

The Downfall of Zhibo

智伯之亡

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The Background The Essay

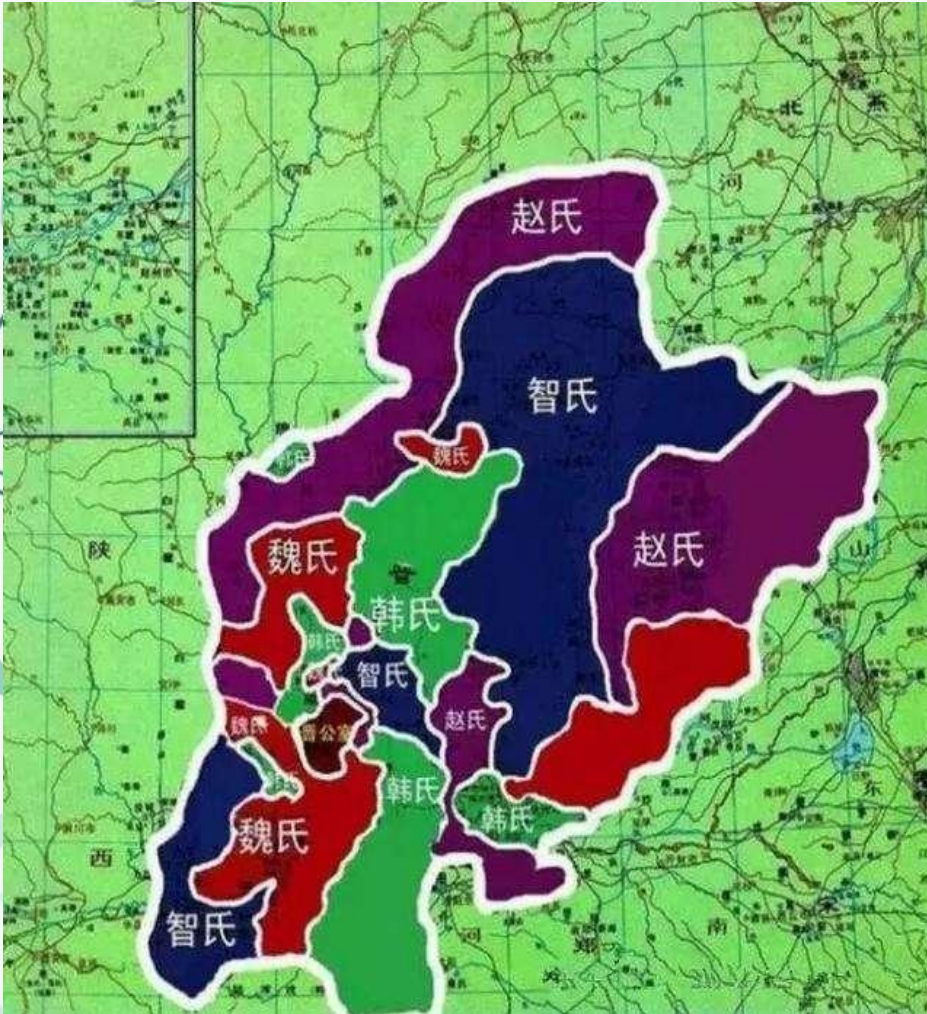


The Downfall of Zhibo

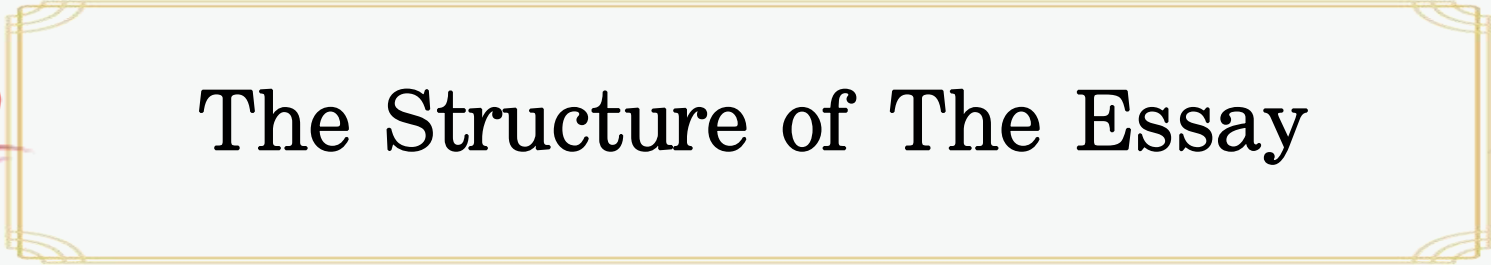


- An explanation of the reasons for the collapse of the house of Zhi 智 in the State of Jin 晉 .
- A side-story on the development of the house of Han 韓、Zhao 趙、Wei 魏.

