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《群書治要》：《左傳·宣公》

宣公二年：〈趙盾弑其君〉¹

晉靈公不君，厚斂以雕牆，從臺上彈人而觀其避丸也。宰夫胾熊蹯不熟，殺之，置諸畚，使婦人載以過朝。趙盾，士季患之，將諫。

Duke Ling of Jin was not a ruler.² He imposed heavy taxes to adorn³ walls, and shot at people from the terrace and watched how they elude the pellets. He killed his cook because he (the cook) did not stew bear's paws properly. Duke Ling then put him into a straw basket and had a woman to carry it through the court. Zhao Dun and Shi Ji worried about it, and prepared to remonstrate with Duke Ling.

士季曰：「諫而不入，則莫之繼也。會請先，不入，則子繼之。」三進，及溜，而後視之，曰：「吾知所過矣。將改之。」

Shi Ji said, 'If our remonstrances were not accepted, then no one else will follow suit. Please allow me to suggest first. If my remonstrance is not accepted, then you can follow.' Shi Ji stepped forward three times, and Duke Ling only looked at him when he reached the eaves. Duke Ling said, 'I know what I have done wrong, and I will correct them.'

稽首而對曰：「人誰無過，過而能改，善莫大焉。詩曰：『靡不有初，鮮克有終。』夫如是，則能補過者鮮矣。君能有終，則社稷之固也。豈唯羣臣賴之。」

Shi Ji kowtowed and replied, 'Who is without fault? There is no greater good than making a mistake yet correcting it. *The Canon of Poetry* says, "None lacks a beginning, but few can persist until the end." If this is the case, then those who can make amends for their faults are few. If you can persist to the end, then the state will be stable and secure. Not only the ministers rely on this.'

猶不改，宣子驟諫，公患之，使鉏麇賊之。晨往，寢門闢矣，盛服將朝。尚早，坐而假寐。麇退，嘆而言曰：「不忘恭敬，民之主也。賊民之主，不忠；棄君之命，不信。」

¹ *Qunshu zhiyao yizhu* 群書治要譯注 (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 2011), pp.124-125.

² Duke Ling did not act as a ruler.

³ In Du Yu's (杜預) annotation, '雕' means '畫'. It is not simply refer to 'carve'. Zuo Qiuming 左丘明, Du Yu 杜預 and Kong Yingda 孔穎達, *Chunqiu zuozhuan zhengyi* 春秋左傳正義 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2000), p.684.

有一於此，不如死。」觸槐而死。

Duke Ling still did not correct his faults. Xuanzi⁴ repeatedly remonstrated with him. Duke Ling detested this and sent Chu Ni to murder him. In the early morning, Chu Ni went there. He found the bedchamber doors open, and Xuanzi prepared to go to court in splendid attire. It was still early, so Xuanzi was sitting there and feigning sleep. Chu Ni withdrew. He sighed and said, 'The person who never forget reverence and respect is the leader of the people. To murder the leader of the people is disloyalty. To violate the ruler's order is faithless. Having even one of these is worse than death.' Chu Ni then killed himself by striking his head against a locust tree.

晉侯飲趙盾酒，伏甲將攻之。其右提彌明知之，趨登，曰：「臣侍宴，過三爵，非禮。」遂扶以下。公喉夫癸焉，明搏而殺之。盾曰：「棄人用犬，雖猛何為。」**鬥**⁵且出。趙穿攻靈公於桃園，宣子未出山而復。

The ruler of Jin feasted Zhao Dun with wine, but set an ambush and was about to attack him. Timi Ming, who stood by the right side of Zhao Dun as his bodyguard, realized this. He then hastened to ascend the steps, saying, 'For a minister to attend a feast and drink more than three cups is improper.' Then he supported Zhao Dun down. The ruler of Jin gave vocal signals to a large fierce dog (to attack them). Ming fought and killed it. Dun said, 'To abandon men and use dogs, even if those dogs are fierce, what use are they? Then they (Zhao Dun and Timi Ming) came out while fighting. Zhao Chuan⁶ attacked (or assassinated)⁷ Duke Ling at Taoyuan. (After hearing that,) Xuanzi turned back before he crossed the mountains of Jin.

大⁸史書曰：「趙盾**殺**⁹其君。」以示於朝。宣子曰：「不然。」對曰：「子為正卿，亡不越境，反不討賊，非子而誰？」孔子曰：「董狐，古之良史也。書法不隱。趙宣子，古之良大夫也。為法受惡。」

⁴ Xuanzi is the posthumous title of Zhao Dun.

⁵ The character **鬥** is the same as **鬥**.

⁶ Zhao Chuan is Zhao Dun's paternal cousin. '趙盾之從夫昆弟' Zuo Qiuming 左丘明, Du Yu 杜預 and Kong Yingda 孔穎達, *Chunqiu zuozhuan zhengyi* 春秋左傳正義, p.687.

