

Letters from a Stoic



面包里的幸福人生

[古罗马] 塞涅卡 著
王坤 岳玉庆 曲芳丽 译

必读的励志经典，被翻译成多种语言，经久不衰
从各个方面探讨人性和人生，引导人们摆脱痛苦和
烦恼，通往幸福的彼岸

作者思想精妙、深邃、睿智，对后世影响深远，有
“基督教教父”的美誉



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序言

Preface

卢奇利乌斯·安内乌斯·塞涅卡 (Licius Annaeus Seneca, 4?BC—AD65), 生于古罗马行省西班牙。曾被训练成为一个雄辩家, 担任过尼禄的老师和顾问。他是斯多葛哲学的拥护者和主要代表人物之一, 撰写过一些哲学著作, 还创作过一系列以暴力和流血为特征的悲剧, 包括《俄狄浦斯》、《阿伽门农》等共计9部。他创作的剧本影响了文艺复兴时期伊丽莎白戏剧的发展, 尤其是莎士比亚的《泰特斯·安德洛尼克斯》。塞涅卡是古罗马著名的哲学家、政治家和剧作家。

本书是塞涅卡写给朋友卢奇利乌斯的书信集, 共选译43篇。这些书信是塞涅卡对于哲学、幸福、人生、疾病、美德、友谊等许多方面的探索, 被誉为“分散的沉思录”。塞涅卡的主张和思想为世人提供了力量和安慰, 引导人们摆脱痛苦和烦恼, 通往幸福的彼岸。

本书采用英汉对照的方式, 方便读者阅读。译文经过仔细推敲, 尽量做到忠实通顺, 为您欣赏大师的作品助一臂之力。

阅读本书, 您会感觉到塞涅卡穿越千古, 跟您娓娓道来, 让您在面包中也能发现幸福的人生。

阅读本书, 您可以在不知不觉中激发对英语的兴趣, 提高英语水平, 同时阅读励志经典, 可谓一举两得, 事半功倍。

最后, 需要说明, 虽然已经尽力而为, 但由于能力所限, 错误和不当之处在所难免, 欢迎读者朋友批评指正。

译者

2012年3月

古罗马哲学家塞涅卡写给朋友卢奇利乌斯的书信共有124封流传下来，本书用英汉对照的方式选译了43篇，都是经典名篇，具有积极意义。这43封信涵盖了友谊、哲学、知识、美德、进步、死亡、旅行、享乐、苦难、克己、幸福、疾病、学习、命运、抱负等主题，几乎触及到了人生的各个方面。

斯多葛哲学的主要内容是平静看待死亡，宣扬生活要坚韧、简朴，认为通过理智，人类能够认识宇宙，应该约束自己的生活；学会坚定平静地接受事实，建立崇高的道德价值观等。塞涅卡与爱比克泰德和奥勒留一样，主要探讨道德哲学。因此，他的书信集也有人译为《论道德》。

塞涅卡的这些书信提出了牧歌式的指导精神生活的忠告。他告诫人们，与人建立起了友谊，就要充分信任，就像信任自己一样；而且，有了发现要跟朋友分享，共同进步。对待命运，要学会接受；命运是多变的，但是我们不能受其束缚。生命是短暂的，死亡随时就会来临。幸运的是，生命的美好不在于长短，而是在于如何去利用。因此，“我们准备好面对生活以前，要先准备好面对死亡。”我们面对疾病和老年，不必悲哀，只要充分利用活着的每一天就是幸福的。

塞涅卡认为，痛苦是生活所要缴纳的税负，因此永远不要去逃避。与追求幸福相对立，人们总是想方设法去躲避痛苦，殊不知“漫长的人生涵盖了所有这些痛苦，正如漫长的旅程也包括尘土、泥污及雨水一样。”那么，我们就要坦然对待痛苦，要忍受痛苦。能够忍受了，人生就容易求得幸福，就能够在面包中得到满足——当你饿到极点时，面包也好比山珍海味。

要得到幸福，就要学会在安静和隐遁中生活；要想保持内心平静，最重要

的就是永远不要作恶，要尽可能地行善。另外，缺乏自制的人会生活在不安中，他们永远都无法安心。因此，自我约束是一种重要的美德。

塞涅卡的这些思想以及其他许多思想都是零零碎碎贯穿在他的书信之中，并没有刻板地进行说教，因此阅读之时，会感觉一位思想大师在跟你秉烛夜谈，进行心灵对话。他从平常的小事着手，慢慢阐发人生的大道理，让你不知不觉受到启发，得到感悟。这就是他的书信集跨越历史，被广为流传和阅读的原因。真诚希望本书能给读者朋友带来人生的启示，把握幸福人生的真谛。

