



Undergraduate assignment feedback form
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Poems about common people living and
working in peace and contentment in ‘Xiao
Ya’ of *Shi Jing* 詩經·小雅

Module code: SICH4010

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Poems about common people living and working in peace
and contentment in 'Xiao Ya' of *Shi Jing* 詩經·小雅¹

- Hong Yan 鴻鴈
- Wu Yang 無羊
- Fu Tian 甫田
- Da Tian 大田

¹ Qu Wanli 屈萬里, *Shijing quanshi* 詩經詮釋 (Xinbei: Lianjing chubanshe, 1983)

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01

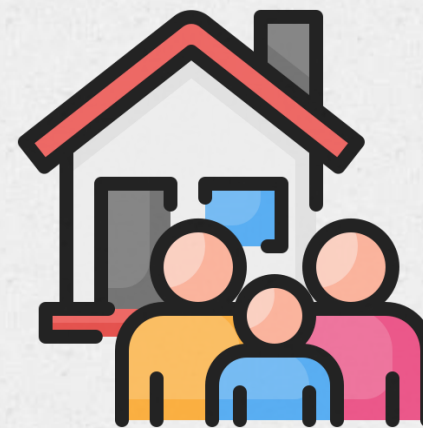
Hong Yan 鴻鴈



Hong Yan 鴻鴈

- Dispersed people are happy to receive a safe and stable place to live.

流民喜得安定之所而作之詩。¹



¹ Qu Wanli, *Shijing quanshi*, p237.



Hong Yan 鴻鴈

The wild geese are flying about;
Su-su goes the rustle of their wings.
[There were] those officers engaged on the commission.
Pained were we and toiled in the open fields;
All were objects of pity,
But alas for those wifeless and widows! ¹

鴻鴈于飛，肅肅其羽。之子于征，劬勞于野。爰及矜人，哀此鰥寡。

(Trans. James Legge)

¹ James Legge, *The Chinese Classics Vol. IV: The She King or The Book of Poetry* (Taipei: Nantian shuju, 2015), p. 292. Originally, the Chinese characters in the translation are Legge romanization. To make it readable, they are replaced by pinyin now.



Hong Yan 鴻鴈

The wild geese are flying about;
And they settle in the midst of the marsh.
[There were] those officers directing the rearing of the walls; —
Five thousand cubits of them arose at once.
Though there was pain and toil,
In the end we had rest in our dwellings.¹

鴻鴈于飛，集于中澤。之子于垣，百堵皆作。雖則劬勞，其究安宅。

(Trans. Legge)



¹ James Legge, *The She King*, p. 293.



Hong Yan 鴻鴈

The wild geese are flying about,
And melancholy is their cry of ao-ao.

There were they, wise men,
Who recognized our pain and toil;

If they had been stupid men,

They would have said we were proclaiming our insolence.¹

鴻鴈于飛，哀鳴嗷嗷。維此哲人，謂我劬勞。維彼愚人，謂我宣驕。

(Trans. Legge)



¹ James Legge, *The She King*, p. 293.



02

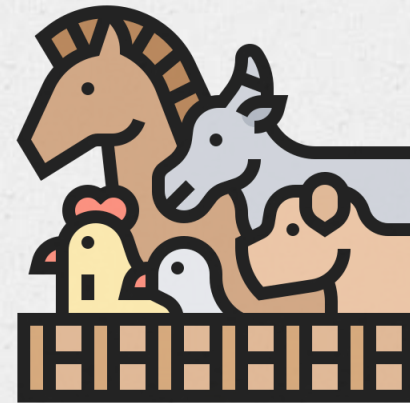
Wu Yang 無羊



Wu Yang 無羊

- Animal husbandry is successful, and cattle and sheep are numerous.

