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SELECTIONS FROM
RECORDS OF THE HISTORIAN
II

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Chinese-English

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Selections from Records of the Historian

II



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伍子胥列传

【原文】

伍子胥者，楚人也，名员。员父曰伍奢。员兄曰伍尚。其先曰伍举，以直谏事楚庄王，有显，故其后世有名于楚。

楚平王有太子名曰建，使伍奢为太傅，费无忌为少傅。无忌不忠于太子建。平王使无忌为太子取妇于秦，秦女好，无忌驰归报平王曰：“秦女绝美，王可自取，而更为太子取妇。”平王遂自取秦女而绝爱幸之，生子轸。更为太子取妇。

无忌既以秦女自媚于平王，因去太子而事平王。恐一旦平王卒而太子立，杀己，乃因谗太子建。建母，蔡女也，无宠于平

【今译】

伍子胥是楚国人，名员。他的父亲叫伍奢，哥哥叫伍尚。他的祖先叫伍举，凭借直言进谏侍奉楚庄王，颇有声望，所以他的后人在楚国很有名气。

楚平王有个太子名叫建，平王派伍奢作太子太傅，费无忌作太子少傅。费无忌对太子建不忠。平王派费无忌给太子到秦国娶亲，秦国女子长得很漂亮，费无忌就跑回去报告平王道：“秦国女子长得非常漂亮，大王可以自己娶了她，另外再给太子娶个妻子。”平王于是自娶了这个秦国女子，并且十分宠爱她，后生子轸。平王另外给太子娶了妻子。

费无忌凭借秦女得宠于平王后，便离开太子而侍奉平王。他担心有朝一日平王驾崩，太子即位，会杀自己，于是在平王面前说太子建的坏话。太子建的母亲是蔡人，不得平王宠爱。于是平



Wu Zixu

Wu Zixu, or Wu Yuan, was a native of Chu. His father was Wu She, his elder brother Wu Shang. Their ancestor Wu Chu had been noted for his frank advice to King Zhuang of Chu, and so his descendants were well-known in that state.

King Ping of Chu appointed Wu She senior guardian to Crown Prince Jian, with Fei Wuji as junior guardian. Fei was not loyal to the prince, however. Sent to Qin by the king to bring back a wife for the prince and finding her very lovely, he galloped back to report, "This girl from Qin is a marvellous beauty. Your Majesty had better take her yourself and find another wife for the crown prince."

So King Ping took the girl, who became his favourite and gave birth to a son Zhen, while a different bride was found for the crown prince. Since Fei had pleased the king in this matter, he left the crown prince and entered the king's service. But fearing that when the king died and Jian ascended the throne he might be killed, he began to slander Jian. As the king did not love the crown prince's mother, who was from Cai, he gradually became estranged from Jian, whom he sent

【原文】

王。平王稍益疏建，使建守城父，备边兵。

顷之，无忌又日夜言太子短于王曰：“太子以秦女之故，不能无怨望，愿王少自备也。自太子居城父，将兵，外交诸侯，且欲入为乱矣。”平王乃召其太傅伍奢考问之。伍奢知无忌谗太子于平王，因曰：“王独奈何以谗贼小臣疏骨肉之亲乎？”无忌曰：“王今不制，其事成矣。王且见禽。”于是平王怒，囚伍奢，而使城父司马奋扬往杀太子。行未至，奋扬使人先告太子：“太子急去，不然将诛。”太子建亡奔宋。

无忌言于平王曰：“伍奢有二子，皆贤，不诛且为楚忧。可以其父质而召之，不然且为楚患。”王使使谓伍奢曰：“能致汝二子

【今译】

王渐渐地越来越疏远太子建了，派他去驻守城父，负责边防。

不久，费无忌又不停地在平王面前讲太子的坏话，他说：“太子因那个秦国女子的缘故，不会不生怨望之心，希望大王自己提防一下。自从太子驻守城父，统领军队，结交诸侯，恐怕想要回来作乱了。”平王于是把太子太傅伍奢召来查问。伍奢知道是费无忌在平王跟前毁谤太子，便说：“大王怎么能因谗贼小臣疏远父子的骨肉关系呢？”费无忌说：“如果大王不马上制止，他的阴谋就要得逞。那时大王就要落到别人手里了！”因此平王大怒，拘捕了伍奢，同时派城父司马奋扬去杀太子。半路上，奋扬派人先去通知太子：“太子赶快离开吧，不然将被杀。”于是太子建逃亡到了宋国。

费无忌对平王说：“伍奢有两个儿子，都很有才能，不杀掉恐将成为楚国之忧。可以拿他们的父亲当人质，把他们召来，不这样会成为楚国的后患！”平王派人伍奢说：“能招致你的两个儿



to guard the frontier city of Chengfu.

