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Tales From The Principalities
Ancient Chinese Short Stories

ALL STORIES ARE TRANSLATED BY ERIC HENRY

CHAPTER FIVE
TALES FROM JÌN – 1

A teacher imparting instruction to students. Note the absence of chairs. When not standing, people sat or squatted on the floor, often on mats. Ink painting in the Zibo Chinese Ceramics Museum, Zibo City, Shandong Province, Summer, 2007. Artist unknown. Image edited by David Henry.

Jìn was the most prominent of the Chinese States in the Spring and Autumn Era. Nine of the present work's twenty-one fascicles are devoted to "Tales from Jìn," amounting in all to 127 stories. Jìn was located north of the Zhōu royal domain on the opposite side of the Yellow River. It rose to supremacy among the States under the rule of Lord Wén of Jìn (reigned 635–628), the third of the five hegemons, and played a leading role in affairs of the States in subsequent eras as well.

Jìn was originally given as a fief to Táng Shú Yú 唐叔虞, the younger brother of King Chéng of Zhōu (reigned 1042–1006). It is somewhat difficult to see how Jìn became a unitary State in the first place, because its topography was full of mountainous barriers, and in fact its earliest detailed historical accounts tell a tale of disunity and bloody conflict between different branches of the ruling family. It was Lord Xiàn of Jìn (reigned 676–651) who brought unity to the State, chiefly by destroying branches of his own lineage, and who added to the State's size and strength by conquering additional territories. The capital of Jìn was a city called Jiàng 絳, but another city to east, Qūwò 曲沃, was also a major center of power. Toward the end of the Spring and Autumn Era, several Jìn clans fell into fierce conflict with each other, and in 451 the State broke into three independent entities, Zhào 趙, Wèi (Nguì) 魏, and Hán 韓, a situation formally acknowledged by the Zhōu Court in 403.

The five stories in this section all come from the first three books of Jìn. They detail the turmoil that prevailed in the Jìn Court prior to advent of Lord Wén in 635.~ Eric Henry.

Author: Unknown, 4th Century BCE.

31. Diviner Sū Makes a Prediction

The theme of divination appears here and in a number of other tales in this collection. The form of augury that appears here is "turtle shell

divination," a technique that first made its appearance in the Courts of Shāng Dynasty Kings, about a thousand years prior to the composition of this item. In this form of divination, a statement about the future (for example, "the forthcoming hunt will be greatly successful") is inscribed in characters on a plastron, the hard under-shell of a turtle, and an area close to the inscription is made thinner by filing. Then the statement is "tested" by applying heat to the thinned-out area, causing a crack to appear. The statement is presumed to be either validated or negated by the nature of the crack, or perhaps by the nature of the sound made when the plastron cracks. In *Tales of the Principalities*, wise people invariably believe in the validity of such indications and guide their actions accordingly; only foolish or reckless people ignore divinations. This story tells how Diviner Sū interprets the cracks on the tortoise shell and makes his prediction. This is Item 2 in "Tales from Jìn" (Book 1). ~ Eric Henry.

Lord Xiàn[1] had a turtle-shell divination made concerning his attack upon the Lí Róng.[2] Diviner Sū[3] interpreted the signs and said, "It will be victorious but unlucky."

"How do you explain that?" asked Lord Xiàn.

"The omen we have obtained," he replied, "goes as follows: 'A bone held tightly in the mouth, the molars and incisors sowing slander.' The Róng and the Xià[4] crisscross each other, meaning that both will be victorious—that is why it is worded thus. The mouth is to be feared. The people will grow disaffected, and the State will suffer shifting

[1] Prince Guǐ Zhū 詭諸, the son of Lord Wǔ of Jìn. He reigned from 676 to 652.

[2] The Lí Róng 驪戎 were a branch of the Western Róng in the vicinity of Lí mountain 驪山. Their chief was a baron (*nán* 男) and bore the royal surname Jī 姬.

[3] Shǐ Sū 史蘇, an officer of Jìn, was an archivist and diviner.

[4] "The Xià" 夏 refers to the Central States, especially Jìn.

allegiances."

"How could a mouth have anything to do with it!" exclaimed Lord Xiàn. "Mouths depend on me. Who will dare advocate what I do not accept?"

"If there is one who can alienate the people," answered Diviner Sū, "it will surely be a person whose speeches are pleasing to you, and you will suspect nothing. How will you be able to block such speech?"

Lord Xiàn failed to heed this warning, but forthwith attacked and conquered the Lì Róng. He captured Lí Jī[5], brought her back, and bestowed great favor on her, making her his Chief Consort. He held a banquet for his officers at which he had the master of ceremonies fill Diviner Sū's goblet and said, "I shall have you drink, but not partake of delicacies. You predicted that the campaign against the Lí Róng would be 'victorious but unlucky,' so I am rewarding you with a glass of wine and punishing you by withholding delicacies. I have conquered a State and gained a Consort. What could be luckier than that?"

Diviner Sū drank off the goblet, kowtowed twice, and said, "The omen was there. I dared not conceal its meaning. To conceal the meaning of an omen would be to fail in the performance of my office. This would amount to two offenses. How could I then serve Your Lordship? A great punishment would then have been in store for me, a thing far worse than denial of delicacies. But perhaps Your Lordship should rejoice in this good fortune and prepare for the bad. If the bad does not come, what harm will be done by preparing for it? If bad fortune does arrive, preparation may lessen it. That my words have not been borne out is a blessing to the State. How dare I shrink from punishment?"

After going out from the banquet, Diviner Sū addressed the

[5] Lì Jī 驪姬 was the daughter of the Li Róng Ruler.

officers, saying, "There are female warriors just as there are male warriors. If Jìn used male warriors to vanquish the Róng, the Róng will certainly use female warriors to vanquish Jìn. There's no help for it!"

Lǐ Kè[6] asked, "What do you mean?"

"In former times," Diviner Sū replied, "Jié[7] of Xià attacked Yǒu Shī,[8] and the men of Yǒu Shī presented him with the beauty Mèi Xǐ.[9] Mèi Xǐ enjoyed great favor, whereupon she was as effective in destroying the Xià as was Yī Yǐn.[10] Zhòu of Shāng[11] attacked Yǒu Sū,[12] and the clan of Yǒu Sū presented him with the beauty Dá Jǐ[13]. Dá Jǐ enjoyed great favor, whereupon she was as effective in destroying Shāng as was Jiāo Gé.[14] King Yōu[15] of Zhōu attacked Yǒu Bāo,[16] and the men of Bāo presented him

[6] Lǐ Kè 里克, a.k.a. Lǐ Jìzǐ 里季子, was a Jìn Court officer.

[7] Jié 桀 was a name applied to Wáng Guǐ 王癸, the last Xià King.

[8] Yǒu Shī 有施, a State, the Rulers of which were surnamed Xǐ 喜.

[9] In Chinese legend, Mèi Xǐ 妹喜 is the first of three female favorites associated respectively with the downfalls of the Xià, Shāng, and Western Zhōu Dynasties.

[10] Yī Yǐn 伊尹, a.k.a. Yī Zhì 伊摯, was the Prime Minister of the Shāng (Yīn) founder Tāng 湯. He left Xià and went over to Shāng.

[11] Zhòu 紂 of Shāng, referred to as Xīn 辛 of Yīn 殷 in the text, was the last Shāng King.

[12] Yǒu Sū 有蘇, a State, the Rulers of which were surnamed Jǐ 己.

[13] Dá Jǐ 妲己, the second of the three femmes fatales referred to in Note 13 above.

[14] Jiāo Gé 膠鬲, Shāng minister who went over to Zhōu and helped King Wǔ destroy Shāng.

