

# 進學解 - 韓愈

jin` xue' jie^      han' yu`  
 juyen3 hok6 gye2      hon4 yuey6

## "Explanation Upon Entering the Academy" – by Han Yu

馮欣明英語譯，附國語拼音及粵音，'09年2、3月，'10年4月

English Translation Plus Mandarin Pinyin & Cantonese Pronunciation by Feng Xin-ming Feb., Mar. 2009

(繁體版 Complicated Chinese Script, [http://www.tsoidug.org/Literary/Academy\\_Comp.pdf](http://www.tsoidug.org/Literary/Academy_Comp.pdf))

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### COMMENT:

Who says traditional China's Confucianism was all about blind, unquestioning submission to authority? Han Yu was a famous Confucian, yet here he certainly accepted an audacious questioning of his authority from a mere student. When it appeared that what he, the teacher, was saying, that is, those in charge would be intelligent and just, did not accord with reality, that is, those in charge did not seem to treat the teacher himself intelligently or justly, it was perfectly fine for a student to pointedly challenge the teacher. In fact, in Confucian China, it was considered an unshirkable duty for a subject to dispute a ruler and for a son to dispute a father, when the ruler or the father was being unrighteous. Please note that it wasn't just acceptable behavior; it was an actual duty. (See Chapter 15 "Dissuading and Disputing" in *Xiao Jing* or *The Classic of Xiao or Being Good to Parents* at [http://www.tsoidug.org/Xiao/Xiao\\_jing\\_Comment\\_Comp.pdf](http://www.tsoidug.org/Xiao/Xiao_jing_Comment_Comp.pdf), pp. 28-30.)

Yes, rather than just rely on the interpretations of authors who might present a one-sided view, it pays to read the original writings of the ancients yourself and personally hear their voices. And that is why this website provides translations of traditional Chinese writings.

### Introduction:

In 815 A.D., after Han Yu, who had been head of not only the Supreme Academy but also of all education throughout the Empire plus other high offices at court, had been demoted for three years to be a mere doctor (*bo' shi`* 博士) at the Supreme Academy (*tai` xue`* 太學), which was a junior, entry level position for court officials, he wrote this piece, perhaps to console himself. After those in power read the essay they re-promoted him to a higher post, probably afraid that others would draw the same conclusions as the student depicted in the essay.

### TEXT 原文

(拼音四聲 4 tones in Pinyin denoted as 1: di-, 2: di', 3: di^, 4: di`)

(粵語注音說明請參看 Notes on Cantonese pronunciation: [http://www.tsoidug.org/Cantonese\\_Comp.pdf](http://www.tsoidug.org/Cantonese_Comp.pdf))

國子先生，晨入太學，

guo' zi^ xian- sheng- chen' ru` tai` xue`  
 gwok3 jee2 seen1 sung1 sun4 yup6 tye3 hok6

The Teacher of the Sons of the Country<sup>1</sup> entered the Supreme Academy<sup>2</sup> in the morning,

召諸生於膝下而訓之曰：

zhao` zhu- sheng- yu- xi- xia` er` xun` zhi- yue-  
jiu1 juey1 sung1 yeu1 sut1 hah6 yi4 fun4 jee1 eurt6

Called the students to his seat, and admonished them:

學精于勤荒于嬉，行成於思毀於隨。

xue` jing- yu- qin` huang- yu- xi- xing` cheng` yu- si- hui` yu- sui`  
hok6 jing1 yeu1 kun4 fong1 yeu1 hay1 hung4 sing4 yeu1 see1 waeuh2 yeu1 tsuaey4

“Study excels with diligence and becomes neglected with play; conduct succeeds with thinking and is destroyed by following.

方今聖賢相逢，治具畢張，

fang- jin- sheng` xian` xiang- feng` zhi` ju` bi` zhang-  
dong1 gum1 sing3 yeen4 seurng1 fone4 jee6 guae6 but1 jeurng1

“Today the saintly (i.e. a saintly emperor – *trans.*) and the virtuous (i.e. virtuous ministers – *trans.*) are met, and the apparatus of government is expanding fully<sup>3</sup>.

拔去凶邪，登崇俊良。

ba` qu` xiong- xie` deng- chong` jun` liang`  
but6 huae3 hone1 tseh4 dung1 sone4 jueun3 leurng4

“The wicked are rooted out, and the good ascend to honor.

占小善者率以錄，名一藝者無不庸。

zhan` xiao^ shan` zhe^ shuai` yi^ lu` ming` yi- yi` zhe^ wu` bu` yong-  
jeem1 siu2 seen6 jeh2 sueut1 yee3 loke6 ming4 yut1 ngaeuh6 jeh2 moe4 but1 yone4

“Those with a small expertise are inducted into the registry<sup>4</sup>; those with a single skill don’t go unused<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Teacher of the Sons of the Country: Sons of the Country refers to sons of the highest ranking officials, namely the sons of officials of the first to third ranks. See Baidu 百度

<http://baike.baidu.com/view/44762.htm>, under Section “歷史淵源”：面向三品以上官僚子弟。 Also see 漢典 <http://www.zdic.net/cd/ci/8/ZdicE5Zdic9BZdicBD346299.htm>: (國子監) 掌儒學訓導之政… 為中國古代教育體系中的最高學府。

<sup>2</sup> Supreme Academy: the highest academy in Imperial China, from 206 B.C.E. (Han Dynasty) onward and often seats of dissent. See Baidu 百度 under 太學 <http://baike.baidu.com/view/44762.htm>.

<sup>3</sup> 畢 (bi) means “fully” here.

<sup>4</sup> The registry: this refers to the registry of officials; therefore, being inducted into the registry means being hired as a government official.

<sup>5</sup> 庸 (yong-) is in its ancient usage here as a verb meaning “to use”.

