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A Study on the *Jiangzhongzi* and its idiom in the Book of Poetry

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Respected provost, Miss Deng, good evening and good afternoon. My name is Ruxin Zhang and the topic I would like to share with you today is a study on the *Jiangzhongzi* 將仲子 and its idiom in *The Book of Poetry* 詩經.

The presentation will be divided into three parts. The first part is ‘Motivation’, the second part is ‘Analysis’. And finally, I will share with you ‘Self-Reflection’.

Motivation

Let’s start with the first part.

Today I want to share with you an idiom called *Renyan Kewei* 人言可畏, which comes from *Jiangzhongzi* this poem is in the *Lessons from the states* 國風 of *The Book of Poetry*. The reason I chose this idiom is because in today's society, the development of the Internet has made the transmission of information more convenient, and the whole world has become like a village. No matter where you are in the world, once you are connected to the Internet, you can quickly find out what is happening in the world today. Indeed, the speed of information transmission is getting faster and faster, which provides convenience for people’s life to a certain extent.

However, because people use virtual identities to communicate with others on the Internet, some people have gradually started to say irresponsible comments that hurt others. As a result, more and more people are afraid of these comments, so they often mention the idiom *Renyan Kewei*. In the past, I understood the meaning of this idiom as that people are cautious in expressing their opinions because they are afraid of

external comments. But after studying the poem, I found that the meaning of the idiom is much more than that.

Analysis

Now let's move on to the second part.

First of all, the theme of this poem is that a woman reminds the man she likes that he should obey etiquette. The poem is divided into three chapters, and the three chapters have the same structure, but each chapter will alternate in rhyme.

Let's look at the first chapter, '將仲子兮,無踰我里,無折我樹杞。'¹ The character *jiang* 將 is pronounced as *qiang* 羌, which means please.² For the character *zhong* 仲, in ancient times the elder brother was called *bo* 伯, the second was called *zhong* 仲, the third was called *shu* 叔, and the younger brother was called *ji* 季. And the ancients liked to use these characters as names, and here *zhongzi* 仲子 refers to the name of the man.³ The character *yu* 踰 means climb over,⁴ and *li* 里 means residence.⁵ The character *zhe* 折 means that the man broke the branch because he climbed over the wall,⁶ and *shuqi* 樹杞 refers to the wolfberry tree.⁷ This sentence means that the woman hopes that the man she likes will not climb over the wall to her residence, and break the wolfberry tree.

¹ Kong Yingda 孔穎達, *Exegesis of the Thirteen Classics: Maoshi Zhengyi* 十三經注疏·毛詩正義 (Taipei: Yeewen Publishing Company, 2001), p.162.

² Ma Ruichen 馬瑞辰, *Maoshi Zhuanjian Tongshi* 毛詩傳箋通釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1989), p.253.

³ Wang Jingzhi 王靜芝, *The TongShi of the Book of Songs* 詩經通釋 (Taipei: Fu Jen Catholic University, 1985), p.179.

⁴ Kong Yingda 孔穎達, *Exegesis of the Thirteen Classics: Maoshi Zhengyi* 十三經注疏·毛詩正義, p.162.

⁵ Kong Yingda 孔穎達, *Exegesis of the Thirteen Classics: Maoshi Zhengyi* 十三經注疏·毛詩正義, p.162.

⁶ Zhu Shouliang 朱守亮, *The PingShi of the Book of Songs* 詩經評釋 (Taipei: Student Book Company, 1985), p.229.

⁷ Zhu Shouliang 朱守亮, *The PingShi of the Book of Songs* 詩經評釋, p.229.

The next sentence says, ‘豈敢愛之？畏我父母。’⁸ The character *zhi* 之 is a pronoun that refers to the wolfberry tree. The sentence means that it is not that the woman loves the wolfberry tree too much, but that she is afraid of being reprimanded by her parents. The following sentence says, ‘仲可懷也，父母之言，亦可畏也！’⁹ The character *huai* 懷 means missing, this sentence means that although the woman misses the man very much, she is afraid of being blamed by her parents for his behavior.

Next, we study the rhyme of this chapter from the perspective of phonology. For the first sentence ‘將仲子兮’¹⁰, the character *xi* 兮 is usually used as a modal particle, and *ye* 也 is also a modal particle. Therefore, if we want to study the rhyme of this poem, we need to look at the previous word of the modal particle. However, although *zhi* 之 is usually used as a modal particle, in this poem it is a pronoun, referring to the wolfberry tree. In *The Shuowen Jiezi zhu* 說文解字注, it can be found that the rhyme groups of the five characters *zi* 子, *li* 里, *qi* 杞, *zhi* 之 and *mu* 母 all belong to the first ancient group *zhi* 之,¹¹ so sentences 1,2,3,4 and 5 all rhyme with the first ancient group *zhi* 之. The rhyme groups for the character *huai* 懷 and *wei* 畏 belongs to the 15th ancient groups *zhi* 脂,¹² so sentences 6 and 8 all rhyme with the 15th ancient group *zhi*. The rhymed sinigram of the 7th sentence is the character *yan* 言, which belongs to the 14th ancient group *yuan* 元.¹³ According to Zhang Taiyan's rhyme table, we can find that the relationship between the 14th ancient group *yuan* and the 15th ancient group *zhi* is called *secondary duizhuan* 次對轉. Specifically, the 14th ancient group *yuan* first turns to the 13th ancient group *zhun* 諄, and then turns to the 15th ancient group *zhi*. Therefore, there are five characters all belonging to the first

⁸ Kong Yingda 孔穎達, *Exegesis of the Thirteen Classics: Maoshi Zhengyi* 十三經注疏·毛詩正義, p.162.

