

Preface

Confucianism survived its own time, the three centuries of Classical China, to be accepted as its official doctrine by the post-Classical Chinese Empire. That transition is the subject of this book.

For centuries, the states of Spring and Autumn had found their chariot armies inadequate. They could win a battle, but they could not occupy territory. Every sizeable state hoped to conquer the others, and replace the powerless Jōu (whose token kings still survived at their former eastern capital, Lwò-yáng) as Lord of All Under Heaven. But despite great efforts, it was not happening.

The solution was obvious. Ever since the Shāng Dynasty, when it was first introduced by invaders from the west, the chariot with its driver and its archer had been accompanied by lightly armed foot soldiers, to protect it from the side, like some modern tank. What was needed was to turn the formula upside down, with the chariot warriors, the professionals, retained in a command function, and the outrunners expanded into a mass infantry army. The force (shī 師) of earlier times would then become the army (jywn 軍) of the future.

This was easier said than done. For one thing, the warriors were supported by their landholdings (whose resident farmers could double as his outrunners), but the huge new army would have to be fed by the state. This would require increased taxes in grain, and more tax collectors to assess and collect them; huge storehouses to store them, and many managers to oversee the storehouses. In short, the infantry army required a civilian army: a whole new civil service. In the process, the palace states of old would become new bureaucratic states. This is the meaning of the subtitle of this book.

The title of the book refers to Confucius, son and successor of a warrior, with an unusual upbringing (the “Confucius” of Analects 9:6 complains of it), which gave him contacts outside warrior circles – his mother was from a commercial family, and these literate persons were prime civil service material. There were many suppliers of candidates for the bureaucracy; some even provided their motivational materials (we know of two such cases). But only Confucius was positioned to bring to the civilian sector the warrior’s code of dedication, his rvn 仁. The ideal civil servant would not just refrain from padding his expense account (Analects 6:4) but would give his all to the cause.

How that worked out, how the convincement of Confucius’ original circle evolved in the ongoing Analects school, how the seeming distractions and interruptions along the way actually strengthened it; how Mencius in the 04c and Sywndž in the 03c picked up the torch when the Analects school faltered, and how what we may properly call “Confucianism” reached the Hàn Empire, to become, for centuries afterward, the ideology of the Imperial civil service, the following pages will tell.

This book is for specialists, but also for the general reader. Its conventions are meant to keep the references simple, and the Chinese words pronounceable, for those who may be encountering them for the first time.

Footnote references cite sources in the short form Author, Title Keyword. These are expanded in the Works Cited section at the end of the book.

Dates. “312 BC” is “0312,” the prefixed zero indicating years BC/BCE. The 04th century may be abbreviated as “04c.” Many dates are approximate or “circa,” thus “c0405” for the date of the completion of *Analects* 9.

Chinese Words are spelled in the Common Alphabetic (CA) system, following the usual formula “consonants as in English, vowels as in Italian,” plus these conventions for vowels without an English spelling: æ as in “cat,” v as in “gut,” z as in “adz,” yw (after l or n, simply w) for the “umlaut u” sound. Pronunciations are modern, but a lost initial ng- is restored to distinguish some words, like the states of Wèi 衛 and Ngwèi 魏, both now pronounced “Wèi.” An equivalence table for CA and two other systems begins at page 171.

We should add that wherever this book differs from *The Original Analects*, our work of a quarter-century ago, or our recent *Emergence of China* (2015), this book represents our current best opinion.

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Dedication. Gù Jyé-gāng advised taking only “one Confucius at a time.” We have here done our best to follow his advice, distinguishing the many “Confuciuses” who appear in the course of the *Analects*, and the one in whose name Mencius and Sywǎndž continued to address the public of a later time.

Gù Jyé-gāng was the first to systematically doubt the reality of the world of high antiquity: the Yellow Emperor, and the imaginary rulers Yáu and Shùn, who had been devised by Warring States thinkers to give ancient sanction to forms of government which they advocated in the present. With his “Doubting Antiquity” 疑古 movement, he took his stand not as a purveyor of traditional antiquity, but as its critic, its historian: seeking to discern what lay behind it, and to distinguish its earlier from its later stages of development.

We seek to do likewise. And in grateful recognition of his pioneering effort, we dedicate this book to Gù Jyé-gāng.

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