⁷ '攻，本或作弑' Zuo Qiuming 左丘明, Du Yu 杜預 and Kong Yingda 孔穎達, *Chunqiu zuozhuan zhengyi* 春秋左傳正義, p.688.

⁸ The character 大 is interchangeable with 太.

⁹ In the original text of 左傳, the character **殺** is written as **弑**, which means to assassinate the ruler. It refers to an improper act. But in 群書治要, the compilers used the character **殺**, which simply means to kill someone. That show that Zhao Dun's action was not wrong, and the Duke of Jin could not really be regarded as a ruler.

The scribe recorded, ‘ Zhao Dun killed his ruler.’ He displayed it at the court. Xuanzi said, ‘It was not so.’ The scribe replied, ‘You are the senior minister. Going into exile but did not cross the border; returning but did not attack the rebel¹⁰. Who else (killed the ruler) but you? Confucius said, ‘Dong Hu was a good scribe of ancient times, who obeyed the historical principle, and did not conceal the truth. Zhao Xuanzi was a good senior minister of ancient times, who suffered blame for the principle.

宣公十一年：〈楚子伐陳〉¹¹

十一年，楚子伐陳。謂陳人：「無動¹²，將討於少西氏矣。」遂入陳，殺夏徵舒，因縣陳。申叔時使於齊，反¹³，復命而退。

In the eleventh year of Duke Xuan, the ruler of Chu attacked the state of Chen. The ruler of Chu said to the people of Chen, ‘Do not be alarmed, we will only attack the Shaoxi clan.’ Then he entered the state of Chen and killed Xia Zhengshu. He then made Chen a county of Chu. Shen Shushi was sent to the state of Qi as an envoy. When he returned, he reported his mission and withdrew.

王使讓之曰：「夏徵舒為不道，弑其君，寡人以諸侯討而戮之，諸侯縣公，皆慶寡人，汝獨不慶寡人，何故？」

The ruler of Chu asked someone to blame him, saying, ‘Xia Zhengshu acted in an improper way (for a minister), and assassinated his lord. I lead the feudal lords to attack and kill him. The feudal lords and county dukes have all congratulated me. Only you did not congratulate me. Why is that?’

對曰：「夏徵舒弑其君，其罪大矣。討而戮之，君之義也。抑人亦有言曰：『牽牛以蹊人之田。而奪之牛。』牽牛以蹊者，信有罪矣，而奪之牛，罰已重矣。諸侯之從也，曰討有罪也。今縣陳，貪其富也。以討召諸侯，而以貪歸之，無乃不可乎？」

Shen Shushi replied, ‘Xia Zhengshu assassinated his lord. His crime is grave. To attack and kill him is righteous for you. However, as someone once said, “A man lead an ox to

¹⁰ It refers to Zhao Chuan.

¹¹ *Qunshu zhiyao yizhu* 群書治要譯注, pp.133-134.

¹² There is no annotation for the character 動 in the ancient commentaries. But in Yang Bojun’s 楊伯峻 interpretation, 動 means to be alarmed. 「動謂驚懼也。」 Yang Bojun 楊伯峻, *Chunqiu zuozhuan zhu* 春秋左傳注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1995), p.713.

¹³ The character 反 is interchangeable with 返, meaning ‘to return’.

tread on fields. The landowner¹⁴ thus seized the ox.” He who leaded an ox to tread on fields is truly guilty, but the punishment of seizing the ox is already too severe. The feudal lords followed you to punish the guilty. Now you made Chen a county of Chu out of greed for its wealth. You called the feudal lords together for attacking, yet you end up acting out of greed. Would this not be improper?’

王曰：「善哉！吾未之聞也。反之，可乎？」對曰：「可哉！吾儕¹⁵小人所謂取諸其懷而與之也。」乃復封陳。

The ruler of Chu said, ‘Well said!’¹⁶ I have never heard such words. Would it be proper if I return dominion to the state of Chen?’ Shen Shushi replied, ‘That’s proper! That is what we (humble ones)¹⁷ call taking from others’ hold and returning it to them.’ He then restored the state of Chen.

宣公十五年：〈楚子伐宋〉¹⁸

十五年，楚子伐宋，宋人告急于晉。晉侯欲救之。伯宗曰：「不可。古人有言曰：『雖鞭之長，不及馬腹。』天方授楚，未可與爭。雖晉之強，能違天乎？諺曰：『高下在心。』川澤納污，山藪藏疾，瑾瑜匿瑕，國君含垢，天之道也，君其待之。」

In the fifteenth year of Duke Xuan, the ruler of Chu attacked the state of Song. Song asked for emergency help to the state of Jin. The ruler of Jin intended to help the state of Song. Bo Zong said, ‘You should not do that. As an ancient saying goes: “Although the whip is long, it cannot hit the horse’s belly.” Heaven is now supporting Chu. We cannot compete with it. Though Jin is powerful, can it go against Heaven? There is a proverb says, “High or low, it lies in the heart.”’¹⁹ Rivers and marshes take in filth²⁰. Mountains and marshes hide

