

## Lesson Overview for Confucian Ideals: *The Analects* and *Miss Li*

### The Reading:

*The Analects*, attributed to Confucius, is a compilation of sayings as recorded by his disciples. Translations often group the sayings by several categories. Four categories I chose to emphasize are: Jen (Humaneness), Xiao (Filial Piety), Li (Rites), and Chün-tzu (The Superior Man).

*The Story of Miss Li* by Po Hsing-chien is a classic example of Confucian ideas in action. Miss Li, a prostitute, attracts and tricks a governor's son. When he no longer has money, she abandons him. He is left alone and destitute, and having disgraced his father. At the depths of his despair, he encounters Miss Li again by chance. She recognizes her responsibility and helps to build him up to man of honor.

### Lesson Components:

- ✓ Powerpoint lecture with student response notes
- ✓ *The Analects* Grouping Exercise
- ✓ Excerpted reading/questions for *The Analects*
- ✓ Translation activity/discussion guide
- ✓ The Story of Miss Li – reading, questions, short essay assignment
- ✓ The Superior Man –chart comparing related analects and the characters in Miss Li
- ✓ Suggested writing assignments

### Powerpoint Presentation.

Attachments:

- Copy of teacher's lecture slides and notes.
- Copy of lecture slides with writing area for the students.

The purpose of the presentation is to provide the students with the necessary background information on Confucius, *The Analects*, and four major Confucian themes: Jen, Xiao, Li, and Chün-tzu.

Students will receive the printout of my presentation with a notes column. They are to write their comments and questions in the spaces provided, demonstrating a thoughtful response to the information. Writing "This is interesting," or similar responses for each slide will not earn the student credit. I use this technique in determining the students' background knowledge as well as ensuring a thoughtful response to what otherwise can be a simple exercise in copying information.

Sources:

- Ebrey, Patricia B., ed. *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. New York: The Free Press, 1993.
- Murphey, Rhoads. *East Asia: A New History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. New York: Addison-Wesley, 2000.
- Website: Chinese Cultural Studies at: <http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/core9/phalsall/texts/lopez.html>
- Hattstein, Markus. *World Religions*, Köln: Könemann.
- Magill, Frank N., ed. *Masterpieces of World Philosophy*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1990.
- World Book Encyclopedia 2000.

## ***The Analects Grouping Exercise***

Attachments:

- List of analects to be photocopied and cut into strips.

Given one set of strips of paper with the Analects, students will form small groups. Students will read each strip and place it in one of the three categories from the lecture: Jen, Xiao, or Li.

When groupings are complete, I will reveal the number of analects in each category. Groups will be allowed to adjust their strips. The class will then discuss any variations in placement and their rationale. Note that some of the analects may be reasonably placed in other categories.

Sources:

- The analects preceded by roman numerals are from a website at <http://acc6.its.brooklyn.cuny.edu/~phalsall/texts/analects.html>
- The analects preceded by arabic numerals are from [www.columbia.edu/itc/eacp/aiasite/topics/Confucius/Sources/Class.htm](http://www.columbia.edu/itc/eacp/aiasite/topics/Confucius/Sources/Class.htm)

## **Reading *The Analects***

Attachments:

- Excerpted copies of *The Analects* with questions.
- Each day one of the following five analects will be written on the board. These aren't included in the excerpted readings, but may be interesting as a springboard for discussion.
  1. Confucius said: "In education there are no class distinctions." (XV:38)
  2. Confucius said: "Learning without thinking is labor lost; thinking without learning is perilous." (II:15)
  3. Confucius said: "By nature men are pretty much alike; it is learning and practice that set them apart." (XVII:2)
  4. Confucius said: "Yu, shall I teach you what knowledge is? When you know a thing, say that you know it; when you do not know a thing, admit that you do not know it. That is knowledge." (II:17)
  5. There were four things that Confucius was determined to eradicate; a biased mind, arbitrary judgments, obstinacy, and egotism. (IX:4)

Given the background information provided in the powerpoint presentation, the student will be expected to apply these major ideas to the reading. The analects on the worksheet are a compilation of translations from two sources, all relating to the major themes.

