

Session 3-1

Confucius
and
Confucian Classics

Confucius and education

- Contribution of Confucius: Established China's private education to all people from any social ranks and editing Confucian classics.

- **Titles of Confucius:** King ping of Han gave his formal title: 褒成宣尼公 at 1AD; 492AD Xiaowen of North Wei: 文圣尼公 (Civil Sage); 581 Kingwen of Sui Dynasty: 先师尼父 (Teacher of the past); 628 Taizong of Tang: 先圣; 739 xuezhong of Tang: 文宣王 (**King of Civil**); 1008 zhengzhong of Song: 至圣文宣王 (**Superlative Sage Civil Enhancing King**); 1307 wuzong of Yuan: 大圣先师; 1645 shunzhi of Qing: 至圣先师

- **Six arts in the Rite of Zhou (What Confucius was expertised):**

- 礼 rite; 乐 music; 射 archery; 御 steering chariot ; 书 history; 数 mathematics

- **Confucian six arts:**

- 诗: correct language for the application of benevolence in daily life

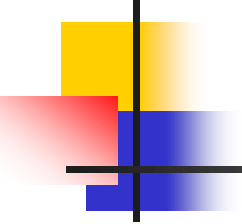
- 书: enhance morality and knowledge through widely learning from histories

- 礼: clarify familial, social, political regulations to know what is the most appropriate

- 易: unification with heaven and earth from the beginning to the end

- 乐: for harmonize souls, adjust spirits to create a benevolent appearance

- 春秋: for identify and judge things before things happening)

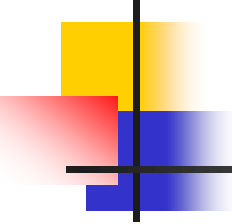


Confucianism: A Tradition of Books?

- As the doctrine of *literati*, Confucianism may well be called a tradition of books in the sense that it takes the sacred writings of the ancients as the source of values and ideals.
- It had been agreed that Confucian Classics contains the core of Confucian doctrines and the fountain-head of all the Confucian streams
- It fundamentally appreciate for establishing a humane and harmonious society.

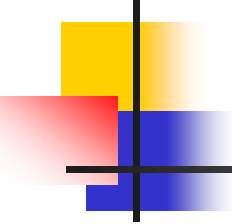
A popular view on Confucian classics

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- However, thus a fundamentally appreciative view of the Confucian classics changed as the function of these classics in East Asian society and history was fully revealed
 - Radical Chinese and Korean intellectuals began to denigrate the classics in their desire to demolish Confucianism when they strive for modernization.
 - These classics were deemed to be obstacles for the further development of their culture as the force constantly drawing them back to the past. Thus, Confucianism as 'a scriptural tradition' does not have a future.



Another view on Confucian Classics

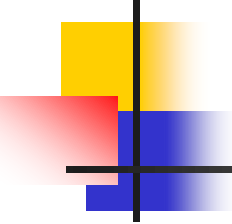
- For a long time the classics have been considered the sacred writings and the source of supreme values.
- They are indeed the foundation on which Confucian thinking was formulated and the behaviour guided of the people.
- As the source of values they stimulate Confucian students to follow and to create.
- Therefore, it is not very far from the truth to say that the Confucian classics are identifiable with Confucianism.



Two Different view on Confucian Classics

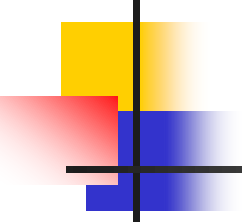
One argues that **these classics were the products of history, contingent upon time and space**. This would inevitably make them dogmatic and stereotyped if their words and sentences were to be applied absolutely and universally to communal and personal life.

On the other hand, it is argued that what we know as the **Confucian classics did not remain unchanged for two thousand years**. Rather, they have been constantly renewed, extended and deepened in the form of annotation, interpretation and reinterpretation made by each generation of Confucian scholars.



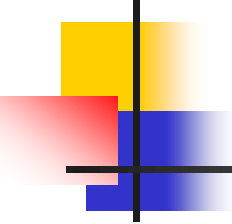
Master Chin Kung's View

- As core part of Chinese tradition, Confucian Classics are essential for understanding Chinese traditional culture and society and other scriptures of the 3 grand tradition of China: Daoism and Buddhism
- MAs in Sinology all taking Confucian the Four Books as compulsory readings



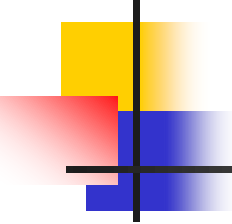
Confucius and the Confucian Classics

- There are good reasons for holding that the Confucian classics took their shape in the hands of Confucius.
- However, nothing can be taken for granted in the matter of the early versions of the classics, and debates and arguments concerning what are original texts and how much Confucius did to them.



