



Is There a Confucian Perspective on Social Justice?

a talk by



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(Moderator: Dr. Loy Hui Chieh)

Abstract: In recent years there has been a growing interest among Chinese and western scholars in reconstructing Confucian philosophy for contemporary or comparative purposes. There have been interesting works examining the compatibility between Confucianism on the one hand and civil liberties and democracy on the other. However, the relation between Confucianism and justice was left relatively unexamined. This paper is an attempt to partially fill the gap. It aims to reconstruct early Confucian views of justice. My focus is not general justice or justice as a virtue, but distributive justice and social justice. The questions I want to discuss are: does Confucianism contain the concepts of distributive justice and social justice? Are there ethical principles governing the distribution of resources in Confucianism? Are they principles of justice, and, if so, are they still relevant and viable today

The Speaker: Joseph Cho-wai Chan received his B.Soc.Sc in politics from the Chinese University of Hong Kong, M.Sc in political philosophy from the London School of Economics and Political Science, and D.Phil. in political philosophy from the University of Oxford. He is Professor at the Department of Politics and Public Administration and Director of the Centre for Civil Society and Governance, The University of Hong Kong. His recent research interests include Confucian political philosophy, contemporary liberalism and political perfectionism, the theory and practice of human rights, and civil society and social cohesion. He has published articles in various journals, including *Ethics*, *History of Politics Thought*, *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, *Journal of Democracy*, *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies*, *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, and *Philosophy East and West*. He is co-editor of *Political Theory in China* (OUP, 2001, in Chinese). He is working on a book tentatively titled *Confucian Political Philosophy: A Critical Reconstruction for Modern Times*.

View Confucian Ethics Research Papers on Academia.edu for free. While our analysis does not wholly endorse any of the reconstructions, it shows that there is a richness and vitality to Confucian justice theory that merits proper consideration in justice theory conceived as a truly global and cosmopolitan discipline. Save to Library. by Tim Murphy. Islamic perspective on social justice is similar; one of the Five Pillars of Islam is that all must give to the poor. However, certain sects of Islam promote views of women and men as different; women are not equal to and are subservient to men. The postmodern critique on the idea of a just society provokes interesting debate. Can there ever be a just society? Can we ever view all people as inherently equal and entitled to the same rights and privileges? Wow to some of the comments. First of all, there is no such thing as social justice. There can only be justice and there are only individuals. Society is a fictional imaginary thing. As for a social contract, there is none. I don't remember ever signing one. Do you? Confucian Perfectionism critically reconfigures the Confucian political philosophy of the classical period for the contemporary era. This perspective is not unique to the study of Confucianism but common to much of the political theorizing carried out under the name of "political philosophy." Political philosophy has a dual character: viewed as a philosophical field of study, it searches for an ideal social and political order that expresses the best aspects of humanity and our most deeply held values; viewed as a political field of study, it aims to illuminate our understanding of the real world and give principled... In this sense it is appropriate to say that social justice is the foundation of the well-field system.