

## 《論語淺釋》

(續)

## The Analects of Confucius (Continued)

宣化上人講 Lectures by Venerable Master Hua

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## 【學而第一】

「謂其人曰」：就告訴他家裏的人說，「今日病已」，我今天可疲倦到極點了！為什麼疲倦得這麼厲害呢？「予助苗長矣」，我幫著我所種的田苗長了。「其子趨而往視之」：他兒子趕快跑去看，喔！父親有了神通，那大約是念一個什麼密宗的老鼠咒吧？一念咒，把這個苗就幫著長高了！啊，趕快去看一看！「苗則槁矣」，到那兒一看，這些苗都乾了。因為把根都拔出來，它不乾怎麼樣呢？你不要幫著它長，「鐵杵磨繡針，功到自然成」；你要有忍耐心、有定性，勇猛精進，不要生一種退悔的心。

我們應該想，要知道釋迦牟尼佛三大阿僧祇劫修福、修慧。當然，我們也不知道我們修幾大阿僧祇劫了；但是我們就是修了幾大阿僧祇劫，我們還不要自滿，也不要說：「喔！我已經修了幾大阿僧祇劫了。」我們當自己還是第一步從這兒開步走。

## (九) 曾子曰。慎終追遠。民德歸厚矣。

「曾子曰」：曾子說了。曾子，你們都認識了，和果喜是一家子；果喜俗家也是姓曾，那麼這是你的祖先。你有這樣的好祖先，你要好好的學佛法才可以的，不要那麼盡打妄想。

曾子說，「慎終」：怎麼叫「慎終」？慎，就是謹慎其事、謹慎。就是在父母死的時候，要對這個事情看得很慎重的，不可以那麼馬馬虎虎地，這叫「慎終」，你要好好地來辦喪事。「追遠」：不是父母死了的時候，你謹慎其事就算完了；還沒有完，要「

## Chapter 1: Xue Er (To Learn)

He told his family: "Today, I'm exhausted." What was the reason? "I helped the seedlings to grow taller." 'His son rushed to the field to take a look.' His son thought: "Oh! Father must have acquired spiritual penetrations. Could he have chanted one of those rat mantras from the Secret School to help the seedlings grow? I must go there and take a look!" When he arrived, he saw that 'the seedlings had all withered'. As they were pulled out by the roots, how could they not have withered? Therefore, don't help them to grow. As the saying goes: "Grinding an iron pestle down to a sewing needle – things will naturally be accomplished with the right effort." You must have patience and perseverance, as well as a still nature. Forge ahead vigorously and do not regret or think of retreating.

We should recall how Shakyamuni Buddha cultivated blessings and wisdom over a period of three great *asamkheya kalpas*. Of course, we do not know how many great *asamkheya kalpas* we have cultivated. However, even if we have done so, we should not feel smug and say: "Wow! I have already cultivated for so many great *asamkheya kalpas*." We still ought to treat this as the first step and begin our journey from here.

**(9) Zeng Zi said, "By carefully observing the funeral rites for parents and conducting memorials for ancestors, the people's moral behavior will tend towards sincerity and kindness."**

**Zeng Zi said.** Zeng Zi spoke these words. All of you know about Zeng Zi – he is related to Guo Xi whose lay surname is also Zeng. [To Guo Xi: This is your ancestor. With such an illustrious forbear, you should study the Buddhadharma well and not keep on having false thoughts.]

Zeng Zi said, "**By carefully observing the funeral rites for parents.**" What is the meaning of the character '慎' (shèn)? It means to be careful or cautious. When one's parents pass away, one should look upon it as a serious and solemn affair, not something to be trifled with. Preparations for the funeral should be carried out properly. **Conducting memorials for ancestors.** One should adopt a

追遠」，就是每一遇著父母的忌日的時候，要去回憶一下。追，就是「回憶」，就是「想一想」；去到墳上掃一掃墳，把墳給掃乾淨了。

中國講燒紙錢，這個是不太好的。因為你燒那個錢，紙灰在那兒，把那個地方也都弄邋遢了。並且我常說這個道理，你們大家應該知道，鬼不用什麼錢的；鬼若用錢，那它還不如人了！鬼要用錢的話，它自己也會製造錢，不用人給它錢，它才會用。我們人，誰給製造錢呢？我們人，沒有誰給我們製造錢，都是人類自己本身想方法來造錢。那麼人既然會造錢，鬼為什麼要人來給它錢，才有錢用呢？尤其鬼也不需要錢了，所以不需要到處去行賄絡。假如鬼用紙錢的話，西方人沒有燒紙錢的，那麼那些鬼都變成窮鬼了？沒有錢用，都變成要飯的了？這世界上沒有這個道理的！所以人要聰明一點。

這就是中國那些個愚夫愚婦，以訛傳訛的風俗！好像中國人現在，親人死了，喔！用紙糊一個大飛機；那紙糊的飛機燒了，它就能用嗎？那個是紙紮的，尤其燒成灰了，人怎麼可以坐到那個飛機上？你想想看！又有用紙糊一輛汽車燒了，這才是騙人呢！這是那些做生意的人，想盡方法來騙人的錢，所以利用你的弱點。什麼弱點呢？你貪心的弱點。你這個「貪心」說：「喔！這鬼也要錢，你給他燒什麼，他有什麼。你燒個火車，他就有個火車；燒個飛機，他就有個飛機；燒個小汽車，他就有個小汽車。」這完全是太滑稽、太滑稽了！沒有這個道理的。沒有這個道理，為什麼一般人還要用很多錢買這些東西去燒呢？就是一個貪心作怪！他做人那麼貪錢，他以為鬼也是貪心鬼，也就歡喜錢。

