孝經
The Classic of Xiào
(Dedicated, obviously, to my parents, Drs. Klaus and Ute Wilms, and in memory of my beloved grandma, Dr. Ellinor Wilms)

開宗明義章第一
Chapter One: Opening up to One’s Ancestors and Illuminating Righteous Conduct

LINE ONE
（一）仲尼居，曾子侍。
（二）子曰：先王有至德要道，以順天下，民用和睦，上下無怨。汝知之乎?
（三）曾子避席，曰：參不敏，何足以知之?

1) Zhòngni was at his home, with Zēngzǐ in attendance.
2) The Master said: “The kings of old possessed consummate dé and the crucial dào, thereby aligning all Under Heaven. The people used this to interact harmoniously and amicably, and there was no resentment between above and below. Do you know why this is so?”
3) Zēngzǐ got up off his mat and replied: “I, Shēn, am a little slow. How could I possibly know this?”

LINE TWO
（一）子曰：
（二）夫孝，德之本也，教之所由生也。
（三）復坐，吾語汝。
（四）身體髮膚，受之父母，不敢毀傷，孝之始也。
（五）立身行道，揚名於後世，以顯父母，孝之終也。
（六）夫孝，始於事親，中於事君，終於立身。
（七）《大雅》云：無念爾祖，聿脩厥德。

1) The Master said:
2) “As for xiào, it is the root of all dé. It is the source that teaching comes from.
3) Sit down again. I will explain it to you.
4) The body with all its hair and skin is received from one’s parents. Not daring to destroy or damage it is the beginning of xiào.
5) To stand up straight on one’s own (i.e. to establish oneself in the world or to be morally straight), to practice the dào, to elevate one’s name for future generations, and thereby shine light back on one’s parents, this is the end of xiào.  
6) So xiào begins with serving one’s parents, is centered on serving one’s lord, and ends with establishing oneself in the world.  
7) The Dà Yì says: ‘Do not [just] remember your ancestors! Cultivate their virtue!’”

Translation Notes:

Zhì dé yào dào: 至德要道: The full meaning of these characters is impossible to reflect in a direct translation. Dào and dé are obviously the two characters used for Laozi’s famous Dào Dé Jīng 道德經, usually translated as “Classic of the Way and its Virtue.” One way to explain these key concepts in early Chinese philosophy is perhaps that dào is literally the “path,” the “road” that one should walk to be in harmony with the macrocosm and one’s tiān xìng 天性 (“heavenly” or “inner” “nature”), one’s mandate in this lifetime. At the same time, though, and perhaps in the more “Daoist” sense of the word, dào is also 天地之道, the “way of heaven and earth,” almost in the sense of natural laws, the Way in which everything in the universe changes in accordance with yīn and yáng and the five phases 五行. Dé 德, usually translated as “virtue,” is then the manifestation of a person’s ability to walk this path, and therefore the almost magical power that emanates from a person who embodies the dào successfully and integrates it into their daily life. This connotation with power is expressed in one theory of its etymology as an eye with a shaman’s markings above, the heart underneath, and the radical for action on the side. It is perhaps best visualized as Confucius’ analogy of the virtuous ruler to the Pole Star, which simply exists while the rest of the world revolves around it. Zhì is a depiction of an arrow or a bird hitting the ground, or in other word something hitting its target hard, directly, and with utmost precision. Yào means essential, in the sense of “most important.”

Shùn 顺: This is a wonderful character, which quite literally means simply to “go with the flow,” to flow smoothly instead of going against the flow, which is expressed by the character nì 逆. In the context of political or medical discourse, shùn often refers specifically to the ability of a ruler or physician to “treat” or “rule” (zhì 治) by knowing and following and manifesting the Dào 道 that is prevailing in the universe, on heaven, on earth, and in the human body.

Xiào 孝: I have purposely left this important term un-translated because no English word exists to convey its meaning fully. It is the key virtue in the Confucian system of ethics, on a most basic level the ability to be a good son or daughter and serve one’s parents, in both actions and attitudes. Traditionally translated unappealingly as “filial piety,” Ames and Rosemont translate it as “family reverence” in their translation of the Xiao Jing.

Dà Yì 大雅: A section of the Shī Jīng 詩經 (Classic of Poetry).

天子章第二  
Chapter Two: The Son of Heaven

(一) 子曰:  
(二) 愛親者，不敢惡於人；敬親者，不敢慢於人。  
(三) 愛敬盡於事親，而德教加於百姓，刑於四海，蓋天子之孝也。  
(四) 《甫刑》云：一人有慶，兆民賴之。
1) The Master said:
2) “Those who love their parents do not dare to hate [the parents] of others. People who respect their parents do not dare to be negligent toward [the parents of] others.
3) To reach the highest level of love and respect in service to one’s parents, and then to extend one’s dé and teachings to the common people, to become a model for all between the Four Seas, now this is the xiào of the Son of Heaven.
4) A quotation from the Fǔ Xíng: ‘When [the Son of Heaven] singly acts in goodness, the masses rely on this.’”

