

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

水鏡回天錄白話解

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常喜樂 英譯 Translated into English by Joy



名濂，字景濂，明代浙江金華人。其母夜夢僧，手書《華嚴經》，謂：「吾乃永明延壽，欲假一室，以終此卷。」醒濂誕生。眉清目秀，英敏強記，一目十行，學問淵博，精於內外典，為一代經師。淡泊名利，元代不官。嘗曰：「良禽擇木而棲，良臣擇主而事。」後與劉基同事明太祖，基參與軍中謀議，濂則襄助文書。狀貌豐偉，美髯拂胸，有長者風，令人肅然起敬。奉詔撰《元史》，著《母子愛》短文等行於世。晚年因胡案，外遣邊疆，卒於途。

在每一個朝代裏，都會有一些大權示現的菩薩來到世間，或者示現長者身，或者宰官身，或者示現比丘、比丘尼身，種種不同。永明延壽禪師，據說是阿彌陀佛的化身，所以他的所行所作與人多少有點不同。後來他又示現為善繼禪師，善繼禪師也是好像青草堂和尚一樣想要做官。據說宋濂是善繼禪師的後身。

宋濂是明朝時代浙江金華縣人，姓宋，名濂，字景濂；他這一生對「濂」字很感興趣，大概因為他五行缺水，所

Lian, whose style name was Jinglian, was born in Jinhua, Zhejiang province in the Ming Dynasty. His mother dreamed of a monk writing out the *Avatamsaka Sutra* who said, "I am Yongming Yanshou, and I would like to borrow a 'house' to finish copying out this sutra." After waking up, she gave birth to Lian. With delicate and fine features, he was intelligent with a keen memory enabling him to read ten lines at a glance. He was profoundly erudite and well versed in sutras and non-Buddhist classics. As a reputed scripture master at the time, he was indifferent to fame and fortune and refused to be an official under Yuan's regime. He said, "Clever birds choose the trees in which they roost. Decent officials select the masters they are willing to serve." Later, he worked with Liu Ji to serve Emperor Taizu of Ming. As Ji took part in military strategizing, Lian assisted with managing government documents. With a long beard that reached to his chest, his countenance was magnificent. Possessing the charisma of an elder, he won people's respect. Under imperial decree, he wrote *The History of the Yuan Dynasty*. He also wrote short essays which are well circulated in the nation, such as *The Love between Mothers and Sons*. In his late years, as a result of being implicated by Prime Minister Hu, he was exiled to the border and died in transit.

In every dynasty, Bodhisattvas came and manifested in this world. Sometimes, they appeared as an elder, a prime minister, a Bhikshu, a Bhikshuni, or other identities. Dhyana Master Yongming Yanshou was said to be the transformation body of Amitabha Buddha. Therefore, what he said and how he conducted himself differed from others in some ways. Later, he also appeared as Dhyana Master Shanji who, like the Venerable Qing Caotan,

以總要有個水字邊。他的母親懷他時，有一天晚間夢見一個和尚在寫《華嚴經》，這個和尚對她說：「我寫《華嚴經》需要有一間房子，想要向妳借房子來寫完這卷經。」為什麼永明壽禪師到她這兒來借房子？因為他和這個家庭有緣，要了結這一段公案，所以托生到宋家。

母親夢醒的時候，宋濂就出生了。他從小就非常聰明，英敏強記，記憶力特別好，可以過目不忘，而且能目下十行字。所謂「目下十行字」，實際上也是一行一行看，並不是眼睛一下子就可以看十行；看文章要一個字、一個字看，才能分辨出句意；如果一看就看一大片，怎麼能分別出句讀？「目下十行字，耳聽百人音」，是因為敏捷，別人看一行的時間，他可以看十行，看得快，記憶力也強。

三國時代的龐統，能「目下十行字，耳聽百人音」，他用這個方法來對治粗魯人——張飛。本來水鏡先生司馬徽對劉備說：「臥龍鳳雛，得一而安天下。」只要得到其中一個，就能把世間治理得太平。所以劉備首先三顧茅廬，三請諸葛亮，得到「臥龍」。