Following each section are some questions for the students to consider. Many of the questions are shamelessly edited from, stolen from, or inspired by the Brooklyn site. Students are expected to answer in complete sentences.

Sources:

- The analects preceded by roman numerals are from a website at <http://acc6.its.brooklyn.cuny.edu/~phalsall/texts/analects.html>
- The analects preceded by arabic numerals are from [www.columbia.edu/itc/eacp/aiasite/topics/Confucius/Sources/Class.htm](http://www.columbia.edu/itc/eacp/aiasite/topics/Confucius/Sources/Class.htm)
- The analects used for the board listed above see DeBary, Wm. Theodore, et al. *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, Vol 1. New York Columbia Press, 1960.

## Translation

Attachments:

- A teacher's discussion guide.
- A student worksheet with analect IV.25: (The Master said, "Virtue is not left to stand alone. He who practices it will have neighbors.") in characters.
- A student handout with one of the analects with a variety of translations.

I have created this activity to get the students to think about the complexities of reading literature in translation. The analect is actually one they will have already encountered in the excerpted reading. I would like the students to understand that there is more to translation than just a good dictionary. . . that inevitably the person doing the translation is also revealed. I will then hand out an analect with a variety of translations. We will then discuss some of the aspects, both good and bad, of these professional translations.

Sources:

- The source for the characters and definitions can be found at this web address: [www.zhongwen.com/lunyu.html](http://www.zhongwen.com/lunyu.html).
- The handout with the various translations was shamelessly lifted in its entirety from: <http://www.cifnet.com/~geenius/kongfuzi/teach.html>

## The Story of Miss Li

Attachments:

- A student worksheet with several study guide questions, a short essay assignment, and a grading guide.
- Possible answers to the study guide questions. Note that many answers not provided could/should also be considered correct.

I chose this selection because it demonstrates the Confucian ideas I wanted to present to the students as outlined in the lecture. There is a strong female character (to contrast with *Antigone*, a prior reading), and since the students are probably familiar with the submissive stereotypes of Asian women, this story offers an interesting twist. I also like that the story illustrates an idea that the students think is distinctly American: an individual can, through hard work and character, change their circumstances. That this change is initiated by a woman in Miss Li is even more interesting.

Students are expected to complete the study guide questions and a short 50 point essay.

Sources:

- "The Story of Miss Li" by Po Hsingjian. In Birch, Cyril. *Anthology of Chinese Literature, Vol. I*. NY: Grove Press. 1965. p. 300-313.

## The Superior Man

Attachments:

- A student worksheet with several Confucian analects dealing with the idea of the superior man. The analects are provided in the first column, and students are to provide examples AND/OR counter examples of these traits in both the governor's son and in Miss Li.
- Possible answers for the chart. Note that many answers not provided could/should also be considered correct.

The purpose of this assignment is to have the students read several more Confucian analects with great attention to application. Filling in the chart requires a good understanding of *The Analects* and of *The Story of Miss Li*. I am adding this theme since it relates to the rest of my World Literature course. . .that is, a look at heros/heroines in other cultures. A comparison is natural in some of our other readings, namely: Antigone in *Antigone*, Sita in The Ramayana, and for the male characters of Rama in The Ramayana, Okonkwo in Things Fall Apart, and Siddhartha in Siddhartha. Most of these comparisons and constrasts will come out as the semester progresses.