¹⁴ According to 陳杞世家, 史記, the person who seized the ox is the landowner. ‘牽牛徑人田，田主奪之牛。’Sima Qian 司馬遷, Chenqi shijia, *Shiji* 史記: 陳杞世家<<https://ctext.org/shiji/zhs?searchu=%E7%94%B0%E4%B8%BB>> / [accessed 3 April 2026]

¹⁵ In Du Yu’s(杜預) annotation, ‘儕, 輩也.’ It means people of a certain kind. Zuo Qiuming 左丘明, Du Yu 杜預 and Kong Yingda 孔穎達, *Chunqiu zuozhuan zhengyi* 春秋左傳正義, p.725.

¹⁶ *Commentary on the ‘Spring and Autumn Annals’*, translated and introduced by Stephen Durrant, Wai-yee Li, and David Schaberg (University of Washington Press, 2016), p.637.

¹⁷ *Commentary on the ‘Spring and Autumn Annals’*, translated and introduced by Stephen Durrant, Wai-yee Li, and David Schaberg, p.637.

¹⁸ *Qunshu zhiyao yizhu* 群書治要譯注, pp.146-147.

¹⁹ That is, one should take suitable measures based on circumstances. *Qunshu zhiyao yizhu* 群書治要譯注, pp.148.

poisons. Fine jades conceal flaws. A ruler endures disgrace. That is the way of Heaven. You should wait patiently.

乃止。使解揚如宋，使無降楚，曰：「晉師悉起，將至。」鄭人囚而獻楚，楚子厚賂之，使反其言，不許，三乃許之。登諸樓車，使呼宋人而告之，遂致其君命。

The ruler of Jin then stopped, sent Xie Yang to Song to dissuade Song from surrendering to Chu, and ordered him to say, 'The Jin army has already set out in full force and will arrive soon.' The people of Zheng imprisoned Xie Yang and presented him to Chu. The ruler of Chu bribed him generously to tell him to say the opposite. Xie Yang refused. He only agreed after three times. When Xie Yang ascended the watchtower chariot, the ruler of Chu told him to call out to the people of Song and inform them. He then did as his lord (the ruler of Jin) had ordered him.

楚子將殺之，使與之言曰：「爾既許不穀²¹而反之，何故？非我無信，汝則棄之，速即²²爾刑。」

The ruler of Chu was about to kill him and sent someone to ask him, 'You have already made me a promise, but you broke it. For what reason? It is not that I lack faith - you are the one who abandoned your word. Hasten to accept your punishment.'

對曰：「臣聞之，君能制命為義，臣能承命為信。義無二信，信無二命。君之賂臣，不知命也。受命以出，有死無實²³，又可賂乎？臣之許君，以成命也。死之成命，臣之祿也。寡君有信臣，下臣獲考²⁴，死又何求？」楚子舍之以歸。

Xie Yang replied, 'I have heard that it is righteousness for a ruler to issue (proper) commands, and it is faithfulness for a minister to carry out the commands. Righteousness admits no double faithfulness, and faithfulness accepts no double commands. For a ruler to bribe his ministers shows he does not understand the (principle of) command²⁵. Having received the command to go as an envoy, I will die rather than discontinue my mission. How can I be bribed? I promised to you only so that I might carry out (the ruler of

²⁰ Commentary on the 'Spring and Autumn Annals', translated and introduced by Stephen Durrant, Wai-ye Li, and David Schaberg, p.677.

²¹ Humble term. It refers to the ruler of Chu.

²² '即：就、接受' *Qunshu zhiyao yizhu* 群書治要譯注 (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 2013), p.476.

²³ The character 實 is interchangeable with 隕. It means to discontinue. '實 廢隊也' Zuo Qiuming 左丘明, Du Yu 杜預 and Kong Yingda 孔穎達, *Chunqiu zuozhuan zhengyi* 春秋左傳正義, p.768.

²⁴ '考，成也。' Zuo Qiuming 左丘明, Du Yu 杜預 and Kong Yingda 孔穎達, *Chunqiu zuozhuan zhengyi* 春秋左傳正義, p.768.

²⁵ That is, the ruler does not the principle of '義無二信，信無二命'.

Jin's) commands. It is my blessing to die yet fulfill my mission. Our (unworthy)²⁶ ruler has a faithful minister. I, a lowly subject²⁷, am granted fulfillment. What more can I ask for, even in death?' The ruler of Chu remitted him and let him return to the state of Jin.

²⁶ *Commentary on the 'Spring and Autumn Annals'*, translated and introduced by Stephen Durrant, Wai-yee Li, and David Schaberg, p.679.

²⁷ *Commentary on the 'Spring and Autumn Annals'*, translated and introduced by Stephen Durrant, Wai-yee Li, and David Schaberg, p.679.

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