

# Study of Lu Jiuyuan's Discourse on "The Method of Learning"

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## Abstract

**Lu Jiuyuan had different opinions about the method of learning from those of his time, and these opinions made his thoughts more and more unique. Do not read all the time, but first establish the greatness of it; do not be eager to achieve, but cut close and leisurely; do not study outside of the seeking, but leave the scriptures and discern the will.**

## Keywords

**First establish the greatness of the world; Approaching and wandering; Discerning the will apart from the scriptures.**

## 1. Introduction

In the Analects of Confucius, there are many passages in which Confucius talks about "learning". Confucius said to him, "There is Yan Hui who is good at learning; he does not relent in his anger, and does not repeat his faults. Unfortunately, he died a short life. Today, there is none. I have not heard of a good scholar." Mr. Laosiguang said in his "New History of Chinese Philosophy", "Confucius said among his disciples that Yan Hui was good at learning, but by 'good at learning' he meant 'not relenting in anger, not committing any wrongdoing', which obviously has nothing to do with knowledge. It is obvious that this has nothing to do with knowledge, but is all about the advancement of virtue. The 'learning' in Confucius' mind, then, clearly refers to the effort of advancing virtue." From Confucius, the focus of learning lies in the cultivation of virtue, and Xiangshan can be said to have got the spiritual direction of Confucius, and insisted on the issue of "learning" as the first good learning to strive for the advancement of virtue.

Usually, knowledge is the goal of learning, or at least the object of learning, and at that time, the widely influential Zhu Zi school was also strongly advocating the work of materialism, but Lu Jiuyuan said, "Since we do not know how to respect virtue, how can we have the so-called Taoist learning". He took "respecting virtue" as a prerequisite for "learning the Way", so why and how to "respect virtue" is the first lesson of learning.

The first step of "respecting virtue" is the so-called "establishing the great one first".

## 2. Establish the great one first

Lu Jiuyuan said: "Recently, some people have said to me: 'There is no trick except the phrase "first stand on the great one". I heard it and said: "True."' The well-known method of teaching people by Lu Jiuyuan is "to establish the first thing that is big". What is the meaning of "the one who first establishes his greatness"? This phrase comes from Mencius, in which Gong Du Zi asked, "What is it that makes Jun a human being, either as an adult or as a villain?" Mencius said, "From its great body is the adult, from its small body is the little man." He said, "Jun is also a human being, or from his great body, or from his small body, what is it?" Said: "The ears and eyes of the officials do not think, but hidden in the object. The object crosses the object, it is just lead to it.

"I have five out of ten aspirations to learn, but no one has had aspirations for a thousand years now. It is not to be blamed, but what is the bottom of it? It is necessary to have wisdom and

knowledge, and then have the will. People should have a great ambition. The common people are confused between the rich and the famous, and their conscience and good nature are obscured. How to make people today to understand the will, must first have the wisdom to get." This is Lu Jiuyuan lamenting, saying that Confucius said he had the will to learn at the age of fifteen, and now, after a thousand years, no one has the same will as Confucius. But you can't blame him, how could he be ambitious? Because only with wisdom and knowledge can one have the direction and desire to set aspirations. People should have great aspirations, but most of them hang around among the rich and famous, and the conscience and good nature they were born with are obscured by these rich and famous. It is evident that most people still regard learning as the content of study, but Lu Jiuyuan believed that learning needs to have the foundation of human character, and he took the establishment of human character as the first lesson. In the process of guiding his students to study, his "heart learning" was reflected in every way.

Lu Jiuyuan also said, "A scholar must have a clean and pure field to make him work hard to plant. field is not clean, also study can not. If reading, it is false invasion of soldiers, capital stealing food."] If the reader is not given a good foundation of character, the more he reads, the more harm he does, and the more he helps the tiger. In the second order of study, the removal of selfishness from the mind is an important and primary hurdle. He said, "If you have not passed the level of selfishness, it is difficult to enter into virtue. If you cannot enter virtue, then how can you know the rules and laws?" If one cannot enter virtue, if one does not have respect from the heart, even if there are external compulsory forces such as rules and laws to regulate one's behavior, they cannot be understood and used, and disharmony will inevitably occur, and one will not be able to operate in accordance with heavenly principles.