453 BC



- Zhibo 智伯 asked a large amount of lands from the head of Han and Wei .
- Zhao Wuxu 趙無恤 refused to do so, invaded them.
- Zhao Wuxu persuaded the Hanhu 韓虎 and Weiju 魏駒 to demolish the house of Zhi 智 together.
- This is the history that Sima Guang used as the beginning of his book *Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government*.



The Structure of The Essay



文言文（正文）

智宣子將以瑤為後。智果曰：
「不如宵也。瑤之賢於人者五，
其不逮者一也。美鬢長大則賢，
射禦足力則賢，伎藝畢給則賢，
巧文辯慧則賢，彊毅果敢則賢，
如是而甚不仁。夫以其五賢陵人，
而以不仁行之，其誰能待之？若
果立瑤也，智宗必滅。」弗聽。

English Translation

Xunshen 荀申 intended to make Xunyao 荀瑤 as his inheritor, but his vassal Xunguo 智果 suggested that it should be better for him to make Xunxiao as his inheritor. This was followed by a more detailed analysis of Xunyao's personality, character, strengths and weaknesses: handsome appearance, good archery skills, versatility, intelligence and bravery, but his most fatal shortcoming was his lack of benevolence. If he were so talented but not great virtuous, he was bound to endanger others. If Xunshen did establish Xunyao as his inheritor, the house of Zhi will surely perish.

Unfortunately, Xunshen did not take the advice of Xunguo. Eventually he made Xunyao as his inheritor.

Section 1: 'Emphaize The Importance of Abilities Rather Than Virtues'

