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CHRONICLES OF THE HAN DYNASTY

II



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CHRONICLES OF THE HAN DYNASTY

II



(汉)班固 著

安平秋 张传玺 今译

王之光 英译

Written by Ban Gu (Han Dynasty)

Edited by An Pingqiu, Zhang Chuanxi

Translated by Wang Zhiguang

外文出版社

Foreign Languages Press

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

汉书选: 汉英对照 / (东汉)班固著; 王之光译.

-- 北京: 外文出版社, 2015

(大中华文库)

ISBN 978-7-119-09408-3

I. ①汉… II. ①班… ②王… III. ①英语—汉语—对照读物

②汉书—译文 ③中国—古代史—西汉时代—纪传体

IV. ①H319.4 ②K234.104.2

中国版本图书馆CIP数据核字(2015)第056165号

出版策划: 胡开敏

责任编辑: 杨春燕 曹晓娟 刘芳念

英文审定: Sue Duncan 贺 军

大中华文库

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© 2015 外文出版社有限责任公司

出 版 人: 徐 步

出版发行:

外文出版社

(中国北京百万庄大街24号)

邮政编码 100037

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

电话: 008610-68320579 (总编室)

008610-68995852 (发行部)

008610-68327750 (版权部)

制 版:

北京杰瑞腾达科技发展有限公司

印 刷:

深圳市佳信达印务有限公司

开 本: 960mm × 640mm 1/16 印 张: 50.25

2015年4月第1版第1次印刷

(汉英)

ISBN 978-7-119-09408-3

(精装)

定价: 160.00元(全2卷)

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晁错传

【原文】

晁错，颍川人也。学申商刑名于轹张恢生所，与洛阳宋孟及刘带同师。以文学为太常掌故。

错为人峭直刻深。孝文时，天下亡治《尚书》者，独闻齐有伏生，故秦博士，治《尚书》，年九十馀，老不可征。乃诏太常，使人受之。太常遣错受《尚书》伏生所，还，因上书称说。诏以为太子舍人，门大夫，迁博士。又上书言：“人主所以尊显，功名扬于万世之后者，以知术数也。故人主知所以临制臣下而治其众，则群臣畏服矣；知所以听言受事，则不欺蔽矣；知所以安利万民，则海内必从矣；知所以忠孝事上，则臣子之行备矣：此四者，臣窃为皇太子急

【今译】

晁错是颍川人。曾经在轹县张恢先生那里学习过申不害、商鞅的刑名学说，与雒阳人宋孟和刘带同师。因为通晓文献典籍，担任了太常掌故。

晁错为人严峻刚直而又苛刻。汉文帝时，朝廷没有研究《尚书》的人，只听说齐国有伏生，原是秦朝的博士，精通《尚书》，已经九十多岁了，年老不能征召，文帝于是下令太常派人前往学习。太常派遣晁错到伏生那里学习《尚书》，回来后，趁机上书报告学习情况，称赞解说《尚书》。文帝下诏先后任命他担任太子舍人、门大夫，后升为博士。晁错又上书说：“君王所以地位尊贵显赫，功名传播万代之后，是因为懂得运用刑名之术。因此知道怎样控制臣下、治理众人，那么群臣便畏惧顺从了；懂得怎样听取各种言论，那么便不被欺骗蒙蔽了；懂得怎样安定社会，使百姓富裕，那么天下百姓就会服从；懂得怎样对尊长尽忠尽孝，那么臣子的行为就具备了。这四条，臣自以为是皇太子的当务之急。人臣的议论有人认为皇太子



Chapter 9

Biography of Chao Cuo

Chao Cuo was from Yingchuan. He had studied the Legalists Shen Buhai and Shang Yang's criminal law theory at Mr. Zhang Hui's residence in Zhi County, with the same teacher as Song Meng and Liu Dai from Luoyang. Because of his knowledge of literary classics, he served as a clerk to the Chamberlain for Ceremonials.

