



Undergraduate assignment feedback form
(to be completed by marker)

<i>Student Name: Yifang Sun</i>	
<i>Module Code: SIC4009</i>	<i>Student number: 2016013</i>
<i>Module title: The Four Books</i>	
<i>For completion by marker:</i> <i>Comments:</i>	
<i>Marker's signature:</i>	<i>Date:</i>
<i>Provisional mark:</i> NB. All marks are provisional until confirmed by the final examination board.	

AI Acknowledgement

☒ 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.

☐ I have used AI in my assignment

I acknowledge the use of [AI Tool 1] [(AI Tool 1 url)] on [Date] to [Purpose my work: (e.g. support my research/proofread/edit photographic material etc.)]. I used the prompt(s):

1. [Prompt]

2. [Prompt]

3. [Prompt]

I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated text as my own work. I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used before, and after the use of AI tools which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

How to Distinguish Good Friends

Module code : SICH4009

Module tutor : Venerable Chengde

Student name : Yifang Sun

Student ID number : 2016013

Date : 22 January 2025



CONTENTS

- 1 **Introduction**
- 2 **Three ways for distinguishing good friends**
- 3 **Conclusion**



Introduction

Master Zeng said: “The gentleman acquires friends by means of cultural refinement, and then **relies upon his friends for support in becoming good.**” ¹

(trans. by Edward)

曾子曰：「君子以文會友，以友輔仁。」 ²



¹ *Confucian Analects*, trans. by Edward Slingerland (Hackett Publishing Company, 2003), p. 137.

² He Yan 何晏 and Xing Bing 邢昺, *Lunyun zhushu* 論語注疏 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2000), p. 191.

Three ways for distinguishing good friends

Observe their

- **appearance**
- **preference**
- **mindset**



Observe their appearance

Mencius said: “When observing someone, there is nothing more telling than the pupil of the eye. In the pupil, one’s wickedness cannot be concealed.

When one is correct within one’s innermost being, the pupil will be clear.

When one is not correct within one’s innermost being, the pupil will be dull.

If one listens to his words and observes the pupils of his eyes, what can a person hide? ”³
(trans. by Bloom)

孟子曰：「存乎人者，莫良於眸子。眸子不能掩其惡。胸中正，則眸子瞭焉；胸中不正，則眸子眊焉。聽其言也，觀其眸子，人焉廋哉？」⁴



³ Mencius, trans. by Irene Bloom (Columbia University Press, 2009), p. 81.

⁴ Zhao Qi 趙岐 and Sun Shi 孫奭, *Mengzi zhushu* 孟子註疏 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2000), p. 240.

Observe their preference

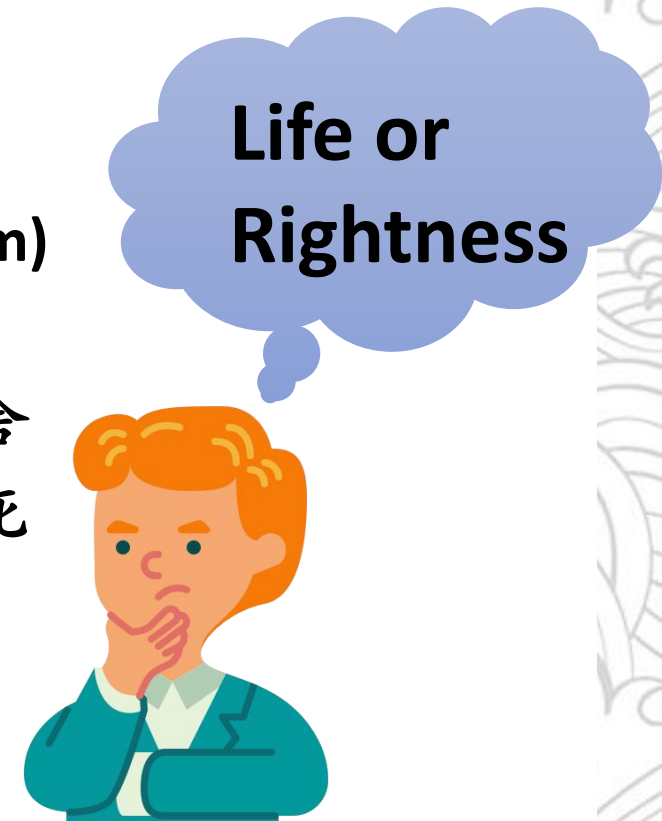
Mencius said: “I desire life, and I also desire rightness. **If I cannot have both of them, I will give up life and take rightness.** It is true that I desire life, but there is something I desire more than life, and **therefore I will not do something dishonorable in order to hold on to it.** I detest death, but there is something I detest more than death, and **therefore there are some dangers I may not avoid.**” ⁵

(trans. by Bloom)

孟子曰：「生，亦我所欲也；義，亦我所欲也，二者不可得兼，舍生而取義者也。生亦我所欲，所欲有甚於生者，故不為苟得也。死亦我所惡，所惡有甚於死者，故患有所不辟也。」⁶

⁵ Mencius, Bloom, p. 127.

