

陶淵明詩講錄（第十八講）

Lectures on Tao Yuanming's Poems (Lecture Eighteen)

葉嘉瑩教授 講 By Professor Yeh Chia-ying

晨珪譯組 英譯 English Translated by Early Bird Translation Team

陶淵明的飲酒詩，題目雖然是飲酒，但他寫到的都是人生中的重要問題。像人生究竟應該掌握什麼，生活的意義、價值、理想都是什麼等等，他都考慮到了。

在飲酒詩的第一首中，他就曾提出「寒暑有代謝，人道每如茲」。 「代」是輪流更換，「謝」是消失。《千字文》上說：「寒來暑往，秋收冬藏。」春夏秋冬的四季，就這樣一個接著一個過去了；季節如此，人生也是如此。每一個人都會過去，每一個時代也都會過去。

陶淵明還寫過五首《歸園田居》，其中一首的結尾說：「人生似幻化，終當歸空無。」人生在世界上，就像《金剛經》所說的如夢幻泡影，轉眼就消失了，就什麼都沒有了。

從這裏我們可以看到，陶淵明對人生的認識有一個很基本的觀念，就是他認識到了人生的短暫和空無。在飲酒詩的「顏生稱為仁」那一首裏，他還說：「客養千金軀，臨化消其寶。」你把你自已看得那麼重要，吃好的，穿好的，住好的，用千金來保養你的肉體，可是你的肉體能夠永遠存在嗎？總有一天你要幻化歸於空無。這道理似乎很簡單，但真正認識它是需要智慧的，所謂「達人解其會，逝將不復疑」。我們說「智慧」，它與一般人常說的「聰明」是不同的。比別人想得快、計算得精明，那是聰明；而對人生看得透徹，有一種超出人生的覺悟，那才是智慧。

☞待續

Tao Yuanming's "Drinking" poems, though titled as such, touch on profound aspects of life. In these poems, he explores themes such as what we should truly value in life, as well as life's meaning, purpose, and goals.

In the first Drinking poem, he writes: "*Winter and summer come and go — So it is with worldly affairs.*" The character 代 (dài) suggests cycles and change, while 謝 (xiè) means to fade or pass away. The *Thousand Character Essay* says, "*Winter comes and summer goes; autumn brings harvest, and winter stores.*" The four seasons—spring, summer, autumn, and winter—follow one another in an endless cycle. Life, too, follows this pattern: people pass on, and so do entire eras.

Tao Yuanming also wrote a five-part poem titled *Returning to the Countryside to Farm*. One of the poems ends with the lines: "*Life is an illusion. / In the end, we return to emptiness.*" This echoes the teaching in the *Vajra Sutra*, which says that life is "like a dream, an illusion, a bubble, a shadow." All experiences in this world disappear in the blink of an eye, leaving nothing behind.

At this point, we can see that Tao Yuanming's understanding of life was grounded in a fundamental insight: life is short, fleeting, and ultimately empty.

In the eleventh Drinking poem, which begins, "*Master Yan was well-known for his benevolence,*" Tao writes: "*You spend a thousand taels of gold to sustain your body, yet when it perishes, everything is gone.*" We may think we are important, enjoying fine food and comfortable living, spending great wealth to maintain the body in good condition—but can it last forever? No. The day will come when we are no longer here. This principle may seem simple on the surface, but truly understanding it requires wisdom. As Tao writes in the first Drinking poem: "*Wise men understand these conditions, harboring no doubts whatsoever.*"

Here, "wisdom" is different from what people commonly call "intelligence." Being quick-witted or sharp in calculations is intelligence. But wisdom is something deeper—it is a penetrating clarity about life and a transcendental awakening to its true nature.

☞To be continued