

古文观止

精选

汉英对照

A SELECTION OF CLASSICAL CHINESE ESSAYS
FROM GUWENGUANZHI

with the original texts and notes

Translated by Luo Jinsuo

罗经国 译

外语教学与研究出版社

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH PRESS

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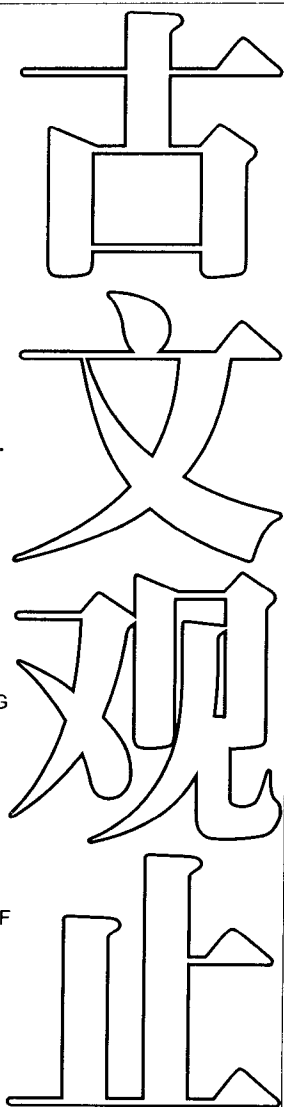
外语教学与研究出版社

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北京 BEIJING

Acknowledgements ■

MY THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE, WHOSE HARD WORK AND EXPERTISE HELPED IN THE COMPLETION OF THIS VOLUME. PROFESSOR LIN YUNYING OF PEKING UNIVERSITY, WHO CAREFULLY COMPARED THE TRANSLATION AGAINST THE ORIGINAL TEXTS. PROFESSOR ZHOU SHANFENG OF PEKING UNIVERSITY, AND MY AMERICAN FRIENDS, DR. DELLA LEVINE AND MISS VICTORIA WONG, WHO EXAMINED THE ENGLISH VERSION OF THE BOOK.



序言

刘意青

前辈学者罗经国教授选编和翻译的《古文观止精选（汉英对照）》终于出版了。回想近两年罗先生钻研《古文观止》时斟酌词句的那种痴迷劲头，我们这些知情的同事和朋友都很敬佩他那知难而上的钻研精神。现在大家都为他完成了这项工程而由衷地高兴，也为我国读者能够读到又一部中国文学经典的选译本而感到欣慰。

罗经国先生是我的老师。他于1951年从上海考入清华大学外文系，后转入北京大学西方语言文学系，攻读英国语言文学，是当时学生中的佼佼者。毕业留校后，他一直在北京大学英语系任教，讲授过“英国文学选读”，“19世纪英国文学”，“20世纪英国文学”，“欧洲文学”等多门课程，深受同学们欢迎。“文革”之后，作为最早外派的学者之一，罗先生曾参加我国英语界的教授代表团访问英国，后来又曾赴美国访问和深造，并获学位。在他任教的数十年中，罗先生以他对祖国和人民的忠诚、对英语文学的热爱，启蒙和感化了无数学子。在很大程度上，我本人就是因三年级时上过他的“英国文学”而对外国文学发生了极大的兴趣，并终生与这门学科结下不解之缘的。罗先生的英文和英国文学造诣很深，对他的敬业态度、学术品位和文学修养，所有得到过他教诲的学生都是有口皆碑的。

除了教学业绩，罗经国先生还曾先后参加数十年来作为我国通用教材、由杨周翰等主编的两卷集《欧洲文学史》（1964，1971）的编纂工作；近十年来又主持李赋宁先生任总主编的四卷集《欧洲文学史》（1999）的编辑工作，并担任第一卷主编。他编写的《英国文学选读》和《狄更斯的创作》都是极受广大学子欢迎的出版物。然而，近两年来，已年逾古稀的罗先生又把他的关注点转向了翻译我国的古典文学上，《古文观止精选（汉英对照）》就是他在这方面的一项成果。

《古文观止》为我国历代优秀散文选本，于康熙三十四年，即1695年镌版，其中收编了上起先秦、下至明末的222篇文章，共分12卷。这部散文经典收录了多种体裁的文章，都是各个时期重点作家的作品，并附有简短的评注。罗经国教授从《古文观止》的浩瀚大海中挑选了《滕王阁序》、《前出师表》等32篇脍炙人口的精品，并用流畅的英文把它们展现给中外读者，既宣传了我国优秀的文学、文化传统，又推动了双语学习，确实值得提倡。

