

Today's Lecture

- Don't forget, it's International Women's Day on March 8th (this Monday).
- Eleventh in-class quiz (can you believe it's been that many already)
- Admin stuff
- The teachings of Confucius concluded.

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 16** (*NOTE* that I've changed it from the 17th so that it corresponds with one of our classes).
- 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.

Admin stuff

- Some of you have already asked me about doing papers on martial philosophy.
- The trick is finding enough material to make it an appropriate paper for a philosophy class.
- In case you keep running into a scarcity of philosophical books on martial arts, here's some I can recommend:
 - Winston King's *Zen and The Way of the Sword*. It's published by Oxford University Press. It's dated 1994.
 - Also check out the chapter on "Zen and the Art of War" in David Loy's *The Great Awakening: A Buddhist Social Theory*. It's published by Wisdom Publications. It's dated 2003.

Admin stuff

- Morihei Ueshiba's *The Art of Peace*, translated and edited by John Stevens. It's published by Shambhala Publications. It's dated 2002.
- Of course there's always, John Stevens' *Budo Secrets: Teachings of the Martial Arts Masters*. It's also published by Shambhala Publications. It's also dated 2002.

Confucianism: *Li* - Where we left off:

- *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 [emphasis mine]).

Confucianism: *Li*

- For Confucius, *Jen* is the standard to which putative examples of *li* are held.
- If a rule or maxim is to count as an example of *li* it must conform to, or facilitate the cultivation of, *Jen* (*Asian Philosophies*, p.273).
- “Thus, *li* refers to the ceremonial and ritual means by which the potential of humanity (*jen*) is realized. The best of these practices reflect the concrete embodiment and expression of *jen* in the past and therefore serve as a guide to its realization in the present” (*Asian Philosophies*, p.273).

Confucianism: *Li*

- “Yu Tzu said, ‘Of the things brought about by the rites [i.e. *li*], harmony is the most valuable. Of the ways of the Former Kings, this is the most beautiful, and is followed alike in matters great and small, yet this will not always work: to aim always at harmony without regulating it by the rites simply because one knows only about harmony will not, in fact, work’” (I, 12; *Course Pack*, p.152).
- “The Master said, ‘Unless a man has the spirit of the rites [i.e. *li*], in being respectful he will wear himself out, in being careful he will become timid, in having courage he will become unruly, and in being forthright he will become intolerant....’” (VIII, 2a; *Course Pack*, p.160).

Confucianism: *Li*

- “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.’ / Yen Yuan said, ‘I should like you to list the items.’ The Master said, ‘Do not look unless it is in accord with the rites; do not listen unless it is in accord with the rites; do not speak unless it is in accord with the rites; do not move unless it is in accord with the rites.’ ...” (XII, 1a-b; *Course Pack*, p.165).

Confucianism: *Hsiao*

- *Hsiao* is often translated ‘filial piety’ or ‘filial love’.
- This conveys **two things of importance** about this concept: (1) It **primarily denotes** the love of children for their parents and (2) and conveys a sense of *reverence for* the parents (somewhat anticipatory of the relationship of the living to the deceased) (*Asian Philosophies*, p.275).
- The importance ascribed to this ‘virtue’ helped contribute to the hierarchy of loyalty (beginning with one’s parents, extending to one’s family, and gradually beyond), that has been historically associated with Confucianism.

Confucianism: *Hsiao*

- “Yu Tzu said, ‘It is rare for a man whose character is such that he is good as a son and obedient as young man to have the inclination to transgress against his superiors; it is unheard of for one who has no such inclination to be inclined to start a rebellion. The gentleman [i.e. *Zhunzi*] devotes his efforts to the roots, for once the roots are established, the Way [i.e. *Tao*] will grow therefrom. Being good as a son and obedient as a young man is, perhaps, the root of a man’s character’” (I,2; *Course Pack*, p.151).

Confucianism: *Hsiao*

- “The Master said, ‘Observe what a man has in mind to do when his father is living, and then observe what he does when his father is dead. If, for three years, he makes no changes to his father’s ways, he can be said to be a good son’” (I, 11; *Course Pack*, p.152).
- “The Governor of She said to Confucius, ‘In our village there is a man nicknamed ‘Straight Body’. When his father stole a sheep, he gave evidence against him.’ Confucius answered, ‘In our village those who are straight are quite different. Fathers cover up for their sons, and sons cover up for their fathers. Straightness is to be found in such behavior’ (XIII, 18).

