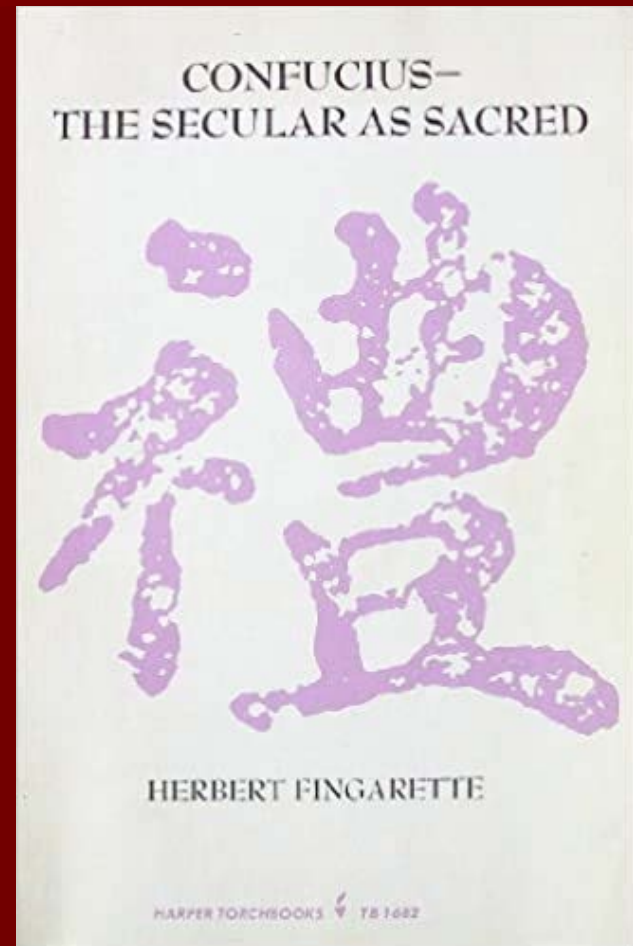
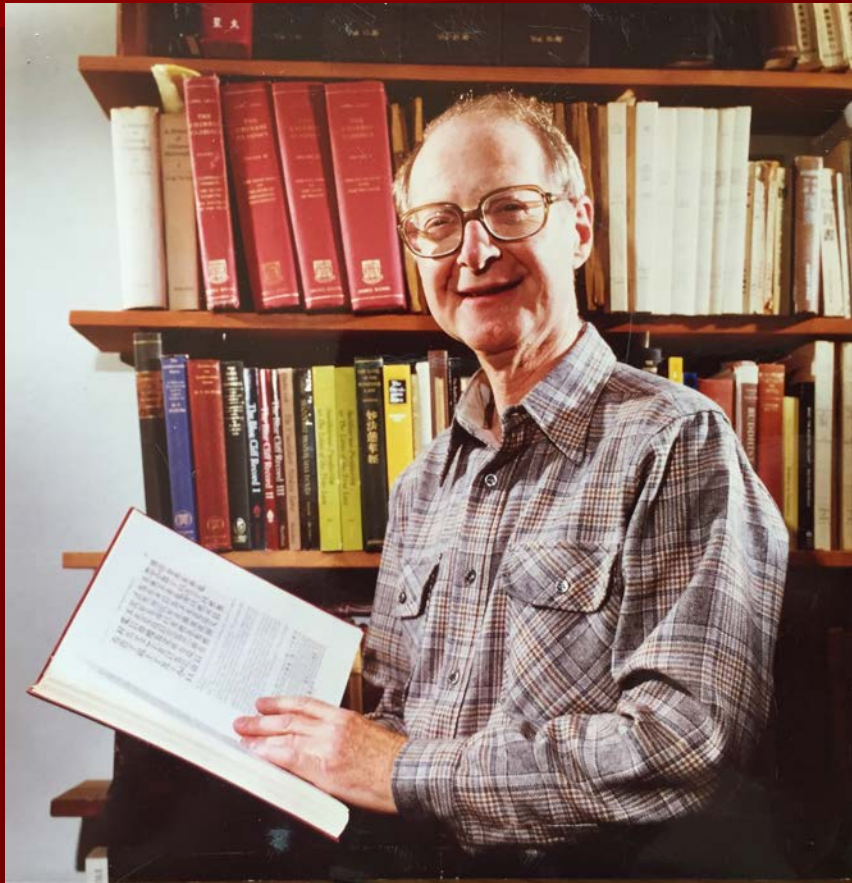


Chinese Conceptions of the Self

Lecture 2: The Locus of the Personal:
Understanding *li* 禮 and *ren* 仁

Herbert Fingarette (1921-2018)

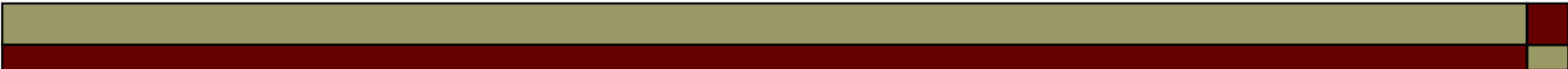


The Five Behaviours ('virtues')

- Five behaviors of the gentleman most central to the *Analects* are
 - benevolence (*ren* 仁)
 - righteousness (*yi* 義)
 - ritual propriety (*li* 禮)
 - wisdom (*zhi* 智)
 - trustworthiness (*xin* 信)

Confucius' main concerns

- ❑ *li* rituals/rites as tradition (socio-historical aspect)
- ❑ The pattern of overt behaviour, *li* as a set of rules that mould human actions
- ❑ Actions and how they relate to roles (“Let the father be a father; the son be a son;...”)
- ❑ The personal side of actions, especially those directed to or acted jointly with other human beings. Though personal, actions can be observed and are thus objective (e.g., a musical performance; we can observe liveliness of interpretation, hesitation etc. *in* the performance)



False assumptions

- ❑ Self as a room where virtues dwell
- ❑ Self as an enactor of rules
- ❑ Self as an aggregation of social rules

But

- ❑ Confucius' ideas involve a substantial and characteristic self; distinctive in itself and contributive to community and world at large

Person as the interplay between rites and personal orientation

li 禮 “sacred ceremonies”

- Traditional **social pattern** of conduct and relationships
- Particular exemplifying the rites
- Overt, distinguishable pattern of behaviour
- *Li* must be learned
- Example: greeting appropriate to a given social situation
- “it is ... in the medium of ceremony that the peculiarly human part of our life is lived” (Fingarette)
- Ability to act according to *li* and to submit to *li* are essential to human virtue and power

ren 仁 “humaneness”

- Oriented **toward person** who pursues or acts out *li*
- Expresses the orientation or concern of the actor in a given act; it is particular and unique to the person and the situation
- It does not refer to attitudes, feelings, wishes, motives (the internal psyche of the actor)
- Refers to the shaping of oneself in *li*
- BUT, referring to a person is not the same as referring to a person’s inner mental or psychic state
- The notion of a person’s inner psyche did not occur to Confucius
- Power of *ren* results from the directedness (vectoredness) of an action. Image of the vector.

ren 仁 has vector qualities

SCALAR AND VECTOR

 **BYJU'S**
The Learning App



SCALAR

A scalar is a quantity that is fully described by a magnitude only. It is described by just a single number. Some examples of scalar quantities include speed, volume, mass and time.



VECTOR

A vector is a quantity that has both a magnitude and a direction. Vector quantities are important in the study of motion. Some examples of vector quantities include force, velocity, acceleration and momentum.