

I. A Model to all Mankind——Confucius

Confucius is one of the greatest men in the history of world. More than two thousand five hundred years ago(551—479B.C.),he was born in the State of Lu (now the Province of Shantung). A descendent of a great noblemen of the State of Sung, he lost his father at the age of three and was reared by his mother in a state of impoverished simplicity. As he grew up, he was put in charge of the granary and the cattle and sheep of a certain Baron.

Never tired of learning and teaching throughout his life, Confucius has long been recognized in China as "the Greatest Sage and Foremost Teacher with Outstanding Achievements." He believed that in teaching, there should be no class distinctions and hence he had up to three thousand disciples. From the Analects, we can see that he tried to help his disciples solve problems arising out of daily life and human relationships. Though commonplace and practical, easily understood and easily carried out, his teachings contributed to the cultivation of the individual, the regulation of the family, the order of the state and the peace of the world.

Confucius was born in a most critical period known as the period of the Spring and Autumn Annals, when the imperial dynasty of Chou was in decline, the rituals and music began to degenerate, and the country was in a state of moral chaos from the foudal princes down to the people. He attempted to revive the culture of the Chou House in its heyday. Once he was made the Chief Minister of his native State of Lu, and in three months he was able to put the country in order, but unfortunately he was forced to quit. For fourteen years he wandered over various states to see whether his political ideas could be realized. After repeated failures he finally returned to his native state, having perused nearly all the official documents of ancient times, he took pains to compile, edit or comment on the Book of History, the Book of Odes, the Book of Rites, the Book of Music, the Book of Changes, and the Spring and Autumn Annals, These are the Six Classics which were handed down to later generations. In addition, his philosophy is also opitomized in the Analcets, the Canon of Filial Piety, the Great Learning, and the Contral Harmony (or the Doctrine of the Mean).

After the death of Confucius, his disciples and fol-

lowers were seattered in different states, serving the foudal lords in one way or another and almost invariably preaching their teacher's doctrines. During the period of the Warring States, Mencius went further to elaborate Confucius political and ethical philosophy and laid down the foundation of Confucianism in particular and that of Chinese culture in general. In more than two thousand years from the Western Han Dynasty to the present day, it is the Confucian schotars or follows who have been able to re-establish the new order out of chaos in China, as can be seen throughout Chinese history. To commemorate Confucius, the National Government of the Republic of China has since its establishment officially proclaimed the birthday of Confucius as Teachers' Day. (September the 28th.)



Broad yet profound, Confucianism has not only been the cornerstone of Chinese culture for more than two thousand five hundred years but also has had far-reaching effects abroad. It has influenced neighboring countries such as Japan, Korea, Vietnam and others, and it also inspired the eighteenth century French Enlightenment and as a result of modern democratic thought in the West. In the present world of moral decay, Confucianism, which emphasizes the way of right rather than the way of might, might be one of the best remedies to our present world disorder. Thus, Confucius, recognized in China as the Greatest Exemplar of Teachers of All Ages, can serve as a model to all mankind.



II. The Evolution of Confucian Sacrificial Rites

Confucius lived for 73 years from 551-479 B.C., during the Chou dynasty. Two years after his death, the ruler of the State of Lu decreed that Confucius' former residence at Chüeh Li, Chufu (in modern Shantung province) be established as a temple. He also decreed that his robes, headgear, books, chariot and lute be safeguarded and worshipped on a regular basis in accordance with the rites. It was at this stage that lesser noblemen began sacrificing to Confucius.

The Han emperor Kao-tzu was the first of a number

of kings and emperors to offer sacrifices to Confucius. In 195 B.C. he sacrificed a bull, a ram and a boar to Confucius while journeying through the state of Lu.

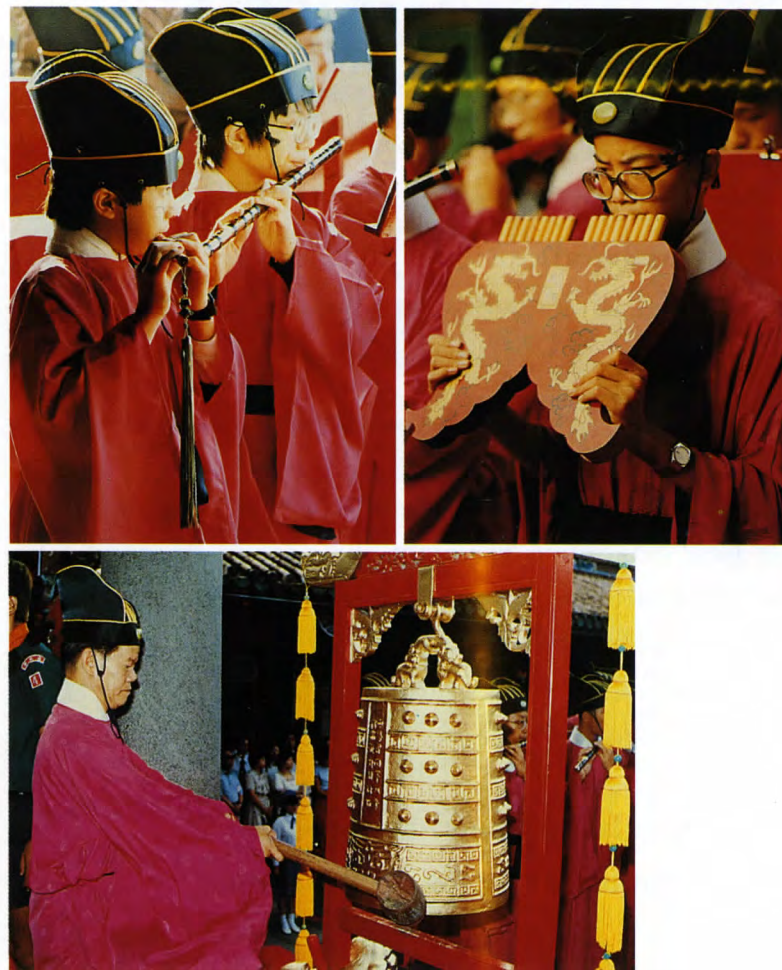
The practice of ennobling Confucius' descendants out of reverence for the sage began when Emperor Yuan-ti (r. 48-33 B.C.) enlisted the services of a 13th-generation descendant of Confucius, K'ung Pa, as his imperial teacher. The emperor brought him into the inner court, gave him a title, bestowed upon him a fiefdom of 800 households and also made seasonal sacrifices to Confucius out of tax revenues.

