

## 《弟子规》的「冬温夏清、晨省昏定」 应怎样解释？

### How Should We Interpret the Passage in Di Zi Gui about “Warm in Winter, Cool in Summer; *Xing* in the Morning, Settled in the Evening”?

冯欣明中英双语著（简体版）

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[http://www.tsoidug.org/dizigui/DZG\\_winter\\_warm\\_simp.pdf](http://www.tsoidug.org/dizigui/DZG_winter_warm_simp.pdf)

（到繁體版 To Complicated Chinese Script:

[http://www.tsoidug.org/dizigui/DZG\\_winter\\_warm.pdf](http://www.tsoidug.org/dizigui/DZG_winter_warm.pdf)）

《弟子规》的「冬则温，夏则清，晨则省，昏则定」一段，应该怎样理解呢？我在本网站的《弟子规》英语译文<sup>1</sup>里，解释为是勉励年青人要自重自爱<sup>2</sup>：「冬天须要保持温暖，夏天须要保持清凉，早晨须要察省自己行为，黄昏须要安定下来。」这个观点，跟有些学者的解释不同，是否合理呢？

How should the passage in *Di Zi Gui*<sup>1</sup> regarding “winter then warm, summer then cool; morning then *xing*, evening then settle” be understood? In my English translation of *Di Zi Gui* posted on this website, I interpret the passage to be an

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<sup>1</sup> 见本网站的《弟子规》原、译文：

[http://www.tsoidug.org/dizigui/dizigui\\_web.pdf](http://www.tsoidug.org/dizigui/dizigui_web.pdf)

See URL above on this website for original Chinese text and English translation of *Di Zi Gui (Rules for Students)*.

<sup>2</sup> “自重自爱”是中国一个传统的概念；一个人必须自重自爱才能对自己有高标准的要求，才会有崇高的品行和志向。相反地，一个人不自重自爱的话，就会变为“自暴自弃”，就会堕落。

“Valuing and Loving Oneself” is a traditional Chinese concept; one must Value and Love Oneself in order to be able to place high demands on oneself, in order to have noble character, conduct and aspirations. In contrast, if one does not Value and Love Oneself, then one will come to “Abuse and Abandon Oneself”, will look down upon oneself, will not place high demands on oneself, and will degenerate.

encouragement for young people to Value and Love Themselves<sup>2</sup>: “In winter one keeps warm; in summer one keeps cool. In the morning one thinks over one’s conduct; in the evening one settles down.” This interpretation is different from those of some scholars; is it valid?

《弟子规》这一段，出自春秋战国时代的《礼记》「曲礼上」卷一<sup>3</sup>：「凡为人子之礼，冬温而夏清，昏定而晨省，在丑夷不争。」

This passage in *Di Zi Gui* comes from *The Book of Propriety*, of the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States Periods (approx. 720 to 220 B.C.E.—D.F.), the Volume “Rules of Propriety, First”, Roll 1:<sup>3</sup> “For all who are sons, Propriety requires warmth in the winter and coolness in the summer, settling in the evening and *xing* in the morning, and not quarreling when with peers.”

唐朝贞观年间（公元 599 – 649 年）唐太宗命陆德明对《礼记》作新的注解释文。新释文里，陆德明说，关于「冬温而夏清」的「水」字边的「清」字，流传下来的版本是错误的，应该是「冰」字边的「清」字<sup>4</sup>。这个「清」字意思是「使清凉」，是个特别字，通常只用于著名的黄香故事，每夏天晚上为鳏寡的父亲把床席拨扇使其清凉。用了这「清」字，句子的意思就是使父母的床席清凉了。新注解释文完成后，唐太宗把更改了的经文刻上石碑，作为标准正本，供全国学者参考更改。这就是历史上著名的「石经」版本了。由唐朝到现在，很多释文都沿用陆德明的这个解释，都说《礼记》这一段，是关于做子女者必须好像孝童黄香一样，为父母冬天温被、夏天凉（清）席。

During the reign era of *Zhen-guan* (599 – 649 C.E.), the Emperor Tang Tai-zhong commissions Lu De-ming to write new annotations and explanatory notes for *The*

<sup>3</sup> 《礼记正义》，十三经，中华书店，1980年印于北京，上册，第1,233页。  
*The Book of Propriety Li Ji – The Correct Meaning*, “The Thirteen Classics 十三經”, published by Zhonghua Shudian 中华书店, Beijing, 1980, Vol. I, p. 1,233.

