

An Overview  
of Chinese Culture

刘志红◎主编

中国文化概览



知识产权出版社

全国百佳图书出版单位

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## 内容提要

本书的主要内容包括中国建筑文化：皇家建筑、民居建筑；中国园林文化：皇家园林、苏州园林；中国传统艺术文化：戏剧、书画、工艺品（玉、丝绸）；中国传统中医文化：中医、中药、养生；中国传统民俗与节庆文化：传统节日、习俗；中国餐饮文化：茶、酒、食。

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副主编：毛晓霞 谢职安

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# 序

时代的发展要求我国英语专业教育在人文素质与专业技能培养之间达到动态平衡，给不同特色的英语专业一定的调节空间，避免同质化。不管是理工科院校还是文理综合大学，在本土语境下的英语教育必须对其人文性和工具性之辩有所思考，英语专业的学生必须接受扎实的国学知识和中国人文知识的教育，即便是非英语专业的学生也不能忽视素质教育。刘志红老师主编的《中国文化概览》正是顺应了这样的需求，完全符合教育部英语专业教学大纲的基本要求，为培养具有扎实的英语语言基础和广博的文化知识的复合型英语人才做了一件很有实际意义的事情。

国学泛指以儒学为主体的中华传统文化与学术，其外延涉及医学、戏剧、书画、星相、数术、建筑、饮食、民俗等。语言习得者通过对国学经典的研习，达到修身养性，这就是通常所说的素养教育、人格教育。但如果按国粹派邓实把国学理解为“一国所有之学也”，那么按学科分就有哲学、史学、宗教学、文学、礼俗学、考据学、伦理学等，上至先秦诸子、儒道释三家，下至琴棋书画、婚丧嫁娶，无所不包。当然，研习国学和了解中国人文知识可以各有侧重，本书更适合于英语习得者，偏于知识性。《中国文化概览》为了让读者更有效掌握知识点，在编写体例上下了很大的工夫。该书图文并茂，在练习中列出的关键词汇和重要概念均具有代表性，对知识点的解释简明扼要，易于掌握，练习形式有多项选择、问答、填空、翻译等，这在概况类教材中并不多见，很有实用价值，易于被教师和学生所接受。

目前国内类似的教材很多，但大多是中文版的。《中国文化概览》作为全英文读本，且能包涵这么丰富的知识量，很值得英语学习者去通读，并充分利用附加的练习来作为复习和思考的机会。不仅如此，在提倡中国文化走出去的大背景下，能熟练操用英语的中国人应该多多接触国学知识和中国人文知识，《中国文化概览》提供了这样的以英语为媒介的知识库，相信会让每位读者受益无穷。

封一函



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# Chapter One Chinese Religion and Confucianism



## Objectives

In this chapter, you will learn

- ❖ Confucius, Mencius and Their Thoughts
- ❖ Lao Zi, Zhuang Zi and Taoism
- ❖ Chinese Religion — Buddhism and Taoism
- ❖ the Theory of *The Book of Changing* and *Yin & Yang*
- ❖ the Important Figures in Chinese Philosophy and Their Ideas



## Lead-in

1. Do you know the names of the ancient Chinese philosophers in the following pictures? What are their major thoughts?



2. Please look at the picture carefully and answer the following questions.

- (1) What are they doing?
- (2) Who are the vinegar tasters?
- (3) How to interpret the painting?



三眼图/尝醋图/尝醋翁 The Vinegar Tasters



## Reading

### Passage A The History and Development of Confucianism

Confucianism was firstly created by Confucius, and then developed by Mencius, the only two ancient Chinese scholars who enjoy Latinized names. Confucianism is the cornerstone of traditional Chinese culture. It is regarded as an ethic-political system in ancient China. It has shaped the civilization of China and exerted a profound influence upon almost a quarter of the human race for more than two thousand years.

