



The Chinese Literary Canon: Exploring 3000 Years of History and Culture

Qiuyu Yu

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In *The Chinese Literary Canon*, one of China's most brilliant critics puts three millennia of Chinese writing in its proper historical context. He shows us what to read and how to read it. Yu Qiuyu traces a bright line of the very best literature that China has produced: from the first carvings on bone, through the first poems, the first philosophers, the greatest historian, to the ultimate stylists of the Tang Dynasty and beyond. And because brilliant literature is always a product of its time and place, Yu tells us about the men who did the writing and the worlds in which they lived. Most of all, Yu tells us about the ideas that motivated them, how they read the writers of the past, and how each writer of genius transformed and added his own stamp to the literary canon. The Yellow Emperor, the Book of Poetry, Confucius and Laozi, the great historian Sima Qian, Cao Cao, Kum?raj?va, Li Bai, Du Fu, Cao Xueqin... Their thread weaves in and out of the history of the first Chinese, the Warring States, the unification under Qin, the destructive split into the Three Kingdoms, and the cosmopolitan Tang Dynasty. All of this history is interpreted and presented in the warm, distinctive voice of a truly great reader, Yu Qiuyu.

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