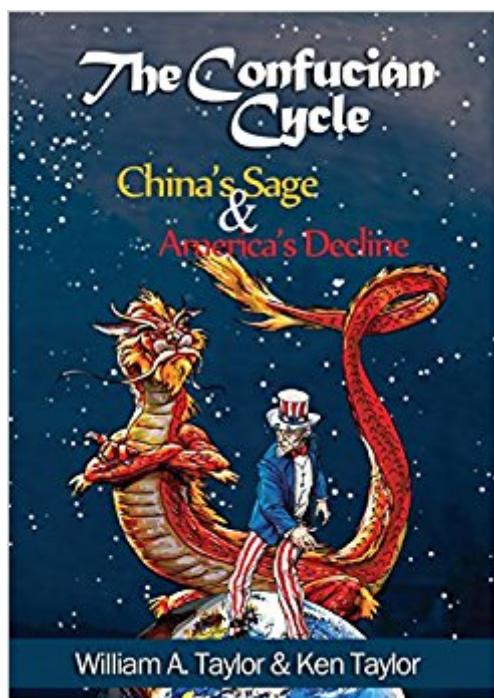


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# The Confucian Cycle: China's Sage And America's Decline



## Synopsis

2,500 years ago, the Chinese sage, Confucius, observed that all governments follow a cycle: from unity, through prosperity to stagnation, then to collapse and anarchy. He taught that when government officials sought personal power or wealth instead of taking care of the people, society lost the "Mandate of Heaven" and fell apart. By "Mandate of Heaven," Confucius meant that God Himself had directed how society should work. Chinese history shows 15 or 20 collapses when government lost virtue and the country broke apart in civil war, but whenever the Chinese followed Confucius' rules, Chinese society worked well. From his day to ours, civilizations all over the world have followed the same cycle Confucius observed. Today's United States is well into the "stagnation" phase and many observers predict a collapse. But America has an advantage Confucius never imagined. Unlike the Chinese, America's voters have the power to replace their rulers and reform their government without armed revolution. The Taylors' wide-ranging tour through history, culture, and modern news sheds new light on how the past both predicts the future and can be used to alter it for the better.

About William Taylor - William Taylor's parents were American missionaries to Japan right after the Second World War. The Japanese had learned the secrets of civilization from the Chinese, so Confucian ideas were thick on the ground. Until he entered MIT in 1963, Mr. Taylor watched the Japanese use Confucian virtue to bootstrap themselves to first-world status. There were no Japanese cars on American roads in 1963 and next to no cars on Japanese roads. Cars move faster than bicycles; he was hit by cars 3 times his first year at MIT. After studying computer technology at MIT and graduating before "computer science" had been invented, Mr. Taylor worked for truly monster societies such as the US Navy, General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler; middle-sized business cultures such as IBM, the New York Times, the First National Bank of Chicago, NASA, and the MIT Draper Lab; and tiny startups you've never heard of.

About Kenneth Taylor - Growing up with well-educated parents of wide-ranging, eclectic experience and interests, Kenneth Taylor was exposed from an early age to a variety of cultural touchstones. With his father working in the world of tech startups, he had a ringside seat to watch many of the principles discussed in this book illustrated in living and sometimes garish color. Working for a Japanese tech company in the mid-1990s presented a unique view of modern Confucian management. At the time, most Japanese employers were very large, very old, or both. The Japanese had recovered from the destruction of WW II by learning from other countries. Having caught up with the West, they now had to discover new ideas on their own to keep their economy growing. Mr. Taylor's employer had founded by a Japanese graduate of Tokyo University who'd been sent through MIT by a monstrous Japanese

conglomerate. They expected him to work for them until he died so that they could recover their investment in his education; instead he founded a startup like so many in America at the time.   
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## Customer Reviews

Well-organized and well written, this is a refreshingly easy read that ties together the loose ends many of us recognize. It's worth a couple hours of your week.

Diamond in the rough here. A friend recommended this to me, so I figured I'd give it a shot. What an excellent read! The book is chock full of historical data and analysis about a long-standing societal rule, what the authors call "The Confucian Cycle", which states that virtue is a core part of societal preservation or collapse. Avoiding the cycle requires buy-in from government, business, families, even children. Everyone has to be in on it to avoid societal collapse, but if the same traditional values are taught, everything works. The Taylors have an extraordinary amount of research crammed into this book. I enjoyed every part - intro, middle essays and conclusion - immensely. Hope to see more from them in the future on this subject!

