

良相佐國—晏嬰

Yan Ying — An Outstanding Statesman Who Helped Rule the Country

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春秋齊國人，名嬰，字仲。穎悟聰敏，博學廣聞，貫通古今，辯才無礙，為齊景公之良相。力行節儉，食不二肉味，妻不著綢緞。

出使楚國，待為上賓。楚王設宴，故捉一人，誣為盜罪，稱為齊人，楚王戲曰：「齊國善盜乎？」晏曰：「聞橘生淮南則為橘，生於淮北則為枳，葉相似，味不同，此乃水土也。」楚王自討無趣。

其御者，駕駟馬高車，洋洋得意，不可一世，被妻竊窺，認為羞恥，乃對夫曰：「晏子六尺，身為齊相，和藹可親，令人肅然起敬。汝身八尺，為人御者，反而傲慢。故求離去！」御者改變行為，謙下謹慎，勤讀書，後為大夫，此乃賢妻之感也。

今天我們講的這位晏嬰，個子很矮的，一般人都有七、八尺高，他只有六尺高，在當時當駝子講。雖然是駝子，可是他很有智慧，所謂「

Yan Ying (578 - 500 B.C.E.) was born in state of Qi during the Spring Autumn period. His courtesy name was Zhong. Yan was wise, witty, erudite, eloquent and had immense understanding of knowledge of both past and present. He was a capable prime minister to Duke Jing of Qi. He was so frugal that he only allowed himself one serving of meat per meal and his wife never wore fine silk clothes.

When he visited the state of Chu as an ambassador, he was treated as a highly honored guest. During the welcoming banquet, the king of Chu intentionally brought in someone who was wrongly arrested for theft. He claimed that the person was a Qi citizen. The king of Chu teased Yan saying, "Are Qi people fond of stealing?" Yan replied, "I heard that clementines are called clementines if they are grown south of the Huai River, but called Zhi if they are grown north of the Huai River. Their leaves look alike but their tastes differ because of the water and soil conditions, i.e., depending on where they are grown." The king of Chu had this coming!

The servant who drove Yan's magnificent four-horse cart was full of pride and joy, and had an air of superiority. The servant's wife noticed this, regarded his attitude as shameful, and said to him, "Yan is only six [Chinese] feet tall, but he is the prime minister and has a friendly disposition; when one sees him, one gives rise to reverence. By contrast, you are eight feet tall, but only a servant and a driver, yet so arrogant. I beg to leave you!" The servant thus transformed himself, and became very humble, modest, and cautious. He also started to immerse himself in studies. He later became a high official. This was all attributed to his worthy wife.

Commentary:

Today we will talk about Yan Ying, who was rather short at six [Chinese] feet (4 feet 7 inches,) as the average height at that time was seven to eight [Chinese] feet (5 feet 4 inches to 6 feet 1 inches.) Those with such short heights were often

身小會文國家用，大漢空長作什麼」，有的人高高大大的，只是一個酒囊飯袋，不能做什麼事情。

晏嬰，他是春秋齊國人，姓晏，名嬰，字仲，就叫晏仲。這個人生性非常穎悟聰敏，博學廣聞，貫通古今，能言善辯，又深明治國之道，內政、外交這兩種才幹，他兼而有之。於是在當時做齊國齊景公的丞相，令齊國天下大治，老百姓望風歸投。

他力行節儉，食不二肉味，就是吃飯時不用兩道肉菜，妻子不著綢緞。

他常常到外國去辦外交，因為他身很駝的，楚國的人（就是湖南這地方），這些南蠻子就看不起他，想侮辱他。怎麼侮辱他呢？等他來的時候，楚王叫守門的開一個旁邊的小門，表示身體矮應該走小門。要是一般的人，在這樣情形之下就會委曲求全了，誰叫自己長得這麼矮呢，於是就會進去。

可是他當時不進去，楚國人就問他：「你為什麼不進來呢？」他說：「這個小門是狗走的門。我是人，要到大的國家，應該走大門；到小的國家，或者狗的國家，我才應該走小門。」於是楚王就開大門，因為他是一國丞相，必須要開正門歡迎他。

現在的人迎接是用紅氈鋪地，古來雖然沒有飛機，不用下飛機的時候就紅氈鋪地，起碼到城門那兒也要有一點歡迎的儀式。可是楚國就想用很簡單的儀式來侮辱他，但是他不受侮辱，就在城門那兒這麼一說，把楚王、楚國的人都給說服了，沒有法子不開正門。

這雖然是件小事，但是關係著兩國的國體和國格，所以他使於四方，不辱君命，不能令自己的國王受了侮辱。

nicknamed “hunchback.” He may appear short but he had great wisdom. As the saying goes, “Short in stature, but learned and benefiting the country; big in size, but hollow inside and of little use.”

Yan was from the state of Qi during the Spring and Autumn Era of China. His family name was Yan, first name Ying, with the courtesy name of Zhong and was thus also known as Yan Zhong. He was by nature very intelligent and quick to fathom. He was erudite and had broad knowledge spanning from the ancient times. He was also eloquent and had profound understanding in the methods of governing the country. In international relations, his diplomatic skills were equally excellent. Thus he was skilled in both internal as well as external affairs of government. Therefore, when he was the prime minister, he was able to assist Duke Jing of Qi to govern the country well, gaining the respect of the people and drawing others to the Qi.

Yan was frugal and never had more than one serving of meat for a meal while his wife never wore fine silk clothes.

At that time, he often visited other states for diplomatic affairs. Since he was very short, the people of the state of Chu (currently Hunan province) looked down upon him and wanted to humiliate him. How did they try to humiliate him? When he arrived at the city, the king of Chu ordered the entry guard to open the tiny side door beside the main gate for him, implying that he only deserving of the side door because of his height. Under such circumstances, most people would just tolerate the slight, blaming themselves for being born short and just walk through.

Yan, however, refused to use the side door. When asked by the guards, “Why are you not coming in?” He countered, “This tiny door is meant for dogs. I am a human, visiting a big country. I should walk through the main gate. I only take the side door when visiting small countries or countries of dogs!” Thus, the King of Chu ordered the main gate to be opened. Since he was a prime minister of a country, the main gate should be used to welcome him.

Nowadays, we use the red carpet to welcome people. In the ancient times, even though they did not use airplanes or laid out the red carpet to welcome visitors after they arrived, they still hosted the welcoming ceremony at the main gate. But the state of Chu used a very casual welcoming ceremony to humiliate him. Yan, however, did not submit to such humiliation. He succeeded in compelling them to open the main gate for him.

This event may seem trivial, but it concerned the status and dignity of both countries. Since he represented his country, it was his duty to uncompromisingly safeguard the dignity of his king wherever he was sent.

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☞To be continued