

VIII
Eighth Couplet

爲人子 . 方少時 : 親師友 . 習禮儀
wei² jen² tzu³ . fang¹ shao³ shi²
ts'in¹ shih¹ yu³ . hsi^{2.5} li³ yi²

Rhyme: 支 chih¹ (平 tone) “a bamboo rod”, same rhyme as in # VI.

Translation:

[Intent on] becoming [an Accomplished] Man, a son must, in his youth, draw close to teacher and friends [in order to] practice [with them] ceremonies of all sorts.

It is still a very long way to the Capping ceremony. For the time being the boy must learn whatever will make him morally and intellectually worthy of being counted among the Accomplished Men (cf. above, # 7-D). Therefore he must return to # 3₁-M, and follow the example of young Mencius' zeal. Our primer elaborates on this point in a manner dear to Confucian scholarship: the couplet is a web of quotations.

Allusions and quotations:

First quotation: 爲人子 :

> 人子, in ordinary language, may be rendered as “a young gentleman supposed to be well behaved”. It is the equivalent to Sk. *kulaputra* “the son of a [noble] family”; or to the *efendi* of the Turks. 爲 may be considered as an expletive: “he is a son of noble birth, the one who, in his youth, ...”

> 爲人子 is in fact a trinome. It is taken from the *Li chi*, where it occurs nine times (*HY*. I.90 000, p. 122-123). A correct interpretation is conveniently provided by the *Li chi* pericope quoted above, # 7-D, namely: “to act as (or, to be) a

son (子) [according to] human [standards] (人)”. However, in the context of # VIII, 爲 changes its meaning from “acting as (or, to be)” to “intent on becoming”. There is a time difference: our text addresses itself to youngsters who may have twelve or fourteen years to go before celebrating their Capping: 男子二十冠而字 *At the age of 20, a son receives his cap and a friends' name* (*Li chi*, Ch'iu li, *HY*. 1/28; *C.*, I, p. 32-33).

> 爲 must invariably be read in the second tone, wei², in all its nine occurrences. There also exist 爲人臣, 爲人父 “to be (or, to act as) a minister, or a father, [according to] human [standards]” (e.g. *C.*, I, p. 475).

知爲人子然後可以爲人父

Whoever knows how to carry out (Latin: gerere) his filial duties, will also be able, later on, to carry out his paternal duties. (Couvreur).

Second quotation:

少時 “in his youth” is taken from the *Lun yü*, *HY* 34/16/7 (*C.*, p. 255; *L.*, p. 312-313):

孔子曰君子有三戒。少之時。血氣未定。戒之在色 *Confucius said: “There are three things which the gentleman guards against. In his youth, when the physical powers are not yet settled, he guards against lust.”* namely, in practice, the frequentation of the “willow lanes” 花柳地方, casinos, brothels and the like; as an adult he guards himself against being contentious; and in old age against avarice.

The quoted pericope is the sixth in a series of seven ternaries.* The fifth ternary opposes the three beneficial pleasures, namely: the study of ceremonies-and-music, speaking of the goodness of others, intercourse with many worthy friends; and the three injurious pleasures, namely those which derive from extravagance, idle sauntering**, and revels. The former are *yang* pleasures which men find in the company of other men; the latter are *yin* pleasures which men find in company of women. Remember: in the family school of Tou Yen-shan the boys had no female contacts whatsoever

4-F; nor were there any women present at the famous Orchid tower celebration (cf. *BISCHOFF*).

*) The ternary: see below, notice 2.

***) 佚遊 is listed as a binome in *MTH.*, 3025.5: “idle sauntering”. However, yu² “to travel” is a common euphemism for “the trip”, meaning a drug-induced ecstasy. Either interpretation may apply.

Third quotation, and one allusion:

親師友 includes one quotation of, and one allusion to, the *Li chi*, Hsioh Chi, *HY.* 18/2 (*C.*, II, p. 30):

a) 親師 “to draw close to the teacher” refers to the examination at the end of the fifth year;

b) 友 “[to draw close to] friends” alludes to the third year’s examination.

Here the extract of the pericope: Students were admitted to the *Hsioh*^{2.5} every year (namely, to the 國學 kuo^{2.5} hsioh^{2.5}, the great, central school in the capital city). Through comparative examinations, some exclusions took place every other year: at the end of the first year, there was an intelligence test and a character test; at the end of the third year, the students were tested on their motivation and on their sociability (樂群);

> 樂群 yao⁴ (or le^{4/5}) ch’ün² “fond of those of his own class” (*MTH.*, 4129, b, 2); “to enjoy the company of friends and comrades” (*M.*, 6.15399.79 quotes the present passage).

and 五年視博習親師 at [*the end of*] *the fifth year the students were examined on whether they had made satisfactory progress in their studies (習) and drawn close to their teachers.*

Fourth quotation:

習, may be drawn from the previous quotation; but, in the present context, it alludes to the initial verse of the *Lun yüi*:

學而時習之。不亦說乎

Qui colit et omni tempore recolit illud, nonne quidem gaudet?

