

Confucius Life, Literature And Thoughts: An Ethical Study

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Abstract

The objective of this paper is to compare Confucian life, literature, and moral thoughts to how they should live ethically. It will show that, despite decades of history separating them, they both embody the same worldview. The paper begins by introducing the reader to Chinese government history and Confucius' time as a teacher. It will then go into greater detail on the significance of comprehending his point of view and moral beliefs, as well as their impact on China's political and cultural growth. It will next look at five Confucian precepts on social action in order to help you live your best life.

First and foremost, it is critical to study about Confucius' life and the impact he had on Chinese civilization and eastern philosophy, which is based on the fundamental concept that humans are fundamentally good. Education, self-reflection, and discipline could help to develop and actualize this inherent goodness. Ceremonies, music, archery, characterisation, writing, and mathematics are among the six arts that can be studied to improve one's character. Despite humanity's inherent goodness, Confucius had to deal with reality. He wondered if it was ever possible to fully achieve the status of a true gentleman. Finally, given this information, one can consider Confucius' teachings and compare them to modern theories.

Key Words: Confucius Philosophy, life, education, development and moral activity

Objectives:

Confucianism is a Chinese ethical and philosophical framework based on the teachings of Confucius (551–479 BC), a Chinese philosopher. It concentrates on human morals and appropriate behaviour. And it's a complicated system of moral, social, political, philosophical, and quasi-religious philosophy that's had a huge impact on East Asian culture and history. Because of government promotion of Confucian ideals, it may be considered a state religion in some East Asian countries. You should be able to grasp the following by the end of this unit:

- The life of Confucius • sacred texts of Confucianism • Confucian worldview • cult of

Confucius • sacrificial rites and feasts • ethical teachings • social philosophy • views on education.

Introduction

Confucianism, together with the other two formal traditions of Taoism and Buddhism, has long been one of China's most significant systems of thinking, and it continues to be a vital part of Chinese civilization. Each of the three had a religion and a philosophy founded on the worship of ancestors, personal deities, and local gods. The basic purpose of Chinese religion is to maintain sanctity through cultivating human-to-human and

human-to-nature harmony. Confucius, in particular, was concerned with achieving harmony in human society. Personal and governmental morality, correctness of social relationships, justice, and sincerity were all important aspects of his thought. Confucius' ideas have been developed into Confucianism, a philosophical system. Confucius' teachings and philosophy have had a lasting impression. The teachings and philosophy of Confucius have deeply influenced Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Taiwanese, and Vietnamese thought and life.

Life of Confucius

Confucius was a Chinese thinker and social philosopher who lived from 551 BC to 479 BC. Confucius was born in or around Qufu, in the Chinese State of Lu, in 551 BC, according to legend (now part of Shantung Province). Confucius is a Latinized version of Confucius. Kung Fut-tzu, which translates to "Master Kong" in Chinese, was his Chinese name. He lived near the period of Socrates and Plato, and was a contemporary of Gautama Buddha. Confucius was born into a wealthy but impoverished household. Confucius' father died when he was three years old, and his mother raised him in poverty. Confucius married Qi Quan, a young girl, when he was 19. Kong Li, their first kid, was born when she was 20 years old. Confucius worked as a shepherd, cowherd, clerk, and bookkeeper, according to legend. He became a teacher when he was twenty-two years old. Confucius' mother died when he was 23 years old. He quickly rose to prominence as a respected educator. Many people came to learn from him. His educational programme was built around moral education.

Moral Thoughts

The cornerstone of Confucian philosophy is the concept that man is fundamentally good. According to the Analects, "Is righteousness truly so far away?" asked the Master. If we truly want kindness, we should seek it out and find it". "Man's nature is naturally beneficial, just as water naturally flows downward," Mencius, a Confucian follower, goes on to say. Education, self-reflection, and discipline could help to develop and actualize this inherent goodness.

Ceremonies, music, archery, characterisation, writing, and mathematics are among the six arts that can be studied to improve one's character. Despite humanity's inherent goodness, Confucius confronted reality head on. He wondered if it was ever possible to fully achieve the status of a true gentleman. "I, for one, have never yet met one who truly cared about kindness, nor one who truly abhorred vice," Confucius said. "As for being a divine sage or simply a good guy," he added of himself, "far be it from me to make any such claim." "There are three methods of the true gentleman," the Master continued, "and I have yet to succeed in any of them." But, if man is good by nature, why can't we achieve what should be natural to us?

