

SESSION 6 CONFUCIAN MORAL EPISTEMOLOGY

SESSION 6-1 CONFUCIAN UNDERSTANDING OF DAO AND NATURE



DIFFERENT BETWEEN CONFUCIAN AND WESTERN EPISTEMOLOGY

- The *Analects* are centrally concerned with the nature of human happiness, the relation of the individual to the state, and the ideal for humans.
- Western philosophers regard these issues as centrally concerned with the search for truth.
- This search for truth receives no mention in the *Analects*, nor is there any developed epistemology aimed at securing truth as a goal.
- **Why does this search for truth apparently play no role for Confucius?**
- **What is it about his philosophy that makes the search for truth so unimportant?**

THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH IS CENTRAL TO WHAT CONFUCIUS TAUGHT

- Confucius was an educator, and believed that society should reflect the Dao (the ultimate truth) as manifest in human virtues, and that genuine learning proceeded from this practice. The sage is often referred to as one who completely abides the Dao,.
- Confucian notions of truth, is that truth is believed to be realized through a inward seeking of innate nature and outward examination of social and natural phenomenon
- Human can exist as part of the Dao and thus have direct access to the Dao although any explanation of the Dao and its workings serves us only as it simply points our attention to it to be conceived by us directly.
- Why Confucius emphasized practicing virtue as opposed to making extensive arguments about 'what' that truth is, because through practice harmonious with the Dao one can realize it for themselves.

Dao in Daoism	Dao in Confucianism
Dao of Nature	Tian Dao= Way of Heaven= Way of Heaven and Earth Ren Dao = Way of Humans
Dao of Nature: Spontaneity, naturally formed	Dao of Heaven: Moral, religious as well as naturalistic
Dao is the root and source of myriad thing: Dao give birth to the One, the One to the Two, and the Two to the Three, and the Three to the Myriad thing. Dao is the natural law Dao is the nature and essence of everything Dao is manifested into all beings Dao is the Dao of Yin and Yang Individual can experience Dao through meditation and self cultivation When Dao is obtained by individual, one can realize all one's potentials Yin-yang are the two equal force with different function that all necessary for the development of the universe.	Dao is the natural law as well as the Way of humans = way of harmony The principle of Heaven is guidance of humans Since Human moral principles came from the Way of Heaven, therefore is the truth can not be violate Since Human nature is connected to the nature of the Dao, therefore, humans can know the way of heaven through sincerity to observe nature, human society as well as personal meditation. Yin-yang has different function as well as different position, that is heaven is above and earth is below. So female should follow the male

Daoist understanding of nature/ human nature	Confucian understanding of nature/human nature
Nature = The nature = universe, it is the manifestation of the Dao, Dao permeate into every being become its innate nature Nature shows the perfect order and best operational principle It shows the best function/performance of the material world, It is the best example of harmony of diversity, e.g. It is show a perfect example of how individual can fulfil its own destiny in keeping harmony with others.	Nature is the material world = the Nature It is self orientated and determined by its inner power and endorsed by Heaven Natural operational principle is the learning source of human society due to its virtues of harmony and sincerity
Human Nature = Manifestation of the Dao in Humankind Human Innate nature= Human True Nature has connection with the Dao, So human individual can through inward seeking of one's own innate nature to experience and obtain the Dao Human life is treasure due to it is comprised by the balance of Yin and Yang	Human Nature has no orientation, it can be good, but also can be bad depending on personal choose and social influence (Confucius) Human Nature is good because it is naturally has moral intension and potential (Mencius, and School of Mind/heart) Human Moral Nature is an acquired nature for the establishment of society. Original human nature has a potential to become bad. (Xunzi)

TIAN DAO (WAY OF HEAVEN) AND HUMAN NATURE

- Confucian understanding of both Religious Tian and Moral Tian have presumption that Dao of Tian or the Way of Heaven are manifested in human nature
- Even Rational and Naturalistic Confucians all believe that human nature are connected with human nature because Qi is the transformation of Dao and foundation and essence of humans, since everything is compromised by Qi.
- **Why human different from other beings is because:**
- Human endorsed with balanced of turbid Qi and clarity Qi
- They have intelligent to know the world and to form the human society through establishing morality

SESSION 6-2 DAO IS KNOWABLE

- Dao is connected with moral truth:
- Truth of the natural and human world is knowable: The Book of Change is to predict and foresee the further of events and human affairs developments
- Moral truth can be internal experienced and recognized through connecting to individual innate nature exercises, such as purifying one's heart, sincerely internal cultivation, meditation

WHY THE WAY OF HEAVEN CAN BE KNOWABLE?

- Dao of tian manifests xing (human nature)
- The way of humans should be in accordance with the way of heaven
- If only humans can observe the human's good nature/innate nature, the way of heaven will be known.
- The process of human observing the nature and doing things according to the nature is the process of learning and education.
- Sincerity is the ensurance to secure humanity to find the innate nature, which is also the way of heaven.



