

XIAO JING –
THE CLASSIC OF XIAO
With English Translation

孝經 英語譯

By Zeng Zi (505 - 436 B.C.E)
曾子 著 (前 505 - 436 年)

English Translation by Feng Xin-ming
(May 2007, revised February and May 2008)
馮欣明英語譯

(2007 年五月譯，2008 年二月及五月修改)

http://www.tsoidug.org/Xiao/Xiao_Jing_Transltn_Comp.pdf

Complicated Chinese Version 簡體版: http://www.tsoidug.org/Xiao/Xiao_Jing_Transltn.pdf

Home Page: <http://www.tsoidug.org/>

Xiao Page: <http://www.tsoidug.org/xiao.php>

開宗明義章第一

CHAPTER ONE: OPENING EXPLANATION

仲尼居，曾子侍。子曰：「先王有至德要道，以順天下，民用和睦，上下無怨，汝知之乎？」

Zhong Ni (Confucius) was at home, and Zheng Zi was in attendance. The Teacher said, “The Former Kings have a most important virtue and way of conduct, to make the world harmonious, the people practice peace and cordiality, and neither above nor below have resentment. Do you know what it is?”

曾子避席曰：「參不敏，何足以知之？」

Zheng Zi got off his mat and said, “I, Shen, am not clever; how would I know it?”

子曰：「夫孝，德之本也，教之所由生也。復坐，吾語汝。」

The Teacher said, “*Xiao* is the foundation of virtue, and is what all teaching grows out of. Sit down; I will tell you.

「身體髮膚，受之父母，不敢毀傷，孝之始也。」

“The body, hair and skin, all have been received from the parents, and so one doesn’t dare damage them—that is the beginning of *xiao*.”

立身行道，揚名於后世，以顯父母，孝之終也。」

“Establishing oneself, practicing The Way, spreading the fame of one’s name to posterity, so that one’s parents become renowned—that is the end of *xiao*.”

「夫孝，始於事親，中於事君，終於立身。」

“Thus *xiao* starts with serving one’s parents, progresses with serving one’s lord, and ends with establishing oneself.

大雅云：『無念爾祖，聿修厥德。』」

“The ‘Great Refined Odes’ say, ‘Do not just commemorate your ancestors; cultivate your virtue¹.’”

天子章第二

CHAPTER TWO: THE SON OF HEAVEN

子曰：「愛親者不敢惡於人，敬親者不敢慢於人。愛敬盡於事親，而德教加於百姓，刑於四海。蓋天子之孝也。」

The Teacher said, “He who loves his parents does not dare to do evil unto others; he who respects his parents does not dare to be arrogant to others. Love and respect are exerted to the utmost in serving the parents, and this virtue and teaching is extended to the people; the example is shown to the whole world beyond China. That is the *xiao* of the Son of Heaven.

《甫刑》云：『一人有慶，兆民賴之。』

“The book *Fu on Law* says, ‘One person has cause to celebrate; the multitudes rely on that.’

¹ According to the Tang Dynasty (618—907 A.D.) annotations of *Xiao Jing* by Xing Bing 邢昺, the word “*wu* 無” in the phrase “*wu nian er zu* 無念爾祖” means “always” rather than the usual “not”. See *Xiao Jing* 孝經, “*The Thirteen Classics* 十三經”, published by Zhonghua Shudian 中華書店, Beijing, 1980, Vol. II, p. 2,545. I, however, beg to differ. Nowhere else in *Xiao Jing* is “*wu*” used as anything other than its regular meaning: “none” or “no”. I think that “*wu*” here really does mean “do not” the way “*wu*” usually does. Thus the sentence means, “Do not just commemorate your ancestors; cultivate your virtue.”

諸侯章第三

CHAPTER THREE: THE DUKES

「在上不驕，高而不危。制節謹度，滿而不溢。高而不危，所以長守貴也。滿而不溢，所以長守富也。富貴不離其身，然後能保其社稷，而和其民人。蓋諸侯之孝也。」

“Above others but not arrogant, then one can dwell on high but not be in danger. To economize and calculate carefully, then one can be full and not spill. (*Translator’s note: being full without spilling means having lots of wealth but not wasting it – X.F.*) To dwell on high without danger, then noble rank can long be maintained. To be full without spilling, then wealth can long be maintained. With noble rank and wealth not leaving his person, then one can protect one’s state² and make one’s people harmonious. That is the *xiao* of the feudal dukes.

《詩》云：『戰戰兢兢，如臨深淵，如履薄冰。』

“The *Book of Poetry* says, ‘Apprehensive and cautious, as if approaching a deep abyss, as if walking on thin ice.’

