as to the great importance of marriage and ask, "important for what?" it becomes at once evident that there is a fundamental cleavage between the Confucian and the Christian conceptions of marriage.

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1 I Corinthians 7:7
2 Matthew 19:11, 12
3 The Council of Trent sees 14 c. 10 anathematizes those who deny that celibacy is better and more blessed than matrimony
4 Matthew 5:27-32; 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-12
5 Matthew 19:4-6
6 Genesis 2:18-24
7 I Timothy 4:1-3; Hebrews 13:4
According to Confucianism marriage is intended to supply sons for the continuation of the family line and the worship of ancestors, and is regarded as a failure justifying dissolution and concubinage if this object is not attained. From this essential root has grown as a cancer the depreciation and degradation of womanhood and its far-reaching consequences of evil. Marriage on the Christian view has a physical basis, and one of its designs was the propagation of the race. But its primary purpose which is most emphasized, is not biological; marriage is a moral association and a spiritual union. It was to be a companion and help meet for man that woman was created.

In the matter of the dissolution of marriage Confucianism is certainly right in saying that the marriage relation should be "long enduring," and divorce has not been common in China. But the power to divorce is given to man alone, the wife has no rights or protection, and dissolution of marriage is authorized for childlessness and talkativeness. Fortunately in practice the three qualifying conditions checked the use of this power. But Christianity cannot allow divorce on these terms. Christ was emphatic in denouncing divorce "except for fornication." The apostle Paul, in dealing with the mixed-marriage problem in Corinth, enjoined the Christian partner not to seek separation on this account, but, evidently regarding the desertion of the unbelieving partner as proof presumptive in such a society that he has contracted another alliance which would be adultery, the apostle adds that if the unbeliever departs then "the brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases." The Christian church is divided on the interpretation of these passages and the question of the justifying causes of divorce. We cannot here survey this debate which is highly controversial. But it may be said that Christianity, in opposition to Confucianism, holds that the marriage union is a life-long spiritual union of a

1 Genesis 1:28  
2 Genesis 2:20-22  
3 Matthew 19:9; 5:32  
4 I Corinthians 7:10-17
man and a woman, dissolution of which, except by death, was not intended, for no provision for divorce was made at its institution, and which can be broken only as the result of sin.

Finally, as to widows, Christianity supports Confucianism in condemning sutteeism. But to burn effigies of wives at the grave in place of the burial of the living with the dead is a compromise incompatible with Christian truth for a wife is bound to her husband only while he lives, and the conjugal relation does not exist in the world to come.¹ Nor can the opinion be allowed that a widower should remarry but a widow may not. Christianity objects to both the double standard, and the prohibition of a widow remarrying. The apostle Paul considered that a widow would be happier to remain as she is, and freer to serve the Lord, and he recommended that elderly widows be placed on the roll.² But he asserted that, since death dissolves the relationship of husband and wife, she is free to remarry, and he advised the younger widows to do so.³

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¹ Matthew 22:30; I Corinthians 7:39; Romans 7:2, 3
² I Corinthians 7:39, 40; I Timothy 5:9-10
³ I Timothy 5:11-15; cp. I Corinthians 7:8, 9
CHAPTER V
ELDER AND YOUNGER BROTHER

Although the relationship between brothers is not frequently referred to in the Classics yet it is clearly quite fundamental to Confucian social morality. That a brother is a closer relation than a wife has already been mentioned, for, according to orthodox teaching, brothers are parts of one body like hands and feet, while husband and wife are two separate persons. Further, the fraternal relationship is necessary to perfect conjugal felicity.

"Loving union with wife and children
Is like the music of lutes;
But it is the accord of brothers
Which makes the harmony and happiness lasting."  

The same poem, on the theme of the close relation and value of brothers, emphasizes that brothers are in various ways superior to friends. "Of all the men in the world there are none equal to brothers."  

But the importance of the relationship between brothers in Confucian ethics is chiefly seen, not in comparing it with others of the five relationships, but in the fact that the virtue 't'ı,' which has no English equivalent but means, to act in a submissive manner as a younger brother should, is often associated with the great virtue 'hsiao,' filial piety, as together both the root and the richest fruit of Confucian social morality. That they are the root of all virtue is stated in the Analects. "The superior man bends his attention to what is fundamental. That being established all practical courses naturally grow up. Filial piety and fraternal submission -- are they not the root of all benevolence?"  
That these two virtues also are the highest fruits of morality is stated by Mencius. "Mencius said, The richest fruit of all benevolence is this -- the service of one's parents. The richest fruit of righteousness is this -- the obeying of one's elder brothers." These two essential virtues constitute the theme

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1 See pgs, 178-179 of this thesis.
2 Shih Ching, II, 1, iv.
3 ibid., verse 1.
4 Lun Yü, I, 2.
5 Meng tzu, IV, 1, xxvii.
of the first section of the Sacred Edict under the motto, "Esteem filial piety and fraternal submission in order to emphasize the human relationships," and in a later section the training of youth in these qualities is urged on parents. 1

"Constantly talk to them about filial piety, fraternal submission, honesty and sincerity." "You must without fail thoroughly explain to them filial piety, fraternal submission, industry, morality and a sense of shame." And so in the Chinese boy's first school primer he was taught

"To behave as a younger brother towards the elder is one of the first things to know. Begin with filial piety and fraternal submission and then see and hear." 2

In order to understand the relationship of elder and younger brother according to Confucian ethics the position of eldest son in a Chinese household should be noticed. The special rights and prerogatives of primogeniture are universally recognized. The firstborn is senior in rank in the family. This is often emphasized by the custom of numbering the sons of a family according to age, and designating them simply by their numbers added to the family surname, as Wang the Great, Wang the Second, Wang the Third, and so on. 3 None but the eldest son is the heir of his father and grandfather in direct succession, and continues the family line as their lineal descendant. 4 Greater intelligence of younger brothers, or greater age of uncles or cousins gives way to the accident of birth in determining who is head of the branch-family, or chief of the clan. The firstborn does not of course enter into his full rights until the death of his father. Until then he is subordinate, but at his father's death he succeeds him as the representative head of the family, even though a mere boy. Thus it sometimes comes about that at the time of New Year calls, for instance, when prostrations are made to the head of the family, rules of priority require old men to bump their heads in reverence before mere boys. 5

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1 Sheng Yu, I and XI
2 San Tsu Ching, lines 39-42. It is impossible to put the concise Chinese of the text into equally concise English. "To behave as a younger brother" of line 1, and "fraternal submission" of line 3 are the same word in Chinese, the virtue 't'i,' which has no English equivalent.
3 Smith, Proverbs and Common Sayings from the Chinese, pg.219; Mateer, Mandarin Lessons, vol. pg.
4 Doolittle, op. cit., vol. 2, pgs. 225-227
5 Smith, Village Life in China, pgs. 200-201
In times of mourning and at all the functions of ancestor worship the eldest son as head of the family or clan officiated as pontifex maximus, and it was his right and privilege to present all offerings. The Book of Rites sets forth his sole prerogatives in the sacrifices to ancestors. "That any other son but the eldest did not sacrifice to his grandfather showed that (only he was in direct line from) the Honoured Head. So, no son but he wore the (three years') unhemmed sackcloth for his eldest son because the eldest son of no other continued (the direct line) of the grandfather and father. None of the other sons sacrificed to a son (of his own) who had died prematurely, or one who had left no posterity... Nor could any of them sacrifice to their father showing that (the eldest son was the representative of) the Honoured Head." Doolittle describes a visit which he made to an ancestral hall where the clan was gathered to worship their ancestors. "The head person among them was a lad some six or eight years old, being the eldest son of the eldest son of the eldest son, etc. of the remote male ancestors from whom all the Chinese having his ancestral name living in this city claim to have descended. He was the chief of the clan according to the Chinese law of primogeniture." All the ancestral tablets belonging to his father, like heirlooms, are his birthright and he alone of the sons may erect in his home the tablets of their parents, and officiate at the worship of their ancestors. If the younger brothers hive off to found homes of their own, they may erect, not tablets with individual names on each, but only a general tablet to their ancestors.