Confucianism: *Hsiao*

- “Meng Yi Tzu asked about being filial [i.e. *hsiao*]. The Master answered, ‘Never fail to comply.’ / Fan Ch’ih was driving. The Master told him about the interview, saying, ‘Meng-sun asked me about filial. I answered, ‘Never fail to comply.’’ / Fan Ch’ih asked, ‘What does that mean?’ / The Master said, ‘When your parents are alive, comply with the rites in serving them; when they die, comply with the rites in burying them; comply with the rites in sacrificing to them’” (II, 5; *Course Pack*, p.153).
- “Meng Wu Po asked about being filial [i.e. *hsiao*]. The Master said, ‘Give your father and mother no other cause for anxiety than illness’” (II, 6; *Course Pack*, p.154).

Confucianism: *Hsiao*

- As I've implied, this virtue was, or is, not limited to children (and their regard for their parents).
- For Confucians, and arguably for Confucius, *hsiao* aids in developing *Jen* by directing an individual to love, care and respect his fellow human through a series of successive stages (*Asian Philosophies*, p.274).
- First an individual ought to show proper love, care, respect **AND reverence** for his parents. This *primary expression* of *hsiao* exploits what Confucius believed to be an innate disposition of filial love in the properly functioning individual (*Asian Philosophies*, p.275).

Confucianism: *Hsiao*

- As an individual progresses morally, or matures as a moral agent, the love (and proper decorum) cultivated through cultivating *hsiao* is extended to include his greater family, community, province, and so on, until it includes, or encompasses, all humankind (*Asian Philosophies*, pp.274-75) ... do note my choice of words here.
- Also note: this does not mean that the Confucian regarded everyone as his social equal, nor did he think that he had identical duties to everyone within his moral community (i.e. the community to whom he was 'morally responsible').

Confucianism: *Yi*

- *Yi* is typically translated “righteousness” (*Asian Philosophies*, p.275). Koller provides an interpretation of this notion in Confucian thought which has two complementary, though subtly different, features.
- (1) In the pursuit of self-cultivation, *an individual ought to act with yi*. This would mean acting in accord with *li* for no other reason than that it is right to do so (or it is one’s duty to do so) (*Asian Philosophies*, p.275). This sense of *yi* concerns our motives for action.
- Under this usage, *yi* refers to the moral quality of an individual’s actions. If you act in accord with *li*, but for the wrong reasons (i.e. it is expedient, or beneficial), your action lacks moral worth (or *yi*).

Confucianism: *Yi*

- (2) As an individual cultivates her moral potential (i.e. *jen*), she develops **moral character**. *Acting from* this character, she acts rightly. Indeed, when properly cultivated, such an individual is *disposed to* act rightly, without regard for the personally beneficial or harmful consequences of the relevant actions. In such circumstances she acts with *yi* (*Asian Philosophies*, p.275).

Confucianism: some comments

- Some reasons for adopting the position so far.
- **Regarding the cultivation of moral character (or *jen*):**
 - (1) Possessing the right moral principles (or *li*) is not enough to ensure right action.
 - (2) To ensure right action we need to acquire the requisite ‘will power’.
 - (3) In order to minimize moments of **moral weakness** (i.e. in order to acquire the requisite will power), we should endeavor to *effectively* internalize the right moral principles and attitudes.
 - (4) This is just to say, we should cultivate a moral character (or *jen*).

Confucianism: some comments

- Regarding the importance of moral principles (or *li*):
- (1) The cultivation of moral character will first require an explicit formulation of the relevant end and the means to that end for any given type of action (of moral significance), or of actions in general.
- (2) There will be better or worse ends for our (morally significant) actions.
- (3) When we have a choice between better and worse ends (for our [morally significant] actions), we should choose those which are better.

