

Richard Lynn’s translation of the main text and of Guo Xiang’s commentary are copiously annotated, helping the reader to further place within its context a work that moulded the perception of the book *Zhuangzi* for centuries. His learned and thickly annotated introduction to key issues regarding the main text and the commentary, three appendices, two glossaries, a bibliography, and an index complete this most welcome contribution to our understanding of the *Zhuangzi* and its reception history. This new translation, an admirable result of a longstanding dedication to Guo Xiang’s *Zhuangzi*, truly deserves not only a special place on our bookshelves but will become a treasured point of reference for anyone who appreciates the aphorisms, wisdom, and literary qualities of those bundles of cherished texts attributed to Master Zhuang.

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Daniel K. Gardner (trans.): *Zhu Xi: Basic Teachings*

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Edited by Li Jingde 黎靖德 (fl. 1263) in 1270, the *Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類 (Classified Conversations of Master Zhu), a posthumous compilation of educational sayings and dialogues on 26 general topics by Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200) arranged in 140 chapters, served as one of the guidelines of traditional Chinese learning for centuries.

The translator, Daniel K. Gardner, Emeritus Professor of History at Smith College, is well known to students of Chinese philosophy. His *Chu Hsi and the Ta-hsueh: Neo-Confucian Reflection on the Confucian Canon* (1986), *Learning to Be A Sage: Selections from the Conversations of Master Chu, Arranged Topically* (1990), *Zhu Xi’s Reading of the Analects: Canon, Commentary and the Classical Tradition* (2003), *The Four Books: The Basic Teachings of the Later Confucian Tradition* (2007), and his *Confucianism: A Short Introduction* (2014) are well established as first-rate resources for all students of Chinese philosophy, not just those with a particular interest in its later developments. It thus comes as no surprise that the leading scholar on Zhu Xi in Western Sinology provides us with a sound, small, but well-chosen selection from the *Zhuzi yulei* that is aptly described as the “basic teachings” of the thinker who shaped orthodox curricula in China, Japan, and Korea.

As a compilation of the master’s lectures and exchanges with students and followers, the *Zhuzi yulei* uses a rather straightforward conversational language, mainly in the form of pseudo-dialogues, one of the most common and efficient rhetorical means in educational literature, that encourages the reader’s direct engagement with the insights of this pre-eminent thinker whose endeavours aimed at a revival of the Confucian tradition. Gardner’s extracts reflect the situational and linguistic nature of the original very well, and offer elegant, accessible translations from what could be described as the introductory chapters that deal with matters such as the “Foundations of the Universe” (i.e. excerpts from the “Liqi” 理氣 and “Guishen” 鬼神 chapters), “Human Beings” (i.e. excerpts from the “Xingli” 性理 chapters), “Learning” (i.e. excerpts from first two of the “Xue” 學 chapters), “A theory of reading” (i.e. extracts from the third and the



fourth of the “Xue” chapters on *dushufa* 讀書法 or “method of reading”, complemented by excerpts on the *Four Books* as core readings from the first of the “Daxue” 大學 chapters and elsewhere), and “Moral self-cultivation” (i.e. excerpts from the sixth and seventh of the “Xue” chapters). Gardner’s chapters come with a concise and highly informative introductory summary that facilitates the reader’s access to Zhu Xi’s remarks; source references at the end of each of the translated sequences enable us to locate the passage in the original text easily. Building on his previous work, namely his earlier translations in part two of his *Learning to Be A Sage* and elsewhere, Gardner brings into focus the paradigmatic views on learning and reading of Zhu Xi, who devoted much of his life to education. More importantly, one might argue that significant parts of these chapters on learning, which are crucial for a meaningful reconstruction of the history of reading (and learning) in traditional China, may still be considered relevant for the contemporary learner.

However, one minor caveat may be in order here: given that the punctuated edition published by Zhonghua Shuju (1986), on which this translation is based, consists of well over 3,000 pages in eight volumes and includes detailed notes, explorations and commentaries on the classics, it becomes apparent that Gardner’s selection represents but a tiny part of the original. Yet his highly accessible translations, supported by a general introduction, concise notes and a glossary of key terms, offer a good elementary overview on the basics of Zhu Xi’s system of thought. Nevertheless, the more advanced student of Zhu Xi will still want to consult the original version of the *Zhuzi yulei*, especially the rich records of his explorations on the classics, many of which complement and further elucidate his celebrated glosses and interlinear commentaries on canonical works.

In sum, Gardner’s translations from the *Zhuzi yulei* constitute a most welcome contribution on the study of so-called Neo-Confucianism and the man and his work that informed this philosophical system that still reverberates through contemporary Chinese discourses.

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Huaiyu Chen: *Animals and Plants in Chinese Religions and Science*

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In March 2023, Huaiyu Chen published two books on the subject of animals in China: *Animals and Plants in Chinese Religions and Science*, the focus of this review, and *In the Land of Tigers and Snakes: Living with Animals in Medieval Chinese Religions*. In the former, Chen extends his remit to cover plants as well as animals, and moves beyond the context of religion. What is perhaps not clarified in the title is that medieval sources are the primary focus of this book, though sources from preceding and subsequent dynasties are cited throughout.