



熒惑在心—《呂氏春秋·季夏紀》

When Mars Encroaches Upon the Xin

An Excerpt from the “Almanacs of Late Summer (the Sixth Lunar Month)” Chapter of the *Lüshi Chunqiu* (Master Lü’s Spring and Autumn Annals)

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宋景公之時，熒惑在心，公懼，召子韋而問焉，曰：「熒惑在心，何也？」子韋曰：「熒惑者，天罰也；心者，宋之分野也；禍當於君。雖然，可移於宰相。」公曰：「宰相所與治國家也，而移死焉，不祥。」

子韋曰：「可移於民。」公曰：「民死，寡人將誰為君乎？寧獨死。」子韋曰：「可移於歲。」公曰：「歲害則民饑，民饑必死。為人君而殺其民以自活也，其誰以我為君乎？是寡人之命固盡已，子無復言矣。」子韋還走，北面載拜曰：「臣敢賀君。天之處高而聽卑。君有至德之言三，天必三賞君。今夕熒惑其徙三舍，君延年二十一歲。」公曰：「子何以知之？」對曰：「有三善言，必有三賞。熒惑有三徙舍，舍行七星，星一徙當一年，三七二十一，臣故曰君延年二十一歲矣。臣請伏於陛下以伺候之。熒惑不徙，臣請死。」公曰：「可。」是夕熒惑果徙三舍。❀

During the reign of Duke Jing of Song (unclear- 469 BCE, Spring and Autumn period), Mars was seen invading the sky above the state of Song, greatly terrifying the Duke. He summoned the court astrologer, Zi Wei, and asked him, “Mars is encroaching upon Xin, our state star. What does this mean?” Zi Wei replied, “Mars is a star of punishment in the heavens, while Xin is the star which represents the Song. Such portents point to imminent disasters befalling Your Majesty. However, this disaster could be transferred to the prime minister.” The duke said, “The prime minister is entrusted with important matters of state — to send him to his death would be very ominous.”

Zi Wei said, “We can transfer it to the people instead.” The Duke said, “If the people die, then for whom am I ruler? I would rather die myself.” Zi Wei replied, “We can transfer it to the Spirit of the Yearly Harvest (Sui).” The Duke said, “Harming Sui would cause the people to starve, and if the people starve, they will surely die. If we allow the people to die so that I survive as Duke, then for whom am I the Duke? This must mean that my time is up, so please speak no further on this.” Zi Wei took a step back and bowed towards the north, “I, your subject, congratulate you. The Heaven is high up there, but it hears voices from lowly places. Three times you have spoken, and three times your speech has embodied the utmost virtue. Heaven will certainly have three rewards for you. Tonight, Mars will move three *she* (1 *she* = 30 *li*) across the sky, extending your life another twenty-one years.” The Duke asked, “How do you know?” He replied, “You have spoken virtuously three times, so there must be three rewards. Mars shifts three *she*, and one *she* spans across seven stars. Each star represents one year—three times seven is twenty-one. As such, your subject believes you shall have twenty-one additional years of life. Your subject bows to you, beseeching that you observe Mars’ movement; if it does not move, your subject shall receive a punishment of death.” The Duke said, “Your wish is granted.” That night, Mars indeed moved three *she*. ❀

熒惑在心淺釋

Venerable Master Hua's Commentary on the Story of “When Mars Encroaches upon the Xin”

—摘自宣公上人《楞嚴經淺釋》

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— An excerpt from a commentary on the *Shurangama Sutra* by Venerable Master Hsuan Hua

English translation by Nuoyan Wang

在中國每逢朝代變更，都有不祥預兆出現。有一次，一位皇帝看見不吉祥的星辰出現了，就召專管天文的欽天監，「這主於什麼事情呢？」欽天監告訴皇帝說：「這是最不祥的星辰，主於國君死亡的。可是臣有方法可將這種災禍轉移到宰相身上去。」皇帝說：「這不可以的，宰相是管理國家大事，怎麼可以叫宰相代我去死呢？」這個欽天監說：「那可以轉移到老百姓身上去。」皇帝說：「民為邦本，這老百姓若死了，我這皇帝又有什麼意思呢！我是為老百姓做事，沒有老百姓，我給誰做皇帝呢？那也不可以。」欽天監又說：「您把這個災難那麼轉到歲上，讓這個年景荒旱、飢饉貧年。」皇帝說：「這不可以的！如果轉移到這個歲上，也會把老百姓餓死的，我做這麼一個皇帝也沒有意思。」於是欽天監就向皇帝叩頭，說：「皇上真是明君，您有這善心，一定能轉凶為吉，您一定不會死的了。」果然第二天這個凶星就退了，就沒有了。

由這一件事看來，這證明凡事都沒有一定的，雖然說現凶星，也可以化凶為吉。就在我們人存的這一念心，這一念心轉變了，就是凶也可以變為吉祥。✿

Whenever dynasties changed in China, inauspicious omens appeared. Once, a ruler Duke Jing of the Song (unclear - 469 BCE) saw an inauspicious star, so he summoned the court astrologer. He asked, “What does this omen mean?” The court astrologer told the Duke, “This is the most inauspicious star, it is a sign of your majesty’s impending doom. However, I know a way to transfer this disaster onto the prime minister.” Duke Jing replied, “This cannot be. The prime minister is in charge of important matters for the entire country. How could we ask him to take my place in this bad situation?” The court astrologer said, “Then we could transfer it to the citizens instead.” Duke Jing then replied, “The people are the foundation of the country. If my subjects were to die, then what is my purpose as a ruler? I am here to serve the people — if the people die, then whom do I rule? This also cannot be.” The court astrologer then said, “Then transfer the disaster onto the Spirit of the Yearly Harvest (Sui), and allow this year to be filled with drought, famine, and poverty (in exchange for your prolonged life).” The duke replied, “This cannot be! If we send the disaster onto Sui, then we will starve the people. If I do this, why am I serving as a ruler?” At this point, the court astrologer bowed to Duke Jing, and said, “Your Majesty truly is a benevolent leader. With your good heart, the inauspicious omen will surely turn into an auspicious portent (and the star will disappear).” Indeed, on the second day, the inauspicious star faded away.

This example proves that nothing is fixed. Although such stars are inauspicious omens, these calamities can still be transformed into that which is auspicious. It all depends on a single thought — if we change this thought in our hearts, then an inauspicious omen can become auspicious. ✿