

The "Light of China"

Descendant of the Great Confucius, Visiting America, Writes of the Real Meaning of Confucianism, and Shows How the Master Who First Stated the Golden Rule Has Influenced the Life of the Chinese.



Dr. Kung Han Li, a Descendant of Confucius in the 75th Generation, Who Has Been Visiting the United States.

THE oldest living member of the family of Confucius has for centuries inherited the title of Duke and is known as the Holy Duke Kung. The present head of the family is of the 73d generation from Confucius, himself, but there are descendants living in collateral branches, 85 generations in descent from the great teacher.

Dr. H. F. Kung, known in China as Kung Han Li, now, like the Duke, a follower of the Christian religion, speaker of the Shantung Provisional Assembly, and one of the Shantung delegates to the Peace Conference in Paris, who has been visiting the United States, is a descendant of the great sage in the 75th generation, and is the first descendant of Confucius to visit America. The following article, written for this newspaper by Dr. Kung, gives an authentic picture of the great leader of Chinese thought.

CONFUCIANISM--A LIVING FORCE

By Dr. H. F. Kung, Descendant of Confucius

THE holy sage of China, my honorable ancestor who is now known to the world outside of China as Confucius, was really a man named Kung. The Chinese call him Kung, his name; Fu, the word for Father, and Tse, a Teacher, or Kung Fu Tse, properly translated, Kung, the Father of Teachers, the phrase in which he is always referred to by the Chinese.

He was born in the Province of Shantung, China, in a village near the present site of Tai-an, which stands near the foot of Tai-shan, the famous sacred mountain of China, which rises over a mile in height out of the plain at this point, and on its summit the Emperor Fuhi sacrificed to Heaven nearly three thousand years before the time of Christ.

Born 551 Years Before Christ

Born in the shadow of this sacred mountain in the year 551 B. C., Kung, the Father of Teachers, is far from being a mythological character. He is, in fact, a truly historical one. His father died when he was but three years old, but he was carefully raised and educated by his mother, who called him "Kleu," or "little hump," because he had a peculiar protruding knob of a forehead, which is always a prominent feature in the portraits of him which have come down to us.

As a boy he displayed an extraordinary love for study, and his mature conduct while yet a child was highly praised by all who knew him. He developed into a young man of unusual talent and great industry as a student, and became so famous locally for his erudition that at the age of 17 he was made an inspector of the grain markets in his home city and soon made himself known for his energy in repressing fraudulent dealings

in the trade. Within two years he received a substantial promotion, and just after this promotion he was married, in accordance with the Chinese custom, and a year later was blessed with the birth of a son.

It was during this period from the time he was 23 until he was 26, after having had six years as a public official and an administrator, that he studied and reflected deeply on life and the rules that should govern it.

It was during this time that he formulated the system that has come down to us and is known throughout the world as Confucianism.

After three years of mourning for his mother he reappeared among men, and began his career as an educator of his countrymen in the wisdom of the ancients and the rules of right living. He particularly laid stress upon the mutual obligations that existed between all men, exhibiting in his own life the principles of consideration and moderation that he taught to others.

There is no question but that it was his own enthusiasm for the study of the ancients, imparted by him to his own pupils, that has given to Chinese education the character that it has had ever since.

Up to the time that he entered his period of mourning for his mother, he had remained a resident of his own country, the Dukedom of Lu, but immediately after he came out of his retirement he began a tour of China, traveling through the various states, where his fame as a teacher had already preceded him.

An Army of Disciples

It is from this army of disciples, nearly all of them scholars and writers themselves, that the details of his life, the descriptions of his person, his habits, his taste in dress and food, and his sayings and teachings have come down to us.

After some years as a teacher the Duke of Lu insisted upon Kung's participation in his government, and after holding a series of offices he

became, at the age of 55, the Prime Minister of his native principality. Under his guidance the Kingdom of Lu grew in wealth until its fame spread throughout China. Its people became noted for their prosperity and for their exemplary conduct. No men, in fact, were so honest as the men of Lu. The inhabitants of Lu no longer locked the doors of their houses, and they laid down their tools wherever conveniences dictated, and their crops were stored in the open, as no one in Lu would steal.

As a teacher he laid stress upon the necessity of digesting the knowledge that one accumulates, and one of his maxims was: "Reading without thought is fruitless, but thought without reading is dangerous."

The thing which characterizes the Confucian philosophy above everything else is its humanity and liveliness. He did not teach anyone to strive after unattainable perfection, but urged only such conduct and practices as he considered humanly attainable.

You can appeal to the words of Kung, the Father of Teachers, and the Holy Sage for advice on almost any present-day subject.

