

爱莲记 - 北宋周惇颐

ai` lian` ji` bei^ song- zhou- dun- yi`

"On Loving the Lotus" – by Zhou Dun Yi of the Northern Song Dynasty

冯欣明英语译 English Translation by Feng Xin-ming Feb. 2009

简体版 Complicated Chinese Script, http://www.tsoidug.org/Literary/Lotus_Simp.pdf
(URL to simplified Chinese Script 到繁体版: http://www.tsoidug.org/Literary/Lotus_Comp.pdf)

NOTE:

周惇颐（公元1017—1073）是一位哲学家，也是一位善于判决疑难案件的清廉地方官。他著了《太极图说》一书，把儒家的《易经》和道家的学说结合起来，提出自己的宇宙论。1071年他在衙门前挖了一口池塘，种满莲花，就写了《爱莲记》。（见: <http://www.hudong.com/wiki/周敦颐>。）

Zhou Dun Yi (1017 – 1073 C.E.) was a philosopher and an incorruptible local official who was good at judging difficult cases. He wrote a book, “Schematic Explanation of Tai Ji”, which integrated the Confucian classic “Yi Jing” and Daoist theories to formulate his own cosmology. In 1071 he dug a pond in front of his house, planted the pond full of lotuses, and wrote this piece, “On Loving the Lotus”. (See: <http://www.hudong.com/wiki/周敦颐>.)

原文 Text

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

水陆草木之花，可爱者甚蕃。

shui^ lu` cao^ mu` zhi- hua- ke^ ai` zhe^ shen` fan`

Among the flowers of water, land, herb and wood, many are loveable.

晋陶渊明独爱菊，自李唐来世人甚爱牡丹。

jin` tao' yuan- ming' du' ai` ju' zi` li' tang' lai' shi` ren' shen` ai` mu^ dan-

During Jin times Tao Yuan-Ming loved only the chrysanthemum, and since the Tang times people have greatly loved the peony.

予独爱莲之出淤泥而不染，濯清涟而不妖。

yu' du' ai` lian' zhi- chu- yu- ni' er' bu` ran^ zhuo' qing- lian' er' bu` yao-

I love only the lotus for rising from the mud but is not stained, bathed by clear waves but is not seductive.

中通外直，不蔓不枝，

zhong- tong- wai` zhi` bu` man` bu` zhi-

Inside, it is open; outside, it is straight. It neither crawls or forks.

香远益清，亭亭净植，

xiang- yuan^ yi` qing- ting` ting` jing` zhi`

The farther away one is, the purer is the fragrance. Upright and elegant, it establishes itself cleanly.

可远观而不可亵玩焉。

ke` yuan^ guan- er` bu` ke^ xie` wan` yan-

It can be viewed from far away but cannot be toyed with.

予谓菊，花之隐逸者也，

yu` wei` ju` hua- zhi- yin^ yi` zhe^ ye^

I say: the chrysanthemum is the recluse among flowers,

牡丹花之富贵者也，莲花之君子者也。

mu^ dan- hua- zhi- fu` gui` zhe^ ye^ lian` hua- zhi- jun- zi^ zhe^ ye^

The peony is the wealthy among flowers, and the lotus is the gentleman among flowers.

噫，菊之爱，陶后鲜有闻，

yi- ju` zhi- ai` tao` hou` xian^ you^ wen`

Aye, the love for the chrysanthemum is seldom heard of after Tao.

莲之爱，同予者何人？

lian` zhi- ai` tong` yu` zhe^ he^ ren`

As for the love for the lotus, is there anyone like me?

牡丹之爱，宜乎众矣。

mu^ dan- zhi- ai` yi^ hu` zhong` yi^

Ah, the love for the peony is right for most people.

COMMENT:

这篇短文文体属“古文”。古文是摹仿汉朝（约公元前200—公元200）的古代语言而写的，自大约公元800年韩愈倡导“古文运动”以来，取代了骈文而成为主流文体。骈文则接近诗词体，字句都构成相同字数、词性和结构的对联，又时常压韵。本网站登载的刘禹锡“陋室铭”便是骈文。古文则不需要对联，字

句可以长短不一，亦不需压韵。古文紧紧地扎根于汉朝语言，便把传统中国学者的文章跟普通人们的日常语言大幅度地分割开来。但是，古文又同时超越了
中国诸多极大不同又不断演变的各地区方言，在中国历史上曾作为把辽阔的中华文化区域紧紧地胶合起来的粘固剂。(参见 [http://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/古文_\(文學\)](http://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/古文_(文學)) 和 <http://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/駢文>。)

The style of this short essay is that of the “ancient prose (*gu’ wen*)”, which mimics the ancient language of the Han Dynasty (about 200 B.C.E. – 200 C.E.) and which, from about 800 C.E. on when Han Yu initiated and led the “Ancient Prose Movement”, had replaced “parallel prose (*pian’ wen*)” to become the dominant style of prose writing. 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. “Inscription – The Crude House” by Liu Yu Xi, which is carried on this website, is an example of “parallel prose”. “Ancient prose” does not require the formation of couplets, the sentences may be of different lengths, and rhyme is not necessary. By rooting itself firmly in the language of the Han Dynasty, ancient prose served to greatly detach traditional Chinese scholars’ writings from the language in use by ordinary people. At the same time, however, ancient prose transcended the many widely disparate and continually evolving local speech forms in China, thus historically providing an effective cement tightly bonding together the far-flung lands of the Chinese civilization. (See [http://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/古文_\(文學\)](http://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/古文_(文學)) and <http://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/駢文>.)