Sources:

- The chün-tzu analects for this section are from:  
<http://acc6.its.brooklyn.cuny.edu/~phalsall/texts/analects.html>

## Longer Writing Assignment Options

- **Antigone and Miss Li**--Compare and contrast the character of Antigone and her role in Greek culture to Miss Li and Chinese culture. (At this early point in the semester course *Antigone* is the only previous reading.) You are expected to follow a point-by-point, or a block format for comparison/contrast essays.
- **Rewrite the Analects in Calligraphy**--See if you can imitate the calligraphy used by copying (to the best of your ability) some of the actual analects (see [www.zhongwen.com/lunyu.html](http://www.zhongwen.com/lunyu.html)) in your own calligraphic art. Emphasis for this writing assignment is the beauty of the final product. Typed script does not count.
- **Expand Your Essay**--You have already started a short essay on one of the Confucian themes in *The Story of Miss Li*. Expand your paper to include the other two themes. Quotes are required.
- **Create a Chinese literature assignment**--Read a story or several poems. Develop a lesson and a teacher's guide for the reading. You are expected to include a photocopy of the reading, worksheet(s) for the students, and the answers to your questions.
- **Can you cartoon?** Check out the cartoons in *Zhuangzi Speaks: The Music of Nature*. Find a Confucian idea and create your own cartoon.
- **Try to write a series of analects of your own.** See if you can capture a similar feeling to the ones in *The Analects* of Confucius. Then, explain your philosophical position, and create a specific example of how this may have helped an individual "disciple" of your own.
- **Read and Log**--Read at least the first three chapters of *Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China* by Jung Chang. Write a reading log commenting on sections that reveal Confucian ideas and important Chinese themes.
- **Translate Chinese Poetry**--Given several poems written in characters, create your own translations. I will give you the definition of the characters, but you must link them together in a poetic way. See how many different translations you can develop for the characters, and *then* compare your poems to a professional translation. In addition to your poems, I expect a brief informal essay explaining the process you went through and the difficulties you faced in creating your poems.
- **Powerpoint**--Create and present your own powerpoint history presentation on the Warring States period in China, the Chou Dynasty, or Women in China. You are expected to include significant research, graphics, and a resource slide.
- **Got another idea?** Discuss an idea of your own with me. I am looking for something other than a traditional research report.

## Excerpts from *The Analects*

Directions: On a separate sheet of paper, please respond to the 2 questions following each section. Use complete sentences for full credit.

### Jen (Humaneness)

*If we were to identify the virtue that Confucius and his followers regarded as most important, it would be that of jen (pronounced ren) or humanity. Though it is at the heart of his teaching, Confucius never defined jen. Remember from the lecture that the symbol for jen is made up of two symbols—one meaning a human being, the other meaning two. So the basic idea has to do with the way in which human beings relate to one another in society. See if you can get a better idea of jen from reading the following Analects.*

XII.22: Fan-ch'ih asked about jen. The Master said, "It is to love all men." He asked about knowledge. "It is to know all men." Fan ch'ih did not immediately understand these answers. The Master said, "Employ the upright and put aside all the crooked; in this way, the crooked can be made to be upright."

VI.28: Tzu-kung said, "Suppose I put the case of a man who extensively confers benefits on the people, and is able to assist everyone, what would you say about him? Might he be called perfectly humane? The Master said, "Why speak only of humaneness in connection with him? Must he not have the qualities of a sage? . . . Now the man of perfect humaneness, wishing to be established himself, he seeks also to enlarge others. To be able to judge of others by what is nearby in ourselves, that is what we might call the art of humaneness."

XV.23: Tzu-kung asked, saying "Is there one world which may serve as a rule of practice for all one's life?" The Master said, "Is not reciprocity such a word? What you not want done do yourself, do not do to others."

VII.15: The Master said, "With coarse rice to eat, with water to drink, and my bended arm for a pillow; I still have joy in the midst of these things. Riches and honors acquired by inhumanity are to me as a floating cloud."

IV.25: The Master said, "Virtue is not left to stand alone. He who practices it will have neighbors."

XV.8: The Master said, "The determined scholar and the man of virtue will not seek to live at the expense of humanity. They will even sacrifice their lives to preserve their humanity."

4:2 Confucius said, "One who is not a man of humanity (jen) cannot endure adversity for very long, nor can he enjoy prosperity for long. The man of humanity is naturally at ease with humanity. The man of wisdom cultivates humanity for its advantage."

4:4 Confucius said, "If you set your mind on humanity, you will be free from evil."

