Zhi (智) in Confucian literature. Posted on May 4, 2006 | 17 Comments. Here are a few notes (from a few years back) on zhi (commonly translated as "wisdom") in Confucian literature. I’ve argued that this should be translated as “of proper mind” rather than wisdom. Also, I’ve argued that this word is different from the other zhi (知) commonly used in the Analects (without the radical yue (曰) ["to speak"] attached). I haven’t thought about this much for a while, but I’ve recently been worrying a bit about the moral epistemology of the Analects, so I thought I’d go ahead and post some of this stuff. Confucius served as an exemplar to his students, perhaps of the virtue of ren, though he never claimed the virtue for himself. Book Ten of the Analects displays what might appear to be an obsessive concern with the way Confucius greeted persons in everyday life, e.g., if he saw they were dressed in mourning dress, he would take on a solemn appearance or lean forward on the stanchion of his carriage. Such concern becomes much
more comprehensible if Confucius is being treated as an exemplar of virtue from which the students are trying to learn.