

III₁
Third Couplet, First Line

昔 孟 母 . 擇 鄰 處
hsi^{2.5} meng⁴ mu³ . che^{4.5} lin² ch'u³

Rhyme: 處 has two pronunciations, hence two rhymes:
- meaning “a place, a location”, it is pronounced ch'u⁴, and rhymes 御 yü⁴ (“to lead a horse, to drive a chariot”);
- meaning “to stay at home”, it is pronounced ch'u³ and rhymes 語 yü³ (“a discourse”).

The rhyme word 語 yü³ “a discourse” relates to the discourse through which Mother Meng brought about the conversion of her light-minded son. The rhyme word 御 yü⁴ “to lead a horse, to drive a chariot; to direct, to govern” may be understood as referring at Mother Meng's pedagogy. It also alludes to the personal names of Mencius (cf. # 3₁-D). Both readings convey appropriate meanings: “she chose a place”, or, “she chose a dwelling”. Both readings are valid. However, in # 3₂, the editor of VIE indicates his preference for the 語 yü³ rhyme.

Translation:

Mother Meng of yore chose [her] residence [according to] the neighbourhood.

We are again in the hieroglyphic style: the last kanji is the object of the statement, and it is modified by everything that precedes: “there was a residing”, and “there was a neighbouring”, and “there was a choosing”. It cannot be determined whether “the choice” applies to “the neighbourhood” or to “the residence”, whether A is meant to determine B or C: logic alone decides, and in the present case both are legitimate. GILES: “chose a neighbourhood”, i.e.

“chose a place”, A determines C; *DES MICHELS*: “*choisit un bon voisinage et y habita*”, i.e. “chose the neighbours”, A determines B which in turn determines C. The choice, anyway, was that of Mother Meng of yore.

In the present context Mother Meng is quoted as an example of a mother, who, the most adverse circumstances notwithstanding, was superlatively successful in inspiring her son with “a zeal for learning” (s. above, # 2-T, quotation). She is considered more generally the paragon of “prudence”, the FOURTH (a *yin* number) virtue among the the five 常 *ch'ang*² “constants”: 仁義禮智信 “*l'humanité, la justice, la civilité, la prudence, la sincérité*”, cf. *DORÉ*, vol. XIV, p. 511, and picture No. 179 (reproduced hereafter).

Etymologies:

昔 *W.* 17J; 孟 *W.* 157B; 母 *W.* 67O, compare the entire series of 女.

> 女 shows “a male and a female sexual organ in conjunction” i.e. “the woman as the *yin*-partner of the man” cf. Karlgren *Grammata serica*, 94.

Master Wang's Commentary

3₁-A

母氏之教 . 本於慈

*mu*³ *shi*⁴ *chih*¹ *chiao*¹ . *pen*³ *yü*² *ts'u*² .

The instruction given by the mother is based on tenderness.

Of the two types of education given consecutively by mothers, the “uterine instruction” 胎教 was outlined in # 2-G-J: this applies to the embryo. The “tending mother's education” 阿保母氏之教 was outlined in # 2-K-O: it applies to infants up to the age of eight, or ten, anyway until the age when the boy enters the world of the males.

> 母氏之教 , cf. # 2-O.

> 慈 “the tenderness”, is characteristically *yin*, and eponymous of the mother; its antonym is 嚴 *yen*² “strictness”, eponymous of the father.

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3₁-B

由異而入教之所宜先也

yu² hsün⁴ erh² ju^{4.5} chiao¹ chih¹ suo³ yi² hsien¹ yeh³

Instruction which penetrates by means of submissiveness is what ought to come first.

> 巽 “docile, humble, complying, all pervading like the wind” (*Cd.*, p. 766c) is an eminently *yin* quality. For the female humility of Mother Meng, see her own discourse # 3₂-G.

Allusions:

First allusion:

巽入 : *Yi ching*, Shuo^{1.5} kua⁴ 說卦 “the divining hexagrams explicated”, *HY* 50/ 說 /6; *Wil.*, p. 273: 7, *The Attributes*:

巽入也

The *WILHELM* translation, *THE GENTLE is penetrating*, fits the present context; but within the original context of the *Yi ching*, the factitive mood appears preferable: *the Gentle allows penetration (invites penetration)*.