Maxims of Conduct

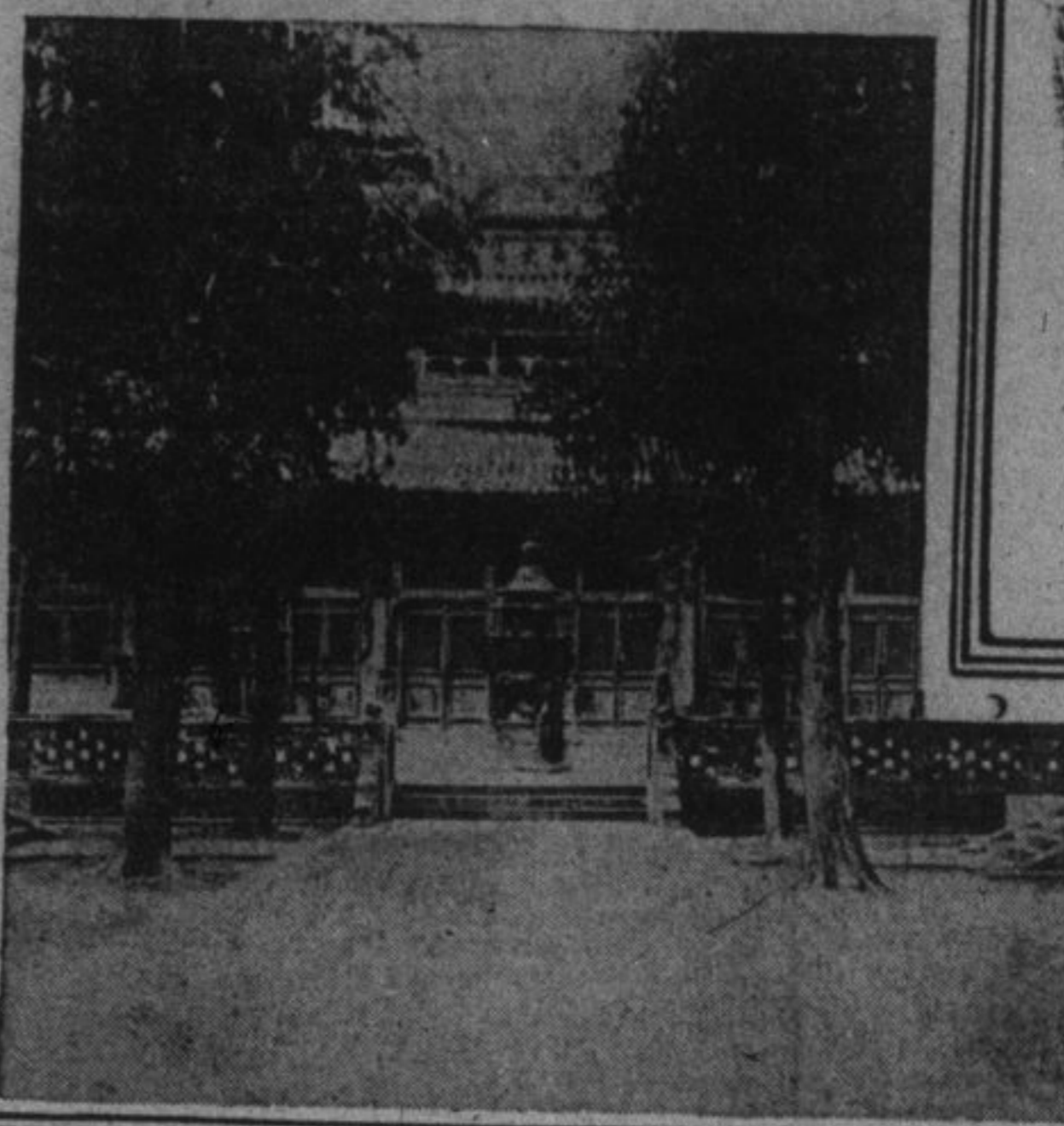
The Holy Sage did not believe in prohibition, for while he carefully restrained himself as to the amount of food that he consumed, it is recorded by one of his disciples that: "It was only in wine that he laid down no limit for himself, but he did not allow himself to be confused by it."

While speaking on this subject himself, he said that his own attitude on the subject of drink was: "Not to be overcome of wine."

You might wonder what the sage would have to say on the subject of preparedness, which has been such a mooted question of late in our own country. Read in the Analects--the Master said: "To lead an unprepared people to war is to throw them away."

And what, you say, would be the attitude of Confucius on the subject of the League of Nations? Read what he says on what he calls the Principle of Universalism, in which he prophesies the whole world one republic, and suggests old-age pensions, universal education, and other

Newspaper Feature Service, 1918.



Confucius Yellow Temple in Pekin to Which Reverend Scholars Go When They Have Completed Their Course of Study.



The Grave of Confucius, with Monument, Candle sticks and Sacrificial Urn, at Which Thousands of Chinese Worship Annually.

things that are far more likely now than they were when he announced his belief in them, 2400 years ago.