爬羅剔抉，刮垢磨光。

pa' loo' ti- jue' gua- gou' mo' guang-  
pah4 loh4 tik1 kueet3 gwaht3 gouh3 moh4 gwong1

**“The net is combed and picked over; dirt is scraped away and things are polished to shine.**

蓋有幸而獲選，孰云多而不揚。

gai' you^ xing' er' huo' xuan' shu' yun' duo- er' bu' yang'  
koy3 youh5 hung6 yee4 wok6 suein2 soke6 wun4 doh1 yee4 but1 yeurng4

**“There are those who get chosen because of luck; there aren't those who have much but are not raised up.**

諸生業患不能精，無患有司之不明。

zhu- sheng- ye' huan' bu' neng' jing- wu' huan' you^ si- zhi- bu' ming'  
jee1 sung1 yee6 warn6 but1 nung4 jing1 moe4 warn6 youh5 see1 jee1 but1 ming4

**“Students, worry that your studies won't excel; don't worry that those in charge may be muddle-headed.**

行患不能成，無患有司之不公。

xing' huan' bu' neng' cheng' wu' huan' you^ si- zhi- bu' gong-  
hung4 warn6 but1 nung4 sing4 moe4 warn6 youh5 see1 jee1 but1 goeng1

**“Worry that your conduct won't attain high standards; don't worry that those in charge may be unjust.”**

言未既，有笑於列者曰，

yan' wei' ji' you^ xiao' yu- lie' zhe^ yue-  
yeen4 may6 gay3 youh5 siu3 yeu1 leet6 jeh2 eurt6

**Before the words were finished, among those lined up someone laughed and said,**

先生欺我哉。

xian- sheng- qi- wo^ zai-  
seen1 sung1 hay1 ngoh5 joy1

**“Teacher, you are deceiving us.**

弟子事先生，于茲有年矣。

di' zi' shi' xian- sheng- yu- zi- you^ nian' yi^  
daeuh6 jee2 see6 seen1 sung1 yeu1 jee1 youh5 neen4 yee5

**“I, your student, have been serving under you, Teacher, for a year now.**

先生口不絕吟于六藝之文，

xian- sheng- kuo<sup>^</sup> bu<sup>^</sup> jue' yin' yu- liu<sup>^</sup> yi<sup>^</sup> zhi- wen'  
seen1 sung1 houh2 but1 jueet6 yum4 yeu1 loke6 ngaeuh6 jee1 mun4

“Teacher, your mouth never stops reciting the works of the Six Arts<sup>6</sup>;

手不停披于百家之編。

shou<sup>^</sup> bu<sup>^</sup> ting' pi- yu- bai<sup>^</sup> jia- zhi- bian-  
souh2 but1 ting4 pay1 yeu1 bahk3 gah1 jee1 peen1

“Your hands are never taken off the books of the Hundred Schools.

記事者必提其要，纂言者必鈎其玄。

ji<sup>^</sup> shi<sup>^</sup> zhe<sup>^</sup> bi<sup>^</sup> ti' qi' yao<sup>^</sup> zuan<sup>^</sup> yan<sup>^</sup> zhe<sup>^</sup> bi<sup>^</sup> gou- qi' xuan'  
gay3 see6 jeh2 beet1 taeh4 kay4 yiu3, juein3 yeen4 jeh2 beet1 ngou1 kay4 yuein4

“When recording matters you always mention what is important; when editing works you always footnote what is profound.

貪多務得，細大不捐。

tan- duo<sup>^</sup> wu<sup>^</sup> de' xi<sup>^</sup> da<sup>^</sup> bu<sup>^</sup> juan-  
tahm1 doh1 moe6 duk1 saeuh3 die6 but1 gwuein1

“You hunger for more duties and without fail get them; you don’t relinquish anything, great or small.

焚膏油以繼晷，恆兀兀以窮年。

fen' gao- you' yi<sup>^</sup> ji<sup>^</sup> gui<sup>^</sup> heng' wu<sup>^</sup> wu<sup>^</sup> yi<sup>^</sup> qiong' nian'  
fun4 goe1 youh4 yee5 joke6 gwaeuh2 hung4 ngut6 ngut6 yee3 kone4 neen4

“You burn the oil to continue daylight; you keep working away the whole year long.

先生之業，可謂勤矣。

xian- sheng- zhi- ye<sup>^</sup> ke<sup>^</sup> wei<sup>^</sup> qin' yi<sup>^</sup>  
seen1 sung1 jee1 yeep6 hoh2 waeuh6 kun4 yee5

“Teacher, your work can be said to be diligent.

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<sup>6</sup> The Six Arts: what Confucian students are to master: courtesy and the rites, music, archery, chariot driving, writing, arithmetic. See Baidu 百度 <http://baike.baidu.com/view/9207.htm>: 中國古代儒家要求學生掌握的六種基本才能：禮、樂、射、御、書、數。出自《周禮·保氏》：“養國子以道，乃教之六藝：一曰五禮，二曰六樂，三曰五射，四曰五馭，五曰六書，六曰九數。”

觝排異端，攘斥佛老。

di<sup>^</sup> pai<sup>^</sup> yi<sup>^</sup> duan- rang<sup>^</sup> chi<sup>^</sup> fo<sup>^</sup> lao<sup>^</sup>  
daeu2 pie4 yee6 duein1 yeurng6 tsik1 fut6 loe2

“You refute heresies; you rebut the Buddhists and the Daoists.

補苴罅漏，張皇幽眇。

bu<sup>^</sup> ju- xia<sup>^</sup> lou<sup>^</sup> zhang- huang<sup>^</sup> you- miao<sup>^</sup>  
boe2 juaey1 lah3 louh6 jeurng1 wong4 youh1 miu5

“You fill in the cracks and defects; you expand and magnify the obscure and tiny.

尋墜緒之茫茫，獨旁搜而遠紹。

xun<sup>^</sup> zhui<sup>^</sup> xu<sup>^</sup> zhi- mang<sup>^</sup> mang<sup>^</sup> du<sup>^</sup> pang<sup>^</sup> sou- er<sup>^</sup> yuan<sup>^</sup> shao<sup>^</sup>  
tsum4 jouey6 souey5 jee1 mong4 mong4 doke6 pong4 souh2 yee4 yuein5 siu6

“You seek traces<sup>7</sup> in the vast expanse; you alone search nearby things and connect them with things far away.

