Advice to Kangshu (□□)

Original text

[Duke of Zhou] spoke thus: Lord of lords, my younger brother Feng! Our illustrious father the late King Wen (□□) has shown splendid virtues and prudently applied punishments (□□□□). He dared not despise widows and widowers. He employed the employable, respected the respectable. He was fearsome against the feared. He shined in the eyes of the people. He thus started our area, then it grew beyond our one or two regions and this is how we came to rule our western territory. All this while, he diligently sought counsel from the Lord Above (□□) and the Lord was pleased. Heaven therefore ordained King Wen to conquer the Yin. The heavenly mandate reached its territory and its people. They are provided for at the moment. Your humble elder brother (Duke of Zhou) made some efforts and thus you are here in this eastern territory.

Oh, Feng, keep this in mind. Whether these people will remain reverent would depend on whether you take the example of the late King Wen and follow his virtuous words (□□). Please do a comprehensive study of earlier sage kings of Yin so that you can govern these people well. You should uphold the teachings of Shang elders so that you can win their heart and know what to teach them. You should specially seek counsel of the ancient sage kings so that you make people prosper and protect them. When your virtues are great enough to reach the sky, you will not be cast away in the execution of the king’s commands.

My little brother Feng! Feel the pain of the people as if it is your own. Be mindful of the Heaven. Fearful as it may be, Heaven helps those who are sincere. You can see the public opinion in its broad outline, but it is difficult to retain small men. When you are there, give all your heart. Do not indulge in leisure and pleasure. Govern people instead. I heard thus, “Grievance does not arise from abundance or

shortage; it arises from lack of principle in giving rewards and lack of the ruler’s efforts.”

It is true, my little brother, you must ensure that the Yin people are well protected and that they obey the king. You must assist the royal house in fulfilling the Heaven’s mandate by renovating these people (□□□).

Oh, Feng, please be cautious and transparent in applying punishments (□□□□). Suppose a person commits a small crime. If it is not a mishap but an intentionally committed violation of the rules, then the law is that – even though the crime may be small – he cannot but be put to death. On the other hand, even though the crime is great, if it was not intentionally committed but a disastrous mishap, then the equity is that – if the person has already fully admitted its fault – he shall not be put to death.

Oh, Feng, if these are properly done, people will obey splendidly. They will regulate themselves and strive for harmony treating the misdeed as if it is a disease. They will abandon their evil deeds. Protect them as if they are your own babies. They will prosper and be orderly. It is not you, Feng, who punish or execute people. Do not punish or execute them arbitrarily. It is not you, Feng, who cut the nose or ears of the people. Do not arbitrarily cut people’s nose or ears.

When ‘external’ affairs are presented to you, let the appropriate legal offi□cer (□□) deal with them according to the punishments of Yin which stand to reason. When interrogating a prisoner, reflect for five, six or upto ten days before making the definitive decision. When legal officer pronounces the punishments in the proceedings you supervise, make sure that they are in accordance with the Yin law and the punishment and the execution are just. Do not use them to suit your personal feelings, saying, “I think this is proper”, “I think this is not in order”. [It is true, Feng, you are young. There is no one who has a heart like yours. You know my heart

and my virtue.]

Those who commit the crime of robbing, stealing, treachery, killing, laying hands on other's goods or committing violence without fearing one's life, are to be abhorred. But the greatest evil to be abhorred all the more is lack of filial piety and brotherly love. The son who does not serve his father with respect, but greatly hurts his father's heart; the father who does not love his son, but hates him; the younger brother who does not think of Heaven's brightness, and does not respect his elder brother; the elder brother who does not have compassion for his tender younger brother, and treats him coldly and suppress him: if we do not deal with the people who commit these crimes, the law which our people have received from the Heaven will be greatly annihilated and disturbed. This is why these conducts need to be constrained. They must have the punishment or execution as set down by King Wen without pardon.

When the great command is disobeyed; moreover, when junior lords, village chiefs, their deputies and minor offi□cers sent out [to Yin] entrusted with power give commands arbitrarily and cause havoc; and when people in general, without scruple and without diligence, plague their ruler, evils arise. And I abhor them. This is why you need to deal with them and put them to death in accordance with rightness.

Also, when the ruler and the heads cannot manage to control their own family members and when their small offi□cers and retainers cause terror and commit cruelty, that is to greatly abandon the king's commands and to use punishments without virtue (□□□□). You too must never fail to uphold the law and make people happy just as King Wen made them happy through his cautious reverence for the law. Having made the people happy, if you can say, "I made it", I shall be happy.

Feng! people should be guided by auspiciousness and happiness. Use the virtue of earlier sage kings of Yin and seek to govern

people well. It is not right to lead people astray. If people do not follow your lead, then there is no government in that country.

Feng! I cannot but reflect upon and tell you these virtuous sayings about administration of punishments (□□□□□□□). At the moment, the people are not quiet. A lot of them have not made up their mind to follow us. They have not yet become one with us. Only Heaven will punish those who kill us. We should not blame them as long as their crimes are not with their magnates, are not widespread. It is said, “If it is manifest, it will be heard in Heaven.”

Oh, Feng! Be cautious and respectful. Do not cause grief. Do not use bad counsel, do not follow the crooked way. Please practice virtue diligently. Have firm resolve. Scrutinise your own virtue. Have a grandiose plan. Be generous to the people to bring them comfort. Then I shall have no occasion to blame you or to remove you.

Oh, my little brother Feng! Our mandate is not permanent. You must remember it. Do not make me remove you. Obediently carry out the mandate clearly. Uphold what you heard from me. Govern people well.

Go, Feng! Do not ruin the revered law. Listen to my advice. You will then be venerated by Yin people generation after generation.