This book analyzes the current state of the United States (and indeed the world) in the context of the teachings of Confucius (551-479 BC). The first author, who grew up in postwar Japan where his

parents were missionaries, was exposed to Confucian doctrines in school. When he moved back to the United States for college and his career, he saw how the teachings of Confucius applied to this country, both at the level of government and in the governance of large corporations. Both have bureaucracies that must be controlled and limited if they are not to grow without limit and destroy the country or the company they were created to serve. He summarizes Confucius' rules for ordering society as follows: Children have a duty to serve and obey their parents. Wives have a duty to serve and obey their husbands. Citizens have a duty to serve and obey the government. Government has a duty to serve the welfare of the people. To Confucius, civilizations would thrive if they followed these rules, which he had derived from looking at the history of several Chinese dynasties that had preceded his birth. The government would be successful as long as it held the *Mandate of Heaven*, which it would hold as long as it was virtuous (defined as filling its role of serving the welfare of the people). When the bureaucracy grows out of control and cannot be reined in, it no longer serves the needs of the people, loses the mandate of heaven. At this point, citizens lose respect for the government, fail to serve and obey it, and government collapses. This book shows how this cycle has occurred repeatedly throughout history, not only in China but around the world. It also shows how this occurs inside companies, which can either adapt and reinvent themselves when their bureaucracies get to big, or fail as some auto manufacturers have. Most of the remainder of the book provides examples of the Confucian rules both from history, and from current organizations, from private corporations to state and local government. It shows how private companies can be motivated to change inefficient rules, while governmental organizations can be incentivized to grow ever larger, less efficient, and more overbearing because of the reward systems that are set up. The next to last chapter compares Confucian teachings to Judeo-Christian teachings, and notes many parallels. The final chapter contains some suggestions for starting to repair the problems in our Federal Government. I found this book gave me a view that I hadn't been exposed to previously of how and why organizations, particularly governments, behave the way they do. I think it will be helpful to all who want to get our government back to a manageable size.

This book is a fast read that will make you think. The historical presentation of governing systems and worldviews draws amazing parallels that tells us there really is nothing new under the sun. No matter how novel the approach is by individuals or governments (at least apparently novel), the success of the individual or government does really depend on virtue, the spreading of good to others by honest, empathetic behavior (which usually also promotes self-advancement). The

Taylors make a strong case for their thesis using personal and historical examples and citations. This is quite refreshing, as many politicians and social scientists seem to be void of supporting their views "of the way things should be." The question that the Taylors try to push us to answer is: "Are we in America too late to avoid the societal death spiral that seems to be happening in our nation and, indeed, our culture." Every reader will have to answer that for himself. The authors make a good case that we can not continue on the current path we are on. Some of those paths include, but are not limited to, moral relativism, undefined gender roles, government power grabs, self-esteem promotion, and hedonism. The Taylors accomplish their goals without whining or complaining. They chide individuals, private companies, government agencies and leaders, and civic/religious groups for dropping the ball while saying it's not too late to avoid our death spiral predicament. They offer steps that could be taken to regain control of our lives and our nation. Some people may not like the suggested antidote, but if you have a life-threatening disease, you shouldn't complain about the negative effects of a cure. Truly, the negative side of the cure the Taylors advocate is only negative because of the selfish mode we're caught in now. I highly recommend this book as our political season swings in to high gear. You'll be able to put your favorite candidate's worldview into proper context after enjoying this book.

Excellent explanation of why big government doesn't work. Of course there are always those who will say this time it will work - but it won't. We can already see the wide spread corruption that brought down these dynasties in our own government. Their links to crony capitalism prevents any serious regulation, and our political leaders refuse to seriously punish corruption.

Can you give a book 6 stars? What an education on political philosophy and worldview! A great read by a couple knowledgeable men who are doing their part to stop America's free-fall into collapse. I can only pray that it will be widely read and deeply considered. I have already given copies to local politicians.

Interesting book

looks like lot of research. I like the book and loved the front page.

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