

Stories of  
**Huainanzi**

Huainanzi Gushi

Jin Yu



895.1301  
Y 901 S

Translated by  
**Han Jianghong and Hu Zuoyou**

Stories of  
Huainanzi

The sculpture reproduced on the endpaper depicts a scene where three soothsayers are interpreting to King Suddhodhana the dream of Queen Maya, mother of Lord Buddha. Below them is seated a scribe recording the interpretation. This is perhaps the earliest available pictorial record of the art of writing in India.

From: Nagarjunakonda, 2nd century A.D.

Courtesy: National Museum, New Delhi

Stories of  
**Huainanzi**  
(Huainanzi Gushi)

*By*  
**Jin Yu**

*Translated by*  
**Han Jianghong and Hu Zuoyou**



**SAHITYA AKADEMI**



Library IAS, Shimla

895.1301 Y 901 S



Stc

00148230

n edition of collection of selected stories from the Chinese classic *Maianzi Gushi* by Jin Yu, translated by Han Jianghong and Hu Zuoyou. Originally published by Anhui People Publishing House, China. Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi (2016).

### Sahitya Akademi

#### Head Office

Rabindra Bhavan, 35 Ferozeshah Road, New Delhi 110 001

Website: <http://www.sahitya-akademi.gov.in>

#### Sales Office

'Swati' Mandir Marg, New Delhi 110 001

E-mail: [ds.sales@sahitya-akademi.gov.in](mailto:ds.sales@sahitya-akademi.gov.in)

895.1301

Y901S

#### Regional Offices

172 Mumbai Marathi Grantha Sangrahalaya Marg  
Dadar, Mumbai 400 014

Central College Campus, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Veedhi  
Bangaluru 560 001

4 D.L. Khan Road, Kolkata 700 025

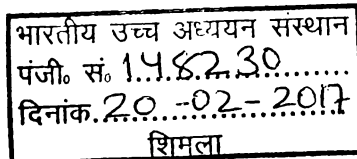
#### Chennai Office

Main Guna Building Complex (Second Floor) 443 (304), Anna Salai  
Teynampet, Chennai 600 018

© Anhui People Publishing House

All right reserved.

ISBN 978-81-260-4751-2



Rs. 95

Typeset and printed at Vikas Computer and Printers, Delhi-110032

# Contents

*Preface*

*vii*

## **Folktales**

Marrying Off One's Daughter	3
Man Who Did Good	4
Qin Niuque Meets the Robbers	6
Aspirations of Crows and Magpies	8
A Man of Qi Stole Gold	10
Keeping the Promise	11
Shan Bao and Zhang Yi	13

## **Fairytales**

Nuwa Mends the Sky	17
Houyi Shoots Down the Suns	18
Chang'e Flies to the Moon	20
Kua Fu Chasing the Sun	21
Gong Gong Smashed Mount Buzhou	22
Shennong Tasted Different Plants	23

## *Contents*

God of Farming	24
Conflicts Between Emperors Yellow and Yan	26
Battle of Zhuolu	28
Fuxi Created Trigrams	30
Cangjie's Creation of Characters	31
Suiren Created the Fire	32

## **Seasonal Stories**

The First Month of Spring	37
The Second Month of Spring	39
The Third Month of Spring	41
The First Month of Summer	43
The Second Month of Summer	45
The Third Month of Summer	47
The First Month of Autumn	49
The Second Month of Autumn	51
The Third Month of Autumn	53
The First Month of Winter	55
The Second Month of Winter	57
The Third Month of Winter	59

## **Appendix**

Introduction to Liu An, King of Huainan	63
Use Wisdom to Mould One's Destiny	72

## Preface

Cultural classics like *Huainanzi* emerged in the fertile land of Huainan. Why is it so fascinating and popular in the recorded history of more than two thousand years?

Gao You, the scholar of Dong Han dynasty, held that classics were about everything in the world—all matters, big and small. Liu Zhiji of Tang dynasty spoke highly of knowledge of things, past and present. The great scholar Hu Shi evaluated the substantial content of the stories, using the expressions: a perfectly unheard-of, fantastic story. Liu An voiced his own aspirations in the summary of *Huainanzi*—on conjecturing moralities of occurrences in human life and truth. He believed that even if people did not grasp the law of the development of nature, human life and society, the substantial content of the stories could make people understand the beginning and end of the development of the boundless universe. So long as people read stories, they would continue to be aware of why *Huainanzi* remains unique in Liu An's quest of writing the stories.

However, Liu An the king of Huainan's rebellious spirit is not the main aspect of Taoism and archaic and abstruse writing turn *Huainanzi* into a big desert of the lonely starlit sky.



## Preface

Passing through the gloomy and bright tunnel of time and space until the era of blazing cultural development and prosperity is reached we began to unearth the treasure of *Huainanzi*, which is like a bright pearl of historical desert, endowed with essence. We established a *Huainanzi* Research Committee of Anhui, held several discussions on *Huainanzi* and produced successive publications based on the research of *Huainanzi*. Experts and native scholars came in a continuous stream and many guests of exalted rank were present to put forward their views, arguments and had exchange of ideas, which laid a solid foundation for the development of *Huainanzi*.

The fine work of *Huainanzi* is rare and full of ideas. Everything is covered, such as nature, politics, astronomy, geography, military affairs, during philosophy, medicine, etc. How much can a scholar write during his life ?

Jin Yu, the quiet native scholar of *Huainanzi*, strongly felt that people need to argue, analyse and distill without keeping it in a big desert or ivory tower meant only for the literates. Stories of *Huainanzi*, have come out with a slight fragrance of ink.

With passage of time, it is hard to avoid being abstruse and involved when reading the classics. Stories of *Huainanzi* reveal a rich traditional culture as also its popularity, interesting contents, in the form of strong and vivid plots and eidetic images.

The classics of *Huainanzi* relate stories, such as 'Preventing, Trouble at All Times' 'Living and Dying' 'Misfortune and Happiness', etc. bringing the classic back to life in its customary language of today and the elements of present time. *Huainanzi* mainly consists of stories of the figure, history, folk, myth, idioms, season, mottos and aphorisms. We discover how erudite and informed people become after reading these stories more than two hundred in number.

## *Preface*

Yao, a legendary monarch in ancient China, brought good and removed all evil, placed a brass speculum in the sun to generate heat to ignite dry grass, achieved victory with unstained swords, carved on gunwale of a moving boat, marked where a sword was dropped, and talked of the goddess of the moon, who swallowed elixir stolen from her husband and flew to the moon. The cultural chain, formed by more than two hundred stories, reveal the Chinese history before the period of Han dynasty and that too brilliantly and vividly from these stories. From these stories, we get to know not only history, but customs, ethics, etiquette, social intercourse, invention, creation and innovation. People feel contented to gain complete knowledge about bloodshed in the past and they learn how to emerge unscathed in times of crises after reading the stories.

*Huainanzi* is a literary treasure from the land of Huainan, which is a gift from our ancestors. We should use this treasure to benefit people and share with others rather than conceal it in our treasury. Jin Yu's stories are only a small part of *Huainanzi*. I hope more scholars and artists will study and develop classics using different forms. Let the research on development of *Huainanzi* lead to intellectual and artistic efflorescence.

Dong Qing  
March 2008



*Folktales*

## Marrying Off One's Daughter

Believing in his own knowledge, a man in the State of Song thought he could foretell the future. He predicted that his daughter's marriage would end in failure.

On hearing this, the daughter got worried and anxiously asked her father how to deal with the situation.

Father said to the daughter, 'When you are married off, you should be prepared for this eventuality. Be wary of your husband's desertion and accumulate enough private savings for a second marriage.'

Obedying her father's words after getting married, the daughter began to collect her husband's money. Members of her husband's family regarded her behaviour as amounting to pilfering and drove her away.

Seeing the daughter come back, the father became complacent that his prophecy proved true.

*Huainanzi* said, 'The father taught his daughter to accumulate her husband's money for future in fear of being deserted, not realising exactly that she was deserted just because of her habit to pilfer. To presume things in this negative manner, how could you ever hope to make a success of your efforts!'

## Man Who Did Good

A family in the State of Song continued doing good deeds, from one generation to another. One year, a black cow gave birth to a white calf and the family found it strange. They approached a fortune-teller right away. The fortune-teller said, 'This is a good thing and the white calf should be offered as a sacrifice to God.'

A year later, the father's eyes became blind without any prior symptom.

Later, that black cow gave birth to another white calf. Father ordered his son to consult the fortune-teller right away. The son said, 'We believed his words previously, considering it to be lucky, but you have gone blind. Why bother to ask him again now?'

The father said, 'Sage's words always sound incorrect in the beginning, but can be verified afterwards. This matter has not got over and you go to ask him again.'

Thereupon, the son went out to look for the fortune-teller, who said, 'This is a lucky sign and you go and offer sacrifice to God again.'

The son repeated to his father the words spoken by the fortune-teller. Father said, 'Go and do what the fortune-teller told you.'

*Stories of Huainanzi*

A year later, the son lost his eyesight.

Then the State of Chu launched a war against the State of Song. The Chu army lay siege to the enemy city they lived in and a serious famine struck the besieged inner city. The people exchanged their children for food and used the bones of the dead as firewood.

Most adults inside the city died in the battle against the Chu Army, while the old, the sick and the teenagers engaged in the battle to defend against the enemy to the last. The king of Chu became furious at that. After the city wall and moat was broken down by the Chu army, the king gave orders to kill all the people holding to the last.

The father and son were the only survivors left because they didn't go to fight on account of their blindness.

Once the Chu army withdrew, the father and the son's found their eyesight restored.

*Huainanzi* said, 'People who reap broom-corn millet are sure to gain and so are the people who bestow a favour for they too would be rewarded.'



## Qin Niuque Meets the Robbers

A hermit called Qin Niuque was both clever and brave. One day he came across a band of robbers while swinging over a mountain. The robbers not only decamped with his horse and carriage, but even stripped him off his clothes. A short time later, curiosity made the robbers take a look at the victim in his nakedness. When they came back to Qin Niuque, they found him walking cheerfully with no fear in his mind.

Very perplexed, the robbers asked him, 'We have deprived you of all your belongings and even put a knife across to your neck, yet you are not you afraid?'

Qin Niuque replied, 'Horses and carriages are to be for the use of man while clothes are used to conceal the body, Sages will not trouble their minds over external issues that are not physically connected with oneself.'

Hearing this, the robbers felt that this person was not a nobody. They discussed about the man among themselves. This person ought to be a sage because he knew not to get overcome by desire.' Another said, 'If he is a sage, his talent and learning are capable to reach as important position on the kingdom. If he becomes a high official of the empire, he will punish us for what we have done today.'



*Stories of Huainanzi*

The robbers discussed agitatedly with each other before coming up with a countermeasure. They went back and killed Qin Niuque the hermit.

*Huainanzi* says, ‘This hermit revealed his knowledge and experience and not putting up the pretence of being ignorant; he was brave, and unable to hide his large heartedness. A person with high moral standards and learning will not await destruction in a resigned manner before an unexpected even occurs, but find a way out to counter the disaster. That is why people all over the world respect them.’

