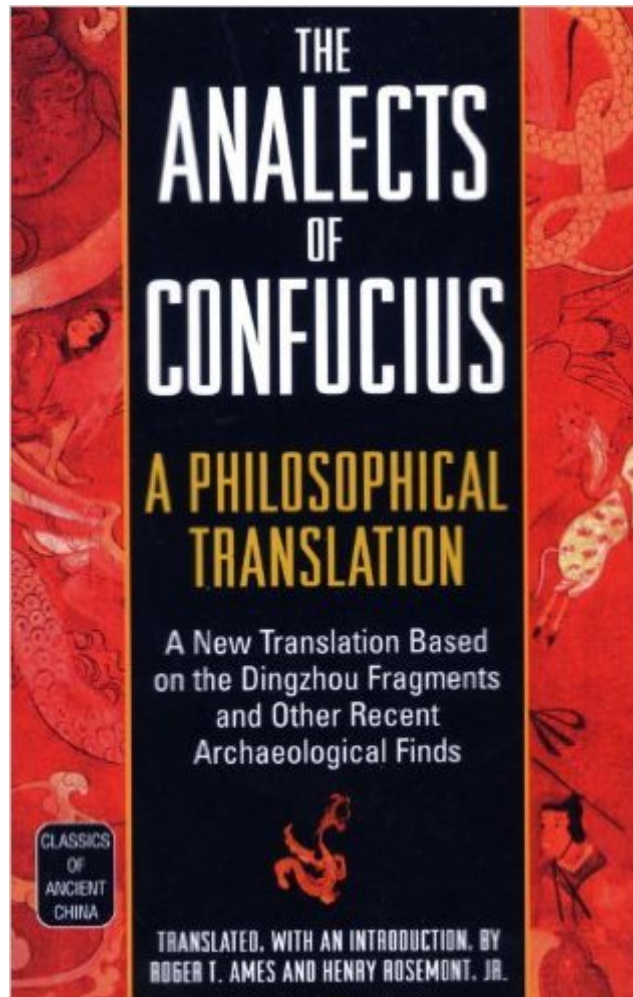


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The Analects Of Confucius: A Philosophical Translation (Classics Of Ancient China)



Synopsis

"To quietly persevere in storing up what is learned, to continue studying without respite, to instruct others without growing weary--is this not me?"--Confucius

Confucius is recognized as China's first and greatest teacher, and his ideas have been the fertile soil in which the Chinese cultural tradition has flourished. Now, here is a translation of the recorded thoughts and deeds that best remember Confucius--informed for the first time by the manuscript version found at Dingzhou in 1973, a partial text dating to 55 BCE and only made available to the scholarly world in 1997. The earliest Analects yet discovered, this work provides us with a new perspective on the central canonical text that has defined Chinese culture--and clearly illuminates the spirit and values of Confucius.

Confucius (551-479 BCE) was born in the ancient state of Lu into an era of unrelenting, escalating violence as seven of the strongest states in the proto-Chinese world warred for supremacy. The landscape was not only fierce politically but also intellectually. Although Confucius enjoyed great popularity as a teacher, and many of his students found their way into political office, he personally had little influence in Lu. And so he began to travel from state to state as an itinerant philosopher to persuade political leaders that his teachings were a formula for social and political success. Eventually, his philosophies came to dictate the standard of behavior for all of society--including the emperor himself.

Based on the latest research and complete with both Chinese and English texts, this revealing translation serves both as an excellent introduction to Confucian thought and as an authoritative addition to sophisticated debate.

From the Trade Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

This book consists of an introduction, a translation, and an appendix. The introduction gives an historical and textual background, and outlines the philosophical approach of the authors. The appendix has some further remarks about a new version of the Analects found in a Han tomb in 1974, and more ruminations about Chinese language and philosophy. When I bought this book I was a bit skeptical about the subtitle "A Philosophical Translation" -- What kind of hybrid monster would that be? What would made a translation "philosophical"? Is this like saying: a "deep" translation or an "insightful" translation? And what does this choice of subtitle mean for other translations on the market? Are they now, by contrast, all "unphilosophical"? But... I decided to give the writers the benefit of the doubt, and see what they had to say. Unfortunately, after reading the philosophical introduction, I came away sorely disappointed and almost disgusted by the intellectual laziness and sloppiness of the writers. Instead of two people trying to think through the real issues that Confucius addresses, issues that are interesting *either* because they are completely out of date (merely of historical interest) *or* because they still may be relevant for people today, whatever their cultural background, I find two muddle-headed academicians spouting nonsense about the "basically substantive and essentialistic" nature of the English language (sometimes generalized to all Indo-European languages) versus the "more eventful", "relational" nature of the Chinese language. If you just squint your eyes a bit, and pretend to sort of vaguely understand what that might mean, and consider the evidence for this view, you find mostly smoke, pipe dreams, the half-digested remains of past metaphysical discussions.

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