Namely: The sixth “explication” places the eight hexagrams (八卦) resulting from the doubling of a trigram within the macrocosm of the “Earlier Heaven” (*WIL.*, p. 266; *Cd.*, p. 453c, *sub. voc.* 卦; for the “Later Heaven” arrangement, cf. *WIL.*, p. 269). It lists these hexagrams in an order which makes them descriptive of a coitus in eight phases. Moreover, it appends an explanatory synonym to the name of each hexagram. Whereupon, on the microcosmic level, a seventh “explication” gives a list of eight animals which are symbolic and/or illustrative of the aforementioned eight coital phases, either by virtue of their nature, or by virtue of their (sexual) behaviour. (This sequence of eight animals is unrelated to the dodecazoo.) Combining the lists of

the sixth and of the seventh “explications”, one obtains the following synopsis:

I - South (top): 天 Heaven, 乾 (*W.* 117D) 健. 馬 ch'ien² chien⁴ “the surging energy” (= *kua* # 1) “potent, vigorous, untiring”; “the horse”; *yang*.

II - North (bottom): 地 Earth, 坤 順. 牛 k'un¹ shun⁴ “obedience” (= *kua* # 2) “docile”; “the cow”; *yin*.

III - Northeast (lower left): 震 thunder, 震 動. 龍 chen⁴ tung⁴ “thunderbolt” (= *kua* # 51) “arousing”; “the dragon”; *yang*.

N.B.: the dragon is the animal of clouds and thunder. These are expressions of the sexual arousal of Heaven and Earth, paradigmatic of sexual arousal in general.

IV - Southwest (upper right): 風 the wind, 巽 入. 雞 hsün⁴ ju^{4.5} “Submissiveness” (= *kua* # 57) “insinuating, to penetrate; compliant, allowing to enter”; “the hen”; *yin*.

N.B.: the hen is the paragon of *yin*-ness (cf. e.g. *Tao te ching*, # 10). Among the numerous meanings of the kanji 風 “wind”, we may retain “to give a good (or a bad) example through which a person of authority influences the behaviour of inferiors; a teaching; a reputation, &c.” all of which fit the context of Mother Meng. Fitting the context of the present “explication” it also means “the instinctive behaviour during the sexual act”: “THE GENTLE means crouching.” (*WILH.*, p. 680), as does the hen when copulating.

V - West (right): 水 water, 坎 陷. 豕 k'an³ hsien⁴ “a hole” (= *kua* # 29) “to dive, to sink”; “the hog”; *yang*.

N.B.: water is considered to be the seminal fluid of Heaven. The hog is the digging, water loving, animal; but also, physiologically: among all the domestic animals, the hog produces the greatest amount of seminal fluid;

VI - East (left): 火 fire, 離 麗. 雉 li² li⁴ “to pair” (= *kua* # 30), “to copulate”; “the pheasant”; *yin*.

N.B.: the pheasant is the paragon of staying in male-female pairs; this matrimonial fidelity makes him symbolic of an official's (*yin*) loyalty to his ruler (*yang*) (cf. above, # I₁, Ode 70, Stanza 1).

VII - Northwest (lower right): 山 mountain, 艮 止 . 狗 ken⁴ chih³ “to refuse to go any further” (= *kua* # 52) “to stay motionless”; “the dog”; *yang*.

N.B.: the mountain is symbolic of utter firmness, while its kanji, 山, resembles the male organ in a state of erection; as for the dog, because of the magnitude of his erection, he cannot easily withdraw from the bitch: the animals remain linked together, motionless, awaiting complete detumescence.

VIII - southeast (upper left): 澤 the lake, 兌 說 . 羊 tui⁴ yüeh^{4.5} “contentment” (= *kua* # 58), “joy”; “the sheep”; *yin-yang*.

N.B.: the hexagram “is symbolised by the smiling lake” (*Wil.*, p. 223); the paragon of social harmony.

Clearly, the original statements of the “explications”, 巽 入 也 and 巽 為 雞 ought to be understood in the factitive mood: “compliant” [means] “to let, to allow to enter” (namely, the semen), and “compliant: as is a hen”; whereas the teaching of Mother Meng “penetrates”. This, however, is a problem of English, not of Chinese. The Kanji simply states: “There is penetration”.

Returning to Master Wang’s statement, it appears that 巽 而 入 serves a dual function:

- a) understood literally, it fittingly characterises the gentle, motherly instruction;
- b) traced to its *locus classicus*, it alludes to conception (not to education). In a strict sequence of thought, and in a straight line from what has been said so far, Master Wang starts his account of Mother Meng’s educational methods by telling us that she conceived, gave birth to a son and, by implication, that she gave him an appropriate uterine education.

