

English Translation Series  
of a Hundred Peking  
Opera Classics  
中国京剧百部经典英译系列

孙萍 主编  
Chief Editor Sun Ping



Stealing the Imperial Horse  
盗御马

中国人民大学出版社  
外语教学与研究出版社

中国京剧

百部经典英译系列

周洪岩



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孙萍主编

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八十多年前的1930年，36岁的中国京剧表演艺术家梅兰芳经过数年苦心孤诣的准备后远赴重洋，把当时中国最为流行、最有代表性的京剧艺术带到了美国。从那时起，全面系统地总结京剧艺术并将其传播到世界各地，让不同国度的朋友分享京剧艺术的迷人魅力，领略博大精深的中华文化，一直是中国文化工作者尤其是京剧人为之奋斗的目标。

京剧艺术是中国文化的重要符号，也是中国的国粹，诞生至今已有将近两百年的历史。它不仅仅属于中国，也属于全世界。组织专门的力量来进行京剧经典剧目的翻译工作，让京剧艺术能够更好地走出去，扩大在世界范围内的影响，这对于促进中外文化交流、增进中外人民的了解与友谊具有重要意义。

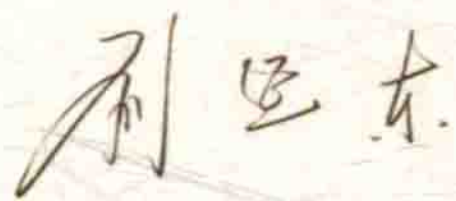
然而，翻译京剧此类很纯粹的中国艺术，是一项艰苦的工作。要实现京剧文化的有效传播，既保持艺术形式的原汁原味，又兼顾不同国家民众的欣赏需求，须通过学术研究，在中文准确贴切地阐释京剧艺术的历史沿革、文化背景、剧情梗概以及表演、音乐、舞美等的基础上，根据不同语言的特点，将其翻译成外国朋友便于理解并体验的内容。这不是简单的文字转换，而是



一个再创作的过程，需要译者具备深厚的文化积淀和高超的语言功底。

中国人民大学和北京外国语大学发挥各自优势，经过多年精心筹划，邀请了国内外数十位著名戏剧理论工作者、表演艺术家和英语翻译家汇聚一堂，共同研讨京剧经典剧目翻译、海外演出及文化传播等问题，启动了“中国京剧百部经典英译系列”丛书的编写工作，在推动京剧艺术走向世界的道路上迈出了坚实步伐。经过一年的努力，丛书中的10部作品即将率先付梓，希望能为世界人民带去一份美好而独特的礼物。

当今世界，不同国家、不同民族、不同文化之间加强沟通了解，在和而不同中取长补短，在求同存异中相得益彰，在交流互鉴中增进友谊，已成为推动人类文明进步的持久动力，这有利于消除偏见与误解，增进理解与互信，促进人类社会的和谐与繁荣。“中国京剧百部经典英译系列”丛书作为中外人文交流的创新之举和有益尝试，是中华文化走出去的又一重要成果。我相信，通过专家学者、艺术家们的共同努力，这套丛书一定能成为学术精品和经典读物，奉献给全世界热爱中国文化的人们，为丰富人类文明宝库做出应有的贡献。



中国共产党第十七届中央委员会政治局委员

中华人民共和国国务院国务委员

二〇一二年九月



## Preface I

More than eight decades ago, i.e. in 1930, after several years of painstaking preparation, Mei Lanfang, the 36-year-old Peking Opera artist, sailed to the US with China's most popular and representative traditional art form, Peking Opera. Since then, it has been the shared wish of generations of Chinese intellectuals, Peking Opera artists in particular, to make a comprehensive and systematic summary of the art, and spread it to other countries in the world, so that more people would be exposed to it and appreciate the profundity of Chinese culture.

Since its birth nearly two centuries ago, Peking Opera has been the quintessence of the Chinese nation, as well as an important symbol of the Chinese culture. However, Peking Opera belongs not only to the Chinese people, but also to the whole world. To enhance cultural exchange and promote mutual understanding and friendship between the Chinese people and people in the outside world, it is important to carry out the translation of the classic repertoire of Peking Opera with a pool of specialists before Chinese arts reach out to a larger audience.

