中英文對照賞析

Magnanimous Ruler: Emperor Taizu of Song (Part 2)

一代仁君趙匡胤（下）

Zhao Kuangyin (927 – 976 AD), who founded the Song Dynasty (960-1279 AD) and came to be known as Emperor Taizu of Song, went down in history as a distinctive and benevolent ruler in Chinese history.

The following stories were taken from History of the Song Dynasty and notes from same period, which give us a picture of Emperor Taizu's charisma and appeal.

Being Frugal Helps One Better Appreciate Blessings

Emperor Taizu of Song lived frugally and avoided sensual pleasures. He was of a pure mind and thus set an example for his subordinates. Later generations credited him with reversing the moral and cultural decline that was rampant when he came to power.

Emperor Taizu gave orders that the reed screens in his palace be wrapped with cloth on the rim to extend their lifespan. Seeing his eldest daughter decorate her short gown with kingfisher feathers, he told her not to.

"You were born into a wealthy and esteemed family. Being frugal helps one better appreciate the blessings," he said.

Meng Chang, the last emperor of Later Shu, ruled today's Sichuan area from 934 – 964 AD. He surrendered to Song upon his army's defeat. When Emperor Taizu found out that Meng Chang's urinal had sevenkinds of precious stonesembedded in it, he smashed it.

"Seven diamonds to adorn a urinal?" he said to Meng. "How will you decorate the bowl that holds food? With conduct like yours, how could your kingdom not falL?

(Adapted from *History of the Song Dynasty*: Basic Annals of Emperor Taizu)

Brutal Killer Punished Despite Amnesty

Emperor Taizu was known for his generosity. Yet his generosity did not prevent him from upholding social justice.

Because of a personal grudge, Fan Yichao killed 12 members of the Chang family, who lived in the Shaan Prefecture, which is today's Henan Province. The only one to escape was the family's youngest son, Chang Liuliu. The killings took place in Later Zhou, prior to Emperor Taizu's coming to power, and Fan remained at large.

By the time Emperor Taizu ascended to the throne, he issued an amnesty. After some years, Chang Liuliu apprehended Fan and took him to the local authorities. Officials in the Shaan Prefecture filed a report, suggesting that, based on the amnesty issued at the beginning of the Song Dynasty, Fan would be spared being executed.

"How could someone brutally kill 12 members of one family be spared because of a general amnesty?" said Emperor Taizu. He ordered Fan to be executed.

(Adapted from History of the Song Dynasty: Records of Criminal Laws)

High Regard for History

Emperor Taizu was a warrior before ascending to the throne and was good at martial arts. He was courageous and fearless. Yet he was afraid of the entries logged by the historiographer who kept a diary on daily activities in the imperial court.

Emperor Taizu held history in high regard, because it passed on one's accomplishments and shortfalls to future generations for judgment.

One day Emperor Taizu was shooting birds in the backyard of the palace. A subordinate asked to see him, claiming an urgent matter. Emperor Taizu sat down with him but considered the matter trivial, making him quite unhappy. He scolded his subordinate for falsely claiming urgency.

"Your Majesty, in my humble opinion, this matter is more urgent than shooting birds," said the subordinate.

Enraged, Emperor Taizu hit his subordinate in the face with an ax handle, knocking out two front teeth. The subordinate bent down, picked up the teeth, and put them in his pocket.

"You're holding onto your teeth so that you can file a charge against me," the angry Emperor screamed.

"I'm not in a position to file any charges against Your Majesty. However, the historiographer will have to document what happened today."

Emperor Taizu was alarmed, yet pleased at the same time. He knew that his subordinate acted out of loyalty to him. He rewarded his subordinate with gold and silk.

(Adapted from *News Recorded at Susui* by Sima Guang)

Three Secret Vows for Governance

After founding the Song Dynasty, Emperor Taizu carved three vows on stone to be read by his successors. The stone was locked up in a room to which only a handful of administrators of the royal family had access. Not even prime ministers knew anything about it. Each emperor, upon taking office, would be taken to the secret room to kneel down and read the three vows.

