

Materials on Korean Studies

An Annotated Translation
to Yi Gok's *Jukbuinjeon*
(*Biography of Lady Bamboo*)*

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Introduction

This is an English translation of Yi Gok's 李穀 *Jukbuinjeon* (*Biography of Lady Bamboo* 竹夫人傳). Until now (2019), it has been translated into Korean only. There was neither translation for non-Korean speaking readers into English, nor into any other global language as well. Not many researchers outside of Korea are interested in the Goryeo period (918-1392) as a whole, nor in its history or literature. However, Goryeo was one of the most developed countries¹ of that time, and I think that it should be known more widely rather than only inside Korea. Therefore, I would like to offer the first English translation of Yi Gok's work, which is faithful to its original text and includes footnotes with references to the primary sources that will be useful to the readers.

Gajeong 稼亭 Yi Gok (1298-1351) lived in the latter half of the Goryeo period, during the times of Yuan intervention.² The political situation, as well as the cultural situation, were very complicated as Goryeo became a country ruled by the Mongol emperor's son-in-law. However, a new literati 新興士大夫 class started emerging and Yi Gok was one of them. His life can be divided into three parts—the first part starts when he, at 36 years old, passed the metropolitan examination 會試 in China and continues until his first career success in China. This period was probably one of the most distressing periods of his life. The second part is the time he spent living as a Yuan and Goryeo official. He was in his heyday for sixteen years, during which he was keeping social and intellectual intercourse with literati in both countries. The final part of his life is when he returned to Goryeo. When he came back to Goryeo, he did not have a very

good relationship with King Chungjeong 忠定王 (1337-1352) and the last three years of Yi Gok's life were spent visiting scenic sites of Goryeo (Han 1998, 1-7). Yi Gok was a typical scholar who was very successful in his career and gained recognition in Korea as well as in China. However, with the declining aristocratic power, he could not fulfill his ideals.

Yi Gok's writing skills were outstanding. He wrote many poems, from which we can learn about the Korean-Chinese cultural exchange in detail, and about one hundred of his literary works are recorded in *Dongmunseon* 東文選, a book compiled from poems from the times of the Silla kingdom until the time of King Sukjong of Joseon 肅宗王 (1661-1720). He is also the author of *Gajeongjip* 稼亭集 which consists of four books and twenty volumes, including the *Biography of Lady Bamboo*. This work is not a biography of a real person, but it is a pseudo-biography. This type of prose, called *gajeon* 假傳 in Korean, was used also by the famous Yi Gyubo 李奎報 (1168-1241) who personified wine and turtle, and by Yi Cheom 李詹 (1345-1405) who wrote about paper. Goryeo authors were inspired by Han Yu's 韓愈 (768-824) *Biography of Fur Point* (*Mao ying zhuan* in Chinese; *Moyeongjeon* in Korean 毛穎傳) on a writing brush. This was taken as a parody of a typical biography *Shiji* (*Sagi* in Korean 史記). As a kind of the *Shiji* parody, Goryeo works use also the *Shiji*'s form—the beginning part is about the main character's family background and in the end, there is usually a historian's judgement (this can be seen in the *Biography of Lady Bamboo*, too) (Lee 2003, 136-38).

Even though Goryeo's state ideology was Buddhism, Confucianism was starting to become more influential. Yi Gok's ideology was also Confucianism and as a Confucianist, loyalty to country and fulfilling the duties of filial piety (*chunghyo* in Korean; *zhong xiao* in Chinese 忠孝) were very important to him, but his problem was which country he should be devoted to. As a high official, he was supposed to be devoted to Yuan, but as someone born in Goryeo, he was also supposed to be devoted to his homeland. He emphasized the importance of loyalty to one's country and the fulfillment, the duties of filial piety, and kept thinking about the correlation of them (Han 1998, 1-7).

