

改頭換面——

曾鞏

Begin a New Life —

Zeng Gong

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何宗武 英譯

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BIOGRAPHIES | 人物誌

名鞏，字子固，北宋江西南豐人。其母信佛，四事供養青草堂和尚，和尚感其恩乃曰：「老僧願與夫人作子。」某日，和尚見宰相告老還鄉，榮耀異常，生一念羨慕心，不久圓寂（年九十），即生曾家。

鞏誕生時，母憶前言，派人視之，和尚端坐而化。鞏生而穎慧，雍容華貴。十二歲時，即有文名，早登科第。議論淳正，忠厚廉潔，官至相位。

一日，宋神宗問：「王安石為人如何？」對曰：「勇於有為，吝於改過。」可謂識人之評語。世人稱為曾魯公。江西山明水秀，文人輩出。

脫去龍袍換袈裟 祇恨當年一念差  
我本西方一衲子 因何流落帝王家

這是清朝順治皇帝出家時，留下的一首詩。慶幸自己終於脫去天子的龍袍，換上僧人的袈裟，還他本來面目，遂了他的心願。他本來就是佛的弟子，這一切的折騰都只怪當年



*Essay:*

Gong was his given name, and his subsidiary given name was Zigu. During the reign of the Northern Song Dynasty, Zeng was born in Nanfeng of Jiangxi Province. His mother, a Buddhist, once catered to the Monk of the Green Grass Hall with the four types of offerings. The monk was touched and said, "Let me be your son in return." One day, the monk saw that the woman's husband, the prime minister, had returned home after retirement with great pride. One thought of admiration arose in him. The monk died at the age of 90 and was reborn in the Zeng

household.

The moment Zeng was born, the mother was reminded of what the monk had said to her. She immediately sent someone to check and discovered that the monk had died in a sitting posture. Zeng Gong was gifted with talents and fine and noble features, and he became a renowned writer by the age of 12. He was recruited at a young age. Since his arguments were straight and fair, and he was always dignified in behavior, he was then promoted to the position of Prime Minister.

One day, the Emperor Shen Zong asked him: "What do you think of

他一念之差，羨慕人間皇帝的權位，今生才會流落到帝王家裡。而今天我們所談的曾鞏，他的來歷也和順治皇帝相似。

曾鞏名鞏，字子固，合起來有基礎鞏固、穩定之意，是北宋江西南豐人。他的母親信佛，故常供養三寶。但她並非平等地供養僧人，而是聽說誰有修行，就供養誰。

她聽說青草堂和尚（又稱青草和尚或草堂和尚）很有修行，就很誠心地以飲食、衣服、臥具、湯藥四事來供養這位出家人。她天天送最好、最值錢的供養，來表示她的誠意：食物——用最美味可口的齋菜，送給出家人吃；衣服——用最漂亮、最名貴的料子，做給出家人穿；臥具——也買最好的質料，給出家人用。湯藥——當出家人有病，她就親自煎藥熬藥給出家人喝。

這種以四事單獨供養一位出家人的方式，本來就有一種情感的成份在內，所以出家人被情感所感動，覺得不知怎麼辦才好，受人這麼供養，將來自己如何來報答，以還此債呢？他看曾家頗為富有，這位施主心地也很善良，對他又這麼好，一時動了心，被情感所迷，就對她說起醉話：「將來我給你做兒子。」如此一講，也不知是真的或假的，大概當時他是真魂出竅，魂魄跑了，心被情感所牽，所以種下給人當兒子的因。

有一天，青草堂和尚看到宰相告老還鄉，榮耀異常，很是風光，就生出羨慕的心：「啊！做大官原來這麼威風，我如果能身臨其境，也很不錯呀！」心一打這個妄想，就圓寂了（年九十），托生到姓曾的施主家。

曾鞏誕生的時候，他母親記起和尚以前曾說要給她做兒子，就特意派人去看看青草堂和尚，只見和尚已經端坐而化。她也不敢確定，這個兒子是不是真的就是和尚的轉世，就這樣糊里糊塗生了一個兒子。

**Wang Anshi?" Zeng replied, "He was responsible in what he did, but was reluctant to correct his mistakes." His comments on Wang Anshi were fair and to the point. Out of respect, people remembered him as Honorable Zeng Lu. Province Jiangxi is renowned for its mountains and rivers and for being the birthplace of many outstanding figures.**

**Commentary:**

*Casting off the imperial robes to don the kashaya sash,  
I regret that single thought in a previous life that led me off the path.  
I was originally a monk who sought rebirth in the West.  
How did I wind up born in a royal clan?*

This is a poem left by Emperor Shunzhi of the Qing Dynasty before he became a monk. He rejoiced in being able exchange his imperial robes for a monk's *kashaya*, thus returning to his original identity and fulfilling his profound wish. He was originally a disciple of the Buddha, but in a past life he lost the Way and became an emperor as a result of a being led astray by a single thought. We will discuss Zeng Gong, who had a similar experience to that of Emperor Shunzhi.

