



Undergraduate assignment feedback form
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<i>Module Code: SIC4010</i> <i>Module title: Selected Readings from the Canon of Poetry</i>	<i>Student number: 2016013</i>
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Xiao pan 小弁 in the section of Xiao min zhi shi 小旻之什 in Xiao ya 小雅, Shi jing 詩經

Module code : SICH4010

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Date : 7 November 2024

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- 1 The background of this poem
- 2 The meaning of this poem
- 3 conclusion



The background of this poem

- The Little Preface: “The Xiao pan is directed against king zhou you wang(周幽王). It was made by the tutor of the king's eldest son (宜臼).”¹
- 〈詩序〉：「〈小弁〉，刺幽王也。太子之傅作焉。」²

¹James Legge, ‘Prolegomena’, in *The Chinese Classics Vol. IV: The She King or The Book of poetry* (Taipei: Nantian shuju, 2015), p. 68. Originally, the Chinese characters in the translation are Legge romanization. To make it readable, they are replaced by pinyin now.

² Mao Heng毛亨, Zheng Xuan鄭玄and Kong Yingda 孔穎達, *Maoshi zhengyi* 毛詩正義 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2000) p. 873.

The background of this poem

- Prof. Qu: “Mencius commented that the author of this poem didn’t receive love from his parents, so he made this poem, but it is not stated who this author is.”

(trans. by myself)

- 屈萬里:「《孟子》論此詩，大意謂人子不得於其父母者所作，而未坐實其人。茲從之。」³

³ Qu Wanli 屈萬里, *Shijing quanshi* 詩經詮釋(Xinbei: Lianjing, 1983), p. 372.

The background of this poem

- Prof. Pei: “this is a poem about a child who can not get the love of their parents, who wrote it due to afraid of slander and disaster.”
- 裴普賢：「為人子者，不得於父母而憂讒畏禍所做的詩。」⁴

⁴ Pei Puxian 裴普賢, *Shijing pingzhu duben xia* 詩經評註讀本(下) (Taipei: Sanmin shuju, 2016), p. 500.

The meaning of this poem

Stanza 7:

Our sovereign believes slanders, as readily as he joins in the pledge cup.

Our sovereign is unkind, and does not leisurely examine into things. The tree-fellers follow the lean of the tree; the faggot-cleavers follow the direction of the grain; [but] he lets alone the guilty, and imputes guilt to me.⁵

Stanza 8:

There is nothing higher than a mountain; there is nothing deeper than a [great] spring. **Our sovereign should not lightly utter his words**, Lest an ear be laid close to the wall. Do not approach my dam; do not remove my basket. My person is rejected; —of what use is it to care for what may come after?⁶

君子信讒，如或疇之。**君子不惠**，不舒究之。伐木掎矣，析薪柅矣。舍彼有罪，予之佗矣。⁷

莫高匪山，莫浚匪泉。**君子無易由言**，耳屬於垣。無逝我梁，無發我筍；我躬不閱，遑恤我後！⁸

⁵ James Legge, *The She King*, p. 339. ⁶ James Legge, *The She King*, p. 339-340.

⁶ ⁷ Mao Heng, Zheng Xuan and Kong Yingda, *Maoshi zhengyi*, p. 879-880.

⁸ Mao Heng, Zheng Xuan and Kong Yingda, *Maoshi zhengyi*, p. 880-881.



第壹章

弁彼鶯斯，歸飛提提。
民莫不穀，我獨于罹。
何辜于天？我罪伊何？
心之憂矣，云如之何！⁹

Stanza 1:

With flapping wings the crows
come back, flying all in a flock.

Other people all are happy,
and I only am full of misery.

What is my offence against
Heaven?

What is my crime ?

My heart is sad ;—
what is to be done ?¹⁰



第貳章

踽踽周道，鞠為茂草。
我心憂傷，惄焉如擣。
假寐永嘆，維憂用老。
心之憂矣，疢如疾首。¹¹

Stanza 2:

The way to Zhou(周)
should be level and easy,
but it is all overgrown with rank grass.
My heart is wounded with sorrow,
and I think till I feel as if pounded [all over].
I lie down undressed, and sigh continually ;
through my grief I am growing old.
My heart is sad;—
it puts me in pain like a headache.¹²

第參章

維桑與梓，必恭敬止。靡
瞻匪父，靡依匪母。不屬
于毛？不離于裏？天之生
我，我辰安在！¹³

Stanza 3:

Even the mulberry trees and the Zi
must be regarded with reverence :
but no one is to be looked up to like a father;
no one is to be depended on like a mother.
Have I not a connection with the hairs [of my
father]?
Did I not dwell in the womb [of my mother]?
O Heaven who gave me birth!
How was it at such an inauspicious time? ¹⁴

(trans. by Legge with modifications)

第肆章

菀彼柳斯，鳴蜩嘒嘒。
有漙者淵，萑葦淠淠。
譬彼舟流，不知所屆。
心之憂矣，不遑假寐。¹⁵

Stanza 4:

Luxuriant grow those willows,
and the cicadas [on them] go hwuy-hwuy.