> 說 is here pronounced yüeh^{4.5}.

The second part of the apophthegm reads:

有朋自遠方來不亦樂乎

When friends come from a distant place, is that not a joy too?

> 朋 p'eng² “the friends”, whom we will meet again in the next quotation, are, more precisely, former classmates (cf. note of *L.*, p. 138a).

Fifth quotation:

禮儀 “the rules of ceremony”: there are 300 of them, cf. *Li chi*, Chung yong, *HY.* 31/25 (*C.*, p. 58; *L.*; p. 422). In fact, the binome is taken from the *Odes*, *HY.* 51/209/3 (*L.*, p. 371), where it is said *à propos* a sacrificial and feastal service:

禮儀卒度 . 笑語卒獲

... *The guests and visitors / present the cup, and drink all round. / Every form according to rules; / every smile and word are as they should be.* (Legge) and, the verse being quoted in the *Li chi*, Fang chi, *HY.* 30/11 (*C.*, II, p. 415): *Toutes les cérémonies, grandes ou petites, sont accomplies conformément aux prescriptions (ritus et minores caeremoniae)*. Convivial gatherings played an important role in a mandarin's existence, and 禮儀 “the do and the don't” of mandarinal society decided whether an individual belonged to it, or not. We refer to this social phenomenon as “esprit de corps” (cf. *WEBSTER*). The “group spirit” of the mandarin was formed in the classroom and sealed in the dormitory.

Notice 1:

In addition to what has been said above, # 4₁-B, note, & -F, and in order to illustrate what is meant by 親友 “to draw close to friends” (# VIII, verse 2:1), let us mention the story of 孟宗 Meng Tsung (a paragon of filial piety): When he was about to leave home in order to enter the school of a famous master, his mother made him an oversized quilt. Asked why she was making the quilt so large, she answered: “In order to allow my son to share his couch with some potent (德) comrade.” – namely outstanding in every respect, physical as well as intellectual (cf. *DORÉ, loc. cit.* # IX, p. 475-476). The

modern version of the story omits this detail (cf. *PLANK*, p. 116-118). Since the end of the *ancien régime*, and the imposition of Western patterns upon the Chinese school system, and henceforth as proof of a progressive mind, Chinese public opinion affects to loathe male homosexual relations.

Notice 2:

The ternary is a pattern of rhetoric common also in the sapiential literature of the West, e.g. Ecclesiasticus, 25:1, 3.: *With three things my spirit is pleased, which are approved before God and men: ... Three sorts my soul hateth, and I am greatly grieved at their life: ... &c. mult.* For the formal similarity of words of wisdom in East and West, cf. *H.A. FISCHER*, particularly p. 138. We may as well compare the formal rhetorical similarity of *Li chi*, Ju hsing, *HY.* 41/3 (C., II, p. 606, 9) with Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians 6:14-17; but quite in general consult *UNGER*, an amazing book that demonstrates the fact that the figures of rhetoric are the same in East and West. One is reminded of the sentence of Roger Bacon (XIIIth century): *Grammatica una et eadem est secundum substantiam in omnibus linguis, licet incidentaliter varietur*: “Grammar* is substantially the same in all languages; there are differences only in the details.” (quoted according to *GILSON*, p. 405).

*) Grammar teaches how to say things correctly; rhetoric, how to say them beautifully. In literary Chinese there is hardly any difference detectable between the two.

Master Wang's Commentary

8-A

此言爲子弟之道也

tz'u³ yen² wei² tzu³ ti⁴ chih¹ tao⁴ yeh³

This tells us what constitutes correct behaviour of sons and younger brothers.

> 道 *W.* 160A, is a behaviour appropriate to given circumstances: here it refers to behaviour appropriate to little boys. In # VII = # 7-B the *Li chi* was quoted to tell us that, unless one is learned, one cannot know the *tao*⁴: in # IX and # X we will be introduced to two shining examples of little boys who behaved correctly according to the “tao”.

> 子弟 may just mean “sons”, “boys”, as used by Chu Hsi in his preface to the *Ta hsioh* (cf. # 2-P). However, the two examples that are to follow, illustrate, respectively, the correct behaviour of a son, and the correct behaviour of a younger brother. Hence it may be justified to understand 子弟 literally, as “sons and younger brothers” – as opposed to “fathers and elder brothers” (*M.*, 3.6930.647). The elder brother holds a *yang* position of authority; the younger brother holds a *yin* position. He must learn to be modest and subservient.