<sup>4</sup> 见前注条。陆德明说，「清... 字从冰，冰冷也。本或作水旁，非也。」（标符为本文笔者所加。）

*Book of Propriety (Li Ji)*. In his new explanatory notes, Lu De-ming says that, in the phrase “warmth in the winter and coolness (*qing*) in the summer”, the word used in the old texts, *qing* with the water radical 清, is wrong, and that the correct word is *qing* with the ice radical 清<sup>4</sup>. Now this new *qing* means “to cool down” and is a specialized word usually reserved for the famous story of Huang Xiang, who fans and cools down the bed for his widower father every night in summer. So the meaning of the phrase now becomes “to cool down the parents’ bed”. Upon the completion of the new annotations, the emperor has the words carved onto stone steles to serve as standards to which scholars from the whole country can refer and according to which they can “correct” their texts. This is the famous “Stone Classics” text. From the Tang Dynasty to today, most scholars follow Lu De-ming’s interpretation, saying that this passage from *The Book of Propriety* is about how sons and daughters must, like Huang Xiang the child who is famous for *xiao*, i.e. for being good to his parents, warm up the bed for the parents during winter and cool the bed during summer.

另外，陆德明又说，「昏定而晨省」是「安定其床...。省，问其安否何如。」<sup>5</sup> 也就是说，黄昏时安定父母的床被，早晨时问候父母安好。

Also, Lu De-ming says that “settling in the evening and *xing* in the morning” means to “settle down the bed... *Xing* means to ask after how they (one’s parents) are feeling.”<sup>4</sup> That is to say, in the evening one must settle down one’s parents’ bed, and in the morning one must ask after how one’s parents are feeling.”<sup>5</sup>

所以，跟据陆德明的注解，《礼记》那段话就得作这样的解释：「礼要求做人儿子的，冬天要使父母的床被温暖，夏天要使它清凉；黄昏要把父母的床被安定好，早晨要问候父母安好；跟同辈（丑）一起时不要争执。」

Therefore, according to Lu De-ming’s annotations, the passage in *The Book of Propriety* means the following: “Propriety demands that all those who are sons must warm up their parents’ beds during winter and cool them down during summer,

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* Lu De-ming says, “The word *Qing*...belongs to the ice radical and means ice cold. Originally the word has sometimes been written as belonging to the water radical, but that is not so.” (Punctuation added by author of this paper.)

<sup>5</sup> 见前注条。（标符为本文笔者所加。）

*Ibid.* (Punctuation added by author of this paper.)

settle down the parents' beds in the evening and ask after how the parents feel in the morning, and not quarrel when with peers.”

那么，《弟子规》的「冬则温，夏则清，晨则省，昏则定」一段，也就应该同一解释。

Then the passage in *Di Zi Gui* about “warm in winter, cool in summer; *xing* in the morning, settled in the evening” should also be taken to mean the same.

但是，我不能同意这个解释，尽管它有一千四百年的历史，并且到了现在仍然比较流行。

I, however, cannot agree with this interpretation, even though it has a 1,400 year history and is still quite popular.