译者

2012年3月

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On True and False Friendship

真正和虚假的 友谊

You have sent a letter to me through the hand of a “friend” of yours, as you call him. And in your very next sentence you warn me not to discuss with him all the matters that concern you, saying that even you yourself are not accustomed to do this; in other words, you have in the same letter affirmed and denied that he is your friend. Now if you used this word of ours in the popular sense, and called him “friend” in the same way in which we speak of all candidates for election as “honourable gentlemen,” and as we greet all men whom we meet casually, if their names slip us for the moment, with the salutation “my dear sir,”—so be it. But if you consider any man a friend whom you do not trust as you trust yourself, you are mightily mistaken and you do not sufficiently understand what true friendship means. Indeed, I would have you discuss everything with a friend; but first of all discuss the man himself. When friendship is settled, you must trust; before friendship is formed, you

你托人给我送来一封信，称送信人为“朋友”。紧接着第二句话，你又告诫我不要和他谈论所有与你有关的事情，说就连你自己也不习惯这样做；换言之，在同一封信中你既肯定又否认他是你的朋友。如果你是將“朋友”一词用作泛称，你称他“朋友”，就像我们称呼所有选举候选人“尊敬的先生们”，或跟任何偶遇的人打招呼，却一时想不起他们的名字，就称之为“亲爱的先生”那样，也便罢了。但若你将一个人视为朋友，却无法像信任自己那样信任他，那你就是大错特错，尚未完全理解真正友谊的含义。当然，我希望你能和朋友探讨任何事情，但首先你得探讨一下这个人本身。一旦友谊建立，你必须对其予以信任；在此之前，你必须对其予以评判。有些人违反了泰奥弗拉斯托斯的定律，不

must pass judgment. Those persons indeed put last first and confound their duties, who, violating the rules of Theophrastus^①, judge a man after they have made him their friend, instead of making him their friend after they have judged him. Ponder for a long time whether you shall admit a given person to your friendship; but when you have decided to admit him, welcome him with all your heart and soul. Speak as boldly with him as with yourself. As to yourself, although you should live in such a way that you trust your own self with nothing which you could not entrust even to your enemy, yet, since certain matters occur which convention keeps secret, you should share with a friend at least all your worries and reflections. Regard him as loyal, and you will make him loyal. Some, for example, fearing to be deceived, have taught men to deceive; by their suspicions they have given their friend the right to do wrong. Why need I keep back any words in the presence of my friend? Why should I not regard myself as alone when in his company?

There is a class of men who communicate, to anyone whom they meet, matters which should be revealed to friends alone, and unload upon the chance listener whatever irks them. Others, again, fear to confide in

是先看人再交朋友，而是先交朋友，再对其加以评判，这些人显然是本末倒置，分不清先后顺序。是否与人交朋友要经过深思熟虑；一旦决定与他结交，就要全心全意对待他。要对他直言不讳，就像跟自己说话一样。至于你，你虽应畅所欲言，毫不隐瞒，即便对敌人亦应如此，但习俗约定有些事只能秘而不宣，那你至少应将所有的烦恼与思虑与朋友分享。你若视他为忠实的朋友，你就会让他变得忠实。比如，有些教人去骗人的人，自己也害怕被骗。由于他们心存怀疑，他们的朋友就有了背叛他们的权利。为什么在朋友面前我还要有所隐瞒呢？为什么有了朋友的陪伴我还要认为自己是孤独的呢？

有些人把只该告诉朋友的话跟任何人讲，把自己的烦心事随便说给任何人听；而有些人，即便对最亲密的朋友也不敢吐露心事。如有可能，他们甚至连自己都不相信，而将秘密埋于心底。这两种做法都不可取，什么人都信和什么人都

① Theophrastus 泰奥弗拉斯托斯 (370~287BC)，古希腊逍遥学派哲学家

their closest intimates; and if it were possible, they would not trust even themselves, burying their secrets deep in their hearts. But we should do neither. It is equally faulty to trust everyone and to trust no one. Yet the former fault is, I should say, the more ingenuous^①, the latter the more safe. In like manner you should rebuke these two kinds of men,—both those who always lack repose^②, and those who are always in repose. For love of bustle is not industry,—it is only the restlessness of a hunted mind. And true repose does not consist in condemning all motion as merely vexation^③; that kind of repose is slackness and inertia^④. Therefore, you should note the following saying, taken from my reading in Pomponius: “Some men shrink into dark corners, to such a degree that they see darkly by day.” No, men should combine these tendencies, and he who reposes should act and he who acts should take repose. Discuss the problem with Nature; she will tell you that she has created both day and night. Farewell.

