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## The Herald

Entered as second-class matter September, 1906, at the post office at Monmouth, Oregon, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

RICHARD B. SWENSON  
Editor & Publisher

MONMOUTH, OREGON

ISSUED EVERY FRIDAY

FRIDAY, JANUARY 13, 1922

### Subscription Rates

One year	\$2.00
Six months	\$1.00
Three months	75 cts

### Interpreting China

By Rev. L. V. Lewis

In response to several requests we will give, this time, a brief review of the life and teachings of China's great religious leader, Confucius. During the life of Confucius, B. C. 551-478, the population of China was from ten to fifteen millions and in many of the arts, literature and civilization she was in advance of Europe during the Middle Ages. Every country had its historiographer, its musicians, its code of laws, its treatises on agriculture and on conduct—yet, it was a period of dying civilization.

She had passed the zenith and was rapidly travelling the downward road. Slavery, polygamy and concubinage were common and there was an entire absence of any clear belief in a holy, righteous and personal God and instead of a united kingdom there was a multitude of semi-independent, feudal states warring against each other. Into this period Confucius was born.

The biographers of Confucius trace his genealogy back to the emperor Hwang-ti B. C. 2700. And as that genealogy has been preserved down to the present day the family now count seventy six generations, the longest known genealogy in human history. Confucius was the son of an old man and a young mother, as his father, Kung Shu Liang-ho was over seventy years of age at the time of his son's birth.

As a boy Confucius was grave, and fond of playing at ceremonies. At nineteen he was employed by the chief of the Ki clan as the superintendent of his parks and herds and manifested in practical life the high standard of honesty he afterwards taught by making no effort to become rich, though corruption was then common. At twenty two Confucius became a school teacher which continued to be his main employment throughout his life. Gradually there gathered around him, not only the boys of the town, but young men, many of social and political standing, who wished to learn the principles of government.

He refused to have any fixed hours of instruction or even to remain in any fixed abode, but travelled from place to place accompanied by such pupils as were financially able to live that kind of a life.

He accepted readily the large fees which the wealthy young men brought him but rejected no one of earnestness and ability because he only brought small fee. He never lowered his moral principles for the sake of the rich and had but one test that was applied to all students. "When I have presented one corner of the subject and the pupil cannot make out the other three, I do not repeat the lesson", were his own words. Possibly this is the reason why so many pupils came but so few remained. During his lifetime he had over three thousand pupils but only had seventy two disciples.

At fifty two Confucius was called to the magistracy of a small city, and ruled so well that through his example a marvelous change took place in the moral and manners of the people. He was then promoted to the position of Minister of Crime. Here was his first opportunity to put into practice his principles and, unlike so many who lower the standard when position and power comes, Confucius remained true to his faith. He punished one of the chief officials of the state, repressed the barons who were disloyal to the king and negligent in obedience, rewarded honesty and punished dissoluteness, so that the little kingdom was transformed, and Confucius became the idol of the people, and his name flew in songs throughout the land. But the ruler of Tsi, fearing that the state of Lu would rise to the leadership of the entire nation, sent to the Marquis of Lu a number of fine horses and a group of beautiful singing and dancing girls. The Marquis accepted the present eagerly and soon became infatuated with his pleasures. Confucius finding the head of the state indulging the vices which he was punishing in others, was obliged to resign in

order to preserve his self-respect. And at fifty six, only four years after his promotion, Confucius started as a wanderer from state to state, seeking employment and finding none. His terms were too hard. He was willing that the ruler should remain nominally the sovereign but that as prime minister, the reins of government must be placed in his hands.

He was not an office-seeker for if money had been his aim he would have accepted the offers of support which the rulers of several states freely offered him. But as they refused to reform their lives Confucius passed on as a wanderer to other states. When advised to become a hermit he replied, "It is impossible to withdraw from the world and associate with birds and beasts which have no affinity with us. With whom should I associate but with suffering man?"

When Confucius was seventy years of age his son died, the next year his favorite disciple, Yen Hwei died. Confucius never recovered from the blow and when, three years later, his next beloved disciple died, the mighty intellectual structure crashed to the ground. The next day he was seen tottering back and forth in front of his door, dragging his staff in his hands behind his back, and crooning the words: "The great mountain must crumble; The strong beam must break; The wise man must wither away like a plant".

He took to his bed and died seven days later, with no prayer on his lips betraying no apprehension but with the conviction that his life had been a failure crushing out the flickering flame.

But the death of the man whose teaching had emphasized justice and responsibility upon the part of rulers; the death of the man who had constantly sought for fifty years to put his principles to practice, not through love of money or of honor but for the sake of the public welfare; and the death of the man whose austere but genuine virtues had won the admiration and love of his disciples, produced an impression upon the nation, and the fame of Confucius began to rise almost from the day of his burial.

(Continued Next Week)

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