

Classical Chinese Grammar Tutorial*

Lesson 2: Verbal Predicates

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Language points:

- Classification
- Categorical flexibility
- Voice alternation

New historical sources:

- *Ssì Kí* (史記) ‘Records of the Grand Historian’ (SsK)
- *Ts’iēn Tsí Wèn* (千字文) ‘The Thousand Character Classic’ (Ts’TsW)
- *Hân Fēi Tsì* (韓非子) ‘Writings of Master Han Fei’ (HFTs)

1 Classification

Classical Chinese verbs, like verbs in many other languages, differ from nouns in that they do not need to rely on extra elements (e.g., copulas) to function as predicates. In addition, verbs are negated by *pu* (不[不]) instead of *pul* (非[非]) (which is used for nouns), and they can directly take aspect markers like *glu?* (矣[矣]) (perfect) and *muds* (未[未]) (negation of perfect).

- (1) a. 于我未病楚不能矣
于我未病楚不能矣 (TsČ)

ɣ^wa *ŋa:l?* ***muds*** *braŋs*, *sɿ^hra?* ***pu*** *nu:* ***glu?***
iũ *ngò* *wéi* *píng*, *Č’ù* *put* *nêng* *ì*
for us not yet ill Č’ù not can PRF

‘It’s not yet too bad for us, but the State of Č’ù already can’t bear it.’ (vdG:448)

This example happens to contain all three function words mentioned above. It shows the three constructions below:

*The full series is available on my website (www.juliosong.com).

- (2) a. [*pu* V] ‘not V’
 b. [*muds* V] ‘not yet V-ed, has not V-ed’
 c. [V *glu?*] ‘already V-ed, has V-ed’

These are fairly easy to use. Take any verb, such as *gru:g* (學 [學]) ‘study’, and any proper name, such as *John*. We can now readily express three useful ideas:

- (3) a. *John pu gru:g* ‘John does not study.’
 b. *John muds gru:g* ‘John has not studied.’
 c. *John gru:g glu?* ‘John has studied.’

Pulleyblank distinguishes four types of verbs for Classical Chinese: adjectives (aka quality verbs), intransitive verbs, transitive verbs, and copulas. Since intransitive and transitive verbs are nothing new to speakers of other languages, and we have touched on the copula *ɣ^{wal}* (爲 [爲]) in Lesson 1, here I only illustrate the behavior of adjectives, which are grammatically verblike in both Classical and Modern Chinese.

- (4) a. 山高
 山高
sre:n ka:w (predicative)
šān kaō
 mountain high
 ‘Mountains are high.’
- b. 高山
 高山
ka:w sre:n (attributive)
kaō šān
 high mountain
 ‘high mountains’ (PB:23)

Intransitive verbs, especially unaccusative ones, can be used in exactly the same way.

- (5) a. 人亡
人亡

njin maŋ (predicative)
žin wâng
person die

‘A person dies.’

- b. 亡人
亡人

maŋ njin (attributive)
wâng žin
die person

‘a dead person’ (vdG:153)

The behavior of adjectives with regard to negation and aspect marking is illustrated below.

- (6) a. 吾老矣
吾老矣 (LI)

ŋa: ru:ʔ gluʔ
ngû laò ì
I old PRF

‘I am already old. (lit. I have become old.)’ (vdG:319)

- b. 未老先衰
未老先衰

muds ru:ʔ su:n shrol
wéi laò siēn šǔi
not yet old first decline

‘prematurely senile’

- c. 不善
不善

pu gjenʔ
put šén
not good

‘not good’ (vdG:371)

Sometimes it is hard to distinguish predicative adjectives from their nominalizations from a semantic perspective (since there is not really much difference in meaning). In such cases, the syntax can help us, as the latter admit nominal predication elements like *la:lʔ* (也[也]).

