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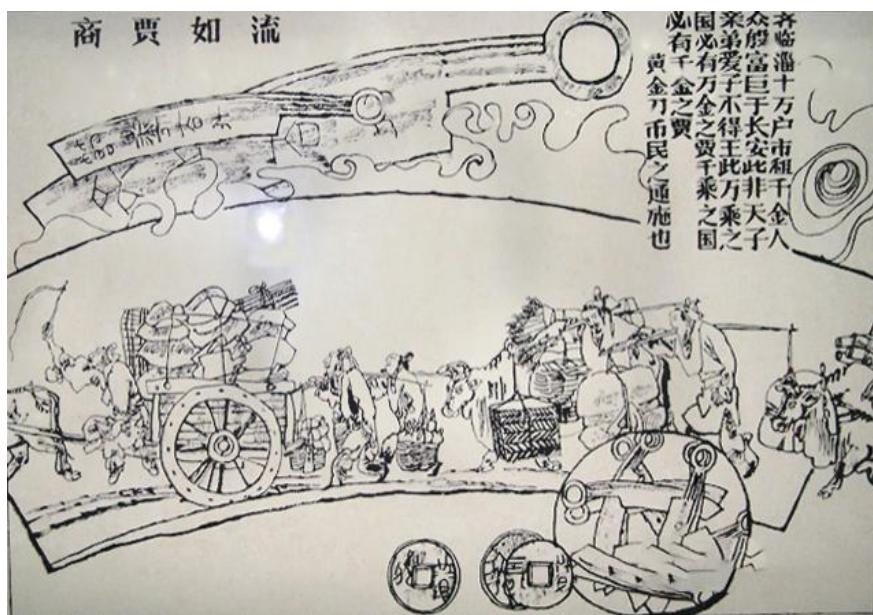


**RIISING ASIA**  
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Special Issue  
*Tales From The Principalities*  
Ancient Chinese Short Stories

ALL STORIES ARE TRANSLATED BY ERIC HENRY

## CHAPTER SEVEN TALES FROM JIN—3



A representation of traveling merchants in pre-imperial China. Ink painting in the Zibo Chinese Ceramics Museum, Zibo City, Shandong Province, Summer, 2007. Artist unknown. Image edited by David Henry.

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The eleven items in this section all come from Books Five through Nine of “Tales from Jin,” and are variously related to the reigns of nine or ten Rulers who came after Lord Wén in the Spring and Autumn Era. Some of those Rulers were spectacularly depraved, and some had notable strengths. A number of the items in this section, however, do not directly concern Rulers, but concern attitudes and practices prevalent in other levels of the society. ~ Eric Henry.

**Author: Unknown, 4th Century BCE.**

## **46. A Crisis of Conscience**

**Summary:** Irritated by Zhào Dùn’s incessant exhortations to reform his behavior, Lord Líng sends Chù Mí out to kill him. When Chù Mí comes upon him, it is early morning, and he is sitting fully dressed in a half sleep, waiting to go to Court. Moved at this evidence of conscientiousness, he finds he is unwilling to kill a just man, but at the same time is unwilling to fail to carry out his Ruler’s orders. This story tells us how he resolved the situation. This is Item 5 in “Tales from Jin” (Book 5). See also *Zuǒ Tradition*, Xuāngōng 2, Item 3. ~ Eric Henry.

Lord Ling was wantonly cruel, and Zhào Dùn admonished him about it many times. This worried Lord Líng, so he ordered Chù Mí 鉏麋 to slay him. Going out early in the morning to accomplish this, Chù Mí found that the doors to Dùn’s front chambers were already open, and that Dùn, dressed in formal attire and ready for Court, was dozing, for it was still early. Chù Mí withdrew, sighed, and said, “Zhào Dùn holds his duties in high respect indeed! Those who do not forget respect are the ones who make our altars firm. To slay a pillar of the State is to be disloyal, but to accept an order, and then cast it aside, is to lack good faith. Rather than be assigned either of these two names, I had better die.” With this, he dashed his head against a poplar tree in the outer

courtyard and died.

Lord Ling tried to kill Zhào Dùn but failed.<sup>1</sup> Zhào Chuān<sup>2</sup> attacked and killed the Lord Líng at Pear Garden [Táoyuán], and then put Prince Hēitún 黑臀 on the throne; he was Lord Chéng [reigned 606–600].

**Author: Unknown, 4th Century BCE.**

## 47. Fàn Wǔzǐ Strikes His Son With a Staff

This item, which dramatizes a principle essential to personal survival, is one of many illustrations in *Tales* of the danger inherent in putting oneself forward. To avoid falling victim to the resentment of others, one must carefully avoid any appearance of excellence.