MORAL EPISTEMOLOGY IN THE BOOK OF THE MEAN

- 天命之谓性，率性之谓道，修道之谓教 (mission/destiny of heaven is called Xing; in accordance with xing is called Dao, cultivating Dao is called Education)
- What Heaven has conferred is called the Nature(Xing); an accordance with this nature is called The Path of Duty (Dao). The regulation of this path is called Instruction(jiao). (James Legge trans: chapter one)
- 道也者，不可须臾离也 Dao is something you cannot left for even an instant.
- 喜怒哀乐之未发谓之中，发而皆中节谓之和。中也者，天下之大本也；和也者，天下之达道也。致中和，天地位焉，万物育焉。
- While there are no stirrings of pleasure, anger, sorrow, or joy, the mind may be said to be in the state of Equilibrium. When those feelings have been stirred, and they act in their due degree, there ensure what may be called the state of Harmony. This Equilibrium is the great root from which grow all the human actings in the world, and this Harmony is the universal path which they all should pursue. (James Legge trans: chapter one)
- 子曰，道不远人。人之为道而远人，不可以谓道。（chapter 12）
- The Master said, 'The path (Dao) is not far from man. When men try to pursue a course, which is far from the common indications of consciousness, this course cannot be considered THE PATH (Dao)' (James Legge trans)



SINCERITY, KNOWING, EDUCATION IN THE BOOK OF THE MEAN

- 诚者，天之道也；诚之者，人之道也。诚者，不勉而中，不思而得，从容中道，圣人也；诚之者，择善而固执之者也。博学之，审问之，慎思之，明辨之，笃行之。 Chapter 19
- Sincerity is the Way of Heaven. The attainment of sincerity is the way of men. He who possesses sincerity is he who without an effort, hits what is right, and apprehends, without the exercise of thought; ---he is the sage who naturally and easily embodies the right way. He who attains to sincerity is he who chooses what is good, and firmly holds it fast.
- To this attainment there are requisite the extensive study of what is good, accurate inquiry about it, careful reflection on it, the clear discrimination of it, and the earnest practice of it.
- 自诚明，谓之性；自明诚，谓之教。诚则明矣。明则诚矣。（chapter 21）
- When we have intelligence resulting from sincerity, this condition is to be ascribed to nature; when we have sincerity resulting from intelligence, this condition is to be ascribed to instruction. (James Legge)

HEART, NATURE AND HEAVEN IN THE BOOK OF MENCIUS

- 尽其心者，知其性也；知其性，则知天也（孟子，尽心上）
- Mencius said: he who has exhausted all his mental constitution knows his nature. Knowing his nature, he knows heaven (book VII, chapter I)
- 存其心，养其性，所以事天也。夭寿不贰修身以俟之，所以立命也。
- To preserve one's mental constitution, and nourish one's nature, is the way to serve Heaven. When neither a premature death nor long life causes a man any double-mindedness, but he waits in the cultivation of his personal character for whatever issue; --this is the way in which he establishes his heaven-ordained being. (7A:1:2-3)
- 孟子曰，万物皆备于我矣，反身而诚，乐莫大焉。
- Mencius said, All things are already complete in us. There is no greater delight than to be conscious of sincerity on self-examination. (Book 7A, chapter IV)
- 孟子曰：人之所不学而能者，其良能也；所不虑而之者，其良知也。孩提之童，无不知爱其亲也；及其长也，无不知敬其兄也。亲亲，仁也；敬长，义也。无他，达之天下也。
- Mencius said: The ability possessed by men without having been acquired by learning is intuitive ability, and the knowledge possessed by them without the exercise of thought is their intuitive knowledge. Children carried in the arms all know to love their parents, and when they are grown a little, they all know to love their elder brothers. Filial affection for parents is the working of benevolence. Respect for elders is the working of righteousness. There is no other reason for these feelings;--- they belong to all under heaven (7A: 15:1--3)



HEART, NATURE IN NEO-CONFUCIANISM OF SONG(960-1279) AND MING (1368-1644) DYNASTIES

- **Lu Jiuyuan:** 宇宙便是吾心，吾心即是宇宙 (the universe is my heart/mind and my heart is the universe) . It means the principle, essence of the objective universe is actually the truth of the subjective thought.
- 人皆有是心，心皆具是理，心即理也 (Every body has such a heart/mind, and all heart possesses such kind of truth, therefore Heart-Mind is the Principle /Truth)
-
- **Wang Yangming:** 心外无物 Nothing exists beyond the mind' is an important idea of Wang Yangming's mind learning system.
- Examination on heart is one important way to knowing moral truth

SESSION 6-3 EXAMINATION ON THE MORAL DIMENSION OF CONFUCIANISM

- Morality has been characteristics of Confucian theory and practice.
- It was on the foundation of Confucianism that various codes of moral life, rules of propriety, patterns of behaviour and guidelines for social and daily life were produced and enhanced.
- Confucianism underlined, and will continue to underline, the basic structure of society and community, to orient the life of the people and to define their moral standards and ethical ideal in most parts of East Asian.
- Mencius: 吾日三省吾身
- Story of Zhuxi: Observing/examining the bamboos
- Story of Wang Yangming: ill after 7 days examining Bamboos



