

Selections from the *Analects* of Confucius (400s BC)

Confucius lived from 521-479 BC, and his sayings were written down by his disciples in the decades after his death.

The Master said, "A gentleman [*junzi*] points out the admirable qualities of men and does not point out their bad qualities. A petty man does just the opposite."

The Master said, "A gentleman [*junzi*] is distressed by his lack of ability, but he is not distressed by men not knowing him."

The Master said, "To rule a country of a thousand chariots requires reverent attention to business, sincerity, economy in expenditures, and love for men, as well as the employment of the people only in the right seasons."

The Master said, "If the people are governed by laws and punishment is used to maintain order, they will try to avoid the punishment but have no sense of shame. If they are governed by virtue and rules of propriety [ritual] are used to maintain order, they will have a sense of shame and will become good as well."

Ji Kang Zi asked Confucius about government, saying, "What do you say to killing those who are unprincipled [i.e., the immoral] for the good of those who are principled?" Confucius replied, "Sir, in carrying on your government, why should you use killing at all? Let your obvious desires be for what is good, and the people will be good. The relation between superiors [*junzi*] and inferiors is like that between the wind and the grass: the grass is bound to bend when the wind blows across it."

Selections from the writings of Han Fei (c. 230 BC)

Han Fei was a prince of the state of Han who defected to its chief rival, the state of Qin, but eventually he ran afoul of Qin's chief minister and was forced to commit suicide in 233 BC.

No country is permanently strong. Nor is any country permanently weak. If conformers to law are strong, the country is strong; if conformers to law are weak, the country is weak....

Therefore, the intelligent sovereign makes the law select men and makes no arbitrary promotion himself. He makes the law measure merits and makes no arbitrary regulation himself. In consequence, able men cannot be obscured, bad characters cannot be disguised; falsely praised fellows cannot be advanced, wrongly defamed people cannot be degraded. The means whereby the intelligent ruler controls his ministers are two handles only. The two handles are chastisement and commendation. What are meant by chastisement and commendation? To inflict death or torture upon culprits, is called chastisement; to bestow encouragements or rewards on men of merit, is called commendation.

In an entire state you could not find ten men who can be trusted to do good of themselves, but if you make it impossible for people to do wrong the whole state can nevertheless be kept in order.

Ministers are afraid of censure and punishment but fond of encouragement and reward. Therefore, if the lord of men uses the handles of chastisement and commendation, all ministers will dread his severity and turn to his liberality. The villainous ministers of the age are different. To men they hate they would by securing the handle of chastisement from the sovereign ascribe crimes; on men they love they would by securing the handle of commendation from the sovereign bestow rewards.