



## Undergraduate assignment feedback form

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| <i>Module Code:</i> <u>SICH5002</u>                                                  | <i>Student number:</i> <u>1804385</u> |
| <i>Module title:</i> Sinological English                                             |                                       |
| <i>For completion by marker:</i>                                                     |                                       |
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# **A Translation of Verse 9 Chapter 6 (Yongye 雍也 6:9)**

## **of the *Analects of Confucius* 論語 and Its Selected Annotations**

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Date: 18 February 2022

Word count: 1788

Respected Provost, Miss Deng and my classmates, good morning. My name is Siyao Zeng. My presentation today is ‘A Translation of Verse 9 Chapter 6 of the *Analects of Confucius* 論語 and Its Selected Annotations’.

### **1. Original text and translation of verse 6:9 of the *Analects of Confucius***

季氏使閔子騫為費宰。閔子騫曰：「善為我辭焉。如有復我者，則吾必在汶上矣。」

The Jis once appointed Min Ziqian as the chief of the Fei fief. Min Ziqian replied, ‘Please decline the appointment for me politely. If anyone come for me again, I will be on the Wen River.’

### **2. Original text and translation of the annotation of verse 6:9 in *Lunyu jiangyao* 論語講要**

費，古注讀密，然山東當地人皆讀費之本音。孔安國注：「費，季氏邑。季氏不臣，而其邑宰數叛，聞閔子騫賢，故欲用之。閔子不欲為季氏宰，語使者曰，善為我作辭說，令不復召我也。復我者，重來召我也。去之汶水上，欲北入齊也。」

According to ancient annotations, the word 'Fei' is pronounced 'Mi', however in Shandong province, the locals use its original pronunciation 'Fei'. Kong Anguo annotated, 'Fei is a fief of the Jis. The Jis were disloyal while their chief of fief had betrayed them for several times. The Jis heard Min Ziqian is a virtuous person, thus they wanted to appoint him. However, Min Ziqian was unwilling to accept this appointment. He told the messenger that "Please decline for me politely and do not come for me again." "Come for me" means "come back and appoint me again". Leaving for the Wen River was hinting that he might enter the state of *Qi*.'

孔子為魯司寇時，閔子騫曾為費宰，孔子辭去，閔子騫亦辭去。後以三家不聽魯君之命，而費邑之宰亦叛季氏，是以季氏使閔子騫為費宰。然閔子不願遂季氏之私，故辭之，且堅告使者，如再來召，則吾必不在家，而在汶河之上矣。汶河東北是齊國，在汶上，意謂避至齊國也。儒者去就，於此可見其概焉。

During the time that Confucius was the minister of criminal justice of the state of *Lu*, Min Ziqian was the chief of Fei fief. When Confucius resigned as minister, Min Ziqian resigned, too. Later, as the three families didn't take orders from the king of Lu while the chief of Fei fief betrayed the Jis likewise, the Jis wanted to appoint Min Ziqian as the chief of the Fei fief. However, Min Ziqian was unwilling to help the Jis to achieve their personal aim, therefore,

he requested the messenger stoutly that if they try to appoint him again, he will not be at home but on the Wen River. The state of *Qi* lays to the north-east of the Wen River. ‘On the Wen River’ means he will escape to the State of *Qi*. From this piece of text, we can have a general idea of a Confucian’s moral principle of when to leave or stay.

### 3. Original text and translation of the annotation of verse 6:9 in *Sishu*

#### *zhangjuzhuzhu* 四書章句集注

閔子騫，孔子弟子，名損，費，季氏邑。汶，水名，在濟南魯北竟上。閔子不欲臣季氏，令使者善為己辭。言若再來召我，則當去之齊。程子曰：「仲尼之門，能不仕大夫之家者，閔子、曾子數人而已。」

Min Ziqian is one of the students of Confucius. His last name is Sun. Fei is a fief of the Jis. Wen is the name of a river near Jinan in North Lu. Min Ziqian was unwilling to work for the Jis, therefore, he requested the messenger to decline the appointment for him politely and said if they come for him again, he will leave for the state of *Qi*. Cheng Zi said, ‘Among Confucius’ students, only a few students, such as Min Ziqian and Zeng Zi, can abstain from serving the families of the ministers of the court.’

