

CHINESE ENGLISH

[汉英对照] THREE
KINGDOMS

（出） 外文出版社

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英对照

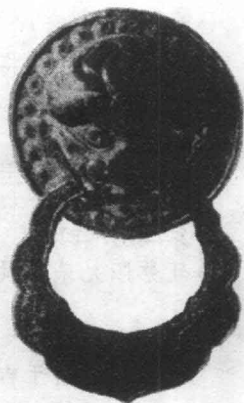
CHINESE AND ENGLISH CLASSICS

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三国演义

Three Kingdoms

II



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罗慕士 译

Attributed to Luo Guanzhong

Translated by Moss Roberts

外文出版社
Foreign Languages Press

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

三国演义 / (明)罗贯中著; (英)罗慕士(Roberts, M)译.

—北京:外文出版社, 2003.1

ISBN 7-119-03219-4

I. 三... II. ①罗...②罗... III. 英语-对照读物, 小说-汉、英
IV. H319.4: I

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2002)第 092609 号

外文出版社网址:

<http://www.flp.com.cn>

外文出版社电子信箱:

info@flp.com.cn

sales@flp.com.cn

三国演义

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出版发行 外文出版社

社 址 北京市百万庄大街 24 号

邮政编码 100037

电 话 (010)68326613

印 刷 北京才智印刷厂

经 销 新华书店 / 外文书店

开 本 大 32 开

字 数 2070 千字

印 数 0001 — 5000 册

印 张 95.25

版 次 2003 年 1 月第 1 版第 1 次印刷

装 别 平 装

书 号 ISBN 7-119-03219-4 / I.734(外)

定 价 138.00 元 (全五卷)

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第二十三回

祢正平裸衣骂贼 吉太医下毒遭刑

却说曹操欲斩刘岱、王忠。孔融谏曰：“二人本非刘备敌手，若斩之，恐失将士之心。”操乃免其死，黜罢爵禄。欲自起兵伐玄德。孔融曰：“方今隆冬盛寒，未可动兵，待来春未为晚也。可先使人招安张绣、刘表，然后再图徐州。”操然其言，先遣刘晔往说张绣。晔至襄城，先见贾诩，陈说曹公盛德。诩乃留晔于家中。次日来见张绣，说曹公遣刘晔招安之事。正议间，忽报袁绍有使至。绣命人。使者呈上书信。绣览之，亦是招安之意。诩问来使曰：“近日兴兵破曹操，胜负何如？”使曰：“隆冬寒月，权且罢兵。今以将军与荆州刘表俱有国土之风，故来相请耳。”诩大笑曰：“汝可便回见本初，道：‘汝兄弟尚不能容，何能容天下国土乎！’”当面扯碎书，叱退来使。

张绣曰：“方今袁强曹弱；今毁书叱使，袁绍若至，当如何？”诩曰：“不如去从曹操。”绣曰：“吾先与操有仇，安得相容？”诩曰：“从操其便有三：夫曹公奉天子明诏，征伐天下，其

Chapter 23

Mi Heng Strips, Denouncing the Traitor Ji Ping Is Executed for Threatening Cao's Life

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Cao Cao wanted to execute the two commanders, but Kong Rong pleaded for them. "They were no match for Xuande," he said. "Killing them would only demoralize your officers and men." So Cao Cao contented himself with depriving them of rank and pay. Then he began planning his campaign against Xuande. Again Kong Rong sought to dissuade him. "We cannot mobilize in the winter cold," he argued. "We must wait until spring comes. If we can get the support of Zhang Xiu and Liu Biao first, we'll be in a better position to attack Xuzhou." Cao Cao accepted this advice and dispatched Liu Ye to Zhang Xiu in Xiangcheng.

The envoy sang Cao Cao's praises to Zhang Xiu's adviser, Jia Xu.¹ Jia Xu welcomed Liu Ye as his personal guest and the following day brought him before Zhang Xiu, explaining that Cao's envoy was offering amnesty. During this discussion an envoy from Yuan Shao was announced. Shao too, according to the documents the envoy bore, was seeking Zhang Xiu's allegiance. Jia Xu said to Yuan Shao's representative, "Your master has taken the field against Cao Cao. How do things stand now?" "We have suspended operations for the winter," he replied. "My lord is making the offer to General Zhang Xiu and Liu Biao because he regards both as leaders of the land." Jia Xu said with a laugh, "Go back and tell Yuan Shao that if he couldn't make common cause with his own brother, how can he expect to do so with the 'leaders of the land'?" Then and there Jia Xu destroyed Yuan Shao's letter in the presence of the envoy and dismissed him harshly.