卿大夫章第四

CHAPTER FOUR: THE MINISTERS

「非先王之法服不敢服，非先王之法言不敢道，非

² 社稷 *she ji*, literally “God of Land and God of Grain of a Country,” the ritual sacrifices to which are the duties of the head of state in traditional China, is a term normally used to mean “a country” or “a state.”

先王之德行不敢行。是故非法不言，非道不行。口無擇言，身無擇行。言滿天下無口過，行滿天下無怨惡。三者備矣，然後能守其宗廟。蓋卿大夫之孝也。

“They dare not wear what is not of the Former Kings’ Method of clothing, or speak what is not of the Former Kings’ Method of speech, or practice what is not of the Former Kings’ virtuous conduct. Therefore if not of the Method it is not spoken; if not of the Way it is not practiced. In speaking there is no choice in what to say; in conduct there is no choice in what to practice. One’s speech fills the world yet there are no wrong words; one’s acts fill the world yet there are no complaints of vice. When one is qualified in those three things, then one can maintain one’s ancestral temples. That is the *xiao* of the Ministers.

《詩》云：『夙夜匪懈，以事一人。』

“The *Book of Poetry* says, ‘Never unprepared day or night, to serve one person.’

士章第五

CHAPTER FIVE: THE OFFICERS

「資於事父以事母而愛同，資於事父以事君而敬同。故母取其愛，而君取其敬，兼之者父也。故以孝事君則忠，以敬事長則順。忠順不失，以事其上，然後能保其祿位，而守其祭祀。蓋士之孝也。」

“Take from how one serves his father to serve one’s mother and the love is the same. Take from how one serves his father to serve one’s Lord and the respect is the same. Thus the mother takes the love while the lord takes the respect; the one who takes both is the father. Thus when serving the lord in accordance with *xiao* one is loyal; when serving elders in accordance with respect one is compliant. Not losing loyalty and compliance when serving one’s superiors, one can preserve one’s position and

maintain one's sacrifices. That is the *xiao* of the Officers.

《詩》云：『夙興夜寐，無忝爾所生。』

“The *Book of Poetry* says, ‘Rise early and sleep late; don’t bring shame to those who have given you birth.’

庶人章第六

CHAPTER SIX: THE COMMON PEOPLE

「用天之道，分地之利，謹身節用，以養父母，此庶人之孝也。」

“Using Heaven’s Way, sharing in Earth’s bounties, being prudent with their persons and thrifty in their expenditure, in order to support their parents—this is the *xiao* of the common people.

「故自天子至於庶人，孝無終始而患不及者，未之有也。」

“So from the Son of Heaven to the common person, there is none who has been constant in his *xiao* yet has the problem of not doing what he should.”

三才章第七

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE THREE MATERIALS³

³ The Three Materials are: Heaven, Earth, and people. See *Ci Hai*, (辭海), 1989 ed., Shanghai, p. 15, under the entry “三才”. According to *Ci Hai*, the term is from the *Book of Change* (易

曾子曰：「甚哉，孝之大也！」

Zheng Zi said, “Extreme indeed is the greatness of *xiao*!”

子曰：「夫孝，天之經也，地之義也，民之行也。」

The Teacher said, “Now, *xiao* is the principle of Heaven, the righteousness of Earth, and the (proper) conduct of the people.

「天地之經而民是則之。則天之明，因地之利，以順天下，是以其教不肅而成，其政不嚴而治。」

“The principle of Heaven and Earth—people’s affairs should follow that principle. We should study Heaven’s brilliance and take advantage of Earth’s bounties in order to bring harmony to the world; that way the teaching is not stern and yet it is successful, the governing is not severe and yet good order reigns.

「先王見教之可以化民也，是故先之以博愛而民莫遺其親，陳之以德義而民興行，先之以敬讓而民不爭，導之以禮樂而民和睦，示之以好惡而民知禁。」

“The Former Kings see that, if the people are taught thus, they can be converted. Therefore when the Kings set an example of universal love the people do not abandon their parents. When the Kings explain morals and righteousness, such conduct becomes popular among the people. When the Kings set an example of respect and letting others go first the people do not quarrel. When the Kings use courtesy and music to guide the people they become harmonious and cordial. When the Kings clarify good and evil the people know what is forbidden.

經): “There is the Way of Heaven, the Way of Man, and the Way of the Earth—take the three materials and make them into two. (有天道焉，有人道焉，有地道焉，兼三材而兩之。)”

「《詩》云：『赫赫師尹，民具⁴爾瞻。』」

“The *Book of Poetry* says, ‘Awe-inspiring high government official⁵ teachers, the people all⁶ look up to you.’”

