

Confucius

SAID . . .

He has been called the wisest man in China. But who was Confucius, and what did he really say?

By Mona Chiang

Have you ever heard someone begin a sentence with the words: “As Confucius said”? For more than 2,000 years, the sayings of the ancient Chinese teacher Confucius (*kuhn-FYOO-shuhs*) have been quoted in every language. Confucius himself has been called one of the wisest men who ever lived. But who he was and what he actually said are something of a mystery.

“There is a lot of myth and legend surrounding Confucius,” says Jonathan Lipman, a professor of history at Mount Holyoke College. “We actually have very little information about his life and times.”

What is known about Confucius comes mostly from his students. Confucius taught through informal

conversation, leaving no written lessons. But he attracted many **disciples** (followers) who collected his teachings and wrote them down. These teachings, which stress the need to develop character, healthy social relationships, and a sense of responsibility, became the core of the philosophy known as **Confucianism**.

The most important text of Confucianism is *The Analects*. It was not written by Confucius, but contains many sayings collected by his earliest students. On young people, for example, “The Master said, ‘A youth, when at home, should be **filial** (an obedient child), and abroad, respectful to his elders. He should be earnest and truthful. He should overflow in love to all, and cultivate the friendship of the good.’”

Confucius became a teacher.

During this time, China was in a state of chaos. The Zhou **dynasty** (ruling family) had little control over the vast country. Instead, rival lords competed for power and land, and waged war on each other.

The bloodshed prompted many teachers and philosophers to devise ways to bring peace to China. They wandered from city to city, hoping to spread their ideas for reform. Confucius was one of these traveling teachers.

“He tried to offer his ideas to the lords, but none of them were interested,” says Lipman. “He never succeeded in becoming an official at court or a confidant to important people.”

Master Teachings

Disappointed, Confucius returned home to open a school. Through his teachings, he sought to better society by encouraging proper conduct between human beings.

The core of Confucianism is the

Word to Know

• **Confucianism:** A philosophy based on the ideas of Confucius, who believed that good social and family relationships would lead to a moral and just society.

Wise Beginnings

Confucius, or *Kong Fuzi* in Chinese, is believed to have lived from 551 to 479 B.C. He was born into a noble family in northeastern China. After his parents died, the young

idea of **benevolence**, or kindness. According to Confucius, one becomes benevolent by following a set of **guidelines** (rules) of acceptable behavior. Through the practice of these **rituals** (repetitive acts), one can learn to become a better person and lead a good life.

Confucius believed the world would be harmonious if individuals were kind and respectful in five basic relationships: father and son, husband and wife, elder brother and younger brother, elder friend and younger friend, and emperor and subject.

“According to Confucian theory, if an individual were good and virtuous, then his or her family would be, too,” explains Lipman. And if families were good and virtuous, it would follow that all of society would be harmonious.

Confucius approved of the rule of kings and



Confucius, or Kong Fuzi in Chinese, means “Great Master Kong.”

emperors, but he argued that the best leader was one who guided his people with kindness and morality, not force. One of his rules said: “If you govern your province well and treat your people kindly, your kingdom shall not lose any war.”

Widespread Influence

By the time of the Han Dynasty (202 B.C. to 220 A.D.), Confucian philosophy had become a key part of official government doctrine. Over the next thousand years, it gradually became the most important tool for advancement for young men wishing to become government officials. They had to pass a highly competitive exam based on the Confucian texts.

Confucianism eventually became the foundation of the modern Chinese education system. For centuries, Chinese students memorized the master’s words and recited his stories. Many still do.

Although the ancient government exams were abolished in 1905, Chinese culture remains steeped in Confucianism. **JS**

SAYINGS OF CONFUCIUS

- * A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.
- * To study something and practice it at appropriate times, is that not a great joy?
- * Study the past if you would define the future.
- * To see what is right and not do it is a lack of courage or principle.

Your Turn

WORD MATCH

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| 1. disciples | A. rules |
| 2. dynasty | B. ruling family |
| 3. benevolence | C. repetitive acts |
| 4. guidelines | D. kindness |
| 5. rituals | E. followers |

THINK ABOUT IT

Write a paragraph applying one of Confucius’s sayings to an incident in your own life.

World

China Looks to Its Future, pp. 16-19

OBJECTIVES

Students should understand

- While China's fast-growing economy has led to some political and social reforms, the government still controls many aspects of people's lives.

TEACHING STRATEGY

Tell students that China's population is almost 1.3 billion. Begin a classroom discussion on the political, social, economic, and health challenges that a nation as populous as China faces.

