

一百叢書

漢英對照 Chinese-English

盧允中選譯 By Lu Yunzhong

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JOKES
THROUGH
THE AGES

中國
歷代笑話一百篇

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出版：商務印書館香港分館

香港鰂魚涌芬尼街2號D僑英大廈五樓

印刷：中華商務聯合印刷(香港)有限公司

香港九龍炮仗街75號

版次：1985年11月第一版第一次印刷

©1985 商務印書館香港分館

ISBN 962 07 1058 4

《一百叢書》總序

本館出版英漢(或漢英)對照《一百叢書》的目的,是希望憑藉着英、漢兩種語言的對譯,把中國和世界各類著名作品的精華部分介紹給中外讀者。

本叢書的涉及面很廣。題材包括了寓言、詩歌、散文、短篇小說、書信、演說、語錄、神話故事、聖經故事、成語故事、名著選段等等。

顧名思義,《一百叢書》中的每一種都由一百個單元組成。以一百為單位,主要是讓編譯者在浩瀚的名著的海洋中作挑選時有一個取捨的最低和最高限額。至於取捨的標準,則是見仁見智,各有心得。

由於各種書中被選用的篇章節段,都是以原文或已被認定的範本作藍本,而譯文又經專家學者們精雕細琢,千錘百煉,故本叢書除可作為各種題材的精選讀本外,也是研習英漢兩種語言對譯的理想參考書,部分更可用作朗誦教材。外國學者如要研習漢語,本叢書亦不失為理想工具。

商務印書館香港分館
編輯部

前 言

這裏彙譯的一百則笑話選自王利器輯錄的《歷代笑話集》(上海古籍出版社1981年出版)，收錄了自三國直至清末我國各類笑話集約七十種以上，基本上反映了各個朝代笑話作品的概貌。這些笑話以其短小精悍的獨特形式，描繪了中國歷代人民當時的社會生活片斷，是世世代代中國人民積累下來的高度智慧結晶。歷代笑話的素材大多來自民間，直接從現實生活中擷取而來。作者通過複雜微妙的生活表象進行廣泛深入的概括，選取並抓住其中最能體現本質的素材，再通過高度集中的處理，把反面人物加以醜化，突出其中帶有普遍意義的特徵，維妙維肖地再現了這些我們似曾相識的反面人物嘴臉；或採用誇張的手法，對一些虛偽的風尚，予以無情的揭露，淋漓盡致的描繪和諷刺。

我國歷代笑話著作頗多，以三國魏邯鄲淳所撰《笑林》為最早。歷代笑話的創作過程，一般地說，首先以口頭創作的形式在民間廣泛流傳，然後通過集體修改、加工或士大夫階級文人的再創作而形成書面作品。這些笑話大多以真人真事為創作素材，帶有濃郁的生活氣息，具有通俗、生動、清新、明快的特色。讀者可以從中窺見各時代的中國人民一些有趣的生活

側面、他們的思想感情以及所經歷的憂患和疾苦。有些人也許可以在這些笑話中發現自己的影子並從中吸取教益。有些人則可以在笑聲中嘗到人世的苦味。

就藝術形式及表現手法而言，我國歷代笑話著作的特徵是：作者總是用高度集中的形式抓住典型事物，並通過人物的典型性格表現豐富的幻想力和合理的蠱化，從而反映了對該時代的共同看法。歷代的笑話作品，重點都是放在描寫諷刺典型的反面特徵上。笑話的作者通過精簡的筆墨、辛辣的筆觸勾勒出五光十色的人生臉譜——偽善、迂腐、貪婪、愚昧、無能、欺詐、怠惰等。他們挖苦嘲弄的對象雖然多半是封建社會的豪門貴族或貪官污吏，但作品中的諷刺與鞭撻即使在今日仍有其深遠的現實意義。

笑話的作用之一是針砭時弊。南朝蕭梁時代，劉勰在他所撰的《文心雕龍》中，為笑話這種文學形式寫過一篇《諧謔》的評介文章，並總結了諧謔的含義：“古之嘲隱，振危釋憊。雖有絲麻，無棄菅蒯。會義適時，頗益諷誠。空戲滑稽，德音大壞。”劉勰指出了笑話這類諷刺文學作品的作用，在於中肯（會義）而及時（適時），從而收到“振危釋憊”的效果。劉勰肯定了這種中國古代民間文學的藝術價值，並指出其教育意義及不良傾向，說明了笑話創

作的起源和發展是合乎時代要求的。元、明以後，笑話還直接影響和豐富了小說及戲曲的創作內容。

另一方面，笑話中描繪的不一定都是真人真事。作者根據其豐富的生活經驗，完全可以虛構一些具體情節。所謂虛構，乃是作家概括生活、塑造形象、突出主題的一種手法。讀者要求的其實並非現象的真實，而是本質的真實。魯迅說過：“諷刺的生命是真實；不必是曾有的實事，但必須是會有的實情。”虛構的藝術形象如果酷似生活、符合生活的真實，同樣可以具有很高的文學鑒賞價值和重要的歷史科學研究價值。

