

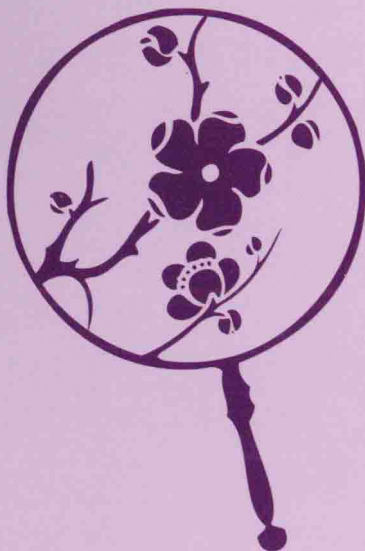
CLASSICAL CHINESE POETRY AND PROSE

PEACH BLOOMS PAINTED WITH BLOOD

KONG SHANGREN
TRANSLATED BY XU YUANCHONG
& FRANK M. XU

许译中国经典诗文集

桃花扇 | 【清】孔尚任 著
许渊冲 许明 译



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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Ancient Chinese classic poems are exquisite works of art. As far as 2,000 years ago, Chinese poets composed the beautiful work *Book of Poetry* and *Elegies of the South*. Later, they created more splendid Tang poetry and Song lyrics. Such classic works as *Thus Spoke the Master* and *Laws Divine and Human* were extremely significant in building and shaping the culture of the Chinese nation. These works are both a cultural bond linking the thoughts and affections of Chinese people and an important bridge for Chinese culture and the world.

Mr. Xu Yuanchong has been engaged in translation for 70 years. In December 2010, he won the Lifetime Achievement Award in Translation conferred by the Translators Association of China (TAC). He is honored as the only expert who translates Chinese poems into both English and French. After his excellent interpretation, many Chinese classic poems have been further refined into perfect English and French rhymes. This collection of Classical Chinese Poetry and Prose gathers his most representative English translations. It includes the classic works *Thus Spoke the Master*, *Laws Divine and Human* and dramas such as *Romance of the Western Bower*, *Dream in Peony Pavilion*, *Love in Long-life Hall* and *Peach Blooms Painted with Blood*. The largest part of the collection includes the translation of selected poems from different dynasties. The selection includes various types of poetry. The selected works start from the pre-Qin era to the Qing Dynasty, covering almost the entire history of classic poems in China. Reading these works is like tasting "living water from the source" of Chinese culture.

We hope this collection will help English readers "understand, enjoy and delight in" Chinese classic poems, share the intelligence of Confucius and Lao Tzu (the Older Master), share the gracefulness of Tang poems, Song lyrics and classic operas and songs and promote exchanges between Eastern and Western culture. We also sincerely invite precious suggestions from our readers.

出版前言

中国古代经典诗文是中国传统文化的奇葩。早在两千多年前，中国诗人就写出了美丽的《诗经》和《楚辞》；以后，他们又创造了更加灿烂的唐诗和宋词。《论语》《老子》这样的经典著作，则在塑造、构成中华民族文化精神方面具有极其重要的意义。这些作品既是联接所有中国人思想、情感的文化纽带，也是中国文化走向世界的重要桥梁。

许渊冲先生从事翻译工作70年，2010年12月荣获“中国翻译文化终身成就奖”。他被称为将中国诗词译成英法韵文的唯一专家，经他的妙手，许多中国经典诗文被译成出色的英文和法文韵语。这套“许译中国经典诗文集”荟萃许先生最具代表性的英文译作，既包括《论语》《老子》这样的经典著作，又包括《西厢记》《牡丹亭》《长生殿》《桃花扇》等戏曲剧本，数量最多的则是历代诗歌选集。这些诗歌选集包括诗、词、散曲等多种体裁，所选作品上起先秦，下至清代，几乎涵盖了中国古典诗歌的整个历史。阅读和了解这些作品，即可尽览中国文化的“源头活水”。

我们希望这套许氏译本能使英语读者对中国经典诗文也“知之，好之，乐之”，能够分享孔子、老子的智慧，分享唐诗、宋词、中国古典戏曲的优美，并以此促进东西文化的交流。也敬请读者朋友提出宝贵意见。

