

To learn (xue)

1. What to learn?

- The Master taught us through his erudition, his conduct, his loyalty and his trustworthiness.

子曰：「學而時習之，不亦說乎？」(7.25)

- Confucius taught his disciples using poems, documents, li and music. His students were about 3000. 72 of them were accomplished in 6 arts (六藝).

孔子作春秋，自魯哀公十四年春始，至魯哀公十六年冬止，歷時六年，而春秋成。 (Sima Qian, Shiji, 卷62) (Sima Qian: c. 145 – c. 86 BCE)

- 六藝 = 禮，樂，射，御，書，數 (Dong Zhong Shu, 春秋繁露，卷5) (Dong Zhong Shu: 179 – 104 BCE)

- 魯哀公十四年春，西狩獲麟，作春秋至此而絕筆。 (Xu Gan: 170 – 217)

- A villager of Da Xiang (大鄉) said, “Great, isn’t he? Confucius. With his vast learning, he did not manage to make a name of himself.” The Master heard this and told his students, “What shall I try? Shall I try carriage driving? Or shall I try shooting? I think I will try carriage driving.”

子曰：「吾欲求夏禮，而得《坤》。作《坤》小過，繫《坤》六五，曰：『直隕，王公辟，無所損。』」(9.2)

- The Master said, “When you are at home, serve your parents. Outside the family, treat everyone with brotherly love. Be earnest and trustworthy. Comprehensively love all living beings but closeness should be based on ethical integrity. Conduct should come first. Then, read books (讀書) when you have energy to spare.”

子曰：「居則致其敬，出則致其忠，與人交而信，雖至小，不可不謹。」(1.6)

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- The Master said, “There are people who can recite all three hundred poems out of memory. But when they are entrusted with governing, they cannot manage. When they are sent on diplomatic missions, they cannot cope on

their own. Numerous as they may be, they are all useless.

[illegible]

- Zi Xia said, “If you overcome talents, remove desires, serve your parents with all your might, serve your boss with devotion, abide by your words when socialising with friends, who can say that you haven’t learned? I will certainly say that you have learned.”

[illegible]

- 勝=to win, to be victorious. 才= talents, erudition
- 去=to remove a dense thicket (去蕪集錦) 去 = desires, temptation
- 去蕪集錦 (2C – 3C commentary by He Yan 何晏)
- Regarding 'teacher', the Analects have:
 - The Master said, “When I see talented people, I endeavour to align myself with them. When I see those who lack talent, I scrutinise myself. 見賢則思齊焉，見不賢則思加焉 (論語 4.17)
 - The Master said, “Whenever I am in a company of three, I find a teacher. I follow the one who is good. And I reform myself by not following the one who is bad. 三人行，必有我師焉。擇其善者而從之，其不善者而改之 (論語 7.22)
 - Gong Sun Zhao of Wei asked Zi Gong, “From whom did Zhong Ni learn?” Zi Gong replied, “The way of King Wen and King Wu has not fallen to the ground and it now remains with the people. Talented ones have great knowledge. Those who lack talent have small knowledge. As the way of King Wen and King Wu is everywhere, how can the Master not learn? Why should there be a full time teacher?” 子貢問曰：「仲尼自何人而學？」子曰：「文王、武王之道，天下有之，自及我，不可及也。天之有文也，猶天之有日月也，不可及也。天之有文也，猶天之有日月也，不可及也。天之有文也，猶天之有日月也，不可及也。」 (論語 19.22)

2. How to learn?

- The Master said, “Perhaps there are people who say

things they know nothing about. I don't do that. You should gather a lot of information (聞) and then choose the good things and follow them. You should experience a lot (行) and you will understand. This is the way to knowledge."

子曰：「多聞闡義，少能知者，吾所不貴也。」(7.28)

- Zi Zhang learned in order to seek an employment. The Master said, "Study a lot (聞) and eliminate doubtful information. If you cautiously say things which are not doubtful, you will make few mistakes. Experience a lot (行) and eliminate the risks. If you cautiously do things which are not risky, you will have few regrets. When you make few mistakes in your speech and when you have few regrets in your conduct, an employment will come your way as a consequence."