Translation Notes:

天子 tiān zǐ: A reference to the ruler of “Under Heaven” 天下, the title for the ruler of China from the Zhou 周 dynasty on, the person in charge of embodying the Dào 道 in his internal and external actions and ruling with Dé 德, the power (or “virtue”) that springs from his ability to live and act in accordance with the Dào. As a result of this Dé, the people will be like grass bending under the wind, or like the heavenly bodies revolving around the pole star, following the ruler’s virtue voluntarily, without any need for punishments.

親 qīn: While the character is usually translated as “parents,” especially in the context of Confucian family reverence, it is also possible to read it here more generally as “relatives,” or even as “those intimate/close to oneself.” This reading is also suggested by the Shūowén definition: 親，至也。

慢 màn: Usually translated as slow, it obviously means more here, to be read in conjunction and/or opposition with 恶 wù. In the Shūowén, it is explained as follows: 慢：惰也。從心曼聲。一口慢不畏也 ("Màn is the same as dòu. It is composed of 心 ‘heart’ and the phonetic 曼 màn. Some say, màn is the absence of fear."). Dòu 惰 is defined in the Shūowén as 不敬 “not respectful.” I suggest “remiss” or “negligent.”

形 xíng: I would suggest reading it here not in its most literal meaning as “punishment,” as you would want to in accordance with the Shūowén definition 形：刑也。從刀幵聲。("Xíng means cutting the throat. It is composed of 刀 ‘knife’ and the phonetic 形 qìng."). Instead, I read it in its broader sense as identical with 形 xíng “form/shape” or “appearance” or 型 xíng ("model" or "pattern").

蓋 gài: While this character can mean “cover” or “seal,” it is also a common grammatical particle with two functions. At the beginning of a sentence, it can affirm the following statement (in the sense of “indeed” perhaps), but it can also something like “may well be” or “possibly,” expressing that what follows may be doubtful. At the beginning of a concluding phrase or statement, though, especially one ending in 也, it simply introduces what follows as the conclusion, providing emphasis.

甫刑 Fǔ Xíng: “Laws of Fǔ,” a section of the Confucian classic from the Zhou dynasty called 尚書 Shàng Shū (Book of Documents), more commonly known as 吕刑 Lǚ Xíng, “Punishments of Lü.” It is said to reflect the legal announcements of King Mu 穆王, as recorded by Marquis Lü 呂侯, who then became known as Marquis Fu 甫候.

慶 qìng: More commonly meaning “celebration” or “to rejoice,” my translation here is based on the traditional reading of this line in the source text.
Chapter Three: The Feudal Lords

(一) 在上不驕，高而不危；制節謹度，滿而不溢。
(二) 高而不危，所以長守貴也；滿而不溢，所以長守富也。
(三) 富貴不離其身，然後能保其社稷，而和其民人。蓋諸侯之孝也。
(四) 《詩》云：戰戰兢兢，如臨深淵，如履薄冰。

1) Situated above others without being haughty, they are high without being at risk. Economizing with restraint and being scrupulous and measured, they are full without overflowing.
2) By being high without being at risk, they preserve their nobility long-term. By being full without overflowing, they preserve their wealth long-term.
3) Wealth and nobility do to leave them. As a result of this, they are able to protect the altars for their land and the gods of the grain, and then they can harmonize their populations. This indeed is the xiào of the feudal lords.
4) A quote from the Shī Jing: ‘Be full of caution and trepidation, as if standing at the edge of a deep abyss or treading on thin ice.’

Translation Notes:
諸侯 zhū hóu: This phrase is a reference to the feudal lords of the various states (國 guó) that composed the “Central States” (中國 zhōng guó) during the Zhou dynasty. These are also the states that were fighting each other during Confucius’ lifetime, in the period called “Warring States” or 戰國 zhàn guó (475-221 BCE).

驕 jiāo: The Shūowén explains it as a horse that is 6 chi tall or in other words, a fancy, elegant horse. Alternatively, it can mean a wild horse. The common meaning of the word is “arrogant, proud, haughty.”