- (7) 仁內也非外也義外也非內也 (MTs)

<i>njin,</i>	<i>nu:bs</i>	<i>la:lʔ, pul</i>	<i>ŋ^wa:ds</i>	<i>la:lʔ;</i>	<i>ŋrals,</i>	<i>ŋ^wa:ds</i>	<i>la:lʔ, pul</i>		
<i>žin,</i>	<i>núi</i>	<i>yè,</i>	<i>fēi</i>	<i>nguái</i>	<i>yè;</i>	<i>ngí,</i>	<i>nguái</i>	<i>yè,</i>	<i>fēi</i>
benevolence	internal	AST	not	external	AST	righteousness	external	AST	not
	<i>nu:bs</i>	<i>la:lʔ</i>							
	<i>núi</i>	<i>yè</i>							
	internal	AST							

‘As for benevolence, it is (what is) internal, not (what is) external; as for righteousness, it is (what is) external, not (what is) internal.’ (vdG:336)

Pulleyblank also mentions the comparative and superlative constructions for adjectives, which respectively involve the coverb *ɣ^wa* (于[于]) and the copula *ɣ^wal* (爲[爲]).

- (8) a. Comparative: NP₁ Adj *ɣ^wa* NP₂ ‘NP₁ is more Adj than NP₂’
 b. Superlative: NP *ɣ^wal* Adj ‘NP is the most Adj’

- (9) a. 則無望民之多于鄰國也 (Mts)

<i>ʔsu:w</i>	<i>g ma</i>	<i>maŋs</i>	<i>min</i>	<i>tju</i>	<i>ʔl'a:l</i>	<i>ɣ^wa</i>	<i>rin</i>	<i>k^wu:w</i>	<i>g la:lʔ</i>
tsek	wù	wáng	mín	ǎi	tō	iū	lín	kuok	yè
then	not	expect	people	GEN	many	than	neighbor	state	AST

‘Then don’t hope your people will be more than those of the neighboring countries.’ (PB:24)

- b. 物皆然心爲甚 (MTs)

<i>mud</i>	<i>kri:l</i>	<i>njen,</i>	<i>slum</i>	<i>ɣ^wal</i>	<i>gljums</i>
wut	kiài	žân,	sím	wèi	ćím
thing	all	thus	heart	COP	excessive

‘Things are all like that and the heart is most so.’ (PB:25)

Some transitive verbs take two objects, which makes them ditransitive. Typical ditransitive verbs are verbs of giving, telling, teaching, and the like. They generally assume the word order V-IO-DO (akin to English *give somebody something*), but one may also front the DO via the coverb *lu?* (㉚ [以]) ‘taking’, which then yields the reversed word order V-[*lu?* DO]-IO.

- (10) a. 我欲中國而授孟子室
我欲中國而授孟子室 (MTs)

nə:l? log tuŋ kʷu:g nju djuŋ mra:ŋs ?slu? hliŋ
ngò yuk cūng kuok rî šou méng tsì ssí
I want center state CONJ give Méng Tsì house

‘I would like to (choose a place in) the central area of the state and give Mencius a house (there).’ (PB:31)

- b. 堯以天下與舜
堯以天下與舜 (MTs)

ŋe:w lu? qʰl'i:n gra:? las hljuŋs
yaô ì t'iēn hiá iù šún
Yaô CVB heaven under give Šún

‘Yaô gave the world to Šún.’ (PB:32)

But beyond the above basic patterns, there may be some additional flexibility in the use of ditransitive verbs. For instance, the *lu?*-introduced DO may also stay after the IO—in which case *lu?* should probably be treated as a preposition ‘with’—and the IO itself may be introduced via a preposition (ㄉʷa 于 [于] ‘to, for’) as well. Note that when the DO introduced by *lu?* is the object pronoun *tju* (ㄗ [之]), it is obligatorily omitted, giving rise to the surface form *lu?*-V-IO.

- (11) a. 教人以善謂之忠...以天下與人易
教人以善謂之忠...以天下與人易 (MTs)

kra:w njin lu? gjen? guds tju tuŋ ... lu? qʰl'i:n gra:? las
kiaó žin ì šén wéi cī cūng ì t'iēn hiá iù
teach people with goodness call it loyalty CVB heaven under give
njin le:gs
žin yik
people easy

‘Teaching others goodness, we call it loyalty ... giving the world to others is easy.’ (PB:32)

- b. 公都子不能答以告孟子 (MTs)

klo:ŋ ta: ?slu? pu nu: tku:b, lu? ku:g mra:ŋs ?slu?
kūng tū tsì put nêng tap, ì kaó méng tsì
Kūng Tū Tsì not can answer CVB tell Méng Tsì

‘Kūng Tū Tsì could not answer and told it to Mencius.’ (PB:32)