In A.D. 29, Emperor Kuang-wu began sending high-ranking officials to offer sacrifices at the Confucian temple at Chüeh Li, Chufu.

Until A.D. 59, all Confucian sacrificial ceremonies were held at the Confucian temple in Chufu. In that year, Emperor Ming-ti initiated the practice of sacrificing to the Duke of Chou and Confucius at schools throughout the land. Since that time, the central and provincial governments have maintained the Confucian ceremonies in all schools, thus making them an important national activity.

To be enshrined in a Confucian temple has been regarded as a high honor by courtiers and scholars

ever since A.D. 72, the year in which Emperor Ming-ti went in person to sacrifice at Chufu.



III. The Procedure and the Meaning of Current Memorial Service for Confucius on His Birthday

1.Beginning of ceremony.

2.First drumming.

The purpose of belling and drumming is to develop a pious mood for thinking of Confucius with respect.

3.Second drumming.

4.Third drumming.

There are three bellings and three drummings from the first drumming through the second drumming to the third drumming. "Three" in Chinese stands for "a lot" which means solemn. Principal consecration and secondary consecration, which are described below, are both composed of three parts for the same reason.

Ceremonial attendants in position.

5.Ceremonial inspector in position.

6.In general, the local government officer who is in charge of civil affairs will be the ceremonial inspector

whose responsibility is to correct any mistake during the ceremony.

Accompanying consecration officers in position.

7.In general ,the outstanding persons who have local political or educational position will be the accompanying consecration officers.

8.Secondary consecration officers in position.

In general ,local people who have political or educational positions and legislators will be the secondary consecration officers.

9.Principal consecration officer in position.

The highest rank local government officer will be the principal consecration officer.

10.Opening the main gate.

Yi Gate and Ling Hsing Gate are usually closed. They are open only for Confucius ceremony. After ceremony, the gates will closed again. People use side doors as entrances to show their respect for Confucius.

11.Burning the blood and hair of sacrificial animals.

The sacrificial animals should be killed before ceremony. First, the blood and hair should be put in the

utensil. The ceremonial attendants then take them outside through the court, Yi Gate and Ling Hsin Gate. Finally, the attendants dig a hole at west side and bury the blood and hair . According to the traditional custom, animals are used for sacrificial offerings. Animals grow up on earth. Burning the blood and hair of animals is to fertilize the earth. What comes from the earth will return to the earth. Therefore, the earth will continue offering nutrient to all creatures which will then grow on and on.

12.Welcoming the spirit of Sage.

The spirit of Sage is not physically present during welcoming the spirit of Sage. It is just a way to express the living people's thinking of the dead with respect.

13.All attendants bow three times.

14.Offering dainties.

According to the principle of "treating the dead as if they were still alive" , in ancient consecration, all the sacrificial offerings should be what the dead would enjoy when they were alive. It means the dead are still alive in the living people's mind.

15.Offering burning incense.

16.The first consecration for Confucius.

Elementary pupils will hold the positions of young boys. In early days, dances can be classified as literary dance, martial dance, and literary and martial dance. Literary dance will be performed by young boys holding feathers and bamboo flutes; martial dance will be performed by older than fifteen years old young men holding shields and spears; literary and martial dance will be performed by male adults holding feathers, bamboo flutes, shields and spears.

17.The first consecration for disciples.

18.Chanting the eulogy.

19.All attendants bowing.

20.The second consecration for Confucius.

21.The second consecration for disciples.

22.The final consecration for Confucius.

23.The final consecration for disciples.

24.The President offering the burning incense.

25.Chanting the Presidential Eulogy.

26.All attendants bowing.

27.The Consecration Man offering the burning incense.

28.Receiving wine for blessing.

In early days, Chinese believe the spirit of Sage gave his blessing in sacrificial offerings, wine and meat. People drink the wine and take the meat home to symbolize his accepting the spirit of Sage's blessing.

29. Withdrawing the offered dainties.

30. Farewell to the spirit of Sage.

31. All attendants bowing.

32. Burning the message of eulogy and silk.

In early days, Chinese believe the spirit of Sage will receive offerings after they are burned.

33. Observing the burning.

The reason for observing the burning is to express one's sincerity throughout the ceremony. Returning to position

34. Closing the gates.

35. Withdrawal.

36. Conclusion.

37. The Ceremony Concludes.