[15] King Yōu 幽王 was Prince Gōng Niè 宮涅, the last King of the Western Zhōu.

[16] Yǒu Bāo 有褒 was a State, the Rulers of which were surnamed Sì 姒.

with the beauty Bāo Sì.[17] Bāo Sì enjoyed great favor and gave birth to Bó Fú[18], whereupon she was as effective as Guó Shífǔ[19] in driving away the Crown Prince Yí Jiù[20] and establishing Bó Fú in his place. The Crown Prince fled to Shēn,[21] and the men of Shēn and Céng[22] summoned the Western Róng to join in attacking Zhōu, whereupon Zhōu perished.

"But now the Ruler of Jìn, lacking virtue, has installed a captured maiden in the palace and has raised her high in favor. Could this not easily be compared to the three final reigns of the last three dynasties?[23] Moreover the crack [in the tortoise shell] read, 'A bone held tightly in the mouth, the molars and incisors sowing slander.' When I divined the outcome of the Lí Róng campaign, the cracks in the tortoise shell diverged. This, we may observe, is an omen favorable to bandits, not to the ruling house; there will be a splitting apart.

"If no one is to seize control of our government, could the oracle have said 'pressed tight?' If no one is to gain the confidence of the Ruler, could it have said 'a bone carried in the mouth?' If control is seized and the Ruler's confidence is gained, then though molars and incisors may create havoc at the center, who can say that the State will not follow the usurper? When the Xià States follow the Róng, how can this result in

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[17] Bāo Sì 褒似, the third femme fatale; associated with the fall of the Western Zhōu.

[18] She prevailed on King Yōu to name Bó Fú 伯服 the heir to the throne of Zhōu.

[19] Guó Shífǔ 虢石甫, the Lord of Guó, was a sycophantic minister of King Yōu.

[20] Yí Jiù 夷臼 was the son of the Principal Consort. He later became King Píng, the first Zhōu King subsequent to the removal of Zhōu to the east.

[21] Shēn 申 was a State, the Rulers of which were surnamed Jiāng 姜.

[22] Céng 鄫 was a State, the Rulers of which were surnamed Sì 姒.

[23] i.e., the last reigns of the Xià, the Shāng, and the Western Zhōu.

anything but defeat? Those who take part in affairs of State cannot but be on their guard. Destruction may now come any day now!"

Guō Yǎn[24] said, "The destruction of the three last Kings was only fitting. They abandoned themselves to their delusions without seeing that they were ill, and gave boundless rein to their desires. They went wherever their pampered desires led; there was nothing they denied themselves. This is why they went to their destruction and failed to profit from the mirror of past events.

"But in the present case, Jìn is nothing but an outlying Marquisate. Its territory is small, and it is bordered by great States. Even if our Rulers wished to give free rein to their infatuations, they could never attain such a monopoly on power that they could do so. Great Houses and neighboring States will use armies to preserve us, and Rulers will several times be placed upon the throne, and thus Jìn will not come to destruction.[25]

"Though there will be sudden replacements on the throne, these will not exceed five in number. The mouth is the gateway of three and five;[26] therefore, disturbances arising from a slanderous mouth will not exceed these numbers. 'Pressed tight' refers to a minor obstruction like a fishbone in the throat; it may make a small gash, but it will not lead to the destruction of the State. The ones directly affected will suffer wounds, but what harm will this do to Jìn? Though there will be obstruction, and though molars and incisors will create disorder, the

[24] Guō Yǎn 郭偃, a.k.a. Bǔ Yǎn 卜偃, was a Jìn Officer.

[25] This refers to three Qín military incursions into Jìn that were to occur in subsequent years.

[26] This is said because it is the mouth that refers to the three heavenly entities (sun, moon, and stars), and the five phases (earth, wood, metal, fire, and water).

mouth will not long be able to withstand it.[27] How long can it endure? Jìn's worries are great, but there is no danger of destruction. There is a bronze inscription from the declining years of Shāng that goes:

> A paltry bit of virtue,
> Not enough for service.
> No ground for pride,
> A source of worry only.
> A paltry bit of food,
> Not enough to savor.
> No source of fat,
> But bait for blame alone.

"Though Lady Lí will bring disorder, she will only cover herself with blame. How can she prevail?

"I have heard that one who sows disorder in order to amass riches cannot endure even for a season if he lacks schemes.[28] Without supporters, one cannot escape calamity;[29] without propriety, one cannot survive a round decade;[30] without righteousness, one cannot live out one's allotted span;[31] without virtue, one cannot transmit one's rule to a

[27] This means that Lí Jī, the captured Róng Princess, will not long be able to enjoy the results of her slanderous speeches.

[28] Wú Zhī 無知 of Qí exemplifies this.

[29] Zhōu Xū 州吁 of Wèi exemplifies this.

[30] Shāng Rén 商人 (Lord Yī of Qí) exemplifies this.

[31] King Líng of Chǔ exemplifies this. He destroyed Chén and Cài, then used Yǐn Tàizǐ 隱太子 as a human sacrifice at Gāngshān 岡山.

successor;[32] without Heaven, one's house cannot endure the passage of generations.[33]

"But in the present case, Lady Lí does not base her actions on the preservation of security, so she cannot be said to be good at making schemes; she uses injurious slander to carry them out, so she cannot be said to have gained supporters; she casts away the capital and the Court to further her own interests, so she cannot be said to be ritually correct; without reckoning the consequences, she makes improper demands, so she cannot be said to possess a sense of right; she uses the Ruler's favor to purchase resentment, so she cannot be said to possess virtue; her clansmen are few, and her enemies many, so she cannot be said to enjoy Heaven's support. One who fails to put virtue and righteousness into practice, who fails to use propriety and rectitude as models, and who casts people aside and so that their schemes go awry, will also incur the disapproval of Heaven. By my view, if the Ruler's Consort brings about disorder, she will in the end be like a landless peasant toiling in the fields. Even if she obtains fertile land and devotes herself to its improvement, she will not be able to live on what it produces and will finally have to be the servant of another."

Shì Wěi[34] said, "Admonitions are best when made beforehand. If they come early, they may help later. Your admonitions, sir, both yours and the other officer's, are of this kind."

Li Jī did not, in the end, vanquish Jìn. Jìn was set to rights by Qín and regained stability only after five Lords were raised to its throne.

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[32] Yí Wú 夷吾 (Lord Huì of Jìn) exemplifies this.

[33] Lord Huán of Qí and Lord Wén of Jìn exemplify this. Heaven loaned them years, and their descendants carried on their achievements.

[34] Shì Wěi 士蒍 was a Jìn Officer.

Author: Unknown, 4th Century BCE.

32. Performer Shī Has Lí Jī Slander the Crown Prince

This item is one of a series describing how Lí Jī, wishing to advance the interests of her new-born son, tricks the Ruler of Jìn into destroying his Crown Prince. In bed at night, Lí Jī informs Lord Xiàn that Shēnshēng is treating the people kindly so as to gain their support. Shēnshēng will portray Lord Xiàn as deluded and tyrannical, she says, and no one will object when he finally overthrows his father. She suggests to Lord Xiàn that he abdicate the throne and have Shēnshēng rule in his stead. Lord Xiàn rejects this suggestion. Lí Jī then suggests that he have Shēnshēng undertake a campaign against the Dí of Gāo Luò (who have been raiding Jìn's borderlands, depriving the people of pasturage) to see if he actually enjoys the people's support. If he is victorious, his guilt will be confirmed and measures can be taken. This story tells how a victory would put Jìn in an excellent position with regard to neighboring States and tribes. This is Item 8 in "Tales from Jìn," (Book 1). A parallel account appears in *Zuǒ Tradition*, Mǐngōng 2, Item 7. ~ Eric Henry.