社稷 shè jì: This is an established compound, referring to the altars of the land and the gods of the grain. While it is sometimes just translated in the sense of “state” (which it did come to symbolize to a certain extent), the full and literal meaning of the expression is significant, at least in my eyes. Shè 社 is a fun character, visually revealing its meaning quite easily: It is a combination of 社 shì (“altar”) and 土 tǔ (“land, soil”). Ji 稷 is simply a combination of 禾 hé (“grain”) and the phonetic 稷 jì. The privilege of sacrificing at the local altar to the soil signified that the lord was in charge of the domain.

詩 shī: This is simply a reference to the Shī Jing 詩經, the “Classic of Poetry/Songs.”

戰戰兢兢 zhàn zhàn jīng jīng is just as scary as it sounds and looks.

Chapter Four: The Ministers and High Officials
（一）非先王之法服不敢服，非先王之法言不敢道，非先王之德行不敢行。
（二）是故非法不言，非道不行。口無擇言，身無擇行。
（三）言滿天下無口過，行滿天下無怨惡。
（四）三者備矣，然後能守其宗廟。蓋卿大夫之孝也。
（五）《詩》云：夙夜匪懈，以事一人。

1) They do not dare to wear clothes that are not in accordance with the clothes [stipulated in] the laws of the former kings. They do not dare to express anything in words that are not in accordance with the speech [stipulated in] the laws of the former kings. They do not dare to act in any way that is not in accordance with the actions [reflecting] the dè of the former kings.
2) For this reason, if it is not in accordance with the laws, they do not speak it. If it is not in accordance with the dào, they do not act it out. In their speech, they do not have a choice over their words. In their personal conduct, they do not have a choice over their actions.
3) While their speeches fill all Under Heaven, there are no wrong words. While their actions fill all Under Heaven, there is no resentment or hatred.
4) It is only when these three aspects are perfected that they are able to preserve their ancestral shrines. This indeed is the xiào of ministers and high officials.
5) A quote from the Shi Jing: ‘Never slacking day or night, in the service to the One Person.’

Translation Notes:
卿大夫 qīng dài fū: Ministers and high officials. This is in contrast to the “lower officials” (土 shì) addressed in the next chapter.
法 fǎ: While you can certainly read 法服 and 法言 as compound terms in the sense of “ceremonial robes” and “ceremonial speech” (as suggested by Wenlin), it is also possible to translate 法 more literally as “law” or even “standard.” Again for this line, it really helps to look for parallelism.
擇 zé: I read it literally as “to choose” here. Beware of the translation of this phrase as suggested by Wenlin, which is, however, entirely possible grammatically but has the opposite meaning.
匪 fēi: Note that this character can also just mean “not.”

士章第五
Chapter Five: The Lower Officials

（一）資於事父以事母而愛同，資於事父以事君而敬同。
（二）故母取其愛，而君取其敬，兼之者父也。
(三) 故以孝事君, 則忠。以敬事長, 則順。  
(四) 忠順不失, 以事其上, 然後能保其祿位, 而守其祭祀。  
蓋士之孝也。  
(五) 《詩》云: 夙興夜寐, 無忝爾所生。

1) They serve their mother by relying on their natural disposition to serve their father, and love both the same. They serve their lord by relying on their natural disposition to serve their father and respect both the same.  
2) Therefore the mother receives their love, and the lord receives their respect. But the person who receives both [their love and their respect] is the father.  
3) For this reason, they employ xiào to serve their lord, and as a result they are loyal. They employ respect to serve their elders, and as a result they align themselves [with the wishes of the family].  
4) When loyalty and alignment are not lost but are used to serve those above them, they are able to safeguard their salaries and official posts and continue their ceremonies and sacrifices to the ancestors. This indeed is the xiào of the lower officials.  
5) A quote from the Shī Jīng: ‘Rise early and go to bed late! Do not shame those who gave birth to you.’

Translation Notes:  
資 zī: This character is somewhat difficult to grasp here. Rosemont and Ames translate the phrase as “drawing upon their devotion to their fathers…,” hence apparently read zī in the sense of 取 qǔ “to take,” one of the glosses used in the commentary to the Shūowén definition. It does have the meaning of “provision,” but also of “natural endowment” or of “taking advantage of, making use of.” I read it more in the sense of “naturally equipped with,” admittedly an awkward formulation.  
事 shì: Here, read this character as an active verb, meaning “to serve” (oh the limitations of Wenlin!). The Shūowén, by the way, defines it as 職 zhí (“duty”, “responsibility”).  
兼 jiān: This character again has to be read as a verb here, in the sense of “experience/receive both at the same time.” Or, if it’s easier to wrap your head around it, you can add a character, which should make this phrase clear: 兼取之者… If you are still having trouble with this phrase, remember the trick: topic… comment…. Or A 者 B 也。  
長 zhǎng: Here pronounced zhāng, this means “elders” here, i.e. the senior members in one’s family.  
忝 tiǎn: Also to be read as a verb here, in the sense of “prove yourself unworthy of….” And make sure you follow strictly the grammatical construction in the last phrase. It makes perfect sense once you get it (not that that helps…)

