

REFLECTION IN THE WATER-MIRROR:TURNING
THE TIDE OF DESTINY

水鏡回天錄白話解

Min, Ziqian

閔子騫

宣化上人講於一九八八年四月一日

Lectures by the Venerable Master Hua on April 1, 1988

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魯國人，名損，字子騫。事親孝，待弟友。孔門弟子，以德行著名為顏淵、閔子騫。幼年喪母，後母妒嫉虐待，食不飽，衣不暖，子騫逆來順受，處之泰然，並無怨天尤人。

其父經商，常年在外。偶爾回家，後母虛情假意，表演一番，三子平等待遇，如同己出。時逢大雪，寒冷非常，子騫抖衣而戰，其父怒鞭之，衣破蘆花現，再視次子及三子，所衣乃棉絮也。始知錯怪子騫，父斥後母偏私曰：「汝乃蛇蠍心腸之女人，閔家不容，速去！」子騫跪父前，哀求息怒，勿令母去。諫曰：「母在一子單，母去三子寒。」父母受感動，抱頭痛哭，後母改過自新，成為良母。

閔子騫是春秋時代山東魯國人，名損，字子騫。這個「損」字，並不代表他有什麼缺陷，例如少兩個眼睛、少個鼻子、少個耳朵等等；只是以損為義，並不一定是少了什麼。「子騫」，這「騫」的意思是什麼事情都不太順利，蹇滯不通，也並不是缺腿、跛腳、拽

Essay:

Mr. Min (536-487 BCE) was a citizen of the state of Lu (in the Spring-Autumn Era). His given name was Sun, and his other name was Ziqian. He was very filial to his parents and very friendly to his younger brothers. Among Confucius' students, Yan Yuan and Min Ziqian were most renowned for their virtue. His mother died early when he was little, and his stepmother was very jealous and mean to him. Even though he usually had neither enough food to eat nor enough clothes to keep warm, he took it very well and never blamed others or complained about his fate.

His father was out of town doing business throughout the year and was seldom home. During his father's short stay at home, his stepmother pretended to treat all three children fairly as if all were born to her. Once there was a severe snowstorm, and Ziqian was shivering due to the freezing weather. The father was so mad that he whipped Ziqian. Reed blossoms were exposed from the rip of Ziqian's jacket. The father was surprised and examined the other two children's jackets and found them filled with cotton. Only then did the father realize that he had wrongly blamed Ziqian. The father scolded the stepmother for her bias: "You are a woman as evil as a snake or scorpion, and there is no place for you in this household. Get out of here right away!" Ziqian knelt in front of his father and begged his father not to get angry and kick the stepmother out, pleading: "Only one child suffers from the cold with the mother home, but three will suffer without the mother." Both of his parents were so moved that they burst into tears and had a good cry. His stepmother was so ashamed that she reformed to become an exemplary mother from then on.

Commentary:

Min Zi-Qian (536-487 BCE) was a citizen of the state of Lu in the Spring-Autumn Era. His given name was Sun, and his other name was Ziqian. His name Sun (損) does not mean that he had any defect such as missing eyes, nose, or ears. The character Qian (騫) means bad luck in doing things; however it does not mean lacking legs, being lame, or having injured arms either. Why such a bad name? The Chinese

子（胳膊有毛病或受了傷，不能伸動的人）之類的。為什麼取這麼一個不好的名字呢？講迷信的話，就是為了好養、快高長大；好像現在有人叫子女小狗、小貓、小兔子……等，這些不好的名字，也是一樣的意思。不要以為名字叫「騫」就是有什麼缺陷，沒有的。他要是沒有缺陷，就不會列到孔門的德行科裏，有德行的人是沒有什麼缺陷的。他事親至孝，要是他有缺陷，或者是個瘸子（跛腳的人）、癱子（癱瘓的人）、拽子，或者是個瞎子、聾子，已經自顧不暇了，泥菩薩過海自身難保，怎麼還能孝事父母呢？所以大家對於這一點，見解要圓融一點，不要看見這個「騫」，就以為他有缺陷；我雖沒有和他有什麼親戚關係，不過依情度理是這麼回事。

閔子騫不但事親至孝，對待弟弟也很友善，不吵架。他是孔門的大弟子，和復聖顏子互相媲美，以德行著名。什麼叫德行呢？德行就是不自私、不自利，無論做什麼事都願意幫助人、利益人，這樣才能栽培自己的德行。要是不幫助人，永遠都不會有德行。德行是一點一點栽培來的，遇到有什麼利益人的事就去做，絲毫沒有選擇的；不是選擇一件事去幫助人，這就是有德行了。

可惜他的母親和他沒有什麼緣，他年幼時就喪母了；大概因為他是個賢人，他母親福氣不夠，見不了這麼一個好兒子，所以很早就走了。要是他的母親活著，他也不會受罪了——不會吃不飽、穿不暖，這就是要磨練磨練他。他的父親又討了一個後老婆。這個後老婆很妒忌這個大兒子，因為她若不對她大兒子這麼不好，也就顯不出她這兩個小兒子是自己親生的了，所以她就有所偏私，令他吃也吃不飽，穿也穿不暖。可是，子騫逆來順受，處之泰然，一點也不介意，很安詳的。他不會想：「唉！我媽媽真不好！先死了，令我落到後母手裏。這個爸爸也這麼歡喜女人，叫我來受罪！」要是一般人呢，這怨天尤人的思想就會油然而生。