#### Confucius' Life and His Philosophy

Confucius ( 551 – 479B. C. ), or Kong Zi, was a thinker, political figure, educator, and founder of the Ru School ( Confucian ) of Chinese thought. He is one of a handful of individuals who have shaped world history. His fame can be compared to great leaders and emperors such as Ramses II, or Alexander the Great; His teachings, preserved in the *Analects*, formed the foundation of much of subsequent Chinese speculation on education and shaped the soul of China. Confucianism, the great system of moral and religious philosophy built upon the teachings of Master Kong, or Confucius as he is known in the West, became the basis for personal and government morality in China. For a period of almost 1,500 years, the teachings of Confucius formed the basis of the Chinese state religion and permeated every aspect of Chinese culture and society, and even today his teachings continue to influence modern China and its culture.

## Chapter One Chinese Religion and Confucianism

Confucius' surname is Kong; his given name Qiu, and his social name Zhongni. According to the well-known *Records of the Grand Historian* ( *Shi Ji* ) by the Western Han Dynasty (206B. C. -8A. D. ) court historian, Sima Qian, Confucius' ancestors were members of the State of Song during the Spring and Autumn Period (770 - 476B. C. ). His great grandfather, fleeing the turmoil in his native Song, had moved to the State of Lu, somewhere near the present town of Qu Fu in southeastern Shandong Province, where the family became impoverished. Confucius was born in the year 551 B. C.

The ethnical principle of Confucianism is its discovery of the ultimate in the moral character of human relationships. He offered the solution for the ills and evils of his time. The Three Cardinal Guides are: ruler guides subject; father guides son; and husband guides wife. The Five Constant Virtues are translated into benevolence, righteousness, prosperity, wisdom, and fidelity which were specified in the feudal ethical code. They are described in detail as the following:

- “Ren”, the will to show benevolence to others ( the root );
- “Yi”, righteousness by justice ( the trunk );
- “Li”, moral ways of conduct ( the branches );
- “Zhi”, wisdom ( the flower );
- “Xin”, faithfulness ( the fruit ).

Confucius also organized the Three Obedience and Four Virtues for women. According to the ethics, a woman should have obedience to her father before her marriage, to her husband after marriage, and to her son after husband's death. He also pointed out the morality, proper speech, modest manner and diligent work for a woman.

**Benevolence** is the core subject of Confucius' thought. It contains various connotations. The first and the general connotation of benevolence is “to love the people”. According to Confucius, “to love the people” means to love all people, no matter what kind of social positions they maintain. The connotation of benevolence can be explained from three aspects: family, government and one's self-cultivation.

Filial piety and fraternal duty are the moral norms in Confucianism. To love the people, one should, first of all, love his parents, brothers and sisters, and his family members. If one does not love his parents, it is absolutely impossible for him to love other people. Secondly, “Benevolent government” is an extension of Confucius' idea of benevolence. It is Confucius' social and political idea he pursued all his life. When talking of how the ruler should govern his country, he said, “In ruling a state of one

thousand war-chariots, the ruler should attend strictly to business, punctually observe his promises, economize in expenditure, show affection to his subjects, and use labor of peasant only in the slack season of the year.” What Confucius said is of great realistic significance today.

According to Confucius, to be benevolent, one must pay attention to self-cultivation and overcome selfishness. He said, “If you yourself desire establishment, then help others to get establishment; if you yourself want success, then help others to attain success.” And “Never do to others what you wouldn’t like them to do to you.”

