The Master said, “He who rules by moral force is like the polestar, which remains in its place while all the lesser stars do homage to it.” (II, 1)

The Master said, “If out of the three hundred Songs I had to take one phrase to cover all my teaching, I would say ‘Let there be no evil in your thoughts.’” (II, 2)

The Master said, “At fifteen I set my heart upon learning. At thirty, I had planted my feet firm upon the ground. At forty, I no longer suffered from perplexities. At fifty, I knew what were the biddings of Heaven. At sixty, I heard them with docile ear. At seventy, I could follow the dictates of my own heart; for what I desired no longer overstepped the boundaries of right.” (II, 4)

Tzu-yu asked about the treatment of parents. The Master said, “Filial sons nowadays are people who see to it that their parents get enough to eat. But even dogs and horses are cared for to that extent. If there is no feeling of respect, wherein lies the difference?” (II, 7)

The Master said, “Yu, shall I teach you what knowledge is? When you know a thing, to recognize that you know it, and when you do not know a thing, to recognize that you do not know it. That is knowledge.” (II, 17)

1. **polestar n.** North Star, toward which the Earth’s axis points; also, a directing principle.
2. **Songs:** The Book of Songs.
3. **Tzu-yu** (dzō̄-yó’): one of Confucius’s principal disciples, often credited with sayings of his own.
4. **Yu** (yō’): disciple of humble birth.

The Master said, “He who seeks only coarse food to eat, water to drink, and bent arm for pillow, will without looking for it find happiness to boot. Any thought of accepting wealth and rank by means that I know to be wrong is as remote from me as the clouds that float above.” (VII, 15)

The Duke of She asked Tzu-lu about Master K’ung (Confucius). Tzu-lu did not reply. The Master said, “Why did you not say ‘This is the character of the man: so intent upon enlightening the eager that he forgets his hunger, and so happy in doing so that he forgets the bitterness of his lot and does not realize that old age is at hand.’ That is what he is.” (VII, 18)

Tzu-kung asked about government. The Master said, “Sufficient food, sufficient weapons, and the confidence of the common people.”

Tzu-kung said, “Suppose you had no choice but to dispense with one of these three, which would you forgo?” The Master said, “Weapons.” Tzu-kung said, “Suppose you were forced to dispense with one of the two that were left, which would you forgo?” The Master said, “Food. For from of old, death has been the lot of all men; but a people that no longer trusts its rulers is lost indeed.” (XII, 7)

Someone said, “What about the saying ‘Meet resentment with inner power?’ The Master said, “In that case, how is one to meet inner power? Rather, meet resentment with upright dealing and meet inner power with inner power.” (XIV, 36)

The Master said, “A gentleman is distressed by his own lack of capacity; he is never distressed at the failure of others to recognize his merits.” (XV, 18)

Tzu-kung asked saying, “Is there any single saying that one can act upon all day and every day?” The Master said, “Perhaps the saying about consideration: ‘Never do to others what you would not like them to do to you.’” (XV, 25)