Soon Fei was belittling Jian day and night to the king. "The crown prince naturally resents losing his bride from Qin," he said. "I must beg Your Majesty to be on your guard. Now the prince is in command of an army at Chengfu and in contact with other states, he may make trouble."

King Ping summoned the senior guardian Wu She and asked him about it. Wu She, knowing of Fei's slander, told the king, "Don't let yourself be estranged from your own flesh and blood, sir, by a petty treacherous slanderer."

Fei insisted, "Unless you stop them, they will succeed. And then you will be trapped."

So the king in his anger had Wu She imprisoned. He ordered Fen Yang, the military commander at Chengfu, to kill the crown prince, but instead Fen Yang sent a man to warn Jian, saying, "Fly for your life, or you are lost!" So Prince Jian fled to Song.

Fei Wuji told the king, "Wu She has two sons, both able. If you do not eliminate them they will cause Chu trouble. With their father as hostage you can summon them. Failing this, they will be a menace to our state."

Then the king sent word to Wu She, "Get your two sons here and

【原文】

则生，不能则死。”伍奢曰：“尚为人仁，呼必来。员为人刚戾忍诟，能成大事，彼见来之并禽，其势必不来。”王不听，使人召二子曰：“来，吾生汝父；不来，今杀奢也。”伍尚欲往，员曰：“楚之召我兄弟，非欲以生我父也，恐有脱者后生患，故以父为质，诈召二子。二子到，则父子俱死。何益父之死？往而令仇不得报耳。不如奔他国，借力以雪父之耻，俱灭，无为也。”伍尚曰：“我知往终不能全父命。然恨父召我求生而不往，后不能雪耻，终为天下笑耳。”谓员：“可去矣！汝能报杀父之仇，我将归死。”尚既就执，使者捕伍胥。伍胥贯弓执矢向使者，使者不敢进，伍胥遂亡。闻太子建之在宋，往从之。奢闻子胥之亡也，曰：“楚国君臣且苦

【今译】

子来就可以活，否则就是死。”伍奢说：“伍尚为人仁厚，叫他肯定会来。伍员为人桀傲不驯，坚忍卓绝，能成大事业，他知道来了一并被捉，势必不来。”平王不听，派人去召他们说：“你们来了，我饶你们的父亲不死；不来，现在就杀死伍奢。”伍尚打算前往，伍员说：“楚王叫我们兄弟去，并不是想保全我们父亲的性命，他只是担心有逃脱的，会生后患，所以拿父亲作人质，用欺骗的方法来叫我们。两个儿子一到，就会父子一同处死。对于父亲的死，有什么好处？去了，仇就报不成了！不如逃到别国，藉他人之力来洗雪这个耻辱，一起死，毫无意义。”伍尚说：“我知道去了终究不能保全父亲的性命。但是心中懊悔父亲召我们以求生而我们不去，将来又不能报仇雪恨，最后只是被天下人耻笑啊！”又对伍员说：“你走吧！你能报父仇，我要投身就死。”伍尚就擒后，使者又要去抓伍胥，伍胥弯弓搭箭对着使者，使者不敢近前，伍子胥就逃掉了。又听说太子建在宋国，便去投奔。伍奢听





you shall live. Otherwise you die.”

“Shang has a good heart and would come,” replied Wu She. “But Zixu has a hard character, can stand abuse and is capable of great things. When he sees this is a trap, he will not come.”

The king paid no attention but sent for both sons, saying, “Come, and your father lives. Otherwise he must die.”

Shang wanted to obey the summons but Zixu reasoned, “The king has no intention of sparing our father but has sent for us because he is afraid of the trouble we may cause if we escape. He is holding our father as hostage in order to trick us. If we go we shall all die together — what good would that do our father? We should simply lose all chance of revenge. No, better escape to another state and enlist support to avenge him. There is no point in perishing together.”

