



Francis Bacon

培根处世智慧书

畅销四百年的智慧经典 启迪年轻人的哲理名篇

〔西方励志经典书系·英汉对照〕

〔英〕弗兰西斯·培根 / 著 何宗思等 / 译



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The Essays of Francis Bacon



[英] 弗兰西斯·培根 / 著

何宗思 丁文华 阎秀荣博士 / 译

白云飞 丁卫星 刘雯 / 注

祝晔 叶琛 / 审订

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前言

本书选译自弗兰西斯·培根的《论说文集》(Essays)，共选译了44篇，其他如《论伪装和掩饰》、《论贵族》、《论王权》、《论殖民地》等13篇，于青年身心无多大教益，故未收入。

培根的《论说文集》共收文58篇，1597年问世，又分别于1612、1625年两次增订再版，是一部畅销全世界400多年的哲理散文经典，早已“震撼了那些震撼世界的人”。文字隽永，字字珠玑；内涵丰富，给人启迪。它教给我们关于健康、完善、和谐的人生智慧，引领我们关怀人生，向着真善美的方向努力。

奥利芬特·斯韦顿先生评论这本书说：“凡是细心研究过他的这些文章的人，没有一个不发现它们是作者自己的经验之结果，而经过他的奇妙的心智所陶冶锻炼过的。……培根的《论说文集》可说是少数的‘世界书’的一部，这种书不是为一国而作，乃是为万国而作的，不是为一个时代，而是为一切时代的。在这本书里，极高的智力与变化无穷的兴趣和同情心合而为一了，所以，世人之中，无论什么样的类型或脾气，都可以在这本书里找到一点与他有联系的东西。……培根的《论说文集》的影响可说是仅为世界的四极所限，因为既然大家都能懂，自然无人不能享受了。”（《培根论说文集》，商务印书馆1958年版，第5页。）

弗兰西斯·培根(1561~1626)，英国伟大的思想家、哲学家和著名政治家，出身于伦敦一个新贵族家庭。12岁(1573年)进入著名的剑桥大学三一学院，主攻神学和形而上学，同时进修哲学、逻辑学、天文学、数学、希腊文和拉丁文。1576年赴巴黎，任英国驻法国大使随员，后当过律师、国会议员、女王法律顾问、总检察长、大法官兼上议院院长等。1621年培根被卷入一宗重大的经济案件。这个案子的背景直接牵连国王詹姆斯一世。培根被判受贿罪和包庇罪而免去公职。从此，培根脱离政治生涯，潜心著书。1626年4月9日，培根因病去世。

培根是英国经验主义哲学的奠基人，他认为感觉是一切知识的源泉，自然界、物质是科学研究的对象。他还著有《学术的进展》、《新工具》、《论古人的智慧》等著作。

本书英汉对照，由何宗思策划，并约请丁文华、阎秀荣博士共同译出，然后由何宗思统稿、整理。

本书适合于广大文学爱好者和高中英语水平以上的读者。为了方便读者阅读、理解和学习英语，我们把英语原文中的所有古代英语词汇转换为现代英语词汇，如 maketh、hath、mindeth、giveth 等词，分别转换为 makes、has、minds、gives；把原文中作者引用的大部分拉丁语转换成英语；并对培根原文进行了分段，将其中英文生词变成黑体，并简注在相应中译段落旁，标注国际音标。注释尽量做到简明、准确，译文力求信、达、雅。如有不尽人意之处，恳请广大读者批评指正！

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The Essays of Francis Bacon



只有当我们以神为神时，
我们才能以人为人。

——培 根

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——奥利芬特·斯韦顿





1. Of Truth

1. Of Truth

What is truth? said **jesting** Pilate, and would not stay for an answer. Certainly there be, that delight in **giddiness**, and count it a **bondage** to fix a belief; affecting free-will in thinking, as well as in acting. And though the **sects** of philosophers of that kind be gone, yet there remain certain discoursing wits, which are of the same veins, though there be not so much blood in them, as was in those of the ancients.

But it is not only the difficulty and labor, which men take in finding out of truth, nor again, that when it is found, it **imposes** upon men's thoughts, that does bring lies in favour; but a natural, though **corrupt** love, of the lie itself. One of the later school of the **Grecians**, examines the matter, and is **at a stand**, to think what should be in it, that men should love lies; where neither they make for pleasure, as with poets, nor for **advantage**, as with the merchant; but for the lie's sake.

