

Annals of Kingdoms in East Zhou Dynasty
(First volume: from Chapter 1 to Chapter 60)

东周列国志

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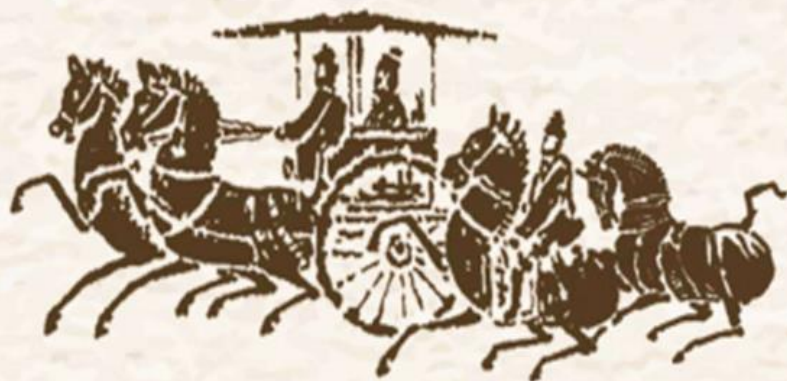
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前 言

明代小说家冯梦龙所著、清代蔡元放校订的《东周列国志》是一部章回体的长篇历史小说,是除《三国演义》以外流传最广、影响较大的历史演义类小说。《东周列国志》讲述了从西周开始 500 多年间诸侯国兴衰的历史,记录了从西周衰落到秦始皇统一中国期间诸侯国纵横捭阖、争相问鼎中原的故事。

在世界文化交流日益频繁的背景下,将这部作品原汁原味地译成英文无疑会使外国读者更好地了解和欣赏中国历史智慧和文化遗产。多年前在中国文化走出去的国家战略背景下,燕山大学外国语学院王林海教授带领部分教师和研究生在翻译硕士教学实践中开始尝试和研究如何较好地将这部半文言文作品翻译成英文,目前取得了一些阶段性成果,发表相关论文三篇,完成译著一部,相信这份努力对传播中国历史文化会有微薄的贡献。

本译著为 2019 年度河北省社会科学发展研究课题“《东周列国志》文言典籍翻译及翻译模型研究”(项目类别:一般课题;课题编号:2019030502006)的阶段性研究成果之一。译者王林海、李秀梅、王爽、胡玲、陈天慧为燕山大学外国语学院教师,参与过《东周列国志》翻译的严湘渡、史玉妹、张晴是燕山大学外国语学院毕业的研究生。

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Chapter 1

Hearing the Rumours, King Xuan of Zhou Killed Commons at Will; Being Treated Unjustly, Senior Minister Du Turned into a Fierce Ghost and Took Revenge on the King

A poem says,

The three sovereigns and five emperors are the best in terms of morality,
As for honorable dynasties, there were Xia, Shang and Zhou.
The five hegemonies of the Spring and Autumn period had fought fiercely,
And they experienced the ups and downs just in a short period of time.
Few people could leave their names in the history books,
Most of them were buried in the countless deserted graves under Beimang Mountain.
There is no point in talking about the historical battles,
Just as the predecessors planted seeds, and later generations will naturally harvest them.

After the King Wu of Zhou Dynasty crusaded against the Emperor Xin who was known as King Zhou because of his tyranny of Shang Dynasty, King Wu replaced Emperor Xin as the King.

With the assistance of capable and virtuous dukes, such as Duke Zhou whose name was Jidan, Duke Shao whose name was Jishi, Duke Bi whose name was Jigao and Shi Yi, the people in the Zhou Dynasty all lived a peaceful and abundant life with highly developed culture. During the reign of King Yi, the eighth generation of King Wu, the feudal states gradually got strong, and they did not pay their tributes to the Zhou Empire. King Li, the ninth generation of King Wu, was a tyrant and thus was killed by the people of Zhou, which was the beginning of mass uprising in Zhou Dynasty. Thanks to Duke Zhou and Duke Shao's endeavor, King Li's son, the Crown Prince Jing became the king, known as King Xuan of the Zhou Dynasty. King Xuan was a wise man, and with the assistance of Fang Shu, Shao Hu, Yin Jifu (Yin is an official title, and fu is a kind of praise for virtual man), Shen Bo, Zhong Shanfu who were all excellent ministers, the Zhou Dynasty had a clean government and became prosperous again as it was in the reign of King Wen, King Wu, Cheng and Kang, and thus the Zhou dynasty came into resurgence. There was a poem as a proof,



