



The Analects of Confucius

By Confucius

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Acting as an inspiration to the people of China and East Asia, "The Analects" affirms a humanistic ethic. This translation of the work aims to break down the stereotypical Confucius, showing him to have been a man of passion, enthusiasm and action, whose vocation was politics, and who saw his world sink into violent barbarity. Unable to secure the political role he sought, he engaged his crumbling culture in ethical debate, exercising his moral duty to reform society and restore its former glory. In this translation of the work, Confucius seems to be addressing the problems of our own age.

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

Simon Leys is the pseudonym of Pierre Ryckmans (Chinese studies, Univ. of Sydney), who tells us in the foreword that he uses a literary pen name because his intention here was to produce a "writer's translation." In fact, this well-crafted translation of Confucius departs only in subtle ways from other distinguished translations to which Leys gives due credit, such as that by Arthur Waley (1938) and D.C. Lau (1979). When his reading is in any way unusual or when he has added to the text, he discloses his rationale fully in the notes. Leys draws parallels between Confucius and thinkers more familiar to Westerners, from Heraclitus to Emerson. He also allows himself to editorialize when a passage strikes a certain chord in him, bringing a fresh, contemporary reading to what might otherwise be an obscure Chinese concept. Scholars of Chinese may quibble over some of the nuances of translation, but it is the opinions set forth in Leys's notes that will spark lively debate. Recommended for academic collections and other collections in need of a good translation of this classic work. —Mark Woodhouse, Elmira Coll. Lib., N.Y.
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From [Booklist](#)

Nearly all of us think we know Confucius (551[^]-479 B.C.). He is the archetypal Chinese sage, spouting cryptic one-liners, and, to the slightly more knowledgeable, the inventor of ancestor worship and the groveling before authority that supposedly hobbled progress in China. With his new translation of the only Confucian text, Leys seeks to restore Confucius' reputation by presenting him as an apt teacher for today. Confucius' China was racked by political dissolution and violence, and he prescribed ritualized politeness as a means of bolstering order. But he did not countenance injustice, venality, and the other vices of authority; and he thought that being a gentleman--the most important and desirable status in his political prescription--was something an ethical man from any social class could attain, provided he mastered the kind of education the West has called liberal. To Western societies that many find lacking in civility, order, and virtue, Confucius does indeed speak, and in this version with maximum clarity, thanks to the crystalline introduction and notes as much as to the translation. *Ray Olson*

Review

"This fresh rendering of the *Analects* may come to be accepted as [Waley's] richest gift: fresh in time and in treatment." —*The Listener*

Users Review

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Evelina Soria:

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Joan Beverly:

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