

CONFUCIUS(1) AND ROAST(2)

The famous Chinese writer Lin Yutang(3) told the following story about Confucius:

One day, when [the wife of Confucius]* had run out of(4) meat at home and had to get it in a hurry(5) and found that her husband refused to eat roasts from a delicatessen,(6) she had already partially made up her mind(7) to leave this obstreperous(8) scholar, whose "greatness" was somewhat difficult to perceive.(9) When she again found her husband refused to eat because she had forgotten to place ginger on the table, it was about time.(10) But when one day she found that this good man of hers refused to eat meat because it was not beautifully and "squarely sliced,"(11) it was the last straw.(12) She had no choice but to walk out(14) and leave him to find another woman who could slice the meat squarely every time. What a gourmet!(15)

Lin Yutang says that Confucius, his son, and his grandson all divorced(16) their wives. He also says that even though Confucius talked a lot about family harmony, Confucius himself lived most of his life as a "bachelor philosopher."(17)

DIALOGUE

Tina: We're going to roast a chicken and talk about the Doctrine of the Mean. (18)

Jim: Why do you want to be mean?(19) I'd rather be kind than mean.

Tina: No, that's not what I mean. (20)

Jim: You don't mean(20) to be mean?(19)

Tina: I mean(20) "the Doctrine of the Mean," also called "The Middle Way."

Jim: Oh. May I come? I love to roast chicken.

VOCABULARY

1. Confucius 孔子。2. roast (n.) 烤肉。3. Lin Yutang 林語堂。4. run out of 用完。5. in a hurry (adv.) 急忙地。6. delicatessen 熟食店。原指歐美國家賣現成食物（火腿肉、烤牛肉等，供做三明治）的小店。近年來已融入超市的販售模式（熟食區），成為國際性的都會飲食消費型態，在台灣亦日漸普遍。7. made up her mind 下定決心。8. obstreperous 難駕馭的，難溝通的。9. somewhat difficult to perceive 令人費解。10. about time 差不多是時候了。11. squarely sliced（被）切成正方形。12. the last straw 最後的原因。源自諺語 "It is the last straw that breaks the camel's back."（駱駝負載過重時，加一根稻草也會壓斷背脊）。13. had no choice but 不得不。14. to walk out 離家出走。15. What a gourmet! 好一個美食家！（此處具有嘲諷的意味）。16. divorce 和…離婚。古代叫做休妻。17. bachelor philosopher 單身漢哲學家。18. Doctrine of the Mean 《中庸之道》。19. mean (adj.) 卑鄙的。20. mean (v.) 意指。表達…的意思。

*[] 這個符號表示裡面的文字不是原作者林語堂的原文，而是本文作者為了使刪節後的文字通順加進去的。

林語堂是國際聞名的作者，用英文寫了許多關於中國文化的著作。上面引文中他調侃孔子「肉不正不食」的說法，虛構一則家庭事件，說是孔夫人受不了他的挑剔，離家出走。林語堂也說，孔子祖孫三代都離婚（古代稱休妻，因女權低落）。他雖然教別人要家庭和睦，自己卻齊家無術。讀完這篇，可以朝向「另類」方向思考，解構一下孔子維繫兩千多年的威權，莞爾一笑。

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