Second allusion:

教 先 : *Li chi*, *Hsioh chi*, *HY* 18/2 (*C.*, II, p. 29):

教 學 為 先

... *For this reason, the kings of Antiquity, intent on establishing their government, considered teaching-and-learning paramount.*

> 先 (the rhyme word of # II) “comes first” in time, or in importance. In the present context the teaching provided by the mother comes first in time; and it is most important too: the uterine education determines the character of the child, and possibly even its sex; while the post-uterine education provides a foundation for the ulterior, the intellectual, development (cf. # 2-G-J and K-O).

Ornatus:

Numerology informs Chinese methodology no less than Chinese aesthetics. The FIVE couplets # III - # VII constitute the core of the introductory part of the *San zu ching*: FIVE being the number of the MIDDLE, of that which is most important. They expound the duties incumbent on the mother (TWO = # III₁₋₂), the father (THREE = IV₁₋₂), the teacher (FOUR = # V₁₋₂), the student (FIVE = # VI₁₋₂) who, in this matter, is obviously the most important factor. Number SIX (= # VII) crowns the efforts with success. This central unit opens and closes with the quoting of the introductory line of the Chapter on Education (Hsioh chi) of the *Li chi*: the present quotation is the apodosis; the protasis will be quoted by Couplet # VII.

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3₁-C

古之賢母 . 能教子以成大名者 . 惟孟母最著
 ku³ chih¹ hsien² mu³ . neng² chiao¹ tzu³ yi³ ch'eng² ta⁴ ming²
 che³ wei² meng⁴ mu³ tsui⁴ chu⁴

Among the mothers of antique sages, Mother Meng is most famous: for she was able to educate her son so that he achieved great renown.

We may hesitate as to whom we wish to refer 者: to the sons, or the mothers “who, by educating their sons, achieved great renown”. The ambiguity may be intentional; however, the problem is resolved by comparing the present sentence with # 4₁-C which is constructed in an identical fashion, yet is perfectly unambiguous.

Note:

Here begins the story of Mother Meng. Her “moving thrice” 孟母三遷, and her “destroying the weaving” 斷機杼 (# III₂) is strictly all that is transmitted concerning Mencius prior to his public life (s. *LEGGE*, p. 16-17; *FORKE*, I. p. 190-191). Her legend was recorded by 劉向 Liu Hsiang (77-6 B.C.) in his collected “*Biographies of meritorious women*” (列女傳 already quoted in # 2-G); the text is reproduced in *M.*, 3.6960.254 and 255.

This is a true to life story of a Chinese outcast woman (socially rejected, without money, without family) who succeeds all by herself not only in surviving, but in securing an outstanding education for her son. We may, of course, read the story in the way we are supposed to read it, namely: “Do not do any thinking: just be edified!” We may, in the same manner, contemplate the illustration at *DORÉ*’s where Mother Meng and the boy (he holds his favourite book next to his heart) are followed by a servant woman who carries two bags of belongings at the one end of her pole, and, at the other end, a pile of huge books, books of modern shape. Yet, by comparing the two versions of the story, that of Liu Hsiang and that of Master Wang, we discover interesting details, which we might otherwise have overlooked, details which suggest to our imagination circumstances which are gruesome even by Chinese standards.

The “original” account, that of the “*Biography*”, starts with Mother Meng and her son dwelling in the cemetery. There is silence about the circumstances, the catastrophe, which brought them there, and there is complete silence on Mencius’ father. This makes us assume the worst: most probably the tyrant of the day deemed father Meng *persona non grata*, had him dismembered and thrown to the birds and the dogs. Only this could explain the absence of any relative, or connection, or employment, for a young woman with her male child, both of whom had a sizable commercial value. Living in a cemetery meant hitting the hard rock bottom of Chinese existence, among the socially rejected who sheltered their naked bodies in abandoned tombs and fed on funeral

offerings and on corpses. Yet, in order to be allowed this existence, the young woman had to make a deal with the “beggar king” of the premises, an outcast of the worst kind. (Cf. Gaius Valerius Catullus, the lurid *Carmen LIX*, “*Bononiensis rufa*”: such things do exist!)

After a time, when she could dare to show herself in town again, the second station: the market. Another local boss permitting, some semi-regular prostitution of herself and of the boy gave her some income, no matter how modest ... until she could secure a regular position in a whore house: third station.

