HKU03x Humanity and Nature in Chinese Thought

Week 1: Introduction: God, Nature and Dao
Section 12: Meaning and Mind Maps

- Think of *meaning* in terms of path metaphor rather than law metaphor (0.25)
    - Ways of moving from one concept to another (0.35)
- Idea of 'bachelor uncle' leads to many other related concepts - married, sibling, parents, male, new aunt (1.18)
- Come to Hong Kong - you have to learn new concepts, a new game (1.32)
    - More than simply sister and brother, you must learn 妹妹 *mui mui*[little sister] and 哥哥 *go go*[elder brother] (1.44)
    - 細佬 *sai lou*[younger brother] and 家姐 *ga je*[elder sister](1.48)
    - A different system of related concepts to master (2.18)
- Knowing a language is knowing your way around - paths from concept to concept
- Western philosophy mindmaps vs. Chinese philosophy mindmaps - different game played with different concepts (3.44)
- To say "Chinese words have lots of meanings" is a mistake (4.00)
    - Stems from finding many English dictionary entries for one Chinese word (4.20)
    - A result of trying to describe the Chinese concept map in terms of English concepts (4.40)
    - Consider 德*dé*[virtuosity] - there are links to other Chinese concepts which are like English paths from 'virtuosity' to 'virtue', to 'power', to 'charisma', and to 'excellence'.(5.25)
- In this course, 'translations' of a Chinese concept, presented in [superscript] reflect the conceptual role that works best in this particular context. When we use a different superscript, it does not mean the Chinese concept "has a different meaning." (5.59)
    - We are focusing on a Chinese concept and its relation to other Chinese concepts (6.11)

  - Focus is on inference - explanation of reasoning using concepts (6.30)

- We can understand many of these concepts as natural metaphors (6.55)
- Let us try that model of interpretation with the two key concepts we began with: (7.37)
  - 天 *tiān*[nature:sky:god:heaven]
  - 命 *mìng*[destiny:luck:life:fate:name:role:identity:appoint:decree:command:mandate]