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Confucius Says

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At this time of the year, I like to reflect on what has been, contemplate what is to be, while experiencing the joys of the present. Even though it has been said, "There is no present, only the immediate future and the immediate past," it is these philosophical words which often give us a fresh look into our own world and the universe around us. As each passing year brings another candle on the birthday cake and with it closer to our own mortality, hearing the words of Satchel Paige, the great baseball pitcher, brings new life to our own reality: "How old would you be, if you didn't know how old you was?"

Throughout the ages there have been countless words of wisdom spoken by numerous philosophers. Most people know of the great philosopher Confucius. Born in Shantung Province in 551 B.C., his real name was K'ung Fu-tzu. Even though Confucianism is often referred to as a religion, Confucius was neither a religious leader or a prophet, but a philosopher and learned man of the highest order. He did have followers who recorded for posterity his wisdom but had that not occurred, the world would never have had the opportunity to learn from this enlightened man. Listen to the words of wisdom and as we enter a new year, perhaps one of these statements will find a special place in your heart. Best wishes for a prosperous, healthy and happy 1997 (Year of the Ox).

- Better a diamond with a flaw than a pebble without.
- Study the past, if you would divine the future.
- To be happy, take things as they come and let them go just as they came.
- What the superior man seeks is in himself; what the small man seeks is in others.
- One way to keep happy is to learn to appreciate adversity.
- Better to do kindness near at home than walk a thousand miles to burn incense.
- When a multitude detests a man, inquiry is necessary, when the multitude likes a man, inquiry is equally necessary.

- The great man is he who has not lost his child's heart.
- Let mourning stop when one's grief is fully expressed.
- Experience is a comb which nature gives us when we are bald.
- Govern a family as you would cook a small fish, very gently.
- If you walk on snow, you cannot hide your footprints.
- Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime.
- There are many paths to the top of the mountain, but the view is always the same.
- When you don't know something, know you don't know it. This is knowledge.
- It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness.
- The loftiest towers rise from the ground.
- One thing about raising children is that they grow in any soil.
- Children may tear up a house, but they never break up a home.
- Do not remove a fly from your friend's head with a hatchet.
- A single conversation across the table with a wise man is worth a month's study of books.
- He who was bitten by a snake avoids tall grass.
- When wings are grown, birds and children fly away.
- Never try to catch two frogs with one hand.
- Three early risings makes an extra day.
- An attractive person is more attractive when they are laughing.
- It does not matter how slowly you go so long as you do not stop.
- The rich man plans for tomorrow; the poor man for today.
- Two good talkers are not worth one good listener.
- A good neighbor is a found treasure.
- One man tells a lie; many repeat it as the truth.
- The ladder of success contains splinters not realized until sliding down.
- The man who turns a girls head often ends up being a pain in the neck.
- One rotten egg doesn't spoil a dozen -- only when they are scrambled.
- You cannot prevent the birds of sadness from passing over your head, but you can prevent them from making nests in your hair.
- A man is judged by the company he keeps; a woman by how late she keeps company.

- All work and no play makes one rich.
- The girl with the cleanest mind gives the dirtiest look.
- It's no use for a husband to put his foot down when he hasn't a leg to stand on.
- If you stand straight, do not fear a crooked shadow.
- The happiest people are those who are too busy to notice.
- It's not strange that members of a family differ. Even the lily family includes a cousin named garlic.
- Most husbands know how to handle a wife, but their wives won't let them.
- The best beauty preparation in the world is a clear heart and a good night's sleep.
- A poor man can be happy, but no happy man is ever poor.
- No matter how big a man is, he can always fit under a woman's thumb.
- A man sometimes discovers the girl of his dreams is a nightmare.
- The top of the ladder is a nice place, but very lonesome.
- A woman's beauty lasts as long as her disposition stays sweet.
- The best way for a man to remember his wife's birthday is to forget it just once.
- One rat dropping spoils a pot of rice.
- Misery loves company, but happiness throws parties.
- Always be happy. When the kettle is up to its neck in hot water, it still continues to sing.
- Teachers open the door, but you enter by yourself.
- If you always give you will always have.

Confucius is credited with hundreds of statements, many of course that were never uttered by him. There are only a few listed here which are not historically accurate. As Lao Tzu is credited with saying, "A journey of a thousand miles, begins with a single step." Best wishes on your journey.

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