

Translated by  
Roland C. Fang 方重譯

陶淵明詩文選譯 *Gleanings from  
Tao Yuan-ming*

( Prose & Poetry )



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**GLEANINGS FROM TAO YUAN MING**

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## *From The Translator*

In the introduction to his *170 Chinese Poems*, first published in 1918, Arthur Waley mentioned Tao Yuan-ming (A.D. 365—427) as “the greatest Chinese *recluse*”, and further on, he added that our poet “was not an original thinker, but a great poet who reflects in an interesting way the outlook of his time.” And in this book of his, only 12 of Tao’s poems are included.

Two years previously, Cranmer-Byng had published his exquisite translations of some 20 representative poets and expressed his regret for omitting Tao Yuan-ming. Thus he remarked:

“This author has been comparatively neglected as yet by Western scholars. Many of his poems would be well worth translating.”

Today in China, Prof. Wang Yao of Peking University, one of our recognized Tao scholars and an editor of the poet’s works, has made discerning references to the existence of French, German, Japanese and Russian versions but failed so far to find a good, sensible English translation of this great pre-Tang poet.

This brings us to the perpetual issue on the possibility of translating a classic poet with tolerable satisfaction. English translators of Chinese poetry have often admitted the almost

insurmountable barriers they meet in their work.

“Poetry is poetry,” said Cranmer-Byng, “whether it be written in Chinese ideographs or European characters, and no knowledge of Chinese will enable one to interpret the poet’s message in another tongue. . . . Before one line is placed on paper the translator from the Chinese must have soaked himself in the traditions of the Chinese masters, their reticence, their power of suggestion, their wonderful colour-sense, and above all, their affinity and identification with their subject.”

With the present translator, such a work has been for long years a labour of love. I have received encouragement and help from many of my friends, Chinese as well as foreign, to whom I am deeply indebted. I expect more versions or interpretations of Tao Yuan-ming to appear in English or other languages, for he is undoubtedly our poet of poets and to transplant his simplicity and charm in another soil will bring the gleaner rich rewards.

Roland C. Fang

## 譯者的話

於1918年初次刊印的《170首中國詩集》序言裏，阿瑟·韋利提到了陶淵明，稱他爲“中國隱士中最突出的一位隱士”。在這句話之後，他却跟着說道，“這位詩人並非一個有創見的思想家，不過由於他善於反映當代的一些觀點和立場，則不失其爲一個偉大的詩人。”（韋利書中所譯陶詩僅十二首）

在韋利譯作出版之前二年，克蘭默·賓已譯出了二十多位有代表性的中國詩人的作品，但因未譯陶詩，他感到遺憾。“迄今爲止”，他說，“西方學者忽視了陶淵明，而陶詩中值得一譯的詩品却不在少數。”

北京大學王瑤教授，是一位陶詩專家，曾編印了一部完整的《陶淵明集》。他對國外已譯成的陶詩列舉了梁宗岱的法譯本，楊業治的德譯本，以及日文、俄文、朝鮮文的譯本，“但未見到有系統的英譯本”。談到陶淵明在中國文學史上的地位與影響，他認爲“昭然在人耳目。僅由陶集注本之多一點而言，即足覘此”。

這裏不免要引出一個爭論不休的基本問題——“理想的詩譯是否可能？”上面所提到的英國詩譯者克蘭默·賓講得好：“一張

紙放在面前，而漢詩英譯者必須先把自己浸透在中國詩人的文化傳統之中，深刻體驗他們的意向風尚、嚴謹沉默，他們的技巧手法，尤其是他們切身的藝術修養，等等。”

至於我本人在陶譯的歲月中所經受的是一個很有意義的艱苦歷程。不少中外友人給了我熱情鼓勵和幫助，對於他們，我要衷心地感謝。我希望有更多的陶詩英譯本問世，因為陶淵明無疑是我國一千五、六百年以來的一位“詩聖”，他那種樸素超脫的品質，如能用英美的詩文風格逐漸地移植過去，實在是極為可貴的一種嘗試。

方 重

1979年2月於上海

## *Tao Yuan-ming, A Biographical Sketch*

by

*Prince Hsiao Tung (A.D. 527) \**

Tao Yuan-ming (A.D. 365-427 ), alias Yuan-liang, otherwise known as Tao Chien, alias Yuan-ming, was a native of the district of Chaishang in Shunyang.\*\* His great grandfather, Tao Kan, served under the Tsins, holding a high official post. From his early youth our poet cherished rare tastes of his own, and was well-read and proficient in the art of poetry. Like an arrow-head out of its sheath he prided himself on his way of true living as being far above those of his contemporaries. He wrote the "Story of the Man of Five-Willows" to throw light on his own character, a sketch considered in his day to be a self-portraiture.

