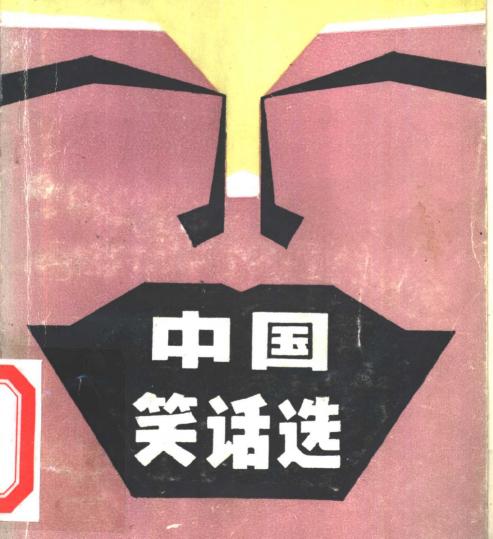
SELECTED CHINESE HUMOROUS STORIES



西南师范大学出版社

SELECTED CHINESE HUMOROUS STORIES

中国笑话选

(英汉对照)

TRANSLATED & COMPILED

BY

FAN GAOYUE

西南师范大学出版社

(英汉对照)

中、軍关話选

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FOREWORD

Humorous stories belong to folk literature. It is a special satirical art. In China, humorous stories have ancient origins and a long history of development, they are rich and very much liked by the broad masses of the people.

"To see a World in a grain of sand," is a very famous verse of William Blake, one of the forerunners of English Romantic poetry. Beyond laughter, we very often find the truth behind humorous stories. It seems that we may also say: "To perceive a truth in a humorous story". This may be the reason why the humorous story is great and enjoys a long life.

In the "long stream" of humorous stories, there is inevitably some filth and mire. But, anyhow, it is not the mainstream; the mainstream is still the expression of the thoughts and feelings of the broad masses and that of their love and hatred, and their optimistic spirit. As for those things unreasonable and even reactionary in social life, they have been exposed and castigated.

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Comrade Fan Gaoyue has chosen one hundred and forty humorous stories and translated them into English. Originally he did this just for those who do not know Chinese. Now according to the suggestions of Chongqing People's Press the Chinese oringinal is needed, and to meet the requirements of students of English, notes and explanations have been made to some of the English words, phrases, or sentences. Thus, this book is not only a book of humorous stories, but also rather good English reading material.

Why have the Story of the Crane and the Mother-ofpearl in a Fight to Death, to the Benefit of the Fisherman and the Story of Pulling Up a Seedling in Mistaken Hepe of Helping It to Grow, which happened more than two thousand years ago, been handed down to us? I should think it is not just because they are amusing; it is mainly because they are suggestive and give us much food for thought, and ring louder through laughter the sound of truth.

To render a language successfully into another one is indeed not easy; to translate Chinese humorous stories into English seems to present some special difficulties. But Comrade Fan Gaoyue did not avoid known difficulties. Such a spirit of his commands admiration. After I have read over his translation, I can say that his translations stick to the original. He has translated them

in a vivid, easy and fluent style. All these have left me with a good, deep, and unforgettable impression. Frankly speaking, I appreciate this book of humorous stories very much.

Dept. of Foreign Language and Literature SW China Teachers University Beibei, Chongqing May 4, 1986

> Jiang Jiajun Professor of English

笑话属于民间文学宣作,是一种独特的讽刺艺术。在中国, 笑话源远流长,内容十分丰富,深为广大人民群众所喜爱。

"从一粒微沙观宏宇,"这是英国浪漫派诗歌的先驱威廉·布莱克的著名诗句。笑话在笑声之外常常含有真理。我们似乎也可以说:"从一则笑话悟真理。"笑话之所以伟大和长寿,道理也许在此吧。

在笑话的长河中,兔不了杂有少量污泥浊水,但这毕竟不是 主流;主流仍是表现广大人民群众的思想感情,他们的爱和恨, 他们的乐观精神。而那些社会生活中不 合 理 的,乃至反动的东 西,在众多的笑话中是受到了揭露和鞭挞的。

獎高月同志从许多笑话中,造出了一百四十则,并把它们译,成了英文,原本是专为不懂中文的外国读者才这样作的。现应出版社的建议,除将中文原文附上外,并对英译文中的某些字句,从学习外语的角度来考虑,作了较为详细的注释。因此,这本书就不仅是笑话集,也是一册较好的英语读物了。