Here, the protagonist Fàn Wǔzǐ hits his son for having shown off at Court by answering riddles posed by a guest from Qín. The older officers had the decency to pretend to be unable to answer, so as to yield the privilege to their superiors. This is Item 7 in “Tales from Jìn” (Book 5). No account parallel to this appears in *Zuǒ Tradition*. ~ Eric Henry.

F<sup>a</sup>n Wénzǐ withdrew from Court at dusk. “Why so late?” asked Wǔzǐ.

“There was a guest from Qín who posed riddles at Court,” replied Wénzǐ. “None of the officers were able to answer, but I knew three of them.”

This angered Wǔzǐ, who said, “It was not that the officers were unable to answer. They were deferring to their elders. A mere boy like

<sup>1</sup> In the Fall of 607 (Xuāngōng 2), he entertained Zhào Dùn at a wine feast, where troops in concealment were to kill him in response to a signal. Dùn became aware of it and escaped, so the attempt failed.

<sup>2</sup> Zhào Chuān 趙穿, a.k.a. Wǔzǐ Chuān 武子穿, was a grandson of Zhào Sù 趙夙 and a paternal cousin of Zhào Dùn.

you, eclipsing others three times at Court! If I were not in Jìn, your destruction might come at any time!”

He beat Wénzǐ with his staff and tore his headpiece apart.

**Author: Unknown, 4th Century BCE.**

## 48. A Mysterious Source of Wisdom

**Summary:** Mount Liáng collapses and Bó Zōng is summoned to the capital. Traveling in an official vehicle, he finds the way blocked up by an overturned cart. The cart owner turns out to be an intelligent man who knows what steps a Ruler must take when a mountain collapses. Bó Zōng is unable to discover his name, but he makes use of his remarks in advising Lord Chéng upon arriving at the capital. This is Item 13 in “Tales from Jìn” (Book 5). See also *Zuǒ Tradition*, Chénggōng 5 [586].

~ Eric Henry.

Mount Liáng<sup>3</sup> collapsed, and an official vehicle was dispatched to Bó Zōng with an order summoning him to the capital. On his way to the capital, he came across an overturned vehicle that blocked the way, the driver of which was standing by the side of the road.

“Make way for my official carriage,” said Bó Zōng.

“An official carriage is expected to go swiftly,” was the reply. “If you wait for me to get out of the way, you will be even more late. It would be best to go around me.”

Pleased at this, Bó Zōng asked, “Where do you live?”

“I am a man of Jiàng,” was the reply.

“What news have you heard?” asked Bó Zōng.

“That Mount Liáng has collapsed and that an official carriage has been sent to summon Bó Zōng to Court,” was the reply.

<sup>3</sup> Mount Liáng 梁山: the site is in present-day Shǎnxī Province, Hánchéng 韓城 District. The event occurred in 586.

“So, what must be done?” asked Bó Zōng.

“What must be done when a mountain has decayed soil and collapses?” said the man. “The Ruler of a State, we may note, presides over streams and mountains; therefore, when streams run dry and mountains collapse, the Ruler must lessen the richness of his clothing, abandon his palace to reside in a way-station, ride in an unadorned chariot, abjure banquets, and have characters put on bamboo to announce the event to the Lord on High. The State must set aside three days for weeping, so as to be in conformity with the rites; even if only you, Bó Zōng, were involved, you would still have to observe these practices. What else can be said?”

Bó Zōng asked the man his name, but he did not divulge it. He asked to present him to the Ruler of Jìn, but the man did not accede.

On reaching Jìn, Bó Zōng reported the man’s advice to the Ruler, and he acted in accordance with it.

**Author: Unknown, 4th Century BCE.**

## **49. A Coming-of-Age Ceremony**

**Summary:** On the day of his capping ceremony, Zhào Wénzǐ (Zhào Wǔ) pays his respects to all the high officials of Jìn: Luán Wǔzǐ, Zhōngháng Xuānzǐ, Fàn Wénzǐ, Xì Jǔbó, Hán Xiànzǐ, Zhì Wǔzǐ, Xì Chōu, Xì Zhì, and Zhāng Lǎo. They each offer him words of encouragement and advice, some of them recalling the qualities and accomplishments of his ancestors. Zhāng Lǎo, the last in the series, makes comments on the words of those who preceded him. This is Item 1 in “Tales from Jìn” (Book 6). ~ Eric Henry.

**W**hen Zhào Wénzǐ<sup>4</sup> was capped, he went to see Luán Wǔzǐ.<sup>5</sup> Wǔzǐ said, “What a handsome fellow you are! In former days I assisted

<sup>4</sup> Zhào Wénzǐ 趙文子: Zhào Wǔ 趙武, the son of Zhào Shuò 趙朔 and grandson of

your father Zhào Shuò.<sup>6</sup> Showy appearances are splendid, but substance cannot be perceived. I would ask you to place more weight on substance.”

