

# CONFUCIANISM

## A Modern Interpretation

(2012 Edition)

Chi Yun Chang

*Translated by*  
Orient Lee



ZHEJIANG UNIVERSITY PRESS  
浙江大学出版社



World Scientific

# CONFUCIANISM

## A Modern Interpretation

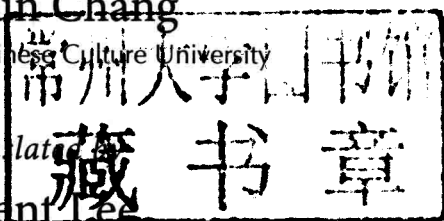
(2012 Edition)

Chi Yun Chang

Founder of the Chinese Culture University

Translated by

Oriental Press



Professor, Department of History, Chinese Culture University



ZHEJIANG UNIVERSITY PRESS  
浙江大学出版社



World Scientific  
Connecting Great Minds

## 图书在版编目(CIP)数据

孔学今义 = Confucianism: A Modern  
Interpretation: 英文 / 张其昀著; 黎东方译. — 杭  
州: 浙江大学出版社, 2012.11  
ISBN 978-7-308-10180-6

I. ①孔… II. ①张… ②黎… III. ①儒家—哲学思  
想—思想评论—英文 IV. ①B222.05

中国版本图书馆CIP数据核字(2012)第141783号

Not for sale outside Mainland of China

此书仅限中国大陆地区销售

## 孔学今义

张其昀 著 黎东方 译

---

责任编辑 张 琛 (zerozc@zju.edu.cn)

责任校对 章小可

封面设计 Ng Chin Choon 俞亚彤

出版发行 浙江大学出版社

(地址: 杭州市天目山路 148 号 邮编: 310007)

(网址: <http://www.zjupress.com>)

排 版 浙江时代出版服务有限公司

印 刷 浙江印刷集团有限公司

开 本 710mm×1000mm 1/16

印 张 31.75

字 数 807 千

版 次 2012 年 11 月第 1 版 2012 年 11 月第 1 次印刷

书 号 ISBN 978-7-308-10180-6

定 价 188.00 元

---

版权所有 翻印必究 印装差错 负责调换

浙江大学出版社发行部邮购电话 (0571)88925591

---

## *Foreword*

I dedicate this book to the youth in China and elsewhere. They deserve more comprehensive information about the precepts of Confucius than is available so far. There are scholarly works by sinologues, each covering one or several aspects of Confucianism. A survey in more general terms like this one may perhaps fill a need.

The Chinese original of this book has been received with enthusiasm in Hong Kong and Taiwan of China, Singapore, and Malaysia. Friends well-versed in the Korean and the Japanese languages are engaged in translating it. This English version painstakingly undertaken by Professor Orient Lee, I am sure, will enrich the young people in the West with the wisdom of our Sage.

Chang Chi-yun  
Oct. 31, 1980

---

## *About the Authors*

**Chi Yun Chang** (张其昀, Zhang Qi-yun, 1901–1985) was a prominent historian and educator. He graduated from Nanking Higher Normal School in 1923, which was expanded into National Southeastern University and later expanded again into National Central University (today's Nanjing University). Chang earned an early recognition of his high attainments in geography and history with his books published by the Commercial Press at Shanghai. He taught at his alma mater before he became the founder and the chairman of the department of History and Geography in 1936 at National Zhejiang University. He was a visiting research fellow at Harvard from 1943 to 1945. He was appointed dean of the College of Arts at Zhejiang University soon after he returned to China in August, 1945. After retiring from public life in 1959, Chang devoted all his time, besides writing his monumental *Five Thousand Years of Chinese History* (《中华五千年史》), to the founding and developing of the Chinese Culture University in Taipei (founded in 1962). *Confucianism: A Modern Interpretation* (《孔学今义》), originally published in Chinese, is the fifth volume of his *Five Thousand Years of Chinese History*. It was translated into English (*Confucianism: A Modern Interpretation*) by Professor Orient Lee in 1981. Subsequently, Professor Shan-hsiung Ting revised it in 2011.