It often happens that the family property remains undivided for generations, in which case the family lives together in a group of buildings, or occupies a whole village or group of villages. Names such as "Li family village," "Ma family village," "Large Wang village," "Small Wang village," etc. met with

1 Doolittle, op. cit., vol. 1, pg. 173; vol. 2, pg. 225
2 Yates, Ancestral Worship
3 Li Chi, XIII, 1; XIV
4 Doolittle, op. cit., vol. 1, pgs. 230-235
5 ibid., vol. 1, pg. 224
6 ibid., vol. 1, pgs. 221-222; vol. 2, pgs. 223-225
7 Williams, China Yesterday and Today, pgs. 58-60
everywhere in the countryside, indicate this. 1 When the father's property is
divided among the sons, Williams says they all receive "share and share alike," 2
but Doolittle disputes this. "The eldest son," he says, "always receives more
than any of his younger brothers, though sometimes not twice as much," 3 though
the common custom is a double portion. It is to be expected that he would re­
ceive more because it is his burden to perpetuate the worship of the parents
and ancestors, which entails expense.

In the direction of all family affairs the eldest son after the decease
of the father stands in loco parentis to his younger brothers and has a moral
responsibility for their behavior. 4 "The father's eldest son," says the Sacred
Edict, "is styled viceroy of the family; and the younger brothers (after the
father's death) give him the honourable appellation of family superior. Daily,
in going out and coming in, whether in small or in great affairs, the younger
branches of the family must ask his permission. In eating and drinking, they
must give him preference; in conversation, yield to him; in walking, keep a
little behind him; in sitting and standing, take the lower place. These are
illustrative of the duty of younger brothers." 5

"The duties to their younger brothers" 6 of elder brothers are left unde­
dined in the Confucian Classics. I have found but one reference, a passage in
the Classic of History in which the elder brother who "is very unbrotherly to
his junior" is listed for punishment. 7 But in the Sacred Edict elder brothers
are told that "they must tenderly love their younger brothers. Be their age
what it may, they should simply be treated as children." They should "gently
admonish" them and not strike them. 8

In their mutual relationship "friendliness," 9 and "harmony," 10 between

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1 Smith, Village Life in China, pg. 31
2 Williams, loc. cit.
3 Doolittle, op. cit., vol. 2, pgs. 224-225
4 Gray, China, vol. 1, pg. 239
5 Sheng Yü, I, paraphrase
6 Ta Hsüeh, IX
7 Shu Ching, V, 9, i
8 Sheng Yü, I
9 Lun Yü, II, 21
10 Lun Yü, XIII, 28. The Chinese word is 'i.' Legge translates it "bland;"
Soothill "gracious bearing," or "in pleasant harmony."
brothers are mentioned as desireable. The Sacred Edict devotes a paragraph to "the evils of animosity between brethren," and the argument for peace is based on the closeness of the relationship of brothers, who are nearer to each other than husband and wife. "Now an elder brother and a younger brother are as closely related as hand and foot; how then can they wrangle?" Their wives are blamed by the imperial moralist for most of the squabbles between them. 1

It is on the obligations of younger brothers to their elder brothers that the whole emphasis falls. The comprehensive duty of younger brothers is 't'i,' to behave as a younger brother should, which indicates subordination, respect, submission and obedience to elder brothers. This with 'hsiao,' filial piety, as we have already shown, constitutes in Confucian ethics, the foundation of family virtue and social morality. 2 Chinese law enforced these two fundamental virtues. In antiquity "the younger brother who does not think of the manifest will of Heaven, and refuses to respect his elder brother" was listed with the unfilial as a case for severe punishment. 3 The law of the last Chinese dynasty similarly provided severe punishment for those deficient in filial piety and fraternal submission. "Whoever reviles an elder brother ... is beaten one hundred heavy blows," and "younger brothers ... who strike elder brothers ... are beaten ninety heavy blows and banished for two and a half years; if they wound them, they are beaten one hundred heavy blows and banished for three years; if death ensue, they are beheaded." 4 No such punishment was prescribed for elder brothers who tyrannize over the younger.

It is a younger brother's duty "at home, to serve his father and elder brothers," said Confucius, 5 who confessed that one of the four things in "the way of the superior man" to which he had not yet attained was "to serve my elder brother as I would require my younger brother to serve me." 6 The energetic younger brother who has a father and elder brothers living may not act independently without

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1 Sheng Yu, I
2 Waleshe, "Confucius," Hastings's Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics
3 Shu Ching, V, 9, iii
4 Sheng Yu, I
5 Lun Yu, IX, 15
6 Chung Yung, XIII
Elder brothers are thus associated with fathers in receiving the service and submission of the juniors, though to a less degree, of course, since a father's position while he lives is supreme. Fraternal submission also means giving way to seniors. "He who respects his elder brother," says the Sacred Edict, "should in all matters, whether in eating or drinking, or dressing, or speaking, whether in walking or sitting or standing invariably give way to him." The essence of 't'i,' the virtue of a younger brother, is the subordination of the younger to the elder. "Between old and young there is a proper order," -- observance of this is the duty associated with the fraternal relationship. And so in the Chinese pupil's first school primer "precedence between elders and younger" is one of the ten moral obligations. Difference of rank between brothers is expressed by the very name. There is no common designation in Chinese like our English word "brothers" that puts all sons on an equal footing; instead they have two words, 'hsiung,' or elder brother, and 'ti,' or younger brother. As a sign of his subordination a younger brother may not walk shoulder to shoulder with his elder brother but allows the senior to precede him. "To walk slowly, keeping behind his elders," said Mencius, "is to perform the part of a younger. To walk quickly and precede his elders, is to violate the duty of a younger." The Chinese pay great attention to priority of rank in the family. A younger brother who beats his older brother in the examinations may be placed lower on the final list. As an official, a younger brother who is appointed to a position of superior rank in a province than that held by his elder brother or his father is expected to tender his resignation.

The Confucian Classics are full of the words "superior" and "inferior," and their cognates. Inequality is a fundamental concept in Confucian social ethics.

1 Lun Yu, XI, 21
2 Sheng Yu, I
3 Faber, A Systematical Digest of the Doctrines of Confucius, pg. 82; Martin, The Lore of Cathay, pg. 212
4 Meng tzu, III, 1, iv
5 San Tzu Ching, line 101
6 Li Chi, XXI, 2; op. Wu, Ancient Chinese Political Theories, pg. 287
7 Meng tzu, VI, 2, ii
8 Giles, A History of Chinese Literature, pg. 216
9 Doolittle, The Social Life of the Chinese, vol. 1, pg. 317
"It is in the nature of things," said Mencius, "to be of unequal quality. Some are twice, some five times, some ten times, some a hundred times, some a thousand times, some ten thousand times as valuable as others. If you reduce them all to the same standard, that must throw the empire into confusion." 1 From this basic principle he opposes all levelling processes in society. He attacks the views of the heretic Hsu Hsing, who said that "wise and able rulers should cultivate the ground equally and along with their people," 2 and the doctrine of Mo Ti, who taught that all men were to be loved equally without difference of degree. 3 Ruler and subject, father and son, husband and wife, older and younger, superior and inferior, higher and lower rank and status, -- authority and government belonging to the one, submission and reverence the duty of the other, -- are distinctions everywhere emphasized by Confucianism. "It is important to see this point," says Lin, "in order to understand the whole spirit of Chinese social behaviour, both good and bad. . . Instead of social equality, the emphasis is on sharply defined differentiation, or stratified equality." 4 This great attention to age and rank is not found only where we would expect it, at court, in official life, or the army; it pervades all Chinese society and is expressed in the elaborate ceremony and etiquette of social intercourse, and it is required in the family between its members, imparting to Chinese family life a formality that chills natural and spontaneous affection and expression of feeling. The small boy early learned this lesson.

