

The Analects of Confucius (Continued) (續)

《論語淺釋》

宣化上人講 Lectures by the Venerable Master Hua

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【八佾第三】

(八) 子夏問曰：「『巧笑倩兮，美目盼兮，素以為絢兮。』何謂也？」子曰：「繪事後素。」曰：「禮後乎？」子曰：「起予者商也，始可與言詩也已矣！」

噯！我再教你們一遍，哪一個字怎麼樣讀，就要念給我聽了！我慢一點念，你們要記得，你們要把它印上心啊！

現在所講的是《論語》，怎麼叫「論」呢？論，就是討論；語，就是言語；討論孔子的言語。和誰討論呢？這本來是孔子所說的話，孔子在杏壇設教，教三千多個學生；每一天上課，他所說的，都有他的重要的道理。上課之後，這一些個學生互相來討論，檢討老師所說的這個話——裡邊的含義是什麼，他怎麼樣說的。就互相來研究。後來一些個弟子及弟子的學生，就把這些言論整理出來，記載成一本書，內容都是很扼要的，這叫「論語」。這「論語」兩個字，就是這樣講。

你們各位要知道這個题目的講法，不要讀了《論語》，不知道它是說的什麼。現在你們雖然是小學生，我教你們大學的課程；現在大學的學生也不懂這些個做人的道理。那我們現在就是專門講根本做人的道理，所以你們各位都是很幸運的，能在這個混亂的、黑暗的時代，再重見光明；這是你們各位特別的幸運，你們——尤其這些個小朋友，都是很幸運的，能得到這個課程，來做為做人的基礎。

什麼是「老師」？問你們理由，你們答不出來。「眾人是我師，我是眾人師」，眾人都是我的師父。你們單獨一個人時，

Chapter 3: Eight Rows of Eight Dancers

(8) Zixia inquired, "Her sweet smile is charming indeed; her pretty eyes so clear and bright. With her simple features, how gorgeous she looks. What does this mean?" The Master replied, "The paintwork is executed on top of the white background." Zixia asked, "Does this mean that the rites serve as a backdrop?" The Master exclaimed, "Shang, you are one who inspires me! I may now begin to discuss the Songs with you."

All right! I am going to teach you the pronunciation of the characters one more time, after which you will have to recite the text for me. I'll recite it a bit slower. You must remember it; imprint it in your mind!

We are now lecturing on the *Analects*. What is the meaning of '論' (lùn)? It means 'to discuss' and '語' (yǔ) means 'language' or 'sayings.' Therefore, it is a discussion on Confucius' sayings. Who were the participants in the discussion? Originally, these words were spoken by Confucius who had set up school at the Apricot Pavilion, teaching more than 3,000 students. The things that he said every day in his lessons were based on important principles. After lessons were over, the students would gather together to discuss and analyze their teacher's sayings in an attempt to find out the underlying meanings and the way they were explained. In other words, the students gathered in groups to investigate the teachings. Subsequently, some of his students, together with their own disciples, sorted out these discussions and compiled the essential points into a book known as the *Analects*. This is an explanation of the two characters '論語.'

All of you should know the meaning of the title, otherwise you will not understand what the *Analects* is talking about even after reading it. Although you are primary school students, I am teaching you the university curriculum. Nowadays, even university students do not have a clue about the principles of being a person. We are now specifically lecturing on the fundamental principles of human conduct and all of you are very fortunate indeed as you will be able to see the 'light' again in this age of chaos and darkness. Every one of you, especially the children, is particularly lucky to be able to come across this lecture series, as it will serve as a foundation for building your character.

不是我的師父；你們大家一起，就是我的師父了！你們善的，就是我的一個「法師」；你們惡的，就是我的一個「戒師」。我問你們理由，你們應該這麼樣答覆我，那就夠了；你們都不曉得答覆，因為你們都不願意做人師，我知道！你們都覺得「人之患，在好為人師」，所以就願意做學生，不願意做老師，yes（是不是這樣子）？大約差不多！

「我是眾人師」，我若有學問，我也可以做你們的大家的師父。「時常師自己」，你們自己也應該時常管自己叫老師，時常以自己做為自己的老師。「自己是常師」，也自己常常做人家的老師。你這樣子，就互相交換知識，那個知識就一天比一天多了。我問你們的問題，你們都不答覆我，不要那麼刻薄慳吝！不要那麼孤寒（編註：粵語「吝嗇」之意）！