**Orient Lee** (黎东方, Li Dong-fang, 1907–1998) was a leading figure in Chinese history. He earned his Ph.D. in history from the University of Paris in 1931 with an honor citation, first of its kind since the 19th century. He taught history and philosophy in many renowned

universities, among them, Peking University, Tsinghua University, Fudan University and Chinese Culture University. He had published a series of books on Chinese history from the Qin Dynasty down to the Republic, written in a style called “elaborate,” such as *Elaborate the Qin and the Han Dynasties* (《细说秦汉》), *Elaborate the Three Kingdoms* (《细说三国》), *Elaborate the Ming Dynasty* (《细说明朝》) and *Elaborate the Qing Dynasty* (《细说清朝》).

**Shan-hsiung Ting** (丁善雄, Ding Shan-xiong) is professor of English and director of the English graduate program at Chinese Culture University. He studied comparative literature at the University of Washington, where he took a Ph.D. in 1976. Better known as Lin Lu (林绿), his publications include three collections of poetry, three books of prose, three volumes of critical essays and a collection of selected works. He was professor of English at Taiwan Normal University from 1976–2002, and visiting professor in the Chinese department at the University of Hong Kong, 1995–1996.

---

## *Contents*

<i>Foreword</i>	v
<i>About the Authors</i>	vii
<b>Chapter 1 Confucius Was Great</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 His Great Personality	1
1.2 His Humanism	2
1.3 First Democratic Educator	4
1.4 An Accomplished Philosophical Man	6
1.5 Inauguration of a New Era	7
1.6 The Four Steps	9
1.7 Aim at the Dao	9
1.8 Build up a Base with Virtue	12
1.9 Rely on <i>Ren</i>	14
1.10 Relax in the Arts	15
1.11 Man's Mind, Nature, and Sentiments	19
1.12 Learning, Knowledge, Intuition	22
1.13 Action	25
1.14 Have a Sincere Will	27
1.15 Happiness in the Dao	30
1.16 The Middle Way	33
1.17 To Be a Sage Inside and a King Outside	41
1.18 People Are Masters	45
1.19 Confucianism and the Idea of Revolution	48
1.20 Great Harmony	50
1.21 Lineage of Confucianism	52
1.22 A Confucianist Century for the World	55

<b>Chapter 2</b>	<b>Philosophy of Life</b>	<b>61</b>
	2.1 A Humanist Philosophy	61
	2.2 <i>Ren</i> , a Concept Created by Confucius	62
	2.3 Righteousness: Its Relationships with <i>Ren</i> , with Courage, with the <i>Li</i> , etc.	69
	2.4 Filial Devotion	74
	2.5 Trustworthiness	78
	2.6 Loyalty and Empathy	80
	2.7 Public Spirit and Straightforwardness	83
	2.8 Respect and Sincerity	85
	2.9 Calmness and Firmness	88
	2.10 Thrift, Modesty, and Willingness to Yield	90
	2.11 Seeing a Man's Merit Through His Faults	93
	2.12 Overcoming One's Self in Order to Get Back to the <i>Li</i>	95
 <b>Chapter 3</b>	 <b>Philosophy of Education</b>	 <b>99</b>
	3.1 The Goal of Education	99
	3.2 The Systems of Education	101
	3.3 Equality of Opportunity in Education, a New Trend in the 20th Century	103
	3.4 National Homogeneity Through Education	103
	3.5 Upholding Man's Virtuous Nature	105
	3.6 Learning about the Dao Through Inquiry and Practice	107
	3.7 Grasping the Vast and Big	110
	3.8 Exhausting the Subtle and Abstruse	113
	3.9 Textbooks and Curricula	118
	3.10 Methods of Instruction	120
	3.11 The Way of a Teacher	128
	3.12 Friends as Teachers	131
	3.13 Giving Education to More People	133
	3.14 Character-Building	136



