

ARISTOTLE ON HAPPINESS:  
A COMPARISON WITH CONFUCIUS

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ABSTRACT

In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle defines the highest good for humankind in terms of happiness. The nature of happiness includes intellectual activity, virtuous activity, and friendship; and certain external goods are needed for happiness. A good life involves consistently participating in activities that make a person good: intellectual activity, virtuous activity, and pursuing friendships. Though Confucius does not take the same exact approach as Aristotle, he is concerned with the good for humankind. Seeking the good of humankind involves consistently and habitually performing acts that develop good character. Such acts include: performing virtuous acts, acting with ritual propriety of the Zhou dynasty, living according to the *dao* or way, and doing what is appropriate. In this dissertation, I explicate Aristotle's conception of happiness, and I include a comparison of his conception of happiness with Confucius.