

Vorlesungsreihe: Der Blick der radikalen
Philosophie auf die Geschichte der
Philosophie

“Radikale Philosophie und
antikes Philosophieren: China
und Indien ”

Meng Zi (Menzius) , Forts., Xunzi
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Lektüre des Mencius (Selections), übers. v. A. Charles Muller, Forts.

7B:24, p. 70; 7B:25, p. 71; 7B:31, p. 72f.;
7B:32, 7B:32, p. 73; 7B:34, p. 73f.; 7B:37, p.
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Xun Zi (313-nach 238v.)

Xunzi (chinesisch 荀子, Pinyin *Xúnzǐ*, jap. *Junshi*, kor. *Sunja* * etwa 298 v. Chr.; † etwa 220 v. Chr.), auch **Hsün-Tse** oder, in Wade-Giles Umschrift, **Hsün-Tzu**, war ein chinesischer Philosoph gegen Ende der Zeit der Streitenden Reiche. Seine Lehren werden dem Konfuzianismus zugerechnet. Gleichzeitig ist Xunzi auch der Name seines Werkes. (Wikipedia)

Xunzi ("Master Xun") is the common appellation for the philosopher whose full name was Xun Kuang. He is also known as Xun Qing, "Minister Xun," after an office he held. He was born in the state of Zhao in north-central China around 310 BCE. As a young man he studied in the state of Qi in the northeast, which had the greatest concentration of philosophers of the age. Xunzi's writings show him to be well acquainted with all the doctrines current at the time, which he probably came in contact with during this period of his life. Leaving Qi, he traveled to many of the other states that made up China at the time, and was briefly employed by some of them.

Xun Zi, 2

His last post ended when his patron was assassinated in 238 BCE, ending his chances to put his theories of government into practice. Xunzi may have lived to see China unified by the authoritarian state of Qin in 221 BCE. If so, he certainly must have been disappointed that two of his former students, Li Si and Han Feizi, helped counsel Qin to victory when the Qin government was steadfastly opposed to Xunzi's ideas of government through moral power. The Qin dynasty was long remembered as a time of strict laws and draconian punishments, and Xunzi's association with two of its architects probably was one factor in the later marginalization of his thought. (IEP)

Geboren wurde Xunzi als Sohn einer alten Familie aus Jin (晉 , *Jìn*) in Zhao (趙 , *Zhào*), einem der drei Teilstaaten nach der Teilung von Jin. Der Hauptort von Jin ist heute Handan (邯鄲 , *Hándān*) in der Provinz Hebei (河北 , *Héběi*). Um 248 erhielt er in Qi (齊 , *Qí*) den Posten eines *Jijiu* (祭酒 , *Jìjiǔ*), was ein Großbeamter ist, der für das Bildungswesen zuständig ist. Er fiel jedoch durch eine Verleumdung in Ungnade und wurde 238 Gouverneur von Lanling (蘭陵 , *Lánlíng*), dem heutigen Zaozhuang (棗莊 , *Záozhuāng*), wo auch sein Grab liegt.

Xun Zi, 3

„Das präziseste philosophische Werk der klassischen Epoche...“
(Schleichert/Roetz, 239)

Das Buch „Xunzi“: The ***Xunzi*** ([çŷn tsì]; Chinese: 荀子 ; Wade-Giles: ***Hsün-tzu***) is an ancient Chinese collection of philosophical writings attributed to the 3rd century BC Realist Confucian philosopher Xun Kuang. In the *Xunzi*, Xun Kuang distinguishes what is born in man and what must be learned through rigorous education. Though Confucian, the *Xunzi* may also be considered a root canonical writing of the Chinese Legalist "School". Its essays are often critical of competing schools, such as Daoism and Mohism, as well as rival schools within Confucianism. (Wikipedia)

Die Schriften des Xunzi wurden zu späterer Zeit unter dem Titel *Xunzi* in 32 Kapiteln (編 , *biān*) in 20 Bänden (卷 , *juǎn*) zusammengefasst. Es ist unumstritten, dass der meiste Teil von Xunzi selbst stammt und nur wenig von Schülern hinzugefügt wurde. Während ältere Philosophen ihre Werke in Dialogform verfassten, sind die meisten Kapitel von Xunzi in Form eines Artikels, also ohne einen Dialogpartner, geschrieben. (Wikipedia)

Xun Zi, 4

Redaktion und Textgestalt:

In the first century AD, Liu Xiang redacted *Xunzi*'s extant oeuvre from hundreds of loose fascicles into 32 bundles (篇) of bamboo strips. In 818 AD, an unknown minor official named Yang Liang fixed many errors in the bamboo strips which had accumulated over the centuries, transcribing them on scrolls (卷) of silk and adding commentary which modern scholars have found helpful. Yang's commentary still appears in some modern editions of the text. The text has been continuously in print since the invention of the printing press in the 11th century AD. (Wikipedia)

