



水鏡回天錄白話解

REFLECTIONS IN THE WATER-MIRROR:
TURNING THE TIDE OF DESTINY

白起 Bai Qi

宣公上人講於1988年8月26日

Commentary by the Venerable Master Hua on August 26, 1988

廖親達 英譯 Translated into English by Alfie Lew

戰國時，為秦將，屢戰有功，封武安君。與趙國戰於長平，詐敗而走；絕趙糧，困趙軍。秦兵射死趙國主帥趙括，活埋降卒四十萬，慘無人道。後違王命，賜劍自刎；墮三惡道，受無量苦。

唐時，京北之法海寺道英法師，於曉時見二人入寺，行不踐地，知為鬼。二鬼向法師乞食。翌日施食，秦王率三百鬼眾來應食，內有白起及王翦等人。

明朝，吳山三茅觀內，雷殛白蜈蚣，約一尺長，脊有「白起」二字。又屠夫宰豬，皮有「秦白起」三字。清朝，江南民女，十九歲忽患重病，臨終自言曰：「我是秦時白起，殺人數十萬，受盡無間地獄之苦，永無了期。今為女身，壽限二十。」言畢而亡。老君云：「善惡之報，如影隨形。」信然！

今天我們講一個做將軍和做過元帥的人。說是：「真天子，百兵相助；大將軍，八面威風。」雖然說八面威風，但是你若做得不對，也一樣下地獄的，也一樣沒有威風。那麼今天講的這個，是統兵的元帥，善於用兵，也善於將將，一位古今都知道的一個人。這個人是戰國時候的人，他是秦國一個將領，戰無不勝，攻無不克；所以積功累勳，秦王就封他做武安君。以後他和趙國作戰，去侵略趙國。那時候是戰國的時代，

Essay:

Bai Qi was a general of Qin during the Warring States Period. He was granted the title 'One Who is Secure in Battle' due to his frequent triumphs in battle. In a war against the State of Zhao at Changping, he feigned defeat and retreated. Subsequently, he cut off the enemy's supplies and laid siege to the troops of Zhao. The Qin soldiers with arrows killed the commander-in-chief of Zhao, General Zhao Kuo, and then buried alive the four hundred thousand soldiers who had surrendered, which was totally brutal and inhuman. When Bai Qi later opposed the emperor's orders, he was given a sword to cut his own throat. He was reborn in the three evil paths and underwent endless sufferings.

In the Tang Dynasty, at Fahai (Sea of Dharma) Monastery north of Beijing, Dharma Master Dao Ying saw two people enter the monastery at dawn one day. Since their feet did not touch the ground as they walked, he knew they were ghosts. The two ghosts begged for alms from him. The next day, the Dharma Master offered food, and the Qin Emperor led three hundred ghosts, including Bai Qi, Wang Jian and others, to partake of it.

In the Ming Dynasty, at Sanmao Monastery on Mount Wu, a foot-long white centipede was struck by lightning, and the two words Bai Qi appeared on its backbone. Another time, when a butcher slaughtered a pig, the five words 'Bai Qi of Qin Dynasty' appeared on its skin. In the Qing Dynasty, a nineteen-year-old girl from Jiangnan became gravely ill. On her deathbed, she said to herself, "I was Bai Qi in the Qin Dynasty, and I killed several hundred thousand people then. I underwent endless suffering in the hells. I was reborn as a girl whose life span is limited to twenty years." After saying this, she passed away. Bai Qi's suffering in the three evil paths will never come to an end. Laozi said, "Good and evil retribution follow one as a shadow follows a form." We can certainly believe it!

所謂「始春秋，終戰國；五霸強，七雄出。」誰有勢力，兵精糧足，勇猛善戰，誰就稱王稱霸。那麼這七雄，就是齊、楚、燕、韓、趙、魏、秦；這七雄裡邊，秦國尤其是最強盛的。因為它強盛，它就要以強凌弱，以大壓小，要去侵略其他的國家；它常常派兵到國外去戰爭，去侵略其他國家的土地。

