

HKU03x Humanity and Nature in Chinese Thought

Week 8: Xunzi and Legalism (Han-Fei-zi) Section 11: Summary

- Xunzi took a pragmatic response to human issues.
- 禮 ^{ritual} 義 ^{morality} is a cultural invention from the Sage Kings to promote social cohesion and unity.
- Xunzi's dogmatic authoritarianism stems from pessimism about human nature and skepticism about any real basis for morality.
- Xunzi favours using punishment as a way to control and reign in the negative human impulses and to prevent skepticism from asserting itself.
- 天 ^{nature:sky} *tian* has no purpose. It does not provide actual normative guidance.