



十四.《荀子·勸學》(節)¹



課文 (Text)

君子曰：學不可以已。青，取之於藍，而青於藍；² 冰，水為之，而寒於水。³ 木直中繩，⁴ 輅以為輪，⁵ 其曲中規，⁶ 雖有槁暴，⁷ 不復挺者，⁸ 輅使之然也。故木受繩則直，⁹ 金就礪則利，¹⁰ 君子博學而日參省乎己，¹¹ 則知明而行無過矣。¹² 故不登高山，¹³ 不知天之高也；不臨深谿，¹⁴ 不知地之厚也；不聞先王之遺言，¹⁵ 不知學問之大也。¹⁶ 干、越、夷、貉之子，¹⁷ 生而同聲，長而異俗，¹⁸ ^{upbringing} 教使之然也。...

積土成山，¹⁹ 風雨興焉；²⁰ 積水成淵，²¹ 蛟龍生焉；²² 積善成德，而神明自得，²³ 聖心備焉。²⁴ 故不積跬步，²⁵ 無以至千里；不積小流，無以成江海。騏驥一躍，²⁶ 不能十步；駑馬十駕，²⁷ 功在不舍。鍤而舍之，²⁸ 朽木不折；鍤而不舍，金石可鏤。²⁹ 螾無爪牙之利，³⁰ ^{筋 tendon} 筋骨之強，³¹ ^{yet} 上食埃土，³² ^{ān dū} 下飲黃泉，³³ 用心一也。蟹六跪而二螯，³⁴ ^{shàn} 非蛇蟺之穴無可寄託者，³⁵ 用心躁也。³⁶ 是故無冥冥之志者，無昭昭之明；³⁷ 無惛惛之事者，³⁸ 無赫赫之功。³⁹

It is
become it
→ single-
minded.

日 註釋 (Annotations)

1. 荀子 Xúnzǐ a book written by Xún Kuàng 荀況 and his disciples. Xun Kuang, or Xunzi, was a philosopher of the Confucian School who lived in the later part of the Warring States period.
- 勸學 Quàn xué to encourage learning; here it is the title of a chapter.
2. 青 qīng indigo. (A noun.)
 dark blue. (An adjective.)
- 藍 lán the indigo plant. (Note that, to express the notion "blue", pre-Qin Chinese only employed 青, not 藍.)
3. 寒 hán cold.
4. 木 mù timber.
- 直 zhí straight.
- 中 zhòng to match with.
- 繩 shéng rope; carpenter's rule.
5. 輶 róu to bake and bend. (A substitute for 燥.)
6. 曲 qū curve.
- 規 guī compass.
7. 槁暴 gǎo pù exposed to wind and rain; damaged by the natural elements.
8. 復 fù again.
- 挺 tǐng to straighten.
9. 受 shòu to receive.
10. 金 jīn metal.

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| 就 | jiù | to go to; to meet. |
| 礪 | lì | whetstone. |
| 利 | lì | sharp. |
| 11. 博 | bó | extensively. |
| 參 | cān | to inspect. |
| 省 | xǐng | to examine. |
| 乎 | hū | same as 於, when it comes before a nominal.
(A preposition.) |
| 12. 知 | zhì | wisdom. (Written as 智 in later times.) |
| 明 | míng | bright. |
| 行 | xíng | conduct; behavior. |
| 過 | guò | fault; excess. |
| 13. 登 | dēng | to ascend. |
| 14. 臨 | lín | to stand above and look down. |
| 谿 | xī | valley. |
| 15. 先王 | xiān wáng | the sage kings of the ancient times. |
| 遺 | yí | to hand down. |
| 16. 學問 | xué wèn | learning; knowledge. |
| 17. 干越夷貉 | gān yuè yí mò | names of four tribes. |
| 子 | zǐ | baby; child. |
| 18. 異 | yì | to be different. |
| 俗 | sú | folk customs; customary practices. |
| 19. 積 | jī | to accumulate. |

