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<i>Student Name: Pang Hoi Na</i>	
<i>Module Code: SICH5005</i>	<i>Student number: 1903362</i>
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A Brief Analysis of Selected Characters in the Poem *Zhihu* 陟岵

Student name: Pang Hoi Na SID: 1903362 Date: 3 Jun 2021

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Venerable Shengmiao, Miss Deng, good morning. My name is Pang Hoi Na and I would like to share with you the topic on ‘A Brief Analysis of Selected Characters in the Poem *Zhihu* 陟岵’. The presentation will be divided into three parts, introduction, text analysis, and last part is the conclusion.

1. Introduction

There is much different explanation from different scholars on the meaning and pronunciation of selected characters in *Weifeng Zhihu* 魏風·陟岵. During this discussion, I will analyze these characters one by one to make sure which interpretation is more appropriate.

The original poem of *Zhihu* is now recorded here for discussion.

陟彼岵兮，瞻望父兮。

父曰：嗟！予子行役，夙夜無已。上慎旃哉，猶來無止。

陟彼屺兮，瞻望母兮。

母曰：嗟！予季行役，夙夜無寐。上慎旃哉，猶來無棄。

陟彼岡兮，瞻望兄兮。

兄曰：嗟！予弟行役，夙夜必偕。上慎旃哉，猶來無死。¹

¹ (Han)Zhengxuan's commentary, (Tang) Lu Mingde sound and meaning, Kong Yingda annotated, (漢)鄭氏箋, (唐)陸德明音義, 孔穎達疏, *Maoshi Zhushu* 毛詩注疏 (The annotation of Mao poem), (Qing)Jiyun, Yongyong, (清) 紀昀, 永瑤等編纂, 景印文淵閣四庫全書 (Complete Library in Four Branches of Literature - Wen Yuan Ge) (Taipei : Taiwan Commercial Press, 2008), Complete Library in Four Branches of Literature, volume 9, book 69, 338. Translated by myself.

The Chih hoo

I ascend that tree-clad hill,

And look towards [the residence of] my father.

My father is saying, ‘Alas! My son, abroad on the public service,

Morning and night never rests.

May he be careful,

That he may come [back], and not remain there!’

I ascend that bare hill,

And look towards [the residence of] my mother.

My mother is saying, ‘Alas! My young child, abroad on the public service,

Morning and night has no sleep.

May he be careful,

That he may come [back], and not leave his body there!’

I ascend that ridge,

And look towards [the residence of] my elder brother.

My brother is saying, ‘Alas! My younger brother, abroad on the public service,

Morning and night must consort with his comrades.

May he be careful,

That he may come [back], and not die!’²

2. Text analysis

2.1 The analysis of the characters *hu* 嶺 and *qi* 記

² James Legge, *The Chinese Classics IV-The She King* (Shanghai: East China Normal University Press, 2011), 167-168. Edited by myself.

The sound of character 岵 is hu , (‘g’o/ɣuo/hu). There are two explanations for it. One is in the *Maozhuan* 毛傳 called it a mountain without grass and trees. Those who agree with this statement include *Maoshi zhengyi* 毛詩正義³, *Maoshi huijian* 毛詩會箋(Mao Shi's Notation), *Kangxi zidian* 康熙字典(the Kangxi dictionary) and Duan Yucai’s annotation. The second one is from *Erya* 爾雅 and *Shuowen* 說文 call hu 岵 as a wooded mountain. *Lushi* 魯詩, *Yupian* 玉篇, and *Guangyun* 廣韻 say the same thing.⁴ The chapter *Shishan* 釋山 in the *Shiming* 釋名 (the Explanation of Names) says, ‘山有草木曰岵; 岵, 怙也, 人所怙取以為事用也。 (The character hu 岵 means the mountains with grass and trees), (because) hu 岵 is equal to another character hu 怙, which means people rely on something to do their purpose.’⁵ Xushen and Wangsu follow the explanation of *Erya*.⁶ Duan uses the statement of *Wei feng zhuan* 魏風傳 in Mao's poem and believed that Mao's biography is correct.⁷ He says, ‘岵之言瓠落也。岵之言菱滋也...無父何怙也。 The character hu 岵 refers to huluo 瓠落(something which appearance is large or empty; someone who is dejected or down-hearted).’⁸ The meaning hu 岵 includes yangdao 陽道 which also conveys the meaning of father. There is a famous sentence in the poem *lu e* 蓼莪, 無父何怙也 (Without father, who can I rely on). The character hu 怙 also refers to father so Duan uses this evidence to prove his opinion. The Kangxi dictionary agrees with *Mao zhuan*’s saying that ‘The version which is different from Mao’s is the wrong version of handwriting.’ Interestingly, Erya, Xu Shen, and Duan’s commentary walk on the consistent