此詩言牧事有成，而牛羊眾多也。





Wu Yang 無羊

Who can say that you have no sheep?
There are three hundred in [each] herd.
Who says that you have no cattle?
There are ninety, which are black-lipped.
Your sheep come,
Horned, but all agreeing.
Your cattle come,
Flapping their ears.¹

(Trans. Legge)



誰謂爾無羊？
三百維群。
誰謂爾無牛？
九十其犝。
爾羊來思，
其角濇濇。
爾牛來思，
其耳濕濕。



¹ James Legge, *The She King*, p. 307.



Wu Yang 無羊

Some are descending among the mounds;
Some are drinking at the pools;
Some are lying down, some are moving about.
Your herdsmen come,
Bearing their rain-coats and bamboo-hats,
Or carrying on their backs their provisions.
In thirties are the creatures arranged according
to their colour;
For your victims there is abundant provision.¹

或降于阿，
或飲于池，
或寢或訛。
爾牧來思，
何蓑何笠，
或負其餼。
三十維物，
爾牲則具。

(Trans. Legge)



¹ James Legge, *The She King*, p. 308.



Wu Yang 無羊

Your herdsmen come,
With their large faggots, and smaller branches,
And with their prey of birds and beasts.
Your sheep come,
Vigorous and strong,
None injured, no infection in the herd.
At the wave of the [herdsman's] arm,
All come, all go up [into the fold].¹

爾牧來思，
以薪以蒸，
以雌以雄。
爾羊來思，
矜矜兢兢，
不騫不崩。
麾之以肱，
畢來既升。

(Trans. Legge)



¹ James Legge, *The She King*, pp. 308-309.



Wu Yang 無羊

Your herdsmen shall dream, -

Of multitudes and then of fishes;

Of the tortoise-and-serpent; and then of the falcon
banners.

The chief diviner will divine the dreams,

How the multitudes dissolving into fishes,

Betoken plentiful years;

How the tortoise-and-serpent dissolving into the
falcon banners,

Betoken the increasing population of the kingdom.¹

牧人乃夢，

眾維魚矣，

旒維旟矣。

大人占之，

眾維魚矣，

實維豐年。

旒維旟矣，

室家溱溱。

(Trans. Legge)

¹ James Legge, *The She King*, p. 309.



03 Summary





The Poetics of the Great Preface (Shi daxu 詩大序):

'The tones of a well-managed age
are peaceful and full of joy;
its government is harmonious.'¹

治世之音安以樂，其政和。

(Trans. Joseph R. Allen)



¹ *The Book of Songs*, trans. Arthur Waley, ed. with additional translations by Joseph R. Allen (Grove, 1996), pp. 365–366.



Thanks for listening

Bibliography

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The Book of Songs, trans. Arthur Waley, ed. with additional translations by Joseph R. Allen (Grove, 1996)

Zhu Xi 朱熹, *Shijizhuan* 詩集傳 13th edn. (Taipei: Zhonghua shuju, 2019)

Poems about common people living and working in peace and contentment in ‘Xiao Ya’ of *Shi Jing* 詩經·小雅

According to the description of Prof. Qu Wanli 屈萬里,¹ there are 4 poems on this topic in Xiao Ya 小雅. (Hong Yan 鴻雁, Wu Yang 無羊, Fu Tian 甫田, Da Tian 大田)

Due to the time limits, I will introduce 2 of them, which are Hong Yan 鴻雁 and Wu Yang 無羊.

Hong Yan 鴻雁

According to Prof. Qu, this poem is about dispersed people (also called refugees) are happy to receive a safe and stable place to live. 流民喜得安定之所而作之詩。²

It has 3 verses, 4 characters each line, and 6 lines each verse.

The wild geese are flying about;
Su-su goes the rustle of their wings.
[There were] those officers engaged on the commission.
Pained were we and toiled in the open fields;
All were objects of pity,
But alas for those wifeless and widows! (Trans. Legge)
鴻雁于飛，肅肅其羽。
之子于征，劬勞于野。
爰及矜人，哀此鰥寡。³

In this poem, Legge translate ‘之子’ as ‘officers’, but Zhu Xi’s interpretation is ‘the dispersed people so addressing one another’, and ‘征’ is ‘travel’. 之子，流民自相謂也。征，行也。⁴ So, the 3rd line means ‘We are travelling on our journey’. The same goes to the next two verses.

