

論語淺釋 (續) The Analects of Confucius (continued)

宣化上人講

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【雍也第六】

Chapter 6: As for Yong

(七) 季氏使閔子騫為費 (bi) 宰。閔子騫曰：「善為我辭焉！如有復我者，則吾必在汶 (wèn) 上矣！」

(7) Lord Ji wanted to appoint Min Ziqian as a steward in the fiefdom of Bi. Min Ziqian said to the messenger, “Please decline the offer politely on my behalf. If His Lordship summons me again, I shall move north of the Wen River!”

【上人講解】

「季氏使閔子騫為費宰」：閔子騫，叫閔損——他就自己不要什麼利益，要自己損；字子騫。這個人專門為人家著想，自己品德非常清高，節操非常好；所以在孔門四科（德行科、言語科、政事科、文學科）裡頭，他是屬於德行科的。「德行：顏淵、閔子騫」，頭一個就是顏淵，第二個就是閔子騫。

閔子騫有個故事。他的父親閔大夫，前邊那個太太死了，又娶一個後妻。這個後妻就帶過來一個兒子，普通的世俗話叫帶的「油瓶仔」（廣東話），就好像大舜那個母親一樣的；那麼她到閔家這兒，又生了一個兒子。閔子騫他這個後母很偏心的，當時家裡大約也不太富裕，若富裕也不至於有這個情形；這閔大夫大約也是個清官，所以家庭也都很寒苦的。冬天做棉衣服，這個後母就把閔子騫的衣服，用蘆花當棉花來給絮的；蘆花，就是蘆葦之花，就蘆葦那個穗子。給她自己的兒子做的，就用真的棉花；當時大約真的棉花是貴，蘆花就便宜。

Venerable Master Hua's Commentary:

Lord Ji wanted to appoint Min Ziqian as a steward in the fiefdom of Bi. Min Ziqian (閔子騫) was also known by his personal name, Min Sun (閔損). The character ‘損’ (sǔn) implies that he did not want benefits of any sort and was always willing to take a loss. ‘Ziqian’ (子騫) was his style name. As a person, he was particularly considerate towards others. He possessed very high moral principles and had a strong sense of integrity. This explains why amongst the Four Disciplines in the Confucian School (Virtue and Conduct; Oratory and Discourse; Governance and Serving; Literary Scholarship), he was placed in the discipline of ‘Virtue and Conduct’. In this discipline, the first being Yan Yuan (顏淵) and the second, Min Ziqian (閔子騫).

Speaking of Min Ziqian, there is a story about him. His mother passed away when he was young and his father, Grand Master Min, married another woman. This second wife brought with her a son from her previous marriage. In colloquial language, she was said to have brought along an ‘oil pitcher’ (a Cantonese slang for ‘stepson’). This situation was similar to that of the Great Shun’s mother. After marrying Min Ziqian’s father, she gave birth to another son. Unfortunately, this step-mother was a very biased person. At that time, the family was probably not very wealthy. If they were well-off, then it was unlikely the following event would have happened. Grand Master Min was presumably an honest official, and so his family was living in poverty. In winter, people wore coats with cotton padding. The coats that this step-mother made for Min Ziqian, however, were stuffed with reed catkins instead of cotton. Reed catkins are the flowering spikes of the reed grass. As for her own sons, she padded their coats with real cotton. In those days, cotton must be very expensive, whereas reed catkins were cheap.

☯待續

☯To be continued