

7 c0450

Dzǖng Shǖm (to be distinguished from his second son Dzǖng Shǖn), known in the Analects as Dzǖngdǖ “Master Dzǖng,” is shown in LY 8 as on his deathbed surrounded by disciples. This suggests that he was alive, and head of the school of Lǖ, as of the preceding LY 7, a possibility supported by thematic usages common to the LY 8 Dzǖngdǖ sayings and parts of LY 7.

Dzǖngdǖ was from the fortress town of Wǖ-chǖng in southern Lǖ, and despite later tradition seems not to have been one of the original protégés. He was probably noticed as a promising officer by Dǖ-yóu when he was Steward of Wǖ-chǖng, and came north sometime after Dǖ-yóu himself, in c0473. As the first *outside* school head, he will have needed something to tell his students about a Confucius whom he had never known. LY 7 may be the result.

It continues the aestheticism of LY 5, while at the same time extending the lowliness noted in LY 6. It is a portrait of Confucius, and many features of that portrait are new. It defines him in terms of the sage (shǖng), a word absent from earlier chapters, and makes him a transmitter of antiquity, not an inculcator of more recent feudal-military values. Other elements of the LY 7 portrait (such as personal invulnerability) were not incorporated in the final Confucius myth, but the idea of a sage conveying ancient wisdom has proved to be enduring.

Reference numbers to Legge are given at the end of each passage.

[A. Personal Character]

┌ 7:1. The Master said, In handing on and not inventing, in being faithful to and loving antiquity, I might be compared to our old Pǖng. [7:1]

Confucius’s actual Spring and Autumn feudal-warrior ethos seems, on the evidence of LY 4, to have been outmoded at the end of his life. His stance as a teacher in LY 4 involved no references to antiquity or to any other authority. These traits have been generally preserved in LY 5–6, composed within living memory of Confucius. This saying is the first to link him to antiquity as such. Who “old Pǖng” may have been at this early period is difficult to say.

└ 7:2. To be silent and understand, to study and not tire of it, to encourage others and not grow weary in so doing: what problem do these present for me? [7:2]

This rhetorically modest claim (compare 7:34) is outrageous in wider context: it makes Confucius himself, not merely Yén Hwéi, a meditational adept. Structurally, the “self-improvement” theme which has figured at the end of each chapter since the authentic LY 4, turns up *at the beginning* of LY 7. This not only emphasizes pedagogy in general, it highlights the meditationist theme (the mystical element of 7:2 joins the mysterious motif of antiquity, in 7:1), and adds it to the other arts of the teacher. For Dzǖngdǖ as a teacher and an interpreter of Confucius, see the Reflections (7r), following.

Anxiousness over the adequacy of teaching is also new. In his own closed society, Confucius’s position itself made him an authority. The impatience of 5:10a/b and 6:21 is here, in 7:2, replaced by solicitousness; it has now become the *teacher* who must put energy into the situation. See also 7:7 below.

┌ 7:3. The Master said, My character not being cultivated, my studies not being pursued, hearing the right and not able to follow it, being not good and unable to change it: these are my anxieties. [7:3]

This saying reverts from mysticism to ordinary self-improvement (as in LY 4–6), and from the claimed successes of 7:1/2 to the confessed shortcomings of 7:3/5.

└ 7:5. The Master said, Extreme has been my decline; long has it been since last I dreamed of Jōu-gūng! [7:5]

For the emphatic inverted predicate, compare 6:11. Jōu-gūng, the “Prince of Jōu,” brother of the Jōu founder and first holder of the fief of Lǚ (see page 3), was the regent and thus the preserver of Jōu in the minority of the second Jōu king. If we fold the 7:3/5 pair back over 7:1/2, then 7:5 (the first Lǚ Prince) will match 7:1 (Confucius as continuous with the past); 7:5 thus *explicitates* 7:1. Though here recollected in age, the dream itself – the sense of continuity with the Jōu – would presumably have belonged to the youth of “Confucius.”

└ 7:6. The Master said, Intent upon the Way, based on virtue, close to rǚn, and acquainted with the arts. [7:6]

These parallel clauses may be advisory (“Be . . .”) or descriptive (“I am . . .”); the best reading may be a general description (“He [the gentleman] is . . .”). If so, it fits the LY 7 portrait by epitomizing Confucius’s behavioral ideal.

