

THE BOOK OF CHINESE WISDOM

BOOK IV

TIMELESS TALES
OF POWER
AND INFLUENCE

Michael C. Tang

中國智慧故事

唐庆华 著

④ 权谋兵法篇

上海人民出版社



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The Book of Chinese Wisdom was originally published by the Foreign Language Press of Beijing in 1996 under the title of *A Treasury of China's Wisdom*. It was published in the U.S. by Prentice Hall Press in 2000 under the title of *A Victor's Reflections and Other Tales of China's Timeless Wisdom*. Subsequently it was translated into other foreign languages and published in Europe and Asia.

I have completely revised and substantially expanded the book for the bilingual version. The book is now in four volumes, each with a distinct theme.

The Book of Chinese Wisdom is the result of years of studying hundreds of Chinese classics in history, literature and philosophy, ranging from *The Book of Changes* to *Tao Te Ching*, from *The Intrigues of the Warring States* to *The Records of the Historian*, from *Remarks of Monarchs* to *The Comprehensive Mirror to Rulers*, from *The Chronicles of the Three Kingdoms* to *The History of the Ming Dynasty*, traversing the vast panoply of China's history.

In recent years, there is a surge of interest in China. But most newly published books outside China deal with modern China. Few focused on China's classical wisdom. This book is meant to fill that gap. I approach the subject of Chinese classical wisdom with a view of applying it in our present-day life. No prior knowledge of China is needed as I take the reader on a tour through the treasure land of Chinese wisdom and call their attention to the gems in the treasure trove. I hope they will discover the practical value of Chinese wisdom while learning something about Chinese culture.

I am deeply grateful to Wang Meng, former Minister of Culture of China and well-known author, Nicholas Kristof, author and Pulitzer Prize winning journalist of *The New York Times*, Zhu Yinghuang, editor-in-chief emeritus of *China Daily*, and Ross Terrill, well-known author and China scholar at Harvard University, for their generous praise.

At the Shanghai People's Publishing House, I am indebted to Mr. Fan Weiwen and Ms. Pan Danrong for their enthusiasm and thoughtfulness and to Ms. Julia Zhang for her wonderful help.

I owe a special debt to Professor Constance Yang who read the entire manuscript and offered many valuable suggestions that have brightened these pages. I would like to thank Ms. Frances Zhang and Ms. Cecilia Qian for their

致 谢

《中国智慧故事》原用英文撰就，由中国外文出版社于1996年出版。2000年该书由美国最大的出版公司之一普伦蒂斯·霍尔公司在美国出版，随后被译成多种语言在各国出版。

作者在撰写英汉对照本的过程中，对原著内容作了全面修订和大幅度的扩充，并拓展为四册。每册有一个主题。

《中国智慧故事》是作者根据多年来所研读的数百种中国书籍，包括《老子》、《庄子》、《易经》、《论语》、《左传》、《国策》、《国语》、《史记》、《三国志》、《资治通鉴》等等，选取其中最能代表中国智慧的精华故事，以现代英语重新撰写而成，旨在使不具备中国历史知识的普通英语读者也能了解渊源博大的中国智慧。

近年来，世界各国对中国的兴趣日趋浓厚。但是，目前国外出版的多为现代中国的题材，而以普通读者为对象，介绍中国古代智慧的书却极少。其实，中国古典智慧是很有现实意义和实用价值的。作者相信，通过此书，读者既可以受到中国智慧的启迪，又能够增进对中国传统文化的了解。

本书渥蒙前文化部长、著名作家王蒙，美国《纽约时报》专栏作家、普利策奖获得者纪思道，英文《中国日报》名誉主编朱英璜，美国著名作家、哈佛大学费正清中心研究员谭若思等撰写赞语，作者深感荣幸。

作者十分感谢上海人民出版社对本书的热情支持，特别是范蔚文先生和潘丹榕女士的悉心关怀和指导，以及张玲雅小姐卓有成效的工作。

阮式云教授细阅全稿，给我良多助益，我特别感激她。我也感谢张帆小姐和钱华小姐的耐心协助。

本书封面之美归功于著名书籍设计师袁银昌先生匠心独运。李静女士的创意也为本书增色无限。本书书名由家父唐清安题写。

patience and assistance.

The cover is the creation of Mr. Yuan Yinchang, renowned Chinese artist whose works have won domestic and international prizes. Ms. Li Jing has graced the page layout with her ingenuity. The calligraphy was elegantly written by my father with virtuoso brush strokes.

I owe the biggest debt of all to my grandfathers and grandmothers who taught me to love the Chinese classics and cherish their wisdom.

I shall be happy to hear comments and suggestions from my readers.

祖父母和外祖父母从小教我要热爱中国古典精华，珍惜中国智慧。他们是最应该感谢的人。

作者衷心欢迎读者来信交流心得，并馈赠宝贵意见和建议。

INTRODUCTION

Wisdom is the most precious asset our ancestors have left behind. But it is something that cannot be genetically inherited. Unless we make an effort to learn and practice it, wisdom will not be ours to keep.

