

BOOK NEWS

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The Oil Vendor and the Courtesan: Tales from the Ming Dynasty

by Feng Menglong

Translated by *Ted Wang and Chen Chen*

Published by Welcome Rain, NY. 2006

Softcover \$14.00 ISBN 1-56649-139-8; Hardcover \$25.00 ISBN 1-56649-140-1

This volume and a previous volume (*The Abbot and the Widow*) published earlier (2004) contain tales collected by Ming dynasty authors Ling Mengchu (1580-1646) and Feng Menglong (1574-1646), respectively, who wrote down hundreds of stories told in the famous teahouse storytelling tradition of that era. Various humorous, staid, bawdy, moralizing, salacious, brutal, and fantastic, these tales are about people from all walks of life, reflecting their lives, loves, adventures, beliefs, sufferings, morals, escapades, customs, and desires. Together they constitute a fascinating and remarkably true-to-life mirror of Chinese life some four to ten centuries ago, and thereby provide valuable insights into the psyche of today's Chinese.

The selections, from a total of 200 stories, were made by the editors with their appeal to Western readers in terms of plot, content, originality, and readability in mind. Besides being wonderfully entertaining to read, these tales are a rich source of information for anthropological, cultural, and gender studies on Chinese behavior, social mores, living conditions, and legal norms during the Song, Yuan, and Ming dynasties.

The Abbot and the Widow: Tales from the Ming Dynasty by Ling Mengchu, translated by Ted Wang and Chen Chen, EastBridge, NY. 2004. Soft-

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Introduction to Chinese Dialectology

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Introduction to Chinese Dialectology intends to give a comprehensive account of the studies on Chinese dialects tracing from the first Chinese dialect study of Yang Xiong's Fangyan "Dialect" to present works, covering mainly phonological and lexical features. It investigates the dialect research from historical and theoretical linguistic perspectives. Topics include: the classification of Chinese dialects, dialect studies in different periods, the criteria for the dialect classification as proposed by different scholars, discussions on the Chinese dialectology from philological, descriptive, generative and computational quantifying approaches, and the contributions of Chinese dialectology to the general linguistic theories. The main text devotes to the description of the major phonological characteristics and distributions of the major dialects, supplemented by fourteen sketch dialect maps and over one hundred tables of dialect data for easier reading and comparisons. Each chapter is supported by exercises, which basically is in the form of contrastive and comparative linguistic analysis nature.