



PRIFYSGOL CYMRU
Y Drindod Dewi Sant

UNIVERSITY OF WALES
Trinity Saint David

(to be completed by marker)

<i>Student Name: Yirong Cui (崔苡榮)</i>	
<i>Module Code: SICH4004</i>	<i>Student number: 2016053</i>
<i>Module title: An Introduction to the Great Learning and the Doctrines of the Means</i>	
<i>For completion by marker:</i> <i>Comments:</i>	
<i>Marker's signature:</i>	<i>Date:</i>
<i>Provisional mark:</i> NB. <i>All marks are provisional until confirmed by the final examination board.</i>	

English Oral Presentation

Good morning respected provost, Miss Wu and my classmates, I'm Yirong. Today the topic of my presentation is The way may not be left for an instant. 「道也者，不可須臾離也」

I will divide my presentation into the following parts: the preface, scripture explanation and self-cultivation.

Now, let's begin with the preface.

When we learned this scripture, I believe that everyone wants to practice the way better. After we have this goal, how to implement it is particularly important. I also want to use this scripture to remind myself that I should study hard and implement it in my daily life. We must never leave the way and we must aim to correct our mistakes.

Next one is scripture explanation.

This scripture is taken from *the Doctrine of The Mean*, the original scripture as translated by Jame Legge is "The path may not be left for an instant. If it could be left, it would not be the path." 「道也者，不可須臾離也。可離，非道也。」¹This scripture roughly means that those who practice the way can not leave the way for a single moment. If they leave, they will not be practicing the way. The way is mentioned here, so what is the way? At the beginning of *the Doctrine of The Mean*, it says: "What Heaven has conferred is called THE NATURE; an accordance with this nature is called THE PATH of duty." 「天命之謂性，率性之謂道」²So the way means our nature. And then if we want to practice the way, how can we do so? We can know from this scripture: The path may not be left for an instant 「不可須臾離也」。「須臾」means the shortest time. This scripture tells us that we can not leave the way, even for a moment. Why? We often talk about the seven emotions and the six desires. In *the Doctrine of The Mean*, we know there are four emotions: joy, anger, sorrow and happiness, any of these four emotions can hinder our nature and let us live in pain and not know. When we learn about the true nature and want to practise, we need to make some adjustments to change the effects of emotions on us. This is the process of getting rid of emotions and developing our nature. When we can get rid of the effects of emotions for ourselves, our true nature will naturally appear. But it is difficult for us to get rid of the emotions, especially since we are just ordinary people. Therefore, we should have a firm will and really work hard to do it. If we are slack, we can not develop our true nature.

Since we want to develop our true nature, how should we do this?

I think firstly we should be able to see our own thoughts. If we can not see our own thoughts, how can we get rid of them? For example, we all tend to eat delicious food, when we see food with nice colour and flavor we want to eat more. And in many cases we can not treat each type of food equally. When we have this distinction, we are not on the way. So, it is important for us to

¹ James Legge, *The Chinese/English four books*(Hunan: Hunan chubanshe, 1992), p.25.

² James Legge, *The Chinese/English four books*(Hunan: Hunan chubanshe, 1992), p.25.

see our own thoughts clearly. And after we see them, what can we do? We should remind ourselves not to have differences of heart. But it's not easy for us to make changes in the process. Although we know it's not easy for us to break through ourselves, we should still try our best to do it. Fundamentally, we can change our mindset when we can understand the truth. Because we can know and learn the correct attitudes and ways of thinking from the truth. How can we learn the truth? We can use a fixed time every day to listen to the scriptures. It's a gradual learning process. The more scriptures we learn, the more clear the situations we face will be. We can remember one of the scriptures we learned when something happens. As we are able to recall more scriptures, we are able to restrain our emotions more easily.

As mentioned earlier, the way is our true nature. It's infinite in time and space. Since it is infinite, how can we want to leave it? So the true nature is everywhere and forever-lasting. Most people don't understand the truth and think that people have only this life. They think that we didn't exist before we were born and after we died. We know that time is divided into present, past and future. In terms of time, the past has a past, the future has a future, so we didn't leave the way for a moment. Therefore, we really don't have life and death, what we think of life and death is only the birth and death of the body. After we know the truth, we know how to practice the way. To practice the way is to let go of our emotions, to not be selfish and persistent. For example, when we have a serious conflict with others, we can try to get rid of our selfishness and think about others. Because we are often selfish, we feel that we have a conflict of interest with others. If we can get rid of our selfishness, we will be less prone to conflict with others because we know that we are one with them. The ancient sages were able to see the world as one with themselves, and this practice was that the path may not be left for an instant.