Xunyao 荀瑶

Good-looking

Good archery
skills

Versatility

Intelligence

Bravery

Lack of benevolence

Chose as his inheritor Xunyao

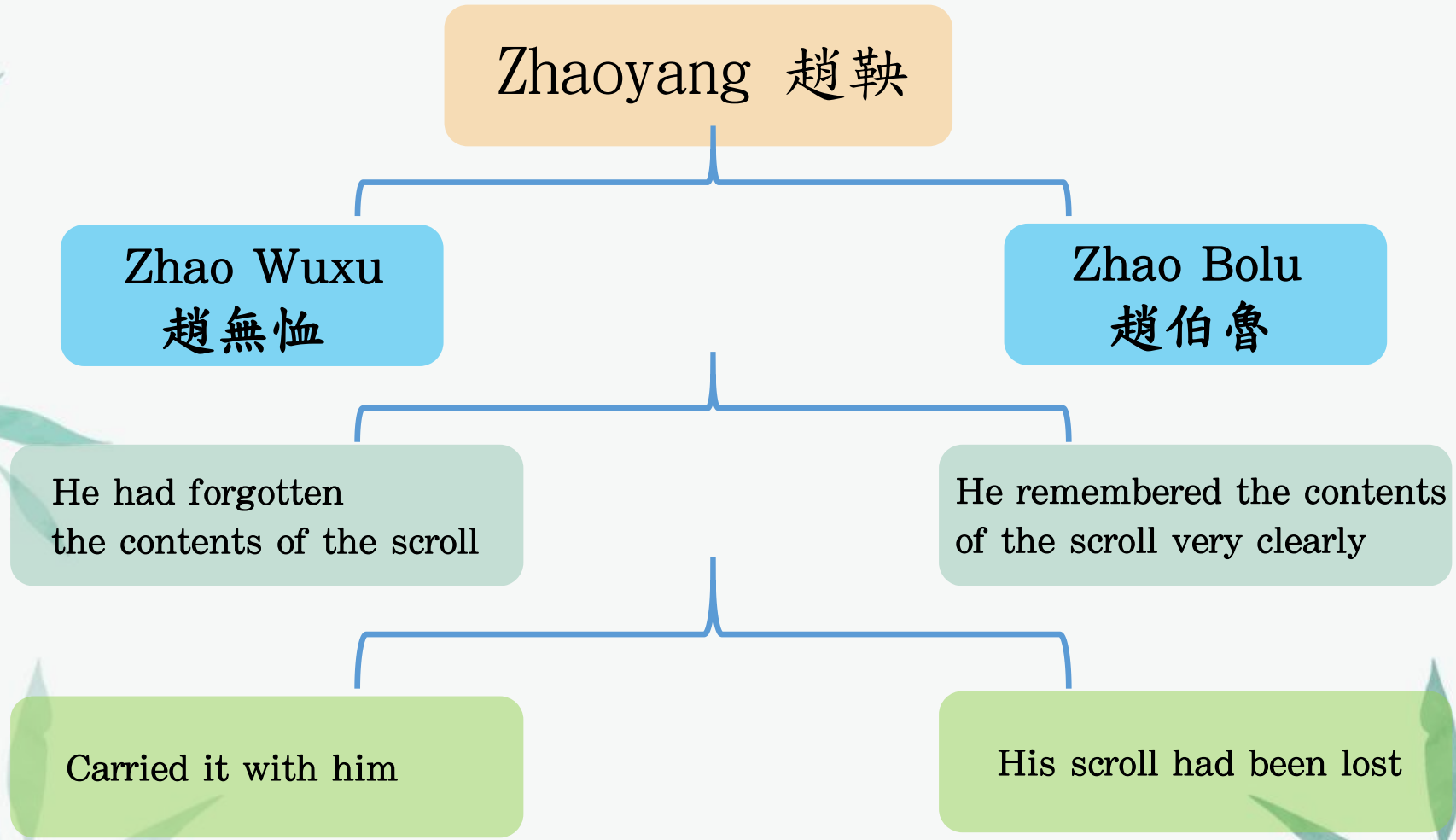
文言文（正文）

趙簡子之子，長曰伯魯，幼曰無恤……書訓戒之辭於二簡，以授二子曰：「謹識之。」三年而問之，伯魯不能舉其辭，求其簡，已失之矣。問無恤，誦其辭甚習，求其簡，出諸袖中而奏之。於是簡子以無恤為賢，立以為後。

English Translation

Zhaoyang gave his two sons, Zhao Wuxu and Zhao Bolu, a bamboo scroll. He instructed them to keep it carefully and to remember its contents. Three years later, Zhaoyang suddenly asked his two sons about it. Bolu's response was that he had forgotten the contents of the scroll and that his scroll had been lost. On the other hand, Wuxu remembered the contents of the scroll very clearly and carried it with him. In this way, Zhaoyang judged Zhao Wuxu to be a very wise man and eventually appointed him as his inheritor.

Section 2: 'Emphaize The Importance of Virtues Rather Than The Abilities'



Section 3: 'Xunyao Asked For Lands'

文言文（正文）

智伯請地於韓康子，康子欲弗與。
段規曰：「智伯好利而愎，不與，
將伐我；不如與之。彼狃於得地，
必請於他人；他人不與，必嚮之以
兵，然後我得免於患而待事之變
矣……又求地於魏桓子，桓子欲弗
與……」

English Translation

Xunyao荀瑤 asked Hanhu韓虎 and Weiju魏駒 for a lot of lands respectively. At first, both Hanhu and Weiju were unwilling to give him any land, but their ministers pointed out that Xunyao was so greedy that if he did not do so, he would definitely attacked the house of Han and Wei . It would be better to give him some land rather than refuse him. If the house of Han and Wei did so, Xunyao will be proud and would ask others for land, and if they do not give it to him, he will attack them. And we shall be saved from disaster at this time.

Section 4: 'The Right Choice of City to Flee to'

文言文（正文）

智伯又求蔡、皋狼之地於趙襄子，襄子弗與。智伯怒，帥韓、魏之甲以攻趙氏。

English Translation

Xunyao荀瑤 again asked Zhao Wuxu趙無恤 for land. But Wuxu無恤 did not agree, and then Xunyao荀瑤 took Hanhu韓虎 and Weiju魏駒 with him to attack Wuxu無恤.