Neither King Yi nor Li can build a clean government,
Only King Xuan recruited ministers with great talent.
If there is no king like King Xuan,
Zhou Dynasty cannot last for so long.

Though King Xuan was diligent in official affairs, he could not do what King Wu had done, take the admonitions written on the Holly Book and write mottos wherever he could touch and see. Although there was a renaissance, it could not compare with the governance of King Cheng and King Kang, during which culture and moral had developed so well that other nations rushed to pay tributes to Zhou. In the 39th year of Zhou Dynasty, the ethnic minority called Jiang disobeyed the Zhou's order, so King Xuan led his soldiers personally to fight the Jiang minority. He was defeated in Qianmu and suffered heavy losses. King Xuan wanted to fight again, but he worried that they did not have enough soldiers, so he himself checked people's residence registration in Taiyuan (now Guyuanzhou), which was near the territories of the Jiang minority. The registration officers checked the people's residence and reserves of the grains and horses in order to get prepared for more wars against the minority. Prime Minister Zhong Shanfu advised King Xuan not to wage wars against the Jiang minority, but King Xuan rejected his counsel. There is a poem written by the futurities,

Is it necessary for King Xuan to crusade against the Jiang ethnic minority?
It will stain the glory of his sword.
What a pity it is to shoot sparrows with precious pearls!
Because gains cannot make up for the losses,
The King's authority was ruined and he had to check people's registration in person.

After checking the registration, on his way back to the capital King Xuan heard a dozen of children singing together before entering the city. King Xuan ordered the soldiers to stop to hear the song, which says, "The moon will rise, and the sun will set; bows, arrows and arrows bags will make the Zhou Dynasty perish."

King Xuan hated the song very much. He sent the carriage driver to call for the children for questioning, but the children were all scared and ran away. The driver brought two children to the King and made them kneel down before the carriage. King Xuan asked them who wrote the song, the older one answered, "Three days ago, a child in red taught us the song, and all children in the capital city sang the song." King Xuan asked, "Where is the child in red?" The older child answered, "After teaching us, he disappeared." King Xuan remained silent for a while and ordered the two children to leave. He ordered the Office of City Management to forbid the song, if there would be any child singing the song, the child as well



as his father and brother would be punished. Then King Xuan went back to his palace.

The next morning, ministers and officers gathered in the palace, after paying respects to the sovereign, King Xuan told them the song he heard the last night, and asked officers to make an explanation. Ritual Officer Shao Hu said, “Yan is a kind of mulberry that can make bow, it is called mulberry arch. Ji is a kind of grass, which can be woven into the arrow bag, thus it is called arrow bag. As far as I know, our country would have an armed insurrection.” Prime Minister Zhong Shanfu remonstrated, “Bows and arrows are weapons used by our troops. Now Your Majesty, you’ve checked residence registration of people in Taiyuan and want to avenge yourself on the Jiang ethnic minority. If the war continues, there must be the scourge of the death of the state!” King Xuan didn’t say anything but he nodded. He asked, “Who is the child in red who taught the song?” The Grand Scribe Bo Yangfu answered, “All unfounded words spread in the streets and towns are rumors. The Emperor of Heaven wanted to warn your majesty, so he ordered the Mars God to change into a child to spread rumors and teach other children nursery rhymes. They can tell a person’s fortune at a micro level, while they can also tell the rise and fall of the nation. The Mars is red, thus the child is in red. The rumor is actually made by the Emperor of Heaven to warn Your Majesty.” King Xuan said, “If I pardon the Minority of Jiang, destroy all weapons in arsenals by fire and forbid manufacturing and selling weapons, would the scourge be appeased?” Bo Yangfu answered, “As far as I got from my observation of heavenly bodies, the signs have already been formed. It seems that it will happen in the palace and has nothing to do with the bows and arrows outside. It was certain that the descendants of the monarch would meet a woman who would bring disaster to the country. In addition, the rumor says that the moon will rise, and the sun will set. The sun represents the King, while the moon is feminine. The sun is setting and the moon is rising, which means a woman will be more powerful than man, there must be a queen who will interfere in the affairs of our state.” King Xuan said, “Queen Jiang is quite wise and virtuous who selected my concubines, where does the woman’s interference come from?” Bo Yangfu said, “It says that the moon will rise and the sun will set, which indicates the time is not the present but the future. What’s more, it won’t necessarily happen. What Your Majesty needs to do is to develop gracious morality, and the disaster will certainly be appeased. The arrows and bows needn’t be burned or destroyed.” Hearing the answer, King Xuan was still dubious and unhappy, and then he went back to his palace.