他父親是一個行商的人，常常在外邊來回經商，偶爾忙裏偷閒才回家一趟。他父親要是回來了，後母就虛情假意表演一番，表示對三個兒子平等待遇，對閔子騫也好像她自己親生的一樣。有一年冬天下大雪，天氣非常寒冷，子騫凍的忍不住打戰顫，因為他身上穿的是蘆花，不保暖。他父親看那兩個小兒子都是趾高氣昂的，不怕冷，這個大的兒子反而這麼怕冷，所以很不高興，以為他是裝模作樣，叫他可憐他，於是他心想：「好啊！你想要我

hold a superstitious belief that is easier to raise a child with a bad name. Don't think that he was named Qian (騫) because he had defects. If he had defects, he would not be listed as a virtuous exemplar among Confucius' disciples. A virtuous one has no defects. He was extremely filial towards his parents. If he had been disabled, such as being a cripple, paralytic, one with injured arms, blind, or deaf, he would not be able to take good care of himself, let alone serving his parents, much as a clay Bodhisattva himself is endangered while crossing the ocean. So, upon seeing his name Qian (騫), do not jump to the conclusion that he must have had defects. Although I am not related to him, it makes sense that this should be the case.

Min Ziqian was not only extremely filial to his parents, but also very friendly to his younger brothers; they never quarreled. He was Confucius' senior disciple and with Sage Yan Yuan was renowned for his virtuous deeds. Virtuous deeds are unselfish and not self-benefiting. Only by always being willing to help and benefit others can one nurture one's virtue. If you help no one, you will never develop your virtue. Virtue grows bit by bit; you ought to do whatever you can to benefit others without thinking twice about it. Being selective about which beneficial deeds you do is not considered virtuous.

Unfortunately Ziqian's mother did not have much of an affinity with him. His mother died when he was still little. Probably she died young because he was a worthy person and she had insufficient blessings to see such a good son. If his mother had lived longer, he would not have had to suffer – he would have had enough food to eat and enough clothes to keep warm. This hardship was to test and train him. Unable to endure loneliness, his father remarried. His stepmother was very mean to him. It was as if she felt that if she did not treat this oldest son badly, she could not show that the two younger sons were born to her. So she was biased and did not give Min Ziqian enough food to eat and enough clothes to keep warm. However, Ziqian took the hardship very well; he did not mind at all. He never thought: "My mother was really bad! She died young, so I fell into my stepmother's hands. My father loves her so much that I have to suffer!" Most people would normally blame others and lament their own fate.

His father was a merchant, doing business out of town throughout the year. He was seldom home. During his short stay at home, the stepmother always acted differently and pretended to treat all three children fairly and to regard Min Ziqian as her natural child. One winter, there was a severe snowstorm and it was freezing cold. Ziqian shivered because the jacket he wore was filled with dried reed flowers that just could not keep him warm. Upon seeing that the two younger

可憐你，我先打一打你再說！」拿起鞭子就往他身上抽打。鞭子一抽，大概那衣服也是舊的布洗乾淨做的，不是用新布做的，所以一打就壞了；這一壞，露出裏面的蘆花。他父親一看，再看看第二、第三個兒子所穿的是什麼，他用小刀把他們的衣服割破了，一看裏頭是棉花，這才知道錯怪子騫了。因為蘆花是不保暖的，棉花才能保暖，所以他才冷得那樣。他知道自己受欺騙了，錯怪自己的兒子，於是罵這後母，說她不公平：「妳的心腸像蛇、蠍那麼毒！我們閔家不能容納妳這樣的女人！妳趕快走！」

閔子騫聽父親這樣趕後母走，他懂得大體，就在父親面前跪下，哀求息怒，勸諫說：「父親不要發脾氣！有事情慢慢講，不要這麼不講理，不要攆媽媽走！為什麼？母親在的時候，單我一個人寒冷一點不要緊。母親要是走了，再來一個後母，我們兄弟三個人就都落到後母手裏，到時候都要受罪了！都要穿蘆花的衣服了！那時你說可憐不可憐？」他的父親和母親聽他這麼一說，就都感動了，說：「喔！你這麼明白！真難為你這孩子，我們錯待你了！」於是就抱頭痛哭。這個抱頭不一定抱著閔子騫的頭，或者他父親和母親就互相抱頭痛哭，或者他父母抱著閔子騫痛哭。自此以後，他的後母也就改過自新，成為賢妻良母了。

☞待續

sons were energetic and unafraid of the cold while the oldest one was afraid of the cold so much, his father was very upset. The father thought that Ziqian was pretending being sick so that the father would pity him. His father thought: "Well! You want me to pity you? I'll beat you up first." His father whipped him severely. His jacket was most likely made of worn-out cloth, so the jacket ripped during the whipping and the dried reed flowers fell out. The father was astonished. With a knife, he cut open the other two children's jackets and found them filled with cotton. The father realized that he had wrongly blamed Ziqian. Unlike cotton, reed flowers just can't keep a person warm; no wonder Ziqian was shivering. The father knew immediately that the stepmother had been deceiving him, so he castigated her for being unfair: "Your heart is as evil as that of a snake or scorpion! We cannot allow a woman like you in this household. Get out of here right away!"

Upon hearing that his father wanted to kick the stepmother out, Ziqian knelt in front of his father and begged him not to get angry, pleading: "Please calm down and don't get mad! Please don't kick mother out. Let me tell you why. It is alright if only I myself suffer from the cold with the mother at home. Once the mother leaves, we'll have a new stepmother, and all three of us children will fall into the hands of the stepmother and will all suffer. We'll all have to wear jackets filled with reed flowers. Wouldn't that be pitiful?" Hearing this, both of his parents were moved to tears, saying: "Oh! You really understand things! We are sorry that we have mistreated you for so long!" They both hugged their heads and cried loudly. It is not clear whether the parents hugged Ziqian's head, or they hugged each other's heads and cried. His stepmother was so ashamed that she reformed to become an excellent mother and wife from then on.

☞To be continued



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