两干多年前的笑话,比如"鹬蚌相争,渔翁得利","揠苗助长"等故事,为什么能一直流传到今天?我想,其原因不仅在于故事有趣,主要的原因还在于它们给人以启迪,发入深省,在笑声中更鸣响着真理的声音。

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要把一种文字成功地译成另一种文字, 本来就不容易。要把

中文笑话译成英文,就似乎更有它的特殊困难处。樊高月同志知 难而进,这种精神令人钦佩。我曾通读过他的全部译文,我觉得樊 高月同志的译文是忠实于原文的,他的译笔也是生动流畅的。关 于这些,都给我留下了良好的、深刻难忘的印象。说真的,我是 十分欣赏这个笑话集的。

江 家 駿

一九八六**,"五·四"青**年节 于重庆北碚西南师范大学外语系

INTRODUCTION

China has a cultural tradition several thousand years long. Art and literature form the most significant ingredients of that tradition. Tang poetry, the novels of the Ming and Qing Dynasties, and classical Chinese Theatre may serve as just a few examples of the literary genius of the Chinese people, a genius which manifests itself, also, in the novels and abort stories of the 1930's and 1970's. Unfortunately the literature of China has not been made available to the outside world on a comprehensive basis, and Chinese folk humor, or the short humorous folk tale, has never been extant in translated versions. In order to facilitate and bring about a better understanding of Chinese culture and literature, we have translated examples of folk humor and compiled in this book.

Folk humor is a unique genre in folk literature. It is characterized by wit, satire, profundity, and by a short form and a simple plot. Folk humor is imaginative and penetrating, and it combines the fantastic with the realistic. The short humorous folk tale exposes and analyzes characters and situations economically, i.e., by using few words, and can therefore be compared to

caricature in drawing. The humorous folk tale is usually brought to a sudden end or achieves its climax through the insertion of an unexpected, witty phrase which provokes laughter in the reader or listener. However, the laughter is only a prelude to an understanding of the deeper meaning of the story.

Chinese folk stories are multifaceted. Stories that satisfize, ridicale or expose class differences are predominant, however. These stories often describe how common working people triumph over the ruling classes by exposing the greed, stupidity, and corruption of these classes. Typically, these stories ridicule corrupt officials, money-grabbing landlords, bragging politicans, merchants and brokers who practise usury, and inane scholars who have no real learning. The common working people are often vindicated through the comic art of the Chinese folk story. These stories can be seen, then, as examples of relief and vindication through comedy.

But there are also stories which satirize and expose the shortcomings of the working people. Lack of wit, laziness, and superstition are criticized in an effort to educate the people.

The charm and attraction of folk humor mainly consists in bringing the listener or the reader pleasure and relief through the comic plot of the story. However, folk humor also has a didactic purpose, it can make the

reader understand the objective nature of social reality, and it can make him strive for beauty and ethical ideals. Folk humor is a release and the relief that follows results in an optimistic mood through the dissipation of fatigue and depression. Folk humor, therefore, is enriching and enlightening. Through comedy and laughter, falsehood and ugliness are destroyed, and truth, beauty, and goodness are born. This makes folk humor a unique art form.

Folk humor in China is an oral tradition --- the stories have been passed on from generation to generation by word of mouth. The stories show variety in local color and style. Through centuries of change and polishing they have grown richer and richer, and they have come to express and exhibit the common, collective life of the people. After being written down, the humorous folk story created a unique place for itself in Chinese literature. The stories appeared for the first time in written form at the end of Dong Zhou (about 250 B.C.). In the Han Dynasty (206 B.C. 220 A.D.), Chunyu Kun and Dongfang Shuo were experts in folk humor. During the Wei Dynasty (220-265 A.D.) the monograph "Xiao Lin" (A Treasury of Folk Humor) appeared, compiled by Handan Chun. During the Sui (581—618) and Tang Dynasties (618 --- 907) appeared monographs such as "Qi Yan Lu"