> 爲 : comparing its present use with that in # VIII and # 8-B, notice the elegant *distinctio*. 爲 is used here in reference to 道 (not to 子弟).

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8-B

凡爲人子弟. 當少年. 無事之時

宜當親近明師. 交結良友

講習禮節 儀文之事

fan² wei² jen² tzu³ ti⁴. tang¹ shao³ nien². wu² shih⁴ chih¹ shi²
 yi² tang⁴ ts'in¹ chin⁴ ming² shih¹. chiao¹ chieh^{2.5} liang² you³
 chiang³ hsi^{2.5} li³ tsieh^{2.5} yi² wen² chih¹ shih⁴

For a young gentleman of leisure intent on becoming an [Accomplished] Man, it is right and salutary, to draw into the close intimacy of an enlightened teacher and to tie bonds of felicity with virtuous friends [with whom he would] discuss and practice matters of style and decorum.

Master Wang gives us a slightly developed paraphrase of # VIII. In accordance with the method commonly used among Chinese literati, he translates the predominantly

monosyllabic *ku-wen* of the Classical quotations into *wen-yen* binomes:

> 子 of # VIII = 子 弟 of # 8-A and # 8-B;

> 方 = the first 當 “at the time when”, to be read in the first tone (the second 當, meaning “salutary”, carries the fourth tone: one more distinctio !);

> 少時 = 少年;

> 親 = 親 近 and 交 結 *W.* 24C “bonds resulting from words of wisdom which will bring happiness”;

> 師 = 明 師 “an intelligent teacher”, or “famous teacher” (which is not necessarily the same): it alludes to Ssu-ma Kuang’s *Song* (# 6-B, note);

> 友 = 良 友 “a good friend” *MTH.* 3941,5: “good” should be understood as descriptive of the moral excellence of the friend no less than of the intimacy of the friendship;

> 習 = 講 習 “to discuss and to practice” is taken from the *Yi king*, *HY.* 36/58; *Wilhelm.* p. 686:

Lakes resting one on the other:/ The image of THE JOYOUS

(兌). / *The superior man joins with his friends / for discussion and practice.*

Cf. # VIII and indeed the EIGHTH *Yi ching* explication, # III₁-B, N.B. These were the happy days fondly remembered by every mandarin throughout his arduous and often unpleasant career (cf. Ode 70 quoted #I₁).

> 禮 = 禮 節 “decorum” but also “feast, celebration” (*R.*, 3440), is quoted from the concluding part of the “Conduct of the *ju*”, *Li chi*, *Ju hing*, *HY.* 41/12 (*C.* II, p. 612), a pericope that defines the diverse expressions of 仁, *inter alia*:

禮 節 者 仁 之 貌 也

Decorum is the outward expression of *jen*.

Couvreur: *La politesse et les cérémonies sont les formes extérieures de la vertu d’humanité.* 仁 is emblematic of the mandarin.

N.B.: Not to confuse: in # 2-P, “sprinkling, brooming”, &c., were considered to be 節’s, and 禮 was considered a 文: this

was a different categorisation, unrelated to the present context.

> 儀 = 儀文 “style” of behaviour, but also of literature.

> 無事 “there is no business” appears not to be quoted from the Classics.

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8-C

愛親敬長之道

進德修業

以爲立身之本

ai⁴ ts'in¹ ching⁴ chang³ chih¹ tao⁴

tsin⁴ te^{2.5} hsiu¹ yeh^{4.5}

yi³ wei² li^{4.5} shen¹ chih¹ pen³

The “tao” of loving the relatives and of subservience to the elders

[by which] we further our potency and ever improve our achievements.

is to be valued as the foundation on which to establish ourselves.

VAR.: The simplified characters' edition, S.C. omits 進德修業. This omission frustrates the aim of the *San tzu ching* of its ethical dimension, makes the entire Confucian education meaningless. This is the only important textual variant among the three texts used.

Quotations and allusion:

First, an allusion:

Li ki, Tsi yi, *HY* 24/16; *C.* II, p. 284-285

子曰：立愛自親始。教民睦也

立敬自長始。教民順也

The Master said: “Whoever holds an official position must first of all love his own relatives: [in so doing] he teaches the populace to live in harmony with each other. Whoever holds an official position must first of all be subservient to the senior members of his own [family]: [in so doing] he teaches the populace to be law-abiding.”

