The Great Learning and The Doctrine of the Mean

CONFUCIAN CLASSICS

The Great Learning and The Doctrine of the Mean

大學・中庸

Translated from the Classical Chinese with AI (Claude) and edited

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INTRODUCTION

The Great Learning and *The Doctrine of the Mean* are two short chapters of the *Book of Rites* (*Liji*), a Confucian collection compiled in the second and first centuries BC from earlier writings. Tradition credited the first to Confucius and his disciple Zengzi and the second to Confucius's grandson Zisi; modern scholars date both to the late Warring States or early Han period, roughly the third century BC. In the twelfth century AD the philosopher Zhu Xi (1130–1200) set them beside the *Analects* and the *Mencius* as the Four Books, and from 1313 to 1905 they were the core of the civil service examinations in China.

The Great Learning is a compact program for self-cultivation and government. It traces a chain of steps from investigating things and making one's intentions sincere, through setting the heart right and cultivating oneself, to ordering the family, governing the state and bringing peace to the world. *The Doctrine of the Mean* begins with Heaven, human nature and the Way, praises the balanced, unremarkable steadiness of the "mean," and rises to a vision of sincerity as what unites human beings with Heaven and Earth.

This edition follows Zhu Xi's arrangement. He divided *The Great Learning* into a short classic text and ten chapters of commentary, reordering passages he believed had been displaced; he held that most of the fifth chapter, on investigating things, was lost, and wrote a supplement of his own, which is not included here. *The Doctrine of the Mean* keeps its traditional order in thirty-three chapters. Zhu Xi's notes are omitted. Passages are cited as "GL Classic," "GL 1" to "GL 10" (the commentary chapters) and "Mean 1" to "Mean 33."

The Great Learning

大學

From investigating things and sincere intentions to an ordered family, a well-governed state and a world at peace.

THE CLASSIC TEXT

The aims of great learning, and the chain of steps from investigating things to a world at peace.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
GL Classic 大學之道，在明明德，在親民，在止於至善。知止而后有定；定而后能靜；靜而后能安；安而后能慮；慮而后能得。物有本末；事有終始。知所先後，則近道矣。古之欲明明德於天下者，先治其國。欲治其國者，先齊其家。欲齊其家者，先脩其身。欲脩其身者，先正其心。欲正其心者，先誠其意。欲誠其意者，先致其知。致知在格物。	The Way of great learning lies in making one's bright virtue shine, in renewing the people, and in resting in the highest good. Knowing where to rest, one is then settled; settled, one can then be still; still, one can then be at peace; at peace, one can then deliberate; deliberating, one can then attain. Things have their root and their branches; affairs have their end and their beginning. To know what comes first and what comes after is to be near the Way. The ancients who wished to make their bright virtue shine throughout the world first governed their states. Wishing to govern their states, they first ordered their families. Wishing to order their families, they first cultivated themselves. Wishing to cultivate themselves, they first set their hearts right. Wishing to set their hearts right, they first made their intentions sincere. Wishing to make their intentions sincere, they first extended their knowledge. Extending knowledge lies in investigating things.[1]
物格而后知至。知至而后意誠。意誠而后心正。心正而后身脩。身脩而后家齊。家齊而后國治。國治而后天下平。自天子以至於庶人，壹是皆以脩身為本。其本亂而末治者，否矣。其所厚者薄，而其所薄者厚，未之有也。	When things are investigated, knowledge is then extended. When knowledge is extended, the intentions are then sincere. When the intentions are sincere, the heart is then set right. When the heart is set right, the self is then cultivated. When the self is cultivated, the family is then ordered. When the family is ordered, the state is then governed. When the state is governed, the world is then at peace. From the Son of Heaven down to the common people, all alike take cultivating oneself as the root. For the root to be in disorder and the branches well governed—this cannot be. For what deserves the most care to be treated slightly, and

1 "Renewing the people": the text has 親 "being close to" the people; Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi read it as 新 "renewing," as commentary chapter 2 assumes.

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
		what deserves slight care to be treated with the most—there has never been such a case.[2]

COMMENTARY 1: MAKING BRIGHT VIRTUE SHINE

Three passages from the Documents on making virtue shine.

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
GL 1	《康誥》曰：「克明德。」《大甲》曰：「顧諟天之明命。」《帝典》曰：「克明峻德。」皆自明也。	The "Announcement to Kang" says, "Able to make virtue shine." "Tai Jia" says, "Keep your gaze on Heaven's bright decree." The "Canon of the Emperor" says, "Able to make lofty virtue shine." All of these are about making one's own virtue shine.

COMMENTARY 2: RENEWING THE PEOPLE

Tang's basin inscription and other texts on daily renewal.

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
GL 2	湯之盤銘曰：「苟日新，日日新，又日新。」《康誥》曰：「作新民。」《詩》曰：「周雖舊邦，其命惟新。」是故君子無所不用其極。	The inscription on Tang's bathing basin read: "If one day you can renew yourself, renew yourself day after day, and again each day renew yourself." The "Announcement to Kang" says, "Rouse a people that renews itself." The *Odes* says, "Though Zhou is an ancient state, its mandate is new." Therefore there is nothing in which the exemplary person does not give their utmost.[3]

COMMENTARY 3: RESTING IN THE HIGHEST GOOD

Odes on resting where one belongs, and the stations in which ruler, minister, son and father rest.

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
GL 3	《詩》云：「邦畿千里，惟民所止。」《詩》云：「緡蠻黃鳥，止于丘隅。」子曰：「於止，知其所止，可以人而不如鳥乎？」《詩》云：「穆穆文王，於緝熙敬止。」為人君，止於仁；為人臣，止於敬；為人子，止於孝；為人父，止於慈；與國人交，止於信。	The *Odes* says, "The royal domain, a thousand li around—there the people come to rest." The *Odes* says, "Twittering, the yellow oriole rests on a corner of the hill." The Master said, "In resting, it knows where to rest. Can a human being be less than a bird?" The *Odes* says, "Profound and grave was King Wen—oh, ever bright, reverent in his resting!" As a ruler, one rests in humaneness; as a minister, one rests in reverence; as a son, one rests in filial devotion; as a father, one rests in kindness; in dealings with the people of the state, one rests in trustworthiness.
	《詩》云：「瞻彼淇澳，菉竹猗猗。有斐君子。如切如磋，如琢如磨。瑟兮僴兮，赫兮喧兮。有斐君子，	The *Odes* says, "Look at that bend of the Qi, its green bamboo so lush. Here is a refined exemplary person, as if cut, as if filed, as if carved, as if pol-

2 "Heart" (心) is the heart-mind, the seat of both feeling and thought. "Sincere" (誠) means being genuine through and through; it is also rendered "integrity."
3 Tang was the founder of the Shang dynasty.

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
	終不可諠兮。」「如切如磋」者，道學也；「如琢如磨」者，自脩也；「瑟兮僩兮」者，恂慄也；「赫兮喧兮」者，威儀也；「有斐君子，終不可諠兮」者，道盛德至善，民之不能忘也。《詩》云：「於戲前王不忘！」君子賢其賢，而親其親。小人樂其樂，而利其利。此以沒世不忘也。	ished. How grave, how stern! How radiant, how imposing! Here is a refined exemplary person who can never be forgotten." "As if cut, as if filed" speaks of learning; "as if carved, as if polished" speaks of self-cultivation; "how grave, how stern" speaks of inner awe and caution; "how radiant, how imposing" speaks of an awe-inspiring bearing; "here is a refined exemplary person who can never be forgotten" speaks of abundant virtue and the highest good, which the people cannot forget. The *Odes* says, "Ah, the former kings are not forgotten!" Exemplary persons treat as worthy those whom the former kings treated as worthy, and hold dear those whom they held dear; petty persons enjoy what they made enjoyable, and profit from what they made profitable. That is why, though they have passed from the world, they are not forgotten.[4]

COMMENTARY 4: THE ROOT AND THE BRANCHES

Confucius wishes to end lawsuits, an example of knowing the root.

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
GL 4	子曰：「聽訟，吾猶人也，必也使無訟乎！」無情者不得盡其辭，大畏民志。此謂知本。	The Master said, "In hearing lawsuits I am like anyone else. What is needed is to bring it about that there are no lawsuits!" Those without truth on their side cannot press their pleas to the end, for the people's minds are held in great awe. This is called knowing the root.