<b>Chapter 4</b>	<b>Political Philosophy</b>	<b>139</b>
4.1	The People Are Important	139
4.2	Heaven's Mandate Is Revocable	140
4.3	Notions of Liberty and Equality	141
4.4	Governing a Country with the <i>Li</i>	143
4.5	Rectifying the Names	144
4.6	Politics and Education	147
4.7	Politics and Ethics	149
4.8	Administration by the Elite	151
4.9	The Way of a Statesman	153
4.10	Secrets of Efficiency	156
4.11	The Problem of Public Opinion	159
4.12	Self-Cultivation	160
4.13	Regulation of the Family	161
4.14	Self-Government on the <i>Xiang</i> Level	163
4.15	How to Govern a Whole Country	164
4.16	Confucianism and Dr. Sun's Three Principles	166
4.17	Pacification of the World	168
4.18	<i>Da-tong</i> (Great Harmony)	169
 <b>Chapter 5</b>	 <b>Philosophy of Law</b>	 <b>171</b>
5.1	The Place of Law in Chinese Culture	171
5.2	The <i>Li</i> versus the Law	173
5.3	The Three Classics on the <i>Li</i>	174
5.4	Some Stimulating Comments on the <i>Li</i>	178
5.5	The <i>Li</i> and the Natural Law	179
5.6	The Writing and Publication of the Law	180
5.7	Applications of the Law	183
5.8	Judges	187
5.9	The Legalists	188
5.10	Some Principles in Chinese Law	190
5.11	The Chinese Legal System	192

<b>Chapter 6</b>	<b>Philosophy of Art</b>	<b>193</b>
	6.1 A Country Dedicated to the <i>Li</i> and the <i>Yue</i>	193
	6.2 Harmony, the Spirit of the <i>Yue</i>	194
	6.3 Confucius the Artist	196
	6.4 Songs and Dances	198
	6.5 Poetics	199
	6.6 Diction in Prose	201
	6.7 A Further Discussion on Music	202
	6.8 Masters of the <i>Yue</i>	204
	6.9 Musical Instruments	206
	6.10 A Further Discussion on the Dance	207
	6.11 Painting	209
	6.12 Physical Culture	210
	6.13 Living with Nature	210
	6.14 Aesthetics and Education	212
<b>Chapter 7</b>	<b>Philosophy of Change and of History</b>	<b>215</b>
	7.1 Theories and Facts	215
	7.2 <i>The Book of Changes</i> : Its Own History	217
	7.3 The <i>Yin</i> and the <i>Yang</i> , the Ultimate Being, and the Ultimate Nothingness	222
	7.4 Change, No-Change, Simplicity	225
	7.5 The Virtue of Modesty	228
	7.6 Rising up from Trouble	230
	7.7 Lessons from <i>The Book of Documents</i>	233
	7.8 An Interpretation of History	234
	7.9 <i>Chun-qiu</i>	236
	7.10 Using the Right Words	237
	7.11 Upholding National Unity	239
	7.12 Curbing the Barbarians	241
	7.13 The Three Commentaries of the <i>Chun-qiu</i>	242
	7.14 A Great Tradition: Historians' Integrity	243
<b>Chapter 8</b>	<b>Military Philosophy</b>	<b>247</b>
	8.1 Confucius Was a Knight	247

8.2	Preparedness	250
8.3	Defense Through Virtue	251
8.4	A <i>Ren</i> Man Can Never Be Defeated	252
8.5	Using Kindness to Put an End to Troubles	254
8.6	A <i>Ren</i> Man Has to Resist Aggression	255
8.7	Wang Yi, a Boy Who Died for Lu	256
8.8	Ran Qiu, Scholar-soldier	256
8.9	Zi-gong, an Adroit Diplomat	258
8.10	Cautiousness and Careful Planning	259
8.11	Military Organization During the Middle Zhou	261
8.12	A Pact for Permanent Peace	264
<b>Chapter 9</b>	<b>Religious Philosophy</b>	<b>267</b>
9.1	Heaven's Dao	267
9.2	<i>Tian</i>	268
9.3	The Orders from Heaven	271
9.4	Heaven and Man Are One	273
9.5	Reverence for Heaven and Love for Man	275
9.6	Filial Piety	276
9.7	Life and Death	279
9.8	Sacrificial Ceremonies	280
9.9	The Catholic Appraisal of China's Religious Tradition	283
9.10	Confucius Prayed	284
9.11	Is Confucianism a Religion	286
9.12	The Confucianist Motto: Be Sincere	288
<b>Chapter 10</b>	<b>The Model Types of Men by Confucian Standards</b>	<b>291</b>
10.1	Perfection Was the Aim	291
10.2	The <i>Ru</i> (儒), Scholar with a Principle	292
10.3	The Good Men, the Accomplished Men, and the Great Men	294
10.4	The <i>Shi</i> (士), Knight-Scholar with a Purpose	296

