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Leo Tolstoy
Flow of Water
1886

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Flow of Water

Leo Tolstoy

1886

Once students found Confucius by the river. The teacher was sitting on the shore and was looking closely at the water, observing how it ran.

Students were surprised and asked:

“Teacher, what’s the use to observe how water flows? There’s nothing special in it, that’s how it always was and will be”.

Confucius replied:

“You’re right: this is the most common phenomenon, it always took place and will continue, and everybody understands it.

But not everybody understands that the flow of water is similar to a teaching. I was looking at the water and was thinking about it. Waters flow incessantly, they flow day and night until they merge together in a large ocean. Similarly, the true teaching of our fathers,

grand-fathers, and grand-grand-fathers from the beginning of the world was flowing without stop for us.

Let us also ensure that the true teaching flows further, let us work to pass it to those who will live after us so that they, following our example, will pass it to their descendants, and so on, until the end of the world.”