But I cannot tell; this same truth, is a naked, and open day-light, that does not show the **masks**, and **mummeries**, and triumphs, of the world, half so **stately** and **daintily** as candle-lights.

Truth may perhaps come to the price of a pearl, that shows best by day; but it will not rise to the price of a diamond, or **carbuncle**, that shows best in varied lights.

A mixture of a lie does ever add pleasure. Does any man doubt, that if there were taken out of men's minds, **vain** opinions, flattering hopes, false valuations, imaginations as one would, and the like, but it would leave the minds, of a number of men, poor **shrunk** things,

1. 论真理

“真理是什么呢？”彼拉多^①曾嘲笑道，他并不指望得到一个确切答案。总有些人因轻信而自以为得到了真理，他们沾沾自喜，将之奉为信仰，当作清规戒律，这就限制了思想和行动的自由。这种持怀疑精神的哲学家已为数不多不成流派，但还是留下了这样一些哲言慧语，他们延续了智者的血脉，尽管其机敏和睿智比先师大哲稍逊。

人们所以轻信，不仅是因为发现真正的真理需要艰苦的努力，也不是因为有谁要将教条强加于人们的思想，而是因为人们对谎言的偏好，这是一种天然的偏爱，尽管这种偏爱有百害而无一利。人为什么会喜爱谎言呢？后期希腊学派有一位哲学家曾探讨过这一问题，他发现，人们喜爱谎言既不是像诗人写诗那样为了愉悦，又不像商人经商那样为了赚钱，恰恰是因为它是谎言。

我也不懂这究竟是因为什么，也许真理就像一无遮拦的日光，它不能像摇曳的烛光那样，将人世的假面舞会表现得那么讲究那么堂皇。

真理像珍珠，其价值在白天的阳光中才能被认识，它不会像金刚石或红宝石那样，因了各种光的照射更加璀璨。

真真假假虚虚实实的谎言，的确带来热闹。假如把那些虚妄的意见、谄媚的期盼、错误的愿望和幻想等诸如此类的东西都从人们头脑中抽空，许多人的心里就会乏味而可怜了，

jesting ['dʒestɪŋ] *n.* 笑话

giddy ['gɪdi] *adj.* 头晕的；**giddiness**
n. 轻率

bondage ['bɒndɪdʒ] *n.* 奴役，束缚

sect [sekt] *n.* 宗派

impose [ɪm'pəʊz] *vi.* 施加影响

corrupt [kə'rʌpt] *vt.* 腐蚀

Grecian ['griːʃən] *adj.* 希腊式的（建筑、容貌）；*n.* 希腊学家

at a stand 停顿，陷入僵局

advantage [əd'vɑːntɪdʒ] *n.* 利益

mask [mɑːsk; (US) mæsk] *n.* 面具

mummery ['mʌməri] *n.* 哑剧表演

stately ['steɪtli] *adj.* 堂皇的

daintily ['deɪntəli] *adv.* 优美

carbuncle ['kɑːbʌŋk(ə)l] *n.* 红宝石

vain [veɪn] *adj.* 虚荣的

shrunk ['ʃrʌŋkən] *adj.* ([罕] shrink
的过去分词) 缩小的

full of **melancholy** and **indisposition**, and displeasing to themselves?

One of the fathers, in great **severity**, called poesy **vinum daemonum**, because it fills the imagination; and yet, it is but with the shadow of a lie. But it is not the lie that passes through the mind, but the lie that sinks in, and settles in it, that does the hurt; such as we **spake** of before.

But **howsoever** these things are thus in men's **depraved** judgments, and affections, yet truth, which only does judge itself, teaches that the inquiry of truth, which is the love-making, or **wooing** of it, the knowledge of truth, which is the presence of it, and the belief of truth, which is the enjoying of it, is the **sovereign** good of human nature.

The first creature of God, in the works of the days, was the light of the sense; the last, was the light of reason; and his **Sabbath** work ever since, is the **illumination** of his Spirit. First he **breathed** light, upon the face of the matter or **chaos**; then he breathed light, into the face of man; and still he breaths and **inspires** light, into the face of his chosen.

The poet, that beautified the **sect**, that was otherwise **inferior to** the rest, said yet excellently well: It is a pleasure, to stand upon the shore, and to see ships **tossed** upon the sea; a pleasure, to stand in the window of a **castle**, and to see a battle, and the adventures **thereof** below; but no pleasure is comparable to the standing upon the **vantage** ground of truth (a hill not to be commanded, and where the air is always clear and **serene**), and to see the errors, and wanderings, and **mists**, and **tempests**, in the **vale** below; so always that this prospect be with pity, and not with **swelling**, or pride.