To translate and interpret this typically Chinese cultural form as Peking Opera, however, is by no means an easy task. To effectively disseminate Peking Opera, it is necessary to retain its unique art form without losing its authentic flavor, and at the same time take into consideration both the artistic tastes of audiences in different countries and the distinctive features of target languages. To do this, academic studies and efforts are required to



accurately explain the historical evolution, cultural background, synopses, performance, music and stage art of Peking Opera, before the repertoire is rendered in such a way that is easy for understanding and appreciation by the foreign audience. This is not a simple word-to-word conversion but rather a process of artistic re-creation, which demands strong cultural competence and superb language proficiency on the part of translators.

Mobilizing their resources, Renmin University of China and Beijing Foreign Studies University have taken a firm and steady step in spreading Peking Opera to the outside world by launching the *English Translation Series of a Hundred Peking Opera Classics* program, behind which is years of elaborate planning and detailed discussion about translation, global performance and cultural transmission by dozens of drama theorists, artists and translators both in and outside China. They stride firmly in the global promotion of Peking Opera. After one year of hard work, ten titles of this Series are ready for the press, which I sincerely hope will be a brilliant gift for people around the world.

In today's world, efforts of different countries, nations and cultures in communicating with each other, learning from others' strong points to offset one's weakness in a harmonious manner while maintaining one's distinctive characteristics, seeking common ground while reserving differences to promote friendship have become the driving forces behind the progress of human civilization. This plays an irreplaceable role in eliminating prejudice and misunderstanding, enhancing mutual trust and promoting global harmony and prosperity. The *English Translation Series of a Hundred Peking Opera Classics*, as a creative and conducive experiment in furthering cultural and people-to-people exchanges,



is another significant accomplishment in promoting Chinese culture overseas. I am confident that, with concerted efforts of scholars and artists, this Series will turn out to be excellent academic and classic reading resources for Chinese culture lovers around the world, and contribute to the human civilization treasure-house.

*Liu Yandong*

**Member of the Political Bureau of the 17th CPC Central Committee**

**State Councilor of the People's Republic of China**

**September, 2012**







众所周知，京剧艺术是中国的国粹，是中华优秀传统文化园中的一朵奇葩。

中国京剧艺术形成至今的一百七十余年里，诞生了众多伟大的艺术家。通过他们的代代相传，创作积累了数千个承载着精彩表演艺术的优秀剧目。这些剧目的题材上至帝王将相，中至才子佳人，下至家长里短，纵至金戈铁马，横至儿女情长，可以说反映了中国古今社会生活的全部。同时，充分体现出了中华民族源远流长的核心价值观。虽然，京剧艺术本身的历史不长，但假如说其是中华优秀传统文化的综合体现者，延续着中国传统戏剧艺术自起源至今的血脉精髓，这大概不是脱离实际的夸张。

中国的优秀传统文化历来也是分层次的。有学者就认为，由经、史、子、集为对象，以读书人（古来对文化人的称呼）为传承主体的，属于“大传统”；而由小说、戏曲、说唱等俗文学为对象，以广大人民群众（甚至包括不能识字者）为传承主体的就属于“小传统”。毫无疑问，几千年来，多数人对文化遗产的实际形式和成果的了解，都来源于小传统。百余年来，很多人习惯于从京剧中了解历史，体会世间百态；京剧也从历史与现实中获得创作灵感的源泉。可以这样说，优秀的京剧剧目，往往都是很好



地反映中国人对生活、对艺术的理解与追求。因此,要想了解中国人的思维习惯、价值观念,很好地学习欣赏京剧也是一种极为有效的方式。

中国近代史是与京剧艺术发展史同步的。同样是在这一百多年里,西方文化也以有史以来最快的速度从各种不同的渠道进入古老的中国,并至今仍产生着深远的影响。我们本着鲁迅先生“拿来主义”的智慧与勇气,当然欢迎优秀的外来文化丰富我们的生活,拓展我们的视野;但与此同时,我们不难发现,拥有五千年文明的中国文化,却由于历史的原因,在当今世界上鲜为“外人”所充分理解。我想这也是近年来,国家提出要把“文化走出去”作为一项非常重要的工作来抓的原因。

文化不仅要传承(内传),更要传播(外传)。要“外传”,语言是第一位的媒介。《中国京剧音配像精粹》搞了25年,过去的目的比较单纯,就是尽可能完整地保留京剧表演艺术家们的舞台艺术,传给年轻的京剧人和爱好者。后来我们发现,其实还应该拓宽《音配像》的受众。于是在新出的DVD版中,选择了16出戏做了中英文对照的唱词和念白,目的也是为了推动“文化走出去”。