By nature Chao Cuo was straightforward, but harsh. In the reign of Emperor Wendi, there was no one in the whole land expert in the *Book of Documents*, apart from a Mr. Fu in Qi. He had originally been a Qin erudite, and was proficient in the *Book of Documents*, but already a nonagenarian, he was too old to be pressed into service. So the Emperor ordered the Chamberlain for Ceremonials to send people to learn it. The Chamberlain for Ceremonials then sent Chao Cuo to learn the *Book of Documents* at Mr. Fu's residence. When he came back, Chao took the opportunity to report on his study, extoling the *Book*. The Emperor ordered him appointed as a secretary of the Crown Prince, then grand master of the prince, and then promoted him to an erudite. Chao Cuo said in another memorial: "The Lord has so noble a position, and his fame spreads to a thousand later generations because of his mastery of laws and punishment. Therefore, the Lord knows how to control his subjects and manage the people, so that the ministers are awed and obedient; he knows how to listen to all kinds of opinions, so is not deceived; he knows how to maintain social stability, benefiting the multitude, so that the common people within the seas have to obey; he knows how to faithfully fulfill his filial duties to the Emperor, thus he achieves the conduct of a courtier. These four items I think should be the priority



【原文】

之。人臣之议或曰皇太子亡以知事为也，臣之愚，诚以为不然。窃观上世之君，不能奉其宗庙而劫杀于其臣者，皆不知术数者也。（皇太子所读书多矣，而未深知术数者也。）皇太子所读书多矣，而未深知术数者，不问书说也。夫多诵而不知其说，所谓劳苦而不为功。臣窃观皇太子材智高奇，驭射伎艺过人绝远，然于术数未有所守者，以陛下为心也。窃愿陛下幸择圣人之术可用今世者，以赐皇太子，因时使太子陈明于前。唯陛下裁察。”上善之，于是拜错为太子家令。以其辩得幸太子，太子家号曰“智囊”。

是时匈奴强，数寇边，上发兵以御之。错上言兵事，曰：

臣闻汉兴以来，胡虏数入边地，小入则小利，大入则大利；高后时再入陇西，攻城屠邑，驱略畜产；其后复入陇西，杀吏卒，大寇盗。窃闻战胜之威，民气百倍；败兵之卒，没世不复。

【今译】

没有必要知道干什么事，臣虽然愚笨，实在认为并非如此。看看上世君王，不能供奉宗庙而被臣子所胁迫杀害的原因，就在于不懂得刑名之术这门学问。皇太子所读书很多了，所以没有深入掌握刑名之术的原因，在于不深究书中论说的义理。多读而不知其中论述的道理，这就是劳而无功。臣看到皇太子才智高奇，驾驭、骑射技艺超绝出众，然而对于刑名之学还没有掌握，这与陛下的心思是有关的。臣希望陛下选择一些圣人之术，又可用于今世的，用以赐教皇太子，根据情况让太子陈述出来。望陛下明察、裁决。”皇上称善，于是拜授晁错为太子家令。由于他的善辩才能得宠于太子，在太子家中号称为“智囊”。

这时匈奴正强大，多次侵边，皇上发兵抵御。晁错上书论兵事，说：

臣听说汉兴以来，胡人多次侵入边地，小规模侵入就获得小利，大规模侵入就有大利；高后时再侵入陇西，攻城抢劫邑镇，驱掠畜产；之后又侵入陇西，杀害官兵，大举抢掠。臣听说战胜的威力，可使民气百倍；失败的兵卒，至死也不能振奋。从高后



of the Crown Prince. Some ministers may say that the Crown Prince does not need to know what things to do. Although I am a stupid minister, I truly believe the opposite. Looking at rulers of previous generations and why they could not preserve their ancestral temple but were coerced and killed by their courtiers, I find the reason to be that they did not understand the art of government and divination. The Crown Prince has read a lot, but he has no deep understanding of the art of government and divination, because he does not go into the principles in the books. To read much without knowing the principles is futile labor. I find that the Crown Prince is highly intelligent and extremely outstanding at riding and bowmanship, but he does not keep to the art of government and divination, and this has to do with Your Majesty's own attitude. I suggest that Your Majesty selects some of the arts of the sages appropriate for the present day, in which the Crown Prince may be instructed, so that he can make presentations according to the situation. I hope Your Majesty will observe this clearly and adjudicate." The Emperor approved the ideas, and appointed Chao Cuo as the household provisioner of the Prince. Because of his eloquence he became a favorite of the Prince, and was known to the family as "Brains."