Certainly, it is heaven upon earth, to have a man's mind



处
世
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1. 论真理

谁能保证他们不会因此变得郁郁寡欢、浑身不爽、心绪不宁呢？

一位先哲曾指责诗歌为“魔鬼的迷幻药酒”，因为它充满了幻想，尽管想像本身无可厚非，却为不实之念制造了庇荫。但是真正可怕的并非稍纵即逝的幻想或谬见，而是在人们心中沉积或生根的如前所述的陋习或偏见。

这些东西迎合了人们颓废的倾向和偏好，而真理只以自身为价值尺度。但是真理让人们懂得，因为热爱真理而探索真理，渴望真理而寻求真理，欣赏真理而信仰真理，乃是人的天性中最崇高的德行。

上帝创世时首先创造了感性之光，最后创造了理性之光，在安息日它又把自己的精神传给了人类。它先是用光照亮了万物和混沌的世界，而后照亮了人类的脸庞，它的光辉至今都在照射着它的选民。

诗人往往容易美化某些东西而贬低另一些东西，但是有一位诗人^②说得好：“站在岸上看船在海中颠簸，站在一个城堡的窗口看一场战争，这些都是乐事，因为自己远离危险。而更为有趣的是站在一个真理的高地，一个尚未被人占有的山上，在一片空明而宁静的氛围中看沟谷里人们的错误、迷乱、无所适从和争斗的风暴。”当然，这种观察应该是带着怜悯而不是自满高傲的。

倘若一个人始终站在真理的一端，因慈悲

melancholy ['melənkəli] *n.* 忧郁
indisposition [ɪndɪspə'zɪʃən] *n.* 厌恶

severity [si'verɪti] *n.* 严肃
vinum ['vaɪnəm] *n.* [药] 酒
daemonic [di:'mɒnɪk] *adj.* 恶魔的，似魔鬼的；**daemonum** *n.*
spake [speɪk] *n.* [古] **speak** 的过去式

howsoever [hausəʊ'veə(r)] *adv.* 无论如何
depraved [di'preɪvd] *adj.* 堕落的
woo [wu] *v.* 追求
sovereign ['sɒvrɪn] *adj.* 至高无上的

sabbath ['sæbəθ] *n.* 安息日
illumination [ɪ,lju:'mɪneɪʃən] *n.* 照明，发光
breath [breθ] *n.* 气息，呼吸；*v.* 散布
chaos ['keɪɔs] *n.* 混沌
inspire [ɪn'spaɪə(r)] *vt.* 产生

sect [sekt] *n.* 派别，宗派
inferior to 次于
toss [tɒs; (US) tɔ:s] *vt./vi.* 颠簸
castle ['kɑ:s(ə)l; (US) 'kæsl] *n.* 城堡
thereof [ðeə'ɒv, -'ɒf] *adv.* 由此，因此
vantage ['vɑ:ntɪdʒ] *n.* 优势
serene [si'ri:n] *adj.* 平静的
mist [mɪst] *n.* 薄雾
tempest ['tempɪst] *n.* 暴风雨
vale [veɪl] *n.* 谷，山谷
swell [swel] *vi.* 骄傲自满

charity ['tʃærɪti] *n.* 施舍，慈善机构
rest in 依靠

move in **charity**, **rest in providence**, and **turn upon** the **poles** of truth.

To pass from **theological**, and philosophical truth, to the truth of **civil** business; it will be acknowledged, even by those that practise it not, that clear, and round dealing, is the honour of man's nature; and that mixture of **falsehood**, is like **alloy** in **coin** of gold and silver, which may make the **metal** work the better, but it embases it. For these winding, and **crooked** courses, are the goings of the **serpent**; which goes basely upon the **belly**, and not upon the feet.

There is no **vice**, that does so cover a man with shame, as to be found false and **perfidious**. And therefore Mountaigny said prettily, when he inquired the reason, why the word of the lie should be such a **disgrace**, and such an **odious** charge? Said he, If it be well weighed, to say that a man lies, is as much to say, as that he is brave towards God, and a **coward** towards men.

For a lie faces God, and **shrinks** from man. Surely the **wickedness** of falsehood, and **breach** of faith, cannot possibly be so highly expressed, as in that it shall be the last **peal**, to call the judgments of God upon the generations of men; it being **foretold**, that when Christ comes, he shall not find faith upon the earth.