However, another problem related to Confucianism was the immoral and corrupted court society. Yi Gok emphasized the Three Bonds and Five Relationships of Confucianism (Samgangoryun in Korean; Sangangwuchang in Chinese 三綱五倫), and he wanted to express his discontentment with the behaviour of the court society. For that, he chose probably the best suitable way

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1. For example, Goryeo had a very developed marriage system, including divorces and remarriages. Inheritance was equal for sons as well as for daughters. Also, children were recorded by in their birth order in the family registers called *hojeok* 戶籍. This started to change in the end of the dynasty when neo-Confucianism was adopted and in the Joseon dynasty (1392-1910), Confucianism became the state ideology. For more information, see Kwon 1997, 1998; Choi 1981.

2. Goryeo was invaded by the Yuan empire of China first in 1231, but kept resisting for more than thirty years and even moved its royal court from the capital of Gaegyeong 開京 (nowadays Gaeseong) to Ganghwa Island. However, in 1258 Goryeo surrendered to the Yuan dynasty and until the fifth year of the reign of King Gongmin 恭愍王 (1356) when he succeeded with his movement against Yuan (*ban-Won undong* 反元運動), Goryeo was under their intervention. For more information see Kim, Im, and Han 2011, 190-248.

for him—writing this pseudo-biography. The reason why he chose bamboo is simple that bamboo symbolizes fidelity and chastity, and at least through this work he probably wanted to give a warning sign and make the people give a thought about the problems in the society. Hence, he personified plants which symbolize the highest moral qualities and as the main character, he chose the Lady Bamboo as a symbol of the chastity and showed the right way in which everyone should behave (Hwang 1979).

Text and Annotated Translation

Biography of Lady Bamboo 竹夫人傳

夫人姓竹。名憑。渭濱人質之女也。系出於蒼筤氏。其先識音律。黃帝采擢而典樂焉。虞之簫亦其後也。蒼筤自昆侖之陰徙震方。

The lady's family name was Zhu,³ and her name was Ping.⁴ She was a daughter of Yun⁵ from Weibin⁶ but her ancestral lineage came from the clan of

Canglang.⁷ His ancestor knew the rules of sounds [so] Huangdi chose him for an official post of Manager of Music. Xiao⁸ from time of Yu (Shun)⁹ was also his descendant. [The clan of] Canglang moved from the north side of Kunlun mountain¹⁰ to the eastern region.¹¹

伏羲時。與韋氏主文籍。大有功。子孫皆守業爲史官。秦之虐也。用李斯計。焚書坑儒。蒼筤之後寢微。

During the times of Fu Xi,¹² together with the clan of Wei¹³ they were in charge of preservation of books and documents and made great contribution [to the country]. All the descendants served the post and became court historians. Under the tyranny of Qin,¹⁴ Li Si's¹⁵ plan was used—the books were burned, and the scholars were buried alive.¹⁶ Canglang clan's descendants then gradually started declining.