可是以後龐統來了，劉備不太注意他，甚至把司馬徽所說的話都忘了，只委派龐統去做縣令，也就是一個地方官。當時中央每隔一段時間，要派人去視察地方的縣政，張飛被派去調察龐統，因為龐統到任以來只是喝酒，其他什麼事情也不幹。他把接狀子的招牌掛出去，說：「任何人有冤屈，都可以來投訴、控告。」可是他上任一百多天，一件案子也沒有辦過，把狀子都壓在那兒，有幾百份之多。張飛到了那兒，聽他的下屬說他做官只喝酒，旁的事情什麼也不幹，就預備給他難看，想打他一頓，也就是要查他的案子。

張飛問龐統：「你到這兒來，什麼公事也不辦，盡幹什麼來著？」龐統就叫衙役升堂，通知所有告狀的人來，大概有幾百人都集合到這兒。龐統說：「你們每一個人說自己的案由。」龐統耳朵

also wished to be a government official. It was said that Song Lian was the incarnation of Dhyana Master Shanji.

Song Lian was from the Jinhua county of Zhejiang province in the Ming Dynasty. Surnamed Song, he was named Lian with style name Jinglian. During his whole life, he was particularly interested in the character '濂 (lian)'. Perhaps he lacked 'water' in his Five Elements; therefore his name had a water radical in it. While his mother was pregnant, she dreamed of a monk writing out the *Avatamsaka Sutra*. The monk said to her, "I need a 'house' to copy out the *Avatamsaka Sutra*. I would like to borrow one from you to finish this task." Why did Dhyana Master Yongming Yanshou come to borrow a 'house'? It is because he had affinities with this family and wished to wrap up this affinity with them. As a result, he was born in the Song family.

After the mother woke up from the dream, Song Lian was born. He was very intelligent from childhood. With keen, powerful memories, he could read ten lines at a glance and retained everything after reading it just once. "Reading ten lines at a glance" means he actually read line by line, not reading ten lines simultaneously. When reading, one must read each character in order to understand its meaning. If one reads a block of text at once, how can one understand the text? "Reading ten lines at a glance; hearing one hundred people talking simultaneously" simply means one is very keen and deft in reading and listening. In the time it takes an ordinary person to read one line of text, Song Lian could read ten lines. He read very quickly and had powerful, retentive memory.

Pang Tong of the Three Kingdoms Period also had the ability to read ten lines at a glance and hear one hundred people talking simultaneously. This was the skill he used to deal with Zhang Fei, a rough and tough guy. Originally, Sir Water-Mirror, Sima Hui said to Liu Bei, "Whoever employs either Crouching Dragon (referring to Zhu Geliang) or Baby Phoenix (referring to Pang Tong) as a cabinet member will be able to bring peace to the world." Therefore, Liu Bei visited Zhu Geliang's thatch cottage three times to request his help. Liu Bei, as a result, gained the "Crouching Dragon," Zhu Geliang, as his supporter.

Pang Tong came later. Liu Bei did not pay attention to him and even forgot what Sima Hui had said. Liu Bei merely appointed Pang Tong to the post of magistrate, a local official. Periodically, the central government would send an auditor to inspect the local county government. Zhang Fei was assigned to check up on Pang Tong. Ever since Pang Tong became the magistrate, he did nothing but drink. For lawsuit cases, he merely hung the sign - "Accepting all cases of complaints, grievances, or even wrongly accused circumstances" on the gate. Pang Tong had been there for more than a hundred days and he had not taken care of any lawsuits or complaints. Several hundred cases simply sat there. When Zhang Fei arrived there, he heard Pang Tong's subordinates say that all Pang Tong did was drink, nothing else. Zhang Fei was prepared to embarrass Pang Tong and teach him a lesson by inspecting and auditing these cases.

