I. Text

Ospreys 關雎

"Guan, guan," cry the Ospreys,
On the islet in the river.
Graceful is this fair maiden,
A fine bride for a gentleman.

Thick and thin grows the water mallow,
Left and right one gets it in the flow.
Graceful is this fair maiden,
Awake or asleep, I am seeking her.

Seeking though I was, I could not possess her,
Awake or asleep I was longing for her.
Alas, longing and forlorn
I tossed and turned in bed.
Thick and thin grows the water mallow,
Left and right one plucks it.
Graceful is the fair maiden,
With zither and zithern I will befriend her.

Thick and thin grows the water mallow,
Left and right one gathers it.
Graceful is this fair maiden,
With bells and drums I will gladden her.

[Translated by Zong-qi Cai]
The poem read in Mandarin by Zhao Wenxuan

II. Episode Notes

1. The Making of the Confucian Canon during the Han
   - Emperor Wu of the Han 漢武帝 (156-87 BCE) adopted Confucianism as state ideology
   - “The Prefaces to the Book of Poetry”

2. The Commentary on “Osprey” by the author of the “The Prefaces to the Book of Poetry”
   - King Wen 文王 (1152-1056 BCE), the founder of the Zhou dynasty
   - Tai Si 太姒 (1152-1056 BCE), the wife of King Wen
   - Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127-200 AD), a famous Confucian scholar in the Eastern Han Dynasty
   - The praise of Tai Si’s moral character as reflected by her perfect harem management

III. Textual Source