"Today's so-called learning and discernment, and in this can not be deeply distinguished, based on empty words, Fu Zhi opinion, increase warts and benefits superfluous, help win Chong private, heavy its impetuous, long its negative, obscure the most reasonable, rolling out the most important words, self-righteous, no world does not return, this is its crime, floating in the self-loathing people carry on. This person's fault, the first is very small, after it is big; people's rescue, the first is easy, after it is difficult, but also its situation." Here the "this" is the first established its big is the most important, Lu Jiuyuan think that if you can not grasp this principle, just read the words of the book, their own arbitrary understanding, that the words of the sages can also become a limit to increase their misunderstanding of the things that separate people, because there is no standard of right and wrong, the words of the sages can do any interpretation, once you decide that their interpretation is corrects, even if it is to satisfy selfishness and selfishness, it will be used as a reason to be grand, without understanding to the Divine Principle but self-righteous, complacent, in the end or a person of unknown. In the long run, it will be too late to clean up the court again. This view is also valuable to the present society. In the era of multiple values and information explosion, how to stand up for one's own heart, stick to one's own values, not to be swayed by outside opinions, and not to be judged by stereotypes, is what people who study nowadays should reflect on and learn from.

Therefore, Lu Jiuyuan said, although many readers can have poetry and books, but still only the study of the villain, he said: "Although the usual number for the scholar, although reading the sage books, in fact, what has been committed to the cause of the sage, often from the vulgar floating, with the time to look down, detention of love and indulgence, bubbling and can not be revived. Day and month more than the shame of the shame of the rot with the grass and wood." Lu Jiuyuan believes that if you just read books, have knowledge, have a name, but no commitment to the cause of the sage, will inevitably follow the external conditions of poverty, power, wealth and other material aspects of the floating, will lose their own heart and comply with unreasonable desires, in the long run will gradually lost, more and more heartless. In the end, it is just a waste of study. This is the result of not having established one's own heart first.

It can be seen that there are no tricks except the one who is first established in its greatness, and this trick of "first established in its greatness" is the killer of Lu Jiuyuan. It is the door to whether scholars can really get started.

### 3. Close to and superior

According to Lu Jiuyuan, learning should be a process of self-adaptation, gradual progress, and close to self-knowledge under the condition of establishing the greatness first, and continuing to invent the original mind in the process of realizing the invention of the original mind. He once said, "Sages such as Confucius also had a few years to learn the Book of Changes, so that there would be no major mistakes. Therefore, for scholars in general, he said, "To be in a hurry to discern is the great disease of scholars.

Therefore, regarding the attitude of learning, unlike Ercheng and Zhu Xi, who were either quiet or respectful, Lu Jiuyuan's weather was not so tense, and he was more relaxed.

He said, "Scholars should not be too tightly focused. There are treasures in the deep mountains, and those who are not mindful of them gain them." He opposed the method of reading that focuses on research specifically for the sake of harvesting something, because if the purpose of reading is too strong, there will be tendencies, and there are bound to be priorities and priorities in the judgment of things, which are only subjective judgments of people, not necessarily the real priorities, but rather this judgment, which obscures the bright heart of people, making people deviate from the right track, or even the north. Lu Jiuyuan said: "No matter how big or small, no shallow or deep, are not strong probe force. People suffer from no will and the world is there is a will than no will, often are strong to explore the force of the disease." The reason why the more aspirational is less than aspirational is because people with aspirations are inevitably strong probing force, once the strong probing force, it is easy to reverse the essence, the essence of the reversal of nature is not easy to understand. The more peaceful people are, the more they can keep an open and relaxed state and get something out of it.

