



‘Man can enlarge the Way. It is not the Way that enlarges man’ .. (柯蔼蓝)
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[Zigong understood and explained what he heard by unfolding the quotation and so taking the meaning further. (See other example on handout)].

Put into a more general framework we find the Master saying: ‘ I enlighten only the enthusiastic; I guide only the fervent. After I have lifted up one corner of a question, if the student cannot discover the other three, I do not repeat’ . (Leys)

The Master praises his disciples for the way they unfold and expand meaning, moving on from a starting point. In Chinese: 兴, 博, 知来, 发, 愤, 起, 启。

I would like here to comment on two of these terms, namely - 兴 (xing) and 博 (bo), both of which imply a process of individual, creative unfolding or expanding.

While discussing the importance of the Book of Odes, the essential term ‘ xing’ (兴) is introduced. In ch.XVII.9 the Master asks his disciples: ‘ Little ones, why do you not study the Poems? The Poems can provide you with stimulation and with

observation, with a capacity for communion, and with a vehicle for grief’ . (Leys):

[In other translations of the Analects we find the term rendered: incitement (A. Waley), exhilaration (E. Pound), inspiration (B. Brooks), and call out the sentiment (Ku Hung-ming).]

In ch.VIII.8 ‘ xing’ is again mentioned in the context of poetry: The Master says: It is by the Odes that the mind is aroused (J. Legge). [Leys changes from ‘ stimulation’ to ‘ inspiration’ : ‘ Draw inspiration from the Poems’ , and Waley sticks to his incite: ‘ Let a man be first incited by the Songs’ .]

‘ Xing’ appears earlier on the oracle-bones and as is well known, was later adopted and developed to become a most important technical term in Chinese literary thought. I believe that even here in the Analects, its meaning goes further than some scholars seem to think.

The term ‘ bo’ (博) appears, among other places, in the very important paragraph about Yan Yuan, the Master’s favourite disciple’s progress in his own moral cultivation. Heaving a sigh, we hear him proclaim: ‘ The more I look up at it the higher it appears. The more I bore into it the harder it becomes. I see it before me. Suddenly it is behind me. The Master is good at leading one on, step by step. He broadens me with culture and brings me back to essentials by means of the rites...’ The Book of Poems which was regarded as containing the wisdom of the past, was a seminal book in Confucius’ and later in the Confucian curriculum.

Knowledge of poetry, and more specifically of the Book of Poems, was conceived as a necessary condition for the attainment of moral accomplishment. [In the

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