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978-0-521-09739-0 - Injustice to Tou O (Tou O Yuan)

Chung-Wen Shih

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PRINCETON-CAMBRIDGE STUDIES IN  
CHINESE LINGUISTICS

IV

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# INJUSTICE TO TOU O (*TOU O YÜAN*)

A STUDY AND TRANSLATION  
BY  
CHUNG-WEN SHIH

*Professor of Chinese, George Washington University*

CAMBRIDGE  
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS

1972

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,  
São Paulo, Delhi, Dubai, Tokyo

Cambridge University Press  
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)  
Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9780521097390](http://www.cambridge.org/9780521097390)

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First published 1972  
Re-issued in this digitally printed version 2009

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

*Library of Congress Catalogue Card Number: 74-155585*

ISBN 978-0-521-08228-0 Hardback  
ISBN 978-0-521-09739-0 Paperback

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Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

CONTENTS

<i>Foreword</i>	<i>page</i> ix
<i>Preface</i>	xiii
PART ONE: A STUDY OF <i>TOU O YÜAN</i>	
Kuan Han-ch'ing and his time	1
The narrative tradition and the play's source	3
Conventions of Yüan drama	5
Yüan Northern dialect	7
Vernacular speech	12
The poetry	21
The music	27
The play's theatricality	31
PART TWO: <i>TOU O YÜAN</i>	
Symbols and abbreviations	33
Dramatis personae	35
Chinese text, transliteration and translations	36
PART THREE: APPENDICES	
Glossary: <i>Tou O Yüan</i>	329
Selected bibliography on Old Mandarin and the language of Yüan Drama and works cited	373

ILLUSTRATIONS

1. ‘Arousing Heaven and Stirring Earth is Tou O’s Injustice’. From <i>Yüan ch’ü hsüan</i> , 1616; courtesy of the Syndics of the Cambridge University Library.	Page 34
2. ‘Holding a Mirror and Carrying a Scale is the Surveillance Commissioner’s Way’. From <i>Yüan ch’ü hsüan</i> , 1616; courtesy of the Syndics of the Cambridge University Library.	327

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 978-0-521-09739-0 - Injustice to Tou O (Tou O Yuan)  
 Chung-Wen Shih  
 Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

## FOREWORD

A striking phenomenon in Chinese cultural history is the development of drama under the foreign Mongolian rule and the creation within a century of the greatest dramatic works in the entire Chinese history. A half-dozen dramatists, representing the leadership of this new field in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, took part both in creating the form and in carrying it to its highest perfection. The most renowned of these literary and dramatic geniuses is Kuan Han-ch'ing, whose *Tou O Yüan* (*Injustice to Tou O*) Dr Chung-wen Shih so ably translates and interprets here.

Yüan drama is a subject of great difficulty. In the first place, serious study of the dramatic texts has begun only in this century in China and Japan; despite remarkable achievements, it can be said to be still in the pioneer stage. The language of the Yüan *tsa-chü* drama, covering a wide range of styles, from classical to colloquial, offers innumerable difficulties for the modern reader. The music of the plays, of underlying significance for the prosody of the songs and dramatic performance, is largely lost and little studied. The forms of the theater and the style of stage production are difficult to reconstruct. The nature of the audience, the sponsorship, and the social background of the authors are issues that remain unsolved. At the same time, the intrinsic value of this drama and its historical significance are extraordinarily high; so the rewards are as great as the difficulties.

Dr Shih makes a genuine contribution to literary scholarship in her translation of *Tou O Yüan* and in illuminating the context in which the play is to be studied and understood. In concise and lucid language, she explains how Yüan drama, like many other great literary achievements, was brought about by the fortunate coincidence of men and the time. Some traditionally trained scholars, deprived of access to officialdom under the alien rule, turned to play writing as an outlet for their creative energies, giving rise to rapid development of a dramatic literature. Of particular significance is Dr Shih's material relating the development of this new genre to the ongoing tradition of oral narrative, for it is the adoption of various devices and conventions from the oral tradition that gives both Yüan and later drama many of its unique characteristics. Her analytical comparison of the