2011年10月



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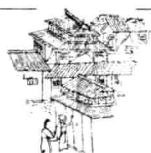


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PREFACE

There are four important Chinese dramatic works written in rhyme from the 13th to the 19th century, namely, *Romance of Western Bower*, *Dream in Peony Pavilion*, *Love in Long-life Hall*, and *Peach Blooms Painted with Blood*. All these four works tell us love stories which reflect the times from Tang to Qing dynasties. *Love in Long-life Hall* is said to reflect the strife between love and power, *Romance of Western Bower* between love and honor, *Dream in Peony Pavilion* shows that love can revive the dead, and *Peach Blooms Painted with Blood* that political power can separate living lovers.

The hero of *Peach Blooms Painted with Blood* is Master Hou, patriotic intellectual of Ming Dynasty, and the heroine is Fragrant Lee, one of the eight famed songstresses in Jinling. They fell in love at first sight and he presented her a fan as token of love, on which he wrote the following poem:

*The beauty of the Southern land
Holds you not in sleeves but in hand.
You follow her as summer fan
Brings her fragrant breeze when you can.*

They were soon married. The last Ming emperor died as a result of the troubles within and without, a new emperor succeeded to the throne. As Hou did not support the new ruler, he was put in prison and Lee was forced to remarry another lord. She would prefer death to remarriage, so she dashed her head against

the ground and her blood stained the fan, on which a peach blossom was painted, and that is why the fan was called peach blossom fan. When she sent him the blood-stained fan, she sang:

*You see the blood in deep or light red
Densely or sparsely spread.
It is not cuckoo's tears fallen in showers
But my own blood blent with peach flowers.
It pours out of my heart and from my face,
And leaves on icy silk its trace.*

This story tells us the strife between love and power, and ends in the separation of the lovers.

Is there any love story in the West which reflects the rise or fall of an empire? In drama we have Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* and in novel Scott's *Quentin Durward*. Shakespeare's play may be compared with *Love in Long-life Hall*, while Scott's novel reflecting the times of Louis XI, may remind us of *Peach Blooms Painted with Blood*. But in the Chinese drama almost all the characters are historic figures while in Scott all the heroes but Louis XI are created by imagination. Here we see realism in Chinese literature and romanticism in Western fiction. In Chinese works the heroes are glorified and the corrupt officials blamed, which shows Chinese idea of morality, while in the West, Louis XI may not be a good king, but he is not criticized. This shows another difference between the East and the West. But the love of beauty is common in the West as in the East, so Fragrant Lee may rival Isabelle in Scott's *Quentin Durward*. This tradition comes

from *the Book of Poetry* in China and Homer's epics in Greece. In the former more common people than heroes are glorified, which is also a difference between the East and the West. For instance, we may read *A Home-coming Soldier after the War* in the *Book of Poetry* composed about six centuries BC:

*When I left here,
Willows shed tear.
I come back now,
Snow bends the bough.
Long, long the way,
Hard, hard the day.
My grief overflows.
Who knows? who knows?*

In Homer's *Iliad*, when Hector left his wife for the front, he said:

*Where heroes war, the foremost place I claim,
The first in danger as the first in fame.*

This shows the difference between realism in the East and romanticism in the West.

Frank M. Xu at OKC, USA

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ACT I

BEAUTY AND DUTY



Scene 1 Visit to a Beauty

(Enter Hou Fangyu in elegant dress.)

Hou (singing to the tune of *the Moon over the Mountain*):

The powdered face in golden dress not passed away

Reminds me of the splendor of the bygone day.

Seeing the misty grassland would break my heart,

For it announces spring in bloom will soon depart.

How could I not complain

Of spring gone unenjoyed in wind and rain?

I am Hou Fangyu, a scholar roaming for long with my books and sword. Now on a bright sunny day of the third moon and in a magnificent place inhabited by so many beauties, how can I not enjoy spring to the fill, at least as much as a roaming poet can? Yesterday I met Yang Longyou, who told me about a young courtesan named Fragrant Lee, whose beauty is beyond compare in the capital of the six dynasties. Now she is learning from Su Kunsheng how to sing songs and how to play on the flute and the lute. And I was told not to miss the chance of paying her a visit. But what can I do with a lean purse as mine? As today is the festival for ancestor-worship, how can I pass such a festive day by sitting lonely in the hotel and not going out to tread on the green in the countryside? I will take the chance to visit the famed delightful resort.