"Different rules of decorum mark superiors and inferiors.

. . . .
Even among kindred, deference is due to the aged,
And food for the old and young should be different." 5

To inculcate and perpetuate these distinctions is the raison d'être of the Confucian ritual of manners. Confucius was a lover of ceremony, and greatly emphasized ritual correctness. 6 His own precision of etiquette is described for

1 Meng tzu, III, 1, iv.18
2 Meng tzu, III, 1, iv
3 Meng tzu, III, 1, v
4 Lin, My Country and My People, pgs. 186-188
5 Ch'ien Tzu Wen, lines 82, 205, 206
6 Shryock, The Origin and Development of the State Cult of Confucianism, pgs. 36-37
us in the Analects. How far this was carried is illustrated by the story of Tzu Lu, one of his disciples, who was stabbed with such force that his cap fell off. Remark ing that "the superior man does not allow his cap to be disarranged even in death," he adjusted it again and expired. The forms of politeness, and rules of propriety set down for the regulation of all social intercourse with such minute detail in the Chinese Classics are not mere customary etiquette, or changeable social convention. They have for Confucianism a religious quality. And they are designed to instil in the young by the use of ceremonial, habits of behavior characterized by sedate dignity, and recognition of the honor due seniors in age and rank, and the subordination and extreme respect required of juniors. This could be illustrated at great length, but the following passage makes it clear:

"At court among parties of the same rank, the highest place was given to the oldest... One of eighty years did not wait out the audience, and when the ruler would question him he went to his house. Thus the submission of a younger brother... was recognised at the court.

A junior walking with one older... if he did not keep transversely (a little behind), he followed the other. When they saw an old man, people in carriages or walking got out of his way... Thus the submission of juniors was recognised on the public ways.

Residents in the country took their places according to their age, and the old... were not neglected... Thus the submission of juniors was recognised in the country districts and hamlets.

According to the ancient rule, men of fifty years were not required to serve in hunting expeditions; and in the distribution of the game, a larger share was given to the more aged. Thus the submission of juniors was recognised in the arrangements for the hunts.

In the tens and fives of the army and its detachments, where the rank was the same, places were given according to age. Thus the submission of juniors was recognised in the army.

The display of filial and fraternal duty in the court; the practice of them on the road; their reaching to the districts and hamlets; their extension to the huntings; and the cultivation of them in the army... all would have died for them under the constraint of righteousness, and not dared to violate them."

To the Westerner Chinese etiquette has always been irksome and tedious in its...

1 Lun Yu, X
2 Tso Chuan, Ai kung, 15th year
3 Williams, The Middle Kingdom, vol. 1, pg. 68; Wu, Ancient Chinese Political Theories, pg. 287
4 Li Chi, XXI, 2
elaborate technicalities of ceremony, and the honorific terms of compliment and self-depreciation used in conversation and correspondence. "The whole theory and practice of the use of honorific terms," says Smith, "so bewildering, not to say maddening, to the Occidental, is simply that these expressions help to keep in view those fixed relations of graduated superiority which are regarded as essential to the conservation of society."¹

The obligations of respectful and submissive politeness required of younger brothers in relation to their elder brothers in the family often merge, as the foregoing quotation shows, into exhortations on the reverential courtesy due elders in general. The latter are 'hsien sheng,' those born previous to one,² a term now used to denote 'Mr.,' and the younger are 'hou sheng,' the after-born.³ In this respect also, 't'i' is like its associated virtue 'hsiao;' fraternal submission like filial piety is not only a family virtue but has an inclusive character. "The Master said, The filial piety with which the superior man serves his parents may be transferred as loyalty to the ruler; the fraternal duty with which he serves his elder brother may be transferred as submissive deference to elders."⁴ It is in the family that these comprehensive virtues, the foundation of the social morality of Confucianism, are learned.⁵ Respect for, and subordination to, elder brothers teaches reverence for old age and submission to superiors in the wider sphere outside the family. "Therefore, the ruler, without going beyond his family, completes the lessons for the state. There is filial piety, by which the sovereign should be served. There is fraternal submission by which elders and superiors should be served."⁶ "The Master said, The laying the foundation of love in the love of parents teaches people concord. The laying the foundation of reverence in the reverence of elders teaches the people obedience . . . Filial piety in the service of parents, and obedience in the discharge of orders can be displayed throughout the kingdom,  

¹ Smith, Chinese Characteristics, pg. 36  
² Lun Yê, II, 8  
³ Lun Yê, IX, 22  
⁴ Hsiao Ching, XIV  
⁵ Martin, The Lore of Cathay, pg. 212; Kulp, Country Life in South China, pg. 108  
⁶ Ta Hsêh, IX
and they will everywhere take effect."  

"The filial son should serve one twice as old as himself as he serves his father, one ten years older than himself as an elder brother; with one five years older he should walk shoulder to shoulder, but a little behind him."  

If one thus "reverently orders his own conduct" and is "observant of propriety" then "all within the four seas" will regard him as a brother.

From earliest times the Chinese have venerated and honored old age. "Anciently," says the Book of Rites, "the sovereigns of the line of Yu honored virtue and highly esteemed age; the sovereigns of Hsia honored rank and highly esteemed age; under Yin they honored riches, and highly esteemed age; under Chou they honored kinship and highly esteemed age. Yu, Hsia, Yin and Chou produced the greatest kings that have appeared under Heaven, and there was not one of them who neglected age. For long has honor been paid to years under the sky; to pay it is next to the service of parents."  

Therefore "when the son of Heaven was on a tour of inspection" he "first visited those who were a hundred years old," and "he did not dare to pass by" without seeing "those of eighty and ninety." Why did they give honor to the old? "Because of their approximation to the position of parents. They showed reverence to the aged because of their approximation to the position of elder brothers." "Abundance of years" in the opinion of the Chinese is one of the things most to be desired. An early poet rejoices in the prospect of being blessed with "the eyebrows of longevity." Archeologists have found in the inscriptions on the Chou bronzes the prayer for long life next frequent to the desire for sons. The most complimentary terms used in every-day conversation carry the prefix 'lao,' old, aged, as a polite form of address denoting honor and respect. Thus even a young person may be

1 Li Chi, XXI, 1  
2 Li Chi, I, 1, ii  
3 Lun Yu, XII, 5  
4 Li Chi, XXX, 2  
5 loc. cit.; op. Li Chi, XXVII  
6 Li Chi, XXX, 1  
7 Mayers, The Chinese Reader's Manual, part 2, no. 60  
8 Shih Ching, Sacred Books of the East, vol. 3, pgs. 345, 346  
9 Creel, The Birth of China, pg. 333
called 'lao hsiem sheng,' venerable sir, or 'lao t'ai t'ai,' venerable lady, by someone requesting a favor, or a teacher of any age may be called 'lao shih,' venerable instructor, and the country people commonly designate God as 'lao t'ien yeh,' the Venerable Heavenly Gentleman. It is the old in Chinese society that enjoy life to the full and receive honors and flattery and veneration. China is an old man's Paradise.¹

THE CHRISTIAN APPRAISAL

The Christian ethic has little that bears directly on this relationship of elder brother and younger brother, which is a peculiarity of Confucian social concepts. Two Biblical stories of elder and younger brothers come to mind, those of Esau and Jacob, and the elder brother and the prodigal son, and they are instructive. On the general relation of brothers, irrespective of their age, Christ taught that brothers should exercise a charitable judgment of each other.² He indicated how they should deal with each other's faults,³ and said that no matter how many times one sinned and repented he should be forgiven.⁴ The brother who is angry and refuses to be reconciled is in danger ultimately of "the hell of fire."⁵

The word "brother" in the New Testament signifies most frequently not a relative, but a disciple of Christ or a fellow-Christian. Jesus said that anyone who followed Him was a brother of His.⁶ And this fraternal epithet thus instituted by Christ, came to be regularly used by the early Christians who called themselves "brethren," whether rich or poor, high or low, master or slave, -- a great family of God's sons.