Queen Jiang welcomed the emperor. King Xuan told Queen Jiang what the ministers said, Queen Jiang said, “I have something strange to report to Your Majesty.” King Xuan asked, “What was that?” Queen Jiang replied, “There is an old maid in her fifties who has been pregnant since the last dynasty, that is, it has been more than forty years. She gave birth to a baby girl last night.” King Xuan was surprised and asked where the baby girl was. Queen Jiang said, “I thought the baby is ominous, so I ordered maids to desert the baby to the river



twenty miles away by wrapping her with a straw mat.” King Xuan summoned the old maid and asked her about how she got pregnant. The old maid knelt before the king and answered, “I heard that in the last years of Xia Dynasty, the King Jie was on his throne, there were two immortals in Bao City who were incarnated as two loongs. When they arrived at the palace, drooling, they talked to the King Jie, ‘ We are kings of Bao. ’ King Jie was frightened and intended to kill the loongs, so he asked the Grand Scribe to practice divination. He was told that it was ominous to kill them. It was also ominous to expel them. The Grand Scribe advised, ‘ It must be propitious that the immortals descend to the world, why doesn’t Your Majesty keep their saliva? The saliva is the essence of loongs, if Your Majesty keeps them, it must be very lucky. ’ King Jie ordered the Grand Scribe to practice divination again. It turned out to be quite propitious. Then they displayed oblation before the loongs, collected their saliva with a golden plate, after that they put the golden plate in a red wooden case. Suddenly, the weather changed, the storm bursting in its full fury, the two loongs flew away. King Jie ordered his minister to keep the saliva in the warehouse. After 644 years of Shang dynasties, it has been passed down to from one monarch to another. And then it was passed to the kings of Zhou dynasties in almost 300 years of history, the wooden case was never opened. However, in the last year of the reign of King Li, there was a glimmer of light in it. The officer who took charge of the warehouse reported to King Li. King Li asked, ‘ What is it in the case?’ The warehouse officer presented the document to King Li, on which there were detailed records for the reasons of keeping the saliva.” King Li ordered his servants to open the case. One of the servants opened it and presented the golden plate to King Li respectfully. While King Li reached for the plate, he dropped it onto the ground carelessly. The saliva flowed everywhere in the palace, and then turned into a little turtle. Servants and maids tried to expel it, but it crawled to the inner palace straightly and disappeared suddenly. I was just twelve years old then. When I strode on the turtle’s spoor, I felt strange, and then my abdomen became bigger and bigger, as if I were carrying a baby. Our king blamed me for being pregnant without getting married, so he jailed me in a small dark cell. It has been forty years up to now, one night I felt a sharp pain in my abdomen and gave birth to a girl. Since servants and maids didn’t dare to conceal the event, they reported it to our Queen. The Queen thought that the monster could not stay in the palace, and then she ordered the attendant to take her away and abandoned her in the ditch. I am a sinner, and even death cannot atone for my sin.” King Xuan said, “It is not your fault.” King Xuan ordered his attendant to check the whereabouts of the baby girl. After a while, they came back and reported to King Xuan that the baby girl had been floated away by the water. King Xuan had no doubt about that.