Let's move on "If it could be left, it would not be the path."³ Although we know that practicing the way means letting go of our selfishness, sometimes we have strong selfishness and will argue with others when we disagree with them. If we really want to practice the way we shouldn't have conflicts with people. These conflicts refer exclusively to conflicts between private individuals. When we have personal conflicts with others, we need to be able to let go of our own interests. If we are working for the country, such as judges, we must distinguish between right and wrong during the trial, and we can not do so without principles.

After we understand this truth, our heart must always experience the way. In our daily life, we encounter all kinds of people and things every day. Although we will face many problems and difficulties, as long as we can deal with them with sincerity and get rid of selfishness, these problems and difficulties will naturally be solved. And if we can get rid of selfishness, our wisdom will be revealed. When we have enough wisdom, we can successfully solve problems that we meet.

Currently, we are experiencing the Covid-19 pandemic, most people are panicking about this. We need to actively prevent Covid-19, protecting ourselves from infection. But although we must actively prevent it, we should not be afraid in our hearts. Why? We know that our body is fake, so

³ James Legge, The Chinese/English four books(Hunan: Hunan chubanshe, 1992), p.25.

even if we are infected with the virus and even face death, it is only our fake body that will die. So people who really practice the way will not panic because they understand that the body is fake. Once we really encounter the infectious disease, the body does not exist, and we fall back into our true nature. It's very important for us that we do not leave the way. If we leave the way, most of us still have selfishness so we will not know where we will go in the next life once the body dies. If our hearts and thoughts are all on the way, then there will be no fear. Confucius said, "If a man in the morning hear the right way, he may die in the evening without regret."⁴ Although we can not get back to our nature yet, we are still on the way. And as long as we understand the truth, do not leave the way, we will gain real benefits.

The last one is self-cultivation.

When I studied this scripture, I also thought that we should be vigilant in our usual day-to-day self-cultivation. Because my self-cultivation still needs a lot of effort to reduce my unnecessary thoughts. And I have found that I can chant the name of the Buddha to replace the thoughts. However, the more comfortable the environment in which we live, the less alert we will be. Master Yinguang told us to stick the word "death" on the forehead, which also reminds me of impermanence quickly, we never know which will come first, tomorrow or death. So we must cherish time, and not be greedy for pleasure or indulge our desires. I also think that when we participate in some activities such as parties, sports or group activities, we can not leave the way. I reflect on myself that when I participate in sports activities, I always want to win, and I can not treat sports with a peaceful heart. I found that my selfish thoughts are still strong. Since I found out, I have made adjustments and changed the sport from playing volleyball to worshipping Buddha, at the same time, increasing the time I usually spend listening to scriptures. After a while, I realized that when I played volleyball with classmates again, I didn't play to win and really enjoy the process of playing volleyball. In addition, there may be a lot of scattered time that we usually waste. Recently, I have also used a lot of scattered time. For example, when I have ten minutes, I will listen to lectures or read scriptures. After making these changes, I find my heart is much more settled than before. And then when I need to deal with some things, I will not be as anxious as before, so I feel the happiness of learning.

We face many people and things every day, and our delusions are constantly arising and passing away. We need to be very alert to our delusions, and as soon as they arise, we let them disappear immediately. Don't be afraid of delusions arising, just be afraid that we can not detect delusions when they arise. *The Treatise on Response and Retribution* tells us that "He walks the path of virtue and avoids the path of vice and evil."⁵ When we find that our thoughts are wrong, we should quickly remind ourselves to turn the wrong thoughts into right ones. We need to keep our hearts pure and kind, and I believe that as long as we try our best to do that, we can reap benefits.

That concludes my presentation. Any feedback and suggestions will be appreciated. Thank you for listening patiently!

⁴ James Legge, *The Chinese/English four books*(Hunan: Hunan chubanshe, 1992), p.91.

⁵ 鐘伯晟 [Chung baisheng], ed. 太上感應篇 [The treatise on Response and Retribution], p.3.

Bibliography

1. The Chinese/English four books, trans. by James Legge (Hunan: Hunan chubanshe, 1992)
2. 鐘伯晟 [Chung baisheng], ed. 太上感應篇 [The treatise on Response and Retribution]