

# I THE MAN

## Introduction

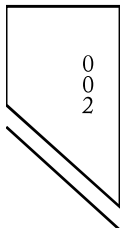
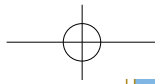
*Classic of Poetry* is the oldest poem collection in China; it is considered as the source of Chinese realistic literature. According to some scholars, it is Confucius who made the final editorial decisions for the poem collection. As one of the greatest works of ancient Chinese literature, *Classic of Poetry* has provided abundant inspiration for later poetic

writing.

In *Classic of Poetry*, “The Man” is a narrative poem, and some of its traits can be seen in those poems written in the following thousands of years, such as “A Peacock Flying Southeast” and “The Everlasting Regret”. The following story is adapted from this poem.



◉ A Confucian temple with *Classic of Poetry* on the shelf, printed as an illustration in a Latin translation of Confucianism, Paris, 1687



## Story Time

The man, goofily smiling, brought some cloth for thread, with a real intention of proposing marriage. Having sent him across the Qihe River, I lingered and said, "It's not that I would like to put it off, but that you didn't have a matchmaker by convention. I beg you not to be angry. We could fix the autumn as the day."

That autumn, climbing up the city wall, I waited for days. Finally, he was coming! We talked delightedly. He said, "I've attempted divination. Nothing unlucky at all! So, I came with the cart, in the hope of picking you up."

Before mulberry leaves turn yellow, how fresh they are! Turtledoves, do not eat the mulberries, which will intoxicate you. Girls, if you fall in love with men, they

can do what they will, but a girl will never get away.

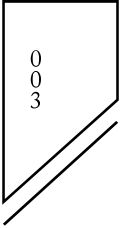
When mulberry leaves turn yellow, how sere they are! Since marrying him three years ago, I have shared his poverty all the time. The Qihe River would remember it once wetted the cart curtains as we crossed the river. I did nothing wrong, but he changed completely.

Never idle at home for three years, I wonder why he turned so rough. Not knowing what happened, my brothers joked with me as before. Alone, I could only lament my fate.

The Qihe River is very wide but has its shores. Since love has been the past, it would be better to let it end like this.



◉ The Qihe River flowing through the present Qi County of Henan Province, mentioned 18 times in *Classic of Poetry*



## Cultural Links

### ► *Classic of Poetry*

*Classic of Poetry* includes over 300 poems dating from the beginning of the Western Zhou Dynasty to the middle of the Spring and Autumn Period. As one of the “Five Classics”, which are representative works of Confucianism, it has been studied and recited by people for over 2,000 years.

Its content, mostly originating from oral chants, can be divided into three main sections: *feng*, *ya* and *song*. *Feng* is usually derived from ancient folk songs in various regions and reflects the voice of common people. *Ya* includes poems used by the aristocracy and government officials, and songs used at banquets. *Song* is often used in sacrificial rites.

Many Chinese idioms originate from *Classic of Poetry*, and some of them are used widely by people. Here are a few examples:

- 1) the fair maiden, the gentleman's good mate;
- 2) the full peach blossoms, bright and

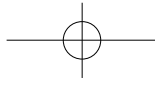
gorgeous;

- 3) her smile graceful, her eyes beautiful;
- 4) one day apart, as if three years passed;
- 5) hand in hand, with love to the end.

### ► *Fu*, *bi* and *xing* in Chinese poetry

The three major literary techniques employed in *Classic of Poetry* are *fu* (straightforward narrative), *bi* (comparisons or metaphors) and *xing* (describing another thing before talking about the main content). *Fu*, *bi*, *xing*, *feng*, *ya* and *song* are together called Six Senses from *Classic of Poetry*.

In the poem “The Man”, the first two verses describe the man's proposal and how the man and the woman got into marriage, which is *fu*. Then, the author compares beautiful girls to mulberry leaves, which is *bi*. The last verse first mentions the Qihe River has shores and then points out that love has come to an end, which is *xing*.



