

THINKING BEYOND THE BOX: PROMPTS FOR ENCOURAGING CRITICAL
THINKING WITH HIGH ABILITY STUDENTS

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**standards and concepts*

**Key Questions*

**2:00 AM TV (But Wait!! There's More!!)*

**Shifting perspectives & paradigms*

**Lateral thinking: Random Word association*

**Counterfactual thinking: What if...?*

**Poorly posed problems/questions*

**Interrogating sources*

**example/example/non-example*

**debates & trials*

**Memorial projects*

The Death of Prince Shen-sheng

In the fifth year of Duke Hsien's reign (672 B.C.), the Duke attacked Li-jung and acquired Madame Li. Both Madame Li and her younger sister became the Duke's favorites.

In the twelfth year Madame Li gave birth to a son named Hsi-ch'i. The Duke began to think seriously about the possibility of replacing Shen-sheng (the present heir) by Hsi-ch'i as the crown prince.

In the seventeenth year (660 B.C.) the Duke ordered crown prince Shen-sheng to head an army to attack Tung-shan.

"I have several sons," said the Duke to a minister, Li K'e. "I do not know which of them should be designated as my heir apparent." Li K'e did not reply. Later he went to see the crown prince.

"Is it true that I am going to be replaced as the crown prince?" Shen-sheng asked.

"You should do your best while you are commanding the army," said Li K'e. "As long as you believe that you are respectful to your father, why should you be afraid of being replaced? Moreover, a man should be more concerned with his performance as a loyal son than with the possibility, or the lack of it, of being designated as the heir apparent. You will be very safe indeed if you diligently cultivate your virtue and never place any blame on others."

One day in the nineteenth year the Duke told Madame Li privately that he intended to replace Shen-sheng with Hsi-ch'i as the crown prince. "No, you should not," Madame Li protested in tears. "The fact that Shen-sheng is the crown prince is known to all the states throughout the country. Moreover, he is at the head of the army

and is very popular with the people. You must not replace the eldest son of a legal wife by the young son of a concubine on my behalf. If you insist on carrying out your plan I will commit suicide."

Despite what she said in front of the Duke, Madame Li secretly sent her agents to spread rumors for the purpose of slandering the crown prince, though outwardly she kept on praising him. She, of course, wanted her own son to be installed as crown prince.

One day in the twenty-first year (656 B.C.) Madame Li told the crown prince that she had dreamed about Madame Chiang, the crown prince's deceased mother, and that he, the crown prince, should proceed to Ch'ufu to offer sacrifices to comfort his deceased mother. After the rituals had been completed, the crown prince brought back the sacrificial meat to his father as tribute. The Duke was then on a hunting trip outside the capital, and Madame Li ordered her servants secretly to place poison in the meat.

Two days later the Duke returned from his hunting trip, and the royal chef presented the sacrificial meat. The Duke was about to eat it when he was stopped by Madame Li. "Since the meat comes from a place far away, it should be tested before you eat it," she said. The Duke threw the meat to the ground, the ground began to bulge. Fed with it, a dog died immediately. Tested on a slave, the slave also dropped dead. "How cruel the crown prince is!" Madame Li said in tears. "He wants to kill his own father whom he is anxious to replace. How can he possibly have mercy on others? You, sir, are very advanced in years, and yet he cannot wait. The reason he wants to kill his father is because he cannot stand

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me and my son Hsi-Ch'i. Under the circumstances I and my son can either flee to another country before it is too late, or commit suicide before the crown prince slaughters us with his own hands. Formerly when you wanted to replace him as crown prince, I was strongly opposed to it. Now I know how wrong I was."

As soon as he learned that he had been implicated by Madame Li in the alleged attempt to murder his father, the crown prince fled to Hsinch'eng. Unable to locate the crown prince, the Duke was furious enough to kill the prince's tutor as a substitute.

Someone told the crown prince that the poison was placed by Madame Li and that he should

inform his father about his innocence. "My father is very old," said the crown prince. "He needs Madame Li for his old age. Without her he could not eat or sleep well. If I tell him the truth, he will be very angry with her. I cannot bear to see his only comfort taken away from him during his old age." Someone suggested that he should flee to another state. "With a bad reputation such as I have, which state or country will take me in as its guest?" said the crown prince. "The only course open to me is to commit suicide."

In the twelfth month, crown prince Shen-sheng committed suicide at Hsinch'eng.