



Non-fiction

Group 1

New Talse of Judge Pao

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Who is Judge Pao? What is he? Is he a real person or an imaginary one? According to the history of China, Pao was a real person who lived in the Song Dynasty (960–1279). In fact, in Hong Kong, Sir Pao Yue Kong a well known person, is believed to have descended from him.

Pao, also known as the Chinese Sherlock Holmes, came from a poor family but rose to become a famous magistrate. He was also trusted and held many other important positions as well. He was greatly admired by all, especially the poor and vulnerable, victims of corrupt, selfish, greedy and power-hungry people such as Kings, rulers and high ranking officials of his time. These victims were often falsely accused of crimes and misbehaviour that they had never committed. With his sharp mind, righteousness and integrity and the rule of law, he became the saviour of these victims and was honoured with the title of Pao Qing Tian, for being a kind judge, a man of honesty and fairness. Also, he initiated many legal reforms to better address the grievances of people in China. What inspired him to take up such a task was Confucius' desire for a benevolent government where kindness and fairness prevail. His passion for justice was so great that when he found his nephew guilty of a crime, he did not spare him but sentenced him to death.

Is Pao known only to and loved by the Chinese? Of course not, he has been and is still greatly admired by people of different countries too. Even after his death, people still love to read his cases and stories written by subsequent writers.

And, was Pao the only upright judge able to solve mysteries of crimes and bring about justice? No, as throughout history, injustices were also rampant but fortunately with shrewd judges and mediators, like Pao, their victims were also rescued.

Take for example, in the Bible, Daniel was able to save Susanna, a victim of being falsely accused of wrong doing, from being stoned to death and then there was Jesus who also rescued a woman from a similar fate by making the accusers realize they were no better than she was.

Even now, with corrupt officials in governments and tyrants ruling countries, such sad cases still exist and that is why many crimes stories, such as those of Sherlock Holmes of England and those of Pierrot of France are welcome by readers. Like Pao both of them are ingenious detectives, famous for solving difficult intriguing crimes

To have a taste of what an excellent judge Pao was, we should read some of his more famous cases such as: EXECUTING BAO MAN, CIVET CAT EXCHANGED FOR CROWN PRINCE and THE CASE OF THE TWO NAILS.

To conclude, I just wish we have Judge Pao or judges like him with us today in this world which is still rampant with corruption and justice.

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On a thunderous evening on the 5th of March, 999, the residents of the Bao family were busy making preparations to welcome a new member to their family. Suddenly a roaring baby's cry brought joy to the entire household. The cry of the baby was full of energy drowning out the deafening sound of the thunder. The Bao family's joy was however short-lived when they saw the baby's skin was as dark as the night and his forehead had the markings of a crescent moon. Many felt that the baby was cursed, but little did they know that night marked the beginning of a magnificent justice of the Song Dynasty, Bao Zheng commonly known as "Bao Gong".

Despite early hardship with people quick to judge him as cursed, Bao Zheng was diligent and at the age of 29, he passed the highest-level imperial examination and became qualified as a Jinshi. However, Bao Zheng did not start his official career for a decade, opting to stay at home and look after his ailing parents. After the passing of his parents, at 39 Bao was appointed magistrate of Tianchang County not far from his hometown. During his tenure, Bao was decisive in his judgment and was renowned for his love and respect for the people.

In 1040, Bao Zheng was promoted to the prefect of Duanzhou in the south for his exceptional performance. It was during these 3 years that Bao Zheng established his righteous and incorruptible reputation. Bao Zheng would not take bribes and abolished corrupt rules set by his predecessors. Bao Zheng was recalled back to the capital and named investigating censor in 1044. During the next two years Bao Zheng

In 1057, Bao was appointed the magistrate of the capital city of Kaifeng. Bao Zheng initiated several administrative reforms. The most famous reform was allowing citizens to directly lodge complaints, bypassing corrupt city clerks who only served those that could afford to pay them large sums of money. Bao Zheng gained much fame and popularity from his reforms and was loved by the people.

Bao Zheng died on the 3rd July 1062. During his 25 years in civil service, the people often referred to him as "Bao qingtian" or "Iron-faced judge", due to his righteousness, defending peasants and lower-class people against corruption and injustice. There were also assertions that he was the incarnation of the Astral Gods of Civil Arts. There were even rumors that the crescent moon on his forehead was a sign that he was a demigod which gave him the ability to communicate with the super-naturals, helping him to solve inexplicable cases.

To this day, the people still commemorate his exploits, with numerous TV series showcasing his deeds. In modern Chinese, Justice Bao is synonymous with the "Lady Justice" of western culture symbolizing justice for all.