

## The Problem of Mencius 5

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### Handout

#### 1. Precursors of Mencius 5 Issues in Mencius 2 and 4

##### Character of ancient worthies

2A2:22. Contrasting Bwó-yí (served good governments), Yī Yīn (who served even bad governments), and Confucius (who served when he could, and withdrew when he couldn't). (5B1)

2A9. Bwó-yí's purity was "narrow-minded." Lyǒusyà Hwèi's taking low position "lacked self-respect." The jyw̄ndž will do neither. (5B1, 5A4)

4B20. Exemplary men of antiquity included Yǔ, who was fond of good advice, and Tāng, who was flexible in selecting able men. Jōu-gūng combined the achievements of all others.

##### Accepting gifts or support from a ruler

2A3. Accept money from a ruler when needed for particular purposes. (5B6)

4A10. Against accepting regular support from a ruler without a position.

##### Shùn's filiality

4A26. Shùn married without informing his parents. (5A1)

4A28. Shùn pleased his father and Great Filiality was established. (5A4)

##### Filiality as a Virtue

4B13. Nourishing parents when alive is less important than serving them properly after they die.

4B30. "To reprove one's father and urge him to do good is a great injury."

##### Antiquity

4B1. Shùn and Wǎn-wáng lived in different times, but had the same principles.

4B21. The True King 王者 came to an end in the Spring and Autumn period.

##### Conflict/Difference Between Private and Public Obligations

2B9. Jōu-gūng appointed his elder brother to oversee Yīn, and he rebelled. But his decision was right. (5A5)

4A37. Dz̄ngdž was a teacher, so he left the state when invaders came. Dž-sž was an official, and stayed to defend the state. Both fulfilled their obligations, one as teacher and one as officer. (5B4)

## 2. The Systematic Reconsideration in Mencius 5

### [PART 1: THE CHARACTER OF THE RULER]

#### Shùn's Personal Character Before He Became a Ruler

- 5A1. Discussion of a tradition about Shùn in his early days. Intense and unfulfilled filial piety.
- 5A2. Discussion of a tradition about Shùn's marriage. Conflicting requirements of filial piety.

#### Conflict of Private and Public Duty in Shun

- 5A3. Shùn as a ruler did not banish his brother, nor did he allow him to rule in his domain.
- 5A4. Shùn as a ruler had his father for a subject. Reversal of father-son relationship.

#### Succession Issues: Conflict Between Ancient and Historical Systems

- 5A5. Against the theory that Yàu gave the world to Shùn. Justifying meritocratic succession.
- 5A6. Against the theory that virtue declined with Yǔ. Justifying lineal succession; rationalizing history.

### [PART 2: GAINING AND HOLDING OFFICE]

#### Being Noticed in a Low Social Position

- 5A7. Against the theory that Yī Yǐn gained the attention of Tāng by his cooking.
- 5A9. Against the theory that Bwó-lǐ Syī attracted the attention of Chín Mù-gūng by tending cattle.

#### Proprieties When in Office

- 5B1. Harmonizing the different approaches of Bwó Yí and others. Latitude is justified by appropriateness.
- 5B2. The Jōu Rank and Income system. Differences of rank and income are justified as appropriate.

#### Overriding Considerations in Personal Relations While in Office

- 5B3. Friendship is based on virtue, not rank. [NB: There are no merely lateral relationships in this system]
- 5B4. Respect is the key to questions of gift. [NB: There is a limit to personal scruple]

#### On Taking Office

- 5B5. Grounds for taking a low office. Official vs informal duties.
- 5B6. Placing oneself under the protection of a lord. Gift protocol. (the counterpart of 5B4)

### [PART 3: THE GENTLEMAN WHEN NOT HOLDING OFFICE]

#### On Not Taking Office

- 5B7. The gentleman does not meet the lord. The lord must instead court his moral superior, the gentleman.
- 5B8. Fellowship with other gentleman in one's own time, or failing that, with those in antiquity.