Zeng Gong's given name was Gong, and his subsidiary given name was Zigu. They have the combined meaning of firmness and stability. He was born in Nanfeng of Jiangxi Province during the Northern Song Dynasty. His mother was a Buddhist who and often made offerings to the Triple Jewel. However, she did not make offerings equally to all the monks. Instead, she preferred to offer to those who were said to be good cultivators.

She heard that the monk in the Green Grass Hall (also known as Green Grass Monk or Grass Hall Monk) had spiritual attainment, so she sincerely offered four things: food, clothing, bedding, and medicines. She demonstrated her sincerity by giving the goods of the best quality almost daily, including the finest vegetarian food, clothing made of the finest materials, high-quality bedding, and even personally prepared medication when the monk was sick.

Such special offering to favor a single monk is tendered with personal emotion. Thus, the monk was moved, but had no idea how to return her favor. He knew she was from a wealthy family and that she was so kind to care for him so well. And being touched and overcome with emotion, he spoke these words in his confusion: "Let me be your son in return." He probably did not have his wits about him, and so, under the influence of affection, he spoke such words, which, whether true or false, seeded a destiny of one day becoming her son.

One day, the monk saw that the Prime Minister had returned home after retirement with great pride. A sense of admiration arising from within, he thought, "Oh, a high-ranking official is so powerful. It would be good if I could become one, too!" The moment such a fantasy overtook him, he died at the age of 90 and was reborn into the household of his donor.

When Zeng Gong was born, the mother thought of what the monk had said. She then sent a person to visit the Green Grass Hall Monk, only to discover that

曾鞏生來就聰穎有智慧，相貌端正華貴。「十二歲能文，語已驚人」，十二歲作《六論》，文章寫得非常之好；語言雄壯，令人吃驚，有神童的雅號。二十歲因文才出眾，當時文壇領袖歐陽修閱讀他的文章之後，驚為奇才，因而備受賞識，後來收他為門生。他有濃厚的儒家思想，主張先道後文，非常重視文人的道德修養。他的學術和文章，生時已聞名遐邇，死後更是盛名不衰，是為唐宋八大家之一。

他早登科舉及第，很受皇帝的重用。他的議論樸實公正，對國家很忠心，待人接物也很厚道，操守廉潔，一路做到丞相的地位。任官期間，注意救治民疫，體恤民生的疾苦。有一天，宋神宗問他：「王安石的為人，你覺得怎麼樣？」他回答：「他有創作力，敢作敢為，但計劃不周全，很荒唐，冒失躁進，犯了錯也不敢承認，更捨不得改。」他這樣批評王安石，可說是很認識他，這也是很公平的評論。

世人因為尊重他，就不直呼其名，而稱他為曾魯公。他是江西人，江西這個地方山明水秀，所以出了很多很聰明及有才智的文人。

☞待續

he had died. She was not sure whether she had given birth to the monk, but in any case, it was under unclear circumstances that she had given birth to a son.

In addition to a fine and noble appearance, Zeng Gong was gifted with talents. He was capable of writing essays at the age of 12 and his speech amazed people. At the age of 12, he wrote an excellent article titled, "Six Arguments," that was excellent in style and powerfully moving in its eloquence. When he was 20, his erudition and outstanding performance were appreciated by the intellectual leader Ouyang Xiu, who gave him great credits and accepted him as one of his disciples. Zeng Gong was deeply influenced by Confucian thought and emphasized that erudition and capability without morality are empty. While he was alive, his scholarship and writings were well known, and his name went down in history. He was one of the eight prose masters of the Tang-Song period.

Zeng was recruited by the government when he was young, and the Emperor looked highly upon him. His arguments were straightforward and fair. Not only was he loyal to the country but he was also a good and kind person. Since his moral conduct was impeccable, he was eventually promoted to the position of Prime Minister. During his term of service as an official, he attended to problems of disease and contagion, and empathized with civilian hardships. One day, the Emperor Shenzong asked him, "What do you think of Wang Anshi?" Zeng replied, "He was innovative and confident in his actions. However, his policy implementation usually lacked sufficient planning. He was presumptuous and negligent, and reluctant to admit the mistakes he made, much less correct them." His comments on Wang Anshi were fair and to the point.

To show respect, people called him Honorable Zeng Lu, instead of his given names. He was a native of Jiangxi, which is known for its mountains and rivers and for being the birthplace of many intelligent and capable figures throughout history.

☞To be continued



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