



Undergraduate assignment feedback form
(to be completed by marker)

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<i>Module Code:</i> SICH6016 <i>Module title:</i> Sinological English III: Translation of Confucian and Buddhist Literature	<i>Student number:</i> 2006724
<i>For completion by marker:</i> <i>Comments:</i>	
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A Humble Leader is Not Weak

from the perspective of Confucianism

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Introduction

In West

In Confucian

Humility is related to the meek and lowly, the humiliated, the poor.¹ This call for humility will involve blind

attitude and no authority.

Humility $\neq$ Weakness

highlighted and for emperors, and key factors to try well.





Definition of Leader Humility

- Control their desires and correct their conduct.
- Recognise their limitations and are willing to accept subordinates' advice.
- Treat subordinates with the rules of propriety and build on a symbiotic relationship with them.



01

Control Desires & Correct Conduct



Control Desires and Correct Conduct

‘The relation between superiors and inferiors, is like that between the wind and the grass. the grass must bend, when the wind blows across it.’
(Trans. Legge)

君子之德风，小人之德草。草上之风，必偃。

Control Desires and Correct Conduct

In the past, King Ling of Chu admired men with slender waists. As a result, his ministers all restricted themselves to one meal a day; they would hold their breath before tying their belts and were so weak they had to lean against a wall to stand up. Within a year, the ministers' faces turned dark and thin.'

《墨子·兼愛中》：「昔者楚靈王好士細要，故靈王之臣皆以一飯為節，肱息然後帶，扶牆然後起。比期年，朝有鰲黑之色。」

Emperor Yang VS Emperor Taizong



Emperor Yang
of Sui Dynasty

Conduct

- Indulging in his desires
- Excessive luxury
- Launching wars

Result

- People were suffering
- People rose and overthrew his nation



Emperor Taizong
of Tang dynasty

Conduct

- Control his desires
- Allow people to rest and recover

Result

- People lived happily
- The nation was flourishing



02

Recognising personal limitations and being willing to accept others' advice to improve oneself is an important part of Confucian leader humility.



Why Humility is important?

- I. Emperors or leaders have absolute authority, which may cause losing touch with reality.**

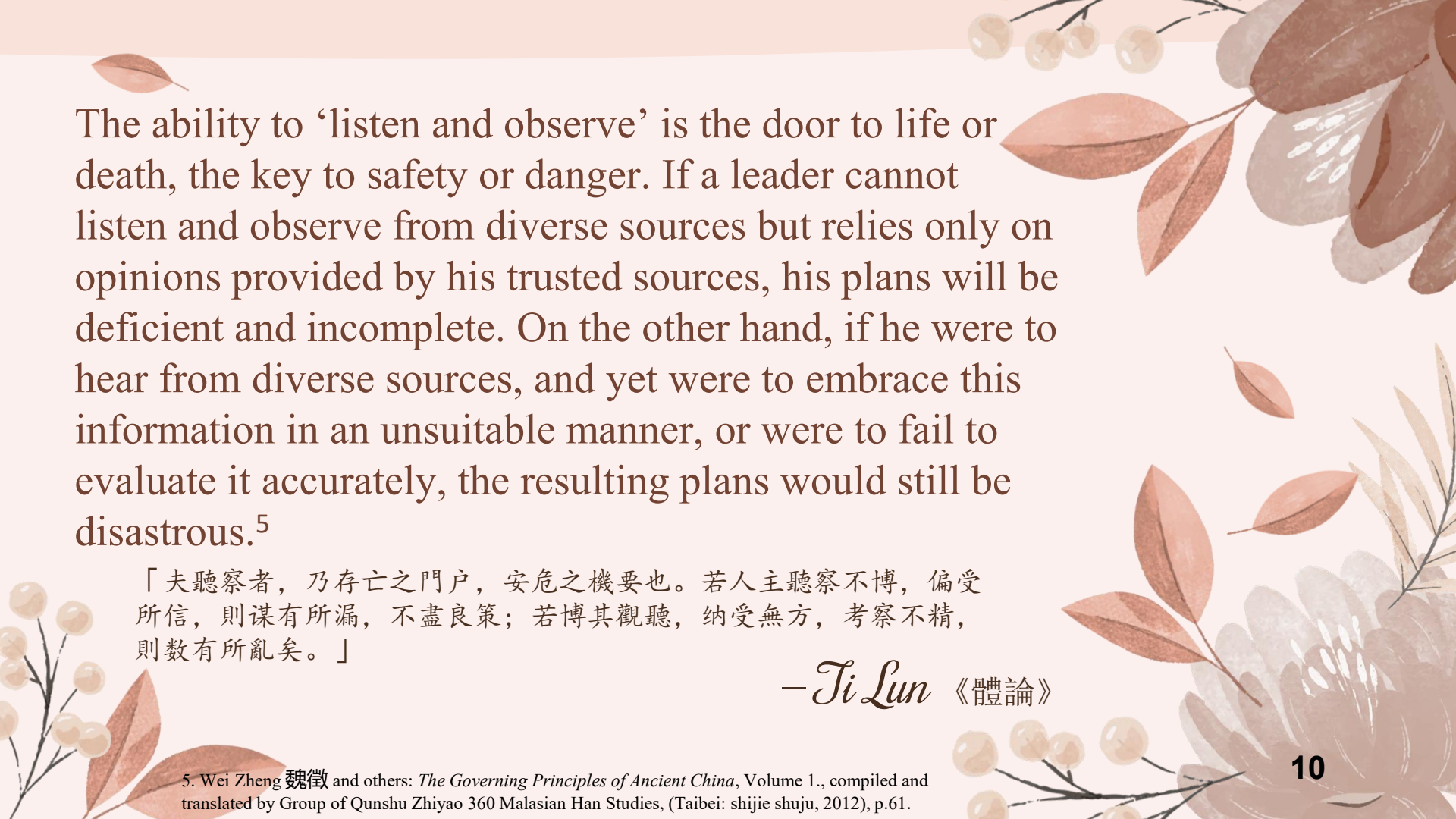
The Analects said, 'If I transgress, let not the ten thousand states suffer because of me; but if the ten thousand states transgress, the guilt is mine alone.' ⁴ (trans. D.C. Lau)

- II. A leader's view is limited.**

Example: Emperor Taizong of the Tang dynasty

Result: created a golden age in ancient Chinese history.





