

CREAM OF CHINESE GOLDEN SAYINGS

SOCIAL WISDOM

TRANSLATED FROM CHINESE BY HU XIAOYANG

中国的至理名言

增广贤文

汉英对照

胡晓阳译

对外经济贸易大学出版社

UNIVERSITY OF INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS PRESS

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前 言

《增广贤文》简称《增广》，它辑自何人，始于何时，至今仍无法找到任何记载。相传是由明朝中期的一位儒生编纂、后经明末清初的士人增补而成的。自清朝中后期以来，即风靡全国，影响极大：几乎家喻户晓，妇孺皆知，洛阳曾为之纸贵；人称“读了《增广》会说话。”

《增广贤文》的内容以处世立身为中心，涉及社会生活的各方面和各阶层，所以过去士农工商无一不备。它不仅论理精辟，而且语言形式经诗词化之后变得既通俗易懂，又琅琅上口，一经成诵，便使人终身不忘，受益匪浅。它的语句或为格言，或为谚语，有的取自古代文献，有的直接取自于民间。由于来源广泛，书中内容也有少数自相矛盾的地方，对此，可以理解为：这些是由不同的人针对不同的情况和群体作出的不同结论。《增广贤文》中有些思想来源于儒、道、佛三教，并且就象在中国文化中很大程度上所表现出来的那样，这些思想并没有被对立起来，而是有机地融为了一体。不过，《增广贤文》的主格调却是道教的。

选编格言、谚语，用以宣传自己的人生哲学，并希望进一步能治世育人，这在我国有着非常久远的传统。早的，如《老子》中的不少文句就是当时的格言和谚语。晚的，如明朝洪应明的《菜根谭》，就与《增广》的体例风格基本一致，可以认为它是明朝的《增广》，而《增广》则可以认为是清朝的《菜根谭》。但是，《老子》和《菜根谭》等著述在民间的影响力却远不及《增广贤文》，这是因为《增广》的内容更加接近于大众的实际生活，它的语言也更加通俗易懂，生动活泼。由于同样的原因，《增广》又成了蒙学读本中的佼佼者。可以说，《增广贤文》的内容基本

上不用讲解就能使读者如得点化，甚至豁然开朗，大有“听君一席话，胜读十年书”的感觉。时至今日，《增广》的许多话语仍然广为流传，常常被人们挂在嘴边，这正是传统文化的力量所在。因此，《增广贤文》的价值是不能够忽视的。

由于涉及的层面多，《增广贤文》的内容可以认为是相当庞杂的。其中大多是我们的祖先在人世波涛的奋斗中总结出来的处世经验及人生哲学，今天看来仍然是健康的，或者至少是有借鉴价值的。这方面的文句，早已在民间流传，是我国传统文化中一笔宝贵的财富。当然，《增广》中也有一部分内容反映了旧社会的一些人面对弱肉强食、尔虞我诈不敢奋力进取、从而表现出的过分明哲保身、乃至消极避祸的处世观念，这些是受时代局限而不可避免的。所以，对于《增广贤文》的种种见解，我们必须要有“择其善者而从，其不善者改之”，我们今天对待《增广》的态度应当如同对待其他古代文化遗产的态度一样：取其精华，去其糟粕，批判继承，古为今用。

《增广贤文》洋溢着中国风情和语言的独特美感，具有鲜明的民族特征，但它阐述的观点又绝非仅仅是中国的。实际上，《增广》的大多数观点适用于整个世界，这丝毫也不夸张。比如象“谁人背后无人说，哪个人前不说人”、“江中后浪推前浪，世上新人赶旧人”这样的论断，谁能说它们不是放之四海而皆准的呢？因此可以说，《增广贤文》用简洁、生动的中国民间语言，独到地诠释了世界上许多的普遍真理，而且其轻松自如，好似“四两拨千斤。”《增广贤文》应该是属于世界的。

今天，面临着全球经济一体化的大潮，面临着世界各种文化碰撞和融汇的巨澜，我们将这部汉英对照的《增广贤文》奉献给中外读者，希望它有助于世人一窥中华文化强大的生命力和绚烂的魅力，有助于世界的经济、文化交流。鉴于翻译难度及编、译者水平的局限，书中疏漏、讹误之处在所难免，敬请广大读者批评指正，以使此书得到进一步完善。

FOREWORD

So far no record has been found about who compiled Social Wisdom and when it was first published. It is said that the contents of the book were first collected and modified by a scholar in the mid Ming dynasty (1368 – 1644) and then supplemented by scholars in the late Ming and the early Qing (1644 – 1911) dynasties. After the mid to late Qing dynasty, the book became popular all over China, creating an extreme influence in which almost every household including the women and children knew about it, and in Loyang, the prices for paper once soared because of its printing. People used to say, “The reading of Social Wisdom enables you to understand how to deal and talk with people.”