“I know I cannot save him by going,” Shang rejoined. “But I don’t want to be sneered at by the whole world for staying away to save my own skin and perhaps failing later to avenge him.” He added, “You leave! You can avenge our father while I die with him.”

With Shang in their hands, the messengers tried to seize Zixu, but he fitted an arrow to his bow and aimed it at them so that they dared not advance. Thus he escaped. Hearing that the crown prince was in Song, he went there to join him.

When Wu She learned of Zixu’s flight he said, “Now the king of Chu and his ministers face military disaster.”



【原文】

兵矣。”伍尚至楚，楚并杀奢与尚也。

伍胥既至宋，宋有华氏之乱，乃与太子建俱奔于郑。郑人甚善之。太子建又适晋，晋顷公曰：“太子既善郑，郑信太子。太子能为我内应，而我攻其外，灭郑必矣。灭郑而封太子。”太子乃还郑。事未会，会自私欲杀其从者，从者知其谋，乃告之于郑。郑定公与子产诛杀太子建。建有子名胜。伍胥惧，乃与胜俱奔吴。到昭关，昭关欲执之。伍胥遂与胜独身步走，几不得脱。追者在后。至江，江上有一渔父乘船，知伍胥之急，乃渡伍胥。伍胥既渡，解其剑曰：“此剑直百金，以与父。”父曰：“楚国之法，得伍胥者赐粟五万石，爵执珪，岂徒百金剑邪！”不受。伍胥未至吴而疾，止中

【今译】

说伍子胥逃跑了，便说：“楚国君臣恐怕要为战事所苦了！”伍尚到了楚国，楚王把伍奢和伍尚一起处死了。

伍子胥到了宋国，宋国刚好发生华氏之乱，伍子胥便同太子建逃到了郑国。郑国君臣对他们很友好。太子建又前往晋国，晋顷公说：“太子对郑国好，郑人又信任太子。如果太子能给我从内接应，而我自外攻入，肯定能灭掉郑国。灭掉郑国，就把郑地封给太子。”太子于是返回郑国。事情还没准备妥当，恰巧太子有件私事要杀从者，这个从者知道他的计划，便告诉了郑国。郑定公和子产便诛杀了太子建。太子建有个儿子名叫胜。伍子胥怕丧命，便和胜一起逃往吴国。到昭关时，守卫要抓他们，伍子胥就和胜二人徒步逃亡，几乎不能幸免。追赶的人穷追不舍。伍子胥逃到了江边，江上有个渔父驾着船，知道了伍子胥情况危急，就渡他过江。过了江，伍子胥解下佩剑，说：“这把剑值百金，送给你吧。”渔父说：“楚国法令，抓到你的赐粟五万石，封执珪之爵，岂只百金之剑呢！”不肯接受。伍子胥还没到吴国就病倒了，



As soon as Shang returned, he was put to death with his father.

After Wu Zixu reached Song there was a revolt led by Hua Hai, so Wu Zixu and Prince Jian went on to Zheng, where they were well received. Then Prince Jian visited Jin.

Duke Qing of Jin said, "You are a good friend of Zheng and trusted there. If you help from within while I attack from without, I can certainly conquer Zheng and give it to you."

The prince returned to Zheng. But before the plan was carried out he made an attempt on the life of one of his followers against whom he had a grudge, and this man, knowing the plot, informed against him. Then Duke Ding of Zheng and his minister Zichan killed Prince Jian.

The prince had left a son named Sheng, with whom Wu Zixu fled in alarm to Wu. The guards at the Zhao Pass tried to arrest them and, being on foot, they were very nearly caught. With pursuers hot behind them they reached the river, where a fisherman who saw that their case was desperate ferried them across in his boat. On the further shore, Wu Zixu unbuckled his sword.

"This sword, worth a hundred gold pieces, I leave with you," he said.