COMMENTARY 5: INVESTIGATING THINGS AND EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE

A two-sentence fragment of the chapter on investigating things and extending knowledge.

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
GL 5	此謂知本，此謂知之至也。	This is called knowing the root. This is called the utmost of knowledge.[5]

COMMENTARY 6: MAKING THE INTENTIONS SINCERE

Not deceiving oneself, and being watchful when alone.

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
GL 6	所謂誠其意者：毋自欺也，如惡惡臭，如好好色。此之謂自謙。故君子必慎其獨也。小人閒居為不善，無所不至，見君子，而后厭然。揜其不善，而著其善。	What is called making the intentions sincere means not deceiving oneself—as when we hate a bad smell, as when we love a beautiful sight. This is called being content with oneself. Therefore the

4 Zhu Xi reads the "exemplary persons" and "petty persons" here as the nobles and the common people of later generations.
5 Zhu Xi judged the first sentence a stray repetition and the rest of this chapter lost; he wrote a supplementary chapter of his own on investigating things and extending knowledge.

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
	人之視己，如見其肺肝然，則何益矣？此謂誠於中，形於外。故君子必慎其獨也。曾子曰：「十目所視，十手所指，其嚴乎。」富潤屋，德潤身。心廣體胖。故君子必誠其意。	exemplary person must be watchful over themselves when alone. Petty persons, living at leisure, do what is not good and stop at nothing; on seeing an exemplary person, they then shamefacedly cover up, concealing what is not good in them and displaying what is good. But others see them as if seeing their very lungs and liver—so what is gained? This is what is meant by "sincere within, it takes shape without." Therefore the exemplary person must be watchful over themselves when alone. Zengzi said, "What ten eyes look at, what ten hands point to—how severe it is!" Wealth enriches a house; virtue enriches the person. The heart is broad and the body at ease. Therefore the exemplary person must make their intentions sincere.

COMMENTARY 7: SETTING THE HEART RIGHT AND CULTIVATING THE SELF

Anger, fear, delight and worry keep the heart from being right.

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
GL 7	所謂脩身在正其心者：身有所忿懥，則不得其正。有所恐懼，則不得其正。有所好樂，則不得其正。有所憂患，則不得其正。心不在焉，視而不見，聽而不聞，食而不知其味。此謂脩身在正其心。	What is meant by "cultivating oneself lies in setting one's heart right" is this: if one harbors anger, the heart is not right; if one harbors fear, the heart is not right; if one harbors fondness and delight, the heart is not right; if one harbors worry and anxiety, the heart is not right. When the heart is not present, we look but do not see, listen but do not hear, eat but do not know the taste. This is what is meant by "cultivating oneself lies in setting one's heart right."

COMMENTARY 8: CULTIVATING THE SELF AND ORDERING THE FAMILY

Partiality toward others shows why ordering the family depends on cultivating oneself.

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
GL 8	所謂齊其家在脩其身者：人之其所親愛，而辟焉。之其所賤惡，而辟焉。之其所畏敬，而辟焉。之其所哀矜，而辟焉。之其所敖惰，而辟焉。故好而知其惡，惡而知其美者，天下鮮矣。故諺有之曰，「人莫知其子之惡，莫知其苗之碩。」此謂身不脩，不可以齊其家。	What is meant by "ordering one's family lies in cultivating oneself" is this: people are partial toward those they hold dear and love; they are partial toward those they despise and dislike; they are partial toward those they hold in awe and respect; they are partial toward those they pity and feel sorry for; they are partial toward those they treat with arrogance and neglect. So those who love someone yet know their faults, or dislike someone yet know their merits, are rare in the world. Hence the proverb: "No one knows the faults of their own child; no one knows how big their own sprouts have grown." This is what is meant by: if

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
		the self is not cultivated, one cannot order one's family.

COMMENTARY 9: ORDERING THE FAMILY AND GOVERNING THE STATE

Virtues learned at home spread outward to govern the state.

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
GL 9	所謂治國必先齊其家者：其家不可教，而能教人者，無之。故君子不出家，而成教於國。孝者，所以事君也；弟者，所以事長也；慈者，所以使衆也。《康誥》曰：「如保赤子。」心誠求之，雖不中、不遠矣，未有學養子，而后嫁者也。一家仁，一國興仁；一家讓，一國興讓；一人貪戾，一國作亂。其機如此，此謂一言僨事，一人定國。	What is meant by "to govern the state one must first order one's family" is this: no one who cannot teach their own family is able to teach others. Therefore the exemplary person, without leaving the family, achieves teaching throughout the state. Filial devotion is how one serves the ruler; respect for elders is how one serves one's elders; kindness is how one directs the multitude. The "Announcement to Kang" says, "As if caring for a newborn child." If the heart sincerely seeks it, though one may not hit the mark, one will not be far off. No young woman has ever learned to raise a child first and only then married. When one family is humane, the whole state rises to humaneness; when one family yields, the whole state rises to yielding; when one person is greedy and perverse, the whole state falls into disorder. Such is how things are set in motion. This is what is meant by: one word can ruin an affair; one person can settle the state.
	堯舜帥天下以仁，而民從之。桀紂帥天下以暴，而民從之。其所令反其所好，而民不從。是故君子，有諸己，而后求諸人。無諸己，而后非諸人。所藏乎身不恕，而能喻諸人者，未之有也。故治國在齊其家。《詩》云：「桃之夭夭，其葉蓁蓁，之子于歸，宜其家人。」宜其家人，而后可以教國人。《詩》云：「宜兄宜弟。」宜兄宜弟，而后可以教國人。《詩》云：「其儀不忒，正是四國。」其為父子兄弟足法，而后民法之也。此謂治國，在齊其家。	Yao and Shun led the world with humaneness, and the people followed them. Jie and Zhou led the world with violence, and the people followed them. When what rulers command runs counter to what they love, the people do not follow. Therefore the exemplary person, having it in themselves, only then seeks it in others; being free of it themselves, only then condemns it in others. If what one harbors in oneself is not reciprocity, yet one can make others understand—there has never been such a case. Thus governing the state lies in ordering one's family. The *Odes* says, "The peach tree is young and lovely, its leaves lush and thick. This young woman going to her new home will live in harmony with her household." Only in harmony with one's household can one then teach the people of the state. The *Odes* says, "In harmony with elder brother, in harmony with younger brother." Only in harmony with elder and younger brothers can one then teach the people of the state. The *Odes* says, "Their bearing is without fault; they set right the states of the four quarters."

CHINESE	ENGLISH
	Only when one's conduct as father and son, elder and younger brother is worth emulating will the people then emulate it. This is what is meant by: governing the state lies in ordering one's family.[6]

COMMENTARY 10: GOVERNING THE STATE AND BRINGING PEACE TO THE WORLD

The way of the measuring square, the Odes on winning the people, and virtue before wealth.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
GL 10 所謂平天下在治其國者：上老老而民興孝，上長長而民興弟，上恤孤而民不倍。是以君子有絜矩之道也。所惡於上，毋以使下。所惡於下，毋以事上。所惡於前，毋以先後。所惡於後，毋以從前。所惡於右，毋以交於左。所惡於左，毋以交於右。此之謂絜矩之道。	What is meant by "bringing peace to the world lies in governing one's state" is this: when those above treat the aged as aged, the people rise to filial devotion; when those above treat elders as elders, the people rise to respect for elders; when those above care for the orphaned, the people do not turn their backs. Therefore the exemplary person has the way of the measuring square. What you dislike in those above you, do not use in directing those below; what you dislike in those below you, do not use in serving those above. What you dislike in those ahead of you, do not use in leading those behind; what you dislike in those behind you, do not use in following those ahead. What you dislike in those on your right, do not use in dealing with those on your left; what you dislike in those on your left, do not use in dealing with those on your right. This is what is called the way of the measuring square.[7]
《詩》云：「樂只君子，民之父母。」民之所好好之，民之所惡惡之，此之謂民之父母。《詩》云：「節彼南山，維石巖巖。赫赫師尹，民具爾瞻。」有國者不可以不慎，辟則為天下僇矣。《詩》云：「殷之未喪師，克配上帝。儀監于殷，峻命不易。」道得衆，則得國；失衆，則失國。是故君子先慎乎德。有德，此有人；有人，此有土；有土，此有財；有財，此有用。	The *Odes* says, "Joyful is the exemplary person, father and mother of the people." To love what the people love and hate what the people hate—this is what is called being father and mother of the people. The *Odes* says, "Towering is that southern mountain, its rocks rugged and steep. Majestic Grand Master Yin, the people all look up to you." Those who hold a state cannot fail to be careful; if they are partial, they will be destroyed by the world. The *Odes* says, "Before Yin lost its multitudes, it was a match for the Lord on High. Take Yin as your mirror: the lofty mandate is not easily kept." This says: win the multitude and you win the state; lose the multitude and you lose the state. Therefore the exemplary person is first careful about virtue. Having virtue, one has people; having people, one has land; having land, one has wealth; having wealth, one has the means for use.[8]

