

【水鏡回天錄白話解】

武則天

WATER-MIRROR REFLECTIONS: TURNING THE TIDE OF DESTINY Empress Wu Zetian

宣公上人講於一九八六年九月十二日

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武則天名曩。唐文水人。小有才華。善用人。狄仁傑為相。忠心事之。故為十六年大周則天皇帝。十三歲入宮。為唐太宗才人。高宗立。宮廷爭寵。乘機而起。所謂「潛隱先帝之私。陰圖後房之嬖」。甚得高宗之寵。為目的不擇手段。計害王皇后。取而代之。高宗患風濕。代批奏章，決定國事。帝崩。立中宗及睿宗。旋而廢之。自立為帝。篤信佛教。貶斥異道。請賢首國師講華嚴經。覺不圓滿。故遣使西域求梵本。實又難陀法師譯出八十卷。特撰其序及開經偈。享年八十二。中宗復位。唐室中興。

武則天，她是唐朝時候山西文水人，姓武，名字叫曩，這都是她以後自己取的名字。她生來就有一種詭計多端的思想，唯利是圖，對她有利的時候，她就想法子去做去；所以說「小有才」，不是什麼大才。「善用人」，她是知人善用，對於好的人、不好的人她知道，所以她善於用人。為什麼說她善用人呢？本來她是個女人，在唐朝狄仁傑是當時一個狀元，都能為她所用。可是她很怕狄仁傑的，為什麼怕狄仁傑

Text:

Empress Wu Zetian's name was Zhao. She lived during the Tang Dynasty and was a native of Wenshui County. She had some minor talents and knew how to make good use of people's abilities. With Di Renjie as her loyal Prime Minister, she reigned for sixteen years as Empress Zetian of the Great Zhou Dynasty. She entered the palace at the age of thirteen to become Tang Emperor Taizong's lady-in-waiting. After Gaozong succeeded to the throne, she seized the opportunity to rise to prominence while the other court ladies were vying for his affection. It's said that she 'concealed the private affairs between her and the late emperor, and secretly schemed to be the favorite of the inner court.' She gained Gaozong's favor. She resorted to unscrupulous means to achieve her goals, ruthlessly plotting against Empress Wang and replacing her as the empress. When Gaozong was afflicted with rheumatism, Empress Wu reviewed and commented on all the documents on his behalf and made decisions on the country's affairs. Upon the emperor's demise, she appointed Zhongzong and Ruizong one after another but deposed them both shortly after and proclaimed herself as emperor. As a devout Buddhist, she denounced non-Buddhist teachings. She invited National Master Xianshou to lecture on the Flower Adornment Sutra but felt that the sutra was not complete. Thereafter, she dispatched an envoy to the Western Regions to seek the Sanskrit version of the sutra. Dharma Master Shikshananda translated the sutra into eighty rolls, and she wrote a preface and the Verse for Opening a Sutra. When she passed away at the age of eighty-two, Emperor Zhongzong was restored to the throne and the Tang Dynasty was revived.

Commentary:

Empress Wu Zetian lived during the Tang Dynasty and was a native of Wenshui County in Shanxi Province. Her surname was Wu and later on, she assumed the formal name, Zhao. She had a crafty mind and was only interested in per-



呢？因為狄仁傑很正，邪不勝正，她是有一股邪裏邪氣的行爲，所以她很怕狄仁傑的。狄仁傑當時在唐朝已經做丞相，對她很忠心的，大約狄仁傑也是因為識時務，所謂「識時務者爲俊傑」；大約知道這個天意，她有這麼一段。

她在十三歲就被選入宮了，唐太宗一就是李世民一選她做才人，也常常幸她，可是她不提這個事情。所謂「潛隱先帝之私，陰圖後房之嬖」。怎麼叫「潛隱先帝之私」呢？她和唐太宗已經有過關係；然後她覺得唐太宗年紀老了，將來會死的，死了怎麼辦呢？那時候的太子就是高宗，高宗當時到廁所去，這個武則天就用金盆給高宗端一盆水去，給他洗手；這高宗一看見這麼美貌的一個女孩子，也就和她有了關係了！所以這叫「陰圖後房之嬖」。

等到以後，有人就知道說是唐朝的氣運，會有陰人在這兒作亂，所以當時有欽天監看，就說這主於姓武的；於是，就把宮裏和宮外姓武的人殺了很多。可是唐太宗不忍心殺武則天，就把她攆到宮外去了，她就到廟上去出家。高宗因為心目中也非常喜歡她，所以就找她；那麼一找，就找到廟上，看她把髮給落了，就叫她把髮留起來。等到唐太宗死了，高宗做皇帝了，特意到這個廟上去，又把她叫回來。這時候王皇后和另外的蕭妃在爭寵；因為蛤蚌相爭，她就漁翁得利了。高宗一看見她回來了，把蕭妃也不要了；又因為她把自己女兒殺了，誣陷說是王皇后給弄死的，所以高宗就把王皇后也給貶了。這都是她在那兒勾心鬥角，儘用手段；所以說她「爲目的不擇手段」，用種種的手段，就把王皇后也給貶到冷宮去了，她於是就獨霸宮內。