Socially reintegrated, and with a roof over her head, the woman could take up silk weaving, as a part-time job, and the boy could enter the nearby school. These are the realities of Chinese life at which the legend hints.

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3₁-D

孟子名軻 . 字子輿 . 戰國鄒人也

meng⁴ tzu³ ming² k'o¹ . tzu⁴ tzu³ yü² . chan⁴ kuo^{2.5} tsou¹ jen² yeh³

The personal name of Mencius was K'o, and his style was Tzu-yü; he was a native of Tsou [and lived at the time] of the Warring States.

For the biography of Mencius, *Shih chi*, Chapter 74 (*M.*, 3.6960.3).

> 軻 “Axletree”;

> 子輿 “Bottom of Confucius’ (‘the Master’s’) Carriage”.

> 戰國 traditionally defined as having lasted from 403 till 221 B.C., the period covered by the 戰國策 *Chan⁴ kuo^{2.5} ts'e^{4.5}*, a recital of the “Intrigues of the Warring States” (published in 26 B.C.; *M.*, 5.11667.47; *FEIFEL*, p. 85, 124).

> 鄒 a small state in Shantung (*M.*, 11.39562.I.1).

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3₁-E

父早喪 . 母仇氏

fu⁴ tsao³ sang⁴ . mu³ chang³ shi⁴*His father had died early; his mother was née Chang.*

These indications are of recent invention. Ancient sources are absolutely silent about Mencius' father. This fact is remarkable, particularly since the Meng clan was one of the three prominent clans of Lu; but it had recently fallen from power (*FORKE*, p. 190). Hence, the likely execution of this man (for political reasons) could explain why his memory was blotted out. It may also explain the grim tenacity of his highly aristocratic widow determined to survive in order to restore the family to its former glory; which, in turn, explains the fierceness of her reaction to the nonchalance of her son (cf. her own words, # 3₂-G). But of herself, not much is known either (cf. 3₁-C Note). The opening words of her "Biography":

鄒孟軻之母也號孟母。

The mother of Meng K'o of Tsou: she is known as "Mother Meng".

No name is given. Notice that Master Wang praises the well-educated sons of Tou Yen-shan for having brought glory upon their ancestors (# 4₁-C); of Mencius he says nothing of that sort.

> 喪 sang¹ "mourning" and all "the mourning rituals and ceremonies"; sang⁴ "to die", but also "to cause to die".

> 仇 is a hapax kanji, used only as the family name of Mother Meng: *Cd.*, p. 808 and *M.*, 1.357; the *Chung kuo jen ming ttt.* (p. 25 a) does not mention her, only one man of Ming times; *Mth.*, 204, quotes the present line # 3₁-E. Vie and SC tell us that its pronunciation equals 掌 chang³, probably, in order to forestall a confusion with 仇 ch'ou² "the enemy".

Etymologies: 早 *W.* 143E; 喪 *W.* 10H; 氏 *W.* 114A.

3₁-F

居近屠肆

chü¹ chin⁴ t'u² ssu⁴*Her residence was close to the meat market.*

Reminder: Master Wang reverses the original order of events. The original order: first, the cemetery (# 3₁-I); second, the market. That this market was a “meat market” was not stated in the “*Biography*”.

Master Wang shows us Mother Meng as a widow who was dwelling “next to” (not “at”) the meat market; and he has her move twice. He does not say why she had moved to the meat market, nor how long she had lived there (it may have been for quite some time). All he wants is to emphasize her honest poverty.

A meat market, apart from being pedagogically detrimental (see hereafter # 3₁-H), is considered an undesirable neighbourhood because of the odours, the flies, and the shrieks of the animals about to be slaughtered (the pigs, in particular, are offensively vocal). The Chinese are sensible to this last inconvenience, cf. *MENCIUS*, *HY* 3/1A/7 (*L.*, p. 141; *C.*, p. 314): “*So is the superior man affected towards animals, that, having (...) heard their dying cries, he cannot bear to eat their flesh. Therefore he keeps away from slaughterhouse and kitchen.*” (Legge)

> 屠肆 “a house where oxen and pigs are slaughtered and their meat sold; a meat shop” (*M.*, 4.7761.36.1). In # 3₁-G, 其間 indicates that there was more than one ssu⁴. Hence the translation: “market”, where there were many butchers’ stands, or shops.

“*Biography*”:

乃去舍市傍

Therefore she went away and took residence at the marketplace.

