



The Peony Pavilion: Mudan ting

By Xianzu Tang

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One of the world's greatest love stories in its first complete English translation, brought up-to-date in this new edition. Cyril Birch has captured all the elegance, lyricism, and subtle humor of this drama by Tang Xianzu, perhaps the finest of the Ming dramatists.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Birch (Univ. of California, Berkeley) has captured the beauty and elegance of Tang's original drama, conveying even the humor of subtle puns...." ?Choice, October 2002

An example of the southern, or chuanqi, genre of opera from Ming dynasty China (14th to 17th centuries), The Peony Pavilion, completed in 1598, was Tang's masterpiece and, according to Birch's preface, a profound meditation on the nature of love. Selected scenes have become near necessities of any traditional Chinese opera repertoire. The tale concerns a cloistered girl and young scholar who fall in love in dreams. After the heroine pines away from longing, their devotion transcends death, resulting in her resurrection and a happy union. Birch (Univ. of California, Berkeley) has captured the beauty and elegance of Tang's original drama, conveying even the humor of subtle puns. With such titles as *Stories from a Ming Collection* (1958), *Scenes for Mandarins* (CH, Feb'96), and *Mistress & Maid* (CH, Jan'02) to his credit, Birch has long been a leading translator of Chinese literature. This second edition of the Birch translation (first edition, CH, Mar'81) includes revisions of the translation; a preface in which Birch provides a general introduction to the drama; and a fascinating introduction by Catherine Swatek (Univ. of British Columbia), in which she introduces three recent productions of Peony Pavilion. All levels. C. D. Smith, Grand Valley State University, Choice, October 2002

Language Notes

Text: English, Chinese (translation)

About the Author

Cyril Birch is Agassiz Professor Emeritus of Chinese and Comparative Literature, University of California, Berkeley. His books include the two-volume *Anthology of Chinese Literature*, *Stories from a Ming Collection*, *Scenes for Mandarins*, *Mistress and Maid*, and *Tales from China*.

Catherine Swatek is Associate Professor of Asian Studies, University of British Columbia, and author of *Peony Pavilion Onstage: Four Centuries in the Career of a Chinese Drama*.

Cyril Birch is Professor Emeritus of East Asian Languages and Cultures, University of California, Berkeley. His other publications include the two-volume *Anthology of Chinese Literature*, *Chinese Narrative*, *Scenes for Mandarins*, *Mistress and Maid*, and *Tales from China*.

Catherine Swatek is Associate Professor of Asian Studies, University of British Columbia, and author of *Peony Pavilion Onstage: Four Centuries in the Career of a Chinese Drama* (forthcoming).

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