This logion formulates the Confucian theory of ruling the populace *per exemplum*, cf. the *MENCIUS* apophthegm in # VI, notice 1. As the classic definition of the commandment fundamental to Confucian ethics, it is normally quoted: 愛親敬長, the formula given by Master Wang.

> 愛 *W.* 99F.

> 敬 *W.* 54G is usually translated as “to respect, to honour” (*MTH.*, 1138). The kanji, however, displays “a sheep” (that which, on the top, looks like “grass”), symbol of social harmony; and a “mouth” carefully “guarded, restrained” within oneself – or else there is “the whip”. This etymology suggests “attention”, “heed given to power”, rather than “honour”. Henri Doré translates it most appropriately with “*déférence*”.

> 親 “relatives” may as well be rendered by “family” or “clan”: it is the same tightly knit social unit referred to in # 2-C where we were told that a child without relatives will not reach adulthood.

Second, a quotation:

進德修業 *Yi ching*, *HY* 2/1 言 [二]; *Wilhelm*, p. 380, d) 8-a) 6., and 381, a) 7:

見龍在田 . 利見大人 ... 龍德而正中者也 ...

A dragon has appeared on earth: a great man has appeared for our good fortune. He is possessed of a dragon's potency: upright stands he in the Middle... Indeed, a great powerful mandarin, second only to the *huang² ti⁴* 皇帝, the *boqdo qayan*, the Manchu Emperor. But he also toils day and night:

日乾乾 . 夕惕若厲

At daytime he is creatively active; at night he worries whether something could have been done in a better way. Hence

進德修業

he furthers his potency and ever improves his achievements.

> 德: Mindful of the fact that Chinese thinking does not distinguish between the physical, the social, and the ethical order, “the progress” should not be considered merely as a moral progress. It should be considered as a social and

physical progress as well, resulting (in addition to power, and authority) in colossal wealth, and documented by an extended household that includes many concubines and the households of numerous sons.

Note: For a vivid description of the wealth and luxury of high officials and grand eunuchs, see *Chin P'ing Mei*, ch. 55, 70, 71 & al. These descriptions were true to life: the (anonymous) author was, most likely, a retired Minister of Justice (*Index*, p. 309); at any rate he knew what he was talking about, obviously, and much of it was familiar even to his ordinary readers. The “scandalous” wealth of Chinese politicians of recent past was in fact solid Chinese tradition (cf. # VI, Notice 2).

Third, a quotation:

立身行道 . 揚名後世

Treading the paths of establishing oneself [results in leaving] *an exalted name to later generations.* (*Hsiao ching*, M. 8.25721.126).

> 立身 “to establish oneself in life” *MTH*. 3921.61. The context, however, and the *Yi ching* quotation make it clear that more is meant than just an enviable social position; and the one meaning does not exclude the other meaning: cf. # 7-D, 成人, a mystical rite of passage, and, in ordinary language, “a man successful in life”.... Which reminds one of the conversation between Hsi-men Ching and Ho Yi, an high ranking court eunuch. Whereas Hsi-men Ching appreciates his new mandarin position as a gainful source of wealth, the eunuch, in a very tactful way, reminds him that actually he is supposed to serve the emperor (*Chin P'ing Mei*, ch. 71, p. 232).

PS: *Yi ching* oracles allow two interpretations: a *yang* interpretation, and a *yin* interpretation: they forecast good fortune and happiness, and, on the contrary, difficulties and

disaster. Master Wang alludes to the former (see above); a duck-and-drake, however, reminds us of the latter:

上下無常 . 非爲邪也 : 進退無恆 . 非離群也

In ascent and descent there is no fixed rule, except that one must do nothing evil. In advance and retreat no sustained perseverance avails, except that one must not depart from one's nature.

This *WILHELM* translation makes good sense: effortlessly it applies to a mandarin's career, to its risks, to its pitfalls. However, considering the present context, and the ch'eng² jen² still in mind (# 7-D), we obtain:

(子 曰 The master said:) *[Although you may witness utter] immorality among your superiors and your subordinates alike, you shall abstain from doing evil. Although the social commerce may be ruled by opportunism, you shall not depart from the esprit de corps.*

> 上下 : 上 “the superior, ‘those who sit on top’”, cf. # I₁, Ode 70, Stanza 3, sub-subcommentary.

> 常 = 五常, the moral virtues of Confucianism, cf. # 1₁-C, quotation, commentary;

> 進退 : social commerce, cf. # 3₁-M.

> 群 ch'ün² “esprit de corps” displays appositely the “sheep”, symbol of social harmony, and the “gentleman”.

The warning is lifted to the moral level. A mandarin's career should be something more than just a rat race for favours and promotion, for power and riches (cf. # II, the kanji ts'ien¹ 遷 and its etymology).