子曰：「多聞闡義，少能知者，吾所不貴也。」(2.18)

- The Master said, "Learning without thinking leads to false knowledge. Thinking without learning is dangerous."

子曰：「多聞闡義，少能知者，吾所不貴也。」(2.15)

- Zi Xia said, "In order to excel in your task, you must learn. In order to excel in your learning, you must be entrusted with a task."

子曰：「多聞闡義，少能知者，吾所不貴也。」(19.13)

3. Fond of learning?

- The Master said, "A noble man will eat but not seek to bloat out. He will have a dwelling but not seek comfort. He will be forthcoming in his conduct but cautious with his words. He will proceed along the Way and be upright. Such a man can be regarded as fond of learning."

子曰：「多聞闡義，少能知者，吾所不貴也。」(1.14)

- Duke Ai (哀) asked, "Among your students, who is fond of learning?" Confucius replied, "A man called Yan Hui was fond of learning. He was unwavering in his wrath. He did

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- Zi Xia said, “If you constantly realise what you lack and do not forget what you are capable of, you deserve to be called someone who loves to learn.”

- mobilise people at the right moment □□□□ (1.5)

- Pheasants in the mountain bridge! It is the right time, It is the right time! 雉鳴於山橋 (10.18)
- As he spoke only when it is the right time to speak, people did not hate his speech (言必當其時人莫惡其言) (14.13)
- Use the calendar of Xia (夏) dynasty 夏曆 (15.11)
- When you are still young, as your physical energy is unsettled, you should watch out for physical attractions 年少氣盛宜慎色 (16.7)
- Confucius chose the moment when he is not around to come and express his gratitude. 孔子不遇而致謝 (17.1)
- If you love to offer your service and yet miss the right timing repeatedly, can you be regarded as intelligent? 好義而失時可謂智乎 (17.1) (qi = many times)
- Four seasons come and go, all creatures are born. But does Heaven speak? (四時行焉百物生焉天何言哉) (17.19)
- cf. 禮記 (quoting Li Ji, 禮記) In Spring, you memorise the canonical texts, in Summer, you learn to play musical instruments, in Autumn, you learn the ritual protocols, and in Winter, you read books. 春讀書夏學樂秋習禮冬讀詩 (Also quoting Li Ji, 禮記) In Spring and Autumn, you teach the ritual protocols and music. In Winter and Summer, you teach the Poems and the Documents. 春官大司馬掌三春之教以辨九德之象以辨九教之象以辨九才之象以辨九德之象以辨九教之象以辨九才之象以辨九德之象以辨九教之象以辨九才之象以辨九德之象 禮記

▪ 行 = to put it into practice,

- Master Zeng said, “Every day, I scrutinise myself about three things – , whether I was loyal when I undertake other people’s business; whether I was trustworthy in my dealings with friends; whether I put into practice what I teach.” 曾子日三省吾身為人謀而不忠乎與朋友交而不信乎傳不習乎 (1.4)
- The Master said, “By nature, human beings tend to be similar. By actual practice, human beings tend

(, 16.9)

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▪ Zi Gong said, "In poverty, yet not be abject; in affluence, yet not be arrogant. How's that?" The Master said, "Possible. But still, it is not as good as being poor yet in delight; being rich yet fond of Li." Zi Gong said, "The Odes have it, 'Like a gem! Now quarried, now filed, now sculpted and now polished!' Is that what you mean?" The Master said, "Ci, Now we can talk poetry together! I tell you one thing and you understand the next." 吾嘗聞古之有也，及乎今而後知。其所以為之者，亦猶此而已矣。 (論語, 1.15)

- Master You said, “If your promise is close to righteousness, you may carry out your promise. If your politeness is close to Li, you can avoid humiliation. If you do not, as a result, lose your popularity, you can be a leader. 君子居则贵其身而天下有定(1.13)
- If you cherish 仁 (ren) and neglect learning, you will

end up being stupid; If you cherish wisdom and neglect learning, you will end up being undisciplined. If you cherish trustworthiness and neglect learning, you will end up being a gangster; If you cherish honesty and neglect learning, you will end up being caught in a straightjacket; If you cherish courage and neglect learning, you will end up being disruptive; If you cherish firmness and neglect learning, you will end up being crazy.” 學而不思則罔，思而不學則殆。 (論語， 17.8)