- c. 不告于王而私與之吾子之祿爵 (MTs)

pu ku:g ɣ^{wa} ɣ^{wa}ŋ nju sil las tju ŋa: ?slu? tju ro:g ?sewɣ
put kaó iū wâng rî ssī iù ċī ngû tsì ċī luk tsiak
not tell to king CONJ private give him my sir GEN salary title

‘(If you) do not tell the King and privately give him (i.e., someone you like) your salary and title...’ (PB:32)

In (11a), *lu?* is used in two different ways, first as a preposition introducing the DO in its usual post-IO position, and then as a coverb promoting the DO to the preverbal position. In (11c), *ɣ^{wa}* introduces the IO *ɣ^{wa}ŋ* after the verb ‘tell’ (the postverbal object pronoun ‘it’ is omitted), and there is still another ditransitive verb in the sentence, *las* ‘give’, which assumes the normal V-IO-DO word order. As we can see, the object pronoun *tju* may either be a DO or an IO depending on the context. There is yet another occurrence of *tju* in (11c)—between ‘my sir (i.e., you)’ and ‘salary and title’—but that is not the object pronoun *tju* but instead the genitive marker *tju*, which happens to have the same form.

Apart from “telling” verbs, various other verbs in Classical Chinese may be used ditransitively, which must be learned one by one. Some of the examples given by Pulleyblank are *l’ot* (奪[奪]) ‘rob, deprive’ (V-IO-DO), *mun* (聞[聞]) ‘hear’ (V-DO-IO), and *muuns* (問[問]) ‘ask’ (V-DO-IO or V-IO-DO).

2 Categorical flexibility

While the basic classification of verbal predicates in Classical Chinese is as above, this classification is not very useful in practice unless we also learn the various zero derivation patterns regularly occurring in the language. These mainly involve the verbal usage of nouns and the causative usage of noncausative verbs (including adjectives). We begin with the former.

- (12) a. 君君臣臣父父子子 (LI)
君君臣臣父父子子 (LI)

klun klun, giŋ giŋ, baʔ baʔ, ʔsluʔ ʔsluʔ
kiün kiün, čʔn čʔn, fú fú, tsì tsì
 ruler act as r. minister act as m. father act as f. son act as s.

‘(Let) the ruler act as a ruler should, the minister as a minister, the father as a father, and the son as a son.’ (PB:26)

- b. 故湯之于伊尹學焉而後臣之 (MTs)
故湯之于伊尹學焉而後臣之 (MTs)

ka:s ʔʰa:ŋ tju ɣʷa qlil ɣʷlinʔ gru:g gan nju go:ʔ
kú tāng čī iü ī yìn hiok yên rî heú
 thus Tāng GEN to Ī Yìn learn from him and afterward

giŋ tju
čʔn čī
 make into minister him

‘Thus Tāng’s (behavior) towards Ī Yìn was to learn from him and afterwards make him his subject.’ (PB:25)

In (12a), the four nouns of status are used as intransitive verbs meaning ‘acting as ...’. In (12b), the same noun of status *giŋ* ‘minister’ is used causatively, meaning ‘make sb. into a minister’. Of course, since Tāng made Ī Yìn his minister, the latter naturally became a subject of the former, hence the translation. Such contextual verbalization of nouns is highly common in Classical Chinese, and the general pattern is:

(13) $N \rightarrow [V \nu_{DO} N] \rightarrow [V \nu_{CAUS} [V \nu_{DO} N]]$

where the little *ν*’s are “verbalizers” of various flavors. Occasionally, the causative sense of denominal verbs is not simply ‘make ... N’ (i.e., factitive) but a specialized ‘regard/treat ... as N’ (i.e., denominative), as illustrated below.

- (14) 親親 ... 子庶民
親親 ... 子庶民 (ČY)

shin shin ... ʔsluʔ hljags min
tsʔn tsʔn tsì šú mìn
 treat as kin kin treat as child people

‘Treat kins as kins ... treat the populace as children.’ (vdG:430)

Apart from the above systematic patterns, there are also cases of less regular (but more idiomatic) verbalization of nouns, where the meaning of the deverbal noun must be memorized by learners. Pulleyblank gives the following examples:

- (15) a. *ri:ʔ* (禮[禮]) ‘n. ceremony, ritual’ → ‘v. treat with ceremony/respect’
 b. *djeŋ* (城[城]) ‘n. city wall’ → ‘v. wall a city, build a city’
 c. *kun* (軍[軍]) ‘n. army’ → ‘v. encamp’

I illustrate these with the sentences below.