6 Jie and Zhou (紂, not the Zhou dynasty 周) were the last kings of the Xia and Shang dynasties, archetypal tyrants.
7 The "measuring square" (絜矩) is the carpenter's square: taking oneself as the measure for how to treat others.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
德者本也，財者末也。外本內末，爭民施奪。是故財聚則民散，財散則民聚。是故言悖而出者，亦悖而入。貨悖而入者，亦悖而出。《康誥》曰：「惟命不于常。」道善則得之，不善則失之矣。楚書曰：「楚國無以為寶，惟善以為寶。」舅犯曰：「亡人無以為寶，仁親以為寶。」	Virtue is the root; wealth is the branches. To make the root outer and the branches inner is to set the people quarreling and teach them to plunder. Therefore when wealth is gathered in, the people scatter; when wealth is dispersed, the people gather. Therefore words that go out against what is right come back against what is right; goods that come in against what is right go out against what is right. The "Announcement to Kang" says, "The mandate is not constant." This says that with goodness one gains it, and without goodness one loses it. The *Book of Chu* says, "The state of Chu has nothing it takes as treasure; it takes only goodness as treasure." Uncle Fan said, "An exile has nothing to take as treasure; humaneness toward kin is taken as treasure."[9]
《秦誓》曰：「若有一个臣，斷斷兮，無他技，其心休休焉，其如有容焉。人之有技，若己有之。人之彥聖，其心好之。不啻若自其口出。寔能容之，以能保我子孫黎民，尚亦有利哉。人之有技，媢疾以惡之。人之彥聖而違之，俾不通。寔不能容，以不能保我子孫黎民，亦曰殆哉。」	The "Declaration of Qin" says: "Suppose there were a single minister, steadfast and true, with no other skills, yet with a heart generous and broad, as if able to embrace all. When others had skills, it would be as if that minister had them; when others were accomplished and sagely, that minister's heart would love them—more than any words from that minister's own mouth could say. Truly able to embrace them, such a minister could protect my descendants and the common people—surely there would be benefit in that! But when others have skills, to envy and hate them; when others are accomplished and sagely, to thwart them so that they cannot advance—truly unable to embrace them, such a one could not protect my descendants and the common people—how perilous that would be!"[10]
唯仁人放流之，迸諸四夷，不與同中國。此謂唯仁人為能愛人，能惡人。見賢而不能舉，舉而不能先，命也。見不善而不能退，退而不能遠，過也。好人之所惡，惡人之所好，是謂拂人之性，菑必逮夫身。是故君子有大道，必忠信以得之，驕泰以失之。生財有大道，生之者衆，食之者寡。為之者疾，用之者舒，則財恆足矣。	Only the humane person banishes and exiles such a one, driving them out among the peoples of the four borders and not letting them share the Central States. This is what is meant by: only the humane person is able to love others and able to hate others. To see the worthy and fail to raise them up, or to raise them up but not give them precedence—this is negligence. To see what is not good and fail to dismiss it, or to dismiss it but not send it far away—this is a fault. To love what others hate and hate what others love—this is called going against

8 Yin is another name for the Shang dynasty, whose mandate passed to Zhou.
9 Uncle Fan (Hu Yan) was the maternal uncle and adviser of Prince Chong'er of Jin, later Duke Wen, during his exile in the 7th century BC.
10 The "Declaration of Qin" is a chapter of the *Documents* attributed to Duke Mu of Qin (7th century BC).

CHINESE	ENGLISH
	human nature, and disaster will surely reach that person. Therefore the exemplary person has a great Way: it must be gained by doing one's best and being trustworthy, and it is lost through arrogance and complacency. There is a great way to produce wealth: let those who produce it be many and those who consume it be few; let those who make it be quick and those who use it be sparing—then wealth will always be sufficient.[11]
仁者以財發身，不仁者以身發財。未有上好仁而下不好義者也，未有好義其事不終者也，未有府庫財非其財者也。孟獻子曰：畜馬乘，不察於雞豚。伐冰之家，不畜牛羊。百乘之家，不畜聚斂之臣。與其有聚斂之臣，寧有盜臣。此謂國不以利為利，以義為利也。	The humane use wealth to raise up themselves; those who are not humane use themselves to raise up wealth. Never has it happened that those above loved humaneness and those below did not love rightness; never has it happened that those who loved rightness failed to bring their tasks to completion; never has it happened that the wealth in the storehouses and treasuries was not the ruler's own. Meng Xianzi said, "Those who keep a four-horse carriage do not look to chickens and pigs. A family that cuts ice does not raise cattle and sheep. A house of a hundred chariots does not keep a minister who squeezes out levies. Rather than have a minister who squeezes out levies, better to have a minister who steals." This is what is meant by: a state does not take profit as profit; it takes rightness as profit.[12]
長國家而務財用者，必自小人矣。彼為善之，小人之使為國家，菑害並至。雖有善者，亦無如之何矣。此謂國不以利為利，以義為利也。	When one who heads a state or a house devotes themselves to wealth and its uses, it must come from petty persons. The ruler deems them good; but when petty persons are set to run the state and the house, disaster and harm arrive together. Even if there are good people, there is nothing they can do about it. This is what is meant by: a state does not take profit as profit; it takes rightness as profit.[13]

11 The text has 命 "fate"; following Zheng Xuan and Zhu Xi, it is read as 慢 "negligence."
12 Meng Xianzi was a minister of the state of Lu in the 6th century BC; cutting ice for funerals and sacrifices was a privilege of high-ranking families.
13 Zhu Xi thought the words 彼為善之 ("The ruler deems them good") garbled; the rendering follows the common reading.

The Doctrine of the Mean

中庸

Heaven, human nature and the Way; the balanced steadiness of the mean; and sincerity as the bond between people and Heaven and Earth.

CHAPTER 1

What Heaven decrees, the Way and teaching; the center and harmony.

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
Mean 1	天命之謂性，率性之謂道，修道之謂教。道也者，不可須臾離也，可離非道也。是故君子戒慎乎其所不睹，恐懼乎其所不聞。莫見乎隱，莫顯乎微，故君子慎其獨也。喜怒哀樂之未發，謂之中；發而皆中節，謂之和。中也者，天下之大本也；和也者，天下之達道也。致中和，天地位焉，萬物育焉。	What Heaven decrees is called nature; following nature is called the Way; cultivating the Way is called teaching. The Way cannot be departed from for a single moment; what can be departed from is not the Way. Therefore the exemplary person is cautious about what they do not see, and apprehensive about what they do not hear. Nothing is more visible than what is hidden, nothing more manifest than what is subtle; therefore the exemplary person is watchful over themselves when alone. The state before joy, anger, sorrow, and pleasure have arisen is called the center; when they arise and all hit the proper measure, it is called harmony. The center is the great root of the world; harmony is the universal Way of the world. Bring the center and harmony to their utmost, and Heaven and Earth take their proper places, and the myriad things are nourished.

CHAPTER 2

The exemplary person holds to the mean; the petty person goes against it.