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

speech of Yüan drama (Old Mandarin) with modern Mandarin is of interest to both linguists and students of literature. With illustrations of the use of grammatical particles, a salient feature of colloquial Chinese, Dr Shih demonstrates 'that the Yüan dramatists made good use of the language as they found it and took few, if any, liberties with the spoken language' (p. 21). Her study of the imagery in *Injustice to Tou O* and her demonstration of how, through the use of imagery, the dramatist significantly enlarges the scope of the play, illustrate Dr Shih's skillful application of her training in Western literature to the study of Chinese traditional works. Her analysis and explanation of the *ch'ü* form, though technical, is clear and easily comprehensible. Lastly, her discussion of the play's theatricality dispels a popular concept that Yüan drama, because it is essentially poetry, is not good theater. Dr Shih's approach, thoughtful and luminous, makes her study a delightful piece of scholarly work.

In translating the play, Dr Shih has drawn upon her skills as a specialist in Chinese and comparative literature. She has translated with grace and fidelity so that the play can be read in English with pleasure and interest. She has annotated in ways that explicate cultural life and social history as well as the intricacies of linguistics. Her notes correlating the two most important texts of *Tou O Yüan* provide scholars with added insight into the textual difficulties inherent in the study of a thirteenth-century work, and lead to a better understanding of the play itself. She has romanized the entire text so that students can the more conveniently read it aloud and gain access to its language both by ear and by eye. Finally, she has provided the serious student with a substantial bibliography on the language of the Yüan drama, citing works in Chinese, Japanese and English. Quite apart from its value as a contribution to the study of Chinese literature, this volume is important as a text in thirteenth-century language.

In fact, I believe that this volume will stand as a model of the kind of teaching materials demanded by the present level of development in Chinese studies. In 1967, Dr Shih was one of a group of linguists and language teachers participating in the Second Conference on Chinese Linguistics sponsored by the Chinese Linguistics Project at Princeton University. As she has noted in her Preface, a major focus of that conference was how best to teach Chinese on all levels in Western colleges and how to provide textbooks for direct reading of literary, especially classical, Chinese. A plea was made for specialists in language and literature to prepare texts which would provide romanization, interlinear translation, and notes, to enable students to

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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make an easy transition from reliance on textbooks to a direct reading of difficult Chinese texts. A second plea was made for scholars to prepare well-annotated texts to make classical Chinese writings more easily accessible. This conference served as an impetus for Dr Shih to divert her attention from her study of Yüan drama to produce this present volume, the study of a specific Yüan play.

Dr Shih's contributions are to both practical and historical linguistics, to literary history, to comparative literature, and to the study of Chinese literature and civilization during the Yüan period. Students of all these fields, but especially students of the Chinese language, who want to take on the challenge of a fine thirteenth-century literary text, will be grateful to her for the uncommon assistance she provides them.

FREDERICK W. MOTE

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 Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

## PREFACE

This work consists of two parts. Part One is a study of *Tou O Yüan*, a play by Kuan Han-ch'ing, the leading dramatist of Yüan times. A careful analysis of this play, with reference to the times, its narrative tradition, conventions, language, prose style, and poetic qualities, should contribute to the understanding of not only the genre itself, but also of Chinese drama as a whole, and of other vernacular forms derived from this tradition. Part Two is the outcome of a discussion on Chinese language and literature teaching at the Chinese Linguistic Conference at Princeton University in October 1967. The consensus was that there was an urgent need for material including the original text, transliteration, a word-by-word translation, a readable English version, and notes. This present work is a modest attempt to help fill that need.

In the transliteration of the text, modern Mandarin pronunciation is followed in order to make the text conveniently readable for students. While a final reconstructed reading of Old Mandarin is yet to be agreed upon among linguists, they have determined that Old Mandarin pronunciation is closely cognate to modern Mandarin pronunciation.<sup>1</sup> When rhyme obviously calls for a reading different from modern pronunciation, such a reading is given in the notes. Those wishing to experiment with a reconstructed reading in Old Mandarin pronunciation may profitably refer to the works by modern linguists mentioned below in this study.<sup>2</sup> For those desiring more information on the language of *Tou O Yüan*, a selected bibliography on the subject is included at the end of this work.<sup>3</sup>

I have used the *Pin-yin* romanization for the transliteration of the text, and the Wade-Giles system for the translation and the bibliography. In the notes, *Pin-yin* is used except for source reference – authors and titles of works – and for the spelling of dynasties. *Pin-yin* is adopted because it is the simplest form of spelling among the currently used systems, and the Wade-Giles is retained in the translation and

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 7–10 below.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> A bibliography on Yüan drama will be given in my forthcoming work on the genre.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

bibliography because of its familiarity to most readers.<sup>1</sup> I have followed the convention of using tonal marks with *Pin-yin* and not using tonal marks with the Wade-Giles system.