## Aspirations of Crows and Magpies

Crows and magpies know that every year there would come rainstorms during the summer. To avoid being hurt, they leave the lofty trees and nest on the low branches. But doing this does not prevent them from being far away from a disaster. Because the nests have been built on low branches, adults would trap the birds and the children would prick the eggs when walking by.

Guarding against the future calamities, while having ignored the nearby disaster, reveals the wisdom of crows and magpies.

The State of Qin is a good case in point.

Qin Shi Huang found a picture on which were written the words, 'The people who destroy the State of Qin are the Hu people.' Thereupon he recruited 500,000 civilian workers to build the Great Wall to guard against the northern invaders. The Great Wall reached Liusha in the west, River Liao to the north, and Korea in the east. All the foods and supplies were transported from the Central Plains via carriages.

Qin Shi Huang coveted rhinoceros horns, elephant's tusks, emeralds, pears and gems from the State of South Yue. He assembled 500,000 soldiers who were constituted into five armies to attack the State of South Yue. Hundreds and thousands of

soldiers died in the battle. The dead bodies lay strewn in the battlefield, shedding blood everywhere.

Due to the war, men could not farm and women were unable to attend to spinning and weaving. There were carriages carrying supplies and food to the frontier. The people everywhere were stripped of their possessions by government officials.

Among the people, some fell ill and could not be cured and the dead could not be buried.

Chen Sheng and Wu Guang, two in a group of about 900 soldiers who were assigned to defend against the Xiong-nu were declared the leaders of the first revolution by the commoners of Daze village. Widespread revolts by peasants, prisoners, soldiers and descendants of the nobles of the six warring states arose all over China. Liu Bang and Xiang Yu's rebels attacked the main cities without encountering any resistance.

The Qin dynasty failed despite building the Great Wall against the Xiongnu in their greed for capturing the treasures in the State of South Yue. Qin Shi Huang thought in building the Great Wall he would defend himself against the Xiongnu but failed to realise that it was this that could lead to its ruin.

*Huainanzi* says, 'The way of Qin dynasty to govern is akin to the wisdom of crows and magpies.'

## A Man of Qi Stole Gold

Strolling for the past several days in a flourishing market place, a man in the State of Qi came to a gold shop one day. It was the time when trade was good and there were many people inside.

He stood on tiptoe and tried to look inside but failed to see anything. He leapt up to see inside again and again but failed. Then he pushed himself into the gold shop making his way through the crowd.

The dazzling gold met his eyes and an excited look appeared on his face. He imagined how his life would change if he could possess all the gold. 'Oh! How wonderful it is!' he exclaimed within his heart.

Stretching out his hands, he scooped up gold with his two hands and ran outside.

'Catch the thief, the shopkeeper shouted loudly.

The man was caught red-handed inside the gold shop by the shopkeeper.

The shopkeeper asked him furiously, 'How dare you rob the gold so brazenly with so many people around?'

The man answered, 'I can see only the gold but nothing else.'

*Huainanzi* says, 'The man who concentrates only on what he wants, gives no consideration to what he is doing.'

## Keeping the Promise

A young man called Weisheng liked a young girl. They had fallen in love at first sight the day they ran into each other on the street.

One day, Weisheng reached the bridge pillar, the designated place as early as possible, waiting patiently for the young girl to arrive.

Time passed by and Weisheng waited patiently, thinking of their few meetings. He imagined the pleasure she would bring today and where they would meet the next time.

Leaning on the pillar of the bridge, he pondered and smiled. He did not know that disaster awaited him.

So engrossed was he in his thoughts about the young girl, that he was suddenly jolted when he found the water was rising up. The water under the bridge had already started rising high and his shoes were soaked in water.

His first impulse was to run away. As soon as he lifted up one foot, he suddenly remembered that he would break his promise when she arrived and did not find him. Thereupon, he put his feet back. The flow of water rose more furiously than expected.

On the bridge, somebody shouted out to him, 'Run! Run! Or you will be drowned!'

Weisheng felt his body ready to float, but he did not run. He held on to one pillar to avoid being washed away.

The water rose higher and higher. He began to find difficulty in breathing. With only his head above the water, he tried his best to look up, hoping to catch a final glimpse of the girl he had promised to wait for.

Weisheng's bun got loosened, his hair got drenched in the water. This was the last one saw of Weisheng.

*Huainanzi* says, 'Keeping a promise is a noble quality, but who can think highly of Weisheng's foolish behaviour?' It adds, 'Weisheng's holding on to the pillar and drowning under the bridge, is a no way to keep a promise.'



## Shan Bao and Zhang Yi

Both Shan Bao and Zhang Yi lived in the State of Lu. One was good at 'fostering inner' while the other at 'fostering the external'. One day, Shan Bao who fostered the inner mind died from an external cause while Zhang Yi who fostered the external died of an inner disease.

How did Shan Bao foster an inner mind? He paid much more attention to acquire a good temperament. He lived in seclusion, far away from the crowd, drinking the spring water and eating no refined or coarse grains. His face looked like a child's even when he was seventy.

But to his great surprise, one day a starving tiger found him and swooped down and ate him.

How did Zhang Yi foster outer? He paid greater attention to his behaviour and manners. When walking by royal or imperial court, he walked in half steps. Seeing a crowd gather in an alley, he would get off his carriage and walk in. He treated his servants and grooms with due respect.

But in the end Zhang Yi, who attached great importance to behaviour and manners died of inner fever.

*Huainanzi* says, 'Shan Bao developed good temperament, but the tiger devoured his body. Zhang Yi paid greater attention to his behaviour and manners but was attacked by an inner disease. People who concentrate only on development of good temperament get hurt by external factors. While people burdened with the external world lose balance of their inner *yin* and *yang* and fall prey to physical illnesses.



*Fairytales*

## Nuwa Mends the Sky

In ancient times, the four corners of the sky collapsed and the world with its nine regions lay split open. The sky could not cover all the things under it, nor could the Earth carry all the things on it. A raging fire could not be extinguished and an unyielding flood could not be tamed. Savage beasts devoured innocent people and vicious birds preyed on the weak and elderly.

Then Nuwa melted down the five coloured stones so as to mend the breach in the sky. She supported the four corners of the sky with the legs she had cut off from a giant turtle. She killed the black dragon to save the people of Jizhou, and blocked the flood with the ashes of reeds.

Thus the sky was mended, its four corners lifted, the flood tamed, Jizhou pacified, harmful birds and beasts killed, and the innocent people enabled to live on the square Earth under the dome of the sky.

Nuwa's deeds benefitted the heavens above and the Earth below. Her name is remembered by every generation and her light shines on every creation.

## Houyi Shoots Down the Suns

In the remote past, it is said, there were ten suns in the sky, and these were like veritable burning fires which scorched the plants, the grass and the woods. Nothing could grow and a great famine spread. On top of this, snakes and beasts roamed everywhere, endangering the life of people.

In view of this, King Yao ordered Houyi, the master of archery, to shoot down the suns and kill the beasts to rescue the people from their misery. Houyi overcame all kinds of difficulties to carry out this order and succeeded in shooting down the surplus suns and finishing off the ferocious animals. After shooting the suns, he killed Yayu. He slew Zaochi at Chouhua, threw Jiuying in the troubled waters and shot Dafeng to death in Qingqiu swamp. The Xiu snake was cut into pieces in Lake Dongtinghu and Fengxi among the mulberry trees.

Since then, there has been only one sun shining in the sky, making for a temperate climate, exuberant vegetation, fine harvests and consequently general well-being. His immortal feats for the people and for posterity won universal admiration and support for Houyi.

The land under heaven is in peace and security. People cheer everywhere and celebrate his feats.

---

*Stories of Huainanzi*



## Chang'e Flies to the Moon

Houyi and his wife Chang'e lived on the Earth. To return to the Heaven, Houyi obtained the elixir of immortality from Queen Mother of the West. On returning to his palace, he confided the good news to his wife Chang'e, a lady of graceful carriage and unparalleled beauty and dearly loved by her husband.

One day, when Houyi was out, Chang'e secretly swallowed the potion in the hope that she would become immortal. The result was quite unexpected: she felt herself becoming light, so light that she flew up in spite of herself, drifting and floating in the air, until she reached the palace of the moon.

Houyi stood helpless to see his wife's flying away. At night Houyi stared at the moon, trying to find his beloved wife. Because by now the elixir was gone, he had to stay on the Earth while his wife lived on the moon.

## Kua Fu Chasing the Sun

Kua Fu is a giant in Chinese mythology who wished to capture the sun.

One day Kua Fu began to chase the sun bravely, with two yellow snakes hanging on his ears and a crane in his hand. He followed the sun with vigorous strides till Yu Valley where the sun rested.

When he arrived at Yu Valley, he noticed a giant, red, bright fireball in front of him. At that time his burning thirst forced him to find water. Just then River Yellow and River Wei came into sight, roaring and flowing onwards. He swooped upon them earnestly and drank up the whole river. But he still felt thirsty and hot. Thereupon, he marched northward towards the lakes the north China. Unfortunately, he fell down and died halfway because of his extreme thirst and exhaustion. His crane dropped when he fell. Subsequently the crane grew into a stretch of peace, green and lush.

## Gong Gong Smashed Mount Buzhou

In Chinese mythology, Gong Gong was the chief of an ancient tribe. He was ashamed that he had lost in the fight to claim the throne of Heaven with Zhuanxu, one of the five emperors and in a fit of rage, he smashed his head against Mount Buzhou, a pillar holding up the sky. The pillar suffered damage and caused the sky to tilt towards the northwest. All the stars too moved to the northwest. The Earth inclined to the southeast while the rivers and sands began to flow to the southeast.

Mount Buzhou was the pillar holding up the sky. Gong Gong's smashing against it caused the stars to change their course.

## Shennong Tasted Different Plants

Shennong, also called Emperor Yan, was the God who invented farming in the mythology of ancient China.

In ancient times people ate only raw plants and drank raw water. They climbed trees to pick fruits and caught escargots and clams in the river. This kind of eating often made them sick and poisoned.

To save their lives, Shennong began to teach people how to cultivate different crops according to diverse soil types. Rice, millet, grains, wheat and beans began to grow.

To prevent diseases from spreading among the people, Shennong tasted spring water in person and let people drink afterwards. To cure diseases, he tasted all kinds of plants, classifying them as bitter, sweet, hot and cold.

Thus Shennong found 365 kinds of herbs to cure more than 100 different diseases. Some say he tasted over 70 kinds of herbs.

Legends say that he reigned for 140 years and died at an age of 168.



## God of Farming

After Shennong discovered the method of cultivating rice, millet, grains, wheat and beans, these became the staple food of the people. Shennong came to be regarded as 'Father of Corns' or 'God of Farming'.

He paid great attention to farming. He did farming himself and his wife wove yarn. They set a good example to the others. He once decreed an order that if the adults did not do farming and weaving, then people would starve and freeze to death.

In his time, men could not clothe themselves without labouring on farms and women could not clothe themselves by avoiding to weave. Whether you led a good or poor life, it depended completely on your own labour.

Shennong taught his people not to collect rare things as treasures and attached little importance to things of no practical value.