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
Mean 2	仲尼曰：「君子中庸，小人反中庸。君子之中庸也，君子而時中；小人之中庸也，小人而無忌憚也。」	Confucius said, “The exemplary person holds to the mean; the petty person goes against the mean. As for the exemplary person and the mean: being exemplary, they keep to the center as the times require. As for the petty person and the mean: being petty, they have no scruples and fear nothing.”[1]

1 The mean (zhongyong): holding to the center in ordinary conduct, as in *Analects* 6.27.

CHAPTER 3

Confucius laments that few can sustain the mean.

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
Mean 3	子曰：「中庸其至矣乎！民鮮能久矣！」	The Master said, “The mean—is it not the utmost! For a long time now, few among the people have been able to attain it.”

CHAPTER 4

The wise and the worthy overshoot the Way; the foolish and unworthy fall short.

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
Mean 4	子曰：「道之不行也，我知之矣，知者過之，愚者不及也；道之不明也，我知之矣，賢者過之，不肖者不及也。人莫不飲食也，鮮能知味也。」	The Master said, “Why the Way is not practiced, I know: the wise go beyond it, and the foolish do not reach it. Why the Way is not understood, I know: the worthy go beyond it, and the unworthy do not reach it. There is no one who does not eat and drink, but few are able to know the taste.”

CHAPTER 5

Confucius laments that the Way is not practiced.

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
Mean 5	子曰：「道其不行矣夫！」	The Master said, “So the Way is not being practiced!”

CHAPTER 6

Shun’s wisdom: asking questions and applying the center to the people.

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
Mean 6	子曰：「舜其大知也與！舜好問而好察邇言，隱惡而揚善，執其兩端，用其中於民，其斯以為舜乎！」	The Master said, “Shun—surely his was great wisdom! Shun loved to ask questions and loved to examine plain words close at hand. He passed over what was bad and made known what was good. Grasping the two extremes, he applied the center between them to the people. Was it not by this that he was Shun?”

CHAPTER 7

People call themselves wise yet cannot keep to the mean for a month.

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
Mean 7	子曰：「人皆曰『予知』，驅而納諸罟擭陷阱之中，而莫之知辟也。人皆曰『予知』，擇乎中庸而不能期月守也。」	The Master said, “People all say, ‘I am wise,’ yet when driven into nets, snares, traps, and pitfalls, none of them knows how to avoid them. People all say, ‘I am wise,’ yet when they choose the mean, they cannot keep to it for a full month.”

CHAPTER 8

Yan Hui holds fast to each good thing he gains.

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
Mean 8	子曰：「回之為人也，擇乎中庸，得一善，則拳拳服膺而弗失之矣。」	The Master said, "This is the kind of person Yan Hui was: he chose the mean, and when he gained one good thing, he clasped it firmly to his breast and never lost it."

CHAPTER 9

Ruling, refusing office and facing blades are easier than the mean.

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
Mean 9	子曰：「天下國家可均也，爵祿可辭也，白刃可蹈也，中庸不可能也。」	The Master said, "The world, its states and families can be set in order; rank and salary can be declined; naked blades can be trodden on; but the mean cannot be achieved."

CHAPTER 10

Zilu asks about strength; Confucius contrasts south and north.

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
Mean 10	子路問強。子曰：「南方之強與？北方之強與？抑而強與？寬柔以教，不報無道，南方之強也，君子居之。衽金革，死而不厭，北方之強也，而強者居之。故君子和而不流，強哉矯！中立而不倚，強哉矯！國有道，不變塞焉，強哉矯！國無道，至死不變，強哉矯！」	Zilu asked about strength. The Master said, "The strength of the south? The strength of the north? Or your own strength? To teach with breadth and gentleness, and not to retaliate against those who lack the Way—this is the strength of the south, and the exemplary person abides in it. To lie down on weapons and armor, and to die without complaint—this is the strength of the north, and the strong abide in it. Therefore the exemplary person is in harmony but does not drift along—strong indeed, and unbending! They stand in the center and do not lean—strong indeed, and unbending! When the state has the Way, they do not change from what they were in obscurity—strong indeed, and unbending! When the state lacks the Way, they do not change even to the point of death—strong indeed, and unbending!"[2]

CHAPTER 11

Confucius rejects strange practices and stays the course without recognition.

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
Mean 11		The Master said, "Searching out the hidden and practicing the strange, so that later ages will have

2 Zhu Xi takes 塞, "blocked," as one's earlier days before gaining office.

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
	子曰：「素隱行怪，後世有述焉，吾弗為之矣。君子遵道而行，半塗而廢，吾弗能已矣。君子依乎中庸，遯世不見知而不悔，唯聖者能之。」	something to tell of—this I do not do. There are exemplary persons who follow the Way and walk it, but give up halfway—I cannot stop. The exemplary person relies on the mean; withdrawing from the world and going unrecognized, yet without regret—only a sage is capable of this."[3]

CHAPTER 12

The Way of the exemplary person is far-reaching yet hidden, beginning with ordinary people.

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
Mean 12	君子之道費而隱。夫婦之愚，可以與知焉，及其至也，雖聖人亦有所不知焉；夫婦之不肖，可以能行焉，及其至也，雖聖人亦有所不能焉。天地之大也，人猶有所憾。故君子語大，天下莫能載焉；語小，天下莫能破焉。《詩》云：「鳶飛戾天，魚躍于淵。」言其上下察也。君子之道，造端乎夫婦；及其至也，察乎天地。	The Way of the exemplary person is far-reaching yet hidden. Ordinary men and women, foolish as they are, can share in knowing it; yet in its utmost reaches there is something even the sage does not know. Ordinary men and women, unworthy as they are, can practice it; yet in its utmost reaches there is something even the sage cannot do. Great as Heaven and Earth are, people still find something in them to fault. Thus when the exemplary person speaks of its greatness, nothing in the world can contain it; when speaking of its smallness, nothing in the world can split it. The *Odes* says, "The hawk flies up to Heaven; the fish leaps in the deep." This speaks of its being manifest above and below. The Way of the exemplary person begins with ordinary men and women; in its utmost reaches, it is manifest throughout Heaven and Earth.[4]

CHAPTER 13

The Way is near at hand; Confucius admits falling short of four duties.

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
Mean 13	子曰：「道不遠人。人之為道而遠人，不可以為道。《詩》云：『伐柯伐柯，其則不遠。』執柯以伐柯，睨而視之，猶以為遠。故君子以人治人，改而止。忠恕違道不遠，施諸己而不願，亦勿施於人。	The Master said, "The Way is not far from human beings. If people take as the Way something far from human beings, it cannot be the Way. The *Odes* says, 'Hewing an ax handle, hewing an ax handle—the pattern is not far off.' One grasps an ax handle to hew an ax handle, yet glancing sidelong at it, one still thinks the pattern far away. Therefore the exemplary person governs people by means of people, and stops once they have changed. Doing one's best and reciprocity are not far from the

3 Following Zhu Xi, who reads 素 "plain" as 索 "to search out."
4 夫婦, literally "husband and wife," is read by Zhu Xi as ordinary men and women; the last sentence is also often taken as "begins with husband and wife."

CHINESE	ENGLISH
	Way: what you do not wish done to yourself, do not do to others.
君子之道四，丘未能一焉：所求乎子，以事父未能也；所求乎臣，以事君未能也；所求乎弟，以事兄未能也；所求乎朋友，先施之未能也。庸德之行，庸言之謹，有所不足，不敢不勉，有餘不敢盡；言顧行，行顧言，君子胡不慥慥爾！」	There are four things in the Way of the exemplary person, and I have not managed even one of them: to serve my father as I would require of a son—this I have not managed; to serve my ruler as I would require of a minister—this I have not managed; to serve my elder brother as I would require of a younger brother—this I have not managed; to be the first to treat a friend as I would require of a friend—this I have not managed. In practicing ordinary virtue and taking care in ordinary speech, where there is some shortfall, one dares not fail to make the effort; where there is more than enough, one dares not use it all. Words keep deeds in view; deeds keep words in view—how could the exemplary person be anything but earnest!”

