

論語淺釋 (續)

The Analects of Confucius (continued)

宣化上人講

楊維光 英譯

Lectured by the Venerable Master Hua

English Translation by Yong Wei Kwong

【雍也第六】

【陳居士講解】

「伯牛有疾」：伯牛得病，並沒有說明他是某一種病，但一定是非常嚴重的病。古書上說他是癩病，就是「癩瘋」一類的病，可是並沒有說明。「子問之」：就是孔子去看他的病。

為什麼要「自牖執其手」？因為孔夫子不進到他的房間。這個「牖」字是指「南牖」，就是一個向南方的窗。《禮記》上面講，病人本來是住在一個北邊有窗的房間；假如君王去看他的時候，家裏的人就要把他搬到一個有南邊窗的房子裏頭，君王就可以向南邊坐來問候他。那麼冉耕家裏的人也是這樣做，可是孔夫子是最守禮的，他不是君王，他不願意旁人這樣來禮讓的；所以他不去，就在門外頭用手伸到窗裏頭去，執著伯牛的手。

還有一個講法，就是說：因為冉耕的病很厲害，他家裏頭的人就恐怕他會傳染給孔子，就不要孔夫子進去；可是孔夫子非常地關心他的學生，所以他不怕傳染，他還是從窗裏頭伸進了手去握住他的手。

Chapter 6: As for Yong

[Upasaka Chen's Explanation]

When Bóniú was ill. The illness that Bóniú was afflicted with is not specified, but it must have been very serious. The ancient texts mention that he had leprosy but did not clarify further. **The Master went to inquire after him.** Confucius visited him to ask about his illness.

Why was it that he **clasped his hand through the window**? It was because Confucius did not enter Bóniú's room. The character '牖' (yǒu) refers to the south-facing window. *The Book of Rites* cites an example of a sick person who was staying in a room with a north-facing window. If the state ruler paid a visit, his family members had to move him to a room with a south-facing window so that the ruler could be seated facing south while inquiring after him. In this case, Rǎn Gēng冉耕's family intended to follow the same protocol. As one who observed the rites most strictly, Confucius did not want other people to accord him this kind of courtesy because he was not the sovereign. Therefore, he refrained from entering the room but merely reached inside the window to clasp Boniu's hand.

There is another explanation that goes like this: As Rǎn Gēng's illness was so severe, his family members were worried that he might transmit the infection to Confucius, and so they dissuaded Master Kong from going inside his room. Being extremely concerned about his student, Confucius was not afraid of contracting the disease and proceeded to put his hand through the window to clasp Rǎn Gēng's hand.

While holding his hand, Confucius realized how terribly ill Rǎn Gēng was, and so he sighed, **"We will lose him soon."** He is dying! As Confucius probably could not feel his pulse when he touched his wrist, he lamented, **"Alas, this is his destiny!"** This is all fated. **"How could such a person be stricken with such an illness?"** Why is such a good person afflicted with this type of terrible illness? This was because Rǎn Gēng was one of Confucius' best students, ranked after Yán Huí顏回 and Mǐn Zǐqiān閔子騫. He was such a fine student and yet he contracted this horrible malady and was about to die. For this reason, Confucius was extremely grieved

因為這個病很厲害，所以他抓著冉耕手的時候，他就說「亡之」：你沒有命了！大概是抓著那個手的時候已經沒有脈了，所以他說「命矣夫」：命運就是這樣子。「斯人也，而有斯疾也」：為什麼這樣一個好的人，而又生這種不好的病？因為冉耕是孔子最好的幾個弟子中間的一個，好像顏回、閔子騫，然後就是冉耕。可是這樣好的學生又生了這樣不好的病，馬上就要死了；所以孔夫子非常的悲哀，說「斯人也，而有斯疾也」：為什麼這樣好的一個人，而有這樣不好的病？

【上人講解】

不要歪曲事實，你們要用一種很公平的心來看。好像這個「伯牛有疾，子問之，自牖執其手，曰：亡之，命矣夫！斯人也，而有斯疾也！斯人也，而有斯疾也」：說：「這個病是死亡的病，大約人的生命就是這樣了，也是他前生的業應該這樣子！所以這樣的人，才也有這樣的病！這樣的人呢，也有這樣的病！」這聽起來，好像怨天尤人似的。「孔子也怨天尤人？」其實這不是！這就是感嘆詞，感嘆說這樣的好人，不應該有這樣的病，可是他居然有這樣的絕症。這個「病」，我們不能說他又是癡瘋，又是什麼；就是絕症，治不好的病，他已經病入膏肓了，就是神醫來了，也治不好。

為什麼孔子「自牖執其手」？就是因為伯牛的家裏以君王禮來待孔子，他不接受這種過份的招待，所以他進房裏去。孔老夫子這一不進房裏去，就引起後代這些個不守規矩的人猜想：伯牛大約是有傳染病。這是所謂「吹毛求疵」了，以小人之心，度聖賢之腹。這在佛教因果來說，都是示現；雖然說是那麼好的人，還是有這麼壞的病，這都是業報如此。

☞待續

and continued lamenting: “How could such a person be stricken with such an illness?” Why is it that such a good person like him can end up with such a horrible illness?

【Venerable Master's Commentary】

Do not twist and turn the facts. All of you must read the text with an impartial mind. An example is this passage:

“When Bóniú was ill, the Master went to inquire after him. Clapping his hand through the window, the Master sighed, “We will lose him soon. Alas, this is his destiny! How could such a person be stricken with such an illness? How could such a person be stricken with such an illness?”

Some of you said, “This is a life-threatening illness. Probably, this is what human life is all about. Due to the karma he created in past lives, he ought to suffer in this way! This is the reason that such a person can end up with such an illness! A person like him can also get this kind of sickness!” It sounds like Confucius was repining at Heaven and laying blame on the patient himself. Would Confucius do that? Definitely not! This is an exclamatory remark. Confucius was bemoaning the fact that Bóniú, being such a good person, was afflicted with this kind of sickness. Who would have thought that he would contract this incurable disease? As for the ‘illness’, we cannot speculate that it was leprosy or whatever disease. Suffice it to say that it was a fatal and untreatable illness. The disease had already attacked his vitals and it was impossible to cure. Even if a physician who could perform miracles came to treat him, it would be hopeless.

Why did Confucius **clasp his hand through the window**? It was because Bóniú's family wanted to use the princely rites to receive Confucius but he refused to accept such excessive treatment. Therefore, he did not enter Bóniú's room. His refusal, however, led people in later generations who had no sense of propriety to surmise: Bóniú was probably afflicted with a contagious disease! This is called ‘nit-picking.’ With the mind of a petty person, they attempt to gauge the hearts of the sages and worthies.

In terms of the Buddhist teaching of cause and effect, Bóniú's illness was just a manifestation. Although he was a very good person, he was still afflicted with such a vile illness. This is simply the result of karmic retribution.

☞To be continued