



Confucianism

Jennifer Oldstone-Moore

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Six centuries before the birth of Jesus, a Chinese sage named Master Kong or Kong Fuzi (later latinized to Confucius) drafted the principles of a society founded upon virtue. For more than two thousand years, Kong Fuzi's work has remained the foundation of Chinese civilization.

In this lavishly illustrated volume, Jennifer Oldstone-Moore takes readers on an insightful tour of this enduring belief system. Not quite a religion, more than a philosophy, Confucianism coexists with Daoism and Buddhism in Chinese spiritual life, guiding personal relations and social structure. Oldstone-Moore explains the essence of Confucian belief--the primary importance of filial relations, and the need for governments to be founded upon virtue--and she underscores the overarching importance of the Confucian canon. Though Confucius's own sayings are preserved in the Analects, he saw himself as an editor and mediator of the wisdom of antiquity, which he gathered in the Six Classics and Four Books, which stress harmony in the social order. The author sheds much light on these texts--The Book of Changes, the Classic of History, the Classic of Poetry, the Spring and Autumn Annals, the Book of Rites, and the now-lost Classic of Music--and also discusses the role of heroes (such as the Sage Kings), rituals and the Chinese calendar, sacred places, and Confucianism's place as a state religion through much of Chinese history.

No society on earth has had the continuous history--as a single people, culture, and state--that China enjoys. One of the keys to that unity, to China's very identity, is Confucianism, deftly elucidated in this attractive, informative volume.

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