This poem is an allusion, one of the three methods of poem composition in *Shi Jing*. The others

¹ Qu Wanli 屈萬里, *Shijing quanshi* 詩經詮釋 (Xinbei: Lianjing chubanshe, 1983).

² Qu Wanli, *Shijing quanshi*, p. 237.

³ James Legge, *The Chinese Classics Vol. IV: The She King or The Book of Poetry* (Taipei: Nantian shuju, 2015), p. 292. Originally, the Chinese characters in the translation are Legge romanization. To make it readable, they are replaced by pinyin now.

⁴ Zhu Xi 朱熹, *Shijizhuan* 詩集傳 edn. (Taipei: Zhonghua shuju, 2019), p. 119.

are ‘narration’ and ‘metaphor’.

The first two lines is describing *hong* 鴻 and *yan* 鴈. They are two similar animals. *Hong* is a large species of *yan*.

They are flying, and their wings rustle, which indicates the people’s condition—toiled and endless. The following two lines describe their condition. They have no houses to live in, so they’re ‘in the open fields’. The last two lines say that the leaders look after all the pitiable people, especially worry about those wifeless and widows.

The wild geese are flying about;
And they settle in the midst of the marsh.
[There were] those officers directing the rearing of the walls; —
Five thousand cubits of them arose at once.
Though there was pain and toil,
In the end we had rest in our dwellings.
鴻雁于飛，集于中澤。
之子于垣，百堵皆作。
雖則劬勞，其究安宅。⁵

The second verse has a similar pattern. The wild geese like living in the marsh. Now they are gathering in the marsh, which indicates the dispersed people have a place to settle down at last. The third line means the people is building wall for their home, and Legge convert the unit ‘*du* 堵’ into ‘cubits’. It says they are building fast. For them, though there was pain and toil; the important thing is that they have stable dwellings in the end.

The wild geese are flying about,
And **melancholy** is their cry of ao-ao.
There were they, wise men,
Who recognized our pain and toil;
If they had been stupid men,
They would have said we were proclaiming our **insolence**.
鴻雁于飛，哀鳴嗷嗷。
維此哲人，謂我劬勞。

⁵ James Legge, *The She King*, p. 293.

維彼愚人，謂我宣驕。⁶

Ao-ao 嗷嗷 represents the sorrow sound of the geese when they haven't got a place to rest. This is also an allusion to the people. The wise men are the leaders who have compassion with the people. The stupid men are the leaders who can't govern well, and don't understand the people.

This poem describes the people from being destitute and homeless to, in the end, building their home. Their sufferings may be because of previous wars or disasters, and people wrote this poem to express gratitude to the current wise leaders.

Wu Yang 無羊

It is about animal husbandry is successful, and cattle and sheep are numerous.

此詩言牧事有成，而牛羊眾多也。⁷

It has 4 verses, 8 lines and 4 or 5 characters each line.

Who can say that you have no sheep?

There are three hundred in [each] herd.

Who says that you have no cattle?

There are ninety, which are black-lipped.

Your sheep come,

Horned, but all agreeing.

Your cattle come,

Flapping their ears.

誰謂爾無羊？三百維群。

誰謂爾無牛？九十其犝。

爾羊來思，其角濈濈 jí。

爾牛來思，其耳濕濕。⁸

There are three hundred sheep in a herd, and there's certainly not only one herd. This indicates that the number is huge.

⁶ James Legge, *The She King*, p. 293.

⁷ Zhu Xi, *Shijizhuan*, p. 126.

⁸ James Legge, *The She King*, p. 307.

Chun 犮, has two meanings, one is cattle with black lips, it's a rare kind of cattle. Another one is 7 feet cattle,⁹ it's a really big size. There are ninety unusual ones, so we can suppose that there are many more others.

