

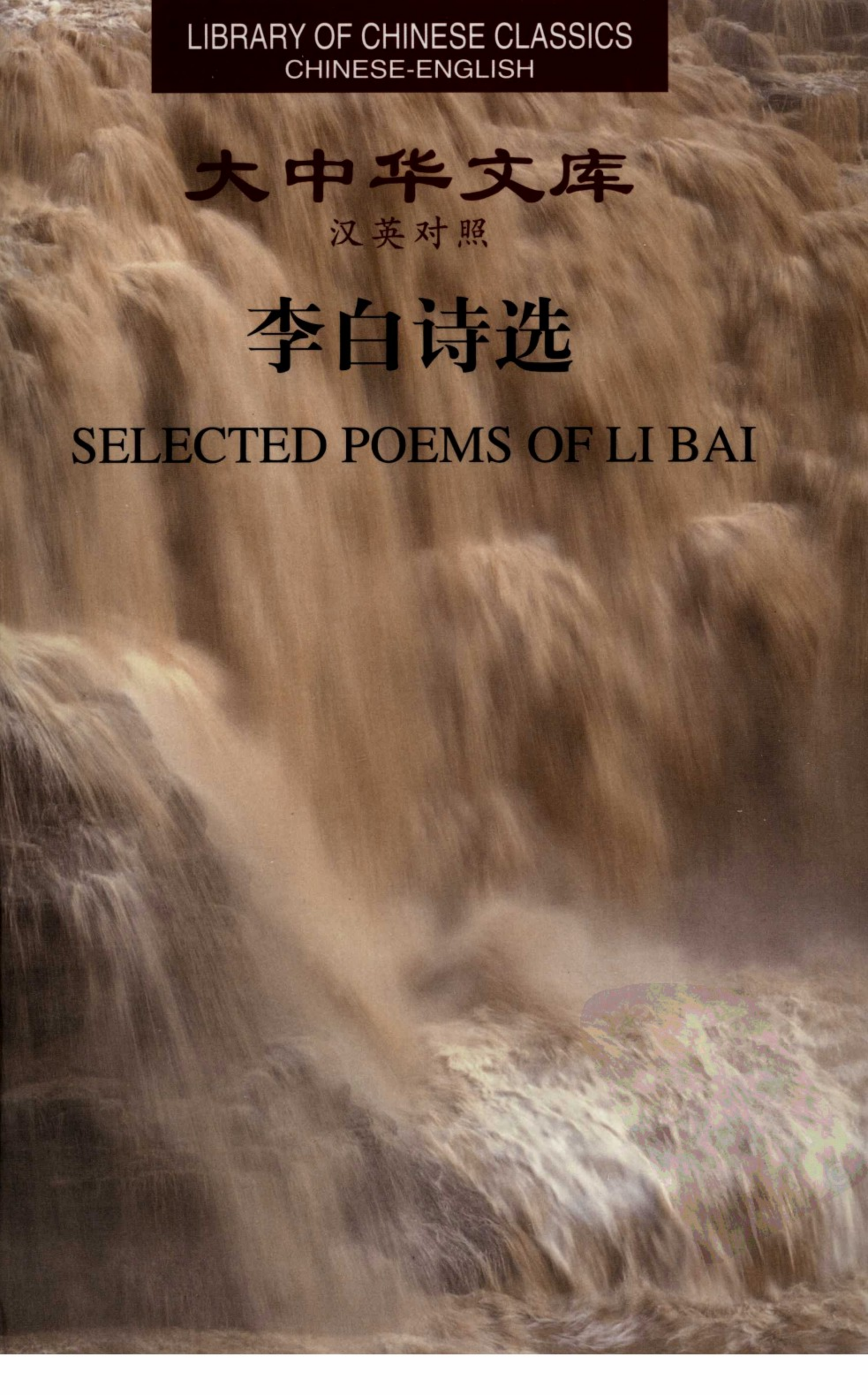
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Selected Poems of Li Bai



许渊冲 英译

Translated into English by Xu Yuanchong

湖南人民出版社

Hunan People's Publishing House

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

李白诗选 / 许渊冲英译

长沙: 湖南人民出版社

(大中华文库)

ISBN 978-7-5438-5001-9

I. 李... II. 许... III. ①英语-汉语-对照读物 ②古典诗歌-作品集-中国-唐代

IV. H319.4: I

中国版本图书馆CIP数据核字(2007)第138323号

责任编辑: 李 林 莫 艳

大中华文库

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许渊冲 英译

©2007 湖南人民出版社

出版发行者:

湖南人民出版社

(湖南长沙市营盘东路3号 邮政编码410005)

<http://www.hnppp.com>

制版、排版者:

湖南新华印刷集团有限责任公司(湖南新华精品印务有限公司)

印制者:

深圳市佳信达印务有限公司印刷

开本: 960 × 640 1/16(精装) 印张: 17 印数: 1-3,000

2007年12月第1版第1次印刷

(汉英对照)

ISBN 978-7-5438-5001-9

定价: 48.00元

版权所有 盗版必究

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First Edition 2007

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ISBN 978-7-5438-5001-9

©2007 Hunan People's Publishing House

Published by

Hunan People's Publishing House

3 East Yingpan Road, Changsha 41005, Hunan, China

<http://www.hnppp.com>

Printed by

Shenzhen Jiaxinda Printing Co., Ltd, Shenzhen, China

Printed in the People's Republic of China



总 序

杨牧之

《大中华文库》终于出版了。我们为之高兴，为之鼓舞，但也倍感压力。

当此之际，我们愿将郁积在我们心底的话，向读者倾诉。

一

中华民族有着悠久的历史 and 灿烂的文化，系统、准确地将中华民族的文化经典翻译成外文，编辑出版，介绍给全世界，是几代中国人的愿望。早在几十年前，西方一位学者翻译《红楼梦》，将书名译成《一个红楼上的梦》，将林黛玉译为“黑色的玉”。我们一方面对国外学者将中国的名著介绍到世界上去表示由衷的感谢，一方面为祖国的名著还不被完全认识，甚至受到曲解，而感到深深的遗憾。还有西方学者翻译《金瓶梅》，专门摘选其中自然主义描述最为突出的篇章加以译介。一时间，西方学者好像发现了奇迹，掀起了《金瓶梅》热，说中国是“性开放的源头”，公开地在报刊上鼓吹中国要“发扬开放之传统”。还有许多资深、友善的汉学家译介中国古代的哲学著作，在把中华民族文化介绍给全世界的工作方面作出了重大贡献，但或囿于理解有误，或缘于对中国文字认识的局限，质量上乘的并不多，常常是隔靴搔痒，说不到点子上。大哲学家黑格尔曾经说过：中国有



最完备的国史。但他认为中国古代没有真正意义上的哲学，还处在哲学史前状态。这么了不起的哲学家竟然作出这样大失水准的评论，何其不幸。正如任何哲学家都要受时间、地点、条件的制约一样，黑格尔也离不开这一规律。当时他也只能从上述水平的汉学家译过去的文字去分析、理解，所以，黑格尔先生对中国古代社会的认识水平是什么状态，也就不难想象了。

中国离不开世界，世界也缺少不了中国。中国文化摄取外域的新成分，丰富了自己，又以自己的新成就输送给别人，贡献于世界。从公元5世纪开始到公元15世纪，大约有一千年，中国走在世界的前列。在这一千多年的时间里，她的光辉照耀全世界。人类要前进，怎么能不全面认识中国，怎么能不认真研究中国的历史呢？

二

中华民族是伟大的，曾经辉煌过，蓝天、白云、阳光灿烂，和平而兴旺；也有过黑暗的、想起来就让人战栗的日子，但中华民族从来是充满理想，不断追求，不断学习，渴望和平与友谊的。

中国古代伟大的思想家孔子曾经说过：“三人行，必有我师焉。择其善者而从之，其不善者而改之。”孔子的话就是要人们向别人学习。这段话正是概括了整个中华民族与人交往的原则。人与人之间交往如此，在与周边的国家交往中也是如此。

秦始皇第一个统一了中国，可惜在位只有十几年，来不及做更多的事情。汉朝继秦而继续强大，便开始走出去，了



解自己周边的世界。公元前 138 年，汉武帝派张骞出使西域。他带着一万头牛羊，总值一万万钱的金帛货物，作为礼物，开始西行，最远到过“安息”（即波斯）。公元前 36 年，班超又率 36 人出使西域。36 个人按今天的话说，也只有一个排，显然是为了拜访未曾见过面的邻居，是去交朋友。到了西域，班超派遣甘英作为使者继续西行，往更远处的大秦国（即罗马）去访问，“乃抵条支而历安息，临西海以望大秦”（《后汉书·西域传》）。“条支”在“安息”以西，即今天的伊拉克、叙利亚一带，“西海”应是今天的地中海。也就是说甘英已经到达地中海边上，与罗马帝国隔海相望，