The Book of Chinese Wisdom brings together a host of thought-provoking stories that are among the most famous in Chinese classics. They are the gems in the treasure trove of Chinese wisdom. You do not need prior knowledge of Chinese history to appreciate these stories whose morals transcend time and space.

Wisdom is not one-dimensional or singly focused; wisdom is rich in variety and kaleidoscopic in manifestation. *The Book of Chinese Wisdom* is in four volumes. *Book I* is about the art of management; *Book II's* theme is wit and humor; *Book III* focuses on virtues and values; and *Book IV* contains famous stories of power and influence.

Looking through the annals of China's long history, I found the period between the fall of an old dynasty and the rise of a new one to be the best focal point to examine the folly and wisdom of man. These periods gave birth to great men whose talent and wisdom were brought into full swing by fate. Great men come out of great conflict.

Ralph Waldo Emerson said, there is properly no history, only biographies. Indeed I am not so much interested in history as in the people who made history, in the individuals: what they thought, what they did and how they did it. The role of the individual to shape, change and create history was important then as it is today.

In this book I limit myself to three most significant periods. The first is the rise of the Qin dynasty which built the Great Wall and its rapid collapse; the second is the rise of the Han dynasty whose distinguished founder rivaled with a famous war hero in an epic struggle for supremacy; and the third is the turbulent years of the last emperor of the Ming dynasty and the rise of the Qing.

History is a mirror. If we can read its reflections correctly, then it becomes a crystal ball for us to see what future has in store for us.

I have not included the story of the glorious Tang dynasty and its founding emperor Tang Taizong because I have written a separate book on the subject entitled *The Emperor of Tang and the Secret of His Spectacular Success*.

序

智慧是祖先留给我们的最宝贵的财富。但是，智慧不能靠基因遗传。如果不努力学习智慧，不运用智慧，我们就无法传承智慧。

《中国智慧故事》搜集了中国历史经典中最著名的故事。这些引人深思的故事是中国智慧宝库里的明珠。读者即使不熟悉中国历史，也能欣赏故事里超越时空的寓意。

智慧层面丰富，种类繁多，表现多姿多彩。《中国智慧故事》共有四册。第一册的主题是管理智慧。第二册的主题是机智与幽默。第三册的重点是教育与伦理。第四册的重点是权谋与兵法。

纵观中国的漫长历史，我发现观察人的智慧和愚蠢的最佳时期是一个旧王朝为一个新王朝所取代的那段时期。伟人往往产生在这段时期里。命运让他们有机会尽其智慧，施展才华。伟大的人物往往产生于伟大的冲突之中。

爱默生说过，严格地说来，其实没有历史，只有历史人物的生平记述。事实上，我对创造历史的人物比历史更感兴趣。我感兴趣的是他们想些什么、做些什么，以及如何去做。个人对历史的影响，个人在改变历史、创造历史中的作用，无论是过去还是现在，都非常重要。

本书写了中国历史上三个最有意义的时期。第一个是建造万里长城的秦朝的崛起和崩溃的过程；第二个是汉朝兴起的过程，叙述汉朝的开国皇帝如何在一场史诗般的搏斗中击败了另一个英雄；第三个是明末清初的动荡年代。

历史是一面镜子。如果我们能正确地解释镜子里的图像，这面镜子就变成我们预知未来的水晶球。

本书没有记录辉煌的唐朝及其缔造者唐太宗，因为笔者另有一本关于唐朝和唐太宗的英文专著《唐太宗和他的成功秘诀》。

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PART I

THE FOUNDING OF THE QIN DYNASTY

秦朝的建立

The fifth century B.C. was a time of great strife in China. Although the king of the Zhou dynasty was the nominal ruler, he held only the title of the ruler of the state. In fact, the power of the king was the only power that could be exercised. The king's power was based on the fact that he had been granted the right to rule by the other rulers of the state. The king's power was based on the fact that he had been granted the right to rule by the other rulers of the state.

In the course of time, these rulers began to fight for their own interests and government. The king's power was based on the fact that he had been granted the right to rule by the other rulers of the state. The king's power was based on the fact that he had been granted the right to rule by the other rulers of the state.

The king of Qin was the most powerful ruler of the state. He had been granted the right to rule by the other rulers of the state. The king's power was based on the fact that he had been granted the right to rule by the other rulers of the state.

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A RADICAL REFORMER

The fifth century B.C. was a time of internal strife in China. Although the king of the Zhou dynasty was the sovereign ruler, he held only the vain title of the “Son of Heaven” and the capital city of Luoyang was the only place he could exercise any control. The divine right which he claimed to be his had long been ignored by the rulers of his numerous vassal states—hereditary nobles whose ancestors had been kinsmen of the royal house of Zhou.

In the course of time, these hereditary nobles had built up their own armies and governments. Some even assumed the title of king. As they fought each other for supremacy, China entered a period known as that of the Warring States. Smaller states were annexed by bigger states until there were only seven left.

The State of Qin in northwestern China was the most backward as it was separated from the civilized life of the other six states—Yan, Zhao, Han, Wei, Qi and Chu.

Anxious to remedy the situation, Qin rulers adopted a policy of recruiting men of distinguished abilities from other states. Among those recruited, the most famous was Shang Yang.