障百川而東之，迴狂瀾于既倒。

zhang<sup>^</sup> bai<sup>^</sup> chuan- er<sup>^</sup> dong- zhi- hui<sup>^</sup> kuang<sup>^</sup> lan<sup>^</sup> yu- ji<sup>^</sup> dao<sup>^</sup>  
jeurng1 bahk3 tsuein1 yee4 done1 jee1 wui4 kong4 lahn4 yeu1 gaeuh3 doe2

“You dam a hundred rivers and turn them eastward<sup>8</sup>; you stop crazed waves when they are about to come down.

先生之于儒，可謂勞矣。

xian- sheng- zhi- yu- ru<sup>^</sup> ke<sup>^</sup> wei<sup>^</sup> lao<sup>^</sup> yi<sup>^</sup>  
seen1 sung1 jee1 yeu1 yeu4 hoh2 waeuh6 loe4 yee5

“Teacher, what you do for Confucianism can be said to be full of contributions<sup>9</sup>.

沉浸醲郁，含英咀華，

chen<sup>^</sup> jin<sup>^</sup> nong<sup>^</sup> yu<sup>^</sup> han<sup>^</sup> ying- ju<sup>^</sup> hua<sup>^</sup>  
tsum4 jum3 noeng4 yoke1 hum4 ying1 jouey2 wah4

“Soaked in the finest wine, flowers and blossoms come out of your mouth,

<sup>7</sup> Traces 墜緒 (zhui<sup>^</sup> sui<sup>^</sup>): See *Ci Hai*, Shanghai 1989 Edition, p.605, 《詞海》，辭書出版社，上海1989年版，605頁：“墜緒”：僅存的遺跡。

<sup>8</sup> In traditional China, it was thought that rivers were supposed to flow east – turning the rivers eastward is a metaphor for making things go right.

<sup>9</sup> Contributions 勞 (lao<sup>^</sup>): See *Ci Hai*, Beijing 1936 Edition, Volume Zi, p. 429, 《辭海》，中華書店，北京1936年版，子集429頁：勞：… 功也 …。

作為文章，其書滿家。

zuo` wei` wen` zhang- qi` shu- man^ jia-  
jok3 waeuh4 mun4 jeurng1 kay4 seu1 moon5 gah1

“You put them into writing; those books fill your house.

上規姚姒，渾渾無涯，

shang` gui- yao` si` hun` hun` wu` ya`  
seurng6 kwaeuh1 yiu4 tsee5 wun6 wun6 moe4 ngai

“Above, they take as guide Shun and Yu (the Sage Emperors – *trans.*)<sup>10</sup>, vast<sup>11</sup> without end;

周誥殷盤，佶屈聱牙。

zhou- gao` yin- pan` ji` qu- ao` ya`  
jouh1 goe3 yun1 poon6 gut1 wut1 ngoe4 ngah4

“The Zhou Dynasty’s *Enjoinments*<sup>12</sup> and the Yin Dynasty’s *Pan Geng*<sup>13</sup>, irregular and hard to pronounce;

春秋謹嚴，左氏浮誇，

chun- qiu- jin` yan` zhuo` shi` fu` kua-  
chueun1 tsouh1 gun2 yeem4 joh2 see6 fouh4 kuah1

“*Chun Qiu*, reverent and serious, *Zhuo Shi*, inflated and exaggerating,

<sup>10</sup> Shun and Yu were two of the legendary Sage Emperors from perhaps around 2,000 – 2,500 B.C., with Yu being the founder of the Xia Dynasty (夏朝, 2070-1600 B.C.E.). “姚姒” (yao’ si’) refers to these two Sage Emperors. See *Op. Cit.* 8, Volume *Chou*, p. 314, 《辭海》1936, 丑集314頁: “姚姒”: … 舜、禹也。

<sup>11</sup> 渾渾 (*hun’ hun’*) usually refers to “muddied waters” but here it means “vast” as in “vast waters”. See: *Gu Han Yu Chang Yong Zi Zi Dian* (“Dictionary of Commonly Used Words in Ancient Chinese”), Shang Wu Publishing, Beijing, 2007, p.161, 《古漢語常用字字典》，商務印書館，北京2007，161頁: 渾: 水勢盛大。[渾渾]

<sup>12</sup> The Zhou Dynasty’s *Enjoinments* refer to the six *Enjoinments* (*The Great Enjoinment, Kang’s Enjoinment, The Wine Enjoinment, The Summons Enjoinment, The Luo’ Enjoinment, and King Kang’s Enjoinment*) in the classic *Shang Shu*, Volume “Book of Zhou”. 周誥指《尚書·周書》中的《大誥》，《康誥》，《酒誥》。《召誥》，《洛誥》，《康王之誥》等篇。See: *The Thirteen Classics Annotated*, published by Zhonghua Shudian, Beijing, 1980, Vol. I, p. 3, “Table of Contents” 《十三經注疏》，中華書店，北京1980，3頁，“目錄”。

<sup>13</sup> 殷盤 (*yin- pan’*): This refers to the Yin Dynasty’s King Pan Geng who wrote three decrees, which were collected in the classic *Shang Shu*, Volume “Book of Shang” as *Pan Geng First, Second, and Third*. See *Op. Cit.* 8, p.128, 《辭海》1936, 午集128頁: “盤庚”: 殷王…作書告諭(即《尚書·商書盤庚三篇》)。See: *The Thirteen Classics Annotated*, published by Zhonghua Shudian, Beijing, 1980, Vol. I, p. 168-172, “Pan Geng First, Second, and Third” 《十三經注疏》，中華書店，北京1980，168-172頁，“盤庚上、中、下”。

易奇而法，詩正而葩。

yi' qi' er' fa^ shi- zheng' er' pa-  
yik6 kay4 yee4 faht3 see1 jing3 yee4 bah1<sup>14</sup>

“*The Book of Change*, uncanny and its methods to be learned, and the *Book of Poetry*, upright and ornate.

下逮莊騷，太史所錄。

xia' dai' zhuang- sao- tai' shi^ suo^ lu'  
hah6 daht6 jong1 soe1 tie3 see2 soh2 loke6

“Below, your writings attain the levels of Zhuang Zhou, *Li Sao*<sup>15</sup>, and what the Grand Historian has recorded<sup>16</sup>,

子雲相如，同工異曲。

zi^ yun' xiang- ru' tong' gong- yi' qu^  
jee2 wun4 seurng1 yeu4 tone4 goeng1 yee6 koke1

“Compared to Zi Yun and Xiang Yu<sup>17</sup>, you craft the same artistry, only the songs are different.