Orderliness of conduct,⁷ respect and deference to elders,⁸ regard for the aged, so emphasized by Confucianism, are virtues also in the Christian view, and are particularly enjoined by Paul in speaking of church order. At the same time

¹ Lin, My Country and My People, pg. 186
² Matthew 7:1-5
³ Matthew 18:15-17
⁴ Luke 17:4; Matthew 18:21, 22
⁵ Matthew 5:21-24
⁶ Matthew 12:50; 26:40; op. Hebrews 2:11, 12
⁷ I Corinthians 14:20-40; Colossians 2:5; I Timothy 3:4, 12, 15; Titus 1:6; etc.
⁸ I Timothy 5:1, 2, 17, 19
the apostles also direct that elders are not "to lord it,"\(^1\) and two young men are both enjoined, "Let no man despise thy youth."\(^2\) The younger are commanded to "be subject unto the elder," but also "all of you," elder and younger alike, "gird yourselves with humility to serve one another."\(^3\) "Honour the king," and also "honour all men."\(^4\) Thus it is to be noted again that a balance is preserved by Christian teaching which contrasts with the one-sidedness of Confucian ethics. In each of the three family relationships which we have considered, the burden of obligation rests almost wholly on the subordinate member. The duties and responsibilities of fathers, husbands, and elder brothers which should correspond with, and match the obligations incumbent on, sons, wives, and younger brothers are conspicuously neglected, while filial piety, a wife's implicit obedience and submission, and fraternal subordination are shouted from the house-tops. Further, daughters, sisters, and mothers have no place in the scheme of five relationships.

The results in the family of this one-sided emphasis on fraternal submission are to foster the tyranny of elder brothers,\(^5\) and to teach the younger members respect but deprive them of personal liberty and independence of thought and action.\(^6\) The subordination is too complete and long-continued, for the younger brother though a grown man remains in subjection to his elders.\(^7\) The effects upon the Chinese race have been both good and bad. Great respect for authority, deference to elders, submission to those in power, have been among the virtues of the Chinese who are as a race orderly, docile and law-abiding.\(^8\) But the habitual submission to elders and immoderate veneration for age has destroyed such qualities as initiative, energy and sturdy independence, and made the Chinese ultra-conservative and antagonistic to change.\(^9\) "The authority of the old," as Russel has said, "has increased the tyranny of ancient custom."\(^10\) Both the good

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1 I Peter 5:3
2 I Timothy 4:12; Titus 2:15
3 I Peter 5:6
4 I Peter 2:17
5 Williams, China Yesterday and Today, pgs. 68-69
6 Smith, Chinese Characteristics, pgs. 227-228
7 Rudd, Chinese Social Origins, pg. 128
8 Smith, Chinese Characteristics, pgs. 237-241
9 ibid., chap. 14
10 Russel, The Problem of China, pg. 36
and the evil have been accentuated by the ceremonial etiquette of Confucianism which requires of everyone a continual consciousness and expression of the differences of priority and equality between man and man. This makes for courtesy and suavity, and also for rigid formality, repression and self-depreciation characteristic of Chinese social intercourse. Without relaxing the courtesy Christian social contacts are freer, friendlier and more spontaneous, because love of man is emphasized rather than external form, and each individual personality of whatever rank or class, or of whatever age, is regarded as having eternal value.

Having now concluded the family relationships, it will be in order to summarize here our appraisal of Chinese familism.

The foundation of the social morality of Confucianism is the family. The family is conceived to be the pattern of the state, and the family is the social unit upon which Chinese laws are based. Family virtues are the virtues emphasized by the Confucian moralists. A man's chief duty is toward his parents, and the family provides the chief moral sanction of Confucian ethics. Loyalty and devotion to the interests of the family take precedence in the Chinese mind over loyalty to any other group. It is, says Clennel, "a worship of the family."

Chinese familism has affected the whole social fabric and culture of the country. On its good side, the emphasis on the family has strengthened the ties of kinship and made for family solidarity, both in misfortune and in good fortune, and for social stability. Dr. Hu Shih, however, argues that the breaking-up of the old family is great gain, and says, "The Chinese family of old times rarely, if ever, possessed the valuable virtues which have sometimes been attributed to it, or read into it." The injurious effects of the patriarchal family system may be seen in relation to the individual, to society in general, and to the nation.

1 Smith, op. cit., chap 4
2 See what Dr. Wang Chung-hui, recently Chief Justice of China, says on this; Williams, China Yesterday and Today, pg. 56
3 Clennel, The Historical Development of Religion in China, pg. 47
4 Hu Shih, The Chinese Renaissance, pg. 108
Importance is placed on the family at the expense of the individual. As the family multiplies, the sons growing up and marrying, bringing their wives to live in the same joint household of their parents, and rearing their children there, the rule of the father extends over an enlarging group, and the sons to no matter what age, continue to be dependent minors living with their parents. The son is not his own master, cannot exercise his individual judgment, has no voice in the matter, for instance, of the choice of his wife, and turns his earnings into the common family purse. He is not a free agent, or a separate personality. "Where the parents are too self-centered and autocratic," says Lin, "it often deprives the young man of enterprise and initiative, and I consider this the most disastrous effect of the family system on Chinese character." Individual rights were non-existent.

The effect upon society in general has also been far-reaching. Family consciousness displaces social consciousness. Responsibility of each family and clan for its own members is recognized by all. If a criminal flees, the government seizes his family. The family is thus held responsible for the crimes of its members, and it depends on the nature of the crime how much the family suffers, and to what distance of relationship the hand of the law reaches. The same responsibility is valid in good fortune; the wealthy family member has a host of poor relatives living upon him. But family obligations and family interests are so emphasized that there is no recognition of obligations to outsiders. Until the advent of Christianity there were few public charities. A stranger drowned or fell sick by the wayside and no one proffered help. There is a general lack of sympathy, and an indifference to others. A proverb says, for instance,

2 Leong and Tao, Village and Town Life in China, pg. 11
3 Lin, My Country and My People, pgs. 176-177
4 Maogowan, Sidelights on Chinese Life, pgs. 27-29; Williams, China Yesterday and Today, pg. 61
5 Lin, My Country and My People, pg. 181; Martin, The Chinese, their Education, Philosophy and Letters, pg. 287
6 Stewart, Chinese Culture and Christianity, pgs. 105-106; Lin, op. cit., pgs. 176-180; Fitzgerald, China, pg. 51
7 Smith, Chinese Characteristics, chap. 21
"Do not detain a man of seventy to spend a night; do not ask an old man to sit down," the reason being that he might die in your house and the responsibility be on you. The growth of large families with a keen group consciousness has made for clan rivalry and deadly feuds, especially in South China. But for the same reason the Chinese have been rarely able to co-operate on any large scale. As Lin expresses it, indifference is one of the Chinese characteristics "that paralyze the Chinese people for organized action." This is not to ignore the existence of guilds, and associations of various trades. With the laissez-faire policy of government, mercantile and other trades, even the beggars, had to look out for their own interest. But general social service, or team work in the promotion of public welfare projects, village or municipal improvements, and so forth, are unknown. "To a Chinese," says Lin, "social work always looks like 'meddling with other people's business,'" and he points out that "the word 'society' does not exist as an idea in Chinese thought. In the Confucian social and political philosophy we see a direct transition from the family, 'chia,' to the state, 'kuo,' as successive stages of human organization." Familism breeds selfishness and clamorishness, so that the Chinese instinctively dislike a foreigner, who may be a fellow-countryman from another province.