“Intent upon the Way” (compare 4:9) implies initial commitment. Virtue (dé 德), a goal in 7:3, is here a resource (see 7:23); rǚn, a mainstay in 4:5, is now an ideal to be approached. The arts (yì 藝), except as “accomplishments” for Rǎn Chyóu in 6:8, are new: it seems (from the verb yóu 游 “travel, wander,” here “acquainted with”) that they serve as relaxation after the hard ethical work (compare 9:2). With this hint, we may take the phrases as a sequence (and 7:6 as a precursor of the ethical progress passage 2:4): initial determination on the right path, reliance on virtue for further progress, homing on rǚn as a beacon in the last stages, and seemly personal accomplishments at the end.

[B. Early Teaching]

┌ 7:7. The Master said, From those who have brought a bundle of dried meat on up, I have never been without a lesson to give them. [7:7]

The point is Confucius’s welcome to sincere students whatever their wealth. 7:7 attests the use of tuition payments (structured, in this society, as gifts) in the school of Lǚ. Dried meat (see 10:6c) has humble associations, implying that “Confucius” had meaningful things to say to pupils who were not in line for palace positions. The social broadening since LY 4–5 is enormous.

└ 7:8. The Master said, If they are not eager, I don’t expound. If they are not urgent, I don’t explain. If I give out one corner and they don’t come back with three corners, then I don’t go on. [7:8]

Discipline, balancing the acceptance of 7:7 (Grafflin **Form**: “open admissions but post-matriculation screening”). A new idea (like that in 7:3) is often paired with an older idea. “Corners” suggest carpentry: given one right angle, a novice should be able to make the other corners square. What Confucius wants is the ability to infer the next step (see 5:9). For the desire to learn, see 6:21.

┐ 7:12. If wealth could be had for the seeking, though it were only as some officer who holds the whip, I too would do it. But if it cannot be had, I will follow what I love. [7:11]

“Wealth” (see 4:5) is temptation to wrongful office; for a tragic overtone, see Durrant **Mirror** 23. “If,” usually *rú* 如, is here *ár* 而, seemingly a (dialectal?) shift in the syllabicity of medial -i- (*nyu/niw*). There is a similar interplay in the text between standard *rǔ* 汝 and variant *ǎ* 爾, both “you.”

Waley makes “officer” (*shǔ* 士) ironic for “groom,” but driving was an elite skill, and here, at least, rank and salary would seem to attend it. It may attest the decreasing prestige of horsemanship as such (compare again 9:2).

└ 7:14. When the Master was living in *Chí* he heard the *Sháu*; for three months he did not know the taste of meat. He said, I did not imagine that making music could reach to this. [7:13]

The *Sháu* (“Summons”) was a dance with orchestral accompaniment. Warring States orchestras, flutes ornamenting bells and chimes and supported by drums, were (to judge from the related Japanese *gagaku*) capable of impressive effects.

The aesthetic rapture of 7:14 pairs it with the “love” of virtue in 7:12. There is a reverse or palindromic (ABBA) secondary pairing of 7:12/14 with 7:7/8 (compare 7:5). The reader may wish to search for further examples of ABBA.

The implication is that these performances were not known in *Lǔ* at this date; the *Chí* contact may also suggest a shift northward from *Lǔ*’s heretofore predominantly southern trade focus (see 5:18n, 5:19bn). For the possibility that 7:14 preserves a memory of Confucius’ actual travels, see page 271.

┐ 7:16. The Master said, Eating coarse food, drinking water, crooking one’s arm and pillowing upon it – happiness may be found also in these circumstances. To be unrighteous and so become wealthy and even honored – to me this is like a drifting cloud. [7:15]

An echo of 6:11 and 7:12. The drifting cloud symbolizes indifference.

└ 7:17. The Master said, Give me several more years; with fifty to study, I too might come to be without major faults. [7:16]

“Too” (*yì* 亦) is the *Lǔ* reading (**Shǔ-wǎn** 51; not in *Mǎ Shǔ Jīng*), which with most critical scholars (Waley; Mao **Suggestions** 286) we prefer to the *Gǔ* text’s homophonous *Yì* 易, the Changes; the sentence pause is affected, and in such matters oral tradition is safer. Despite the identity of the phrase “major faults” (*dà gwō* 大過) with the name of Hexagram 28, it is doubtful (Dubs **Changes**) that Confucius studied, or knew, the *Yì*. The theme of lifelong ethical striving is echoed poetically in *Dzǔngdž*’s last words, 8:3 below.

