

## THE SUPERIOR MAN OF CONFUCIUS

All goodness, truth, beauty are combined in the ideal of the superior man (Chun-tzu). Noble both in birth and endowment, he has the manners of a gentleman and the wisdom of a sage.

The superior man is no saint. The saint is born; he is what he is; the superior man becomes what he is through self-discipline. "To have the truth is the path of heaven, to seek the truth is the path of men. He who has the truth finds the right action without pains, achieves success without reflection." But he who *seeks* the truth chooses the good and holds it fast. He investigates, he questions critically, he ponders the truth and resolutely acts on it. "Perhaps others can do it the first time; I must do it a thousand times.

But he who really has the perseverance to go this way — be he foolish, he will become clearheaded; be he weak, he will become strong."

The character, cast of thought, gestures of the superior man are described. He is contrasted with the inferior man. The superior man is concerned with justice, the inferior man with profit. The superior man is quiet and serene, the inferior man is always full of anxiety. The superior man is congenial though never stooping to vulgarity; the inferior man is vulgar without being congenial. The superior man is dignified without arrogance; the inferior man is arrogant without dignity. — *Karl Jaspers in The Great Philosophers.*