

# Yan Hui's Embodiment of Learning in *the Analects* (continued)

## 《論語》中顏回在學習上的表現（續）

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### Inner Motive for Learning

If it wasn't Yan Hui's intention to pursue either material wealth or social recognition, what then could be the reason that motivated him to learn? Confucius spoke highly of those who study for intrinsic reasons, instead of extrinsic ones. He greatly valued those who learned for learning's sake, not mixed with other motives, as expressed in his lament: "It is not easy to find someone who is able to learn for even three years without a thought given to the official salary" (8.12). Confucius greatly valued the intention of learning for oneself. He says, "In ancient times scholars learned for their own sake; these days they learn for the sake of others" (14.24). It seems likely that Yan Hui's love for learning was powered from within. He was a rare treasure in the sense that he truly embodied learning for learning itself, sought no material gains

### 學習的內在動力

如果顏回不是為了追求物質財富或社會認可，那麼他學習的動力是什麼？孔子高度讚揚那些為了內在而學習的人，而不是追求外在而學習的人。他非常看重那些不摻雜其他動機而學習的人，正如他所感嘆的那樣：「三年學，不至於穀，不易得也。」(8.12)「很難找到能學習三年而不考慮官職薪水的人」孔子非常重視為自己而學的意願。他說：「古之學者為己，今之學者為人。」(14.24)

看來，顏回好學是發自內心的。他真正體現了為學而學，既不求物質利益，也不求社會影響力；更不在乎博取他人的好感，哪怕只有一些糧食和水來維持生活，他真是難

or social influences, and didn't try to impress anyone, even if all he had to sustain his life was some grains and water. Confucius applauded him, "What a worthy man Yan Hui was!" (6.11).

Yan Hui's intrinsic love for learning is also evident in his diligence in learning from those he met and with every opportunity. Whomever Yan Hui encountered, he would find something to learn from them. As Zengzi, another influential student of Confucius, spoke of him: "Able, and yet inquiring of those who were not able; more knowledgeable, and yet inquiring of those who were less" (8.5). We can only imagine what kind of learning spirit one must have in order to learn as Yan Hui did. Regardless of how his teacher and peers respected and applauded him, Yan Hui remained humble and ready to learn from anyone. This is consistent with what Confucius famously says, "When walking with two others, I always find something to learn from them. I emulate their good qualities and correct myself for the bad ones that I see" (7.22). Propelled by that inner motive to learn, Yan Hui kept advancing and never stopped (9.21). For Yan Hui, learning had no beginning or end, and he could pursue learning anywhere, anytime, from anyone.

## What Type of Learning And How Does One Learn?

It is important to distinguish between learning and accumulating "knowledge" though. In Yan Hui's case, he was actually dedicated to unlearning, dropping all that was not conducive to his learning or his embodiment of the teachings, such as not looking at, listening to, speaking, or acting what is not aligned with the highest goodness that he intended to cultivate (12.1). After dropping everything that is not, one may begin to see more clearly what it is.

What type of "learning" is being referred to in the Analects? Confucius once said to Zengzi, "All that I teach can be strung together on a single thread." Then he left the room without saying anything further (4.15). Another time, Confucius asked Zigong, another student, "Do you see me as someone who learns through studying a wide variety of things and keeping them in memory?" Zigong asked, "Is this not the case?" Confucius said, "No. I bind it all together with a single thread" (15.3). What is

能可貴的珍寶。孔子稱讚他說：「賢哉回也」(6.11)「顏回是個賢人！」。

顏回熱愛學習的本性還體現在他勤於向所見之人學習，並抓住每一個機會學習。無論顏回遇到誰，他都會找別人值得學習的地方。正如孔子另一位有影響力的學生曾子所說：「以能問於不能，以多問於寡」(8.5)自己有才能卻向沒有才能者請教，自己多學識卻向少學識者請教；有卻好像無，充實卻好像空虛，被人冒犯了也不計較。從前我的朋友曾經這樣做。我們只能想像，要如同顏回一般樂學，必須具備怎樣的學習精神。無論夫子和同輩們如何尊重和讚嘆他，顏回依舊保持謙遜，樂於向任何人學習。這與孔子的名言如出一轍：「三人行，必有我師焉。擇其善者而從之，其不善者而改之。」(7.22)。在這種內在學習動機的推動下，顏回不斷前進，從未停止(9.21)子謂顏淵，曰：「惜乎！吾見其進也，未見其止也。」)。對於顏回而言，學問無始無終，隨時隨地都可以向任何人學習。

## 何種類型的學習與如何學習？

然而，區分學習與累積知識很重要。以顏回為例，他實則是致力於「勿知」，捨棄一切不利於他學習或貫徹夫子之道的東西；比如「非禮勿視，非禮勿聽，非禮勿言，非禮勿動」(12.1)。放下所有不對的之後，就能看得更清楚對的是什麼。

《論語》中所謂的學問究竟是什麼？孔子曾經對曾子說：「吾道一以貫之。」然後便一言不發地離開了學堂(4.15)又一次，孔子問子貢：「你覺得我是那種博聞強記的人嗎？」子貢回答：「難道不是嗎？」孔子說：「不，我是用一個基本思想貫串始終的。」子曰：「賜也，女以予為多學而識之者與？」對曰：「然，

that “single thread” in learning? How does Confucius convey that “single thread” to his students and how does one learn?