孝治章第八

CHAPTER EIGHT: GOVERNING THROUGH XIAO

子曰：「昔者明王之以孝治天下也，不敢遺小國之臣，而況於公、侯、伯、子、男乎？故得萬國之謹心，以事其先王。」

The Teacher said, “Back when the Enlightened Kings use *xiao* to govern the world, they do not dare neglect even the subjects of small states; how much more so when it

⁴ The word “具” (pronounced *ju*) here is used as the word “俱” (also pronounced *ju*) meaning “all”, as in 史記：項羽紀：“良（張良）乃入，具告沛公。” See *Ci Hai* (辭海), Shanghai, 1989, p.326, under the entry “具”.

⁵ Instead of “high government official teachers”, the words 師尹 can also be taken to mean “Teacher Yin”, as James Legge has done. See *The Hsiao King*, translated by James Legge, 2nd ed., Oxford, 1899, pp. 465-488, on the web at <http://www.chinapage.com/confucius/xiaojing-be.html>. Teacher Yin refers to Yi Yin (伊尹), prime minister to the first emperor of the Shang (商) Dynasty (1600 B.C.E. to 1046 B.C.E.), Emperor Tang (湯). After Tang died his son ascended the throne but was licentious, so Yi Yin exiled the young emperor. Three years later, when the young emperor had learned his lesson, he was brought back to the capital and resumed his rule. Therefore Yi Yin had been considered a great teacher, because he had taught a licentious emperor how to be virtuous. I think, however, that the words 師尹 should instead be taken to mean high government officials who are teachers, taking the word “yin” (尹) to mean “high government official”, because this interpretation correlates with the preceding passage where Confucius describes how the people follow the Kings’ teachings, and not how the Kings (emperors) are taught by some outstanding teacher. When the Kings teach the people, the high government officials would be the intermediaries transmitting the teachings to the people.

⁶ The word “具” here is used as the word “俱” meaning “all”. See footnote 4.

comes to the dukes and the nobles of various ranks? Thus the Kings obtain all the states' affection, with which the Kings serve their ancestral kings.

「治國者不敢侮於鰥寡，而況於士民乎？故得百姓之謹心，以事其先君。

“The ruler of the state does not dare to bully the wifeless and the widowed, so how can he bully the officers and the people? Thus he gets the affection of all the families, with which he serves his ancestral lords.

「治家者不敢失於臣妾，而況於妻子乎？故得人之謹心，以事其親。

“The ruler of the family does not dare to offend his servants and concubines, so how can he offend his wife and sons? Thus he gets people's affection, with which he serves his parents.

「夫然，故生則親安之，祭則鬼享之，是以天下和平，災害不生，禍亂不作。故明王之以孝治天下也如此。

“This way, when alive one's parents can relax; when deceased their spirits can enjoy the offerings. Thus the world comes to be at peace, natural disasters don't happen, and rebellions and disorders don't arise. That is how the Enlightened Kings use *xiao* to rule the world.

「《詩》云：『有覺德行，四國順之。』」

“The *Book of Poetry* says, ‘When there is great virtue⁷, states from all four directions comply.’”

⁷ “覺” is used for the word “梏”, meaning tall and big (高大) or upright (正直) in this quotation for the *Book of Poetry*. See *Ci Hai*, (辭海), 1989 ed., Shanghai, p. 1,627, under the entry “覺”.

聖治章第九

CHAPTER NINE: SAGE GOVERNING

曾子曰：「敢問聖人之德，無以加於孝乎？」“

Zeng Zi said, “May I ask whether, of the Sages’ virtues, there is any greater than *xiao*?”

子曰：「天地之性，人為貴。人之行，莫大於孝。
。

The Teacher said, “Of all the species in the world, humans are the most precious. Of all human conduct, nothing is greater than *xiao*.”

「孝莫大於嚴父。」

“In *xiao* nothing is greater than revering⁸ the father.

「嚴父莫大於配天。」

“In revering the father nothing is greater than associating him with Heaven.

「則周公其人也。」

“Let us study the Duke of Zhou.

「昔者周公郊祀后稷以配天，宗祀文王於明堂以配

⁸ The 嚴 in 嚴父 is a verb here.

上帝，是以四海之內各以其職來助祭。夫聖人之德，又何以加於孝乎？

“Formerly the Duke of Zhou makes Countryside Sacrifices⁹ to Hou Ji (*the Ancestor Of All Zhou People*¹⁰—*X.F.*) in order to associate him with Heaven, and makes Ancestral Sacrifices to King Wen (*the Son of Heaven’s and the Duke’s deceased father*—*X.F.*) in the Great Palace Hall in order to associate him with God on High. Therefore all (*nobles*—*X.F.*) within the country come, each in his post, to help with the sacrifices. So, of the Sages’ virtues, what is greater than *xiao*?