- (16) a. 魏文侯師卜子夏友田子方禮段干木 (C'Ts')
 魏文侯師卜子夏友田子方禮段干木 (C'Ts')

ŋuls mun go: sri po:g ʔsluʔ gra:ʔ, ɣwuʔ l'i:ŋ
wéi wên heû ssī puk tsì hiá, yeù t'iên
 Wéi Wên marquess make into teacher Puk Tsì Hiá make into friend T'iên
ʔsluʔ baŋ, ri:ʔ do:ns ka:n mo:g
tsì fāng, li tuán kân muk
 Tsì Fāng treat with respect Tuán Kân Muk

‘Marquess Wên of Wéi learned from Puk Tsì-Hiá, befriended T'iên Tsì-Fāng, and respected Tuán Kân-Muk.’

- b. 天子命我城彼朔方 (Ši)
 天子命我城彼朔方 (Ši)

qʰl'in ʔsluʔ mreŋs ŋa:l, djeŋ pralʔ sŋra:g baŋ
t'iên tsì míng ngò čêng pì šuok fāng
 heaven son order me build city that north direction

‘The Son of Heaven (i.e., the emperor) ordered me to build a city in the North.’

- c. 楚子伐隨軍于漢淮之間 (TsČ)
 楚子伐隨軍于漢淮之間 (TsČ)

sŋʰraʔ ʔsluʔ bad ljol, kun ɣwa hna:ns ɣʱri:l tju kre:n
Č'ù tsì fat sùì, kiün iũ hán hoài čī kiān
 Č'ù king attack Sùì encamp at Hán Hoài GEN space

‘The King of Č'ù attacked the State of Sùì, encamping between the River of Hán and the River of Hoài.’

Note that (16a) involves three denominal verbs: *sri* ‘n. teacher’ → ‘v. make into one’s teacher, learn from’, *ɣʷu?* ‘n. friend’ → ‘v. make into one’s friend, befriend’, and *ri:?*.

Next, we turn to the causativization of ordinary intransitive verbs (i.e., nonadjectival ones). This typically happens to verbs that denote locations or motions, such as

- (17) a. *ru:g* (來[來]) ‘vi. come’ → ‘vt. make come, summon’
- b. *kʰas* (去[去]) ‘vi. go’ → ‘vt. make go, remove’
- c. *ʔslins* (進[進]) ‘vi. move forward’ → ‘vt. make move forward’
- d. *ŋʰu:bs* (退[退]) ‘vi. move backward’ → ‘vt. make move backward’
- e. *kju?* (止[止]) ‘vi. stop’ → ‘vt. make stop, make stay’
- f. *shle:ŋ* (生[生]) ‘vi. be born’ → ‘vt. give life to, give birth to’

Occasionally, verbs denoting sentiments or mental states can also be used in this way:

- (18) a. *kloŋ* (恭[恭]) ‘vi. respectful’ → ‘vt. make respectful’
- b. *lod* (說[說 (悅)]) ‘vi. rejoice’ → ‘vt. make rejoice, please’
- c. *kru:g* (覺[覺]) ‘vi. perceive, understand’ → ‘vt. make understand, teach’

Below are some example sentences:

- (19) a. 故遠人不服則脩文德以來之 (LI)

<i>ka:s</i>	<i>ɣʷan?</i>	<i>ŋjin</i>	<i>pu</i>	<i>bu:g</i> ,	<i>ʔsu:g</i>	<i>sluw</i>	<i>mun</i>	<i>tu:g</i>	<i>lu?</i>
kú	yuèn	žin	put	fuk,	tsek	sieū	wèn	tek	ì
therefore	distant	people	not	submit	then	cultivate	civil	virtue	so as to
<i>ru:g</i>	<i>tju</i>								
lái	čī								
make come	them								

‘Therefore, if distant people do not submit, cultivate civil virtue to make them come.’
(PB:27)

- b. 天去其疾矣 (TsČ)

q^hl'i:n k^has gu zid glu?
t'iēn k'iũ k'i tsit i
 heaven make go his disease PRF

'The heaven ridded him of his disease.' (vdG:143)

- c. 止子路宿 (LI)

kju? *?slu?* *g·ra:gs sug*
čì Tsì Lú suk
 make stay Tsì Lú lodge for the night

'He made Tsì Lú stay to lodge for the night.' (ibid.)

