

# Xixiangji or Interpretation of the Narrative

by Reiko HIROSE

The author tries to compare the three narrative works: Ying-ying zhuan 鶯鶯傳 (Tang Chuanqi 唐傳奇, a short story), Dong Jieyuan Xixiangji 董解元西廂記 (Zhugongdiao 諸宮調, a chantefable), and Xixiangji 西廂記 (Yuan drama) by focusing on the two main characters of each work.

(1) In Ying-ying zhuan, much is left unsaid about the motive and rationale of these characters, even when they make an important action. As a result, the reader is left puzzled.

(2) In Dong Xixiang, they act rationally, and their actions are related to one another in a reasonable way. Especially, Ying-ying's change of mind is traced carefully, while Zhangsheng remains consistently in love to the extent of being a fool.

(3) In Xixiangji, Ying-ying and Zhangsheng fall in love with each other almost at the same time at the beginning of the play. The drama exists in how their happy finale is delayed by their own problems as well as by obstacles imposed by others. The mutuality of their feelings relaxes the audience and allows for much laughter, often in deviations from the main plot.

Thus, Dong Xixiang can be seen to be an interpretation of the enigmatic Ying-ying zhuan, and Xixiangji a further exploration and understading of this pair of lovers.