Remember: Master Wang has reversed the order of the domiciles. He also changed the original “market place” into a

“meat market”. In # 3₁-G he will insist that the word should be understood literally. The wording of the “*Biography*” may suggest prostitution; “meat market” even more so.

> 傍 pang⁴ (*Mth.*, p’ang²) *the border, alongside.*

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3₁-G

孟子幼嘗嬉戲其間。學爲屠人宰割之事

meng⁴ tzu³ yu⁴ ch’ang² hsi¹ hsi⁴ ch’i² chien¹
hsioh^{2.5} wei² t’u² jen² tsai³ ko^{1.5} chih¹ shi¹

The infant Mencius, constantly playing in this environment, learned to do the butchers’ business of slaughtering animals and cutting up the meat.

Do not ask how a little boy (of six or seven) can butcher pigs and oxen. The story is intended to fire the imagination.

> 嬉戲 is a synonymic binome meaning “to play”. It is endowed, however, with a connotation of Confucian learning: Confucius, as a child, made *hsi¹-hsi⁴* by arranging sacrificial vessels on altars (*Shih chi*, cf. *M.*, 3.6736.6, and below, # 3₁-M): 嬉戲常陳俎豆。

“*Biography*”:

其嬉戲爲賈人衙賣之事

In his plays he did the ballyhooing and the haggling of the traders.

Now the infant philosopher did not slaughter pigs and oxen; but he did do something else: he prostituted himself. Master Wang felt it appropriate to change the text; but, generally speaking, imperial China was not prejudiced against child prostitution (cf. # 3₂-D). It was considered normal business, and little boys may as well free-lance on the market place. The parents permitting, there was nothing to make a fuss about; and it can be assumed that, at that point, Mother Meng did not object to her son contributing to their modest budget.

One more move, # 3₁-L, integrated mother and child into Chinese society.

Note:

MENCIUS has preserved the song of “a baby” (孺子) ballyhooing the merits of his own posterior, and reports Confucius’ laudatory remarks (*HY* 27/4A/9; *L.*, p. 299; *C.*, p. 470; and *Orchis*, p. 143). This song is quoted at the end of “*The Fisherman*” 漁父 (= *Ch’u tz’u* VII), as a model of conduct fit for politicians.

> 孺子 *ju*^{2,3} *tzu*³ “a baby, a child”, also, addressed to a young man, a word of endearment, *Mth.*, 3147.2,3; *Cd.*, p. 309c, 孺 “to love tenderly, with affection”, hence: a “loverboy”; but 需 *hsü*¹ “required, needed, essential” *Mth.*, 2884, hence: “a boy of convenience”; *Cd.*, p. 747b: a boy “who stands waiting (on the market place)” We could, in a Chinese mode, go on quipping; but, before we stop: the *ju*, the Confucianists, were known to be fond of boys: 儒 – 孺.

Etymologies: 宰 *W.* 102H; 割 *W.* 97E.

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3₁-H

孟母曰 . 此非可以居子也

*meng*⁴ *mu*³ *yüeh*^{1,5} : *tz’u*³ *fei*¹ *k’o*³ *yi*³ *chü*¹ *tzu*³ *yeh*³

Mother Meng said: “This is not appropriate for a young scholar.”

Or “*This is not appropriate to house the boy*”: the changes which Master Wang made to the unambiguous original, proves that the pun was intended: 居子 “to house the boy” / “private scholar” i.e. a young scholar who has not yet been appointed to public office.

“*Biography*”:

孟母又曰 . 此非吾所以居處子也

Again Mother Meng said: “This is not an address for me to house the boy.”

“Again”, because, according to the original version, the market place was her second address.

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3₁-I

乃遷於郊。居近墳塋

nai³ ts'ien¹ yu² chiao¹ . chü¹ chin⁴ fen² ying²

And she moved outside the walls and took up residence near the graveyard.

Searching hard for an honourable explanation for this move, we may come up with an edifying absurdity. Mother Meng, as a Confucianist widow, made her infant son observe the mourning ritual for his father, as commanded by the *Li chi*, Tsa chi, *HY* 21/9 (C., II, p. 163): to live for three years in a straw hut next to his father's tomb.

N.B.: according to Master Wang, Mother Meng moved not thrice, but only twice, namely, from the market to the cemetery, from the cemetery to the school. According to the "Biography" she moved thrice: 1) after the catastrophe (whatever it was) from her original residence to the cemetery, 2) from there to the market, 3) from there to the school.