「故親生之，膝下以養，其父母日嚴¹¹。聖人因嚴以教敬，因親以教愛。」

“Thus parents give birth to the child and raise him at their knees, then become stricter as the days pass¹². The Sages follow this strictness to teach respect, and follow the closeness¹³ to teach love.

⁹ An ancient rite, making sacrifices in the countryside to Heaven or Earth. See *Ci Hai*, (辭海), 1989 ed., Shanghai, p. 512, under the entry “郊祀”.

¹⁰ The ancestor of the Zhou people, born from the daughter of You Tai-shi (有邰氏) who became pregnant with Hou Ji (后稷) when she stepped into the footprint left by a giant. Hou Ji became an expert at agriculture and taught people how to plant. The Zhou people considered him the originator of agriculture. See *Ci Hai*, (辭海), 1989 ed., Shanghai, p. 304, under the entry “后稷 (*Hou Ji*)”.

¹¹ In the version of Xiao Jing as annotated by the Tang Dynasty Xing Bing 邢昺, this passage is punctuated differently: 「故親生之膝下，以養其父母日嚴。」 See *Xiao Jing* 孝經, “*The Thirteen Classics* 十三經”, Beijing, 1980, p. 2,553. That way of punctuating would change the meaning to this: “Thus the parents give birth to him at their knees, in order to support his parents more strictly day by day.” I, however, don’t think that makes much sense, nor do I think that is consistent in meaning with the subsequent sentence, “The sages follow the strictness to teach respect, and follow the closeness to teach love.” It is obvious to me that the strictness following which the sages teach respect refers to the strictness of the parents toward their offspring, and not the strictness of the offspring in supporting the parents.

¹² See footnote 7.

¹³ I’ve translated the word *qin* 親 in the phrase 因親以教愛 to mean “closeness” instead of “parents.” This way of using the word *qin* 親 does exist more or less contemporaneously as in the chapter “Loving Ministers” in *Han Fei Zi* (韓非子·愛臣) circa 280 B.C.E.: “Loving one’s ministers too closely always endangers one’s person (愛臣太親，必危其身).” See

「聖人之教，不肅而成，其政不嚴而治，其所因者本也。」

“The teachings of the Sages succeed without being stern; their governing brings good order without being severe. That’s because they follow what is natural.

「父子之道，天性也，君臣之義也。」

“The Way between the father and the son is Providence-given (*i.e. God-given – F.X.*) nature and is the relationship between the Lord and his Ministers.

「父母生之，續莫大焉；君親臨之，厚莫重焉。」

“One’s parents give birth to one—there is no continuity greater than this. One’s Lord personally¹⁴ assumes the role of being the superior over one¹⁵—there is no generosity greater than this.

「故不愛其親而愛他人者，謂之悖德。不敬其親而敬他人者，謂之悖禮。」

《古漢語常用字字典》(*Dictionary of Commonly Used Words in Ancient Chinese*), Shangwu Publishing (商務印書館), Beijing, 2007, p. 311.

¹⁴ Xing Bing 邢昺 interprets this passage differently from me: “The father, who is the Lord, assumes lordship over one.” See *Xiao Jing* 孝經, “*The Thirteen Classics* 十三經”, Beijing, 1980, p. 2,554. Xing Bing and I differ in translating the word *Qin* 親: while Xing Bing considers it to mean “parents”, I consider it to mean “personally” as in the poem “*Han Yi*” in the “Great Refined Odes” in *The Book of Poetry* (《詩經·大雅·韓奕》): “The King personally ordered it (王親命之).” See *Dictionary of Commonly Used Words in Ancient Chinese* (《古漢語常用字字典》), Shangwu Publishing (商務印書館), Beijing, 2007, p. 311.

¹⁵ The word “臨 (*lin*)” I translate as “to assume the role of being the superior over”—see *Ci Hai*, (辭海), 1989 ed., Shanghai, p. 68, under the entry “臨”: “It’s extended to mean the superior dealing with the inferior: ‘Assume being the superior with dignity, then people will be respectful.’” (“引申為上對下之稱。「論語·曲禮上」:‘臨之以莊則敬。’”)

“Thus for he who does not love his parents but loves others, we call that perverse virtue. For he who does not respect his parents but respects others, we call that perverse courtesy.

「以順則逆，民無則焉。不在於善而皆在於兇德。雖得之，君子不貴也。」

“If one makes right follow wrong, then the people will have no principle to follow. They will not come to good but will come to a vile virtue. Even if a Noble Person gets it, he will not value it.