"When the great principle of Universalism is accepted the whole world becomes a republic. The people elect men of virtue, talent and ability. They endeavor to find out the basis of sincere agreement and cultivate universal peace. Provision is made for the aged till their death. Employment is given to the middle-aged, and the means of self-development is offered to the young. Widows, orphans, childless men, and all those disabled by disease are supported by the state. Each man has his rights protected, and each woman her individuality safeguarded. They produce wealth not for the purpose of throwing it away or of keeping it for their own gratification, but disliking idleness they labor, not alone with a view to their personal advantage. In this spirit selfish scheming is suppressed and finds no way to arise. Robbers, flechers and the rebellious do not exist, hence, the outer doors remain opened and unlocked."

To one of his disciples, who asked advice concerning a duty that he felt he owed to his dead parents, the Master said: "Since you have not yet learned to serve living men how can you undertake to serve their spirits?"

And when another asked him about death, he replied: "While I do not know life, how can I consider death?"

His disciples report that he always spoke with deliberation; that he never indulged in superlatives; that he moved with dignity, preserved his self-respect in the presence of princes, but always bowed in salute of those in mourning. That he was careful of his person and particular that everything about him was in its place. He would not sit down unless his mat was exactly in position. In his home the tunic that he wore had the right sleeve shorter than the other so that it would not interfere with his writing. He ate sparingly, but was inordinately fond of ginger, which he had by him constantly. He preferred undergarments of silk or grasslinen, and he always slept in a nightgown that was half again longer than his body.

His Personality

The universal acceptance of his philosophy in China dates practically from the attempt of the tyrant Chin, B. C. 240, to blot out all trace of his teachings and writings. This tyrant, finding the adherence of the official class to the teachings of Kung to be an insuperable obstacle to his tyrannical projects, determined to burn every scrap of a record of his teachings, and so the "Fires of Chin," as they were called, did stop their circulation for the time, but faithful students preserved the precious manuscripts by hiding them in the walls of houses and other buildings, until the death of the tyrant made it safe to bring them to light.

It is common to refer to the three religions of China as if they were different sects. But the truth is that there is no competition in their respective fields between these so-called religions. They each have their own share in the ordinary Chinese life and Chinese are practically all Confucians, all Taoists, and all Buddhists.

Christianity and Confucianism

The Confucian philosophy is the rule of their personal lives, but when they come to deal with material things, like the digging of wells or the building of houses, they seek the Taoist priest to propitiate the spirits of the earth, the water and the air; and since Confucianism concerns itself only



The Traditional Portrait of Confucius.

The Confucian Creed of Conduct

Personal Virtues

- Fidelity and Truth.
- Suavity and Respect.
- Dignity of Carriage.
- Precision of Words and Actions.
- Avoiding Prejudice.
- Restraining the Passions.
- Cherishing Good Impulses.
- Adhering to the Just Mean.
- Self-Examination.
- Scrutiny of Secret Motives.
- Religious Reverence.
- Fear of Self-Deception.
- Rejection of Error.
- Comprehension of the Truth.
- Quickness of Moral Perception.
- Insight Into Providence.
- Study of the Laws of Nature.
- Study of the Constitution of Man.
- Study of the Records of History.

Lines of Social Improvement

- Filial Piety.
- Fraternal Love.
- Conjugal Fidelity.
- Care in Choice of Associates.
- Strictness in Intercourse of the Sexes.
- Attention to Established Rules.
- Instruction to Children.
- Caution Against Partiality.
- Harmony with Neighbors.
- Regard for Frugality.
- Science of Government.
- Power of Combination.
- Reverence for Heaven and Ancestors.
- Discrimination in Choice of Agents.
- Love for the People.
- Zeal of Education.
- Strictness in Executing the Laws.
- Wisdom in Conducting War.
- Righteousness in Rewards and Punishments.
- Liberality in Admitting the Expression of Sentiment.
- Frugality in Expenditures.
- Skill in Legislation.

with life and refuses to speculate as to whether there was any existence after death, they turn at death to Buddhism, in the hope that if they have souls Buddha will look after theirs.

There is no conflict between Christianity and Confucianism, but many early Christian missionaries, ignorant of Confucianism, attacked it because it was Chinese. But the most successful Christian missionaries have been those who studied Confucius, traced the merits of his teachings, and who have quoted freely from his sayings and writings in support of the new doctrines which they were asking the Chinese to accept.

There can be but little doubt but that his statement of the so-called "Golden Rule" is the original one, in fact, the context in which it occurs in the Confucian classics clearly indicates that it is the original source from which the Golden Rule as stated in the New Testament is drawn. Note the language in which it is stated in the Confucian classics and compare it with the language as stated in the New Testament:

The Chinese Golden Rule

"Tse Kung asked, saying: 'Master, is it possible to state in one word a rule by which to live for all one's life?' And the Master replied: 'Does not the word reciprocity do so? What you do not want done to yourself do not you do unto others.'"

Asked again by a disciple regarding the conservation of one's energy, Kung, the Father of Teachers, replied: "In youth when the physical powers are developing one must guard against lust. In middle-age when the physical powers are in full vigor one must guard against quarrelsomeness. In old-age when the animal powers are decaying one must guard against covetousness."