

The civilization of China - as every one knows, is based upon the teaching of Confucius who flourished five hundred years before Christ. Like the Greeks and Romans, he did not think of human society as naturally progressive; on the contrary, he believed that in remote antiquity rulers had been wise and the people had been happy to a degree which the degenerate present could admire but hardly achieve. This, of course, was a delusion. But the practical result was the Confucius, like other teachers of antiquity, aimed at creating a stable society, maintaining a certain level of excellence, but not always striving after new successes. In this he was more successful than any other man who ever lived. His personality has been stamped on Chinese Civilization from his day to our own. During his life time, the Chinese occupied only a small part of present day China, and were divided into a number of warring states. During the next three hundred years they established themselves throughout what is now China proper, and founded an empire exceeding in territory and population any other that existed until the last fifty years. In spite of barbarian invasions, and occasional longer or shorter periods of Chaos and Civil War, the Confucian system survived bringing with it art and literature and a civilised way of life. A system which has had this extra ordinary power of survival must have great merits, and certainly deserves our respect and consideration. It is not a religion, as we understand the word, because it is not associated with the super natural or with mystical beliefs. It is purely ethical system, but its ethics, unlike those of Christianity, are not too exalted for ordinary men to practise. In essence what Confucius teaches is something is very like the old-fashioned ideal of a 'gentleman' as it existed in the eighteenth century. One of his sayings will illustrate this: 'The true gentleman is never contentious.....he courteously salutes his opponents before taking up his position,.....so that even when competing he remains a true gentleman'.

#### Questions

(1) Why do you think the author calls Confucius' belief about the progress of human society as a delusion? (04)

The author calls Confucius' belief about the progress of human society a delusion. The reason is that Confucius was of the view that human society was not naturally progressive. However, human society was naturally progressive because humans progressed gradually, which means no ruler of a specific era could claim that he was the reason of all the progress of his society. In this way, Confucius' belief about the progress of human society is a delusion.

(2) How did Confucius' thought affect China to develop into a stable and 'Proper' China? (04)

The thoughts of Confucius contributed a lot in the development of China. The reason is that he emphasized on stability of his society. Besides, having achieved his intended goals, he did not yearn for more successes, so that his focus could entirely be on maintaining his state. In a nutshell, the thoughts of Confucius made China progress.

(3) Why does the author think that Confucian system deserves respect and admiration? (04)

Confucian system must be praised and lauded. In fact, due to this system, China became one of the prosperous nations of the world. Despite foreign invasions and civil wars, Confucian system did not end. Instead, it kept producing art and literature. Besides, it also kept rendering a civilized way of life. Given all these characteristics, Confucian system must be appreciated.

(4) Why does the author call Confucian system a purely ethical system and not a religion? (04)

According to the author, Confucian system is purely an ethical system not a religion because it has nothing to do with supernatural beliefs. Besides, unlike Christianity, its ethics are for everyone to practice. As far as practicing ethics is concerned, there is no discrimination between a rich man and

an ordinary person. All the people must have to have ethics. In this way, Confucian system is an ethical system.

(5) Briefly argue whether you agree or disagree to Confucius' ideal of a gentleman. (04)

No one can disagree to Confucius' ideal of a gentleman. In fact, his ideal of a gentleman is perfect because, according to him, a gentleman cannot be contentious. Instead, he respects his opponents, while setting at his position, so that he lingers a gentleman during his fight. In short, the notion of Confucius about a gentleman is true.