不信一样，二者都是错误的。不过我得说，前者过于坦率，后者过于保守。同样，你应当指责这两类人：那些总是忙不得闲的人和安于宁静的人。因为乐于忙碌并非勤奋——它只是恐惧心灵的躁动。而厌烦一切活动，也并非真正的安宁，只是松懈与惰性罢了。因此，你要记住下面这句话，这是我从庞培尼乌斯的书中读到的：

“有些人蜷缩到黑暗的角落，即使白天在他们看来也如黑夜一般。”可见，我们应当把上述两种倾向结合起来，安于宁静的人应当行动起来，而忙于行动的人应当安静下来。去问大自然吧。她会告诉你，她既创造了白天，也创造了黑夜。再见。

① ingenuous 率直的，坦白的
② repose 安静，休息
③ vexation 恼怒，烦恼
④ inertia 惰性，迟钝

I commend you and rejoice in the fact that you are persistent in your studies, and that, putting all else aside, you make it each day your endeavour to become a better man. I do not merely exhort you to keep at it; I actually beg you to do so. I warn you, however, not to act after the fashion of those who desire to be conspicuous rather than to improve, by doing things which will arouse comment as regards your dress or general way of living. Repellent^① attire, unkempt^② hair, slovenly^③ beard, open scorn of silver dishes, a couch on the bare earth, and any other perverted^④ forms of self-display, are to be avoided. The mere name of philosophy, however quietly pursued, is an object of sufficient scorn; and what would happen if we should begin to separate ourselves from the customs of our fellow-men? Inwardly, we ought to be different in all respects, but

看到你坚持不懈地学习，心无旁骛，一天天努力使自己变得更好，我很高兴也很赞赏。我不仅要劝诫你坚持下去，实际上我要恳求你这样去做。可是我还要提醒你，不要像有些人一样，渴望惹人注意，让人对其穿着或生活方式评头论足，而不渴望去提高自己；不要衣着不当，头发蓬乱，胡子拉碴；不要公然表现出对银器的蔑视；不要席地而睡，也不要使用其他不当方式来自我炫耀。无论如何悄然地研究哲学，仅凭哲学之名，就足以引来众人的蔑视。如果我们脱离社会习俗会怎样呢？在内在本质上，我们各方面都应彼此不同，但在外表上，我们应与社会保持一致。我们的袍子不要太华丽也不要

① repellent 令人厌恶的
② unkempt 蓬乱的
③ slovenly 邋遢的
④ perverted 不正当的

our exterior should conform to society. Do not wear too fine, nor yet too frowzy^①, a toga^②. One needs no silver plate, encrusted^③ and embossed^④ in solid gold; but we should not believe the lack of silver and gold to be proof of the simple life. Let us try to maintain a higher standard of life than that of the multitude, but not a contrary standard; otherwise, we shall frighten away and repel the very persons whom we are trying to improve. We also bring it about that they are unwilling to imitate us in anything, because they are afraid lest they might be compelled to imitate us in everything.

The first thing which philosophy undertakes to give is fellow-feeling with all men; in other words, sympathy and sociability. We part company with our promise if we are unlike other men. We must see to it that the means by which we wish to draw admiration be not absurd and odious. Our motto, as you know, is "Live according to Nature"; but it is quite contrary to nature to torture the body, to hate unlaboured^⑤ elegance, to be dirty on purpose, to eat food that is not only plain,

太破烂肮脏。我们不需要镀着纯金的银盘,但也不能认为没有金银就证明生活简朴。让我们试着保持高于民众的生活方式,但又不能与之完全相反,否则,我们会把那些我们试图去改造的人们吓跑,还会因此使他们担心必须一切都要模仿我们,从而在任何方面都不愿模仿我们。

