



**Confucius**  
(552-479 BCE)

***The Analects\****  
(extracts on gain)

- 3.7 The Master said, “Exemplary persons (*junzi*) are not competitive, except where they have to be in the archery ceremony. Greeting and making way for each other, the archers ascend the hall, and returning they drink a salute. Even in contesting, they are exemplary persons.”
- 4.5 The Master said, “Wealth and honor are what people want, but if they are the consequence of deviating from the way (*dao*), I would have no part of them. Poverty and disgrace are what people deplore, but if they are the consequence of staying on the way, I would not avoid them. Wherein do the exemplary persons (*junzi*) who would abandon their authoritative conduct (*ren*) warrant that name? Exemplary persons do not take leave of their authoritative conduct even for the space of a meal. When they are troubled, they certainly turn to it, as they do in facing difficulties.”
- 4.10 The Master said, “Exemplary persons (*junzi*) in making their way in the world are neither bent on nor against anything; rather they go with what is appropriate.”
- 4.11 The Master said, “Exemplary persons (*junzi*) cherish their excellence; petty persons cherish their land. Exemplary persons cherish fairness; petty persons cherish the thought of gain.”
- 4.12 The Master said, “To act with an eye to personal profit will incur a lot of resentment.”
- 4.16 The Master said, “Exemplary persons (*junzi*) understand what is appropriate (*yi*); petty persons understand what is of personal advantage.”
- 6.4 [ . . . ] The Master said, “In traveling to Qi, Zihua was driving choice horses and was wearing fine furs. I have heard it said, ‘Exemplary persons help out the needy; they do not make the rich, richer.’”
- 6.5 When Yuansi served as the Master’s household steward, he was given nine hundred measures of grain. Yuansi would not accept so much. “You must not refuse it,” the Master said. “It is to give to your family, friends, and neighbors.”
- 6.11 The Master said, “A person of character (*xian*) is this Yan Hui! He has a bamboo bowl of rice to eat, a gourd of water to drink, and a dirty little hovel in which to live. Other people would not be able to endure his hardships, yet for Hui it has no effect on his enjoyment. A person of character is this Yan Hui!”
- 6.30 Zigong said, “What about the person who is broadly generous with the people and is able to help the multitude – is this what we would call

authoritative conduct (*ren*)?”

The Master replied, “Why stop at authoritative conduct? This is certainly a sage (*sheng*). Even a Yao or a Shun would find such a task daunting. Authoritative persons establish others in seeking to establish themselves. Correlating one’s conduct with those near at hand can be said to be the method of becoming an authoritative person.”

7.16 The Master said, “To eat coarse food, drink plain water and pillow oneself on a bent arm – there is pleasure to be found in these things. But wealth and position gained through inappropriate means – these are to me like floating clouds.”

8.12 The Master said, “It is not easy to find students who will study for three years without their thoughts turning to an official salary.”

8.13 The Master said, [ . . . ] “It is a disgrace to remain poor and without rank when the way prevails in the state; it is a disgrace to be wealthy and of noble rank when it does not.”

9.27 The Master said, “If there is anyone who would feel no shame in wearing a shabby old gown while standing next to someone wearing fox and badger, it would have to be Zilu!

“Not jealous, not greedy,  
How could he but be good?”

Zilu on hearing this praise of himself, kept repeating these lines over and over again. The Master said to him, “How can this remark deserve to be treasured so?”

12.18 Ji Kangzi was troubled by the number of thieves, and asked Confucius for advice. Confucius replied to him, “If you yourself were not so greedy, the people could not be paid to steal.”

15.32 The Master said, “Exemplary persons (*junzi*) make their plans around the way (*dao*) and not around their sustenance. Tilling the land often leads to hunger as a matter of course; studying often leads to an official salary as a matter of course. Exemplary persons are anxious about the way, and not about poverty.”

16.1 Confucius said, [ . . . ] As for me, I have heard that the ruler of a state or the head of a household:

Does not worry that his people are poor,  
But that wealth is inequitably distributed;  
Does not worry that his people are few in number,  
But that they are disharmonious.  
Does not worry that his people are unstable,  
But that they are insecure.

For if wealth is equitably distributed, there is no poverty; if the people are harmonious, they are not few in number; if the people are secure, they are not unstable.” [ . . . ]

16.7 Confucius said, “Exemplary persons (*junzi*) have three kinds of conduct they guard against: when young and vigorous, they guard against

licentiousness; in their prime when their vigor is at its height, they guard against conflict; in their old age when their vigor is declining they guard against acquisitiveness.”

16.10 Confucius said, “Exemplary persons (*junzi*) always keep nine things in mind: in looking they think about clarity, in hearing they think about acuity, in countenance they think about cordiality, in bearing and attitude they think about deference, in speaking they think about doing their utmost, in conducting affairs they think about due respect, in entertaining doubts they think about the proper questions to ask, in anger they think about regret, in sight of gain they think about appropriate conduct.”

19.1 Zizhang said, “Those scholar-apprentices are quite acceptable who on seeing danger are ready to put their lives on the line, who on seeing an opportunity for gain concern themselves with what is appropriate, who in performing sacrifice concern themselves with proper respect, and who in participating in a funeral concern themselves with grief.”

\* excerpted from Roger T. Ames and Henry Rosemont, Jr. *The Analects of Confucius: A Philosophical Translation*, New York: Ballantine Books, 1998.