要把一篇优美的散文翻译成为地道的英文并非易事，要把我国文学的瑰宝《古文观止》中的佳文妙语译成英文且不失原有的文采更是难上加难。这要求译者不仅有扎实的外文功底和雄厚的外国文学知识，而且要有良好的古文基础。虽然罗先生那一代的学者在古文方面的修养都很深厚，但他十分谦虚，在翻译中不敢有半点含糊和失责。对古文中的疑难处或学术界有争议的字句，他总是不厌其烦地反复研究，利用北京大学优越的人文环境和条件进行咨询，以求得到最正确的中文释义和最恰当的英文译文。

评论翻译成果，我们不免要参照严复很早就提出的关于翻译的三原则：“信、达、雅”。我以为，在“信”的前提下，兼顾“达”（expressiveness）和“雅”（elegance）是一件难事。罗先生在《古文观止精选》的翻译中恰恰在这两个方面做得很出色。例如，他将刘禹锡《陋室铭》中著名的“苔痕上阶绿，草色入帘青”一句译为“The green moss creeps onto the doorsteps. The lush grass is reflected through the bamboo curtains.”这可以说是实践“达”和“雅”原则的一个成功例子。又例如，柳宗元的《钴姆潭西小丘记》中有一处“山之高，云之浮，溪之流，鸟兽之遨游”，罗先生将之译为“the rising of the mountains, the floating of the clouds, and the flowing of the brook, as well as the pleasurable activities of birds and beasts”。这其中用了of短语与中文的“之”字相呼应，十分恰当、贴切。《滕王阁序》中有“画栋朝飞南浦云，朱帘暮卷西山雨”这样的千古绝句，为了不遗漏这两句对多层次的美景的描述，罗先生采用了意译法，把它们译成：“In the morn the rosy clouds from the southern shore flit across the painted pillars. / In the eve the rain in the western mountains are drawn in by the red curtains.”这样就突出了原文的诗情画意。类似的例子还有很多，这里就不一一枚举了。

正如前面已经提到的，《古文观止》是我国文学的集萃，它文字优美，思

想境界超凡脱俗，集中表现了华夏文化的智慧。罗经国教授虽然年事已高，却在英语教学、研究和翻译领域中不辍耕耘，不断获得新的成就，实在令人钦佩。1999年，我曾赴美国担任富布莱特教授，因需要讲解一些中国文学而接触了不少英语版本的中国文学选读本和单行本。我发现西方的汉学家在这方面已经做了大量有效的工作，不少选读本和译本质量很好，印刷精美，使用十分方便。相比之下，好像西方的汉学家在比我们更积极地宣传中国的文学和文化。这令我感慨不已。然而，就我所知，西方目前更有兴趣的首先是牵涉宗教和哲学的一些中国经典，如儒、道、佛方面的知名作品；其次是经典诗歌和小说以及现当代文学。相比之下，经典散文似乎被忽略了。我几乎没有见到《古文观止》和《史记》这类书籍的近期中文译本，这不能不说是西方汉学教学与研究方面的一点偏颇。在这种情况下，我以为罗经国先生的汉英对照版《古文观止精选》不仅仅是一本帮助中国读者学习英语的读物，它还可以向爱好中国文学和文化的西方读者和学习汉语的外国人介绍他们不太熟悉的散文经典。此举意义深远。为此，在这部古典散文的英译本出版之际，让我们祝贺罗经国先生，并向他致谢。祝愿他今后有更多类似的译作不断涌现。

2005年1月于北京

刘意青：1964年北京大学英语语言文学系毕业，先后获美国纽约州立大学硕士、芝加哥大学文学博士学位，长期在北京大学英语系任教，现为教授，博士生导师。

Foreword

The thirty-two essays in this volume are selected from among the 222 pieces featured in *Guwenguanzhi*, a famous anthology assembled by Wu Chucai and Wu Diaohou in the thirty-fourth year of the reign of Emperor Kangxi (1654-1722) during the Qing Dynasty. The two compilers performed a very meaningful undertaking by sifting the 222 pieces from diverse reams of extraordinary material penned over a span of 2800 years, beginning with those from the early Zhou Dynasty (1046B.C.-256B.C.).

The essays chosen to be translated and included in this book have for centuries highly acclaimed and widely read by the Chinese intelligentsia. Aphorisms from these texts have weathered wars and political upheavals to linger on the lips of the modern-day Chinese people. Their wisdom has long been accepted as guiding principles of Chinese ethics. An example of this can be found in the essay "The Yueyang Tower" by Fan Zhongyan (989-1052) where the exhortation "to be the first in the country to worry about the affairs of the state and the last in the country to enjoy oneself" was not only well received by the Chinese scholars for over a thousand years, but is still an ideal of modern politics.