Because the people devoted themselves to farming, the individual and the society became rich enough to live well. With good clothes and ample food, evils disappeared. With housing and work, the world lived peace.

*Stories of Huainanzi*



## Conflicts Between Emperors Yellow and Yan

The Emperor Yellow Huangdi with his surname Gongsun and family name Xuanyuan and Emperor Yan with his surname Jiang and family name Shennong were leaders and names of tribes representing two ages.

Emperor Yan's tribe lived in the northwest taking bulls as their totems. They moved to North and Central China before Emperor Yellow and moved towards the south gradually. When they entered Central China, they entered into conflicts with the Jiuli tribe whose leader was Chi You and who had moved into the area before.

Chi You had 81 brothers and he was the leader of the 81 clans. He was violent and ruthless no one could defeat him. Emperor Yellow was forced to move to the Zhuolu plains.

The totem of Emperor's Yellow tribe was a snake. In the deep Kunlun mountain was built his palace beneath which were surrounding rivers called Ruosui and round hills with flames burning forever.

Emperor Yellow had four imperial concubines. His wife Luo Zu taught the Chinese to weave silk from silkworms and was honoured as 'Goddess of Silkworms'. His concubine Tongyu

*Stories of Huainanzi*

taught cooking and eating with chopsticks while Fanglei invented the combs. Another concubine Momu invented a loom which introduced clothing, and she came to be called 'Goddess of Weaving'. Huainanzi Mountain puts emphasis on the fact that her reputation as praiseworthy though she was plain looking.

Emperor Yellow invented chariots himself.

Later he and Emperor Yan entered into three serious conflicts in Banquan area. Emperor Yellow's tribes under the totems of Bear, Pi and tiger defeated Emperor Yan's tribes. Emperor Yellow now became the supreme ruler.

As to the cause of the war, Huainanzi says, 'Emperor Yan caused the great fire, so the Emperor Yellow captured him.'

## Battle of Zhuolu

The people under Chiyou were defeated at Zhuolu which is a defunct prefecture on the border of the provinces of Hebei and Liaoning, by the military unification of Emperor Huang and Emperor Yan, leaders of the Huaxia tribe as they struggled for supremacy over the Huang He valley.

The people under Chiyou were brave, fierce and good at warfare. They were adept at forging weapons and their bronze weapons were sharp and unbreakable.

Chiyou declared war on the kingdom of Emperor Yan. His fellow men often killed innocent people. Emperor Yellow was defeated. Emperor Yan merged his tribe with that of Emperor Yellow to fight against the Chiyou tribe.

Unprecedented war raged at Zhuolu between them.

Emperor Chiyou assembled his army of 81 clans, which had more people and efficient weapons.

Emperor Huang sent tribes under the totems of the bear, Pi, wolf, leopard, hawk, dragon and others in retaliation against Emperor Chiyou's tribes. They took full advantage of their upper river position and built dams to save water and resist the attack.

At the very beginning, Emperor Huang suffered nine defeats.

*Stories of Huainanzi*

After rain came fair weather. With the help of the Xuann tribe, Emperor Huang's forces launched a counter attack. When fierce winds and sand-storm blew, the warriors blew their horns and beat their drums, thus scaring the enemy. Emperor Huang's forces emerged victorious after killing Chiyou at Hebei.

## Fuxi Created Trigrams

Fuxi is considered the forefather of the Chinese civilisation before Emperor Yan and Emperor Yellow and was ranked first among the three august ones.

Legend says Fuxi was good at observing astronomical phenomena and the world around him. He drew eight trigrams as per his observations. Qian depicts Heaven, Kun depicts Earth, Zhen depicts thunder, Xun depicts wind, Kan depicts water, Li depicts fire, Gen depicts mountain and Dui depicts swamp, marsh. He used these eight trigrams to foretell the future.

King Wen of Zhou is said to have given each hexagram a description regarding its own nature, thus Gua Ci gave 'Explanation of Hexagrams' in his seven years' imprisonment at Youli. Later Zhou Gong Dan created Yao 'Explanation of Horizontal Lines' to clarify the significance of each horizontal line in each hexagram. Each hexagram is a figure composed of six stacked horizontal lines where each line is either *Yang* (an unbroken, or solid line), or *Yin* (broken, an open line with a gap in the centre). What they had done was to inquire into the nature and origin of things.

Later, during the time of spring and autumn, Confucius is traditionally said to have written the *Zhou Yi* according to his study of Fuxi, King Wen of Zhou and Zhou Gong's thoughts.

## Cangjie's Creation of Characters

Cangjie is a legendary figure in ancient China, claimed to be an official historian of Emperor Yellow and the inventor of Chinese characters. Legend has it that Cangjie had four eyes and eight pupils. He collected characters popular among the people and listed them systematically.

Cangjie's creation of characters was to arouse the gods. In late spring of a year, the Emperor Yellow issued a prescript to declare Cangjie's creation of characters and called on the people to learn and use them. That day, the sky rained millets but not the common rain and later people called it the Grain Rain. It became one of the twenty-four solar terms.

God was afraid that the people were too busy learning characters to attend to farming. Once the Spring passed by and if the farming season was missed, the land would be left uncultivated. It rained to alert the people to return to farming in the right season.

The people became smarter after they mastered the characters. Villains and devils felt frightened and disturbed at this development. They complained and poured out their worries. Thus it was said that deities and ghosts cried at Cangjie's creation of characters.



## Suiren Created the Fire

Before the fire was discovered, our ancestors ate raw plants, birds and animals without cooking them. Their eating habits of led to the spread of diseases.

Legend says that Suiren invented the method of igniting fire by drilling in the wood. From then on, mankind entered the civilised age with the discovery of fire.

Suiren had knowledge about astronomy. It is said he came across lighting a fire while observing astronomical phenomena. He used five different kinds of wood in different seasons: elm in spring, date palm and mulberry tree in summer, bristle tooth oak in autumn and locust tree in winter.

Later people discovered the way of making fire with *Yang Sui*. *Yang Sui* was a concave mirror made of metal to ignite a fire with the help of sunlight. When the sun arose from the sea, the concave mirror was placed facing the sun to collect the sun's rays. Dry wormwood was put above it. A short time later, the wormwood smelled of burning. A single puff ignited the fire.

The fire made with concave mirror was called open flame, while fire made by drilling wood was called state flame. The

*Stories of Huainanzi*

book *Zhou Li* tells that the Yangsui fire came from the sun, was related to the sky and used in the art of praying and sacrifice, while fire made by drilling the five woods, close to mankind, was used in cooking.



## *Seasonal Stories*



# The First Month of Spring

*(First Month of the Chinese Lunar Year)*

The first month of the lunar year lies in the east. The representative heavenly stems are *jiayi*, the first and the second ones.

The representative animal is one with scale and shell; the representative musical scale is *jue*, the third tone of the traditional Chinese musical notation; the representative number is eight, the taste is sourness, and the odour is smell of mutton.

Ice is melted in the warm spring breeze. Animals in hibernation wake up in succession. Fish swim in the residual ice close to the surface of water. Otters start hunting for fish. Wild geese fly back north.

The Emperor wears blue clothes, rides a blue horse and wears blue jade, with blue flags flying high.

People eat food made out of wheat powder and mutton and drink the dew blown by the wind. They obtain fire by striking a piece of flint and then burn the stems of beans.

The maid-servants in East Palace wear blue clothes and trinkets, playing the lute and psaltery.

The representative weapon of this month is the spear, the representative poultry is sheep and the representative tree is poplar.

*Jin Yu*

The emperor summons a group of ministers in the northern room facing east and issues the administrative orders for spring. He grants favours to show his mercy, holds celebration to reward the heroes, and reduces taxes.

On the morning of the beginning of spring, the emperor leads his officials personally to the eastern outskirts to greet the arrival of spring.

The administrative orders at that time include selling of small trees growing wild, destroying of nests and collecting of eggs is strictly prohibited, pregnant animals and young elks cannot be hunted, and rural workers are not forced to rebuild cities.



## The Second Month of Spring

*(Second Month of the Chinese Lunar Year)*

The second month of lunar year lies in the east. The representative heavenly stems are *jiayi*, the first and second ones.

The representative animal is one with scale and shell; the representative musical scale is *jue*, the third tone in the traditional Chinese musical notation; the representative number is eight, the taste is sourness, and the odour is of mutton.

The spring rain wets the Earth. Gorgeous flowers come into bloom on peach and plum trees. Orioles sing sweetly and cuckoos start cooing.

The emperor wears blue clothes, rides a blue horse and wears blue jade, with blue flags flying high.

People eat the food made out of wheat powder and mutton, drink the dew blown here by the wind; obtain fire by striking flint and burn the stems of beans.

Maids in the East Palace wear blue clothes and trinkets, play the lute and psaltery.

The representative weapon of this month is spear, the representative poultry is sheep and the representative tree is almond.

*Jin Yu*

The Emperor summons a group of ministers in the main room facing east to order them to forgive the prisoners of minor offence, remove their manacles or handcuffs, forbid whipping and mediate in litigation. He requests the officials to bring up small kids, support old people without children and family so that all living things grow prosperously.

Prevent rivers and lakes from drying up, prevent ponds from draining, curb burning of forests and stop draft of farmers into construction and army so as not to hinder agriculture.



## The Third Month of Spring

*(Third Month of the Chinese Lunar Year)*

The orientation lies in the east and the representing heavenly stems are *jiayi*, the first and the second ones.

The typical animal of the third month is the reptile. The typical tone is *jue*, the third tone in the traditional Chinese musical notation. The typical number is eight, taste is sourness and smell is that of mutton.

Phoenix trees are in full blossom. Field mice are replaced by partridges. The rainbow emerges in the sky and light green duckweed is seen floating on the water surface.

The Emperor is in blue, rides a blue horse, wears a blue jade, with blue flags flying high.

People eat wheat items and mutton and drink the dew brought by wind from different directions. They light fire with flint and burn beanstalk.

Maids in the Eastern Palace dress in blue, wear blue ornaments and play stringed musical instruments called *qin* and *se*.

The typical weapon of this month is spear, the domestic animal is sheep and the tree is plum.

The Emperor meets all his ministers in the southern chamber of the bright hall facing east, orders his officials in charge to open the governmental granary to feed the poor suffering from food shortage (between two harvests), gets the governmental warehouse opened to take out silk cloth, sends envoys to visit dukes and princes and recruit famous talents in the country treating them with great respect.

His Highness orders the officials in charge of water conservation to carry out regular inspection, reinforce dams, dredge watercourses and clear roadblocks before the rainy season begins.

Imperial concubines fast and go to the eastern mulberry field to pick mulberry leaves. As for the women of this country, the Emperor commands them to be relieved of domestic chores and encourages them to dedicate time in sericulture.

# The First Month of Summer

*(Fourth Month of the Chinese Lunar Year)*

The orientation is in the south, and the heavenly stems are *bingding*, the third and the fourth ones.

The typical animal of this month is bird, the tone is *zhi*, the fourth tone in the traditional Chinese musical notation, the number is seven, the taste bitter and the typical odour is that of a burnt item.

Insects begin to chirp and earthworms crawl out of the earth. Plants bear fruit and melons spread all over the ground.

