

Why We Read the *Analects* of Confucius

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Although this essay will speak mostly to why and how I read the *Analects* of Confucius, the reason I entitle it “Why We Read the *Analects*” is not that I claim to speak for everyone but only that my personal reading follows from what others have thought and said about it. Ever since Confucius’ disciples recorded his sayings, teachings and example in the Fifth Century CE, later generations have been inspired to pass it on, to share it with others who have read, reflected on it, and discussed it together. Thus the *Analects* are still read because they have survived this scrutiny and reexamination over the centuries, which is why we read it today, not because it became part of a fixed canon (though in some places it did) or was required reading imposed by one generation upon the next.

I have read and discussed the *Analects* with students in my Asian Humanities class for 60 years and their response to it is much the same, whether they are majoring in the natural or social sciences or in the humanities. So, for practical purposes, when I speak of “Why We Read the *Analects*” it means “How I and my students have read the *Analects* together,” and especially how one’s first impressions are formed by the early chapters. Indeed it is no different for other audiences of any age or at any level, including adult education. If this is what is meant by “general” education, then the *Analects* speak to the generality of human beings – to their common, perennial, “core” concerns, more than to the farthest outreaches of abstract thought.

This is why I avoid speaking of what I do as “teaching” the *Analects*. No doubt a teacher can help students with their reading and reflection upon the text, but basically students are rediscovering it and learning it for themselves. The book teaches itself, as of course most genuine “classics” do. Whatever may be done by a teacher is only an enhancement of the reader’s own personal encounter in recognizing that the text speaks directly to him or herself.

For me the latest confirmation of this fact comes from the valedictory address of a Columbia College graduate in 2008 who chose to sum up his four years’ learning experience by drawing on the model of the *Analects* and some of its key sayings.¹ Understandably our valedictorian drew first on the opening lines, which read:

The Master said: To study and at times to practice what one has learned, is that not a pleasure? To have friends coming from afar, is that not a joy? To be unembittered even if one is not recognized, is that not to be a truly noble person?²

If one wishes to know more of what our valedictorian made of these lines, one can refer to the *Proceedings* just cited. In what follows, despite my disclaimer of any originality or unique

expertise, I shall offer my own thoughts on these lines and other key passages that mark the *Analects* as classic.

Taken together these opening lines tell us much about the nature and context of the *Analects*. The first lines could be addressed to and understood by any literate human being, but the last line points more specifically to “the noble person [*junzi*].” Here *junzi* refers to the traditional leadership elite, an aristocratic class born to a privileged status of would-be rulers. But Confucius emphasizes the learning process for what it takes to be worthy of a leadership role or become an exemplary person; in other words, what it means to command respect as a person, whether or not one finds oneself in a position to lead or rule. Thus he reconceives the traditional concept of *junzi* from that of “nobleman” to one that emphasizes “the noble *man* [or person]” as one whose personal character, not status, establishes him as a model to be followed – a true leader in any social role whatever, even if not successful politically.³

The same multi-faceted expression *zi* also appears as the very first word in the *Analects*: “The Master said [*zi yue*].” As “Master” *zi* could be applied to other authority figures like *Laozi* and *Zhungzi*, and here it clearly refers to a teacher, but the language that follows marks Confucius as distinct from any teacher who is simply dictating or preaching to his students or disciples.

Note the rhetorical cast of all three of the statements above; they are not outright assertions, much less forceful dictates. They invite and expect an implicit response from the hearer as if one’s own experience would immediately confirm the truth of what Confucius is saying – he is only telling them in a sense what they already know, without invoking any higher authority.

This is not the thunderous voice of the prophet, or a pronouncement from the pulpit or podium. Old Testament prophets spoke first of all to God, and then delivered God’s word to His people. Confucius speaks directly to us, and asks us to recognize Heaven within and around us.

His appeal to ordinary human experience is also the ground on which he talks of studying or learning. What he says may be addressed to the individual, calling on one personally to achieve fulfillment as a truly noble person, but his hearers are learning from others as well as from their own experience and practice, and their “others” here include teachers, examples from the past, as well as “friends coming from afar” with whom one can share one’s experience – it is learning that can be gained from (being open to) both the past and others able to confirm and expand on one’s own knowledge.

But if I have distinguished Confucius’ voice from that of the Old Testament prophet, this does not mean that there is no common ground between them, both speak to an ideal standard by which to measure and judge the conduct of kings and rulers, and by implication anyone else who bears a responsibility for others – which means just about all of us.