7. *Canglang* 蒼筤 means “a young green bamboo.” In *Zhouyi* (*Book of Changes* 周易) in the part Explanation of Trigrams (Shuo Gua 說卦) is a mention about *zhen* 震 and *canglang*: “*Zhen* is (the substance of) the thunder, the dragon, . . . the green young bamboos, the reeds and rushes” 震為雷，為龍，為蒼筤竹，為萑葦 (*Zhouyi*, Shuo Gua 13; also available at <https://ctext.org/book-of-changes/shuo-gua>). This has a connection to the Eastern Region 震方.
8. *Xiao* 簫 means “a flute” or “ancient panpipes.” It is probably also referring to the music of Shun (Xiao Shao 簫韶)—in *Shujing* (*Book of Documents* 書經) the part Yi and Ji 益稷 says about the music, “when the nine parts of the service have all been performed, the male and female phoenix come into the court” 九成，鳳皇來儀 (*Shujing*, Yi Ji 5; also available at <https://ctext.org/shang-shu/yi-and-ji>).
9. Yu 虞 is the name of the fiefdom given to Shun by Yao 堯, and therefore “time of Yu” refers to the time of Shun of Yu (Shun is the legendary Sage-king of China).
10. A mountain located in the western part of China.
11. Character *Zhen* 震 is related to the Eight Trigrams 八卦 which in direction is assigned to the east. There is a mention about this in the *Book of Changes* in the part Explanation of Trigrams 說卦: “All the things come from the *Zhen*. *Zhen*, which is in the East” 萬物出乎震。震，東方也 (*Zhouyi*, Shuo Gua 5; also available at <https://ctext.org/book-of-changes/shuo-gua>).
12. Fu Xi 伏羲, another of the earliest legendary emperors, he is reputed to invent writing and according to Sima Qian's 司馬遷 *Shiji* (*Records of the Grand Historian* 史記) he also created the system of the Eight Trigrams: “自伏羲作八卦” (*Shiji* 127, Ri Zhe Lie Zhuan 11; also available at <https://ctext.org/shiji/ri-zhe-lie-zhuan>).
13. *Wei* 韋 means “a leather string which joins bamboo poles.” Sima Qian's *Records of the Grand Historian* mentions about “wei” concerning Confucius. In the later years of Confucius, he enjoyed reading the *Book of Changes* so much that “the leather string which joins bamboo poles got torn three times” 韋編三絕 (*Shiji* 47, Kongzi Shijia).
14. Qin 秦 here probably stands for Qin Shi Huang 秦始皇 (259 BC-210 BC), the founder of the Qin dynasty and the first emperor of the unified China.
15. Li Si 李斯 (280 BC-208 BC) was a prime minister, politician, writer, and calligrapher of the Qin dynasty during the rule of the emperors Qin Shi Huang and Qin Er Shi 秦二世 (229 BC-207 BC).
16. First, the books were burnt in 213 BC. It had not been long since the Qin dynasty was established and Li Si wanted to make the intellectuals' thoughts and political opinions unified. Three categories of books were considered the most dangerous—books about philosophy, poetry, and history. The

3. Even though this is a Korean literary work, the story takes place in a Chinese setting and English readers are usually familiar with names of the legendary or real characters in pinyin Romanization. Therefore, it seemed to me more appropriate to use the pinyin to Romanize all names in this translation. *Zhu* 竹 means “a bamboo.” Bamboo symbolizes someone who is right-minded, moral, or can also mean “a gentleman” 君子. In the *Book of Songs* (*Shijing* 詩經) is a song mentioning bamboo called Qi Yu 淇奥: “Looking at those curves of the Qi river, with the green bamboos, so luxuriant! There is the elegant gentleman. As from the knife and the grinder, as from the chisel and the polisher./ How dignified and how courageous he is! How splendid and how impressive he is! The elegant gentleman, he cannot be forgotten, never” 瞻彼淇奥，绿竹猗猗。有匪君子，如切如磋，如琢如磨。瑟兮僊兮，赫兮咺兮。有匪君子，终不可谖兮 (*Shijing*, Qi Yu 1; also available at <https://ctext.org/book-of-poetry/qi-yu>). Hence, bamboo as such a symbol was used not only in Korean, but also in Chinese culture. See Yun and Son 2014, 96-109.
4. *Ping* 憑 means “to support,” which shows her supportive character which comes from the stereotype about women. As she was a daughter as well as a wife, it probably has relevance with her family name Zhu (bamboo), or her husband's family name Song (Pine 松).
5. *Yun* 簀 means “a tall bamboo.” Tall bamboo in the Chinese literature “was remembered for its elegance,” and in Su Shi's 蘇軾 poem the tall bamboo might be seen as “a gentleman who was full of poise and greatness.” See Su 2013.
6. Weibin 渭濱, district of Baoji city, literally means “Wei riverbank.” Weibin is together with the “tall bamboo” mentioned in Su Shi's poem saying that Weibin is placed thousand acres in his mind: “漢川修竹賤如蓬，斤斧何曾赦籊籊。料得清貧饑太守，渭濱千畝在胸中。” This poem is a part of his essay called “On Wen Yuke's Painting of the Bamboo Grove of the Yundang Valley” 文與可畫筤谷偃竹記 with the famous idiom about having a bamboo in one's heart before drawing it: “胸中成竹.”