The Emperor wears red, rides a red horse, girdle is of red stones, and red flags fly high.

People eat beans and chicken, and drink the dew brought by wind from all the directions. They light fire with flint and burn three-bristle cudrania.

Maids in the Southern Palace wear red ornaments and play musical bamboo instruments *yu* and *sheng*.

The typical weapon of this month is halberd, the fowl chicken, and the tree peach.

The Emperor meets all his ministers in the east chamber of the bright hall facing south, promulgating governmental orders for the summer.

*Jin Yu*

On the morning of the beginning of summer, the Emperor leads high-ranking officials to the southern suburb to receive the summer's arrival. After coming back, His Highness awards his ministers, confers titles, offers sacrifice to gods, has ceremonial music played and treats his ministers.

Besides, the Emperor commands the officials in charge to identify talented people, recommend the wise and the virtuous, appoint those who are dutiful and loving and give them salary and position.

He also orders to stop construction on a large scale, not fell big trees, drive off wild and domestic animals to keep them away from crops.

## The Second Month of Summer

*(Fifth Month of the Chinese Lunar Year)*

The orientation is in the south and the heavenly stems are *bingding*, the third and the fourth ones.

The typical animal of this month is bird, the typical tone is *zhi*, the typical number seven, the taste bitter, and the typical odour is the smell of the burnt.

With slight heat arriving as expected, *mantis* turn up, butcherbirds begin to whistle while blackbirds retreat into silence.

The Emperor wears red, rides a red horse, girdled with red stones, and red flags fly high.

People eat beans and chicken, drink the dew brought by wind from all the directions, light, fire with flint and burn three-bristle cudrania.

Maids in the Southern Palace also wear red, wear red ornaments and play the musical bamboo instruments called *yu* and *sheng*.

The typical weapon of this month is halberd, the bird is chicken and the tree is elm.

The Emperor calls in all his ministers to the middle chamber of the bright hall facing south, orders musicians to play music

and adorn their instruments like bells, drums, *qing*, *qin*, *se*, *xiao* and *yu*, orders preparation of shields, axes, daggers and commanding flags, and advises officials in charge to hold a grand musical ceremony to pray for rain and pray to the high mountains for health and safety of the common people.

People are not allowed to fell unripe indigo plants for dyeing material, nor cut down and burn grass and trees to use as manure. *Kohemp* cloth is not exposed to strong sunlight to prevent it from turning brittle and crack. City gate is opened so that people can go in and out of the city at any time no tax is collected at the toll-gate or trade at the fair.

## The Third Month of Summer

*(Sixth Month of the Chinese Lunar Year)*

The orientation is in the centre and the heavenly stems are *wuji*, the fifth and the sixth ones.

The typical animal of the sixth month is worm; the tone is *gong*, the first tone in the traditional Chinese musical notation, the typical number five, the taste sweet and the smell of fragrant flowers.

The wind is cool. Crickets sing under the walls, fireflies fly up and down among the grass, eaglets flap their wings, trying their very first fly.

The Emperor is now in yellow, riding a yellow horse, girding yellow stones and has yellow flags flying high.

People eat cereal and beef, drink the dew brought by wind from all the directions, light fire with flint and burn three-bristle cudrania.

Maids in the Middle Palace don yellow, and put on yellow ornaments.

The typical weapon of this month is sword, the domestic animal is cattle and the typical tree is *catalpa*.

*Jin Yu*

The Emperor meets his ministers in the Middle Palace, ordering them to kill the evil dragon, use its skin to make drums, and send tortoise shells to the ancestral temple for use in rituals.

Merciful and charitable policies are being carried out; the dead are mourned, the sick condoled, the old visited, and the poor distributed food.

It is not proper to fell trees or to meet leuds. Construction on a large scale is avoided. Recruits are not employed and wars are not waged.



# The First Month of Autumn

*(Seventh Month of the Chinese Lunar Year)*

The orientation is in the west, the heavenly stems are *gengxin*, the seventh and the eighth ones.

The typical animal of the seventh month is the beast, the tone is *shang*, the second tone of traditional Chinese musical notation, the typical number is nine, the taste spicy and the odour is that of blood.

Autumn wind begins to blow and white dew falls at night. Cicadas sing and eagles prey on little birds. Felonious criminals are executed.

The Emperor wears white, rides a white horse, is girdled with white stones and flags fly high.

People eat food made of sesame and dogs and drink dew brought by wind from all directions. Fire is lighted with flint and three-bristle cudrania is burned.

Maids in the Western Palace dress in white, wear white ornaments and ring white bells.

The weapon of this month is dagger, the domestic animal is dog, and the tree, chinaberry.

The Emperor meets his ministers in the southern chamber of the bright hall facing west, giving autumn orders.

Those who do not support their parents or respect their elder brothers are cruel and vicious and have to face punishment.

On the morning when autumn begins, his Highness leads all his ministers and officials to the western suburb to greet the autumn's arrival. When coming back, his Highness awards his brave generals who have made great contributions to the royal court.

The Emperor commands his generals to select bridle-wise soldiers, sharpen their weapons and impart them the most talented special training. His Highness places meritorious generals and soldiers in very important positions and fights against the ruthless and cruel to pacify the state.

Officials in charge are commanded to amend laws and regulations, to repair prison houses, to forbid any illegal acts, to hear flintng cases and pronounce fair judgements.

Local officials are commanded to collect taxes, build dams and avoid watercourse jams and floods. Cities and royal palaces are built and strengthened.

It is not a good time for feudatories, appointments to high posts are made, granting largesse or sending envoys to other States.

## The Second Month of Autumn

*(Eighth Month of the Chinese Lunar Year)*

The orientation of the eighth month is in the west, the representing heavenly stems are *gengxin*, the seventh and the eighth ones.

The typical animal of this month is the beast, the tone is *shang*, the typical number is nine, the taste spicy and the odour is the smell of blood.

With the cool wind blowing, wild geese fly south and swallows circle up and down in the sky.

The Emperor wears white, rides a white horse, wears white stones and white flags fly high.

People eat food made of sesame, eat dogs and drink the dew brought in by wind from all directions. Fire is lighted with flint and three-bristle cudrania is burned.

Maids in the Western Palace are dressed in white. They don white ornaments and ring white bells.

The weapon of this month is the dagger, the typical domestic animal is dog and the tree is three-bristle cudrania.

The Emperor meets his ministers in the main chamber of the bright hall facing west, ordering his officials in charge to

*Jin Yu*

restate all the laws and to carry them out in the strictest sense. Criminals whose heads are chopped off must have committed serious crimes but wrong and unfair sentences are not allowed.

His Highness advises support for the old; and provides walking sticks and food.

Cities, cellars and barns are built and repaired. Officials in charge are commanded to urge the farmers to reap and store crops, encouraging them to plant wheat to pass the winter. Those who miss the farming season are to be punished.

## The Third Month of Autumn

*(Ninth Month of the Chinese Lunar Year)*

The orientation of this month is in the west and the representative heavenly stems are *gengxin*, the seventh and the eighth ones.

The typical animal of this month is the beast of the typical tone is *shang*, the number nine, the taste spicy and the smell is that of blood.

Chrysanthemum is now yielding yellow flowers, wild geese fly south in lines and leopards in the mountains begin to hunt their game.

The Emperor wears white, rides a white horse and is girdled with white stones and white flags fly high.

People eat food made of sesame, eat dogs and drink the dew brought by wind from all directions. They light fire with flint and burn three-bristle cudrania.

Maids in the Western Palace are dressed in white, wear white ornaments and ring white bells.

The weapon of this month is the dagger, the domestic animal is dog and the tree is pagoda.

The Emperor meets his ministers in the northern chamber of the bright hall facing west, orders the officials in charge to

*Jin Yu*

restate the laws and strictly follow them. All levels of officials, whether in a high position or low, are required to be fully devoted to the autumn harvest and any loss of provisions is not allowed.

The officials in charge are commanded to keep an accurate record of the amount of the year's yield.

After the first frost, artisans stop their business and the common people stay at home to keep warm. They can enter the Imperial Palace to learn how to play musical instruments and rehearse their music for ceremonies. Formal ceremonies are held and sacrifices are made to gods.

His Highness meets the lords and the common people are taught to hunt in the open.



## The First Month of Winter

*(Tenth Month of the Chinese Lunar Year)*

The orientation moves to the north now and the representing heavenly stems are *rengui*, the ninth and the tenth ones.

The typical animal of this month is the reptile, the tone is *yu*, the last tone of the traditional Chinese musical notation, the number is six, the taste salty and the smell rotten.

Frost falls on the ground; lakes and rivers begin to freeze and rainbows vanish from the sky.

The Emperor dons black, rides a black horse, is girdled with black stones and black flags fly high.

People eat millet and pork, and drink the dew brought by wind from all directions. They use flint to light fire and burn pine wood.

Maids in the Western Palace wear black, don black ornaments and play the musical stone, qing.

The typical weapon of this month is *sha*, a long spear, the typical domestic animal is pig and the tree is sandalwood.

The Emperor calls in all the ministers to the western chamber of the north-facing bright hall, issuing winter orders.

His Highness commands the officials in charge to amend all the injunctions, forbid people to move away, close city gates, wall up laneways and check migrants. They are also ordered to judge cases, execute convicts awaiting execution and severely punish those who break law or bribe officials.

On the morning of the beginning of winter, the Emperor leads in person all his ministers to greet the winter's arrival in the northern suburb. When coming back, His Highness awards the families of those soldiers who have died in battle and offers to support the orphans and widows.

Officials in charge are ordered to check the reserves in army force and finance, build and reinforce cities, watch city gates and laneways, fix latches, keep keys in safety and tighten the seals, renovate and strengthen frontier defence, improve the building of forts and wall up all the paths leading to frontier areas.

During this month, the Emperor organises an offering ceremony and drinks mellow wine, praying to the sun, the moon, the stars and all of the heavenly bodies to get a good harvest next year.

His Highness visits the farmers who are always slogging for the country, letting them have rest.

Generals and soldiers are commanded to practise boxing and shooting skills and compete with each other to hone their skills.

Officials take orders to collect fishing tax. Levies are restricted to a proper amount.



## The Second Month of Winter

(*Eleventh Month*)

The orientation is now in the north and the representing heavenly stems are *rengui*, the ninth and the tenth ones.

The typical animal of this month is the reptile, the tone is *yu*, number six, taste salty and the smell rotten.

Thick ice covers all water surfaces and cracks appear on earth owing to the severe cold.

The Emperor dresses in black, rides on a black horse and wears black precious stones; black flags fly high.

People eat millet and pork and drink the dew brought by wind from all directions. They use flint to light fire and burn pine wood.

Maids in the Western Palace don black, wear black ornaments and play the musical stone, called *qing*.

The typical weapon of this month is *sha*, the domestic animal is pig and the typical tree is Chinese *jujube*.

The Emperor meets his ministers in the middle chamber of the north-facing bright hall and orders the officials in charge to prohibit large-scale construction, or opening of cellars or recruit people to do forced labour.

*Jin Yu*

Robbers and thieves are warned; wrong-doers and frauds severely punished.

