

HKU03x Humanity and Nature in Chinese Thought

Week 8: Xunzi and Legalism (Han-Fei-zi)

Section 4: Non-purposive Naturalism

- Xunzi depersonalizes *tian*^{nature:sky} and makes 天 *tian*^{nature:sky} unprescriptive:
- 天 *Tian*^{nature:sky}
 - does not guide us or tell us how to behave.
 - does not have any desires.
 - is not the source of normative authority.
- We have adopted modes of behavior that fit into the patterns of nature, and this can lead to the illusion of 天 *tian*^{nature:sky} having intention and being prescriptive.
- Xunzi thinks that if we have found forms of social organization that fit into nature then we get 禮 *li*^{ritual} - we get benefits 利 *li*^{benefit}. However, if we don't fit into nature, we get the opposite – disaster and 害 *hai*^{harm}.
- Xunzi suggests conforming to the past Sages' rules, practices, and conventions.
- Xunzi thinks we have to manage our human nature.