It was not until the forces of the Jin dynastydefeated the Song army and took over the palace that the secret vows were revealed:

1. If descendants of the Later Zhou royal family, from whom Emperor Taizu took the throne, ever commit a crime, they must not be subjected to corporal punishment – even if they conspire to overthrow Song. They will be allowed to commit suicide in prison, without being executed in public, nor will their families be implicated.2. No scholars or anyone who gives specific recommendations to the imperial court will be killed for their opinions.3. Taxes on agricultural land shall not be increased.

Emperor Taizu established the bottom line of governance for the Song Dynasty through the three vows. The descendants of the Later Zhou royal family, who supported Song through thick and thin, attested to Emperor Taizu's generosity, effectiveness, and farsightedness. Sticking to the vows, all succeeding Song emperors refrained from arbitrarily executing high-ranking officials.

What is also critically important is the second vow, which prohibited the killing of scholars. It guaranteed that the Song Dynasty, founded by Emperor Taizu, who himself was a warrior with little schooling, would become one that came down in history as the epitome of the "rule of civility."

Su Shi, whose achievements in poetry placed him among the literary giants in Chinese history, made the Song imperial court a target of sarcasm in his poems. In any other period, he would have been executed many times over, and none in his family would have been spared. Yet he was just demoted, and later resumed his career in the imperial hierarchy.

Compared with founders of Western and Eastern Han, Tang, and the later Ming dynasties, who were surrounded by prominent generals and strategists, yet the only notable adviser under Zhao Kuangyin was Zhao Pu, whom the author describes as a man of limited abilities. Emperor Taizu, rather, relied on himself. He put an end to over seven decades of turmoil across the vast land of China, bringing about the boom during the reign of Jianlong (960 – 963 AD), which laid the foundation for three centuries of Song rule of the Song Dynasty.

Sima Chi told his son Sima Guang (a historian known for the Comprehensive Mirror in Aid of Governance), "The unification of the realm, which has brought us an extended period of blessings, without domestic or foreign threats, is all because of Emperor Taizu's righteousness and magnanimity."

Two more renowned scholars, Fan Zhongyan and Cheng Yi, also applauded Emperor Taizu's virtue of not arbitrarily killing a single subordinate.

Zhu Yuanzhang, who founded the Ming Dynasty, credited Emperor Taizu with following the mandate of heaven and complying with the popular wishes of the people, bringing about unity and civil rule that spanned over 300 years, and for reigning with virtue that resulted in peace and prosperity for generations to come.

(The End)

宋太祖趙匡胤是歷史上一位獨樹一幟的好皇帝，其「杯酒釋兵權」、「千里送京娘」、「華山不納糧」等故事家喻戶曉。

下面選錄的幾則宋太祖的事跡，來源於宋人筆記和《宋史》，能讓我們更全面的感受到他的人格魅力。

「不亡何待！」

皇宮中的葦帘，都用青布包邊；太祖日常穿的衣服，洗滌多次還在穿。魏國長公主（太祖女兒）短襖上裝飾著翠鳥的羽毛，太祖告誡她不要再用了，並教誨她說：「你生長在富貴之家，應當懂得珍惜福分。」太祖看見孟昶用珠寶裝飾的小便器具，把它打碎了，說：「你用七種寶石裝飾便器，那該用甚麼器皿來盛放食物呢？像你這種行為，不亡國還等甚麼？」——事見《宋史．太祖本紀》

評註：宋太祖心地清正，不近聲色，崇尚節儉，以身作則……，對改變五代以來奢靡風氣具有很大的示範效應，深為後世所稱道。

命正其罪

陝州人范義超，在後周顯德年間因為私仇殺了同鄉常古真一家十二口人。常古真的小兒子常留留僥倖逃脫。到宋初，他把范義超抓住送到官府處理。陝州的官員上奏：按照宋朝初年發布的赦令，應當寬恕。太祖說：「哪裡有殺一家十二口，還按赦令寬恕的呢！」於是下令按殺人罪處死范義超。——事見《宋史．刑法志》