"Reading and writing is something that can be done at any time and with any effort. It is not enough to worry about those whose talent is not strong enough, and it is not enough to be ashamed of. If you are ashamed of your talent, you are not strong enough to worry about it, but you are happy to boast and lose your heart. "It is not necessary to worry and feel ashamed of the lack of ability, for it will grow slowly and naturally, but it is necessary to worry and feel ashamed of the lack of ability but anxious, for that is to lose one's original heart and not to do things according to one's original duty, which is most undesirable. "Learning does not want to be fast, but to be fast is a big problem for scholars." It is also clearly pointed out that one should not be in a hurry to achieve something, but should aim at real gain. As Confucius said, the ancient scholars were for themselves and the modern scholars are for others, and Lu Jiuyuan also advocates learning for oneself. Not to judge the amount of knowledge and the number of arguments to measure the effect of one's learning.

Then about the method of learning, not to go to the heart too tight, but how should it be? Lu Jiuyuan said "generally for learning, but when the diligent into the virtue of cultivation, so that this heart in the daily use of planting thieves day less, the light of the day, then the sage dictates, to think that the root of the wrong joints can not be selected to solve the, will be a new ice release, and smoothly, there is no thinking and get it carry on.

It is also to say that there is no understanding of the temporary shelving, we can also experience in practice this state of Lu Jiuyuan said, because after shelving and doubtful questions, without being rushed to put a period, will get a more comprehensive answer. After all, human cognitive ability and understanding are limited, and it is impossible to solve infinite problems with limited ability, so to solve these problems we have to accumulate gradually, not to rush, and to

face them with the attitude of seeking reason rather than the attitude of seeking answers. "scholars reading, first in the easy to understand where the sinking connotation familiar, the belly cut themselves to think, then he is difficult to understand the lax ice release carry on. If you look at the difficult places first, you will not be able to reach" This is also to say to cut close to you, do not have to dwell on the difficult places, but ultimately can not understand the difficult places, that is, those easy to understand, but also ignored.

"The method of reading, must be plain to see, carefully play, not hastily. The so-called excellent and soft, aversion and demon of, naturally have lax ice release, and pleasantly smooth bottom reason." Probably the loss of hastily, is also for learning in the big taboo. Here is the meaning of not overly entangled in the meaning of not easy to know, but also not too hasty, not to play with the thought. As Lu Jiuyuan said, "Good scholars are like Guanjin, not to put people through indiscriminately." The study of leisure is not relaxation and slackness. He said, "The words of the sages and philosophers in the square book, what is not ready. The house of commentary, sweat and cattle, such as the medicine cage formula book, search for savings, almost no missing category. The good doctor used, no need to be strange, but only enough to cure the disease. If you are tired of its regular, ignore its cheap, it is not to seek the intention."

With the words quoted by Lu Jiuyuan to summarize his view of reading for learning, that is, "reading cut off in the desolate busy, culminating work of taste long. Do not be afraid to let go of the right before you know, but you must think about it urgently. The master is always healthy, but the spirit is not damaged. I would like to tell the two or three sons who travel with me not to let their words spoil the day.

#### **4. "To distinguish the will from the scriptures"**

Lu Jiuyuan said, "If you are interested in righteousness, you will learn to be righteous, and if you learn to be righteous, you will be righteous. Will on the benefit, then the practice will be in the benefit, the practice in the benefit, the metaphor in the righteousness of carry on. Therefore, the scholar's will must not be discerned."

In Confucianism, the highest ideal or ultimate goal of being a human being is to reward society, to give back to others and to society, that is, to treat society with a public and righteous heart. If one is well read in poetry and books, but "bubbling over between the rich and the poor, profit and loss, and lust for sex", one is only using study and learning as a tool to hunt for fame and wealth, and doing such "learning" does not realize the true value of study. Being trapped in wealth and power is precisely more distant from inventing one's own heart. Not only can not cultivate the body and mind, the invention of the heart morality, but will make people more join the lost way and do not know how to return. "No will is unable to learn, not to learn is not to know, so that the one who leads to the way cares about learning, so for the scholar cares about the will." "Establishing the will" is an important step in learning.

