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Garden of Eloquence(*Shuo yuan* 說苑)

The *Dao* of rulers (君道)

河間獻王曰。堯存心於天下。加志於窮民。痛萬姓之罹罪。憂衆生之不遂也。有一民飢。則曰。此我飢之也。有一民寒。則曰。此我寒之也。一民有罪。則曰。此我陷之也。仁昭而義立。德博而化廣。故不賞而民勸。不罰而民治。先恕而後教。是堯道也。

1

Prince Xian of Hejian said, ‘Yao fixed his heart upon the world and extended his will to the destitute. It grieved him that the people suffered punishment² and worried that the people failed to flourish. If a single one of the people went hungry, then he would say, “It is I who starved them.” If a single one of the people felt the cold, then he would say: “It is I who left them cold.” If a single one of the people commit crimes, he would say, “It is I who trapped them.” His benevolence³ was manifest and his righteousness established. Moreover, his virtue was expansive and his enlightenment broad. Therefore, the people were encouraged without rewards and governed without punishments. Yao empathised⁴ with the people first,

¹ Wei Zheng, *Qunshu Zhiyao*, ed. by Wang Yunwu (Shanghai: The Commercial Press, 1936), p. 749.

² Eric Henry (2022, 13) translates ‘zui 罪’ as adversity. According to the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*(2003, 19), ‘adversity’ means ‘difficulty’ or ‘misfortune’, conveying a general sense of hardship. I think that it lacks internal logic because it fails to connect the ‘罪’ with the ‘fa 罰’ mentioned later. In my opinion, this ‘罪’ in ‘痛萬姓之罹罪’ should be translated as ‘punishment’. Based on the context, there is a clear link among the ‘罪’ in ‘痛萬姓之罹罪’, the ‘罪’ in ‘一民有罪’, and the ‘罰’ in ‘不罰而民治’. The ‘罪’ in ‘一民有罪’ and the ‘罰’ in ‘不罰而民治’ are related to ‘people’s crime’ and ‘the punishment endured by the people’. Then, we have reasons to believe that the people’s suffering grieved Yao. Hence, the sentence 痛萬姓之罹罪 means ‘It grieved him that the people suffered punishment’. 罪 should be rendered as ‘punishment’.

³ Eric Henry (2022, 13) translates ‘ren 仁’ as ‘humanity’. However, I have different opinions. Regarding James Legge’s translation in *Zhong Yong* 中庸 (2014, 276): Benevolence is the characteristic element of humanity (仁者，人也). This states that, in translation, humanity refers to the inherent moral nature of humans, while benevolence denotes the manifested virtue of caring for others. In this paragraph, Yao cares for the people and takes responsibility for the people’s sufferings. Hence, I think that *ren* in this sentence is the manifested benevolence, not the humanity.

⁴ *Shu* 恕 is a crucial character in Confucianism, especially in the *Analects*. The conventional translation of *shu* is ‘to reciprocate’(Peimin Ni), meaning ‘to respond to (a gesture or action) with a corresponding one’ (*Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, 1196). However, it is inapplicable in this context. It is because the subject of the sentence 先恕而後教 is Yao, and there is no implication that shows Yao’s intention for expected return. Based on the sentences ‘堯存心於天下’ ‘加志於窮民’ ‘痛萬姓之罹罪’ at the beginning of

instructed later. This is the *Dao* of Yao.’

河間獻王曰。稱民無食則我不能使也。功成而不利於民。則我不能勸也。故疏河⁵而道⁶之。鑿江通於九派。⁷灑五湖而定東海。民亦勞矣。然而不怨苦者。利歸於民也。⁸

Prince Xian of Hejian said, ‘Yu stated, “if the people have nothing to eat, I cannot command them. If the achievement is completed but does not benefit the people, I cannot encourage them.” Thus, he dredged the Yellow River to guided it, he carved the Yangtze River to channel it to the Nine Tributaries⁹, and he diverted¹⁰ the Five Lakes¹¹ to flow into the Eastern Sea. Though the people toiled, they did not harbor resentment of toil, for the benefits returned to the people.’

禹出見罪人。下車問而泣之。左右曰。罪人不順道使然。君王何為痛之至於此也。禹曰。堯、舜之民。皆以堯舜之心為心。今寡人為君也。百姓各自以其心為心。是以痛之也。¹²

Yu went out and saw a criminal, the he got down from his carriage, asked about him, and wept over him. The attendants¹³ asked: ‘The criminal’s failure to be obedient to the *Dao*, leads to this. Why does Your Majesty grieve for him to this extent?’ Yu replied: ‘The people of Yao and Shun took the hearts of Yao and Shun as their own heart. Now that I have come to

this paragraph, which conveys the idea of dedicating one’s heart to the people, I translate *shu* as ‘to empathise’. meaning understand and share the feelings of another (*Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, 467), as stated in the *Shenglei* 聲類: to measure others by people’s own heart is called *shu*. (*yiqiejing yinyi* 一切經音義, 44)

⁵ *He* 河 refers to the Yellow River.(see Wang Tianhai and Yang Xiulan, 45)

⁶ The character *dao* 道 is *dao* 導. The version preserved in the *Qunshu Zhiyao* uses the character *dao* 道, yet the original *Shuo Yuan* text uses *dao* 導 (*Shuoyuan jiaozheng* 說苑校正, 7). In early Chinese texts, these two characters were often used interchangeably (*Shuowen jiezi zhu* 說文解字注, 122-123).