至漢蔡倫家客楮生者頗學文。載筆時與竹氏游。然其人輕薄。且好浸潤之譖。疾竹氏剛直。陰蠹而毀之。遂奪其任。

[When the time] of the Han dynasty¹⁷ arrived, in Cai Lun's¹⁸ house [there was] a guest called Chu Sheng¹⁹ who had learned a lot about writing. He used to carry writing brushes [with him], and from time to time he hung out with [people from] the clan of Zhu. However, the man was frivolous and moreover, he liked slanders that gradually permeated [into people's hearts].²⁰ Because he detested Zhu clan's uprightness, he talked behind [the clan's members'] backs and pulled [them] down. Eventually, he seized their posts.²¹

周有竿亦竹氏後。與太公望釣渭濱。太公作鉤。竿曰。吾聞大釣無鉤。釣之大小在曲直。直者可以釣國。曲者不過得魚也。太公從之。後果爲文王師。封於齊。舉竿賢。以渭濱爲食邑。此竹氏渭濱之所起也。

Gan²² of Zhou was also the Zhu clan's descendant. Together with Tai Gong

emperor was seeking a prolonged life, but two alchemists deceived him. For this reason, only a year after the first incident, in 212 BC, more than 460 Confucian scholars were buried alive. Both incidents are recorded in the *Records of the Grand Historian* in the part Basic Annals of the First Emperor of Qin 秦始皇本紀.

17. The second imperial dynasty of China (206 BC-220 AD).

18. During the reign of Emperor He of the Han dynasty 漢和帝, Cai Lun 蔡倫 (48-121) was a eunuch and politician, and he invented paper from the trees' barks, remnants of hemp, old clothes, and fishing nets. Because of his contribution, he got promoted to the post of Regular Palace Attendant 中常侍. Short record about his life can be found in *Hou Hanshu* (*Book of the Later Han* 後漢書), currently also available at <https://ctext.org/hou-han-shu>.

19. *Chu sheng* 楮生 literally means "the one who was born from mulberry." The bark of this kind of mulberry was used to make paper. In this text, Chu Sheng, the guest of Cai Lun, can be seen as personification of paper.

20. The meaning of this phrase is "to make someone believe a baseless story," and the reference can be found in *Lunyu* (*Analects* 論語) when Confucius was talking to Zi Zhang 子張: "Zi Zhang asked about enlightenment. Confucius said, 'The one who has not gone through slanders that gradually permeate, nor through accusations that are poignant like touching flesh, can be called enlightened. The one who has not gone through slanders that gradually permeate, nor through accusations that are poignant like touching flesh, can be called profound'" 子張問明。子曰。浸潤之譖。膚受之愬。不行焉。可謂明也已矣。浸潤之譖。膚受之愬。不行焉。可謂遠也已矣 (*Lunyu* 12, Yan Yuan 6; also available at <https://ctext.org/analects/yan-yuan>).

21. "Chu Sheng seized the Zhu clan members' posts" seems to be personification of the fact that usage of bamboo for writing was replaced by paper.

22. *Gan* 竿 means in this context "a fishing rod." About a bamboo fishing rod (*zhugan* 竹竿) can be found a poem in the *Book of Songs* called "Zhu gan": "With long and slender bamboo rods, fishing in the Qi river./ Am I not thinking about you? [Indeed, I am] but I am too far, and I cannot get to you" 籊籊竹竿, 以釣于淇。豈不爾思, 遠莫致之 (*Shijing*, "Zhu Gan" 1; also available at <https://ctext.org/book-of-poetry/zhu-gan>).

