HKU03x Humanity and Nature in Chinese Thought

Week 2: Confucius
Section 10: The Importance of Ren Humanity for Confucianism (Part Two)

- How can we be sure to make a performance correctly fit an occasion? It seems that 仁 *ren*[humanity] must be a guiding intuition that tailors the performance in each distinct situation
- Confucian interpreters range from those who see 禮 *li*[rituals] as the more important and those who view 仁 *ren*[humanity] as the essence of Confucius' teaching
- The passage with strongest support of the latter view is *Analects* 3:3 "Humans and not 仁 *ren*[humane] … what would become of 禮 *li*[rituals] ? What would become of music?
- But if I have such a powerful guiding intuition - the same intuition as the Sages - why do I need to study their 禮 *li*[rituals]?
    - One wing of Confucianism (the Neo-Confucian school of Mind following Mencius) takes the issue to its conclusion: The classics are footnotes in my heart
    - The rival wing puts more emphasis on learning, acquiring and practicing 禮 *li*[rituals] until we acquire the intuition to guide us. They sidestep the issue of how we can be sure we have the right teacher, with the right way of teaching (Xunzi is the Classical model)