

汉英双讲

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● 元曲英译 / 许渊冲

中国元曲

50篇

50 CLASSICAL CHINESE
YUAN QU WITH CHINESE-ENGLISH
INTERPRETATIONS



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50 篇 50 Classical Chinese Yuan *Qu* with Chinese-English **Interpretations**

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前言

2003年，本书作者团队在大连出版社的鼎力支持下，出版了《汉英双讲中国古诗100首》。这本书用中文和英文双语对100首中国古诗进行了较为详细的解读和赏析。该书出版后，受到读者的普遍好评，更受到学习汉语和到中国旅游的外国友人的青睐。在中国越来越开放并大步走向世界的今天，在多元文化交流与合作日益频繁的国际大背景下，用各种形式将中国文化推向世界，让世界人民更多地了解中国，无疑对推动中国进步和促进世界和谐发展有着不容忽视的积极意义。众所周知，中国古代诗歌形式最常见的有诗、词、曲三种。为了更加全面地介绍中国古代诗歌的面貌，本书作者团队再接再厉，继《汉英双讲中国古诗100首》出版之后，又编选翻译了《汉英双讲中国元曲50篇》。

中国的元代从公元1206年开始到1368年结束，时间跨度虽然只有一百多年，但却是中国文化的重要转折时期。从消极方面讲，元代是中国少数民族之一的蒙古族入主中原建立的政权，而蒙古族部落在入主中原之前尚处于奴隶制社会形态，他们对中原地区的统治

带有明显的掠夺性质，使悠久的汉民族传统文化遭到一定程度的破坏。但从积极方面讲，元朝的统治又结束了中国土地上300多年来政权并立、疆土分裂的局面，使中国整体的疆域更加广大，国家趋于统一。地域的广大、国家的统一、多民族的杂居都促进了各民族人民之间的融合与交流，各民族文化也相互取长补短，彼此增进。

在元代，统治者把人分为四个等级：蒙古人、色目人、汉人和南人。空前严重的民族矛盾和阶级矛盾使得汉族文人知识分子，即所谓儒生，几乎遭受灭顶之灾。当时有“九儒十丐”的说法，儒生不仅失去了通过科举进身仕途的机会，而且被压在社会的最底层，其地位仅仅高于乞丐。政治和文化压迫迫使元代文人走向了人民大众。他们或隐逸山林，著书立说；或混迹江湖，与盗贼为伴；或进入市井勾栏，与戏子、歌女为伍。地位的低下使他们深切了解人民的苦难，自己的不幸又激发出他们的创作热情。他们不再为仕途的进退而苦恼，也就彻底抛却了束缚思想行为的枷锁，获得了相对独立的人格。比之前代文人，元代文人更敢于仗义执言，更敢于毫无顾忌地批评当权者。天翻地覆的社会变化，传统文化与人民大众的紧密结合，使元代文学的价值取向、审美情趣和艺术风格都迥异于前代，这就是元曲产生的时代背景。元曲在元代异军突起，取代了诗、词的地位而成为元代的代表性文学形式。

元曲的勃兴还与异族音乐输入中原有密切关系。金代、元代少数民族入主中原后，他们粗犷响亮、高昂激越的音乐旋律与原来伴随唐诗、宋词而流行的柔靡乐曲大异其趣。在元代初期社会动荡的艰难岁月中，人民的心中万分痛苦，他们需要呐喊，因而中原传统音乐的舒缓委婉与诗词格调的含蓄典雅已经无法满足人民精神的需求；而西域胡乐快速强烈的节奏，以及伴随胡乐的急切而直白的歌词才更符合人民的心理需求。由此，一种全新的流行乐曲和填词方式顺势而起，取代了原有的诗、词模式而成为元代文化的主流，这就是元曲。

元曲按地区分为南曲和北曲：南曲兴于南宋，流行于江浙一

带；北曲兴于金元，随着元代蒙古族征服全国，逐渐由北而南风靡各地。元曲按种类分为散曲和剧曲（杂剧）：散曲曲词是独立成章的，而剧曲则是戏剧中的唱段；散曲属于诗歌的范畴，而剧曲属于戏剧的范畴。散曲又分为小令、套曲和带过曲：小令是一段单一的曲词；套曲是由多个曲牌连缀成套的曲词；带过曲是在几段曲词之间起连接作用的曲词。

