



# How to Read Chinese Poetry Podcast

## Topic 2 *The Book of Poetry* and Diplomacy

Guest Host: Wai-ye Li (Harvard University)

### Episode 6 What Does it Mean to Say, “I Love you”?

#### I. Texts

#### Magpie's Nest 鵲巢

The magpie has a nest,

But the cuckoo stays in it.

This girl is going to her mate's home,

A hundred carriages welcome her.

The magpie has a nest,

But the cuckoo owns it.

This girl is going to her mate's home,

A hundred carriages escort her.

The magpie has a nest,

But the cuckoo fills it.

This girl is going to her mate's home,

A hundred carriages complete the ceremony.

wéi què yǒu cháo  
維鵲有巢

wéi jiū jū zhī  
維鳩居之

zhī zǐ yú guī  
之子于歸

bǎi liàng yà zhī  
百兩御之

wéi què yǒu cháo  
維鵲有巢

wéi jiū fāng zhī  
維鳩方之

zhī zǐ yú guī  
之子于歸

bǎi liàng jiāng zhī  
百兩將之

wéi què yǒu cháo  
維鵲有巢

wéi jiū yíng zhī  
維鳩盈之

zhī zǐ yú guī  
之子于歸

bǎi liàng chéng zhī  
百兩成之

[Translated by Wai-ye Li]

Picking Artemesia 采蘩

Where does she pick artemisia?

At the pool, at the pond.

For what will it be used?

For the affairs of lords and princes.

Where does she pick artemisia?

In the middle of the stream.

Where will it be used?

At the temple of lords and princes.

With her hairpiece piled high,

Day and night she is at the lord's hall.

With her hairpiece resplendent,

She makes her way back.

yú yǐ cǎi fán  
于以采蘩  
yú zhǎo yú zhǐ  
于沼于沚  
yú yǐ yòng zhī  
于以用之  
gōng hóu zhī shì  
公侯之事

yú yǐ cǎi fán  
于以采蘩  
yú jiàn zhī zhōng  
于澗之中  
yú yǐ yòng zhī  
于以用之  
gōng hóu zhī gōng  
公侯之宮

bì zhī tóng tóng  
被之僮僮  
sù yè zài gōng  
夙夜在公  
bì zhī qí qí  
被之祈祈  
bó yán huán guī  
薄言還歸

[Translated by Wai-yee Li]

There is a Dead Doe in the Wilds 野有死麇

There is a dead doe in the wilds,

White rushes wrap it.

There's a girl longing for spring,

A fine man shows her the way.

There are oak and elm branches in the wood,

There is a dead deer in the wilds.

yě yǒu sǐ jūn  
野有死麇  
bái máo bāo zhī  
白茅包之  
yǒu nǚ huái chūn  
有女懷春  
jí shì yòu zhī  
吉士誘之

lín yǒu pú sù  
林有樸楸  
yě yǒu sǐ lù  
野有死鹿

White rushes bound and wrap it,  
There is a girl just like jade.

Slowly! Gently!

Do not ruffle my kerchief!

Do not make the dog howl!

bái máo tún shù  
白茅純束  
yǒu nǚ rú yù  
有女如玉

shū ér tuì tuì xī  
舒而脫脫兮  
wú hàn wǒ shuì xī  
無感我帨兮  
wú shǐ máng yě fèi  
無使龍也吠

[Translated by Wai-ye Li]

Plum Tree 常棣

The flowers of the plum tree—

Are they not truly splendid?

Of men that now are,

None equals a brother.

The fear of death and mourning

Makes brothers long for each other.

As upland and lowland form a pair,

So elder brother and younger brother go together.

There are wagtails on the plain:

Brothers relieve each other's plight.

But even good friends

At the most do but heave a sigh.

Brothers may quarrel within the walls,

But outside they fend off insults.

cháng dì zhī huā  
常棣之華  
è bù wěi wěi  
鄂不韡韡  
fān jīn zhī rén  
凡今之人  
mò rú xiōng dì  
莫如兄弟

sǐ sāng zhī qī  
死喪之戚  
xiōng dì kǒng huái  
兄弟孔懷  
yuán xí pǒu yī  
原隰裒矣  
xiōng dì qiú yī  
兄弟求矣

jǐ lìng zài yuán  
脊令在原  
xiōng dì jí nán  
兄弟急難  
měi yǒu liáng péng  
每有良朋  
kuàng yě yǒng tàn  
況也永歎

xiōng dì xì yú qiáng  
兄弟閔于牆  
wài yù qí wù  
外御其務

Whereas even good friends  
Offer but little help.

Death and chaos, having been brought to an end,  
All is calm and still.

Now even brothers  
Are not the equal of friends.

Set forth your food stands,  
Drink wine to your fill.  
All you brothers are here together,  
Peaceful, happy, and brotherly.

With your wives and children you are in harmony,  
Matched like the little zither with the big zither.  
You brothers are in concord,  
Peaceful, merry, in great glee.

Thus you bring good to house and home,  
Joy to wife and children.  
Examine this, ponder this—  
Isn't it truly so?

měi yǒu liáng péng  
每有良朋  
zhēng yě wú róng  
蒸也無戎

sāng luàn jì píng  
喪亂既平  
jì ān qiě níng  
既安且寧  
suī yǒu xiōng dì  
雖有兄弟  
bù rú yǒu shēng  
不如友生

bìn ěr biān dòu  
儉爾籩豆  
yǐn jiǔ zhī yù  
飲酒之飫  
xiōng dì jì jù  
兄弟既具  
hé lè qiě rú  
和樂且孺

qī zǐ hào hé  
妻子好合  
rú gǔ qín sè  
如鼓琴瑟  
xiōng dì jì xū  
兄弟既翕  
hé lè qiě dān  
和樂且湛

yí ěr shì jiā  
宜爾室家  
lè ěr qī nú  
樂爾妻帑  
shì jiū shì tú  
是究是圖  
dàn qí rán hū  
亶其然乎

[Translated by Wai-ye Li]

Poems read in Mandarin by Zhao Wenxuan and Zhao Sikun

## II. Episode Notes

- Zhao Wu 趙武 (d. 541 BCE), leader of Jin, great grandson of Zhao Cui
- Shusun Bao 叔孫豹 (d. 538 BCE), minister in Lu 魯
- Han Hu 罕虎 (d. 529 BCE), minister in Zheng 鄭

## III. Textual Source

Wai-yee Li. "Poetry and Diplomacy in *Zuo Tradition (Zuozhuan)*." In *How to Read Chinese Poetry in Context: Poetic Culture from Antiquity Through the Tang*, ed. Zong-qi Cai. New York: Columbia University Press, 2018, pp. 13-29, especially 22-26.