Loyalty, filial piety, benevolence, and justice form the basis of Confucian thought. No doubt Confucian thought once served the interests of

the feudal rulers and was frequently melded with half-truths to encourage the submission of the lower classes, but when it is regarded in its pure form, one finds Confucius's teachings inherent to the beauty of Chinese culture and fundamental to modern social mores. "The First Memorial to the King Before Setting Off for War" written by Zhuge Liang (181-234) showed the author's abiding loyalty to the late king. Secluded in a thatched Nanyang cottage during the tumultuous period of the Three Kingdoms (220-280), Liang "merely managed to survive in times of turbulence and had no intention of seeking fame and position from princes". But in order to defeat the king's adversaries and rejuvenate the Han Dynasty, he was persuaded to relinquish his home in the countryside and enter the service of Liu Bei of the King of Shu. After Liu Bei's death, the erstwhile hermit was appointed advisor to Liu Bei's incompetent heir, and was therefore effectively entrusted with the welfare of the entire kingdom. Zhuge Liang was uneasy about what would happen at court during his travails on the front. In his "Memorial", he repeatedly counsels the king "to be close to the virtuous and able officials, and keep away from the vile and mean persons". Zhuge Liang later died of illness on the battlefield. He was among one of the many figures in China's history who died upholding personal code of honor.

“An Epitaph Inscribed on the Memorial Tablet at the Path Leading to the Tomb in Shuanggang” written by Ouyang Xiu (1007-1072) is a typical essay illustrating traditional Chinese adherence to filial piety. According to Xiu, a son's duty is to support continuously his parents to the best of his ability. In his words, he would rather “provide for them with a simple living when they were alive than offer them rich sacrifices when they were dead”. A pious son would study hard and pass the highest imperial civil examination, and as an official, he would be “honest and incorruptible”, thus

winning respect and admiration for his ancestors. To further explore the emphasis placed upon filial piety in Chinese culture, I invite the reader to peruse "A Letter to His Majesty" by Li Mi (224-287). Li Mi's father died when he was only six months old and his uncle forced his mother to remarry when he was four. Raised by his frail grandmother, Li Mi was extremely lonely and had nobody to talk to, "with only body and shadow comforting each other". When the emperor summoned him to assume office in the capital, Li Mi implored him, in fear and trepidation, to permit him to care for his grandmother, "I am forty-four years of age and my grandmother is ninety-six. Ahead lie many years during which I may faithfully serve Your Majesty, but there remain only a few brief moments during which I can serve my grandmother. Given that even the crow looks after its elderly, I pray Your Majesty will allow me to stay with my grandparent until her last breath."

Nor were the bonds of filial responsibility restricted to one's elders. In "An Elegiac Address to the Twelfth Nephew", Han Yu (768-824) expressed his bitter grief at the early death of his twelfth nephew. Although they were of two different generations, Yu was almost the same age as his nephew, and they had been raised as brothers. Yu blamed himself for the early death of his nephew, saying, "When you were alive, I did not live with you to support you. When you were dead, I did not mourn over your remains to give vent to my bitter grief. When you were lying in the coffin, I did not follow the funeral procession. When you were interred, I did not come to your grave. I fear I am the cause of your untimely death, as I have failed to live up to the expectations of the gods. I am neither kind nor filial." Filial piety and the importance of family bonds are two concepts well expressed in these essays.

A ruler's benevolence toward his people is a theme that features prominently in classical Chinese literature. This Confucian idea is

clearly illustrated in “The Snake Catcher” and “The Life of Camel Guo, the Tree Planter” by Liu Zongyuan (773-819). In the former, he describes the life of a snake catcher who was exempt from taxation on the condition that he risked his life collecting poisonous snakes for the royal pharmacopoeia in order to provide an ingredient crucial to ancient Chinese medicine. Liu Zongyuan sympathized with the man’s plight, but was surprised to find that the snake catcher seemed quite content with his profession. The snake catcher explained that he risked less than his neighbors, for it was inevitable that they would either die or be forced to migrate to poorer regions as a result of heavy taxation. Liu Zongyuan even adapts Confucius’ saying that “tyrannical rule is more ferocious than a tiger”, by substituting “snake” for “tiger”. In “The Life of Camel Guo”, he uses the example of an experienced tree planter, whose secret is to let a young tree’s roots grow freely, satisfying its needs and only occasionally redirecting its growth. Liu Zongyuan advises the government to comply with the wishes of the people and allow them intervals free from political interference. For thousands of years the Chinese people admired that kind of “benevolence” from their rulers.

