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## **AN OVERVIEW OF THE PU SONGLING'S LIFE AND WORK**

Pu Songling was a Qing Dynasty Chinese writer, best known as the author of "聊齋誌異". He was born in an impoverished gentry family, but in spite of low financial situation his educated degree was very high. Sources tell us that he made a living by giving private lessons and teaching those who were preparing for the state examination for the degree. This fact proves that Pu Songling's education level was really high. He knew a lot of ancient Confucian works, but examinations didn't want to let him pass the exam because he was poor.

The whole life Pu Songling tried to get an official title, but due to the formalism of the examination system he didn't succeed. Failures in public examinations and the shame from the awareness that he is one of the "eternal students" leaved deep scars in Pu Songling's heart, which later would be reflected in the collection of stories "聊齋誌異". Even the literary critics of the XVII century called this collection a "book of lonely frustration." The collection is filled with the feeling of eternal sorrow.

Pu Songling wrote not only prose, but also some other Chinese genres, sometimes he even used to write his works using spoken language. The writer contributed much in the history of the Chinese literature. However, nowadays Pu Songling is best known as the author of "聊齋誌異", we can even call it the peak of his work. In this collection of stories Pu Songling due to his talent could combine a sophisticated literary style with describing small daily things. He used to talk about the ordinary using Classic Chinese (上古汉语). The author wrote his stories in a very difficult political situation, so one of the main ideas of the collection is the dream about honest officials and fair rulers in China. Maybe because of that difficult political situation Pu Songling used to add some fantastic characters to his stories.

The collection had been well received by his contemporaries, even Wang Shizhen - an indisputable authority in literary matters of that time - was one of Pu Songling's fans. The critics also paid tribute to Pu Songling for his great talent. In the early XVIII century the writer was very widely known in the whole country.

Probably because of the Pu Songling's popularity, the government gave him a chance and he received an academic degree (秀才) at the state examinations in 1711. Thus the writer only at the age of eighty became able to enter into the gentry class. However, this academic degree has meant nothing to Pu Songling, because he was a gray-haired old man by that time. Four years later, in 1715, the writer passed away.