He went to see Zhōngháng Xuānzǐ.<sup>7</sup> Xuānzǐ said, “What a handsome lad you are! It’s a pity I’m so old.”

He went to see Fàn Wénzǐ.<sup>8</sup> Wénzǐ said, “You can now be given rules of behavior. When the worthy, note, enjoy favor, they govern themselves more strictly still. When the inadequate enjoy favor, they grow haughty. Thus, a flourishing King rewards ministers who admonish them, while a dissolute King punishes them. I have heard that in former times, when Kings had perfected their virtue, they listened to the people, and then had blind declaimers recite admonitions at Court; and those in Court positions presented poems to keep the Ruler from falling into delusion. They gathered sayings in the market places, discerned good and bad omens in the rhymed ditties of children, investigated the hundred affairs at Court, asked questions concerning the slander and praise heard on public roads, and corrected what was askew; thus, they fully deployed the arts of warning. What the former Kings hated most was haughtiness.”

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Zhào Dùn 趙盾.

<sup>5</sup> Luán Wǔzǐ 欒武子: Luán Shū 欒書.

<sup>6</sup> Identified as Master Zhuāng 莊 in the text. Zhuāng was the temple name of Zhào Shuò 趙朔, Wénzǐ’s father. Luán Shū acted as his assistant commander when he led the Lower Army.

<sup>7</sup> Zhōngháng Xuānzǐ 中行宣子 was Xún Gēng 荀庚, the son of Zhōngháng Huánzǐ 荀中行桓子. His regret at being old perhaps refers to the likelihood that will not live to see the young Zhào Wénzǐ’s future deeds.

<sup>8</sup> Fàn Wénzǐ 范文子: aka Fàn Xiè 范燮.

He went to see Xì Qí,<sup>9</sup> who said, “What a fine looking fellow you are! But the contributions of the young and sturdy do not measure up to those of the elderly.”

He went to see Hán Xiànzǐ.<sup>10</sup> Xiànzǐ said, “To be circumspect is the essence of character formation. Forming one’s character depends on using goodness as one’s starting point. When one starts from goodness, goodness promotes goodness, and evil has no means of arriving. When one starts from evil, evil promotes evil, and goodness likewise has no means of thriving. It is like the growth of plants and trees: each species develops according to its own nature. A man wearing a formal cap is like one who owns a walled room. As long as the dung is swept out, what else is there to add?”

He went to see Zhì Wǔzǐ.<sup>11</sup> Wǔzǐ said, “Exert yourself, my lad! It would surely be no disgrace if the descendant of Zhào Cuī<sup>12</sup> and Zhào Dùn<sup>13</sup> came to be a Court officer in his old age! How can the culture of Zhào Cuī, or the loyalty of Zhào Dùn, be forgotten? Zhào Cuī aided our former Lord by quoting the pronouncements of previous reigns. He quoted old laws and institutions, and was at last put in charge of Jìn’s affairs. How could that not be called culture! And Zhào Dùn admonished Xiāng and Líng with all his strength. He incurred hatred for his efforts but, not fearing death, he strode forward. How could that not be called

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<sup>9</sup> Xì Qí 郤錡; referred to in the text as Xì Jūbó 郤駒伯.

<sup>10</sup> Hán Xiànzǐ 韓獻子; a.k.a. Hán Jué 韓厥.

<sup>11</sup> Zhì Wǔzǐ 智武子 was Xún Yíng 荀瑩, the son of Xún Shǒu 荀首.

<sup>12</sup> Zhào Cuī 趙衰, an illustrious ancestor of Zhào Wénzǐ; referred to in the text as Chéng 成.

<sup>13</sup> Zhào Dùn 趙盾, another of Zhào Wénzǐ’s illustrious ancestors; referred to in the text as Xuān 宣.

loyalty! Exert yourself my lad! With the loyalty of Zhào Dùn aided by the culture of Zhào Cuī, you will surely be successful in assisting our Lord.”

He went to see Xì Chóu,<sup>14</sup> who said, “There are many people crowding out the young by holding positions. How can we find a place for you?”

He went to see Xì Zhì.<sup>15</sup> Jìzǐ said, “You may seek a position subordinate to anyone whose abilities surpass yours.”

He went to see Zhāng Mèng<sup>16</sup> and told him what the others had said. Zhāng Lǎo said, “Excellent! Master Luán’s words can make you develop substance, Master Fàn’s teachings can make you grow in virtue, and Master Hán’s admonitions can form your character to the good. And now you can mature and become complete. Whether you have the will to achieve your aims is up to you. As for the three Xìs,<sup>17</sup> their words were those of people on the verge of destruction. How could they be worth repeating! But the words of Master Zhì were excellent. Through them, your predecessors were nourishing and protecting you.”

