

# 陋室铭 - 刘禹锡

lou` shi` ming' liu' yu^ xi-

## "Inscription - The Crude House" – by Liu Yu Xi

馮欣明英語譯 English Translation by Feng Xin-ming Feb. 2009

简体版 Complicated Chinese Script, [http://www.tsoidug.org/Literary/Crude\\_House\\_Simp.pdf](http://www.tsoidug.org/Literary/Crude_House_Simp.pdf)

(URL to simplified Chinese Script 到 繁體版: [http://www.tsoidug.org/Literary/Crude\\_House\\_Comp.pdf](http://www.tsoidug.org/Literary/Crude_House_Comp.pdf))

### NOTE:

刘禹锡（公元772—842）为朝廷礼部尚书时参加企图限制宦官和藩镇势力的“永贞革新”，革新失败被贬为县行政官吏。见他仍然公开提倡革新，知县（县长）便违反当时关于该职位的酬薪律例，把刘禹锡安置在最简陋、只有一室的一间小房子居住。刘禹锡依然不屈，写了这篇文章，碑刻竖立门外。（見

<http://baike.baidu.com/view/218529.html?fromTaglist>)

As Minister of Rites at the imperial court Liu Yu Xi (772 – 842 C.E.) took part in the Yong Zhen Reform, which attempted to limit the power of the palace eunuchs and the provincial governors. When the Reform failed he was demoted to be a mere county administrative officer out in one of the provinces. Upon seeing that he continued to publicly espouse the Reform Movement, the county head placed Liu's living quarters in the crudest little house with only one room, contrary to existing remuneration regulations for his rank, which called for three chambers and three living rooms. Unbowed, Liu wrote this piece and had it inscribed in stone and erected outside the little house's door. (See

<http://baike.baidu.com/view/218529.html?fromTaglist>)

### 原文 Text

(拼音四声 4 tones in Pinyin denoted as 1: di-, 2: di', 3: di^, 4: di`)

山不在高，有仙则名。

shan- bu` zai` gao- you^ xian- ze' ming'

**It matters not the height; if an immortal resides in a mountain it becomes famous.**

水不在深，有龙则灵。

shui^ bu` zai` shen- you^ long' ze' ling'

**It matters not the depth; if a dragon lives in a body of water it has magical powers.**

斯是陋室，惟吾德馨。

si- shi` lou^ shi`, wei' wu' de' xin-

**This is a crude house; only I appreciate its fragrance.**

苔痕上阶绿，草色入帘青。

tai' hen' shang' jie- lu', cao^ se' ru' lian' qing-

Moss ascends the steps, turning them green, and the grass' color enters the blinds, turning them light green.

谈笑有鸿儒，往来无白丁。

tan' xiao' you^ hong' yu' wang^ lai' wu' bai' ding-

In talk and laughter there are scholars with profound knowledge, and among those coming and going there are no illiterate men.

可以调素琴阅金经。

ke' yi^ tiao' su' qin' yue' jin- jing-

One can play the lute and read the golden scriptures.

无丝竹之乱耳，无案牍之劳形。

wu' si- zhu- zhi- luan` er^, wu' an` du' zhi- lao' xing'

There is no string or wind instruments to confuse the ear, and no desk paper work to strain the body.

南阳诸葛庐，西蜀子云亭。

nan' yang' zhu- ge' lu', xi- shu^ zi' yun' ting'

It's Zhu Ge's thatched house in Nanyang; it's Zi Yun's gazebo in West Shu.

孔子云，何陋之有？

kong' zi' yun' he' lou` zhi- you^

Confucius says, "What crudeness is there?"

### **COMMENT:**

这篇文体属晋朝（约公元250—400）以来直到刘禹锡时唐代（约公元600—900）风行大约七百年的“骈文”。字句都构成相同字数、词性和结构的对联，又时常压韵，接近诗词体格。与刘禹锡同时代的韩愈倡导了“古文运动”，提倡文句摹仿汉朝（约公元前200—公元200）的古代言语，骈文便被古文取代为主流文体。（见

<http://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/骈文> 和 <http://baike.baidu.com/view/8064.htm>。）

The style of this essay belongs to the “parallel prose (*pian' wen*)”, popular for about 700 years from the Jin Dynasty (about 250 – 400 C.E.) up to the time of Liu Xiu Xi's Tang Dynasty (about 600 – 900 C.E.). In “parallel prose” the sentences form couplets that often rhyme and that have the same number of words, parts of speech, and sentence structure, approaching poetry in form. Liu's contemporary Han Yu initiated and led the “Ancient Prose Movement”, which advocated mimicking the ancient language of the Han Dynasty (about 200 B.C.E. – 200 C.E.), and henceforth “parallel prose” was replaced by “ancient prose” as the dominant style. (See <http://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/骈文> and <http://baike.baidu.com/view/8064.htm>.)