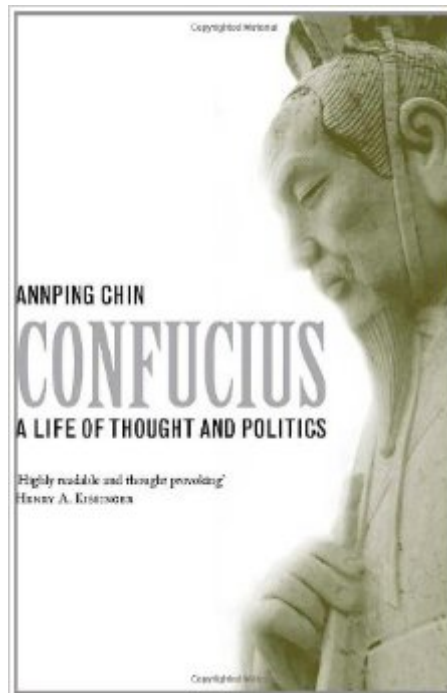


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Confucius: A Life Of Thought And Politics



Synopsis

For more than two thousand years, Confucius (551–479 B.C.) has been a fundamental part of China's history. His influence as a moral thinker remains powerful to this day. Yet despite his fame and the perennial interest in his life and teachings, Confucius the man has been elusive, and no definitive biography has emerged. In this book, the scholar and writer Annping Chin negotiates centuries of reconstructions, guess-work, and numerous Chinese texts in order to establish an absorbing and original account of the thinker's life and legacy. She shows with new insight how Confucius lived and thought, his habits and inclinations, his relation to his contemporaries, his work as a teacher and as a counsellor, his worries about the world and the generations to come. Chin brings the historical Confucius within reach so that he can lead us into his idea of the moral and explain his timeless teachings on family and politics, culture and learning. Confucius is the culmination of years of research, a book that makes an important and fascinating contribution to biography and Chinese history.

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Customer Reviews

The other reviewer hit the nail on the head but I think may have used the wrong tool. There are a bunch (a small bunch, albeit) of books out there that try to ascertain the facts about Confucius and that respect the fact that we don't really know much about the sage who lived 2500 years ago. This is not such a book, and I was as surprised as my fellow reviewer to find that out. But I quickly came to appreciate the virtues of Chin's strangely intimate style and got over my desire to read a straight

scholarly biography of Confucius. Frankly, we don't really need another one and I am very glad Chin did not waste her political and moral intelligence on that. Instead, she has tried to pry Confucius loose alike from the cold dead grip of the past as well as the tendentious grasping of subsequent political and ideological appropriations. What else is there? Something we rarely find anywhere--an encounter with the underlying wisdom of Confucius. I hesitate to use the word timeless, but that's really the point of this labor of two decades and of a great respect and love--to make it possible for those who are trying to engage the world fully with integrity and intelligence to converse with the mind of Confucius about the most important questions. Ultimately, Chin is interested in understanding why Confucius made the decisions that he made in life, placing this work squarely in the grand tradition of philosophical biography which traces back to Plutarch. Previous reviewer cites Chin's seemingly disappointing take on Confucius' possible motives for his possible divorce.

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