

Today's Lecture

- Admin stuff
- Asian Philosophies and the martial arts:
some concepts and issues
- Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*

Admin stuff: My availability during the examination period

- My official office hours come to an end this week (NOTE THE CORRECTION FROM CLASS).
- I will be available for appointment if you need to see me ... please contact me via email if you'd like an appointment (afenton2@uwo.ca).
- *Don't do this the night before you want an appointment.*

Admin Stuff

- Re the exam questions: You do not need to go outside of the course material (e.g. lectures and course texts) to adequately answer these questions ... what's more, you *shouldn't* go outside of the course material to answer these questions.
- Any questions about the possible exam questions?

Asian philosophies and the martial arts

- Clarification on some terminology:
- (1) Martial arts - techniques used in physical (or bodily) defense or attack.
- (2) *Budo* - “The Way of brave and enlightened activity” (John Stevens, *Budo Secrets: Teachings of the Martial Arts Masters*, p.ix [see the full bibliographical details in your *Course Pack*]). Alternatively, the Martial Way.
- (3) *Bushido* - The Way of the Warrior. Often characterized as the Way of life (and death) to which all Samurai aspired.

Asian philosophies and the martial arts

- Several philosophies we have studied have had an impact on the 'Eastern' martial arts (particularly those available to interested practitioners in the 'West').
- Kung Fu (Ch'an Buddhism), Tai Chi (Taoism), Aikido (rather eclectic, but includes Buddhism and Taoism), Karate (Buddhism, Confucianism) are just some examples.
- Do note there is a history of martial arts in a great many human cultures, including South Asian culture(s). So there are 'Eastern' martial arts associated with Hinduism and the Sikh Tradition.

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- A(n albeit) superficial survey (of some of the Traditions we have studied) on violent behavior directed towards others (i.e. other humans):
- (Some forms of) Hinduism and violence - (i) Ideally, we should *never* engage in violent behavior (the Hindu principle of *ahimsa*); (ii) We sometimes *have a duty to* engage in violent behavior (think of Arjuna in the *Gita*); (iii) We should only engage in violent behavior if we would violate our moral duty by doing otherwise (Gandhi).

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- Jainism and violence - We should *never* engage in violent behavior (think of the Jain principle of *ahimsa*).
- Buddhism and violence - (i) We should *never* engage in violent behavior (think of right action and right livelihood in the Eightfold Path); (ii) Ideally, we should not engage in violent behavior (think of the Buddhist King Ashoka).
- Taoism and violence - Ideally, we should not engage in violent behavior (think of Chapters 30 & 31 in the *Tao-te ching*).

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- Some of the reasons proffered for not engaging in violent behavior:
- (1) (i) We would not want to be harmed or killed.
(ii) Given (i), others ought not to harm or kill us.
(iii) We are not different from (most of) our fellow humans in any morally significant way. (iii) Given (ii) and (iii), we ought not to harm or kill others.
- We can find this kind of argument in Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism (and perhaps Confucianism and Taoism).

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- (2) Conflict, including violent conflict, arises from hatred, competition or the incompatibility of self-interests. We ought not to cultivate, or become attached to, a conception of our self. We ought not to cultivate, or become averse to, a conception of another's self. As these are the necessary conditions for hatred, competition or self-interest, by eliminating these conditions we also eliminate the conditions that give rise to violent conflict.
- We can find this kind of argument in Buddhism and Taoism.

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- (3) (i) Engaging in violent behavior creates unwholesome states in our minds. (ii) Unwholesome states hinder our spiritual advancement (i.e. our advancement towards *moksha* or enlightenment). (iii) We ought not to cultivate or maintain states that hinder our spiritual advancement. (iv) So, we ought not to cultivate or maintain unwholesome states. (v) So, we ought not to engage in violent behavior.
- We can find this kind of argument in Jainism, Buddhism and Taoism.

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- (4) (i) Engaging in violent behavior creates karmic debt. (ii) Karmic debt hinders our escape from *samsara* (or, alternatively, our enlightenment). (iii) We ought not to engage in behavior that hinders our escape from *samsara* (or, alternatively, our enlightenment). (iv) So, we ought not to engage in violent behavior.
- We can find this kind of argument in Jainism and Buddhism.

