

【水鏡回天錄白話解】

# 武則天 (續)

## REFLECTIONS IN THE WATER-MIRROR: TURNING THE TIDE OF DESTINY Empress Wu Zetian (CONTINUED)

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評曰：

出身寒微	偽裝慈悲
深謀遠慮	笑臉媚堆
惑主求榮	爭權倖遂
才智過人	垂簾廷帷

這個評論說：

「出身寒微」：徐敬業討武氏檄那個檄文裡，他這麼說的：「偽臨朝武氏者，性非和順，地實寒微。昔充太宗下陳，曾以更衣入侍。入門見嫉，娥眉不肯讓人。掩袖工讒，狐媚偏能惑主。」這一段就說得很好，很像她的寫照，所以這裡說她出身寒微。「偽裝慈悲」：她是好像很慈悲，可是，也是很假的。

「深謀遠慮」：她對她有利益的事情，她就要做；對她沒有利益的事情，她就不做。所以說她很深謀遠慮的，又善於攻心。「笑臉媚堆」：她常常對皇帝現一種諂媚的樣子。

「惑主求榮，爭權倖遂」：她迷惑唐太宗和唐高宗；她又爭權，僥倖地順遂她的心願。

「才智過人」：她怎麼能這樣？因為她很狡猾的、很奸的，才智過人。所以「垂簾廷帷」：她在當時也垂簾聽政，也做了皇帝了。

又說偈曰：

A verse of critique says:

Coming from a lowly background,  
She feigned to be kind and compassionate.  
While scheming and planning carefully,  
She displayed an enchanting smiling face.  
In pursuit of glory, she deluded the emperor.  
Luck was on her side as she fought for power.  
With outstanding talent and ability,  
She reigned from behind the curtain.

Commentary:

**Coming from a lowly background.** According to Luo Binwang's "An Official Denunciation of Wu Zhao on Behalf of Xu Jingye", it is said: "Lady Wu, the hypocrite who presides over the imperial court, does not possess a gentle nature and is of humble origin. In the past, she was a low-status attendant of the Emperor Taizong and later on she gained favor by serving Emperor Gaozong. She was jealous of all the new ladies who came to serve in the palace, for she prided herself as being the most exceptional whereas she felt all the others were inferior to her. Just like Lady Zheng Xiu [wife of the King of Chu during the Warring States period], she was good at slandering people and she made use of her crafty charm to delude her master." This passage is a very apt description of her. That is why it is said she came from a lowly background.

**She feigned to be kind and compassionate.** She appeared to be very kind and compassionate but it was all a pretense. **While scheming and planning carefully.** She only did things that were to her benefit. That is why it is said she schemed and planned carefully and was good at using psychological tactics. **She displayed an enchanting smiling face.** She always adopted a flattering attitude in the presence of the emperor.

**In pursuit of glory, she deluded the emperor. / Luck was on her side as she fought for power.** Both the Emperors Taizong and Gaozong were besotted by her charm. She also fought for power and as luck would have it,



雖具才智多虛偽 口甜心苦奸如鬼  
古今皇帝受此害 昏庸人主被色累  
周幽褒姒諸侯戲 殷紂妲己孕婦劈  
歷史說法君知否 差之絲毫謬千里

註解：

「雖具才智多虛偽」：具，是「具有」；她是有一點才智，可是虛偽很多，她行為都不真實的。

「口甜心苦奸如鬼」：她的口很甜的，她的心是很毒辣的、很苦的。她奸詐的手段就像鬼那麼聰明。

「古今皇帝受此害」：古今的皇帝多數是因為女色把江山丟了！總而言之，都是留連忘返女色，不理朝政。

「昏庸人主被色累」：昏庸的人主都被色所迷惑、所累了。

「周幽褒姒諸侯戲」：周幽王寵著褒姒，褒姒因為當時總也不笑，周幽王就想盡辦法，想叫她這個褒姒笑一笑，也沒有什麼辦法，以後他就把烽煙點起來。烽煙，古來沒有電話、也沒有飛機，不容易傳達消息，所以就點起狼煙，所謂「狼煙四起」；這個狼煙點起來，著得很高的，十幾里路都看得見，這個烽火臺一點燃起來，就表示國王有難了；諸侯就來勤王，各方面的將軍帶兵就來救皇帝。這本來也沒有什麼事，周幽王就因為想要討好褒姒，所以把這種的東西點起來了，這諸侯都帶著兵到這個城下來了，就問皇帝說：「有什麼事情嗎？」皇帝說：「沒有什麼事情！因為這褒姒娘娘總也不笑，我今天把烽火臺點起來，你們大家來了，她很高興，就笑了！」這些諸侯一聽，這叫個什麼？你就是為了想叫你的妃嬪笑一笑，就讓我們跋涉千里到這兒來。這一想，諸侯也沒辦法，就走了，周幽王叫他們回去了。回去了以後，犬戎就造反了，幽王兵力抵抗不了，所以又把烽煙點起來。這些諸侯說：「以前點起烽煙，原來什麼事沒有，就為叫這個妃子笑一笑；我們現在

everything turned out according to her wishes. **With outstanding talent and ability.** How did she achieve this? It was because she was very crafty and treacherous, yet very talented and capable. Therefore, **she reigned from behind the curtain.** At that time, she reigned from behind the curtain and also became an emperor herself.