³ (Han) Maohou, Zhengxuan, (Tang) Kong Yingda, (漢)毛亨傳, (漢)鄭玄箋, (唐)孔穎達疏, *Maoshi zhengyi* 毛詩正義 (The annotation of Mao poem), see footnote 1, *The Complete Library in Four Branches of Literature - Wen Yuan Ge*, 430. Translated by myself.

⁴ (Qing)Wang xianqian, (清)王先謙, *Shisanjing qingren zhushu* 十三經清人註疏 - 詩三家義集疏, (The Annotation of the 13 Classics from Qing Dynasty–The Collection of 3 Schools of the Poetry’s Annotation) (Beijing: Publishing House of Zhonghua, 1989), 405. Translated by myself.

⁵ (Han)Liuxi, (漢)劉熙, *Shiming* 釋名(the Explanation of Names), see footnote 1, *The Complete Library in Four Branches of Literature - Wen Yuan Ge*, book 221, volume 1, 388. Translated by myself.

⁶ (Qing)Wang xianqian, *The Annotation of the 13 Classics from Qing Dynasty–The Collection of 3 Schools of the Poetry’s Annotation*, see note 4, 325.

⁷ (Qing) Xu Shen 許慎撰, (Qing)Duan Yucai 段玉裁注, *Shuowen Jiezi zhu* 說文解字注 (The Annotation of *Shuowen*) (Taipei: Hung Yeh Publishing, 2018), 443. Translated by myself.

⁸ (Qing) Xu Shen, *The Annotation of Shuowen*, see note 7, 443.

way to interpret the character *hu* 岵 as *hu* 怙, but according to the same proof, they made different conclusions. People who agree with Xu believe that later generations have copied Mao's poems by mistake, while Duan believes Xu is generally consistent with Mao's poems, so later generations copied Xu Shen's words incorrectly.

The pronunciation of the character 屺 is *qi* and its ancient pronunciation is (*k'iæg/k'ji/k'i). According to *Mao zhuan*, one of its meanings is a wooded hill. Kongyingda and Japanese scholar Takezoe Koukou agree with this meaning and explain that 彼岵彼屺，非一山也 (The characters *hu* 岵 and *qi* 屺 refers to the different mountains) because the poet wants to emphasize that the journey is far away and nonstop every day.⁹ Duan changes Xushen's explanation and says, 'The character of *qi* 屺 is equal to *gaizi* 荄滋 (荄 means the root of grass, its sound follows the character *hai* 亥 in the ancient times and *zi* 滋 means flourishing). *Shuowen* explains the character *gai* 荄 as root, and also quotes the data from *Erya* says, 'Ancient people call the tuber onion root as *gai* 荄.' The second explanation is a bare mountain without vegetation from *Shuowen* and *Erya*. *Erya* points out that the character *gai* 岥 means bare mountain, its interpretation also quoted *gai* 岥 and *qi* 屺 is the same in *Sancang* 三倉, *zilin* 字林 and *shenglei* 聲類 these three phonology books. The pronunciation of these two characters is *k'iæg/k'ji/k'i: which have no difference in ancient times. The ancient sound of *hai* 亥 is equivalent to *ji* 己, and the two characters can replace each other. The character *gai* 岥 means *haiji chuju* 亥基初具 (the vegetation has not yet appeared). The pronunciation of *gai* 岥 is a little bit different from the above version. It is *kæg/køi/kai[gōi]. There is no such word in *Qieyun* 切韻. But *Guangyun* still agrees with this statement 'gai 岥 and qi 屺 is the same' as *Maoshi shu* 毛詩疏(the commentary of Mao's poem), *Yupian* 玉篇，*Beitang shuchao* 北堂書鈔, *Chuxueji* 初學記, *Taipingyulan* 太平御覽. But in the *Shiming* 釋

⁹ Takezoe Koukou 竹添光鴻, *Maoshi huijian* 毛詩會箋 (Mao Shi's Notation)(Tainan: Taiwan Datong Press, 1975), 636. Translated by myself.