先生之于文，可謂閎其中而肆其外矣。

xian- sheng- zhi- yu- wen' ke^ wei hong' qi' zhong- er' si' qi' wai' yi^  
seen1 sung1 jee1 yeu1 mun4 hoh2 waeuh6 hone4 kay4 jone1 yee4 see3 kay4 ngoy6 yee5

“Teacher, what you have done with writing can be said to be immense in content and unrestrained in form.

少始知學，勇于敢為。

shao' shi^ zhi- xue' yong^ yu- gan^ wei'  
siu3 tsee2 jee1 hok6 yone5 yeu1 gum2 waeuh4

“From an early age you’ve known to study; you are brave and you dare do things.

<sup>14</sup> Can also be pronounced “pah1” in Cantonese.

<sup>15</sup> 莊騷 (*zhuang- sao-*) refers to the Daoist author Zhuang Zhou (approx. 369-286 B.C.E.), who wrote *Hua Nan Jing*, and *Li Sao*, which is a famous long poem by Qu Yuan (approx. 340-278 B.C.E.). See: *Gu Wen Ping Zhu* (Classical Writings with Commentary and Footnotes), by Guo Xiang-hou, 1703, Hong-Ye Books, Taipei 1975 古文評註全集，過商候著，宏業書店，台灣1975，564頁：“莊騷”：莊周有華南經，屈原有離騷經。

<sup>16</sup> 太史 (*tai- shi'*) or Grand Historian refers to Sima Qian (司馬遷，135-90 B.C.E.), who wrote the famous history book *Shi Ji* 《史記》.

<sup>17</sup> Zi Yun refers to Yang Xiong (approx. 53 B.C.E.-18 C.E.), a famous historian, and Xiang Yu refers to Sima Xiang Yu (approx. 179-127 B.C.E.), a famous music and song composer. See *Op. Cit.* 14, p. 564: “杨雄字子云，著太玄经；司马相如，著上林赋、工乐等曲。”

長通于方，左右具宜。

chang' tong- yu- fang- zuo^ you` ju` yi'  
tseurng4 tone1 yeu1 fong1 joh2 youh6 kuaey1 yee4

“Long have you known well what is correct<sup>18</sup>; whether to the left or to the right<sup>19</sup> you act appropriately.

先生之于為人，可謂成矣。

xian- sheng- zhi- yu- wei` ren` ke^ wei` cheng^ yi^  
seen1 sung1 jee1 yeu1 waeuh4 yun4 hoh2 waeuh6 sing4 yee5

“Teacher, your conduct as a person can be said to have attained high standards.

然公不見信于人，私不見助于友。

ran' gong- bu` jian` xin` yu- ren` si- bu` jian` zhu` yu- you`  
yeen4 goeng1 but1 geen3 sueun3 yeu1 yun4 see1 but1 geen3 joh6 yeu1 youh5

“Yet in public affairs you are not trusted by others and in private affairs you are not helped by friends.

跋前疐後，動輒得咎。

pa- qian' zhi` hou` dong` zhe' de' jiu`  
pah1 tseen4 jee3 hou6 doeng6 jeep3 duk1 gouh3

“When you go forward you fall and when you go backward you meet with obstruction; you make a small movement and you get reproached.

暫為御史，遂竄南夷。

zan` wei` yu^ shi^ cuan` shu^ nan' yi`  
jahm6 waeuh4 yeu6 see3 suaey3 tsuein3 nahm4 yee4

“For a while you were Supervisory Inspector<sup>20</sup>, then you fled to the barbaric South<sup>21</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> 方 (*fang-*) is used here in its ancient meaning: what is right and moral. See: *Op. Cit.* 8, Volume *mao*<sup>^</sup>, p. 215 《辭海》1936, 卯集215頁: “方”: 道義也。亦: 人之正直者亦曰方。

<sup>19</sup> In ancient China left and right respectively denote first, those of lower or higher station than you, and second, those who are closely related to or distant from you. See *Op. Cit.* 10, p. 523 for “left” and p. 469 for “right”, 《古漢語常用字字典》，左: 523頁; 右: 469頁。具 here I take to mean 俱, all. An alternative meaning for 具 is the more common “equipped with”; then the phrase would mean, “To the left and right you are well-equipped.”

<sup>20</sup> 御史 (*yu^ shi^*) I translate as “Supervisory Inspector”. At first the position was one of historian and recorder of events, but from the Qin Dynasty (221-206 B.C.E.) onwards it became one of supervising and impeaching other officials. See <http://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/御史>: 御史本來是負責紀錄的官職, 秦朝開始變為監察和彈劾其他官員的官職。

<sup>21</sup> He was demoted to be a local official in a southern province, at that time less developed and hence considered “barbaric”.



三年博士，冗不見治。

san- nian' bo' shi` rong' bu` jian` zhi`  
sahm1 neen4 bok3 see6 yone2 but1 geen3 jee6

“For three years you’ve been doctor, superfluous and not involved in governing.

命與仇謀，取敗幾時。

ming` yu^ chou' mou' qu^ bai` ji^ shi`  
ming6 yeu5 souh4 mouh4 tsuaey2 bye6 gay2 see4

“Fate colludes with your enemies; you have met with defeat a number of times.

冬煖而兒號寒，年豐而妻啼饑。

dong- nuan^ er' er' hao' han' nian' feng- er' qi- ti' ji-  
doeng1 nuein5 yee4 yee4 hoe6 hon4 neen4 fone1 yee4 tsaeuh1 taeuh4 gay1

“The winter is warm yet your son cries of cold; the harvest is plentiful yet your wife weeps of hunger.

頭童齒豁，竟死何裨。

tou' tong' chi' huo- jing' si^ he' bi`  
touh4 tone4 tsee2 fok3 ging2 say2 hoh4 bay1

“Your head is bald and your teeth are cracked; should you die what good would all (your work) be?

