



[元]王实甫 著 许渊冲 许明 译

Romance of Western Bower

西厢记

许渊冲文集



11



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DOLPHIN BOOKS
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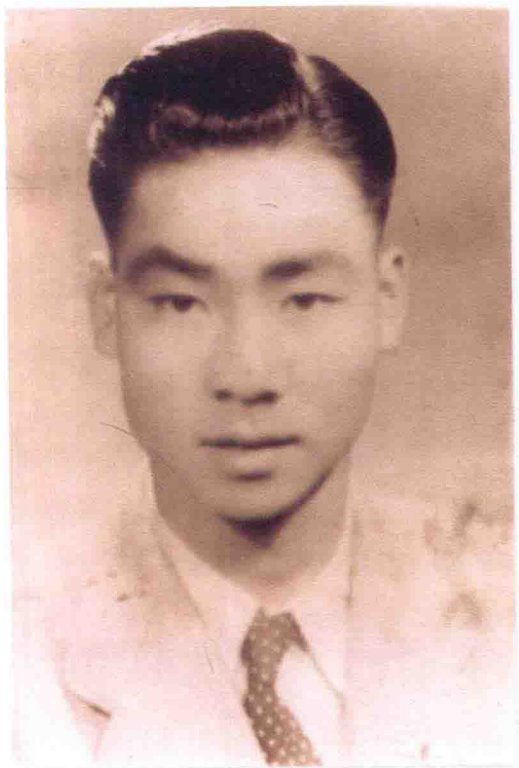
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1944 年入清华大学外国文学研究所时摄。



洛阳解放军外国语学院教师游少林寺摄。左1前后索天章夫妇（译莎士比亚剧），左后2王仲英（曾任人民文学出版社编辑），左3前后许渊冲夫妇，左4后梁希彦，曾去苏联讲学。



与好莱坞明星卢燕（右2）谈论梅兰芳表演艺术的英译问题。

出版说明

许渊冲先生是当代翻译大家，他毕生致力于中西文化的互译工作，已经在国内外出版中、英、法文著作一百二十余部，并提出了中国学派的文学翻译理论，为我国的翻译事业以及中西方的文化交流做出了划时代的贡献。钱钟书教授曾经称赞许先生译文风格：“戴着音韵和节奏的镣铐跳舞，灵活自如，令人惊奇。”

本文集共二十七卷，重点收录了许渊冲先生中译外、外译中的翻译作品，涉及中文、英文、法文三个文种，涵盖了诗词、杂剧、散曲、哲学经典以及外国小说等。文集中收入许先生中译外的主要作品有《论语》、《道德经》、《诗经》、《楚辞》、《汉魏六朝诗选》、《唐诗三百首》、《唐五代词选》、《宋词三百首》、《元曲三百首》、《宋元明清诗选》、《西厢记》、《牡丹亭》、《长生殿》、《桃花扇》、《中国古诗词选》，外译中的主要作品有《一切为了爱情》、《水上》、《飞马腾空》、《昆廷·杜沃德》、《雨果戏剧选》、《红与黑》、《人生的开始》、《高老头》、《包法利夫人》、《哥拉·布勒尼翁》、《约翰·克里斯托夫》。另外还收录许先生珍藏的图片八十余幅。

除去翻译作品之外，许先生还有大量的文字，如学术专著、评论、散文和书信，以及许先生新近作品等，如果有条件，我们还会将《文集》接续出版。

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ROMANCE OF
WESTERN BOWER

PREFACE

The *Romance of the Western Bower* written by Wang Shifu is the most important lyrical drama in the history of Chinese literature. It is as well-known in China as Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* in the West, yet it was written about three hundred years earlier than Shakespeare's tragedy. Like the English play, it consists of a narrative part written in prose and a lyrical part written in verse. It is divided into five acts and twenty scenes. Act One describes the first meeting in the temple between the lovers, Zhang Gong, a young scholar, and Cui Yingying, nineteen-year-old daughter of former Prime Minister Cui. Act Two relates how Zhang saves the temple from attack by bandits and Madame Cui promises her daughter can marry Zhang, but she soon goes back on her word. Act Three describes the lovers' longing for each other. Act Four depicts their meeting in Scene I. In Scene II, Madame Cui will not approve their marriage unless Zhang wins honor in the civil service examinations. Scene III depicts their parting when

Zhang leaves to attend the examinations in the capital. Scene IV ends with a dream in which the lovers meet again. The last Act describes their reunion.