**Author: Unknown, 4th Century BCE.**

## **50. A National Victory Leads to National Disaster**

**Summary:** At the Battle of Yānlíng, Luán Wǔzǐ commands the Upper Army and wants to attack Chǔ. Fàn Wénzǐ, commanding the Lower Army, does not want to attack. He points out to Luán that if Jìn defeats Chǔ, Lord Lì will grow proud and reckless and Jìn will be thrown into turmoil. Luán, however, is determined to wipe away various disgraces incurred by

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<sup>14</sup> Xì Chōu 郤犇; referred to in the text as Kǔchéng Shǔzǐ 苦成叔子.

<sup>15</sup> Xì Zhì 郤至; referred to in the text as Wēn Jìzǐ 溫季子.

<sup>16</sup> Zhāng Mèng 張孟; referred to in the text as Zhāng Lǎo 張老.

<sup>17</sup> This refers to the brothers Xì Qí, Xì Chóu, and Xì Zhì, who were soon to lose their lives in a political upheaval.



Jìn in three previous battles, and is unable to think of distant consequences. Jìn defeats Chǔ, and Fàn's predictions are borne out. This is Item 7 in "Tales from Jìn" (Book 6). ~ Eric Henry.

In the Battle of Yān 鄆 [575], Jìn attacked Zhèng, and Chǔ<sup>18</sup> came to Zhèng's rescue. Luán Wǔzǐ led Jìn's Upper Army and Fàn Wénzǐ led the Lower Army. Luán Wǔzǐ wanted to do battle, but Fàn Wénzǐ was opposed, saying, "I have heard that only a person of great moral attainment is able to thrive after enjoying a great blessing. When a person has no character, and many submit to him, he will surely do himself injury. As for the moral character of Jìn—the Lords are all turning against us; thus, we may enjoy some security for a while. It is due to the Lords that we are beset with troubles; the Lords are always the root of calamity. Moreover, only sages are able to be free both of internal worries and external threats—and since we are not sages, we are sure to have at least one or the other. Why don't put aside Chǔ and Zhèng for now, and consider them to be merely external worries?<sup>19</sup> Then the Lords will act in concert and harmony will be achieved."

"As things stand now, even if we should win military victories over Chǔ and Zhèng, our Ruler will boast of his wisdom and might. He will neglect instruction and make his requisitions still heavier. He will enrich his favorites and increase the fields dedicated to his concubines, and if he does not seize land from officers, how else will he be able to achieve this? How many officers will voluntarily give up their lands and dwellings or just quietly withdraw? If we gain no victory, this will be a

<sup>18</sup> Referred to as Jīng 荆 in the text. This item begins with the same nine characters as the previous item. The second phrase is also similar.

<sup>19</sup> The last two sentences are repetitions of passages that appear in the previous item.

blessing for Jìn. If we gain victory, our standard practices will be thrown into confusion. This will do injury to our great officers. Why don't we just not fight for now?

Luán Wǔzǐ said, "In former times, after the Battle of Hán, Lord Huì was unable to return to his camp;<sup>20</sup> in the Battle of Bì our three armies were unable to prevail; in the Jī campaign, Xiān Zhěn was unable to preserve his life. Jìn has thus suffered three great disgraces. I am now in charge of Jin's government. Am I to fail to wipe away these disgraces, and instead add to them by running away from the Yí and the Mán?<sup>21</sup> What I propose to do may lead to bad consequences, but I fail to see what these may be."

Fàn Wénzǐ said, "In selecting blessings nothing is better than to choose the greatest; and in selecting misfortunes, nothing is better than to choose the least. When seeking good fortune, one does not take actions that promise the least good fortune, and when awaiting disaster, one does not take actions that promise the most misfortune. Jìn has indeed<sup>22</sup> suffered deep disgrace; the inability of our Rulers and officers to listen to each other<sup>23</sup> has made us a laughingstock among the Lords. Why should avoiding Yí and Dí barbarians for now be considered a disgrace?"

Luán Wǔzǐ ignored this advice and fought a battle with Chǔ at Yānlíng, winning a great victory. The Jìn Ruler thereupon boasted of his wisdom and might, neglected instruction, and made his requisitions

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<sup>20</sup> This was because he was captured. See Jìnyǔ 3:06.

<sup>21</sup> This is a contemptuous reference to Chǔ.

<sup>22</sup> For 故 read 固.

<sup>23</sup> This refers to failures of cooperation that took place in the three battles enumerated by Luán Wǔzǐ.

heavier. He enriched his favorites and killed the three Xì,<sup>24</sup> exhibiting their corpses at Court, then seized their women's property and distributed it among his concubines. This made the people of Jìn aware of his depravity, and they killed him at Yì, and interred him outside of Yì's eastern gate, burying him with only a single chariot. He died because, although he performed many feats and had many submit to him, he lacked virtue.