10.5	The <i>Jun-zi</i> (君子), Perfect Gentlemen	298
10.6	The <i>Xian-men</i> (贤人), the Worthy Ones	300
10.7	The <i>Sheng-men</i> (圣人), the Sages	301
10.8	The Sages in Legendary Times	303
10.9	The Five <i>Ren-men</i> (仁人) of Shang	304
10.10	The Sages and the <i>Xian-men</i> of Early Zhou	305
10.11	Guan Zhong and Zi-chan	306
10.12	Liu-xia Hui and Qu Bo-yu	307
<b>Chapter 11</b>	<b>The Disciples of Confucius</b>	<b>309</b>
11.1	The Number of Disciples	309
11.2	Their Geographical Origins	310
11.3	Their Years of Birth	313
11.4	The Ten Disciples with Four Kinds of Specialties	315
11.5	Yan Yuan	316
11.6	Min Zi-qian, Ran Bo-niu, and Zhong-gong	318
11.7	Zai Wo and Zi-gong	320
11.8	Ran You and Zi-lu	323
11.9	Zi-you	326
11.10	Zi-xia	327
11.11	Zeng Shen	329
11.12	Zi-zhang	330
11.13	Some Other Disciples	331
11.14	Epilogue	334
<b>Chapter 12</b>	<b>Confucianist Lineage</b>	<b>337</b>
12.1	A Main Stream in Chinese Cultural History	337
12.2	Beginnings of Confucianism	337
12.3	The Spread of Confucianism	339
12.4	Confucianism During the Warring States Periods	340
12.5	Confucianism During the Han Dynasty	342

12.6	Confucianism During the Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties	346
12.7	Confucianism During the Sui Dynasty	347
12.8	Confucianism During the Tang Dynasty	348
12.9	Confucianism During the Northern Song Dynasty	350
12.10	Confucianism During the Southern Song Dynasty	353
12.11	Confucianism During the Yuan Dynasty	357
12.12	Confucianism During the Ming Dynasty	358
12.13	Confucianism During the Qing Dynasty	361
<b>Chapter 13</b>	<b>Classics and Memorials</b>	<b>365</b>
13.1	Confucius the Educator and Confucius the Author	365
13.2	<i>The Book of Changes</i>	367
13.3	<i>The Book of Songs</i>	371
13.4	<i>The Book of Documents</i>	373
13.5	The <i>Chun-qiu</i> and Its Three <i>Commentaries</i>	376
13.6	The Three Classics on the <i>Li</i>	378
13.7	The <i>Xiao-jing</i>	381
13.8	<i>The Four Books</i>	382
13.9	<i>The Great Learning</i>	383
13.10	The <i>Analects</i>	385
13.11	The <i>Mencius</i>	386
13.12	<i>The Doctrine of the Mean</i>	387
13.13	Evaluation of Ancient Texts	389
13.14	The Confucian Temple and the Confucian Forest at Qufu	392
13.15	Honors and Ceremonials Conferred on Confucius and the Outstanding Confucianists	395
13.16	Birthday of Confucius and Teachers' Day	396
<b>Chapter 14</b>	<b>Confucianism in Eastern Nations</b>	<b>399</b>
14.1	Confucianism and Eastern Culture	399

14.2	Cultural Contacts Between China and Korea	402
14.3	Silla and Its Flower Youths	403
14.4	Confucianism in Koryo	404
14.5	Confucianism in Yi's Chao-xian	405
14.6	Korea's Achievements in Music	406
14.7	Cultural Contacts Between China and Japan	407
14.8	Confucianism in Japan Prior to the Sui and the Tang Dynasties	408
14.9	Confucianism in Japan During the Sui and the Tang Dynasties	410
14.10	Confucianism in Japan from the Song Dynasty to the Ming Dynasty	413
14.11	Zhu Shun-shui's Academic Activities in Japan	415
14.12	Confucianism in Contemporary Japan	417
14.13	The Confucian Temple at Yushima and the Shibun Kai	419
14.14	The Tenri University	421
14.15	Confucianism in Ryukyu	422
14.16	Confucianism in Vietnam	424
<b>Chapter 15</b>	<b>Confucian Studies in Western Countries</b>	<b>427</b>
15.1	Confucianism and Western Culture	427
15.2	The Early Catholic Missionaries in China	428
15.3	Translations of the Confucian Classics by Catholic Missionaries and Their Other Writings Concerning China	430
15.4	G. W. Leibnitz	433
15.5	Voltaire	436
15.6	Confucian Studies in England from Johnson to Toynbee	438
15.7	Confucian Studies in Italy, Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands, and Sweden	441
15.8	Confucian Studies in the United States	443

