

A READING FROM THE TEACHINGS OF CONFUCIUS

The superior man accords himself with the Middle Way. Though he may be unknown, unregarded by the world, he feels no regret. It is only the sage who is able to do this.

The way that the superior man pursues reaches wide and far, and yet is secret.

Common men and women, however ignorant, may meddle with the knowledge of it; yet in its utmost reaches, there is that which even the sage does not know.

Common men and women, however much below the ordinary standard of character, can put it into practice; yet in its utmost reaches, there is that which even the sage is not able to put into practice....

The way of the superior man may be found, in its simple elements, in the society of common men and women; but in its utmost reaches, it shines brightly through Heaven and earth.

The Master said, "The path is not far from man. When men try to pursue a course that is far from the common indications of consciousness, this course cannot be considered The Path....

Therefore, the superior man governs men according to their nature, with what is proper to them, and soon as they change what is wrong, he stops.

When one cultivates to the utmost the principles of his nature, and exercises them on the principle of reciprocity, he is not far from the path. What do you not like when done to yourself, do not do to others.

From "The Doctrine of the Mean" by Confucius
Written c. 500 BCE