「君子則不然。言思可道，行思可樂；德義可尊，作事可法，容止可觀，進退可度，以臨其民。是以其民畏而愛之，則而象之。故能成其德教，而行其政令。」

“The Noble Person is not like that. When speaking he thinks whether the words can be spoken; when acting he thinks whether the action brings happiness. His virtue and righteousness can be revered; his handling of matters can be emulated; his manner can impress; his interactions with people can be held up to what is right. With that he assumes the role of being the superior over^{16,17} his people. Thus his people fear and love him, study and emulate him. Therefore he can succeed in his teaching of morals and execution of governance.

《詩》云：『淑人君子，其儀不忒。』」

“The *Book of Poetry* says, ‘The virtuous Noble Person, his demeanor has no faults.’”

¹⁶ *Op. cit.* 9.

¹⁷ The way the term *jun zi* or “Noble Person” is used here assumes that he is of noble birth: he rules his subjects. Of course, as pointed out in the preceding translator’s comment, later in Chinese history the Noble Person can be a person of no matter how lowly a birth, as long as he has high morals.

紀孝行章第十

CHAPTER TEN: CONDUCT THAT CONSTITUTES *XIAO*

子曰：「孝子之事親也，居則致其敬，養則致其樂，病則致其憂，喪則致其哀，祭則致其嚴。五者備矣，然後能事親。」

The Teacher said, “This is how the *xiao* son serves his parents: during daily living he presents respect, when providing for them he presents happiness, during their illnesses he presents worry, during mourning he presents grief, when making offerings (*to his deceased parents and ancestors—F.X.*) he presents reverence. When he is prepared in these five things, then he is able to serve his parents.

「事親者，居上不驕，為下不亂，在醜不爭。居上而驕則亡，為下而亂則刑，在醜而爭則兵。」

“He who serves his parents is not arrogant when above, not rebellious when a subordinate, and not quarrelsome when with peers. Being arrogant as a superior leads to perishment; being rebellious as a subordinate leads to being sentenced; being quarrelsome when with peers leads to dueling.

「三者不除，雖日用三牲之養，猶為不孝也。」

“If these three things are not rejected, then even though one provides for one’s parents so sumptuously as to serve the Three Animals (*beef, pork, mutton—F.X.*) daily, one is still un-*xiao*.”

五刑章第十一

CHAPTER ELEVEN: THE FIVE PUNISHMENTS

子曰：「五刑之屬三千，而罪莫大於不孝。」

The Teacher said, “The Five Punishments¹⁸ are applied to three thousand offenses¹⁹, but none of them is greater than that of being un-*xiao*²⁰.”

¹⁸ In Confucius’ day, the Five Punishments, extant since the Xia Dynasty or from 2,070 B.C.E. onward, consists of: tattooing the face (*mo`墨*), cutting off the nose (*yi`劓*), castration (*gong- 宮*), cutting off the feet (*yue`刖*), and death (*sha- 殺*). Later, from the Sui Dynasty or 581 C.E. onward, the Five Punishments are changed to: beating with a whip or a bamboo strip (*chi- 笞*), beating with a rod (*zhang`杖*), imprisonment (*tu`徒*), exile (*liu`流*), and death (*si^ 死*).

¹⁹ According to Xing Bing’s annotations of *Xiao Jing* 孝經, “*The Thirteen Classics* 十三經”, Beijing, 1980, p. 2,556, originally, early in the Zhou Dynasty (1,122 B.C.E. – 256 B.C.E.) there has been only five hundred offenses for each of the Five Punishments, making a total of only 2,500 offenses. Later in the Zhou Dynasty, however, the list of offenses is expanded to six hundred for each of the Five Punishment, making a total of 3,000.

²⁰ In *Xiao Jing* 孝經, “*The Thirteen Classics* 十三經”, Beijing, 1980, p. 2,556, Xing Bing describes two different interpretations of this passage. The first interpretation, advanced by the old annotators prior to Xing Bing’s time, is that being un-*xiao* is not included as one of the three thousand offenses punishable by the Five Punishments and that Confucius is just saying rhetorically that being un-*xiao* is morally even more serious than any of those offenses. The second interpretation is that being un-*xiao* is indeed included among the three thousand ancient offenses punishable by the Five Punishments and that Confucius is calling it the worst offense, deserving of the most severe punishment. Xing Bing dismisses the first interpretation and advocates the second one.