名 said, ‘There is no grass and trees in the mountains, it means *qi* 岷 and *qi* 圮, which also conveys that nothing is born.’ *Tongshi* 通釋 highlights that the contradiction between *Shiming* and *Mao zhuan* comes from the mistake of handwritten copy so Duan’s annotation is incorrect.¹⁰ Generally speaking, the text of *Shuowen* will be based on Mao's transmission.¹¹ Wangsu’s commentary of Mao’s poem in Wei state of the Three Kingdoms period is the same as *Shuowen* and *erya*,¹² but annotations of later generations show the opposite meaning.

Here is a list of initial consonants in the ancient times and middle ancient times, with relevant categorizes of Rhyme:

We can see the initial consonant of *hu* is the same in the ancient times and middle ancient times, its categories of rhyme are also having no differences. For *qi*, it is the similar with *pi* but *gai*’s information is not enough.

	上古聲紐 The initial consonant in the ancient times	中古音聲紐 The initial consonant in the middle ancient times	17 韻部(段玉裁) The 17 categories of rhyme(Duan yucai)	32 韻部(陳新雄) The 32 categorizes of rhyme(Chen xinxiong)	擬音 ¹³ The sound effect
<i>Hu</i> 岷	<i>xia</i> 匣 ¹⁴	<i>hu</i> 戶 ¹⁵	<i>yu</i> 魚	<i>yu</i> 魚	[g ^h o]
<i>Hu</i>	<i>xia</i> 匣 ¹⁶	<i>hu</i> 戶 ¹⁷	<i>yu</i> 魚	<i>yu</i> 魚	[g ^h o]

¹⁰ (Qing)Ma ruichen (清)馬瑞辰, *Shisanjing qingren zhushu-Maoshi zhuanjian tongshi* 十三經清人註疏-毛詩傳箋通釋(The Annotation of the 13 Classics from Qing Dynasty–The General Annotation of the Commentary of Poetry)(Beijing: Publishing House of Zhonghua, 1989), 326. Translated by myself.

¹¹ Takezoe Koukou, *The Mao Shi's Notation*, see note 9, 636.

¹² (Qing)Wang xianqian, *The Annotation of the 13 Classics from Qing Dynasty–The Collection of 3 Schools of the Poetry's Annotation*, see note 6, 325. Translated by myself.

¹³ *pi* 圮 is from Wangli’s sound effect system, the other word all come from Bernhard Karlgren’s sound effect system. Translated by myself.

¹⁴ (Qing) Xu Shen, *The Annotation of Shuowen*, see note 7, 443.

¹⁵ (Qing) Xu Shen, *The Annotation of Shuowen*, see note 7, 443.

¹⁶ (Song)Chen pengnian (宋)陳彭年, *Guangyun* 廣韻(The Guangyun dictionary) (Taipei:Hung Yeh Publishing, 2001), 267. Translated by myself.

¹⁷ (Qing) Xu Shen, *The Annotation of Shuowen*, see note 7, 510.

¹⁷ (Qing) Xu Shen, *The Annotation of Shuowen*, see note 7, 443.

¹⁷ (Song)Chen pengnian, *The Guangyun dictionary*, see note 15, 267.

怙					
Qi 𡵚	<i>xiao</i> 曉 ¹⁸	<i>qi</i> 起 ¹⁹	<i>zhi</i> 之	<i>zhi</i> 之	[k ^h iəŋ]
Gai 𡵚	/	<i>gai</i> 該 ²⁰	/	/	/
Pi 圮	<i>bing</i> 並 ²¹	<i>fou</i> 否 ²²	<i>zhi</i> 之	<i>zhi</i> 之	[biə]