Trees can be cut down and bamboo arrows are made.

Idle officials are dismissed, useless utensils, gates of palaces repaired courtyards and cities and laneways cleaned. Prisons are built, conforming to the natural law of a closed store.

## The Third Month of Winter

(*Twelfth Month*)

The orientation lies in the north, and the heavenly stems are *rengui*, the ninth and the tenth ones.

The typical animal of this month is the reptile, the tone is *yu*, the number is six, the taste salty and smell that of rotten things.

Magpies begin to strengthen their nests and hens cluck with excitement after laying eggs.

The Emperor dresses in black, rides a black horse and wears black precious stones and has black flags flying high.

People eat millet and pork, and drink the dew brought by wind from all directions. They use flint to light fire and burn pine wood.

Maids in the Western Palace don black, wear black ornaments and play the musical stone called *qing*.

The typical weapon of this month is *sha*, the domestic animal is pig and the tree is *robur*.

The Emperor meets his ministers in the eastern chamber of the north-facing bright hall, ordering the officials in charge to hold a memorial ceremony for the last month of the year, dispel

*Jin Yu*

diseases and ghosts, and offer dogs and goats to drive away evil. Farm cattle are taken out and people are encouraged to take up farming activities.

Fishermen are ordered to start fishing and Farmers are ordered to take out corn seeds from their cellars, sift and choose carefully for the new round of growing and the farming tools are repaired and readied.

As new year is approaching, farmers need a good rest so they should not be recruited for any forced labour. The Emperor discusses with his ministers the amendment of the national code as well as governmental decrees for the coming new year.

## *Appendix*

## Introduction to Liu An, King of Huainan

Liu An (B.C. 179–B.C. 122) was an ideologist and litterateur of the Western Han dynasty. As a descendant of Han imperial family, he was the grandson of Emperor Gaozu, Liu Bang, and was crowned as King of HuaiNan by Emperor Wen of Han dynasty. In his term of office, a long 43 years, his largest contribution to the later generation lies in organising his retainers to compile the academic work *Huai Nan Zi*, a fine piece of scholarship.

During the earlier and middle period of his tenure in Huainan, as a talented and elegant vassal, he was beloved and esteemed by both the Imperial Court and the men of letters, but, from the middle to the late period of his life, he got addicted to worship of gods and practice of alchemy with his retainers. At last, he was charged with rebellion and his throat was cut.

### His Childhood

The tragedy of Liu An's life can be partly attributed to his father Liu Chang.

Liu Chang was the ninth son of Emperor Gaozu, Liu Bang. Liu Chang's mother was an imperial concubine of Zhang'ao, the king of Zhao region. Zhao concubine was made pregnant by Liu Bang (Gaozu) when he stayed in the kingdom of Zhao. Soon, Zhang'ao was exposed to rebellious behaviour. Zhao concubine was also involved in it and put into jail. In prison, she committed suicide after giving birth to Liu Chang.

When Liu Chang grew up, he was declared the king of Huainan. Due to his special life and lack of motherly love, he was rude, testy and unmannered. From the bottom of his heart, he hated an official named Sheng Shiqi. When in prison Liu Chang's uncle said his mother had relied on Sheng Shiqi to tell the Queen that she carried the Emperor's baby in the body, hoping that the Queen would tell everything to Emperor Gaozu. But the Queen was jealous of Liu Chang's mother and Sheng Shiqi didn't try to argue for her, leading to his mother committing suicide out of disappointment. Liu Chang held Sheng Shiqi responsible for his mother's death. So, one day, he broke into Sheng Shiqi house and killed him.

The ruler at that time was Emperor Wen of Han dynasty, half brother of Liu Chang, who was very fond of the youngest brother and sympathised for his mother's suffering. So, the Emperor didn't punish Liu Chang.

Since then, Liu Chang became even more overbearing and self-indulgent. In Huainan, he made laws and ran the bureaucracy by himself.

When Liu An was five or six years old, his father Liu Chang was impeached by some officials due to his illegal behaviour and for conspiring against the court with some conspirators. Emperor Wen wasn't willing to punish Liu Chang, but dismissed him from his post and noble title.

Officials appealed to Emperor Wen to punish Liu Chang for committing a capital crime despite seeing the Emperor's reluctance to do so. They wanted him to be exiled to a remote place in Sichuan province.

Thus when he was five or six years old, Liu An, together with his three little brothers and parents, was sent to exile. On the way, the stubborn and spoiled Liu Chang was shut in a carriage, just as in a prison. He had no means to give vent to his anger. In order to resist the cruel reality, he refused to eat. Emperor Wen knew his temperament very well, and thought of recalling him in case of any calamity. At that moment, the news of Liu Chang dying from fasting spread in the court. Hearing the news of Liu Chang's death, Emperor Wen, ordered burying of the dead as in a ceremony of vassal's funeral.

Two years later, Liu Chang's four sons were conferred the title of Marquis. The eldest child, Liu An, was ennobled as Marquis of FuLing, when he was seven or eight years old.

Three or four years later, a ballad was staged to show that even a foot of cloth can be stitched up; even a kilo of millet can be ground. How can two blood brothers not make up? On hearing the ballad, Emperor Wen felt that people believed that it was him who had killed Liu Chang on purpose. So he conferred the title of King Li of HuaiNan on Liu Chang, and built a mausoleum to rebury him in a ceremony accorded to a vassal king's funeral.

In the sixteenth year of Emperor Wen of Han dynasty (B.C. 164), excepting one of Liu Chang's sons who had died prematurely, all the other three were 15 to 16 years old, or full-grown youth. The Emperor divided the late Liu Chang's fief dom into three parts, conferring Liu An as king of HuaiNan, his two younger brothers as King of HengShan and King of LuJiang.



Liu An, at the age of 15 or 16, returned to ShouChun, the capital of HuaiNan. He had experienced with bitterness and sweetness in the childhood. Only through reading and playing music, he could escape from the pain. All his hobbies and character were thus built during his childhood.

### Widespread Fame in Middle Age

Compared with the other vassal kings of that time, Liu An preferred to read and play music rather than ride, shoot or hunt. This was partly due to his character; meanwhile, he intended to stay away from the circle of vassals and avoid getting into rumours regarding his father. He chose a different path from his father, never showing himself by way of force or strength.

Due to his interests in reading and writing, all his retainers were men of letters. Though his status was of vassal king, he called on litterateurs of the country to show their talent in HuaiNan. At that time, ShouChun, the capital of HuaiNan, became the centre for congregation of litterateurs at this academic researching centre.

The most popular writing genre was rhyming poems Liu An and his retainers composed and echoed each other through ode. It is worth mentioning that Liu An was the first to compose *Li Sao* (The Lament) with annotations. As “Legend of King of HuaiNan in Han History” records, Emperor Wu of Han dynasty asked Liu An to compose Biography of Li Sao (The Lament). Liu An was given the imperial decree in the morning, and he submitted the spectacular and iridescent “*Biography of Li Sao*” to the Emperor in the afternoon.

According to history, Emperor Wu asked scholars, such as Sima Xiangru, to consult Liu An to draft the imperial edict in a certain period of time. In the initial stages of Emperor Wu’s

reign in China, the teenaged Emperor trusted and respected his imperial uncle, Liu An. He liked talking with his uncle, listening to his political and academic viewpoints and appreciated his reading out his articles. In accordance with *Han Dynasty Yiwen Records*. King of HuaiNan had composed 82 odes, which have been lost. However, compared with those odes, the much more valuable masterpiece *Huai Nan Zi* has turned out to be the most precious cultural heritage today.

*Huai Nan Zi* was written in the period of Emperor Jing of Han dynasty. Under the 16 years' reign of Emperor Jing (B. C. 156–B.C. 141), Liu An was past the prime of his life at 40 years. Emperor Jing inherited Emperor's Wen ideology in running the state. The reigns of Wen and Jing (China's celebrated era of economics management and prosperity through cultivation) is presented under the policy of rehabilitation of the nation. During this period, people accumulated wealth and the nation became powerful and prosperous. Living in this peaceful era, Liu An called together all talented people from the country to HuaiNan for academic research, poetry and ode.

As a vassal, Liu An was not similar to other common litterateurs. Composing poetry and ode was a pastime in his life. He aimed towards greater achievements, organising litterateurs to compile a book on Liu's family. This book would sum up all schools of ideologies present before Han dynasty including the success and failures, collected from Heaven to Earth and in all ages known by the Governor of the Liu dynasty.

According to this principle, Liu An organised his retainers to compile this erudite and informed *Huai Nan Zi*, which was named originally as *HuaiNanHongLie*. 'Hong' means bigness and greatness; "Lie" means clarity and awareness. It is a book meant to understand reason and morality in general. Later on, this

book was classified as one of the books in Zi category, namely by *Huai Nan Zi*.

After being enthroned, *HuaiNanHongLie* was read by Emperor Wu often. However, with the consolidating of his position and maturing of his thought, Emperor's Wu's ideas on reigning were divorced from Emperor Wen and Emperor Ji's thoughts. After Emperor's Wu aim to abandon all other schools of thoughts and worship Confucianism alone, 'HuaiNanHongLie' could never serve as the fundamental principles in managing the State for Liu dynasty. Liu An realised the difference between Emperor Wu's policies on reigning and those advocated in *Huai Nan Zi*. Possibly due to this reason Liu An concentrated in seeking celestial beings and Taoists since his Middle Ages.

One of major propositions in *Huai Nan Zi* is to reign by doing nothing, but Emperor Wu constantly conquered enemies through force. As *Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government* mentions, in the sixth year of JianYuan (B.C. 135), Liu An exhorted Emperor Wu, who was seated on the throne just for six years 'don't solve the problems in Min and Yue districts by force of arms.' He added, 'After ascending the throne, Your Majesty contributed your virtue and charity to everyone, who all were overawed. People like to live a stable life where they could never be confronted by a war. After hearing Your Majesty's plan to conquer Yue district, in private, I evaluated this matter bitterly for you.' Liu An described the misfortune caused by warfare to the people and spread of bitter hatred, hoping that the Emperor would not use force but let 'husband and wife to stay together; father and son to depend on each other.' However, Emperor Wu didn't accept his suggestion and dispatched troops to suppress the rebellion. Liu An had two sons and a daughter. Tu the Queen of HuaiNan, wasn't the natural mother of the eldest son named

LiuBuhai who was treated indifferently by the King and the Queen of HuaiNan. The natural son of the Queen Tu was appointed as the prince of HuaiNan. Daughter LiuLing was loved deeply by Liu An, as she was bright, smart and skilled in talking and arguing. Middle-aged Liu An held a high reputation in the country, due to his literary and scholarly talents and as his status as the uncle of the present Emperor. His family was happy too. So, many people tried to find a match for the prince of HuaiNan.

### Suicide due to Guilt in Old Age

In the third year of YuanShuo in Emperor's Wu reign (B.C. 126), the Emperor bestowed small tables for leaning on and serve as a crutch for supporting Liu An as these were needed in old age and ordering that he need not have audience with the Emperor regularly. At that moment, Liu Qian, the prince of HuaiNan was engaged. He was to marry the granddaughter of Emperor's Wu sister.