庶人章第六  
Chapter Six: The Commoners
(一) 用天之道, 分地之利, 謹身節用, 以養父母，此庶人之孝也。
(二) 故自天子至於庶人，孝無終始而患不及者，未之有也。

1) They employ the Dao of Heaven and share the benefits of the Earth, they are scrupulous with their body and economical in what they employ. Thereby they nourish their father and mother. This indeed is the xiao of the commoners.
2) Therefore from the Son of Heaven down to the commoners, xiao has no beginning and no end. And yet to worry about it not reaching [anybody], this is something that is impossible.

Translation Notes:
及 jí: Unlike some other translators, I suggest that you read jì in its very literal sense as a verb, meaning “to reach.” What that means will make an interesting discussion. I do disagree with Rosemont and Ames here, who translate 不及 bù jí as a compound meaning “inadequate.” An alternative reading of this line would be: “From the Son of Heaven down to the common people, there are none who have an issue with being insufficient if their xiao has no beginning or end.”

未之有也 wèi zhī yǒu yě: Remember the literal meaning of wèi as “not yet.”

三才章第七
Chapter Seven: The Three Great Powers

LINE ONE
曾子曰: 甚哉，孝之大也!
Zēngzǐ said: “Profound indeed, the greatness of xiao!”

LINE TWO
（一）子曰:
（二）夫孝，天之經也，地之義也，民之行也。
（三）天地之經而民是則之，則天之明，因地之利，以順天下，是以
其教不肅而成，其政不嚴而治。
（四）先王見教之可以化民也，是故先之以博愛而民莫遺其親；陳之
於德義而民興行；先之以敬讓而民不爭；導之以禮樂而民和睦；示之
以好惡而民知禁。
（五）《詩》云: 赫赫師尹，民具尔瞻。
1) The Master said:
2) “Now xiào is the guiding principle of Heaven, the righteousness of earth, and the actions of the people.

3) When people take this guiding principle of heaven and earth as their model, they take the radiance of heaven as their model and rely on the harvests from the earth, thereby creating alignment for all under heaven. For this reason, [the ruler’s] teachings are not stern and yet are brought to fruition, and the government is not severe and yet [the people] are managed well.

4) Seeing that their teachings were able to transform the people, the former kings therefore presented themselves first with universal love, and none among the people left their parents behind. They displayed to them [their own] dé and righteousness, and the people enthusiastically acted on that. They presented themselves first with respect and yielding, and the people did not quarrel. They guided them with ritual and music, and the people were harmonious. They instructed them with what they liked and disliked, and the people knew prohibitions.

5) A quote from the Shī Jīng: ‘Oh illustrious Teacher Yīn! The people all look up to you!’”

Translation Notes:

三才 sān cái: This is a standard reference to the three great forces in the universe, namely Heaven, Earth, and Humanity. Cái is believed to be a depiction of a sprout pushing through the earth and emerging into daylight, hence the meaning of “talent.”

天 tiān: Most traditional commentaries explain this term here as referring to the natural cycles of heaven, such as the cycle of the four seasons. In its most literal meaning, the character 经 jīng refers the warp in a loom, from which the meanings of “classic/canon,” “channel,” and ultimately “guiding principle” are derived.

義 yì: This is one of the Confucian virtues, often also translated as “justice” or “sense of right and wrong.” In the Shì Míng 釋名 (“Explanation of Names”), it is glossed as 宜 yì, “suitable” or “proper,” which is obviously a key aspect of the Confucian project of “rectifying names” 正名, or making the ruler act as a ruler, father as a father etc etc. Rosemont and Ames translate it quite elegantly as “appropriate responsiveness.”

則 zé: This character here needs to be read as a verb. It is glossed in traditional commentaries as 法 fǎ (to pattern or model oneself after…). Also, do note the parallel construction between the two phrases 則天之明 and 因地之利, and in both cases, treat the first character as the active verb!

先 xiān: This character is a challenge here. Based on the sentence structure and the fact that it is followed by the object 之 (“them”, i.e., the people), it is clearly used as a verb in the parallel constructions of 先之以博愛。。。陳之以德意。。。導之以禮樂。。。 I read it quite literally as “place first,” in the sense of the Shūowén gloss of 前進 (to advance). Here it can be interpreted in the transitive sense of “advancing [the people]” or even as “prioritize.” All three verbs (先、陳、導) are methods of teaching, ways in which the former kings transmitted their expression of xiào to the people.