BACKGROUND

China recently signed several trade agreements with U.S. companies that total about \$1.6 billion. The contracts are efforts to satisfy American concerns over a \$130 billion trade surplus with China—a \$27 billion increase from the previous year. China has been the third-largest U.S. trading partner since 2001.

THINKING SKILLS

NOTING DETAIL: How did China's economy

change after Mao Zedong's death in 1976? (China opened its economy to Western investment. Today, many U.S. companies do business in China, taking advantage of the nation's cheap but skilled labor force.)

COMPREHENSION: Why does the U.S. take a careful approach in criticizing China? (China is a major world power and a valuable trading partner. China has recently threatened to go to war with Taiwan, a U.S. ally, if it declares independence.)

ACTIVITY

CONTROLLED MEDIA: A 2002 Harvard University study reported that China denied Internet users access to 19,000 Web sites that the government found threatening. Instruct students to write a report on how media censorship might affect their community or school. What similarities or differences exist between China's policy and the Internet filtering policies of your school or local library?

STANDARDS

SOCIAL STUDIES, GRADES 5-8

Power, authority, and governance: How, after years of isolationism, China has become a dominant economic power.

- **Global connections:** How tensions between China and Taiwan and U.S.–China trade relations influence U.S. policy.

RESOURCES

PRINT

- Allan, Tony, *The Rise of Modern China* (Heinemann Library, 2002). Grades 5-8.
- Asher, Sandy, *China* (Benchmark, 2002). Grades 5-8.

WEB SITES

- **Chinese Culture**
www.chinavista.com/experience
- **China**
www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ch.html

World History

Age of Confucius, pp. 20-21

OBJECTIVES

Students should understand

- Confucius was the most influential and respected philosopher in Chinese history.

TEACHING STRATEGY

Without revealing the philosopher's identity, read aloud the following saying of Confucius: "To know is to know that you know nothing. That is the meaning of true knowledge." Encourage students to offer their interpretation of this famous adage, one that emphasizes humility and the pursuit of education.

BACKGROUND

Confucianism is not a religion. It does not teach about God, heaven, or the afterlife. Rather, it is a philosophy that aims to teach how to live responsibly, ethically, and wisely. China's ruling Communist Party suppressed Confucianism because it encouraged independent thought and urged people to look to the past for inspiration rather than to Communism. Official opposition ended in 1977.

THINKING SKILLS

CAUSE AND EFFECT: Why did Confucius and other teachers begin to spread their teachings during the Zhou Dynasty? (Civil war among rival warlords led to widespread violence and bloodshed. Confucius and other teachers spread their teachings to cities and towns in an effort to bring peace to China.)

MAKING INFERENCES: What is the meaning of Confucius's saying, "Success has many fathers, failure is an orphan"? (Students might answer that success requires the combined efforts of many, while failure is the result of an individual's limitations. Another interpretation might be that if several people compete for a prize all will share in a successful outcome. Other interpretations are possible.)

ACTIVITY

CONFUCIUS AND YOU: Ask students to research one saying of Confucius and write a report describing how the adage applies to his or her personal life.

STANDARDS

SOCIAL STUDIES, GRADES 5-8

- **Global connections:** How Confucius and his followers spread philosophical teachings throughout China and the world beginning in 551 B.C.
- **Culture:** How Confucianism influenced Chinese culture and became a foundation of the nation's education system.

RESOURCES

PRINT

- Lau, D.C. trans., *Confucius: The Analects* (Penguin USA, 1998). Grades 7-8.
- Hoobler, Thomas, *Confucianism* (Facts on File, 1993). Grades 6-8.

WEB SITES

- **Confucius**
www.cifnet.com/~geenius/kongfuzi/index.html
- **Ancient China**
<http://members.aol.com/Donnclass/Chinalife.html>

ANSWERS

Word Match, p. 7

- D
- A
- E
- C
- B

GeoSkills, p. 11

- 56
- January 27
- March 2
- California; it has the largest population
- March 9
- March 2
- Illinois
- Montana and New Jersey; June 8
- Boston, 7/26-7/30
- New York, 8/30-9/2

China map, p. 19

- Summer Olympic Games
- Shanghai
- More than 520 persons per sq mi
- Eastern
- Taiwan
- Xian
- Three Gorges Dam
- United Kingdom
- Russia
- It would give Manchuria access to the sea.

Word Match, p. 21

- E
- B
- D
- A
- C

Political Cartoon, p. 22

- The fish represent the Democratic contenders for the party's presidential nomination.
- President Bush is probably pleased that the Democratic candidates are attacking each other in the campaign. Such attacks may have the effect of weakening the eventual nominee.
- The goldfish seem to be too busy fighting each other—or winning the Democratic nomination—to notice the cat.
- The artist implies that President Bush will defeat whomever the Democratic Party nominates.
- Answers will vary.