Familism has made nationalism, patriotism and public spirit impossible. This is seen for instance in the extent of nepotism that corrupts Chinese political life. Few officials can resist the temptation to benefit their family by their position, and justification for it is found in the Confucian Classics. The mandarin places relatives in sinecure posts and unblushingly "squeezes" the people to increase his family fortunes. And connections of relationship and

1 Edwards, A Collection of Chinese Proverbs, No. 21
2 Lin, op. cit., pg. 57
3 Williams, China Yesterday and Today, chap. 9
4 Goodnow, China, an Analysis, pgs. 186-188; Lin, op. cit., pg. 203
5 Smith, Village Life in China, pgs. 42-43
6 Lin, op. cit., pgs. 173-176
7 Douglas, Society in China, pgs. 142-143; Smith Chinese Characteristics, chap. 12; Stewart, Chinese Culture and Christianity, pg. 106
8 Smith, Chinese Characteristics, chap. 13
10 Meng Tzu, V, 2, iii; Sheng Yu, I
friendship made impartial justice and administration rare. 1 For this reason the Manchu government forbade a magistrate to serve in his native province, but this had little effect. 2 If a magistrate was in arrears in paying up taxes the authorities sometimes searched his house, which meant not his actual residence, but his paternal home where evidence of his financial condition would be found. 3 And the sentiments of the people were so narrowed down to the family, that while the Chinese had a passionate love for home, they experienced no love for the empire. 4 The breakdown of the old type of family institution in modern China is giving rise to nationalism and patriotism, and civic morality. 5

"Filial piety and the strength of the family generally," says Russel, "are perhaps the weakest point in Confucian ethics." 6 With this estimate we agree, adding, however, the reservation that from the Christian point of view there is a still more fundamental deficiency in Confucian social ethics. This will be considered in the concluding chapter.

1 Lin, op. cit., pgs. 181-182; Stewart, Chinese Culture and Christianity, pgs. 106-107
2 Williams, China Yesterday and Today, pg. 152
3 Doolittle, Social Life of the Chinese, vol. 1, pgs. 313-314
4 Maogowan, Men and Manners in Modern China, pg. 27; Latourette, The Development of China, pg. 105
5 Hu, The Chinese Renaissance, pg. 37; Lin, op. cit., pgs. 184-185
CHAPTER VI
FRIEND AND FRIEND

The fifth human relationship taken account of by Confucian ethics is the relationship of friends. A prominent place is thus given to friendship by Chinese moralists.¹ What the Classics have to say on the subject may be classified under three heads: the benefits of friendship, the choice of friends, and the qualities requisite to the friend and friend relationship.

"Confucius said, There are three things men find enjoyment in which are advantageous. . . . To find enjoyment in the discriminating study of ceremonies and music; to find enjoyment in speaking of the goodness of others; to find enjoyment in having many worthy friends: -- these are advantageous."² The benefits of having such friends are the mutual development of goodness of character.

"The superior man. . . . by their friendship helps his virtue."³ "The Master said, He who aims to be a man of complete virtue. . . . frequents the company of men of principle that he may be rectified."⁴ "To urge one another to what is good by reproofs," said Mencius, "is the way of friends."⁵ But in pointing out his faults one must use tact. "The Master said, Faithfully admonish your friend, and skillfully lead him on. If you find you cannot, stop. Do not disgrace yourself."⁶ For "between friend, frequent reproofs made the friendship distant."⁷

Those who are alike in their ideals and circumstances naturally associate together. "The scholar whose virtue is most distinguished in a village shall make friends of all the virtuous scholars in the village. The scholar whose virtue is most distinguished throughout a state shall make friends of all the virtuous scholars of that state. The scholar whose virtue is most distinguished throughout the empire shall make friends of all the virtuous scholars

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¹ Legge, The Religions of China, pg. 107
² Lun Ŭ, XVI, 5
³ Lun Ŭ, XII, 24
⁴ Lun Ŭ, I, 14
⁵ Meng tzu, IV, 2, xxx
⁶ Lun Ŭ, XII, 23
⁷ Lun Ŭ, IV, 26
of the empire."¹ No good man will be without friends, virtue attracts them. "The Master said, Virtue is not left to stand alone. It will certainly have neighbours."² But there is need also for discrimination in the choice of friends, for some are helpful and others harmful. "Confucius said, There are three friendships which are advantageous, and three which are injurious. Friendship with the upright; friendship with the sincere; and friendship with the man of much observation: -- these are advantageous. Friendship with the man of specious airs; friendship with the insinuatingly soft; and friendship with the glib tongued: -- these are injurious."³ Therefore the sage advised Tzu Kung to associate with the good who will help to perfect his character. "When you are living in any state, take service with the most worthy among its great officers, and make friends of the most virtuous among its scholars."⁴ "Friendships of festivity lead to opposition to one's master. Friendships with the dissolute lead to the neglect of one's learning."⁵ So "while exhibiting a comprehensive love for all men, let him ally himself with the good."⁶ And since the object of friendship is to improve one's character one should "have no friends not equal to one's self," that is, not as good as one's self.⁷

Of the five virtues, the fifth, 'hsin,' sincerity, should especially characterize the association of friends. "The philosopher Tseng said, I daily examine myself. . . .whether, in intercourse with friends, I may have been insincere."⁸ Similarly Confucius said that one of his aspirations was "in regard to friends to show them sincerity."⁹ This sincerity refers to what one says, -- "in his intercourse with his friends, his words are sincere."¹⁰ But it goes

¹ Meng tzu, V, 2, viii; cp. Lun Yu, XII, 24
² Lun Yu, IV, 25
³ Lun Yu, XVI, 4
⁴ Lun Yu, V, 24
⁵ Li Chi, XVI
⁶ Lun Yu, I, 6 (Soothill)
⁷ Lun Yu, I, 8; IX, 24
⁸ Lun Yu, I, 4
⁹ Lun Yu, V, 25
¹⁰ Lun Yu, I, 7
beyond words. "To conceal resentment against a person and appear friendly with him" was conduct of which Confucius was "ashamed."1 "If one is not trusted by his friends he will not get the confidence of his sovereign," and "the way to being trusted by one's friends" is by "being obedient to one's parents."2 Faithfulness and mutual confidence are thus basic to friendship. However, the Chinese are not noted for sincerity3 and this deficiency is fostered by the suave politeness of their manners. Sharing one's possessions is also an ideal of friendship.4 "I should like, said Tzu Lu, "having chariots and horses, and light fur dresses, to share them with my friends, and though they should spoil them, I would not be displeased."5 Further, friends should not presume on superior advantages. "Friendship," said Mencius, "should be maintained without any presumption on the ground of one's superior age, or station, or relatives. Friendship with a man is friendship with his virtue, and does not admit of assumptions of superiority."6

Confucius said, "to set the example in behaving to a friend: to this I have not attained."7 But his disciples tell us that he gave practical proofs of friendship. "When any of his friends died if he had no relatives who could be depended on for the necessary offices, he would say, I will bury him."8

"Friends, however intimate, and however sincere," say Leong and Tao, "are, in the minds of the Chinese, one step further apart than brothers, for we hold, theoretically at any rate, that brothers are the 'hands and feet of one body,' that is, members of the same body."9 So the practice exists in China of two friends adopting each other as relatives. They swear to mutual brotherhood and