To sum up, the rules of using similar sound to explain the meaning tell that those characters which have the same initial consonant will have the same meaning.²³ By knowing the handwriting mistake is very common in ancient times. According to the above information, I will choose the version that *hu* 𡵚 as there is vegetation, *qi* 𡵚 as no vegetation. Although the categorizes of initial consonants is not obvious for the character *qi* 𡵚, it is clear for the character *hu* 𡵚. What is more, it has more literature evidence. Instead of Doubting these three books - *Erya*, *Shiming*, and *Shuowen*, they all have wrongly written characters or they are misleading each other, the more reliable guess is the manuscript of *Mao zhuan* in the Three Kingdoms period is correct, but the following scripts have transcribing errors and people copy these two characters upsides down. Bernhard Karlgren also agrees with this interpretation.²⁴

2.2 The analysis of the characters shang 上

The first interpretation of the character *shang* 上 in *Shangshen zhanzai* 上慎旃哉 comes from Zhengxuan.²⁵ He explains it as ‘when in the military department or the army’. Therefore,

¹⁸ (Qing) Xu Shen, The Annotation of *Shuowen*, see note 7, 443.

¹⁹ (Song)Chen pengnian, *The Guangyun dictionary*, see note 15, 253.

²⁰ (Song)Chen pengnian, *The Guangyun dictionary*, see note 15, 99.

²¹ (Qing) Xu Shen, The Annotation of *Shuowen*, see note 7, 697.

²² (Song)Chen pengnian, *The Guangyun dictionary*, see note 15, 249.

²³ Linyin 林尹, Lin jiongyang 林炯陽, *Zhongguo shengyunxue tonglun* 中國聲韻學通論(The Theory of Chinese Phonology) (Taipei: Li Ming Cultural Press, 2009), 262. Translated by myself.

²⁴ Bernhard Karlgren, *Shijing zhushi* 詩經注釋(The commentary of the Book of Poetry) (Shanghai: The Zhongxi Press, 2012), 283. Translated by myself.

²⁵ (Han)Zhengxuan’s commentary, (Tang) Lu Mingde sound and meaning, Kong Yingda annotated, *The annotation of Mao’s poem*, see note 1, volume 9, book 69, 338. Translated by myself.

this sentence means ‘be careful when you in the military department or the army’. *MaoShi Zhengyi* 毛詩正義 agrees with this statement.²⁶ The second one is in Lu’s poems, explain it as *Shangshen zhanzai* 尚慎旃哉. The character *Shang* 尚 means to wish, and the whole sentence is interpreted as ‘I hope you will be careful.’ The pronunciation of the character *shang* 上 and *shang* 尚 is the same as (²ǎ iang/zǎng/shang). Their etymology is the same so they can be used interchangeably. Bernhard Karlgren agrees that the character *shang* 上 in this poem is just the graphic loans of the character *shang* 尚. For example, the word *shangwoyan* 上渥焉 in *the Book of Rites*, chapter *xiangsheli* 鄉射禮 (the Country Shooting Ceremony) annotated as *shangwoyan* 尚渥焉 in the Vernacular. I agree with the meaning of interpreting the above character *shang* 上 as wish, because this poem expresses a son who is taking military service, ascends the heights to miss his relatives... Imagining the words of his relatives before leaving to express he misses them deeply.²⁷ It is worth noting that there are not many controversial interpretations of the character *shang* 上, but the situation is different for the English translation. Waley uses ‘Grant that he is being careful of himself’²⁸ which uses Zhengxuan’s explanation and discloses his poor family member to begging for his safety. If translating the character *shang* likes this may change the main idea from a filial child missing his family to the worried one who satire his government leader indignantly.

3. Conclusion

The poem *zhihu* is famous for its description of deep affection for filial and sibling love. The reader can understand the kind virtue from human nature from the poet’s image. He does not

²⁶ (Han) Maohen, Zhengxuan, *The annotation of Mao’s poem*, see footnote 7, 430. Translated by myself.

²⁷ Mi wenkai 糜文開, Pei puxian 裴普賢, *Shijing xinshang yu yanjiu* 詩經欣賞與研究(The Fantasy and Study of the Book of Poetry)(Taipei:San Min Press, 1985), 252. Translated by myself.

²⁸ Arthur Waley, *The book of songs*, (New york: Grove Press, 1996), 86.

write down that he wants to see all relatives but tactfully to say how his family member yearned for him. After analyzing the pronunciation and meaning of this poem, we can recover the true color of the classic text which will also help us to select the better version of its translation.

This is all my presentation today. Any feedback and suggestions would be appreciated.

Thank you.

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