這時候和趙國作戰，因為兵不厭詐——戰爭就是你詐我虞的，你欺騙我，我也欺騙你，拿著人頭熱血去侵略人家的土地；白起沒有真正敗，可是他卻詐敗跑了。那麼他跑，趙國的軍隊就後頭追；這一追，就入他的圈套，追到他埋伏的陣地裡頭去。他就把趙國軍隊糧餉的道路給斷了，所以說是「絕趙糧，困趙軍。」把這趙國的軍隊給困住了，秦國的軍隊就等機會和趙國軍隊作戰。這兩軍陣前作戰，秦國這個神箭手(善射箭這個人)就把趙國主將叫趙括的給射死；軍隊這個主將陣亡，軍隊就群龍無首，就沒有一個主帥在那兒指揮了，於是乎這四十多萬軍隊就一起降了秦國。

可是想不到白起非常毒辣，就把這降卒四十萬(有的書上說二十萬，二十萬、四十萬；總而言之，是不少的一個數目)都給活埋了。各位想一想，我們用土把人活埋到地裡頭，這多麼殘忍，多麼不人道！這可以說沒有人權，沒有人道，沒有人心了，根本就不是人。這樣的殘忍！這樣的殘忍！可以說是違背上天好生之德。「兩國交鋒，不斬來使。」那麼這個軍隊已經投降了，你怎麼可以把他們活埋了？活生生的埋起四十多萬！

在戰國那時候，人沒有這麼多，居然就坑降卒四十萬！這是既不仁道，又沒有仁心，也不符天地好生之德；所以他死了，就墮落到三惡道去了。怎麼死的呢？他也是功高傲主，所以秦王的號令他不遵從。他違背秦王的號令，秦王就賜他一口寶劍，叫他自刎而死；死了，就墮到三惡道。

Commentary:

Today we are going to talk about a general and a field marshal. It is said, 'A true emperor always gains help from hundreds of warriors, and the great general is always awe-inspiring.' However, if a general cannot do things properly, he will also fall into the hells without any dignity. The field marshal had great skills in military strategies and was also good at commanding other generals. He was widely known. The general was from the State of Qin during the Warring States Period [c. 475 – 221 BCE]. Due to his frequent triumphs in battle, he was given the title 'One Who is Secure in Battle.' Later, he received the order to attack the State of Zhao. As it is said [in the Three Character Classic], 'From the Spring and Autumn Period to the Warring States Period, were five strong feudal lords followed by seven strong feudal states.' During that entire period, whoever had power, strong troops, provisions (for the army), and fodder (for the horses), and was fierce and skilled in fighting, would be the leader. During the Warring States Period, Qin was the strongest of the seven feudal states—Qi, Chu, Yan, Han, Zhao, Wei, and Qin—and always sent troops to attack other countries and to seize their lands.

This time, Bai Qi fought the state of Zhao. Since all is fair in war, the strategies were: you deceive and cheat me, and I will do the same to you. Lands were invaded and conquered at the cost of people's lives. Bai Qi was not really defeated in the battle; he faked defeat and started to retreat. Zhao's army chased after Bai Qi's soldiers who led Zhao's army into Bai Qi's trap. Bai Qi then cut off their food supply, so the [Three Character Classic] says, "He cut off the Zhao food supply and trapped the Zhao army." He ambushed the Zhao army. The Qin army had waited for an opportunity to battle with the Zhao army. When they arrayed themselves for battle, the best archer of Qin shot and killed the chief commander of the Zhao army, general Zhao Kuo. Seeing their leader killed, the army had no one to lead them, so all 400,000 some soldiers surrendered to the Qin.

Little did people know that Bai Qi was so diabolic that he would bury 400,000 captives alive. Some accounts indicate it was 200,000, and some say 400,000; in any event, it was not a small number. Everyone should think about this. How cruel and inhuman it is to bury a person alive! That person knew nothing about human rights, ethics, and conscience; basically he was not human at all. Such a brutal act opposes the virtue of Heaven which cherishes life. It is said, 'When two countries are at war, envoys should not be harmed.' The troops had already surrendered. How could he just bury them alive? He buried more than 400,000 living people.

The population wasn't that big during the Warring States Period, yet he alone buried 400,000 captives! He was totally inhumane and unkind for he violated against Heaven's virtue of cherishing life. Therefore, after he died, he fell into the three evil paths. How did he die? His abundant military exploit made him arrogant. He no longer obeyed the orders of the Emperor of Qin, who then conferred upon him a fine sword to kill himself. After committing suicide, Bai Qi plunged to the three evil paths.

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☞To be continued