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英译 蒋坚松 今译 胡如虹

菜根谭

Cai Gen Tan

*My Crude
Philosophy
of Life*

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前 言

《菜根谭》是我国古代一部著名的语录体著作，作者系明人洪应明。洪应明的生卒年月及生平事迹今已不可考。清《四库全书总目提要》在他的另一部著作《仙佛奇踪》中记载说：“应明字自诚，号还初道人，其里贯未详。”又据与他同时代的著名学者袁璜在为《仙佛奇踪》所写的题序中说：“洪生自诚，新都弟子也。”可以大体知道洪应明字自诚，号还初道人，曾做过明代大学者杨慎的弟子，约为神宗万历年间人。

《菜根谭》这个书名，从今天看来，饶有趣味。对其解释，有几种不同的意见。明代三峰主人于孔兼在《菜根谭》序中说：“谭以菜根名，固自清苦历练中来，亦自栽培灌溉里得。其颠顿风波，备尝险阻可想矣。”清乾隆三十三年版《菜根谭》序中三山病夫通理认为“菜之为物，日用所不可少，以其有味也。但味由根发，故凡种菜者，必要厚培其根，其味乃厚。是此书所说人世味及出世味，皆为培根之论”。而近人孙铿于1915年在日本购得竹子恭所释的《菜根谭》，竹子恭原序则云“谓书名《菜根谭》者，系取宋汪革氏‘人咬得菜根，百事可做’语意”。三种说法，皆有所切之处，而尤以第三说简明扼要。

《菜根谭》的内容，据三山病夫通理在其序中引不翁老人的概括为“其间有持身语，有涉世语，有隐逸语，有显达语，有迁善语，有介节语，有仁语，有义语，有禅语，有趣语，有学道语，有见道语，词约意明，文简理诣”，是一部集儒、道、释为一体的论述如何修身养性、磨砺锻炼、为人处世、待人接物等方面内容的人生格言警句汇集。作者撷取儒、道、释三派中有关人生哲学的精髓，将儒家的忠

怨之道,道家的清静无为,佛家的无物无我融通在一起,参之以自己对宇宙万物的旷大无垠、包容运化,修身养性的天人合一、和谐淡泊,为人处世的藏用自然、荣辱不惊,待人接物的冲融谦让、忘怀得失,建功立业的德居功前、审时度势的种种认识,再辅之以整齐对称的句式,铿锵有致的声调,优美清新的韵意,熔铸成这部内涵深邃、哲理深刻、发人深省的语录体著作。

明清之际,有关修身养性的语录体著作特别盛行。如明万历年间吕坤所著的《呻吟语》,明末陈眉公所著的《小窗幽记》,清初王永彬所著的《围炉夜话》等等,但是其中影响最大的当数《菜根谭》一书。特别值得注意的是,《菜根谭》不仅在当时传颂一时,而且,进入20世纪80—90年代后,在我国企业界,尤其是日本企业界产生了很大的影响。日本企业界普遍认为论企业经营管理的书籍成千上万,而从根本上说,多数抵不上一部《菜根谭》。他们把《菜根谭》、《三国演义》、《孙子兵法》并列在一起,作为企业经营管理的最佳参考教材。作为一部阐述人生哲理的语录体著作为什么能够在我国和日本企业界产生如此大的影响?笔者认为,大约有以下三个方面的原因。一是书中所包融贯穿的如何修身养性、格物自省等道德规范可以加强企业家本身的修养,极大地提高他们的素质。这在当前市场经济激烈的竞争中显得特别重要。在市场经济条件下进行有序竞争,既需要完备的法律规范,也需要脱胎于传统的注入了新的时代内容的新道德规范,二者有机结合,并逐渐内化为人们特别是企业家的道德品质自律,将有利于稳定市场经济秩序,促进经济建设的正常发展。二是书中所包融贯穿的如何把握人与外界、人与人之间交往尺度,构筑起和谐圆融关系的天人合一思想与当前企业管理中的重要理论行为科学管理理论相吻合。行为科学管理理论认为现代化企业以人为中心,职工素质、职工与企业的关系决定着企业的兴衰成败,因此,情感管理、人格管理可以高度激发职工的积极性,创造出很高的效益。阅读《菜根谭》,可以领悟到