CHAPTER 14

Acting fittingly in any position and seeking the cause of failure in oneself.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
Mean 14 君子素其位而行，不願乎其外。素富貴，行乎富貴；素貧賤，行乎貧賤；素夷狄，行乎夷狄；素患難，行乎患難；君子無入而不自得焉。在上位不陵下，在下位不援上，正己而不求於人則無怨。上不怨天，下不尤人。故君子居易以俟命，小人行險以徼幸。子曰：「射有似乎君子；失諸正鵠，反求諸其身。」	The exemplary person acts according to the position they are in and does not wish for anything beyond it. Placed in wealth and honor, they act as one in wealth and honor; placed in poverty and low station, they act as one in poverty and low station; placed among the Yi and Di peoples, they act as one among the Yi and Di peoples; placed in trouble and hardship, they act as one in trouble and hardship. There is no situation the exemplary person enters in which they are not at ease. In a high position, they do not bully those below; in a low position, they do not cling to those above. They set themselves right and seek nothing from others, and so they feel no resentment. Above, they do not resent Heaven; below, they do not blame others. Thus the exemplary person dwells in ease and awaits Heaven’s decree, while the petty person walks in danger and hopes for luck. The Master said, “In archery there is something like the exemplary person: when one misses the center of the target, one turns back and seeks the cause in oneself.”[5]

5 The Yi and Di: the peoples beyond the Zhou states.

CHAPTER 15

The Way starts from what is near, as harmony begins at home.

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
Mean 15	君子之道，辟如行遠必自邇，辟如登高必自卑。《詩》曰：「妻子好合，如鼓瑟琴；兄弟既翕，和樂且耽；宜爾室家；樂爾妻帑。」子曰：「父母其順矣乎！」	The Way of the exemplary person is like traveling far: one must start from what is near; it is like climbing high: one must start from what is low. The *Odes* says, “Wife and children in loving union, like the playing of zither and lute; elder and younger brothers in accord, harmonious and joyful, delighting long together; order well your house and household, delight in your wife and children.” The Master said, “How content the parents must be!”

CHAPTER 16

The virtue of ghosts and spirits, unseen yet everywhere.

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
Mean 16	子曰：「鬼神之為德，其盛矣乎！視之而弗見，聽之而弗聞，體物而不可遺。使天下之人齊明盛服，以承祭祀。洋洋乎！如在其上，如在其左右。《詩》曰：『神之格思，不可度思！矧可射思！』夫微之顯，誠之不可揜如此夫。」	The Master said, “How abundant is the virtue of ghosts and spirits! Look for them and you do not see them; listen for them and you do not hear them; yet they are in the substance of all things and leave none out. They cause the people of the world to fast and purify themselves and to dress in full attire to carry out the sacrifices. Vast and flowing! They seem to be above, they seem to be to the left and right. The *Odes* says, ‘The coming of the spirits cannot be fathomed—how much less can they be treated with indifference!’ So manifest is the subtle; so impossible is sincerity to conceal.”

CHAPTER 17

Shun’s great filial devotion and the rewards of great virtue.

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
Mean 17	子曰：「舜其大孝也與！德為聖人，尊為天子，富有四海之內。宗廟饗之，子孫保之。故大德必得其位，必得其祿，必得其名，必得其壽。故天之生物，必因其材而篤焉。故栽者培之，傾者覆之，《詩》曰：『嘉樂君子，憲憲令德！宜民宜人；受祿于天；保佑命之，自天申之！』故大德者必受命。」	The Master said, “Shun—surely his was great filial devotion! In virtue he was a sage; in honor he was the Son of Heaven; in wealth he possessed all within the four seas. In the ancestral temple he received sacrifices, and his descendants preserved his line. Thus great virtue is sure to gain its position, sure to gain its salary, sure to gain its renown, sure to gain its long life. Thus in producing things, Heaven always responds to their capacities and gives them more. Thus what is planted it nurtures, and what leans it overturns. The *Odes* says, ‘Admirable and joyful is the exemplary per-

CHINESE	ENGLISH
	son, shining with fine virtue! Fitting for the people, fitting for officials; receiving blessings from Heaven—protected, aided, and appointed, renewed from Heaven!' Thus one of great virtue is sure to receive the mandate."

CHAPTER 18

King Wen, King Wu and the Duke of Zhou, and the rites they extended to all ranks.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
Mean 18 子曰：「無憂者其惟文王乎！以王季為父，以武王為子，父作之，子述之。武王纘大王、王季、文王之緒。壹戎衣而有天下，身不失天下之顯名。尊為天子，富有四海之內。宗廟饗之，子孫保之。	The Master said, "The one without sorrows—was it not King Wen alone! He had King Ji as his father and King Wu as his son; the father began the work, and the son carried it on. King Wu continued the enterprise of the Great King, King Ji, and King Wen. Putting on armor but once, he possessed the world, and he never lost his illustrious name throughout the world. In honor he was the Son of Heaven; in wealth he possessed all within the four seas. In the ancestral temple he received sacrifices, and his descendants preserved his line.[6]
武王末受命，周公成文武之德，追王大王、王季，上祀先公以天子之禮。斯禮也，達乎諸侯大夫，及士庶人。父為大夫，子為士；葬以大夫，祭以士。父為士，子為大夫；葬以士，祭以大夫。期之喪達乎大夫，三年之喪達乎天子，父母之喪無貴賤一也。」	King Wu received the mandate late in life. The Duke of Zhou completed the virtue of Wen and Wu, posthumously honored the Great King and King Ji as kings, and further back sacrificed to the earlier lords with the ritual of the Son of Heaven. This ritual extended to the feudal lords and the great officers, and down to the officers and commoners. If the father was a great officer and the son an officer, the father was buried as a great officer and sacrificed to as an officer. If the father was an officer and the son a great officer, the father was buried as an officer and sacrificed to as a great officer. The one-year mourning extended up to the great officers; the three-year mourning extended up to the Son of Heaven; mourning for father and mother was the same for noble and humble alike."

CHAPTER 19

Filial devotion as carrying on ancestors' aims through the rites of the ancestral temple.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
Mean 19 子曰：「武王、周公，其達孝矣乎！夫孝者：善繼人之志，善述人之事者也。春秋修其祖廟，陳其宗器，設其裳衣，薦其時食。宗廟之禮，所以序昭穆也；序	The Master said, "King Wu and the Duke of Zhou—surely theirs was a filial devotion recognized by all! Filial devotion is being good at carrying on the aims of others and good at continuing their under-

6 The Great King (Taiwang) and King Ji were King Wen's grandfather and father, honored as kings only after the Zhou conquest.

CHINESE

爵，所以辨貴賤也；序事，所以辨賢也；旅酬下為上，所以逮賤也；燕毛，所以序齒也。踐其位，行其禮，奏其樂，敬其所尊，愛其所親，事死如事生，事亡如事存，孝之至也。郊社之禮，所以事上帝也，宗廟之禮，所以祀乎其先也。明乎郊社之禮、禘嘗之義，治國其如示諸掌乎。」

ENGLISH

takings. In spring and autumn they repaired their ancestral temples, set out their ancestral vessels, laid out their robes and garments, and offered the foods of the season. The ritual of the ancestral temple serves to set out the order of the generations in the ancestral temple; ordering by rank serves to distinguish noble and humble; ordering by tasks serves to distinguish the worthy; in the general toasting, those below raise their cups to those above, which serves to reach down to the humble; at the feast, seating by the color of the hair serves to order by age. To stand in their places, perform their rituals, play their music, revere those they honored, love those they held dear, serve the dead as they served the living, serve the departed as they served those still present—this is the height of filial devotion. The ritual of the sacrifices to Heaven and Earth serves to worship the Lord on High; the ritual of the ancestral temple serves to sacrifice to one's forebears. For one who understands the ritual of the sacrifices to Heaven and Earth and the meaning of the di and chang sacrifices, governing a state would be like looking at something in the palm of the hand."[7]

CHAPTER 20

Duke Ai asks about government; the five relationships, three virtues and nine constant rules, ending in sincerity.

