

論語淺釋 (續)

The Analects of Confucius

(continued)

宣化上人講

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【里仁第四】

Chapter 4: Living in a Benevolent Neighborhood

為什麼他不說呢？因為當時他的學生還都不夠程度，沒有到中學的課程裏頭；所以他不能講這個法門。那麼老子呢？老子他對佛學懂是懂一點，可是他也是不講，他講道教的道理；為什麼呢？也因為當時的人不夠程度，不能接受佛教。

孔子和老子都是給佛教鋪路的，外道也是給正道鋪路的，邪教也是給正教鋪路的；都是給它們去先把地方收拾乾淨了。那麼這個邪教，它是把人心給衝擊一下，來一個波浪，令他們智慧的鎖先開一開；智慧之門打開一點了，然後才能接受佛教這無上的醍醐甘露。所以你用佛教的道理來講儒教，不太恰當！

為什麼說「朝聞道，夕死可矣」？這「死可矣」並不是死，你們不要以為就

Why not? It is because, at that time, his students were still not of sufficient standard and had not started learning the high school syllabus. Therefore, it was not appropriate for him to explain this dharma-door. What about Laozi then? He understood a bit about Buddhism but he did not talk about it either and, instead, expounded the principles of Taoism. What is the reason? It is also because the people at that time had not reached the required level and would not be able to accept the teachings of Buddhism.

Both Confucius and Laozi were the forerunners of Buddhism, just as how the externalists paved the way for the orthodox schools, and deviant teachings paved the way for the proper teachings. They arrived first to tidy up and clean the place. As for the deviant teachings, their role is to give people's minds a good pounding, similar to the lashing of a wave, so as to unlock their wisdom. It is only when the wisdom door has been pried open that people will be able to accept the unsurpassed teachings of Buddhism. Therefore, if you were to use Buddhist principles to explain Confucianism, that would not be very appropriate!

Why is it said that "If I could learn of the Way in the morning, I would have no regrets dying in the evening?" Here, 'no regrets dying' does not refer to 'death', so do not assume that the person actually died. On the contrary, it

是死了；沒有死的，這是把「道」和「死」的重要性衡量輕重。說是你若聞到這做人之道了，比死還重要；你若能知道怎麼樣做人了，你就死也瞑目了，也可以了；可以是可以，但不是就死了。你們各位要注意這一點！並不是「一早晨我聞著道了，晚上我自殺」；那你自殺，還是一樣下地獄的。不是那樣子！他這是比較輕重的問題，就說這個道比那死更重要。人拿生死看得很重要的，生了就大喜，死了就悲傷了、煩惱了；可是這個道，比生死的問題更重要。

所以你若明白做人之道了——做人之道是什麼呢？那個地方的含義，就是要大公無私。大公無私裏頭，就包括著沒有情慾，不爭、不貪、不求、不自私、不自利、不打妄語。我們這六大宗旨，用佛教的道理講也可以，用道教的道理講也可以，用儒教道理講也可以；這是很實用的，很合用的，很合乎邏輯學的。

那麼為什麼早先人不這麼講呢？我告訴你們，這是我發表的。科學時代的佛教是什麼？就是六大宗旨；這是科學的佛教，很科學的，很邏輯學的，很合乎一般人的所用的。你們若不信，你們往儒教、道教、佛教合一合，都可以合得上的；三而一，一而三，這是很合用的一個方法。佛教裏講的戒律，說來說去，就是說的六大宗旨。

那麼孔子說這個道，我們當然講這個「道」字。這個道是個「首」字，首者，頭也；然後又加一個「走」字兒，說是就要你行。第一件事要什麼呢？就是要你去做去；你若不做，你說多少都是假的，都是在騙人呢！所以說：「說的一丈，不如行的一寸。」相差就十百之差，一倍和百倍相差得這麼遠。所以我們說「聞道」這個「道」，就是做人之道；不是旁的道，不是一定說是了生脫死那個道。就人之道你若了了，那就比你生死還重要。

is an assessment of the relative importance of the 'Way' and of 'death'. What it means is that if you could learn about the Way of humanity, then that is far more important than dying. If you know how to conduct yourself as a person, then even if you have to die, you will not have any grievances. You may have no objections to dying, but it does not mean that you actually have to die. All of you must pay attention to this point! It is not a case of "I learn about the Way first thing in the morning and then I commit suicide at night." If you take your own life, you will fall into the hells all the same. It is not that at all! This is an issue of relative importance; in other words, learning the Way is of a higher priority than dying. People attach great importance to the matter of birth and death: They are extremely happy when there is a birth, but feel sorrowful and afflicted when there is a death. The Way, however, is far more important than the issue of birth and death.

Suppose you have understood the Way of humanity. What exactly is it? It implies that you possess the qualities of public-mindedness and impartiality, which also encompass the following ideals: Not giving rise to passions and lust, not contending, not being greedy, not seeking, not being selfish, not pursuing personal advantages, and not lying. These Six Guidelines of ours make sense whether they are explained according to the principles of Buddhism, Taoism or Confucianism. They are very practical and adaptable guidelines that conform perfectly to logic.

Now, why is it that people in the past did not explain it as such? Let me tell you something: This explanation was put forward by me. What is Buddhism in the Scientific Age? It is just the Six Guidelines. This is scientific Buddhism – extremely logical and very suitable to the requirements of ordinary people. If all of you don't believe me, just combine the teachings of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism and you will find that their principles correspond with one another. The three are one and each one encompasses all three. This is a method that is most adaptable. What the Buddhist Vinaya talks about over and over again is none other than the Six Guidelines.

Since Confucius has brought up the topic of the 'Way', we will certainly have to explain the character '道' (dào). It is a combination of the character '首' (shǒu), which means 'head', 'first' or 'foremost', and the character '走' (zǒu), which means 'walk' or 'move'. What is the 'first and foremost' matter? It is that you must go ahead and do it or practice it. If you do not put it into action, then however much you talk about it will still be false and you are just bluffing people! As the saying goes, "Mouthing words a feet long is not as good as practicing an inch of it!" The difference can be as much as between ten and a hundred, or even between one and a hundred. Therefore, the '道' mentioned in the line "If I could learn of the Way" refers to the Way of humanity. It is not any other way, nor does it necessarily refer to the way of ending birth and death. If you could perfectly comprehend the Way of humanity, that would be far more important than your own birth and death.

☞ To be continued

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