Another verse says:

**Though talented and intellectual, she was full of hypocrisy.  
With a sweet mouth and an evil heart, she was crafty as a ghost.  
Emperors past and present fell victim to her wiles;  
Fatuuous monarchs were trapped by lust.  
King You of Zhou and Lady Baosi made fun of  
all the feudal lords;  
King Zhou of Yin and Lady Daji slit a pregnant  
woman's abdomen.  
Do you understand the Dharma spoken by history?  
Off by a hair's breadth, you will miss the mark  
by a thousand miles.**

Commentary:

**Though talented and intellectual, she was full of hypocrisy.** The character 'ju' means 'to possess certain qualities'. She was quite capable but at the same time, she was full of hypocrisy. Her behavior was just a false pretense. **With a sweet mouth and an evil heart, she was crafty as a ghost.** Though she was a sweet-talker, her heart was vicious and full of spite. Her treacherous deeds were akin to those of a clever ghost. **Emperors past and present fell victim to her wiles.** From time immemorial, many rulers lost their thrones because of their lust for women. In general, they just could not give up their fondness for women and hence neglected the affairs of state. **Fatuuous monarchs were trapped by lust.** Befuddled monarchs were deluded by lust and this led to their downfall.

**King You of Zhou and Lady Baosi made fun of all the feudal lords:** King You of the Western Zhou Dynasty was especially fond of Lady Baosi. Once, for some reason or other, Lady Baosi simply refused to smile. After exhausting all means to elicit a smile from her, King You lit the beacon fires. In ancient times, communications were backward as there were no telephones or airplanes. Therefore, smoke signals were used as a means of communication because the smoke could rise very high in the air and was visible for miles around. Once the beacon towers were lit, this meant that the king was in peril and all the feudal lords and generals from the various regions would rush back to the capital with their armies to protect the king. In this case, King You was not in any particular danger. He lit the beacon fires simply because he wanted to cheer up Baosi. When the feudal lords arrived at the capital city, they asked King You, "Is anything the matter?" He replied, "Nothing at all!

也不須要去了，他還是要這個把戲來戲弄我們！」也就沒來勤王，所以周幽王也就敗亡了。他的太子從西邊跑到東邊去重建朝廷，以後就稱為「東周」。

「殷紂姐己孕婦劈」：殷紂王寵著姐己，姐己說什麼他信什麼。那麼因為看見街上有一個婦人懷



孕，這個殷紂王就問姐己說：「神妃，你說這個婦人她是懷的男孩、女孩？」這姐己說：「他是男的。」這紂王說：「妳怎麼知道？」她說：「因為她走路先邁左腳，所以就知是男的。你要不信，把她肚子給開開看看是男的是女的？」紂王說好，就把這個懷孕的婦人抓來，不由分說，就把肚子給開開了；開開一看，果然是個男孩子，可是沒長成，就連大人帶小孩都一齊死了。這種種的情形，都是因為寵女人。所以「女人是禍水」，傾國傾城，把這江山都給弄沒有了。

所以「歷史說法君知否」：這都是在這個歷史誌書上說的，這個現身說法，你明白不明白呢？

「差之絲毫謬千里」：你就差一點點，那個禍患就無窮的。所以這個武則天雖然是做皇帝，可是她是一個女人中不好的女人。

I lit the beacon towers today because Lady Baosi simply would not smile. At the sight of all of you rushing here, she was very happy and smiled.” On hearing this, the feudal lords were bewildered and thought: “You made all of us travel thousands of miles here just to make your concubine smile?” However, there was nothing they could do and King You asked them to return to their own territories. Subsequently, when the Quanrong nomads staged an uprising that proved too formidable for King You’s personal army to quell, he lit the beacon fires again. However, the feudal lords did not rush to his aid this time for they reasoned: “Previously, the King lit the beacon fires for no purpose other than to cheer up his concubine. Therefore, there is no necessity for

us to rush to him now as it is likely that he will be playing a trick on us again.” As a result, King You fell and died. His crown prince fled from the west to the east to rebuilt the imperial court and that marked the beginning of the Eastern Zhou Dynasty.

**King Zhou of Yin and Lady Daji slit a pregnant woman’s abdomen.** King Zhou of Yin was very fond of Lady Daji and believed everything that she said. On seeing a pregnant woman on the street, King Zhou asked Lady Daji, “Esteemed concubine, do you think that this woman is carrying a boy or a girl?” Lady Daji replied, “It is a boy.” The king then asked her how she knew. She explained: “I know that it is a boy because she puts her left foot forward first when she walks. If you don’t believe me, then slit her abdomen open to take a look.” King Zhou agreed and promptly had the pregnant woman seized and her abdomen slit without regard to her protests. On opening her abdomen, he found that it was indeed a boy. However, the fetus was not fully formed yet and as a result, both the mother and child died. All these incidents happened due to their love for women. Generally, women are regarded as misfortunes. Because of their beauty, they can even cause the downfall of a kingdom.

Therefore, **do you understand the Dharma spoken by history?** All these were recorded in the annals of history and are examples of the dharma being spoken. Do you understand them?

**Off by a hair’s breadth, you will miss the mark off by a thousand miles.** If you make a slight error, you will encounter endless misfortune. Thus, even though Empress Wu became an emperor, she was a bad woman after all.