元曲的作家和作品数量都不能与中国诗歌高峰时期的唐诗和宋词相提并论。根据文献资料的统计，流传下来的元曲，有姓名可考的作者有200余人，作品有小令3800多首、套曲400多套、杂剧160多种。这个数量相对于几万首的唐诗宋词显得微不足道，但对于只有百余年历史的元代来说已经是相当可观了。

元曲与词有许多相同之处，同是发源于民间的文学，同是和乐填词、亦诗亦歌的形式。但是，元曲又与传统诗词大异其趣，其主要不同之处在于，元曲来自民间最底层，更贴近人民生活，因而语言犀利、明快、戏谑、生动，多用白话俗语，一反传统文人辞章的儒雅风格，更加自由开放，充满市井气息，是当时都市底层人民喜闻乐见的文学形式。

由于元曲都是随乐而歌的，所以每一首元曲通常都要标明它的乐调名称和曲牌。中国古代以宫、商、角（jué）、变徵（一说清角）、徵、羽、变宫为七声。乐调中以任何一个音声为主，即可构成一种调式。以宫声为主的调式称为“宫”，以其他六个音声中任何一声为主的调式都统称为“调”，合称为“宫调”。不同的宫调表达着不同的情感，或激昂雄壮，或缠绵忧伤，各有特色。但是我们现代人学习元曲已经不可能重现当时的曲调了，所以本书中不再标明每一首元曲作品的调式。

元曲也有曲牌，这和词有词牌一样。曲牌规定了每首曲的长短和句式。但是，曲和词不同的是，词常常有上下片，甚至多到三片或四片，就像我们现在一首歌曲常常有两段甚至三段或四段歌词一样，唱起来有回环往复的感觉。而曲却不分片，只有一段，称为

单调。这是因为曲常常以叙事文学的形式出现，所以不方便重复歌唱。而且，词的用韵比较稀疏，可以隔行押韵，而曲的用韵密集，几乎句句用韵；词牌对词的句式、字数都有严格规定，不能随意更改，而曲牌则比较随意，允许作者根据需要适当改变句式，增加衬字。

以上这些特点使得曲相对于词来说更加灵活，方便创作，易于理解，深得百姓的欢迎。

总之，中国诗歌发展到元代，诗、词、曲三种形式已经齐备。后人常说“诗庄、词媚、曲俗”，意思是，诗比较典雅、严肃、庄重，多用来言志抒怀；词比较通俗、轻松、细腻，多用来表达情感；曲则更加诙谐戏谑、激昂慷慨，多用来鞭挞讽刺社会和世人心态。在元曲出现以后，中国古代诗歌的形式就没有更多新的变化了，只是在诗、词、曲三种形式中转换摇摆，所以有人说元曲是中国古代诗歌形式中最后的辉煌。

曲在元代出现，并随即达到高峰。但在当时的文人眼中，曲始终被认为是俗曲小调，难登大雅之堂，有地位的文人是不肯作曲而只愿意作诗填词的。随着元代社会渐渐趋于稳定，元曲的创作日渐减少，其锋芒也日渐消退，这也是元曲数量远逊于历代诗、词创作数量的原因之一。也正因为如此，元曲有着更加鲜明的时代特征，是元代文学的最高成就。清代末年的著名学者王国维先生因此总结说：“唐之诗，宋之词，元之曲，皆所谓一代之文学，而后世莫能继焉者也。”（见《宋元戏曲考·序》）

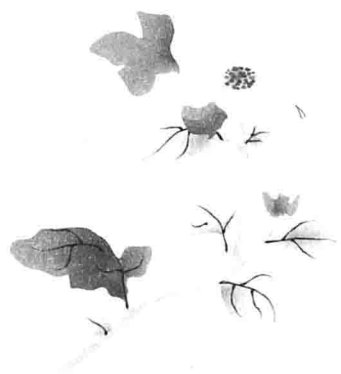
鉴于元曲的重要价值和特殊形式，本书从流传至今的几千首元曲作品中精心遴选出50篇（套）作品，进行分析讲解，以满足中外读者学习中国古代诗歌的需求。本书中对每篇（套）元曲作品都进行了详细的文字注释（中文）、元曲英译（英文）和曲文赏析（中、英文），同时，对每位作者也有简略介绍（中、英文）。

