

Unit 10
Reading C

A Brief Estimate of the character of Confucius 《孔子性格简评》

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1 The great prestige of Confucius and Confucian teachings during the centuries immediately after his death, as well as in subsequent Chinese history, must be ascribed to three factors: first, the intrinsic appeal of Confucian ideas to the Chinese way of thinking; second, the enormous historical learning and scholarship accumulated and practically monopolized by the Confucianists, in contrast to the other schools which did not bother with historical learning (and this body of scholarship carried enough weight and prestige of its own); and thirdly, the evident charm of personality and prestige of the Master himself.

孔子在他去世后的几个世纪以及中国随后的历史中拥有巨大的威望和儒家学说的广泛传播，必须归因于三个因素：第一，儒家思想对中国人的思维方式具有内在的吸引力；第二，儒家积累了大量的历史学识和学问并实际上处于垄断地位，这与其他不关注历史学问的学派形成对比（而这一学识体系本身就具有足够的分量和威望）；第三，孔子本人明显的人格魅力和威望。

There are in this world certain great teachers, whose personality seems to account for their influence more than their scholarship. We think of Socrates, or of St. Francis of Assisi, who themselves did not write any books of account, but who left such a tremendous impress on their generation that their influence persisted throughout the ages. The charm of Confucius was very much like the charm of Socrates, the very fact that the latter commanded the affection and respect of Plato is sufficient evidence of the power of his personality and his ideas. It is true Confucius edited the Book of Songs, and it is also true that he wrote the bare skeleton of events, chronicled in the Spring and Autumn Period, but after all the great tradition of his teachings was put down by his disciples and future followers.

在这个世界上有一些伟大的导师，他们的影响力更多地来自于他们的人格而非学问。我们想到苏格拉底，或者阿西西的圣方济各，他们自己没有写过任何重要的著作，但却给他们那个时代留下了如此巨大的印记，以至于他们的影响历经岁月而不衰。孔子的魅力很像苏格拉底的魅力，后者能赢得柏拉图的爱戴和尊敬这一事实，就足以证明他的人格和思想的力量。诚然，孔子编订了《诗经》，他也确实撰写了简略的《春秋》大事记，但毕竟他的伟大学说传统是由他的弟子和后世追随者记录下来的。

2 There are, of course, many characterizations of Confucius' personality in the various Confucian books. We get a foretaste of it at the end of Chapter III, on "Central Harmony". His disciple Yen Huei also lauded him to the skies, comparing him to a great mysterious something: "You turn up your head and look at it and it seems so high; you try to drill through it and it seems so hard; it appears to be in front of you and all of a sudden it appears behind you." Some of the best characterizations, however, are the following: It was said that he was "gentle but dignified, austere, yet not harsh, polite and completely at ease."

当然，在各种儒家典籍中有很多对孔子人格的描述。在第三章“中和”的结尾，我们可以领略到一点。他的弟子颜回也对他赞不绝口，把他比作一种伟大而神秘的存在：“仰之弥高，钻之弥坚。瞻之在前，忽焉在后。”然而，一些最好的描述如下：据说他“温而厉，威而不猛，

恭而安”。

Confucius' self-characterizations were still better. Once a king asked one of his disciples about Confucius and the disciple could not make an answer. The disciple then returned to tell Confucius of the incident, and Confucius replied, "Why didn't you tell him that I am a man who forgets to eat when he is enthusiastic about something, who forgets all his worries when he is happy, and who is not aware that old age is coming on?" In this statement, we see something of the joy of life, the enthusiasm and the positive, persistent urge for doing something. He also said of himself several times that he was not a "saint", but that he admitted he was tireless in learning and in teaching other people.

