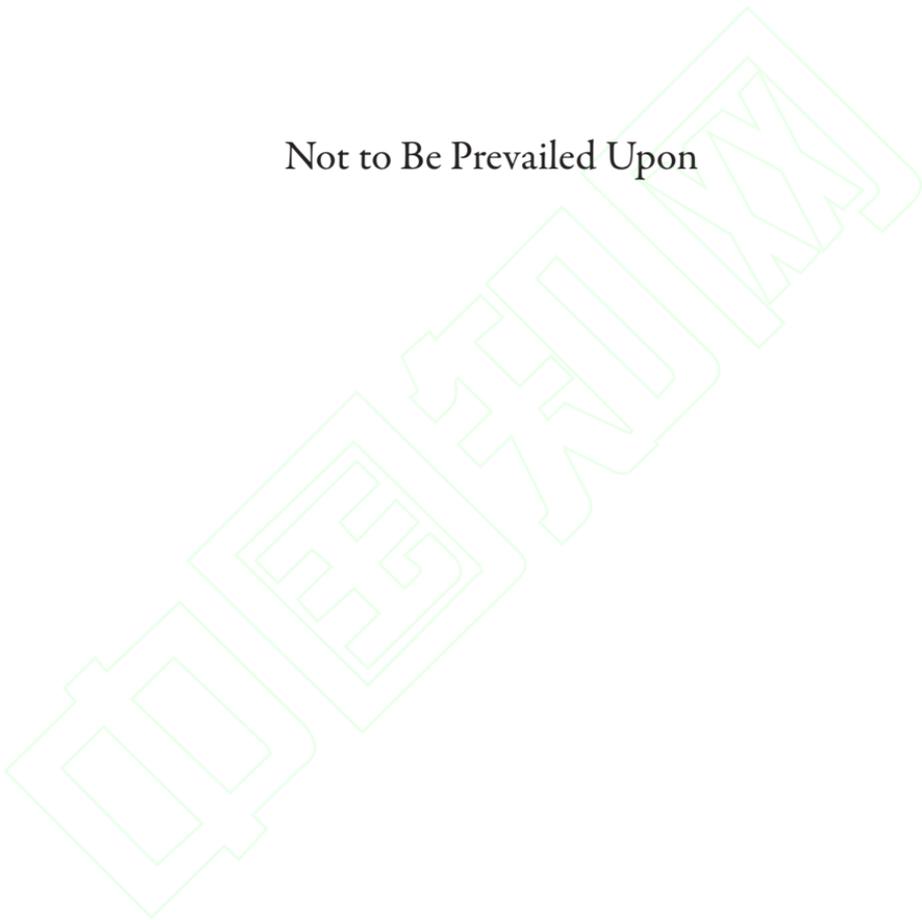


TALE 64

Not to Be Prevailed Upon



King Hui of the state of Wei said to Hui Zi, “All the rulers of states in the world are men of virtue. As I am not as good as you, I am willing to hand over the state to you.”

Hui Zi declined. But the king insisted, saying, “If I relinquish the state and hand it over to a man of virtue, people will cease to be greedy and to scramble for gain. For this reason, I hope you will listen to what I say.”

Hui Zi said, “If it is like what Your Majesty says, I cannot listen to Your Majesty. Your Majesty is the ruler of a big state with ten thousand chariots. If Your Majesty can make people cease to be greedy and scramble for gain, a commoner as I am who has declined to take over a big state will be in a better position to make people cease to be greedy and scramble for gain.”

King Hui said to Hui Zi, “All the rulers of states in ancient times were men of virtue.”



Shun, who accepted the throne, was a man of virtue. King Hui was thus trying to turn Hui Zi into a man like Shun.

Xu You, who declined the throne, was also a man of virtue. King Hui was thus trying to turn Hui Zi into a man like Xu You. Yao, who passed the throne to someone, was a man of virtue. King Hui was thus trying to turn himself into a man like Yao. Yao, Shun and Xu You achieved world-wide fame not simply because Yao

handed the throne to Shun and Shun took it or Yao tried to give the throne to Xu You and Xu You refused to take it. Their conduct in other aspects also corresponded to their fame.

King Hui and Hui Zi had done nothing else and yet wanted to become men like Yao, Shun and Xu You. That was why King Hui was reduced to wearing cotton clothes and hat and locked up at Juan and King Wei of the state of Qi refused to accept his surrender and why Hui Zi had to change his clothes and hat, fled away in a carriage and was almost unable to get out of the state of Wei. In whatever one does, one must not trust to luck but must be sincere.

During the reign of King Hui, he fought fifty wars and lost twenty of them. A countless number of people were killed and King Hui's generals and son were taken prisoner by the enemy. Hui Zi's stupid way of running the state of Wei became a target of ridicule by people in the world, who all cited his mistakes. King Hui had to ask the Grand Historian of the Zhou dynasty to change Hui Zi's honorary title of Secondary Father. Hui Zi laid siege on the city of Handan for three years but could not take it. The soldiers and people were tired out and the state treasury was exhausted.

Regional rulers in all parts of the world sent their armies to rescue Handan. Censured by the common people and condemned by the regional rulers, Hui Zi had to apologize to Zhai Jian and adopt his advice to save the state of Wei from destruction. With its state treasures scattered and its territory annexed, the state of Wei began to decline. Secondary Father was a lofty honorary title, and passing the throne to another man was a noble act. Hui Zi advised King Hui in words which should not be listened to and believed. Listening to advice as King Hui did cannot be said to be a good way of listening to advice.

There is no greater harm than the harm caused by one who rules a state but is not good at listening to advice. It was fortunate that Hui Zi's advice was adopted only by the state of Wei. As Hui Zi had caused harm to the world in the name of establishing order, did he not deserve to be censured by Kuang Zhang?

When Bai Gui met Hui Zi for the first time, Hui Zi talked at length on how to make the country strong. Bai Gui had nothing to say in reply. After Hui Zi had left, Bai Gui said to others, "Suppose someone has just taken a wife. When the bride comes to his house, she should be calm and dignified, not to stare and should walk in gentle steps. If she finds the boy servant has made the torch burn too brightly and says, 'The torch is burning too brightly,' and if she finds a depression in the floor as she walks into a room and says, 'The depression must be levelled or it may hurt someone's foot, what she says will not inconvenience the family, but it is too much on her part. Hui Zi met me for the first time today. He has gone too far to try to convince me.'"

Upon hearing this remark, Hui Zi said, "No. The Book of Odes says: 'Noble and eminent Perfect Men are like parents to the people.' Noble means exalted, and eminent, lofty. A Perfect Man of exalted and lofty virtue is like a parent to the people. Does a parent have to wait for a long time before he can educate his children? Why compare me to a bride? Does The Book of Odes say, 'A noble and eminent bride?'" If the denouncer is befouled upon denouncing a foul and accused of being absurd upon denouncing absurdity, the denouncer will be equalized with the denounced. Bai Gui said, "Hui Zi met me for the first time. He has gone too far to try to convince me."

Upon hearing it, Hui Zi accused him, considering himself a parent. His wrong was far worse than "going too far" as Bai Gui denounced him for.