

# 論語淺釋 (續)

## The Analects of Confucius

(continued)



宣化上人講

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### 【公冶長第五】

### Chapter 5: Gongye Chang

(二十) 季文子三思而後行。子聞之，曰：「再，斯可矣！」

(20) Ji Wenzi always thought thrice before taking any action. The Master, upon hearing this, remarked, “Twice is enough!”

#### 【上人講解】

「季文子三思而後行」：季文子，姓季孫，名行父，他在魯國做官（上卿大夫）。「三（音散，sàn）」，讀去聲，再而三。他這個人是很謹慎的，一舉一動都考慮得很詳細的；那麼左一次、右一次，一、二、三次，來自己推敲，研究這個事情應該怎麼樣做，然後付諸實行。他這個「三思而後行」，不單他自己那麼行；甚至有旁人、有顧問，他請問人家之後，他自己還要想一想：這個究竟怎麼樣做才對？

#### 【Venerable Master's Instructional Talk】

Ji Wenzi always thought thrice before taking any action. Ji Wenzi's surname was Jisun and his given name was Xingfu. He was a senior minister in the State of Lu. Here, the character for 'thrice' (三) is pronounced in the same falling tone as is the character for (散 sǎn) which means 'repeatedly'. He was an extremely careful person who pondered over every action and move in a very detailed manner. He would scrutinize a matter from different angles and examine all the possible ways of dealing with it before taking any concrete action. His approach of 'thinking thrice before acting' was not just confined to his own opinions. Even after seeking the opinions of other advisors, he would still weigh them over and over in his mind and think: “Ultimately, what is the best way of tackling this problem?”

Being such a cautious person, Ji Wenzi was not in the least

所以這是個很謹慎的人，做事不馬虎，也不標奇立異，也不這麽想出風頭。那麽這樣子，他做事時間久了，等他死了之後，君王和大家來給他評價、評論，說應該用個什麼字來代表他的名字呢？大家共同研究之後，就用這麽一個「文」字；說他很斯文的，不慌張、不馬虎、不冒冒失失的，所以這是很好的一個諡號。

「子聞之，曰」：可是孔子聽見人家這樣告訴他，就說了。「再，斯可矣」：真要有智慧的人，根本一思都不要，不必思；就像這個水似的，由心裡頭流出來，「決諸東方則東流，決諸西方則西流」。什麼問題來了，都可以隨時把它解決了；所謂「事來則應」，來了就應對它，「事去則靜」，所以一思都不用思。那麽他既然這麽慎重，只思兩次已經夠了。

這個意思就是：甚至於那麽思一次都夠了！思，就是他考慮，他在那個地方研究。如果你左想也不能解決這個問題，右想還是不能決定；這所謂「仁柔寡斷」，不能當機立斷，不能處事很敏捷的——這個也不能誤會說，這個「敏捷」，我做事就要快！你快，做錯了那也是不對的，還要看著它；這個東西就像鏡子照物似的，恰到好處，照出來它是這個樣子。

所以孔子說：再次，就可以了！不要那麽費時失事，費很多腦筋，結果自己就像狐狸似的。那個狐狸就多疑善變，什麼牠都疑惑，什麼牠都懷疑；可是牠沒有一定宗旨，總是那麽很虛偽的。

☞待續

perfunctory when performing his duties. He was not one to adopt unconventional methods and nor did he long to be in the limelight. He carried out his work this way for a very long time. When he passed away, the state ruler gathered all the ministers to appraise his character and propose a posthumous name that befitted him. After deliberation, they decided to confer on him the character ‘文’ (wén) because he was a very refined and soft-spoken gentleman who was calm, conscientious and considerate. Therefore, this posthumous title was most appropriate.

**The Master, upon hearing this, remarked.** When Confucius heard from someone about Ji Wenzhi’s way of doing things, he commented, “**Twice is enough!**” In fact, people who possess genuine wisdom need not think even once! This is because their wisdom flows forth naturally from their minds like water, as the saying goes: “If there is an outlet in the east, the water flows east. If there is an outlet in the west, the water flows west.” Whatever problem crops up, they can solve it on the spot. It is said, “When a situation arises, one responds accordingly; when the situation passes, one remains still.” Therefore, not even a single thought is necessary. Since Ji Wenzhi was such a cautious person, however, thinking twice was already sufficient.

What Confucius really intended to say was: “Even thinking once is more than enough!” ‘思’ (sī) means ‘to think over’ or ‘consider’. If you think about a problem from all the different angles and still cannot arrive at a solution, it means you are an indecisive person who is unable to make prompt decisions. In other words, you lack the mental agility to handle situations. Then again, do not misinterpret the word ‘agility’ (敏捷 mǐn jié) to mean that you have to be fast! If you do things hastily and make mistakes in the process, that is also not right. You still have to be attentive to details in the same way that a mirror reflects objects – everything appears as it is and exactly as it should.

For this reason, Confucius said, “Thinking twice would be enough!” Do not waste time and effort racking your brain, or else you will end up like a fox. According to its nature, a fox is suspicious and inconstant. It is doubtful and suspicious of anything and everything. Lacking any specific purpose, it is always false and hypocritical.

☞To be continued