I, however, consider the first interpretation much more reasonable and present it as my translation. First, Xing Bing in his commentary seem to have had no access to the list of the three thousand ancient offenses, it probably having been long lost, whereas the old annotators before Xing Bing probably still had access to the list. More important, to legislate being un-*xiao* as the greatest of all crimes, i.e. instituting the death penalty for the offense, would not only fail to remedy the injury done to the parents by their offspring being un-*xiao* but would also, perversely, add greatly to the injury. Depriving the parents forever of their offspring is a much greater injury and loss than any possible injury or loss caused by their offspring being un-*xiao*. Is it not cruel and perverse for the state to inflict, in the name of justice, a much greater injury upon the very victims of a much smaller injury? Why is the state choosing to punish the very victims themselves? And so severely?

I hold that it is definitely against Confucius’ nature to advocate such a cruel and perverse “justice”—remember, he considers looking after one’s body part of being *xiao*, part of being good to one’s parents. Confucius totally understands the great love and cherishment by parents for their offspring. Reading the classics, Confucius clearly comes across as a kind, reasonable and insightful man. I firmly believe that, by saying that being un-*xiao* is worse than any of the criminal offenses, even those punishable by death, Confucius is merely

「要君者無上；非聖人者無法；非孝者無親，此大亂之道也。」

“Those who coerce their lords have no regard for superiors; those who reject the Sages have no regard for law; those who reject *xiao* have no regard for parents. That is the road to great chaos.”

廣要道章第十二

CHAPTER TWELVE: BROAD AND CRUCIAL DOCTRINE

子曰：「教民親愛，莫善於孝；教民禮順，莫善於悌；移風易俗，莫善於樂；安上治民，莫善於禮。」

The Teacher said, “For teaching the people to love one another there is nothing better than *xiao*; for teaching the people to be courteous and harmonious there is nothing better than *ti* (*being respectful to elders—F.X.*); for changing the customs and traditions there is nothing better than music; for making the rulers at ease and the people orderly there is nothing better than etiquette.

「禮者，敬而已矣。故敬其父則子悅，敬其兄則弟悅，敬其君則臣悅。敬一人而千萬人悅。所敬者寡而悅者眾，此之謂要道也。」

“Etiquette is nothing more than respect. Therefore respect the father and the sons are happy; respect the older brother and the younger brothers are happy; respect the lord and the subjects are happy. Respect one person and thousands of people are happy. Respect the few and the many are happy—that is why it is called a crucial doctrine.”

emphasizing that being un-*xiao* is the road to great chaos and anarchy for the entire society. He is only pointing out the importance of *xiao* and the moral repugnancy of being un-*xiao*; he is not calling for the most severe judicial punishment of the death penalty.

廣至德章第十三

CHAPTER THIRTEEN: BROAD AND HIGHEST VIRTUE

子曰：「君子之教以孝也，非家至而日見之也。教以孝，所以敬天下之為人父者也。」

The Teacher said, “The teaching of *xiao* by Noble Persons is not (*just – F.X.*) for what one sees daily on arriving home²¹. *Xiao* is taught so that all who are fathers will be respected.

「教以悌，所以敬天下之為人兄者也；教以臣，所以敬天下之為人君者也。」

“*Ti* or being respectful to elders is taught so that all who are elder brothers will be respected. Being a good subject is taught so that all who are lords will be respected.

「《詩》云：『愷悌君子，民之父母。』非至德，其孰能順民如此其大者乎？」

The *Book of Poetry* says, ‘The happy and kind²² Noble Person is the parent of the people.’ If it is not the highest virtue, how can it make the people compliant in such a big way?”

²¹ *Xiao Jing* 孝經, “*The Thirteen Classics* 十三經”, Beijing, 1980, p. 2,557: in the Tang Dynasty (618—907 A.D.) annotations by Xing Bing 邢昺, this passage is taken to mean differently, as follows: “The teaching of *xiao* by Noble Persons is not necessarily taught by going to every family, every house, and speaking every day.” I present a different interpretation because I think Xing Bing’s interpretation does not lead logically to the sentences that follow about extending the respect universally.

²² See *Ci Hai*, (辭海), 1989 ed., Shanghai, p. 304, under the entry “*Kai Ti* (愷悌)”.

廣揚名章第十四

CHAPTER FOURTEEN: WIDELY SPREADING ONE'S NAME

子曰：「君子之事親孝，故忠可移於君；事兄悌，故順可移於長；居家理，故治可移於官。」

The Teacher said, “The Noble Person is *xiao* in serving his parents, and so his loyalty can be transferred to his lord. He is *ti* (*respectful to elders—X.F.*) in serving his big brothers, and so his compliance can be transferred to his superiors. He effects order when at home, and so his governing ability can be transferred to his position as an official.

「是以行成於內，而名立於后世矣。」

“Yes, that is why, one’s conduct succeeds inside the home and one’s name comes to be established among posterity.”