Deep looks the pool,
And abundantly grow the rushes and reeds
[about it]

[But] I am like a boat adrift, —
where it will go you know not.

My heart is sad ; —
I have not leisure to lie down [even]
undressed.¹⁶

第伍章

鹿斯之奔，維足伎伎。
雉之朝雊，尚求其雌。
譬彼壞木，疾用無枝。
心之憂矣，寧莫之知！¹⁷

Stanza 5:

The stag is running away,
but his legs move slowly.
The pheasant crows in the
morning,
seeking his mate.
I am like a ruined tree,
stript by disease of all its
branches.
My heart is sad ;—
how is it that no one knows
me ?¹⁸

第陆章

相彼投兔，尚或先之：
行有死人，尚或瑾之。
君子秉心，維其忍之。
心之憂矣，涕既隕之。¹⁹

Stanza 6:

Look at the hare seeking protection ;—
some one will step in before and save it.

On the road there is a dead man ;
some one will bury him.

[But] such is the heart of our sovereign,
that there is nothing he cannot bear to
do.

My heart is sad,so that
my tears are falling down.²⁰

第柒章

君子信讒，如或疇之。
君子不惠，不舒究之。
伐木掎矣，析薪柅矣。
舍彼有罪，予之佗矣。²¹

Stanza 7:

Our sovereign believes slanders,
as readily as he joins in the pledge cup.

Our sovereign is unkind,
and does not leisurely examine into
things.

The tree-fellers follow the lean of the
tree;

the faggot-cleavers follow the direction
of the grain;

[but] he lets alone the guilty,
and imputes guilt to me.²²

第捌章

莫高匪山，莫浚匪泉。
君子無易由言，耳屬於垣。
無逝我梁，無發我筍；
我躬不閱，遑恤我後！²³

Stanza 8:

There is nothing higher than a mountain;
there is nothing deeper than a [great]
spring.

Our sovereign should not lightly utter his
words,

Lest an ear be laid close to the wall.

Do not approach my dam;
do not remove my basket.

My person is rejected;—
of what use is it to care for
what may come after? ²⁴

Conclusion



“In the ‘Kaifeng’ the fault of the parent was small, while in the ‘Xiaopan’ the fault of the parent was great... ²⁵

《孟子》曰：「《凱風》，親之過小者也；
《小弁》，親之過大者也。……」

(trans. by Bloom)

²⁵ Mencius, trans. by Irene Bloom (Columbia University Press, 2009), p.134.

²⁶ Zhaoqi 趙岐 and Sunshi 孫奭, *Mengzi zhushu* 孟子註疏 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2000), p.380.

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Zhaoqi 趙岐 and Sunshi 孫奭, *Mengzi zhushu* 孟子註疏 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2000)

**Thank you
for listening**



Xiao pan 小弁 in the section of Xiao min zhi shi 小旻之什 in Xiao ya 小雅, Shi jing 詩經

Good morning respected teachers, and my fellow classmates.

Today, I will introduce a poem about parents in *Shi jing* 《詩經》 According to the classification from Professor Qu Wanli (屈萬里). There are five poems about parents. I will report the one called “Xiao pan” 〈小弁〉

In this presentation, I will first introduce the background of poem, and then meaning of this poem, ending by a brief conclusion.

Now, I will demonstrate the background via the Little Preface and statements from three respected scholars.

Part 1: “The background of this poem” .

The Little Preface about "Xiao Pan" is that “The ‘Xiao pan’ is directed against king Zhou You wang (周幽王). It was made by the tutor of the king's eldest son (宜臼).”¹ According to Prof. Qu, “Mencius commented that the author of this poem didn’t receive love from his parents, so he made this poem, but it is not stated who this author is.” Prof. Qu agreed with Mencius.² Prof. Pei Puxian (裴普賢) also think this is a poem about a child who can not get the love of their parents, who wrote it due to afraid of slander and disaster.³ I agreed with the comment of Prof. Qu.

Next, let's enter the part two: “The meaning of this poem”.

¹ James Legge, ‘Prolegomena’, in *The Chinese Classics Vol. IV: The She King or The Book of poetry* (Taipei: Nantian shuju, 2015), p. 68. Originally, the Chinese characters in the translation are Legge romanization. To make it readable, they are replaced by pinyin now.

² Qu Wanli 屈萬里, *Shijing quanshi* 詩經詮釋 (Xinbei: Lianjing, 1983), p. 372. (trans. by myself)

³ Pei Puxian 裴普賢, *Shijing pingzhu duben xia* 詩經評註讀本（下）（Taipei: Sanmin shuju, 2016）, p. 500.(trans. by myself)

Part 2: “ The meaning of poem.”

