



Undergraduate assignment feedback form
(to be completed by marker)

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<i>Module Code: SICH3012</i> <i>Module title: A Brief History of British Sinology</i>	<i>Student number: 2503183</i>
<i>For completion by marker:</i> <i>Comments:</i>	
<i>Marker's signature:</i>	<i>Date:</i>
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☒ I have not used AI in my assignment

I confirm that I have not used any AI tools in the research and creation of this assignment. I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated materials as my own work. I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used, which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

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1. [Prompt]
2. [Prompt]
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Good afternoon, Dr. Ngo and fellow classmates. I'm very honoured to share a story with you today, and the title of the story is "Not Betray a Previous Agreement". This story comes from Volume Three of *Collectanea of Ethical Exemplars* (Daode congshu 道德叢書). In what follows, it will be presented in 3 parts. First, I will explain 3 phrases related to the story; Second, it is the story content; In the end, I will spend some time talking about what I learned from the story.

Now, let's look at part 1.

First is the civil service recruitment examination. It was a series of exams for scholars before the Republic of China era, who aspired to become officials. And the Metropolitan Examination was the highest stage of the civil service recruitment examination. The Principal Graduate was the Designation of the candidate who got the highest score of the Metropolitan exam. Now let's move on to the story content.

Now, let's look at part 2.

First, let's have a look at the original text of the story in Chinese. Then it is the translation. The protagonist of the story is Mr. Li, whose name has not been recorded. When he went to the village school initially in his childhood, a woodcutter took a break at the front door of the Earth God Temple(土地祠) casually. Suddenly he heard a sound drifting from the Temple, 'Principal Graduate Li starts school today. Tidying and cleaning the street should be needed.' The woodcutter stood up and saw nobody, so he sat down again. A few moments later, he heard another sound, which said: 'Grand Councilor Li is coming.' A gust of wind cleaned the dust off the street. A while later, a man who was Li accompanied by a young boy holding books in his hands arrived. Then the woodcutter inquired about his name in detail and betrothed his daughter to him. Not long after, Li, because of the poor family circumstances, served as a Sub-official Functionary in the county government. The County Magistrate met him and thought that he was different from others, so he ordered Li to accompany his son in his studies. Therefore, Li took the civil service recruitment examination to enter the local school. Someone indirectly suggested Li to break the engagement with the woodcutter's

daughter, but he firmly refused the idea. Soon after, Li attained the status of Principal Graduate in the Metropolitan Examination for civil service recruitment, and he later served as a Grand Councilor. His descendants also continued to become Examination Graduates of the civil service recruitment exams. This is the end of the story.

Now let's turn to the part 3 to discuss some learning points.

When Li took the examination to enter the local school and faced with others' suggestion of breaking off the engagement with the woodcutter's daughter, Li firmly refused the suggestion. When I put myself in Li's situation and felt that his behaviour was extremely rare and commendable. And I truly admired him. From a Sub-official Functionary with poverty to a local school student who can become an official through the exam in the future, if he hadn't kept his promise, perhaps he could have married the daughter of a wealthy or official family. But he still chose to fulfill his promise. For an ordinary people, facing this kind of situation, it is not a small challenge. But Li upheld his commitment. This action not only demonstrates Li's virtue of truthfulness to one's word, but also shows that he did not change his moral character due to the change of his status.

Mencius said, 'There is the nobility of Heaven and the nobility of man. Humaneness, rightness, conscientiousness, and truthfulness —and taking pleasure in doing good, without ever wearying of it— this is the nobility of Heaven. The ranks of duke, minister, or high official—this is the nobility of man. Men of antiquity cultivated the nobility of Heaven and the nobility of man followed after it.' (孟子曰：「有天爵者，有人爵者。仁義忠信，樂善不倦，此天爵也；公卿大夫，此人爵也。古之人修其天爵，而人爵從之。」) In this story Li cultivated the nobility of Heaven, which is truthfulness to one's word, so the nobility of man which is passing the exam with the top score and rising to a Grand Councilor followed after it. His moral conduct also blessed his descendants further. In terms of the connection of cause and effect, truthfulness to one's word and not altering one's virtue despite the change of one's status are the cause and the fortune of passing the exam, becoming a high official and blessing his own descendants are the effect. From Mencius' teaching and Li's life, we can learn how to manage one's own life, make important choices or obtain noble status or money in a correct way—we should cultivate Humaneness, rightness, conscientiousness, and

truthfulness. Meanwhile, in the story, a key point which I found in the transformation of Li's fortune is appreciated by the County Magistrate. Because of being appreciated by the Magistrate, which gave him the opportunity to continue his studies and take the civil service recruitment examination. This may seem accidental, but there is an inevitability within the accident. Why did the Magistrate take notice of Li instead of other Sub-official Functionary? The reason must be that Li paid attention to cultivating and upholding moral conduct in daily affairs and interactions. This tells us it is important to cultivate moral conduct in our daily lives.

This is the end of my presentation. Any feedback would be greatly appreciated. Thank you for listening.