What with poverty and an aged mother at home he began to join the petty ranks in the local prefecture. On finding the work irksome, he soon resigned. Another position was offered

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\* Heir apparent to Emperor Wu-ti of the Liang Dynasty, being one of the outstanding men of letters in literary history. This biographical sketch on Tao Yuan-ming, one of the three earliest records, and the best, was written just one hundred years after the death of the poet.

\*\* in modern Kiangsi.



and rejected. Then he toiled so hard on his scanty farm to support his family that his health broke down. When Governor Tan called on him, he was found to have been bed-ridden for days from illness and hunger. "A wise man," expostulated Tan, "should learn to meet the times when justice reigns, and never think of retirement unless darkness prevails. As it is, you are born into these piping days of peace, what sense is there for you to afflict yourself like this?"

"But how could I ever presume to be wise and knowing? I am not equal to it," answered Yuan-ming.

Thereupon Governor Tan sent him some rice and meat, which he only waved off with nonchalance.

Then he was appointed adviser to a certain military bureau, for which he complained to some of his personal friends, saying, "How I wish to be embarked upon a peaceful job with just enough emoluments to pave my garden-paths!" Such like sentiments of his reached the ears of his superiors, and he was presently transferred to the magistracy of the district of Pengtze.

To Pengtze he went without his family. But he took care to dispatch a man-labourer to his son with a note, in which he wrote: "Considering the heavy housework you have on hand day and night, I am sending this man along to help you carry water and chop wood. Remember though, he is also someone's

son. Treat him well."

As district magistrate he was allotted 300 *mou* of ricefield as a source for his official revenue. He had a mind to have the whole area planted with millet. "If I could only get drunk on the yield of millet-wine I should be more than satisfied," said he. But his wife and sons insisted on his planting rice instead. It was then agreed to turn 250 *mou* into millet, leaving the rest for rice.

By the end of the year there came an official from the higher prefecture, "Welcome him in proper form," was the advice given by his colleagues in the district *yamen*.

"Am I expected to bow to a little town-fool for the sake of five bushels of rice?" And on the same day he gave up his magistracy and wrote the famous *fu*, "Come Away Home!" Though a different post was suggested he did not give it a thought.

By this time a certain Governor Wang of Kiangchow asked to be introduced to him, but could find no way of approach. When it was known that the poet was going up the Lushan Mountains the Governor lost no time in causing one of the poet's old friends, Pang, to bring some wine in order to meet him on the way. Yuan-ming was being accompanied by a pupil and two sons of his who were carrying luggage for him on account of some ailment in his foot. Seeing the wine before him he was glad to sit down and begin to drink it. At

this moment Governor Wang appeared in person. Yuan-ming saw him, but went on drinking as if nothing happened.

At first, a minor official named Yen had cultivated his friendship at Shunyang. While taking up a new post sometime later Yen had to pass the same place again. On this occasion he spent everyday drinking together with the poet; and whenever they met they never parted without getting quite drunk. Governor Wang again sought their company, yet saw the days slip by without any access. Now it was time for Yen to say goodbye to Yuan-ming, with whom he was good enough to leave a fair sum of money. Yuan-ming sank the whole thing in a drinking house, which he frequented as long as the money lasted.

Then on the Double-Ninth Day the poet stepped out of his house to sit ensconced in the chrysanthemum beds. When he had filled his lap with those favorite flowers of his, suddenly came Governor Wang again with wine. Yuan-ming partook of it without ceremony, got drunk, and quietly retired into the house.

He used to keep a stringless zither, though he was not well versed in the technique of musical tunes. Wine-cup by his side he would play on the old instrument in imaginary expressions of silent music. Among his friends he made no difference between the high and the low so long as there was wine. And if he should get drunk first, he would not hesitate to address

his partner in these terms: "I am drunk and will go to sleep; you may go." Such was the frankness of his manners. Another time when certain high officials paid him a visit, they found him busily brewing the wine. For straining off the dregs he was seen to take down off-hand his head-scarf for the purpose, and after straining, the wet scarf was immediately restored to his head with perfect unconcern.