評註：殺十二口人，這不是惡魔嗎？宋太祖的寬仁大度歷史有名，但他的寬仁是有分寸的——對滅絕人性的惡魔他決不姑息，以維護正義和公理。

宋太祖怕史官

宋太祖曾經在皇宮的後園彈捕鳥雀。有個臣子說有急事求見，太祖急忙召見了他，發現他上奏的只是很平常的小事。太祖生氣了，責問他為甚麼這麼說。臣子回答：「臣以為這事比彈鳥雀要緊急。」太祖更加生氣，用斧子柄撞他的嘴。臣子的兩顆牙齒被撞落了，他慢慢彎下腰拾起牙齒，放在懷裡。太祖怒問他：「你懷裡揣著牙齒，想告我的狀嗎？」臣子回答說：「臣沒資格狀告陛下，然而自有史官記錄今天這件事。」太祖既害怕又高興，知道他是個忠臣，賞賜了黃金和絲織品安慰嘉獎他。—— 事見司馬光《涑水記聞》

評註：趙匡胤是地道的練武出身，一身是膽，天不怕地不怕。但有一樣他怕——秉筆直書的史官。他明白：無論善行還是惡行，都會通過史官的記錄而載入史冊，供後人評說。知錯就改是他的又一優點。

太祖三誓

趙匡胤立國之後，曾在石碑上刻下了留給子孫的誓約。誓約鎖藏在宮殿的密室裡，宋朝歷任皇帝即位時，都必須進殿跪讀它。這份誓約至為機密，除了特定的宮中人士之外，甚至連宰相都不知道。後來金朝打敗宋朝，占領皇宮時，才發現它。誓約的內容有三點：（一）柴氏子孫有罪，不得加刑，縱犯謀逆，止於獄中賜盡，不得市曹刑戮，亦不得連坐支屬。（二）不得殺士大夫及上書言事人。（三）不加農田之賦。—— 事見王夫之《宋論》

太祖的這三條誓約，就是宋朝的施政底線。宋朝的皇帝基本上都遵守了這份誓約，從柴氏子孫與宋朝共存亡，以及趙匡胤後的每位宋朝君主，都未嘗輕易殺戮大臣的史實就可以證明。

其中第二條的「不殺士大夫」至關重要，它成為制度保障，使得趙宋這個由武夫開創的王朝，到達後人豔羨的「文治巔峰」，士人的風骨、學問和能力，得到全方位展示。我們熟知的大文豪蘇軾曾在詩文中譏諷朝廷，甚至影射皇帝，這在其他朝代，不誅九族也得死好幾遍。但在不殺士子的大宋，他只是被貶官而已，還復出了。否則，「赤壁」二賦等千古名篇我們將無緣得見。難怪人們說：「宋朝是讀書人的樂園！」

評註：趙匡胤溫厚的個性透過這個石碑遺訓，影響了整個宋王朝，徹底扭轉了唐末以來武夫專權的黑暗局面，使宋朝文化空前繁榮，以至於後人盛讚「宋朝是文人的樂園」。

劉邦、劉秀、李世民、朱元璋等人立國，身邊都是文臣如織猛將如雲，但趙匡胤手下，叫得響的只有一個半拉子趙普。他幾乎是憑一己之力結束了長達七十多年的戰亂，奠定了大宋三百年的基業。他開創的「建隆之治」也名垂後世。

宋太祖是雄才與仁心的完美結合體，其人格魅力令後世深深折服。司馬池曾告訴兒子司馬光：「國家所以能混一海內，福祚延長，內外無患，由太祖以仁義得之故也。」北宋名臣范仲淹曰：「祖宗以來，未嘗輕殺一臣下，此盛德之事。」大儒程頤曰：「太祖之有天下，救五代之亂，不戮一人，自古無之，非漢、唐可比，固知趙氏之祀安於泰山。」大明開國皇帝朱元璋對宋祖推崇備至：「惟宋太祖皇帝順天應人，統一海宇，祚延三百，天下文明。有君天下之德而安萬世之功者也。」（完）

（轉自明慧網）

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