不知慮此，而反教人為。

bu` zhi- lu` ci^ er' fan^ jiao- ren' wei`  
but1 jee1 luaey6 tsee2 yee4 fahn2 gao3 yun4 waeuh4

“You don’t know to worry about this; instead you teach others how to act.”

先生曰，吁，子來前。

xian- sheng- yue- xu- zi^ lai' qian`  
seen1 sung1 eurt6 huaey jee2 loy4 tseen4

The Teacher said, “Oh my goodness! Come forward, sir.”

夫大木為杗，細木為桷。

fu' da` mu` wei' mang^, xi` mu` wei' jue`  
foo4 die6 moke6 waeuh4 mong4 saeuh3 moke6 waeuh4 gok3

“Look, using large timbers for pillars, small timbers for roof trusses,

樽 櫨 侏 儒 ， 椳 闌 扂 楔 ，

bo' lu' zhu- ru' wei- nie` dian` xie-  
bok6 loe4 jiu1 yeu4 waeuh5 yeet6 deem3 seep3

“And dwarfs<sup>22</sup> for column brackets, door rod cups, door dividers, door bolts, and wedges,

各 得 其 宜 ， 施 以 成 室 者 ，

ge` de' qi' yi' shi- yi^ cheng' shi` zhe^  
gok3 duk1 kay4 yee4 see1 yee3 sing4 sut1 jeh2

“So that all are in their right places and form a house,

匠 氏 之 工 也 。

jiang` shi` zhi- gong- ye'  
jeurng6 see6 jee1 goeng1 yah5

“Is the art of the craftsman.

玉 札 丹 砂 ， 赤 箭 青 芝 ，

yu` zha' dan- sha- chi` jian` qing- zhi-  
yoke6 jaht3 dahn1 sah1 tsek3 jeen3 tsing1 jee1

“*Yu zha* and cinnabar<sup>23</sup>, *chi jian* and *qing zhi*<sup>24</sup>,

牛 溲 馬 勃 ， 敗 鼓 之 皮 ，

niu' sou- ma^ bo' bai` gu^ zhi- pi'  
ngouh4 souh1 mah5 boot6 bye6 gwoo2 jee1 pay4

“Cattle urine, *ma bo*<sup>25</sup>, and the skin of broken drums –

<sup>22</sup> Dwarfs: this refers to dwarf pieces of wood.

<sup>23</sup> *yu- zha`* (玉札) and cinnabar or *dan- sha-* (丹砂) were both very expensive medications at the time according to Guo Xiang-hou, so Han Yu is giving examples of expensive drugs here. See *Op. Cit.* 14, p. 565. Incidentally, *Yu zha* is a herb said to be good for abdominal ailments and shortness of breath. See <http://www.zysj.com.cn/lilunshuji/zhengleibencao/471-10-3.html>.

<sup>24</sup> *chi` jian`* (赤箭) and *qing- zhi-* (青芝) were both inexpensive medications at the time according to Guo Xiang-hou, so Han Yu is giving examples of inexpensive drugs here. See *Op. Cit.* 14, p. 565. Incidentally, *Chi jian* is *Gastrodia elata Blume* and is used for liver, headaches, dizziness, and paralysis. See <http://www.duosuccess.com/BZGM/t030.htm>. *Qing zhi* is *Coriolus versicolor* and is used for eyes, liver, and calming the psyche. See <http://baike.baidu.com/view/756692.htm>.

<sup>25</sup> 馬勃 (*ma^ bo^*) was a very cheap herb at the time according to Guo Shang Hou, so along with cow's urine and the skin of broken drums, the author is giving examples of very cheap medications. See *Op. Cit.* 14, p. 565. Incidentally, *ma bo* is *Lasiosphaera fenzlii Reich* and is used for the lungs, voice, and bleeding. See <http://www.duosuccess.com/BZGM/m043.htm>

俱收並蓄，待用無遺者，

ju- shou- bing` xu` dai` yong` wu` yi` zhe^  
kuaey1 souh1 bing6 tsoke1 doy6 yone6 moe4 waeuh4 jeh2

“To all collect and store, to wait for use and not get lost,

醫師之良也。

yi- shi- zhi- liang` ye^  
yee1 see1 jee1 leurng4 yah5

“Is the proficiency of the physician.

登明選公，雜進巧拙，

deng- ming` xuan^ gong- za` jin` qiao^ jue`  
deng1 ming4 suein2 goeng1 jahp6 jueun3 houh2 jueet6

“To post clearly and choose justly, taking in the skilled and the unskilled,

紆餘為媼，卓犖為傑，

yu- yu` wei` pin- zhuo` luo` wei` jie`  
yeu1 yeu4 waeuh4 ping3 tseurk3 lok3 waeuh4 geet6

“Using the bent and weak<sup>26</sup> as officials over women<sup>27</sup> and the outstanding and eminent as heroes,

校短量長，惟器是適者，

jjao` duan^ liang` chang` wei` qi` shi` shi` zhe^  
gao3 duein2 leurng6 tseurng4 waeuh4 hay3 see6 sik1 jeh2

“Measuring shortcomings and strengths so as to fit the ability to the job,

宰相之方也。

zai^ xiang- zhi- fang- ye^  
joy2 seurng4 jee1 fong1 yah5

“Is the method of the prime minister.

<sup>26</sup> 紆 (yu-) means weak and bent; see *Op. Cit.* 14, p. 1291, 《辭海》1989, 1291頁: “紆”: 屈曲, … 中弱則紆 …。

<sup>27</sup> Women’s officials: I translate 媼 (pin-) as its ancient meaning, “women’s official” and not as its more common meaning today of “a woman who lives with a man without marrying him”. See *Kang Xi Dictionary*, compiled 1716, Wen Hua Tu Shu Co., Taipei, 1980, p.201, “媼”古義: 婦官——見《康熙字典》, 1716年, 文化圖書公司, 台北1980年, 201頁]。

昔者孟軻好辯，孔道以明，

xi- zhe^ meng` ke- hao` bian` kong^ dao` yi^ ming`  
sik1 jeh2 mahng6 or1 hoe4 been6 hone2 doe6 yee5 ming4

“Formerly Mencius was good at debate and clarified Confucianism,

環轍天下，卒老于行。

huan` zhe` tian- xia` zu` lao^ yu- xing`  
wahn4 jeep3 teen1 hah6 jueut1 loe5 yeu1 hung4

“Yet he ended up trekking through the whole of China, and died of old age on the road.

