



Undergraduate assignment feedback form

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<i>Student Name:Chuide Kong</i>	
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Zhang Xuecheng' s perspective for The Classics

Good morning, Professor, and the fellow students:

Today I am going the talk about the leading Characters in Qing Dynasty, whose name is Zhang Xuecheng 章學誠, renowned of his zi 字, Shizhai 實齋. He was born in 1738 in Kuaiji 會稽, Zhejiang 浙江 province. He was the reputable scholar and historian in Qing Dynasty. He had great academic achievements in history study and Classical scripture research. Current scholars consider him and Daizhen 戴震 as the most important Thinkers in Qing Dynasty, as two pillars of the Qing academy.

Zhang Xuecheng was well known for his history study. But why do I choose him as my research subject in the classical course. Because he had a famous viewpoint for the Six Classical Scriptures, 六經. He pointed out that: "The Six Classical Scriptures were the historical records of their period." 六經皆史. This is an unprecedented theory of Classical study. Below, I will try to explain it for you.

At the first, let me introduce Zang Xuecheng' s life:

I will introduce three people who all played the important roles in Zhang' s life that influenced him so much.

First, I will talk about the enlightening education from his father, whose name is 章鑣

吾讀古人文字，高明有余，沉潛不足，故于訓詁考質，多所忽略，而神解精識，乃能窺及前人所未到處。初亦見祖父評點古人詩文，授讀學徒，多辟村塾傳本膠執訓詁，不究古人立言宗旨。猶記二十歲時，購得吳注《庾開府集》，有“春水望桃花”句，吳注引《月令》章句云：“三月桃花水下。”祖父抹去其注而評于下曰：“望桃花于春水之中，神思何其綿邈！”吾彼時便覺有會，回視吳注，意味索然矣。自後觀書，遂能別出意見，不為訓詁牢籠，雖時有鹵莽之弊，而古人大體，乃實有所窺。^①

According to Zhang' s diary 家書, he said when his father taught me the poem and classics, he would not choose the formal commentaries, thinking that it didn' t reach the depth of what our ancestor said. 初亦見祖父評點古人詩文，授讀學徒，多辟村塾傳本膠執訓詁，不究古人立言宗旨。By the inspiring of his father, Zhang said, afterwards he was able to

comprehend the classics in a unique way, jumping out of the limits. Even though it has been somewhat incorrect, generally he can reach the deeper meanings of the classics 自后观书，遂能别出意见，不为训诂牢笼，虽时有鹵莽之弊，而古人大体，乃实有所窥。

Zhang had a quite tragic life. He was unlucky in the imperial examination system. He fail to make the list lots of time. And he maintained poverty throughout his life.

Second, he was inspired and enlightened by his teacher, Zhuxun 朱筠. He met Zhuxun after he fail to make the list again in Beijing. Zhuxun was the one who discover the potential of Zhang, and encourage him that: “the imperial examination system is not your specialty, nevertheless, it is meaningless to take exam.” 科举非君所长，不能学亦不足学 He cultivate Zhang to have specialty in discovering the true meanings of the classics. And Zhang subsequently follow his teacher’ s teaching and change the way of studying. And he finally have great success in classical study.

Thirdly, Daizhen had great impact in Zhang. The first time he met Dai, he shocked, which was wrote in his Dairy. In that time, Dai was the most reputable classical scholar who had great achievements in 考据学 and 训诂学, those subjects of 小学. But Zhang has more enthusiasm in 义理学, which is to find the deep meanings of the classics. Zhang was shocked by Daizhen’ s fundamental knowledge and classical perspective. Dai thinks, before we study the classics, we should first understand all the characters in the books, including sound and rhyme and the changes of characters throughout history. Daizhen valued the 小学 more than 义理学, which made Zhang doubted his way of researching. He said: “I was also fear to said that I had already read the Four Books.” 我辈于《四书》一经，正乃未尝开卷，可为慚惕，可为寒心！

Therefore, through Zhang’ s entire life, he was trying to define his own doctrine to challenge the doctrine of Daizhen.

After this, let’ s enter the next.

Zhangxuecheng and his viewpoint of The Classics 章学诚的经学观：

When Zhang proofread /pru:frid/ the book, 经籍考, the viewpoint had emerged. When he wrote his most famous book, 文史通义, he expressed and refined the theory. He said “The Six Classics were the historical records for their period.” 六经皆史也 and said: “The Six Classics were the political codes 六经皆先王之政典也. Current scholar Yu yingshi 余英时 evaluated: “the viewpoint was unprecedented in Qing history.” Zhang tried to redefined The Six Classics, he said: “The Six Classics were all the tools that contain Dao in that period.” 以谓六经载道之书也，而不知六经皆器也。 And said: “The Dao from the previous time was invisible, we can only see the Dao from The Six Classics.先圣先王之道不可见，六经即其器之可见者。 Therefore, by the supporting from his theory, he furthermore thinks that the changes that happen in the later time, The Six Classics are unable to explain.” 事变之出于后者，六经不能言. In his view, he think Dao has historical meanings, which means it will also change alongside the history. Therefore, the only thing we can do is to discover and extract the true

and deep meanings from the Classics instead of researching the characters and rhyme one by one, like archaeologist. Therefore, he dared to point out that: “it is valuable for the extractions of the true meanings in the Six Classics, and we need to reproduce in our period to represent Dao. 固贵约六经之旨而随时撰述，以究大道也。

Undoubtedly, Zhang’ s theory of The Six Classics was unprecedented. He was trying to challenge the general definition of The Six Classics, which had tremendous impacts afterwards, especially in the revolution time in Minguo 中华民国 era. It gives us too much thinking and enlightenment.