The next day, when making the audience with King Xuan, the Grand Scribe Bo Yangfu was told about the story of the loong’s saliva. King Xuan said, “The baby girl had been killed

in a ditch. Please try to practice divination again to see whether the ominous signs are gone.” After prediction, the Grand Scribe Bo Yangfu offered the prediction words. It said, “Crying and laughing, laughing and crying. The sheep were swallowed by the ghost, and the horse met the dog’s chase. Be careful about the bows and arrows!” King Xuan couldn’t understand the words. Father Boyang explained, “According to the 12 terrestrial branches, sheep signifies the year of Wei, while horse refers to the year of Wu. Crying and laughing are the signs of happiness and sorrow. The event would happen in the year of Wuwei. In my opinion, the ominous signs have not been cleared up.”

After hearing that, King Xuan was quite unhappy. So he ordered, “Search the baby girl one house after another. No matter the girl is alive or dead. I will award him three hundred bolts of cottons and silks; if anyone dares to adopt the girl and is reported by his neighbours, I will kill all people in that family who adopts the girl and award the neighbours.” King Xuan ordered the Senior Minister Du Bo (Bo refers to the eldest son in a family in ancient Chinese, obviously, Du Bo is the eldest son of a Du family) to supervise the case specifically, ordered the Junior Master Zuo Ru to supervise the Market Official to patrol the streets because of the “arrows and bows” in the prediction words. People who sell the bows made from mulberry and arrow bags made from grass should be killed. The Market Official didn’t dare to neglect his duties, he made the orders known by people and when he patrolled the streets with a group of soldiers. Then the people in the capital had known and all obeyed the orders, except some villagers. The next day, a woman holding several arrow bags made from grass in her arms went to the city, and her husband with dozens of bows on his back followed. They wanted to sell the arrows and bows in the capital city during the day. The couple lived in a remote village without knowing the orders. Not yet into the city, the woman ran into the Market Management Official who shouted to his men, “Seize her!” They seized the woman. Seeing his wife being arrested, the man threw the bows down and escaped quickly. The Market Management Official handcuffed the woman and escorted her to the Junior Master Zuo Ru. Zuo Ru thought that the woman and the arrows and bows were exactly what the rumors said. The woman is the main bane, now we have had the woman and can respond to the King’s request. The man was concealed by the officials. They just reported to King Xuan that the woman disobeyed the acts and should be killed. King Xuan ordered to kill the woman and burnt the arrow bags and bows to warn the other makers. A poem went like this,

Instead of working hard to build a clean government,
The King stubbornly killed the innocent woman for the rumors.
On the long road of resurgence, many mistakes need correcting,
Who would remonstrate with the King at the time bravely?



The man who ran away hurriedly was rather confused. He didn't know why the official arrested his wife. He still wanted to hear about his wife and stopped about ten miles away from the capital city. The next morning, the news came that a woman was killed for making and selling arrows and bows as soon as she was arrested. Hearing the news, the man knew that his wife died. He dropped several drops of tears as he walked away to the wild places with no people around. Considering himself so lucky, the man walked ten miles away to a river bank. He saw from the distance hundreds of birds gathering and chirping around something. The man was curious and stepped close to check it up. He found that a straw mat bag was floating on the water. Those birds held the bag by their beaks and pulled it to the bank, chirping all the way. The man felt so curious that he drove away the birds, picked up the bag and took a look. It turned out to be a baby girl. The man thought, "The girl was held by birds, which means she must be a noble though she was deserted by someone. If I take her home and raise her up, maybe I can depend on her someday."

Then he took off his sweater and packed the baby. Considering that he had some relatives in Bao City, the man went there with the baby in his arms. I had written a poem to describe how strange the girl was born,

After having been in the womb for forty years, she was born.