## A Single Thread

Although there are a few places in *the Analects* that suggest a possible answer to that single principle that Confucius might be referring to, the point is that learning is not about the quantity of things that one studies. If one grasps the “single thread” that underlies all Confucius’ teachings, one can trace all teachings by following that thread, and apply them based on different situations. As the best student of Confucius, Yan Hui must have understood the “single thread” that runs through all Confucius’ teachings. When Confucius asked Zigong, “Who is better, you or Yan Hui?” Zigong answered, “How dare I even think of comparing myself to Hui? Hui learns one thing and thereby understands ten. I learn one thing and thereby understand two.” Confucius says, “No, you are not as good as Hui. Neither of us is as good as Hui” (5.9). As a highly regarded student of Confucius himself, Zing would not dare to compare himself to Yan Hui when it came to learning because, “Hui learns one thing and thereby understands ten.” In Classical Chinese, “ten” can imply “many.” With that unifying “single thread,” Yan Hui was able to extend his understanding of “one” to “many.”

Furthermore, Confucius made his teaching method clear by saying, “I will not open the door for a mind that is not already striving to understand, nor will I provide words to a tongue that is not already struggling to speak. If I hold up one corner of a problem, and the student cannot come back to me with the other three, I will not attempt to instruct him again” (7.8).

What did Confucius try to spark in students? He wanted to help them start their own self-powered “learning engine,” so that they could engage in learning for their own sake and for learning itself. In other words, he intended to train his students to think on their own, so he resisted spoon-feeding them with what he knew. Confucius was open about his own love for learning too. “In any village of ten households there are surely those who are as sincere and honest as I am, but there is no one who matches my love for learning” (5.28). Confucius

非與？」曰：「非也，予一以貫之。」(15.3) 學問中那個「一」是什麼？孔子是如何詮釋「一以貫之」給他的弟子們的？一個人要如何學習呢？

## 一以貫之

雖然在《論語》中有幾處對孔子提到的那個原則提出了可能的答案，但關鍵是學問並不是一個人所學習事物的數量。如果一個人能掌握貫穿夫子之道的「一」，就可以按圖索驥，並根據不同的情況融會貫通。作為孔子最優秀的弟子，顏回勢必理解了貫穿夫子之道的「一」。子謂子貢曰：「女與回也，孰愈？」對曰：「賜也，何敢望回？回也，聞一以知十，賜也，聞一以知二。」子曰：「弗如也！吾與女弗如也。」(5.9) 孔子問子貢：「你和顏回誰更出色？」子貢回答說：「我膽敢和顏回比呢？回聞一知十。而我聞一知二。」孔子說：「不，你不如回。我們都不如顏回」。

子貢作為孔子的得意門生之一，在學問上也不敢與顏回相提並論，因為「回聞一知十」。在文言文中，「十」可以表達「許多」。有了「一以貫之」，顏回得以將「一」的理解延伸到「多」。

此外，孔子清楚地表達了他的教育方法：「不憤不啟，不悱不發，舉一隅不以三隅反，則不復也。」(7.8)「如果弟子不是經過冥思苦想、用心理解，我不會去啟發他；如果他不是已經竭盡全力、嘗試表達，我不會去開導他。不能舉一反三的話，就不再費力去教他了。」

孔子試圖激發學生什麼？他想幫助弟子們啟動他們的自主「學習引擎」，這樣一來他們就可以為了自己和學問本身而學習。換句話說，他為了訓練弟子們獨立思考而拒絕用他已經知道的知識來灌輸。孔子也坦誠地表達了自己對學習的熱衷。孔子說：「十室之邑，必有忠信如丘者焉，不如丘之好學也。」(5.28)

wanted to spark the same love for learning in his students from within.

### What Does Heaven Ever Say?

Besides hinting at “a single thread” and encouraging students to think on their own, Confucius also explored the idea of not speaking with any words at all! “I would rather not speak,” one day he said to Zigong, who responded with concern, “If the Master did not speak, then how would the students receive teachings from you?” Confucius replied, “What does Heaven ever say? Yet the four seasons are put in motion by it, and the myriad creatures receive their life from it” (17.19). What does he mean by asking, “What does Heaven ever say?” Without words, nature runs its own cycle. Wordless teaching or action could reach much deeper places than words. Confucius often encouraged his students to be “slow to speak, but responsive to act” (4.24).

### Yan Hui's Learning As Reflected In the Teacher-Student Relationship

Confucius and Yan Hui had profound mutual respect and care for each other. Yan Hui spoke very highly of Confucius' teaching, “The more I look up at it, the higher it seems; the more I delve into it, the harder it becomes. Catching a glimpse of it before me, I then find it suddenly at my back. The Master is skilled at gradually leading me on, step by step…” (9.11). Because of Yan Hui's exemplary embodiment of his teaching, Confucius could see how his teaching was put into practice and lived. Yan Hui once said to Confucius, “As long as you are still here, Master, how could I dare to allow myself to die?” (11.23). But he only lived to age forty and died about two years earlier than Confucius, according to some records.