Following Performer Shī's instructions, Lì Jī wept in the middle of the night and spoke to Lord Xiàn as follows: "I have heard that Shēnshēng is fond of keeping his word[35] and is a tough fighter, that he is very liberal in dispensing favors and is compassionate toward the people. He has definite methods for putting all these qualities into practice. He now says that you are being misled by me and will bring disorder to the State. He is, in fact, using the State's well-being as a pretext to use his prowess as a fighter to make a stand against you. You have not yet come

[35] Read hào xìn "好信" ("fond of trustworthiness") instead of hào rén "好仁" (fond of empathetic behavior").

to the end of your allotted span and are not about to die. What are you going to do about this? Why don't you kill me? That way you won't bring disorder upon the hundred clans for the sake of a mere concubine."

"How could he be kind to the people and not be kind to his father?" asked the Jìn Lord.

"I am still terrified," said Lí Jī. "I have heard a saying of others that goes, 'Those devoted to humane behavior are different from those devoted to the kingdom. Those devoted to humane behavior call loving their kin humane, while those devoted to the kingdom call benefiting the kingdom humane.' Therefore, those who lead the people have no kin. The masses are their kin. If he can benefit the masses, and the hundred clans are at peace, how could he fear you? If he renounces his love for his own kin for the people's sake, the masses will venerate him even more. He will put a fine-looking end on an ugly beginning, and his misdeed will, at length, be covered up.

"Whatever benefits the people will, in general, make them thrive. If he kills his Ruler and showers benefits upon the people, who among them will rise against him? If he kills his kin and does no harm to others, who will abandon him? If he benefits all the people and obtains their favor, so he can do as he wishes with their glad consent, who will not be dazzled and compliant, even if his desires grow excessive? Even if they wished to love their Ruler, their infatuation would not slacken.

"Imagine that you were Zhòu.[36] If Zhòu had had a virtuous son who did away with him beforehand, his evil would not have been broadcast about and his defeat would not have been so magnified. He would have died just the same, but not by the hand of King Wǔ, and his house would not have been toppled, but would have continued their

[36] Zhòu of Shāng, last Ruler of that Dynasty.

sacrifices to this day. How, then, would we ever have known whether Zhòu was virtuous or not? Do you think you can ignore this? If disaster comes, it will then be too late for worry!"

"What should be done?" asked Lord Xiàn fearfully.

"Why don't you plead age and turn the State over to him?" said Lí Jī. "When he gains control of the State and can carry out his desires, he will have obtained what he sought and will cease to have designs on you. Consider, Your Lordship, who, from the time of Huánshú on,[37] has been able to love his kin? It was precisely because he took no account of kinship that his descendants were able to annex Yì."[38]

"I cannot let him have control of the State," said Lord Xiàn. "I rely on strength and authority to hold sway over the other Lords. If I resign control while still alive, I cannot be called strong; and if I cannot dominate my own son, I cannot be said to have authority. If I give him the State, the other Lords will break relations with me. If they break relations, they will, then, be able to injure our ruling line. To lose the lead and damage the state is unendurable. Don't worry, I will deal with this."

Lí Jī said, "The Dí of Gāo Luò[39] are constantly raiding our borderlands, so that there is never a day when our people can graze their flocks in peace. Your Lordship's granaries lack provisions, and we fear that some border territories may be pared away. Why don't you have him attack the Dí to see how he really is with the people, to see if he actually enjoys their love and support. If he doesn't vanquish the Dí, then, though he will be punished for his failure, you may rest easy. If he should vanquish the Dí, then you will know he is skilled at using the masses and

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[37] Huánshú was Lord Xiàn's great-grandfather and founder of the Jìn ruling line.

[38] Yì 翼: see Jìn 1:01.

[39] Gāo Luò 皋落 refers to a mountainous region in the eastern part of Jìn.

will certainly seek broader victories. You may, then, use deep schemes against him. Moreover, if he vanquishes the Dí, the Vassal Lords will be impressed and fearful, our borderlands will be put on their guard, the granaries will become full, the surrounding States will submit to our authority, the outlying fiefs will be trustworthy, and Your Lordship will have something to rely on. And, in addition to this, you will know whether he is capable or not. The advantages are endless. Think it over!"

Lord Xiàn was pleased with this proposal and, therefore, had Shēnshēng attack Dōng Shān.[40] He gave him a robe with an off-center seam to wear, with an attached semi-circular metal pendant.[41] When Shēnshēng's chariot attendant, Zàn 贊, heard of this, he said, "The Crown Prince is in grave danger! The Marquis has bestowed something strange upon him. The strange gives rise to the deformed, and that which is deformed is monstrous, and one who is monstrous cannot be raised to the throne." Before sending him out on the campaign, he had the Crown Prince look at these items and, in this way, made plain to him the Ruler's disaffection and showed him the hard cruelty of his power. "This means," he said, "that he must hate your intentions and must intend to injure your person. Hating your intentions, he will surely lay snares for you within the Court, and will surely create dangers for you outside, so as to injure your person. How difficult to avoid is danger that arises from within! And, as for this apparel, even a madman would curse it. The Marquis' words were, 'Utterly destroy the enemy and return.' Even if you

[40] Dōng Shān 東山, a Dí State, in the the Gāo Luò region.

[41] The nature of this garment is uncertain. Vsevolod Taskin, the Russian translator of *Guóyǔ*, has "a robe with different colors on its two sides and a metal ring with a gap in it to wear at the belt. The two-colored robe, he suggests, showed the difference between the views of the Ruler and the Prince, and the metal symbol of authority (instead of the traditional jade) showed that Lord Xiàn's heart had hardened against Shēnshēng.

should utterly destroy the enemy, what will you be able to do about the slander within the Court?"

Shēnshēng vanquished the Dí and returned, while slander continued to work within. A man of discrimination would say, "Zàn knew the implications of minute things."

Author: Unknown, 4th Century BCE.

33. Lí Jī Destroys the Crown Prince

This story continues the tale of the treacherous and lethal cunning of LíJī, the female favorite of Lord Xiàn of Jìn.

Five years after the successful campaign against the Dí of Dōngshān led by the Crown Prince Shēnshēng, Lí Jī continues to slander him to Lord Xiàn, saying that Shēnshēng is plotting to have him killed. She gains Lord Xiàn's permission to find a pretext to kill Shēnshēng. She, then, enlists Actor Shī's aid in insuring that Lǐ Kè, a key figure in the Court of Jìn, will do nothing to hinder her plans. Actor Shī does a dance and sings a song hinting that Lǐ Kè had better transfer his allegiance from Shēnshēng to Lí Jī's son, Xīqí. Lǐ Kè does not support the scheme, but agrees to be neutral. Pī Zhèng, another official, urges him to reconsider and oppose Lí Jī, but Lǐ Kè stands firm. He pleads illness and withdraws from Court the next day.

One month later, Lí Jī continues to slander Shēnshēng to Lord Xiàn, saying that he is plotting to kill him. She gains and conveys an order from Lord Xiàn to Shēnshēng to go to Qūwò and conduct a sacrifice to his mother Qí Jiāng, then bring some of the sacrificial wine and meat for Lord Xiàn. When Shēnshēng returns with the offerings, Lí Jī puts poison in them. The earth foams when Lord Xiàn pours some of the wine on the ground, and a dog and a Court functionary die from eating the meat. Shēnshēng flees to Qūwò. Lord Xiàn orders that Dù Yuán Kuǎn,

Shēnshēng's tutor, be killed. Before death, Dù has a message conveyed to Shēnshēng urging him to face his own death with resolution, so as to gain a fair name. Shēnshēng accepts the advice. People try to persuade Shēnshēng to take refuge in another State, but he is convinced that the only virtuous choice is to remain and accept his fate. What happens next is a twist in the tale. This is Item 1 in "Tales from Jìn" (Book 2). ~ Eric Henry.