Section 4: 'The Right Choice of City to Flee to'

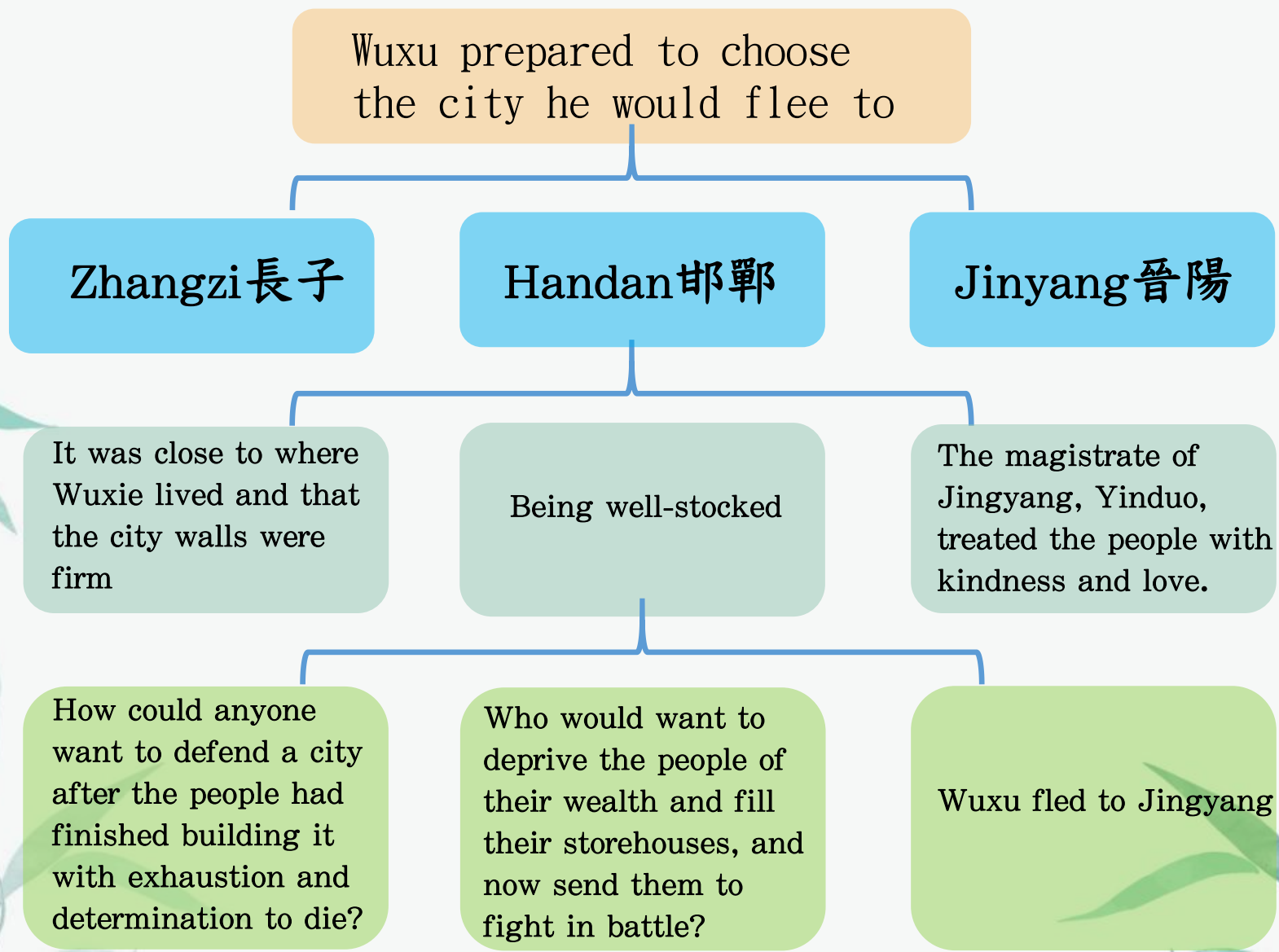
文言文（正文）

襄子將出，曰：「吾何走乎？」從者曰：「長子近，且城厚完。」襄子曰：「民罷力以完之，又斃死以守之，其誰與我！」從者曰：「邯鄲之倉庫實。」襄子曰：「浚民之膏澤以實之，又因而殺之，其誰與我！其晉陽乎，先主之所屬也，尹鐸之所寬也，民必和矣。」乃走晉陽。

English Translation

Wuxu 無恤 prepared to choose the city he would flee to. His attendants advised him on three cities: Zhangzi 長子, Handan 邯鄲 and Jinyang 晉陽. The advantage of Zhangzi 長子 was that it was close to where Wuxu 無恤 lived and that the city walls were firm. But Wuxu 無恤 replied: How could anyone want to defend a city after the people had finished building it with exhaustion and determination to die? The second city, Handan 邯鄲, had the advantage of being well-stocked. Wuxu replied, Who would want to deprive the people of their wealth and fill their storehouses, and now send them to fight in battle? Wuxu then chose a third city, Jinyang. The magistrate of Jinyang, Yinduo, treated the people with kindness and love. He fled to Jinyang.