Ethics

Confucius' teachings emphasise three important concepts: the principles of Lǐ, Yì, and Rén, Lǐ. Propriety, reverence, civility, ritual, or the ideal standard of behaviour are some of the connotations of the term Lǐ. It is the ideal standard of religious, moral, and social conduct, according to Confucius. Lǐ is built on three key conceptual parts of life: ancestor and deity sacrifice ceremonies, social and political structures, and daily manners. According to Confucius, Lǐ is defined as proprietary rights or good manners. How you act in a relationship is determined by the concept of Lǐ. To put it another way, Lǐ can be compared to a person's morality. Morality determines how a person acts and reacts in specific situations, as well as how they view the world. Confucius promotes Lǐ as a necessary stepping stone to social harmony. Throughout Confucian philosophy, Lǐ is understood in a variety of ways. Confucius, the creator of Confucian philosophy, thinks that in order to acquire Lǐ, one must be sincere and true to oneself (Cheng). This belief in virtue as the foundation of morality expands even farther, to include its social implications. Confucius' teachings demonstrate that morality is rooted in a basic, secular, and unassuming approach toward life. Starting with being honest with oneself (Cheng). Lǐ: Some people believed that the Confucian ethical idea, as illustrated in Lǐ, came from the gods. Confucius took a more subtle approach. His theory focused on the evolution of humanity

through the deeds of wise leaders throughout human history, rather than its link to heaven. His talks on Lǐ appear to broaden the term to mean to any actions taken by an individual to build the ideal society, rather than just those that adhere to canonical ritual requirements. Though still tied to conventional modes of behavior, Lǐ evolved to represent a balance between upholding these norms in order to preserve an ethical social fabric and disregarding them in order to achieve ethical good in the early Confucian tradition. These ideas revolve around doing the right thing at the right time, and they are linked to the view that training in the Lǐ developed by previous sages cultivates virtues in people, including ethical judgement regarding when L must be altered in light of situational contexts.

Yì

Yì and Lǐ are closely associated words in early Confucianism. Yì can be translated as righteousness, but it could also just represent what is ethically best in a certain situation. The word contrasts with self-interested behavior. While pursuing one's own self-interest isn't inherently evil, one would be a better, more virtuous person if one's existence was centered on following a path that benefited the larger good, as an effect of y. doing the right act for the right purpose is what this is all about. This concept is frequently used in opposition to personal gain or profit. In contrast to egoism, it refers to the correct behavior principle. It's similar to a justice principle in terms of what actions one should take to comply or conform to it. The foundation of Y is reciprocity. 7 Rén Y is linked to the core value of rén, just as behaviour according to L should be altered to correspond to the desire of adhering to y. Rén is the virtue of properly fulfilling one's responsibilities toward others, and it is most typically translated as "benevolence," "humaneness," or "goodness," with additional meanings such as "authoritativeness" and "selflessness" being proposed. Rather than divinely set norms, Confucius' moral system was built on empathy and knowledge of others. Living by the rules of y was preferable to developing one's spontaneous rén reactions so that they could naturally direct action. Another Confucian version of the Golden Rule was employed to

enhance rén's attentiveness: one must always treat others as one would want others to treat oneself. Virtue, according to Confucius, is founded on harmony with others, which is achieved by this form of ethical practice and a developing identification of one's own and others' interests.

