

The Superior Man (chün-tzu)

Name: _____

In *The Analects*, Confucius describes the superior man. It is clear at the end of Miss Li that the governor's son and Miss Li are rewarded. But who is the real Confucian hero? Next to the corresponding analect, provide information from the story that illustrates how the governor's son and Miss Li measure up to these heroic traits. As an example, a possible response to the first analect is provided. Quotes may be used from the story for extra credit.

From <i>The Analects</i>	The Governor's Son	Miss Li
<p>XV.17: The Master said, "The superior man in everything considers righteousness to be essential. He performs it according to the rules of propriety (li). He brings it forth in humility. He completes it with sincerity. This indeed is the superior man."</p>	<p>Instead of following the rituals for a marriage, the governor's son "marries" Miss Li in the following manner: "He. . . begged that she would accept him as her slave. Henceforward the old lady regarded him as her son-in-law; they drank heavily together and (the next morning). . .settled there permanently.</p> <p>But later, he redeems himself by following the proper rituals for mourning his parents.</p>	<p>Miss Li, after her transformation, refuses to marry the governor's son until the Governor "ordered a match-maker to perform the initial ceremonies for uniting the two families and to accomplish the six rites of welcome." These are part of the proper marriage rituals.</p>
<p>XV.31: The Master said, "The object of the superior man is truth, not food. . .The superior man is anxious lest he should not get truth; he is not anxious lest poverty should come upon him."</p>		
<p>IV.16: The Master said, "The mind of the superior man is conversant with virtue; the mind of the base man is conversant with gain."</p>		

From <i>The Analects</i>	The Governor's Son	Miss Li
<p>XV.20: The Master said, "What the superior man seeks, is in himself. What the mean man seeks, is in others."</p>		
<p>XVI.8: Confucius said, "There are three things of which the superior man stands in awe. He stands in awe of the ordinances of Heaven. He stands in awe of great men. He stands in awe of the words of the sages. The mean man does not know the ordinances of Heaven, and consequently does not stand in awe of them. He is disrespectful to great men. He makes sport of the words of the sages."</p>		
<p>XIV.29: The Master said, "The superior man is modest in his speech, but exceeds in his actions."</p>		
<p>XVI.10: Confucius said, "The superior man has nine things which are subjects with him of thoughtful consideration. In regard to the use of his eyes, he is anxious to see clearly. In regard to the use of his ears, he is anxious to hear distinctly. In regard to his countenance, he is anxious that it should be benign. In regard to his speech, he is anxious that it should be sincere. In regard to his doing of business, he is anxious that it should be reverently careful. In regard to what he doubts about, he is anxious to question others. When he is angry, he thinks of the difficulties his anger may involve him in. When he sees gain to be got, he thinks of righteousness."</p>		

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KEY: Possible Answers

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XV.17: The Master said, "The superior man in everything considers righteousness to be essential. He performs it according to the rules of propriety (li). He brings it forth in humility. He completes it with sincerity. This indeed is the superior man."	<p>Instead of following the rituals for a marriage, the governor's son "marries" Miss Li in the following manner: "He. . . begged that she would accept him as her slave. Henceforward the old lady regarded him as her son-in-law; they drank heavily together and (the next morning). . .settled there permanently.</p> <p>But later, he redeems himself by following the proper rituals for mourning his parents.</p>	Miss Li, after her transformation, refuses to marry the governor's son until the Governor "ordered a match-maker to perform the initial ceremonies for uniting the two families and to accomplish the six rites of welcome." These are part of the proper marriage rituals.
XV.31: The Master said, "The object of the superior man is truth, not food. . .The superior man is anxious lest he should not get truth; he is not anxious lest poverty should come upon him."	<p>"The old lady asked him if he lived far away. He answered untruthfully. . .hoping that they would ask him to stay."</p> <p>It is in part, this lie that gets the young man in trouble from the beginning.</p>	Miss Li carries out trap for her husband, BUT she rectifies the situation. "Our conduct has indeed been inhuman. . .And since we have flouted Heaven and defied the laws of humanity, neither spirits nor divinities will be on our side. Let us not incur a further retribution!"
IV.16: The Master said, "The mind of the superior man is conversant with virtue; the mind of the base man is conversant with gain."	<p>"He consorted only with actors and dancers and low people of that kind, passing time in wild sports and wanton feasting."</p> <p>But after Miss Li transforms him, "The report of his virtue reached even the emperor's ears."</p>	"For the love of father and son in implanted by heaven; yet we have hardened his father's heart. . ." Miss Li is no longer motivated by money, but rather by the opportunity to rectify this fault to heaven.
XV.20: The Master said, "What the superior man seeks, is in himself. What the mean man seeks, is in others."	"The young man accordingly increased his efforts and enhanced his value." When the opportunity arises, the governor's son improves HIMSELF.	"She now made him dismiss all other thoughts from his mind and apply himself to study." Miss Li is clearly seeking to improve her husband, not herself.

<p>XVI.8: Confucius said, “There are three things of which the superior man stands in awe. He stands in awe of the ordinances of Heaven. He stands in awe of great men. He stands in awe of the words of the sages. The mean man does not know the ordinances of Heaven, and consequently does not stand in awe of them. He is disrespectful to great men. He makes sport of the words of the sages.”</p>	<p>The governor’s son masters the words of the sages and passes the highest exams. He was clearly disrespectful of his father, a great man, when he initially disgraced him. In time, the relationship is corrected by Miss Li.</p>	<p>After acknowledging her fault, Miss Li is solely motivated by rectifying the ordinances of heaven. She realizes that SHE has destroyed the relationship between father and son and she must be the one to reunite them. After she does this, she is content to walk out of his life. . .not expecting a reward. Only at the intervention of the reunited father, does she accept a proper marriage to the governor’s son. She is also the one to buy the books for her husband and to force him to study the words of the sages.</p>
<p>XIV.29: The Master said, “The superior man is modest in his speech, but exceeds in his actions.”</p>	<p>“The young man also was quite confident and saw himself winning the first place as clearly as he saw the palm of his own hand.” “He was applauded on every side and was himself convinced that his talents were a unique product of age and could not possibly be called into question.”</p>	<p>“She was of exquisite, bewitching beauty, such as the world has seldom produced.” “Miss Li showed herself a devoted wife and competent housekeeper, and was beloved by all her relations.”</p>
<p>XVI.10: Confucius said, “The superior man has nine things which are subjects with him of thoughtful consideration. In regard to the use of his eyes, he is anxious to see clearly. In regard to the use of his ears, he is anxious to hear distinctly. In regard to his countenance, he is anxious that it should be benign. In regard to his speech, he is anxious that it should be sincere. In regard to his doing of business, he is anxious that it should be reverently careful. In regard to what he doubts about, he is anxious to question others. When he is angry, he thinks of the difficulties his anger may involve him in. When he sees gain to be got, he thinks of righteousness.”</p>	<p>“The young man, perplexed and puzzled to the point of madness, was absolutely at a loss what to do next.” The young man is obviously not “seeing clearly.”</p> <p>The narrator never names the governor’s son. . .it isn’t, afterall, a story about him. Although he rises in station, it is clearly a product of Miss Li’s benevolence. He is rewarded in many ways, but he is not the hero of the story.</p>	<p>“How strange that we should find in the conduct of a prostitute a degree of constancy rarely equalled even by the heroines of history!”</p> <p>It is Miss Li who recognizes the fault of her actions and seeks to rectify them. She represents the human potential reach the Confucian ideal from the depths of prostitution and deception.</p>