

**SELECTION FROM THE CONFUCIAN ANALECTS:  
ON WAR**

**Introduction**

Confucius (the Latinized version of Kong Fuzi, “master Kong”) or, to call him by his proper name, Kong Qiu (551-479 BCE) lived at a time of political turmoil and transition. The China of his time consisted of a number of small feudal states, which, although theoretically subject to the kings of the Zhou Dynasty, were actually independent. Confucius and many of his contemporaries were concerned about the state of turmoil, competition, and warfare between the feudal states. They sought philosophical and practical solutions to the problems of government — solutions that, they hoped, would lead to a restoration of unity and stability. Confucius had no notable success as a government official, but he was renowned even in his own time as a teacher. His followers recorded his teachings a generation or two after his death, and these teachings remain influential in China, Vietnam, Korea, and Japan to this day. The anecdotes and records of short conversations compiled by his disciples go under the English title of the *Analects*. The excerpts from the *Analects* presented below are specifically concerned with war (a subject on which Confucius said very little).

**Selected Document Excerpt with Questions**

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*Selection from the Confucian Analects:*  
**On War**

13:29           The Master said, “When a good man has taught the common people for seven years, they should be ready to be employed in war.”

13:30           The Master said, “To lead the people to war without having taught them is to throw them away.”

**Questions:**

1. What is Confucius’ attitude toward war?
2. What do these excerpts indicate about Confucius’ understanding of the relationship between the ruler and his people?