"Yuan Shao is stronger than Cao Cao," Zhang Xiu complained. "You have torn up his letter and offended his envoy. What if Shao attacks?" "Cao Cao's the surer ally," Jia Xu answered. "But we are enemies," Zhang Xiu said. "How can we work together?" "There are three advan-

宜从一也；绍强盛，我以少从之，必不以我为重，操虽弱，得我必喜，其宜从二也；曹公王霸之志，必释私怨，以明德于四海，其宜从三也。愿将军无疑焉。”绣从其言，请刘晔相见。晔盛称操德，且曰：“丞相若记旧怨，安肯使某来结好将军乎？”绣大喜，即同贾诩等赴许都投降。绣见操，拜于阶下。操忙扶起，执其手曰：“有小过失，勿记于心。”遂封绣为扬武将军，封贾诩为执金吾使。操即命绣作书招安刘表。贾诩进曰：“刘景升好结纳名流，今必得一有文名之士往说之，方可降耳。”操问荀攸曰：“谁人可去？”攸曰：“孔文举可当其任。”操然之。攸出见孔融曰：“丞相欲得一有文名之士，以备行人之选。公可当此任否？”融曰：“吾友祢衡，字正平，其才十倍于我。此人宜在帝左右，不但可备行人而已。我当荐之天子。”于是遂上表奏帝。其文曰：

臣闻洪水横流，帝思俾乂；银；旁求四方，以招贤俊。昔世宗继统，将弘基业；畴咨熙载，群士响臻。陛下睿圣，纂承基绪，遭遇厄运，劳谦日昃；维岳降神，异人并出。窃见

tages to allying with Cao," Jia Xu said. "First, by controlling imperial edicts Cao legitimizes his campaigns throughout the realm. Second, precisely because Shao is the more powerful, as you say, he is unlikely to appreciate your small contingent, while the weaker Cao will receive it with enthusiasm. Third, Cao aspires to mastery of the realm and therefore must eschew all personal enmities so that he can manifest his virtue across the land. Do not doubt it, General."

Jia Xu's arguments convinced Zhang Xiu to receive Cao's envoy. At the audience Liu Ye praised Cao's abundant virtues and then added, "If the prime minister carried grudges, General, would he be sending me to seek your friendship?" Delighted with the offer, Zhang Xiu went with Jia Xu to the capital to tender his allegiance. At the steps leading up to the main hall of the palace, Zhang Xiu prostrated himself before Cao Cao, who hastened to help the general to his feet. Taking Zhang Xiu's hand, Cao Cao said, "It was I who offended. Do not hold it against me." He appointed Zhang Xiu General of Manifest Might and Jia Xu an officer in the Capital Guard. Then Cao Cao asked Zhang Xiu to write to Liu Biao urging him to come to terms.

"Liu Biao likes to befriend the luminaries of our day," Jia Xu told Cao Cao. "What we need is a noted man of letters to persuade him to join us." On Xun You's advice, Cao Cao sent for Kong Rong. "His Excellency," Xun You explained to Kong Rong, "seeks a distinguished scholar to represent his views to Liu Biao. Would you consider it, sire?" "I have a friend, Mi Heng (styled Zhengping)," Kong Rong replied, "who is ten times more talented than I. He belongs in the Emperor's personal service, not just handling a minor matter like this. Let me recommend him to the Son of Heaven." Kong Rong submitted the following petition to the court in Mi Heng's behalf:

When floods overran the land, the Emperor provided for their control, searching every corner of the realm for able men. When Shi Zong took the throne,² he meant to expand the patrimony, and toward that end sought out men who would shed luster on his enterprise. Thus he attracted exceptional talent to his service. With profound sagacity, Your Majesty, heir to the great tradition of Han, has met with an unfortunate situation and spends the days in anguish. But spirits are descending from the

处士平原祢衡：年二十四，字正平，淑质贞亮，英才卓犖。初涉艺文，升堂睹奥；目所一见，辄诵之口，耳所暂闻，不忘于心；性与道合，思若有神；弘羊潜计，安世默识，以衡准之，诚不足怪。忠果正直，志怀霜雪；见善若惊，嫉恶若仇；任座抗行，史鱼厉节，殆无以过也。鸷鸟累百，不如一鹗；使衡立朝，必有可观。飞辩骋词，溢气坳涌；解疑释结，临敌有余。