At this time, the Huns were strong, invading the border area many times, so the emperor sent soldiers to resist them. Cuo submitted a memorial on military matters:

I heard that since the rise of Han, the barbarians have made incursions into the border areas, with a small profit after a small-scale invasion, and huge gains after a large-scale invasion. They invaded Longxi again in the time of Empress Gaozu, attacking and massacring towns, driving and looting livestock; later they invaded Longxi again, killing officials and soldiers, in addition to wholesale looting. They say that the power of victory can boost the people's morale a hundred times, while the soldiers after failure cannot be cheered up



【原文】

自高后以来，陇西三困于匈奴矣，民气破伤，亡有胜意。今兹陇西之吏，赖社稷之神灵，奉陛下之明诏，和辑士卒，底厉其节，起破伤之民以当乘胜之匈奴，用少击众，杀一王，败其众而(法曰)大有利。非陇西之民有勇怯，乃将吏之制巧拙异也。故兵法曰：“有必胜之将，无必胜之民。”繇此观之，安边境，立功名，在于良将，不可不择也。

臣又闻用兵，临战合刃之急者三：一曰得地形，二曰卒服习，三曰器用利。兵法曰：丈五之沟，渐车之水，山林积石，经川丘阜，山木所在，此步兵之地也，车骑二不当一。土山丘陵，曼衍相属，平原广野，此车骑之地，步兵十不当一。平陵相远，川谷居间，仰高临下，此弓弩之地也，短兵百不当一。两陈相近，平地浅(草)[山]，可前可后，此长戟之地也，剑楯三不当一。(萑)[萑]苇竹萧，山木蒙茏，支叶茂接，此矛铍之地也，长

【今译】

以来，陇西三次被匈奴困扰，民气受到摧折伤害，没有取胜的信心。今天陇西的官吏，仰仗先祖神灵，奉行陛下明诏，和睦团结士卒，激励他们的气节意志，唤起受伤害的百姓来抵挡正气盛的匈奴，以少击众，杀死匈奴一王，对于击败众多士兵十分有利。不是陇西之民有勇怯之分，而是将吏表现得巧妙、拙笨有不同而已。因此兵法说：“有必胜的将领，没有必胜的百姓。”由此看来，安定边境，建立功业，在于良将，不可不加以选择。

臣又听说用兵，临战交锋最紧急的有三件事：一是占领有利地形，二是士兵服从命令、训练有素，三是兵器精良、使用便利。兵法说：宽有丈五的沟渠，漫过车的水，山林和垒集的石块，长流之水、大的丘陵，草木生长之地，这是步兵用武之地，车兵骑兵在这里战斗二不当一。土山丘陵，连绵不断，平原旷野，是车、骑的用武之地，步兵在这里交战十不当一。高低悬殊，河谷居其中，居高临下，这是弓弩的用武之地，使用短兵器百不当一。两阵相临近，平地短草，可前可后，这是长戟兵器用武之地，使用剑盾三不当一。萑苇竹萧，草木葱茏，枝叶茂密，这是长矛短矛用武之地，使用长戟二不当一。道路曲屈，险阻交