**Author: Unknown, 4th Century BCE.**

### **51. Lord Dào Assumes the Throne of Jìn**

This item, devoted to a cautious but persuasive speech of a man about to ascend the Throne of Jìn, bears witness to the precariousness of rule in the period portrayed. Rulers of States were only slightly more powerful than their Court officers, and had to possess superb leadership skills in order to avoid assassination.

In this item, the previous Jìn Ruler has just been slain by a coalition of Court figures who felt that their lives and positions were in danger. A delegation of Jìn notables goes to the Zhōu royal domain, where a Jìn Prince, the future Lord Dào, is residing. They invite him to be the next Ruler of Jìn and propose to escort him back to the throne. They greet him at a place on the Jìn border. Lord Dào addresses them in a speech laden with metaphors for the relationship of a Ruler to his officers in which he holds the officers responsible for serving him loyally as long as he rules effectively, which he promises to do. He then enters the capital and holds court in the temple of Lord Wǔ. He discharges much unfinished business left over from the preceding reign and puts into effect many measures conducive to general harmony and popular

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<sup>24</sup> This refers to the three Xì brothers, Xì Qí, Xì Chóu, and Xì Zhì.



contentment. This is Item 1 in “Tales from Jin” (Book 7). A parallel account appears in *Zuǒ Tradition*, Chénggōng 18, Items 1 and 3.

~ Eric Henry.

**H**aving assassinated Lord Lì, Luán Wǔzǐ had Zhì Wǔzǐ and Zhì Gōngzǐ travel to Zhōu to invite Lord Dào to take the throne.<sup>25</sup> On the day designated *gēng wǔ*<sup>26</sup> the officers met him at Qīngyuán.<sup>27</sup>

Lord Dào spoke to the officers: “It was never my desire to come to this. That I have come to this is due to Heaven. When people have a worthy Ruler, they swear to serve and follow him. If they receive orders but do not obey them, that is like burning the harvest. If they swear and the Ruler proves to be ungifted, that is like a harvest that fails to mature. If the grain does not mature, that will be my fault; but if it matures and is then burned up, it will be due to the opposition of you gentlemen. I want to give a permanent place to the people’s desires to find a lodge; in issuing orders, I swear that I shall never prevent the grain from ripening.

“It was because orders were not followed that you gentlemen sought a worthy Ruler, so that you might consult and plan with him. If I should prove unworthy and you should set me aside, who would harbor any grievance? But if I should prove worthy and meet with harsh opposition, it will be you gentlemen who have brought it about. If you wish to serve a worthy Ruler so as to promote the cause of justice everywhere, the decision is yours to make this very day. But if you wish to use violence and oppression to alienate the clan chiefs and upset and

<sup>25</sup> Luán Wǔzǐ 欒武子 was also known as Luán Shū 欒書. Zhì Wǔzǐ 智武子 was also known as Xún Yíng 荀瑩. Zhì Gōngzǐ 晁恭子 was a name for Shì Fáng 士魴 (he had a stipend-diary fief in Zhì 晁). Lord Dào was Prince Zhōuzǐ 周子 or Sūn Zhōu 孫周. At this time, he was only fourteen.

<sup>26</sup> *Gēng wǔ* 庚午 was day six in the sixty-day cycle.

<sup>27</sup> Qīngyuán 清原 was on the Jin border.

alter the people's constant rules, the decision is also yours to make this very day. Let our plans, whether to advance or to move backward, commence this very day."

To this the officers replied, "If Your Lordship will subdue and soothe your many servants and extend your sheltering protection over them, then how could we fail to patiently accept your instructions, when failure to do so would cause us to be subject to shameful execution, bringing trouble to the executioner and his record keeper, and bringing dishonor upon Your Lordship's generous decrees? We dare not fail to take up the enterprise." They thereupon swore to a covenant and entered the capital.

On the day designated *xīn sì*,<sup>28</sup> Lord Dào held Court in Lord Wǔ's temple.<sup>29</sup> He settled all outstanding matters and appointed officers to the various positions. He saw to the upbringing of the heirs to the great houses and to the selection of those among them who were skilled and worthy. He restored the fortunes of old clans and issued rewards that had been held back. He settled longstanding court cases and released those who were in bondage or captivity when there was some doubt of their guilt. He pardoned slight offenses and promoted those who had accumulated merit. He extended kindness to widowers and widows, raised up those who had long been dismissed from office, nourished the very old and the very young, and took pity on the orphaned and the disabled. Those who were over seventy years of age he met with in person and called them *wáng fù*, "royal father," so that they dared not but accept his rule.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> *Xīn sì* 辛巳 was day eighteen in the sixty-day cycle.

