

# 移風易俗—西門豹

## Reforming People's Norms — Ximen Bao

宣化上人講述於1988年5月13日

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Lectured by Venerable Master Hsuan Hua on May 13, 1988

English translation by MTT (Malaysian Translation Team)



複姓西門，名豹，戰國時魏人，爲官清廉，愛民如子。初爲鄴令，微服私訪，問民疾苦。遇老者而告曰：「苦爲河伯娶婦。」豹問何故？老者曰：「若不爲河伯娶婦，百姓將遭其溺。」豹知巫者之詭計，藉機斂財。愚夫愚婦，信以爲真。豹付之：「身爲父母官，當爲民除害。」乃告老者曰：「俟河伯娶婦時，希來報告。」

屆時，豹至河畔，見老巫主持其事。問曰：「新婦容貌如何？」近視之曰：「不美！煩汝通報河伯，待選美女再娶。」於是將老巫拋於河中，隨浪而流。久未回報，復曰：「女人不會辦事，男巫去告之！」男執事，嚇得魂不附體，跪而乞命，誓不再害人。從此以後，改正陋習。迷信已除，造福人群，鑿十二渠，引水灌溉民田，百姓獲得豐衣足食，深感其惠。

西門豹，這個名字好像很惡似的，因為豹就是一個惡獸。他雖叫這個名字，但做官很清廉，也很公正的。中國的姓氏有西門、東門、南

Ximen Bao was from the vassal state of Wei (403-225 B.C.E.) and lived during the Warring States period; his family name was Ximen and his given name was Bao.

Ximen was an honest and upright government official who cared for the people as if they were his own children. When he started his career as a magistrate in the county of Ye (an ancient city in Hebei Province), he dressed as a commoner to interact with the locals to check on them and understand their concerns. He met an elder who told him, "We have been distressed by the need to find wives for the river spirit." "Why must you do that?" asked Ximen.

"If we do not, the spirit will cause a flood and drown us all," the elder responded. Ximen recognized that this was actually a shaman's scheme to accumulate wealth through cheating others and these gullible people took the shaman's words to be true. After hearing this, Ximen considered it his responsibility as a magistrate to help the people rid themselves of the evil. So, he told the elder to inform him when it was time for the river spirit to marry.

On the day of the wedding, Ximen went to the river bank and saw that an old female shaman was presiding over the ceremony. He asked, "How pretty is the bride?" He then walked over to take a closer look at the bride, and remarked, "She is not pretty at all! Could you please go and inform the river spirit that we need to delay the wedding until we can find a more beautiful bride for him?" He then ordered the old female shaman be thrown into the river and she was immediately swept away by the current. When she failed to return after a long wait, Ximen said: "Since that woman was incapable of such a task, let's send a male shaman to report to the spirit!" The male head shaman was so frightened that he knelt down, begged for his life, and swore never to cheat or harm people again. Thereafter, the bad custom stopped. With this superstitious practice eliminated, Ximen strove to bring greater happiness to the people. He implemented a project of digging twelve canals for irrigation. With farm fields well-irrigated, harvests abounded, and the people felt deep gratitude for Ximen's beneficial service.

宮、北宮，這些都是複姓。中國的四書上就有南宮括和北宮黝，又有東方、夏侯，這都是複姓。複姓就是兩個姓併到一起。西門豹，並不是一定西門那個地方有頭豹，東門也可以有，南門、北門也可以有，所以這個腦筋要活動起來。

他名字叫豹，戰國時期魏國人，曾做過鄴縣的縣令。他是個清官，做縣令的時候很關心老百姓的疾苦，於是常就微服私訪，便裝到鄉下私訪。

私訪的時候，遇到一個老年人唉聲嘆氣，西門豹就問他：「你嘆什麼氣呢？」他說：「唉呀，我們這地方現在有說不出的苦！」西門豹問：「有什麼苦呢？」他說：「這兒每一年都要給河裡頭的神送一個童女做太太，如果不送，這一年就會被水淹。所以通靈的說每年要給河伯送一個女人去。」

