

**The Priority and Meaning of Life and Death
-- The Views of Confucius and Heidegger**

Dr. Shing-Shang LIN

Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy, Tunghai University, Taichung

Email: sophialinde@thu.edu.tw

Abstract

When Ji-Lu (季路) asked about death, Confucius answered his student: “How can we know death, before we get acquainted with life?” (未知生，焉知死?) Because of this answer, it has always be known that for Confucius as well as Confucianism life has priority over death. At first glance, Confucius’ views about priority of life over death are different to Heidegger’s. But Confucianism respects death and the dead. They follow traditional Etiquette and Ceremonial, namely received from Zhou Dynasty, and give the dead an elaborate and rich funeral. This paper tries to explore the priority of life over death by Confucius and comparing to Heidegger. In this way, it will try to understand Confucius’ view of life and death, especially of death, with Heidegger’s phenomenology and Hermeneutics.

Keywords: Heidegger, Confucius, Death