【美國弟子比丘尼恒賢練習解釋】

有一個弟子——就是「子夏」，「問曰」，就是問一個問題，要他的老師答覆他這個意思。他提出來《詩經》裡的三句話。就是「巧笑倩兮，美目盼兮，素以為絢兮」，這三句就是從《詩經》上來的。這本來是說，好像有一個女孩子，她笑的時候很好看的，她的眼目也是很好看的，可是沒有什麼顏色；盼，就是眼珠子有黑色的和白色的，可是也是很好看的。然後就說「素以為絢兮」，素，就是沒有什麼顏色，是說這個眼目；然後就加上很多的「絢」；絢，就是莊嚴的，裝飾的。「何謂也」，子夏聽《詩經》裡邊這三句，就不明白這個意思，就問老師，這個很深的意思是什麼？

所以「子曰」，孔夫子就答覆他的弟子說，「繪事後素」，他說，很簡單的！就是說這個畫畫的，要先預備這個素的底，好像一張紙或者絲布之類的；之後，要上顏色。好像眼睛是先有黑色和白色。他的弟子聽這個答覆，忽然間就明白了，「曰」，就是子夏他說。「禮後乎」，我明白這個，就好像是禮，或者禮序，或者祭祀，就是在後邊才有的；先要有一個很好的品德，要有忠和信，要有仁，然後

What is meant by the word “teacher?” When asked to explain, you are dumbfounded. If, according to the saying, “Everybody is my teacher; I am a teacher to everyone,” then it means all of you are my masters. As individuals, you are not my master, but collectively, you are! If your conduct is wholesome, you are my Dharma Master; if your conduct is unwholesome, then you are my Precept Master. When I ask you for an explanation, just this answer will suffice. The reason that you can’t answer me is because you are not willing to be a teacher to others. I am aware of this! All of you subscribe to the notion that a person’s misfortunes arise from his eagerness to instruct others. Therefore, you’d prefer to be students rather than teachers. Yes? Most probably!

As for I am a teacher to everyone, this means that, if I were knowledgeable, I would also qualify to be a master to all of you. Constantly being a teacher to myself -- you should also constantly look to yourself as your own teacher. I am constantly a teacher to others -- Similarly, you can be a teacher to other people all the time. Through mutual exchanges in this way, your knowledge will increase day by day. All of you are not answering my questions. Don’t be so mean and stingy! Don’t be such a scrooge! [The adjective ‘孤寒’ (gū hán) means ‘stingy’ in the Cantonese dialect.]

[The following is the explanation given by the disciple, Bhikshuni Heng Hsien.]

There was a disciple by the name of **Zixia**. The term ‘問曰’ (wèn yuē) means ‘to **inquire** about a certain matter.’ He posed a question to his Master, seeking an answer from him. Quoting three lines from the *Book of Songs*, he said, “**Her sweet smile is charming indeed; her pretty eyes so clear and bright. With her simple features, how gorgeous she looks!**” Basically, this is talking about a maiden who has a delightful smile and very pretty, plain eyes. The character ‘盼’ (pàn) means that the black and white portions of her eyes are very distinct, which look very nice all the same. This is followed by the line: *With her simple features, how gorgeous she looks!* The character ‘素’ (sù) means ‘plain,’ which is referring to the eyes, while ‘絢’ (xuàn) means ‘adornment’ or ‘embellishment.’ **What does this mean?** When Zixia heard these three lines from the *Book of Songs*, he didn’t understand what they meant. Therefore, he asked his teacher about the profound underlying meaning.

Therefore, **the Master replied**. Confucius answered his disciple: “**The paintwork is executed on top of the white background.**” It’s very simple, he said. It is just like painting, whereby you will first have to prepare a plain background such as a piece of paper or silk cloth and then apply the colors on top. Similarly, a person’s eyes are differentiated into black and white portions. On hearing this reply, his disciple, **Zixia**, had a sudden realization and **asked**, “**Does this mean that the rites serve as a backdrop?**” He proceeded to ask another question. According to his understanding, this is analogous to the rites, be it observing protocols or offering sacrifices, which are incidental matters. First and foremost,

就可以有這個禮。是不是這個意思？「子曰」，孔夫子就告訴他——他並不是就說「對」；他說，「起予者，商也」：商，是子夏的名字。起予者，就是令我有所啟發的人，就是商，就是這個子夏！也，是個助詞，沒有意義。「始可與言詩也已矣」，現在我可以和他開始講《詩經》了！因為他明白這個根本的意思了。

☞待續

one must possess good character, moral virtue and qualities such as loyalty, faithfulness and benevolence before the rites can be put into practice. Is this the meaning? **The Master exclaimed.** Confucius did not answer in the affirmative straightaway but said, “**Shang, you are one who inspires me!**” ‘Shang’ is Zixia’s style name. The person who can inspire me is none other than Shang! The character ‘也’ (yě) is an auxiliary word that has no meaning. **I may now begin to discuss the *Songs* with you.** Since he has already understood the fundamental meaning, I can start discussing the *Book of Songs* with him.

☞To be continued

