

A Translation of Verse 9 Chapter 6 (Yongye 雍也 6:9)

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

Student name: Xinyu Wang

SID: 1706391

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

1.1 Original text

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。」

1.2 Translation

Ji sent an envoy to appointed Min Ziqian to become the governor of Fei county. Min Ziqian said to the envoy, 'Please help me find a way to get rid of it. If you come to me again, I must have been on the Wen river.'

2. Original text and translation of the annotation of verse 6:9 in *Lunyu*

***jiangyao* 論語講要**

2.1 Original annotation – Part A

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。」

2.2 Translation of Part A

The character Fei 費, according to the ancient annotation, it should be pronounced ‘Mi’, but the local people in Shandong all pronounce its original pronunciation of ‘Fei’. Kong Anguo annotated that ‘Fei’ is the county of Ji, Ji’s behavior was not in line with the way of being a vassal, so the governor of Fei county betrayed him many times. Then Ji heard that Min Ziqian was a person who was very wise and capable, therefore, he wanted to appoint Min Ziqian as the governor of Fei county. Min Ziqian did not want to be an official under Ji, so he told the envoy, ‘Please help me find a way to get rid of it and let him not to summon me again. The Chinese words ‘復我者’ means come to summon me once again. On the wen river refers to Min Ziqian wanted to go north into the State of Qi.

2.3 Original annotation – Part B

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。

2.4 Translation of Part B

When Confucius was the minister of justice in the State of Lu, Min Ziqian was the governor of Fei County. After Confucius resigned, Min ziqian also resigned. Later, because the three families did not listen to the king of Lu State and the governor of Fei county also betrayed Ji, so Ji wanted Min Ziqian to become the governor of Fei county. However, Min Ziqian did not want to comply with Ji’s selfish desire, so he refused. He firmly told the envoy that if Ji summon him again, he must not be at home, but on the Wen River. To the northeast

of Wen River is the State of Qi. On the Wen River, it means to escape to the state of Qi. The departure and proximity of the Confucians can be seen from this.

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

zhangjuzhu 四書章句集注

3.1 Original annotation – Part A

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。」

3.2 Translation of Part A

Min Ziqian, he was a disciple of Confucius, and his first name is Sun 損. Fei 費 is a county of Ji. Wen 汶 is a name of river, on the north of Jinan in Lu. Min Ziqian didn't want to be Ji's minister, so he asked the emissary to resign for himself. He said that if Ji summoned me again, then I would go to the State of Qi. Cheng Zi said that among Confucius' students, only a few of them such as Min Ziqian and Zeng Zi were able to refuse to serve as an official in minister's families.

3.3 Original annotation – Part B

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？」

3.4 Translation of Part B

Xie Shi said that if scholars can pay less attention to the differentiation between Nei 內 and Wai 外, then they can enjoy the Tao and ignore the power of people. Furthermore, Min Ziqian was always guided by sages, he treats Ji's ill gotten gains as if they were dreadful like pigs and dogs. Then he obeyed Ji and became his minister, that was not Min Ziqian's true intention. If it is a saint, that is not the case, living in a turbulent country, looking at the sinful people, that would be fine for saint. From the saint down, to be too strong is to be in trouble, to be too weak is to be insulted. How could Min Zi not have anticipated all this in advance and prepared for it? For example, Zhongyou didn't get a good ending and Ran Qiu collected money for the Ji's family. Is this their real wish? This is because they have neither the wisdom to anticipate it all nor the talent to deal with the troubles. So isn't Min Zi a wise man?

4. Commentary

The above is my translation. Next I am going to give some my personal viewpoint about this. This article I translated comes from the chapter 6 of the Analects. The protagonist of this verse is Min Ziqian who lived in the period of Spring and Autumn. He is 15 younger than Confucius and he is one of 72 of the most outstanding disciples of Confucius. With the achievement of virtue, he is juxtaposed with other three disciples, Yanzi, Boniu and Zhonggong. He showed his strongly sincere filial piety to his parents and he was ranked third in the Twenty-Four Pictures about Filial Piety written by Guo Jujing in Yuan dynasty. With regard to his sincere filial piety and righteous and profound perspective, not only did

Confucius praise him very highly, but also many emperors of different dynasties designated him duke and praised him by giving him plaque. Now he is respectfully addressed as Minzi.

The paragraphs above mentioned Min Ziqian's righteous and profound perspective and this kind of perspective is perfectly indicated in one of his good behaviour: he refused to be an officer under a high official who controlled the political power of the country because he thought if he did in that way, the pay he got from the high official would be an insult to the emperor.

Minzi sincerely followed the teaching of Confucius, not to be an officer in a dangerous environment and not to take wealth and high social status in unrighteous ways. He firmly refused to be an officer under Jishi with his righteous perspective, which showed he was not in favour of breaching the terms of etiquette and he firmly kept doing righteous things. I have great admiration for his perspective and what he did has reminded me that when I face profits, I should think whether the profits are righteous. I think this point is quite important to my promoting traditional Chinese culture in the future. If I can not overcome the temptation such as reputation and profits, although my original wish is to inherit the culture, eventually I may be a destroyer of the culture. Therefore, I must be too careful with temptations.

5. Conclusion

Translating this article not only improved my English translation level, but most importantly, Min Ziqian's spirit gave me a lot of inspiration and touched me deeply. I wish I can imitate the model provided by Minzi, keeping my original wish for my lifetime, and overcome all challenges and difficulties.