- d. 說親有道 (MTs)

lod shin ɣ^wu? l'u:?
yuet ts'in yeù taó
 make rejoice parents there is way

'As for pleasing one's parents, there is a way to do so.' (ibid.)

- e. 天_之生_斯民也 ... 使_先覺_覺後_覺 (MTs)

q^hl'i:n tju shle:ŋ se min la:l? ...sru? su:n kru:g
kú t'iēn čī šēng ssī mīn yè ...ssì siēn
 heaven GEN give life to these people TOP ...make early understand
kru:g go:? *kru:g*
kiok kiok heú
 make understand late understand

'As for the heaven's giving lives to these people, it makes those who understand things faster teach those who understand things slower.'

Note that in (19e), the verb *kru:g* is used both intransitively and causatively. Such adjacent occurrences of flexibly categorized lexical items are common in Classical Chinese. We have seen it in (12a) as well.

Next, we turn to causatively used adjectives. Adjectives in Classical Chinese can be made causative in two different senses: (i) the good old 'make ... A' sense (factitive); (ii) a mentally oriented sense 'regard ... as A, take ... to be A' (denominative). The latter can be understood as a special

case of causative ‘make ... A in one’s mind’. We have already touched on it when discussing the verbal usage of nouns above (see (14)). See (20) for examples of the factitive usage of adjectives and (20), for the denominative usage.

- (20) a. 王請大之
王請大之 (MTs)

ɣ^waŋ zleŋ da:ds tju
wâŋ ts'ing tá ċī
king beg make big it

‘I beg Your Majesty to make it great.’ (PB:25)

- b. 人能弘道非道弘人 (LI)
人能弘道非道弘人 (LI)

njin nu: ɣ^wu:ŋ l'u:ʔ, puł l'u:ʔ ɣ^wu:ŋ njin
žin nêng hûng taò, fēi taò hûng žin
person can make grand way not way make grand person

‘Man can promote the Way, but not the other way around.’ (vdG:339)

- (21) a. 粵不遠千里而來
粵不遠千里而來 (MTs)

su:ʔ pu ɣ^wanʔ sŋ^{hi}:n ruʔ nju ru:g
soù, put yuèn ts'iēn lì rī lái
sir not regard as far thousand Chinese mile CONJ come

‘You have come, sir, not regarding 1,000 miles as too far.’ (PB:25)

- b. 管仲世所謂賢臣然孔子小之 (SsK)
管仲世所謂賢臣然孔子小之 (SsK)

ko:nʔ duŋs, hljebs sq^hraʔ guds gi:n giŋ, njen k^hlo:ŋʔ ʔsluʔ
kuàn ćung, ší sò wéi kiên ċ'în, žân k'ùŋ tsì
Kuàn Ćung world REL call virtuous minister but K'ùŋ Tsì
smew? tju
siaò ċī
regard as small him

‘As for Kuàn Ćung, he is what people call a virtuous minister, but Confucius despises him.’ (vdG:339)

Note that the denominative usage is specific to adjectives (and nouns). Other types of intransitive verbs cannot be used in this way. As such, whether or not a lexical item can be used denominatively may also be used as a classifying criterion for its (inherent) categorial status.

3 Voice alternation

Classical Chinese has two major semantic voices: active and passive. In addition, von der Gabelentz lists several other voice types based on purely syntactic considerations—namely, how many arguments a predicate takes, and in what order they appear. The Gabelentzian voices are: active, passive, neuter, reflexive, causative, and factitive/denominative. Some of these have been introduced above when we were learning about the categorial flexibility of Classical Chinese. I give the basic syntactic patterns of all these voice types below:

- (22) a. Active: S-V-O
 b. Passive: O-(Pass)-V
 c. Neuter: S-V
 d. Reflexive: S-Refl-V
 e. Causative: (i) [_{V-V} *v*_{CAUS} V]; (ii) Caus-S-V
 f. Factitive/denominative: [_{V-V} *v*_{F/D} [_V *v*_{BE} A/N]]

One may not want to call all these “voices” (to be fair neither did von der Gabelentz—he simply called them *Formen des verbum finitum* ‘forms of the finite verb’ in view of the object-based extension of the predicate part of a simple sentence, p.423). In fact, from a linguistic perspective, both categorial flexibility (in the verbal domain) and voice alternation are essentially about predicate/argument organization—namely, how many arguments a verb semantically calls for, and how many of them are syntactically realized. Also belong to this domain are the terms “transitivity” and “transitivity variation.” Modern linguistics has well-developed tools to handle these seemingly complex phenomena, so knowing some linguistics can greatly facilitate one’s mastering of unfamiliar verb systems in unfamiliar languages, such as Classical Chinese.