all their lives. From the time of the Empress, Longxi has been plagued three times by the Huns, and the national morale has been injured, not confident of victory. Today's Longxi officials, relying on the gods of land and grains, carried out the wise imperial edicts, gathered soldiers, inspired their fine character, and aroused the low-spirited people to resist the triumphant Huns. They attacked the enemy though outnumbered, killing a king, gaining tremendously by defeating the Hun army. This was not due to the courage or cowardliness of the local people, but the different performance, clever or inept, of the generals and officials. As it says in the Art of War: "There are winning generals, but not winning commoners." From this, we see that the stability of the border, and the establishment of meritorious titles, depend on good generals, and we cannot but select them. I also heard that in the deployment of military forces, there are three most urgent affairs in a battle: first is to occupy a favorable terrain, second, disciplined and well-trained soldiers, third, excellent weapons, easy to use. The Art of War says: when there are ditches ten feet and five wide, water just submerging the carriages, mountains and piled stones, long streams, large hills, the land with brush growth, these are used for infantry, one infantry soldier being the equal of two cavalry and chariots in fighting here. Undulating continuous hills, plains and wilderness are used for cavalry and chariots, one against ten infantry for fighting here. The mountaintop high above flat ground, with a river valley in between, looking down from above, this is the arena for crossbows, one is the equal of 100 short arms. When two front formations are close to each other on short-grass plains, this is fit for advance and reverse maneuvers, and is the terrain for long halberds, one the equal of three swords and shields. Reeds, bamboo, wormwood, this lush vegetation and dense foliage is used for spears short



【原文】

戟二不当一。曲道相伏，险阨相薄，此剑楯之地也，弓弩三不当一。士不选练，卒不服习，起居不精，动静不集，趋利弗及，避难不毕，前击后解，与金鼓之（音）[指]相失，此不习勒卒之过也，百不当十。兵不完利，与空手同；甲不坚密，与袒裼同；弩不可以及远，与短兵同；射不能中，与亡矢同；中不能入，与亡镞同：此将不省兵之祸也，五不当一。故兵法曰：器械不利，以其卒予敌也；卒不可用，以其将予敌也；将不知兵，以其主予敌也；君不择将，以其国予敌也。四者，（国）[兵]之至要也。

臣又闻小大异形，强弱异势，险易异备。夫卑身以事强，小国之形也；合小以攻大，敌国之形也；以蛮夷攻蛮夷，中国之形也。今匈奴地形技艺与中国异。上下山阪，出入溪涧，中国之马

【今译】

错，这是剑盾的用武之地，使用弓弩三不当一。士不经选拔、训练，卒不熟练兵器，起居动作不精，动静不协调、不稳定，争夺利益不能到手，躲避灾难不迅速，前面攻击后面懈怠，与金鼓指挥脱节，这些都是不熟练训练管理部队的过错，这种士兵交战时百不当十。兵器不锐利，与空手相同；铠甲不坚硬，与袒肉露体相同；弩不能射到远处，与短兵器相同；射箭不中目标，与没有箭相同；中目标而不能入内，与没有箭头相同：这些是将领没有察看检查兵器所造成的灾祸，在这些情况下交战，五不当一。因此兵法说：兵器不锐利，就是把士兵交给了敌人；卒不可用，就是把将领交给了敌人；将领不知用兵谋略，就是把国君交给了敌人；国君不懂择将，就是把国家交给了敌人。这四方面，就是用兵要领。

臣又听说小与大形状是不同的，强与弱力量是不同的，险与易具有不同的防备。以低微之身去事奉强者是小国所表现的形态；联合小国攻打大国，是势均力敌之国的形态；以夷攻夷，是中原之国的形态。如今匈奴地形技艺与中原不同。上下山坡，出



and long, one for two against long halberds. Zigzagging roads hiding repeated evil obstacles are used for swords and shields, so one for three against crossbows. The sergeants are not selected, soldiers not trained, with their personal life unrefined, their movements uncoordinated and chaotic; failing to seize opportunities or avoid disasters completely, attacking in the front though vulnerable in the rear, out of touch with the command signals of drums and gongs; these are the bad results of not training and managing soldiers; 100 soldiers like this in battle equate to only 10. When weapons are not sharp, it is the same as empty-handedness; when armor is not hard, it is the same as a naked body; when crossbows cannot reach the distance, it is the same as short weapons; when the archer does not hit the target, it is the same as no arrows; when the arrow cannot penetrate, it is the same as no arrowhead; these are the dire results of generals not checking their weapons, worth one per five weapons in fighting. So The Art of War says: "Without sharp weapons, it is to give soldiers to the enemy; with soldiers not available, it is to give generals to the enemy; when the generals do not know military strategy, it is to give the lord to the enemy; when the monarch does not select his generals, it is to hand over the state to the enemy." These four areas are the essentials of military service.