Five years after Shēnshēng's return from Jì Sāng,[42] Lí Jī said to Lord Xiàn, "I hear that Shēnshēng's schemes are deeper than ever. I told you plainly that he had won the people's support. If they didn't expect to gain something, how could he have used them to defeat the Dí? Now he is full of pride at his success, so his ambitions are more expansive than ever. Hú Tú[43] thinks he harbors disloyal intentions, so he doesn't come forth from his seclusion. I have heard that Shēnshēng is fond of demonstrating good faith and is inflexible in his aims. Moreover, he has inadvertently revealed his intentions to the people! Even if he wished to abandon his scheme, the people would insist that he carry it out. Words once spoken cannot be eaten, and the people cannot be stopped. This is why his schemes are now so deep. If you do not devise a plan of action, disaster will come!"

"I have not forgotten this," said Lord Xiàn, "but I have not yet been able to accuse him of any crime."

Lí Jī told all this to Actor Shī,[44] saying, "His Lordship has already

[42] Jì Sāng 稷桑: see Item Item 1.9 in Book One of "Tales From Jìn."

[43] Hú Tú 狐突, an elder advisor of Prince Shēnshēng; see Item Item 1.9 in Book One of "Tales from Jìn."

[44] "Performer" here represents the term yōu 優, a general term for performer or entertainer. The skills of a Court entertainer very likely included such things as

agreed to kill the Crown Prince and establish Xīqí in his place. My difficulty is with Lǐ Kè. I don't know what to do!"

"I will bring Lǐ Kè around," said Actor Shī. "One day will suffice. Prepare a single-beast mutton banquet for me. I will use it to spread a wine feast for him. I am a performer. My words won't miss their mark."

Lí Jī agreed to this and got everything in readiness. Performer Shī gave Lǐ Kè a wine feast. As they were drinking, He rose and did a dance. Speaking to Lǐ Kè's wife, he said, "Give me a serving, Lady Mèng. I am going to teach this one how to serve His Lordship in ease and leisure." He then sang a song, the words of which were:

> One who shrinks from ease and leisure
> Has less wisdom than a crow.
> All others gather in the garden;
> He alone keeps by a withered stump.

Lǐ Kè laughed and asked, "What does 'garden' mean? And what does 'withered' mean?"

"When the mother is Chief Consort," replied Performer Shī, "the son will become the Ruler. Can't that be likened to a garden? If the mother is dead, and the son suffers slander as well, can't that be likened to a 'withered stump?' It is not just withered, but injured as well."

Performer Shī went out. Lǐ Kè pushed away his goblet and went to bed without finishing his meal. In the middle of the night, he summoned Actor Shī and asked, "Were you making a joke today? Or have you heard something?"

"I have heard something," was the reply. "His Lordship has

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punning, joking, singing, dancing, imitations of bird calls, and other auditory phenomena, acrobatic tricks, and physical mimicry.

agreed to Lí Jī's request that the Crown Prince be killed and Xīqí established in his place. The plans are already complete."

"I could not bear to carry out His Lordship's intent and kill the Crown Prince; but I also dare not continue my close association with him. If I remain neutral, will I escape?"

"You will," said Performer Shī.

When morning came, Lǐ Kè went to see his fellow Court Officer Pī Zhèng and said, "It seems Diviner Sū's predictions will soon come to pass! Performer Shī informed me that His Lordship's plans are made and that he will soon elevate Xīqí."

"What did you say?" asked Pī Zhèng.

"I said I would remain neutral," replied Lǐ Kè.

"That's a shame!" said Pī Zhèng. "It would have been better to put Shī at a distance by saying you didn't believe it. That way you could also have strengthened the Crown Prince by depriving his enemies of support. By using many arguments, you could have weakened their determination; and once their sense of purpose was affected, you could have seized some opportunity to intervene. But instead, you said that you would remain neutral—that will only strengthen their resolve. Their schemes will surely come to fruition. There will be no chance to divide their ranks."

"Advice given after the fact does little good," replied Lǐ Kè. "Besides, those people are totally without scruple—how can they be defeated? What course do you intend to take?"

"I have no intentions of my own," said Pī Zhèng. "Thus, when I serve my Ruler, my Ruler gives me my intentions. It's not up to me to decide what those are."

"To claim that assassinating a Ruler is an incorrupt act," replied Lǐ Kè, "and to make that 'honesty' the basis of arrogance, and out of

arrogance to control the fate of others—this I dare not do. But to suppress my sense of what is right, so as to serve a ruler, to set aside a Prince for the sake of personal advantage, to base my career upon the quest for profit—this also I cannot do. I will go into hiding!"

The next day he announced that he was ill and did not appear in Court. Thirty days later [three day-cycles] later, the calamity came to pass.

Lí Jī had a decree of Lord Xiàn presented to Shēnshēng: "Last night, His Lordship dreamed of Qí Jiāng.[45] You are to sacrifice to her at once and send a portion of the offerings to the capital." Shēnshēng assented, performed the sacrifice at Qūwò, and took some of the offerings back to Jiàng.[46] The Marquis was at that time away on a hunting expedition, so Lí Jī received the offerings. She, then, put poison from the feathers of a *zhèn* bird[47] in the wine and aconite in the flesh. When the Marquis returned, he summoned Shēnshēng to present the offerings. When he poured the opening libation on the ground, the earth boiled up. Shēnshēng was afraid and went away. Lí Jī gave some of the meat to a dog, and the dog died. She had a Court functionary drink some of the wine, and he also died. The Marquis ordered that Dù Yuán Kuǎn be killed.[48] Shēnshēng fled back to Qūwò.[49]

Just before he died, Dù Yuán Kuǎn sent Yǔ 圉, a Court Functionary,

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[45] Qí Jiāng 齊姜: Shēnshēng's mother.

[46] Jiàng 絳: the capital of Jìn.

[47] This was a large bird, like a secretary bird, the diet of which consisted chiefly of snakes. According to legend, its feathers were so venomous that they could poison wine simply by being dipped in it.

[48] Dù Yuán Kuǎn 杜原款 was Shēnshēng's tutor.

[49] Qū Wò: referred to in the text as Xīn Chéng 新城, "New City," so called because Shēnshēng had recently taken up residence there.

to Shēnshēng with a message:

> I am ignorant, dull, and devoid of talent, and have brought death upon myself through my inability to instruct you. I was unable to perceive what lay deep in His Lordship's heart and so forced you to leave a favored position and seek a distant place of refuge. Due to my caution and adherence to rules, I dared not make a move. As a result, when slanderous speech arose, I said nothing to refute the charges, and so fell also into disaster. Still, I dare not be concerned about my death; in this failure I dare say I am as guilty as the slanderers.[50]
>
> I have heard that a man of quality does not ignore his feelings, nor does he fail to counter slander. Yet when slander occurs, it is permissible to die. By so doing, he can still enjoy a fair name. To exhibit no alteration of feeling in death shows firmness; to preserve one's feelings so as to make one's father glad shows filial obedience; to kill oneself in order to realize one's principles shows empathy; and not forgetting one's Ruler in death shows attention to duty. Be resolute, my son! Your death shall cause your memory to be cherished. Is it not permissible to die to gain the tender solicitude of the people?

