***Han Feizi*** – Han Fei, c. 250 BCE

If orders are made [short], laws never deviate; if laws are [equal], there will be no [corruption] among the officials. Once the law is fixed, nobody can damage it by means of virtuous words. If men of merit are appointed to office, the people will have little to [complain about]; if men of virtue are appointed to office the people will have much to [rejoice] about. The enforcement of laws depends upon the method of judicial administration. Who administers judicial affairs with ease . . . attains supremacy... Whoever procrastinates in creating order, will see his state [torn apart]. Govern by penalties; wage war by rewards; and enlarge the bounties so as to put the principles of statecraft into practice. If so, there will be no wicked people in the state nor there wicked trade at the market.

…

If penalties are heavy and rewards are few, it means that the superior loves the people, wherefore the people will die for rewards. If rewards are many and penalties are light, it means that the superior does not love the people, wherefore the people will never die for rewards.

If heavy penalties are clear and if the people are always well disciplined and then in men are engaged in case of emergency, the superior will have all the advantage.

In inflicting penalties light offences should be punished severely; if light offences do not appear heavy offences will not come. This is said to abolish penalties by means of penalties. And the state will certainly become strong. If crimes are serious but penalties are light, light penalties breed further troubles. This is said to create penalties through penalties, and such a state will infallibly be dismembered.

***Dao De Jing*** – Laozi, c. 400 BCE, transl. by S. Mitchell

Chapter 2

When people see some things as beautiful, other things become ugly.

When people see some things as good, other things become bad.

Being and non-being create each other.

Difficult and easy support each other.

Long and short define each other.

High and low depend on each other.

Before and after follow each other.

Therefore the Master acts without doing anything and teaches without saying anything.

Things arise and she lets them come; things disappear and she lets them go.

She has but doesn’t possess, acts but doesn’t expect.

When her work is done, she forgets it.

That is why it lasts forever.

Chapter 3

If you overesteem great men,  
people become powerless.  
If you overvalue possessions,  
people begin to steal.  
  
The Master leads  
by emptying people's minds  
and filling their cores,  
by weakening their ambition  
and toughening their resolve.  
He helps people lose everything  
they know, everything they desire,  
and creates confusion  
in those who think that they know.  
  
Practice not-doing,  
and everything will fall into place.



***Analects*** (Lun Yu) – Sayings attributed to Confucius, c. 471 BCE

1:2 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?”

2:3 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. 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.”

4:5 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.”

4:16 The Master said, “The noble person is concerned with rightness; the small person is concerned with profit.”

6:28 Zigong said, “What would you say of someone who broadly benefited the people and was able to help everyone? Could he be called humane?” The Master said, “How would this be a matter of humaneness? Surely he would have to be a sage? Even Yao and Shun were concerned about such things. As for humaneness — you want to establish yourself; then help others to establish themselves. You want to develop yourself; then help others to develop themselves. Being able to recognize oneself in others, one is on the way to being humane.”

12:2 Zhonggong [Ran Yong] asked about humaneness. The Master said, “When going abroad, treat everyone as if you were receiving a great guest; when employing the people, do so as if assisting in a great sacrifice. What you do not want for yourself, do not do to others. There should be no resentment in the state, and no resentment in the family.” Zhonggong said, “Though unintelligent, Yong requests leave to put these words into practice.”

The Master said, The gentleman calls attention to the good points in others; he does not call attention to their defects. The small man does the reverse of this.

The Master said, The true gentleman is conciliatory but not accommodating, common people are accommodating but not conciliatory.

…

The Master said, The gentleman is dignified, but never haughty; common people are haughty, but never dignified.

The Master said, It is possible to be a true gentleman and lack Goodness, but there had never yet existed a Good man who was not a gentleman.

When Master said, He who holds no rank in a state does not discuss its policies, Master Zeng said, “A true gentleman, even in his thoughts, never departs from what is suitable to his rank.”

The Master said, A gentleman is ashamed to let his words outrun his deeds….

The Master said, A gentleman is distressed by his own lack of capacity; he is never distressed at the failure of others to recognize his merits.