北京大学资深教授、著名翻译家许渊冲先生一如既往地负责将本书所选50篇（套）元曲译成英文。同时，我们还聘请了北京交通

大学教授钟良明先生担任本书的英文译著。两位先生都是德高望重、功底深厚、学有专长的英语教授，他们的辛勤工作为本书增光添色。

总之，本书全体编译者的最大心愿是，借助本书的出版，为推进中外文化交流，为向世界介绍中国文化和思想，为帮助中外朋友学习汉语和中国古代文学，为增进中国与世界各国人民之间的友谊、理解和合作，略尽自己的绵薄之力。

编译者



Preface

The third of a series intended to introduce classical Chinese poetry, *50 Classical Chinese Yuan Qu with Chinese-English Interpretations* follows *100 Classical Chinese Poems with Chinese-English Interpretations* and *50 Classical Chinese Ci with Chinese-English Interpretations*, which, for their detailed annotations and insightful interpretations, have been accepted as success stories by their readers, especially by foreign tourists or Chinese language learners, thus helping China and its culture become better understood by the world, a task compatible with China's furthered opening policy and the world's being increasingly dependent on exchange and cooperation between cultures and nations. This book will be about Chinese classical Yuan *qu*, to fully meet our ambition to cover all the three Chinese poetry forms: *shi*, *ci*, and *qu*.

As a consequence of an invasion into Central China and based on slaughter and plunder, the Yuan Dynasty represented the submission and rule of the major nationalities by a minor one, the Mongolian tribes, which had previously been practicing slavery, a rule that had to result in a cultural downturn and be a cultural transition in itself, with a history of only about a century (1206-1368). A good word for that dynasty is, however, it ended the 300-year chaos where China was broken into petty rivalry states, and started a new China with broadened territories, regained unification, and a larger number of nationalities. Naturally, these were conditions favorable for the various cultures to be exchanged, to remedy and to be remedied by one another, an essential part of

that greater process in which the multitudinous tribes, races and nationalities fused into the one Chinese nation.

Yuan saw the division of four classes: Mongolian, *Semuren*, *Han*, and *Nan*, a hierarchy that had to engender unprecedented class and national conflicts, of which intellectuals were the most miserable victims. Their misfortune originated in the abolishment of the *Imperial Examination*, which had formerly provided them access to official posts. Socially placed next to beggars and resenting political and cultural discrimination, they switched over to the common people, withdrawing into mountains to produce their scholarly works, or wandering over rivers and lakes enjoying their company with thieves and bandits, or plunging into the innermost lanes to befriend women singers and performers, a change that would soon be felt in their literary creation. No longer heartbroken by their blocked social ascent, they broke spiritual fetters, cast new thinking patterns, and developed new personalities. Compared with their predecessors, men of letters in Yuan displayed greater bravery in defending justice and were more outspoken in their criticism of people in power. Stunning social changes, inherent cultural tradition, and the easily available popular influence—it is these that explain the vast difference in value, aesthetic standpoint, and artistic style in the Yuan literature, where the popular *qu* occurs so prevalently that it must have obscured the other two forms of poetry to become the one dominant literary genre for the time.

To accompany their triumphant raids, the conquerors brought along their music, which, for its vigorous melody indicative of the hardihood of nomads, was in sharp contrast with its Central China counterpart, which, spiritually temperate and feeble, suited the previously dominating Tang *shi* and Song *ci*. Such music, although alien at the time, found it fit to the sentiments of the native Chinese who had had so much of the physical hardship and political turmoil as to want to speak up in loud shouts and resent their euphemistic traditional music and decorous *shi* and *ci*, which were now far from sufficing expression of their mind. They soon found a new means in the alien music from *Hu* (i.e. Far Northwest), a music featuring strong beats and straightforward expression. And they formulated, shortly afterwards, new schemes for incorporating verse to the music to make up Yuan *Songs*. In the passage of centuries, while the music part of these songs got lost in historical void, the verse part was left behind, known as Yuan *qu*, the predominating form of verse in the Yuan Dynasty.

Regionally there are two types of *qu*, South and North, the former originating in the Southern Song Dynasty to become prevalent in Jiangsu and Zhejiang, the latter in the Jin and Yuan dynasties to grow increasingly popular from North to South alongside the Mongolian conquest. It again divides itself into *sanqu* (i.e. verse for songs each of which is independent) and *juqu* (i.e.

verse for songs to comprise an opera). *Sanqu* is a type of poetry but the other an element of the opera. *Sanqu* is subdivided into *xiaoling*, *taoqu*, and *daiguoqu*, meaning, respectively, verse 1) to a single tune, 2) to one of a series of tunes as a tune suite, and 3) to a transitional tune within a number of tunes.

