

LESSON SIX

Confucius

Presented by



美国俄克拉荷马大学孔子学院

CONFUCIUS INSTITUTE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH BEIJING NORMAL UNIVERSITY

Confucius was a Chinese philosopher who lived from 551 to 479 BCE in the State of Lǔ, located in modern Shandong Province. His Chinese name, *Kǒng Fūzǐ* (孔夫子), means Grand Master Kong. Like Socrates, who was born ten years after Confucius' death, Confucius was a teacher whose words were put into writing and assembled as the *Analects* (论语 *lúnyǔ*) by his students. Confucius was a humanist who believed that people should govern themselves without appeal to a god. Because he lived during a time when China was divided into hundreds of small states that were constantly at war with another, Confucius was primarily interested in creating a well governed and harmonious society (和谐社会 *héxié shèhuì*) that ensured peace and prosperity for its people.

To achieve this he taught that:

1. In their interactions with others, people should be guided by humaneness and a desire to do good to others (仁 *rén*).
2. People's conduct should be guided by moral principles (礼 *lǐ*) to treat one another humanely.
3. Filial piety (孝 *xiào*), respect for and obedience to one's parents, is the most fundamental principle governing human relationships and the model for all other human relationships.
4. Society is hierarchical. Every person should know their proper place in the hierarchy and carry out their assigned role to the best of their ability.
5. Human behavior should be governed by five basic relationships (五伦 *wǔlún*): son to father; younger brother to elder brother; wife to husband; subject to ruler; and friend to friend. In these relationships, the lower ranked person (the first listed in each pair) should obey the higher ranked person, while the higher ranked person should take care of the lower ranked person. Friends of equal rank should support each other.
6. A person is born neither good nor bad, but can become a model person (君子 *jūnzi*) through education.

Confucianism today still serves as the foundation for many Asian cultures, including Chinese, Japanese, and Korean.



Confucius



Oklahoma educators at the Confucius Temple in Beijing - 2016

Student Activities:

1. Find Confucius' hometown, Qufu, on a map of China. Hint: It's in Shandong Province.
2. Look up the *Analects* on the internet and find one passage that explains Confucius' ideas.
3. Discuss what filial piety means to you.
4. Discuss the role of hierarchy in your family, school and community. When is hierarchy good and when is it not so good?

Confucius Institute Day - OU South Oval, Wednesday, Sept. 28 - ouci.ou.edu/2016ciday

Beijing Normal University Youth Art Troupe Performance - OU Sharp Concert Hall, Friday, Sept. 30 - ouci.ou.edu/2016bnu



For more information or resources about Confucius, please visit the OU Confucius Institute's website at ouci.ou.edu/Confucius