In the interlinear translation, words are added when they become necessary to make the meaning clear; objects for transitive verbs, for instance, are supplied, since the English verb will not function as it must unless it has the implied object. Hyphens are used where characters are glossed as a compound or a group, or when it is necessary to rearrange the word order in the English to provide a more natural equivalent (see l. 196). Particles, pretransitives, measure words, localizers, and directional complements are marked with symbols. The use of these symbols is in making the interlinear translation correspond more closely to the original; it does not represent a grammatical analysis. (On the usage of localizers, directional complements, etc., I have consulted mainly Y.R. Chao, *A Grammar of Spoken Chinese*, Berkeley, 1968.)

The Chinese text, though set in horizontal lines for practical reasons, is conventional in format in that it uses a smaller type for prose than for songs. The Chinese convention is not to typeset an individual line of verse as a separate metrical unit. Instead, the verse is typeset in lines of equal length, which disregard the meter.

There are two important texts of *Tou O Yüan*, both from the Ming period. The *Ku ming-chia pen* 古名家本 of 1588, known also as the Hsü text, is preferred by certain modern scholars in the belief that it is closer to the original.<sup>2</sup> The *Yüan ch'ü hsüan* 元曲選 text of 1616, edited by Tsang Chin-shu 臧晉叔, has traditionally been the choice of scholars, as it is a fuller and more readable one.<sup>3</sup> Here I use the *Yüan ch'ü hsüan* as the basic text, supplemented by critical notes on the differences between this and the *Ku ming-chia pen* text in the hope that this approach will offer the maximum of useful information to scholars. In citing the variants, I include everything above the level of wording,

<sup>1</sup> A comparable method is adopted in David Hawkes' *A Little Primer of Tu Fu*. Hawkes says in his preface that the use of more than one system may strike some people as confusing, but it is 'less confusing than any alternative would have been' (Oxford University Press, 1967, p. x.).

<sup>2</sup> A Mr Hsü 徐 of Lung-feng 龍峯 is thought to be the wood engraver, and Ch'en Yü-chiao 陳與郊 the editor of this edition (*Kuan Han-ch'ing hsi-ch'ü chi*, 關漢卿戲曲集, ed. Wu Hsiao-ling 吳曉鈴 *et al.*, (Peking, 1958), pp. 1056-7; see also § 2, p. 37 below).

<sup>3</sup> Professor Yoshikawa Kōjirō 吉川幸次郎 and his colleagues, for instance, used the Tsang text in their annotated edition of six Yüan plays (*Genkyokusen Shaku* 元曲選釋, Kyoto: Kyoto University, 1952).

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

synonym variations, and what I consider to be minor details.<sup>1</sup>

In the preparation of the manuscript, I received much help from my students and colleagues. I owe special thanks to Professor Lien-sheng Yang for reading the interlinear translation and for his comments, to Professor Paul Fu-mien Yang for checking the phonetic transcription and for his suggestions, to Professor E. Bruce Brooks for reading the entire manuscript and for his suggestions and criticisms, and to Professors Fritz Mote, Yu-kung Kao, Mantaro Hashimoto, Frank Kierman, and Chi-yu Wu for their interest and assistance. The Research Committee and the Sino-Soviet Institute of The George Washington University provided part of the materials and secretarial service, and they are gratefully acknowledged. The mistakes and inconsistencies are mine, and I shall appreciate corrections from the reader.

<sup>1</sup> For additional notes on the differences between these two texts, one may refer to *Kuan Han-ch'ing hsi-chü chi*, in which *Ku ming-chia pen* is used as the basic text.