孔子对自己的描述则更好。有一次，一位君主向孔子的一个弟子询问孔子是怎样的人，这个弟子无法回答。弟子回来后把这件事告诉了孔子，孔子回答说：“你为什么告诉他，我是一个热衷于某事时会忘记吃饭，快乐时会忘记所有忧愁，而且不知道衰老即将来临的人呢？”在这句话中，我们看到了一种对生活的喜悦、热情以及积极、执着地去做事的动力。他还多次谈到自己不是“圣人”，但承认自己在学习和教导他人方面不知疲倦。

As an illustration of this positive urge in Confucius, there is also the following record. One of his disciples was putting up for the night at a place, and the gatekeeper asked him where he was from. Tselu replied that he was from Confucius and the gatekeeper remarked, "Oh, is he the fellow who knows that a thing can't be done and still wants to do it?" There was a high moral idealism in Confucius, a consciousness of a mission, that made him completely believe in himself.

作为孔子这种积极进取精神的一个例证，还有下面这样的记载。孔子的一个弟子在一个地方投宿，看门人问他从哪里来。子路回答说他是孔子的弟子，看门人说：“哦，他就是那个明知做不成某事却仍然要去做的人吗？”孔子身上有一种高度的道德理想主义，一种使命感，这使他完全相信自己。

3 The charm of Confucius, private character really lies in his gentility, as is so clearly shown in his conversational tone with his disciples. Many of the sayings of Confucius contained in the Analects can only be interpreted in the light of a leisurely discourse of a humorous teacher with his disciples, with an occasional shot of witticism. Read in this light, some of his most casual remarks become the best. I like, for instance, such perfectly casual sayings as the following: He remarked one day to two or three intimate disciples talking with him, "Do you think that I have hidden anything from the two or three of you? Really, I have hidden nothing from you. That's I." Another instance: Tsekung loved to criticize people and Confucius said, calling him by his intimate name, "Ah Sze, you are very clever, aren't you? I have no time for such things." Another instance: Confucius said, "I really admire a fellow who goes about the whole day with a well-fed stomach and a vacuous mind. How can one ever do it? I would rather that he plays chess, which would seem to me to be better."

孔子的魅力，私下里真正在于他的文雅，这在他与弟子们的交谈语气中清晰可见。《论语》中孔子的许多言论只有从一位幽默的老师与弟子们悠闲的交谈以及偶尔的妙语连珠的角度去理解才行。从这个角度去读，他一些最随意的言论反而成了最好的。例如，我喜欢下面这些非常随意的话语：有一天，他对两三个亲密的弟子说：“你们以为我对你们几个人有什么隐瞒吗？真的，我没有对你们隐瞒任何事情。这就是我。”另一个例子：子贡喜欢批评人，孔子叫着他的亲昵名字说：“啊，赐，你很聪明，不是吗？我可没有时间做这样的事情。”还有一个例子：孔子说：“我真的很佩服那种整天吃得饱饱的，心里却空空如也的人。怎么能做到呢？我倒觉得他下下棋会更好。”

4 In one instance, Confucius said something derisively about what one of his disciples was doing. The disciple was puzzled, and Confucius explained that he was merely pulling his leg, implying that really he approved, for Confucius was a gay old soul. His gentility and hospitality toward all desiring to learn are recorded in the following incident, resembling a story in the Bible when Jesus said, "'Suffer the little children to come unto me. 'The people of a certain village were given to mischief, and one day some young people from that village came to see Confucius, and the disciples were surprised that Confucius saw them. Confucius remarked, "Why be so harsh on them? What concerns me is how they come and not what they do when they go away. When a man approaches me with pure intentions, I respect his pure intentions, although I cannot guarantee what he does afterwards. "

有一次，孔子对他的一个弟子正在做的事情说了些嘲讽的话。这个弟子很困惑，孔子解释说他只是开玩笑，暗示实际上他是赞同的，因为孔子是一个快乐的老顽童。下面这件事记录了他对所有渴望学习的人的文雅和好客，这有点像圣经里的一个故事，耶稣说：“让小孩子到我这里来。”有一个村子的人爱惹是生非，有一天那个村子的一些年轻人来拜见孔子，弟子们对孔子接见他们感到惊讶。孔子说：“为什么对他们这么苛刻呢？我关心的是他们怎么来，而不是他们走的时候做什么。当一个人带着纯粹的意图接近我时，我尊重他的纯粹意图，尽管我不能保证他之后会做什么。”