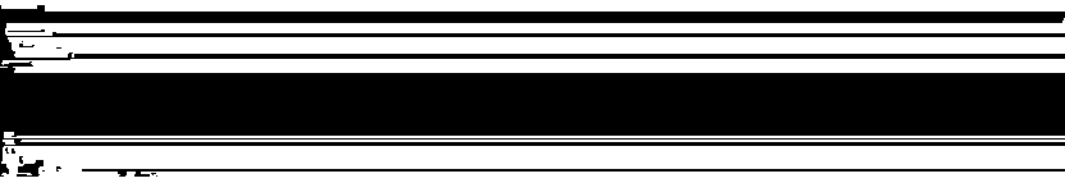
The contents of Social Wisdom are focused on how to deal with people and conduct oneself. People from various involved aspects and classes of society such as scholars, farmers, workers, businessmen and so on all tried to get a copy of this book to read. Besides its penetrating exposition and argumentation, Social Wisdom uses a poetic style that makes the book not only easy to understand, but also easy to read aloud and to remember. This engraves the sentences deeply in your mind, which may benefit you all your life. The sentences of Social Wisdom are either maxims or proverbs, which come from either historical documents or ordinary people. As its sources are multiple, there are some ideas in this book that seem to contradict one another, these we may understand as the different conclusions made by different people, about different situations, or

different groups of people. Social Wisdom offers ideas from Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism too, and as shown in Chinese culture, these ideas are not contradictory to one another, but are harmoniously mixed together. However, the main stream of Social Wisdom is Taoist.

Selecting maxims and proverbs to advocate a philosophy of life, and furthermore to cherish hopes of educating people and improving society, has been a long-lasting tradition in China's history. An early example is the book called *Lao Zi*, in which many sentences are maxims and proverbs prevailing in those old times. A late example is *Vegetable Roots* by Hong Yingming from the Ming dynasty, which is almost in the same style as that of Social Wisdom. We can even regard *Vegetable Roots* as Social Wisdom of the Ming dynasty and Social Wisdom as *Vegetable Roots* of the Qing dynasty. However, works like *Lao Zi* and *Vegetable Roots* are far less influential than Social Wisdom among the ordinary people. This is because the contents of Social Wisdom are much more related to the actual life of the majority of the people, and its language is easier to understand, is more vivid and more colourful. For similar reasons, Social Wisdom has become the best of the books for enlightenment of children in late feudal China. It is believed that explanation is hardly necessary when reading Social Wisdom, and in fact, one may feel guided or even enlightened as he reads it, as the saying goes: "A good talk with a wiser person may exceed ten years of reading." Even today, many sentences from Social Wisdom still spread far and wide and are always hung on people's lips. This shows the power of traditional culture. Therefore, the value of Social Wisdom can not be neglected.

Most ideas from Social Wisdom also apply to the whole world.

We can see from these examples that Social Wisdom has expounded many universal truths in Chinese folk language that is concise and vivid: "Who can keep from talking about others, who can keep from being talked about by others?" "In a river, retreating waves forever chase advancing waves; in the world, new generations keep challenging old generations." And so on. Therefore, Social Wisdom should belong to the world. Today, when we are confronted with the tide of economic globalization and the waves of collision and merging of different cultures, we present the Chinese-English Social Wisdom to readers both in and outside China, in hope that it would enable people to have a glimpse of the strong vitality and splendid attractions of Chinese culture and its benefits.



1

昔时贤文，
诲汝谆谆，
集韵增广，
多见多闻。
观今宜鉴古，
无古不成今。

1

The wisdom of ancient aphorisms
Has been instructing people earnestly,
This expanded poetic collection of them
Can add knowledge to your philosophy.
Consult history when observing reality,
Reality does not exist without history.

2

贤乃国之宝，
儒为席上珍。
农工与商贾^①，
皆宜敦五伦。
孝弟为先务，
本立而道生。
尊师以重道，
爱众而亲仁。

① 贾(音古)：商人

2

In a country,
The learned virtuous and capable people
Should be the most valuable;
At a feast, the talents of learned people
Should be the most desirable.
To educate farmers, workers and businessmen,
Are the five ethical principles^①
Filial duty and brotherhood
Are the most important,
As in forming a theory,
The core is fundamental.
Respect teachers and value their instruction,
Love the ordinary and live closely
With benevolent people.



⁽¹⁾ These are about the relationships between a monarch and his officials, a father and his children, a husband and his wife, the relationship between brothers and the relationship between friends.

3

钱财如粪土，
仁义值千金。
作事须循天理，
出言要顺人心。
心术不可得罪于天地，
言行要留好样与儿孙。
处富贵地，
要矜怜贫贱的痛痒；
当少壮时，
须体念衰老的酸辛

3

Money and wealth are pure emptiness,
Humanity and justice are truly priceless.
Behave in accordance with heavenly purposes,
Speak to comply with popular wishes.
Your intentions
Should not offend heaven and earth;
For the sake of your descendants,
Your words and deeds should set a good example.
If rich and noble,
You should pity the hardships
Of the poor and humble;
When young and vigorous,
You should understand the difficulties
Of the old and feeble.