Jiji 戢戢, also has two meanings, one is 'harmonious', another is 'gathered'.¹⁰ The sheep are gathering, and harmonious, their horns are close to each other, but not hitting one another.

Some are descending among the mounds;
Some are drinking at the pools;
Some are lying down, some are moving about.
Your herdsmen come,
Bearing their rain-coats and bamboo-hats,
Or carrying on their backs their provisions.
In thirties are the creatures arranged according to their colour;
For your victims there is abundant provision.
或降于阿，或飲于池，或寢或訛。
爾牧來思，何蓑何笠，或負其餼。
三十維物，爾牲則具。¹¹

This describes that both the animals and herdsmen are relaxed. *Hou* 餼 means food.¹² The standard for sacrificial animals is high, and now they are abundant, which shows the good skill of the herdsmen.

Your herdsmen come,
With their large faggots, and smaller branches,
And with their prey of birds and beasts.
Your sheep come,
Vigorous and strong,
None injured, no infection in the herd.
At the wave of the [herdsman's] arm,

⁹ Qu Wanli, *Shijing quanshi*, p. 344.

¹⁰ Duan Yucai 段玉裁, *Shuowen jiezi zhu* 說文解字註 (Taipei: Hongye wenhua, 2013), p. 568.

¹¹ James Legge, *The She King*, p. 308.

¹² Qu Wanli, *Shijing quanshi*, p. 344.

All come, all go up [into the fold].

爾牧來思，以薪以蒸，以雌以雄。

爾羊來思，矜矜兢兢，不騫不崩。

麾之以肱，畢來既升。¹³

This describes that though the herdsmen take their animals very well, they are at leisure, collecting branches and shooting birds. The last two lines describe that they can drive the sheep easily and the sheep all listen to their command.

Your herdsmen shall dream, —

Of multitudes and then of fishes;

Of the tortoise-and-serpent; and then of the falcon banners.

The chief diviner will divine the dreams,

How the multitudes dissolving into fishes,

Betoken plentiful years;

How the tortoise-and-serpent dissolving into the falcon banners,

Betoken the increasing population of the kingdom.

牧人乃夢，眾維魚矣，旒維旗矣。

大人占之，眾維魚矣，實維豐年。

旒維旗矣，室家濔濔。¹⁴

The 2nd and 5th lines are repeated, and they refer to the same things: the multitudes and fishes. The same is true of 3rd and 7th lines. *Zhao* 旒 is flag with tortoise and serpent drawing. *Yu* 旗 is flag with bird and falcon drawing.¹⁵ The pronounce of *yu* 魚(fish) is like *yu* 餘(surplus) and *yu* 裕(rich, abundant), so the dream means bumper harvest years. Flags are for gathering a crowd, so it means the increasing population of the family and the kingdom.

This poem depicts a harmonious and happy scene of herdsmen. The animals are healthy and strong, and the people are easy and prosper.

¹³ James Legge, *The She King*, pp. 308–09.

¹⁴ James Legge, *The She King*, p. 309.

¹⁵ Pei Puxian 裴普賢, *Shijing pingzhu duben* 詩經評註讀本 2nd edn. (Taipei: Sanmin shuju, 2011), p. 463.

Summary

The Poetics of the Great Preface (Shi daxu 詩大序) said, ‘The tones of a well-managed age are peaceful and full of joy; its government is harmonious.’¹⁶ 治世之音安以樂，其政和。

From the first poem, we can still see some hardship and sadness, that may be the remains of the turbulent days, but eventually the tone comes to stability and peace. We can also find warmth from the compassion words.

In the second poem, **all** we can find is peace and joy. The government in these times must be stable and harmonious. Therefore, the people can live and work in peace and contentment.

¹⁶ *The Book of Songs*, trans. Arthur Waley, ed. with additional translations by Joseph R. Allen (Grove, 1996), pp. 365–366.

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