Shēnshēng accepted these views.

Someone said to Shēnshēng, "You committed no crime. Why don't you go elsewhere?"

Shēnshēng said, "To act thus would not be right. Were I to leave and have my offense absolved, the blame would surely fall on His Lordship; and this would show that I bore resentment against my Ruler. Were I to publicize my father's wickedness and thus became the

[50] Since he was unable to keep Shēnshēng out of deadly peril.

laughingstock of all the Lords, whose territory could I enter? I would then be in difficulties with my parents at home, and in trouble with the Lords elsewhere—my difficulties would be redoubled. To cast away a Ruler so as to reject a criminal charge is the same as fleeing death. I have heard that 'an empathetic person does not bear resentment against his Ruler; a wise person does not multiply his difficulties, and a courageous person does not fly from death.' If I am not absolved of this crime, then my departure would aggravate it. To aggravate my crime by leaving would show a lack of wisdom. To flee from death and bear resentment against a Ruler would show a lack of empathy; and to be accused of an offense and not die would show a lack of courage. To leave would only deepen resentment. It will not do either to aggravate what is despicable or to flee from death. I will remain where I am and await the decree."

Lí Jī came and wept before Shēnshēng, saying, "If you can bear to act thus even toward a father, what will you refrain from doing to the leading men of the capital? If you seek friendship with others after showing cruelty to your father, who will return your friendship? You sought to kill your father in order to benefit others, but who will regard what you have done as beneficial? The people find all such actions despicable. It will be hard indeed to live out your life!"

After Lí Jī withdrew, Shēnshēng strangled himself in the temple in QūWò. Before dying, he told Měng Zú[51] to speak to Hú Tú for him as follows:

> I have been charged with an offense. Because I failed to listen to your advice, I have brought death on myself.[52] I dare not be concerned

[51] Měng Zú 猛足 was Shēnshēng's servant.

[52] This refers to the advice Hú Tú gave Shēnshēng in the Jì Sāng campaign; see Jìnyǔ 1:09.

> about my death. But be that as it may, His Lordship is advanced in years, and the State is beset with troubles. If you do not come out of your seclusion, what will avail His Lordship? If you come from seclusion and make plans on his behalf, it will be a boon to me in death and I will be able to die without regret.

Because of this, Shēnshēng was given the posthumous designation "Gōng," "the respectful."[53]

After bringing about the death of Shēnshēng, Lí Jī slandered the other two senior Princes, saying, "Chóng'ěr and Yí Wú both knew what Shēnshēng[54] was doing."

Lord Xiàn ordered Yǎn Chǔ to stab Chóng'ěr, and Chóng'ěr fled to the Dí. He ordered Jiǎ Huá 賈華 to stab Yí Wú, and Yí Wú fled to Liáng.[55] The other Princes were all driven away, and Xīqí was made Crown Prince. From that time on it was decreed in Jìn that no Princes were to reside within the State.

Author: Unknown, 4th Century BCE.

34. Two Princes in Exile

Summary: This is a long story with a series of episodes, all of which concern the Jìn succession. The first relates how, after Lord Xiàn's death, several officers of Jìn assassinate Lí Jī and the two children she attempted to place on the throne (Xīqí and Zhuòzi) and then ask Lord Mù of Qín to assist in placing a new Ruler on the Jìn throne.

[53] The posthumous name "Gòng" 共 was given to those "capable of correcting their errors."

[54] Lí Jī here refers to Shēnshēng by his posthumous name, "Gōngjūn."

[55] Yǎn Chǔ 閹楚 was a eunuch employed at Court, and Jiǎ Huá 賈華 was a Court Officer.

The second episode relates how the officers concerned send an emissary to Prince Chóngěr among the Dí to invite him to the throne of Jìn, and how Chóngěr consults with his advisors about this.

The next episode relates how the officers send an emissary to Prince Yí Wú in Liáng in order to extend the same invitation and relates what happens next.

The next episode concerns the decisions of Lord Mù of Qín. After receiving a request from Jìn, he sends an emissary to convey his condolences to Chóng'ěr and urge him to take the Jìn throne. The story, then, moves forward to a surprising conclusion.

The final episode shows Lord Mu of Qín deliberating with his officers concerning the relative merits of the two Jìn Princes, and how he makes his choice. This is Item 8 in "Tales from Jìn" (Book 2).

~ Eric Henry.

In the twenty-sixth year of his reign,[56] Lord Xiàn died. Lǐ Kè, on the point of killing Xīqí,[57] said to Xún Xí,[58] "The followers of the three Princes[59] are going to kill the boy [Xíqí]—what are you going to do about this?"

"With the Ruler dead," he replied, "and his infant son murdered, then my only choice will be to die; I will not join with them."

Lǐ Kè said, "If the boy could be established on the throne through your death, would it not be worth it? But if you die, and the boy is taken from the throne, what purpose will your death serve?"

[56] The twenty-sixth year of Xiàn-gōng's reign was 651.

[57] Xīqí 奚齊 was the son of Xiàn-gōng's female favorite Lí Jī.

[58] Xún Xí 荀息 was Xīqí's tutor.

[59] The three Princes were Shēnshēng, Chóng'ěr, and Yí Wú. Shēnshēng was at this point deceased, and the other two Princes were in quasi-exile.

"In former times," said Xún Xí, "His Lordship [the deceased Lord Xiàn] asked me what an officer's service to his Lord should consist of, and I said it should consist of loyalty and integrity. His Lordship asked me what I meant. I said, 'If there is something that will benefit the ruling house, then loyalty is doing everything in one's power to achieve it, omitting nothing. If one can provide a burial for the dead and support and serve the living, so that if the dead Ruler were to return to life, they would feel no regret and the living feel no shame—that is steadfastness.' Having spoken these words, how can I carry them out if I feel concern for life? Though death now faces me, how can I avoid it?"

Lǐ Kè then went to Pī Zhèng, and made the same announcement: "The followers of the three Princes are going to kill the boy—what are you going to do about this?"

"What did Xún Xí say?" asked Pī Zhèng.

"Xún Xí said he would die for the boy's sake," Lǐ Kè replied.

"Do your best then," said Pī Zhèng. "There is nothing in the intentions of you two State Ministers that cannot be brought about. I will help you put your plans into effect. Lead Shēnshēng's seven sub-commanders[60] out and wait for me to join you—I will stir up the Dí and seek the assistance of Qín so as to make their situation shaky. If we put the weaker of the two on the throne, we can receive rich gifts in return, and as for the stronger, we can keep him from entering the State.[61] Who else besides us will have possession of the State?"

"That won't do," said Lǐ Kè. "I have heard that acting out of principle is sufficient basis for advantage. Acting out of desire for profit

[60] This refers to seven officers who served Shēnshēng when he commanded the Lower Army.

[61] "The weaker" here refers to Yí Wú, who was less popular and charismatic than Chóng'ěr.

breeds resentment. Can the boy himself be said to have incurred the people's blame? We are acting thus because Lí Jī bewitched His Lordship and misled the officers of the State, slandered the Princes, and deprived them of advantage, caused His Lordship to fall into delusion, forced others into exile, killed an innocent man, thereby attracting the derision of other States, and caused all the clan chiefs in the State to harbor hatred in their hearts for her. This, I fear, is like damming a great river: the dam will collapse and nothing will save the situation. So if we kill Xīqí and elevate one of the Princes in exile, this will indeed settle the people and ease their worries. And if we seek the assistance of the other Lords, saying that they are aiding our cause out of principle, then the clan chiefs will be happy to elevate that Prince, and the State will be secure. But if we now should kill the Ruler and thereby enrich ourselves, we will be greedy and unprincipled. If we are greedy, the people will feel resentment, and if we are unprincipled, wealth will spell danger for us. Over-relying on wealth and inciting the people's resentment will bring disorder to the country and put us in peril. This, I fear will cause the Lords to make a record of our deeds, nor is this a way to enjoy long security.