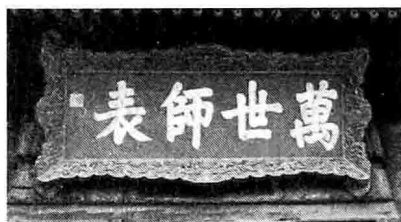
“**Great Harmony**” is the highest realm of Confucius’ social idea. It is the blueprint of his idealized society, a kind of utopia. His wish embodies the fundamental interests of the common people and their expectation. So his idea of Great Harmony will encourage later generations to fight for the realization of an ideal society, and help promote social development. He described, “In the ideal society of Great Harmony, the world belongs to the public. The virtuous and competent are selected. Faithfulness is fostered and good neighborliness is cultivated. People do not only love their own parents or care for their own children. The aged will have their homes, the middle-aged will find their use and the youngsters are well-bred. All solitary persons such as widows and widowers, the deformed and diseased, adults without children or children without parents, have a place to live in and are taken good care of. All men have their positions; all women have their home. It is hateful to lay goods aside wastefully and unnecessary to hide for oneself. It is also hateful to make no efforts of one’s own and unnecessary to make efforts for oneself. Consequently, conspiracies are prevented, theft and robbery are stopped, and there is no need to shut the outdoor of a house.” This is the society of Great Harmony.

**Rites** are systems and standards of the patriarchal hierarchical society. What is emphasized by Rites was the order of the noble and humble positions and the order of the aged and the young. From Confucius ethical point of view, Rites are considered to be standards of human conduct which embodied the outward restrictions of society to human beings. Confucius regarded them as the most important elements in social and political life.

**The Doctrine of the Mean** belongs to the philosophical category indicating the limit, range and sphere of things. It opposes “going beyond” and “falling short”, but puts stress on “moderation”. In general, the Doctrine of the mean stresses on doing

things moderately and properly. It suggests that when confronted with two extremes, one should take the middle course. Confucius said, "To go too far is as bad as not to go far enough." The Characteristic of The Doctrine of the Mean is flexibility. That is to say, the Doctrine of the Mean should be used in a flexible way. Conditions are always changing, in a certain condition, a deed or word may be considered proper, but may not in another condition. So under different conditions people need to adjust their ways of doing things.

### Confucius Thought on Education



Confucius' educational aim is to train and cultivate people who have both ability and moral sentiment, and will practice benevolent government. These people can make the country and society peaceful and prosperous. So he took the philosophy of "Benevolence" as the basis of his educational thought, and attached importance to moral education. Confucius' instructing contents had a wide coverage, including: morality, knowledge, physical culture, art and aesthetics, rites and music, diplomacy, medicine and health care, politics and economy, military affairs and law, etc. He took moral education as the core of his instruction and the instructions of other contents were all round it.

With regard of the objects of education, Confucius put forward the principle of "In instruction there is no separation into categories". He opened up a new path in education. He considered that all those could be instructed should enjoy equal chances of being instructed. If anyone could, regardless of his wealth, rank, bring Confucius a little present, he could be enrolled.

In his long educational practice, Confucius accumulated a lot of teaching experiences, summed up a whole set of effective teaching principles and methods which are the most important part in Confucius' thought. Firstly, the combination of learning and practice; secondly, the combination of learning, thinking and doing; thirdly, the attitude of seeking truth from facts; fourthly, he initiated the elicitation method of teaching; fifthly, he instructed his disciples in accordance with their aptitude. His examples and teaching have cast great impact on the development of human society, having not only a far-reaching historical significance, but also an important and realistic

significance.

## *The Analects of Confucius*

The landmark of Confucianism is *The Analects*, which was written by his disciples after his death. It consists of sayings and answers to the questions raised by the students, usually serving as an introduction to Chinese philosophy and Confucianism. *The Analects* illustrates the life of Confucius, his mission as a teacher and the main principles and concepts of his philosophy. Confucius said,

- “He who learns without thinking will be bewildered; he who thinks without learning will be in danger.”
- “To learn and then do, is not that a pleasure? When friends come from afar do we not rejoice? To live unknown and not fret, is not that to be a gentleman?”
- “He can be a teacher who finds what is new in reviewing what is old.”
- “Intelligent and fond of learning, he was not ashamed to ask and learn from his inferiors.”
- “By nature, men are nearly alike; by practice, they get to be wide apart.”
- “A youth is to be regarded with respect. How do you know that his future will not be equal to our present?”
- “What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others.”
- “If one wants to establish himself, he should help others to establish themselves at first.”

