

Read the Chinese story and answer the following questions.

Gaining New Insights from Reviewing Old Knowledge

1. Confucius (also known as Kongzi) was one of the greatest educators in the Spring and Autumn Period*. He was keen on music and got along well with a famous music player called Shi Xiang. One day, Confucius visited Shi Xiang. They discussed how they could improve the skills of playing the guqin, a plucked seven-string Chinese musical instrument. Shi Xiang could not hide his excitement and started to play the guqin. Listening to the music attentively, Confucius decided to learn this extraordinary piece of music from Shi Xiang.

2. Shi Xiang had never seen anyone like Confucius, who learnt with diligence and humility. Although Confucius mastered the guqin well, he was never satisfied. He practised the piece wholeheartedly. After a few weeks, Confucius was still practising the same piece. Shi Xiang said, "You are excellent in playing this piece. You can learn a new one now." However, Confucius did not agree. He replied, "I can master the techniques now, but I still need more time to gain new insights. I would like to explore the richness of the music and the messages from the composer. After that, I will learn a new piece. Please allow me to practise for a few more days."

3. One day, Confucius stood up amid the sound of the guqin and looked up at the sky. He said thoughtfully, "I have realised the character of the composer. I could feel his strength, his bright eyes and the courage to rule his country. He must be a far-sighted, gentle and honest king. Who else could compose such a great piece except for King Wen of Zhou?" Shi Xiang was very surprised and said, "Indeed! When my teacher taught me this piece, he said that the piece was called 'Wen Wang Cao', composed by King Wen of Zhou. I am so impressed that you have learnt the piece so deeply. You are truly remarkable!"

4. Confucius was always passionate about the pursuit of music. As a teacher, he was a good influence on his students. He encouraged them to study deeply to gain new insights.



*The Spring and Autumn Period refers to a period of time (770 BC to 476 BC) in ancient Chinese history characterised by instability.