



Undergraduate assignment feedback form

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Be Alert to Your Arrogance

Word Count: 1553

Respected provost, Miss Deng and everybody, good morning. My name is Liu Siyu. Today I am very happy to present you the theme of report that be alert to your arrogance. A sentence in Chapter 8 Tai Bo 泰伯, *The Analects of Confucius*, said that, The Master said, ‘Even with a man as gifted as the Duke of Chou, if he was arrogant and miserly, then the rest of his qualities would not be worthy of admiration.’¹

Today I will explain the content is divided into four parts. I shall first explain my ‘Motivation’ to choose this sentence. Then I am going to introduce the ‘Meaning’ of the Confucius’s teaching which summarize from some of the contents of Dr. Zhang’s courses. Next, I want to share my ‘Self-Reflection’. And finally, I will draw a ‘Conclusion’.

Motivation

First, I choose this sentence because I am a student now and I am studying in the stage of study. What is the most important place to pay attention to in learning from teachers? How can I be a student correctly? Dr. Zhang put this sentence in the course as the first taboo of studying.² That must be very important and need to be alert to ourselves. But there are two important points in the sentence, one is arrogance and the other is miserly. Now, I focus on the first “arrogance” as my report theme, that is, arrogant psychology is one of the big taboos in the study stage.

The Meaning of Sentence

Let’s now turn to part 2: Duke of Chou was the most respected sage of Confucius. He made a great contribution to the Zhou Dynasty in his whole life. After assisting emperor Wu of Zhou Dynasty to succeed in conquering Shang Dynasty, he led the army to pacify rebellion of the later generations of the Shang Dynasty. At the same time, he took great care of emperor Cheng of Zhou Dynasty and helped him until he came of age. Even he was misunderstood, he had no grievances and resentments. Confucius also hoped to follow the example of Duke of Chou, to be able to govern the country, and to build up

¹ Zhu Xi 朱熹, *Sishu zhangju zhu* 四書章句集注, (Beijing, ZHONG HUA Book Company, 2020) p.106. Trans. by D.C. Lau.

² Zhang Chaoyu 張朝玉, The courses of An introduction to the Confucian Analects and the Book of Mencius 《論孟》課程, 016, <https://uwtsd.hosted.panopto.com/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=fc5f75c8-e64a-4dd8-bd32-ace501592b33>, 6 April 2021.

achievements to benefit the people in the world. It is worth mentioning that why Confucius was talking about if someone has the same talent as Duke of Chou, not that someone is same as him. It is because if others are virtuous like Duke of Chou, they will not be arrogant.

“Arrogant” is often said to be complacency. Once a person become arrogant, he will be complacent and cannot listen to the good words and deeds of others. Even he made some mistakes or have some disadvantages, he would not accept other people's advice. And his arrogance can also make people around him feel uncomfortable and a sense of oppression. Therefore, if he is in power, he will also let sages stay away and bring some base people together.

And It is easy for people to have arrogance psychology. For example, when there is nothing wrong with you during this period of learning, arrogance is also easy to appear. Because you will be complacent about your current state and think you are very good. This also reminds us that in the future, if we give a good lecture, it may not be really a good thing. If you speak well, on the one hand, you will attract other people's jealousy. More importantly, if you listen to more praise, you will easily be arrogant. It is not easy to calm your inner complacency. That is why “arrogance” is one of the big enemies in our study.