荀卿守正，大論是弘，

xun` qing- shou^ cheng` da` lun` shi` hong`  
sueun1 hing1 souh2 jing3 die6 lueun6 see6 wung4

“Xun Qing stuck to what was right and held great discussions on profound truths,

逃讒于楚，廢死蘭陵。

tao` chan` yu- chu^ fei` si^ lan` ling`  
toe4 tsahm4 yeu1 tsoh2 faeuh3 say2 lahn4 ling4

“Yet he ended up fleeing slanders at Chu, and died rejected at Lan Ling.

是二儒者，吐辭為經，舉足為法，

shi` er` ru` zhe^ tu^ ci` wei` jing- ju^ zu` wei` fa`  
see6 yee6 yeu4 jeh2 toe3 tsee4 waeuh4 ging1 guae2 joke1 waeuh4 faht3

“Those two Confucians, every word they uttered formed scripture and every move they made formed a standard.

絕類離倫，優入聖域，

jue` lei` li` lun` you- ru` sheng` yu`  
jueet6 luaey6 lay4 lueun4 youh1 yup6 sing3 ging2

“They were exceptional and beyond mankind, entering the realm of the saintly.

其遇于世，何如也。

qi` yu` yu- shi` he` ru` ye^  
kay4 yeu6 yeu1 saeuh3 hoh4 yeu4 yah5

“Yet what fate did they meet with in this world?

今先生學雖勤而不繇其統，

jin- xian- sheng- xue` sui- qin` er` bu` you` qi` tong^

gum1 seen1 sung1 hok6 suaey1 kun4 yee4 but1 youh4 kay4 tong2

“Now your teacher’s studies may be diligent but they don’t follow<sup>28</sup> any guiding principle<sup>29</sup>;

言雖多而不要其中，

yan’ sui- duo` er’ bu` yao` qi’ zhong-  
yeen4 suaey1 doh1 yee4 but1 yiu1 kay4 jone1

“My words may be many but there is nothing important in them;

文雖奇而不濟其用，

wen’ sui- qi’ er’ bu` ji` qi’ yong`  
mun4 suaey1 kay4 yee4 but1 jaeuh2 kay4 yong6

“My writings may be uncanny but they are of no practical use;

行雖修而不顯于眾，

xing’ sui- xiu- er’ bu` xian’ yu- zhong-  
hung4 suaey1 souh1 yee4 but1 heen2 yeu1 jone3

“My conduct may be cultivated but it is not outstanding.

猶且月費捧錢，歲靡廩粟，

you’ qie^ yue` fei` peng^ qian’ sui` mi^ lin^ su`  
youh4 tseh2 yueet6 faeuh3 pong2 tseen4 suaey3 may5 ling5 soke1

“Yet every month I cost salary money, and every year I consume government grain.

子不知耕，婦不知織，

zi^ bu` zhi- geng- fu^ bu` zhi- zhi-  
jee2 but1 jee1 gahng1 foo5 but1 jee1 jik1

“My son does not know plowing; my wife does not know weaving.

乘馬從徒，安坐而食。

cheng’ ma^ cong’ tu’ an- zuo` er’ shi’  
sing4 mah5 tsone4 toe4 on1 joh6 yee4 sik6

“I ride a horse and have servants who follow; I sit at ease to eat.

踵長途之役役，窺陳編以盜竊，

<sup>28</sup> Here I interpret 繇 (*you*) to mean 由 (also *you*), i.e. “to follow”. See *Op. Cit.* 10, p. 468; 《古漢語常用字字典》468頁，“由”條：經由。… 必由之路 …。

<sup>29</sup> I interpret 統 (*tong*) to mean “guiding principle”. See *Op. Cit.* 10, p. 385; 《古漢語常用字字典》385頁，“統”條：綱要，綱領。… “略法先王而不知其統。”

zhong<sup>^</sup> chang' tu' zhi- yi` yi` kui- chen' bian- yi<sup>^</sup> dao` qie`  
 joeng2 tseurng4 toe4 jee1 yik6 yik6 kaeuh1 tsun4 peen1 yee5 doe6 seet3

“I go long ways to seek advantage for myself<sup>30</sup>; I look up old compilations and steal from them,

然而聖主不加誅，宰臣不見斥，

ran' er' sheng` zhu<sup>^</sup> bu` jia- zhu- zai<sup>^</sup> chen' bu` jian` chi`  
 yeen4 yee4 sing3 jeu2 but1 gah1 jeu1 joy2 sun4 but1 geen3 tsik1

“Yet the saintly Lord does not punish me and the ministers do not reprimand me.

茲非其幸與。

zi- fei- qi' xing` yu<sup>^</sup>  
 jee1 fay1 kay4 hung6 yeu5

“Is that not fortunate?

動而得謗，名亦隨之。

dong` er' de' bang<sup>^</sup> ming' yi` sui' zhi-  
 doeng6 yee4 duk1 bong2 ming4 yik6 tsuaey4 jee1

“I move and I get slandered, but fame also follows.

投閒置散，乃分之宜。

tou' xian' zhi` san<sup>^</sup> nai<sup>^</sup> fen` zhi- yi'  
 touh4 hahn4 jee3 sahn3 nye5 fun6 jee1 yee4

“To be idle and unneeded is suitable for my station.

若乎商財賄之有亡，計班資之崇庳，

ruo` hu' shang- cai' hui` zhi- you<sup>^</sup> wang' ji` ban- zi- zhi- chong' bei-  
 yeurk6 foo4 seurng1 tsoy4 kwui2 jee1 youh5 mong4 gaeuh3 bahn1 jee1 jee1 sone4 bay1

”If I measure<sup>31</sup> the abundance or scarcity of my riches and calculate the highness or lowness of my rank,

忘己量之所稱，指前人之瑕疵。

<sup>30</sup> I interpret 役役 (yi` yi`) here to mean “going hither and thither to seek advantage for oneself”. See: *Op. Cit.* 6, p. 900; 《辭海》1989, 900頁: “役役”: 奔走鑽營。(韓愈同代人白居易《閉關》詩: 回顧趨時者, 役役塵埃間。) Note: 役役 (yi` yi`) can also mean “constant hard toil” –又: 形容勞苦不休 –but then taken with the next few phrases the entire passage wouldn’t make sense.