SELF CULTIVATION IN CONFUCIAN MORAL EDUCATION

- *The Great Learning* :
- what the Great Learning teaches, is to illustrate **illustrious virtue**(明德); to renovate the people and to **rest in the highest excellence** (止于至善) .
- The point **where to rest** being known (知止) , the object of pursuit is then **determined** (有定) ; and that being determined, a **calm unperturbedness** (能静) may be attained to. To that calmness there will be success a **tranquil repose** (能安) . In that repose there may be **careful deliberation** (能虑) , and that deliberation will be followed by the **attainment of the desired end** (能得) .
- (James Legge, Chapter 1-2)

IMPORTANT OF SELF CULTIVATION

- The Ancients who wished to illustrate illustrious virtue throughout the kingdom, first ordered well their own states. Wishing to order well their states, they first regulated their families. Wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated their persons. Wishing to cultivate their persons, they first rectified their hearts. Wishing to rectify their hearts, they first sought to be sincere in their thoughts. Wishing to be sincere in their thoughts, they first extended to utmost their knowledge. Such extension of knowledge lay in the investigation of things.
- Things being investigated, knowledge became complete. Their knowledge being complete, their thoughts were sincere. Their thought being sincere, their hearts were then rectified. Their hearts being rectified, their persons were cultivated. Their persons being cultivated, their families were regulated. Their families regulated, their states were rightly governed. Their states being rightly governed, the whole kingdom was made tranquil and happy.
- From the Son of Heaven down to the mass of the people, all must consider the cultivation of the person the root of everything besides. (James Legge, Great Learning, Chap I: 4-6)



SESSION 6-4 CONFUCIANISM AS SYSTEM OF MORALITY

- Considering the central position of morality in Confucianism and the significance of Confucian ethics for society,
- some Western scholars have concluded that the dimension is so essential for Confucianism that Confucianism itself can be defined as a form of ethics
- (see Needham, 1970:24-5; Zaehner, 1988:370; Tu *et al.*, 1992:40)

CONFUCIANISM AND OTHER MORAL SYSTEMS

- As a moral tradition, Confucianism demonstrates many features in common with other moral systems in the world:
- It emphasis on both deontological and consequentialistic and
- It is a system of virtue ethics

CONFUCIANISM IS BOTH DEONTOLOGICAL AND CONSEQUENTIAL

- Confucius took a holistic view of a person and believed that if we looked at how a person acted, examined his motives and his tastes, then it would be impossible for the person to conceal his real character from us (*lunyu*, 2:10).
- Confucius repeatedly taught that while it was important to observe ancient rituals strictly, it was even more important to have a sincere heart and a devoted spirit (*Lunyu* 3:3).
- Confucian ethics emphasizes that both inner motive and its external results must be taken into account when we evaluate a person or his/her conduct.
- In this sense, it is both deontological (义务) and consequential.

CONFUCIANISM IS VIRTUAL ETHICS

- Confucian morality revolves around family relationships, especially around the relationships between parents and children, between elder and younger brothers, and between husband and wife.
- In these relationships, the primary emphasis is put on fulfilling responsibilities to each other with a sincere and conscientious heart.
-
- However, Confucian ethics is not confined to the family. It takes family virtues as the cornerstones of social order and world peace.
- In the light of such points, some modern philosophers believe that the way by which the Confucian moral system was established is similar to that of virtue ethics.

THE SIMILARITY BETWEEN CONFUCIAN VIRTUE ETHICS AND THAT OF OTHERS

- Moral instruction and ethical persuasion employed by Confucius and Mengzi are even said to be able to provide radical alternative to the Aristotelian and Thomistic paradigms most often involved in the West (Nivision, 1996:2).
- As a system of virtue ethics, Confucianism is said to point to a solution for social problems arising from the lack of virtues and from the lack of will to practice virtues.
- With respect to the lack of virtues, the Confucian solution is to follow the path of self-cultivation and education.

THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CONFUCIAN VIRTUE ETHICS AND THAT OF OTHERS

- There is no question that Confucianism is oriented towards morality and that ethics is the central part of its theory and practice, but what is meant by morality in Confucianism is in fact quite different from that in Western ethics, because Confucian ethics are not only about what we mean by 'moral issues', but also about politics, religion, education, psychology and metaphysics.
- As morality is integrated with religion and politics, moral virtues become essential both for governing and for religious activities. As religion and metaphysics are part of morality, religious ritual and practice are a way of moral improvement. (custom of moral conduct recording in Chinese religions)
- Taking these into account, we have to say that since Confucianism contains a special kinds of morality and since Confucian ethics cover a much wider area than in the West, it would be misleading simply to define Confucianism as a moral system.