博愛 bó ài: I.e., love that extends to everyone, not just to the people in your immediate family. Traditional commentary here glosses it as 仁 rén, the Confucian virtue of treating others with compassion, by being able to put yourself in their shoes and seeing the effect of your actions on others.
師尹 shī yìn: According to commentary tradition, this is a reference to 伊尹 Yi Yin, the prime minister of the first Shang 商 king Tang 湯. Alternatively, yin has also be interpreted as meaning simply “high government officials” instead of as a family name.

孝治章第八
Chapter Eight: Governing with Xiào

（一）子曰：
（二）昔者明王之以孝治天下也，不敢遺小國之臣，而況於公、侯、伯、子、男乎？故得萬國之懽心，以事其先王。
（三）治國者不敢侮於鰥寡，而況於士民乎？故得百姓之懽心，以事其先君。
（四）治家者不敢失於臣妾，而況於妻子乎？故得人之懽心，以事其親。
（五）夫然，故生則親安之，祭則鬼享之，是以天下和平，災害不生，禍亂不作。
（六）故明王之以孝治天下也如此。
（七）《詩》云：有覺德行，四國順之。

1) The Master said:
2) “In former times, as the enlightened kings used xiào to governed all Under Heaven, they did not dare to disregard the ministers of the minor states. So how much less so would they have disregarded the dukes, marquises, earls, viscounts, and barons? For this reason, they gained the goodwill of the ten thousand states who thereby served their kings of the past.
3) In governing their states, [the feudal lords] did not dare to humiliate the widowers and widows. So how much less so would they have humiliated the lower officials and commoners? For this reason, they gained the goodwill of the hundred surnames who thereby served their feudal lords of the past.
4) In governing their families, [elders] did not dare to neglect their servants and concubines. So how much less so would they have neglected their wives and children? For this reason, they gained the goodwill of others who thereby served their elders.
5) Since this was so, when they were still alive, the elders rested content, and when receiving sacrifices as spirits they enjoyed them. For this reason, all Under Heaven was harmonious and calm, [natural] calamities did not arise, and nobody caused chaos and disorder.
6) Hence the way in which the enlightened kings used xiào to govern all Under Heaven was like this.
7) A quote from the Shī Jīng: ‘Acting with eminent dè [virtue], the states in all four directions follow him.’”
聖治章第九
Chapter Nine: Government of the Sages

LINE ONE
曾子曰：敢問聖人之德，無以加於孝乎?

Zēngzǐ said: “Dare I ask if there is any aspect of the dé [virtue] of the sages that surpasses xiào?”

LINE TWO
（一）子曰：
（二）天地之性，人為貴。人之行，莫大於孝。孝莫大於嚴父，嚴父莫大於配天，則周公其人也。
（三）昔者周公郊祀后稷以配天，宗祀文王於明堂以配上帝，是以四海之內各以其職來祭。夫聖人之德，又何以加於孝乎?

1) The Master said:
2) “Of all the creatures of Heaven and Earth, humans are the most noble. Of all the behavior of humans, nothing is greater than xiào. And of all the aspects of xiào, nothing is greater than accepting the sternness of the father. Of all the aspects of accepting the sternness of the father, nothing is greater than matching it to Heaven. And the Duke of Zhōu was just such a person!
3) In former times, the Duke of Zhōu performed the great jiāo sacrifice in the suburbs to Hòu Jì and thereby matched him to Heaven. He performed the ancestral sacrifice to King Wén in the Hall of Illumination and thereby matched him to Shàng Dì. For this reason, all [the nobles] within the Four Seas came to attend the sacrifice in accordance with their rank. So how could there be any aspect of dé [virtue] that surpasses xiào?

LINE THREE
（一）故親生之膝下，以養其父母日嚴。聖人因嚴以教敬，因親以教愛。
（二）聖人之教，不肅而成，其政不嚴而治，其所因者本也。
（三）父子之道，天性也，君臣之義也。父母生之，續莫大焉；君親臨之，厚莫重焉。
（四）故不愛其親而愛他人者，謂之悖德；不敬其親而敬他人者，謂之悖禮。
(五) 以順則逆，民無則焉，不在於善，而皆在於凶德；雖得之，君子不貴也。

1) For this reason, intimacy is born at the parents’ knee, and by nurturing one’s father and mother acceptance of their sternness grows from day to day. The sages took this acceptance of sternness and thereby taught respect, and they took this intimacy and thereby taught love.
2) Without severity, the sages brought their teachings to fruition; without sternness, their government was ordered. What they relied on was the root.
3) The Way of father and child, this is the natural characteristic of Heaven and the righteous conduct of lord and minister. No ties are greater than those of a father or mother giving birth. No kindness is stronger than that of a lord or family elder looking after their inferiors.
4) For this reason, not loving one’s family elders but loving other people, this is called perversion of dé [virtue]. Not respecting ones family elders but respecting other people, this is called perversion of propriety.
5) Gaining compliance in this manner by patterning it after rebellion leaves the people without proper standards. This approach does not rest in goodness but always in inauspicious power (dé). Even though they may get [this dé], superior persons do not value it.