Liu An realised that since Emperor Wu ascended the throne the present policy had been changed drastically and the governing ideology proposed by him was rejected by the Emperor. So he concentrated his energy on worship and alchemy, seldom bothering about national affairs. Prince Liu Qian and the Queen Tu were the virtual leaders of HuaiNan Kingdom .

Prince Liu Qian was extraordinary headstrong and self-willed. His wife was the granddaughter of Emperor Wu's sister. Liu Qian did not love his wife despite being married for three months and refused to sleep with her. His wife cried all day long and asked to return to her parents' home. Liu An wrote a letter to Emperor Wu expressing his apology and allowed the wife of the prince to return home.

Liu Qian loved wielding the sword and indulged in swordsmanship. He wanted to have a duel with Brigadier General Lei Bei, who was a well-known swordsman of that time. When they competed, Lei Bei could dare to perform with might, but finally, struck the prince by accident. Liu Qian got angry with him and criticised Lei Bei to his father Liu An. At this moment, the count prepared to organise his troops in Xi'An to fight with Hun. Lei Bei was afraid of being incriminated because of injuring the prince accidentally. So he wanted to go to Xi'An. Liu An didn't agree. In order to prevent any misfortune, he dismissed Lei Bei, who fled to Xi'An and reported about his suffering.

Some ministers believed Liu An was guilty for preventing Lei Bei from joining the army to fight the Hun and exhorted the Emperor to punish him with a more stringent sentence, such as execution or repeal of his noble title. The Emperor didn't agree. Prince Liu Qian suggested to his father that they should ask warriors to guard him. If the court sent people to arrest him or in case of any other emergency, the warriors kill the royal soldiers. Then they would revolt and a coup would take place.

Finally, the Emperor punished Liu An by depriving him of five counties from his fief. Hearing the news, Liu An said sentimentally, 'I performed kind and charitable acts but the Count reduced my fief. I am really ashamed.'

Since then, Liu An talked about national affairs with Wu Bei and Zuo Wu who were Brigadier Generals of Huainan, analysing the political situation of the vassals contending for the throne as and when the Emperor died. So he wanted to strike first. (Actually, Liu An was more than 50-years old. While, the Emperor Wu was just a little over 30 at that time and could not die before Liu An.) Wu Bei advised Liu An to give up the idea of revolt. At this moment, Liu An's grandson Liu Jian made people appeal to the Emperor to indict Liu Qian.

The indictment charging Liu Qian with the crime was seen by Emperor Wu, who sent the court to investigate into the matter.

Just then, Shen Qing, grandson of Shen Shi qi, who was killed by Liu Chang 50 years ago, happened to be an official in the court. He had a good relationship with Gongsun Hong, the prime minister at that time. Shen Qing exaggerated the issues to complain to Gongsun Hong. This resulted in Gongsun Hong suspecting that Liu An intended to revolt. He ordered troops to comb Huainan for any problem.

Seeing Liu Qian was summoned for a trial and on hearing some rumours about him in the court, Liu An became scared. He consulted Wu Bei in order to find a method to handle the situation.

Wu Bei forged the writ of the prime minister and other persons of high rank, transferred the wealthy or talented and their families to live on the border and northern area; released the prisoners to reclaim the wasteland in northern area; and arrested the princes and minions of each vassal one by one. This way, the whole country, which would have faced misery in the kingdom of Huainan due to imminent revolt was saved.

Liu Jian exposed Liu Qian's doing to the court. Emperor Wu gave orders to arrest Liu Qian, the prince of Huainan. On hearing the news, Liu Qian tried to commit suicide, but failed to die. Wu Bei presented himself in the court and confessed that he had consulted Liu An.

The troops of the court besieged the palace of King of Huainan and arrested Prince Liu Qian and Queen Tu. Prime Minister Gongsun Hong and some officials insisted on punishing Liu An for his crime. On hearing this Liu An committed suicide.

## Use Wisdom to Mould One's Destiny

### Benefit of Loss

Sun Shuao was prime minister in Chu kingdom during the reign of King Chu Zhuang. In *Records of Grand Historians* Sima Qian classified him into *Biographies of Xun Li* which indicate that he was a competent prime minister. The narration on Sun Shuao in *Huainanzi* was not only longer than in *Records of Grand Historians* but also different. Sima Qian narrated only Sun Shuao's achievements while in *Huainanzi*, emphasis was laid on morality and wisdom of Sun Shuao.

That he knew how to avoid disaster especially revealed the wisdom of Sun Shuao. At the high-ranking position of prime minister, disasters appeared in his own life, but, he put in utmost efforts to avoid disaster befalling on him and his posterity.

In the chapter Renjian of *Huainanzi* 'King Chu Zhuang won victory between He and Yong. When Sun Shuao came back, he declined the awards conferred on him. King Chu Zhuang and Sun Shuao led the army of Chu and won the battle. King Zhuang wanted to confer award on Sun Shuao, but Sun Shuao rejected

it.' According to history, the war mentioned above was between Chu and Jin kingdoms. The cause of the battle was that Jin wanted to rescue Zheng. Before King Chu Zhuang laid siege to kingdom of Zheng for three months and occupied the capital of Kingdom of Zheng. Zheng submitted to King of Chu. The troops of Jin crossed over River Yellow and rescued Zheng. King Chu Zhuang and Sun Shuao led the army of Chu and attacked army of Jin. Jin was defeated and ran away. The sound of the battle echoed all night long. In this war, Sun Shuao made great contributions, but refused the awards conferred on him, because Sun Shuao knew that too much fame and gain would cause trouble.

In order to let his posterity live in peace on the border, Sun Shuao told his son, 'After my death, King of Chu must reward you. In time you shouldn't accept fertile land, but choose barren land. I had made provision for you near the border of the kingdom of Yue, for land called Qinqiu, which was lean and with an unpleasant name. Chu and Yue nearby considered it bad. You may request King of Chu to confer Qinqiu to you. This land would guarantee you and your posterity safety.' After Sun Shuao's death, his son kept his words. When King of Chu conferred him land, he did not choose fertile land but QinQiu. At that time in the kingdom of Chu, generally speaking, the younger generation of the person who made great contributions, inherited title and salary for just two generations, while Sun Shuao's posterity was an exception, due to his wisdom.

The chapter Renjian of *Huainanzi* cites the example of Sun Shuao in to prove that loss and benefit are mutually exchangeable. Sun Shuao was familiar with the reason, so he adopted the method of *sunzhieyi* to avoid any disaster.

The chapter *Daoying* of *Huainanzi* records that the old man Huqiu told Sun Shuao that human beings resented three



things. When the official position rose higher, contemporaries become jealous of you. When power increases the King loathes you. When the salary is handsome, common people complain against you. Sun Shuao said, 'The higher the official position was, my desire would be smaller. The more power I had, my ambition would become smaller. When the salary became more handsome, I would donate widely.' By doing so, Sun Shuao avoided disaster. He had no desire, ambition and could work for the common people. Possession such knowledge prevented Sun Shuao from becoming complacent when becoming prime minister three times and showing no grief when leaving the position of prime minister three times.

Till now, I associated it with the old General Wang Jian of the kingdom of Qin and Zeng Guofan of Qing dynasty. Wang Jian tried to destroy Chu, in leading an army of 600,000 troops to conduct military operations. At that time the strength of the army equalled that of the entire force of the kingdom of Qin held by Wang Jian. Wang Jian was conscious of the fact and had thought out the counter measures. Before going out for the battle, Wang Jian said to the King of Qin Yinzheng, 'A veteran like me is going out to the battle in spite of illness in the hope that the king would reward me with more land'. On the way, Wang Jian sent a person back to Xian Yang time and again to ask the king of Qin for reinforcement. The underling did not understand and said, 'If troops were excessive, even then you did not win the battle, but requested the rewards. Wang Jian said with a laugh. 'The king was sceptical and cruel. He handed the entire army of the kingdom to me. If I do not show my selfishness, the king would not rely on me.' By this token, Wang Jian was an intelligent person.

Zeng Guofan possessed significant power. He knew that if he acquired greater power, the ruling house of Qing dynasty

might not trust him. Accordingly, when he was in power, he wrote many letters and diaries to his family. These letters and diaries recored trivial family details such as education of children, management of the family, planting of vegetable and flowers.

The intention of Zeng Guofan was that to let his master know he held no ambition for power and thus set the master's heart at rest. Compared to Sun Shuao, strategists who desired Wang Jian and Zeng Guofan were petty strategists who desired to save themselves from damage. However, the wisdom of Sun Shuao manifested in his personality, noble character and sterling integrity. He was embodied wisdom, with lofty morals and genius with which the later generations could not be compared.

Human beings cannot predict disaster or good fortune. Disaster can be changed to good fortune or benefit to harm provided you know how to distinguish between mishap and good fortune.

### Contented People are not Subjects

Gongxiuyi was prime minister in the kingdom of Lu. In chapter 'Daoying' of *Huainanzi* it is recorded he had a fancy for eating fish. The countrymen knew his weakness and sent him fish regularly. Gongxiuyi refused to accept the fish. His student asked him, 'You were keen on eating fish then why not accept the fish others send you?' Gongxiuyi answered, 'Just because I like to eat fish, I decided not to accept fish. If I accept it then I would stop eating fish, because accepting fish sent to me would make me lose the position of prime minister. If I do not accept the fish, I may not lose my position as prime minister. Then I can eat fish with my salary for a long time and continue with my desire to eat fish for a long time.'

In *Huainanzi*, after the narration of this story, there is a saying in which Laozi *Zhizuburu* implies that Gongxiuyi was contented with his lot, and did not subscribe to acts which made him a subject of insult.

Confucius too advocated such a spirit of contentment with one's lot so as not be ridiculed later on. Confucius praised his student Yan Hui especially by saying, 'Yan Hui is sagacious. In spite of living in simple and difficult conditions, he maintains a happy state of mind.' Yan Hui was complacent about his difficult living conditions and exercised self-control by following certain moral standards.

Compared with Gongxiuyi's *zhizuburu*, the spirit of Yan Hui showed more self-development in thought and social responsibility. The contention of Yan Hui was that Confucius advocated 'not to lower one's ambition and become subject to indignity.' This spiritual power is greater than Gongxiuyi. But *zhizuburu* (spirit of Gongxiuyi) displayed ordinary education for every person has his own interest and his own interest may become his weak point, causing disaster. It was difficult for the common person to avoid this disaster, but Gongxiuyi did it. This was his unusual quality. It was just for this reason that Gongxiuyi became a role model for his officials.

In *Records of Grand Historian*, Simaqian classified Gongxiuyi in *Biography of Xun Li*. Simaqian said that because Gongxiuyi had outstanding talent and learning, he became prime minister in the kingdom of Lu. During this term of office, he observed laws and Acts, thus establishing a model for officials. Therefore, at that time the officials in the Kingdom of Lu were well mannered. Gongxiuyi ordered that the official who took salary couldn't argue for profits from common people and the officials who received high salary could not demand further benefits.

Gongxiuyi did as he said. He never accepted fish that others sent to him, and this was a typical example.