> 郊 "waste land, open spaces beyond the city" (*MTH.*, 714).

> 墳 塋 literally "tumuli and graves"; as a binome "graveyard" (*MTH.*, 1868.2).

"Biography":

其居近墓

Her residence was close to the tombs.

For a speculative explanation, see the # 3₁-C.

Etymologies: 塋 & 墓 *W.* 78G.

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3₁-J

孟子又學爲埋葬哭泣之戲

meng⁴ tzu³ yu⁴ hsioh^{2.5} wei² mai² tsang⁴ k'u^{1.5} ch'i⁴ chih¹ hu¹

Again, Mencius learned how to bury with and without ceremonies; and to perform funeral wailings with and without tears.

Or flatly: “*he learned to ape (hsi⁴) both the burying and the weeping.*” Anyway, by these skills, he earned a coin or two as a hired wailer boy.

> 戲 hu¹ “to wail”; hsi⁴ “to imitate”.

The “*Biography*” tells another story:

孟子之少也 . 嬉遊爲墓間之事踴躍築埋
Mencius was young (shao⁴). For his amusement he did [all sorts of] business amidst the tombs [such as] hopping and frolicking on the grave mounds.

According to the “*Biography’s*” sequence of events, Mencius was too young for earning any money on the graveyard.

Etymologies: 葬 *W.* 78G; 哭 *W.* 72C.

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3₁-K

孟母曰 . 此亦非可以居子也

meng⁴ mu³ yüeh^{1.5} : tz’u³ yi^{4.5} fei¹ k’o³ yi³ chü¹ tzu³ yeh³

Mother Meng said: For a young scholar, this is not appropriate either.”

Cf. # 3₁-H.

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3₁-L

又遷於學宮之旁

yu⁴ ts’ien¹ yu² hsieh^{2.5} kong¹ chih¹ p’ang²

Again she moved, [this time] next to a school.

“*Biography*”:

復徙舍學宮之傍

Once again she moved her abode, [this time] into the vicinity of a school.

> 學宮 “a palace of learning” = “a school”. This pompous expression probably owes its fortune to the present passage: it is its first occurrence known to the dictionaries, cf. *Pei*, 19:1 and *M.*, 3.7033.48. As 宮 is properly “*un bâtiment qui sert*

d'habitation”, a *hsioh*^{2.5} *kung*¹ may have been a boarding school as required by the *Li chi*: at ten years of age, the boy left the house of his father in order to live in the house of a teacher (*HY* 12/52, *C. I*, p. 673 = the pericope quoted in # 2-P, N.B.1).

> 旁 and 傍 are not exactly synonymous:

– 旁 p’ang² “the side, lateral”; pang⁴ = 傍 ;

– 傍 pang⁴ “next to, in the vicinity of”; p’ang² = 旁; but also = 榜. This last kanji means: (after the examinations,) “the list of the successful candidates” – what a good omen!

Note:

Chinese schools were for the neighbourhood an inconvenience in part comparable to the one described # 3₁-F: they were exceedingly noisy (far beyond anything we may experience in western school yards or around swimming pools). Chinese learning is learning by heart, and the chanting was meant to be done with maximum sound intensity. Moreover, traditional Chinese pedagogy called for a zealous flogging of the boys: another activity of maximum sound intensity (Master Wang will tell us about that, when it comes to the instruction provided by the father and the teacher, # V₁ & ff.).

The schools of pre-modern China were of two types (for the classical model cf. *Li chi*, *Hsioh chi*, *HY*. 18/2; *C.*, II, p. 30, § 4):

- a) The “family school”, 家學 or 家塾 . It educated the boys of one clan, including, occasionally, the boys of befriended families. It was housed in the southernmost building of the compound, next to the entrance gate, along the street. In this location the noise of the school would cause the least discomfort to the residents; while passers-by on the street would hearken and know that, of this clan, there were many boys. The credit of the clan would then rise in proportion. It was not this type of school, to which Mother Meng had moved.