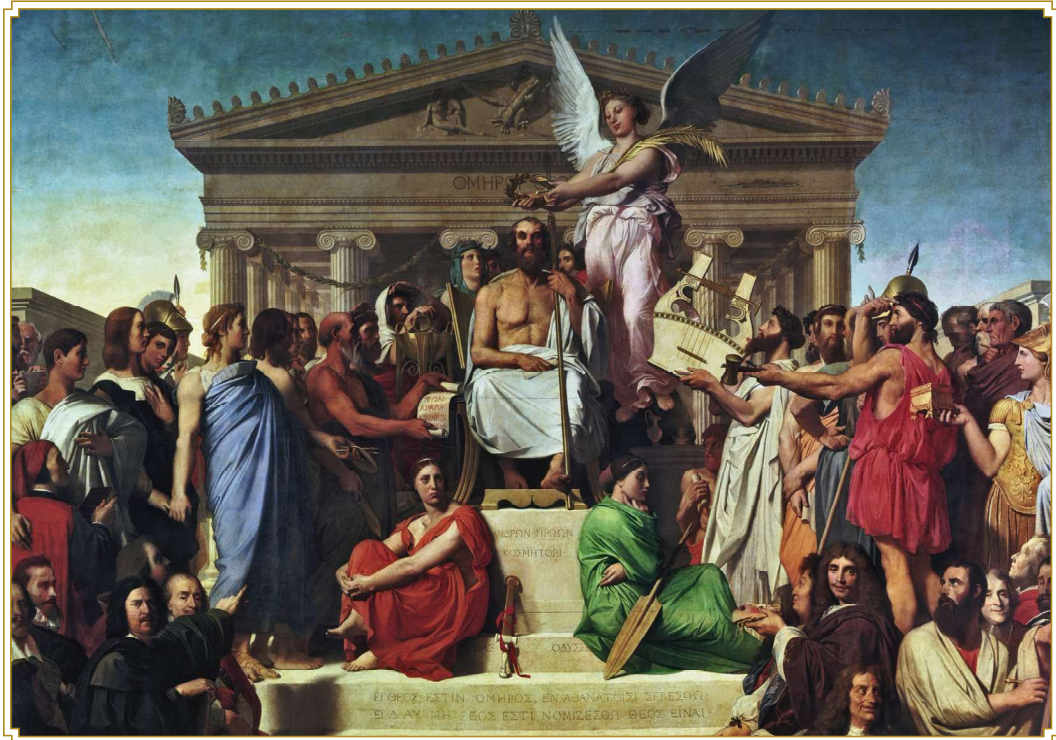
### ► *Homeric Hymns*

*Homeric Hymns* is a collection of over 30 ancient Greek poems in heroic hexameters. The poems in *Homeric Hymns* range widely in length: Some include only three or four lines; some include more than 500 lines.

Literary scholars seem to focus more on those long narratives, as well as some traits of oral literature.

The two most famous poems in *Homeric Hymns*, *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, are said to be created by Homer.

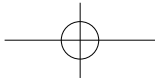
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◉ *Apotheosis of Homer*, depicting the scene of Homer (two women beside him respectively symbolizing *Iliad* and *Odyssey*) being crowned by the Winged Victory, housed in the Louvre in Paris, France

## Discussion

1. If you were a friend of the woman in the story, what would you say to her?
2. What are the similarities and differences between *Classic of Poetry* and *Homeric Hymns*?



# 壹 氓

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## 引

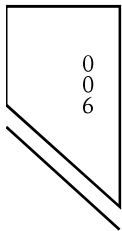
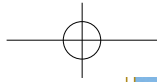
《诗经》是中国最古老的诗歌总集，它被认为是中国现实主义文学的源头。根据一些学者所述，是孔子完成了该诗集最后的编撰和定稿。作为中国古代文学最伟大的作品之一，《诗经》给之后的诗歌写作提供了很多启发。

《氓》是《诗经》中的一首叙事诗。从之后几千年的一些诗歌中，如《孔雀东南飞》和《长恨歌》，可见到此诗的一些特点。以下故事就是根据这首诗改编而来的。

壹  
氓



◦ 书架上放着《诗经》的孔庙，作为插图印制于1687年巴黎出版的儒家学说拉丁语译作中



## 故事

小伙子傻笑着带着布匹来换丝，真正的用意是求亲。我把他送过淇河，恋恋不舍地说道：“不是我想耽误婚期，是你没有通常都会有的媒人啊！我恳请你不要发怒，我们可以把婚期定在秋天。”

那年秋天，我爬上城墙等了好几天。他终于来了！我们开心地聊着，他说：“我已试着占卜过，一点凶兆都没有！因此，我就赶着车来，希望把你接走。”

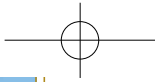
桑叶未黄时，多么鲜嫩啊！斑鸠啊，别吃那些桑葚，它们会让你们醉倒。姑娘们，如果你们恋上男人，他们可以任

意妄为，但女子将永远不能解脱。

桑叶变黄时，多么干枯啊！自从三年前嫁给他，我一直与其共苦。淇河会记得，在我们过河时，它曾溅了我们的车帷。我没做错什么，他却完全变了。

三年来，我在家里忙得团团转，我不知他为何变得如此粗暴。我的兄弟们不知道发生了什么，和以前一样开着我的玩笑。独自一人时，我只能哀叹自己的命运。

淇河很宽，但却有岸。既然爱情已经逝去，不如就让它这样终结吧。



◦ 流经现在河南省淇县的淇河  
《诗经》中提及淇河十八次

## 文化链接

### ► 《诗经》

《诗经》包含西周初期至春秋中叶之间创作的三百多首诗作，作为儒家学说的代表作“五经”之一，两千多年以来一直被人们研究和诵读。

《诗经》的内容大多来源于口头吟唱，主要分成三部分：“风”“雅”和“颂”。“风”通常来源于古时候各地的民歌，反映老百姓的心声；“雅”包括贵族官吏所使用的诗歌和宴会乐歌；“颂”常用于祭祀典礼。