Well-versed in law and political science, Shang Yang was in the employ of the prime minister of Wei who had a good mind

商鞅变法

公元前五世纪，中国处于内乱状态。周王虽然是一国之主，但他的天子称号徒有其名。除了王都洛阳他能掌控以外，他的所谓神授的君权早已被诸侯置之不理。

各国诸侯不但设立了自己的政府和军队，有的还自封为王。他们相互争霸，连年征战。中国进入了战国时期。小国不断被大国吞并，最后只剩下七雄。

七国当中，位于中国西北部的秦国最落后，因为它跟燕、赵、韩、魏、齐、楚其他六国的文明世界隔离开来了。为了改变这种状况，秦国的君主到处搜罗人才。秦国吸引到的人才当中，最著名的要数商鞅。

商鞅精通法律和政治学。他原在魏国相国的门下供职。魏相还没来得及向魏惠王推荐商鞅，就一病不起。魏惠王到相府探望他时，问他：“如果你有个三长两短，我该怎么办？”

“商鞅有奇才，您用他管理国家，准没错。”

惠王听后，一言不发。

“如果您不用他，就要杀掉他，决不能让他为别的国家服务。”

to recommend him to King Hui of Wei. But before he did so, the prime minister fell ill. The king came to see him.

"If anything happens to you, what should I do?" The king asked.

"Appoint Shang Yang as my successor," said the prime minister. "He is a man of great talent and will serve you well."

The king did not say a word.

"If you don't use him," the prime minister added, "you must kill him. Never let Shang Yang leave Wei to work for other states."

The king nodded cursorily and left. The prime minister sent for Shang Yang.

"I recommended you to the king, but he didn't listen to me. So, for the interest of the country, I suggested that he kill you to prevent you from working for other countries. You had better leave Wei for your own safety."

Shang Yang refused. "If the king did not take your advice to appoint me, why should he listen to you and have me killed?"

After the death of the prime minister, Shang Yang could not find a meaningful job in Wei, so he set out for Qin.

When Duke Xiao of Qin interviewed him, Shang Yang talked about the ways of the sage kings of the past, the duke was so bored that he dozed off during the conversation, for he wanted to make a name in his lifetime, not to wait for hundreds of years for his policy to bear fruit. Next time Shang Yang proposed an ambitious reform program. As he described his ideas, the duke was enthralled. Their conversation lasted for days. At the end of which, Duke Xiao appointed Shang Yang prime minister.

Shang Yang began a series of unprecedented legal and

惠王点了点头，就走了。

魏相把商鞅叫来，对他说：“我向惠王推荐了你，但看来他不会用你。考虑到魏国的利益，我建议他杀死你，免得你到别的国家去做事。你快走吧，留在这里不安全。”

商鞅不肯走，他说：“既然魏王不听你的话用我，又怎么会听你的话杀我呢？”

魏相去世后，商鞅在魏国找不到一份有意义的工作，就前往秦国。

商鞅会见秦孝公时，讲了一大通古代圣王的道理。秦孝公兴致索然，打起瞌睡来，因为他希望在世时就名扬天下，而不是等上几百年政策才见成效。下次见面时，商鞅提出了一套雄心勃勃的变法方案。他侃侃而谈，秦孝公听得仿佛着了迷一般。两个人一连谈了好几天。最后，秦孝公任命商鞅为相国。

商鞅采取了一系列空前的变法措施。为了鼓励农垦，他允许农民拥有土地，不再附属于封建领主；为了鼓励婚姻，有两个以上成年男子的家庭，必须分家，否则加倍纳税；为了防止商人牟利，盐铁之类的商品由政府垄断。新法废除了世袭的贵族制度，官爵大小一律以军功和奉献的谷物为准。

商鞅刚颁布变法的法令时，怕民众不把它当一回事，就在市井立了一根木头，宣布谁把这根木头从市井的一

economic reform. To encourage agriculture and migration, peasants were given the right to own land and no longer attached to feudal lords. To encourage marriage, a man with two or more adult sons living with him had to pay a double amount of tax. To discourage profiteering by traders, basic products such as salt and iron were placed under government monopoly.

The old hereditary system was abolished and a new aristocratic hierarchy was created based on military merits and grain contribution to the state.

When his new policy was announced, Shang Yang was concerned that people might not take it seriously. To show he meant business, he had a wooden pole erected in the market place and offered ten ounces of gold to anybody who would move it from one end of the market place to the other. But there was no response. Shang Yang increased the reward to fifty ounces. Thereupon a man came forward, moved the pole, and walked away with the reward. Now everybody knew Shang Yang meant what he said.

Households in Qin were organized into units of five or ten and residents were obliged to keep an eye on each other. If one failed to report a crime committed by his neighbor, he would share the punishment. The penalties for breaking the law were cruel. A condemned prisoner could be beheaded, cut in half, thrown into a boiling pot, had his ribs pulled out, or torn apart by horses. Even littering in the street would mean flogging for the offender.

Duke Xiao worried that the reform might be too radical. But Shang Yang urged him to stick to it.

“Don’t expect to be popular when you introduce new