The ability to ‘listen and observe’ is the door to life or death, the key to safety or danger. If a leader cannot listen and observe from diverse sources but relies only on opinions provided by his trusted sources, his plans will be deficient and incomplete. On the other hand, if he were to hear from diverse sources, and yet were to embrace this information in an unsuitable manner, or were to fail to evaluate it accurately, the resulting plans would still be disastrous.⁵

「夫聽察者，乃存亡之門戶，安危之機要也。若人主聽察不博，偏受所信，則謀有所漏，不盡良策；若博其觀聽，納受無方，考察不精，則數有所亂矣。」

— *Ji Lun* 《體論》

5. Wei Zheng 魏徵 and others: *The Governing Principles of Ancient China*, Volume 1., compiled and translated by Group of Qunshu Zhiyao 360 Malasian Han Studies, (Taipei: shijie shuju, 2012), p.61.



“Confucius criticized feigned humility
and opposed uncritical or rote
humility, even when sincere.”

—Sara Rushing





Tilting vessel
(qiqu欹器)

The top corners of the slide are decorated with stylized floral and leaf motifs. On the left, there is a large, light-colored flower with many petals and several brown leaves. On the right, there is a similar flower and more brown leaves. In the center, there is a light orange circle with the number '03' inside it, flanked by two small, light-colored leafy branches.

03

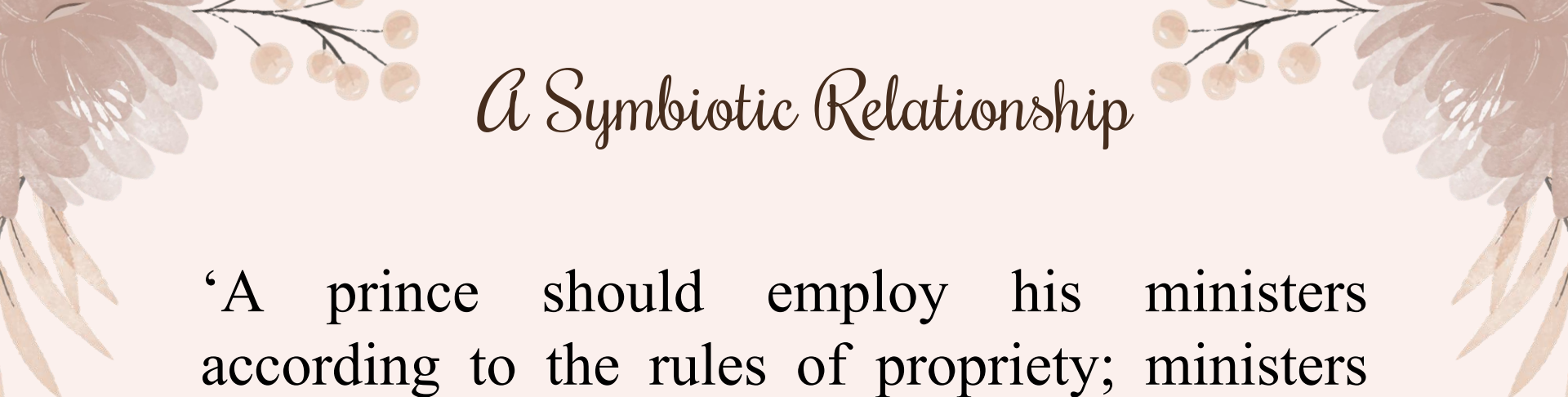
A Symbiotic Relationship

A Symbiotic Relationship

Mencius said to King Xuan of Qi, 'If a ruler treats his subjects as his hands and feet, they will treat him as their belly and heart. If he treats them as his horses and hounds, they will treat him as a mere fellow-countryman. If he treats them as mud and weeds, they will treat him as an enemy.'

(Trans. D. C. Lau, modified)

《孟子》曰：「君視臣如手足，臣視君如腹心。君視臣如犬馬，臣視君如國人。君視臣如土芥，臣視君如寇讎。」



A Symbiotic Relationship

‘A prince should employ his ministers according to the rules of propriety; ministers should serve their prince with faithfulness.’

(Trans. James Legge)

孔子對曰：「君使臣以禮，臣事君以忠。」

A research on CEOs

Face-to-face meetings
with employees



Refusing layoffs and
Keeping equal

The company
overcame the financial
crisis

Conclusion

	Confucian Humble Leaders	Arrogant Leaders
Performance	• Restrain personal desires	• Indulge personal desires
	• Seek counsel to improve	• Self-righteous
	• Build harmonious relationships with subordinates	• Mistreat subordinates
Example	Emperor Taizong of Tang, modern CEOs	King Ling of Chu, Emperor Yang of Sui
Results	Led the nation to prosperity and enhanced company's resilience and cohesion	Drove the nation to ruin
Conclusion	Humility makes leaders stronger	Arrogance makes leaders fragile and weak



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Thank you for listening

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