At that time there were three men known as the three Shunyang recluses. One was Chou, who had gone up the Lushan Mountains to become a disciple of a Buddhist monk. The second was Liu of Pengcheng, who also left the world to live in the same mountains. Our poet made up the trio by refusing all governmental offers. Not long afterwards Chou was, under entreaty, made to lecture to students and to edit old classics with two other scholars. As they were put up in the vicinity of a stable-yard for horse-guards, the poet made reference to it in a verse epistle addressed to them in these lines:

You carry on the tradition of the great sage,  
And colleagues there are to echo your words.

.....  
.....

But the stable-yard is no lecture-hall,  
Where you are just wasting your powers.

The poet's wife, Ti, accepted poverty and hardship with like equanimity. His great-grandfather, he thought, had championed the cause of the Tsins; it would be a shame on his part to serve

the new rulers. As the rule of the new regime grew to be deeper-rooted all the less was he inclined to be summoned to any post.

He lived to the age of sixty-three and died before he could be made to accept the last offer. Posthumously he was honoured with the title of *Tao the Modest and Serene*.

# 陶淵明傳

蕭 統

陶淵明，字元亮。或云潛字淵明。潯陽柴桑人也。曾祖侃，晉大司馬。淵明少有高趣，博學，善屬文；穎脫不羣，任真自得。嘗著“五柳先生傳”以自況，時人謂之實錄。親老家貧，起爲州祭酒；不堪吏職，少日自解歸。州召主簿，不就。躬耕自資，遂抱羸疾。江州刺史檀道濟往候之，偃卧瘠餒有日矣。道濟謂曰：“賢者處世，天下無道則隱，有道則至；今子生文明之世，奈何自苦如此？”對曰：“潛也何敢望賢，志不及也。”道濟饋以粱肉，麾而去之。後爲鎮軍、建威參軍，謂親朋曰：

“聊欲絃歌以爲三徑之資，可乎？”執事者聞之，以爲彭澤令。不以家累自隨，送一力給其子，書曰：“汝旦夕之費，自給爲難，今遣此力，助汝薪水之勞。此亦人子也，可善遇之。”公田悉令吏種秫，曰：“吾嘗得醉於酒足矣！”妻子固請種秔，乃使二頃五十畝種秫，五十畝種粳。歲終，會郡遣督郵至，縣吏請曰：“應束帶見之。”淵明歎曰：

“我豈能爲五斗米，折腰向鄉里小兒！”即日解綬去職，賦“歸去來”。徵著作郎，不就。江州刺史王弘欲識之，不能致也。淵明嘗往廬山，弘命淵明故人龐通之齎酒具，于半道栗里之間邀之。淵明有

脚疾，使一門生二兒舁籃輿；既至，欣然便共飲酌。俄頃弘至，亦無迂也。先是顏延之爲劉柳後軍功曹，在潯陽與淵明情款，後爲始安郡，經過潯陽，日造淵明飲焉。每往，必酣飲致醉。弘欲邀延之坐，彌日不得。延之臨去，留二萬錢與淵明；淵明悉遣送酒家，稍就取酒。嘗九月九日出宅邊菊叢中坐，久之，滿手把菊，忽值弘送酒至；即便就酌，醉而歸。淵明不解音律，而蓄無絃琴一張，每酒適，輒撫弄以寄其意。貴賤造之者，有酒輒設。淵明若先醉，便語客：“我醉欲眠，卿可去！”其真率如此。郡將嘗候之，值其釀熟，取頭上葛巾漉酒，漉畢，還復著之。時周續之入廬山，事釋慧遠；彭城劉遺民亦遁迹匡山，淵明又不應徵命，謂之潯陽三隱。後刺史檀韶苦請續之出州，與學士祖企謝景夷三人，共在城北講禮，加以讎校。所住公廨，近於馬隊。是故淵明示其詩云：“周生述孔業，祖謝響然臻；馬隊非講肆，校書亦已勤。”其妻翟氏亦能安勤苦，與其同志。自以曾祖晉世宰輔，恥復屈身後代，自宋高祖王業漸隆，不復肯仕。元嘉四年將復徵命，會卒。時年六十三。世號靖節先生。

# *Part One*



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