In Confucius’ case however, the approach is most characteristically on the means of self-cultivation by which one can develop the virtues of the Noble Person, understood as a fulfillment of the human ideal. And most characteristic of Confucianism too is the way the *Analects* explain this as an organic growth following the pattern of ordinary human life.

Accordingly, in the passage immediately following that quoted above, the *Analects* speak of that process as grounded in the life of the family, wherein, initially by acquiring habits of

respectful conduct toward others – first of all towards parents and then to one’s siblings – one engenders traits essential to human life, whether one’s own – in the self – or in others. Thus the second passage concludes, “The noble person concerns himself with the root, when the root is established, the Way is born. Being filial and fraternal – is this not the root of humaneness?” (1:2).

Again the rhetorical mode – appealing to anyone’s first experience of life – conveys the sense that the living process is interactive and interpersonal. But here the process is identified as one by which “the Way” is born, takes life. And in the context of the preceding passages this is also understood to be the Way that a truly noble person follows.

At the same time this Way is centered in humaneness as the prime virtue of the Noble Person, a virtue that links the self-fulfillment of the exemplary person to the fulfillment of others. But fulfillment is the product of a sequential process for anyone and everyone. Filiality is the seed from which, with due cultivation, the growth process can be fulfilled in the flowering of humaneness or true humanity. In this respect filiality may be considered the genetic virtue of Confucianism – important in its priority – but its full fruit or flower is humaneness (consummate virtue).

There is a widespread impression that filiality is the most characteristic virtue of Confucianism, and this notion is not just a modern misconception or misreading by foreign observers. The early critic of the Confucian school, Mozi, seized on this family virtue as almost an obsession of the Confucians he knew. And the early Legalists also took issue with the Confucians on this issue, seeing a family ethic rooted in filiality as prejudicial to public-mindedness on a wider scale (as indeed Mozi had). Moreover the powerful hold of filiality on Confucian culture was demonstrated by the resistance it showed to Buddhism on the latter’s introduction to China.

But before we pursue this issue further, we do well to note another early reference to filiality in the *Analects*. When a disciple Mang Wu Bo is quoted as asking Confucius about filiality or filial piety [*xiao*], the terse answer given is somewhat perplexing in its obliqueness: “Parents’ only concern should be lest their children be sick” (2:6).

Traditional commentators have tended to interpret this as implying primarily an obligation on the child to take proper care of itself – attending to one’s own person in bodily and moral health. No doubt this was a distinct and enduring feature of Confucian teaching and practice, and its strong sense of the person as a bodily self is what offered resistance to Buddhist questioning of the reality of any substantial self. But one should not ignore the underlying assumption here that the filial child is responding to the loving concern of his parents. Filiality is a reflection of parental love. It partakes of the basic Confucian principle of reciprocity, in the light of which filiality is to be seen, not as an absolute value requiring blind obedience to parents, but a relative one to the extent that it is qualified and conditioned by a parental love that is taken for granted in the passage just quoted – among the many natural assumptions underlying Confucian discourse.

Another later anecdote in the *Analects* underscores the same point. Confucius’ disciple Zai Wo asked him about the customary three years’ mourning for one’s parents, expressing the

thought that one year's mourning should be enough. Confucius asked him, "If you were to eat good food and wear fine clothing, would you feel at ease?" [Zai Wo responded] "I would feel at ease."

If you would feel at ease [replied Confucius], then do it. But the noble person throughout the mourning period derives no pleasure from the food that he eats, no joy from the music that he hears, and no comfort from his dwelling. But you would feel at ease and so you should do it." After Wo went out, the Master said "How inhuman Yü [Zai Wo] is! Only when a child is three years old does it leave its parents' arms. The three years' mourning is the universal custom everywhere under Heaven. And Yü, was he not the darling of his father and mother for three years? (17:21)

In this case Confucius shows a basic respect for the essentially voluntary character of ethical behavior while he also upholds the standards of reciprocity that should ordinarily apply. The standard, however, presumes that natural feeling should underlie and prompt one's actions. It would do no good to make a pretense of virtue. Thus natural feelings of reciprocity engendered in the normal process of life, from birth and infancy to maturity, are the root of humaneness as in the earlier example.

