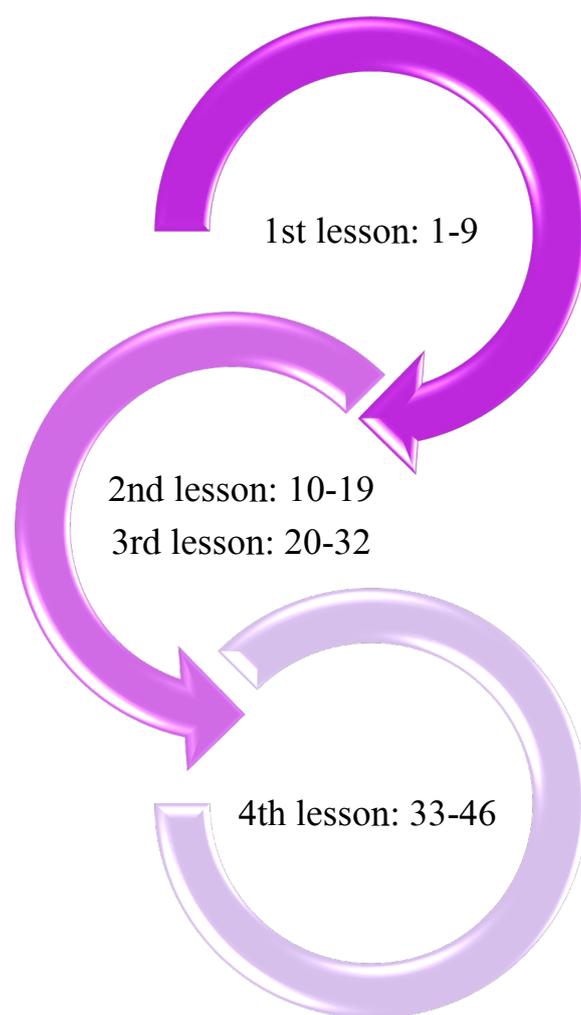


英文解釈



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[1]

There is no point in philosophy unless it helps dispel mental sufferings. Originally the philosopher's role was like that of today's psychiatrist—to provide answers to how we are to live. In fact, modern psychiatry, whether it knows it or not, is carrying out some of the great philosophers' most fundamental beliefs.

Consider Epicurus. Here was a man prepared to confront the question, what does it take to make a man happy? His answer includes: friendship; freedom; a willingness to analyze and reduce anxieties about such things as death, illness, and money. The capacity of money to deliver happiness, he insisted, is present in small salaries but will not rise with the largest. A recently published book by an eminent sociologist describes a number of studies which have indeed shown that once a person's income is above the poverty level, an increasingly larger one contributes next to nothing to happiness. Quite the reverse happens: as wealth accumulates, family solidarity and community bonding disintegrate.

Seneca can be referred to for advice on coping with hardships, and actually he has much to say of relevance to such contemporary stupidities as violence observed in some soccer fans. He sees anger as a kind of madness, given that what makes us angry tends to be the frustration of dangerously optimistic ideas about the world and other people. In this modern world of affluence, effective medicine, and a political system devoted to shepherding us safely from the cradle to the grave, we do not anticipate evils before they arrive. The wise man always considers what can happen, and because we are injured most by what we do not expect we must expect everything to happen. Socrates also offered this advice: "If you wish to put off all worry, assume that what you fear may happen is certainly going to happen."

Men are seduced by the trappings of wealth, power, status, and possessions, but the secret of a fulfilled and satisfied life is the wisdom to know what will truly make us happy. Montaigne believed in the superiority of wisdom knowing what helps us live happily and morally—over mere learning. Education that makes us learned but fails to make us wise is, in his scheme of life, quite simply

absurd. Would that he were living at this hour.

[2]

There are various ways of accounting for dreams. Some claim that they are mysterious experiences in which the soul travels out of the body. Others assert that they are the reflections of hidden desires or socially unacceptable urges. Still others are inclined to think that they do not conceal any deep significance.

Some dreams are little more than traces of recent experiences. If, for instance, we spend the day driving across the country, it would not be unusual to dream about driving down a highway. While such dreams are reasonably straightforward, many others appear disconnected and nonsensical. The fact that most dreams have a surrealistic quality—a quality that causes them to be highly resistant to interpretation—has influenced many people to dismiss dreams as altogether meaningless.

According to one scientific theory, here roughly sketched, dreams are the result of the forebrain's attempts to understand the random electrical signals that are generated by the hindbrain during sleep. In normal waking consciousness, the forebrain sorts through various kinds of internal and external sensory data to construct a meaningful view of the world. Faced with a flood of disconnected, random inputs generated by more primitive areas of the brain during sleep, the higher mental centers attempt to impose order on the incoming signals, creating whatever narrative structure dreams have. Many dreams that are just clusters of incoherent images represent incoming groups of signals that the forebrain was simply not able to synthesize.

Not all dreams are, however, utterly senseless. Take, for example, those we have all seen at one time or another in which we are falling, flying, or appearing naked in public. Dreams of this kind most likely have their bases in experiences and anxieties shared by all human beings.

Falling is a good example of a shared dream motif. Psychologists speculate that falling dreams are rooted in our early experiences as toddlers taking our first steps. If