I was also told that there are different shapes, small and large, different forces strong and weak, and different armaments, risky and easy. To humble the self to serve the strong power means the form of a small country; to attack a large state by uniting small countries is the form of an evenly-matched country; to attack barbarians with barbarians is the form of the kingdom of the Central Plains. Now the lands of the Huns are different from the Central Plains in terrain and their skills are different too. For riding constantly uphill and



【原文】

弗与也；险道倾仄，且驰且射，中国之骑弗与也；风雨罢劳，饥渴不困，中国之人弗与也：此匈奴之长技也。若夫平原易地，轻车突骑，则匈奴之众易挠乱也；劲弩长戟，射疏及远，则匈奴之弓弗能格也；坚甲利刃，长短相杂，游弩往来，什伍俱前，则匈奴之兵弗能当也；材官驽发，矢道同的，则匈奴之革笥木荐弗能支也；下马地斗，剑戟相接，去就相薄，则匈奴之足弗能给也：此中国之长技也。以此观之，匈奴之长技三，中国之长技五。陛下又兴数十万之众，以诛数万之匈奴，众寡之计，以一击十之术也。

虽然，兵，凶器；战，危事也。以大为小，以强为弱，在倏印之间耳。夫以人之死争胜，跌而不振，则悔之亡及也。帝王之道，出于万全。今降胡义渠蛮夷之属来归谊者，其众数千，饮食

【今译】

入溪涧，中原的战马不如匈奴的战马；险道倾侧，边奔跑边射箭，中原的骑手不如匈奴骑手；风雨疲劳，饥渴不困乏，中原人不如匈奴人：这些是匈奴的长技。若是平原地带，轻车骁骑，匈奴就容易乱了阵；强弩长戟，射的宽阔距离远，匈奴的弓不能比；坚硬铠甲、锐利兵器，长短相配合，游弩往来支应，列队的士兵一齐向前，匈奴士兵就不能抵挡；骑射手射出驽矢，射同一目标，匈奴的革笥、木荐遮挡不住；下马地上搏斗，剑戟相交，脚步前后移动，匈奴人的脚不能快速相连：这些是中原之长技。由此看来，匈奴之长技有三，中原的长技有五。陛下又发兵数十万之众，用来诛杀数万人的匈奴，计算众寡，就是以一击十之术了。

虽然是这样，兵器还是凶器；战争还是危险的事情。不懂用兵之道和方法，就会以大为小，由强变弱，这种变化也仅仅在于俯仰之间那样容易。用人的死亡换取胜利，就会失足而不振，悔之不及。帝王成功之道，立足于万全之策。今天来投降的胡人义渠蛮夷等是归义的，部众有几千人，他们的饮食、长技与匈奴相



downhill, in and out of streams, our battle horses are inferior to theirs; shooting arrows while riding on dangerous steep roads, our riders are no match for theirs; braving storms without fatigue, not wearying in hunger and thirst, our people are not as good as the Huns: these are the Huns' superior skills. However, if it is easy, level terrain, using fleet horses and light chariots, the Hun throngs will be easy to disrupt; with our strong crossbows and long halberds, shot across the wide distance, the Hun bows cannot match ours; with our hard armor and sharp blades, swords of different lengths, crossbow maneuvering, advances of massed marched ranks, the Hun soldiers cannot resist us; with our strong archers shooting arrows simultaneously at the same targets, the leather armor and wooden shields of the Huns could not resist; when we dismount for fighting on the ground, and engage with swords and halberds, moving forward and then back, the Huns cannot order their feet fast enough: these are our people's superior skills. From this, we find the Huns to have three superior skills, while we are superior in five. Your Majesty has sent hundreds of thousands of soldiers to wipe out tens of thousands of Huns. In terms of the number of troops, this is a scheme to blow out ten with one.