CHINESE

Mean 20 哀公問政。子曰：「文武之政，布在方策。其人存，則其政舉；其人亡，則其政息。人道敏政，地道敏樹。夫政也者，蒲盧也。故為政在人，取人以身，修身以道，修道以仁。仁者人也，親親為大；義者宜也，尊賢為大；親親之殺，尊賢之等，禮所生也。在下位不獲乎上，民不可得而治矣！

ENGLISH

Duke Ai asked about government. The Master said, "The government of Wen and Wu is laid out on the boards and bamboo slips. When such people are present, such government flourishes; when such people are gone, such government ceases. The Way of human beings works swiftly in government; the Way of the earth works swiftly in trees. Government is like the reed. Therefore government depends on people; one obtains people by means of oneself; one cultivates oneself by means of the Way; one cultivates the Way by means of humaneness. Humaneness is being human, and loving one's kin is the greatest part of it; rightness is what is fitting, and honoring the worthy is the greatest part of it. The gradations in loving one's kin and the degrees in honoring the worthy are what ritual propriety arises from. If those in low

7 The di was a great sacrifice to the royal ancestors; the chang was the autumn ancestral sacrifice.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
	positions do not win the confidence of those above, the people cannot be governed.[8]
故君子不可以不修身；思修身，不可以不事親；思事親，不可以不知人；思知人，不可以不知天。」天下之達道五，所以行之者三：曰君臣也，父子也，夫婦也，昆弟也，朋友之交也：五者天下之達道也。知、仁、勇三者，天下之達德也，所以行之者一也。	Therefore the exemplary person cannot fail to cultivate themselves; intending to cultivate oneself, one cannot fail to serve one's parents; intending to serve one's parents, one cannot fail to know people; intending to know people, one cannot fail to know Heaven." The universal ways of the world are five, and the means of practicing them are three. They are ruler and minister, father and son, husband and wife, elder and younger brother, and the dealings of friends: these five are the universal ways of the world. Wisdom, humaneness, and courage—these three are the universal virtues of the world, and the means of practicing them is one.
或生而知之，或學而知之，或困而知之，及其知之一也；或安而行之，或利而行之，或勉強而行之，及其成功一也。子曰：「好學近乎知，力行近乎仁，知恥近乎勇。知斯三者，則知所以修身；知所以修身，則知所以治人；知所以治人，則知所以治天下國家矣。」	Some know it from birth, some know it by learning, some know it through hardship—but once they know it, it is one. Some practice it at ease, some practice it for advantage, some practice it by forcing themselves—but once they achieve it, it is one. The Master said, "Loving learning is close to wisdom; practicing with vigor is close to humaneness; knowing shame is close to courage. Knowing these three, one knows how to cultivate oneself; knowing how to cultivate oneself, one knows how to govern others; knowing how to govern others, one knows how to govern the world, its states and families."
凡為天下國家有九經，曰：修身也，尊賢也，親親也，敬大臣也，體群臣也，子庶民也，來百工也，柔遠人也，懷諸侯也。修身則道立，尊賢則不惑，親親則諸父昆弟不怨，敬大臣則不眩，體群臣則士之報禮重，子庶民則百姓勸，來百工則財用足，柔遠人則四方歸之，懷諸侯則天下畏之。	For governing the world, its states and families, there are nine constant rules: cultivating oneself, honoring the worthy, loving one's kin, respecting the great ministers, identifying with the officials, treating the common people as one's children, attracting the hundred artisans, being gentle to people from afar, and cherishing the feudal lords. If one cultivates oneself, the Way is established; if one honors the worthy, one is not deluded; if one loves one's kin, uncles and brothers feel no resentment; if one respects the great ministers, one is not confused; if one identifies with the officials, the officers repay with weighty courtesy; if one treats the common people as one's children, the populace is encouraged; if one attracts the hundred artisans, wealth and resources are sufficient; if one is gentle to people from afar, the four quar-

8 Zhu Xi takes 蒲盧 as a fast-growing reed; Zheng Xuan takes it as a wasp said to raise others' young as its own.

CHINESE

齊明盛服，非禮不動，所以修身也；去讒遠色，賤貨而貴德，所以勸賢也；尊其位，重其祿，同其好惡，所以勸親親也；官盛任使，所以勸大臣也；忠信重祿，所以勸士也；時使薄斂，所以勸百姓也；日省月試，既稟稱事，所以勸百工也；送往迎來，嘉善而矜不能，所以柔遠人也；繼絕世，舉廢國，治亂持危，朝聘以時，厚往而薄來，所以懷諸侯也。

凡為天下國家有九經，所以行之者一也。凡事豫則立，不豫則廢。言前定則不跲，事前定則不困，行前定則不疚，道前定則不窮。在下位不獲乎上，民不可得而治矣；獲乎上有道：不信乎朋友，不獲乎上矣；信乎朋友有道：不順乎親，不信乎朋友矣；順乎親有道：反諸身不誠，不順乎親矣；誠身有道：不明乎善，不誠乎身矣。

ENGLISH

ters turn to one; if one cherishes the feudal lords, the world holds one in awe.

Fasting and purifying oneself, dressing in full attire, and not moving except in accordance with ritual propriety—this is how one cultivates oneself. Getting rid of slanderers, keeping away from beauty, holding goods cheap and valuing virtue—this is how one encourages the worthy. Honoring their positions, making their salaries generous, sharing their likes and dislikes—this is how one encourages love of kin. Providing ample officials to carry out commissions—this is how one encourages the great ministers. Doing one's best for them, trusting them, and making their salaries generous—this is how one encourages the officers. Employing them only at the proper seasons and taxing them lightly—this is how one encourages the populace. Daily inspection and monthly testing, with rations matched to the work—this is how one encourages the hundred artisans. Escorting those who leave and welcoming those who come, commending the good and showing compassion for the incapable—this is how one is gentle to people from afar. Continuing lines of descent that have been cut off, reviving fallen states, bringing order to disorder and support to those in danger, receiving court visits and missions at the proper times, giving generously and receiving sparingly—this is how one cherishes the feudal lords.

For governing the world, its states and families, there are nine constant rules, and the means of practicing them is one. In all affairs, preparation brings success; without preparation, failure. If words are settled beforehand, one does not stumble; if affairs are settled beforehand, one is not hard pressed; if conduct is settled beforehand, one has no regrets; if one's way is settled beforehand, one is never at a loss. If those in low positions do not win the confidence of those above, the people cannot be governed. There is a way to win the confidence of those above: if one is not trusted by one's friends, one will not win the confidence of those above. There is a way to be trusted by one's friends: if one does not please one's parents, one will not be trusted by one's friends. There is a way to please one's parents: if, looking within, one is not sincere, one will not please one's parents. There is a way to make oneself sincere: if one is

CHINESE	ENGLISH
	not clear about the good, one will not be sincere in oneself.
誠者，天之道也；誠之者，人之道也。誠者不勉而中，不思而得，從容中道，聖人也。誠之者，擇善而固執之者也。博學之，審問之，慎思之，明辨之，篤行之。有弗學，學之弗能弗措也；有弗問，問之弗知弗措也；有弗思，思之弗得弗措也；有弗辨，辨之弗明弗措也；有弗行，行之弗篤弗措也；人一能之己百之，人十能之己千之。果能此道矣，雖愚必明，雖柔必強。	Sincerity is the Way of Heaven; making oneself sincere is the Way of human beings. One who is sincere hits the mark without effort and attains without thinking, naturally and easily hitting the center of the Way—such a one is a sage. One who makes oneself sincere chooses the good and holds to it firmly. Study it broadly, inquire into it carefully, reflect on it cautiously, discern it clearly, practice it earnestly. If there is something one has not studied, or has studied without mastering, one does not set it aside; if there is something one has not inquired into, or has inquired into without understanding, one does not set it aside; if there is something one has not reflected on, or has reflected on without grasping, one does not set it aside; if there is something one has not discerned, or has discerned without clarity, one does not set it aside; if there is something one has not practiced, or has practiced without earnestness, one does not set it aside. If others can do it once, one does it a hundred times; if others can do it ten times, one does it a thousand times. One who can truly follow this way, though foolish, will surely become clear; though weak, will surely become strong.

CHAPTER 21

Clarity that comes from sincerity, and sincerity that comes from clarity.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
Mean 21 自誠明，謂之性；自明誠，謂之教。誠則明矣，明則誠矣。	Clarity that comes from sincerity is called nature; sincerity that comes from clarity is called teaching. Where there is sincerity there is clarity; where there is clarity there is sincerity.