The primacy of natural sentiments born in the bosom of the family is underscored by another episode in which the Duke of She tells Confucius:

"In our part of the country there is one upright Gong. His father stole a sheep and the son bore witness against him." Confucius says: "In our part of the country, the upright are different than that. A father is shielded by his son, and a son is shielded by his father. Uprightness lies in this. (13:18)

In other words, the intimacy of the family is privileged over the claims of the state, for the state cannot stand if trust within the family – the root of public trust – is undermined.

Soon after this the primacy of sentiment or feeling over rational discourse was reaffirmed for Confucians in the *Mencius* when he defined the goodness of human nature as moral awareness (literally, "good knowing" or natural knowledge [*liang zhih*]), and further when he defined the basic relationship or bond between parent and child, not in terms of filiality, but as one of "intimate affection" or mutual love, to be cultivated of course in the light of reason (the sense of right and wrong [*yi*]).

But since from the outset of the *Analects*, as in all the literate discourse its readers are engaged in, there is the possibility that verbalization and rationalization might intrude on one's ordinary conduct, it is important that what one learns and says be guided and informed by both one's own feelings and one's consciousness of right and wrong [*yi*]. Thus the *Analects* early exposition of the Way of Humaneness includes the following:

A young man is to be filial within his family and respectful outside it. He is to be earnest and faithful, overflowing with love for all living beings and intimate with those who are humane. If after such practice he has strength to spare, he may use it in the study of literate culture [*wen*]. (1:6)

Although the importance of study and learning had already been asserted in the opening lines, and Confucian scholarship became widely known among East Asian teachings as the most rational, here the priority of moral cultivation over literate discourse [*wen*], essential though the latter was to civilized life, is established early on in the *Analects*.

We saw in the opening lines how the process of learning started first by interaction with others, but ended with the Noble Person able to stand, so to speak, on his own. He knew where he stood regardless of the approval or disapproval of others. This is not the same as a radical individuality asserting its complete autonomy, but rather a self in a state of personal balance or poise. The same conception then informs our understanding of other Confucian values connected with the Noble Person as a model of humaneness. In Chapter 1:4, one of Confucius' closest disciples is quoted approvingly as follows:

Everyday I examine myself on three things: In planning on behalf of others, have I failed to be loyal? When dealing with friends have I failed to be trustworthy? In receiving what has been transmitted, have I failed to practice it?

Among each of these cases there is a connection or continuity that involves more than an obedient adherence to or following of others. “Loyalty” (as *zhong* is usually translated) is represented by the graph for “center” underlain by the graph for “mind-and-heart”; it bespeaks a centered mind and heart, in a state of balance within the self but also balanced with others. It means being true to oneself as well as to others (not just following or obeying the latter). This then connects up with the other two values cited. “Trustworthiness” is our rendering here for *xin*, sometimes also translated as “good faith”, both of which express the idea that one’s actions and conduct are consistent with one’s stated professions, being true to one’s word.⁴

This same notion is implicit in Confucian “loyalty”, being true at once to one’s self and others, and it connects up with the faithful practice of one’s professions in service to others. Another notable passage in the *Analects* speaks of the “man of service” [*shi*], here roughly equivalent to the “noble person”, in the following terms:

The man of service cannot but be stout-hearted and enduring; for his burden is heavy and his way is long. To be truly humane is the burden he bears; Is it not heavy? Only in death does his practice of the Way come to an end; Is that not long? (8:7)

Here the burden of humaneness is heavy because service to others which is also true to oneself, can be exacting and demanding of one’s own inner resources. Whether in a position of leadership

or sharing in the responsibilities of government, to be truly reliable and trustworthy meant to be fully honest with oneself and unflinchingly forthright in advising others. Often it would involve courageous honesty in counseling rulers who might resent hearing the truth, especially about themselves.

In the Confucian tradition of civil service, especially in ministerial roles, this courageous honesty was the hallmark of true loyalty on the part of those who were “stout-hearted and enduring” even to the point of martyrdom, when the true scholar/official’s Way ended in death at the hands of a despotic ruler.