⁷ *Huainanzi* 21(“Yaolüe”) has 「剔河而道九岐。」剔: 洩去, “release, let flow.” 九岐 refers to nine currents that diverged from the main river and flowed into the ocean.(Eric Henry, 18)

⁸ Wei, *Qunshu Zhiyao*, ed. by Wang, p.749.

⁹ Nine Tributaries (jiupai 九派) refers to the principal rivers flowing into the Yangzi. (Eric Henry, 19)

¹⁰ The character *sa* 灑 means *fen* 分. (see Xiang Zonglu’s commentary, 4) Hence, I translate *sa* to ‘to divert’ instead of Eric Henry’s translation ‘to connect’(2022, 19).

¹¹ Five Lakes (Wuhu 五湖) refers to what is now the Taihu 太湖 lake system. (Eric Henry, 19)

¹² Wei, *Qunshu Zhiyao*, ed. by Wang, p.749.

¹³ Zuo you 左右 refers to the people travel with or take care of Shun instead of ‘left and right’.

the throne,¹⁴ the people take their own respective hearts as their own heart. This is why I grieve.’

明主者有三懼。一曰處尊位而恐不聞其過。二曰得意而恐驕。三曰聞天下之至言而恐不能行。¹⁵

A wise ruler has three has three fears: the first is that, they occupy a high position yet fear they will not hear of his faults. ¹⁶The second is that, they owe to satisfaction at some great accomplishment yet fear they will become arrogant. The third is that, they hear the wisest¹⁷ words of the world yet fear he will be unable to practice them.

師經鼓琴，魏文侯起舞。賦曰。使我言而無見違。師經援琴而撞文侯。不中。中旒。潰之。文侯顧謂左右曰。為人臣而撞其君。其罪何如。左右曰。罪當烹。提師經下堂一等。師經曰。臣可得一言而死乎。文侯曰：可。師經曰。昔堯、舜之為君也。唯恐言而人不違。桀、紂之為君也。唯恐言而人違之。臣撞桀、紂。非撞吾君也。文侯曰。釋之。是寡人之過也。懸琴於城門。以為寡人符。不補旒。以為寡人戒。¹⁸

While the musician Jing was playing the guqin¹⁹, Marquis Wen of Wei began to dance. The Marquis sang, ‘Let me speak and never be opposed. The musician Jing took up his guqin and swung it at the Marquis. He missed the Marquis Wen, but hit the strung pearls on his crown. The strung pearls fell apart. The Marquis Wen turned to his attendants and asked, ‘What is the penalty for a minister who strikes his lord?’ The attendants replied, ‘They should be boiled.’ Then, the musician Jing was dragged down the first steps of the hall. The musician Jing asked, ‘May I say one word before I die?’ The Marquis Wen granted it. The musician Jing said: ‘In ancient times, when Yao and Shun were kings, they feared only that they spoke

¹⁴ Cited in Eric Henry (2022, 19).

¹⁵ Wei, Qunshu Zhiyao, ed. by Wang, p.750.

¹⁶ Cited in Eric Henry (2022, 43).

¹⁷ Regarding *zhi* 至, there is no clearly defined meaning here. Moreover no other chapters in *Qunshu zhiyao* specify what *zhi* refers to. Thus, According to the word 明主 at the beginning of the paragraph, I translate *zhi* to ‘wisest’.

¹⁸ Wei, Qunshu Zhiyao, ed. by Wang, p.750.

¹⁹ A kind of Chinese traditional musical instrument. *Qin* 琴 is rendered as zither in Eric Henry’s translation, which is a musical instrument from Easter Europe. This is not so accurate. In order to preserve the feature of Chinese traditional musical instrument, I use *pinyin* to translate.

but the people did not oppose them. When Jie and Zhou were Kings, they feared only that they spoke but people opposed them. I was striking at Jie and Zhou instead of striking at my lord.’ The Marquis Wen said, ‘Release him. The fault was mine. Hang the guqin at the city gate to serve as a emblem of my fault. Do no repair the strung pearls of crown so that it serves as a warning to me.’

