**WORKSHEET 3A: WHAT DID CONFUCIUS SAY?**

Confucius was a teacher. Like many teachers, he was not considered a great success during his lifetime. He operated a small private school for the sons of the rich where he taught history, religious rites, morals and standards of behavior. The lessons were largely “dialogues” between the teacher and his students. When the teacher spoke the students took notes. The Analects is the record of the conversations between Confucius and his students. Confucius constantly taught that human beings were essentially alike in nature; differences were determined by environment, education, habits and preferences and individual lives. Confucius tried to form a guide to the way human beings ought to feel about themselves and others. He spoke of the principals of humaneness and filial piety (devotion to one’s parents and family members) and the close link between morality and government.

* Confucius was away at the court and the stable burned. He asked, “Any of the men hurt?” He did not ask about the horses.
* Confucius said, “In the old days men studied to make themselves; now they study to impress others.”
* “Young men should be filial in the home, and brotherly outside it; care of what they say but once said, stick to it; be agreeable to everyone, but develop friendship with real men; if they have any further energy left over, let them devote it to culture.
* Another student asked his teacher about filial piety. Confucius said, “Present day filial piety consists of feeding the parents, as one would a dog or a horse; unless there is reverence, what difference is there?”
* “What is a proper man? He acts first and then his talk fits what he has done.”
* “The proper man seeks everything in himself, the small man tries to get everything from somebody else.”
* A Duke asked Confucius about government. Confucius replied, “Prince to be prince; minister, minister; father, father; son, son.” The Duke said, “Good. I stand by that, if the prince be not prince, minister not minister, father not father, son not son, although there is grain, can I manage to eat it all?”
* “There are five activities of high importance under heaven, and they are practiced with three virtues. I mean there are obligations between prince and minister; between father and son; between husband and wife; between elder and younger brothers; and between friends. The three efficient virtues are; knowledge, humanity and energy; and they are to be united in practice, do not attempt to split them apart from each other.”

Adapted from East Asia Curriculum Project, East Asian Institute, Columbia University, NY

* Distribute Worksheet 3A, “What Did Confucius Say?”

Read introduction with students and allow time to complete reading and exercise

* 1. What is the Confucian definition of a “proper man”?
  2. According to Confucius, why is filial piety an important virtue?
  3. What rules for governing did Confucius give to the princes?
  4. How do these statements show us Confucius’ concern for humanity?
  5. Based upon what you have read, would you like to have been a student of Confucius? Why? Why not? Which of the statements attributed to Confucius has a special meaning for you? Explain your answer.