But being true to one’s word and professions had an importance beyond the individual in Confucius’ whole scheme of things. A prime vocation for the man of service was the business of human governance and the *Analects* has much to say about this. Here a few examples may suffice:

When a disciple asked Confucius about government, the latter replied tersely, “Sufficient food, sufficient military strength and the confidence (trust) of the people [are the three requisites].” When asked further “if unavoidably one had to dispense with any of these three, which of them would you forego?” the Master replied, “Let go of the military strength.” The disciple next asked: If one had, unavoidably, to dispense with one of the remaining two, which should go first? The Master said, “Do without the food, for from of old there has always been death, but without such confidence (trust) a people cannot stand. (12:7)

Mutual trust, among the people and their leaders, is thus the most essential ingredient of any human society – a principle that underlies another response of Confucius to the question of what is essential to government:

Should you try to lead them by means of regulations or keep order among them through laws and punishments, the people will evade these and lack any sense of shame. Lead them [on the other hand] by personal virtue [*de*] and keep order among them through rites [*li*], then the people, having a sense of shame, will correct themselves. (2:3)

Here Confucius’ depreciation of laws and punishment fits with his eschewal of coercive force (“military strength”) except as a possible backup and not as a first choice, in the passage just cited before. For him voluntarism is the basic predicate of any human society, as it had been traditionally in households cooperatively engaged in family-managed agriculture. One can rely better on a person’s or people’s sense of self-respect (the corollary of “the sense of shame” referred to here) to motivate people’s cooperation with their leaders; as the latter’s personal virtue should exhibit exemplary self-respect combined with respect for others.

Note however that personal virtue and respect alone are not enough; the rites are especially involved and indispensable. This is because rites and proper customs establish practical norms of

conduct that are themselves voluntaristic and cooperative – educational and not coercive. They are the means by which the self, in the normal process of life, engages with others. They give form to things, forms and norms naturally conducive to the harmonious development of human relations or political action.

This is the basis for the “harmony” that others have seen as the keynote of Confucianism, whether they always understood its voluntarism or cooperation in the same terms. When Prince Shōtoku in seventh century CE Japan tried to incorporate Confucianism in its first formal constitution, the first word was “Harmony” and it is followed by his exhortation on behalf of a consensual society. Much later, after the Communists in China recoiled from the vicious class struggle of the Cultural Revolution, they turned back, at least in name, to Confucian Harmony as an essential Chinese value to undergird “Chinese Socialism”.

Much more is said in the *Analects* about the rites (or ritual decorum) in daily life, as it relates to personal and social health. But I am limiting myself in this essay only to a few keynotes one encounters in a first reading that give us initial bearings on what follows in the text.

In the remainder of this essay I wish to focus on something no less important to one’s reading of the *Analects* than his key teachings: the image of Confucius and his sense of personal vocation and mission. This image of him has shown through the pages of the *Analects* as almost more compelling and memorable even than his teachings and aphorisms, to such an extent that, despite his own disclaimers of his disciples’ attributions of sagehood to him, among latter-day Confucians the picture of him as he appeared in the *Analects* became the very model of The Sage (though none could hardly boast of emulating the modesty of the Sage).

The first thing to be noted is his becoming modesty and lack of pretension to great personal authority, already implicit in the conversational mode of the opening lines. He did not claim to be proclaiming any new order or teaching. “I am a transmitter, not a creator” (7:1) he said. Whether he was actually creative in the process of transmitting, i.e., in his interpretation and exposition of ancient ideals, is another question, but posterity has generally judged him so. One must also allow for the possibility that, “in transmitting” what he had received from past tradition, he was being more than just conservative. The upholding of past ideals could also seem as a critique of existing institutions that failed to measure up. Thus one episode in Confucius’ teaching career portrays him, in the course of his travels, sending a disciple to ask directions from a farmer along the way, who when he learns that the disciple’s master is Confucius, recognizes the latter as a would be counselor to rulers, going from state to state looking for one who would take his advice.

The farmer bespeaks a skeptical view of this mission; he regards the world as so unruly that the best one can do is attend to his own field. “Instead following a scholar who distances himself from one ruler after another, it would be better to follow one who withdraws from the whole world of men.”

When the disciple reported this to Confucius, the Master sighed and said:

One cannot herd with the beasts or flock with the birds. If I am not to go along in the company of other human beings, with whom should I associate? If the Way prevailed in the world, I would not be trying to change things.” (18.6)

Mere “transmitter” though he was, Confucius saw his mission as trying to change things. Received tradition itself contained the seeds of reform, the need to rectify evils that would not just resolve themselves.