4:5 Confucius said, "Wealth and honor are what every man desires. But if they have been obtained in violation of moral principles, they must not be kept. Poverty and humble station are what every man dislikes. But if they can be avoided on in violation of moral principles, they must not be avoided. If a superior man departs from humanity, how can he fulfill that name? A superior man never abandons humanity even for the lapse of a single meal. In moments of haste, he acts according to it. In times of difficulty and confusion, he acts according to it."

4:6 Confucius said, "I have never seen one who really loves humanity or who really hates inhumanity. One who really loves humanity will not place anything above it. One who really hates inhumanity will practice humanity in such a way that inhumanity will not have a chance to get at him. Is there anyone who has devoted his strength to humanity for as long as a single day? Perhaps there is such a case but I have never seen it."

17:6 Tzu-chang asked Confucius about humanity. Confucius said, "One who can practice five things wherever he may be is a man of humanity." Tzu-chang asked what the five are. Confucius said, "Earnestness, liberality, truthfulness, diligence, and generosity. If one is earnest, one will not be treated with disrespect. If one is liberal, one will win the hearts of all. If one is truthful, one will be trusted. If one is diligent, one will be successful. And if one is generous, one will be able to enjoy the service of others."

## QUESTIONS

1. How would you define jen? What does it mean to exhibit humaneness?
2. Respond thoughtfully to one of the analects listed above. Please identify the analect.

### **Filial Piety (Xiao)**

*Filial piety derives from that most fundamental human bond; parent and child. The parent-child relationship is appropriately the first of the five Confucian relationships. Although the child is the junior member in the relationship, the notion of reciprocity is still key to understanding filial piety.*

*The top portion of the character for Xiao, shows an old man and underneath, a young man supporting the old man. There is this sense of the support by the young of the older generation and the respect of the young for the older generations, but it's also reciprocal. Just as parents have looked after children in their infancy and nurtured them, so the young are supposed to look after parents when they have reached old age and to revere them and to sacrifice to them after their death as well.*

*Almost everyone is familiar with the idea that filial piety is a prime virtue in Confucianism. It's a prime virtue in the sense that, from the Confucian point of view, it's the starting point of virtue. Humaneness is the ultimate goal, is the larger vision, but it starts with filial piety.*

1:2 Yu Tzu (a disciple named Yu Jo) said, "Few of those who are filial sons and respectful brothers will show disrespect to superiors, and there has never been a man who is not disrespectful to superiors and yet creates disorder. A superior man is devoted to the fundamental (the root). When the root is firmly established, the moral law (Tao) will grow. Filial piety and brotherly respect are the root of humanity (jen).

1:6 Young men should be filial when at home and respectful to their elders when away from home. They should be earnest and faithful. They should love all extensively and be intimate with men of humanity. When they have any energy to spare after performance of moral duties, they should use it to study literature and the arts."

2:7 Tzu-yu asked about filial piety. Confucius said, "Filial piety nowadays means to be able to support one's parents. But we support even dogs and horses. If there is not feeling of reverence, wherein lies the difference?"

4:18 Confucius said, "In serving his parents, a son may gently remonstrate with them. When he sees that they are not inclined to listen to him, he should resume an attitude of reverence and not abandon his effort to serve them. He may feel worried, but- does not complain."

The Duke of She told Confucius. "In my country there is an upright man named Kung. When his father stole a sheep, he bore witness against him." Confucius said, "The upright men in my community are different from this. The father conceals the misconduct of the son and the son conceals the misconduct of the father. Uprightness is to be found in this."

## QUESTIONS

3. In the exchange between Confucius and the Duke of She recorded in the selection above, we find two very different views of what “uprightness” means. What do you think being “upright” means to the Duke of She, and what does it mean to Confucius? What advantages and disadvantages do you find in each view?
4. How would you describe the ideal American relationship between parent and child? How does this compare or contrast with the filial piety in Confucianism?