Not Betray a Previous Agreement

不負舊約

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Outline

1

Detailed Explanation

2

Story Content

3

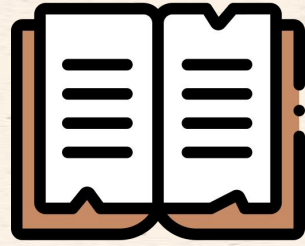
Learning Points



Part 1 Detailed Explanation



- The Civil Service Recruitment Examination (*keju kaoshi* 科舉考試)
- Metropolitan Examination (*dianshi* 殿試)
- Principal Graduate (*zhuangyuan* 狀元)



Part 2 Story Content

不負舊約

李公佚其名。童年初入村塾。一負薪者偶憩土地祠門。忽聞廟中云：「今日李狀元上學。當灑掃街道。」起視無人。遂復坐。頃又聞曰：「李宰相來矣。」忽疾風掃淨街塵。俄而一人。攜一童子。捧書而至。遂詳詢姓名。許字以女。未幾因家貧爲縣小吏。令見而異之。命伴公子讀。應試入泮。或有諷其解負薪之姻者。李堅拒之。旋登魁選。後大拜。子孫科甲不替。

Story Content

李公佚其名。童年初入
村塾。一負薪者偶憩土
地祠門。

When Mr. Li, whose name has not been recorded, went to the village school initially in his childhood, a woodcutter took a break at the front door of the Earth God Temple casually.



Story Content

忽聞廟中云：「今日李狀元
上學。當灑掃街道。」起視
無人。遂復坐。

Suddenly the woodcutter heard a sound drifting from the Temple, 'Principal Graduate Li starts school today. Tidying and cleaning the street should be needed.' The woodcutter stood up and saw nobody, so he sat down again.



Story Content

頃又聞曰：「李宰相來矣。」
忽疾風掃淨街塵。俄而一人。
攜一童子。捧書而至。遂詳
詢姓名。許字以女。

A few moments later, he heard another sound, which said: 'Grand Councilor Li is coming.' A gust of wind cleaned the dust off the street. A while later, a man [who was Li] accompanied by a young boy holding books in his hands arrived. Then the woodcutter inquired about his name in detail and betrothed his daughter to Li.

Story Content

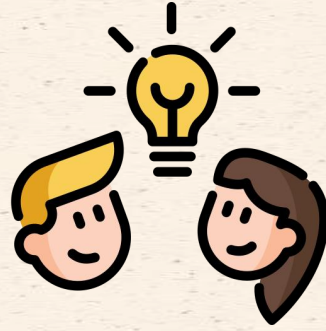
未幾因家貧爲縣小吏。令見
而異之。命伴公子讀。應試
入泮。

Not long after, Li, because of the poor family circumstances, served as a Sub-official Functionary in the county government. The County Magistrate met him and thought that Li was different from others, so he ordered Li to accompany his son in his studies. Therefore, Li took the civil service recruitment examination to enter the local school.



或有諷其解負薪之姻者。李
堅拒之。旋登魁選。後大拜。
子孫科甲不替。

Someone indirectly suggested Li to break the engagement with the woodcutter's daughter, but Li firmly refused the idea. Soon after, Li attained the status of Principal Graduate in the Metropolitan Examination for civil service recruitment and later served as a Grand Councilor. His descendants also continued to become Examination Graduates of the civil service recruitment exams.

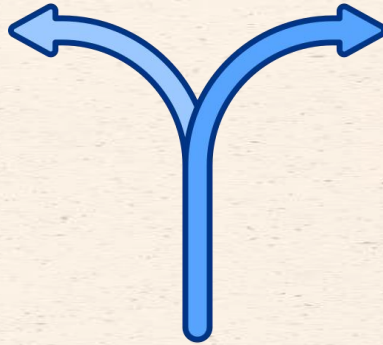


Part 3 Learning Points

Learning Point

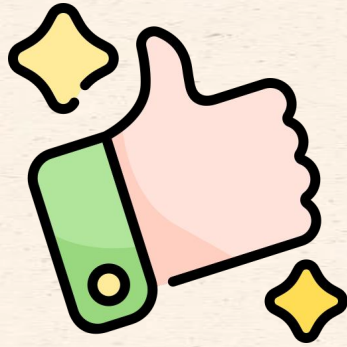
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Break off the engagement



Keep his promise

Learning Point



Truthfulness to one's word 信

Not change his moral character
due to the change of his status

Mencius said, ‘There is the nobility of Heaven and the nobility of man. Humaneness, rightness, conscientiousness, and truthfulness—and taking pleasure in doing good, without ever wearying of it— this is the nobility of Heaven. The ranks of duke, minister, or high official—this is the nobility of man. Men of antiquity cultivated the nobility of Heaven and the nobility of man followed after it.’

孟子曰：「有天爵者，有人爵者。仁義忠信，樂善不倦，此天爵也；公卿大夫，此人爵也。古之人修其天爵，而人爵從之。」

Mencius 6A.16

(Trans. Bloom et al., with modifications)





The connection of cause and effect

Cause

Truthfulness to one's word

Not altering one's virtue despite the change of one's status

Effect

Passing the exam

Becoming a high official



A key point

- Appreciated by the County Magistrate
- Cultivating moral conduct and upheld moral conduct in daily affairs and interactions.
- Cultivate moral conduct in our daily lives.

Thank you for listening!

Bibliography

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