Pī Zhèng agreed with this. They accordingly killed Xīqí, Zhuózǐ, and Lí Jī, after which they went to Qín to ask for assistance in elevating a new Ruler.

When they killed Xīqí, Xún Xí was about to die for his sake, when a person said to him, "It would be better to elevate and serve his younger brother." Xún Xí thereupon elevated Zhuózǐ. When Lǐ Kè killed Zhuózǐ, Xún Xí died for him. A man of quality would say, "He did not have to eat his words."

Having killed Xīqí and Zhuózǐ, Lǐ Kè and Pī Zhèng had Tú'ān Yí 屠安夷 go and announce the fact to Prince Chóng'ěr among the Dí, saying, "The State is in disorder and the people are in turmoil—gaining the State

while it is in disorder and establishing rule over the people while they are in turmoil—you will no doubt wish to enter and do this? I will serve as your guide." Speaking with Hú Yǎn,[62] Chóng'ěr said, "Lǐ Kè wants to put me on the throne."

"It won't do," said Hú Yǎn. "In planting a tree, we may note, everything depends on the beginning. If you do not make the roots secure at the outset, the tree will dry up and wither. And one who leads a State must adhere to the times appropriate to grief, joy, happiness, and anger—this is what enables him to guide the people. To fail to take part in the mourning rites after [the Ruler's] death, and seek to gain a State, will not do. To take advantage of disorder so as to enter a State is perilous. To gain a state during the mourning period is tantamount to taking joy in the death, and taking joy in the death would mean that you would be grieved if the deceased had survived. To use disorder as an opportunity to enter, would make it appear that you delight in disorder; and to delight in disorder would make it appear that you have let your virtue fall away. How, therefore, can one rule a people if you do not adhere to the times appropriate to grief, joy, happiness, and anger? What could you use to guide the people? And if you fail to serve as the people's guide, what sort of Ruler would you be?"

"If it were not for the mourning," said Chóng'ěr, who could come to the throne? And if it were not for the disorder, who could put me on the throne?"

"I have heard," said Hú Yǎn, "that among mourning ceremonies and disorders, some are great and some small. The menace of great mourning rites and disorders cannot be ignored. The deaths of fathers and mothers are occasions of great mourning, and slander among

[62] Hú Yǎn 狐偃 is here and subsequently referred to as Jiù Fàn 舊犯: "maternal uncle Fàn."

brothers is the greatest of disorders. You are now faced with just such a situation; for this reason, your difficulties will be insuperable."

Prince Chóng'ěr went to meet the emissary and said, "It is gracious of you to extend your concern to me, a man in exile, but when my father was alive, he was unable to enjoy the humble services that I might have offered him, and when he died, I added to my offenses when I dared not go and take part in the observations attending his burial, and thus have caused you to suffer the indignity of traveling here. I cannot but decline your offer. Making a State secure, one may observe, lies in having the people feel a sense of kinship and cultivating the friendship of neighbors, and on doing what the people think best. If this would be to the people's advantage, and if neighboring States wish to lend their support, and if the officers were in compliance, I would not presume to go counter to your wishes."

Lǚ Shēng and Xì Chēng[63] also had Pú Chéng Wǔ announce the situation to Yí Wú in Liáng,[64] saying, "If you give handsome gifts to Qín to gain their aid in putting you on the Jìn throne, those of us within the State will take charge of this matter for you."

Yí Wú went to Jì Ruì [65] and announced that Lǚ Shēng wanted to put him on the throne of Jìn. Jì Ruì said, "Then do your best. The State is in chaos, the people are in turmoil, and the officers are without firm loyalties—you must not lose this opportunity. Were there no disorder, how could you enter? Were there no danger, how could security be established? Fortunately, they have sought you alone among His

[63] Lǚ Shēng 呂甥 and Xì Chēng 郤稱 were both Jìn Officers and followers of Prince Yí Wú.

[64] At this point Liáng 梁, a small State near Qín, was Yí Wú's place of exile.

[65] Jì Ruì 冀芮 was Yí Wú's tutor and an Officer of Jìn.

Lordship's sons. The State is just now in chaos and turmoil, so who will come to oppose us? The officers are not steadfast—if you are placed on the throne by the multitude, who would not obey you? You must use the entire wealth of the State to bribe the officers within and the Lords without; don't be concerned that you will be penniless when you enter; once you have entered the State, you can again begin to amass wealth."

Prince Yí Wú went to meet the emissary, bowed twice, touching the ground with his head, and accepted his proposal.

Lǔ Shēng then went out to report this to the other officers, saying, "With the Ruler of the State dead, we dare not put a Prince on the throne purely though our own initiative. I fear that in time the other Lords will seek an exiled Prince of their own choosing to put on the throne. The people would then all be of different opinions. I fear that the situation would become chaotic. Why don't we request Qín to assist us in deciding which Prince to place on the throne?"

The officers agreed to this, and had Liáng Yóu Mǐ[66] go to Lord Mù of Qín and report the following: "Heaven has visited disaster upon the State of Jìn, slanders have proliferated on all sides, and affect even the princes of our former Lord, so that they have had to seek refuge in distant, primitive places, and have no supporters to rely on. Adding to the weight of our calamities, our Ruler's demise has brought on mourning and disorder at the same time. Thanks to the miraculous efficacy of your actions, the spirits have bestowed good fortune on us, and have inflicted destruction upon the evil one.[67] None among the officers of Jìn now dare to remain at ease, so eagerly do they await your

[66] Liáng Yóu Mǐ 梁由靡 was a Jìn Officer.

[67] This, according to Wéi Zhāo, is a reference to Lí Jī.

orders. If, turning your gracious concern to the security of our domain,[68] not forgetting the good relations that existed between you and our Ruler in former times, you will deign to receive one of his exiled sons and establish him on the Throne of our State, so that he may perform secure sacrifices, and bring comfort to our Court and our people, then, though all the neighboring States may hear of this, who among them could presume to disrespect Your Lordship's Majesty, or be anything but delighted by your virtue? If, due to your deep love for our deceased Lord, he can receive your powerful blessing, and we the officers of Jìn can enjoy the fruits of this magnanimity, then who in Jìn would dare do aught but act as one among your industrious servants?"

Lord Mù assented to this request. After sending back the emissary, he summoned his officers Mèng Míng 孟明 and Gōngsūn Zhī 公孫枝, and said to them, "Jìn is in chaos. Of the two Jìn Princes, which should I choose to set upon the throne? This is a situation of the utmost urgency."

Master Míng said, "Your Lordship should send Prince Zhí 公子縶 to perform this mission. The Prince is quick of mind and conversant with ritual. He is punctilious in doing his duty and grasps subtleties. Being quick of mind, he will be able to detect hidden schemes, and being conversant with ritual, he will be able to play the role of an emissary. Being punctilious, he will not fail to fulfill your orders, and being aware of subtleties he will know what can and cannot be done. Let Your Lordship commission him."

Lord Mù thereupon had Prince Zhí convey condolences to Prince Chóng'ěr among the Dí, saying, "The Lord of our humble State has sent me to express his pity for your present difficulties and also condolence

[68] Literally the *shè jì* 社稷, the altars to the grain and the soil, located in the capital. These altars were symbols of the State.

for the death in your family. Our Lord has heard that realms are often gained or lost during the course of royal funerals. This opportunity must not be lost—the burial observances will not last long. By all means think this over!"

