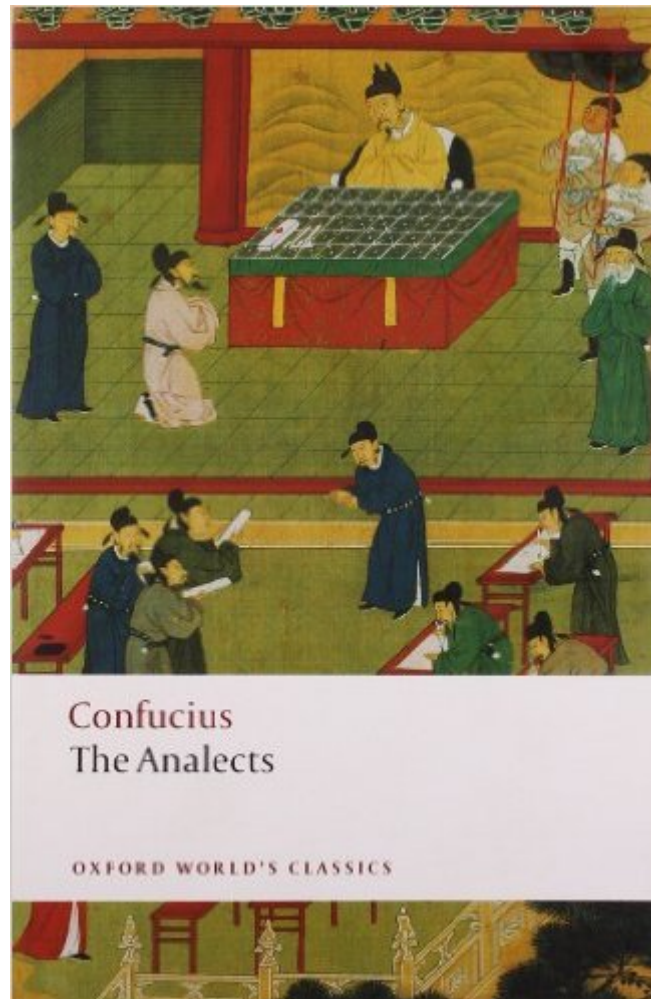


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# The Analects (Oxford World's Classics)



## Synopsis

Few individuals have shaped their country's civilization more profoundly than the Master Kong, better-known as Confucius (551-479 BC). His sayings and those of his disciples form the foundation of a distinct social, ethical, and intellectual system. They have retained their freshness and vigor throughout the two and a half millennia of their currency, and are still admired even in today's China. This lively new translation offers clear explanatory notes by one of the foremost scholars of classical Chinese, providing an ideal introduction to the Analects for readers who have no previous knowledge of the Chinese language and philosophical traditions.

About the Series: For over 100 years Oxford World's Classics has made available the broadest spectrum of literature from around the globe. Each affordable volume reflects Oxford's commitment to scholarship, providing the most accurate text plus a wealth of other valuable features, including expert introductions by leading authorities, voluminous notes to clarify the text, up-to-date bibliographies for further study, and much more.

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## Customer Reviews

The Analects are crucial to understanding the culture of China. For this reason we use it as an anchor text in our document-based core course on the history of civilization. This edition is the most helpful I have seen. It is a good, smooth translation, and it is easily readable. Professor Wayne

Detzler, Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, CT.

Oxford did a phenomenal job in the organization of this historic work. Confucius is undoubtedly one of the most influential men to have walked the earth, and "The Analects" is a work that all libraries should encompass. This book includes additional notes and insights, and is a great size to carry around with you, whether you desire some light reading, are on the train to work, or in a waiting room at the doctor. Well done, Oxford!

An interesting translation. I have found it important to read more than one translation because Chinese-to-English requires just that. Simple inflections change the meanings dramatically, so this is one of several on my shelf.

Dawson's version of "The Analects" is slim, literal, affordable, and accompanied by scant but respectable explanatory material. It's a solid, no-nonsense translation, too sparsely annotated, but well recommended by the author's brief, judicious introduction, which contains more good sense than several of the other works under review. In a "Note on the Translation of Key Terms," Dawson discusses several words, explaining the workable, somewhat conservative renditions that he will use throughout his translation. Notable among his choices are "humaneness" for ren, "rightness" for yi, and "understanding" for zhi; other choices are more predictable, none misleading. He explains the motives behind his translation as follows: "Translation -- at least of philosophical works -- can at best only be an approximation. That does not mean that we should shrug our shoulders pharisaically and accept the argument of those who believe that only a translation with full critical apparatus and exhaustive notes can advance the cause of knowledge....I believe that we should not always be trying to preach to the converted, but should do our best to try to achieve a piece of inter-cultural communication and make the "Analects" as intelligible as possible to people of our own culture" (p. xxvii). The result is a tiny, minimally adorned (just over 100 pages with notes), cramped volume seemingly designed for frequent rereading. Dawson annotates accurately, but only when absolutely necessary; his goal seems to be to throw the reader back on his or her own resources. Whether that is a virtue or a vice of this edition ultimately will depend on the reader's intent.

There's no doubt about it- Confucius was a wise guy. If you're looking for quotes about virtue (or really anything) read this and I'm sure you'll find something. I found it interesting that certain values that arose in other parts of the world also arose there in China, completely independent. An

example would be found in Book 12:2: "Do not impose on others what you would not like for yourself." Very similar to the Christian 'Golden Rule.' Quite interesting. If you're at all interested in Chinese culture/history, this is a must read.

I own the Oxford World's Classics edition translated by Raymond Dawson. This was my first reading of 'The Analects' and while it was not quite what I expected, as it does not contain a truly coherent philosophy or even a consistent mode of presentation or authorship, it was nevertheless an incredibly rewarding study. And I say study rather than read because while it is quite brief (82 pages) there are a wealth of "chapters" that will leave you pondering--in a good way! If you are worried about the stereotype of vagueness and aloofness in Chinese sages, you needn't fear 'The Analects'. The main thing that can obscure some of the "chapters" is their reliance on Chinese history and most of these are briefly cleared up in Dawson's notes. 'The Analects' can be picked up and put down at a whim due to the informal structure and you will never feel that you lost the flow of it should a few days pass between readings. While I can't compare it to another translation or the Chinese, I found Dawson's translation to be very smooth and highly consistent throughout, and he supplements the introduction with helpful notes on his translation of key terms. This is an edition primarily for the newcomer rather than the scholar (not to say it is in anyway "dumbed down") as it is wonderfully concise in its introduction and notes, never saying more than needs to be said. However, in my case, I certainly wouldn't have minded more scholarship and context. Dawson uses Pinyin rather than Wade-Giles, which is a welcome shift in my eyes, as Wade-Giles often feels overwrought even if it sometimes comes closer to the true pronunciation, and there is a nifty conversion chart included in this edition. This edition like all of the newer Oxford World's Classics is neatly designed with a beautiful cover and good quality paper.

The Analects of Confucius is one of the most influential books ever written anywhere. Although I cannot read the original Chinese, this remarkably lucid translation makes me feel quite close to the source. The translation makes a point of allowing some of the dazzling fragments in the Analects to remain just that without trying to smooth them out artificially. This is important as it allows the modern reader to appreciate the complex texture of an ancient text on its own terms. Both the introduction and the endnotes are quite helpful in elucidating some of the difficulties and the ambiguities in the text encountered by the general reader. Additionally, the size of the book is perfect. It is small enough to carry anywhere. Overall, highly recommended!

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