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The Analects Of Confucius (Lun Yu)



Synopsis

In the long river of human history, if one person can represent the civilization of a whole nation, it is perhaps Master Kong, better known as Confucius in the West. If there is one single book that can be upheld as the common code of a whole people, it is perhaps Lun Yu, or The Analects. Surely, few individuals in history have shaped their country's civilization more profoundly than Master Kong. The great Han historiographer, Si-ma Qian, writing 2,100 years ago said, "He may be called the wisest indeed!" And, as recently as 1988, at a final session of the first international conference of Nobel prize-winners in Paris, the seventy-five participants, fifty-two of whom were scientists, concluded: "If mankind is to survive, it must go back twenty-five centuries in time to tap the wisdom of Confucius." This is a man whose influence in world history is truly incomparable. His sayings (and those of his disciples) form the basis of a distinct social, ethical, and intellectual system. They have retained their freshness and vigor for two and a half millennia, and are still admired in today's China.

Compiled by pupils of Confucius's disciples half a century after the Master's death, The Analects of Confucius laid the foundation of his philosophy of humanity--a philosophy aimed at "cultivating the individual's moral conduct, achieving family harmony, bringing good order to the state and peace to the empire. Containing 501 very succinct chapters (the longest do not exceed fifteen lines and the shortest are less than one) and organized into twenty books, the collection comprises mostly dialogues between the Master and his disciples and contemporaries. The ethical tenets Confucius put forth not only became the norm of conduct for the officialdom and intelligentsia, but also profoundly impacted the behavior of the common people. The great sage's unique integration of humanity and righteousness (love and reason) struck a powerful chord in all who attempted to understand his moral philosophy. As translator Chichung Huang contends, "What ethical principle laid down by man could be more sensible than none which blends the best our heart can offer with the best our mind can offer as the guiding light for our conduct throughout our lives?" Ever timely, Confucius's teachings on humanity (family harmony in particular) and righteousness may well serve as a ready-made cure for today's ills in an era which human beings are blinded by force and lust, not unlike Confucius's own day. Far more literal than any English version still in circulation, this brilliant new rendition of The Analects helps the reader not only to acquire an accurate and lucid understanding of the original text, but also to appreciate the imagery, parallelism, and concision of its classical style. The translator Chichung Huang, a Chinese scholar born in a family of Confucian teachers and schooled in one of the last village Confucian schools in South China, brings to this treasure of world literature a sure voice that captures the power and subtleties of the original. Vivid, simple, and eminently readable, this illuminating work makes the golden teachings of the sage

of the East readily available to anyone in search of them.

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Customer Reviews

This translation is far superior to any other that I have seen. The Analects have always been a difficult and opaque work for me. I have read it several times over many years and have always found at least half the sayings completely incomprehensible. The Waley and Legge translations are dry and dated. Lau and Dawson are easier to read but still leave me puzzled about the meaning of most of the sayings. Some of their notes are useless and distracting, while others merely fail to inform. I was always left thinking of the Analects as a few clever and witty proverbs scattered throughout a strange and impenetrable work. The Huang translation, on the other hand, is clear and easy to read. It is easy to follow the structure of the book. It has just the right amount of notes and they are located just underneath the analect itself--not at the bottom of the page or end of the book where you have to interrupt your reading and look for them. The sayings that are easy to understand have no notes. The other sayings have notes that clarify the context and meaning. They are brief and to the point so that they don't get in the way of the text. Things that were impossible to understand are now clear. I find that I am no longer burdened by trying to decipher the meaning. As a result I am now getting to know the character and personality of each of the students, and enjoying their interaction with the Master. This is something I was never able to do before with other translations. Reading the Analects is no longer a chore but an enjoyable journey to a distant, but accessible, culture.

The review above is uninformed. Even if he knows that the main Chinese phonetic system is called pinyin. If one reads the copious notes that back up the research in this translation, one would realize that every character is philologically proven. Whether by the lexicon Shuo Wen, the sea of words or other. This translation is the epitome of scholarly work. There is an unprecedented wealth of information in this book. There has been no one near the ability of Chichung Huang in understanding the ancient annotations of Chinese characters. He has achieved a far more scholarly level in classical Chinese than any other Chinese scholar and translator that I have ever read. The amount of clear concise research proves it. His work is fluid, concise and true to the original exactly because the translator has the ability to be literal. His contemporaries are lacking in this regard. Ren does translate to mean humanity, as in the founding principles of humanity and righteousness. Read the introduction please.

As I bought this book as a gift for my daughter who cannot read Chinese, I compared this translation with the Chinese versions that I have. To understand the original analects fully, most Chinese books provides explanations and definitions. The author has done an excellent job in providing translations and explanations of the analects at the same time.

Very insightful translation--Huang covers more bases than other translators of The Analects do, and he truly does an admirable job of providing a literal translation along with alternative explanations and additional notes. Highly recommended, especially for those also reading The Analects in the original Chinese.

I bought this version of the analects based on previous reviews. I am only about one-third finished, but I am re-reading much as I go along. This translation has completely surpassed my hopes. I know very little Chinese history and none of the language. Yet this translation, with its meticulous notes, provides sufficient context to make Confucious accessible to anyone--even to me. It is deeply rewarding and satisfying to read. Thank you to this translator.

I bought this as a required reading for a college course. Pretty straight forward overall. I'm not the greatest fan of Confucius, but this book got the job done that my Professor was looking for. As far as the price goes, excellent for what you're buying. There are a lot more expensive versions out there.

The book appears to meet its described goal of conveying the work of Confucius with unprecedented honesty. Ultimately, this is probably the second-best edition available on . But I don't know what the first-best is. I get a feeling of nostalgia, like this may or may not have been the edition I read when I was a child. In this sense, it seems better than many alternate editions.

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