

16. Mr. Ji

1. Mr. Ji (季) was going to invade the province of Zhuan Yu (莒). Ran You and Ji Lu came to see Confucius and said, "Mr. Ji is going to have some business in Zhuan Yu." Confucius said, "Qiu (丘)! Are you not at fault here too? Zhuan Yu is a province which had been designated by previous kings as the guardian of Dong Mang (蒙) mountain's ceremony. It is also in the middle of the principality of Lu (鲁). It is directly under the ruling house of Lu. How come Mr. Ji attacks it?" Ran You said, "Mr. Ji wants to do it. Neither of us, as his assistants, want it." Confucius said, "Qiu! Record Officer Zhou Ren (周仁) once said, 'he who has the power to stay in formation must take his position. He who cannot, must withdraw.' If you do not offer assistance when your boss is entering in a dangerous situation and if you do not give support when your boss is about to fall, what use is there for such an assistant? Also, what you said is wrong. Suppose a tiger or a rhinoceros escapes from the cage. Suppose a tortoise shell or jade is damaged in the box. Whose fault is it?" Ran You said, "The province of Zhuan Yu is heavily fortified and it is near Mr. Ji's village of Fei (费). If it is not taken now, it will be a source of trouble for later generations." Confucius said, "Qiu! A noble man finds it appalling when people avoid saying that they want to do it and instead say things to pretend that they are constrained to do it. I have heard that those who take charge of a state or a family do not worry about shortage but indeed worry about fair distribution. They do not worry about poverty; they worry instead about instability. Fair distribution removes poverty. Conviviality removes shortage. Comfort and security remove the danger of revolt. For this reason, when people in remote areas do not submit to your rule, then you should refine your culture and virtues even more so that these people can come to you. When they come, you offer them comfort and security. Now, You (季) and Qiu, as assistants of Mr. Ji, are not capable of