The fisherman answered, "A reward of fifty thousand piculs of grain and a noble title has been offered in Chu to the man who cap-

【原文】

道，乞食。至于吴，吴王僚方用事，公子光为将。伍胥乃因公子光以求见吴王。

久之，楚平王以其边邑锺离与吴边邑卑梁氏俱蚕，两女子争桑相攻，乃大怒，至于两国举兵相伐。吴使公子光伐楚，拔其锺离、居巢而归。伍子胥说吴王僚曰：“楚可破也。愿复遣公子光。”公子光谓吴王曰：“彼伍胥父兄为戮于楚，而劝王伐楚者，欲以自报其仇耳。伐楚未可破也。”伍胥知公子光有内志，欲杀王而自立，未可说以外事，乃进专诸于公子光，退而与太子建之子胜耕于野。

五年而楚平王卒。初，平王所夺太子建秦女生子轸，及平王卒，轸竟立为后，是为昭王。吴王僚因楚丧，使二公子将兵往袭

【今译】

滞于中途，讨饭苟存。到了吴国时，吴王僚正掌权，公子光为将，伍子胥便通过公子光求见吴王。

过了一段时间，楚平王因楚国边城的锺离人与吴国边城的卑梁氏都养蚕，两地女子因争桑叶而斗，于是大怒，以致两国兴兵相互讨伐。吴国派公子光攻楚，占领了锺离、居巢后回国了。伍子胥劝吴王僚说：“楚国可以破啊。希望再派公子光去。”公子光对吴王说：“那伍子胥的父兄死于楚国，他劝你攻楚，不过想报私仇罢了。楚国打不下来的。”伍子胥知道公子光对内有野心，想弑吴王僚而自立，故不能用外事来游说他，便向他推荐了专诸，自己归隐，和太子建的儿子胜到乡下种田去了。

五年后，楚平王去世。原先平王夺的太子建的秦女生子名轸，平王死后，轸竟然继立为昭王。吴王僚趁楚国大丧，派两个



tures Wu Zixu. Why should I take a sword worth only a hundred gold pieces?" And he refused it.

On the way to Wu, Wu Zixu fell ill and had to stop to beg for food. When he reached Wu, King Liao was on the throne with Lord Guang as his commander, and through him Wu Zixu obtained an audience with the king.

Some time later, the women raising silkworms in Wu's frontier town of Beiliangshi started fighting about mulberry leaves with those in Chu's frontier town Zhongli. King Ping of Chu was so incensed by this that he called out his troops, and the king of Wu sent Lord Guang to attack Chu. Upon his return after storming Zhongli and Juchao, Wu Zixu advised the king, "Chu can be defeated if you send Lord Guang out on another expedition."

But Lord Guang told the king, "Wu Zixu's father and brother were killed in Chu. He is advising you to attack because he wants revenge. We cannot defeat Chu."

Wu Zixu knew that Lord Guang was plotting to kill the king and take his place, and that therefore it was useless to speak to him about matters outside. So he introduced Zhuan Zhu to Lord Guang and went into retirement himself ploughing the fields with Sheng, the son of Prince Jian.

Five years later King Ping of Chu died and Zhen, his son by the beauty from Qin, succeeded him as King Zhao. King Liao of Wu seized this opportunity to dispatch two lords with troops against Chu,



【原文】

楚。楚发兵绝吴兵之后，不得归。吴国内空，而公子光乃令专诸袭刺吴王僚而自立，是为吴王阖庐。阖庐既立，得志，乃召伍员以为行人，而与谋国事。

楚诛其大臣郢宛、伯州犁，伯州犁之孙伯嚭亡奔吴，吴亦以嚭为大夫。前王僚所遣二公子将兵伐楚者，道绝不得归。后闻阖庐弑王僚自立，遂以其兵降楚，楚封之于舒。阖庐立三年，乃兴师与伍胥、伯嚭伐楚，拔舒，遂禽故吴反二将军。因欲至郢，将军孙武曰：“民劳，未可，且待之。”乃归。

四年，吴伐楚，取六与濞。五年，伐越，败之。六年，楚昭王使公子囊瓦将兵伐吴。吴使伍员迎击，大破楚军于豫章，取楚之居巢。

【今译】

公子带兵袭楚。楚人发兵断了吴军的后路，吴军退不回去。吴国内部空虚，于是公子光就让专诸杀死吴王僚，然后自立为王，这就是吴王阖庐。阖庐作了王，志得意满，于是召回伍员，任以行人，让他参与商量国家大事。