752 聖人之於天下也。譬猶一堂之上也。今有滿堂飲酒者，有一人獨索然向隅而泣，則一堂之人皆不樂矣。聖人之於天下也。譬猶一堂之上也。有一人不得其所者，則孝子不敢以其物薦進也。²⁰

The Sage’s relation to the world is like being within the hall. There is a hall full of people drinking. if there is one person alone without interests facing the corner and weeping , then all people in the hall will not delight in. The Sage’s relation to the world is like being within the hall. If there is one person who does not get their place, then the filial children would not dare to offer their possessions.²¹

周公攝天子位七年，布衣之士，執贄而所師見者十人，所友見者十二人，窮巷白屋所先見者四十九人，進善者百人，教士者千人，官朝者萬人，當此之時，誠使周公驕而且恠²²，則天下賢士至者寡矣。苟有至者，則心心作必，貪而尸祿者也。尸祿之臣，不能存君也。²³

During the seven years when the Duke of Zhou acted as regent, among the commoners, there were ten whom he visited with gifts and regarded as his teacher; twelve whom he regarded as his friends; forty-nine living in remote alleys and thatched cottages whom he saw first. There were one hundred people gave him good suggestions, one thousand people were taught by him, and ten thousand people served in his court. At that time, if the Duke of Zhou had been arrogant and stingy, then few worthy scholars would come to him. Even if there were someone came to him, they would only thought of their own profit. And they would be

²⁰ Wei, Qunshu Zhiyao, ed. by Wang, p.752.

²¹ In shuoyuan, this paragraph is about sacrifice, so *wu* 物 refers ‘ritual sacrifices’. In *qunshu zhiyao*, it is not this context, so I translate *wu* as possessions.

²² 恠 is the variant character of 吝. (yitizi zidian 異體字字典, <https://dict.variants.moe.edu.tw>)

²³ Wei, Qunshu Zhiyao, ed. by Wang, p.756.

greedy and get salary without effort. This kind of ministers cannot preserve the ruler.

易曰：王臣蹇蹇，匪躬之故，人臣之所以蹇蹇為難而諫其君者，非為身也。將欲以匡君之過，矯君之失也。君有過失，危亡之萌也。見君之過失而不諫，是輕君之危亡也。夫輕君之危亡者，忠臣不忍為也。²⁴

The Book of Changes states, the King's minister is upright, not for his own sake.' The reason a minister who finds that it is difficult to be upright yet they admonish their rulers is not for themselves. It is to correct the lords's mistakes with the faults setting right their ruler's transgressions. A ruler has faults. This is the sprouts of ruin. To see a ruler's fault and fail to admonish him is to treat his downfall lightly. To take a ruler's downfall lightly is something that a loyal officer cannot bear to do.

魏公子牟東行。穰侯送之曰。先生獨無一言以教冉乎。公子牟曰。夫官不與勢期而勢自至。勢不與富期而富自至。富不與貴期而貴自至。貴不與驕期而驕自至。驕不與罪期而罪自至。罪不與死期而死自至。穰侯曰：善。²⁵

As Prince Mou of Wei was traveling east, the Marquis of Rang saw him off and asked ,
'Does the Master have no word of instruction for me?' Prince Mou replied: 'official position has no prior agreement with power but that power will come of itself. That power has no prior agreement with wealth but that wealth will come of itself. That wealth has no prior agreement with high position but that high position will come of itself. That high position has no prior agreement with pride but that pride will come of itself? That pride has no prior agreement with criminal behavior but that criminal behavior will come of itself. That criminal behavior has no prior agreement with death but that death will come of itself. The Marquis of Rang replied, 'Excellent.'

成王將冠。周公使祝雍祝王曰。達而勿多。祝雍曰。使王近於仁。遠於佞。嗇於時。惠於財。任賢使能。²⁶

²⁴ Wei, Qunshu Zhiyao, ed. by Wang, p.759.

²⁵ Wei, Qunshu Zhiyao, ed. by Wang, p.760.

²⁶ Wei, Qunshu Zhiyao, ed. by Wang, p.761.

When King Cheng was about to undergo his capping ceremony. The Duke of Zhou commanded the Intoner Yong²⁷ to address a prayer to the King Cheng, saying, ‘Let your address is coherent and not numerous.’ The Invoker Yong said, ‘May the King stay close to the humanity²⁸ and far from flatters. Be frugal with time and generous with wealth. Employ the worthy and command the capable.

²⁷ Intoner Yong 祝雍: a specialist charged with intoning prayers in sacrificial rites.(Eric Henry, 1129)

²⁸ In the *Shuoyuan*, instead of *ren* 仁, it is *min* 民. Hence, this modification in *Qunshu zhiyao* shows that, compared with the *min*, rulers should follow *ren*. This echos in *Shangshu* 尚書 from *qunshu zhiyao*, it says, 民無常懷，懷于有仁，（民所歸無常，以仁政為常也。）

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