这方面的道理。三是书中某些论述待人接物、修身养性的哲理,暗合市场经济、市场竞争的规律,能够很好地指导企业经营。如《应酬》一章中“救既败之事者,如驭临崖之马,休轻策一鞭;图垂成之功者,如挽上滩之舟,莫少停一棹”,即可启示企业在生产经营中要审时度势,区别对待不同情况。《概论》一章中“居逆境中,周身皆针砭药石,砥节砺行而不觉;处顺境内,眼前尽兵刃戈矛,销膏糜骨而不知”,可启示企业在顺利时居安思危,处逆境时砥砺自己。《概论》一章中“用人不宜刻,刻则思效者去”,则可启示企业在用人管人上掌握分寸,不宜太峻刻。凡此种种,均可举一反三,在书中得到有益的启迪。

《菜根谭》的版本有两个系统,一是两卷本,一是一卷本。一卷本的数个本子中,均在内容上作了分类,按《修省》、《应酬》、《评议》、《闲适》、《概论》五个方面进行编排。本书根据一卷本中光绪十三年扬州藏经禅院重刻本并参考其他本子进行翻译。孜孜矻矻,咬文嚼字,未敢稍息,不当之处,尚祈广大读者给予批评指正。

胡如虹

1999年3月3日

Foreword

Cai Gen Tan, or *My Crude Philosophy of Life*, is a book of aphoristic sayings of ancient China. Its author is Hong Yingming of the Ming dynasty (1368—1644), whose dates and life story are no longer known. However, in the *Selected Titles from the General Catalogue of the Imperial Library Si Ku Quan Shu*, in connection with *Mysteries about Immortals and Eminent Buddhist Monks*, another book of his, this is noted: "Hong Yingming, whose style (name adopted by a man at coming of age—translator) was Zicheng, was also known as The Reverend Return-to-Origin. His native place is unknown." Yuan Huang, a famous scholar and a contemporary of Hong, wrote in his preface to *Mysteries*: "Mr. Hong Zicheng was a disciple of Xindu." We gather from the above that Hong was styled Zicheng, and was otherwise known as "The Reverend Return-to-Origin"; that he was once taught by the eminent Ming scholar Yang Shen (Yang was a native of Xindu, a name which was used alternatively for the man—translator); and that he lived about the Wanli reign period (1573—1620) of Emperor Shenzong.

The name of the book *Cai Gen Tan*, literally *Vegetable Roots Talk*, is of special interest to us today. Yu Kongjian of the Ming dynasty, who called himself "Master of the Three Peaks", said in his preface to the book: "'Vegetable Roots' in the title suggests that the 'talk' is the result of knowing life's bitterness as well as of watering

and cultivating. One can imagine all the hardships and dangers its author must have gone through." Later, in the Qing dynasty (1644—1911), Tong Li, also known as "Invalid of the Three Mountains", said in his preface to the 1768 edition of the book: "Vegetables are part of our daily life because they taste good. However, their taste originates in their roots, which need to be cultivated carefully to make the taste linger long. Thus what the book has to say about the taste of being actively involved in this world and that of banishing it is in fact meaningful words that come from 'cultivating the roots'." More recently, in 1915, Sun Keng acquired in Japan an edition of the book annotated by Kyo Takeko, who noted in his preface: "The title *Cai Gen Tan* alludes to a remark by Wang Ge of the Song dynasty (960—1279): 'Those who can enjoy eating vegetable roots are equal to any work.'" While each version is pertinent in its way, the last in particular is straightforward and clear.

