



## How to Read Chinese Poetry Podcast

### Topic 3 *The Book of Poetry: The Han Canonization*

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#### Episode 9 Dead Deer Meat as a Gift

##### I. Text

In the Wilds There is a Dead Doe 野有死麕

In the wilds there is a dead doe;

With white rushes we cover her.

There was a lady longing for the spring;

A fair knight seduced her.

In the wood there is a clump of oaks,

And in the wilds a dead deer

With white rushes well bound;

There was a lady fair as jade.

“Heigh, not so hasty, not so rough;

Heigh, do not touch my handkerchief.

Take care, or the dog will bark.”

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

lín yǒu pú sù  
林有樸櫨  
yě yǒu sǐ lù  
野有死鹿  
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 shuǐ xī  
無感我帨兮  
wú shǐ máng yě fèi  
無使龍也吠

[Translated by Arthur Waley]

The poem read in Mandarin by Zhao Wenxuan

## II. Episode Notes

1. The First Layer of Commentary by the author of the “Prefaces to *the Book of Poetry*”:  
“‘In the Wilds There is a Dead Doe’ expresses abhorrence at impropriety. As the world was in turmoil, acts of violence were inflicted on people and licentious conduct became rampant. But thanks to the transforming influence of King Wen, people still abhor impropriety even in this time of chaos.”
2. The Second Layer of Commentary by a Famous Exegete Named “Mao”:  
“The impropriety at issue refers to doing away with match-making, not sending [engagement gifts of] wild geese and silk, and kidnapping and coercing women into marriage. It was the time of Zhou [the last Shang dynasty king]. In times of calamity and famine, engagement gifts were reduced but still made. The dead doe in the wild was the spoil of hunting, and could be carved up and its meat shared. The white rushes were used to wrap its meat to keep it clean and pure.”
3. The Third Layer of Commentary by Zheng Xuan
  - The deployment of “interiorization”
4. Dull Moral Allegorization and Artistic Creativity

## III. Textual Source

Zong-qi Cai. “The Canonization of the *Book of Poetry* During the Han.” 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. 65-77, especially 72-77.