很多成语源自《诗经》，其中有一些被人们广泛使用，这里提供一些例子：

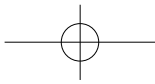
- 1) 窈窕淑女，君子好逑；
- 2) 桃之夭夭，灼灼其华；

- 3) 巧笑倩兮，美目盼兮；
- 4) 一日不见，如三秋兮；
- 5) 执子之手，与子偕老。

### ► 中国诗歌中的赋、比、兴

《诗经》中所使用的三种主要文学表现手法是：赋（平铺直叙）、比（比较或比喻）、兴（在谈及主要内容之前先描述他物）。赋、比、兴、风、雅、颂并称《诗经》“六义”。

在《氓》这首诗中，前两小节描写男子求婚以及男子和女子如何结婚，这是“赋”。之后，作者将漂亮的姑娘比作桑叶，这是“比”。最后一小节先提到淇河有岸，然后指出爱已终结，这是“兴”。



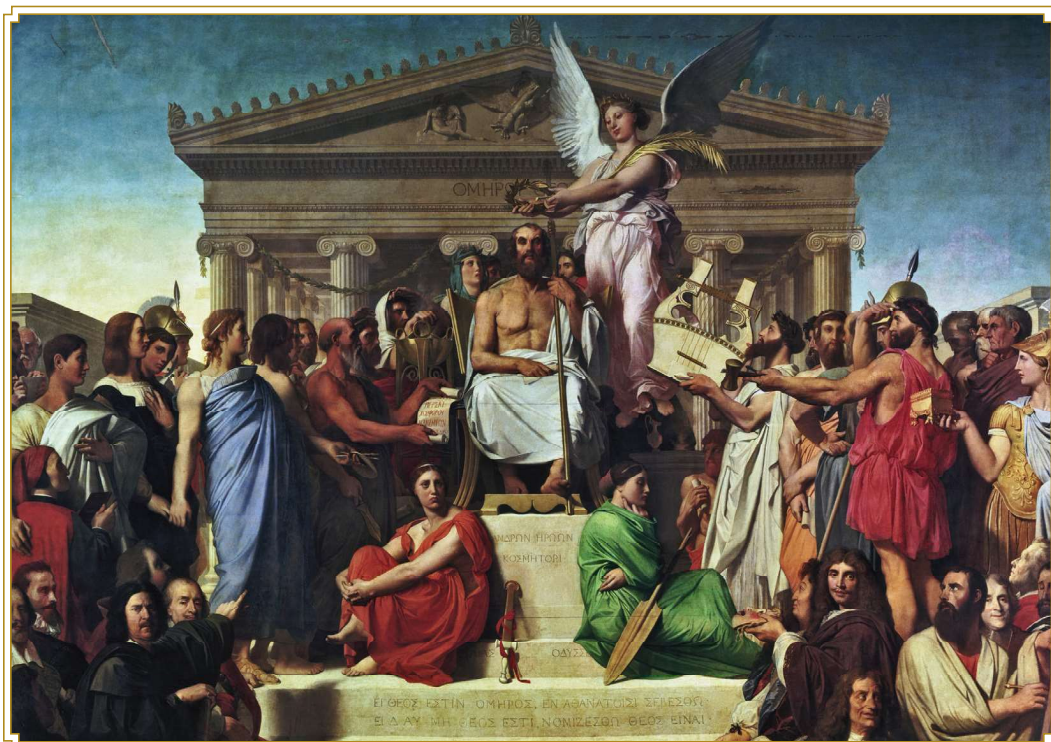
## ► 《荷马史诗》

《荷马史诗》是三十多首古希腊诗歌的合集，这些诗歌都属于英雄双韵体。《荷马史诗》中的诗歌长度差别很大：有的仅有三四行，有的超过五百行。研究文学的学

者似乎更关注那些长篇叙事诗，以及口头文学的一些特征。

《荷马史诗》中最著名的两首诗是《伊利亚特》和《奥德赛》，相传为荷马所作。

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### ◦ 《荷马礼赞》

描绘了荷马（旁边两位女性分别象征着《伊利亚特》和《奥德赛》）被胜利女神加冕的场景  
藏于法国巴黎卢浮宫

## 讨论

1. 如果你是故事中女子的朋友，你会对她说什么？
2. 《诗经》和《荷马史诗》有什么相同之处和不同之处？