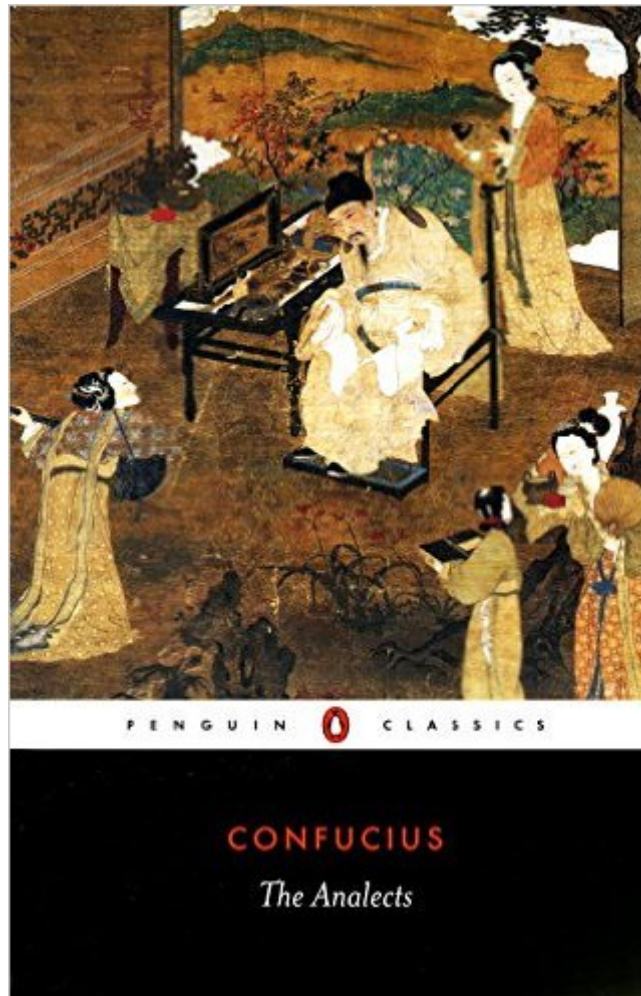


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The Analects (Penguin Classics)



Synopsis

“The Master said, ‘If a man sets his heart on benevolence, he will be free from evil.’” The Analects are a collection of Confucius’s sayings brought together by his pupils shortly after his death in 497 BC. Together they express a philosophy, or a moral code, by which Confucius, one of the most humane thinkers of all time, believed everyone should live. Upholding the ideals of wisdom, self-knowledge, courage and love of one’s fellow man, he argued that the pursuit of virtue should be every individual’s supreme goal. And, while following the Way, or the truth, might not result in immediate or material gain, Confucius showed that it could nevertheless bring its own powerful and lasting spiritual rewards. This edition contains a detailed introduction exploring the concepts of the original work, a bibliography and glossary and appendices on Confucius himself, The Analects and the disciples who compiled them. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

Book Information

Paperback: 160 pages

Publisher: Penguin Classics; 1st edition (September 3, 1998)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0140443487

ISBN-13: 978-0140443486

Product Dimensions: 5.4 x 0.9 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars See all reviews (34 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #15,805 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #1 in Books > Religion & Spirituality > Other Eastern Religions & Sacred Texts > Confucianism #166 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Eastern

Customer Reviews

Analects, in case you were wondering, are "selected passages from the writings of an author." I mention this definition here because it seems that the only time we use the term "analects" is when we consider the writings of Confucius. Was there once a larger corpus of writings from

Confucius, and is what we have today distilled from some larger body of work? If so, then I wish we had that entire larger body of philosophical work, the same way we have a good many books from classical Greek philosophers like Plato and Aristotle; but that being said, I certainly am glad that we have the Analects as a distillation of Confucius's philosophy. His Chinese name was Kǒng Fū-zǔ, 孔 子, and the Latin name that he bears today was probably bestowed by Jesuit missionaries to China in the 16th century. By any name, however, Confucius is a great philosopher who speaks to us today just as clearly as he spoke to the people of Chinese antiquity. He lived a long time ago – when he died in 479 B.C., the Spartan defense of Thermopylae had taken place just one year before – but it is astonishing how current and relevant his words and ideas remain. The Analects is, of course, a Latin- and Greek-derived term; in Chinese, the book is 論語, the "Lun Yǔ." It is divided into 20 books, and contains a total of 512 Confucian sayings, most of them quite short. On this re-reading of "The Analects," I encountered some sayings that were already familiar to me: e.g., "To say you know when you know, and to say you do not when you do not, that is knowledge" (II.17, p. 65). Yet on this reading, I learned many things that I found new.

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