<sup>31</sup> *Shang-* (商) here has the meaning of “to measure” See *Op. Cit.* 25, *Kang Xi Dictionary*, p.122, 《康熙字典》, 122頁, “商”: 度也 … 猶量也。

wang` ji^ liang` zhi- suo` cheng- zhi` qian` ren` zhi- xia` ci-  
 mong4 gay2 leurng6 jee1 soh2 tsing3 jee2 tseen4 yun4 jee1 hah4 tsee1

“If I forget what I am qualified for and criticize the flaws of my superiors,

是所謂詰匠氏之不以杙為楹，

shi` suo` wei` jie` jiang` shi` zhi- bu` yi^ yi` wei` ying`

see6 soh2 waeuh6 keet3 jeurng6 see4 jee1 but1 yee5 yik6 waeuh4 ying4

“That would be what is called questioning the craftsman for not using thin rods as pillars,

而訾醫師以昌陽引年，欲進其豨苓也。

er` zhi^ yi- shi- yi^ chang- yang` yin^ nian` yu` jin` qi` xi- ling` ye^

yee4 jee2 yee1 see1 yee5 tseurng1 yeurng4 yun5 neen4 yoke6 jueun3 kay4 hay1 ling4 yah5

“And criticizing the physician for using *chang yang*<sup>32</sup> to build up the body, wanting to use *xi ling*<sup>33</sup> instead.”

### Note: Han Yu and Ancient Prose

The author Han Yu (768-824 C.E.) was a famous essayist of the Tang Dynasty who changed Chinese prose for the next thousand plus years. He initiated and led the movement to return to “ancient prose” (*gu` wen`* 古文) in opposition to the then dominant “parallel prose” (*pian` wen`* 駢文). “Parallel Prose”, which had become dominant from about 400 A.D. on, was prose that required sentences to be in couplets of two sentences of equal length and often rhymed. By “ancient prose” Han Yu meant prose in the language and writing style of the Qin and Han Dynasties (about 200 B.C.E. – 200 C.E.), where sentences were of unequal length and could stand alone without being in a couplet. While “parallel prose” was ornate and beautiful, “ancient prose” was capable of a far wider range of expression and with Han Yu’s call quickly became the dominant prose style. By adhering to the ancient language of 200 B.C., however, “ancient prose” made the written word in traditional China depart farther and farther from the everyday spoken language (the vernacular) as the centuries passed. Thus respectable writings in Imperial China came to be quite incomprehensible to the ordinary people of the time and remain so today to most Chinese speakers.

### CHINESE TEXT 漢語原文

<sup>32</sup> *Chang- yang*<sup>^</sup> (昌陽): a medicinal herb for building up the body.

<sup>33</sup> *Xi- ling*<sup>'</sup> (豨苓) is a purgative (laxative), which acts opposite to building up the body.

國子先生，晨入太學，  
召諸生於膝下而訓之曰：  
學精於勤荒於嬉，行成於思毀於隨。  
方今聖賢相逢，治具畢張，  
拔去凶邪，登崇俊良。  
佔小善者率以錄，名一藝者無不庸。  
爬羅剔抉，刮垢磨光。  
蓋有幸而獲選，孰云多而不揚。  
諸生業患不能精，無患有司之不明。  
行患不能成，無患有司之不公。  
言未既，有笑於列者曰，  
先生欺我哉。  
弟子事先生，於茲有年矣。  
先生口不絕吟於六藝之文，  
手不停披於百家之編。  
記事者必提其要，纂言者必鉤其玄。  
貪多務得，細大不捐。  
焚膏油以繼晷，恆兀兀以窮年。  
先生之業，可謂勤矣。  
觝排異端，攘斥佛老。  
補苴罅漏，張皇幽眇。  
尋墜緒之茫茫，獨旁搜而遠紹。  
障百川而東之，回狂瀾於既倒。



先生之於儒，可謂勞矣。

沈浸醞鬱，含英咀華，

作為文章，其書滿家。

上規姚姒，渾渾無涯，

周誥殷盤，佶屈聱牙。

春秋謹嚴，左氏浮誇，

易奇而法，詩正而葩。

下逮莊騷，太史所錄。

子雲相如，同工異曲。

先生之於文，可謂閱其中而肆其外矣。

少始知學，勇於敢為。

長通於方，左右具宜。

先生之於為人，可謂成矣。

然公不見信於人，私不見助於友。

跋前疐後，動輒得咎。

暫為御史，遂竄南夷。

三年博士，冗不見治。

命與仇謀，取敗幾時。

冬煖而兒號寒，年豐而妻啼飢。

頭童齒豁，竟死何裨。

不知慮此，而反教人為。

先生曰，吁，子來前。

夫大木為杗，細木為桷。

樽櫨侏儒，椳闌扃楔，  
各得其宜，施以成室者，  
匠氏之工也。

玉札丹砂，赤箭青芝，  
牛溲馬勃，敗鼓之皮，  
俱收並蓄，待用無遺者，  
醫師之良也。

登明選公，雜進巧拙，  
紆余為妍，卓犖為傑，  
校短量長，惟器是適者，  
宰相之方也。

昔者孟軻好辯，孔道以明，  
環轍天下，卒老於行。  
荀卿守正，大論是弘，  
逃讒於楚，廢死蘭陵。  
是二儒者，吐辭為經，舉足為法，  
絕類離倫，優入聖域，  
其遇於世，何如也。

今先生學雖勤而不繇其統，  
言雖多而不要其中，  
文雖奇而不濟其用，  
行雖修而不顯於眾，  
猶且月費捧錢，歲靡廩粟，

子不知耕，婦不知織，  
 乘馬從徒，安坐而食。  
 踵長途之役役，窺陳編以盜竊，  
 然而聖主不加誅，宰臣不見斥，  
 茲非其幸與。  
 動而得謗，名亦隨之。  
 投閒置散，乃分之宜。  
 若乎商財賄之有亡，計班資之崇庳，  
 忘己量之所稱，指前人之瑕疵。  
 是所謂詰匠氏之不以杙為楹，  
 而訾醫師以昌陽引年，欲進其豨苓也。

### ENGLISH TRANSLATION 英語譯文

The Teacher of the Sons of the Country entered the Supreme Academy in the morning,  
 Called the students to his seat, and admonished them:

“Study excels with diligence and becomes neglected with play; conduct succeeds with thinking and is destroyed by following.