LINE FOUR
(一) 君子則不然，言思可道，行思可樂，德義可尊，作事可法，容止可觀，進退可度，以臨其民。
(二) 是以其民畏而愛之，則而象之。故能成其德教，而行其政令。
(三) 《詩》云：淑人君子，其儀不忒。

1) Superior persons hence do not act like this. In their speech, they worry about whether it is knowable. In their actions, they worry about whether they bring joy. In their virtue and righteousness, they worry about whether it can be respected. In their business conduct, they worry about whether it can be taken as law. In their comportment, they worry about whether it can be looked up to. In their advancing and retreating, they worry about whether it is done with the proper measure. In this way, they look after their people.
2) As a result of this, their people love them with awe and imitate them by using them as standard [for their own behavior]. Therefore, [superior persons] are able to bring their teachings on dé [virtue] to fruition and enact the commands of their government.
3) A quote from the Shī Jīng: “Such an honorable and superior person! His comportment is without fault.”

Translation Notes:
郊祀后稷 jiāo sì Hòu Jì: According to the Hàn Shū, the jiāo sacrifice is the most important sacrifice performed by the Son of Heaven to uphold Heaven’s order in the human realm. It is performed on the
outskirts of the capital, in the North to Earth and in the South to Heaven, to reflect yīn and yáng. In the present case, the Duke of Zhōu addresses this sacrifice to the earliest Zhōu ancestor, Hòu Jì, thereby associating him with Heaven.

文王 Wén Wáng: King Wén is the father of the Duke of Zhōu and his brother, King Wú.

上帝 Shàng Dì: This deity was the highest god in the ancient Chinese pantheon, the purported ancestor of the previous Shāng dynasty who continued to be venerated by the Zhōu.

紀孝行章第十
Chapter Ten: Sorting out Actions of Xiào

（一）子曰：
（二）孝子之事親也，居則致其敬，養則致其樂，病則致其憂，喪則致其哀，祭則致其嚴。
（三）五者備矣，然後能事親。
（四）事親者，居上不驕，為下不亂，在醜不爭；居上而驕則亡，為下而亂則刑，在醜而爭則兵。
（五）三者不除，雖日用三牲之養，猶為不孝也。

1) The Master said:
2) “A son’s or daughter’s expression of xiào in serving the family elders is like this: In daily life, treat them with respect. As you take care of them, bring them joy. When they are ill, respond with worry. When mourning their passing, convey your grief. In sacrificing to them, reverently meet their sternness.
3) Only when these five [actions] are perfected is a son or daughter able to serve his or her family elders.
4) Persons who serve their family elders [like this] are not arrogant when in high positions, nor disorderly when subordinate, nor argumentative when among equals. Arrogance in a high position results in ruin; disorderly conduct in a subordinate position results in punishment; being argumentative when among equals results in warfare.
5) If these three [disruptive behaviors] are not eliminated, even if the person were to nurture [his or her elders] daily with the meat of the three sacrificial animals, they would still not be xiào.”

Translation Notes:
三牲 sān shēng: The three sacrificial animals: pig, sheep, and cow. In the present context, this means to prepare a daily feast of pork, mutton, and beef for one’s deceased ancestors.
五刑章第十一
Chapter Eleven: The Five Punishments

(一) 子曰：
(二) 五刑之屬三千，而罪莫大於不孝。
(三) 要君者無上；非聖人者無法；非孝者無親；此大亂之道也。

1) The Master said:
2) “[The crimes] associated with the five punishments number three thousand, and yet no crime is greater than the lack of xiào.
3) Making demands of one’s lord means to deny superiority. Running counter to sageliness means to deny the law. Running counter to xiào means to deny one’s family elders. These are the Way to great disorder.”

Translation Notes:
五刑 wǔ xíng: Before the reforms of the late sixth century CE, this term referred to tattooing, amputation of the nose, amputation of the foot, castration, and decapitation.

