



Undergraduate assignment feedback form

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Keeping a Pure Heart

Translation of Text

This text from *The Great Learning*.

Thus it is that there are few men in the world who love and at the same time know the bad qualities of the object of their love, or who hate and yet know the excellences of the object of their hatred. Hence it is said, in the common adage, ‘A man does not know the wickedness of his son; he does not know the richness of his growing corn.’ This is what is meant by saying that if the person be not cultivated, a man cannot regulate his family.¹ The above is the translation of James Legge.

The Explanation of Text

That there are few men in the world who love and at the same time know the bad qualities of the object of their love, or who hate and yet know the excellences of the object of their hatred refers to that it is difficult — people do not have preconceived idea and prejudice when they face others. In general, people like what meet their appetite. Anyone a person like, even if he or she has shortcomings and weak points, will be think he or she is good. Normally, people will do so. However, we study *The Great Learning*, we should treat others with the heart of equality and purity. So, for the person we like, we should rationally know his or her weak points. Conversely, for the person we dislike, we also should know his or her strong points. A person cannot be perfect without faults and vice versa. For example, some people are rude, but he is very sincere. In the face of these people, we do not like his shortcomings, but should know that he also has strengths. But actually there are few men in the world like this because most people are blinded by the feelings. Hence it is said, in the common adage. ‘A man does not know the wickedness of his son; he does not know the richness of his growing corn.’ Almost everyone has this kind of problem that they think their children are good in all respects and they have no faults. There is an article in *Master Lü's Spring and*

¹ Trans. by James Legge, *The Great Learning* (Zhong Zhou: Zhong Zhou Guji Press, 2016), p.101.

Autumn Annals 呂氏春秋 called 'qu you 去尤' , 'you 尤' refers to faults and what is wrong. 'qu you' means to get rid of these faults and what is wrong. This article said that there was a man who's name is called Wu 惡, he looked very ugly. On one occasion, his father went outside and saw a man, named Shang Duo 商咄, after came back, his father told his neighbor that the appearance of Shang Duo was not as good as his child. In fact, Shang Duo is recognized as the most handsome person in the country of Lu, on the contrary, his son is the ugliest person to the whole country. However, in the opinion of the father, the most handsome person—Shang Duo is not as handsome as his son—Wu². The author's intention to narrate the story in the book of *Master Lü's Spring and Autumn Annals* was to let everyone know that when parents prefer their children, they can not distinguish between right and wrong. Thus, what they do would lack standards. In other words, they can't see the truth of things. The preference for children makes the father not know the facts clearly. That is why the proverb says that men never know the faults of their son. Next sentence: "Farmer does not know the richness of his growing corn." The farmer always want his crops to grow better and better. Sometimes, their crops had already grown well, he still felt unsatisfied. Both attitude are wrong because the emergence of both states is attributed to the selfishness. The above is to tell us to take note of ourselves in our life. After discovering these state and attitude, we should adjust our mentality in time. If we can not adjust and cultivate morality so that set an example, we cannot regulate our family.

Self-Reflection

In our life, it is not hard to find that people will ignore his or her shortcomings because they likes the person and it is difficult to find his or her advantages because people dislike the person. *The Great Learning* also mention that men are partial where they feel affection and love; partial where they despise and dislike; partial where they stand in awe and reverence; partial where they feel sorrow and compassion; partial where they are arrogant and rude. Mr. Yin Yuansheng said clearly in his book of *Daxue Yanyi*. People are too deeply subjective and then become paranoid. Some people think the people they like are perfect while, everything

² Trans. By myself, Xu Xingmin 徐醒民, *Daxue Biji* 大學筆記(Taizhong: Ci Guang library, 2009), p. 97.

the people they detest do is wrong. For those they respect, they will follow with no doubt. They just fear and do not dare to close the people they respect. For the poor people, Someone only pity them without thinking about whether they are really poor, hence, they will be cheated. For the arrogant and lazy people, because there is stereotypes with them, people can not know about them³. If we can't adjust our mindset, there are many misunderstandings, many contradictions, many problems when getting along with others. For instance, if parents do not know their children's shortcomings and even spoil them, which is likely to lead to the failure of education. The children may become headstrong and do not know how to get along with classmates and friends. Such bad interpersonal relationship may make the children feel depressed and etc. Whiles some children will be blindly confident and arrogant because of their parents ' praise. If a leader cannot treat his staff equally, he or she likes some employees and dislikes someone, it can be predicted that the company is hard to develop well. Just like in the Han Dynasty, that Liu Bang can be emperor depends on her minister (of a monarchy) such as Xiao He, Zhang Liang, Han Xin and others. All of them were indispensable. Supposing Liu Bang have no tolerance and trust for them, he appoints Zhang Liang because he like him and does not appoint Xiao He owing to dislike. Then, the Han Dynasty may not exist anymore. Therefore, *The Great Learning* said that if the person be not cultivated, a man cannot regulate his family.

When affecting by the emotions, we are like wearing colored glasses so that can not objectively look at people and things and the real can not be find. How can we see what they really are like? To remove the colored glasses first, our hearts need to like a mirror. When people or objects leave the mirror, the image will disappear and not stay. One thing passed, the heart will be empty, will not leave what. Let our heart keep pure.

Moreover, when our own heart and mentality are partial, we should first be able to detect. And then we should keep calm and no emotion to accept. Next, we can tell ourselves that everyone is different because of the growth environment, they will have different advantages and disadvantages. No matter what kind of person, lovely, hateful, poor or arrogant etc. in essence, they are the same, everybody has the same nature, which is no difference. This way enables oneself to further achieve the state 'men love and at the same time know the bad

³ Yin Yuansheng 因緣生, *Daxue Yanyi* 大學衍義(Taibei: world press, 2016), p. 58.

qualities of the object of their love, or who hate and yet know the excellences of the object of their hatred.' To be able to treat people with an equal and pure heart can not only regulate the family, but also can live in harmony with people.

Bibliography

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