The ‘Xiao pan’ have eight stanzas, and every stanza has eight sentences. Except the last stanza, every sentence in every stanza has same words count. In the last stanza, one sentence has two extra words “君子無易由言” .

From the first stanza to sixth stanza, they used allusive pieces (興). The author will associate many things to his own experiences.⁴

Stanza 1: With flapping wings the crows
come back, flying all in a flock.
Other people all are happy,
and I only am full of misery.
What is my offence against Heaven?
What is my crime ?
My heart is sad ;—
what is to be done ? ⁵

in the first stanza, when the author saw a flock of crows flying, it made him think of how everyone except him has a big and sweet family.⁶

The next five stanzas are also used the same way as the first one, which is used as an allusive piece (興).⁷ However, due to time constrain, we will only simply go through the following five stanzas instead of introducing them in detail.

Stanza 2: The way to Zhou (周) should be level and easy,
but it is all overgrown with rank grass.
My heart is wounded with sorrow,

⁴ Zhu Xi 朱熹, *Shijizhuan* 詩集傳, (Taibei: Zhonghua shuju, 2019), pp.139-140. (trans. by myself)

⁵ James Legge, *The She King*, p. 336.

⁶ Zhu Xi 朱熹, *Shijizhuan* 詩集傳, pp.139. (trans. by myself)

⁷ Zhu Xi 朱熹, *Shijizhuan* 詩集傳, pp.139-140. (trans. by myself)

and I think till I feel as if pounded [all over].
I lie down undressed, and sigh continually ;
through my grief I am growing old.
My heart is sad;—
it puts me in pain like a headache.⁸

Stanza 3: Even the mulberry trees and the Zi.
must be regar/ded with reverence :
but no one is to be looked up to like a father;
no one is to be depended on like a mother.
Have I not a connection with the hairs [of my father]?
Did I not dwell in the womb [of my mother]?
O Heaven who gave me birth!
How was it at such an inauspicious time? ⁹

Stanza 4: Luxuriant grow those willows,
and the cicadas [on them] go hwuy-hwuy.
Deep looks the pool,
And abundantly grow the rushes and reeds [about it]
[But] I am like a boat adrift,—
where it will go you know not.
My heart is sad ;—
I have not leisure to lie down [even] undressed.¹⁰

Stanza 5: The stag is running away,
but his legs move slowly.
The pheasant crows in the morning,
seeking his mate.
I am like a ruined tree,
stript by disease of all its branches.

⁸ James Legge, *The She King*, p. 336-337.

⁹ James Legge, *The She King*, p. 337. (trans. by Legge with modifications)

¹⁰ James Legge, *The She King*, p. 337-338.

My heart is sad ;—
how is it that no one knows me ?¹¹

Stanza 6: Look at the hare seeking protection ;—
some one will step in before and save it.
On the road there is a dead man ;
some one will bury him.
[But] such is the heart of our sovereign,
that there is nothing he cannot bear to do.
My heart is sad,
so that my tears are falling down.¹²

In the last two stanzas, author used descriptive pieces (賦) to tell his misfortune. ¹³

Stanza 7: Our sovereign believes slanders,
as readily as he joins in the pledge cup.
Our sovereign is unkind,
and does not leisurely examine into things.
The tree-fellers follow the lean of the tree;
the faggot-cleavers follow the direction of the grain;
[but] he lets alone the guilty,
and imputes guilt to me.¹⁴

Stanza 8: There is nothing higher than a mountain;
there is nothing deeper than a [great] spring.
Our sovereign should not lightly utter his words,
Lest an ear be laid close to the wall.
Do not approach my dam;

¹¹ James Legge, *The She King*, p. 338.

¹² James Legge, *The She King*, p. 338-339.

¹³ Zhu Xi 朱熹, *Shijizhuan* 詩集傳, pp.140-141. (trans. by myself)

¹⁴ James Legge, *The She King*, p. 339.

do not remove my basket.
My person is rejected;—
of what use is it to care for what may come after?¹⁵

After we went through this poem properly, let's turning to the last section, "Conclusion."

Part three: "Conclusion"

THE MENCIUS 《孟子》 said:

"In the 'Kai feng,' the fault of the parent was small, while in the
'Xiao pan' the fault of the parent was great. ¹⁶

Parents love children, children also love their parents. This is our nature. When parents have wrong actions, as their children, we need to know how to advise our parents. We should not blindly follow their wishes all the time. This is a way to love parents.

This is my bibliography.

This is the end of my presentation. Any feedback and suggestions would be appreciated, thank you for listening.

¹⁵ James Legge, *The She King*, p. 339-340.

¹⁶ *Mencius*, trans. by Irene Bloom (Columbia University Press, 2009), p.134.

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