因為高宗不知道保守身體，一天到晚就好女色，後來就得了風濕病。武則天的學問有一點，所以以後她就代高宗批奏章，所有國事都是她來決定。高宗駕崩之後，

sonal gain. She would think of ways to do anything to benefit herself. She had some minor talents, which were not extraordinary. She could assess whether people were good or bad and appropriately use them to her advantage. Why was it said that she knew how to put people to good use? Though she was a woman, she was able to make use of Di Renjie, the top scholar during that period in the Tang Dynasty. However, she was very afraid of him. What was the reason for this? It was because Di Renjie was an upright person while Wu Zetian had a devious character. As the devious cannot prevail over the upright, she was very wary of him. While serving as the Prime Minister, Di Renjie knew the situation quite well in the Tang court but he was very loyal to her. As the saying goes: "*Whoever understands the times is a great man.*" Perhaps, Di Renjie understood the times and knew that it was fate. She had such a way of doing things.

At the age of thirteen, she was chosen to serve in the palace. The Tang Emperor Taizong, whose name was Li Shimin, selected her to be a lady-in-waiting. Notwithstanding her status, he had frequent liaisons with her, but she never mentioned the incidents. Why is it said that she concealed the private matters about her and the late Emperor? Lady Wu was already involved in a relationship with Emperor Taizong but realized that he was old and would die eventually. What would she do if he passed away? The Crown Prince then was Gaozong. Once, when Gaozong went to the toilet, Lady Wu used a gold basin to bring him water for washing his hands. As soon as Gaozong saw this beautiful lady, he started to have a relationship with her too. This is the meaning of "secretly scheming to be the favorite of the inner court."

Later on, there was talk that the Tang Dynasty was destined to meet with an upheaval caused by a woman. On investigation, the court astrologers claimed that this event could be attributed primarily to a person with the surname 'Wu'. As a result, many people with this surname within and outside the palace were killed. However, Emperor Taizong could not bear to kill Lady Wu, so he ousted her from the palace and committed her to enter the monastic life in a nunnery. As Gaozong was also very fond of her, he set about looking for her and finally found her in the nunnery. On seeing that her head was shaved, he ordered that she be allowed to grow her hair again. After Emperor Taizong had died, Gaozong succeeded to the throne and made special arrangements to recall Lady Wu back to the palace. At this time, Empress Wang and the other concubine Lady Xiao were vying for the Emperor's affection. As the clams and the mussels fought among themselves, Lady Wu became the proverbial fisherman who reaped all the benefits. As soon as Gaozong saw that she was back, he neglected Lady Xiao. Subsequently, Lady Wu murdered her own daughter and framed Empress Wang who was then stripped of her title by Gaozong. "She resorted to unscrupulous means to achieve her goals," for all this came to pass as a result of her scheming and plotting. By employing all sorts of underhanded tactics, she managed to have Empress Wang ban-

她就立了中宗，以後又立睿宗；不久就把睿宗也廢了，把中宗也貶為廬陵王，以後她自己稱帝，稱則天皇帝，改國號叫大周。她做了十六年皇帝，又加前之垂廉聽政有六年，總共有二十二年。



她這個二十二年的過程中，在中國也沒有什麼大的變化，很太平的。她活得很大年紀，她也信佛，對佛教是很有一種影響力；又請賢首國師到宮裏去講《華嚴經》，她自己覺得這《華嚴經》還有不圓滿的地方，於是又派遣使者到西域去取完整的《華嚴經》，由實叉難陀就又翻譯出來八十卷的華嚴。

在翻譯出八十卷《華嚴經》以後，她就享了有八十二歲；之後，中宗又復位，所以唐朝的氣運又繼續起來了。

☞待續

ished to the dungeon. Thereafter, she assumed full control of the inner court.

As Emperor Gaozong was a lascivious person who did not know how to take care of his health, he developed rheumatism. Empress Wu had a bit of learning and so she reviewed and commented on all the documents on his behalf and made decisions on the country's affairs. After Gaozong had passed away, she put Zhongzong on the throne, followed by Ruizong. Before long, she deposed the latter and demoted Zhongzong to the position of Prince Luling. Thereafter, she proclaimed herself as sovereign with the title of Empress Zetian and changed the dynasty title to Great Zhou. In addition to her sixteen years on the throne, she had previously reigned from behind

the curtain for six years, spending a total of twenty-two years in power.

During these twenty-two years, there were no major upheavals in China. Empress Wu's reign was quite peaceful and she lived to a ripe old age. She was a devout Buddhist and exerted an influence on Buddhism. She invited National Master Xianshou to the palace to lecture on the *Flower Adornment Sutra*. Finding that this sutra was lacking in certain aspects, she dispatched an envoy to the Western Regions to obtain the complete version, which was then translated into eighty rolls of Chinese by Shikshananda.

After the *Flower Adornment Sutra* had been translated into eighty rolls, she lived to the age of eighty-two. After that, Zhongzong was restored to the throne and the destiny of the Tang Dynasty resumed as before.

☞To be continued



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