Wang,²³ he was fishing in Weibin [and while] Tai Gong was making a hook, Gan said: "I heard that you can fish well without a hook. Fishing big or small [fishes] depends on whether you use a crooked hook or do not use a hook at all. The one who fishes without a hook can [even] obtain a country, the one who fishes with the crooked hook can merely get a fish." Tai Gong followed this. Afterwards, he became a teacher of King Wen²⁴ and got appointed [to the official post] in the state of Qi. He recommended Gan as a wise man, and Weibin became his fief town. Weibin is the place of origin of the clan of Zhu.

今子孫尚多。若箨簞簞筵是已。徙楊州者稱篠簞。入胡中者稱筵。竹氏大槩有文武幹。世爲籊簞竿禮樂之用。以至射漁之微。載在典籍。班班可見。唯管性至鈍。心塞不學而終。

Even nowadays, there are many of [their] descendants like [families of] Lin, Yu,²⁵ Jun,²⁶ or Ting.²⁷ Those who changed their residence to Yangzhou are

23. Tai Gong Wang 太公望 was known for fishing in the right way without any bait. He left his hook about three *chi* (90.9 cm) above the water surface while saying: "Only those [fishes] that disobey my order, come up and bite the bait" 負命者上釣來. For this, see *Wu wang Fa Zhou pinghua* 武王伐紂平話.

24. King Wen of Zhou 周文王 (1100 BC-1050 BC) was a count of Zhou during the late Shang 商 period, but he was posthumously titled king and honored as the founder of the Zhou dynasty. Many hymns of the *Book of Songs* praise his legacy: "Only this king Wen, how scrupulous and careful he is! He served the God so diligently, so that he could embrace the great blessing./ His virtue was without flaw, therefore he obtained [loyalty of] the states from all sides" 維此文王, 小心翼翼. 昭事上帝, 聿懷多福. 厥德不回, 以受方國 (*Shijing*, Da Ming 3; also available at <https://ctext.org/book-of-poetry/da-ming>).

25. *Lin* 箨 means "a bamboo," and *yu* 筵 means "a bamboo with wide leaves." However, these two characters are used in the *Chinese Rime Dictionary Guangyun* 廣韻 in the Lin's explanation: "*Lin*: *Lin yu* is a name of [one kind of] bamboo" 箨: 箨筵竹名 (*Guangyun*, Lin 6; also available at <https://ctext.org/text.pl?node=298174&tf=en>).

26. *Jun* 簞 means, "*Jun*: a name of [one kind of] bamboo" 簞: 竹名 (*Guangyun*, Jun 5; also available at <https://ctext.org/text.pl?node=292718&tf=en>).

27. *Ting* 筵 means, "*Ting*: a branch of bamboo" 筵: 竹筵 (*Guangyun*, Ting 6; also available at <https://ctext.org/text.pl?node=297030&tf=en>).

28. Yangzhou 揚州, a city in Jiangsu province, China. It was historically one of the wealthiest cities where many great merchant families, poets, and scholars lived. In the *Book of Documents*, part Tribute of Yu 禹貢 refers to Yangzhou: "Between Huai river and the sea, Yangzhou was formed. The lake Pengli stopped the flowing water, and the sun-birds had a place to settle down. The three rivers entered the sea, and the shaking swamp's base got settled. And the short and long bamboos already spread out" 淮海, 惟揚州. 彭蠡既豬, 陽鳥攸居. 三江既入, 震澤底定. 篠簞既敷 (*Shujing*, Yu Gong 6; also available at <https://ctext.org/shang-shu/tribute-of-yu>). The short bamboo *tiao* 箨 and the tall bamboo *dang* 簞 is also mentioned as a tribute article: "*yao* and *kun* jades, with *tiao* (short) and *dang* (long) bamboos" 瑤琨篠簞. Here is the reason why the author chose these two family names for this region.

called Tiao and Dang,²⁸ and those who entered Huzhong²⁹ are called Peng.³⁰ [The people] of the Zhu clan mostly had literary and military abilities. For generations, [from] ritual vessels such as *bian* and *gui*,³¹ *sheng* and *yu*,³² and tools for animal hunting and fishing, we can clearly see its usage as it was all recorded in the old books. Gam³³ was the only one whose nature was too slow. He was so stubborn and died without learning [anything].