<b>Chapter 16</b>	<b>The Period of the Spring and Autumn:</b>	
	<b>A General Survey</b>	<b>449</b>
16.1	The <i>Zeitgeist</i> of the Period of the Spring and Autumn	449
16.2	Major Events During this Period: A Very Brief Chronology	453
16.3	Regions and States	454
16.4	Cultural Assimilation and Territorial Expansion	456
16.5	Geographical Distribution of 42 Famous Persons	458
16.6	Government by the <i>Li</i>	460
16.7	Guan Zhong	461
16.8	Zi-chan	462
16.9	Lao-zi	464
16.10	The Most Important Contributions Made by Confucius	466
16.11	The Great Synthesizer, the Most Sagely Sage, and the Revered Teacher	473
16.12	Spread of Confucian Teachings to Other Parts of the World	474
<b>Appendix</b>		<b>475</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>		<b>483</b>
1.	Books in Western Languages	483
2.	Books in Chinese	484
<i>Index</i>		487

# 1

---

## *Confucius Was Great*

### 1.1 His Great Personality

Like the five other spiritual leaders in the world,<sup>1</sup> Confucius (孔夫子, 551 B.C.–479 B.C.) still lives among us and is admired more than ever.

He absorbed China's cultural traditions accumulated during the 25 centuries before his time. They were rich, but somewhat schematic. He co-ordinated them, re-organized them, evaluated them, and developed them into a profound new system of ethics and political philosophy for the benefit of posterity, thus providing a solid foundation for national existence during the 25 centuries after him.

His expertise as one of the top thinkers and educators that mankind has ever produced is fully shown in the *Analects* (《论语》, *Lun-yu*, dialogues) recorded by his disciples. He appears there, to the surprise of some of us, as a plain man with plain words and plain deeds quite within the reach of anybody who has a desire to learn from his example, a fact which explains eloquently why his teachings constituted the main stream of Chinese thought for over 25 centuries till the present day.

---

<sup>1</sup> Namely: Lao-zi, Gotama Sakyamuni, Socrates, Jesus, and Mohammed. Born in the year 551 B.C., Confucius was younger than Lao-zi by about 50 years, and Gotama Sakyamuni, by perhaps 12 years. He preceded Socrates, Jesus, and Mohammed, by 82, 551 (or 547, according to some authorities), and 1,022 years, respectively.



He has actually personified the cultural characteristics, the aspirations, and the ideals of the average Chinese, so much so that to understand him is to understand China, Chinese, and Chinese history.

Every Chinese person can be proud to have had among his fellow-citizens a man with so monumentary an achievement, so magnificent and immortal a personality, and so much dedication to a self-imposed mission.<sup>2</sup>

I am, therefore, including in my *Five Thousand Years of Chinese History* (《中华五千年史》) a special study on *Confucianism: A Modern Interpretation* (《孔学今义》) as one of the three volumes on Middle Zhou Dynasty (770 B.C.–479 B.C.), the other two being a *Biography of Confucius* and a general history of that period. I hope my young readers in China and elsewhere will hereby acquire a thorough comprehension of the origins and trends of our culture as well as its far-reaching, but often hidden, significance.

I am performing, in the meantime, my homage to this most outstanding man whose place in the history of China and Chinese thought is so focal, so unique, and, may I say, so absolutely prominent, for having continued the lineage of hundreds of kings and sages, synthesized their accomplishments, and passed on to us a Dao (道) all his own, consistent with itself, impressive in scope, serious in substance, and splendid in style.

## 1.2 His Humanism

Confucianism, from its roots to its branches and leaves, is dedicated to the study of man. Man is its ultimate, highest, and most direct aim. It tries to find truth through man's daily activities, and apply its findings to build up man's character, uphold man's rights, develop man's potentials, and unfold man's nature. It is a kind of humanism and has this in common with humanism in the West: it sees in the fulfillment of the individual the hope for civilization.

---

<sup>2</sup>Confucius, besides being a teacher, tried hard to persuade the feudal chiefs of his time to carry out much-needed reform and was blamed by a certain hermit for "doing something which he knew could not be done in the first place."