For convenience’s sake, I will keep using the term “voice.” Let’s now take a look at some basic examples of the above voices. I will only illustrate (22a–d) and (22e-ii), as the rest have already been illustrated above. We begin with the basic active and passive patterns.

- (23) a. 七十者衣帛食肉 (MTs)
 七十者衣帛食肉 (MTs)
 sɿ^hid gjub tja:ʔ **qu**ls bra:g **fi**ljug njug (active)
 ts’it šip čè í pok šik žuk
 seven ten NMLZ wear silk eat meat
 ‘(When) 70-year-olds wear silk and eat meat...’ (PB:27)

- b. 師行而糧食
師行而糧食 (MTs)

sri gra:ŋ nju raŋ filjuŋ (passive)
ssī hīng rī liàng šik
 host proceed CONJ food eat.PASS

‘The host proceeds and supplies are eaten.’ (PB:28)

In the two examples above, (23a) has the active use of *filjuŋ* ‘eat’, while (23b) has its passive use ‘be eaten’. There is no overt passive marker, and the passive reading is only indicated by the reversed word order O-V (instead of the normal active order V-O). Classical Chinese also had an overt passive marker *ke:ns* (見 [見]), which is an auxiliary verb used in front of verbs. Below are a few examples.

- (24) a. 說不行而有敗則見疑 (HFTs)
說不行而有敗則見疑 (HFTs)

hljod pu gra:ŋ nju ɣ^{wu?} bra:ds, ?suu:g ke:ns ŋu (passive)
šuet put hīng rī yeù pái, tsek kién ngī
 words not go CONJ have failure then PASS doubt

‘If the words (of advice) don’t work and the advisor fails, then he will be doubted (by the ruler).’ (vdG:429)

- b. 盆成括見殺 (MTs)
盆成括見殺 (MTs)

bu:n djeŋ ko:d ke:ns sre:d (passive)
pèn síng kuot kién šat
 Pèn Síng Kuot PASS kill

‘Pèn Síng-Kuot got killed.’ (PB:35)

- c. 吾常見笑于大方之家 (ČTs)
吾常見笑于大方之家 (ČTs)

ŋa: djaŋ ke:ns sq^hows ɣ^wa da:ds baŋ (passive)
ngú čàng kién siaó iũ tá fāng *tjuu kra: čī kiā*
 I long PASS laugh by great accomplishment GEN master

‘I’d forever have been laughed at by masters of great accomplishment.’ (PB:36)

In (24a–b), *ke:ns ŋu* and *ke:ns sre:d* respectively mean ‘be doubted’ and ‘be killed’, without the agent argument being mentioned. By comparison, in (24c), the agent argument is introduced

in a $\sigma^w\alpha$ -phrase, which is the Classical Chinese equivalent of the English *by*-phrase in passive sentences.

While *ke:ns* had been the main passive marker in pre-Qin Chinese, a similar usage had developed from the copula $\sigma^w\alpha l$ (爲 [爲]) too, which had caught on at the latest by the end of the Warring States period. This passive-marking $\sigma^w\alpha l$ was usually used in combination with the particle $sq^h\alpha r\alpha?$ (所 [所]), in the construction

(25) $\sigma^w\alpha l$ NP ($sq^h\alpha r\alpha?$) V ‘be V-ed by NP’

This construction subsequently replaced *ke:ns* as the main passive marker in Middle Chinese. Below are two examples from the Old Chinese period.

(26) a. 止將爲三軍獲
止將爲三軍獲 (TsČ)

tju?, *ʔsaŋ* **$\sigma^w\alpha l$** *su:m* *kun* $\sigma^w\alpha r\alpha:g$ (passive)
 čì, tsiāng wèi sām kiün huok
 stop will PASS three army capture

‘If you stop, you will be captured by the Three Armies.’ (PB:37)

b. 終爲之所擒矣
終爲之所擒矣 (SsK)

tjuŋ **$\sigma^w\alpha l$** *tju* **$sq^h\alpha r\alpha?$** *grum* *glu?*
 čūng wèi čī sò kím ì
 eventually PASS 3SG PRT capture PRF

‘... in the end you will be captured by him.’ (ibid.)