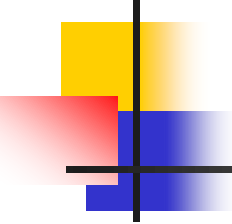
Confucius and the Confucian Classics 2

- Confucius is believed to be the sage primarily for what he did with the ancient recordings.
- At least since the Former Han Dynasty, the majority of Confucian scholars have come to believe that there were no 'Classics' proper before Confucius, and that Confucius established what is known as the classics



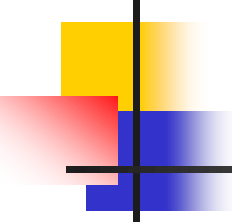
Old Text School's opinion on Confucian Classics

- the Old Text School is a Confucian school based on the version of the classics written in the scripts of pre-Han times
- They believe that the classics originated in the early years of Zhou Dynasty.
- What Confucius did was no more than rearrange the early writings so that he could take them as textbooks for his students.



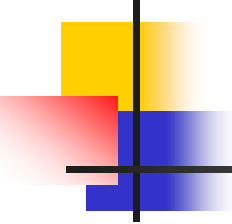
Modern Heir of the Old Text School's opinion

- Some scholar of last century fall into line with the old Text School and put forward an even stronger argument that Confucius had nothing to do with the Confucian classics.
- The Five Classics are said to be five unrelated books, which were put together as the Five Classics during the end of the Warring States period (Gu, 1926:40-82).



Confucian Classics in History

- **Warring State Period (475-221BC):** The earliest known reference to the Six Confucian classics is made in the *Book of Zhuangzi*, a Daoist book compiled during the warring States period. Confucian Classics are included in six books (Watson, 1964:363):
 - The *Book of Poetry (Shijing, the Book of Songs)* 诗经
 - The *Book of History (Shangshu)* 尚书
 - The *Book of Rites (Liji)* 礼记
 - The *Book of Music (Yue Ji)* 乐记
 - The *Book of Changes (Yijing, I Ching)* 易经
 - The *Spring and Autumn Annals (Chunqiu)* 春秋



Three Events Related to Confucian Classics

- Three important ‘events’ were decisive for what we know today as the Confucian classics:
 - 1. The ‘burning of books’ during the Qin Dynasty
 - 2. Rediscovery or –re-editing of the Confucian writings during the Former Han Dynasty
 - 3. The ‘renaissance’ of Confucianism in the Song Dynasty (960-1279 CE).



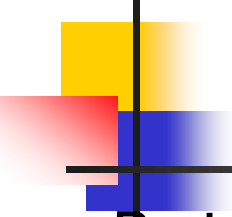
Confucian Classics in Qin-Han Dynasty

- **Qin Dynasty (221-206BC):** due to the *Book of Music* was completely lost probably in the 'burning of books' and so the Six Classics became the Five.
- **Former Han Dynasty(Western Han:206BC-9AD):**
Since Emperor Wu (141-87 BCE) espoused Confucianism as the orthodox state ideology, the Five Classics became the official learning and the standard for selecting civil servants in the Later Han Dynasty
- **The Seven Classics:** The Five Classics(Shijing; Shangshu, Liji, Yue Ji, I Ching/Yijing, and Chunqiu) + The *Analects of Confucius* 论语+The *Book of Filial Piety* 孝经



The Nine Confucian Classics in Tang Dynasty (618-906CE)

- **The ‘Nine Classics’ inscribed on stone tablets:**
- 1)The *Book of Change*易经
- 2)The *Book of History*尚书
- 3)The *Book of poetry*诗经
- 4,5,6) The three commentaries on the *Spring and Autumn Annals* (春秋左传Chunqiu zuoshizhuan;春秋公羊传gongyangzhuan,吕氏春秋lushi chunqiu)
- 7)The *Rites of the Zhou* 周礼
- 8)The *Rites of Etiquette and Ceremonial*仪礼
- 9)The *Book of Rites* 礼记



The Thirteen Confucian Classics in Song Dynasty (960-1279)

- By taking into three more books below, the Nine Classics later became the twelve Classics:
- **The *Book of Filial Piety*** 孝经
- **The *Analects of Confucius*** 论语 and
- ***Er Ya*** 尔雅 (the earliest Chinese Dictionary, the meaning of the title is something like ‘approaching’ ‘what is correct, proper and refined’).

- In the Song Dynasty, **the *Book of Mengzi*** 孟子 was added to the Twelve Classics so that the ‘Thirteen Classics’ was finally established, which has been used as the standard collection of the Confucian Classics even since.