抱薪救火

戰國末期，秦國向魏國接連發動大規模的進攻，魏國無力抵抗，大片土地都被秦軍占領了。

到公元前273年，秦國又一次向魏國出兵，勢頭空前猛烈。魏王把大臣們召來，愁眉苦臉地問大家有沒有使秦國退兵的辦法。

大臣們由於經過多年的戰亂，提起打仗就嚇得哆嗦，誰也不敢談“抵抗”二字。

在這大兵壓境的危急時刻，多數大臣都勸魏王，用黃河以北和太行山以南的大片土地為代價，向秦王求和。

謀士蘇代聽了這些話，很不以為然，上前對魏王說：“大王，他們是因為自己膽小怕死，才讓您去賣國求和，根本不為國家著想。您想，把大片土地割讓給秦國雖然暫時滿足了秦王的野心，但秦國的欲望是無止境的，只要魏國的土地沒割完，秦軍就不會停止進攻我們。”

說到這裡，蘇代講了一個故事：“從前有一個人，他的房子起火了，別人勸他快用水去澆滅大火，但他不聽，偏抱起一捆柴草去救火，是因為他不懂得柴草不但不能滅火反而能助長火勢的道理。大王若同意拿著魏國土地去求和，不就等於抱著柴草救火嗎？”

盡管蘇代講得頭頭是道，但是膽小的魏王只顧眼前的太平，還是依大臣們的意見把魏國大片土地割讓給秦國。

到公元225年，魏國最終被秦國滅掉了。這個故事出自司馬遷的《史記》，“抱薪救火”就是指“用錯誤的方式去挽救現狀，最終只會令狀況更糟糕”。

抱薪救火

战国末期，秦国向魏国接连发动大规模的进攻，魏国无力抵抗，大片土地都被秦军占领了。

到公元前273年，秦国又一次向魏国出兵，势头空前猛烈。魏王把大臣们召来，愁眉苦脸地问大家有没有使秦国退兵的办法。

大臣们由于经过多年的战乱，提起打仗就吓得哆嗦，谁也不敢谈“抵抗”二字。

在这大兵压境的危急时刻，多数大臣都劝魏王，用黄河以北和太行山以南的大片土地为代价，向秦王求和。

谋士苏代听了这些话，很不以为然，上前对魏王说：“大王，他们是因为自己胆小怕死，才让您去卖国求和，根本不为国家着想。您想，把大片土地割让给秦国虽然暂时满足了秦王的野心，但秦国的欲望是无止境的，只要魏国的土地没割完，秦军就不会停止进攻我们。”

说到这裡，苏代讲了一个故事：“从前有一个人，他的房子起火了，别人劝他快用水去浇灭大火，但他不听，偏抱起一捆柴草去救火，是因为他不懂得柴草不但不能灭火反而能助长火势的道理。大王若同意拿着魏国土地去求和，不就等于抱着柴草救火吗？”

尽管苏代讲得头头是道，但是胆小的魏王只顾眼前的太平，还是依大臣们的意见把魏国大片土地割让给秦国。

到公元225年，魏国最终被秦国灭掉了。这个故事出自司马迁的《史记》，“抱薪救火”就是指“用错误的方式去挽救现状，最终只会令状况更糟糕”。

In the last years of*the Warring States period* (战国, 475-221BC), *the State of Qin* (秦国) attacked *the State of Wei* (魏国) on a large scale [repeatedly](http://dict.hjenglish.com/w/repeatedly) and occupied large areas of land, for the State of Wei was too [weak](http://dict.hjenglish.com/w/weak) to [defend](http://dict.hjenglish.com/w/defend) itself.

In 273 BC, the Qin army [launched](http://dict.hjenglish.com/w/launch) another attack upon the State of Wei with a [momentum](http://dict.hjenglish.com/w/momentum) more [vigorous](http://dict.hjenglish.com/w/vigorous) than ever. The king of the State of Wei [summoned](http://dict.hjenglish.com/w/summon) his officials,and asked with a worried look if anyone could [propose](http://dict.hjenglish.com/w/propose) a way to defeat the Qin army.

After years of chaos caused by the wars,the officials [trembled](http://dict.hjenglish.com/w/tremble) when fighting was mentioned, and no one [dared](http://dict.hjenglish.com/w/dare) to speak of “[resistance](http://dict.hjenglish.com/w/resistance%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)”.

At the critical moment when a large enemy force was approaching the [border](http://dict.hjenglish.com/w/border), most of the officials persuaded the king to [sue for](http://dict.hjenglish.com/w/sue%20for) peace, at the cost of giving away to the State of Qin the large area of land north of *the Huanghe River*
(huáng hé 黄河) and south of the *Taihang Mountain* (tài háng shān 太行山).

However*Su Dai* (sūdài 苏代), a [counsellor](http://dict.hjenglish.com/w/counsellor), did not agree. He hurried up to the king and said:"Your Majesty, they don't think about the interests of the country at all.It is just because they are [cowardly](http://dict.hjenglish.com/w/cowardly) and afraid of death that they ask you to sue for peace by [betraying](http://dict.hjenglish.com/w/betray) the country.Of course you can temperarily [satisfy](http://dict.hjenglish.com/w/satisfy) the [ambition](http://dict.hjenglish.com/w/ambition) of the king of the State of Qin is [insatiably](http://dict.hjenglish.com/w/insatiably) greedy. It will never stop [assaulting](http://dict.hjenglish.com/w/assault) us until our land is totally given away."

Once there was a man whose house was on fire. People told him to [put out](http://dict.hjenglish.com/w/put%20out) the fire with water, but he would not listen. Instead, he carried a [faggot](http://dict.hjenglish.com/w/faggot) to put out the fire, only to make the fire fiercer. That was because he didn't know that,instead of putting out the fire, faggots could only make it burning more [vigorously](http://dict.hjenglish.com/w/vigorously). Isn't it [equivalent](http://dict.hjenglish.com/w/equivalent) to carrying faggots to put out a fire if you agree to sue for peace at the cost of the land of the State of Wei?"

Though Su Dai's argument was very [convincing](http://dict.hjenglish.com/w/convincing), the king accepted the suggestion of those officials and gave away to the State of Qin a large area of the land of the State of Wei.

The State of Wei was finally destroyed by the State of Qin. This story appears in the Historical Records Written by Sima Qian. The set phrase"carrying faggots to put out a fire"is used to mean adopting a wrong method to save a situation and ending up by making it worse.

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| 大規模 | dàguīmó | large scale / extensive / wide scale / broad scale |
| 出兵 | chūbīng | to send troops |
| 愁眉苦臉 | chóuméikǔliǎn | to look anxious (idiom) / to look miserable |
| 戰亂 | zhànluàn | chaos of war |
| 大兵 | dàbīng | soldier / large army / powerful army / (old) large-scale war |
| 危急 | wēijí | critical / desperate (situation) |
| 不以為然 | bùyǐwéirán | not to accept as correct (idiom); to object / to disapprove / to take exception to |
| 膽小 | dǎnxiǎo | cowardice / timid |
| 賣國 | màiguó | to betray one's country |
| 割讓 | gēràng | to cede / cession |
| 野心 | yěxīn | ambition / wild schemes / careerism |
| 滅火 | mièhuǒ | to extinguish a fire / firefighting |
| 助長 | zhùzhǎng | to encourage / to foster / to foment |
| 火勢 | huǒshì | intensity of a fire / lively / flourishing |
| 頭頭是道 | tóutóushìdào | clear and logical |
| 現狀 | xiànzhuàng | current situation |