<sup>29</sup> Lord Wǔ was the founding Ruler of Jìn.

<sup>30</sup> The idea is that his respectful treatment of the very old allowed him to benefit



Author: Unknown, 4th Century BCE.

## 52. The Nature of Imperishable Fame

This item illustrates both the temptation and the danger of presumption.

A great officer of Jìn meets a visiting officer from Lǚ and seeks a verbal confirmation from the visitor on the illustriousness of his lineage. The visitor puts him soundly in his place. This is Item 4 in “Tales from Jìn” (Book 8). A parallel account appears in *Zuǒ Tradition*, Item 1. ~ Eric Henry.

When Lord Xiāng of Lǚ had Shúsūn Mùzǐ come to Jìn on a mission of greeting,<sup>31</sup> Fàn Xuānzǐ<sup>32</sup> questioned him: “There is an expression that goes ‘to die but not decay.’ What does it mean?”

Mùzǐ didn’t answer.

“In the time of Yú Shùn and before,” Xuānzǐ continued, “my ancient ancestors belonged to the clan of Táo Táng;<sup>33</sup> in the Xià they belonged to the clan of Yù Lóng;<sup>34</sup> in the Shāng they belonged to the clan of Shǐ Wéi;<sup>35</sup> and in the Zhōu, they belonged to the clans of Táng and

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(1) from their accumulated wisdom, and (2) from the prestige afforded by their support of his rule.

<sup>31</sup> This occurred in 549. Shúsūn Mùzǐ 叔孫穆子 was chief of the Shúsūn clan in Lǚ.

<sup>32</sup> Fàn Xuānzǐ 范宣子, a.k.a. Shì Gài 士匄, was then the Prime Minister of Chin.

<sup>33</sup> Táo Táng 陶唐 was the clan of the Sage-King Yáo 堯.

<sup>34</sup> The clan-name Yù Lóng 御龍, “dragon-controller,” was bestowed by the Xià King Kǒng Jiǎ 孔甲 (fourth from last) upon Liú Lèi 劉累 as a reward for his skill in the care and feeding of dragons. See *Zuǒzhuàn*, Zhāo-gōng 29, item 4, pp. 1500-04.

<sup>35</sup> The Shǐ Wéi 豕韋 arose in the reigns of Wǔ Dīng and subsequent Kings. Prior to that time, Péng 彭, a descendant of Zhù Róng 祝融, took the surname of Dà Péng 大彭. The chiefs of Dà Péng and Shǐ Wéi were Shāng overlords. The Dà Péng and Shǐ Wéi were both later destroyed by Shāng. The House of Liú or Yù Lóng took over Shǐ Wéi, thus *Zuǒ Tradition* states that “the House of Yù Lóng was put in place of the descendants of Shǐ Wéi,” Zhāogōng 29, item 4, p. 1501.

Dù.<sup>36</sup> When Zhōu declined and Jìn inherited its authority, my forebears then came to form the clan of Fàn.<sup>37</sup> Is this what the expression means?”

“What I have heard,” Mùzǐ replied, “is that such things are called ‘hereditary appointment,’ not ‘freedom from decay.’ The person of Zāng Wénzhòng 臧文仲, the former officer of Lǚ, has perished, but his words still stand in later generations. That is what is meant by the expression ‘to die but not decay.’”

**Author: Unknown, 4th Century BCE.**

### 53. Musicmaster Kuāng Discusses Music

This story is one of several in *Tales* that bear witness to an ancient Chinese superstition according which music performed at a State Court influences the future destiny of that State or Dynasty. The right kind of music will make the State strong and powerful, whereas the wrong kind will cause its destruction. This is Item 7 in “Tales from Jìn” (Book 8).

The belief in the power of music to influence national destinies proved to be immensely influential in later ages, and caused the governments of modern China and several other East Asian nations (Korea, Japan, and Vietnam) to make clumsy and destructive efforts to control music. These items are unique to *Tales*; no parallel equivalents are to be found in *Zuǒ Tradition*.

<sup>36</sup> In the time of King Wǔ of Zhōu, Táng 唐 and Dù 杜 were the names of two States. From the closing years of the Shāng, Shǐ Wéi had become the State of Táng. King Chéng of Zhōu abolished Táng and enfeoffed his younger brother Táng Shú Yú 唐叔虞 there; then he moved the clan of Táng to Dù and called its chief Dùbó 杜伯, the “Count of Dù.”

<sup>37</sup> The House of Dù became the House of Fàn 范 in the following way: In the reign of King Xuān, the current Count of Dù (Dù-bó) was an officer of the Zhōu Court. King Xuān killed him, and his son Xí Shú 隰叔 left Zhōu and went to Jìn. Xí Shú’s son Zǐyú 子舆 held a Court position (lǐ guān 理官) in Jìn. Zǐ Yú’s grandson Shì Huì 士會 became the Prime Minister of Jìn and was given the town of Fàn 范 in return for his services, after which he and his descendants formed the House of Fàn.



