

## Translating and Interpreting the *Analects*: The Role of the Commentaries

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The *Analects* is the single most important source for people to understand the thought of Confucius. For more than 3 centuries, since Jesuits had contacts with Chinese scholars in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, it has been translated into numerous versions in Western languages. Each rendition stands for an attempt to make this ancient Chinese classic accessible to Western readers. A general consensus can be reached on the meaning of some of the most important terms or concepts, but further confusion can still arise mainly because of the inherited ambiguities caused by fragmented passages and conversations recorded as well as the syntactical flexibility and open-endedness of classical Chinese writing system. A long exegetical tradition with commentaries on the work led to different and sometimes conflicting interpretations. However, the translation usually followed only one instead of the alternating readings of the work through the mounted exegetical explanations. As a result, the rival analytical voices are lost in translation. This situation was improved when Penguin published a new translation of the *Analects* with commentary by Annping Chin in 2014. Her translation approach was an attempt to draw on the long Chinese exegetical tradition and consider a wide range of choices provided by various classical interpretations. She added commentary after each chapter, and Yan translated her commentary to Chinese in 2019. This study would go through examples of the text and commentaries in both English and Chinese to show how better understanding can be achieved while scholarship of a long exegetical tradition is presented through the efforts of the translators.

*About the Presenter:*



**Jackie Xiu Yan** received her PhD from the University of Texas at Austin, USA. She is now Subject Leader of the MA Translation Program in the Department of Linguistics and Translation at City University of Hong Kong. Her research and teaching interests include Classical Chinese translation, interpreter and translator training, audio description and Applied Linguistics.