哲学许诺的头一件事就是人们之间的相互理解,即同情和社交性。如果我们与其他人不同,就会让人们失去我们的承诺。我们必须确定我们希望借以赢得人们称赞的手段并非是荒唐可憎的。你知道,我们的座右铭是“按照自然而生活”。因此虐待身体,厌恶自然的优雅,故意弄脏弄乱,不吃普通饭菜,而吃些令人害怕作呕的东西,这些都是与自然相悖的。正如追求美食是奢侈的标志,拒吃家常便饭就是疯狂的表现。哲学提倡人们追求简单的生活,而非苦行苦修;我们完全可

① frowzy 肮脏的
② toga (古罗马市民穿的) 宽大长袍
③ encrust 包壳
④ emboss 饰以浮雕
⑤ unlaboured 自然的

but disgusting and forbidding. Just as it is a sign of luxury to seek out dainties^①, so it is madness to avoid that which is customary and can be purchased at no great price. Philosophy calls for plain living, but not for penance; and we may perfectly well be plain and neat at the same time. This is the mean of which I approve; our life should observe a happy medium between the ways of a sage and the ways of the world at large; all men should admire it, but they should understand it also.

“Well then, shall we act like other men? Shall there be no distinction between ourselves and the world?” Yes, a very great one; let men find that we are unlike the common herd, if they look closely. If they visit us at home, they should admire us rather than our household appointments, he is a great man who uses earthenware dishes as if they were silver; but he is equally great who uses silver as if it were earthenware. It is the sign of an unstable mind not to be able to endure riches.

But I wish to share with you to-day's profit also. I find in the writings of our Hecato^② that the limiting of desires helps

以做到既简朴又整洁。这便是我所赞同的中庸之道。我们的生活方式应介于贤哲与普通民众之间。所有人都应赞美这种生活方式，也应理解这种生活方式。

“那么，我们要和其他人表现一样吗？我们要和世人毫无分别吗？”当然，会有很大区别。人们仔细观察的话，就会发现我们和普通人不同。他们若到我们家中拜访，就会称赞我们，而不是我们家中的陈设。能将陶器视为银器的人是伟大的，但能将银器视为陶器的人也同样伟大。不能忍受财富是思想不稳定的表现。

让我再与你分享一下今天的收获吧。我在希卡托的文章中发现限制欲望也有助于治愈恐惧。“不去希望，”他说，“那你不会害怕。”“但是，”你会回答，“如此不同的事物怎么会并行呢？”是这样的，亲爱的卢奇利乌斯：它们虽然看起来的确各异，但其实是紧密相连的。就像一根锁链将囚犯和看押他

① dainty 美味

② Hecato 希卡托，古希腊斯多葛派哲学家

also to cure fears: "Cease to hope," he says, "and you will cease to fear." "But how," you will reply, "can things so different go side by side?" In this way, my dear Lucilius: though they do seem at variance, yet they are really united. Just as the same chain fastens the prisoner and the soldier who guards him, so hope and fear, dissimilar as they are, keep step together; fear follows hope. I am not surprised that they proceed in this way; each alike belongs to a mind that is in suspense, a mind that is fretted^① by looking forward to the future. But the chief cause of both these ills is that we do not adapt ourselves to the present, but send our thoughts a long way ahead. And so foresight, the noblest blessing of the human race, becomes perverted. Beasts avoid the dangers which they see, and when they have escaped them are free from care; but we men torment ourselves over that which is to come as well as over that which is past. Many of our blessings bring bane^② to us; for memory recalls the tortures of fear, while foresight anticipates them. The present alone can make no man wretched. Farewell.

的士兵连在一起一样，尽管希望与恐惧毫不相同，它们却彼此相连，恐惧与希望相随，对此我并不感到惊讶，因为两者都属于一种忐忑不安的心理，一种因期望未来而产生焦虑的心理。它们的产生主要在于我们不能根据现实来调整自己，总想着许久以后的事。于是，预见这一赋予人类的最伟大的圣恩，竟成了祸害。野兽会躲避它们眼前看到的危险，危险过后，便不再担心。而我们人类却为将来的事和过去的事饱受折磨。我们的很多福气给我们带来了灾祸，因为记忆让我们想起恐惧的痛苦，预见让我们提前感应到这些痛苦。只看当前，人是不会感到不幸的。再见。

① fretted 焦躁的

② bane 祸害