“Today the saintly (i.e. a saintly emperor – *trans.*) and the virtuous (i.e. virtuous ministers – *trans.*) are met, and the apparatus of government is expanding fully.

“The wicked are rooted out, and the good ascend to honor.

“Those with a small expertise are inducted into the registry; those with a single skill don’t go unused.

“The net is combed and picked over; dirt is scraped away and things are polished to shine.

“There are those who get chosen because of luck; there aren’t those who have much but are not raised up.

“Students, worry that your studies won’t excel; don’t worry that those in charge may be muddle-headed.

“Worry that your conduct won’t attain high standards; don’t worry that those in charge may be unjust.”

Before the words were finished, among those lined up someone laughed and said,

“Teacher, you are deceiving us.

“I, your student, have been serving under you, Teacher, for a year now.

“Teacher, your mouth never stops reciting the works of the Six Arts;

“Your hands are never taken off the books of the Hundred Schools.

“When recording matters you always mention what is important; when editing works you always footnote what is profound.

“You hunger for more duties and without fail get them; you don’t relinquish anything, great or small.

“You burn the oil to continue daylight; you keep working away the whole year long.

“You refute heresies; you rebut the Buddhists and the Daoists.

“You fill in the cracks and defects; you expand and magnify the obscure and tiny.

“You seek traces in the vast expanse; you alone search nearby things and connect them with things far away.

“You dam a hundred rivers and turn them eastward; you stop crazed waves when they are about to come down.

“Teacher, what you do for Confucianism can be said to be full of contributions.

“Soaked in the finest wine, flowers and blossoms come out of your mouth,

“You put them into writing; those books fill your house.

“Above, they take as guide Shun and Yu (the Sage Emperors – *trans.*), vast without end;

“The Zhou Dynasty’s *Enjoinments* and the Yin Dynasty’s *Pan Geng*, irregular and hard to pronounce;

“*Chun Qiu*, reverent and serious, *Zhuo Shi*, inflated and exaggerating,

“*The Book of Change*, uncanny and its methods to be learned, and the *Book of Poetry*, upright and ornate.

“Below, your writings attain the levels of Zhuang Zhou, *Li Sao*, and what the Grand Historian has recorded,

“Compared to Zi Yun and Xiang Yu, you craft the same artistry, only the songs are different.

“Teacher, what you have done with writing can be said to be immense in content and unrestrained in form.

“From an early age you’ve known to study; you are brave and you dare do things.

“Long have you known well what is correct; whether to the left or to the right you act appropriately.

“Teacher, your conduct as a person can be said to have attained high standards.

“Yet in public affairs you are not trusted by others and in private affairs you are not helped by friends.

“When you go forward you fall and when you go backward you meet with obstruction; you make a small movement and you get reproached.

“For a while you were Supervisory Inspector, then you fled to the barbaric South.

“For three years you’ve been doctor, superfluous and not involved in governing.

“Fate colludes with your enemies; you have met with defeat a number of times.

“The winter is warm yet your son cries of cold; the harvest is plentiful yet your wife weeps of hunger.

“Your head is bald and your teeth are cracked; should you die what good would all (your work) be?

“You don’t know to worry about this; instead you teach others how to act.”

The Teacher said, “Oh my goodness! Come forward, sir.

“Look, using large timbers for pillars, small timbers for roof trusses,

And dwarfs for column brackets, door rod cups, door dividers, door bolts, and wedges,

“So that all are in their right places and form a house,

“Is the art of the craftsman.

“*Yu zha* and cinnabar, *chi jian* and *qing zhi*,

“Cattle urine, *ma bo*, and the skin of broken drums –

“To all collect and store, to wait for use and not get lost,

“Is the proficiency of the physician.

“To post clearly and choose justly, taking in the skilled and the unskilled,

“Using the bent and weak as officials over women and the outstanding and eminent as heroes,

“Measuring shortcomings and strengths so as to fit the ability to the job,

“Is the method of the prime minister.

“Formerly Mencius was good at debate and clarified Confucianism,

“Yet he ended up trekking through the whole of China, and died of old age on the road.

“Xun Qing stuck to what was right and held great discussions on profound truths,

“Yet he ended up fleeing slanders at Chu, and died rejected at Lan Ling.

“Those two Confucians, every word they uttered formed scripture and every move they made formed a standard.

“They were exceptional and beyond mankind, entering the realm of the saintly.

“Yet what fate did they meet with in this world?

“Now your teacher’s studies may be diligent but they don’t follow any guiding principle;

“My words may be many but there is nothing important in them;

“My writings may be uncanny but they are of no practical use;

“My conduct may be cultivated but it is not outstanding.

“Yet every month I cost salary money, and every year I consume government grain.

“My son does not know plowing; my wife does not know weaving.

“I ride a horse and have servants who follow; I sit at ease to eat.

”I go long ways to seek advantage for myself; I look up old compilations and steal from them,

“Yet the saintly Lord does not punish me and the ministers do not reprimand me.

“Is that not fortunate?

“I move and I get slandered, but fame also follows.

“To be idle and unneeded is suitable for my station.

”If I measure the abundance or scarcity of my riches and calculate the highness or lowness of my rank,

“If I forget what I am qualified for and criticize the flaws of my superiors,

“That would be what is called questioning the craftsman for not using thin rods as pillars,

“And criticizing the physician for using *chang yang* to build up the body, wanting to use *xi ling* instead.”

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