

ECHOES *of the* HEART

Selected Poems

MA KAI



外语教学与研究出版社
FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH PRESS

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Translated by
Ling Yuan

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Preface

China is well known for its cultural affinity with poetry. Classical poems, especially those following regulated patterns of rhythm and rhyme, are as gems in the nation's cultural heritage.

Through the centuries, one generation of poets after another has contributed to a cornucopia of brilliant verse that has played no small part in recording history and carrying China's cultural heritage forward. These poems are still very familiar to the tongue today. They are a perennial source of inspiration and ideas, attesting to man's cultural edification and mental well-being; they are instrumental in fostering an exchange of personal feelings, the appreciation of art and the advance of social and cultural development.

The development of classical Chinese poetry over the past millennia and its enduring vitality are attributable fundamentally to the Chinese characters that serve as its carrier language. The square structure of these independent written forms, as monosyllables of four tones, allowed poets in China's dynastic past to follow aesthetically viable tonal patterns and metrics, and construct a consummate poetic framework — a thing of beauty in its equilibrium, rhythm, musicality, symmetry, and its succinctness. This has culminated in an accurate and concise language so pleasing in tonality and rhyme to the ear, and so easy to learn to recite, that all find joy therein.


As a professional economist who has worked for long years in government economic departments, I have developed a deep affection for Chinese culture and letters. I regard myself as an “aficionado” of classical Chinese poems. I started reading Tang dynasty poems

and lyrical verse of the Song dynasty in my childhood. Later, I learned the rhythmic rules and tonal patterns of classical verse which encouraged me to write a first few pieces in my spare time. With the encouragement of family members and friends, I have published collections of my poems, including the *Chants of a Wayfarer* and *Echoes of the Heart*. These selected pieces record the major events at home and abroad that I experienced personally. Some reflect those things I love or hate with a passion; some reflect my thoughts and observations on life, nature, loved ones and friends; and combined together, they sketch a trajectory of my personal life and career over the last six decades or so. To my immense delight, these poems have found resonance among quite a few readers; they also give me the opportunity to make new friends through verse and compare notes with other poets. Indeed, reading, writing and appreciating poems has become an important part of my life.

On the occasion of the release of the English edition of the *Echoes of the Heart*, I would like to convey my heartfelt gratitude to Professor Ling Yuan and his team of translator-editors Ren Xiaomei, Peng Lin and Zhong Zhilan, translators Fan Haixiang and Ge Meng and editors Man Xingyuan, Yi Lu and Duan Huixiang of the Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press for their translation and editorial work with attention to the minute detail, and to President Cai Jianfeng of the Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press for his competent leadership. I would like also to thank Ms Karen Smith, a renowned Chinese art historian of Britain and a longtime friend from the former Chinese Literature Press, for reading through the final drafts of the poems and for her helpful suggestions. I am most indebted to Director-General Xu Lin of the Hanban/Confucius Institute Headquarters and President Li Pengyi of the China Education and Media Group for arranging this translation project; to Mr Li Zhaoxing, former Foreign Minister and incumbent President of the China Translators Association, and Professor Dai Xingyue of Peking University for taking time to read the first translation drafts and set the guideline for improvement; and

to Chairman Chen Jinyu of the Counsellors' Office of the State Council and President Chen Yulu of Renmin University for their unstinting support. My thanks are also due all those friends who have contributed to the English edition of the *Echoes of the Heart*.

I concluded the preface to my first poem collection, the Chinese edition of the *Chants of a Wayfarer*, by saying: "If a single poem or line in this book is beneficial to people and to this world, if the paper and ink consumed to produce this book and the time and effort put into it by my friends are not wasted, I would feel most gratified." The spirit of that line also applies to this book, but I would like to add: I would feel very happy if this English edition of the *Echoes of the Heart* can enhance cultural exchange between China and other countries, if my international readers find this book useful for them to know a little better about China, its culture and its civil servants.



MA KAI

April 2012, Beijing

自序

中国在上素有着“诗的国度”的美誉。特别是以格律诗为代表的中国古典诗词，是中华文化瑰宝中的明珠。几千年来，中华民族一代又一代人创作了大量脍炙人口的光辉诗篇，在记载历史、传承文化、启迪思想、陶冶情操、交流情感、享受艺术、丰富人的精神世界、推动社会文明进步等方面发挥了重要作用。中华古典诗词之所以延绵数千年，具有无穷的魅力和强大的生命力，重要原因在于它以汉字为载体，把汉字方块、独体、单音、四声的独特优势发挥得淋漓尽致，按照合乎美学规律的格律规则，形成了同时兼有均齐美、节奏美、音乐美、对称美和简洁美的大美诗体，使诗作语言精炼、声韵优美、易学好懂、上口好记，为中国历朝历代、男女老少所喜爱。

我是学经济学的，又长期在经济综合部门工作，但我对中国文化特别是中国古典诗词情有独钟，可以说，是一个中华古典诗词的“票友”。我自幼就喜读唐诗宋词。以后，学余工余，也尝试着按照中华诗词的格律规则写了一些小诗小词。在家人和友人的怂恿下，先后出版了《行中吟》、《心声集》等诗集。回过头看，这些习作，记录着我亲身经历的发生在中国大地上的一些刻骨铭心的事件，反映着我心灵深处的所爱所恨、所感所悟，流淌着我对生活、自然、家人、友人的热爱，留下了我几十年人生的足迹。诗集出版后，引起了一些读者的共鸣，以诗会友，享受着诗艺切磋的惬意。读诗、写诗、品诗，已成为我生命的一部分。

欣闻《心声集》英文版即将出版。在这里，我要对凌原教授及其团队包括任小玫、彭琳、仲志兰、满兴远、范海祥、葛萌、易璐、段会香等朋友的精益求精的翻译和编辑，对外研社社长蔡剑峰先生的领

导组织工作，对著名的中国艺术史学者、前中国文学出版社英国专家凯伦·史密斯女士对全译文终稿的通读和宝贵意见，对许琳女士和李朋义先生的策划，对李肇星先生和戴行钺先生对译文初稿的认真审读和指导，对陈进玉和陈雨露等先生的支持，对所有为这本书的出版做出贡献的友人们表示衷心的感谢！

我在第一部诗集《行中吟》自序的结束语中曾写道：“倘若，或一首，或一句，于人有裨，于世有益，不废纸墨，不枉人时，足矣。”同样的话，也适用于本书。同时，还要加上一句：如果《心声集》英译本的出版，能够对中外文化交流做出一点小小的贡献，能够让国外读者从一个侧面对当代中国、对中国文化、对中国政府工作人员有更多一点了解，足矣。

是为序。

易帆

2012年4月于北京

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Committing to the Multitude with Virtue.

CHAPTER I

Musings and Inspirations

感 悟 篇