Confucianism: some comments

- (4) There will also be better or worse ways to realize the relevant end (of our [morally significant] actions).
- (5) We ought to follow the better ways to realize the relevant end (of our [morally significant] actions).
- (6) To successfully achieve (1), (3) and (5) we require relatively detailed instructions or guidelines.
- (7) This is just to say, to successfully achieve (1), (3) and (5) we require relatively detailed principles or maxims of action (i.e. *li*).

Confucianism: some comments

- **Regarding the importance of filial piety (or *hsiao*):**
- Arguably, Confucius' emphasis of *hsiao* reflects a particular model of (i) **the moral subject/agent** and (ii) **moral reasoning.**
- In **Western moral philosophy** the view of the **moral subject/agent** that has been dominant since at least the late Eighteenth or early Nineteenth Century C.E. is that of **the self interested, autonomous subject.**

Confucianism: some comments

- The model of **moral reasoning** that has been dominant in **Western moral philosophy** since at least the late Eighteenth or early Nineteenth Century C.E. is **economic in nature**. More specifically, one adopts the view of a self interested, autonomous subject competing with moral equals to have her interests met, but in an environment of limited (or scarce) resources.
- This model favors rational calculi that aid you in maximizing your (basic) interests while at the same time respecting the analogous interests of your moral equals.

Confucianism: some comments

- Confucius view of the moral subject/agent is **not** of one who is essentially self-interested.
- Humans are, for Confucius, **peculiarly social beings** who realize their full humanity through self-cultivation with an eye to their relationships with, and proper conduct towards, others (i.e. other humans).
- Part of what *makes* us people of *jen* is our conduct, and demeanor, or our relations with others (i.e. other humans). **To be fully human in this sense is to be rightly disposed towards our fellow human** (this right disposition will include genuine care for another's well-being). Remember here the elements of the pictogram for *jen* mentioned in the last class.

Confucianism: some comments

- Confucius' model of **moral reasoning** is **filial in nature**. More specifically, you adopt the view that each member of your moral community is deserving of the kinds of respect, loyalty, compassion and love you accord to your various family members (an important assumption here is that you have a functional family and you are well disposed to your relatives).
- According to Confucius, our actions ought to be ordered by considerations for our own welfare/well being **AND** the welfare/well being of those moral equals affected by said actions, where our welfare/well being *cannot be understood independently of* realizing our full moral potential (or *jen*).

Confucianism: some comments

- Regarding the importance of ‘righteousness’ (or *yi*):
- Arguably, an emphasis on ‘righteousness’ arises from (1) judgments about what kinds of action are morally praiseworthy and (2) the desirability of certain kinds of moral agents.
- Regarding (1): You might believe that only those actions where the agent was motivated by the rightness of said actions, rather than their expediency or utility, are properly praiseworthy.
- Regarding (2): You might believe that it is better to be in a community of agents who *reliably* order their behavior according to what actions are right, than it is to be in a community of agents who sometimes, or even often, so order their behavior.

Confucianism: Good governance

- Not much needs to be said about Confucius' view of good governance over and above what Koller himself says.
- A good ruler: (1) will inspire good behavior in his subjects through being a man of *jen*, (2) will ensure that those in his court, administration, and lower political positions (or positions of power) act in accord with *li*, and (3) will ensure that the relevant social institutions encourage and facilitate the cultivation of *jen*, or at the very least encourage actions in accord with *li*, among the general populace (*Asian Philosophies*, pp.276-77).

Confucianism: Good governance

- Note how different this vision of good governance is from our *typical* systems of governance.
- The ways in which we are *often* governed reflect the concerns of our political representatives to satisfy **the perceived needs of** the electorate in ways that **do not alienate** the more powerful members of private society or their core support in the populace.
- **There is also a cost to Confucius' vision of good governance.** He advocates the view that a good government inspires, encourages, even ensures, moral behavior among its subjects. We know from our own political history that this is a treacherous road on which to embark.

Confucianism: Good governance

- Some consequences of being a good ruler (according to Confucius): (1) He will not need to depend on the harsh enforcement of law and order in maintaining social harmony and peace, (2) the society under his rule will be harmonious and peaceful, (3) the populace will trust those in positions of power and leadership, (4) those in positions of power and leadership will be loyal to their superiors and just to those under their charge (*Asian Philosophies*, p.280).