Chóng'ěr reported this to Hú Yǎn, who said, "It won't do. People who are in exile do not naturally have close associates; they must depend on their own trustworthiness and empathetic understanding of others to gain such associates, and only people with such virtues can be free of danger after being raised to the throne. If you should seek advantage while your father's body lies in the State Reception Hall, who would say that you were endowed with empathy? Both Princes are eligible; if you should take advantage of luck, who would say that you are trustworthy? Devoid of reputation either for empathy or for trustworthiness, how could you hope to enjoy any long-lasting advantage?"

Chóng'ěr went to see the emissary and said, "I, an exile from my State, have been the humble recipient of your condolences and have also heard your decree concerning the assumption of the Jìn throne. But since I am in exile, I, Chóng'ěr, have been unable to assume my position as a weeping mourner at my father's memorial observances, so how could I presume to cast shame on His Lordship's great virtue by harboring ambitions of my own?" With this, he twice bowed, without touching his head to the ground, rose weeping, and withdrew without engaging in any personal conversation with the emissary.

Prince Zhí withdrew, and then conveyed the same words of condolence and encouragement to Yí Wú that he had conveyed to Chóng'ěr. Yí Wú went to see Jì Ruì and said, "The men of Qín wish to assist me!"

Jì Ruì said, "Then do your best. People in exile cannot be scrupulous; scrupulousness leads to failure. Use rich gifts to repay their

generosity—give as much as possible! Don't stint at all! The Princes are both eligible, so you must depend on good fortune; what could be wrong with that?"

Yí Wú went out to see the emissary, bowed twice, touching his head to the ground, rose without weeping, and after withdrawing spoke privately to Prince Zhí, saying, "The officer[69] Lǐ Kè is a supporter of mine; I will order him to give your State fields without limit in Fēnyáng.[70] Pī Zhèng is also a supporter of mine. I will order him to give your State seven hundred thousand fields in Fùcài.[71] If you will support me, I will have no further use even for Heaven's decrees! If I, an exile, can enter and sweep the floor of our Ancestral Temple, and settle the altars of the State, what territory would I require in addition? Your Ruler is in possession of many commanderies and districts, including many cities lying east of the Yellow River, to which I would add five more. This is not at all to say that your Ruler lacks land; I do this merely so that he will not experience trouble and difficulty when journeying at the fords and bridges. My desire is to hold your horse tassels to follow in your dusty wake as a humble groom. I have eight hundred taels of gold here, and six pairs of white jade insignia. These paltry gifts I would not presume to give directly to you, but ask leave to have them distributed among your followers."[72]

Prince Zhí returned and made his report to Lord Mù of Qín, who

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[69] The text has "zhōng dàifū" 中大夫, "middle-grade officer."

[70] Fēnyáng 汾陽: "north of the Fēn," a Jìn area.

[71] Fùcài 負蔡: a Jìn place name.

[72] Throughout this speech Prince Yí Wú uses "wáng rén," "man in exile," as a humble, self-disparaging first-person pronoun.

said, "I am with Prince Chóng'ěr, for he is possessed of human empathy. That he prostrated himself twice without knocking his head on the ground shows that he is not desirous of inheriting the throne. That he wept when he arose shows that he loves his father. That he did not speak with you in private after withdrawing shows that he is not desirous of personal gain."

Prince Zhí said, "What Your Lordship says is in error. If Your Lordship's desire is to establish a Ruler on the Jìn throne so as to make that State whole and secure, then surely establishing the Prince with empathetic virtue is the way to do it. But if Your Lordship's aim is to succeed in establishing a Ruler of Jìn to achieve fame among the Lords of the realm, then surely you should establish an unvirtuous Prince so as to be able to stir up trouble in Jìn. That way you can introduce disorder into the government of Jìn. I, your servant, have heard that 'a person may be placed on a throne so as to demonstrate virtue, and a person may also be put on a throne so as to demonstrate strength.' If the first is one's aim, then a virtuous person should be chosen; but if the second is one's aim, then a biddable person should be chosen."

And so, Lord Mù first placed Yí Wú on the Throne of Jìn; this was Lord Huì of Jìn [reigned 650–637].

Author: Unknown, 4th Century BCE.

35. A Royal Emissary Foresees Lord Huì's Fate

This story, Number 13 in "Tales from Zhou" (Book 1) in the original text, is excerpted and placed here because it helps to fill out the picture of Lord Huì, and the inadequacies and mistakes in his actions as a Ruler, qualities that lead in time to his overthrow and death. In addition to the faults in his behavior most obvious to modern readers, this story pays

much attention to mistakes of gesture that he makes in the performance of ritually prescribed actions at Court.

Summary: King Xiāng sends the Duke of Shào and Chief Archivist Guò to Jìn to confer credentials of legitimacy upon Lord Huì of Jìn. Guò observes certain deficiencies of deportment on the part of Lord Huì and his two chief officers Xì Ruì and Lǔ Yí Shēng, and on that basis predicts that Lord Huì will die without issue and that the two ministers will be killed. He quotes passages from *Writings of Xià* and from the *Documents* on the roles in government of virtue and a sense of responsibility toward the people. He, then, demonstrates that Lord Huì has cast aside four qualities indispensable to a Ruler: mental fixity, steadfastness, propriety, and trustworthiness. Even in ancient times, he observes, when Rulers behaved with perfect propriety, and the duties of the different ranks and classes of society were made clear through differing apparel and accoutrements, there were still vagrants and criminals. What, then, must be the result when Lord Huì himself behaves in such a faulty fashion? Lord Huì is moreover the son of a lesser Consort, which would make his hold on the throne tenuous even if he were prudent and energetic. His bad behavior toward the King and toward the people will, therefore, result in corresponding injury to himself; and the officers who flatter him will also suffer. ~ Eric Henry.

King Xiāng of Zhōu [651–619] deputed the Duke of Shào and Court Archivist Guò to confer credentials of legitimacy upon Lord Huì of Jìn.[73] Lǔ Shēng and Xì Ruì,[74] who assisted Lord Huì in the ceremony, were not respectful, and when Lord Huì grasped the jade insignia, he held it

[73] Lord Huì of Jìn was Prince Yí Wú 夷吾, the son of Lord Xiàn by a concubine. See Note 1 on the Chinese side for more information.

[74] Lǔ Shēng 呂甥, also known as Lǚ Yí Shēng 呂飴甥 of Xià 瑕, and Xì Ruì 郤芮, also

too low, and in making obeisance, he failed to touch his forehead to the floor.

When Chief Archivist Guò returned, he reported to the King as follows: "If Jìn does not perish, its Ruler will certainly die without issue. His officers Lǔ and Xì will, moreover, not escape with their lives."

"Why do you say that?" asked the King.

"In the *Writings of Xià*," replied Chief Archivist Guò, "it says, 'If the masses have not a Ruler of unblemished virtue, whom can they support? If a Ruler has not the masses, he has nothing with which to maintain a State.' In the "Address of Tāng" it says, 'I, the one man, am at fault, not the ten thousand men; the faults of the ten thousand men all derive from me, the one man.'[75] In the "Pān Gēng" it says, 'What there is of goodness within the State derives only from you, the multitudes; what there is of wrongdoing within the State derives only from me, the one man, through error in the application of punishment.'[76] It appears from this that, in leading the multitudes and in using the people, one cannot but exercise great vigilance. What causes most anxiety to the people are great enterprises.[77] The former Kings knew the necessity of using the multitudes to attain success in great enterprises. It was because of this that they cleansed their hearts of random impulses, so as to win the support and gratitude of the people. They examined their inmost feelings so as to measure the feelings of their subjects and thereby draw close to

known as Jì Ruì 冀芮, were both Officers of Jìn.