In *Records of Grand Historin*, Gongxiuyi ate the vegetables produced by his own family and found them delicious, than those plucked from his own garden. He found the cloth his wife wove fine, so he drove her out of home and burned down the weaving machine. Why did Gongxiuyi did so? He said, 'Was it not possible that the peasant who planted vegetables and the woman who wove cloth couldn't sell their own products?'

Truly, it was somewhat extreme behaviour for Gongxiuyi to adopt. It could be the result of Gongxiuyi greater expectations. However, it was recognised that his rejecting fish from others despite his weakness for it impacted officialdom and had universal educational significance.

In Chapter 'Zhushu' of *Huainanzi*, a wise monarch governs his kingdom well, he must have had no personal desires, for, if the monarch had it the people would try to please and flatter his ego.

Chapter 'Daoying' of *Huainanzi* reports an incident about King Qi Wei. After the death of his queen, King Qi Wei wanted to declare one of the imperial concubines as the new queen. In order to cater for the intention of King Qi Wei, Duke Xue offered ten jade earrings and pointed out the most beautiful jade earring to King Qi Wei. The next day, Duke Xue surreptitiously found out to which imperial concubine King Qi Wei had sent the most jade earrings and announced her as imperial queen. On hearing that, King Qi Wei was rather glad. This imperial concubine was declared the new queen. From this time on, in national affairs, King Qi Wei began to consult Duke Xue. In *Huainanzi* it is said that if the intention and desire of the master get revealed to all, then the master can be controlled by his courtiers.

Gongxiuyi had his own hobby and desire, but he could let his hobby or desire to be controlled by others. It was his wisdom that he was conscious of this fact and avoided things which should make him a subject to insult.

## Rejection of Temptation

King Chu Zhuang was one of five overlords during the spring and autumn months. He reigned over his kingdom for 23 years. He was a wise king and performed good deeds. Because he knew the wisdom of life and rejected temptations he revealed that he could not lose the throne for over 20 years or meet with an accident.

In chapter 'Daoying' of *Huainanzi* it is recorded that prime minister Yin Zipei in the kingdom of Chu wanted to hold a competition for King Chu Zhuang. King Chu Zhuang promised to attend it. But when the competition was held formally at Qiang tai, King Chu Zhuang failed to attend. Zipei did not know why it was so and submissively went to the palace barefooted, admitted his error and asked for punishment. He said, 'You had agreed to participate in a competition, but did not attend it. I wonder if I have done something wrong.'

King Zhuang answered, 'I heard that you held the competition at Qiang tai, which faces Mount Liao southward, below abundant water and fertile land because of the presence of River, Yangtze on the left and on the right River Huaihe. The pleasure of climbing Qiang tai can make people forget the sorrow of death. Wicked people like me cannot enjoy such pleasure. I was afraid that if I climbed Qiang tai, I would linger on without any desire to leave therefore I did not participate in your fun.'

In *Huainanzi*, a saying by Laozi, is quoted, 'Without seeing things which arouse desires, your mind would not be puzzled.'

Human beings have emotions and desires, which cannot be eliminated, but if you want to succeed in life, you must control some desires. King Chu Zhuang acted intelligently by exercising control over his desires.

In Chapter 'Qisu' of *Huainanzi* it is recorded that in the Kingdom Lu, there lived a talented man named Yan He, who wanted to become a hermit. The king of Lu Kingdom appointed him prime minister, but he declined politely. The king presented him valuable gifts, but he drilled a hole on the rear wall of his house and ran away. In order to stay steadfast in fulfilment of his ambition, Yan did not consider the position of prime minister eminent or the valuable gifts alluring, enough and so adopted the method of escaping, and finally became a famous hermit.

The chapter 'Rangwang' in *Zhuangzi* talks of Tu Yang who was a hermit who resisted all kinds of temptation. He was a butcher who sold mutton in Chu kingdom. When Wu Zixu led his army to attack the capital of Chu kingdom, King Chu Zhao ran away. Even Tu Yang ran away, following King Chu Zhao. During the course of their escape, Tu Yang devoted all his attention take to care of King Chu Zhao. With his help, King Chu Zhao escaped unscathed. After the Wu army retreated, King Chu Zhao was restored the kingdom, he wanted to appoint Tu Yang as his official. Tu Yang said, 'When you lost the territory, I also lost the place to sell mutton. Now you have regained, your realm and I have got the place to sell mutton again. Why should I act as an official?' King Chu Zhao appreciated Tu Yang's devotion to him during the course of their escape and wanted to reward Tu Yang. Tu Yang said, 'According to Chu's institution, people who accept rewards certainly have made some contribution. However considering the civil aspect, I have no talent to govern the

kingdom and in the military I have no courage to fight with the enemy. As soon as the enemy came, I ran away. It was not for loyalty that I followed the king. If you award people like me, you would be mocked by the masses.'

King Chu Zhao considered Tu Yang an extraordinary person, and sent person to persuade him to accept it, the possible of being honoured but Tu Yang rejected the temptation. He said, 'I knew an official position is high and the salary I receive would be several times more than what I'll earn by selling mutton. But I do not covet a high position or a generous salary, as they make you earn all repute for giving me a high reward. Let me continue selling mutton, so that I can have peace of mind.'

A person can reject same temptation when he foresees the consequences of giving in to the temptation. This only wise men can do, while the weak cannot reject a temptation.

*Records of Grand Historian* records that Confucius left the kingdom singing because the king of Lu kingdom gave in to his temptation. Confucius toured numerous kingdoms and acted as dasikou of Lu Kingdom at the age of 56. Within three months of reign, he took the Lu Kingdom on the path of righteousness. Qi kingdom was afraid that if the Lu kingdom continued developing in this manner, it would pose threat to himself. He thought out a scheme and selected eighty pretty women dressed in beautiful clothes and sent them to the king of Lu kingdom. The king enjoyed the in song and dance presented by the beautiful women and ignored affairs of the kingdom for three days. Confucius sang a song blaming the king for accepting beautiful women of Qi and left the Lu kingdom in despair.

In chapter 'Zhushu' of *Huainanzi* it is said that Duke Qi Huan could not resist the temptation of I eating delicious food. Yi Ya killed his own son, cooked it, make it delicious and sent it to him. After eating, Duke Qi Huan died and his body

decomposed. The king of the Yu kingdom could not resist the temptation of obtaining the treasure, Duke Jin Xian used high-quality jade and horses as bait to entice him watching and made him suffer by capturing and inflicting death on him. King Hu did not resist the temptation of watching beautiful female play music, Duke Qin Mu enticed him and made him lose his fertile land.

If a person can resist temptation, then he can rise high in life and preserve his reputation as well as integrity. However, if he falls prey to temptation, then he loses his reputation and dignity also. Many examples in history teach this lesson to the younger generation.

### Destroy if a Thing is in Surplus

In chapter 'Daoying' of *Huainanzi* it is said that Confucius visited *miaotang* of Duke Lu Huan. A vessel named *youzhi* was kept there. Confucius said happily, 'I am glad to see this kind of utensil here.' Then he asked his students to pour water into the *youzhi*. When half the water was poured, the *youzhi* remained stable. When it became full with water, the *youzhi* collapsed. Confucius said to his students, 'This was the consequence of pouring surplus water.'

Zi Gong asked, 'May I ask how to deal with surplus quantity?'

Confucius replied, '*Yiersunzhi* (stop when it becomes surplus).'

Zi Gong asked 'Why should we *yiersunzhi*?' (Confucius answered, 'Everything becomes excessive and would decay. If happiness reached a climax, sadness comes into being. If the sun rises to the culmination (meridian passage)', it will set westward. When the moon becomes full, it changed its shape. Therefore, excessive wisdom is manifested in stupidity and clumsiness. The



well-read, well-informed and eloquent man can often demonstrate ignorance and ill information. Bravery and fortitude should be manifested in timidity and cowardice. Riches and honour should be demonstrated in frugality and austerity. A philanthropic attitude should be manifested in humility and courtliness. These five principles were the basis on which our ancestors preserved their kingdom. If you violate these five principles, you will run into danger.

Confucius cited *youzhi's* full and surplus as an instance to illustrate to his students on how to deal with full and surplus. In order to prevent a fall from taking place, people should destroy the surplus. Confucius enlightened his students on how to become wise and farsighted, how to be well-read, well-informed and eloquent, to be braver and learn fortitude and how to behave as a rich and honoured man. For doing so, talent, achievement and everything that a person possesses can be preserved; else, people will lose everything some day.

*Huainanzi* cites the example of Duke Bai Xiongsheng several times. Duke Bai named Xiongsheng, as the grandson of King Chu Ping. In *Records of Grand Historian* it is recorded that King Chu Ping had a concubine and Prince Xiong Jian married an imperial concubine. Several years later, he was provoked and wanted to kill Xiong Jian. Xiong Jian ran away to Zheng kingdom and was killed. Wu Zixu brought Xiong Jian's son to Wu kingdom. Later, Wu zixu led the army of Wu and attacked the capital of Chu kingdom. At that time, the ruler of Chu was King Chuzhao Xiongzheng, who was born to a female of Qin kingdom. After the death of King Chuzhao, his son Xiong Zhang was appointed as King Chu Hui. King who was judicious and discreet. He called his brother-in-law, the son of Xiong Jian back from Wu kingdom to defend at the border of Chu kingdom. Xiong Sheng was called Duke Bai and respected by King Chu Hui. But Duke Bai couldn't

forget the death of his father and adopted several hatchet men and to help in taking revenge. Two years later, Duke Bai abruptly raised an armed rebellion in the court, killed chancellors and kidnapped King Chu Hui. General Duke Ye of Chu led the army, defeated Duke Bai and rescued King Chu Hui. Duke Bai escaped to the mountains and committed suicide.

Duke Bai Xiong Sheng did not know the principles of *yiersunzhi*, and so harmed his own life.

In chapter 'Daoying' of *Huainanzi*, Duke Bai Xiong Sheng asked Confucius for advice on whether a person could speak his mind in private. At first, Confucius did not answer it, but Baigong's persistence prompted. Confucius to say, 'You should speak your mind to a person who understands the meaning of your utterance. Even if you did not say anything to the person who understands others' words, he would still understand it. People must have some water on the body in order to find fish. People must run in order to chase beasts. These were not because they liked it. Therefore, the most ingenious reason was self-evident. The best conduct was to take action instead of possessing only the desire. Those people who have narrow and shallow knowledge and experience tend to argue on too trivial or insignificant issues.' In *Huainanzi*, there is a remark that Duke Bai did not understand the reason which Confucius mentioned and so died early.

The implication of these remarks tallies with the above-mentioned utterance. It was profound elaboration of *yiersunzhi*. The reason through unsaid is a most ingenious one. Conduct without the intention of possession is best. Therefore, after the most ingenious reason is said and the best behaviour is shown, the surplus is attained. But, as a result of a person who has too much is sure to get proud and take it to his head, thus having a fall. Confucius conveyed to his students through the experiment of pouring water into the *youzhi*.