## Li (Rites)

*“The last of the three central Confucian values is respect for ritual—the proper way of doing things in the deepest sense.”*

*“On the left side of the character, li is the element of prognostication, or pre-saging. On the right, you have a ritual vessel.” – Irene Bloom.*

*Confucius emphasized the idea of ritual. He believed that through practicing rituals, proper human relationships would be formed. One of the most important is the responsibility a child has to care for the aging parents, and in death to mourn for three years, and to offer sacrifices.*

VIII.2: The Master said, “Respectfulness, without the rules of propriety, becomes laborious bustle; carefulness, without the rules of propriety, becomes timidity; boldness, without the rules of propriety, becomes insubordination; straightforwardness, without the rules of propriety, becomes rudeness.”

III.4: Lin Fang asked what was the first thing to be attended to in ceremonies. The Master said, “A great question, indeed! In festive ceremonies, it is better to be sparing than extravagant. In ceremonies of mourning, it is better that there be deep sorrow than a minute attention to the observances.”

III.17: Tzu Kung wished to do away with the offering of a sheep connected with the inauguration of the first day of each month. The Master said, “Tzu Kung, you love the sheep; I love the ceremony.”

## QUESTIONS

5. American culture is also full of ritual. Describe some common rules of propriety which Americans follow. What is the purpose of these rituals? Why are they considered important?
6. Do you believe the idea of li is an important human virtue? Would you place it in the top three as Confucius does? If so, why? If not, what virtue would place as more important, and why?

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# Teachings and Translations

A more accurate term than "writings," since many of the works attributed to Confucius -- most notably the Analects -- were written down by his students after his death. There are many different translations of Confucius' wisdom, and they vary wildly in quality. One good translation of the Analects is by Arthur Waley. He seems to try very hard to remain faithful to the spirit of the original, which results in some odd phrasings and a lot of embellishment, but generally speaking his translation is quite readable (not to mention extremely well-footnoted). Others . . . well, here are some examples, from the Analects, Book 4, Paragraph 3:

- Roger T. Ames: *The Master said, "The authoritative person (ren) alone has the wherewithal to properly discriminate the good person from the bad."*
- E. Bruce Brooks: *The Master said, It is only the rvn who can like others; who can hate others.*
- Lionel Giles: *Only he who has the spirit of goodness within him is really able either to love or to hate.*
- David Hinton: *The Master said: "Only the Humane can love people, and only they can despise people."*
- Chichung Huang: *The Master said: "Only a humane man is capable of loving men, and capable of loathing men."*
- James Legge: *The Master said, 'It is only the virtuous man, who can love, or who can hate, others.'*
- Simon Leys: *The Master said: "Only a good man can love people and can hate people."*
- Lin Yutang: *Confucius said, "Only a true man knows how to love people and how to hate people."*
- A. Charles Muller: *Confucius said: "Only the **jen** person is able to really like others or to really dislike them."*
- Ezra Pound (!): *He said: Only the complete man can love others, or hate them.*
- Xin Guanjie: *Confucius said, "Only a benevolent man is able to tell whom to love and whom to hate."*
- Confucius Publishing (uncredited): *Confucius said, "Only the benevolent can love or hate men."*
- Waley: *Of the adage 'Only a Good Man knows how to like people, knows how to dislike them,' the Master said, He whose heart is in the smallest degree set upon Goodness will dislike no one.*

That's actually paragraphs 3 and 4. Waley writes in a footnote: "The words 'The Master said' at the beginning of paragraph 3 should be omitted, and paragraphs 3 and 4 taken together." Well! I find myself wondering whether Waley really did figure out something that all the others didn't, though, because Confucius himself confesses to disliking certain types of people, and while he never claims to have attained the ideal of humanity -- *jen* (*ren* in Pinyin), most often translated as "Goodness" or "benevolence" -- often speaks of his devotion to the ideal. Walt Whitman may have seen fit to say: "Do I contradict myself? Very well, I contradict myself. I am large; I contain multitudes," but whether Confucius would have agreed with *that* is questionable.

<http://www.cifnet.com/~geenius/kongfuzi/teach.html>

## Translation Discussion Guide

- The Master said, “Virtue is not left to stand alone. He who practices it will have neighbors.”

