Confucius (Kongzi; 551-479 BCE)

Social Ideal:  *li* (originally, "ritual"; more generally, "propriety")
Human Ideal:  *chün-tzu/junzi* ("the Gentleman")
Ideal Quality:  *jen/ren* ("benevolence, magnanimity")
On Education:  One should study the Classics (*ching/jing*) and the gentlemanly arts.
On Government:  If the ruler upholds *li*, the people will all obey.
On Religion:  (1) One should respect the spirits, but keep them at a distance.
            (2) Ultimately, Heaven (*T'ien/Tian*) is the source of our higher impulses.
            (3) Heaven sometimes acts in the world.

Mencius (Mengzi; ca. 370-290 BCE)

Faithful to the ideals of Confucius, but modified and extended them.
Primary Thesis:  Human nature is inherently inclined to goodness (i.e., it is social, hence moral).
On Education:  One should work to cultivate one's innate moral qualities.
On Government:  If the ruler is oppressive, he should be deposed.
On Religion:  (1) Our innate goodness (in *hsin/xin*, one's heart/mind) is from Heaven.
            (2) Through our *hsin*, we can come to know Heaven.

Hsün-tzu (Xunzi; ca. 300-220 BCE)

Emphasized social organization:  humanity's greatness rests in civilization
Primary Thesis:  Human nature is essentially "foul" (i.e., it is asocial or antisocial, hence amoral or immoral).  "Goodness" must be acquired.
On Education/Government:  Humanistic moral education is futile; society must therefore restrain people's asocial/amoral tendencies
On Religion:  (1) *T'ien* is "Nature":  people cannot move it to act through prayers, etc.
            (2) Only fools believe in spirits.
THE CONFUCIAN "CLASSICS" (Ching)

1. *The Book of Change* (I ching)

   A book of divination (or "textual oracle"), by which one can obtain insight into the processes that underlie worldly events, and advice as to how to bring one's life into better accord with those processes; earliest layers date to ca. 1000 BCE; much material added during the Han dynasty

2. *The Book of Odes* (or Poetry) (Shih ching)

   A collection of ancient songs and poems, ranging from official state hymns of the Shang and Chou dynasties all the way to early Chou folk-songs

3. *The Book of Documents* (or History) (Shu ching)

   A collection of government records pertaining to the early Chou dynasty; some are later fabrications

4. *The Book of Rites* [Lost]

   A guide to the procedures involved in the formal rituals and ceremonies of Chou times; partially reconstructed during Han times

5. *The Book of Music* [Lost]

   Reported to have been a collection of the music that accompanied the ancient rituals

**Added:** A sixth: *The Spring and Autumn Annals* (Ch' un-ch' iu)

   A historical chronicle of the years 722-481 BCE, supposedly compiled by Confucius himself