**Analects, Confucius, ca. 500 BCE**

*Introduction: Confucius (the Latinized version of Kong Fuzi, “master Kong”) or, to call him by his proper name, Kong Qiu (551-479 BCE) lived during the time when the Zhou kingdom had disintegrated into many de facto independent feudal states which were subject to the Zhou kings only in theory. Confucius was a man of the small feudal state of Lu. Like many other men of the educated elite class of the Eastern Zhou, Confucius traveled among the states, offering his services as a political advisor and official to feudal rulers and taking on students whom he would teach for a fee. Confucius had an unsuccessful career as a petty bureaucrat, but a highly successful one as a teacher. A couple of generations after his death, first- and second-generation students gathered accounts of Confucius’ teachings together. These anecdotes and records of short conversations go under the English title of the* Analects.

Master You [You Ruo] said, “Among those who are filial toward their parents and fraternal toward their brothers, those who are inclined to offend against their superiors are few indeed. Among those who are disinclined to offend against their superiors, there have never been any who are yet inclined to create disorder. The noble person concerns himself with the root; when the root is established, the Way is born. Being filial and fraternal — is this not the root of humaneness?”

The Master said, “Lead them by means of regulations and keep order among them through punishments, and the people will evade them and will lack any sense of shame.1 Lead them through moral force (de) and keep order among them through rites (li), and they will have a sense of shame and will also correct themselves.”

The Master said, “Wealth and honor are what people desire, but one should not abide in them if it cannot be done in accordance with the Way. Poverty and lowliness are what people dislike, but one should not avoid them if it cannot be done in accordance with the Way. If the noble person rejects humaneness, how can he fulfill that name? The noble person does not abandon humaneness for so much as the space of a meal. Even when hard-pressed he is bound to it, bound to it even in time of danger.”

The Master said, “The noble person is concerned with rightness; the small person is concerned with profit.”

Questions:

What does Confucius mean by “filial piety?” How does the concept of filial piety give shape to the relations between parents and children and between rulers and subjects?

What assumptions does Confucius make about human nature when he says that one should lead the people through moral force rather than regulations and keep order among them through rites rather than punishments?

What is humaneness and why does Confucius consider it to be so important?

How would a government founded on Confucian principles compare to your own government?

Are Confucian principles relevant to the issues of practical life?