Voter Graph, p. 22

- B
- A
- B
- B
- Answers will vary.

Crossword, p. 23



Quick Quiz, p. T-5

- C
- A
- B
- B
- C
- C
- A
- A
- B
- B
- A
- D
- E
- B
- C
- True
- False
- False
- Opinion
- False

Skills Master I, p. T-6

- World War II
- 58,193
- World War II
- Answers will vary. Students may cite inadequate record keeping.
- Answers will vary. Students may note the advances in weaponry or the short duration of the wars.
- Persian Gulf war
- Answers will vary. Students could answer that improvements in medical technology and battlefield medicine has resulted in fewer combat deaths.

- Answers will vary.
- Answers will vary.
- Answers will vary. Students may want to refer to examples from the American history play in this issue.

Skills Master 2, p. T-7

- Chinese Communist Party
- Chiang Kai-shek made political concessions to Japan in order to concentrate his efforts on defeating the Communists.
- Soviet Union
- The U.S. viewed China's close relationship with the Soviet Union as a threat.
- China lacked the strong infrastructure and resources needed to make the Great Leap Forward a success.
- Deng Xiaoping adopted a series of economic reforms and encouraged foreign trade and investment.
- Answers will vary.
- After the crushing of the pro-democracy movement in 1989, China has seen a lessening of personal and political freedoms.
- Hu Jintao

- Answers will vary.

Skills Master 3, p. T-8

- 25-year-olds and older
- 64 percent of 25-year-olds and older and 37 percent of 18-to-24-year-olds voted in the 2000 election.
- The voter turnout for both groups was lower than in 1972.
- 1972
- Answers will vary.
- Voter turnout decreased by 6 percent between the 1992 and 1996 elections.
- Voter turnout increased by 7 percent between the 1988 and 1996 elections.
- In 2000, 64 percent of voters 25 years old and older voted. Only 37 percent of voters 18 to 24 years old voted in 2000, a difference of 27 percent.
- Answers will vary.
- Answers will vary.

The Early Bird gets the worm...

and a FREE gift!

Make sure you don't miss a single issue of JUNIOR SCHOLASTIC next year.

Renew by March 22nd to lock in this year's prices for Fall 2004. And you'll get your very own Mini Boom Box FREE with your order of 20 or more subscriptions. Please mention code 3164 when ordering.

For faster service, call toll free 1-800-SCHOLASTIC
(1-800-724-6527)
8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time

203-REN-S042

POSTAL INFORMATION

The Teacher's Edition of JUNIOR SCHOLASTIC (ISSN 0022-6688; in Canada, 2-c no. 9229) is published biweekly: Sept, Oct, Nov, Jan, Feb, Mar, and Apr, and monthly: Dec and May, 18 issues total, by Scholastic Inc., 2931 E. McCarty St., Jefferson City, MO 65102-3710. Periodical postage paid at Jefferson City, MO 65102 and at additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTERS: Send notice of address changes to JUNIOR SCHOLASTIC, 2931 East McCarty St., Jefferson City, MO 65102-3710.**

PUBLISHING INFORMATION

U.S. prices: \$8.25 each per year, \$4.95 per semester for 10 or more subscriptions to the same address. 1-9 subscriptions, each: \$12.75 student, \$23.15 Teacher's Edition, per school year. Single copy: \$5.45 student, \$9.35 Teacher's. Communications relating to subscriptions should be addressed to Junior Scholastic, Scholastic Inc., 2931 East McCarty St., Jefferson City, MO 65102-3710. Communications relating to editorial matters should be addressed to Editor, *Junior Scholastic*, 557 Broadway, New York, NY 10012. Canadian address: Scholastic Canada Ltd., 175 Hillmount Rd., Markham, Ontario L6C 1Z7. Toll-free Canadian number: 1-888-752-4690. Indexed in Children's Magazine Guide. Available on microfilm through Xerox University Microfilms, Inc., 300 N. Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Also available on microfiche through Bell & Howell Photo Division, Old Mansfield Rd., Wooster, OH 44691. Printed in U.S.A. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Copyright © 2004 by Scholastic Inc. Scholastic, *Junior Scholastic*, and associated designs are trademarks/registered trademarks of Scholastic Inc. All Rights Reserved. **Materials in this issue may not be reproduced in whole or in part in any form or format without special permission from the publisher. PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.**