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1 Lun Yü, V, 24
2 Chung Yung, XX, 17; Meng tzu, IV, 1, xii
3 Smith, Chinese Characteristics, chap. 25
4 Mateer, op. cit., vol. 1, pg. 319; Faber, A Systematical Digest of the Doctrines of Confucius, pgs. 85-86
5 Lun Yü, V, 25
6 Meng tzu, V, 2, iii
7 Chung Yung, XIII
8 Lun Yü, X, 15
9 Leong and Tao, Village and Town Life in China, pg. 88
faithfulness, and may exchange documents, and ratify the vow by exchanging presents or tendering each other a feast. They are known as 'kan hsiung ti,' what we might call sworn brothers, and their two families then become 'kan ch' in chia,' sworn relatives. Sometimes adults will adopt children in this way, sustaining a relation to them something like that of godparents. There also exist many secret societies, or brotherhoods, some of which have at times in Chinese history been very powerful, and played an important part in Chinese life, such as the Ko Lao Hui, or Association of Elder Brothers, the San Ho Hui, or Triad Society, the White Lily, and the White Cloud Societies and so forth. The members are 'meng hsiung ti,' or sworn brothers. Some of these associations exist as fraternities, to give mutual assistance of one kind or another to members. Others are of a religious nature, having at first no political motives. Sooner or later many of them become political in aim, and engage in mysterious intrigue, and come into conflict with the government.

THE CHRISTIAN APPRAISAL

The Chinese moralists not only give a prominent place to friendship by including it in their scheme of five relationships, but they say some very true things on the subject. Their view of friendship as an association for mutual helpfulness in developing goodness of character is a very high one. The emphasis that Confucius and Lencius place on virtue and the cultivation of personal character are among the best features of the ethical teaching of the Confucian school, even though the Confucian sage and the Christian saint are two different ideals.

1 Leong and Tao, op. cit., pgs. 88-89; Lateer, op. cit., vol. 1, pg. 185
2 Mateer, loc. cit., but op. Leong and Tao, loc. cit.
3 Latourette, The Chinese, Their History and Culture, vol. 2, pgs. 199-201; Clennel, The Historical Development of Religion in China, pgs. 84-87
4 Wieger, Moral Tenets and Customs in China, pgs. 512-523
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The question has been much discussed, both among Chinese and Westerners, as to whether or not Confucianism is a religion, and opposite sides have been taken with equal emphasis. Thus Giles says, that Confucianism "is not, and never has been, a religion, being nothing more than a system of social and political morality," while E. T. Williams asserts, "There is no foundation in truth for the statement sometimes heard that 'Confucianism is not a religion, but a system of ethics.'" The Chinese speak of it as one of the 'san chiao,' which is loosely translated into English as 'the three religions,' a phrase which associates it with Buddhism and Taoism. But this does not prejudice the issue, for 'chiao' means strictly 'teaching' or 'a system of teaching.' The question is to be decided not by its Chinese label, but by its contents. If by 'Confucianism' we mean the teaching and practices of the Confucian school it certainly includes the religious observances we have already mentioned; ancestor worship, the official worship of Shang Ti and many lesser divinities of nature, and gods, and the cult of Confucius himself.

But the assertion that Confucianism is not a religion is not without basis. It is not a religious movement, in the sense of an agitation, and never was a missionary religion. It has had no priests, and sends out no agents to convert others. It officially disapproved of the other faiths of China, but only at times actively opposed them. Confucianists were often at the same time, and without disapprobation, Buddhists or Taoists as well. Beyond occasional

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1 Soothill, The Three Religions of China, pg. 42; Johnston, Confucianism and Modern China, pgs. 95-96; Legge, The Religions of China, pg. 5
2 Giles, China and the Chinese, pg. 143; The Religions of Ancient China, pgs. 36-37
3 Williams, China Yesterday and Today, pg. 249
4 Hu, The Chinese Renaissance, pg. 79
5 op. Williams, op. cit., pg. 249; Du Bose, The Dragon, Image and Demon, pg. 38
6 Shryock, The Origin and Development of the State Cult of Confucius, pg. 226
7 Moule, New China and Old, pg. 154
comparatively petty persecutions it has given no display of religious fanati-
cism or zeal and it has produced no martyrs. The Confucianist has nothing of
the crusader or missionary in his make-up, or ideal. He is, says Martin, "A
Sadducee in creed and an epicure in practice." The Confucian school was nat-
uralistic, and the intelligentsia and official class of China agnostic and
worldly-minded. So that Confucianism has not been a vital religious force.
In so far as it is a religion at all, it is only what Inge calls, "religion at
a very low temperature."

The great master of the Confucian school, whose views stereotyped sub-
sequent Chinese belief and whose character became the ideal of perfect excel-
ence, was not a very religious man. He was certainly no prophet. His tem-
perament lacked the dynamic qualities of fervor, self-abandonment to a vision,
and creative power, necessary in a religious leader, and he was wanting in
faith. He claimed no spiritual ecstasies, or divine revelation. "He saw no
visions and dreamt no dreams," says Soothill. "The life that now is was his
principal text, immortality he left undiscussed. The great questions of God
and the soul, that have stirred the noblest thinkers, Greek, Jew and Christian
evoked no enthusiasm in him; the higher morals which found vague expression in
Lao tzu, and majestic portrayal in Jesus Christ were foreign to his rigid mind,
which, lacking the entrancing ravishment of the Infinite, demanded rules fixed
and inelastic." He had moral earnestness, and he was a moral teacher of a
high order, but not a religious teacher, like Gautama or Mohammed. That he

1 Shryock, op. cit., pg. 226
2 Giles, Confucianism and its Rivals, pg. 1
3 Martin, The Chinese, etc., pg. 28
4 Du Bose, op. cit., pg. 47; Moule, op. cit., pgs. 151-153; Ross, The
Original Religion of China, pg. 66
5 Inge, Christian Ethics and Modern Problems, pg. 25; op. Lin, My Country
and My People, pg. 104
6 Z. K. Zia in Stewart, Chinese Culture and Christianity, pg. 217; Shryock,
op. cit., pg. 223; Soothill, The Three Religions of China, pgs. 42-43
7 cp. Parker, China and Religion, pgs. 55-62
8 Soothill, The Analects of Confucius, pg. 57
9 Gray, China, vol. 1, pg. 80
was awed by the forces of Nature, \(^1\) believed in Fate, \(^2\) and in a Supreme Power which controlled his destiny, \(^3\) is evident. He spoke infrequently of "Heaven" in a vague way, \(^4\) but he had no sure sense of the personality of God, \(^5\) nor of any vital relation between the Power and man, \(^6\) and mentioned religious matters only incidentally. It seems clear from the Shu Ching and Shih Ching that a more unreserved faith existed before his time. \(^7\) He did not repudiate this ancient faith, but he did not rise to the level of it. \(^8\) He left the evidence of it in the Classics he transmitted, but whether they expressed his own beliefs seems doubtful. He advocated only the worship of his own ancestors as the religion for the ordinary man, and engaged in it faithfully himself, \(^9\) as we have already mentioned, though he had no great belief in the spirits. "He sacrificed as if they were present, he sacrificed to the gods as if the gods were present." \(^10\) Confucius was reserved and evasive when speaking of the spiritual world, and discouraged the theological inquiries of his disciples. "When Chi Lu asked about his duty to the spirits the Master replied, While still unable to do your duty to the living how can you do your duty to the dead?" Chi Lu persisted, "I venture to ask about death." Confucius responded, "Not understanding life how can you understand death?" \(^11\) His disciples report that their Master would not talk about "extraordinary things," or about "the supernatural." \(^12\)