⁹ Kong Yingda 孔穎達, *Exegesis of the Thirteen Classics: Maoshi Zhengyi* 十三經注疏·毛詩正義, p.162.

¹⁰ Kong Yingda 孔穎達, *Exegesis of the Thirteen Classics: Maoshi Zhengyi* 十三經注疏·毛詩正義, p.162.

¹¹ Duan Yucai 段玉裁, *Shuowen jiezi zhu* 說文解字注 (Taipei: Hungyeh Publishing Co. Ltd., 2016), p.248、275、620、701、749.

¹² Duan Yucai 段玉裁, *Shuowen jiezi zhu* 說文解字注, p.441、509.

¹³ Duan Yucai 段玉裁, *Shuowen jiezi zhu* 說文解字注, p.90.

ancient group *zhi* 之, so the first chapter is mainly rhymed with the first ancient group *zhi*.

As I said earlier, the three chapters have the same structure, but each chapter will alternation in rhyme. Specifically, the structure of the next two chapters is the same as that of the first chapter. The first chapter says, ‘無逾我里。¹⁴’ which means that the man is going to climb over the woman's residence. The second chapter says, ‘無逾我牆。¹⁵’ which means that the man is going to climb over the woman's courtyard wall. And the third chapter says, ‘無逾我園。¹⁶’ which means that the man is going to climb over the woman's private garden. But for this woman, at first, she said ‘父母之言，亦可畏也。¹⁷’, she was afraid of her parents' reprimand. Then she said ‘諸兄之言，亦可畏也。¹⁸’, she was afraid of her brothers' criticism. And finally, she said ‘人之多言，亦可畏也。¹⁹’, she was afraid of people's censure, and this is also the origin of the idiom *Renyan Kewei*. In terms of distance, the man is getting closer to the woman, but the woman is getting more and more worried.²⁰ For the rhyme of the two chapters, in the second chapter, there are three characters all belonging to the 10th ancient group *yang* 陽, so the second chapter is mainly rhymed with the 10th ancient group *yang* 陽. But in the third chapter, there are four characters all belonging to the 14th ancient group *yuan* 元, so the third chapter is mainly rhymed with the 14th ancient group *yuan* 元.

¹⁴ Kong Yingda 孔穎達, *Exegesis of the Thirteen Classics: Maoshi Zhengyi* 十三經注疏·毛詩正義, p.162.

¹⁵ Kong Yingda 孔穎達, *Exegesis of the Thirteen Classics: Maoshi Zhengyi* 十三經注疏·毛詩正義, p.162.

¹⁶ Kong Yingda 孔穎達, *Exegesis of the Thirteen Classics: Maoshi Zhengyi* 十三經注疏·毛詩正義, p.162.

¹⁷ Kong Yingda 孔穎達, *Exegesis of the Thirteen Classics: Maoshi Zhengyi* 十三經注疏·毛詩正義, p.162.

¹⁸ Kong Yingda 孔穎達, *Exegesis of the Thirteen Classics: Maoshi Zhengyi* 十三經注疏·毛詩正義, p.162.

¹⁹ Kong Yingda 孔穎達, *Exegesis of the Thirteen Classics: Maoshi Zhengyi* 十三經注疏·毛詩正義, p.162.

²⁰ Zhu Shouliang 朱守亮, *The PingShi of the Book of Songs* 詩經評釋 (Taipei: Student Book Company, 1985), p.229.

At this point, we can understand the original meaning of the idiom *Renyan Kewei* is that a woman reminds the man she likes that he should obey etiquette for afraid of people's censure. Although it seems that the woman is also cautious because she is afraid of external criticism, in the case of the poem, the woman was afraid of her parents' reprimand at first. In other words, the woman refused the man out of filial piety to her parents.

Self-Reflection

Let's now move on to the last part.

When we read this poem, if we limit its scope to the relationship between men and women, the enlightenment we learn from this poem will be very limited. And, it will also lead to our understanding of the idiom *Renyan Kewei* will not be accurate enough. As I mentioned earlier, I feel that this woman has a filial heart, she can feel the mind of her parents and know their concerns. And, she also has a sense of responsibility and does not want to bring shame to her family. But at the same time, she is also considerate of others, and she did not hurt the man's heart directly, but expressed her worries politely. And it is because she loves her parents and her family that she knows how to love others. In fact, these principles can be extended to get along with everyone. When we think of our parents and each other when we do things, we are sure to get things done. As for the social problem I mentioned at the beginning, I believe that if those who express irresponsible comments can give more consideration to the feelings of others, they might not say these irresponsible comments to hurt others. Then, the whole society will become more harmonious.

In conclusion, if a person has filial piety toward his parents, a sense of responsibility to his family, and care for others in his mind. Then, he will be very cautious when doing things, not just because he is worried about external criticism, but also because he has filial piety and sincerity in his mind.

This is my presentation, if there is any mistake in the content, any suggestions and advice would be appreciated, thank you very much.

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