Next, we turn to the neuter voice. In von der Gabelentz’s system, this basically refers to cases where a verb—regardless of its original transitivity—only has one overt argument, which occupies its subject position. Thus, we could also just use the term “intransitive verb,” though von der Gabelentz’s term is arguably less ambiguous in cases where an inherently transitive verb is temporarily used intransitively. In terms of the semantic relation between that single argument and the verb, we can further divide neuter verbs into “unaccusative” ones and “unergative” ones. Unaccusative verbs have a theme or patient argument, while unergative verbs have an agent argument.

- (27) a. 寒來暑往
寒來暑往 (Ts'TsW)

ga:n *m·ruu:g* *hja?* *ɣ^waj* (neuter)
hân lâi šù wàng
winter cold come summer heat go

'The winter cold comes; the summer heat goes away.' (vdG:423)

- b. 王笑而不言
王笑而不言 (MTs)

ɣ^waj *sq^hows* *nju* *pu* *ɲan* (neuter)
wâng siaó rî put yên
king laugh CONJ not speak

'The king laughed and didn't speak.' (vdG:424)

In (27a), both *m·ruu:g* 'come' and *ɣ^waj* 'go' are unaccusative neuter verbs. In (27b), both *sq^hows* 'laugh' and *ɲan* 'speak' are unergative neuter verbs.

Next, we turn to reflexive verbs, which are more exactly reflexive uses of transitive or causative verbs, since Classical Chinese does not have inherently reflexive verbs.

- (28) a. 毋自辱焉
毋自辱焉 (LI)

ma *fljids* *njog* *gan* (reflexive)
wû tsí žuk yên
don't self insult SFP

'Don't humiliate yourself.' (vdG:230)

- b. 美者自美 ... 惡者自惡
美者自美 ... 惡者自惡 (HFTs)

mri? *tja:?* *fljids* *mri?* ...*qa:g* *tja:?* *fljids* *qa:g* (reflexive)
mèi cè tsí mèi ngok cè tsí ngok
beautiful NMLZ self regard as beautiful ugly NMLZ self regard as ugly

'Those who are beautiful regard themselves as beautiful... those who are ugly regard themselves as ugly.' (vdG:232)

In (28a), the transitive verb *njog* 'insult' is preceded by the reflexive pronoun *fljids* 'self', and the combined form *fljids njog* literally means 'insult oneself'. There is nothing special with this verb, for it can normally take any other object too. Likewise, the denominative verbs *mri?* and *qa:g* in

(28b) can both normally take other objects as well. It just so happens that their objects may be the reflexive pronoun *híjǐ* ‘self’.

Finally, let us turn to the causative voice, or more exactly the syntactic causative construction. In this construction, an explicit causative light verb *sru?* ‘make’ is used. It is therefore an exact counterpart of the English construction *make someone do something*.

(29) a. 亦何使我至于此極也
夫何使我至于此極也 (MTs)

ba ga:l sru? ɲa:l? tʃigs ɣ^wa she? guŋ la:l? (causative)
fû hô ssi ngò cí iũ ts`ì kik yè
PRT why make us reach to this extreme SFP

‘Why has he made us end up in such extreme misfortune?’ (vdG:430)

Of course, the explicit causative construction above is just one of the several ways to express causativity in Classical Chinese. The above-mentioned derivational processes that produce factitive and denominative verbs are frequent alternatives.

Exercises

Translate the following sentences into Classical Chinese using words and grammatical points in this lesson.

1. The dead person had not yet grown old.
2. The State of Č`ù is better than the neighboring states.
3. Yaô gave Mencius’s house to Š`ún. He didn’t tell this to the King.
4. Tāng made him his minister and treated him with respect.
5. The King of Č`ù befriended Ts`ì Lú and ridded him of his disease.
6. Your Majesty can promote the Way and teach those who understand things slower.
7. Confucius is a master of great accomplishment. He belittles Kuàn Č`ung.
8. The Three Armies were doubted by the distant people. (in both pre-Qin and later styles)
9. I will capture myself and laugh.