1 Lun Yü, X
2 Hu Shih, "Religion and Philosophy in Chinese History," Symposium on Chinese Culture, chap. 2
3 Wilhelm, Kung tse, Leben und Werk, pgs. 164-165; Maclagan, Chinese Religious Ideas, pgs. 35 on
4 Giles, The Religions of Ancient China, pgs. 36-37; Maclagan, op. cit., pgs. 19, 32 on
5 Legge, The Religions of China, pg. 139
6 Faber, A Systematical Digest of the Doctrines of Confucius, pg. 124
7 Ross, The Original Religion of China, pgs. 28-29, 59
10 Lun Yü, III, 12; Wilhelm, The Soul of China, pg. 293; Hu Shih, "Religion and Philosophy in Chinese History."
11 Lun Yü, XI, 11
He was no mystic but of an eminently rational and practical turn of mind. He was not interested in religion and regarded it as vain and a waste of time to peer into the unseen. His concern was with this life and its problems, particularly in their political bearings. "Fan Ch'ih asked what constituted wisdom. The Master said, To give one's self earnestly to the duties due to men, and, while respecting spiritual beings, to keep aloof from them, may be called wisdom. Many different estimates have been formed of Confucius' religious attitude and belief. He is usually regarded as unreligious and agnostic, but there are some who endeavour to defend him against this charge. It is difficult to see the justification for Soothill's statement that Confucius was "a thoroughly religious man," and not to think rather that Dr. Hu Shih is nearer the mark when he writes of Confucius, "our first great philosopher," as "a humanist and an agnostic," and "a founder of naturalism." Very much the same may be said of the religious views of Mencius. But whatever their personal views in these matters, which it is not within the scope of this thesis to discuss, it is plain that the Chinese sages were in no sense religious leaders or teachers.

Nor did they found a religion. Those religious elements of Confucianism which have been enumerated, did not originate with Confucius; some of them, as ancestor worship, were traditional in his day, and others, as the worship of
the sage himself, arose after his decease. But it is said by some that Confu-
cius was the founder of a new religion; Hu Shih says that he made the doctrine
of filial piety into a religion. So he did, in a sense. The difficulty seems
to lie in the notorious fact that 'religion' cannot be satisfactorily defined.

But using the word in the same sense as when we speak of Buddhism or Christian-
ity as religions, it can not be said that Confucius founded a new religion.

Elsewhere in his writings Hu Shih says the same. "Confucius founded no religion.
Contemporary testimony is to the effect that his immediate followers were frank-
ly atheistic." 2

The same unreligious quality characterizes the Chinese Classics. They
are not religious books, like the Koran, and can be classed with "The Sacred
Books of the East," not on account of their contents, but because of the esteem
in which they are held. The Four Books obviously have the same tone as the
sages whose views are recorded there. There is nothing transcendental, mystical
or prophetic about the teachings of Confucius and Mencius. 3 In saying that they
do not have a religious quality we do not mean that they are irreligious. It
has already been pointed out that the Confucian Canon is remarkable among the
religious literature of ancient nations in that mythological stories are entire-
ly absent, vice is not deified, and the whole is on a high moral and rational
plane. 4 They are unreligious rather than irreligious. The Five Classics have
a somewhat different character from the Four Books. Here in the Classics of
History and Poetry is preserved evidence of the more robust belief of pre-
Confucian antiquity; 5 and in the Li Chi, the book of ritual and etiquette of
the Confucian school, many sections are taken up with describing ceremonies of

1 Hu Shih, "Religion and Philosophy in Chinese History; Williams, China
Yesterday and Today, pg. 251; op. Shryock, op. cit., pg. 11
2 Hu Shih, "Confucianism," Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences
3 Walshe, "Confucius," Hastings Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics; Schmitt,
Konfuzius, pg. 174
4 Du Bose, op. cit., pgs. 43-44
5 Ross, The Original Religion of China
a religious nature. But the Five Classics, no more than the Four Books, teach religion or are primarily concerned with religion. "The oral and literary work of the Confucians," as Shryock says, "cannot be called religious propaganda." 

It follows, when we consider the ethical system contained in the Classics and taught by moralists of the humanistic temper of the Confucian sages, that Confucian ethics are not religious ethics. Confucianism is not an unethical religion, for its chief interest is ethical, and it has never been allied with immorality as Hinduism. Neither is it strictly an irreligious ethic, for it does not oppose or explicitly deny religion. Nor is it a system of morality entirely disassociated from religion, such as modern ethical societies claim to be, for in its center is ancestor worship as a form of filial piety, unless it be denied, as some strangely do, that this cult has a religious character. But the relation of religion and morality in Confucianism is not vital and inseparable. As a system of ethics it is indifferent to, and seeks no help from alliance with, religion. It teaches what are the rules of propriety of conduct for this earthly life but has nothing to say about the spiritual and the unseen, and manifests no recognition that human existence has a setting in another world. It defines the relationships of man to man, but does not relate man to God. Confucianism, as Lin puts it, has an "attached-to-the-earth quality" and is "of the earth, earth-born." It may be correctly characterized as a secular and naturalistic ethic.

1 Williams, China Yesterday and Today, pgs. 249-250
2 Shryock, op. cit., pg. 11
3 cp. Inge, Christian Ethics and Modern Problems, pg. 379
4 Garvie, The Christian Ideal for Human Society, pg. 26
5 Suzuki, A Brief History of Early Chinese Philosophy, pg. 48
6 Martin, The Lore of Cathay, pg. 212; Faber, A Systematical Digest of the Doctrines of Confucius, pg. 38; Goodnow, China, an Analysis, pgs. 109-110, 127; Legge, "Confucius," Encyclopedia Britannica
7 Lin, op. cit., pg. 104
8 Secularism is defined by B. Groethuysen, "Secularism," Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, as "the attempt to establish an autonomous sphere of knowledge, purged of supernatural fideistic presuppositions." cp. Legge, "Confucius," Encyclopedia Britannica
From this point of view it attacked Buddhism as other-worldly, and in
doing so most clearly reveals its own nature. Thus a Chinese critic of the
12th century says, "What we should attend to is precisely that span of life
from birth to death. Buddhism completely ignores this life and devotes itself
to speculating about what goes before birth and after death." To the same
effect is the following attack in the Sacred Edict on the transcendental doc­
trines of Buddhism and Taoism: "From time immemorial to the present what has
been orthodoxy? Nothing more than (the observance of) these Five Relation­
ships -- emperor and minister, father and son, husband and wife, elder and
younger brother, friend and companion. No matter whether men are clever or
simple, not one of these relationships may be dispensed with, not a single per­
son but should practise them... Now such people are unaware that if men
leave these Five Relationships and indulge in senseless talk, though (they
speak of) all sorts of marvellous things, these are but weapons which destroy
men, poisons which bewitch them; it is the bounden duty of you soldiers and
people to reject them in deed and in truth... If men were aware that at the
present time there are two "Living Buddhas" placed in their own homes, why need
they go elsewhere to worship on the mountains and to seek happiness from idols?
The common saying puts it well, "If you fulfil your duty to your parents at
home, what need is there to go to a distance to burn incense?" If you recog­
nise that reason is true, and know that the mind enlightened -- that is heaven;
the mind in darkness -- that is hell; you will then as a matter of course have
a ruling principle, and it will be impossible for you to be beguiled away by
heretical sects. If your character is upright, all obliquity will retire of
its own accord: if the family is at peace troubles will become blessings. To
be perfectly loyal to the Ruler, and to fulfil your filial duties to the utmost,
is the whole duty of man and the way to obtain the blessing of heaven. If you

1 Quoted by Hu Shih, "The Indianization of China," Independence, Convergence
and Borrowing, pg. 229
seek no happiness that does not pertain to your lot in life, nor meddle with matters that do not concern you, but simply mind your own business, you will enjoy the blessing of the gods accordingly. Let the farmer just look after his farming, and the soldier go on his rounds at the guard station -- each minding his own occupation, and attending to his own duties -- and the Empire will be at peace, and the people cheerful as a matter of course."¹

