
This small book, an annotated translation of one of the chapters of the Classical Guoyu is conceived as teaching material for a course in Classical Chinese. It is divided into twelve lessons according to the division inherent in the text. Each chapter consists of:

1. the original text in Chinese characters
2. pinyin: QI Chong is responsible for the transcription and also for phonetic notes given for e.g. characters with different readings.
3. a translation from the Classical text into Modern Mandarin prepared by Liu Chaoying
4. a translation into French and
5. a glossary including toponyms and anthroponyms. The translation and the glossary are prepared by Jean Lévi who is also responsible for the introduction and the commentaries.

Many special terms in the glossary are provided with comprehensive explanations which are very useful for the student, since they are frequently not available in the general dictionaries. Furthermore, each chapter contains the syntactic analysis and a literal word for word translation of some exemplary sentences which show a particular grammatical structure or include words which require explanations (for these analyses Jean Lévi, Alain Peyraube, Bai Gang, Qi Chong and Liu Chaoying are responsible). Almost all of the chapters additionally include a commentary which provides historical and cultural information and anchors the narrated events in their historical or philosophical backgrounds. Each chapter is rounded off with a few questions mostly concerning lexical or grammatical but also sometimes historical issues. The answers to these
questions can be found at the end of the book. This clear structuring makes the book a very useful tool for the study of Classical Chinese, with regard to both its language and its culture.

I am very glad that the author selected a part from the Guoyu 國語, a text which has always been underestimated in sinological literature, but which in my opinion certainly belongs to the more interesting texts of the time, from the point of view of both its language and its content. The text is presented clearly and difficult parts are usually accompanied by sufficient information to become clear to the reader. Reference is regularly made to other Classical texts which exhibit parallels or deal with the same problems as the Guoyu. A short introduction 'Présentation' precedes the main part of the book.

In the first part of this introduction a synopsis of the content of the text and of the discussion on the authorship and the date of composition is provided and the relation of the text with the Zuozhuan is succinctly discussed. Some of the earlier philological and linguistic studies on the Guoyu are briefly mentioned, e.g. the work of Karlgren and that of Zhang Yiren who devoted much of his scientific life to the study of the Guoyu, but unfortunately these studies do not appear in the bibliographical references. A reference to Wei Juxian who presented one of the most important studies as far as the dating problem is concerned appears only in a footnote and a reference to the thoroughly researched article of Zhang Yiren, William G. Boltz and Micheal Loewe in Micheal Loewe's Early Chinese Texts has been omitted altogether. I assume that this disregard is due to the fact that the authors intend to study the text from a different perspective than the studies mentioned above. These former studies mostly deal with problems of authenticity and dating, the relation between the Guoyu and the Zuozhuan, or with purely philological issues; whereas the study under consideration explicitly centres on the internal structure of the text and its relation