

Experience benevolence from life

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Respected provost and Miss Deng, my name is Xue Chunyuan. The topic of my oral presentation today is 'Experience benevolence from life'. This is my outline.

1. Introduction
2. The texts analysis
3. Self-reflection
4. Conclusion

Introduction

Let us take a look at this sentence first. The translation of this sentence is, 'Ran Yong asked about Goodness. The Master said, "Behave when away from home as you were in the presence of an important person. Deal with the common people as though you were officiating at an important sacrifice. Do not do to others what you would not like yourself. Then there will be no feelings of opposition to you, whether it is the affairs of State that you are handling or the affairs of a Family."' ¹ From this passage we can see that Ran Yong came to ask Confucius what is benevolence and Confucius used some similes to answer his question.

The texts analysis

First of all, let us get to know what kind of person Ran Yong is. Ran Yong was born in the State of Lu during the Spring and Autumn Period. His virtues were very noble and he was listed as one of the four best disciples of virtues of Confucius. Confucius once said, 'Now Yong, for example. I should not mind setting him with his face to the south.' ² In ancient times, only the emperor could face his seat to the south. Therefore, this sentence is Confucius

¹ Arthur Waley, *Library of Chinese Classic: The Analects* (Hunan People's Publishing House & Foreign Languages Press, 1999.) p.125.

² Arthur Waley, *Library of Chinese Classic: The Analects*. p.53.

praise Ran Yong has the political ability very much. All in all, Ran Yong is a talented person with great political ability and noble moral conduct.

Then Ran Yong asked Confucius what benevolence was. Confucius did not give a direct answer here, but gave several examples to use as similes. Therefore, let us look at each of these examples first. The first example Confucius gave was Confucius first put forward, 'behave when away from home as you were in the presence of an important person.' That in our life like some very important teachers or some high social status officials these are very important guests. So when we go to receive these guests, we naturally become very respect and careful. It also means that when we go out and get along with people, we should treat them with the same respect as if they were important guests whatever the status of the other side. This means that we need to be respectful at all times when dealing with others. The second example given by Confucius was 'Deal with the common people as though you were officiating at an important sacrifice.' Here, the sacrifice refers to some grand large-scale sacrificial activities such as worshipping heaven and offering Confucius. Through this kind of activity to express our gratitude to our ancestors, gods and nature. Therefore, every little detail counts in this grand spectacle. Conducting such ceremonies requires sincerity. Confucius pointed out that we should do the same in the use of people's power. In summary, Confucius used these two examples to simulate a state of mind we should have when we get along with others, and when we can do it, we are very close to benevolence. Therefore, no matter what the circumstances of the situation are, we need to keep our respectful and sincerity.

Now let us look at the next passage and what this paragraph says is, 'Do not do to others what you would not like yourself.' In this paragraph, Confucius also used a simile to let us understand benevolence. This example given by Confucius is forgiveness. There are actually some differences between forgiveness and mercy. If one is a benevolent one will have further compassion on others. For instance, when we are disrespected by others, if it is forgiveness we don't care about it what is it. We will just forgive him in our hearts and no longer further conflict with people. However, if this is a humane man he will not only forgive him he will have compassion. He would sympathize with the fact that he had not been educated to behave in this way. Therefore, he doesn't blame him. This is a state of mind of the benevolent. In

general, forgiveness is very similar to benevolence. Benevolence is also a further advancement on the basis of forgiveness, so without forgiveness there can be no benevolence. A benevolent person must slowly progress from forgiveness to ultimate achievement.

The last paragraph that Confucius spoke was, 'Then there will be no feelings of opposition to you, whether it is the affairs of State that you are handling or the affairs of a Family.' This also means that no matter where you do something, it doesn't cause complaints. And by extension, we can not do things that make people feel negative. If we make people angry, we tend to make them resentful. In general, people are more likely to remember grudge than kindness. Therefore, we try not to hold grudges with others in our life. At the same time, let us not make others hate us. However, It is hard to avoid misunderstandings and contradictions in getting along with others. If it is our fault that we cause others to be angry, then we must put ourselves down and give them a sincere apology. Usually we can get forgiveness if we make a sincere apology. Even if there are deep resentments, we can almost always defuse them if we sincerely apologize and recognize our mistakes. However, sometimes we are too embarrassed to admit our mistakes and find a lot of reasons to justify ourselves. In fact, instead of resolving the conflict, this behavior makes the other person even angrier.

The most important thing about apologizing to someone is being sincere. Sometimes our apologies may be superficial and not heartfelt. In our hearts, we just want the conflict to go away without really apologizing. At this time, the other side can also feel that it may lead to further escalation of the conflict. Therefore, the apologize sincerely need our to recognize our mistakes. It is because everyone feels that they are right that there will be contradictions, as long as one side bowed the head of the contradictions will be resolved naturally. It is like two people meeting on a single wooden bridge, and as long as one side gives way, they can cross the bridge. However, if they do not give in, they may end up in a stalemate on the bridge and no one can cross it. As a result, sometimes a step back can be a step forward. And all these also need us to have a sincere attitude to do things.

It is also mentioned that there should be no resentment, whether in the country or in the family. It's actually a lot easier in the country than it is at home. It is hard to live without any complaints at home. In the family, people know each other very well. When we criticize our

family members for something that is not right they will always be unconvinced and point out what we are doing wrong. And then the conflict escalated into each other to find the shortcomings of each other to defend their own. We might end up having a big fight over a little thing. Maybe afterwards we even don't remember what we fought about in the first place. Therefore, there should be more understanding between families. Consideration among families will make the family more united. Hence, want to be at home without complaints is really an inspection of a person's self-cultivation.

Self-reflection

In general, Confucius gave some examples to describe a benevolent person's work and intentions. Because it is difficult for us to appreciate the state of the sage, Confucius gave us some similes to let us feel the benevolence from the life. After learning this classic chapter, I really benefited a lot. When I was reading the Analects of Confucius, I always saw that Confucius would put forward the concept of benevolence. However, it was hard to understand and I didn't know how to do it. After reading this chapter, I can easily understand the similes used by Confucius and have the direction of implementation. I used to be an irritable person who liked to argue with others about things. In the process, I seldom look at my own mistakes, so I often have conflicts with others and always think that the problem is not my own. After reading this chapter, I realized that where there are contradictions, there must be problems with myself. Therefore, after there are contradictions, find reasons from our self and the contradictions will dissolve naturally. It is true that standing in others' point of view can reduce many conflicts. At the same time, I realized that the sage is good at using all kinds of similes to make us feel and help us improve.

Conclusion

Finally, I also hope that I can continue to implement honesty and respect in my daily life, think more from the perspective of others and reflect on myself, so as not to conflict with others. That is all for today. Thank you for listening.

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