The contents of the book, according to Tong Li's preface, were summarized by a certain "Old Man Fou Wong" as "including sayings about conducting oneself as well as getting along in the world, living in retirement and seclusion as well as being illustrious and influential, mending one's ways as well as keeping proud moral integrity, benevolence as well as uprighteousness, Buddhist ideas as well as comic things, learning as well as attainment—all with clear message in concise language, good reason in simple writing." It is a collection of maxims and epigrams about life dealing with, among other things, how to cultivate one's moral character and temperament, how to put oneself through the mill, how to conduct oneself in society, and how to get along with people, a book that fuses Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. Drawing on the best of the three schools' philosophy of

life, the author brings together the Confucianists' "Way of Loyalty and Consideration", the Taoists' belief in quietness and nonaction, and the Buddhists' precept of obliviousness of both the external world and oneself. This is coupled with the author's ideas and perceptions about a universe with its infiniteness, its all-embracing and manoeuvring power, about a self-cultivation that values the oneness of nature with man and a harmonious simple life with few worldly desires, about an attitude towards life that stresses hiding one's talent in natural ease and being indifferent to honour or disgrace, about a personal relationship that sets store by being quiet and even-tempered, modest and magnanimous, and forgetting gains and losses, and about the pursuit of a meritorious career that underscores the need to place moral integrity before the winning of merits, and to judge the hour and size up the situation. Orderly and symmetrical in sentence structure, rhythmic and sonorous in sound, graceful and fresh in poetic appeal, this book of quotable sayings is deep, philosophical, and thought-provoking.

The end of the Ming and the beginning of the Qing dynasties were a time that saw an unusual crop of books of quotable sayings about self-cultivation. Among them were such works as Lü Kun's *Shen Yin Yu* in the Wanli reign period of the Ming, Chen Meigong's *Notes from a Quiet Small Window* in the last years of the Ming, and Wang Yongbin's *Fireside Talk in the Night* in the beginning of the Qing. However, the most popular of such books was *Cai Gen Tan*. Moreover, not only was the book everywhere cited in its day, but it had its impact even in the 1980s and 90s in the business circles in China and Japan. The case is especially true of Japan, where those in business believed that "fundamentally speaking, al-

though there are thousands of books on business management, most of them can hardly match the one book *Cai Gen Tan*." They regarded it, together with *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* and *The Art of War*, two other ancient Chinese works, as the best reference teaching material for training in business administration. How is it that a book of quotable sayings about the philosophy of life can have such influence in the business world of China and Japan? We believe there are three possible reasons. Firstly, the moral norms for self-cultivation and for investigating the world and examining oneself that pervade the book can help those in business in their own self-cultivation and overall personal improvement. This is specially relevant to the highly competitive market economy of today. In a market economy, orderly competition calls for, on the one hand, a complete set of legal norms and, on the other, new moral standards born out of tradition, but informed by the times. The integration of the two, when it is internalized into the self moral discipline of business men and women, will immensely help keep the order of the market economy and promote the healthy development of economic construction. Secondly, the numerous ideas in the book about knowing the proper limits in dealing with nature and with people, about establishing a relationship of harmony, flexibility and accommodation, ideas based on the belief that man is an integral part of nature, tally with the theory of management of behavioural science, an important theory in present-day business administration. This theory holds that the management of a modern business should centre around people, that the overall personal development of the staff and their relation with the enterprise determine its rise or fall, success or failure; hence the management through personal feeling and through personality, for bring-

ing out the initiative of the staff and producing the best returns. Cai Gen Tan can shed some light on such things. Thirdly, the philosophy contained in some of the sayings about how to cultivate oneself and how to get along with people coincides with certain principles of operation of the market economy and market competition, and thus can guide business management. For example, in the chapter "Social Contact" there is the saying: "To save a losing game is like driving a horse at the brink of a precipice—never lightly stir the whip even for once; to achieve an exploit on the verge of success is like paddling a boat upstream—never spare even one stroke," something that can be a lesson for administrators to make a correct assessment of the situation and act accordingly. In the chapter "Miscellany" there is: "In adversity, one is surrounded, as it were, by salutary though unpalatable remedies, which help improve one's moral integrity and character without one's knowing it; in prosperity, one is confronted, so to speak, with dangerous weapons, which harm and destroy one's flesh and bone without one's realizing it," an admonition that administrators should be alert to possible dangers when successful and should put themselves through the mill when beset with difficulties. In the same chapter, we have "To one's employees one must not be too harsh, or those who mean to serve you will leave," a warning that administrators should know the proper limits in personnel management and avoid being too severe or exacting. One can draw useful lessons from such sayings and make inferences about numerous other things from them.