Xun Zi, 5

Like most philosophical works of the time, the Xunzi that we have today is a later compilation of writings associated with him, not all of which were necessarily written by Xunzi himself. The current version of the Xunzi is divided into thirty-two books, about twenty-five of which are considered mostly or wholly authentic and others of which are considered representative of his thought, if not his actual writings. This is probably the largest collection of early Chinese philosophical writings that can be plausibly attributed to one author. The Xunzi is also notable for its style. Comparatively little of it is written in the dialogue format of works like the Mencius, and there are none of the fanciful parables of the Zhuangzi. Most books normally attributed to Xunzi are sustained essays on one topic that appear to have been written as more or less unified pieces, though there are often sections of verse and two books that are merely compilations of poetry. In these writings, Xunzi carefully defines his own position and raises objections to rival thinkers in a way that renders his work more recognizable as philosophy than that of many other early Chinese thinkers. (IEP)

Xun Zi, 4

Hauptthemen wichtiger Kapitel, 1:

- The "Discussion of Heaven (天 *tiān*)" rejects the Mencian notion that heaven has a moral will. Instead, Xun Zi asserts that heaven is simply the natural world; thus people should focus on the human, social realm rather than dealing with heavenly ideas.
- The "Discussion of Ritual Propriety (*lǐ*)" gives rules of individual and social conduct (decorum).
- "Dispelling Obsessions" teaches that in focusing on only one aspect of a situation, one often loses sight of the larger purpose. (Wikipedia)

Xun Zi, 5

Hauptthemen wichtiger Kapitel, 2:

- "Proper Use of Terms" (正名 *zhēngmíng*): A name becomes proper for a situation through conventional usage, but once this is fixed it is improper to deviate from this norm. Thus a conventional view is adopted for the origin of the sound-to-meaning mapping, although the objects signified by the term remain real.

The term **Zhēngmíng** often appears in English as "The Rectification of Names". This is a misleadingly narrow translation of the Chinese title. In classical Chinese, the phrase " 正名 (*zhēngmíng*)" could be interpreted either as "rectifying names" or as "correct/right names".

Xun Zi, 6

Hauptthemen wichtiger Kapitel, 3:

- "Human Dispositions are Detestable" (性恶 *xìng è*)
Rejects Mencius' claim that people have a natural inclination toward goodness. Confucius, who simply said that people are similar by nature, was not clear on the matter. Xunzi holds that man is naturally inclined towards selfishness, and that if this inclination is not curbed, human societies devolve into chaos. He views morality as a social construct, emphasizing the difference between nature and nurture.
- This last view engendered considerable debate over two centuries.

Xun Zi, 7

Diskussion einiger Grundbegriffe (gestützt auf Winnie Sung)

- qing
- bi
- xu, yi, jing
- xin/zhi
- shen

Xun Zi, 8a

Zitate, 1

- The person attempting to travel two roads at once will get nowhere.
 - Quoted in: Errick A. Ford (2010) *Iron Sharpens Iron: Wisdom of the Ages*, p. 48.
- In order to properly understand the big picture, everyone should fear becoming mentally clouded and obsessed with one small section of truth.
 - Quoted in: Joan Klostermann-Ketels (2011) *HumaniTrees*, p. 96.
- Human nature is evil, and goodness is caused by intentional activity.
 - Quoted in: Fayek S. Hourani (2012) *Daily Bread for Your Mind and Soul*, p. 336.

Xun Zi, 8b

Zitate, 2

Learning proceeds until death and only then does it stop. ... Its purpose cannot be given up for even a moment. To pursue it is to be human, to give it up to be a beast.

- *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy* (2001), p. 258

The learning of the gentleman enters through his ears, fastens to his heart, spreads through his four limbs, and manifests itself in his actions. ... The learning of the petty person enters through his ears and passes out his mouth. From mouth to ears is only four inches—how could it be enough to improve a whole body much larger than that?

- *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy* (2001), p. 259

The gentleman knows that whatever is imperfect and unrefined does not deserve praise. ... He makes his eyes not want to see what is not right, makes his ears not want to hear what is not right, makes his mouth not want to speak what is not right, and makes his heart not want to deliberate over what is not right. ... For this reason, power and profit cannot sway him, the masses cannot shift him, and nothing in the world can shake him.

- *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy* (2001), p. 260

Xun Zi, 8c

Zitate, 3

One whose intentions and thoughts are cultivated will disregard wealth and nobility. One whose greatest concern is for the Way and righteousness will take lightly kings and dukes. It is simply that when one examines oneself on the inside, external goods carry little weight. A saying goes, "The gentleman makes things his servants. The petty man is servant to things."