[75] "Tāng Shì" in the *Documents*. See Note 7 to Lǔ 1.13 on the Chinese side.

[76] Pān Gēng was a Shāng Dynasty King, the son of Zǔ Yǐ 祖乙. He is said to have been responsible for the removal of the Shāng ruling house to its final location in Yīn. This passage appears near the end of the first of the three speeches into which the chapter "Pān Gēng" in the *Book of Documents* is divided.

[77] i.e. warfare, hunting, and sacrifice.

them. They made prominent displays of patterns of behavior so as to instruct them. They performed seemly deeds and followed through on promises so as to dispose them toward action. As our forebears said,

> Cleansing the heart is 'fixity of mind [*jìng*],
> examining one's feelings so as to measure those of others is 'steadfastness [*zhōng*],
> displaying patterns of behavior is 'ritual' [*lǐ*]; and
> performing seemly deeds and following through on one's words is 'trustworthiness' [*xìn*].

"From this it follows that in leading the multitudes and using the people, agreement cannot be achieved without mental fixity, authority cannot be achieved without steadfastness, compliance cannot be achieved without ritual, and performance cannot be achieved without trustworthiness.

"But now the Marquis of Jìn, having just come to the throne, is going back on his promises of gifts[78] to those within and without the State who aided him. In persecuting members of his Court,[79] he has cast aside trustworthiness; in failing to show reverence to the King's decrees, he has cast aside ritual; in doing to others what he himself would hate if done to him, he has cast aside steadfastness; by indulging his hatreds to satisfy his heart, he has cast aside clarity of mind. When these four things are cast aside, those from afar will not draw near, and those nearby will not be disposed to cooperate—how is he going to maintain his State?

"In ancient times, when the former Kings had gained the

[78] Eric Henry: The word rendered as "gifts" is often translated as "bribes'; but that seems too heavy-handed a choice here. Giving gifts to political supporters was not regarded as reprehensible in the society portrayed.

[79] This refers to Lord Huì's executions of Lǐ Kè and Pī Zhèng.

submission of all the realm, they still raised altars to the High Lord and to the bright spirits, and served them with reverence; and there were moreover the rites of paying Court to the sun [*cháo rì*] and to the evening moon [*xì yuè*] which were used to show the people how to serve their Ruler.[80] The Vassal Lords received their instructions from the King in spring and autumn ceremonies so as to draw the people to them; the officers and the men-at-arms stood punctiliously at their Court stations to show reverence for their positions; and the commoners, craftsmen and merchants all held fast to their occupations so as to retain the goodwill of their superiors. But still the Kings of old feared that there might be some slip or failure, so they created the different ranks of carriages and vestments, with flags and banners to make them clear; they made emblems of authority and tablets of investiture and used jade tallies and bamboo insignia to add weight to them; they created the different ranks and arranged them in descending order; they made proclamations of merit and advancement so as to make these distinctions clearly audible; but in spite of this, there were still some who went their own way, evaded duty, were lazy and disrespectful; and so were condemned to punishment or sent off to dwell in the wilds. And so, there arose the States of the Mán and the Yí; and there came to be people subject to the axe of execution and to the punitive lopping of limbs and inking of foreheads. In view of this, what pretext can remain for indulging in unrestrained deportment?

"The Marquis of Jìn, we may note, was not the rightful heir to his position—even if he were diligent and fearful and held his appointment with apprehensive correctness, it could not be pronounced sufficient. If

[80] The *cháo rì* rite was performed on the day of the vernal equinox outside the eastern gate of the capital, while the *xì yuè* rite was performed on the day of the autumnal equinox outside the western gate.

he gives free scope to his desires, drives away his neighbors, tramples upon his people, and insults his superiors, how will he be able to keep the throne in secure possession?

"To hold the jade insignia in a low position is to cast away one's emblem of office. To fail to touch the head to the floor in doing obeisance is to act as if there were no King. One who casts away his emblems of office has nothing with which to make his status weighty. One who ignores his King will be without subjects. Matters in which Heaven is involved are always prefigured by visible signs. One who is lax in maintaining his dignity and who gives rein to his desires will swiftly come to grief. It, therefore, follows that, as the Marquis of Jìn ignores his King, his people will also ignore him; and if he casts aside his dignity, his people will cast him aside as well. When great officers enjoy Court stipends, and instead of admonishing their Ruler encourage his misdeeds with flattery, they also come to grief."

The Marquis of Jìn was raised to the throne in the third year of the reign of King Xiāng [650]; in the eighth year [645] of the King's reign, the Marquis suffered defeat at Hán 韓;[81] and in the sixteenth year of the King's reign [637] the men of Jìn killed [the Marquis' heir] Lord Huái.[82] Lord Huái had no descendants, and Qín killed L ǔ Shēng and Xì Ruì.[83]

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[81] In this year Qín attacked Jìn because (1) Lord Huì had failed to give Qín territory that he had promised in return for helping him gain the Throne of Jìn, and (2) he had failed to provide Qín with grain for famine relief even though Qín had earlier performed the identical service for Jìn. The forces of the two States fought at Hányuán 韓原. Lord Hui was captured by Qín and held in that State for three months, and his Army and followers were heavily defeated. See *Zuǒ Tradition*, Xīgōng 15, Item 4.

[82] Lord Huái was Yǔ 圉, the son of Lord Huì. When Lord Huì died, his son Yǔ inherited the throne, whereupon Lord Mù of Qín had Prince Chóng'ěr escorted to the Jìn throne. The people of Jìn killed Lord Huái with a sword at Gāoliáng.

[83] Lǚ Shēng and Xì Ruì are here referred to as Zǐ Jīn 子金 and Zǐ Gōng 子公.

Author: Unknown, 4th Century BCE.

36. Failure to Keep Promises and Reward Benefactors

This story provides an example of the predictive nature of songs sung by the populace of a State.

After the accession to the Jìn Throne by Yí Wú (Lord Huì), Chóng'ěr's younger brother, the people of Jìn make a song satirizing his failure to fulfill the promises that he made to Lǐ Kè, Pī Zhèng, and the State of Qín to repay them for their proposed support for his return to Jìn. The people make a song predicting that troubles will come as a result of the broken promises. This is Item 1 in "Tales from Jìn" (Book 3). ~ Eric Henry.

After entering Jìn, Lord Huì[84] went back on the promises of gifts he had made to people within and without the State. The people intoned a verse about this that went,

The enticer was enticed,
But finally got no fields;
The deceiver was deceived,
But finally lost his bribe;
Disdainful Lords who seize a State,
Will meet with just deserts;
A loss that goes unpunished
Leads to further loss.

After the deaths of Lǐ Kè and Pī Zhèng, misfortune came: His

[84] Lord Huì: previously Prince Yì Wú of Jìn; see the concluding items in the previous book.

Lordship met defeat and capture at Hán.[85]

Guō Yǎn[86] said, "How splendid! The mouth of the multitudes, we may note, is the gateway to disaster and blessing. This is why a man of quality weighs the mood of the masses before acting, and makes his plans conform to their warnings, takes careful measure before acting, and thus does nothing that does not succeed. He plans domestic policy and carefully scrutinizes conditions abroad—he tirelessly deliberates. Considering and testing throughout the day, he fully grasps the need to be prepared."

[85] Hán 韓 refers to Hányuán, the "Hán plain," a place between Jìn and Qín. Lord Huì was to suffer a grievous military defeat.

[86] Guō Yǎn 郭偃 was a Qí Court Diviner.