

Lesson 6

Compound sentences

Interrogative pronouns, pivot verbs, auxiliary verbs

Questions

乎 hū : sentence question (yes or no)

子知之乎？

天子有道乎？

人無耳目乎？

王食其牛之肉乎？

豈。。。哉 qǐ...zāi? → rhetorical question/exclamation

安。。。哉 ān...zāi?

‘Surely’, ‘Should it be possible that?’, ‘How could it be that!’

- expected answer almost always negative

- 豈(不) ‘surely (not)’



Question words

- ▶ 何 hé: 'what'
- ▶ 何以 héyǐ: 'why'
- ▶ 何事 héshì: 'what matter', 'why'
- ▶ 何處 héchù: 'where'
- ▶ 何不 hébù: 'why not'
- ▶ 何人 hérén: 'who'
- ▶ 誰 shéi: 'who'
- ▶ 爲何 wèihé: 'why', 'for what reason'
- ▶ 幾 jǐ: 'how many'
- ▶ Question words are often located at the same position in the clause as the expected answering word, e.g.
- ▶ 遊人到何處？ 遊人到臨洮。 The wanderer has arrived at Lintao.



Pivot verbs/pivotal constructions

“I asked that he give you this.”

→ indirect speech in subjunctive mood

“I asked him to give you this.”

→ pivotal construction consisting of a

- ▶ pivot verb (to ask)
- ▶ indirect object (“him”)
- ▶ direct object (action, i.e. “to give you this”)



Pivot verbs/pivotal constructions

frequently used pivot verbs in Chinese are

shi, 使 ‘to let/cause’

ling 令 ‘to make’, ‘to command’

quan 勸 ‘to urge’

亞父勸項羽擊沛公 ‘Yafu urged Xiang Yu to attack the Duke of Pei’

五色令人目盲；五音令人耳聾；五味令人口爽

‘The Five Colours cause people’s eyes to go blind; the Five Tones cause people’s ears to become deaf; the Five Flavours cause people’s mouths to become numb’