└ 7:19. The Prince of *Shǔ* asked *Dž-lù* about Confucius. *Dž-lù* did not reply. The Master said, Why did you not say, “This is the kind of man he is: in his enthusiasm he forgets to eat; in his happiness he forgets his sorrows; he is not even aware that old age will soon be at hand.” [7:18]

The “Prince” was a local rebel; Confucius (in the presence of a ruler called *Kǔngdž*; compare 6:3) hints that employment could be declined if offered (compare the temptations of 7:12 and 7:16). For his “happiness,” see again 7:12 and 7:16; Confucius (compare 7:2) is here taking on *another* trait of *Yén Hwéi*.

[C. Late Teaching]

┌ 7:20. The Master said, I am not one who knows things from birth. I am one who loves antiquity and seeks after it with diligence. [7:19]

In this second half of the chapter, we return to the antiquity theme of 7:1. The denial of inborn knowledge, like the frequent denial of sagely or supernatural insight, has in the end the reverse effect, probably intended, of suggesting that Confucius was himself a sage. The “ritual modesty” theory of the orthodox commentators (Waley *Analects* 74) may have its beginnings in this LY 7 motif.

└ 7:22. The Master said, When I am walking in a group of three people, there will surely be a teacher for me among them. I pick out the good parts and follow them; the bad parts, and change them. [7:21]

This, balancing the probably esoteric claim of 7:20, returns to the empirical ethics with which we have been familiar since 4:17, and gives it its most striking formulation in the *Analects* (compare the ten households of 5:28). The experienced reader will no longer require the gloss “change them [in myself].”

The Lǚ text (**Shì-wǎn** 52; not in Mǎ **Shì Jīng**) adds an explicit “I” (wǒ 我) to the first line, making clear that Confucius is himself one of the “three men.”

┌ 7:23. The Master said, Heaven begat virtue in me. What does Hwán Twéi expect to do to me? [7:22]

Hwán Twéi was a minister of Sùng by whom Confucius is supposed to have been threatened. The implication of travel to other states, and thus a reputation beyond Lǚ (compare 7:14), also appears for the first time in LY 7. Even stronger is the claim of supernatural invulnerability, based on a charge from Heaven, and relating to the Jōu connection which is asserted in 7:5.

This passage has an aberrant pronoun (yǔ 予, ancient initial y-, in place of the standard wǒ 我, ancient initial ng-), here found for the first of many times in the text. It is merely a plural in the Shāng oracle bones (information from David N. Keightley), but in the Warring States, when it was known only from ritual inscriptions, it was invested with something like a sacral nuance; hence its use in this “Heaven” context (Alvin P. Cohen notes that a similar association of yǔ with oaths obtains in the Dzwǒ Jwǎn). The idea of divine protection is novel in LY 7, and part of Dzǔngdǔ’s contribution to what, on the model of “Christology,” we might call “Confucianology.” Such theories may be typical of successors who lack direct acquaintance with the founder of a movement.

└ 7:24. The Master said, Do you disciples take me as concealing something? There is nothing I conceal from you; I never act but that I share it with you. This is Chyōu. [7:23]

Again the disclaimer (despite the sincere “Chyōu,” and the direct address to “[you] two or three [young] masters” 二三子) fails to convince. The idea of a secret teaching is part of this revisionist portrait of Confucius. It explains to Dzǔngdǔ’s hearers the lack of support for the LY 7 portrait in earlier chapters, and lets Dzǔngdǔ the latecomer monopolize the interpretation of Confucius as he could not have done otherwise. It may be relevant that in the interpolated *4:15¹, Dzǔngdǔ appears in exactly this light: explaining the secret meaning of an otherwise cryptic saying of Confucius. For secret *actions*, see 7:29, below.

┌ 7:26a. The Master said, A *sage*ly man, I have not managed to find; if I could find a *gentleman*, it would be enough. [7:25a]

The new concept of the Sage is treated as remote from all possible experience (dǔ 尔 得 而 “contrive to” is more emphatic than dǔ “get to”). Confucius would gladly be content with the traditional jywǎndǔ ideal, if (see 5:3) he could get it.