Despite this, weapons are dangerous tools; and a war is a risky affair. And it is the matter of a twinkling of an eye to turn a large country into a smaller one, or go from strong to weak. To sacrifice the lives of people in exchange for victory, will cause the nation to stumble and slump, and it will be too late for regrets. The Imperial Way to success is based on a surefire plan. Now the Yiqu barbarians who once surrendered to the Huns have been converted to righteousness; they are thousands in number, and their diet and special skills are the same as the Huns. We could give them hard armor and padded coats,



【原文】

长技与匈奴同，可赐之坚甲絮衣，劲弓利矢，益以边郡之良骑。令明将能知其习俗和辑其心者，以陛下之明约将之。即有险阻，以此当之；平地通道，则以轻车材官制之。两军相为表里，各用其长技，衡加之以众，此万全之术也。

传曰：“狂夫之言，而明主择焉。”臣错愚陋，昧死上狂言，唯陛下财择。

文帝嘉之，乃赐错玺书宠答焉，曰：“皇帝问太子家令：上书言兵体三章，闻之。书言‘狂夫之言，而明主择焉’。今则不然。言者不狂，而择者不明，国之大患，故在于此。使夫不明择于不狂，是以万听而万不当也。”

错复言守边备塞，劝农力本，当世急务二事，曰：

臣闻秦时北攻胡貉，筑塞河上，南攻杨粤，置戍卒焉。其起兵而攻胡、粤者，非以卫边地而救民死也，贪戾而欲广大也，故功未立而天下乱。且夫起兵而不知其势，战则为人禽，屯则卒积

【今译】

同，可以赐给他们硬铠甲棉衣，强弓利矢，再增加边郡的良骑。让明将能知他们的习俗，使他们和睦相处，就在于用陛下之明智去节制统帅。要是有了险阻，用这一办法对付；平地通道，就用轻车骑手去对付。两军互相配合，协同作战，各用其长技，横向上使用众多士兵，这就是万全之策。

书传上说：“狂夫之言，请明主选择。”臣晁错愚笨鄙陋，冒犯死罪进上狂言，望陛下裁择。

文帝十分赞扬晁错的陈述，便赐给他玺书回答，说：“皇帝问太子家令：上书所讲兵事三章，听到了。书曰‘狂夫之言，而明主择焉’。如今不是这样。言者不狂，而择取的人却不明智，国家的大患，就在于此。要是让不明智去选择不狂，就是听一万条上书也是有一万次对付不了。”

晁错又论守边备塞，鼓励农耕，致力本业，当世的二件紧急要务，说：

臣听说秦朝北攻胡、貉，在黄河上修筑工事，南攻杨、粤，安置了戍守士卒。他们发兵攻胡、粤的目的，并非保卫边地、救助死亡，而是贪图扩大，因此功业尚未建立天下就大乱起来。要



strong bows and sharp arrowheads, and then add good cavalry from the frontier prefectures. So order your wise generals that understand their practices and desires to win their hearts and minds and so command them under Your Majesty's wise covenant. If there are risky obstacles, combat them with these reserves; on flat ground and wide roads, just contain them with light chariots and strong bow strikers. The two armed forces, each with special skills, would complement each other, then deploy the massed ranks in crosswise fashion. This is a surefire plan.

According to a book: "The words of a mad man, the wise monarch will select." Your servant is stupid and shallow, but I take the liberty to submit my mad words, and I hope the wise monarch will choose at his discretion.

Emperor Wendi praised Chao Cuo, and gave him his sealed edict as his answer. It read: "The Emperor asked the Household Provisioner of the Prince, and heard the three chapters on military matters in the memorial. The book reads: 'The words of a mad man, the wise monarch will select.' This is not the present case. The speaker is not mad, nor is the selector wise: that is the tragedy of the country. If the unwise man is to select a man not mad then even if he heard 10,000 proposals he would fail to deal with any one of them."

Chao Cuo also elaborated on what he saw as the urgent priorities of the age - guarding the frontiers and preparing frontier garrisons, as well as encouraging agriculture as the primary occupation. He argued:

I heard that Qin attacked the Huns and the Mo in the north, constructing fortifications on the Yellow River; it attacked Yang and Yue in the south, placing frontier garrisons there. They invaded north and south, with no thought of defending the frontier, or saving the people from death, but greedily seeking to expand, so before any meritorious deeds had been established