



# Confucius: And the World He Created

*Michael Schuman*

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Confucius is perhaps the most important philosopher in history. Today, his teachings shape the daily lives of more than 1.6 billion people. Throughout East Asia, Confucius's influence can be seen in everything from business practices and family relationships to educational standards and government policies. Even as western ideas from Christianity to Communism have bombarded the region, Confucius's doctrine has endured as the foundation of East Asian culture. It is impossible to understand East Asia, journalist Michael Schuman demonstrates, without first engaging with Confucius and his vast legacy.

Confucius created a worldview that is in many respects distinct from, and in conflict with, Western culture. As Schuman shows, the way that East Asian companies are managed, how family members interact with each other, and how governments see their role in society all differ from the norm in the West due to Confucius's lasting impact. Confucius has been credited with giving East Asia an advantage in today's world, by instilling its people with a devotion to learning, and propelling the region's economic progress. Still, the sage has also been highly controversial. For the past 100 years, East Asians have questioned if the region can become truly modern while Confucius remains so entrenched in society. He has been criticized for causing the inequality of women, promoting authoritarian regimes, and suppressing human rights.

Despite these debates, East Asians today are turning to Confucius to help them solve the ills of modern life more than they have in a century. As a wealthy and increasingly powerful Asia rises on the world stage, Confucius, too, will command a more prominent place in global culture.

Touching on philosophy, history, and current affairs, *Confucius* tells the vivid, dramatic story of the enigmatic philosopher whose ideas remain at the heart of East Asian civilization.

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