Confucius was known in his time as a scholar persistent in his call to be of public service, but equally for his diffidence in serving any ruler whose actions were inconsistent with his own principles. On another occasion someone asked Confucius, “Why does the master not take part in government?” The master said “What do the *Documents* [The Book of History] say about being filial? Be filial. Just being filial and being friendly with one’s brothers contributes to the government. Why should one have to take office to do this?” (2:21). Again Confucius’s answer is somewhat terse and a little oblique, but it takes us back to where we started in the *Analects*: filiality as the value underlying all social and civic virtue. Public service is not performed only by those in office; anyone who practices and promotes such civic virtues is rendering a public service. And indeed the practice of such values is the precondition for anyone who might qualify for office. Elsewhere Confucius says:

One should not be anxious about having an official position but about having the wherewithal to hold office. One should not be anxious about not being recognized [for office] but about not being worthy of such recognition. (4:14)

Again we are taken back to the starting point of our reading: the Noble Person who can stand on his own even if he is not recognized. The course he has followed (and we in following the *Analects* thus far) is summed up in Confucius’ own brief summation of his life experience:

At 15 I set my heart on learning. At 30 I was established in its pursuit. By 40 I had no great doubts [about what I was doing]. At 50 I heard what Heaven commanded of me. At 60 I could heed it. At 70 I could follow my heart’s desire without transgressing. (2:4)

In the light of our previous discussion we may be able to fill in the spaces in this spare outline of his personal history. That it starts with learning we already know. That it takes time to learn from the past and others’ experience we can readily understand. Confucius’ growing from adolescence to increasing security at 30 and maturity at 40 – these are familiar stages in the life process. What may be somewhat unexpected is that only at 50 did he “hear” what Heaven expected of him. The language used here for “Heaven’s command” is itself not unfamiliar, but earlier it had referred to what is usually translated as “The Mandate of Heaven” [*tian ming*], a claim made by rulers or

their spokesman to justify their taking power and exercising authority, ostensibly in the name of Heaven.

For Confucius that claim could only be considered legitimate if in fact the ruler or his dynasty ruled virtuously on behalf of the people. And it is this sense of responsibility attaching to the claim of legitimacy or public trust that is key to Confucius' understanding of Heaven's command or charge.

Confucius himself was in no position to rule. At some point nevertheless he must have felt that he had some capacity and obligation to make use of what he had learned on behalf of the public good. (Whether or not this occurred exactly at 50 in this schematic sequence is not the point.) More significant is that Confucius takes this charge upon himself personally; it is not just a political concept applying to dynastic rulers, but a charge or commission Heaven was entrusting directly to himself.

We are already aware from other references to Heaven in the *Analects* that Confucius felt some personal relation to it – a kind of religious relationship between Heaven theistically conceived (divine creator) and its creation. Heaven spoke directly and personally to him and he had a filial obligation to listen.

Confucianism may not be thought of as a “religion” in the usual sense, but Confucius bespoke a reverential attitude toward Heaven, and the deep respect in which he held all life was a reflection of this. In response to questions put to him by disciples about the Noble Person, he said: “He cultivates himself with reverence” (14:45), and even more to the point here: “Without knowing (or understanding) what Heaven has ordained [*tian ming*], i.e., its charge or command, one has no way to become a Noble Person” (20:3). Indeed, the attitude and virtue of reverence remained a key element in later Confucianism. It was not a purely secular ethic as some have supposed it to be.

But if Heaven charged Confucius personally with a responsibility for public service, we know already how conflicted he was about taking office and we can understand the difficulty he might face in trying to carry out that charge. This is perhaps why it took him time (here, another ten years) actually to “heed” what we he had heard earlier, i.e., to find a way to resolve his conscience in this regard.

My own supposition is that his resolution of the matter was in keeping with the response he gave to those who had questioned him about his refusal to take office: both in the given circumstances and in the larger scheme of things; taking office was not the only way to fulfill one's obligation to be of service to Heaven and humankind. Teaching was also a public service when it contributed to the individual's and people's education on behalf of the public trust.

Finally when we are told that at 70 Confucius had satisfied his heart's desire, we are reminded that at 15 he had “set his heart on learning,” and so the outcome – his satisfaction as a scholar and teacher in lieu of an official career – fulfilled not only that early aspiration but also any political ambitions he might have had, in carrying out Heaven's charge to him. This was not accomplished without struggle of the kind that one might endure who had to bear the burden of

humaneness to the end. It was, after all, an end marked by some measure of satisfaction and fulfillment.