廣要道章第十二
Chapter Twelve: Expounding the Crucial Dào

(一) 子曰：
(二) 教民親愛，莫善於孝；教民禮順，莫善於悌；移風易俗，莫善於樂；安上治民，莫善於禮。
(三) 礼者，敬而已矣。故敬其父則子悅，敬其兄則弟悅，敬其君則臣悅，敬一人而千萬人悅。
(四) 所敬者寡，而悅者眾，此之謂要道也。

1) The Master said:
2) “To teach the people intimacy and love, nothing is better than xiào. To teach the people propriety and compliance, nothing is better than tì. To transform customs and change habits, nothing is better than music. To make superiors safe and govern the people, nothing is better than propriety.
3) Propriety is nothing more or less than respect! Therefore, respecting the father will please the child. Respecting the older brother will please the younger brother. Respecting the lord will please the minister. Respecting a single person will please a thousand times ten thousand people.
4) Those who are respected are few, but those who are pleased are numerous. This is what is called the crucial Dào.”
Translation Notes:
悌 (tì): Deference, as accorded to one’s older brother. Composed of the character for younger brother (弟 dì) and the heart radical, this character literally means the deference with which a younger brother should treat his older brother. Based on this narrow meaning, it is commonly paired with xiào to refer to family relationships as a whole.

悅 (yuè): I have purposely left my translation as ambiguous as the Chinese source text. Depending on one’s personal preference, this line can be read as “If you respect X, Y will be pleased,” or as “Respecting X pleases Y,” in the sense that the action of respecting X gives Y pleasure.

廣至德章第十三
Chapter Thirteen: Expounding Consummate Dé

（一）子曰：
（二）君子之教以孝也，非家至而日見之也。
（三）教以孝，所以敬天下之為人父者也；教以悌，所以敬天下之為人兄者也；教以臣，所以敬天下之為人君者也。
（四）《詩》云：愷悌君子，民之父母。非至德，其孰能順民如此，其大者乎？

1) The Master said:
2) “The superior person’s teachings on xiào do not stop just with the family and with what we see every day.
3) By teaching about xiào, they create respect for all those Under Heaven who are somebody’s father. By teaching about tì [brotherly deference], they create respect for all those Under Heaven who are somebody’s elder brother. By teaching about being a minister, they create respect for all those Under Heaven who are somebody’s lord.
4) A quote from the Shī Jīng: ‘Oh joyous deference for the lord, the father and mother of the people. If not consummate dē, what could make the people compliant like this? What could be greater than this?’”

廣揚名章第十四
Chapter Fourteen: Expounding “Elevating one’s Name”

（一）子曰：
（二）君子之事親孝，故忠可移於君；事兄悌，故順可移於長；居家理，故治可移於官。
（三）是以行成於內，而名立於後世矣。

1) The Master said:
2) “It is because superior persons serve their family elders with xiào that their loyalty can then be transferred to their lord. It is because they serve their older brothers with rì deference that their compliance can then be transferred to any elders. It is because they run their families with principles that this order can then be transferred to their office.
3) By means of all these [attributes], their actions are accomplished at home and then their name is established for future generations.”

諫諍章第十五
Chapter Fifteen: Remonstrance and Frank Criticism

LINE ONE
（一）曾子曰：
（二）若夫慈愛、恭敬、安親、揚名，则聞命矣！
（三）敢問子從父之令，可謂孝乎？

1) Zēngzǐ said:
2) “Whether on kindness and love, on reverence and respect, on making one’s family elders comfortable, or on elevating one’s name, I have heard instructions on those topics already.
3) Dare I ask, though, whether a child [blindly] following the father’s orders, can this be called xiào?”

LINE TWO
（一）子曰：
（二）是何言與！是何言與！
（三）昔者天子有爭臣七人，雖無道，不失其天下；諸侯有爭臣五人，雖無道，不失其國；大夫有爭臣三人，雖無道，不失其家；士有爭友，則身不離於令名；父有爭子，則身不陷於不義。
（四）故當不義，則子不可以不爭於父，臣不可以不爭於君。
（五）故當不義，則爭之，從父之令，又焉得為孝乎？

1) The Master said:
2) “What is this you are saying? What is this you are saying?
3) In former times, the Son of Heaven had seven censors who reproved him, so even if he did not possess the Dào, he did not lose his empire Under Heaven. The feudal lords had five ministers who reproved them, so even if they did not possess the Dào, they did not
lose their states. The senior officials had three servants who reproved them, so even if they did not possess the Dào, they did not lose their families. The [inferior] nobles had friends who reproved them, so they did not lose their good reputation. Fathers had children who reproved them, so they did not fall into unrighteous conduct.
4) Therefore, when faced with unrighteous conduct, the child has no choice but to reprove the father, and the servant has no choice but to reprove the lord.
5) Therefore, when faced with unrighteous conduct, you must reprove the person. Following the father’s orders [blindly], how could this constitute xiào indeed!”