- *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy* (2001), p. 263
- If an action ... involves little profit but much righteousness, do it.
 - *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy* (2001), p. 263

Xun Zi, 8d

Zitate, 4

Human nature is evil; its goodness derives from conscious activity. Now it is human nature to be born with a fondness for profit. Indulging this leads to contention and strife, and the sense of modesty and yielding with which one was born disappears. One is born with feelings of envy and hate, and, by indulging these, one is led into banditry and theft, so that the sense of loyalty and good faith with which he was born disappears. One is born with the desires of the ears and eyes and with a fondness for beautiful sights and sounds, and, by indulging these, one is led to licentiousness and chaos, so that the sense of ritual, rightness, refinement, and principle with which one was born is lost. Hence, following human nature and indulging human emotions will inevitably lead to contention and strife, causing one to rebel against one's proper duty, reduce principle to chaos, and revert to violence. Therefore one must be transformed by the example of a teacher and guided by the way of ritual and rightness before one will attain modesty and yielding, accord with refinement and ritual, and return to order.

- *Sources of Chinese Tradition* (1999), vol. 1, pp. 179-180

Xun Zi, 8e

Zitate, 5

A person who is transformed by the instructions of a teacher, devotes himself to study, and abides by ritual and rightness may become a noble person, while one who follows his nature and emotions, is content to give free play to his passions, and abandons ritual and rightness is a lesser person.

- *Sources of Chinese Tradition* (1999), vol. 1, p. 180

A questioner asks: If human nature is evil, then where do ritual and rightness come from? I reply: ritual and rightness are always created by the conscious activity of the sages.

- *Sources of Chinese Tradition* (1999), vol. 1, p. 180

Xun Zi, 8d

Zitate, 6

A person who is shallow aspires to depth; one who is ugly aspires to beauty; one who is narrow aspires to breadth; one who is poor aspires to wealth; one who is humble aspires to esteem. Whatever one lacks in oneself he must seek outside.

- *Sources of Chinese Tradition* (1999), vol. 1, p. 181

The straightening board was created because of warped wood, and the plumb line came into being because of things that are not straight. Rulers are established and ritual and rightness are illuminated because the nature is evil.

- *Sources of Chinese Tradition* (1999), vol. 1, p. 182

-> Wikiquote: en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Xun_Zi

Xun Zi, 9

Hauptthemen und Problematiken:

SEP: The Way of the Sage Kings / Fa (Models), Teachers, and Gentlemen / Education and Punishment / Tian (Natur or Heaven) / Human Nature and Agency / Normative Arguments / Epistemology / Philosophy of Language

IEP: The Way and the Heaven / Human Nature, Education, and the Ethical Ideal / Logic and Language / Social and Political Thought

Xun Zi, 9

- Die Figur des Edlen (Geldsetzer/Hong, 37)
- Herrscher und Heiliger (ebd.)
- Böse Veranlagung, Erarbeitung des Guten im Menschen: xing, wei, e (Schleichert/Roetz, 241-244)
- Paideia als grundlegende Aufgabe (a.a.O., 244-248)
- Der gute Herrscher (a.a.O., 248-250)
- Der böse Herrscher (a.a.O., 250-255)

Xun Zi, 10

Die Interpretation durch Fung Yulan (The Spirit of Chinese Philosophy, London [1944/45], 81) – philosophische, nicht doxographische Lektüre – von einer metaphysischen Gegenposition zu meiner ‚radikalen Philosophie‘:

„Hsün Tzu’s [Xun zi’s] ‚Heaven‘ was a Heaven of ‚Nature‘ in the senses of the natural order.“

„in the Confucianist philosophy he represents more the specialists in ritual conduct and music ... the sphere he dealt with was restricted to the moral“

Xun Zi, 11

Criticism of „other systems of thought in his day“:

„Lao Tzu [=Laozi] (604-531) -> Daoismus] had a vision of how to be abased, but not of how to abound. Mo Tzu [=Mozi (spätes 5. Jh.) -> Mohismus] had a vision of social uniformity, but not of individuality.“

„Mo Tzu’s vision was obscured by utility and he did not understand culture. Hui Tzu’s [=Hui Shi/Huizi (380-305) -> „Namensschule“] vision was obscured by terms, and he did not understand the actual. Chuang Tzu’s [= Zhuangzi (365-290)] was obscured by nature, and he did not understand man“

Xun Zi, 12

„Hence from the standpoint of utility, the Tao is nothing more than profit; from the standpoint of dialectic, the Tao is nothing more than cogency of argument; from the standpoint of Nature, the Tao is nothing more than laissez faire. Each of these items refers to one aspect of the Tao. As to the Tao itself, it is the essence of unchangeability and yet exhausts the possibilities of change. One aspect cannot express it adequately. A man with lop-sided knowledge, observing only one corner of the Tao, cannot understand it. The result is that if he thinks he has an adequate understanding of it, his mind is thrown into confusion on the one hand, and on the other hand he misleads others. For those above to obscure the vision of those below, and for those below to obscure the vision of those above, this is the calamity of benightedness.“