为什么呢？因为礼记是春秋时代即公元前七百至四百年左右编写的，而为父亲冬天温被、夏天凉席的孝童黄香却是东汉安帝年代（公元一零六至一二五年）的人。那就是说，《礼记》是在黄香五百至八百年之前写的。到了东汉年代，《礼记》早已是儒生必唸的经典。如果这本经典，真的好像陆德明所说那样，提倡儿子必须为父母温被凉席，那么到东汉时这点已被提倡了几百年之久，应为众所皆知。为什么出了个黄香温被凉席，竟会令人们这么惊讶呢？为什么会把温被凉席看为是至上的孝道行为，令朝廷把他提拔到京城做官、天子也要特地召见他呢？这些都应该是没有可能的，应被看为普通常情、理所当然。事实相反，黄香温被凉席震动了东汉。可见，春秋战国时代的《礼记》说的那段话，根本不是关于温被凉席；唐朝的陆德明把《礼记》误解了。

Why? It is because *The Book of Propriety* is written and compiled during the “Spring and Autumn” period, i.e. from 700 to 400 B.C.E., whereas the “child of *xiao*”, Huang Xiang, who warms the bed for his father during winter and cools it during summer, lives during the time of the Eastern Han emperor An Di, i.e. from 106 to 125 C.E. That is to say that *The Book of Propriety* has been written and compiled five to eight hundred years before Huang Xiang. By the time of the Eastern Han, *The Book of Propriety* has long been a must-read for all students of

Confucianism. If that book really has been advocating, as Lu De-ming says, that sons must warm and cool the bed for their parents, then by the Eastern Han that has been advocated for several hundred years already, and should be well known to everyone. Then why are the people at the time so surprised when they hear about Huang Xiang warming and cooling the bed? Why is warming and cooling the bed considered such an utmost act of *xiao* (being good to parents)? So much so that he is brought by the Imperial Court to the capital to be an official, and summoned by the Emperor for a personal audience? None of this should have happened; warming and cooling the parents' bed should have been considered normal, ordinary, and expected. Instead, Huang Xiang's act reverberates throughout Eastern Han China. Therefore, the original meaning of the passage from *The Book of Propriety* cannot be about warming and cooling the bed; the Tang Dynasty's Lu De-ming has misinterpreted the *Book of Propriety*.

所以，我认为《礼记》那段话的意思跟我在本网站《弟子规》英语译文里所提出的差不多：

礼要求做人儿子的，冬天要保持温暖，夏天要保持清凉；早晨要察省自己行为，黄昏要安定下来；跟同辈一起时不要争执。

早晨的「省」不是「看视和问候」的意思，而是「吾日三省吾身」，察省自己行为的意思。黄昏的「定」不是整理床被，而是把自己安定下来，以便身心休息。

I think the meaning of the passage from *The Book of Propriety* is similar to what I've said in my English translation of *Di Zi Gui* posted on this website:

*Propriety demands that those who are sons must keep warm during winter, keep cool during summer; think over their conduct in the morning, settle and calm down in the evening, and not quarrel when with peers.*

The *xing* in the morning does not mean “to see and ask after” but to reflect upon and think over one's own conduct, as in “every day I *xing* (reflect upon and think over) my conduct three times”. The “settling” in the evening is not some fixing of the bed, but is to settle and calm down oneself, so as to rest one's body and mind.

这样呢，《礼记》这段话就很顺理成章了：《礼记》是说，礼要求做人儿子的，要自重自爱：既要注意自己的身体，即冬温、夏清和昏定，也要注意自己的品行，即晨省和与同辈不争。

This way, the meaning of the passage from *The Book of Propriety* is very clear: the *Book* says that, propriety demands that those who are sons must Value and Love Themselves: first, they must look after their bodies, that is, to keep warm in winter, cool in summer, and to calm down in the evening; and second, sons must look after their character and conduct, that is, to think over their conduct in the morning and to not quarrel with peers.

不然的话，要跟随陆德明的说法的话，《礼记》这里说了五件为人儿子要做的事：冬温被、夏清席，昏定床、晨省亲、和在丑不争，为什么五件里头的三件竟然都是关于父母的床被呢？试想，对还没有病重的父母来说，床被让子女每晚整理，有多大重要呢？试问，二千多年来，有多少个孝子曾为父母这样每晚整理床被呢？当然，孝子孝女们知恩报恩，对父母尽了无微不至的细心侍奉，是一件很好、很值得提倡的事，但这些侍奉小节比起子女懂得注意自己身体和品行，会更为重要吗？孔子和曾子著的《孝经》<sup>6</sup>第一章不是说，孝的第一步是照顾自己的身体吗？同时，《孝经》第十章不是说过，如果行为不好，在上骄，在下乱，或跟同辈争执，那么虽然对父母侍奉得很丰富，达到“日用三牲之养”，仍然是不孝吗？