(A Book of Laughter) by Hou Bai, "Xie Xue Lu" (A Book of Humor) by Zhu Kui, and "Xiao Yan" (Funny Stories) by Wuming Shi, etc.. After the Song Dynasty (960-1279) many scholars participated in the collection and compilation of folk humor. After the Yuan Dynasty (1279 --- 1368) folk humor influenced and enriched novels and plays. Quite a few novels and dramas used the short humorous story as a comic interlude. Some plays, such as Shen Jing's Funny Records, were entirely based on humorous stories. During the Ming (1368—1644) and Qing Dynasties (1644—1911) monographs on folk humor became wide-spread. Among the most influential essays on folk humor were "Xiao Zan" (Folk Humor) by Zhao Nanxing, "Gu Jin Tan Gai" (A Brief Talk on the past and the present), "Xiao Fu" (Folk Humor Storehouse), "Guang Xiao Fu" (Great Folk Humor Storehouse) by Feng Menglong, "Xiao De Hao" (Laugh well) by Shi Chengjin, "Xiao Lin Guang Ji" (A Collection of Folk Humor) by Youxi Zhuren, and others. From Wei Dynasty to Qing Dynasty collections of and books on folk humor amounted to 76 in number. In addition there were 36 works that more briefly dealt with the subject of folk humor. In modern times, a lot of people have been engaged in collecting, compiling, and creating humorous folk stories. In his book "Gu Xiao Shuo Gou Chen" (Ancient Stories Regained), Lu Xun collected and edited dozens of stories from the books of the Sui Dynasty. In recent years a lot of anthologies of humorous folk stories have been published, for example, "Li Dai Xiao Hua Xuan" (A Collection of Folk Humor Through the Ages) by Wang Liqi, "Xiao Hua 480" (480 Humorous Stories) by You Mo, "Xiao Hua" (Laughter) by Wang Qin and Tang Guogang, "Xiao Hua Xuan" (Selected Folk Humor) by Li Lin and Shou Zhen, "Xin Xiao Hua Ji Jin" (A New Collection of Wonderful Folk Humor) by Chou Guoliang and Chen Jinsheng, and many others. More and more scholars are now interested and engaged in the study of folk humor. Chinese folk humor is loved by the broad masses and is sure to flourish in the future.

The present book consists of 140 humorous stories selected from various collections of ancient and modern humorous stories. We have selected those that are progressive and interesting, and for the sake of readers' convenience roughly classified them into six categories according to their nature. We hope that our readers will be entertained, enriched and enlightened by this collection, and will learn from it something about Chinese folk literature.

This book aims at introducing Chinese humorous stories to foreign readers, but, wouldn't it be even better if we could communicate with them orally? For this

purpose, this book is also devoted to all the English lovers in our country. Owing to the familiar social and cultural backgroud and the colloquial language of these stories, it is particularly easy for Chinese readers to understand, memorize and retell them. So the book will benefit those who are learning English. It can serve as material for reading, listening, comprehending and speaking in English classes of universities and middle schools. It can also be read just for recreation and entertainment. In order to make the reading easy, attention has been paid to the choice of words and sentence patterns. Besides, lists of new words and notes have been attached to the stories for the same purpose.

As my ability is limited, there would certainly be mistakes in the book. Therefore criticisms from readers or colleagues will be welcome.

Fan Gaoyue

前 言

中国有着几千年的优秀文化传统,文学艺术是极其重要的组成部分。中国人民有着伟大的文学天才,唐诗、宋词、元曲、明、清小说,三十年代和七十年代小说就是 这 种 天才的光辉结晶。遗憾的是,世界各国人民对中国的灿烂文化知之不多,对中国民间文学之一的笑话更是闻所未闻。为了使各国人民更好地了解中国文化,译者编译了这个笑话集。

笑话是民间文学的一种独特形式。它短小精干,情节简单,诙谐幽默,寓意深刻。它富于想象,把幻想与现实结合起来,揭示出深刻的道理。它语言精炼,寥寥数语,淡淡凡笔就画龙点睛 地 勾 勒 出各种人物的脸谱,尤如一辐幅辛辣的讽刺画。它总是在最令人注意的地方,突然用带有俏皮的出入意料的话语,结束故事,使读者或听众大笑不已。笑过之后,稍一回味,使恍然大悟。领略到故事的深刻含意。