西門豹一聽，就知道這是有邪巫在作怪，藉機斂財，所以他告訴老年人：「今年河伯娶婦的時候，你來告訴我一聲。」娶婦的時候到了，老者就來告訴西門豹。西門豹這回不是微服了，帶著很多隨從，前呼後擁地到那裡參加這個盛典。巫婆一看，覺得縣官都來觀禮了，更擺起架子要顯一點威風，於是一聲令下，說：「河伯的新婦到了沒有？」一幫人回答：「到了。」

這時候，縣官西門豹說：「先不要往裡送，等我看看這個新婦合不合格、夠不夠標準。給河伯做太太的一定得很美麗，俗氣是不合格的。」說完就到這女孩子的前邊看一看。

「這女孩子不夠漂亮，妳不可以用她。妳再另選一個夠漂亮美麗的送去，現在河伯娶妻的日子要改期了。旁人不認識河伯，妳這個做巫醫的一定和河伯有聯絡，妳到那兒替我報告他，改期再給他送太太來。」於是也不管她願不願意、聽不聽令，就把這個巫婆硬抓著放到河裡，隨波逐浪，順水流跑了。

### Commentary:

His name, Ximen Bao, may sound fearsome because a leopard is a fierce animal. Despite his name, Ximen was actually a fair and incorruptible government official. "Ximen" is a compound Chinese family name. Chinese family names include Ximen, Dongmen (Eastern Gate), Nangong (Southern Palace), and Beigong (Northern Palace), which are all examples of compound family names. In the Four Books, there are names such as Nangong Kuo and Beigong You, as well as surnames such as Dongfang (the East), Xiahou (Marquis Xia), and other compound family names. A compound name consists of two or more characters to form a surname. Ximen Bao (which literally means Western Gate Leopard) does not necessarily mean that there is a leopard at the "Western Gate." There could also be a leopard at the eastern gate, at the southern gate, or at the northern gate. It is important to be flexible, not rigid!

He was from the vassal state of Wei during the Warring States period. He once served as a magistrate in Ye County. He was an honest and upright government official, and was greatly concerned with the suffering of the common people. He often visited the rural areas anonymously dressed as a commoner.

One day, he encountered an elder who was sighing in despair, so Ximen asked, "Why are you sighing?" "Our current misery is very difficult to express," replied the elder. "What is the problem?" asked Ximen. The elder responded, "Every year we have to offer a maiden to the river spirit to be his wife. Otherwise, the people will be drowned by floods. Those shamans said we should send a young maiden to the river spirit every year."

Once Ximen heard of this, he realized it was the shaman's scheme to collect money. So Ximen told the elder, "Please inform me when the time comes for the maiden to be offered to the river spirit in marriage this year." When the time came, the elder informed Ximen. Ximen brought along a large entourage to attend the grandiose ritual of offering the maiden. When the female shaman presiding over the ceremony saw [the county officials] approaching, she assumed that they were there to attend the ritual; wanting to put on airs, she arrogantly asked those conducting the ritual, "Is the bride for the river spirit here yet?" They answered, "Yes, she is."

Then Magistrate Ximen said, "Wait a minute! Do not send her down to the river yet. Let me see whether she is qualified. Someone who is to be married to the river spirit must be beautiful; those who are ordinary looking are not qualified!" Ximen walked closer to check the girl.

He told the shaman, "She is not pretty enough. You cannot send her. Go pick a prettier one instead. The river spirit's wedding must be postponed until a later date. Others do not know the river spirit; you as a shaman must have contact with the spirit, so go report to him about the change of date; on the new date we will send him his new wife." Unconcerned with whether or not the shaman was willing to obey the command, Ximen ordered the shaman to be seized and thrown into the river; she was then carried away by the rapid currents, bobbing up and down in the waves.

◎待續

◎To be continued