Self-Reflection

Next, I will give you my reflection. Once upon a time, I did not think arrogance would have much influence on a person. But later, by studying history, I will find that the psychological of arrogance has a huge impact on one person or even a country. The smaller impact is to make a grudge with others, and then they are not able to have a good interpersonal relationship, which we can see a lot examples in today's society. In the article, How CEO hubris affects corporate social responsibility, their findings suggest that, CEO hubris also hinders long-term sustainability as it leads to a lower level of participation in socially responsible activities and a higher level of participation in socially irresponsible ones. It can be seen that personal arrogance will not only affect themselves. It will influence more people as their status becomes stronger. What is more serious is that one will die because his arrogance threatened other people. How many generals and ministers who had big achievement were killed by their emperor because of their arrogance and complacency, and eventually their relatives and families are killed. And the most serious impact is to bring danger to the whole country, how many kings in

history, because of arrogance and despise the advice of good officials, finally lost the country. For example, Xiang Yu, the overlord of Western Chu Dynasty and Napoleon are widely known by people. The reason is that although they were very talented and had created their own country, their hubris perished themselves and even their country. Shakespeare also said: a proud man always destroys himself in pride.³

So, what is the bad effect on students? As a student, if he is very arrogant, then the teacher's words are also very difficult to absorb for him. He is also easy to add self-righteous smart ideas to the teacher's words, but that is not innovation. Hubris people are more likely to keep their own ignorance and opinions. I realized that my complacency was developed from childhood. Most of our generation are only children in the family. Therefore, it is common for us to get applause and praise from many relatives and friends when we get a good grade and do a good thing. I was also obedient and sensible in school, which was deeply liked by teachers. In these greenhouses, the inner self grows bigger and bigger. I feel that I am quite good. Through years of accumulation, I become more and more self-centered, look down on others and have a sense of superiority. Therefore, I cannot accept others' advices and judgments which are different from mine. But now, I want to change myself.

However, modesty is not superficial. It should come from the heart. I think if we want to practice modesty, we have to start with our parents and the people closest to us. Starting from their words, they are the people who know ourselves best. If we do not listen to the opinions of our parents and people around us, how can we humbly accept the opinions of outsiders? If we cannot be respectful to our parents and the people around us, we will naturally feel superior to others and cannot be respectful to others.

The Duke of Chou had a very high position but was still very modest. When he washed his head, he had to hold his hair many times. When he had a meal, he had to spit out the food, and got up to receive the visitors and accept their suggestions. The reason is that he was afraid of losing the sages in the world. In order to welcome a sage named Jiang Ziya to govern the country, the emperor Wen of Zhou Dynasty carried him by sedan chair to his own country. Liu Bei was one of the kings in the Three Kingdoms period. In order to govern the country better, he went to a wise man's home named Zhuge Liang three times in person and asked him to come out to help govern the country. The emperor Taizong of Tang Dynasty managed his country well all his life, and the people lived and worked in peace and contentment. This is because he was able to accept the opinions of

³ Ming Yan Tong 名言通, <https://www.mingyantong.com/ju/7561>, 6 April 2021. Trans. by myself.

wise officials. In many prosperous times of Chinese history, it was the humble and modest attitude of the monarch and the acceptance of the opinions of the wise ministers that brought peace to the people of the country.

Socrates, a famous ancient Greek philosopher, once said: the only thing I know is my own ignorance.⁴ Confucius once said: ‘Even when walking in the company of two other men, I am bound to be able to learn from them. The good points of the one I copy; the bad points of the other I correct in myself.’⁵ Newton, Einstein, Madame Curie and many other great scientists have modestly expressed that they have done little, the truth is still far away. At all times and in all over the world, many great men who have contributed to the progress of mankind are very low and modest, which confirms an old saying: half a bucket of water sloshing, a bucket of water does not ring. ⁶

Conclusion

In conclusion, arrogance is not a psychology that can help ourselves, but can have a bad influence at all stages of us. If a person's status is bigger, his arrogance will easily become stronger, and his decisions will affect more people. So, we should be modest and cautious both now and in the future.

That is all for my presentation today. Thank you for your listening.

⁴ Ming Yan Tong 名言通, <https://www.mingyantong.com/ju/25680>, 6 April 2021. Trans. by myself.

⁵ Zhu Xi 朱熹, *Sishu zhangjuji zhu* 四書章句集注, p.98. Trans. by D.C. Lau.

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