CHAPTER 22

Utmost sincerity realizes every nature and forms a triad with Heaven and Earth.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
Mean 22 唯天下至誠，為能盡其性；能盡其性，則能盡人之性；能盡人之性，則能盡物之性；能盡物之性，則可以贊天地之化育；可以贊天地之化育，則可以與天地參矣。	Only those of utmost sincerity in the world can fully realize their own nature. If they can fully realize their own nature, they can fully realize the nature of others. If they can fully realize the nature of others, they can fully realize the nature of things. If they can fully realize the nature of things, they can assist the transforming and nurturing of Heaven and Earth. If they can assist the

CHINESE	ENGLISH
	transforming and nurturing of Heaven and Earth, they can form a triad with Heaven and Earth.[9]

CHAPTER 23

Developing one side of one's nature until sincerity transforms.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
Mean 23 其次致曲，曲能有誠，誠則形，形則著，著則明，明則動，動則變，變則化，唯天下至誠為能化。	Next below this is developing a single side of one's nature. That single side can have sincerity. With sincerity there is form; with form, visibility; with visibility, brightness; with brightness, movement; with movement, change; with change, transformation. Only those of utmost sincerity in the world are able to transform.[10]

CHAPTER 24

Utmost sincerity can foresee the rise and fall of states.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
Mean 24 至誠之道，可以前知。國家將興，必有禎祥；國家將亡，必有妖孽；見乎蓍龜，動乎四體。禍福將至：善，必先知之；不善，必先知之。故至誠如神。	The Way of utmost sincerity makes it possible to know beforehand. When a state is about to flourish, there are sure to be auspicious omens. When a state is about to perish, there are sure to be ill portents. These appear in the milfoil and the tortoise, and they stir in the four limbs. When calamity or good fortune is about to come, if it is good, it will surely be known beforehand; if it is not good, it will surely be known beforehand. Therefore utmost sincerity is like a spirit.[11]

CHAPTER 25

Sincerity completes oneself and completes things.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
Mean 25 誠者自成也，而道自道也。誠者物之終始，不誠無物。是故君子誠之為貴。誠者非自成己而已也，所以成物也。成己，仁也；成物，知也。性之德也，合外內之道也，故時措之宜也。	Sincerity is self-completing, and the Way is self-directing. Sincerity is the end and the beginning of things; without sincerity there are no things. That is why the exemplary person values making oneself sincere above all. Sincerity does not merely complete oneself; it is that by which things are completed. Completing oneself is humaneness; completing things is wisdom. These are virtues of one's nature, the Way that unites outer and

9 "Form a triad" renders 參, literally "make a third": the person of utmost sincerity stands alongside Heaven and Earth as the third member of a triad.

10 致曲 "developing a single side" follows Zhu Xi, who takes 曲 as one particular bent or point of goodness that is extended to the full.

11 Milfoil stalks and tortoise shells were the two chief means of divination in ancient China.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
	inner. Therefore whatever it is applied to, at whatever time, is fitting.

CHAPTER 26

Unceasing sincerity, and the Way of Heaven and Earth.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
Mean 26 故至誠無息。不息則久，久則徵，徵則悠遠，悠遠則博厚，博厚則高明。博厚，所以載物也；高明，所以覆物也；悠久，所以成物也。博厚配地，高明配天，悠久無疆。如此者，不見而章，不動而變，無為而成。天地之道，可一言而盡也：其為物不貳，則其生物不測。天地之道：博也，厚也，高也，明也，悠也，久也。	Therefore utmost sincerity never ceases. Not ceasing, it endures; enduring, it shows forth; showing forth, it reaches far; reaching far, it becomes broad and deep; broad and deep, it becomes high and bright. Broad and deep—this is how it bears things up. High and bright—this is how it covers things over. Far-reaching and enduring—this is how it completes things. In breadth and depth it matches Earth; in height and brightness it matches Heaven; far-reaching and enduring, it is without bounds. Being so, it is manifest without being seen, it brings change without moving, it completes without acting. The Way of Heaven and Earth can be summed up in a single phrase: as a thing it is undivided, and so the way it produces things is unfathomable. The Way of Heaven and Earth is broad, is deep, is high, is bright, is far-reaching, is enduring.
今夫天，斯昭昭之多，及其無窮也，日月星辰繫焉，萬物覆焉。今夫地，一撮土之多，及其廣厚，載華嶽而不重，振河海而不洩，萬物載焉。今夫山，一卷石之多，及其廣大，草木生之，禽獸居之，寶藏興焉。今夫水，一勺之多，及其不測，黿鼉、蛟龍、魚鱉生焉，貨財殖焉。	Now take Heaven: it is only so much bright sky, but in its boundlessness the sun, the moon, the stars and constellations hang from it, and the myriad things are covered by it. Now take Earth: it is only so much as a pinch of soil, but in its breadth and depth it bears up Mount Hua without feeling the weight, it holds the rivers and seas without letting them leak away, and the myriad things are borne up by it. Now take a mountain: it is only so much as a fistful of stone, but in its breadth and size grasses and trees grow on it, birds and beasts dwell on it, and precious stores come forth from it. Now take water: it is only so much as a ladleful, but in its unfathomable depths giant turtles and alligators, flood dragons and dragons, fish and turtles live, and wealth and goods multiply.
《詩》云：「維天之命，於穆不已！」蓋曰天之所以為天也。「於乎不顯！文王之德之純！」蓋曰文王之所以為文也，純亦不已。	

CHINESE	ENGLISH
	The *Odes* says: "Heaven's decree—how profound, and never ceasing!" This means: this is what makes Heaven Heaven. "How illustrious! The purity of King Wen's virtue!" This means: this is what made King Wen "Wen"—his purity, too, never ceased.[12]

CHAPTER 27

The greatness of the sage's Way and how the exemplary person lives under it.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
Mean 27 大哉聖人之道！洋洋乎！發育萬物，峻極于天。優優大哉！禮儀三百，威儀三千。待其人而後行。故曰苟不至德，至道不凝焉。故君子尊德性而道問學，致廣大而盡精微，極高明而道中庸。溫故而知新，敦厚以崇禮。是故居上不驕，為下不倍，國有道其言足以興，國無道其默足以容。《詩》曰「既明且哲，以保其身」，其此之謂與！	Great indeed is the Way of the sage! Vast and overflowing, it brings forth and nurtures the myriad things and towers up to Heaven. Ample and great! Three hundred rules of ritual, three thousand rules of conduct. They wait for the right person and only then are carried out. Hence it is said: unless there is the highest virtue, the highest Way will not take form there. Therefore the exemplary person reveres the virtuous nature and follows the path of inquiry and learning, reaches to the broad and great and goes to the end of the fine and subtle, attains the height of the lofty and bright and follows the path of the mean. They review the old and know the new, and are generous and steadfast so as to honor ritual propriety. Therefore in a high position they are not arrogant, and in a low position they are not rebellious. When the state has the Way, their words are enough to raise them up; when the state lacks the Way, their silence is enough to keep them safe. The *Odes* says, "Clear-sighted and wise, they keep themselves safe"—does this not describe it?