└ 7:26b. [The Master said,] A *good* man, I have not been able to find; if I could find a *constant* man, it would be enough. But when lacking seems having, empty seems full, and privation seems opulence, it will be hard to find constancy. [7:25b]

The term “good (shàn 善) man” suggests the later Micians. With the 5:12 Golden Rule, this is the second time that a seemingly popular ideal is accepted by “Confucius” as worthy but difficult to attain. Such receptivity implies that the Micians were yet not a competitive threat; this will change in the 04c.

As for steadfastness, the *concept* is compatible with earlier ideas, but the *term* (hǔng 恆) is new; besides 7:26b, it recurs only in *13:22¹⁴ as the “stabilizing” of omens. In 7:26b it is rather “candor,” nondissimulation. Note the esoteric, positive value of “lacking, empty, privation,” associated in 6:11 with mystical insight: see 5:11 for “firmness” (gāng 剛) and desirelessness, and 6:23 for rǔn and stillness. We might paraphrase: It is hard to detect one of mystical insight behind the facade of conventional success.

It may then be (note the pairing with the “sage” in 7:26a) that we have here a concept of a “sage” whose special insight rests on meditation techniques.

┌ 7:28. The Master said, To be sure, there are those who can originate something of which they did not previously know. I myself have no such capacity. But to hear much and pick out the good so as to follow it, and to see much and remember it, is the next-best kind of knowing. [7:27]

This is the method of experiential gradualism (7:22), not (wǒ 我 “me” is the contrastive “I”) the new inspiration technique, the old Confucius sharing the chapter with, and preparing reader acceptance for, the new. For a disclaimer of inborn knowledge, see 7:20; for transmission versus innovation, see 7:1.

Mao **Suggestions** 286 regards “pick out . . .” as a false repeat due to a broken bamboo slip at 7:22. But breaks lead to *displacement*, not *duplication*. The line as we have it is meaningful: one is selective with things heard, but accepting of things seen. Experience is primary over advice. The contrast between oral and written advice has not yet emerged (compare 9:24).

└ 7:29. In Hù County it was hard to find anyone to talk with. A youth presented himself. The disciples had their doubts, but the Master said, We are involved with his coming forward, but not with his going away. Why be so fastidious? If someone purifies himself and comes to us, we accept his purification; we do not guarantee his future conduct. [7:28]

It would appear that Confucius and his disciples are traveling about the country, proselytizing any who will receive them. We may then notice that there is in LY 7 no mention of government service or policy (compare LY 6); instead, Confucius appears as a knower and a teacher, working in the byways with inferior material (compare 7:26a/b). It may be that 7:26a–7:29 express, among other things, a concern with transmitting the school leadership.

ㄣ 7:30. The Master said, Is *rǎn* really far away? If I want *rǎn*, then *rǎn* is already there. [7:29]

Here is the instantaneous-attainment method applied to *rǎn* (compare 6:22–23 and 7:2). The superficial point is that will is not only necessary but sufficient for the attainment of virtue. The emphasis on willingness over experience also tends to validate the sort of leader that *Dzǎngdǎ* was: not knowing Confucius, but by an inner effort directly intuiting the essence of his teachings.

[D. Retrospection and Death]

ㄣ 7:33. The Master said, As for culture, I am no worse than anybody else. But as for personally carrying out the role of a gentleman, I have never had the opportunity to do it. [7:32]

This refers to Confucius's career failure, already implied in LY 4. It shows how faithfully, despite his association in LY 7 with supernatural contacts (7:5) and protections (7:23), the historic fact of the failed Confucius is still respected.

ㄣ 7:34. The Master said, If it is a matter of a Sage or of *rǎn*, how dare I presume? But if one looks to acting for others without tiring of it, or teaching others without growing weary in so doing, perhaps something might be said. *Gǔngsyī Hwá* said, The only problem is that the disciples cannot learn. [7:33]

The 7:33 career failure is neatly balanced by this second failure to pass on wisdom to others. It evokes the idealistic teacher of 7:2 (minus its meditational component), and the strict one of 7:8. After all, nothing has been transmitted.

ㄣ 7:35. The Master was very ill. *Dǎ-lù* asked to offer a prayer. The Master said, Is this done? *Dǎ-lù* replied, It is. The *Elegy* says, "We prayed for you to the higher and lower divinities." The Master said, *Chyōu*'s praying was done long ago. [7:34]

Confucius's self-reference by his personal name *Chyōu* tends to occur in expressions of emphatic sincerity; compare 5:28 and 7:24. This passage also reflects the LY 7 sensitivity to ritual (compare 7:14). Following the 5:12 maxim and the 6:13 hint of the *Shǎ*, this is the third reference to a non-*Analects* text.