To sacrifice oneself in the pursuit of justice has long been considered a virtue by the Chinese people. Almost all the authors whose works appear in this book were persecuted for championing reforms. Tao Yuanming, the author of “Going Home”, could not tolerate the corrupt politics of his time, and resigned from his official post in protest. His experiences in court impelled him to write “A Tale of the Fountain of the Peach Blossom Spring”, in which he created a utopian classless society where people lived in harmony. Wang Bo (649-676) (“A Tribute to King Teng’s Tower”), Li Bai (701-762) (“A Letter to Han Jingzhou”), Liu Yuxi (772-842) (“An Epigraph in Praise of My Humble Home”), Liu Zongyuan (“The Snake

Catcher”), Fan Zhongyan (989-1052) (“The Yueyang Tower”), Sushi (1037-1101) (“The First Ode on the Red Cliff”) and Wang Yucheng (954-1011) (“The Bamboo Pavilion in Huanggang”) were all exiled for defending their beliefs and offending the emperors. Although some were deported repeatedly and even died in exile, all of their writings reflect an unyielding spirit.

Chinese scholarship is often coupled with a love of nature, and Chinese literature and art is particularly rich in works describing the natural world. In his essay “A Tribute to King Teng’s Tower”, Wang Bo depicts a sunset that renders the beauty of the Poyang Lake in a dramatic light. “A solitary wild duck flies alongside the multicolored sunset clouds, and the autumn water is merged with the boundless sky in one hue,” he writes. “The fishermen can be heard singing the evening songs, their voices drifting as far as the banks of the Poyang Lake. Even the wild geese feel the chill of dusk settling upon them, and they cry all the way while flying southward, disappearing around the south bend of the Heng Mountain.” In “The Pavilion of the Drunken Old Man”, Ouyang Xiu gives a picturesque account of the change of seasons and of day and night in nature, as he writes, “In the morning the rising sun disperses the forest mists and in the evening, the gathering clouds darken the caves and valleys. This shifting from light to darkness is morning and evening in the mountains. In spring, blooming flowers send forth a delicate fragrance; in summer the flourishing trees afford deep shades; in autumn, the sky is high and crisp, and the frost, snowy white; in winter, the water of the creek recedes and the bare bedrock emerges.”

Despite the pleasure they took from dwelling upon pleasant ideals, the Chinese intellectuals were perturbed by human mortality. While sipping wine and composing poems by the water, Wang Xizhi (321-379) in “Prologue to the Collection of Poems Composed at the Orchid Pavilion”

writes, "It saddens me to think that the happiness we are enjoying at this moment will be a bygone thing at another moment, not to mention that we are subject to natural law and will eventually perish." In his "Entertainment Given in the Peach and Plum Garden on a Spring Evening", Li Bai recalls drinking with his cousins on a beautiful spring evening, and sighs, "Life is as fleeting as a dream; how long can our joy possibly last?"

Most Chinese intellectuals who were frustrated in their official careers sought spiritual refuge in nature. They would retire to a secluded village, retreating from petty politics and material extravagances. Not surprisingly, the perception of man as an integral part of nature is prevalent in their writings. For example, in Liu Zongyuan's "The Hillock to the West of *Gumu* Pond", the idea of unification with nature is explicit. While in exile, Liu Zongyuan purchased and cultivated a wild hillock into a beautiful spot, of which he writes, "I lay on a mat with a pillow under my head, my eyes conversing with the cool and refreshing air, my ears with the murmuring water, my spirit with the indifferent and detached environment, and my heart with the serene and sedate atmosphere." In "Prologue to the Foolish Creek Poem", he even wanted to "transcend the vulgar conventional world and melt into the chaos, the primeval state of the universe, where no one knows me."

Despite the prevalence of common class divisions that exerted a strong influence in the arena of pedestrian affairs, the ancient Chinese scholars maintained that an individual's knowledge was to be respected, regardless of his age or social status. Han Yu advocates this premise in his essay "On the Teacher", stating that the mission of a teacher is to "propagate the doctrine¹, impart professional knowledge, and resolve doubts". He continues to say, "Anyone who was born before me and learned the doctrine

before me is my teacher. Anyone who was born after me and learned the doctrine before me is also my teacher. ...Therefore, it does not matter whether a person is high or low in position, young or old in age. Where there is the doctrine, there is my teacher.” Chinese creative and historical literature is filled with accounts in which the protagonist reaps significant benefits by following the particularly prudent advice of an inspired underling. The willingness to seek advice from one’s subordinates has long been a particularly commended virtue in popular Chinese philosophy.

It is hoped that this anthology will expose the reader to the beauty of traditional Chinese literature, and honor an ancient generation of literary pioneers that nurtured a people and a nation.

1. “Doctrine” refers chiefly to Confucius’s teachings.

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