- b) The public school 學宮 headed by a school master, 外傅 wai⁴ fu⁴ “external teacher” (cf. # 3₂-C), and frequented by boys of modest families. Schools of this type – because of the great number of pupils – produced even greater noise than the “family schools”. Deemed unacceptable to any residential neighbourhood, they were usually relegated to the narrow space between the rear of the casinos and the city wall. There was quite obviously some relation between Mother Meng’s new address and her income. Commenting on verse # III₂, Master Wang makes a number of innuendos to this effect. However, given the way society was organised in imperial China, there was not much choice in the matter of professions for women: if she was not a nun, or a servant owned by a family, a woman could only earn a living either as a go-between, or as a midwife, or as a prostitute; and do some silk weaving for a side income. Hence, prostitution was considered normal and, given the circumstances, neither demeaning nor dishonourable... quite the contrary; or else it would have been easy, both for Liu Hsiang, and for Master Wang, to avoid the equivocation.

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3₁-M

孟子朝夕學爲揖讓之禮。進退周旋之節
 meng⁴ tzu³ chao¹ hsi^{4.5} hsioh^{2.5} wei² yi^{1.5} jang⁴ chih¹ li³ tsin⁴
 t’ui⁴ chou¹ hsüan² chih¹ tsieh^{2.5}

Morning and evening Mencius learned the urban ways of saluting and of showing deference; and the skills of approaching and withdrawing, and of friendly commerce.

The first part of this program was outlined in # 2-N and said to be taught by loving mothers. The second part was outlined in # 2-P and said to be taught by stern fathers and teachers. The “friendly commerce” is new. However, Mencius could not have studied (學) this second part unless he had already entered the school; but this will only happen in 3₂-C. The “*Biography*” resolves the problem. Hence it appears that, at the present stage, Mencius learned (studied) by observing the

regular pupils; and the object of his learning is termed 節 “skills”, not 文 “arts”, not yet.

> 周旋 *MTH.*, 1293.4: “to treat friends cordially, to wait on”; literally “the turning movement of the sky and the turning movement of the earth”. *Cd.* p. 844b quotes the *Po hu t'ung*:

天左旋 . 地右周 . 猶君臣陰陽相對向也

The sky turns from left to right and the earth from right to left: this is the image of the respective positions of ruler and subject, and of yin and yang.

The “*Biography*”:

其嬉遊乃設俎豆揖讓進退

His enjoyment was the arranging of sacrificial vessels, saluting, showing deference, approaching and retreating.

By quoting the *Shih chi* (cf. # 3₁-G), the “*Biography*” invites us to understand that little Mencius, before being admitted as a regular student (this will happen in # 3₂-C) was allowed to “audit” informally while taking care of the ceremony hall of the boarding school (or else, where from did that destitute boy get “sacrificial vessels” to be “arranged” ?) In fact, no mention is made of “friendly commerce.”

> 嬉遊, *M.*, 3.6736.2/4 “*tanoshimi asobu*”, as in # 3₁-J ; in # 3₁-G, where little Mencius was actually learning something, the expression was 嬉戲, as did Confucius.

Quotation:

進退周旋

advance or retreat, and go left or right...

... when, by fulfilling their parents’ orders, the sons and their wives *advance or retreat, and go left or right*, they should take a grave demeanour, ... and they should neither belch, nor vomit, nor blow their noses &c.: this *Li chi* pericope was quoted in # 2-G, second internal quotation.

> 進退, cf. # 2-P, quotation.

> 周旋, cf. # X, “On friendship”, second couplet.

3₁-N

孟母曰 . 此可以教吾子矣

meng⁴ mu³ yüeh^{1.5} : tz'u³ k'o³ yi³ chiao¹ wu² tzu³ yi³*Mother Meng said: "This is appropriate for educating my son."*

“Biography”:

孟母曰真可以居吾子矣

Mother Meng said: "Verily, this is appropriate for housing my son." or, perhaps, ... for housing me and the boy.

Indeed, the address was good for mother and son alike (cf. # 3₁-L, note b). Notice that, according to Master Wang, in the two previous instances, # 3₁-H and # 3₁-K, Mother Meng referred to the boy only, without mentioning herself.

*

3₁-O

遂安居焉

sui⁴ an¹ chü¹ yen²*Whereupon they happily took up their residence there.*

> 焉, normally an interrogative particle and read in the first tone, is used here and in *MENCIUS* (cf. below, the quotation) as a demonstrative pronoun of location: it must be read in the second tone (cf. *MTH*. 7330.a).