## Mencius' Thought

### Governing the State with Human Love

Mencius (372B. C. –289B. C.) entitled “Second Sage” in China, was one of the most important philosophers in the Confucian school. His idea that human nature is innately good is one of the basic tenets of Confucianism. According to Mencius' thought, there are four innate “sprouts” (duan) of the four cardinal virtues: “Compassion is the sprout of benevolence; being aware of shame is the sprout of rightness; paying deference to others is the sprout of ritual propriety; knowledge of good and evil is the sprout of wisdom.”

In order to preserve and extend human's good nature, Mencius believes that man should cultivate the goodness inherent in his nature and to serve humanity. The

importance of internal concentration or reflection in cultivating an ethical sense is also emphasized and advocated. He believes that original human goodness can become depraved through one's own destructive efforts or through contact with an evil environment.

### “Four Books” and “Five Classics”

Confucius' thought is rich and profound, mainly consists of the theories of Benevolence, Great Harmony, Rites and the Doctrine of the Mean, covering various fields of social sciences, such as philosophy, sociology, ethics, education and political science. All his philosophy, mostly encoded in the Confucian classics — namely the “Four Books” and “Five Classics”, forms the foundation of much of the subsequent Chinese speculation on education and comportment of the ideal man, how such an individual should live his life and interact with others, and the forms of society and government in which he should participate. “Four Books” came into existence before the Qin Dynasty, although they were not called “Four Books” at that time. *The Analects of Confucius*, one of the “Four Books”, is the collection of his teaching and exchanges with his disciples. The other three are *Mencius*, *The Great Learning* and *The Doctrine of the Mean*. They were regarded as the elementary textbooks for Confucianism study. “Five Classics” refer to five ancient classics: *The Books of Changes*, *The Book of Documents*, *The Book of Poetry*, *The Records of Rite* and *The Spring and Autumn Annals*. These Confucian classics functioned as the basis of scholarly education in China up to 21st Century. In the Dynasties of Ming and Qing, the sentences from the “Four Books” and “Five Classics” were the basis for the Imperial Examinations.



### Post-reading Activities

#### I. Reading Comprehension

1. What is the landmark of Confucianism?
  - a. *The Great Learning*.
  - b. *The Records of Rites*.
  - c. *The Analects*.
  - d. *The Spring and Autumn Annals*.
2. What interpretation about *The Doctrine of the Mean* is not correct?
  - a. The Doctrine of the Mean belongs to the philosophical category indicating the limit, rang and sphere of things.

- b. It means to compromise or take the neutral position in case of conflicts.
  - c. The Mean in the mind of Confucius implies moderation of one's behavior, and standing "central and balanced" in dealing with things or human beings.
  - d. The Mean endorses balanced living, without extremes of action, emotion or thought, with emphasis on the cultivation of the mind through meditation, and cautions against bodily pleasures.
3. What does Confucius' thought mainly include?
- a. *The Analects of Confucius*.
  - b. *The Great Harmony and Benevolence*.
  - c. *The Great Learning*.
  - d. *Five Classics*.
4. *The Four Books* includes:
- a. *Mencius*.
  - b. *The Great Learning*.
  - c. *The Doctrine of the Mean* and *The Analects of Confucius*.
  - d. All of above.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ is the cornerstone of traditional Chinese culture?
- a. *The Analects*
  - b. Confucianism
  - c. Taoism
  - d. Mencius
6. According to Mencius, what are the four innate "sprouts" (duan) of the four cardinal virtues:
- a. Paying difference to others is the sprout of ritual propriety; knowledge of good and evil is the sprout of wisdom.
  - b. Compassion is the sprout of benevolence.
  - c. Being aware of the shame is the sprout of rightness, ritual propriety, wisdom.
  - d. All of the above.