CHAPTER 28

Only the Son of Heaven may make rites; Confucius follows Zhou.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
Mean 28 子曰：「愚而好自用，賤而好自專，生乎今之世，反古之道。如此者，菑及其身者也。」非天子，不議禮，不制度，不考文。今天下車同軌，書同文，行同倫。雖有其位，苟無其德，不敢作禮樂焉；雖有其德，苟無其位，亦不敢作禮樂焉。子曰：「吾說夏禮，杞不足徵也；吾學殷禮，有宋存焉；吾學周禮，今用之，吾從周。」	The Master said, "Foolish yet fond of relying on oneself, lowly yet fond of acting on one's own authority, born into the present age yet returning to the Way of antiquity—such a person brings disaster upon themselves." No one but the Son of Heaven deliberates on ritual, sets the regulations, or examines the script. Now throughout the world carts have axles of the same gauge, writing uses the same script, and conduct follows the same

12 文 wen, "pattern, culture, refinement," is King Wen's posthumous title, and the line plays on its meaning.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
	norms. Though one may have the position, if one lacks the virtue, one dare not create rites and music; though one may have the virtue, if one lacks the position, one likewise dare not create rites and music. The Master said, "I can speak of the rites of Xia, but Qi cannot provide sufficient evidence. I have studied the rites of Yin, and Song preserves them. I have studied the rites of Zhou, and they are in use today. I follow Zhou."[13]

CHAPTER 29

Three weighty matters, and the tests the exemplary person's Way must meet.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
Mean 29 王天下有三重焉，其寡過矣乎！上焉者雖善無徵，無徵不信，不信民弗從；下焉者雖善不尊，不尊不信，不信民弗從。故君子之道：本諸身，徵諸庶民，考諸三王而不繆，建諸天地而不悖，質諸鬼神而無疑，百世以俟聖人而不惑。質諸鬼神而無疑，知天也；百世以俟聖人而不惑，知人也。	Ruling the world involves three weighty matters—with them, one will have few faults! What comes from earlier ages, however good, lacks evidence; lacking evidence, it is not trusted; not trusted, the people do not follow it. What comes from those in low positions, however good, is not honored; not honored, it is not trusted; not trusted, the people do not follow it. Therefore the Way of the exemplary person is rooted in one's own person, verified among the common people, checked against the Three Kings without error, set up between Heaven and Earth without contradiction, put before the ghosts and spirits without doubt, and awaits a sage a hundred generations later without misgiving. Put before the ghosts and spirits without doubt—this is knowing Heaven. Awaiting a sage a hundred generations later without misgiving—this is knowing human beings.[14]
是故君子動而世為天下道，行而世為天下法，言而世為天下則。遠之則有望，近之則不厭。《詩》曰：「在彼無惡，在此無射；庶幾夙夜，以永終譽！」君子未有不如此而蚤有譽於天下者也。	Therefore when the exemplary person acts, it becomes for generations a way for the world; when they conduct themselves, it becomes for generations a model for the world; when they speak, it becomes for generations a standard for the world. Those far from them look up to them; those near them never tire of them. The *Odes* says, "There, none dislike them; here, none weary of them. Morning and night they strive, to keep their praise forever!" There has never been an exemplary person who was not like this and yet early won praise throughout the world.

13 Qi and Song were small states whose rulers descended from the royal houses of Xia and Shang (Yin).
14 Zhu Xi takes the three weighty matters as deliberating on ritual, setting the regulations, and examining the script (ch. 28); the Three Kings are the founders of Xia, Shang and Zhou.

CHAPTER 30

Confucius carries on Yao and Shun and is likened to Heaven and Earth.

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
Mean 30	仲尼祖述堯舜，憲章文武；上律天時，下襲水土。辟如天地之無不持載，無不覆幬，辟如四時之錯行，如日月之代明。萬物並育而不相害，道並行而不相悖，小德川流，大德敦化，此天地之所以為大也。	Confucius carried on the tradition of Yao and Shun and took King Wen and King Wu as his model; above, he followed the seasons of Heaven, and below, he accorded with water and land. He is like Heaven and Earth, which hold up and bear all things and cover and canopy all things; he is like the four seasons in their alternating course, like the sun and moon shining in turn. The myriad things are nurtured together and do not harm one another; ways run side by side and do not conflict. The lesser virtue flows like rivers; the greater virtue is deep and transforming. This is what makes Heaven and Earth great.

CHAPTER 31

The virtues of the utmost sage, whose fame reaches all peoples.

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
Mean 31	唯天下至聖，為能聰明睿知，足以有臨也；寬裕溫柔，足以有容也；發強剛毅，足以有執也；齊莊中正，足以有敬也；文理密察，足以有別也。溥博淵泉，而時出之。溥博如天，淵泉如淵。見而民莫不敬，言而民莫不信，行而民莫不說。	Only the utmost sage in the world can be quick of hearing, clear of sight, perceptive and wise, enough to preside over others; broad, generous, warm and gentle, enough to embrace others; vigorous, strong, firm and resolute, enough to hold fast; orderly, grave, centered and correct, enough to be reverent; refined, ordered, meticulous and discerning, enough to make distinctions. Vast and broad, deep and welling like a spring, they bring it forth in due season. Vast and broad as Heaven, deep and welling as the abyss. They appear, and none of the people fail to revere them; they speak, and none of the people fail to trust them; they act, and none of the people fail to delight in them.
	是以聲名洋溢乎中國，施及蠻貊；舟車所至，人力所通；天之所覆，地之所載，日月所照，霜露所隊；凡有血氣者，莫不尊親，故曰配天。	Therefore their fame overflows the Central States and spreads to the Man and Mo peoples. Wherever ships and carts reach, wherever human strength penetrates, wherever Heaven covers, wherever Earth bears up, wherever the sun and moon shine, wherever frost and dew fall—all who have blood and breath honor and love them. Hence it is said: they are a match for Heaven.[15]

15 The Central States (中國) are the Zhou states of the central plain; Man and Mo are historical names for peoples beyond them to the south and north.

CHAPTER 32

Only utmost sincerity can set the world in order and know Heaven's workings.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
Mean 32 唯天下至誠，為能經綸天下之大經，立天下之大本，知天地之化育。夫焉有所倚？肫肫其仁！淵淵其淵！浩浩其天！苟不固聰明聖知達天德者，其孰能知之？	Only those of utmost sincerity in the world can order and weave the great strands of the world, establish the great root of the world, and know the transforming and nurturing of Heaven and Earth. What do they rely on? Earnest, earnest—their humaneness! Deep, deep—their abyss! Vast, vast—their Heaven! Unless one is truly quick of hearing, clear of sight, sagely and wise, reaching the virtue of Heaven, who could know it?

CHAPTER 33

Odes on hidden virtue, closing with Heaven's working without sound or smell.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
Mean 33 《詩》曰「衣錦尚絅」，惡其文之著也。故君子之道，闇然而日章；小人之道，的然而日亡。君子之道：淡而不厭，簡而文，溫而理，知遠之近，知風之自，知微之顯，可與入德矣。《詩》云：「潛雖伏矣，亦孔之昭！」故君子內省不疚，無惡於志。君子之所不可及者，其唯人之所不見乎。《詩》云：「相在爾室，尚不愧于屋漏。」故君子不動而敬，不言而信。	The *Odes* says, "Over brocade, a plain unlined robe"—from dislike of the pattern being too conspicuous. Therefore the Way of the exemplary person is hidden yet grows more manifest each day; the way of the petty person is conspicuous yet fades away each day. The Way of the exemplary person is plain yet never wearisome, simple yet refined, warm yet ordered. Knowing that the far begins from the near, knowing where the wind comes from, knowing how the subtle becomes manifest—with this one can enter into virtue. The *Odes* says, "Though it sinks and lies hidden, still it is very clear!" Therefore the exemplary person examines themselves within and finds no fault, and has nothing to be ashamed of in their intentions. Where the exemplary person cannot be equaled is surely in what others do not see. The *Odes* says, "See yourself in your own room: may you not be ashamed even before the northwest corner." Therefore the exemplary person is reverent without moving and trusted without speaking.[16]
《詩》曰：「奏假無言，時靡有爭。」是故君子不賞而民勸，不怒而民威於鈇鉞。《詩》曰：「不顯惟德！百辟其刑之。」是故君子篤恭而天下平。《詩》云：「予懷明德，不大聲以色。」子曰：「聲色之於以化民，末也。」《詩》曰：「德輶如毛」，毛猶有倫。「上天之載，無聲無臭」，至矣！	The *Odes* says, "They come forward to the spirits without a word; at that time there is no contention." Therefore the exemplary person does not reward, yet the people are encouraged; does not show anger, yet the people stand in greater awe than of the executioner's ax and the battle-ax. The *Odes* says, "How illustrious is virtue! The many princes take it as their model." Therefore the ex-

16 The northwest corner (屋漏) was the most secluded spot in a house, where offerings to the household spirits were made.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
	emplary person is earnest and respectful, and the world is at peace. The *Odes* says, “I cherish bright virtue that makes no great show of voice and look.” The Master said, “In transforming the people, voice and look are the branches.” The *Odes* says, “Virtue is light as a hair”—yet a hair still has something it can be compared to. “The doings of high Heaven have neither sound nor smell”—that is the utmost!