As Jin Shengtan(1608—1661) said in the preface to *Romance*, “Before reading *Romance*, one should read the *Book of Poetry* (China’s earliest anthology of poetry compiled in the 6th century BC), because there are correlations between *Romance* and *Book of Poetry*”. For instance, the first lyric in the *Book of Poetry* reads as follows:

By riverside are cooing
A pair of turtledoves;
A good young man is wooing
A fair maiden he loves.

Water flows left and right
Of cresses here and there.
The youth yearns day and night
For the good maiden fair.

His yearning grows so strong,

He cannot fall asleep;
He tosses all night long,
So deep in love, so deep!

Now gather left and right
The cresses sweet and tender.
O lute, play music bright
For the fiancée so slender!

Feast friends at left and right
On cresses cooked tender;
O bells and drums, delight
The bride so sweet and slender!

If we compare this lyric with the parting scene in Act Four, we shall find similarities as well as differences between them, which shows the development of love poetry from the 6th century BC to the 14th century AD. In the lyric the young man seeing a pair of turtledoves cooing by the riverside longs for his beloved. In Act Four, Scene III, the heroine sings:

... Two lovebirds torn apart bewail. ...

Eastward the oriole and westward the swallow flies.
The lovebirds, the oriole and the swallow are symbols of
the lovers. She sings:

My tears would make the Yellow River overflow.

We see the heroine's grief symbolized by the river, depicted from a more subjective viewpoint, while in the lyric the water flowing left and right of the cresses has nothing to do with the yearning of the young man, and we have only a simple description of the lover who cannot fall asleep and tosses all night long. But in the parting scene of *Romance*, the heroine has more intense feelings and is not only unable to fall asleep but also afraid "to see the curtained bed" for "Last night in warm embroidered coverlet spring dwelt." Here we see that the tradition of romantic love during the 14th century has developed from twenty centuries before. As well, in *Romance* there is a more pictorial description of the lover who sits at table,

Slanting his head,

Knitting his brows, as if half-dead.

He dare not let his tears fall from his brimming eyes

For fear his grief be known.

Seeing himself observed, he utters sighs,
Pretending to arrange his white silk gown.

In the passage cited from the *Book of Poetry*, the food is only sweet cresses cooked tender; but in Act Four, Scene III of *Romance* the food and wine “taste like muddy water,” but

As mud the food is not so fine;
As water the wine is not so sweet.

In the former we find only an objective description; in the latter, the subjective sentiment of the heroine at parting. Here we see the poet of the Yuan dynasty (1271—1368) more skilled in his description of scenery and situation, persons and things, thoughts and feelings.

Even in the description of the relationship, we may compare a poem in the *Book of Poetry* with Act Four, Scene I of *Romance*, see the differences between them and find out how much progress has been made from vague suggestion to more detailed description. First, let us read the love story between a deer-killer and a

beautiful maiden in the *Book of Poetry*.

An antelope is killed
And wrapped in white afield.
A maid for love does long,
Tempted by a hunter strong.

He cuts down trees amain
And kills a deer again.
He sees the white-drest maid
As beautiful as jade.

“Oh, soft and slow, sweetheart!
Don’t tear my sash apart!”
The jade-like maid says, “Hark!
Do not let the dog bark!”

Here we see the hunter loves the maiden because she is “beautiful as jade” and she loves him because he is strong and skilled. The description of their love-making is rather implicit and suggestive only by saying “Don’t tear my sash apart!” and “Do not let the dog bark!” On the