She was still alive after being deserted three days in the water.

A born monster would bring disasters to the country, for the king's laws and policies can never beat the heaven's will.

King Xuan was unperturbed because he thought that the rumors had already come true after the woman being killed. And he didn't reconsider sending troops to Taiyuan. Then years passed uneventfully.

It was the forty-third year of the reign of King Xuan, the year of sacrificial rites. King Xuan spent his night in the Fast Palace. At midnight, it was quiet outside. Suddenly a young beauty from the west went to the palace directly. King Xuan blamed her for violating the fast rules and scolded her. He ordered his guards to arrest the lady but no one responded. The lady was not afraid at all. Instead she entered the Imperial Ancestral Temple, laughing three times and then crying three times. After that in no hurry, she bound the seven gods and headed eastward. King Xuan got up and ran after the lady in person, but woke up suddenly. It turned out to be a dream.

He felt distracted and narrowly failed the rite. After behaving the complicated rites, King Xuan returned to the Fast Palace to change his clothes and ordered his guards to fetch the Grand Scribe Bo Yangfu secretly. King Xuan told Bo Yangfu about the dream. Father Boyang reported to King Xuan, "My lord, don't forget the rhyme three years ago? I have insisted that



your honor have disaster that caused by woman, and the evil signs have not been cleared. There were laughs and cries in the prediction words which correspond to the dream.” King Xuan asked, “The prediction words can’t be cleared though we killed a woman?” Bo Yangfu said, “It is hard to understand the way of heaven, when it comes, all will be proved. How could the village woman affect our nation’s fate?” King Xuan was silent. He was thinking about it three years ago, he sent the Senior Minister Du Bo to search for the baby girl but heard nothing about the detection. After awarding the meat used in the rites, King Xuan went back to his palace, and the ministers showed their appreciation to him. The king asked Du Bo, “Why don’t you tell me about the search?” Du Bo responded, “The detection showed that the girl had no influence on our nation. Besides, I thought the woman who made arrows and bows had been killed, and the rhyme had come true. I was afraid that continuous searching would make the people panic.” King Xuan raged, “Why didn’t you tell me the truth? It is obvious that you slight my orders. The disloyal minister is useless for me. Arrest and kill him outside the palace to warn the rest.” The rest were scared and all pale. Suddenly a civil official came out of the team and stopped Du Bo, repeated the words, “Please don’t, please don’t.” King Xuan looked at the man named Zuo Ru who was one of the best friends of Du Bo, they were recommended to work for the imperial court at the same time.

Zuo Ru knelt down and reported to King Xuan, “Your Majesty, I have heard that Emperor Yao was still an emperor after nine years of flood, and King Tang was still a king after seven years of drought. The natural disasters didn’t exert any influence on your reign, how can we believe that evil persons can interfere with the fate of our country? Your Majesty, if you kill Du Bo, I am afraid that the people will spread the rumor, and the minorities would despise us. I beg you to think it twice.” King Xuan said, “The fact that you violate my orders for your friend shows that you value your friend but neglect your king.” Zuo Ru replied, “If the King is right while my friend is wrong, I will comply with the king and disobey my friend, vice versa. Du Bo doesn’t commit a crime that carries the death penalty. If you kill him, the people would regard you as a fatuous and self-indulgent ruler. If I can’t stop you, Your Majesty, the people would regard me as a disloyal courtier. If you insist on killing Du Bo, please kill me too.” King Xuan was still angry, said, “I don’t care Du Bo’s life. Killing Du Bo is just like removing grass for me. Why shall we bother discussing it any longer?” The King cried to his guards, “Kill him right now!” The guards beheaded Du Bo outside. Zuo Ru committed suicide by cutting his own throat when he was home. I wrote a poem to praise Zuo Ru,

What a worthy person Zuo Ru is,

Outspoken and dare to make remonstrance.

If his friend is right, he would stand up for his friend and disobey the king of his.