**Virtue: Confucius and Aristotle**

1. Structural similarity between virtue and ren
   1. Both used to describe “manhood”.
   2. Different uses for the two terms
      1. Ren is composed of two components: “human” and “two” which points to human relationships
      2. Arete associated with *aristos*, meaning “exellent or “best”; virtue is relative to its own proper function or *ergon.*
   3. Two characteristics of *Ren*:
      1. “To love man” and “To return to li”
      2. Neither is a complete notion of human goodness
      3. Conformity to *li* without inner feeling can only be a formality
      4. Love without learning and embodying *li* is foolishness.
   4. Two kinds of Virtue
      1. Intellectual virtue: “the soul’s activity that expresses reason” (reason in itself)
      2. Ethical Virtue: “not without the reason” (nonrational but obeys reason)
      3. Human good is the soul’s activity that expresses virtue
      4. Reason does not distinguish human good from human evil
         1. Ethical virtue is concerned with character, informed by social and cultural customs
         2. Man is a rational and a social animal
      5. Virtue makes the goal correct, and practical wisdom makes what promotes the goal
   5. How an individual behaves in society should be a result of interplay between two different forces
2. Li, Ethos and Practical Wisdom
   1. Li: totality of acceptable social behavior patterns and lifestyles: moral and non-moral norms.
      1. Person must act in conformity with social norms and be accepted.
   2. Ethos: traditional social mores and cultural settings
   3. Ren as return to li means to be a person acceptable according to the Zhou li.
   4. The analects are a social hierarchy based on family relationships
      1. Society governed by a network of names which prescribe duties.
      2. If each would play their role suitable to their personage, society would be harmonious
   5. “To return” does not simply mean to go back, but to hold on to the authentic spirit of their culture.
   6. De is consequence of returning to li.
      1. Counterpart of Aristotle’s Ethical Virtue
      2. IF a person lives in accordance with li, he has de.
      3. Heaven is the author of de, and de is justified in the operation of heaven. (What does heaven ever say?)
      4. De of the gentleman sprouting from authentic ethos of the zhou li
      5. De of the small man sprouting from a non-authentic ethos.
   7. Aristotle’s ethos is not about simple conformity.
      1. Existing ends may be in conflict or not even good
      2. A good citizen changes accordingly
      3. It is our decisions that make the character we have.
   8. Practical Wisdom
      1. One must maintain a reflective attitude towards ethos in order to be a good person
         1. Helps understand why the behavior learned is really noble and true
         2. Proceeds from “that” (oti) to “why” (dioti)
      2. Does not merely say “why”, but is required to compare views of what goodness is and what is really good.
      3. Concerned with actions, which are always about the particulars.
   9. Li does not require us to maintain a critical attitude.
   10. Aristotle, in contrast to Confucius’ traditionalism, does not prescribe continuity and compliance with tradition.
   11. Yi (“righteousness”, “meaning” or “morality”)
       1. Opposition to personal advantage or profit
       2. Principle of justice or what action one should follow
       3. When a particular act lacks the guidance of the concrete li, we must follow the right (yi)
3. Filial Love and Self Love
   1. Confucius
      1. In returning to li, one must discipline the self
      2. Li is not something external that one ought to obey without regard to inner motivations.
         1. Ethics is not how we should be bounded, but how we can follow social rules willingly and naturally
      3. Ren is to love humanity.
         1. Based on Feeling one has towards parents and brothers
         2. Filial love as natural sentiment is inborn and not culturally specific
         3. Filial love is basis for willful acceptance of parental authority and hierarchy
         4. Filial love expands its roots throughout society
      4. One can only be good when one conforms to li out of love
         1. Keeps compliance with li from being externally imposed limitation
         2. Provides inner ground for altruism
         3. Individual should not love equally, but graded, depending on the societal roles
         4. If an ethos encourages the disruption of filial love, it is, for Confucius, the greatest evil
   2. Aristotle
      1. Social love and friendship are an extension of self-love
      2. All forms of love must be understood in context of self-love
      3. The good man is obedient to the voice of reason and sets his life accordingly.
      4. This understanding fails to explain altruism or acting for things other than their own ethical character.
4. Cultivation
   1. “To get” and “to have” both require ethical training and cultural refinement
      1. Confucius: Expanding filial love to society to be able to willingly accept li
         1. Cultivation is a process of education
         2. Jiaoyu (education) : “Teaching” and “nurturing”
         3. A person is required to respect those who teach him as father like.
         4. Society is an extended school and an extended family
         5. Single thread pervading Confucius’ dao:
            1. Zhong(doing one’s best)
            2. shu (do not do to others what you yourself do not desire.)
         6. Ren is the positive articulation of shu
         7. Single thread as treating others as one deals with parents and brothers.
      2. Aristotle: Habituation and development of practical wisdom
         1. Humans are not ethically good by nature
         2. Virtue is acquired by doing good things repeatedly
         3. Habit/ethos is the process of moderating desires and emotions toward appropriate objects
         4. Law has the power that compels. It must prescribe upbringing and practices.
         5. A character that is fond of what is fine and objects what is shameful can be taught through ethical argument
         6. Cultivating habituation is a process of acting in accordance with good instructions from one’s father and the laws of one’s community
         7. We cannot be a person of practical wisdom without being good
         8. A human being is a rational animal not merely a creature of habit
   2. Cultivation is lifelong before virtue can be internalized
   3. A state of character can be good because it aims at correct feeling and correct action, determined by practical wisdom
5. Synthesis
   1. Confucius and Ren
      1. Ren as love
      2. Ren as conforming to li
   2. Aristotle and Virtue
      1. Virtue as a state of character
      2. Virtue as exercising practical rationality
   3. Neither has been fully respected historically, and have both been respectfully severed pairs at points in history.