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MA Dissertation Approval Form

I have completed/ about to complete* Part 1 of my degree.

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Title of Dissertation:

A Study of *Shi Jing* [Book of Poems] excerpts in *Qunshu zhiyao* [The Governing Principles of Ancient China]

Aims and Objectives:

This paper focuses on the study of neglected topics in *Shi Jing* excerpts of *Qunshu zhiyao* [The Governing Principles of Ancient China]. These writings are valuable for understanding the history of *Shi Jing* during the ancient middle period of China (about 220 – 649 BCE). More importantly, the research in this paper is the unique ideas of the compilers of *Qunshu zhiyao*, in relation to self-development; good governance of a country; which

together results in peace.

Abstract (approximately 400 words):

Qunshu zhiyao is constituted of excerpts from various traditional Chinese works, such as the *Six Classics*, the *Four Collections of History* etc. The editors in the Tang Dynasty(618 - 907 BCE) compiled this book with the intention of helping emperors governing the country. *Shi Jing*, as one of the *Six Classics*, contains 305 songs, but only 78 was selected for *Qunshu zhiyao*. By analysing these songs, it can be discovered that they were not casually chosen, but were cited to demonstrate the compilers' thinking about politics when they copied them from the primary sources.

When studying *Qunshu zhiyao*, academics pay more particular attention to its value in philology rather than its implications. Therefore, this paper aims to study the latter field, explaining the reason for the compilers' selection from *Shi Jing* and showing their ideology. We also hope this essay can provide useful information for future scholars who intend to study *Qunshu zhiyao*.

This paper will be divided into four chapters:

Chapter 1 (1500 words)

This chapter will illustrate the compilers' aims and the characteristics of *Qushu zhiyao*.

1. They aimed at teaching emperors to cultivate themselves, enabling to rule wisely and justly, and to bring about peace in the world.

2. The characteristics of this book in described by Wang Xiaoping, a modern scholar, as a top political textbook.¹

Chapter 2 (2000 words)

This chapter will demonstrate the value of researching for and the nature of *Shi Jing* excerpts in *Qunshu zhiyao*.

1. The purpose of this research is to discover the new and hidden thinking of the compilers in these traditional songs.
2. The nature of the book can be defined by a saying of Qu Wanli (1907-1979 CE), a distinguished researcher in the field of *Shi Jing*: ‘studying *Shi Jing* can cultivate oneself and understand how to govern a country.’²

Chapter 3 (5200 words)

This chapter will focus on textual analysis.

1. The 78 songs will be explored and classified according to their themes.
2. Based on the first step, the hidden ideas of the compilers can be discovered gradually. For example, they selected the poems ‘Guan ju 關雎’, ‘Juan er 卷耳’, ‘He bi nong yi 何彼禮矣’, ‘Ji ming 雞鳴’ and ‘Gu feng 谷風’, which are related to emperors’ wives. Based on this, we can understand one of the compilers thinking that women’s position is rather high, because wives’ characters and behaviours can have a positive or negative impact on the country.

¹ Wang Xiaoping. *Riben Shijingxue wenxian kaoshi* [the Philology of *Shi Jing* with Research and Illustration] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2012). 89.

² Qu Wanli. *Shi Jing quanshi* [*Shi Jing* with Illustration] Shanghai: Shanghai cishu shubanshe, 2016. 20.

Chapter 4 (900 words)

According to the definition and research mentioned above, it will be shown that *Shi Jing* excerpts in *Qushu zhiyao* are not simply copied passages, but convey the advanced and practical ideas of the compilers.

Short Introductory Bibliography:

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