Section 4: 'The Right Choice of City to Flee to'



Section 5: 'Without Their Lips, Their Teeth Would be Damaged And Hanhu And Weiju Would Start to Be Worried about Their Own Situation'

文言文（正文）

- 三家以國人圍而灌之，城不浸者三版；
沈灶產蛙，民無叛意。

English Translation

- The army of Xun Yao 荀瑤, Hanhu 韓虎 and Weiju 魏駒, who surrounded Jinyang 晉陽 and dug up the Fen River 汾水. They attempted to crush Jinyang 晉陽 with a flood. The situation in the city was such that only three planks of wood remained in the city before it was submerged. The people's cooker is submerged by the river, and there were fish and frogs everywhere, but the people did not rebel.

Section 5: 'Without Their Lips, Their Teeth Would be Damaged And Hanhu And Weiju Would Start to Be Worried about Their Own Situation'

文言文（正文）

- 智伯行水，魏桓子禦，韓康子驂乘。
智伯曰：「吾乃今知水可以亡人國也。」桓子肘康子，康子履桓子之跗，以汾水可以灌安邑，絳水可以灌平陽也。

English Translation

- Xun Yao inspected Jinyang, which was about to be overrun, said, 'until today I never knew that water can destroy a city'. After he said this, Hanhu and Weiju hinted at each other, meaning that since the Fen River could destroy Jinyang, it could also destroy their homes, Pingyang and Anyi.

Section 6: The Three Houses Destroyed The House of Zhi智

文言文（正文）

- 趙襄子使張孟談潛出見二子.....張孟談曰：「謀出二主之口，入臣之耳，何傷也？」二子乃潛與張孟談約，為之期日而遣之。

English Translation

- Wuxu無恤 sent Zhang Mengtan張孟談 to meet Hanhu韓虎 and Weiju魏駒 in secret and told them not to be worried that their plan might be revealed, assuring them, ‘this plot is between you and me, so what are you afraid of?’ He finally gained the trust of Hanhu and Weiju. They set a date for their rebellion.

Section 6: The Three Houses Destroyed The House of Zhi智

文言文（正文）

- 襄子夜使人殺守堤之吏，而決水灌智伯軍。智伯軍救水而亂，韓、魏翼而擊之，襄子將卒犯其前，大敗智伯之眾。遂殺智伯，盡滅智氏之族。

English Translation

- At the beginning, Wuxu無恤 sent his soldiers to kill the official guarding the water embankment at night, and then attacked Xun Yao荀瑤 with flood. At that time, Xun Yao's荀瑤 army rushed to rescue him and his soldiers were in disarray. Han Hu韓虎 and Wei Ju魏駒 attacked from both flanks, while Wuxu無恤 led his own army to attack Xun Yao荀瑤.
- The three houses of Han韓, Zhao趙 and Wei魏 worked together to destroy the house of Zhi智 and eventually killed Xun Yao荀瑤.



Conclusion



The Downfall
of Zhibo
智伯之亡

1

'Emphaize The Importance of Abilities Rather Than Virtues'

2

'Emphaize The Importance of Virtues Rather Than The Abilities'

3

'Xun Yao asked for Land'