从中国京剧数以千计的优秀剧目中挑选出一些更为经典的剧目,从立体的角度详加阐释,并且按照外国人能理解的意思翻译成英文,是一个很好的创意。我们的前人由于历史和物质条件的限制,很少能够如此综合、持久地来做这件事。中国人民大学作为国内首屈一指的文科高校,历来高举弘扬中国传统文化的大旗;北京外国语大学则是国内外语教育的旗舰。两家联手来做“中国京剧百部经典英译系列”丛书的出版,从工作的意义上说是建设优秀传统文化传承体系的重要组成部分,从合作方式上说又体现出教育部“高等学



校创新能力提升计划”（“2011计划”）中所提倡的“协同创新”。按我的理解，就是充分发挥各自的长处，强强联合。目前已经有了很好的开始，未来要陆续推进，定会蔚为大观。

当今世界，风云变幻，机遇与挑战并存；而一切的矛盾与和谐，主要都源于人与自然、人与自身的关系，归根到底也就是文化问题。其实无论是中国人还是外国人，假如能在繁忙的工作之余了解一点中国京剧艺术，肯定是有百利而无一弊的。而这部图文并茂的“中国京剧百部经典英译系列”丛书则一定会是所有想要了解中国京剧艺术、了解中国文化的人们的首选作品。作为虽然不懂，却喜欢京剧，而且一直支持京剧文化的传承与传播的我，非常乐意向海内外的广大读者推荐这套丛书。

是为序。

周传表

中华人民共和国第十一届全国人民代表大会常务委员会副委员长

二〇一二年九月



## Preface II

As is known to all, Peking Opera is a splendid art form and part of China's brilliant traditional cultural heritage.

During the past 170-odd years since Peking Opera came into being, many great artists have emerged. They have passed down a repertoire consisting of thousands of outstanding titles they have created through the years. Dealing with emperors, high officials, talented scholars and lovely ladies, warlike clashes and tender romances, these performances depict Chinese life in both ancient and modern times, and reflect the core values of the millennia-old Chinese culture. Although Peking Opera is a comparatively nascent art form, it is no exaggeration to say that it is a true reflection of traditional Chinese culture and a true vehicle of the essence of traditional Chinese theater.

China's traditional culture falls into different categories. Some scholars believe that the Confucian classics, history, philosophy and literature, passed down mainly by intellectuals, belong to the "Greater Tradition"; and popular literature, covering fiction, drama, talking and singing and so forth, passed down mainly by the broad masses of the people (even including the illiterate), belongs to the "Lesser Tradition." There can be no doubt that in the several thousand years of Chinese history, for most people the understanding of the country's cultural heritage and achievements came from the Lesser Tradition; for more than a century many Chinese have gained their understanding of history and traditional life through Peking Opera, and history and real life have also brought inspiration for the creative development of Peking Opera. The classic repertoire of Peking Opera may be seen to reflect the understanding and pursuit of the Chinese as regards life



and art. Therefore, in order to understand the Chinese way of thinking and the core values of the Chinese people, it is an effective way to learn to appreciate Peking Opera.

Peking Opera has developed along with the Chinese history. Over the past century or so, Western culture has, through various channels, deeply influenced the ancient land. With the wisdom and courage drawn from the idea of “learning from whatever comes my way” promoted by the leading modern writer Lu Xun (1881-1936), we welcome the excellent elements of foreign culture which can enrich our lives and expand our horizons. However, it is obvious that, due to historical reasons, Chinese culture has not yet been fully understood by people outside the 5,000-year-old civilization. I think this is why it has been considered an imperative task for us to “introduce Chinese culture to the outside world” in recent years.

Cultural heritage has to be not only passed down within its native land but also to be spread outside the culture. To do this, language is the most important medium. In the past 25 years the task was to retain the art of Peking Opera masters through recordings as much as possible, and pass it down to the younger generation of professionals and Peking Opera lovers. Later, however, we came to realize that we ought to reach out to a larger audience. So for the DVD version we select 16 operas and offer a Chinese-English libretto, in the hope to give impetus to the program of introducing Chinese culture to the rest of the world.

It is a good idea to select from a huge number of outstanding operas this classical repertoire of Peking Opera and painstakingly translate them into English, a task somewhat neglected or unable to be done in the past. Now two universities rise to the challenge. Renmin University of China, as the country’s leading institute of higher learning of liberal arts,