諫諍章第十五

CHAPTER FIFTEEN: DISSUADING AND DISPUTING

曾子曰：「若夫慈愛、恭敬、安親、揚名，則聞命矣。敢問：子從父之令，可謂孝乎？」

Zheng Zi said, “if it’s about being kind and loving, being respectful, bringing peace to the minds of parents, and spreading one’s name—those instructions have already been heard. May I ask: if the son obeys²³ the orders of the father, can that be called *xiao*?”

²³ I think the implied meaning is “blindly obeying”.

子曰：「是何言與？是何言與？」

The Teacher said, “What kind of talk is that? What kind of talk is that?”

昔者天子有爭臣七人，雖無道不失天下。諸侯有爭臣五人，雖無道不失其國。大夫有爭臣三人，雖無道不失其家。士有爭友則身不離於令名。

“Formerly when a Son of Heaven has seven subordinates who will dispute him, even though he has no virtue he will not lose All Under Heaven (the Empire). When a Duke has five subordinates who will dispute him, even though he has no virtue he will not lose his state. When a Minister has three subordinates who will dispute him, even though he has no virtue he will not lose his clan. With a friend who will dispute him, an Officer will not lose his good name.

父有爭子則身不陷於不義。故當不義，則子不可以不爭於父，臣不可以不爭於君。

“With a son who will dispute him, a father will not fall into unrighteousness. So when there is unrighteousness, then the son must not refrain from disputing his father and the subordinate must not refrain from disputing his lord.

故當不義則爭之。從父之令，又焉得為孝乎？」

“So when there is unrighteousness one must dispute it. How can obeying²⁴ the father’s orders be considered *xiao*?”

感應章第十六

CHAPTER SIXTEEN: FEELING AND RESPONDING (BY THE SPIRITS)

²⁴ See the previous footnote.

子曰：「昔者明王事父孝，故事天明；事母孝，故事地察。」

The Teacher said, “Formerly the Enlightened Kings serve their fathers with *xiao*, and therefore serve Heaven with clarity. The Kings serve their mothers with *xiao*, and therefore serve Earth with perceptiveness²⁵.”

「長幼順，故上下治。」

“The elders and the juniors are harmonious with each other, and therefore both people above and people below are orderly and well governed.”

「天地明察，神明彰矣。」

“When the Kings are clear and perceptive with regard to Heaven and Earth, the gods²⁶ will make evident their blessings.”

「故雖天子，必有尊也，言有父也。必有先也，言有兄也。」

“Thus even the Son of Heaven must revere someone, that is to say there is a father; and must defer to someone, that is to say there are older brothers.”

「宗廟致敬，不忘親也。修身慎行，恐辱先也。」

“One pays respects in the Ancestral Temple because one does not forget one’s parents. One cultivates one’s character and is careful in one’s conduct because one fears bringing shame to one’s ancestors.”

²⁵ I take this passage to mean that the Enlightened Kings learn enlightenment from their fathers and perceptiveness from their mothers.

²⁶ The Chinese text is ambiguous as to whether this is the plural case or the singular case, but in view of the fact that both Heaven and Earth are mentioned as being worshipped, it should be inferred that the plural case is meant.

「宗廟致敬，鬼神著矣。孝悌之至，通於神明，光于四海，無所不通。」

“Paying respects in the Ancestral Temple causes the spirits and gods to manifest themselves. When *xiao* and *ti* (being respectful to elders) arrives, one connects with the divine. This leads to illumination of the whole world, with no place not opening up.

「《詩》云：『自西自東，自南自北，無思不服。」

』」

“The *Book of Poetry* says, ‘From west to east, from south to north, no one thinks of insubordination.’”

事君章第十七

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN: SERVING ONE'S LORD

子曰：「君子之事上也，進思盡忠，退思補過，將順其美，匡救其惡。故上下能相親也。」

The Teacher said, “When a Noble Person serves his superiors, in advancing he thinks of fulfilling duty to the utmost, in retreating he thinks of remedying errors. He supports and helps along the good, and corrects and lessens the consequences of the bad. Therefore the superior and the inferior can be close with each other.

「《詩》云：『心乎愛矣，遐不謂矣；中心藏之，何日忘之。』」

“The *Book of Poetry* says, “The heart is engaged in love; why not say it?^{27,28} Store it in

²⁷ *Ci Hai*, (辭海), 1989 ed., Shanghai, p. 1,197, under the entry “遐 (*xia*)”: here *Ci Hai* takes the word 遐 to mean “why”, and quotes this passage from *Xiao Jing* as the example. On the other hand, in Xing Bing’s Tang Dynasty annotations to *Xiao Jing* 孝經 (“*The Thirteen*

the middle of the heart, and never forget it.”