The Táng Dynasty skeptic Liǔ Zōngyuán, in his essay “Refuting Tales from the Principalities” (Fēi Guóyǔ), pours ridicule on this idea. He says that musical tones have the same relationship to the ear that flavors have to the tongue. Can anyone maintain, he asks, that an incorrect assortment of flavors bring about the downfall of a State? Liǔ, however, was the only Chinese thinker in traditional times known to me who dared to scoff at this superstition. ~ Eric Henry.

Lord Píng [reigned 557–32] found the new music pleasing.<sup>38</sup> Musicmaster Kuàng 曠 said, “His Lordship’s House will surely decline. This is a clear portent of a Ruler’s decay. Music, let us note, is used to release the airs of the mountains and the rivers, and to let virtue shine in distant, far-flung regions. It puts virtue into tunes so that it will spread abroad; it puts mountains and rivers into tunes so that they will reach to distant places; and it puts objects into tunes so that people will be compelled to lend ear to them. We cultivate verse so that we may sing it, and cultivate ritual so that we may endow our actions with correct restraint. The wide dissemination of virtue, and the strict observation of due seasons and occasions, is that which causes distant regions to submit and nearby ones not to waver in their allegiance.”

<sup>38</sup> In connection with “new music,” Wéi Zhāo supplies the following traditional tale: When Lord Líng of Wèi (Wèi Línggōng, reigned 534–493) went to Jìn, he halted for the night by the Pú 濮 River. He heard the sound of a zither playing and found the music very mournful. He had Musicmaster Juān 涓 copy the sound on his zither. Upon arriving in Jìn he had Juān play the music for Lord Píng. Musicmaster Kuàng put his hand over Juān’s hand and said, “Stop. These are the sounds of a destroyed State. In former times Musicmaster Yán 延 made lascivious music for Zhòu (the last Shāng King), and later drowned himself in the Pú River. The one who heard this music must have stopped by the Pú River!”



**Author: Unknown, 4th Century BCE.**

## **54. Social Climbing**

This anecdote is an example of pre-imperial Chinese humor. It turns on a play of words. Dǒng Shú is about to take a wife from the clan of Fàn. Shú Xiàng warns him that the family is rich and proud—the daughter will be hard to deal with. Dǒng Shú replies that he wishes to be allied (jì, “tethered”) to, and aided (yuán, “raised up”) by, the Fàn clan. Later, his bride complains to her elder brother Fàn Xiànzǐ that Dǒng Shú does not respect her. Fàn Xiànzǐ has Dǒng Shú seized and suspended from a poplar tree in his courtyard. Shú Xiàng passes by and Dǒng Shú asks if he will intercede for him. Shú Xiàng replies that Dǒng Shú wished to be “bound” (jì) and has been bound, and that he wished to be “raised up” (yuán) and has been raised up. With these wishes granted, what more does he have to ask for? This is Item 4 in “Tales from Jin” (Book 9). *Zuǒ Tradition*, Xiānggōng 21, Item 5, records that Xiànzǐ’s father Fàn Xuānzǐ had Dǒng Shú executed in 552 for being an adherent of Luán Yíng. If the individual concerned is the same, this item is out of sequence. ~ Eric Henry.

**W**hen Dǒng Shú was preparing to take a wife from the clan of Fàn,<sup>39</sup> Shú Xiàng said, “The Fàn clan is wealthy. Why not drop the matter?”<sup>40</sup>

“I wish to be bound to them, so as to get their support,” he replied.

<sup>39</sup> Dǒng Shú 董叔 was a Jin officer. He was about to marry a daughter of Fàn Xuānzǐ.

<sup>40</sup> He meant that since the Fàn 范 clan was wealthy, its members would be proud; and being proud, would mistreat and bully him.



Later on, Dǒng Qí<sup>41</sup> one day accused Dǒng Shú to Fàn Xiànzǐ, saying, “He does not respect me.” Xiànzǐ had Dǒng Shú bound and suspended from a poplar tree in his courtyard.

Shú Xiàng passed by, and Dǒng Shú said, “Why not intercede for me?”

Shú Xiàng replied, “You sought to be bound and have been bound; you sought to be supported and have been supported. What you desired you have obtained. What more have you to ask for?”

**Author: Unknown, 4th Century BCE.**

## 55. Declining a Reward

China has always in traditional times held civil skills in higher esteem than military ones. Court careers were more admired than military ones. This item is a striking example of that cultural preference.