昔贾谊求试属国，诡系单于；终军欲以长缨，牵制劲越；弱冠慷慨，前世美之。近日路粹、严象，亦用异才，擢拜台郎。衡宜与为比。如得龙跃天衢，振翼云汉，扬声紫微，垂光虹蜺，足以昭近署之多士，增四门之穆穆。钩天广乐，必有奇丽之观；帝室皇居，必蓄非常之宝。若衡等辈，不可多得。《激楚》、《阳阿》，至妙之容，掌伎者之所贪；飞兔、骀骼，绝足奔放，良、乐之所急也。臣等区区，敢不以闻？陛下



sacred hills; and remarkable men are coming to the fore.

I know of one such worthy, presently still a commoner. His name is Mi Heng (styled Zhengping); his age, twenty-four. He is a clean and simple man of shining integrity and outstanding ability. He became conversant with literature first, and later was initiated into the secrets of the arts. What he sees but once he can recite in full. What he hears in passing he can commit to memory. His nature is at one with the true way. His power of thought has something divine in it. It would not surprise me if he proved the equal of Sang Hongyang in calculation and Zhang Anshi in comprehensive recall.³ Moreover, his loyalty is unswerving and his intentions pure as snow. The good inspires him, and evil disgusts him. He would risk his life to defend useful criticism as promptly as he would protect Your Majesty from unscrupulous counsel in the manner of a Ren Zuo or a Shi Yu.⁴ A hundred eagles cannot compare to one wise osprey: Mi Heng would have a wonderful effect if placed at court. His quick thinking and elegant rhetoric are never wanting. He can work out problems and resolve dilemmas with absolute mastery, and will never be at a loss in dealing with the enemy.

In the early years of the Han, Jia Yi petitioned the Emperor to establish frontier colonies as a means for controlling the Xiongnu, and Zhong Jun, sent to placate the kingdom of Nanyue, was ready to haul its king to Chang'an to pay homage to the Emperor. Former generations celebrated these two high-spirited youths.

In more recent times Lu Cui and Yan Xiang have been appointed at court because of their unusual ability. Such treatment should be accorded Mi Heng. A dragon like him aloft in the heavenly court, beating his wings among the constellations, raising his voice among the circumpolar stars,⁵ and sending down the rainbow's beams will lend glory to the newly appointed officials and magnify the dignity of Your Majesty's house. The imperial music festivals are for rare and wonderful performers; the imperial chambers, for preserving extraordinary treasures. Men like Mi Heng are all too rare. The song and dance "Ji Chu" and the composition "Yang E" are the music master's first choice for performance par excellence. Fei Tu and Yao Niao, those fleet gallopers, are what the trainer Bo Le and the charioteer Wang Liang were ever eager to obtain. Though but a humble servant of little note, I feel obliged to call this man to Your Majesty's attention. Your Majesty's earnest caution in selecting men to serve you requires comparison and trial. Now I appeal for an audience for this com-

笃慎取士，必须效试，乞令衡以褐衣召见。如无可观采，臣等受面欺之罪。

帝览表，以付曹操。操遂使人召衡至。礼毕，操不命坐。祢衡仰天叹曰：“天地虽阔，何无一人也！”操曰：“吾手下有数十人，皆当世英雄，何谓无人？”衡曰：“愿闻。”操曰：“荀彧、荀攸、郭嘉、程昱，机深智远，虽萧何、陈平不及也。张辽、许褚、李典、乐进，勇不可当，虽岑彭、马武不及也。吕虔、满宠为从事，于禁、徐晃为先锋；夏侯惇天下奇才，曹子孝世间福将。——安得无人？”衡笑曰：“公言差矣！此等人物，吾尽识之：荀彧可使吊丧问疾，荀攸可使看坟守墓，程昱可使关门闭户，郭嘉可使白词念赋，张辽可使击鼓鸣金，许褚可使牧牛放马，乐进可使取状读招，李典可使传书送檄，吕虔可使磨刀铸剑，满宠可使饮酒食糟，于禁可使负版筑墙，徐晃可使屠猪杀狗；夏侯惇称为‘完体将军’，曹子孝呼为‘要钱太守’。其余皆是衣架、饭囊、酒桶、肉袋耳！”操怒曰：“汝有何能？”衡曰：“天文地理，无一不通；三教九流，无所不晓；上可以致君为尧、舜，下可以配德于孔、颜。岂与俗子共论乎！”时止有张辽在侧，掣剑欲斩之。操曰：“吾正少一