The different editions of *Cai Gen Tan* have appeared in two forms—the two-volume form and the one-volume form. In the several editions of the one-volume form the sayings are classified and ar-

ranged in five divisions: Self-cultivation, Social Contact, Human Affairs, Leisure, and Miscellany. The modern Chinese translation of the present edition is largely that of the original text of a reissued edition of 1887 by the Tripataka Buddhist Monastery in Yangzhou, but other versions were consulted in the translating. Although we have worked scrupulously and hard for correct reading of the original and for adequate expression, there may still be errors and inaccuracies, for which we solicit the readers' criticism.

Hu Ruhong
3 March 1999

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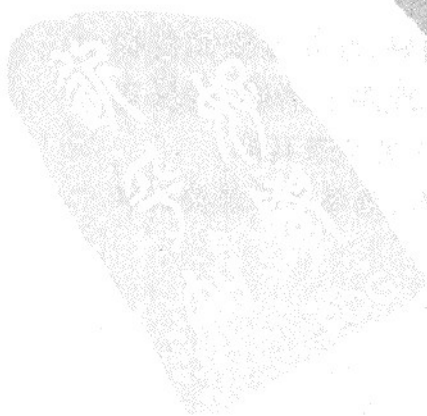
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CAI GEN TAN
My Crude Philosophy of Life

菜根譚

[明]洪应明 著

英译 蒋坚松 今译 胡如虹



修 省

1. 欲做精金美玉的人品，定从烈火中锻来；思立掀天揭地的事功，须向薄冰上履过。

[今译]要想成就精金美玉般的品德，一定要在人生的熔炉中千锤百炼；打算建立惊天动地般的伟业，也一定要像在薄冰上走路那样小心谨慎。

2. 一念错，便觉百行皆非，防之当如渡海浮囊，勿容一针之罅漏；万善全，始得一生无愧，修之当如凌云宝树，须假众木以撑持。

[今译]一个念头错了，就会使人觉得自己各种行为都有过错，因此要小心提防，好像浮海的气囊容不得针尖大的漏洞一样。万般善事做全，才能使自己一生无愧于心，因此要尽力修为，如同佛地的凌云宝树要靠众多的树木撑持一样。

3. 忙处事为，常向闲中先检点，过举自稀；动时念想，预从静里密操持，非心自息。

[今译]忙碌时所做的事情，应经常在空闲的时候预先检查思考，这样过失自然会稀少一些；行动时所持的念头，应预先在平静的时候仔细掂量权衡，这样非分之想自然会平息下来。

4. 为善而欲自高胜人，施恩而欲要名结好，修业而欲惊世骇俗，植节而欲标异见奇，此皆是善念中戈矛，理路上荆棘，最易夹带，最难拔者也。须是涤尽渣滓，斩绝萌芽，才见本来真体。

[今译]做善事而想要炫耀自己，胜过他人；施恩惠而想要获取

Self-cultivation

1. To have the character of pure gold and fine jade, one has to go through tempering fire; to achieve great earth-shaking feats, one must walk over treacherous ice.

2. One momentary slip and you will feel your conduct is all amiss: you have to be as watchful as with a floating bag for ferrying across the sea, which does not admit of a pinpoint leak. Ten thousand accomplished good deeds only can give you a good conscience for life: you need to be as scrupulous as the legendary sky-reaching magic-tree, which gets the support of numerous other trees.

3. Things done in pressing circumstances should be pre-meditated in leisure hours, for then you will make fewer errors; ideas held in action should be carefully weighed beforehand in idle moments, for then you will be free from improper thoughts.

4. To do good in order to show or distinguish oneself; to bestow favours in order to win a name or ingratiate one-