# Confucius Tradition in the Mencius
A Taeko Brooks (atbrooks@research.umass.edu)

## Abstract

It has been doubted that the Analects, and perhaps also the Mencius, existed as texts prior to the Hàn Dynasty. I here consider all the places in the Mencian writings which appeal to the authority of Confucius, or where a corresponding passages exists in our Analects, and attempt to distinguish between what I will call the received tradition, in which the Analects is regarded as the authoritative repository of Confucius sayings, and the free or invented tradition, in which the Mencians, like the Dzwǒ Jwàn and the later Analects itself, constructed new Confucius sayings to serve as authority pronouncements for situations which were not envisioned by the earlier Analects school.

It turns out to be useful to distinguish, in their treatment of the received Confucius, between what I have called the southern and northern Mencians, whose texts are respectively MC 2-3 and 4-7. One obvious difference is that the ethically oriented northern Mencians relied significantly on the early Analects (the parts composed in the 05th and 04th centuries), whereas the politically oriented southern Mencians related more often to the later 04th and 03rd century Analects material. Both schools, whether following the Analects or inventing Confucius sayings, do so in support of their own position at the time.

The followers of Mencius made their contribution to Mencian tradition during the first half of the 03rd century, a time when the Analects itself was still being actively compiled. This makes possible a two-way relation between the two, and a reverse (Mencius > Analects) indebtedness does seem to occur: invented sayings in the Mencius were taken into the Analects in the late chapters 18 and 19, and in two late interpolations to the otherwise early chapter 8. In large perspective, we may say that the Analects school and the two Mencian schools were colleagues in extending, and in keeping alive, the earlier tradition of Confucius.