其實就算他歡喜錢，也是變成灰了，他怎麼能用那個錢啊？那灰有什麼用？那灰若是錢的話，紙沒燒之前，它像錢似的，那麼燒了之後，它還是錢？你們相信這個道理嗎？我相信這就是人這一種貪心在那兒作怪。

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careful approach not only at the time of death of one's parents, for the process doesn't just end there, but on every anniversary of their deaths, on which one ought to reminisce about them. The character '追' (zui) means to remember or recollect, as in visiting their graves and tidying up the sites.

The Chinese custom of burning paper money (for the deceased) is not a good practice as the ash that remains becomes a mess and is a source of pollution. Moreover, I have mentioned it many times and all of you should probably know this: Ghosts do not require any money. If they do, then they are worse than people! Even if they want to use money, they can create it themselves without the need for us to offer it to them. As for us human beings, who creates money for us? No one. It's just that we ourselves think of a way to manufacture it. Since it is the case that even people know how to create money, why would ghosts have to depend on us to give them such offerings? They do not have any particular use for it and they don't have to go around bribing others. If it is true that they use paper money, then what becomes of Westerners who do not subscribe to this practice? Will their spirits become impoverished ghosts or mendicant ghosts? There is no such logic in the world! People ought to be a bit smarter!

All this is due to the custom of relaying distorted information practiced by those foolish and ignorant people in China! Take the modern day Chinese for example. Upon the death of a loved one, they make a paper model of a big airplane. Can it be used after it has been burnt? It is made of paper and particularly, in the form of ash, how could anybody board it and take a flight? Think about it! What's more, some people make paper replicas of limousines and burn them. That is simply cheating! Those businessmen think of all ways and means to cheat people of their money by targeting their weaknesses such as greed. Your greedy mind says, "Oh! Ghosts need money too. They will receive whatever you burn for them, be it a train, airplane or sedan." This is simply ridiculous! There is no such thing. However, why do most people still spend huge sums of money to purchase paper offerings for burning? It is the greedy mind that is playing tricks! As human beings, they are greedy for money and so they presume that ghosts are also greedy and fond of money.

Actually, even if ghosts do like money, how could they possibly make use of it when it has turned into ash? Does ash have any use? Before burning, paper currency may look like the real thing but once it is burnt, is it still considered money? Do you all believe this principle? I am convinced that the culprit is the mind of greed. Furthermore, people nowadays can be as foolish as this: They say that ghosts need money and therefore, when they are still alive, they burn a lot of fake gold and silver ingots, as well as paper horses, with the intention of depositing them in King Yama's bank in the nether world deaths. Wouldn't you say that such people are as stupid as pigs, for how else would you explain their behavior? Ponder over it.

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還有的，你說現在人糊塗到這麼個樣子上！說是：「鬼需要錢！」他就沒有死之前，就燒了很多金、銀、紙馬，說：「存到陰間銀行去，存到閻羅王那個銀行，死了，好到那兒就有錢用。」你說這個人如果不是像個豬似的，他怎麼會這樣子？你們想一想，他怎麼不想：「啊！我到極樂世界去，我什麼都不要了，沒有這些個囉唆！」他不這樣想，他要到地獄去，他還以為有個銀行在地獄那兒可以存款。哈！閻羅王一看，你一來了：「好東西！你這個貪心鬼，我叫你去吃糞去。」派他去做那個屎坑裏的蟲子。

所以這一點，你們各位要用你們真正的智慧來破除這個迷信。什麼叫佛教裏的迷信呢？喔！這就是迷信！那些和尚還鼓勵說：「燒多點啦！燒多點好啊！」你看！把人弄得以為是真的了：「那個法師都叫我燒多點這個。因為他不會騙人啦！」人家都是知道出家人不騙人、不打妄語啊！想不到他和做生意的合起來騙人，想不到的！所以這一點，你們大家要深深地明白了！我和你們說過之後，你們到處要宣傳這個道理，切記不要人燒紙錢、燒金箔、燒這些個東西；這真是沒有用的，真是浪費世間的金錢！

Why don't these people think: "Ah! I am going to the World of Ultimate Bliss. I don't require anything and have no need for such fuss!" Instead of thinking like this, they want to go to the hells and even harbor the notion that there is a bank in the hells where they can deposit their funds. Ha! When King Yama takes one look at them, he will say, "You good-for-nothings! Since you are such greedy ghosts, I will let you go and eat excrement," and send them packing off to be worms in a cesspit.

Therefore, all of you should use your true and actual wisdom to break this superstition. What is called superstition in Buddhism? This is exactly it! Some monks even encourage people saying, "Burn more offerings. The more the merrier!" In this way, people think that it is true. "Oh! Those Dharma Masters tell me to burn more of these offerings. They can't be bluffing me!" Everyone knows that left-home people do not cheat others and do not tell lies. It is unimaginable that they are actually in cahoots with the businessmen! All of you must understand this aspect clearly! Now that I have explained it to you, propagate this principle wherever you go. Make it a point to discourage people from burning paper currency, gold foil and the like. It is of no use at all and truly a waste of worldly money.