笑话的内容十分丰富,讽刺、嘲笑和揭露统治阶级的作品占大多数。这些故事叙述劳动人民是怎样通过揭露统治阶级的贪婪、愚蠢和腐朽,用智慧战胜他们。这些故事特别讽刺和嘲笑了那些腐败无能的官僚、惜财如命的地主,吹牛拍马的政客,心狠手毒的高利货者和不学无术的封建文人。劳动人民就是通过笑话这一喜剧艺术来发泄他们对削剥者的憎恨,获得精神上的解脱和宽慰。

笑话中也有讽刺劳动人民自己的缺点的作品。 它 对 人 民当中存在的痴呆、懒惰和盲目迷信等缺点进行善意的批评 和规劝, 以达到教育的目的。

笑话的魅力在于通过故事的喜剧情节给听众或读者带来 娱乐和宽慰。但它的教育目的也是显而易见的:它使读者或 听众了解社会现实的客观性质,追求美好的东西和符合道德 的理想。笑话可以驱逐疲劳,解除烦恼,带来休息和藉慰, 使人乐观向上。因此,笑话可以丰富生活,启 迪 智 慧,使 假、丑、恶在笑声中毁灭,使真、善、美在笑声中诞生。

中国笑话故事一代又一代地耳口相传, 在时间行程中经 常变化着,表现出多种多样的地方色彩和民族风格。在长期 的加工和锤炼中, 笑话故事不断丰富着, 并开始表现和展示 人民的一般生活和集体生活。 笑话见于书面后, 在中国文学 中占有特殊位置。它的发展走过了漫长的道路。东周末(公 元前 250 年左右) 第一次出现了以文字记载的 笑 话。汉 朝 (公元前206年——公元220年)的淳于髡和东方朔是讲笑话 的能手。魏朝(220年——265年)出现了邯郸淳所撰的《笑 林》。隋朝(581年——618年) 和唐朝(618年——907年) 出 现了侯白的《启颜录》,朱揆的《谐噱录》, 无名氏的 《笑言》等笑话专著。第三(960年——1279年)以后,许多 学者参加了笑话的收集和编 篡工 作。 在元朝 (1270年—— 1368年), 笑话影响并丰富了小说和戏剧。许多小说和戏 剧把笑话故事作为喜剧性插曲。有的戏剧, 如 沈璟的《博 笑记》,甚至完全以笑话为题材。在明朝(1368年—— 1644年)和清朝(1644年——1911年), 笑话专著更是广为 流传。其中最有影响的要数明人赵南星的《笑赞》: 冯梦龙 的《古今谭概》、《笑府》、《广笑府》; 清人石成金的 《笑得好》;游戏主人的《笑林广记》等。从魏到清,笑话

专集多达76种。此外,还有36种书籍涉及到笑话。在现代,也有许多人在收集,编纂和创作笑话。在《古小 说 钩 沉》里,鲁迅就从隋书中整理出若干篇笑话。近些年来,笑话集尤如雨后春笋,纷纷涌现。例如,王 利 器 的《历 代 笑 话选》,尤默的《笑话480》,王秦和唐国刚 的《笑 话》,里林和守箴的《笑话选》,仇国良和陈淦生的《新笑 话 集 锦》,等等。同时,越来越多的学者对笑话感兴趣,并潜心于笑话研究工作。笑话,这门深受广大群众喜爱的民间艺术,一定会蓬勃发展起来。

本书的一百四十则笑话,是从各种古、今笑话集中挑选出来的。挑选时,注意到了故事的可译性、趣味性和思想性。 为了方便读者,根据故事的性质,把它们大体分为六类。希望读者能从中得到娱乐,丰富知识,受到启迪;也希望通过它,读者能对中国民间文学有所了解。

这本书意在向世界各国人民介绍中国笑话,但如果能在 友好交往中通过口头向外国朋友介绍,岂不更好?因此,这本 书也献给国内广大英语爱好者。由于熟悉的社会、文化背景 和笑话的口语性语言,对于国内读者来说,这些故事读起来 易懂,易记,易说,对促进英语学习很有帮助。这本书既可 用于大、中学英语课的听说训练,也可作为大、中学生的课 外读物和广大英语爱好者的娱乐材料。为了易于阅读,译者 注意了词汇和句型的选择。此外,每个故事后还列出了词汇 表,并对重点,难点句子等作了注释。

由于译者水平有限,译文中难免有失误之外,欢迎读者 和同行批评,指正。

樊高月