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- Some problems with a(n absolute) commitment to non-violence:
- (1) We may find ourselves in circumstances where if we do not engage in violence, we will be harmed or those who are morally significant around us will be harmed.
- (2) We may find ourselves in circumstances where we have a 'duty' to engage in violence. Think here of the responsibilities attached to governance or law enforcement.
- (3) We may find ourselves in circumstances where a principle of nonviolence is in conflict with another (equally significant) principle (this may lead us back to (1)). We may have committed ourselves, for example, to protecting the well being of others.

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- Possible responses to these problems:
- (1) A principle of nonviolence is inviolate. So we must accept (all of) the consequences attached to not acting violently. If we are in governance or law enforcement, we must accept the consequences of shirking our 'duty' to act violently, or order others to act violently.

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- (2) A principle of nonviolence is not absolute (is not inviolate) ... but can only be violated in dire circumstances. So, with regards to problems (1) (2) and, perhaps, (3) ... let's kick some ass.
- (3) A principle of nonviolence is not absolute (is not inviolate) ... and can be violated in non-dire circumstances. So, with regards to problems (1) through (3) ... let's kick some ass.
- (4) Who cares about a principle of nonviolence. Let's kick some ass.
- *Arguably*, none of the traditions we have studied so far would advance (3) or (4).

Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*

- Two translations I *strongly* recommend:
- *The Art of War: The Denma Translation*. Published by Shambhala Publications and dated 2002. This is a particularly readable translation. There is also a resistance to introducing too much interpretation into the finished translation (certain Chinese terms [e.g. *Tao*, *shih*] are left untranslated).
- *The Art of War*. Translated by Lionel Giles. Edited by Dallas Gavin. Published by Barnes and Noble and dated 2003. This is also a readable translation, and a popular one. Unfortunately, there is a little too much interpretation from time to time. The accompanying essays are not as useful, or of as high a quality, as what you find in the former translation.

Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*

- This text is sometimes referred to as the *Sun Tzu*.
- We know very little about the formation of this text.
- There are at least two recensions of the text (the Standard and the Bamboo Texts).
- This is a treatise on military conflict ... not a treatise on how to run a country, business, household or poker game.
- This is not to say that there are no principles in the *Sun Tzu* that may be helpful in other (nonmilitary) contexts.

Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*

- There is a clear tension in the text between a negative view of war (or state violence) and an advocacy of efficient violence.
- On the one hand, the author(s) warns of the (sometimes) profound costs of war (or state violence) (see Chapters 2, 3, and 13). Without a doubt, this is a caution against engaging in war when it can be (reasonably) avoided.
- The author(s) also commends victory without violence, or victory without harming the enemy, as the superior victory (see Chapters 3, and 11).

Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*

- On the other hand, the author(s) provides principles and strategies for efficient violence (i.e. for violence that produces expedient and sure victory over the enemy) (see Chapters 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8 *et cetera*).
- *Arguably*, the *Sun Tzu's* commendation of the general who efficiently secures victory, *even* through violence, reflects a desire to do only as much harm as is absolutely necessary.

Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*

- The difficulty in showing convincing evidence of, say, Taoist influence in the *Sun Tzu* is that certain features shared with (philosophical) Taoism just make good sense (and so may just evince a like-mindedness rather than influence), or could as easily have come from Confucianism.
- Some evidence of Taoist influence in the text:
- (1) The Sage General should not to be seen, or seek self-aggrandizement (see Chapters 4 and 10).
- (2) The Sage General should cultivate such virtues as compassion, courage, patience and wisdom (see Chapters 1, 2, 6, 9 and 10).

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- (3) The Sage General should resist extravagance and excess (Chapters 8, 10).
- (4) The Sage General should know both himself and his soldiers, and his enemy (see Chapters 1 and 3).
- (4a) He should act with an eye to the natural strengths of his army and the weaknesses of the enemy (see Chapters 3, 4, 6, 7, 9 and 10).
- (4b) He should know the principles (or the *Tao*) of effective leadership and victory, and the principles (or the *Tao*) of defeat (Chapters 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 10 and 11).
- (5) The Sage General should aspire to achieve victory without doing physical harm to the enemy (see Chapters 3 and 4).

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- (6) The Sage General should act in accordance with the ebbs and flows of Heaven and the natural features of earth (see Chapters 1, 9, 10, 11 and 12).
- (7) The Sage General should act unexpectedly and with spontaneity (see Chapters 1, 5 and 6).
- (8) The use of metaphors from nature, particularly involving water, to talk of the Way of the Sage General (see Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 11).
- (9) The Sage General should use the reversals of the *Tao* to his advantage (see Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 11).