Zhang Fei asked Pang Tong, "Ever since you come here, you have not done any work. What have you been up to?" Pang Tong then asked the guards to prepare the court and informed all plaintiffs to attend. Subsequently, several

聽，眼睛看，手上拿著筆判案，在很短的時間內，把幾個月的文件都批了，判好了案子。張飛一看這個人「目下十行字，耳聽百人音」，心想：「他真是奇才啊！」張飛也被弄糊塗了。所以他很佩服龐統。

其實耳聽百人音，誰都會的。怎麼說呢？我相信龐統三個月當中所接的狀態，他不會一點都不看的；雖然他每天喝醉酒，他也會看一看的。只要看一看，就是不審問也知道怎麼判，因為有智慧的人，從字裡行間一看，就會知道你是有理或沒有理，或者公道不公道。所以他早已胸有成竹，他聽人講案由的時候，只是走一走形式。張飛是一個粗人，一看他能這樣，「喔！聽這麼多人講話，嘰嘰喳喳像鳥叫似的，他都能聽得清楚，案件也判得沒有錯誤。判完了，大家都心服口服的。這真是奇才！」其實龐統早就看過了，早就明白怎麼樣判斷，所以這個方法誰都可以做得到。

宋濂也是非常聰明，博聞強記，諸子百家無所不通；又能過目不忘，有超人的才能。他精通內外典——對佛教的經典也通達，對世間的文字更了解，所以他是一代的明經大師——明白經典，無論世間的經典如四書五經、諸子百家之類，或是出世的經典，他都明白。

他的學問非常淵博，可是對名利很淡泊，不求名，不求利；雖然做官，也是行所無事。他本是元代的人，可是不在元代做官，他常常說：「良禽擇木而棲，良臣擇主而事。」善良的小鳥，要選擇好的樹木棲息；好的臣子，也要選擇他所服從的君主奉事。所以，以後他就和劉伯溫一同幫助朱元璋推翻元朝，建立明朝。當時劉伯溫管參謀，所謂「運籌帷幄之中，決勝千里之外」；宋濂管文書，一切的文件、來往公事、發號施令、立法，都由他來做。他相貌豐偉，鬍子很長，飄灑到胸前；有長者的風度，令人肅然起敬。這是現宰官身，又現長者身，又現大丈夫身，所以他的樣子很特別的。

☞待續

hundred people gathered at the court and Pang Tong said to them, "Tell me about your case." Pang Tong was listening to and looking at them with a pen in his hand deciding each of their cases. Within a short time, he judged and decided on every single case that had piled up for months. After Pang Tong finished, Zhang Fei realized that this person was capable of reading ten lines at a glance and listening to hundreds of people talking at the same time, and he thought, "He was really a genius -- amazingly talented!" Zhang Fei was confused and really admired Pang Tong.

Actually, everyone is capable of listening to a hundred people simultaneously. I believe that Pang Tong had already read some of those cases during the three months he became the magistrate. Even though he drank every day, he still investigated these cases every day. Although the court was not open, he knew how to judge these cases before the interrogation. It was because wise people could read between the lines and tell whether the plaintiffs were reasonable or not. Therefore, Pang Tong had already had a card up his sleeve. Summoning the plaintiffs and the defendants to the court was just formality. Zhang Fei, a rough fellow, saw Pang Tong's ability and thought, "Oh, he could listen to so many people talking at once, just like a flock of chirping birds. Not only that, everyone genuinely accepted the verdict from him. He was really a genius!" In fact, Pang Tong had read all the cases and had known what the final judiciary decision should be. That is why I said that everyone knows this method.

Song Lian was also very smart and learned with an extraordinary retentive memory. There was not a school of philosophy he did not know well, not to mention his photographic memory and superb talents. He was well versed in both Buddhist and non-Buddhist classics – knowledgeable about the Buddhist sutras and even more erudite about secular literature. He was a great sutra master – understanding worldly classics such as the Four Books, the Five Classics and various schools of philosophy as well as transcendental sutras.

Although he was profoundly erudite, he was indifferent to reputation and fortune. He sought neither fame nor profit, although he was an official, acting like nothing was going on. He was born in the Yuan Dynasty but refused to serve as an official for Yuan. He often said: "Clever birds choose the trees in which they roost. Decent officials select the masters they are willing to serve." Subsequently, he and Liu Bowen assisted Zhu Yuanzhang to overthrow the Yuan Dynasty and established the Ming Dynasty. At that time, Liu Bowen served as a military strategist commanding operations in the army. It is said, "Devising military strategies in a tent wins battles over a thousand miles away." Song Lian was responsible for managing all government documents, communicating with the officers, issuing commands, and legislating laws. He had fine and magnificent features with his long beard reaching to his chest. People respected him. He had the demeanor of an elder. This was an example of manifesting as a prime minister and an elder. A great man he was, with an extraordinary appearance.

☞To be continued