II. Fill the blanks with the words given below. Change the form where necessary.

Confucianism	Mencius	benevolence	Rites	Great Harmony
<i>Four Books</i>	<i>Five Classics</i>	aptitude	fraternal duty	filial piety

1. Confucius' thought is rich and profound, mainly consists of the theories of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, rites and the Doctrine of the Mean, covering various fields of social sciences, such as philosophy, sociology, ethics, education and political science.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ was first created by Confucius, and then developed by \_\_\_\_\_, the only two ancient Chinese scholars who enjoy Latinized names.
3. " \_\_\_\_\_ " is the highest realm of Confucius' social ideal. It is the blueprint of his idealized society. He described, "In the ideal society of Great Harmony, the

world belongs to the public.

4. In the Dynasties of Ming and Qing, the sentences from the “ \_\_\_\_\_ ” and “ \_\_\_\_\_ ” were the basis for the Imperial Examinations.
5. In his long educational practice, Confucius accumulated a wealth of teaching experiences; he instructed his disciples in accordance with their \_\_\_\_\_.
6. From Confucius ethical point of view, \_\_\_\_\_ were considered to be standards of human conduct which embodied the outward restrictions of society to human beings.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are the moral norms to which Confucius attached great importance. They take an important position in Confucius' theory of benevolence. To love the people, one should, first of all, love his parents, brothers and sisters, and his family members. If one does not love his parents, it is absolutely impossible for him to love other people.

### III. Translation

1. “To see what is right and not do it is cowardice”.
2. “By nature, men are nearly alike; by practice, they get to be wide apart”.
3. *The Analects* illustrates the life of Confucius, his mission as a teacher and the main principles and concepts of his philosophy.
4. If one wants to establish himself, he should help others to establish themselves at first.
5. Confucius' educational aim is to train and cultivate people who have both ability and moral integrity, and will practice benevolent government.
6. 敏而好学，不耻下问。
7. 子曰：“学而不思则罔，思而不学则殆。”
8. 子曰：“学而时习之，不亦说乎？有朋自远方来，不亦乐乎？人不知而不愠，不亦君子乎？”
9. 子曰：“温故而知新，可以为师矣。”
10. 己欲立而立人，己欲达而达人。





## Words and Expressions

cornerstone *n.* 基石

Ramses II *n.* 拉美西斯二世

impoverish *vt.* 使贫穷, 耗尽

harmony *n.* 和谐

Four Books *n.* 《四书》

The Analects of Confucius *n.* 《论语》

The Spring and Autumn Annals 《春秋》

The Records of Rites 《礼记》

The Book of Documents 《尚书》

patriarchal *adj.* 父权制的

sprout *n.* 嫩芽

encode *vt.* 将文字编码

turmoil *n.* 动乱, 战乱

benevolence *n.* 仁

rite *n.* 礼节

Five Classics *n.* 《五经》

The Book of Changes 《周易》

The Great Learning 《大学》

The Book of Poetry 《诗经》

The Doctrine of the Mean 《中庸》

hierarchical *adj.* 世袭制的

slack *adj.* 萧条的



## Notes

1. "In ruling a state of one thousand war-chariots, the ruler should attend strictly to business, punctually observe his promises, economize in expenditure, show affection to his subjects, and use labor of peasant only in the slack season of the year."  
“道千乘之国，敬事而信，节用而爱人，使民以时。”
2. "If you yourself desire establishment, then help others to get establishment; if you yourself want success, then help others to attain success."  
“己欲立而立人，己欲达而达人。”
3. Never do to others what you wouldn't like them to do to you.  
己所不欲，勿施于人。
4. "In the ideal society of Great Harmony, the world belongs to the public. The virtuous and competent are selected. Faithfulness is fostered and good neighborliness is cultivated...This is the society of Great Harmony."  
大道之行也，天下为公。选贤与能，讲信修睦。故人不独亲其亲，不独子其子。使老有所终，壮有所用，幼有所长。鳏寡孤独废疾者，皆有所养。男有分，女有归。货恶其弃于地也，不必藏于己。力恶其不出于身也，不必为己。是故谋闭而不兴，盗窃乱贼而不作。故外户而不闭。是谓大同。