

七步成詩——

曹子建 (續)

A Poem Composed in Seven Steps —

Cao Zijian (continued)



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BIOGRAPHIES | 人物誌

曹植是晉朝時很有名望的學問家，被稱為一代文豪。小時候常常跟著母親念佛、誦經，因為他很有悟性，久而久之，就體會佛法微妙的道理，所以對佛法生出信心。

有一次在陽春3月的時候，他率眾到魚山欣賞風光，忽然聽見空中有梵音，幽雅悅耳，很好聽的。大家也都聽見了，但大家只是聽一聽，惟獨曹植有所覺悟，他悟入這種音樂的道理，靈感湧出，於是就用七音譜成梵唄。直到現在寺院所唱的讚，都是他那時發明的。

他有才高八斗的文華，如天馬行空那樣豪放。豪放就是不守規矩，天馬行空也是不守規矩——橫跑、豎跑、上跑、下跑。可是在無規無矩當中，還能中規中矩，大致上也不能說他怎麼樣不好。

因為這個緣故，他的哥哥曹丕非常嫉妒他的才能，而且惱恨曹操曾想傳位給他，常常想要報復。所以曹丕做

Cao Zhi was a very prestigious scholar in the Jin dynasty. He was hailed as a great writer of his time. When he was young, he often followed his mother to recite the Buddha's name and chanted the sutras. Because he had a keen sense of understanding, over time, he could comprehend intuitively the subtle principles of the Buddhadharma and developed faith in it.

On one occasion, in an early spring on the third lunar month, he led an assembly into the Fish Mountain for sightseeing. Suddenly he heard a divine (Brahma) sound from space. It was tranquil, graceful and pleasant to hear. Although everyone in the assembly heard it too, but only Cao Zhi had a realization. He recognized the notion of the music and was overwhelmed with inspiration. So, he used the seven sounds and composed Buddhist hymns. To this day, the praises chanted in the Buddhist monastery are mostly composed by him.

He was endowed with remarkable literary talents. His literary style was bold and unrestrained like a heavenly steed soaring across the skies. It means that he would not abide by the rules. Like a heavenly steed soaring across the skies, he would run into every direction: horizontally, vertically, up and down. However, amidst his uninhibited style, his behavior was still considered appropriate. Overall, one could not say that there was anything bad about him.

Because of this, his elder brother Cao Pi was jealous of his talents. Moreover, he was vexed that Cao Cao had once planned to let him succeed to his throne, so he constantly thought of seeking revenge. After Cao Pi became the emperor, he was suspicious and jealous of Zhi and tried to get rid of him. He had even conspired to kill him several times. On one occasion, he looked for an opportunity

皇帝以後，對他猜忌排擠，幾次俟機加害於他，有一次又找機會加罪於他，強迫他七步內作成一首詩；如果能七步成詩，就赦他無罪，否則就要把他斬首示眾。

曹植也不加思索，還沒七步就說出一首詩：

煮豆燃豆其 豆在釜中泣
本是同根生 相煎何太急

煮豆子的時候用豆莢（豆梗子）作燃料，這時豆子在鍋裏哭泣。它說：「我這個豆子和你這個豆莢，本來都是從同一棵豆子上生出的，同氣連枝，同名同姓，又同一命運。為什麼你要變成火來燒我，我要被熱水來這麼煮，這麼難過啊？我們「本是同根生，相煎何太急！」為什麼你就要來煎熬我呢？」

這意思就是說：我們兩人是親兄弟，親兄弟不應該如此相煎熬啊！為什麼你要這樣嫉妒我呢？曹丕一聽這首詩，也覺得自己不對了，所以就沒有殺這個弟弟，把他貶到外地。

曹子建也是放不下的人，雖然有智慧，但是不能逆來順受、忍辱負重，覺得自己命運這樣不好，遇到這樣的哥哥，所以41歲時就憂憤而卒。他有銅雀台賦、洛神賦等很有名的文章流傳於世。

贊曰：

修慧無福，折磨痛苦
兄迫吟詩，豆其泣釜
同根相煎，互為荼毒
親屬同胞，斬斷手足

「修慧無福，折磨痛苦」：因為他往昔只知道修慧，沒有栽培福報，有慧而福不足，所以遭遇一些不圓滿的事情。不單他是這樣，世間上很多修行人也都是沒有福慧雙修，所以有時就會遇到坎坷逆境，受了很多折磨痛苦。

to criminalize him. He forced him to compose a poem within seven steps. If he could do it, then he would pardon his transgression. Otherwise, he would cut off his head and display it to the crowd.

Cao Zhi, without a second thought, improvised a poem within seven steps:

*Cooked over a beanstalk fire,
The beans weep in the cauldron.
Originally both are grown from the same root,
Why such eagerness to torment the another?*

Cooked over a fire using beanstalks as fuel, the beans wept in the cauldron. Why? The beans said: "I am a bean and you are a beanstalk. Originally we are both grown from the same bean, breathing the same air, and grown from the same root. We are of the same given name and same surname, and we share the same fate. Why do you turn into fire to burn me? If I am to be boiled with hot water, how miserable must it be? We are both 'originally grown from the same root, why such eagerness to torment the another!' Why do you want to torment me?"

It means that we are both brothers from the same family. Brothers from the same family should not torment one another! Why are you so jealous of me? After Cao Pi heard this poem, he realized that he was wrong. So he did not kill his younger brother but banished him to a far-off place instead.

Cao Zijian was also a person who could not put things down. Although he was intelligent, he could not accept adversity and was unwilling to suffer disgrace and insults in order to accomplish a task. He felt he had a bad destiny to have encountered such a brother. So he died of grief and indignation at the age of forty-one. His masterworks include 'Ode to the Bronze Bird Terrace', 'Ode to the Goddess of the Luo River' and other famous essays that were widely circulated.

A verse in praise says:

**Cultivate wisdom without blessings,
Only to be tortured with agony.
Elder brother forced him to compose a poem,
The beans and stalks wept in the cauldron.
Grown from the same root yet destroying one another,
Afflicting great pain upon each other.
Siblings born of the same parents,
Sever their fraternity.**

Cultivate wisdom without blessings, only to be tortured with agony. In his previous life he only knew how to cultivate wisdom and neglected to foster blessings. Having wisdom but insufficient blessings, he ran into some mishaps. This does not pertain to him only. In the mundane world, many cultivators also do not cultivate both blessings and wisdom. Therefore, sometimes they will encounter difficulties and unfavorable conditions, and suffer much torture and pain.