“Biography”:

遂居之

Quotation:

> 安居 actually has the connotation of “living quietly”, *demeurer en repos*, as in *MENCIUS*, *HY* 22/3B/2 (*C.*, p. 436; *L.*, p. 264) as opposed to “being angry”. This does not quite fit our context. The point is: by altering the wording of the “Biography”, Master Wang creates a beautiful duck-and-drake which actually sums up all the whole story of “Mother

Meng moving thrice”: *MENCIUS, HY 8/1B/14 (L., p. 175; C., p. 349)*:

... 去之岐山之下居焉 . 非擇而取之 . 不得已也
 T'ai Wang *went off to the foot of mount Ch'i and took up residence there (yen²)*. He did so, not by his own choice, nor did he select the place: it was a matter of necessity. This move, made under miserable circumstances, resulted in the establishment of the Chou dynasty: proof that virtue rises us from misery to exaltation, sooner or later. By this, Master Wang implies that orderly living conditions favour a boy's studies; and will lead him eventually on a great mandarinal career (cf. “the drake” quoted in 1₂-H).

*

3₁-P

古語云

交必擇友 . 居必擇鄰

ku³ yü³ yün² : chiao¹ pi^{4.5} che^{2.5} yu³ . chü¹ pi^{4.5} che^{2.5} lin²

A proverb says: “For your commerce, select your friends; for your residence, select your neighbourhood.”

This appears to be a popular saying. Although Confucius said something about choosing one's friends, and Po Chü-i something about choosing one's neighbours, the proverb is listed neither in *M.*, 5.12796.2 & 59, nor in *Pei*, 2176c & 450; nor could I find it in *SMITH*.

*

3₁-Q

孔子曰

里仁爲美

擇不處仁焉得智

k'ung³ tzu³ yüeh^{1.5} : li³ jen² wei² mei³
 che^{2.5} pu^{4.5} ch'u³ jen² . yen¹ te^{2.5} chih⁴

The Master said, ‘In a neighbourhood, humane relations are a nice thing. If, in selecting [his residence, a man] does not take the humane relations into consideration, what wisdom has he got?’

This is indeed an apophthegm of Confucius, *Lun yü*, HY 6/4/1 (L., p. 165; C., p. 101).

> 仁 “humane relations” should be understood as “in accordance with” or “fitting” one's rank or position (cf. 3₂-L, note on 仁).

Quotation:

Yet, Master Wang does not quote from the *Lun yü*, but from *MENCIUS*, HY 13/2A/7 (L., p. 204; C., p. 377): the original *Lun yü* text reads 知; the lesson 智 is from *MENCIUS*. By quoting *MENCIUS* rather than the *Lun yü*, Master Wang makes a duck-and-drake which refers us back to # 3₁-O and the final residence of Mother Meng.

夫仁天之尊爵也人之安宅也莫之禦而不仁
是不智也

After having quoted Confucius, Mencius continues: *Now, benevolence is the most honourable dignity conferred by Heaven, and the quiet home in which man should dwell. Since no one can hinder us from being so, if yet we are not benevolent; – this is being not wise.* (Legge) Through this duck-and-drake Master Wang intimates that material goods (such as a desirable address) are insufficient if divorced from their spiritual counterpart (cf. *MTH*. 4:2: “*Not in bread alone doth man live ...*”).

*

3₁-R

其此之謂乎

ch'i² tz'u³ chih¹ wei⁴ hu¹

Is not this the meaning of that [proverb]?

Quotations:

This rhetorical question has two *loci classici*:

a) *Li chi*, Hsioh chi, HY 18/2 (C., II, twice: p. 29, and p. 31), an important text which was already quoted in # 3₁-B, and which will be quoted in # VII and # VIII. As a duck-and-

drake it refers to the proverb that outlines and concludes 大學之道 “the curriculum of advanced studies” :

蟻子時術之 . 其此之謂乎

Little ant applies its sagacity all the time... &c.

b) *Chung Yung*, 27 (*L.*, p. 423, *C.*, p. 59). Expressing himself in ducks-and-drakes, Master Wang, once again, warns the would-be State official that his career will be full of traps and dangers:

Thus, when occupying a high situation he is not proud, and in a low situation he is not insubordinate. When the kingdom is well-governed, he is sure by his words to rise; and when it is ill-governed, he is sure by his silence to command forbearance to himself. Is not this what we find in the Book of Poetry, – ‘Intelligent is he and prudent, and so preserves his person?’ (Legge)

其此之謂與 (yü²)

“What we find in the *Book of Poetry*” is taken from the Ode 260:4, a praise of the ideal minister. In imitation of “the little ant”:

以保其身夙夜匪解以事一人

... Intelligent is he and wise, Protecting his own person; Never idle, day or night, In the service of the One man. (Legge)