至箕. 隱而不仕. 有一弟曰簪. 與兄齊名. 虛中直己. 善王子猷. 子猷曰. 一日不可無此君. 因號此君. 夫子猷. 端人也. 取友必端. 則其人可知.

When the time of Yun came, he chose the life of a hermit and declined to take any official post. He had a younger brother called Dang.³⁴ Dang and his older brother were equally famous. He kept his mind clear and honest. He was also a friend of Wang Zi You.³⁵ Zi You said: “I cannot be without this gentleman even one day.” Because of this, Cijun became his pen name. This Zi You was an upright man [so] he obtained a friend who was [also] upright for sure. Therefore, one can guess [what kind of person Dang] was.

娶益母女. 生一女. 夫人是也. 總角有貞淑姿. 隣有宜男者作淫詞挑之. 夫人怒曰. 男女雖殊. 其抱節一也. 一爲人所折. 豈可復立於世. 宜生慚而去. 豈牽牛子之輩所可覬覦也. 既長. 松大夫以禮聘之. 父母曰. 松公君子人也. 其雅操與吾家相侔. 遂妻之.

[Dang] got married to Yi Mu's³⁶ daughter and gave birth to one daughter. This [daughter] is the lady [Bamboo]. Since she was young, she was a virtuous individual. In the neighbourhood, there lived [a man] called Yi Nan³⁷ who used to talk to her obscenely and provoke her. The lady was angry and said: “Although men and women are different, they have to preserve chastity. If someone breaks mine someday, how could I stand proudly in this world again?” [After hearing this] Yi Nan felt ashamed and left. How could someone herding cows [dare to] long for [her]? When [she] grew up, official Song³⁸ proposed to her with courtesy. [Her] parents said: “Duke Song is a man of virtue and his elegant conduct is worthy of our family.” Finally, she got married to him.

夫人性日益堅厚. 或臨事分辨. 捷疾若迎刃而解. 雖以梅仙之有信. 李氏之無言. 曾且不顧. 而況橘老杏子乎. 或值烟朝月夕. 吟風嘯雨. 蕭洒態度. 無得而狀. 好事者竊寫其真. 傳之爲寶. 若文與可. 蘇子瞻尤好焉.

The lady's character became stronger and more generous day by day. When faced with tasks, she made fast and swift judgements just like [a bamboo] that splits when it meets a knife's edge.³⁹ She was never distracted by a letter from Mei Xian⁴⁰ or

29. Huzhong 胡中, probably a place in the northern or western part of China, where Huren 胡人 Manchurian ethnic group lived. According to the *Records of the Grand Historian*, part Han Xi Lu Wan Biography 韓信盧綰列傳, Han Xi 韓信, military general of Han dynasty, died here.

30. Peng 蓬 means “a mugwort,” the kind called Chinese mugwort usually growing in places without abundance of water, on dry mountain slopes or steep river banks. This would correspond to Huzhong. Therefore, this seems as the reason why the author chose family name Peng for the Huzhong region. See KRESÁNEK 1988, 215.

31. *Bian* 簋 is a bamboo fruit vessel: “簋: 竹器” (*Guangyun*, Bian 2; also available at <https://ctext.org/text.pl?node=293877&if=en>). *Gui* 簋 is a bronze food vessel according to *Shuo wen jie zi* 說文解字, part about bamboo 竹部: “*Gui*: a squared shape millet vessel” 簋: 黍稷方器也 (*Shuo wen jie zi*, Zhu Bu 2925; also available at <https://ctext.org/shuo-wen-jie-zi/zhu-bu>). Both were used for the rituals.