Dǒng Ānyú distinguishes himself in the Battle of Xiàiyì, and Zhào Jiǎnzǐ wishes to reward him. Dǒng Ānyú declines, and, when pressed to accept, recounts the services he rendered in childhood, early manhood, and maturity for which he received no recognition, while now, people want to reward him for a moment of madness on the battlefield. Saying he would rather perish than be rewarded for such a thing, he runs off in distress. This is Item 7 in “Tales from Jin” (Book 9). ~ Eric Henry.

**I**n the Battle of Xiàiyì, Dǒng Ānyú acquired much merit.<sup>42</sup> Zhào Jiǎnzǐ bestowed a reward on him, but Ānyú refused it. When pressed to

<sup>41</sup> Dǒng Qí 董祁 was the bride Dǒng Shú took from the Fàn clan. She was the younger sister of Fàn Xiànzǐ.

<sup>42</sup> Xiàiyì 下邑 was a Jin settlement. Dǒng Ānyú 董安于 was a household retainer of Zhào Jiǎnzǐ 趙簡子. In 497 (Dìnggōng 13), Jiǎnzǐ killed Zhào Wǔ 趙午, the overseer of Hán Dān 邯鄲, whereupon Zhào Wǔ's son Jì 稷 held Hán Dān in rebellion. Zhào Wǔ was the nephew, by a sister, of Xún Yín 荀寅, and Xún Yín was related by marriage to Fàn Jí Shè 范吉射. These two rebelled and attacked the headquarters of

accept, he answered as follows: “When just a youth, I was advanced to the position of brush-wielder, and I helped make titles and decrees. I was praised by the elders, and the Vassal Lords were beholden to me, but the chief took no note of it. Upon attaining the vigor of manhood, I wore out my four limbs in service to the Army Marshal, and no sloppy or dishonest practices arose. In my mature years, I assisted the Prime Minister with sash tied and shin-guards fastened, and the people had no treacherous leanings. And now, due to a single day’s delirium on my part, he says, ‘I must give you a reward.’ I would rather go to destruction than be rewarded for lunacy.”

He ran out, and the effort to reward him was abandoned.

**Author: Unknown, 4th Century BCE.**

## **56. Three Officers Boast of Their Accomplishments**

This story demonstrates that boasting elicits the disapproval, not only of one’s fellows, but that of Heaven as well. Heaven always administers setbacks to the vainglorious.

After the Battle of Tiě, Zhào Jiǎnzǐ boasts that the sound of his drum roll did not cease even when he lay on his bow-case, face down in blood. Lord Zhuāng of Wèi, his spearman, boasts that he made nine forays and killed everyone he hit. Yóu Wúzhèng, the charioteer, boasts that he was able to slow the chariot when the pull-straps were about to break. During their return journey, the chariot runs over some logs, and the pull-straps both snap in two. This is Item 10 in “Tales from Jìn” (Book 9). A parallel item appears in *Zuǒ Tradition*, Āigōng 2, Item 3.

~ Eric Henry.

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the Zhào clan. Jiǎnzǐ fled to Jīnyáng 晉陽 and his opponents laid siege to it. This was the battle in which Dǒng Ānyú distinguished himself.



At the Battle of Tiě,<sup>43</sup> Zhào Jiǎnzǐ said, “When the men of Zhèng hit me, I lay on my bow-case with my face in blood, but the sound of my drum did not diminish. In today’s enterprise, none came up to me.”

Lord Zhuāng of Wèi was his spearman.<sup>44</sup> He said, “I mounted and dismounted nine times, and all those whom I struck died. In today’s enterprise, none surpassed me.”

Yóu Wúzhèng was the driver. He said, “When the traces were about to break, I was able to slow the horses. In today’s enterprise, my merit was next to the highest.”

Upon starting back in the chariot, they ran over some logs, and both traces broke.

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<sup>43</sup> Tiě 鐵 was in the State of Wèi. Zhōngháng Yín 中行寅 (a.k.a. Xún Yín) and Fàn Jí Shè 范吉射 (a.k.a. Shì Jí Shè) were holding the city of Cháo Gē 朝歌 in revolt with the backing of Qí and Zhèng. In 493 (Aigōng 2), Qí tried to ship grain provisions to Fàn. Hǎn Dá 罕達 and Sì Hóng 駟弘 of Zhèng were to deliver it, and Fàn Jí Shè was to meet them. Zhào Jiǎnzǐ stopped the delivery at Qī 戚, then did battle at Tiě.

<sup>44</sup> Lord Zhuāng of Wèi (Wèi Zhuāng-gōng) was Kuǎi Kuì 蒯聵, the Crown Prince of Lord Líng of Wèi (Wèi Líng-gōng, reigned 534–493) He failed in an attempt to assassinate Lord Líng’s Consort and fled to Jìn, after which he became an associate of Zhào Jiǎnzǐ.