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| 20. 興 | xīng | to rise. |
| 21. 淵 | yuān | deep and large body of water. |
| 22. 蛟 | jiāo | the kind of dragon capable of creating storms and floods. |
| 23. 神明 | shén míng | wisdom. |
| 自得 | zì dé | to be obtained (comes) of itself. |
| 24. 聖心 | shèng xīn | the sagely mind. |
| 備 | bèi | to be ready or prepared (before the time of need). |
| 25. 跬 | kuǐ | a half step. Also written as 跬. |
| 步 | bù | a step. |
| 26. 騏驥 | qí jì | a fine steed. |
| 躍 | yuè | leap. |
| 27. 駑馬 | nú mǎ | an inferior horse. |
| 駕 | jià | ride; a day's trip. |
| 28. 鐫 | qiè | to carve. |
| 29. 鏤 | lòu | to carve; here, to be carved. |
| 30. 蟄 | yǐn | earthworm. (A variant form of 蚓.) |
| 31. 筋 | jīn | tendon. |
| 32. 食 | shí | to eat. |
| 埃 | āi | dust. |
| 33. 飲 | yǐn | to drink. |
| 黃泉 | Huángquán | the Yellow Springs, i.e., underground water. |
| 34. 蟹 | xiè | crab. |

螯	áo	pincers.
35. 鱸	shàn	eel. (A variant form of 鱓.)
穴	xué	hole; den.
寄託	jì tuō	to entrust (oneself) to; to rely on.
36. 躁	zào	rash; hot-tempered.
37. 冥冥	míng míng	dark; hidden.
志	zhì	intention; here, concentration on learning.
昭昭	zhāo zhāo	bright; shining.
38. 惛惛	hūn hūn	silent; of calm determination.
39. 赫赫	hè hè	illustrious; grand and glorious.

文法闡釋 (Grammar Notes)

I. 青，取之於藍，而青於藍。

This is a topic-comment type of sentence with 青 “indigo” as topic and the two clauses connected by the conjunction 而 as comment. The 之 in the first clause 取之於藍 refers to “indigo”. Since the clause has no subject, it may be taken in the passive sense. The 青 in the second clause 青於藍 is an adjective meaning “dark blue”. Since it is followed by 於 + N, it may be taken in the comparative sense. So the sentence can be translated as, “Indigo, taken from the indigo plant, is bluer than the indigo plant”. This saying in modified form (青出於藍而勝於藍) has become a common expression meaning something like “that student is better than his teacher”.

II. 不復挺者，輒使之然也。

This is structurally an equational sentence. 不復挺者 is the subject, and 輒使之然也 is the predicate. The nominalizer 者 is abstract here, turning 不復挺 into a nominal “that (it) no longer straightens out”. 輒 “bending (wood into wheels)” is the subject of the predicative clause. So the sentence can be translated as, “The

reason why it no longer straightens is that bending makes it so". (The sentence 長而異俗，教使之然也 at the end of this paragraph, though without 者, shares the same structure.)

III. 鍤而舍之，朽木不折。

In a conditional sentence, the conjunction 則 normally appears between its two clauses, but sometimes it is omitted, as it is in the present sentence. The first clause 鍤而舍之 itself contains two clauses connected by the conjunction 而, and should thus be syntactically rendered as: "If (we) give it up after (we started) chopping". The main clause 朽木不折 means simply "(even) a piece of rotten wood won't break".

IV. 用心一也

This is an equational sentence with a clause as its predicate. The implied subject is the long narrative before it. In the clause, 用心 "using (or applying) the mind" is the subject and 一 "one (or undivided)" is the predicate. As an explanation for the narrative before it, this sentence can be rendered as: "That is because it is single-minded". (用心躁也 in the following sentence shares the same structure.)

V. 蟹六跪而二螯

Syntactically, this sentence may puzzle some non-Chinese speakers. But, as far as Chinese grammar is concerned, nominal expressions serving as predicates in a descriptive sense are quite common and normal (e.g., 他三頭六臂 "he is three-headed and six-armed" in Modern Chinese). So, 六跪 and 二螯 in the present sentence are both predicates which are connected by the conjunction 而. The sentence, therefore, can be rendered as: "Crabs, in addition to having six legs, are armed with two pincers".