⁶ Zhao Qi and Sun Shi, *Mengzi zhushu*, p. 363.

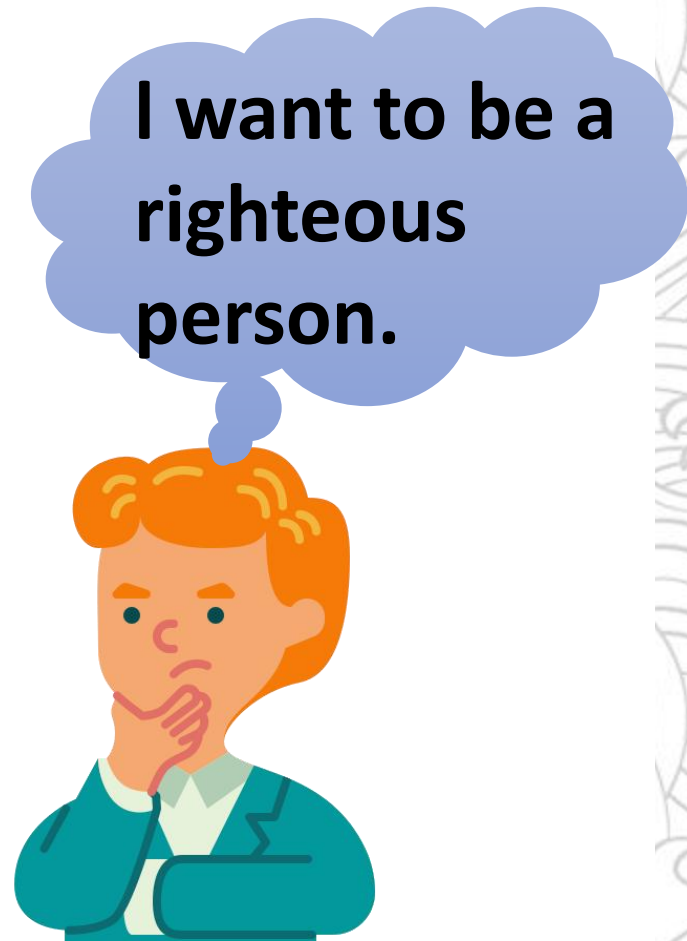


Observe their preference

- Everyone wishes to achieve immortality and dislikes death.
- For **common people**: they lost the innate nature, which would prioritize rightness.
- For **noble people**: they never lost their innate nature.

(trans. by self)

徐醒民：「捨生取義這是本有的心本心。這個本心，普通人經不起環境的衝擊，遇到環境一衝擊的時候，他就容易喪失了，喪失捨生取義的這種本心，賢者他勿喪耳，他不會喪失的。」⁷



A story in ancient China



Xun said to the army: “My friend is ill, I cannot leave him alone, I am willing to replace my friend with my life.”

(trans. by self)

荀曰：「友人有疾，不忍委之，寧以我身代友人命。」⁸

Observe their mindset

Mencius said: “When Heaven intends to confer a great responsibility upon a person, it first visits his mind and will with suffering, toils his sinews and bones, subjects his body to hunger, exposes him to poverty, and confounds his projects. Through this, his mind is **stimulated, his nature **strengthened**, and his inadequacies **repaired**. ”** ⁹ (trans. by Bloom)

孟子曰：「故天將降大任於是人也，必先苦其心志，勞其筋骨，餓其體膚，空乏其身，行拂亂其所為，所以動心忍性，曾益其所不能。」¹⁰

⁹ *Mencius*, Bloom, p. 143.

¹⁰ Zhao Qi and Sun Shi, *Mengzi zhushu*, p. 407.



Observe their mindset

The benefits of adversity:

- Better themselves
- Work on their weaknesses



Conclusion

- **Pupil: clear**
- **Interested: rightness**
- **Attitude: self-improvement**



Bibliography

Books

Confucian Analects, trans. by Edward Slingerland (Hackett Publishing Company, 2003)

He Yan 何晏 and Xing Bing 邢昺, *Lunyun zhushu* 論語注疏 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2000)

Liu Yiqing 劉義慶 and Liu Xiao 劉孝, *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2012)

Mencius, trans. by Irene Bloom (Columbia University Press, 2009)

Xu Xingmin 徐醒民, *Mengzi yandu jiangji* 孟子研讀講記 (Zhanghuaxian huatanxiang: Xueming jiangxitang, 2014, Vol. VII)

Zhao Qi 趙岐 and Sun Shi 孫奭, *Mengzi zhushu* 孟子註疏 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2000)

**Thank you
for listening**