The source for the characters can be found at this web address: [www.zhongwen.com/lunyu.html](http://www.zhongwen.com/lunyu.html).

Given the Chinese characters and a list of definitions. Students will translate one of the analects. We will compare their translations with the professional translation and then compare the various translations listed on the student handout.

### 1. What difficulties did the student face?

- I suspect the students will have had difficulty choosing an appropriate combination of definitions from the worksheet. They may have started with one definition to find that it didn't seem to fit with the next.
- They will have to include words and punctuation that do not appear as it is written in characters.
- I expect that various students will have chosen different combinations, and will be able to explain their choices.
- I expect that the students will not know how to determine if a translation is more accurate than another translation, even though this particular analect was one from their reading.

### 2. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of several translations.

- Distribute the hand out on various translations.

In addition to discussing the translations the students created, we will also discuss the various professional translations from the handout. How do these differ? What subtle, or not so subtle variations are there? What could account for these variations? Do they believe that some of these translations are better than others? Which ones, and why?

### 3. Is there such a thing as the right translation? How do we know what Confucius actually meant? What could be lost in an English translation of a Chinese text?

- Although there isn't such a thing as a “right translation” (even though the students will no doubt want to know what the right answer is), there are translations that are closer to the intended meaning than others.
- I hope to bring out that there isn't a one-to-one correlation between the Chinese character and the English word. There are subtleties in understanding and cultural connotations that make translations difficult to evaluate for a non-native speaker.
- I hope to discuss the idea that each translation tries to capture some aspect of the original meaning.
- The complete appreciation for the shape of the written language, the beauty of the calligraphy, the combination of compound characters (as we have discussed with “Filial Piety”) that adds an additional layer of meaning, and the cultural connotations are not easily captured in translation. Much less, adding in the complication of Confucius's ideas being interpreted by disciples several generations later than when they were uttered.

## Translation

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

There are approximately 40,000 Chinese characters. You would need to know 2-3,000 of them to read a newspaper. Given the characters and their definitions, can you figure out one sentence?

The Chinese characters listed below form a complete thought. Your job is to translate the characters, given a partial list of definitions, into a meaningful English sentence. The characters are in the correct order, but you may need to add words to make the English sentence grammatically correct. Use the work space to the right to play with various combinations until you feel you have captured this Confucian idea.

子 zǐ zi

Pictograph of an infant, legs bundled together. (名) child (名) son (名) egg, seed (名) first Earthly Branch

曰 yuē

Mouth 凵 exhaling (indicated by line). (動) say: 子曰 Confucius says

德 dé

Moral 彳 (phonetic) steps 彳. (名) virtue, righteousness ⇔ 功德, 品德, 賢德, 道德

不 bù

Pictograph of a bird rising to heaven 一. [古] soar away (副) no, not ⇔

孤 gū

Child 子 with 瓜, phonetic and suggestive of cry 呱. (形) fatherless (形) solitary, lonely

+ 孤單 gūdān (形) alone

+ 孤獨 gūdú (形) alone, solitary (形) lonely

+ 孤兒 gūér (名) orphan

+ 孤寂 gūjí (形) lonely

+ 孤立 gūlì (動) isolate (形) isolated

必 bì

Stake 弋 splitting 八. (副) must, necessarily ⇔ 不必, 何必, 勢必, 未必, 想必

## 有 yǒu

Right hand 又 (phonetic, altered to left hand 扌) grasping the abundance of the moon 月 (or, alternatively, meat 肉). (動) have, possess (動) exist, be present (助) (indicating comparison) as: 你有他高嗎? Are you as tall as he? ⇔ 原有, 共有,

## 鄰 [邻] lín

Village 邑 with 粦 phonetic. Simplified form uses 令. [古] group of five homes (名) neighbor ⇔ 毗鄰, 睦鄰

+ 鄰國 língúo (名) neighboring country

+ 鄰接 línjiē (動) adjoin

+ 鄰近 línjìn (副) nearby, in the vicinity

+ 鄰居 línjū (名) neighbor

+ 鄰人 lín rén (名) neighbor

+ 鄰舍 línshè (名) next door

My final translation is:

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What difficulties did you encounter in creating your translation?