The well-known phrase by Confucius comes to mind, “Having in the morning heard the Way, I could die that evening without regret” (4.8). Did Yan Hui “hear the Way?” Was that why he loved learning so much, because it allowed him to “hear the Way?” I could only hear back—the echoing silence. After Yan Hui died, Confucius wept openly and said, “Oh! Heaven has bereft me! Heaven has bereft me!” When the other students said

「每十家必定有和我一樣講忠信的人，只是不如我好學而已。」孔子希望從內在激發弟子們對學習的熱愛。

### 天何曾說過什麼？

除了暗示「一以貫之」和鼓勵學生獨立思考之外，孔子還探討了「一言不發」的想法！一日，他對子貢說：「予欲無言。」（17.19）「我寧可不言。」子貢關切地回答：「子如不言，則小子何述焉？」（17.19）「夫子不言，弟子如何受教？」孔子回答說：「天何言哉？四時行焉，百物生焉，天何言哉？」（17.19）。「天何曾說過什麼？四季照常運轉，萬物自然生長。」孔子為何要問：「天何曾說過什麼？」沒有言語，[大自然]依舊自行運轉。無言的教導或行動比言語更能觸及更深之處。孔子經常鼓勵他的學生「訥於言，而敏於行」。（4.24）。

### 從師生關係看顏回的學習

孔子與顏回彼此敬佩，相互關懷。顏回對孔子的教義評價極高：「仰之彌高，鑽之彌堅；瞻之在前，忽焉在後。夫子循循然善誘人……」（9.11）「夫子的學問和道德，越仰望越覺得高深，越鑽研越覺得深厚；一瞥以為它在我眼前，轉眼之間便在我身後了。師父循序漸進地引導我……因為顏回以身示範，孔子看到了顏回是如何將夫子之道付諸實踐和生活的。顏回曾對孔子說：「子在，回何敢死？」（11.23）「有師父在，我豈敢先死？」。

但據一些記載，他只活了四十歲，比孔子早過世大約兩年。孔子的名言浮現在腦海中。子曰：「朝聞道，夕死可矣。」（4.8）顏回「聞道」了嗎？難道

to him, “Master, surely you are showing excessive grief!” He responded, “Am I showing excessive grief? Well, for whom would I show excessive grief, if not for this man?” (11.10). The depth of their teacher-student relationship transcends most father-son relationships.

## Conclusion

Yan Hui had the purest intention to pursue learning and he strived to live a life that was aligned with that intention. Learning itself made all the other things in life appear trivial to him. Having spotted the “single thread,” the root of things, he let go of the branches, unmoved by either hardships or praises. Even though he was applauded by his teacher and peers, he remained quiet and humble, so alive and content was he in his learning. Neither having made a penny nor taken any government position in his short life, he was put at the top among Confucius’ three thousand students. “What a worthy man Yan Hui was,” indeed! His unwavering intention to learn will certainly continue to stand still as a beacon in a world besieged by accumulative trivialities. ❸

他如此熱衷學問，是因為學問能讓他「聞道」嗎？我只能聽到回聲——迴盪的寂靜。顏淵過世後，孔子痛哭流涕地說：「唉！天喪亡我！」當其他弟子對他說：「師父，您過於悲痛了！」孔子說：「過於悲痛了嗎？不為他悲痛為誰悲痛？」(11.10) 顏淵死，子哭之慟。從者曰：「子慟矣。」曰：「有慟乎？非夫人之為慟而誰為！」)他們師徒關係的深厚，超越了大多數父子關係。

## 結論

顏回的求學之心最為純粹，他畢生都以此而活。學問本身讓生命中的其他事情於他而言都微不足道。找到了「一」，找到了事物的根本，他放下了細枝末節，不為苦難或讚譽所動。雖然他備受夫子與同輩們的推崇，他仍然保持沉默和謙遜，他的學習充滿活力和知足感。在他短暫的一生中，既不曾賺過一文銀兩，也不曾謀取一官半職，卻位列孔子的三千門生之首。「賢哉回也！」毫無疑問，他對學問矢志不移的決心必將繼續如燈塔般，屹立在這個被日積月累的瑣事所纏縛的世界中。❸

Translations of *the Analects* passages quoted in this paper have consulted (with modifications) Edward Slingerland, trans., *Confucius Analects with Selections from Traditional Commentaries*, (Hackett Publishing Company, 2010)

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## BUDDHISM A TO Z

### 十種供養

- 一、香
- 二、花
- 三、燈
- 四、瓔珞
- 五、寶蓋
- 六、幢幡
- 七、衣服
- 八、果食
- 九、音樂
- 十、合掌供養

### The Ten Kinds of Offerings

- 1) Incense.
- 2) Flowers.
- 3) Lamps.
- 4) Necklaces.
- 5) Precious parasols.
- 6) Banners and canopies.
- 7) Clothes.
- 8) Fruit and food.
- 9) Music.
- 10) Joined palms.