With regard to the number of writers and quantity of works, Yuan *qu* can never be a match of Tang *shi* and Song *ci*, the golden peaks of Chinese poetry. Statistics show that there are about 200 authentic *qu* composers, accounting for 3,800 pieces of *xiaoling*, 400 *taoqu*, and 160 *juqu*, which look rather bleak as compared to the tens of thousands pieces of Tang *shi* and Song *ci*, but are sort of consoling considering that this is a crop reaped within a mere century.

Yuan *qu* and Song *ci* have a lot in common: they both originate in folk literature, are both the verse component of music, both to be read as poetry and played as song. The difference is that, belonging to the rank-and-file, Yuan *qu* is sharp-, lucid- or cynical-toned, composed in oral speech of the day, full of folk sayings, smells a marketplace odor, and indicates a broadened individualism; it contrasts so sharply to the old-time works that it seems to have soon found it in popular favor.

As verse for the song, *qu* was given two identifying tags: name of the melody to which musical sounds were arranged and name of the tune to which the verse was composed. In ancient China, *gong*, *shang*, *jue*, *bianzhi* (or *qingjue*), *zhi*, *yu*, and *biangong* were names of the seven musical sounds. When *gong* was to be the principal sound in the arrangement, the melody fell into the category *gong*, whereas any of the other six sounds was to be principal, the melody would alike be tagged *diao*. Since *gong-diao* thus represented form and capacity of the melody, as it varied, it gave expression to moods running all the way from foaming indignation to militant grandeur, from sentimental affection to dark melancholy. Alas, long lost was such music, so that modern learners will have to abide a book devoid of the faintest clue as to what those dismal or magnificent melodies are like.

As is the case of Song *ci*, the tune dictates number of words in the verse and form of the line. They are different in that *ci* is often composed of 2, 3 or even 4 stanzas, like the modern song that comprises several stanzas to be sung repeatedly, whereas a piece of *qu* is a single (*mono*-) verse. This feature of *qu* suits its narrative form, but is unfit for the words to be voiced repeatedly. Also, while *ci* is rhymed every two or few lines, *qu* has to be rhymed at the end of virtually each line. Again, while the *ci* tune restricts line form and the number of words, *qu* is flexible as to be allowed to have its line form and number of words somewhat varied, as deemed necessary by the composer. Such liberty benefits *qu* creation and makes for easier understanding for the audience, to aid *qu*'s popular influence.



Joining *shi* and *ci*, *qu* combines with them to constitute a homogeneous system of Chinese poetry. Critics in the ensuing ages have branded them, in that order, as *majestic*, *courtly*, and *vulgar*, meaning that *shi*, elegant, solemn, and elevated in style, suits expression of aspirations, ideals, and profound feelings, *ci*, with its comparatively easy text and a style that is brisk and entertaining, gives expression to sentimental emotions, whereas *qu*, popularly favored and playfully, ironically, or indignantly worded, is a ready means for social satire and depiction of mentality of the rank-and-file. Upon completion of these three forms, Chinese poetry sort of came to a standstill, to shift aimlessly from one to another, now and again. And this happened, say critics, only after *qu* had exhibited the afterglow.

Even after *qu* had taken root, literary people were still regarding it with disdain, calling it vulgar melodies, unworthy of a place as art, and the well positioned, while continuing their love for *shi* and *ci*, never considered the composition of *qu* worth their while. As Yuan approached its social stability, things were even worse: *qu* recorded declined production and its influence seemed to be spending itself. However, it is owing to its scanty quantity that it has been evaluated as a historical rarity, the sole means of expression for the time, and its most important literary achievement. “As did *shi* in Tang and *ci* in Song, *qu* in Yuan represents an age, to be succeeded by no counterpart in any other,” comments Wang Guowei, an eminent scholar in the Qing Dynasty, in his Preface to *A survey of Opera Verse in Song and Yuan*.

Thus inspired, we selected 50 pieces from among several thousand, had them annotated, translated, and interpreted, and provided each with a short biographical introduction. Should this book have been given its merits, we largely owe them to Xu Yuanchong, a professor of distinction from Peking University, who allowed us to use his English versions of these verses, and to Zhong Liangming, a veteran professor of Beijing Jiaotong University, who agreed to render into English the rest of the book that required to be translated.

May this little book be one more fruitful effort towards increased exchange between cultures and promoted learning of the Chinese language and literary classics.

The Authors and Translators



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