32. *Sheng* 笙 and *yu* 竽 are gourd-shaped mouth organs with a row of wooden reed pipes. *Yu* is a larger version of *sheng* (See Zhang 2013, 206-07).

33. *Gam* 筴 means, “*Gam*: [one kind of] bamboo (with sweet and delicious shoots)” 筴: 筴竹 (*Guangyun*, Gan 3; also available at <https://ctext.org/dictionary.pl?if=en&id=298540>).

34. *Dang* 簞 is another specie of the tall bamboo, in the *Chinese Rime Dictionary* is an explanation: “*Yun*: *Yun dang* is a name of [one kind of] bamboo” 簞: 簞簞竹名 (*Guangyun*, Yun 13; also available at <https://ctext.org/text.pl?node=292620&if=en>).

35. Wang Zi You 王子猷, courtesy name of Wang Hui Zi 王徽之 (338-386), was a son of a famous calligrapher Wang Xi Zi 王羲之. He used to plant a bamboo tree every time he stayed in any house. One day, someone asked him for the reason, and he replied: “How could I be even one day without this gentleman (another expression for ‘bamboo’)?” 何可一日無此君耶. See *Jinshu* (*History of the Jin Dynasty* 晉書), part Wang Hui Zi Zhuang (Biography of Wang Hui Zi 王徽之傳).

36. *Yi mu* 益母 is a name of a herb, motherwort, which was used by women-mothers because of its wholesome effects. In the *Chinese Rime Dictionary*, there is an explanation about *yi mu* saying that it is an herb which can only benefit people: “益: 益母草爾雅注只作益” (*Guangyun*, Yi 7; also available at <https://ctext.org/text.pl?node=315488&if=en>).

37. Revolving around *yi nan* (daylily 宜男) in the past there was a superstition—when a pregnant woman put it on her back, she was supposed to give birth to a baby boy. Reference about this *yi nan*'s meaning is mentioned also in Bose 2016, 217.

38. *Song* 松 means “a pine tree,” symbolizing integrity and long life as said in the text in the following sentence someone with virtue and elegant conduct. Bamboo and pine tree are together mentioned also in *Liji* (*Classic of Rites* 禮記) in the part Rites in the formation of character 禮器 saying that the rules of propriety “are to a man the same as what is having a skin to a bamboo, and the same as what is having a heart to a pine tree or cypress” 其在人也, 如竹箭之有筠也, 如松柏之有心也 (*Liji*, Li Qi 1; also available at <https://ctext.org/liji/li-qi>).

39. *Ying ren er jie* 迎刃而解, an idiom meaning that something can be solved very easily just like when a bamboo is split by a knife.

40. *Mei xian* here means “an apricot,” and in *Taiping yulan* (*Readings of the Taiping Era* 太平御覽) in the part Jing Zhou ji 荊州記 is a story about chancellor Lu Kai 陸凱 from Song period who lived in Jiangnan region and who used to send a branch of apricot with a poem to his friend, historian Fan

her husband's silent wishes, so why would she listen to requests of mandarin elders and apricot children? Sometimes in a foggy morning or under a night moon, she would chant with the wind and whistle under rain. Her neat and fresh outlook was beyond description, so dilettantes would secretly draw her and pass it on as a treasure, and [someone] like Wen Yu Ke or Su Zi Zhan⁴¹ especially liked her.