楚国杀了大臣郢宛、伯州犁，伯州犁的孙子伯嚭逃到了吴国，吴国也任命伯嚭作了大夫。从前吴王僚所派带兵攻楚的两个公子，后路被断回不了吴。后来听说阖庐弑吴王僚自立，便带兵降楚，楚国封他们于舒。阖庐为王三年，就兴兵同伍子胥、伯嚭攻楚，占领舒地，擒获了原来吴国的两个叛将。于是阖庐想趁势攻郢，将军孙武说：“百姓疲惫，还不行，姑且等等。”于是收兵回国。

阖庐四年(公元前511年)，吴攻楚，占领了六地和濞地。五年，攻越，大败越国。六年，楚昭王派公子囊瓦带兵伐吴。吴派伍子胥迎击，在豫章大破楚军，夺取了楚国的居巢。



but the army of Chu cut off their retreat so that Wu was left undefended. Then Lord Guang made Zhuan Zhu assassinate the king and set himself up as King Helü. His ambition realized, he put Wu Zixu in charge of relations with other states and consulted him on government affairs.

When the king of Chu killed his ministers Xi Wan and Bo Zhouli, the latter's grandson Bo Pi fled to Wu and King Helü made him a minister too.

After the two lords sent to attack Chu found retreat impossible and heard that Lord Guang had assassinated King Liao and enthroned himself, they surrendered with their forces to Chu and were given the district of Shu as their fief.

Three years after King Helü ascended the throne, he raised an army and with the help of Wu Zixu and Bo Pi attacked Chu, took Shu and captured the two renegades. He wanted to advance on Ying, the capital of Chu, but his commander Sun Wu said, "Our men are tired. The time has not yet come. We had better wait." So they returned.

In the fourth year the army of Wu attacked Chu again and took Liu and Jian. In the fifth year they attacked and defeated Yue. In the sixth year King Zhao of Chu sent Lord Nang with troops against Wu, but Wu Zixu, who had been dispatched by King Helü to resist, utterly routed him at Yuzhang and captured Juchao from Chu.

【原文】

九年，吴王阖庐谓子胥、孙武曰：“始子言郢未可入，今果何如？”二子对曰：“楚将囊瓦贪，而唐、蔡皆怨之。王必欲大伐之，必先得唐、蔡乃可。”阖庐听之，悉兴师与唐、蔡伐楚，与楚夹汉水而陈。吴王之弟夫概将兵请从，王不听，遂以其属五千人击楚将子常。子常败走，奔郑。于是吴乘胜而前，五战，遂至郢。己卯，楚昭王出奔。庚辰，吴王入郢。

昭王出亡，入云梦；盗击王，王走郢。郢公弟怀曰：“平王杀我父，我杀其子，不亦可乎！”郢公恐其弟杀王，与王奔随。吴兵围随，谓随人曰：“周之子孙在汉川者，楚尽灭之。”随人欲杀王，王子綦匿王，己自为王以当之。随人卜与王于吴，不吉，乃

【今译】

九年(公元前506年)，吴王阖庐对伍子胥、孙武说：“当初你们说郢地进不了，现在怎么样？”二人回答说：“楚将囊瓦贪财，唐国、蔡国都恨他。大王若一定要大举攻伐，一定要先得到唐、蔡的支持才行。”吴王听取了 this 个意见，发动全部军队和唐、蔡一起攻楚，跟楚军在汉水两岸摆开阵势。吴王的弟弟夫概带领军队请求跟从，吴王不许，夫概便带所属五千人攻打楚将子常。子常败逃到郑国。于是吴国乘胜前进，五战打到郢都。己卯日，楚昭王出逃。庚辰日，吴王入郢都。

楚昭王出逃，进入云梦；有强盗攻击，便逃到郢地。郢公的弟弟怀说：“平王杀了我们的父亲，我们杀他的儿子，不很公道吗？”郢公怕弟弟杀了昭王，便跟昭王逃到随。吴兵围随，对随人说：“汉川一带的周室子孙，都被楚人灭掉了。”随人想杀昭王，王子綦把昭王藏起来，说自己是昭王以搪塞他们。随人又进行占卜，认为把楚王送给吴国不吉，于是婉言拒绝把昭王