齊宣王見顏斶，曰：“斶前！”
斶亦曰：“王前！”
宣王不悅。左右曰：“王，人君也。斶，人臣也。王曰‘斶前’，亦曰‘王前’，可乎？”
斶對曰：“夫斶前為慕勢，王前為趨士。與使斶為趨勢，不如使王為趨士。”
王忿然作色曰：“王者貴乎？士貴乎？”
對曰：“士貴耳，王者不貴。”
王曰：“有說乎？”
斶曰：“有。昔者秦攻齊，令曰：‘有敢去柳下季壟五十步而樵采者，死不赦。’今有能得齊王頭者，封萬戶侯，賜金千鎰。由是觀之，生王之頭，曾不若死士之壟也。”
左右皆曰：“斶來，斶來！大王據千乘之地，而建千石鐘，萬石猶。天下之士，仁義皆來役處；辯知並進，莫不來語；東西南北，莫敢不服。求萬物不備具，而百無不親附。今夫士之高者，乃稱匹夫，徒步而處農畝，下則鄙野、監門、閭里，士之賤也，亦甚矣！”

King Xuan of Qi gave audience to Yan Chu, saying, “Chu, come forward!”
Chu thus said, “King, come forward!”
King Xuan was not pleased. His courtiers said [to Chu], “The King is a ruler of others, you are a servant of others. Is it permissible for you to say ‘King, come forward,’ when the king says, ‘Chu, come forward?’”
Chu replied, “If I come forward I esteem force, if the King comes forward he venerates a knight. Making me esteem force does not compare to making the king venerate a knight (shi).”
The King, flushed with anger, said, “Which is more noble, a king or a knight?”
[Chu] replied, “Only a knight is noble, a king is not.”
The King said, “Can you prove it?”
Chu said, “I can. Of old, when Qin attacked Qi, an order was issued, saying, ‘Anyone who dares to forage within fifty paces of Liuxia Ji’s tomb will be killed without mercy.’ [Another] order said, ‘Anyone who can attain the head of the King of Qi will be enfeoffed as a Marquis with ten-thousand households and gifted one-thousand catties of gold.’ From this it can be seen that the head of a living king does not compare to the tomb of a dead knight.” The King was silent and not pleased.

His courtiers all said, “Come forward, Chu! Come forward, Chu! Our Great King controls territory of one-thousand chariots, has cast one-thousand-stone bells and ten-thousand-stone bell-racks. The knights of the world all come to serve him. The eloquent and the wise all come forward to speak to him. To the east, west, south and north none dare to refuse submission. He lacks nothing among the myriad things and is intimate with all among the many [noble] surnames.

“Now among knights the most eminent are called ‘commoners,’ they travel by foot and live among farmers’ fields. Those below them serve as ward patrollers, gate watchmen, or village headmen. The baseness of knights is truly great!”
Master Mozi journeyed south to Chu. He presented writings to King Hui (r. 488-432 B.C.E.), who declined [an audience] on the pretext of old age. [The king] sent Mu He to have audience with Master Mozi. Master Mozi lectured Mu He; Mu He was greatly persuaded. He said to Master Mozi, “Your words are truly good, yet our ruler is a great king of the world, will he not say, ‘these are the work of a base person,’ and not use them?”

Master Mozi replied, “He should only put them into practice. Compare them to a medicine that is the root of a plant. If the Son of Heaven could cure his illness by eating it, how could he say, ‘It is the root of a single plant,’ and not eat it? If now a farmer presents his tribute-grain to a noble, and the noble uses it to make sacrificial wine and millet for offerings to the Lord on High and the ghosts and spirits, how could they say, ‘This is the work of a base person,’ and not receive it? Though I am a base person, if above one compares me to the farmer, below to the medicine, am I not as good as the root of a single plant?”
Chu replied, “Not so. I have heard that in antiquity, in the time of Yu the Great, ten-thousand states were Lords of the Land. Why was this? Because they [practiced] the Way of replete virtue and attained the efforts of noble knights. Thus Shun arose from the farmers’ fields and emerged from distant wards and became the Son of Heaven. By the time of Tang there were three-thousand Lords of the Land. Today, those who face south and call themselves ‘orphaned’ number only twenty-four. From this perspective, are these not winning and losing policies (i.e., the honoring of knights versus the scorn of knights), [respectively]? Gradually [the lords] were destroyed. When one’s lineage has been destroyed, [even if] one wants to be a gate watchmen or village headmen, how is this possible?...”
Secondary Characteristics of Aristocracy

– Martial Valor
– Inviolability
– Vendetta Obligation
– Leisure
– Physical and Mental Health/Bodily Aesthetics
– Masculinity
– Cultural Refinement
Mencius VIIA.36

孟子自范之齊，望見齊王之子．喟然歎曰：“居移氣，養移體，大哉居乎！夫非盡人之子與？”孟子曰：“王子宮室，車馬，衣服多與人同，而王子若彼者，其居使之然也．況居天下之廣居者乎？魯君之宋，呼於垤澤之門．守者曰：‘此非吾君也，何其聲之似我君也？’此無他，居相似也．”

Mencius came from Fan back to Qi, and saw the King’s son. Sighing profoundly, he said, “If one inhabits a different air, one develops a different physical bearing. How great is one’s habitat, for is [the prince] not completely the son of a human being [like others]!” Mencius [further] said, “The prince’s palace and rooms, carriage and horses, clothes and robes are mainly like those of other people, yet the prince is different. His habitat has made him so. What if he had inhabited the most expansive habitat in the world? The ruler of Lu went to Song and called out at the Daize Gate. The gatekeeper said, ‘This is not my lord, why does the voice sound so much like that of my lord?’ There is no other reason for this: their habitats were similar.”
楚王謂田鳩曰: “墨子者, 顯學也. 其身體則可, 其言多而不辯何也?”
曰: “... 墨子之說, 傳先王之道, 論聖人之言以宣告人. 若辯其辭, 則恐人懷其文忘其直, 以文害用也. 此與楚人鬻珠, 秦伯嫁女同類, 故其言多不辯.”

The King of Chu said to Tian Jiu, “Mozi was an eminent scholar. His person and physical bearing were, I suppose, acceptable. Yet why were his words so ineloquent?”

[Tian Jiu] replied: “.... The sayings of Mozi transmit the Way of the former kings; they discuss the words of the sages for dissemination to others. If he made his phrases elegant, he feared people would cherish their patterning and forget their function, so that patterning detracted from function. This would be of the same category as the man of Chu’s marketing of his pearl, or the Lord-Protector of Qin’s betrothal of his daughter. Thus his words were mainly ineloquent.”
客有見田駢者，被服中法，進退中度，趨翔閑雅，辭令遜敏。田駢聽之畢而辭之。客出，田駢送之以目。弟子謂田駢曰：“客，士歟？”田駢曰：“殆乎非士也。今者客所弇斂，士所術施也；士所弇斂，客所術施也。客殆乎非士也。”

A guest had audience with Tian Pian. His clothes fit the standard, his advancing and retiring were perfectly measured, his movements were leisurely and refined, his speech was polite and eloquent. Tian Pian finished listening to him and bid him farewell. As the guest left, Tian Pian followed him with his eyes A disciple asked Tian Pian, “Was our guest a knight?” Tian Pian said, “He seems one, but is not a knight. Just now what he displayed was what a knight should not reveal, and what he kept from view is what a knight should display. He seems one, but is not a knight.”