It is very moving, is it not? The Master patiently lets *Dǎ-lù* instruct him in ritual propriety, notwithstanding the fact (or what the hearer of this saying may be presumed to have regarded as a fact) that he knows much more about it than *Dǎ-lù*. He then rejects the suggested intercession with the deities. Instead, he offers his whole life as the secular equivalent of a prayer: devoted to the pursuit and dissemination of virtue, fulfilling his early aspirations (7:1–6), though without temporal rewards (7:33) or conspicuous educational results (7:34; this biographical element seems already present in 5:27). All this is borne with an unconcern fully worthy of the feudal resignation enjoined in 4:14. Confucius has done his part.

And his uncomprehending direct disciples have done their part too. Being unworthy to succeed him, they have left the door open for *Dzǎngdǎ*.

Interpolations

For a complete finding list of interpolated passages, see page 329.

Reflections

Dz̄v̄ngd̄ž as a writer in LY 7, like Yōud̄ž in LY 6, is less formally elaborate than Dž-yóu in LY 5. He does, however, in 7:6 and 7:14, reveal a certain aesthetic sensibility. In this sense he ranks with Dž-yóu, and this may help explain why, despite a period of hostility which we shall meet in LY 11, he survives in the Analects record, not only along with Dž-yóu but eclipsing him as a figure in the history of the school. Refinement was increasingly important to the school as it evolved toward a more ritual-based definition of itself.

In content, he continues the LY 6 trend toward lowliness (most clearly in the countryside encounter of 7:29), and toward a mystical/meditational layer of discourse (7:2, 7:30). The next few layers of the Analects will see a swing back to a more courtly focus, but the combination of lowliness and mysticism will recur in the late 04c, reaching a climax with Mencius and his successors in their own separate school of Confucianism.

The conjunction of Dàu “Way” and Dv̄ “Virtue” in 7:6 may suggest to readers not only the Dàu/Dv̄ Jīng text (DDJ), but the tradition that its alleged author, Lăud̄ž, was an older contemporary and teacher of Confucius. Though the hints of meditationism in the early LY help explain the genesis of this story, there are no echoes of the DDJ *text* in the Analects until the middle 04c.

The parallel between accretion processes in the Analects and the Biblical New Testament offers some points of interest. The earliest NT writings were the letters of Paul, which aimed to clarify the heritage of the deceased founder for different times and places (Goodspeed **Story** 1–7). They correspond roughly to the adaptive LY 5–6. It was not until the death of Peter, the last follower who had directly known the founder, that a consecutive portrait or history of the founder was felt necessary, an early example being the Gospel of Mark (Goodspeed **Story** 49–53). What are assumed to have existed in the NT case, namely collections of sayings such as the Gospel of Thomas, are actually preserved in the Analects case as the LY 4 nucleus. And the incomprehension or wrongdoing of the original disciples of Jesus in the crucifixion narratives (like that of Confucius’s disciples in 7:35) tends to validate the leadership of those who were known to have been outside the original disciple circle.

One of Dz̄v̄ngd̄ž’s authorial tactics is to eliminate disciple anecdotes; only two disciples, Dž-lù and Gūngsyī Hwá, are mentioned in LY 7. Another is to calm the political animosities that were evident in the transitional LY 5–6; neither Dž-lù nor Gūngsyī Hwá is politically faulted, and both are instead portrayed as earnest if imperceptive. A third is to reconceive Confucius along novel lines, giving him a Jōu cultural continuity and a special relationship with Heaven. Confucius also acquires traits earlier seen in the Yén Hwéi persona, most importantly his meditation skill. This esoteric aspect of earlier chapters has thus as of LY 7 begun to affect the Confucius persona, where it joins other, new esoteric aspects such as his sponsorship by Heaven.

LY 7 is not the last Confucian gospel. LY 9 is something like a revision of it, and LY 10 and 11, especially the latter, contribute their share to the image of the founder and his circle. What is important about LY 7 is that with it we seem to be out of the period when Confucius and his circle were still directly remembered, and into a period of mythic adaptation, in which they are defined, indeed enshrined, for a socially wider and more permanent posterity.

Bronze Figure of a Commoner (see LY 7:29 and 8:6n)
Height 9.1 cm (3.6 in). 05c. Courtesy Freer Gallery of Art (51.7, detail)