Confucius' Social Philosophy

The concept of ren, or "compassion" or "loving others," is central to Confucius' social philosophy. It is necessary to degrade oneself in order to cultivate or practise such care for others. This meant avoiding flowery language or an ingratiating demeanour that could give the wrong impression and lead to self-aggrandizement. On the other hand, those who have cultivated ren are "simple in behavior and sluggish in speaking". Confucius demonstrates his compassion for others by following variations of the Golden Rule: "Do not do to others what you do not wish for yourself". "If you want to be in a position to help others, then do so. If you want to be successful, then assist others in achieving it". He considers loyalty to parents and older siblings to be the most basic type of putting others' needs before of one's own, and he teaches that such altruism can only be achieved by those who have acquired self-discipline. Studying and mastering li, the ritual forms and principles of propriety by which one demonstrates respect for superiors and enacts his function in society in such a way that he himself is deserving of respect and admiration, is an important part of learning self-restraint. Everything one says and does should be guided by a sense of propriety: look at nothing in defiance of ritual; listen to nothing in defiance of ritual; speak about nothing in defiance of protocol; never move hand or foot in defiance of ritual. However, submitting to ritual does not imply denying one's impulses; rather, it entails learning to harmonies one's own desires with those of one's family and community. Confucius and many of his followers believe that humans learn the importance of social structures that enable an orderly society by experiencing desires. Confucius' emphasis on ritual does not imply that he was a zealous ceremonialist who believed that ceremonies of worship and social exchange must be performed perfectly at any costs. Confucius, on the other hand, taught that ceremonial

etiquette meant nothing if one did not have a deep awareness of others' well-being and interests. Confucius' suggestion that the rites not be considered as mere forms, but rather be performed with total devotion and sincerity, was also significant. "He [Confucius, for example] sacrificed to the dead as if they were present". As if the ghosts were present, he offered sacrifices to them. "I consider my absence at the sacrifice as though there were no sacrifice", the Master responded. Ren, on the other hand, is to be practiced extensively and informs one's dealings with all people. While ritual forms often have to do with the more narrow relationships of family and clan, ren is to be practiced broadly and informs one's connections with all people. Confucius warns persons in positions of power not to oppress or dismiss even the most minor of their subjects. "You can take the commander of the Three Armies, but you can't take the opinion of the poorest peasant". Love for others, according to Confucius, is a vocation and a purpose for which one should be willing to die.

Confucius and Literature

Confucius' philosophy is characterized by his emphasis on education and study. He mocks those who believe in intuition or natural understanding, arguing that the only way to truly comprehend a subject is to study it for a long time. Finding a good instructor and imitating his words and acts is what Confucius meant by studying. An excellent instructor is someone who is older and more versed with historical customs and practices. Confucius' attitude appears to be a medium ground between studying and meditating on what one has learnt, notwithstanding his occasional warnings against excessive reflection and meditation. "He who learns without thinking is lost." "Whoever thinks but does not learn is putting himself at grave risk". Confucius is claimed to have taught a total of three thousand students, but only seventy are said to have genuinely mastered the arts he admired. Confucius is happy to teach anyone, regardless of social status, if they are eager and persistent. He instilled morality, proper speech, government, and the great arts in his students. While he emphasizes the "Six Arts"—ritual, music, archery, chariot-riding, calligraphy, and

computation—it is evident that morality is his primary concern. The instructional methods of Confucius are remarkable. He never goes into great detail about a topic. Instead, he asks questions, references classic passages, and draws appropriate analogies, then waits for his students to come up with the correct answers. "I only teach those who are interested and educate those who are zealous. I do not continue with the lesson if I hold up one corner and a pupil cannot return with the other three".

Conclusion

Paper concluded is worship, sacrifice to ancestral spirits and an abstract heavenly deity, and the deification of ancient kings, including Confucius himself, are all examples of Confucianism. All of these characteristics may be traced back to non-Confucian Chinese beliefs that predate Confucius. Confucianism is not regarded as a religion by Chinese or other East Asians in general. Many religions are stigmatized as superstitious, illogical, or incapable of dealing with modernity, which may explain some of this attitude. Confucians, on the other hand, argue that Confucianism is a moral code or intellectual viewpoint rather than a religion. The distinction between religion and philosophy is significantly more hazy in non-Western ideas. The bulk of Western distinctiveness is a comparatively new development, owing to Western Europe's singular Enlightenment period. This cultural diversity is accounted for in the majority of scholarly, comprehensive definitions of religion.

As a result, while Confucianism is not a religion by Western criteria (even by its adherents' standards), it is a religion in the East Asian sense of the word. If religion is defined as the worship of supernatural beings, then the response must be that Confucianism is both a religion and a way of life. Confucianism, on the other hand, very clearly qualifies as a religion if it is characterized as a belief system that contains moral attitudes, daily living guidance, systematic views of mankind and its place in the cosmos, and so on.

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