**Study Guide Questions for Miss Li**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is remarkable about Miss Li from the beginning?
2. What flaws does the son appear to have?
3. Describe their marriage, their relationship?
4. What trap does Miss Li set in order to escape her penniless husband?
5. How do you explain Miss Li's apparent defiance of her mother as it relates to filial piety? In other words, how can we respect Miss Li as a heroine if she breaks the most important Confucian code of behavior?
6. What changes Miss Li's mind about her husband?
7. How are Miss Li and her husband rewarded in the end?
8. Trace the things the governor's son does well throughout the story.

### **Short Essay Assignment**

Choose **one** of the major Confucian themes and comment on how it relates to the story. You must use quotes from the story for full credit. Refer back to your lecture notes for information about the themes. You may use examples or counter-examples for your support. In other words, how are people justly served when they exhibit these qualities, or when they don't.

For passages relating to Jen, see:

- Miss Li's change of mind
- The benevolence of all those the young man has to depend on including the Landlord, the two men sent to cover his near-dead body, and even the governor's acceptance of Miss Li as a daughter-in-law.

For passages relating to Li, see:

- The contrast between the two marriage scenes
- The son's mourning of the death of his parents

For passages relating to Xiao, see:

- The initial sending off of the governor's son
- The disgraceful beating the son receives from his father
- Miss Li's speech on restoring the father-son relationship
- The joyous scene where father and son are reunited

This essay will be graded using the following criteria:

Requirements:

- A clear explanation of the theme (10)
- Examples or counter examples of the theme (20)
- Quotes directly from the text (10)

Mechanics:

- Appropriate format, grammar, and spelling (10)

## Study Guide Answers for Miss Li

1. What is remarkable about Miss Li from the beginning?  
She has exquisite beauty. This is what attracts the governor's son from the beginning.
2. What flaws does the son appear to have?  
He is careless with his spending, falls in love with Miss Li's beauty, eats and drinks to excess, and is obviously hanging around with the wrong sort of people (prostitutes, actors).
3. Describe their marriage, their relationship?  
Their marriage will last as long as his money. He marries her by begging to be her slave and then getting drunk with Miss Li's "mother." The relationship doesn't seem to be the honorable marriage you would expect from a governor's son.
4. What trap does Miss Li set in order to escape her penniless husband?  
She takes him to her "aunt's" house, and then rushes away at the news of her mother's "illness."  
She moves while they are separated, and the aunt disappears. He is left penniless and alone.
5. How do you explain Miss Li's apparent defiance of her mother as it relates to filial piety? In other words, how can we respect Miss Li as a heroine if she breaks the most important Confucian code of behavior?  
Miss Li doesn't defy her mother; she defies the madam. I put this question in to emphasize the idea of filial piety, and to see if the students really understand that the madam is her mother and the aunt isn't her aunt.
6. What changes Miss Li's mind about her husband?  
"Everyone in the land knows that it is I who have reduced him to his present plight. The Court is full of his kinsmen. Some day one of them will come into power. Then an inquiry will be set on foot, and disaster will overtake us. And since we have flouted Heaven and defied the laws of humanity, neither spirits nor divinities will be on our side. Let us not wantonly incur a further retribution."  
Miss Li acknowledges that she is responsible for the fate of the young man. She is afraid that someday she will pay for lack of jen (inhumaneness). The heavens will not protect her since she has disobeyed the laws of humanity.
7. How are Miss Li and her husband rewarded in the end?  
As a result of her change, she is rewarded with a marriage to a high ranking official, four successful sons, and the title "The Lady of Chien-kuo." The narrator sighs as the thought of such a low character changing into such a heroine.
8. Trace the things the governor's son does well throughout the story.  
He shows great promise intellectually. He can sing the dirges and eventually he passes the highest exams. He becomes known throughout the land for his virtue.

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**Confucian Ideals:  
The Analects and Miss Li**

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