## Wise do not Show Off

There is an interesting story in *Huainanzi* in the chapter 'In the World'. A man called Qin Niuqu was clever, brave and talented. One day he came across a group of robbers when he was walking past a mountain. They robbed all his belongings including his vehicle, horse and even his clothes, and returned home fully loaded. But they came back after a while as they were curious to know their victim's plight. They found him walking happily with his arms waving, not at all like an injured party. 'We robbed all you had and almost killed you. Why were you not nervous?' the puzzled robbers asked him.

'The vehicle and horse are used to carry goods and people, and clothes to hide the naked body. The saint would not hurt himself by those outside the body', he replied.

The robbers felt that he was not a common man on hearing his words. Qin walked away with fast steps. They began to discuss, 'The man knows how to protect his heart from injury due to loss of material goods and keeps his body away from profit. He must be a saint.' 'Another said, 'If he is a saint, he will be welcomed by the king for his talent and knowledge; if he is welcomed by the king, he will take revenge against us.' So they decided to kill Qin.

At the end of the story, *Huainanzi* reached the conclusion, 'This man knew how to show his knowledge instead of hiding it; he was brave as to be daring enough to do it but not brave enough to pretend not to dare to.' This meant that Qin Niuqu showed his knowledge, and did not act ignorant of his talent; he was very brave, as, he did not act nervous. In the end, he lost his life.

At the end of this article, it was quoted from *The Book of Songs*, 'It was also said that there was no clever sage.' There is a saying - sages are all stupid.

‘No clever sage’ actually means that those who are really intelligent seem stupid ostensibly. Those who are really wise seem to be foolish while those who act cleverly are always not wise but street smart.

Another story in *Huainanzi* tells about Confucius who said he was lower than his three students.

‘What kind of person is Yan Hui?’ somebody asked Confucius.

‘Yan Hui is kindhearted and better than me,’ he replied.

‘What about Zi Gong?’ another questioned. ‘Zi Gong is eloquent and better than me,’ replied Confucius.

‘And Zi Lu?’ one more asked.

‘Zi Lu is brave and better than me,’ replied Confucius.

‘All are better than you. Then why do they obey you?’ the man was puzzled.

‘I am both kindhearted and heartless, both eloquent and clumsy in speaking, both brave and timid.’ replied Confucius.

That is why Confucius became a saint. Although the three students were better than Confucius in heart, speech and bravery, but they could not be Confucius—both kindhearted and heartless, eloquent and clumsy in speech, both brave and timid they showed off their ability, unlike Confucius, and did not reach the state of no clever sage.

That a truly wise person does not show off his ability is a true intelligent one and his kind of intelligence is beyond common people’s reach. But we can acquire this intelligence. A wise man pretends to be foolish, timid, and weak.

Huainanzi - in chapter on ‘Dao Ying’ says that Gou Jian, the king of Yue, after losing to Wu and giving up his country, was besieged in Kuaiji. At that time, he was so angry that even his

liver and gall bladder were about to break, as his anger gushed like spring. Therefore he chose some brave soldiers for training, was prepared to take all risks and determined to launch a crucial battle. Later, clever Gou Jian changed his mind and begged to be the servant of the king of Wu and his wife to be the king's trusted. He personally carried the arms, led the horse and cleared the way for the king. He deceived the king of Wu in this way and finally defeated Wu by pretending to be 'submissive'.

From this story, *Huainanzi* proves what Lao Zi said, 'The gentle win the strong; the weak beat the tough.' Being wronged is to be right; being bent is to be straight.'

Gou Jian, the king of Yue, was quite brave but he pretended to be timid to deceive the king of Wu. Gou Jian, as a truly wise man, did not show off his ability. This story proves that there was no clever sage.

### Be Flexible

Acting flexible means acting according to circumstances. In *Huainanzi* and under the title, 'The Theory of Si' it was said that acting flexible helped saints and therefore they lived their life smoothly without landing in trouble. Confucius said, 'We can study with somebody but may not get along with him; we may go the right way with somebody but may not obey rules with him; we may obey rules with him but may not act flexibly with him.' What Confucius shows is that not all people know the trick of acting flexible; and only those with certain virtues can be flexible.

In order to prove this view, *Huainanzi* states Guan Zhong's story. Si Maqian gave an overall introduction of Guan Zhong. Guan Zhong was born poor in Yingshang. He got along with Bao Shuya when he was young and Bao admired his talent. Later, Bao

assisted Xiao Bai, the prince of Qi, while Guan assisted Jiu, another prince of Qi. Duke Qi Xiang lived a licentious life and killed innocent people. His younger brothers escaped abroad. Prince Xiao Bai escaped to Ju and Prince Jiu to Lu. Bao Shuya and Guan Zhong went away to Ju and Lu respectively. When Qi faced a coup, those with power and influence in Qi wanted to recall Xiao Bai and make him the king. But Lu wanted Prince Jiu to be king of Qi. Duke Lu Zhuang sent people to protect Prince Jiu on the way to Qi, and at the same time he made Guan Zhong prevent Prince Xiao Bai and his men from reaching Qi. In the scuffle, Guan Zhong shot Xiao Bai with an arrow, but could not kill him because the arrows landed on the hooks on his clothes. But Xiao Bai pretended to be dead. Guan told Duke Lu Zhuang about the death of Prince Xiao Bai to set his mind at peace and delayed Prince Jiu on his journey. Six days later, when Prince Jiu arrived at Qi, Xiao Bai had been made king and was called Duke Qi Huan, while Prince Jiu had to return empty handed to Lu.

After being king, Duke Qihuan wanted to declare war on Lu in order to kill Prince Jiu and take revenge against Guan Zhong for that arrow. But Bao Shuya told Duke Qi Huan that Guan Zhong was a rare talent and would not kill him because if Qi wanted to be the leader of other countries, he had to seek Guan Zhong's help.

Persuaded by Bao Shuya, Duke Qi Huan wrote to Duke Lu Zhuang asking him to kill Prince Jiu and send Guan Zhong back; else Qi would besiege Lu.

Frightened by Qi's strong words and power, Duke Lu Zhuang killed Prince Jiu and Guan Zhong was sent back under guard to Qi. After arriving at Qi, Guan Zhong was led to Duke Qi Huan by Bao Shuya. He was appointed in Qi's government on a rank higher than Bao Shuya's.

In reference to Guan Zhong's experience, *Huainanzi* said, 'Guan Zhong failed to assist Prince Jiu, so we would not say he was clever; he did not commit suicide for his master after Prince Jiu's death, so we would not say he was brave; he turned to help Xiao Bai after the failure, so we would not say he was faithful. But it was he, who, despite not being clever, brave, and faithful, governed Qi, met leaders of other countries nine times and led the world. If Guan Zhong had died for Prince Jiu without having a long-term plan, how could he have lorded over other countries?'

Guan Zhong knew how to act flexibly. Those who are flexible as to bend on small matters but determined on big issues, concede on trifles but insist on major issues.

Duke Qi Huan wanted to be the ruler but counteracted by being successful in politics, which proved that he knew how to be flexible.

*Huainanzi* gave another example. Zhi Gong's father stole sheep and Zhi testified for his father's deed; Wei Sheng went on a date with a woman under a bridge, but the river went up sharply when they were to meet. In order to keep his words, he was drowned in the flood.

Being faithful to your words and carrying out what you have promised are noble characteristics, but who can say what Zhi Gong and Wei Sheng did was noble? They did not know how to be flexible.

Being flexible means adaptig your actions to suit the changing circumstances. There is no hard and fast rule though, sometimes being servile and sometimes being strong helps. Being soft like a reed does not mean being afraid of power and giving up one's aspirations; nor does behaving strongly mean being cocky. They both represent acting flexibly.

Among Liu Bang and Xiang Yu, one knew to act flexibly and the other did not. Liu Bang knew it and won the world while Xiang Yu did not know it and killed himself at River Wujiang.

## Little is Better than Much

*Huainanzi* pointed that one's intelligence does not lie in his skills and small tricks. One without virtues will bring misfortune despite possessing skill. 'Those who are not merciful but brave and decisive are lunatics with sharp swords in hand; those who are not intelligent but eloquent and quick-witted are like people riding winged horses without any destination. One's talent is used to encourage vanity and cover one's his mistakes if talent is not used properly. Therefore it is much better to have less small tricks.'

*Huainanzi* under 'The Theory of Si' gives a vivid example about small tricks. A man in Song considered himself smart and thought that he could forecast the future. On the day of marriage of his daughter, he told her, 'I can predict that this marriage will not be successful, so you must save money secretly in order to be prepared for that your husband deserting you. If you have money, it would be easier for you to marry again.'

She believed her father and often hid money privately when she was at her husband's home. She was sent back to her father after her husband's family came to know of it. Seeing his daughter back, the father was happy at his prediction and the advice he had given protect herself. *Huainanzi* said, 'He knew it was wise to save money for a rainy day but did not know the result of it.' The father was only afraid of his daughter being deserted and taught her to hide money but did not foresee that she was deserted just because she hid money.

The father considered himself clever but he was not really clever, It was just his small trick that misled his daughter and led to the failure of her marriage.

*Huainanzi* under 'The Custom of Qi' defines 'intelligence' as: 'The so-called bright mind means being able to see not



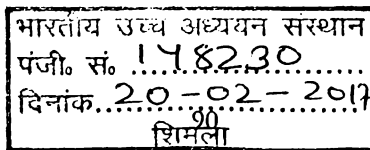
others, but yourself; the so-called ability to hear means being able to hear not others, but yourself.' This definition is deep and provides much food for thought.

In order to expound on what is true intelligence, I want to tell the Confucius the story as written in *Huainanzi Zhushu*.

With many talents, Confucius was more intelligent than Chang Hong and braver than Meng Feng. He could catch up with a sly rabbit and lift the lever of the city gate. Knowing his talent in all fields, people just knew he propagated doctrines, imparted knowledge and resolved problems, but they did not know how brave, quick and powerful he was. He just worked on the most important thing and could visualise his thought, clearly hear his own heart and be absorbed in putting all his intelligence on promoting the enterprise of the king.

Confucius was truly intelligent. *Huainanzi* said, 'The saint owned more intelligence but restricted himself. Therefore his career was prosperous. The stupid possessed less intelligence but engaged in many things and so found himself at the end of his rope. Wu Qi and Zhang Yi were less intelligent than Confucius and Mencius, but they competed with kings, so they faced failure. This means that the saint was intelligent enough and concentrated on one thing and thus his career prospered; but those with little intelligence were stupid to have much desires and so landed in a blind alley. Wu Qi and Zhang Yi were endowed with less intelligence than Confucius and Mencius, and struggled for fame and profit among the kings of big countries that is why they could not succeed in life.

□□□



***Stories of Huainanzi*** is a collection of selected stories from the Chinese classic *Huainanzi Gushi* which was originally published in China. This is an Indian edition of the stories from this book. The stories reveal the rich traditional culture of China. Its popularity is based on its interesting contents in the form of strong and vivid plots and eidetic images. The fine work of Huainanzi is rare and full of ideas which encompass wide subjects from nature, politics astronomy, geography, military affairs, philosophy and medicine. Stories of the book bring the classics back to life in its customary language of today and the elements of present time.



Library IAS, Shimla

895.1301 Y 901 S



00148230



SAHITYA  
AKADEMI

ISBN 978-81-260-4751-2



9 788126 047512

₹ 95