Otherwise, if one follows the formulation by Lu De-ming, then why is it that of the five things *The Book of Propriety* has listed that sons must perform: warming the bed in winter, cooling it in summer, settling the bed in the evening, asking after parents in the morning, and not quarreling when with peers, a whopping three are about fixing the parents' bed? Let us think about this: to parents who are not yet seriously ill, how important is it that their offspring fix the bed every night? Over the past two thousand plus years, may we ask, how many good sons have actually prepared their parents' beds this way every night? Of course, the fact that, recognizing and repaying their debt of kindness, good sons and daughters take the utmost care in serving their parents is a very good thing indeed and deserves encouragement, but can these details of service to parents be more important than the imperative that sons and daughters look after their own health, character and conduct? Hasn't *The Classic of Xiao*<sup>6</sup>, written by Confucius and Zeng Zi, pointed out in Chapter One that the beginning of *xiao* is to look after one's body? Also, has

<sup>6</sup> 见本网站的《孝经》原、译文：

[http://www.tsoidug.org/Papers/Xiao\\_Jing\\_Transltn.pdf](http://www.tsoidug.org/Papers/Xiao_Jing_Transltn.pdf)

See the above link for the original Chinese text and English translation of *Xiao Jing* (Classic of Xiao).

the same book not pointed out in Chapter Ten that if one's conduct is not good, if one is arrogant as a superior, rebellious as a subordinate, or quarrels when with peers, then even if one serves one's parents with great sumptuousness, even to the extent of "providing three animal species daily," one is still un-xiao?

另外，逻辑上，如果好像我在这网站上的《弟子规》译文那样，把《礼记》这段话所提列的五件事都解释为子女自重自爱的行为，那么五件都是同类事情，一口气说了，很顺理成章。但如果好像陆德明那样解释的话，那么《礼记》这段话就变为在讲述两类事情：一类是关于侍奉父母的事情，一类是关于子女自重自爱的事情。把头三件解释为是照顾父母的床被，把第四件解释为是对父母问安，那么四件都属于侍奉父母这一类事情。第五件，跟同辈不要争执，是件不同类的事情，单单独独地属于子女们自重自爱的那一类事情。一口气说了四件同类的事情，然后突然单独地改说另一件完全不同类的事情，似乎有些勉强，有些不自然，有些不合乎逻辑。

Also, from the point of view of logic, if we consider all five matters listed by this passage from *The Book of Propriety* to be, the way I have interpreted it in my translation of *Di Zi Gui* on this website, about conduct by offspring that displays a spirit of Valuing and Loving Self, then all five belong in the same category, and it is very appropriate to talk about them all in the same breath, as is done in the passage. If we, however, follow Lu De-ming's interpretation, then this passage from *The Book of Propriety* is talking about two categories: a category of matters concerning serving one's parents, and a category of matters concerning offspring Valuing and Loving Themselves. With the first three matters being to look after the parents' bed and the fourth matter being to ask after parents, all four belong in the same category, that of serving the parents. With the fifth matter being not to quarrel with peers, that belongs all by itself in the different category of offspring Valuing and Loving Self. To talk about four matters of the same category all in one breath, and then to suddenly switch to a single isolated matter of a completely different category, seems a bit forced, a bit unnatural, a bit illogical.

所以我认为，我在本网站的《弟子规》英语译文的说法是合理的。《弟子规》和《礼记》，跟《孝经》一样，都强调孝和礼对为人子女们的要求，是要自重自爱，要注意自己的身体，更要注意自己的品行。

Therefore, I think that my formulation in the English translation of *Di Zi Gui* posted on this website is valid. *Di Zi Gui* and *The Book of Propriety (Li Ji)* both emphasize, like *The Classic of Xiao*, that what *xiao* and propriety demand of sons and daughters is that they must Value and Love Themselves, must look after their bodies, and must look after their character and conduct.