

# 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

(十三)子曰：「能以禮讓為國乎，何有？不能以禮讓為國，如禮何？」

這一章是孔子說，「能以禮讓為國乎，何有」：就是如果我們能以禮和讓來為國，還有什麼問題啊？一定不會有問題。

禮讓是兩個很重要的問題。禮讓像一個規矩這樣，如果有這個規矩的話，在這國家一定沒有什麼問題。人和畜生有什麼分別，就是人知禮，畜生不懂得禮。

好像有一次孔子就說，你養你的父母，不止單單給他們吃。如果你沒有恭敬心，你和養畜生有什麼不同啊？畜生也可以養牠們的父母，不過牠們

(13) The Master said, “Is it possible to govern a state on the basis of civility and deference? What difficulty is there? If it is not possible to manage state affairs by promoting civility and deference, then what purposes do the rites and rituals serve?”

In the first part, Confucius said, “Is it possible to govern a state on the basis of civility and deference? What difficulty is there?” If we are able to administer a state by means of civility and deference, what problems can there be? For sure, there will be no problems at all. “Civility” and “deference” are two very important issues that are similar to a set of rules. If we possess a set of rules and guidelines, then running the country will definitely be a breeze. What is the difference between human beings and animals? It is just that human beings observe the rules of etiquette whereas animals do not. For example, Confucius once said, “Providing for one’s parents does not just mean giving them food.” If you do not show them any respect, then how is it different from raising animals? Animals know how to support their parents too but they do not have any sense of respect and do not observe any rules of etiquette.

沒有恭敬心，不以禮。

上人：畜生怎麼樣養他們的父母？

弟子：就是給牠們父母東西吃。

上人：什麼畜生給牠父母東西吃？

弟子：不知道。

上人：你不知道，那你怎麼可以那麼講呢？那是說，那個畜生你都可以給牠東西吃，都能養牠。你要是就單單養，說你能養你的父母，你給他飯吃，叫他活著，這就是孝了；那個畜生你也那麼養牠，那你也是孝順牠了？

弟子：人和畜生不同，是因為人注重這個禮。如果我們不用禮來治理這個國家，這個禮有什麼意思啊？就是「禮」也是像法律這樣。

上人：人所以跟畜生不同的原因，就因為人懂得禮貌，畜生就不懂得禮貌。所以到那個夷狄之邦，那兒的人們都很粗野的，人對人之間，連個招呼也不打，沒有禮貌。

讓，就是不爭，不爭就是個讓。這個禮就是個不貪，你若能不貪，那就合禮了，就有禮貌了；你若一貪，那個貪的相貌露出來了，那叫沒有禮貌了。這個禮也是不自私，對人要恭敬。這恭敬人，「敬人者，人恆敬之；愛人者，人恆愛之」，你不恭敬人，人就不恭敬你。如是因，如是果。

讓而不爭，所以帝堯把天下就讓給帝舜，這是以天下送給人；伯夷、叔齊也因為不做國君，把天下讓給旁人坐，他們走了。這都是讓，讓就是不爭的一個本體。不爭就是讓，對誰也不爭。這個世界為什麼亂呢？就是因為爭。這個爭的開始在什麼地方呢？就在人的心裏頭。人的心一爭，就不讓了。

人為什麼心裏爭？就因為自私，就要和人爭了。爭名譽，這是一個爭；爭地位，這是一個爭；爭權利，這是一個爭；爭利益，這是個爭。都是在那兒爭，爭的時候就不讓了；那麼你這一爭，就使這個世界大亂了。先從什麼地方爭起來呢？先從自己心裏頭爭起來的。

**Venerable Master:** How do animals support their parents?

**Disciple:** They give them food.

**Venerable Master:** What sorts of animals give food to their parents?

**Disciple:** I don't know.

**Venerable Master:** If you don't know, then how can you explain it in that way? That quote refers to people who merely provide food for their parents to sustain their lives and consider it as filiality. Well, you can raise animals in the same way just by giving them food, so does it mean you are filial to the animals too?

**Disciple:** People differ from animals because they attach importance to the rites. If we don't employ the rites to govern the country, what meaning would they have? The rites and rituals are just like the laws and regulations.

**Venerable Master:** The reason that human beings differ from animals is because the former have manners whereas the latter do not. For example, the foreign tribes living on the borders of ancient China were very uncouth and barbaric. Among themselves, they did not even greet each other and had no manners at all.

Deference (讓 ràng) means 'not contending'. When you do not contend with others, you defer or yield to others. Civility (禮 li) means 'not being greedy'. If you are able to refrain from greed, then you are in accord with the rites and are well-mannered. The moment you are greedy, it will show on your facial features and that is called bad manners. Being civil also means 'not being selfish' and treating others with respect. There is a saying: "A person who respects others will be respected by everyone; a person who loves others will be loved by everyone." If you do not respect others, then people will also not respect you. This is cause and effect.

By being deferential and not contending, the sage-king Yao yielded all the land under Heaven to Shun. In other words, he gave away the entire kingdom to him. Similarly, Boyi and Shuqi declined to be state rulers and left after giving up the empire to somebody else. All these are examples of deference, which is one of the fundamental aspects of 'not contending'. To refrain from contending is to yield to others. One does not contend with anyone regardless of who it is. Why is the world so chaotic? It is because of contention. And where is its origin? It is right inside people's minds. As soon as a person's mind gives rise to contention, he will not defer or yield to others.

Now, why is it that people's minds give rise to contention? It is due to selfishness, which drives them to contend with others. Whether it is fighting for name and fame, position and status, power and prestige, or benefits and advantages, these are all different forms of contention. As long as you are fighting over something, you will not yield to others. The moment you get involved in any contention, the world is plunged into great chaos. Where does the contention first arise? It all begins in your own mind.

☞待續

☞To be continued