(Singing to the tune of *Silk-Paved Way*):

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I look up and down
East of Phoenix Town,
From door to door stand willow trees.
I flip my violet whip
All the way in my trip,
Swallows in pair fly in the breeze.
(Enter Liu Jingting, an old friend of Hou's.)

Liu (Singing): I wake to hear the oriole's song;
Vernal grief whitens my hair long.

(Calling): Master Hou, where are you going?

Hou (Turning back): Ah! It is Master Liu. You are welcome. I am just in need of a friend to go to the eastern suburbs to tread on the green.

Liu: I am rich in leisure and would be glad to be in your company.
(They walk together.) (Pointing to the riverside) See there stand the wellknown western bowers!

Hou (Singing): With vernal waves as screen,
Windows are dyed in green.
Leaning on a fine day, apricot red
Peeps over the way with its head.

Liu (Pointing to the bridge): Behold the Long Bridge! Let us go there with ease.

Hou (Singing): The wooden bridge is long
With teashops and wineshops along,

Liu: Here we are in the famed delightful resort.

Hou (Singing): I hear the cry of selling flowers
Come through deep lanes of bowers.

Liu (Pointing to a lane): You know this is the lane of the famed sisters.

Hou (Singing): It is distinguished in view:

On the burnished door painted anew
Hangs a golden willow branch pregnant with dew.

Liu (Pointing to a house with high doorsteps): This is the house of Mother Lee.

Hou: I want to know where lives Fragrant Lee.

Liu: You do not know Fragrant is the daughter of Mother Lee?

Hou: What surprise! I want to pay her a visit without knowing her address. What good luck! Now I come to her bower without knowing it is hers.

Liu: Let us knock at the door. (Knocking.)

Voice within: Who is it?

Liu: I am the frequent visitor Liu Jingting. Today I have a distinguished friend with me.

Voice within: Mother Lee and Fragrant Lee are not at home.

Liu: Will you please tell us where they are?

Voice within: They are joining the box party at Jade Bian's bower.

Liu: How could I forget it! They have a festive party today.

Hou: What festive party?

Liu (frapping on his thigh): My old legs are tired. Let us sit down on the stone bench for a rest, and I will tell you what. (They sit down.)

Liu: My dear Master Hou, do you not know the famed courtesans are vowed sisters? They would give a party on each festive day, and today is the festival for mourning the dead.

(Singing to the tune of **Silver Candlelight**):

Kerchiefs in breeze

Fly like wild geese.

On festive day

Dress on display.

Hou: Oh yes, today is the ancestor-worship day. People will go to their parties. Why is it called “box party” today?

Liu: All courtesans of the party should bring a set of boxes carrying different delicious food such as sea fowls or aquatic food or jade-white juice, etc.

Hou: What will they do when they gather together?

Liu: They may vie in their skill in music, play on the lute or on the flute.

Hou: How interesting! Is man allowed to join their party?

Liu (Waving his hand): No man is allowed to join them upstairs, but he may stay downstairs to appreciate their art.

Hou: Could a man meet the artist he appreciates?

Liu: If he appreciates her, he should send a present upstairs and fruit will then be sent down in return. (Singing):
Like wine-cups passing from hand to hand,
Lovers may meet in their dreamland.

Hou: If such is the case, I will go and try my luck.

Liu: A try will risk nothing.

Hou: But I do not know where Jade Bian’s bower is.

Liu: She lives in the Warm Emerald Bower not far from here, and I will show you the way.
(They walk together and sing.)

Hou: Green windows weep on Mourning Day.

Liu: Flutes heard here and there swing and sway.

Hou: Flowers won’t wake the lane in dreams.

Liu: Two bridges lie on the misty streams.

(Pointing to Bian’s bower): Here we are before the Warm Emerald Bower. Will you please go in, Master Hou? (They walk in together.) (Enter Yang Wencong (Longyou) and Su Kunsheng.)