

五.《論語》選(下)

(甲) 陽貨



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課文 (Text)

子之武城，¹ 聞弦歌之聲。² 夫子莞爾而笑。³ 曰：「割雞焉用牛刀？」⁴ 子游對曰：⁵ 「昔者偃也聞諸夫子曰：⁶ 『君子學道則愛人，⁷ 小人學道則易使也。⁸ 』」子曰：「二三子，⁹ 偃之言是也。¹⁰ 前言戲之耳。¹¹」

〈陽貨〉¹²

註釋 (Annotations)

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| 1. 之 | zhī | to go to. |
| 武城 | Wǔchéng | name of a place, in present-day Shandong province. |
| 2. 弦 | xián | string (of a musical instrument). |
| 弦歌之聲 | xián gē zhī | the sound of singing accompanied by string |
| | shēng | music. |
| 3. 莞爾 | wǎn ěr | smiling. (爾 is a suffix for an adverb or adjective.) |
| 4. 焉 | yān | for what; why? (An interrogative particle, always used before a verb.) |

5. 子游 Zǐyóu a disciple of Confucius, who was serving as magistrate of Wucheng.
- 對 duì to reply (to a senior or superior).
6. 昔者 xī zhě in the past.
- 偃 Yǎn formal name of 子游.
- 諸 zhū phonetic fusion of 之 and 於. (之 refers to the ensuing quote from Confucius.)
7. 君子 jūn zǐ a man of noble birth. (This is the literal and original meaning, as it is used here. The term is also used in the sense of a noble-minded man, as in Lesson 3, p. 42.)
- 道 dào the original meaning of 道 is "road". The derivative meaning is "way" or "method". In the Confucian Classics, 道 often refers to 先王之道 xiān wáng zhī dào, namely, the doctrines of the ancient sage kings.
8. 小人 xiǎo rén a person of humble birth. (This is the literal and original meaning, as it is used here. It is also used in the sense of a small-minded person.)
- 易使 yì shǐ easy to use; obedient.
9. 二三子 èr sān zǐ you fellows! (An intimate way of addressing one's friends or disciples, here referring to those who accompanied Confucius to Wucheng.)
10. 是 shì right. (In contrast to 非 "wrong".)
11. 前言 qián yán the words I said just now. (Referring to 割雞焉用牛刀.)
- 戲 xì to jest; to play a joke on.
- 耳 ěr that is all. (A particle expressing limitation.)

12. 陽貨

Yáng Huò

name of a person; here, it also functions as a chapter title.



文法闡釋 (Grammar Note)

割雞焉用牛刀？

This rhetorical question consists of two clauses, 割雞 and 焉用牛刀, which share the same implied subject (“anyone”). The interrogative 焉 always comes before a verb, meaning “in what way” or “why”. The sentence can thus be translated literally as: “When one cuts up a chicken, why does one need a knife for an ox?” (用 “to use” also means “to need”, even in Modern Chinese, e.g., 不用來 “no need to come”.) This metaphor, with its first word 割 changed to 殺, has survived into modern times, with, however, a slightly different implication, namely, “Such a small job doesn’t need a big man!” It can be used either as a humble expression (“You don’t have to bother. A small person like me can do it”.), or as a joke (“Don’t bother me with such trivialities!”).