

# Today's Lecture

- Admin stuff
- Confucianism continued

# Admin stuff

- ***Remember:*** If you are choosing your own term paper topic, you should see me *sooner* rather than later. Don't leave yourself too little time to talk with me about your topic before the absolute deadline for doing so.
- **Any questions** about the term paper topics?
- I'll have your third assignments ready for pick up *as soon as I can*.
- Don't forget to submit your assignment to Turnitin. Do make sure to submit your other assignments, if you have not already ... please don't forget.

# Admin stuff: The Final Exam

- Exam date: **April 17th**, at 2:00 p.m. in 3M 3250.
- Given this date, you'll have a list of potential exam questions on **March 17**.
- Remember, your actual exam questions will be chosen (verbatim) from this list.
- What I can tell you about the exam (at this point):
- (i) You will have *some* choice on the exam (*right now* it looks like you'll be asked eight questions out of which you *must* do six ... but this may change leading up to the end of term).
- (ii) It will be a two hour exam.
- (iii) No aids.

# Confucianism: Confucius

- Where we left off (oh so long ago):
- There are two important principles underlying Confucius' ethical outlook:
  - (1) *We ought to cultivate our full humanity (Asian Philosophies, p.270), and*
  - (2) *We should order our actions such that we not do to others what we would not have done to ourselves (you can also substitute this proscription for the prescription 'do to others what you would have done to you') (Asian Philosophies, p.258-59).*
- (1) emphasizes the **inner**, and (2) emphasizes the **outer**, life of the individual (and the *reciprocity* necessary to living the good life in society) (*Asian Philosophies, p.272-73*).

# Confucianism: Confucius

- There are five elements of Confucius' moral outlook of which you should be aware: (1) *Jen*, (2) *Zhunzi*, (3) *Li*, (4) *Hsiao*, (5) *Yi*.
- Central to Confucius' teaching is the claim that we all should embody *Jen* (pronounced 'ren').
- Despite its centrality to his teaching, Confucius does not offer **one definitive definition** of this term (*Asian Philosophies*, p.272).
- This may be, at least in part, a reflection of its common currency among those with whom he engaged.
- The term can be used to refer to human beings. Thus it connotes a sense of human-ness, or *being* human.

# Confucianism: *Jen*

- “[T]he pictogram consists of the sign for ‘human being’ and the sign for ‘two’. *Jen* thus embraces all moral qualities governing - and expressed by - the ideal behavior of one human being toward another”  
Fischer-Schreiber, Ingrid, Franz-Karl Ehrhard, Kurt Friedrichs, and Michael Diener, eds. *The Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc., p.161)

# Confucianism: *Jen*

- In understanding how Confucius understood the term within his philosophy scholars have tended to examine the use to which he puts it.
- In the literature, it is variously translated as ‘human nature’, ‘human heartedness’, ‘love (for all humankind)’, ‘benevolence’ (as you see in the translation used in your *Course Pack*), ‘compassion’, ‘altruism’, and the like. (See *Asian Philosophies*, pp. 271-72 and also the relevant entry on this term in the *Encyclopedia of Religion* ... you can find the *Encyclopedia* in Weldon’s reference section [Mircea Eliade is the general editor].)

# Confucianism: *Jen*

- We can say this much about it.
- (i) It is the ideal to which all humans *should* aspire (*Asian Philosophies*, p.272).
- (ii) An individual who fully instantiates *Jen*, is, for Confucius, *fully* human. We *can* understand this to be the claim that those who instantiate *Jen* manifest humanity's greatest moral potential, or the ideal moral character for humanity (see *Asian Philosophies*, p.272).
- (iii) It consists of a *reciprocity* in that **what** we expect of others we **do** ourselves, and **how** we expect to be treated, or not to be treated, by others **is how** we treat, or avoid treating, them (*Asian Philosophies*, pp.272-73).
- (iv) It consists of proper feeling AND being rational (*Asian Philosophies*, p.272).



# Confucianism: *Jen*

- “The Master said, ‘If a man sets his heart on benevolence [i.e. *jen*], he will be free from evil’” (IV,4; *Course Pack*, p.155).
- “Yen Yuan asked about benevolence [i.e. *jen*]. The Master said, ‘To return to the observance of the rites [i.e. *li*] through overcoming the self constitutes benevolence. If for a single day a man could return to the observance of the rites through overcoming himself, then the whole Empire would consider benevolence to be his. However, the practice of benevolence depends on oneself alone, not on others.’ ... ” (XII, 1a; *Course Pack*, p.165).

# Confucianism: *Jen*

- “Chung-kung asked about benevolence [i.e. *jen*]. The Master said, ‘When abroad behave as though you were receiving an important guest. When employing the services of the common people behave as though you were officiating at an important sacrifice. Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire. In this way you will be free from ill will whether in a state or in a noble family’ ...” (XII, 2; *Course Pack*, p.165).

# Confucianism: *Jen*

- “Fan Ch’ih asked about benevolence [i.e. *jen*]. The Master said, ‘While at home hold yourself in a respectful attitude; when serving in an official capacity be reverent; when dealing with others do your best. These are the qualities that cannot be put aside, even if you go and live among the barbarians’” (XIII, 19).

