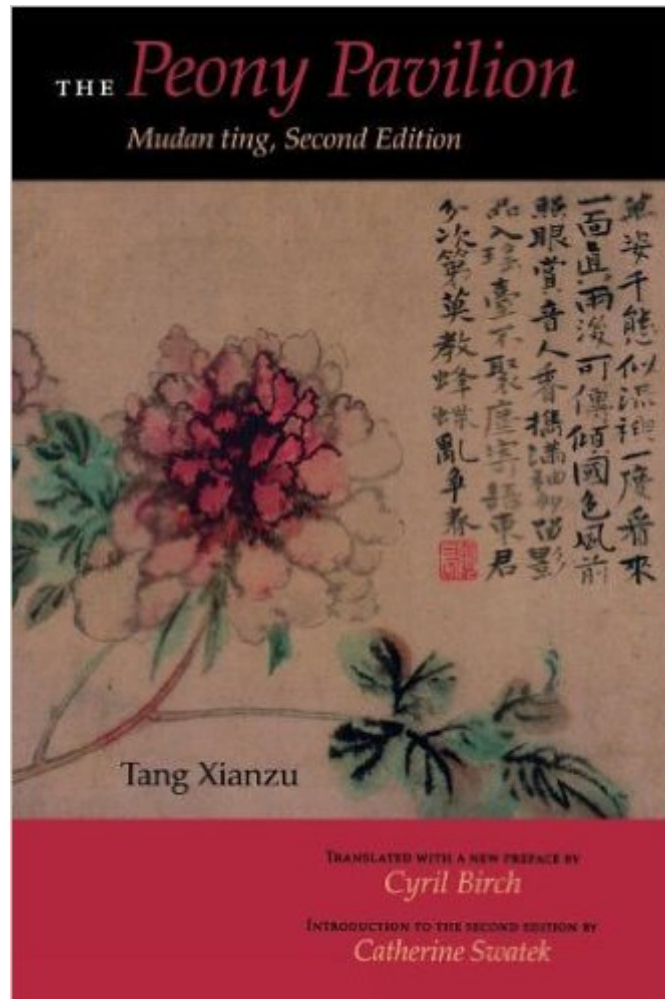


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# The Peony Pavilion: Mudan Ting, Second Edition



## Synopsis

The celebrated English translation of this classic work of Chinese literature is now available in an updated paperback edition. Written in 1598 by Tang Xianzu, *The Peony Pavilion* is one of literature's most memorable love stories and a masterpiece of Ming drama. Cyril Birch has captured all the elegance, lyricism, and subtle, earthy humor of this panoramic tale of romance and Chinese society. When Indiana University Press first published the text in 1981, it seemed doubtful that the work would ever be performed in its entirety again, but several spectacular and controversial productions have toured the world in recent years. For this second edition, which contains a fully revised text of the translation, Cyril Birch and Catherine Swatek reflect on contemporary performances of the play in light of its history.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This play was written the same year (1598) Shakespeare wrote "Henry IV, Part II" & "Much Ado About Nothing." IMHO it's comparable - so it's very, very good indeed. It combines a highly poetic love story with the drama of war & considerable comedy. The translation & footnotes make it more accessible than most of Shakespeare, while providing considerable insight into medieval Chinese literature, legend, poetry, & customs. I thoroughly enjoyed reading it & would love to see it performed. Of course, it's not for everyone, but if you like Shakespeare, Marlowe, et al, give this one a try. You might like it even better.

I am not familiar with Chinese literature and this was a wonderful introduction. As just a "read", this had all the action, love and suspense that one could want. It is a very readable translation, and once into the story it became very difficult to set it down. I would recommend it to anyone that likes a delightful story well told.

This is a very famous modern translation of PP, but there are 2 major translation choices that impede me from enjoying it, so it's caveat emptor!1. Why is Du Liniang, the heroine, unfairly christened Bridal Du in English? Has there ever been a worse name for such an ethereal heroine? The hero, Liu Mengmei, gets to be Liu Mengmei, why is Du Liniang Bridal Du? This terminology does not seem to be just accepted by Cyril Birch but other academics as well. Liniang 林娘 does not mean Bridal, it means "pretty girl/lady/maid". Sure, that's hard to translate, but if a translator wants to be creative, why pick "Bridal" as a first name of all things? Maybe "liniang" has some bridal connotations in some 16th century dictionary, but how can we possibly fall in love with a Chinese heroine called Bridal? It's like calling Shakespeare's Juliet Jar Jar Binks.2. The plum blossom (mei), is translated in this version as 'apricot'. This is another serious translation mismatch. The plum blossom is integral to the entire text and occurs throughout as an *idée fixe*. Historically, when has "mei" ever been "apricot"? In modern day Chinese, everyone knows "mei" is plum. I don't care even if Carl Linnaeus himself says the Chinese "mei" is actually an English "apricot" (which I would demand to see proof of), on stage PP is always shown with plum blossoms. I display my ignorance, I am not a Sinologist or a botanist, but I do speak the language and this PP translation is giving me so much cognitive dissonance that I would dearly love to find another good modern translation, just not this one.

One of the most interesting, fun, and engrossing books I've ever read--literally going to Hades and back, with a host of humorous characters along the way. "Scabby Turtle," anyone? You learn a lot about traditional Chinese culture, as well... views on the afterlife, the role of bureaucracy, etc. It's a shame there aren't more English translations of Xianzu Tang's works, and it's an even further shame there aren't yet Kindle versions of the few additional ones that exist. Get on it, !

I have nothing against the translation, but the failure to proofread for the e-book edition is unforgivable. The book contains frequent sloppy mistakes from Optical Character Recognition (OCR) errors ("Li" as "r.i.", "enterS", "Mengmei" as "Mengrnei" etc) that could have been easily caught if the publisher bothered to have someone proofread or spellcheck the e-book. These

mistakes would be forgivable if it was self-published or a cheap translation, but for a university press to be so sloppy and still charge full price is pathetic. If I could, I would definitely return the e-book and get a hard copy which I assume is error free. Unfortunately, will not allow me to return the e-book.

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