Such then is the whole duty of man according to orthodox Confucian teaching, -- each person in his station fulfilling the duties of his various relationships with others, nothing more.² "If besides these, beyond your proper lot," says Wang Yu-po, "you go about to seek for some refined and mysterious dogmas and to engage in strange and marvellous performances, you will show yourselves to be very bad men."³

Here, apart from all details of differences which have been considered in the previous chapters, is the great cleavage between Christianity and Confucianism, and from this fundamental dissimilarity has come many of the detailed differences. Christianity is like Buddhism in the respect condemned by Confucianism. It is intensely interested in the great questions about God and salvation, in spiritual values and eternal destinies, and the bearing of these on the present life. Its true position thus lies between the entire absorption in the next life of Buddhism, and the entire absorption with this life of Confucianism. And Christian ethics are religious ethics.⁴ The religious and the ethical elements of the Christian Gospel are so vitally united that they cannot be detached without destroying both, though the attempt has often been made. How the apostle Paul regarded the relation is clear from each of the great hortatory passages in his epistles which begin with o3v, indicating that the following exhortations to well-doing are based on the preceding doctrinal teaching.⁵ Christian theology

¹ Sheng Yü, VII
² Legge, The Religions of China, pgs. 104-106
³ Paraphrase on Sheng Yü, VII
⁴ Inge, Christian Ethics and Modern Problems, pg. 10
⁵ Romans 12:1; Galatians 5:1; Ephesians 4:1; Colossians 3:1; I Thessalonians 4:1
has ethical fruit, and Christian ethics have doctrinal root. The New Testament ethic, as Professor Scott has shown, is bound up with faith in God; morality and religion constantly merge and can at no point be separated.¹ From the Christian viewpoint, therefore, a fundamental deficiency of the Confucian system which vitiates the whole, excellent though it is in many respects, is that Confucian ethics has no religious basis.²

The consequences of this secularity are obvious. Duties toward God, incomparably the most important in the Christian view, find no place in the Confucian system of ethics,³ and parents take the place of Deity.⁴ Instead of man's chief end being to glorify God, the chief end of man is to serve his parents and to shed lustre on his ancestors. In place of such motives of conduct as Paul appeals to, to please God, to walk consistently with a new relationship to God,⁵ and sanctions based on thought of God's pleasure or displeasure, Confucianism finds its incentives to goodness, and standards and sanctions of morality in consideration of "the living divinities placed in the home," and a son's obligations to them. Pre-Confucian antiquity had a doctrine of the ruler's responsibility to Heaven for his reign, but Confucius did not prominently reassert or develop this thought. He taught no relationship of man to God,⁶ nor man's personal responsibility to Him, and disallowed the right of the ordinary man to worship Shang Ti,⁷ the Supreme Ruler. Man's responsibility instead is to his parents and family, and worship is paid to his ancestors. Confucian ethics has nothing better than this basis of morality in filial piety to reenforce its many good maxims or to make binding and obligatory its moral injunctions. It could claim no supernatural authority, nor offer the stimulus of

¹ Scott, The Ethical Teaching of Jesus, pgs. 38-41
² Legge, The Religions of China, pg. 139
³ Edkins, Religion in China, pg. 130; Legge, The Religions of China, pg. 106; Martin, The Lore of Cathay, pg. 212
⁴ Hu, The Chinese Renaissance, pg. 82
⁵ C. A. Scott, New Testament Ethics, pgs. 86 on
⁶ Faber, A Systematical Digest of the Doctrines of Confucius, pg. 124, no. 1
⁷ Legge, The Religions of China, pg. 70
religious belief. And with its counsels of perfection it supplied no effective means to carry them out.¹ This is a fatal lack of dynamic power.

The ideal personality envisioned by Confucian ethics, the 'chün tzu,' or man of perfect virtue, is well described by Gray. "The saint of Confucius is neither the absorbed ascetic of Buddha nor the contemplative recluse of Lao tze. He is the dignified head of the well-ordered family; the dutiful and patriotic citizen who seeks after righteousness in his doings and propriety in his conduct, distinguished by reverence towards his parents and towards the emperor, both of whom virtually stand between him and God."² The Confucian sage, it is clear, has none of the spirituality or piety of the Christian saint. He is a self-sufficient man of the world. And the means proposed for attaining the ethical ideal are simple imitation of the ruler of the empire. There is no insight into any fatal weakness in human nature that makes the achievement of moral perfection impossible without the help of a Power outside of one's self.³

Matthew Arnold's definition of religion as "morality touched with emotion"⁴ is certainly inadequate, but observes correctly that morality associated with religious incentives and motives is touched with feeling by them. The secular ethics of Confucianism seem dry and coldly rational. They make no appeal to the heart and do not stir the conscience. Confucian thought is not altogether formal and external.⁵ The sages made much of ceremonies but they demanded reverence also. "Always and in everything let there be reverence" is the opening sentence of the Book of Rites.⁶ But the great emphasis on form and on 'li,' rules of propriety,⁷ readily produced an artificiality and externalism, as the Taoist critics said. Confucian ethics became a code of rules to be meticulously conformed to by long training, and not a spontaneous expression of the spirit.

¹ cp. Ross, The Changing Chinese, pgs. 256-257
² Gray, China, vol. 1, pg. 81
³ Faber, op. cit., pg. 124, no. 4; Soothill, op. cit., pgs. 247-250
⁴ Arnold, Literature and Dogma, pg. 21
⁵ Maclagan, Chinese Religious Ideas, pg. 51
⁶ Li Chi, I, 1, 1
⁷ Ross, The Original Religion of China, pgs. 229, 237, 247
within. "Christ," as Davidson says, "laid stress on the heart as the seat of morality." Right action proceeds from a right heart, and moral conduct is conditional on inward renewal.

"Confucianism," says John, "has dried up the religious sentiment in the Chinese mind, and left it the most worldly and unspiritual thing imaginable." There is abundant testimony to the worldly and unreligious character of the Chinese people. The Confucian educated class was largely humanistic and materialistic. But the lack of spiritual elements in Confucianism, and its silence on great religious issues could not always satisfy even them. For the satisfaction of their spiritual natures the Chinese turned to Buddhism and Taoism.

Giles recommends that a revised Confucianism be made the state religion of the Republic of China under the battle cry, "There is no God but God and Confucius is His Prophet." Similarly Professor Johnston would excise what is dead in the system, though he doubts whether there is anything really dead. But what Confucianism most vitally needs, if it is to serve modern China, is not mere subtraction but addition, the infusion, if possible, of a new spirit and life. It is difficult to become enthusiastic for such a project. While grateful for the truths Confucianism has so firmly grasped and taught throughout all these centuries, and recognizing that Confucius and Mencius have few equals among the world's great moralists, yet we hold that the Chinese would

1 Davidson, Christian Ethics, pgs. 50-55
2 Thompson, Griffith John, pgs. 292, 377
3 Giles, The Civilization of China, pgs. 57-58; Eu Shih, The Chinese Renaissance, pgs. 78-81
4 Lin, op. cit., pgs. 101-104, 106, 115, 121; Eu, op. cit., pg. 78
5 Z. K. Zia quoted by Stewart, Chinese Culture and Christianity, pg. 217
6 Moule, New China and Old, pgs. 151-154
7 Nevius, China and the Chinese, pg. 149; Legge, The Religions of China, pgs. 176-177; Walshe, "Confucius," Hastings's Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics; Soothill, The Three Religions of China, pg. 3
8 Giles, Confucianism and its Rivals, pgs. 264-265
9 Johnston, Confucianism and Modern China, pg. 197
do far better to accept the offer of the Christian Gospel which conserves all
the good in Confucian morality, without its defects, and is unique in its
possession of a dynamic power, an incomparable ideal, and a satisfying hope.
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