To be sure this was not exactly a supreme epiphany or sudden moment of enlightenment, but rather a threshold of accumulated learning and experience. Nor does it, on the other hand, result from the sort of profound confrontation with evil and suffering that we see, say, in St. Augustine or Dostoyevsky. In such a range of perspectives, one could see it as a relatively optimistic or even idealistic view of life. But it is reassuring for those who have followed him in the *Analects* to believe that this good man could live out a life worthy of a truly Noble Man – the goal he set out for himself at the start.

Epilogue

The foregoing is just one among several ways of explaining why or how we read the *Analects*. There are others too. However important it is to read the text directly and personally, the one we read always bears the imprint of the tradition that has passed it on. And if we want to know how others have received and understood it, showing a decent respect for the opinions of readers and writers before us in other places and times, we might go on to consider how it was understood by those who had a major impact on other civilized peoples.

This would be especially true of those East Asian peoples whose education was structured in the form given by the pervasive Neo-Confucian movement from the Eleventh to the Nineteenth centuries. In this long pre-modern period the *Analects* was read as one of the so-called “Four Books”, a special packaging of the Confucian classics mainly attributed to the great Neo-Confucian philosopher Zhu Xi (1130–1200 CE). In that form the *Analects* was not the first thing one read. It came after text of the *Great Learning*, a chapter from the *Record of Rites [Liji]* attributed to Confucius’ disciple Zengzi, which was provided with a special preface and commentary by Zhu Xi that he thought propedeutic to any reading of the other classics included in the Four Books. Thus how one read the *Analects* itself was conditioned by Zhu’s own way of introducing us to “How to Read a Book.” The book is still a classic, but now the product of a subsequent tradition, so this is not exactly the same as “reading it in the original.” Zu Xi was now presenting it in a form adapted to his own age, in which “new age” Confucians, i.e. Neo-Confucians, responded to the challenge of Mahayana Buddhism by providing a metaphysical explanation to accompany the text. The basic message remained the same as Zhu Xi summed it up in his preface: “Self-cultivation for the Governance of Humankind” [*xiuji zhiren*], a memorable slogan in later literature. Now however it was elaborated on in terms of a new cosmology and a more sophisticated philosophy of human nature [*dao xue* and *xingli xue*].⁵

It did not take long however for even this Neo-Confucian version of the traditional classic to be called into question by text critics in the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth centuries, who pointed out differences between these supposed “classic” or traditional Four Books and the versions that had been “classic” before. This led inevitably to efforts by modern critics to rediscover or reconstruct “the original *Analects*.” If we want to incorporate any of these new versions into our

own core curriculum, however, which are we to choose? No working curriculum that tries to provide a humanities component for undergraduate education (or even alongside graduate training) can get into all of the complexities that this historical development entails. If we read what some modern scholar reconstructs as *The Original Analects*, it is not what traditional education in East Asia would have recognized, nor what would have entered into the intellectual and moral formation of generations of East Asians. It would simply be another academic discovery.

There is no perfect solution to this educational dilemma, but if we are willing to think of working, rather than final, solutions, we can try to provide a repertoire of approaches by which one can adapt these resources to different educational situations and different levels of learning. The important thing is that the first reading be a personal encounter with a classic text (however “classic” may be interpreted), and that it be understood as only a first reading, to be followed up as best one can by more or other readings.

Notes

1. See *Proceedings of the Conference on Classics for an Emerging World*, Columbia University, January 19–20, 2008, published by the University Committee on Asia and the Middle East, New York, 2008.
2. All translations are by the author.
3. In the context of the times one understands that *junzi* refers most directly to male heirs of the aristocracy, but the second half of the compound *-zi* is literally “child” and not gender specific. Thus later Japanese empresses could appropriate to themselves the expression *tianzi*, normally understood in China as “Son of Heaven.” They were clearly open to their own hereditary claim to be a “child of Heaven” regardless of gender. Still later in China *jun* could be a suffix applied to women as well.
4. Ezra Pound, as a poet and amateur translator playing around with the *Analects*, notes that the character for *xin* (trust) included the graph for man or person at the left and the graph for “word” or “saying” beside it on the right, which suggested to him the felicitous rendering of it as “man standing by his word.”
5. Incidentally, this is how the *Analects* was reported on by the American art critic Ernest Fenollosa, who read it in a Japanese edition of the Four Books and handed it on to people like Ezra Pound. But this is what we all do – read it on the recommendation of someone else in a form more or less adapted to the latest scene.