

Traditional Culture: When the Emperor Ruled with Compassion, People Loved Him

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Translated by Qing Yan from Tang Dynasty History book *Zhenguan Zhengyao*

(Clearwisdom.net) In Year One of the Zhenguan Era, Emperor Tang Taizong told his imperial chief of staff, "The women in the imperial palace are miserable. At the end of the Sui Dynasty, the imperial palaces recruited too many women. Many of them live in out-of-town royal palaces where the emperor seldom visits; it is a waste of money and human resources. I do not like this situation. All they do is house cleaning. What else can they do? Let them go back home and get married. We can save money and the people will be much happier and have their own lives." After that, the imperial palaces sent more than 3,000 women home.

In Year Two of the Zhenguan Era, Central China had a drought followed by a horrendous famine. Emperor Tang Taizong said to his cabinet, "The extreme climate is the result of my lack of virtue; my rule is not based

on virtue. Therefore we are being punished. What have the people done wrong to deserve this hardship? I have heard that people sell their sons and daughters for money. I feel very sad!" He then dispatched cabinet member Du Yan to survey the drought area. He bought back the children with the Emperor's personal money and returned them to their parents.

In Year Seven of the Zhenguan Era, Xiangzhou Governor Zhang Gongjin passed away. The Emperor was deeply saddened and he went to several memorial services to express his feelings. Some officials wrote a note to him: "The Huai book of Yin-and-Yang says that one should not cry in mourning because it may bring bad luck." Emperor Taizong answered, "My relationship with my ministers is like father and son. I feel sad from my heart. How could I not cry?" After that, the Emperor started to cry again.

In Year Nineteen of the Zhenguan Era, Emperor Taizong personally commanded the army to conquer Korea. While resting at Ding Zhou, some soldiers stopped by. Emperor Taizong met with the soldiers at the North Gate. One of the soldiers was sick and could not follow the troops. Emperor Taizong invited him to his own bedside and asked him where he was hurting. The Emperor also asked the doctors in Ding Zhou to

treat the sick soldier. Because of the Emperor's compassion, all his generals and soldiers were willing to follow him in battle. On their return trip, Taizong ordered the troops to honor the bones of the dead soldiers in a ceremony, in which they offered to sacrifice cows, sheep and hogs. The Emperor came to the ceremony and cried. All the military personnel were moved to tears. After the ceremony, the parents of the lost soldiers said, "The Emperor cried at our son's funeral. Now he can rest in peace." When Emperor Taizong's troops were attacking Baiyan Town in East Liaoning Province, General Li Simo was hit by an arrow. The Emperor himself sucked the bad blood out of General Li's wound. All the soldiers were deeply touched.