However, in order for this "will" to truly transcend the actual content of the empirical world, so that the "mind" that is corrected can become a "mind" that is universal and absolute in nature and connected to the Divine Principle, it needs to be To be truly beyond the actual content of the empirical world, so that the "mind" that is corrected can become a "mind" that is universal and absolute and connected to the Divine Principle, it is necessary to put it into practice in the concrete content, that is, the discernment of righteousness and profit. That is why he said, "There are advantages and disadvantages in human skills, and there are small and large virtues. But as for the great end of tendency, there can be no two. With this is yes, different from this is not, between the backward and forward, the good and evil, the gentleman and the villain of the difference, so decided." The great end of the tendency here is about the choice and separation of public and private righteousness and profit, and the choice of public or private, and the division of good and evil, the gentleman and the villain.

Lu Jiuyuan was invited by Zhu Zi to give a lecture at the White Deer Cave Academy, and his lecture was about the "discernment of righteousness and profit", which was derived from the phrase "A gentleman is righteous and a villain is profitable" in the Analects of Confucius. He made a generous speech, which hit the nail on the head, saying that the only way to really see the work of establishing a will is to fall on the discernment of righteousness and profit, and that the establishment or otherwise of a will is not only in words or forms, but must be honed in deeds. Many scholars listening to the lecture are sweating or tears, in the words of Zhu Xi, "to its so invented perfunctory, but also earnest to understand, and all have to cut in the scholars hidden micro-deep chronic disease, cover the listeners are not moved by the heart" Lu Jiuyuan's ability to lecture is evident, both infectious and relevant. Zhu Zi had Lu Jiuyuan's speeches engraved in the academy as a reminder to scholars.

The reason why the "defense of will" is first and foremost "the discrimination between righteousness and profit" is that, in a general sense, the establishment of will is the work of inventing one's own heart, and only behavior that is motivated by the highest goodness of one's own heart is worthy of affirmation, while in reality, many problems are related to public and private issues, and the difference between public and private is the difference between righteousness and profit. In reality, many problems are related to public and private issues, and the distinction between public and private is the distinction between righteousness and profit, therefore, only by truly realizing the distinction between righteousness and profit can we practice the supreme goodness in our hearts. Lu Jiuyuan said, "This principle fills the universe and cannot be violated by heaven, earth, ghosts and gods, let alone by human beings. Knowing this truth, one should have no selfishness."

According to the different qualifications, the degree of effort needed is also different. In view of this situation, just like the attitude of "leisurely reading", "Most scholars should discuss the will, not profoundly about the arrived. The will of the right or wrong, such as two people living in Jing Yangzhou, one heard the South China Sea of the rich elephant rhinoceros, his will to go, one heard the beauty of the capital of the wind and religion, his will to go, then the next day's questioning the way to start, the strength of the poor day, the direction has been divided at this point. If its arrival, then the years have long and near, work has diligent and slow, the gas endowment has thick and thin faint and bright, strong and soft sharp and blunt of the different, especially can not be discussed quickly." Therefore, one should study according to one's own situation and not pursue the ultimate realm, as long as one determines whether the direction is correct, and on the basis of the correct direction, regardless of the urgency, it is worthy of affirmation. From the similar attitude toward different matters, it seems to be visible the weather of Lu Jiuyuan's euphoria, and one can appreciate the characteristics of his thought that affirms the difference yet firmly believes in the original heart.

## 5. Conclusion

Lu Jiuyuan focused on the practice of practical learning, and he believed that practical learning must be put into practice, as later expounded by Yangming, and that true action is true knowledge. In Lu Jiuyuan's view, "learning" is something that can be done anytime and anywhere, and there is a heavenly principle in everything. As long as one can invent one's own heart, one can realize the heavenly principle in one's practice, and even if one is not studying in a study hall, one can still do one's own learning and cultivate one's body to understand the principle. This is a valuable proposition nowadays. Education and form are not absolute criteria for measuring a person's learning, and an old man who does not know how to read can also be a learned person, because as long as he is clear-headed, what he understands is the truth that fits with the Divine Principle, and he is a person who "knows". A person who is not good at speech, who is not known, and who is no more than an ordinary person, is a person of good

learning as long as his behavior is in line with the Divine Principle. Therefore, when pursuing learning, we should ask ourselves whether we are practicing it and whether we take learning as a necessary part of our life.

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