4

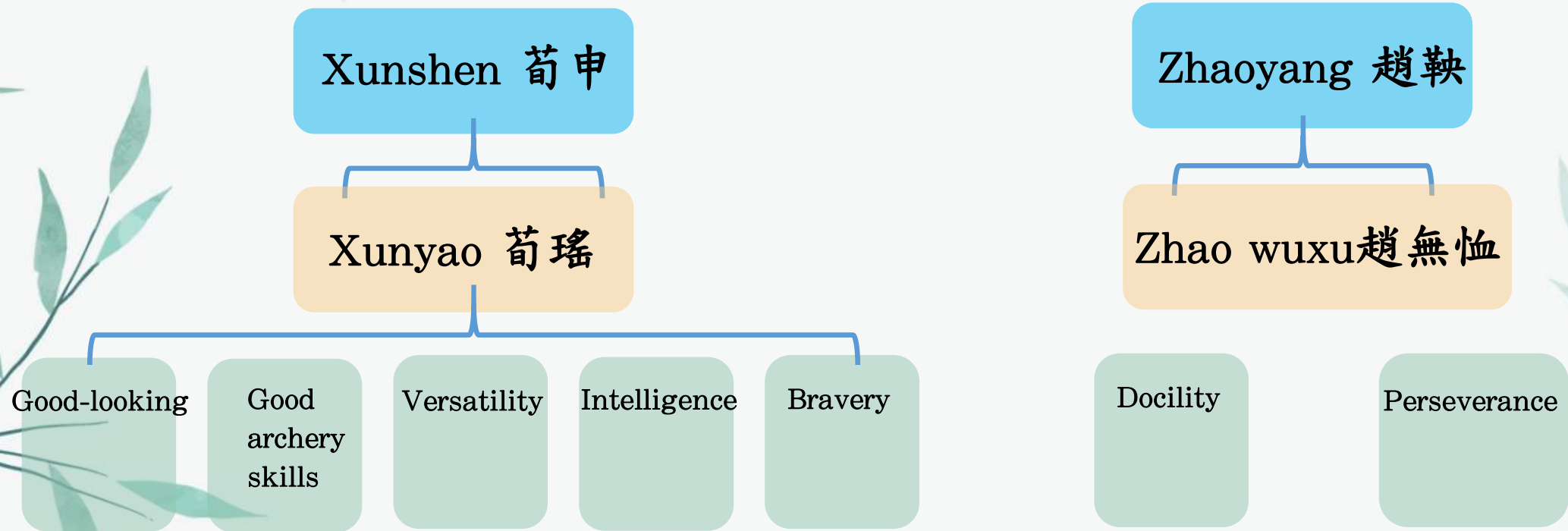
'The Right Choice of City to Flee to'

5

'Without Their Lips, Their Teeth Would be Damaged And Hanhu And Weiju Would Start to Be Worried about Their Own Situation'

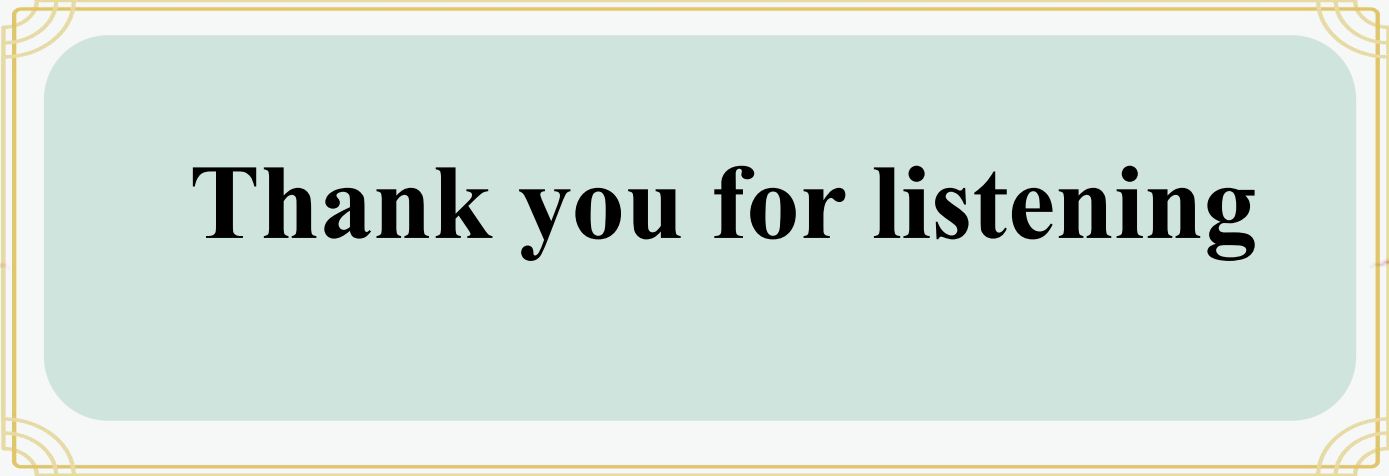
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'The Three Houses Destroyed The House of Zhi智'



Sima Guang said, 'A person who has both talent and virtue is a saint. A person who has neither talent nor virtue is a fool. A person with more virtue than talent is a gentleman; a person with more talent than virtue is a villain.'

Thank you for listening



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