



The Four Books: The Basic Teachings of the Later Confucian Tradition

Daniel K. Gardner

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In this engaging volume, Daniel Gardner explains the way in which the Four Books--*Great Learning*, *Analects*, *Mencius*, and *Maintaining Perfect Balance*--have been read and understood by the Chinese since the twelfth century. Selected passages in translation are accompanied by Gardner's comments, which incorporate selections from the commentary and interpretation of the renowned Neo-Confucian thinker, Zhu Xi (1130-1200).

This study provides an ideal introduction to the basic texts in the Confucian tradition from the twelfth through the twentieth centuries. It guides the reader through Zhu Xi's influential interpretation of the Four Books, showing how Zhu, through the genre of commentary, gave new coherence and meaning to these foundational texts. Since the Four Books with Zhu Xi's commentary served as the basic textbook for Chinese schooling and the civil service examinations for more than seven hundred years, this book illustrates as well the nature of the standard Chinese educational curriculum.

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