謝氏曰：「學者能少知內外之分，皆可以樂道而忘人之勢。況閔子得聖人為之依歸，彼其視季氏不義之富貴，不啻犬彘。又從而臣之，豈其心哉？在聖人則有不然者，蓋居亂邦、見惡人，在聖人則可；自聖人以下，剛則必取禍，柔則必取辱。閔子豈不能早見

而豫待之乎？如由也不得其死，求也為季氏附益，夫豈本心哉？蓋即無先見之知，又無克亂之才故也。然則閔子其賢乎？」

The annotation of Xie stated, ‘Even a learner can take delight in the *Dao* while forget the powers by letting go the thoughts of differentiation between individuals. Min Ziqian, as a student who had opportunity to follow a sage as his teacher, regarded the unrighteous wealth of the Jis as good as beasts, how could serving them be his aspiration? However, this does not happen to sages. Only sages are capable of staying in a turbulent country or meeting an evildoer with safety. For those who are not sage, the tough ones were doomed to encounter disasters while the soft ones were doomed to be humiliated. How can’t Min Ziqian observe all these and prepare himself? Such as *You* who did not end well, and *Qiu* who raised revenue for the Jies, were they doing of their own free will? It was because they neither had the wisdom of foresight nor the competence in conquering turbulence. Isn’t Min Ziqian virtuous?

#### **4. Commentary**

As Alexander Tytler once quoted, ‘There is an extreme difficulty of translating from the works of the ancients. This difficulty is that there are certain words which but imperfectly correspond to any of the words of other languages.’ In the annotations of this piece of text, there are several expressions that can hardly find an exact equivalent in English.

For example, in this context, the term *neiwai* that Xie mentioned is related to a Buddhist concept of *renwo jian* 人我見, which means self-attachment and the attachment to others. In regard to the educational background and life experiences of Xie, he was one of the most famous students of the Cheng brothers. He was known by his teaching style of supporting Confucianism by Zen Buddhism, his explanation of *the Analects* had boosted the development of Cheng-Zhu school in Chinese history.

According to *Mr. Shangcai's Phrases* 上蔡先生語錄, Xie stated, 'If one attaches on one's self, differentiates between oneself and others, how can one reach the stage of being an integral part of nature? One must restrain oneself and get rid of their selfish thoughts once they occur. When one can get rid of one's selfishness, one's good nature occurs.'<sup>1</sup> He emphasized that 'Selfish thoughts might not appear when people are alone, they tend to show up when one is dealing with another person.' What Xie means is that, when one can still see the differentiation between individuals, when one cannot treat others like one's own self, one will not reach the stage of being an integral part of nature, which called *tianren heyi* in Chinese. For example, the habit of attaching on something good and leaving those worse to others, it might happen on profits, chances, or resources. From Xie's point, it is shown that *neiwai* is something arose between one person and others, therefore, I understand *neiwai zhifen* as the differentiation between individuals.

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<sup>1</sup>Xie Liangzuo narrated 謝良佐語, Zhu Xi edited 朱熹編, *Mr. Shangcai's Phrases* 上蔡先生語錄, (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1985), p.26.

In fact, differentiation is always there, knowing the differentiation between all beings is a common sense. However, Confucians also know the truth of the universe that all beings are one entity, human beings are good in nature. Therefore, it offers possibility for them not to care about the differentiation between people or the powers but concentrate on the *Dao* and their self-cultivation, so that they could take delight in the *Dao* and forget the powers. As the attachment of differentiation can be an obstruction on the way to enlightenment, Confucians, especially Neo-Confucianism, they allowed themselves not to care it any more and turn to seek happiness from the *Dao*. This is also the reason why I translate 少知 as ‘let go’.

## **5. Conclusion**

These texts and annotations show us the idea and attitude of ancient Chinese saints and sages on how they thought of official position. Min Ziqian’s staying and leaving represent the principle and conduct standard of Confucians, which is valuable and meaningful to modern days’ value and world view. The annotation of Xie had further revealed a mindset and pursuits of a Confucian, that is the true happiness of the *Dao*.

## Bibliography

### Books (Chinese)

Xie Liangzuo narrated 謝良佐語, Zhu Xi edited 朱熹 編, *Mr. Shangcai's Phrases* 上蔡先生語錄, (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1985)