

Translating Confucius

Confucius lived during the reign of the Zhou dynasty in a time of chaos. Although the Zhou ruled China, the real power was in the hands of individual feudal lords. Many scholars and great thinkers roamed the country trying to help restore order to Chinese society. Confucius used his teachings to help unite the people.

When the Qin dynasty came into power, the teachings of Confucius were banned and his books burned. It wasn't until the Han dynasty that Confucianism regained popularity. Today, the words of Confucius still inspire millions of people.

Read the following quotes from Confucius. Translate their meanings into your own words. Then choose one quote as the basis of an oral presentation that you will give to the class.

1. "Listening to music brings harmony to the mind. Right conduct brings harmony to existence."

2. "When people are educated, the distinction between classes disappears."

3. "Without learning, the wise become foolish; by learning, the foolish become wise."

4. "When the ruler behaves himself correctly, the people will also."

5. "Let your parents' only reason for worry be whether you are healthy."

6. "Your parents gave you bodies, hair, and skin, every bit of you. Take care of them."

7. "The superior man loves quality; the small man loves comfort."

8. "The superior man is always himself. In a low position, he does not court; in a high position, he is not condescending. He is himself, and content to be so."

Enrichment Activity

Research other great philosophers and teachers such as Buddha, Socrates, and Jesus. How were these men alike? How did their purposes and teachings differ? _____