处
世
智
慧

1. 论真理

而心动，顺天意而行，那么他就是进入人间天国之境了。

谈了神学和哲学之理，再来看日常之理。即使不是自觉践行真理的人也得承认，正大光明是人类崇高的德性。所以伪善如同铸入了银的金币，也许更好使用，但毕竟是劣币。欺诈行为就像蛇一样，只能在地上爬行，无法用足站立。

没有什么比被人发现弄虚作假、背信弃义更使人蒙羞的了。骗子这个词为什么如此可憎呢？蒙田^③说得好：“仔细想一下，说一个人撒谎，就如同说他敢于面对上帝却不敢面对世人一样。”

因为骗子冲着上帝而不敢面对世人，所以诚实之德败坏不会太快，否则就等于敲响了末世的警钟，上帝就要来对人类进行审判了。有人预言，当人间不再有诚信之时，基督就该降临了。

(阎秀荣/译)

注释：

① 彼拉多 (P. Pilate)，罗马帝国派驻犹太国的巡抚，在参与审判耶稣时，因耶稣坚持为真理作见证，于是他说出了那句对真理质疑的永载史册的问话。

② 指伊壁鸠鲁派哲学家卢克莱修 (Lucretius，公元前99~约前55)，罗马诗人。

③ 蒙田 (Michel de Montaigny，1533~1592)，法国著名文学家，此处引自其著作《随笔集》卷二《论谎言》。

providence ['prɒvɪdəns] *n.* 上帝

turn upon 随……而定

pole [pəʊl] *n.* 竿，杆

theological [θiə'lɒdʒɪkəl] *adj.* 神学的

civil ['sɪvəl] *adj.* 公民的，市民的，国民的

falsehood ['fɔ:lshʊd] *n.* 虚假

alloy ['ælɔɪ] *n.* 合金

coin [kɔɪn] *n.* 硬币，钱币

crooked ['krʊkɪd] *adj.* 弯曲的，扭曲的

serpent ['sɜ:pənt] *n.* 大毒蛇

belly ['belɪ] *n.* 腹部

vice [vaɪs] *n.* 恶习

perfidious [pə:'fɪdiəs, -dʒəs] *adj.* 背信弃义的

disgrace [dɪs'greɪs] *n.* 耻辱

odious ['ɒdiəs, -diəs] *adj.* 可憎的

coward ['kaʊəd] *n.* 胆小的人，懦夫

shrink [frɪŋk] *v.* 收缩

wickedness ['wɪkɪdnɪs] *n.* 不道德

breach [bri:tʃ] *n.* 违背

peal [pi:l] *n.* 响亮的钟声

foretell [fɔ:'tel] *v.* 预言

2. Of Death

Men fear death, as children fear to go in the dark; and as that natural fear in children, is increased with tales, so is the other. Certainly, the **contemplation** of death, as the wages of **sin**, and passage to another world, is **holy** and **religious**; but the fear of it, as a tribute due unto nature, is weak.

Yet in religious **meditations**, there is sometimes mixture of **vanity**, and of **superstition**. You shall read, in some of the **friars'** books of **mortification**, that a man should think with himself, what the pain is, if he have but his finger's end pressed, or **tortured**, and thereby imagine, what the pains of death are, when the whole body is **corrupted**, and **dissolved**; when many times death passes, with less pain than the torture of a **limb**; for the most **vital** parts, are not the quickest of sense. And by him that spoke only as a philosopher, and natural man, it was well said, It is the **trappings** of death that terrify, rather than death itself. **Groans**, and **convulsions**, and a discoloured face, and friends weeping, and blacks, and **obsequies**, and the like, show death terrible.

It is worthy the observing, that there is no passion in the mind of man, so weak, but it **mates**, and masters, the fear of death; and therefore, death is no such terrible enemy, when a man has so many **attendants** about him, that can win the **combat** of him. Revenge triumphs over death; love slights it; honour aspires to it; grief flies to it; fear pre-occupates it; nay, we read, after Otho the **emperor** had **slain** himself, pity (which is the tenderest of affections) **provoked** many to die, out of mere compassion to their **sovereign**, and as the truest sort of followers. Nay, Seneca adds niceness and **satiety**: Consider how long you have been doing the same things; death



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2. 论死亡

如同孩子害怕黑暗一样，人们对死亡的恐惧也会因为听信一些鬼怪的传说而加大。当然，把死亡看作赎罪，看作向另一个世界的旅行是神圣的，但若把死亡看作是向自然的回归，死也就不那么令人畏惧了。

