

The Three-Character Classic

In last issue, we have come across some moral about human nature and the importance of teaching. In this issue, let's look into the meaning of learning.

子不學 非所宜

If a child does not learn, this is not as it should be.

幼不學 老何為

If he does not learn when he is young, what will he be when he is old?

玉不琢 不成器

Jade that has not been polished, cannot become a thing of use.

人不學 不知義

If a man does not learn, he cannot know the meaning of righteousness.

為人子 方少時

He who is the son of a man, when he is young,

親師友 習禮儀

He should attach himself to his teachers and friends; and practice etiquette

Remark:

The Three-Character Classic was probably written in 13th century. It is commonly attributed as the work of Wang Yinglin of the Song Dynasty. The work comprises of traditional Chinese values and philosophy, especially the basis of Confucian morality.

The work was written in triplet of characters for easy memorization. It is also well-known as the early learning materials on Confucianism for young children.

Reference:

Chinese Text Project: <http://ctext.org/three-character-classic/zh?en=on>