

Cultural Perspective: Confucianism

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We all have mobile devices and tablets with us every day, but how often do we use them to learn something new about the world we live in? Apart from googling tomorrow's weather, almost never. Let me fix this and discuss a rather obscure practice: Confucianism, which I thoroughly researched, having always had an interest in Chinese culture. Cultural practices have a significant impact on particular people's worldview, so it is important to understand them in a society as diverse as that of the US. In most cases, the notion of cultural practice encompasses customs, beliefs, and way of life. Confucianism is a philosophical practice that determines the Chinese attitude and approach to life. It is currently followed by many Chinese individuals and remains a way of life that most Chinese people hold dear to their hearts, as opined by Corsini, the author of the recent article "Filial piety in Buddhism" (2019). The central idea in Confucianism is filial piety, which refers both to respecting one's parents and practicing a level of humanness by caring for other people. Hence, I would like to start with the central concept of respect for parents and trace its general cultural influence.

The Confucian way of life strongly advocates for having respect for one's parents. Filial piety is considered the root of all Confucian values. For instance, filial piety gives way to what is considered brotherly love. This means that one man would respect another if they were brothers from the same mother, as argued by Corsini (2019). This notion is essential to understanding that the Chinese hold the virtues of respect for their superiors in regard equal to how they would respect their parents. Also, filial piety is demonstrated through ancestor worship. Confucian culture dictates that children love their parents while they are alive, and even after they die, they need to hold their memories in high esteem, as opined by Huang and Gove (2015). For instance,

ancestor worship is practiced through the worshipping of tablets kept at home. The other manifestation of the concept is rooted in religion and involves going to the graves of the dearly departed and praying for their souls in the afterlife. It was mainly done for both the recently departed and distant ancestors to appease their spirits. Therefore, filial piety is in fact the basis of the Chinese social hierarchy and worldview, but it also translates into other cultural concepts such as humaneness.

Equally important, the concept of humaneness was a core element of Confucianism's cultural practices among the Chinese. The understanding of Confucianism found in Corsini's article (2019) signifies that cultural practice encourages helping others to establish themselves to the same extent they would desire themselves. It means that helping others to succeed is a moral obligation that one man has for the other in Chinese culture. In other words, it involves judging others with the same methods or measures that would apply to oneself, as noted by Zhang (2015). This humaneness included the practice of goodness and benevolence. Operating according to the idea of charity, the cultural practice calls for a human being to do good works and treat others well in society.

Ladies and gentlemen, I would love to reiterate that culture dictates how people lead their lives. It determines their customs, heritage, and beliefs. In China, people adhere to Confucian principles. For instance, this culture champions filial piety whereby parents need to be given the uttermost respect of their children. In the event they die, they must be remembered through ancestor worship either through tables or grave worshipping. The outcome of the practice is humaneness through which society is expected to live in harmony, ensuring that every person is their brother's keeper. I believe that the short excursion we have now made will help us value

diversity more and understand several concepts of Chinese culture better. Overall, cultural practices are not only a way of life, but a means of providing continuity from one generation to another, as depicted in the Chinese way of life.

## References

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