

Postgraduate Assignment coversheet & feedback form

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(DO NOT SEND AS A SEPARATE FILE)

For completion by the student:		
Student Name: Chunyuan Xue		
Module code: SICH7029 Module title: Readings from the Governing Principles of Ancient China (SICH7029)	Student ID number: 1803718	Educational support needs: No
Module tutor: Venerable Chengde Assignment due date: 07 November 2024		
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The Wisdom of Self-Reflection from the *Governing Principles of Ancient China* 群書治要



Module code: SICH7029
Module tutor: Venerable Master Chengde
Student name: Chunyuan Xue
Student ID: 1803718
Due date: 07 November 2024



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01

The Original Texts of Self-reflection

The Original Texts

- Confucius said that the sport of archery was like a Junzi君子 who would reflect on his own problems when he missed his target.

（子曰：「射有似乎君子，失諸正鵠，反求諸其身。」《禮記·中庸》）

- A benevolent man is like an archer, who first corrects himself and then shoots. If he fails to shoot, he will not complain about those who are better than him, but will reflect on himself.
- (仁者如射，射者正己而後發。發而不中，不怨勝己者，反求諸己而已矣。《孟子·公孫醜上》)



The Original Texts

- If you love a person but do not get his closeness, then reflect on your own kindness; if you govern others but to no avail, then reflect on your own wisdom; if you treat others with courtesy but do not receive their courtesy, then reflect on your own respect. If your behaviour is unsuccessful, you should reflect on yourself; if you are right, then the whole world will submit to you.
- (孟子曰：“愛人不親，反其仁；治人不治，反其智；禮人不答，反其敬。行有不得者，皆反求諸己；其身正，而天下歸之。《孟子·離婁上》）





02

The Benefits of Self-Reflection in Governance

2. The Benefits

- Confucius once mentioned, “Man is able to honour righteousness, not righteousness to honour man.’ Therefore, the stability and turmoil of a country, its prosperity and decline, are all determined by the monarchs themselves, not by the destiny.”

(孔子曰：“人能弘道，非道弘仁也。”故治亂廢興在於己，非天降命不可得而反也。（卷十七 漢書五））

The virtue of the person



System

Example

- Emperor Taizong of Tang 唐太宗



Drought



locust infestation



2. The Benefits

- Please do not involve the people in my sins; whereas the people have sinned because I have not set a good example, and the guilt should be borne by me alone.

(朕躬有罪，無以萬方；萬方有罪，罪在朕躬。《論語》)



King Tang 湯

Example

- King of Shun 舜



2. The Benefits

- If those in authority can respect the elderly, then the people will develop a filial piety culture. If those in authority can respect the elderly, then the people will love their elder brothers. If those in authority can show compassion for the lonely and unsupported, then the people will not betray or abandon one another.

(上老老而民興孝，上長長而民興悌，上恤孤而民不背。)



03

The Downside of Not Being Self-Reflective in Governance

The Downside

- “If the ruler treats his subjects as if they were his own hands and feet, then the subjects treat the ruler as if they were his own heart and soul. If the ruler treats his subjects like dogs and horses, then he treats them like strangers. If the ruler treats his subjects like dust and weeds, then he treats them like his enemies.”

(君之視臣如手足，則臣之視君如腹心；君之視臣如犬馬，則臣之視君如國人；君之視臣如土芥，則臣之視君如寇仇。《孟子》)

Example

- King Li of Zhou 周厲王

I'll kill anyone who
speaks ill of me.



The people's life is
already very
hard. They.....
You should.....



The Downside

- “It is unreasonable for a emperor to kill his subjects and his people for the sake of government. Instead of educating the people with filial piety and making them understand the truth, people who make mistakes are directly convicted and tortured, which is killing innocent people.”

(上失其道，而殺其下，非理也。不教以孝，而聽其獄，是殺不辜也。《史記·孔子家語》)

The Downside

1. He is afraid of not being able to hear other people talk about his faults when he is in a high position.

(處尊位而恐不聞其過)

2. He was afraid that everything would go well and lead to pride.

(得意而恐驕)

3. He is afraid that he will not be able to put into practice what he hears as being sensible in the world.

(聞天下之至言，而恐不能行)



04

Conclusion

— WE LOVE WHAT WE DO —

Thank you

