

Confucianism: sociology and ideal person

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Confucianism can be seen as a means to find the balance between opposing qualities that might otherwise lead to harmony. It divides people into categories, and builds relationships through rituals and ceremonies, assigning everyone a place in society and a proper form of behavior. The Five Great Relationships of Confucianism helps to signify those individuals must live up to their social role and status. But, personal excellence is manifested from the five virtues; Ren, Li, Shu, Xiao, and Wen. The Five Great Relationships are determined by personal factors; friendship or family connection, or by social factors; age or social status.

The Father-son is the core relationship, it represents all parent-child relationships. Parents are expected to help conform their child with education and are to help in the selection of career and marriage. Child is to be respectful and obey their parents as they will care for them in their old age. Elder brother- younger brother relationship is important as an older sibling is required to help raise the younger sibling which can be helpful in the event a parent passes away. Husband-wife relationship states that the husband is the authority figure and the protector and the wife is homemaker and mother.

Elder-younger says that older people are responsible for the youngest people, the younger people need care and formation as well as education. Ruler-subject is the role model to all other relationships, Confucianism states that social order begins in the home and extends outward. A ruler must act like a father, caring responsibly for subjects much like his children.

Confucianism ideal person can be formed by the five virtues as well. The virtues are comprised of love, education and forming unique talents but most

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importantly they consist of social virtues. Ren is a virtue that thinks of others.

It can be translated in many ways: kindness, thoughtfulness and human-heartedness. Li is translated into “ doing what is proper in the situation. It also refers too social activity and being respectful, knowing and using proper words for social actions. Shu is the affects your actions have in your social life. They call this the Silver Rule, hope that the individual will think about their actions in other’s viewpoint. Xiao is devotion that all members have to their family’s welfare. It is a way of being respectful to all members of the family, past, present, and future. The last virtue is Wen also known as “ culture. To have a well rounded education in the arts, a love and fondness for them.

Also to gain a skill in knowing have and understanding the beauty of arts many forms. Confucianism has many other virtues as well loyalty, hard work, honesty, and emotional control. In Western society we choose to focus on a social control from the heart where Confucianism is more focused on doing correctly in society. There are definitely more virtues and notions on how an individual should act towards each other and their society but these obligations help to form an ideal person in Confucianism views.