喪親章第十八

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN: THE PASSING OF A PARENT

子曰：「孝子之喪親也，哭不偯，禮無容，言不文，服美不安，聞樂不樂，食旨不甘，此哀戚之情也。」

The Teacher said, “When a *xiao* son loses his parent, he cries without trying to stop himself²⁹, his politeness is without pleasantry, his words are without adornment, when he dresses in fine clothes he feels uncomfortable, when he hears music he does not feel joy, and when he eats delicious food it is not tasty. This is sadness and grief.

「三日而食，教民無以死傷生，毀不滅性。此聖人之政也。喪不過三年，示民有終也。」

“Eating after three days is to teach the people not to let dying injure the living, such that the damage (from the death) does not destroy people’s nature. Such is the policy of the Sages. Mourning is not to exceed three years; this is to show the people that it has an end.

Classics 十三經, Beijing, 1980, p. 2,560), he takes the same word to mean “far away” and generates this interpretation, completely different from that of *Ci Hai*: “Though far away, the Noble Person does not speak of (i.e. consider important) his distance from his lord...”

²⁹ 偯 (*yi*) means “the type of whimpering that occurs as crying stops.” Thus in a strict word-for-word translation, this passage would be rendered as: “...he cries without the type of whimpering that occurs as crying stops.” Therefore I take the whole passage to mean: “...he cries without trying to stop himself.”

「為之棺槨衣衾而舉之。陳其簠簋而哀戚之。」「擗踊哭泣，哀以送之。卜其宅兆而安措之。」

“Prepare for the deceased parent inner and outer coffins,³⁰ burial clothes and burial blankets, and raise the coffin. Set out the offering vessels³¹ and mourn him. Beat the breast, jump up and down, and cry. With grief see him off to the burial ground. Divine a good gravesite and place him there to rest in peace.

「為之宗廟以鬼享之，春秋祭祀以時思之。」

“Make a shrine temple to make offerings to his spirit. Conduct sacrificial ceremonies in the spring and autumn to regularly think of him.

「生事愛敬，死事哀戚，生民之本盡矣，死生之義備矣，孝子之事親終矣。」

“When alive, serve him with love and respect; when dead, serve him with grief and sorrow. The people’s³² duty is fulfilled, the obligations both during life and after death are fulfilled, and the *xiao* son’s service to his parents is at an end.”

- END XIAO JING TEXT -

³⁰ The two words in the text here, *guan guo* 棺槨, normally means today inner coffin (*guan*-棺) and outer coffin (*guo*^槨). According to the Tang Dynasty annotator Xing Bing, however, during Confucius’ time the word *guan* 棺 means not coffin but body, and the word *guo* 槨 means not outer coffin but coffin in general. Thus the two words in the text here, *guan guo* 棺槨, according to Xing Bing, actually means body and coffin. See *Xiao Jing* 孝經, “The Thirteen Classics 十三經”, Beijing, 1980, p. 2,561.

³¹ The *fu*^簠 is the bronze rectangular offering vessel, and the *gui*`簋 is the bronze round offering vessel. See *Ci Hai*, (辭海), 1989 ed., Shanghai, p. 2,128, under the entries “簠 (*fu*^)” and “簋 (*gui*”)”.

³² According to *Ci Hai*, the term *sheng min* 生民 simply means “the people” and not some construction like “live people” or “people, when alive”. See *Ci Hai*, (辭海), 1989 ed., Shanghai, p. 1,944, under the entry “生民 (*sheng min*)”.

REFERENCES

1. *Xiao Jing* 《孝經》, annotated by Xing Bing 邢昺 of the Tang Dynasty (618 - 907 C.E.), in *The Thirteen Classics* 《十三經》, Zhonghua Shudian (中華書店), Beijing, 1980, Vol. II, pp. 2,539—2,562.
2. *The Classic of Filial Piety – Xiao Jing*, from: *The Sacred Books of the East: The Texts of Confucianism*, vol. III, part I: The Shu King, The Religious Portions of the Shih King, The Hsiao King, translated by James Legge, 2nd edition, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899, p. 465-488.
<http://www.chinapage.com/confucius/xiaojing-be.html>.
3. 《孝經》, Wikisource, <http://zh.wikisource.org/wiki/孝經>
4. *Ci Hai* 《辭海》, 1989 ed., Shanghai Cishu Chubanshe (上海辭書出版社) Shanghai, 1989,.
5. *Dictionary of Commonly Used Words in Ancient Chinese* 《古漢語常用字字典》, Shangwu Publishing (商務印書館), Beijing, 2007
6. *Far East Pinyin Chinese-English Dictionary*, The Far East Book Co., Ltd., Taipei, 2000.