

# 論語淺釋

## The Analects of Confucius

宣化上人講

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### 【八佾第三】

(十一) 或問禘之說。子曰：「不知也。知其說者之於天下也，其如示諸斯乎？」指其掌。

「或問禘之說」：有一個人就問「禘」是什麼意思？禘，就是前面講的，一種很大的祭禮。問這個祭祀的道理是個什麼？到底是怎麼回事？「子曰：不知也」：孔夫子說，你這回問我嘛，我也不知道。「知其說者之於天下也」：若知道「禘」這種義理、這種道理的，他治理天下，「其如示諸斯乎」：就瞭如指掌了。他明白一切的禮法，治國的方略他都懂了，所以就像看這個手掌這麼容易！「指其掌」：孔夫子就用手，指著他這個掌這麼說。這個「指其掌」，是後來弟子給記上的，怕人不懂得什麼叫「斯」，所以說「指其掌」。

\* \* \* \*

你們在家裡先把它讀熟了，等我到這兒一講，你們就會懂了，這是最好的一個辦法。你又能少到山上去玩，好像果陀，他本來記憶力也很好，他就掛著玩，所以記不清楚，不能完全記。你若是真用功讀書的話，不要說兩個禮

### Chapter 3: Eight Rows of Eight Dancers

(11) Someone asked for an explanation of the ritual for honoring imperial ancestors. The Master replied, "I do not know. If one who knew the explanation were to regard all things under Heaven, would it not be similar to revealing all that is here?" Thereupon, he pointed to his palm.

#### Commentary:

**Someone asked for an explanation of the ritual for honoring imperial ancestors.** There was a person who inquired about the meaning of '禘' (dì). As mentioned before, '禘' is the name of a very grand sacrificial rite. Somebody made a query about the principle underlying this ritual. What is it all about? **The Master replied, "I do not know."** Confucius said, "This time, I am baffled by your question." **If one who knew the explanation were to regard all things under Heaven.** If a person who knew the reasoning or principle behind the '禘' ritual were to govern the country, then **would it not be similar to revealing all that is here?** It would be as simple as pointing at his palm, for he would already have a good grasp of all the rites, laws and strategies for governing a state. Therefore, it would be as effortless as peering at one's palm! **Thereupon, he pointed to his palm.** Confucius then raised a finger to point at his palm while saying this. The last line '指其掌' was appended later by his disciples who were afraid that people might not understand what was being referred to by the character '斯' (sī), meaning 'here.'

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Please familiarize yourself with the text at home so that you will understand it when I come here to lecture. This is the best method. Furthermore, you will have no excuse to go up to the mountains to play so often. For instance, Guo Tuo has an excellent memory but then he is unable to memorize the text completely because all he cares about is playing. If you really make the effort to study hard,

拜，就有十分鐘都可以把它記得很清楚很清楚。可是你就盡掛著去調皮，盡掛著玩，所以就不懂了。你們每一個人，能把沒講的部分在家裡先把它讀熟了，這是好辦法；到這兒來，可以一聽就懂了。

## (十二) 祭如在，祭神如神在。子曰：「吾不與祭，如不祭。」

這是唸第三遍了！第三遍唸完了，看看誰能背得出來？看看有沒有這個記憶力？你們若記得住，那一定是很有前途的。有沒有人能背得出啊？很好，你們還有誰能背得出？還有誰？看他那麼小能記得住，你在家裡有沒有先讀過？（小孩：「有。」）有啊？那這是個好學生，在家裡先讀一讀。現在我給你們講一講這一段。

「祭如在」：祭，就是祭祀；祭祀就是上供。好像我們供佛，這也是祭，不過這叫「供佛」，不叫「祭佛」。那麼「祭」，這是祭祀社稷的鬼神、山川的鬼神、家裡的灶君或者祖先。祭祀的時候，你要觀想那個鬼神就在這兒享受這個祭祀。「祭神如神在」：無論你祭祀什麼神，就好像那個神在那兒似的。

「子曰」：孔子又說。「吾不與祭」：我若不參加這個祭祀的典禮，「如不祭」：就好像我不誠心了，好像沒有祭祀一樣的，這是這個意思。另一個意思，孔子勉勵他的學生，說是你們不要因為我沒有去參加這個祭祀，你們在那地方就不誠心，就馬馬虎虎的，好像沒有祭祀那個樣子，那麼隨便。有這麼兩個意思。

you'll be able to memorize all this within ten minutes, not to mention two weeks. The reason you don't understand is because you are preoccupied with being mischievous and playful. If every one of you could go home and thoroughly read the text for the following lesson, that would be perfect. Then, when you come to attend the lecture, you will understand the moment you listen to the commentary.

**(12) Perform the sacrificial rites as if one were in the presence of the receiver of the sacrifices. Offer sacrifices to the spirits as though one were in the presence of the spirits. Confucius said, "If I do not participate in a sacrificial ceremony personally, it is the same as not offering any sacrifices at all."**

### *Commentary:*

This is the third time we have read this passage! After reading three times, let's see who can recite it. Let's find out whether you possess a good memory or not. If you can memorize it, then you will definitely have a bright future. Is there anyone who can recite it? Very good. Who else can recite it? Anyone else? You see, that fellow is so young and yet he can recite the text. Did you study the passage beforehand when you were at home? [Child: Yes.] You did? That is a good student, for he did his own reading at home. Now, I shall proceed with an explanation of this passage!

**Perform the sacrificial rites as if one were in the presence of the receiver of the sacrifices.** '祭' (jì) is an abbreviation of the term '祭祀' (jì sì), which means offering sacrifices to the gods or ancestors. It is the same as 'making offerings.' For example, when we make offerings to the Buddha, this is also a form of '祭.' However, in this case, it is called 'making offerings to the Buddha' and not 'offering sacrifices to the Buddha.' Now, '祭' can refer to the offering of sacrifices to the ghosts and spirits of the land and grain, the ghosts and spirits of the mountains and rivers, the kitchen god in one's residence, or even one's ancestors. While offering the sacrifices, you must contemplate that particular ghost or spirit being right there enjoying your offerings! **Offer sacrifices to the spirits as though one were in the presence of the spirits.** Regardless of which spirit you are offering sacrifices to, it should be carried out as if that spirit were actually there.

**Confucius said.** Confucius spoke again. **If I do not participate in a sacrificial ceremony personally.** By being absent from the sacrificial ceremony, **it is the same as not offering any sacrifices at all.** It gives the impression that I am lacking in sincerity, and it is as good as not offering any sacrifices. This is one of the meanings. There is another interpretation—Confucius could have been motivating his students by telling them: "Just because I am not there to take part in the sacrificial ceremony, you people should not be insincere and do things carelessly. It is as if you are doing something casual rather than performing the sacrificial rites." These are the two interpretations of this sentence.