當然，笑話和其他民間文學一樣，也有優劣之分。一些笑話之所以膾炙人口，歷代相傳，正是由於作者能巧妙地利用人物之間的特定關係、內在矛盾和各自的獨特語言，顯示了人物形象的不同個性，並通過詼諧的筆觸，把正反人物的兩種典型置諸愛憎分明的讀者面前。

本書收集的一百則笑話，其年代大致上從隋初一直到清末。全書的排序也是按着時代先後編排的。這些笑話大都具有樸素、風趣、構思新穎、含義深刻的特色。一些旨在迎合小市民低級趣味的庸俗猥褻作品均在剔除之列。

譯者這次把《中國歷代笑話一百篇》逐譯成英文，目的在於把這種中國古代民間文學的

精華部分介紹給英語讀者。此外，也希望本書
能成爲一本研習中譯英的參考書。

盧允中謹識

PREFACE

The one hundred humorous stories collected in this volume have been selected from ANTHOLOGY OF CHINESE HUMOROUS STORIES THROUGH THE AGES compiled by Wang Liqi and published by the Shanghai Ancient Books Publishing House in 1981. Humorous stories written by Chinese writers through the ages are legion and the earliest dates back to the Kingdom of Wei (220 – 265) when Handan Chun wrote his JEST BOOKS. The anthologist chose his pieces from more than 70 books of all kinds, covering a period from the Three Kingdoms up to the latter part of the Qing Dynasty. The pieces chosen generally embodied the characteristic features of the humorous stories written by prominent writers at different epochs. Short and pithy, they dramatized the farcical episodes of the common people's life under the prevailing social conditions. The real life of the common people was the fountainhead of source material for creative writing. On the basis of the superficial phenomena of all affairs of life, writers of humorous stories were able to draw the most sweeping generalizations. They probed into the essence of things and by highlighting the salient features of universal significance uglified the villains in their stories, thus reproducing characters remarkably true to life. And by artistic exaggeration they brought out with their trenchant pen the wickedness of the feudal society and the evils of bureaucracy and corrupted morals.

Generally speaking, humorous stories in ancient China were originally and for many years circulated orally among the people. Later, it was through the re-creative efforts of the literati in feudal China that

many of them appeared in manuscript.

Naturally enough, the appeal of the humorous stories lies mainly in their humour — pure, spontaneous and irresistible. This notwithstanding, humorous stories are at bottom an unrelenting indictment of injustice and of humanity in general at any time. Permeated with the rich flavour of life and characterized by simplicity, freshness and creditability — often accompanied with a moralizing message — they offered comic glimpses of the Chinese people of all walks of life. Enormously interested in people, these writers were capable of swift and compassionate insights into the average person and their sympathy invariably went to the underdog, the little man or woman struggling on in the maze of contemporary life.

Writers of humorous stories in ancient China were noted for the sharpness of their observation, the trenchancy of their social criticism and the depth of their concern for human suffering. As to artistic form and technique of expression, they were adept at grasping typical cases and refining the literary raw material gathered from life. In the process of creative writing, they gave full play to their imagination; yet their negative characters, though usually made to look exceptionally stupid and clumsy, were nevertheless true to type. These characters, moreover, were so shown and so brought into action that as little as possible of them had gone to waste. With simple, light touches and in a succinct style, the writers of humorous stories laid bare the true features of certain great personages — hypocrisy, pedantry, avarice, ignorance, incompetence, deceit, indolence, etc. and past personages were often used to disparage their present-day counterparts. Therefore, as the writers jibed at the heartless rich and the venal officials, some of us, perhaps, may have the feelings that their thrusts have been

directed at them.

Not all humorous stories are based on actual persons and events. One of the time-honoured techniques of writers of this genre of folk literature is to invent plots for their stories. Fantastic as they are, the plots usually reflect reality. By drawing on their life experience, the writers epitomize life, create images of their heroes and give prominence to the theme. As a matter of fact, the reader does not ask for truth of phenomenon but truth of essence. An invented artistic image, if portrayed true to life, possesses an indisputable artistic value and affords important materials for historical research.

Of course, like other genres of folk literature, there are good humorous stories and bad ones. Some of them enjoy great popularity because their authors have been able to exploit the given relationships and inherent contradictions between the characters and clothe their thoughts with languages peculiar to each.

The stories collected in this volume have been arranged in chronological order. In rendering them into English, I have made every endeavour to be faithful to the original and capture the spirit of this genre of folk literature in ancient China. I hope lovers of classical Chinese literature and those interested in Chinese — English translation may find this collection worthy of their attention.

Lu Yunzhong
February 1985

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