



Sample: Philosophy - Human Nature

Introduction

Confucius was a Chinese philosopher, teacher and politician who lived between 551 BC and 479 BC. He was the founder of Confucianism a religion whose philosophy put emphasize on government and personal morality, truthful social relationships, justice and honesty.

Confucianism has a basis in Chinese beliefs and traditions. Confucius' teachings emphasized family loyalty, the children respecting the elders, the worship of the ancestors and respect of wives to their husbands (Creel, 1949). His ideal government was the one that was founded on family. Confucius' Golden Rule was "Do not do to others what you do not want done to yourself."

Human nature

According to Chin, (2007), the sole purpose of a person's life is to attain the potential peak as a human being. They argue that one can become a perfect human being through self-cultivation which can be achieved through the possession of virtues in basic human life and activities such as minding one's speech, actions, hearing and sight. The teachings insist that a person is not supposed to look, listen, talk or do anything that is opposing the ritual propriety (Hobson, 2004).

The teachings relate that there are two kinds of human beings that are very different from one another. Although all human beings are the same when born, their difference starts to show when they grow and develop. These types of people are the junzi and the xiaoren whereby the junzi is the good or the profound person while xiaoren is always referred to the small person. The difference between the two is that the junzi understands and lives a moral life while the xiaoren understands and lives a proceeding life (Eno, 1990).



The profound person patents the quality of righteousness and co-humanity in his life while the small person is merely an individual who has not yet embraced the qualities of righteousness and co-humanity. Confucian scholars argue that all human beings have the potential of becoming the profound person. The quality of co-humanity simply means how two individuals can treat each other. Zhi, yi, li, ren are some of the main concepts and practices of ethics that Confucius taught. Zhi refers to a person's ability to see other people's behavior, the good and the bad in life. Li is the ritual norms that determine how a person is supposed to carry himself or herself, while yi is the disposition of righteousness and the moral to do what is good in life. Ren refers to the obligation that an individual has on doing what is humane to other people. In Confucianism, there are consequences for the failure of supporting the moral values of yi and ren (Fingerette, 1972).

Confucian ethics

These ethics are considered humanistic and can be followed and practiced by all the people in a society. The ethics are portrayed as the promotion of virtues that comprise of five elements which are the integrity, humanity, justice, propriety and knowledge which are usually accompanied by loyalty, continence and righteousness. Human nature comprises of many other virtues such as honesty, forgiveness and kindness, modesty, reverence, kind heart, bravery, sense of right and wrong, honesty and cleanliness (Eno, 1990).

Core virtues

According to Confucianism human being's core virtues are humanity, loyalty and filial piety. In Confucianism, humanity is perceived as an external expression of Confucian ideals. A



simple example is an adult's instinct to protect a child in distress even though the child is not his. Confucius defined humanity as the action of one searching to establish himself and also to establish other people and also trying to better himself and also to better other people. The philosopher says that humanity is not something that cannot be achieved because whoever is looking for humanity has surely found it since humanity is always with a person and rarely does it leave. Loyalty is specifically important to the Confucians in the social class because the prominence of a young scholar could only be achieved through entering the civil service of the ruler (Chin, 2007).

Confucius himself never believed that the ruler is always right. Rather that he has to be respected and obeyed because of his morality. However, loyalty is not subservience to the authority because the ruler is expected to reciprocate the respect. In view of politics, Confucianism believes that a leader must accept the counsel of his advisory because this counsel will help the ruler to govern his people well. Filial piety is the respect of one's ancestors and parents or general obedience to other people. It entails being kind to one's parents, be of good conduct towards the parents and outside the home, performing one's job well hence gaining material wealth to help the parents, pouring libation to the ancestors, showing respect and love, being courteous, bringing forth heirs, bringing peace among relatives, being sorrowful after the dead of parents and ultimately offering sacrifices.

Many Confucian scholars believe that loyalty and filial piety will conflict with one another at some point especially if there is social chaos (Hobson, 2004).



Societal harmony

Peace and harmony in the society, results from a person knowing his responsibility and place in the society and responding to them effectively. Confucius said that for there to be harmony in the society, the ruler must be the ruler, the advisory must be the advisory, the parent must be the parent, and the child must be the child. Every person has a duty to fulfill in the society, the young in relation to the older and the older in relation to the young ones. In Confucianism, the young owe reverence to the old and the old owe concern to the young, just the way a wife owes reverence to her husband and the husband owes concern to his wife (Creel, 1949).

Conclusion

The ideal personality results from wisdom, though it is difficult to become a profound person without self-cultivation. Confucius has created the concept of the profound person possessing qualities which anyone can develop. Profound personality is characterized by contentment in life, hard work, less talk, loyalty, knowledge and obedience. Humanity is the most important element of profound personality.



Reference

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