松公長夫人十八歲。晚學仙。遊穀城山。石化不返。夫人獨居。往往歌衛風。其心搖搖。不能自持。然性好飲。史失其年。五月十三日。移家青盆山。因醉得枯渴之疾。遂不理。自得疾依人而居。晚節益堅。爲鄉里所推。三邦節度使惟箇與夫人同姓。以行狀聞。贈節婦。

Song Gong was eighteen years older than the lady, and late in life, he learnt Taoist magic. While roaming the Quingcheng mountain,⁴² he became a stone and [never] returned. The lady [then] lived alone and sang a Wei style song.⁴³ [But] her heart was shaking, and she could not control herself. Although she liked drinking from nature and the historian forgot to write down the year, on the thirteen day of the fifth lunar month she moved to Qingpen mountain.⁴⁴ Because she drank [so much], she suffered from an illness which could not be cured in the end. After she got sick, she lived while depending on people. Late in life, she [preserved] her chastity [even] firmer and she was venerated by her hometown. Three States governor Wei Jun⁴⁵ and the lady were from the same house. He

Ye 范曄, to greet him (*Taiping yulan* 970, Jing Zhou ji.).

41. Wen Yu Ke 文與可 and Su Zi Zhan 蘇子瞻 both lived in Song period and were known for their love for bamboo.

42. Mountain located in Sichuan, China. It is one of the most important centers of Taoism and according to mythology, it was a site of studies of Huangdi, the Yellow Emperor. This refers to the *Records of the Grand Historian*, part Liu hou shi jia 留侯世家 which is talking about Huang Shi Gong 黃石公, a Taoist hermit of the Qin dynasty. Once, he told Zhang Liang 張良, a strategist and statesman of the Han dynasty: "[After] thirteen years, you will see me in Jibei, a yellow stone beneath the Quingcheng mountain, that will be me!" 十三年孺子見我濟北。穀城山下黃石即我矣 (*Shiji* 55, Liu hou shi jia 3; also available at <https://ctext.org/shiji/liu-hou-shi-jia>).

43. There lived a man called Wei Wu Gong 衛武公 who was very wise and whose song included a part about luxuriant green bamboos called *qi yu* 淇奥. The lady sang a song with this part, thus a Wei style song.

44. The thirteen day of the fifth month is considered the best day for planting a pine tree. Only on this day, the tree is stupefied, just like being drunk, so people can transplant it, on the other days it protects its integrity—just like Lady Bamboo. The Qingpen mountain here symbolizes a celadon flowerpot.

45. Reference to this can be found in the *Book of Documents*, in the part Tribute of Yu: "As its (Jing Zhou) tribute...only [the finest] bamboo shoots, du bamboos, and *hu* trees (which is wood good for making arrows) were sent from the Three States which contributed the renowned articles" 惟箇,

reported about her conduct and she was bestowed the title of a chaste woman.

史氏曰。竹氏之先。有大功于上世。其苗裔皆有材抗節。見稱於世。夫人之賢宜矣。噫。既配君子。爲人所倚。而卒無嗣。天道無知。豈虛語哉。

The historian⁴⁶ said: "The Zhu clan's ancestors did a great service to previous generations. All the descendants had talent and upright character for which they were praised in the world. It was only natural for her to grow up as a virtuous person. Alas! She was already equal to the virtuous men and people relied on her. [Unfortunately,] she died without any progeny. Heaven's way is ignorant!"⁴⁷ How can this be an empty phrase?"

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籊, 檜; 三邦底貢厥名 (*Shujing*, Yu Gong 7; also available at <https://ctext.org/shang-shu/tribute-of-yu>). Hence the name Wei Jun 惟箇 refers to the first two characters of the sentence.

46. This is the typical ending for Goryeo period pseudo-biographies

47. Reference to this phrase can be found in the *History of the Jin Dynasty*, in the part Deng You zhuan 鄧攸傳 which is titled after its main character Deng You 鄧攸. During Shi Le's 石勒 (274-333) rebellion, he decided to save his dead brother's son instead of his own son. However, later he could not have any more progeny and people used to say: "The Heaven is so ignorant they let Bo Dao [die] without a son" 皇天無知, 使伯道無兒 (*Jinshu* 90, Deng You zhuan). Bo Dao is Deng You's courtesy name. Therefore, the author used this simile in the end of the story because Lady Bamboo died without any progeny just like Deng You.

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