

# World cultures midterm: confucius analects

Profession, Philosophers



Confucius' program of study envisions some kind of political or social service. The study he encourages has two aspects: intellectual development and character building, in an effort to make an ideal role model that he calls the junzi. Construct a career path for Confucius' junzi indicating his proper roles in society. The path of the Confucian Junzi is interminable and strenuous. It is a life only for the hard working and self-reflective. "The sage and the man of perfect virtue;—how dare I rank myself with them? It may simply be said of me, that I strive to be one such without satiety"(7. 3); even the teacher of the ways of the Junzi knows that the path being a Junzi is never ending and that he has much more to learn. Confucius encourages his students to devote their lives to social and public service. He strives to develop his students intellectually and morally; to attain the wisdom and the virtue of a Junzi through practice of proper social conduct and exercise of traditional rituals. A person plays many roles in a lifetime and for every role comes different authorities and responsibilities. The main roles of a Confucian Junzi's life are that of a student, son, and an attendant to the state/society.

The first job of a Junzi is to be a filial son. The Junzi should attend to his elders, respect his parents' wishes and earnestly follow the way path of his father: "If the son for three years does not alter from the way of his father, he may be called filial"(4. 20). If he possesses the position as the head of the family, the Junzi should regulate his home through example of virtue and benevolence. Family organization is the basis for the structure of the state and the government—one who cannot preside over a family is a poor leader and cannot regulate a country.

A Junzi need not come from a wealthy home or a family of noble descent; Confucius did not discriminate between those rich or poor—he took all those willing to learn and work as his student. The Junzi works to intellectually grow with the experiences he has gained and has a never-ending appetite for knowledge. “ When a man is not in the habit of saying—‘ what shall I think of this? What shall I think of this? ’ I can indeed do nothing with him”(15. 15). He should form questions and insights to everyday occurrences and not avoid what he does not know or is afraid of.

A student is to gain knowledge not only from his studies but also from occurrences and people around him. He will use his learnings to service the state and will not venture to make profit or seek immediate gain. Honor and nobility should be gained through merit and virtue and not through bloodline. As an attendant to the state, the Junzi will rise to a position in court (either through recommendation for his good moral conduct or through proving himself worthy through civil servant exams) and be loyal to his country and ruler. The scholar trained for public duty, seeing threatening danger, is prepared to sacrifice his life. When the opportunity of gain is present to him, he thinks of righteousness”(19. 1). The Junzi will continue to cultivate himself morally and intellectually—to set apart what is right and wrong and to act as a role model. He tries to bring out the admirable qualities in other men and aid them in becoming a superior man. If the Junzi’s services are no longer needed at court, he will then devote his life to teaching students the virtue of a righteous man.

He will greet others with benevolence and preach the rule of reciprocity: “ what you do not want done to yourself do not do to others”(15. 23). “ The

master said, of Tsze-Ch'an that he had four characteristics of the superior man;—in his conduct of himself, he was humble; in serving his superiors, he was respectful; in nourishing the people, he was kind; in ordering the people, he was just"(5. 15). Whether the Junzi is student, a court official/ faithful subject to the country or a filial son, becoming a superior man is a lifelong progression that never stops.