# Confucianism: *Zhunzi*

- The person who fully instantiates *Jen* is a *Zhunzi*, literally a ‘Gentleman’ or ‘Superior Person’ (Creel, Herrlee G. 1953/75. *Chinese Thought: From Confucius to Mao Tse-Tung*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, p.27).
- The term *Zhunzi* “almost universally had a significance somewhat like the original meaning of our word ‘gentleman’. It denoted, that is, a man of good birth, whose ancestors had belonged to a stratum above that of the common herd. Such a person was a gentleman by birth; no one not born so could become a gentleman, and no gentleman could ever become less than one, no matter how vile his conduct might be.”

# Confucianism: *Zhunzi*

- “Confucius changed this usage completely. He asserted that any man might be a gentleman, if his conduct were noble, unselfish, just, and kind. On the other hand, he asserted that no man could be considered a gentleman on the ground of birth; this was solely a question of conduct and character” (Creel, Herrlee G. 1953/75. *Chinese Thought: From Confucius to Mao Tse-Tung*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, p.27).

# Confucianism: *Zhunzi*

- Since the *Zhunzi* exhibits *Jen* in his actions or dealings with others, he will exhibit such virtues as compassion, benevolence or heartedness ... I think this nicely connects the notion of *Jen* with how scholars often translate it.
- **Note:** I have kept the male gender when talking here of the *Zhunzi* to reflect the male voice used by Confucius, and the gendered political structure within which Confucianism began and developed.

# Confucianism: *Zhunzi*

- “The Master said, ‘A gentleman [i.e. *Zhunzi*] who lacks gravity does not inspire awe. A gentleman who studies is unlikely to be inflexible. / ‘Make it your guiding principle to do your best for others and to be trustworthy in what you say. Do not accept as friend anyone who is not as good as you. / ‘When you make a mistake, do not be afraid of mending your ways.’” (I, 8; *Course Pack*, p.152).
- “Tzu-kung asked about the gentleman [i.e. *Zhunzi*]. The Master said, ‘He puts his words into action before allowing his words to follow his action.’
- The Master said, ‘The gentleman enters into associations but not cliques; the small man enters into cliques but not associations.’” (II, 13-14; *Course Pack*, p.154).

# Confucianism: *Zhunzi*

- “The Master said, ‘Wealth and high station are what men desire but unless I got them in the right way I would not remain in them. Poverty and low station are what men dislike, but even if I did not get them in the right way I would not try to escape from them / ‘If the gentleman [i.e. *Zhunzi*] forsakes benevolence [i.e. *jen*], in what way can he make a name for himself? The gentleman never deserts benevolence, not even for as long as it takes to eat a meal. If he hurries and stumbles one may be sure that it is in benevolence that he does so.’” (IV, 5; *Course Pack*, p.155).
- Do look at the relevant footnote for this passage.



- “The Master said of Tzu-ch’an that he had the way of the gentleman [i.e. *Zhunzi*] on four counts: he was respectful in the manner he conducted himself; he was reverent in the service of his lord; in caring for the common people, he was generous and, in employing their services, he was just” (V, 16).
- “Confucius said, “There are nine things the gentleman [i.e. *Zhunzi*] turns his thought to: to seeing clearly when he uses his eyes, to hearing acutely when he uses his ears, to looking cordial when it comes to his countenance, to appearing respectful when it comes to his demeanour, to being conscientious when he speaks, to being reverent when he performs his duties, to seeking advice when he is in doubt, to the consequences when he is enraged, and to what is right at the sight of gain” (XVI, 10).

# Confucianism: *Li*

- Historically, *Li* has been used in three basic ways, all of which inform how the term is used by Confucius.
- (1) *Li* can be used to refer to the (rules governing the) religious rites associated with the worship of deities or ancestor veneration that characterized traditional Chinese religion, *particularly* with regards to those rites performed by the emperor.
- This understanding of *Li* represents its earliest usage (*Asian Philosophies*, p.274).
- Of note here is Koller's point that "[i]t soon came to denote all of the emperor's duties as well as a wide range of other rituals, such as marriage, and military and government festivals" (*Asian Philosophies*, p.274).

# Confucianism: *Li*

- (2) *Li* can also be used to refer to common moral prescriptions and “customary law” (*Asian Philosophies*, p.274).
- “[I]t generally was assumed to refer to the behavior of the aristocracy rather than that of ordinary persons” (*Asian Philosophies*, p.274).
- (3) Lastly, *Li* can be used to refer to anything which orders human conduct. This more general use of the term captures rules of etiquette (initially governing proper conduct in the royal court) as well as rules of right action (*Asian Philosophies*, p.274).

# Confucianism: *Li*

- *Li* governs the Five Cardinal Relationships (or the five basic social relationships found among humanity): (i) Husband and wife, (ii) parent and child, (iii) older and younger sibling, (iv) friend and friend, and (v) ruler and subject (see *Asian Philosophies*, p.274 or *Course Pack*, pp.172-73)).
- “It means a system of well-defined social relationships with definite attitudes toward one another, love in the parents, filial piety in the children, respect in the younger brothers, friendliness in the elder brothers, loyalty among friends, respect for authority among subjects, and benevolence in rulers” (*Asian Philosophies*, p.274).