感應章第十六
Chapter Sixteen: Resonance

(一) 子曰:
(二) 昔者明王事父孝，故事天明；事母孝，故事地察；長幼順，故上下治。
(三) 天地明察，神明彰矣。
(四) 故雖天子，必有尊也，言有父也；必有先也，言有兄也。
(五) 宗廟致敬，不忘親也；脩身慎行，恐辱先也；宗廟致敬，鬼神著矣。
(六) 孝悌之至，通於神明，光於四海，無所不通。
(七) 《詩》云：自西自東，自南自北，無思不服。

1) The Master said:
2) "In former times, the illuminated kings served their fathers with xiào and therefore served Heaven with illumination. They served their mothers with xiào and therefore served Earth with scrutiny. Old and young were in compliance with each other, and therefore above and below were well-ordered.
3) Heaven and earth being [served with] illumination and scrutiny [by the former kings], shén míng became manifest.
4) For this reason, even the Son of Heaven must show respect, which is saying that he has a father, and must show deference, which is saying that he has an older brother.
5) Showing respect at the ancestral temple means that we do not forget our family elders. Cultivating ourselves and acting with caution means that we fear dishonoring those who come before us. Showing respect at the ancestral temple causes the spirits to manifest.
6) The consummation of xiào and tì penetrates to the shén míng and radiates out all the way to the Four Seas. There is nothing that is not penetrated by it.
7) A quote from the Shī Jīng: ‘Whether from the East or from the West, from the South or from the North, none think of not submitting [to the rule of the Son of Heaven].’”
Translation Notes:
神明 shén míng: Most translations of this paragraph interpret this expression as a reference to deities, in other words, as meaning that the spirits make their blessings manifest, to reward the enlightened king for serving Heaven and Earth properly. It is also possible, however, to read the phrase as singular, as “spirit illumination,” although I openly admit that the meaning of that phrase is impossible to convey fully in English. I prefer to leave shén un-translated since the Chinese in most contexts does contain both the meaning of “spirit” (as in the sense of a person’s spirit) and “spirits.”

事君章第十七
Chapter Seventeen: Serving One’s Lord

(一) 子曰:
(二) 君子之事上也, 进思尽忠, 退思补过, 将顺其美, 匡救其恶。
(三) 故上下能相亲也。
(四) 《诗》云: 心乎爱矣! 遐不谓矣! 中心藏之, 何日忘之。

1) The Master said:  
2) “This is how the superior person serves those above: In advancing, think of carrying out the utmost acts of loyalty; in retreating think of mending transgressions. Comply with what is beautiful and redress what is distasteful.  
3) For this reason, above and below are able to treat each other with intimacy.  
4) A quote from the Shī Jīng: ‘Oh the love that is in my heart! Far distance is of no relevance! Centered in the heart, I store it, so when could I ever forget it!’”

喪親章第十八
Chapter Eighteen: Mourning One’s Family Elders

(一) 子曰:
(二) 孝子之喪親也, 哭不偯、禮無容、言不文, 服美不安、聞樂不樂、食旨不甘, 此哀戚之情也。
(三) 三日而食, 教民無以死傷生, 毀不滅性, 此聖人之政也; 喪不過三年, 示民有終也。
(四) 為之棺槨、衣衾而舉之; 陳其簠簋而哀懽之; 操踊哭泣, 哀以送之; 卜其宅兆而安措之; 為之宗廟, 以鬼享之; 春秋祭祀, 以時思之。
(五) 生事愛敬, 死事哀感。
(六) 生民之本盡矣! 死生之義備矣! 孝子之事親終矣。
1) The Master said:
2) “This is how a son or daughter expresses xiào in mourning family elders: Cry without wailing, perform the rituals without caring about appearances, speak without worrying about literary refinement, dress in fancy clothes without being comfortable, hear music without feeling joy, and eat delicacies without tasting sweetness. These are the emotions of grief and sorrow.
3) After three days, resume eating. Teach the people that they should not take death as a reason to harm the living, nor take destruction to extinguish life. This is the government of the sages. In mourning, do not exceed three years, to express to the people that it has an end.
4) Construct an inner and an outer coffin, dress [the deceased] in burial clothes and lift them [into the coffin]. Set out vessels full of sacrificial offerings and grieve and lament their passing. Beat your breast and stomp your feet, cry and weep, and send them off grieving. Divine the most auspicious tomb site and arrange for them to rest in peace. Then set them up in the ancestral temple so that they can enjoy [your offerings] as spirits. In the spring and in the fall, perform sacrifices to the ancestors, so that you think of them regularly.
5) In life, serve [family elders] with love and respect; in death, serve them with grief and sorrow.
6) This exhausts the root of caring for the people! This completes the righteous conduct in death as in life! This concludes the service of a son or daughter with xiào to their family elders!”