宗教的冥想有时杂以空幻和迷信。在一些苦行僧的修道书里，你会读到这样的说教：试试挤压或扭曲你的手指的感受，由此你可以想像整个身体腐烂或溶化的感觉。其实很多时候，死亡并不像想像的那么痛苦，因为最致命的器官并不就是最敏感的器官。有人说过一句很精辟的话：“与死俱来的一切比死亡本身更可怕。”这话既富于哲理又合乎人之常情。死前的呻吟和痉挛、失去血色的脸、朋友的哭泣、丧服、葬礼等等，都使死亡显得可怖。

观察一下就会发现，人类的情感虽然脆弱，但仍可以克服对死亡的恐惧。当你发现有许多同伴与你共同面对死亡时，死亡也就不那么可怕了。仇雠之心使人战胜死亡，爱情使人蔑视死亡，荣誉使人献身死亡，悲痛使人奔赴死亡，而恐惧之心则使人在肉体未死之前心灵就先被击败了。历史上记载，奥托大帝^①自杀之后，他的忠实的追随者们出于忠诚和同情（这是人类最软弱的感情）而殉身。塞涅卡^②曾说，重复乏味的工作也可致人死命，即使他既

contemplation [ˌkɒntemˈpleɪʃən] *n.*

注视

sin [sɪn] *n.* 罪

holy [ˈhəʊli] *adj.* 神圣的

religious [rɪˈlɪdʒəs] *adj.* 宗教的，虔诚的

meditation [ˌmedɪˈteɪʃən] *n.* 沉思

vanity [ˈvænɪti] *n.* 空虚

superstition [ˌsjuːpəˈstɪʃən] *n.* 迷信

friar [ˈfraɪə(r)] *n.* 男修道士

mortification [ˈmɔːtɪfɪˈkeɪʃən] *n.*

【宗】禁欲，苦行；耻辱，悔恨

torture [ˈtɔːtʃə] *n.* 拷问，折磨

corrupt [kəˈrʌpt] *vt.* 使腐烂，使败坏

dissolve [dɪˈzɒlv] *v.* 溶解

limb [lɪm] *n.* 分枝

vital [ˈvaɪt(ə)l] *adj.* 生命攸关的

trappings [ˈtræpɪŋz] *n.* [pl.] 装饰

groan [grəʊn] *n.* 呻吟，叹息

convulsion [kənˈvʌlʃ(ə)n] *n.* (常用

pl) 惊厥，抽搐

obsequies [ˈɒbsɪkwɪz] *n.* (复数) 葬礼

mate [meɪt] *vt.* 结伴，使符合

attendant [əˈtend(ə)nt] *n.* 随从

combat [ˈkɒmbæt] *n.* 斗争，战斗

emperor [ˈempərə] *n.* 皇帝，君主

slay [sleɪ] (slew, slain) *v.* 杀

provoke [prəˈvʌʊk] *vt.* 驱使

sovereign [ˈsɒvrɪn] *n.* 君主，元首

satiety [səˈtaɪəti] *n.* 过饱，厌腻



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maybe desired not only by the **valiant** or the miserable, but also by the **victim** of **ennui**. A man would die, though he were neither valiant, nor miserable, only upon a **weariness** to do the same thing so **oft**, over and over.

It is no less worthy, to observe, how little **alteration** in good spirits, the approaches of death make; for they appear to be the same men, till the last instant. Augustus Caesar died in a **compliment**: fare-well, Livia, keep after me the memory of our marriage. Tiberius in **dissimulation**; as Tacitus said of him: Tiberius was fast losing his bodily strength, but not his gift of dissimulation. Vespasian in a **jest**, sitting upon the **stool**: **Meseems** I am becoming a God. Galba with a sentence: strike, if it be good for Roman People; holding forth his neck. *Septimius Severus* in **despatch**: Come now, if anything remains for me to do. And the like.

Certainly the Stoics **bestowed** too much cost upon death, and by their great preparations, made it appear more fearful. Better said he, A mind that **reckons** the close of life one of natures **boons**.

It is as natural to die, as to be born; and to a little **infant**, perhaps, the one is as painful, as the other. He that dies in an earnest pursuit, is like one that is wounded in hot blood; who, for the time, **scarce** feels the hurt; and therefore a mind fixed, and bent upon somewhat that is good, does **avert** the **dolours** of death.

But, above all, believe it, the sweetest **canticle** is, Now lettest **thou** [thy servant depart in peace]; when a man has obtained worthy ends, and expectations.