“临大海欲渡”，却被人劝阻而未成行，这在历史上留下了遗憾。可以想见班超、甘英沟通友谊的无比勇气和强烈愿望。接下来是唐代的玄奘，历经千难万险，到“西天”印度取经，带回了南亚国家的古老文化。归国后，他把带回的佛教经典组织人翻译，到后来很多经典印度失传了，但中国却保存完好，以至于今天，没有玄奘的《大唐西域记》，印度人很难编写印度古代史。明代郑和“七下西洋”，把中华文化传到东南亚一带。鸦片战争以后，一代又一代先进的中国人，为了振兴中华，又前赴后继，向西方国家学习先进的科学思想和文明成果。这中间有我们的领导人朱德、周恩来、邓小平；有许许多多大科学家、文学家、艺术家，如郭沫若、李四光、钱学森、冼星海、徐悲鸿等。他们的追求、奋斗，他们的博大胸怀，兼收并蓄的精神，为人类社会增添了光彩。

中国文化的形成和发展过程，就是一个以众为师、以各国人民为师，不断学习和创造的过程。中华民族曾经向周边国家和民族学习过许多东西，假如没有这些学习，中华民族绝不可能创造出昔日的辉煌。回顾历史，我们怎么能够不对



伟大的古埃及文明、古希腊文明、古印度文明满怀深深的感激?怎么能够不对伟大的欧洲文明、非洲文明、美洲文明、澳洲文明,以及中国周围的亚洲文明充满温情与敬意?

中华民族为人类社会曾作出过独特的贡献。在15世纪以前,中国的科学技术一直处于世界遥遥领先的地位。英国科学家李约瑟说:“中国在公元3世纪到13世纪之间,保持着一个西方所望尘莫及的科学知识水平。”美国耶鲁大学教授、《大国的兴衰》的作者保罗·肯尼迪坦言:“在近代以前时期的所有文明中,没有一个国家的文明比中国更发达,更先进。”

世界各国的有识之士千里迢迢来中国观光、学习。在这个过程中,中国唐朝的长安城渐渐发展成为国际大都市。西方的波斯、东罗马,东亚的高丽、新罗、百济、南天竺、北天竺,频繁前来。外国的王侯、留学生,在长安供职的外国官员,商贾、乐工和舞士,总有几十个国家,几万人之多。日本派出的“遣唐使”更是一批接一批。传为美谈的日本人阿部仲麻吕(晁衡)在长安留学的故事,很能说明外国人与中国的交往。晁衡学成仕于唐朝,前后历时五十余年。晁衡与中国的知识分子结下了深厚的友情。他归国时,传说在海中遇难身亡。大诗人李白作诗哭悼:“日本晁卿辞帝都,征帆一片绕蓬壶。明月不归沉碧海,白云愁色满苍梧。”晁衡遇险是误传,但由此可见中外学者之间在中国长安交往的情谊。

后来,不断有外国人到中国来探寻秘密,所见所闻,常常让他们目瞪口呆。《希腊纪事》(希腊人波桑尼阿著)记载公元2世纪时,希腊人在中国的见闻。书中写道:“赛里斯人用小米和青芦喂一种类似蜘蛛的昆虫,喂到第五年,虫肚子胀裂开,便从里面取出丝来。”从这段对中国古代养蚕技术的



描述，可见当时欧洲人与中国人的差距。公元9世纪中叶，阿拉伯人来到中国。一位阿拉伯作家在他所著的《中国印度见闻录》中记载了曾旅居中国的阿拉伯商人的见闻：

——一天，一个外商去拜见驻守广州的中国官吏。会见时，外商总盯着官吏的胸部，官吏很奇怪，便问：“你好像总盯着我的胸，这是怎么回事？”那位外商回答说：“透过你穿的丝绸衣服，我隐约看到你胸口上长着一个黑痣，这是什么丝绸，我感到十分惊奇。”官吏听后，失声大笑，伸出胳膊，说：“请你数数吧，看我穿了几件衣服。”那商人数过，竟然穿了五件之多，黑痣正是透过这五层丝绸衣服显现出来的。外商惊得目瞪口呆，官吏说：“我穿的丝绸还不算是最好的，总督穿的要更精美。”

——书中关于茶(他们叫干草叶子)的记载，可见阿拉伯国家当时还没有喝茶的习惯。书中记述：“中国国王本人的收入主要靠盐税和泡开水喝的一种干草税。在各个城市里，这种干草叶售价都很高，中国人称这种草叶叫‘茶’，这种干草叶比苜蓿的叶子还多，也略比它香，稍有苦味，用开水冲喝，治百病。”

——他们对中国的医疗条件十分羡慕，书中记载道：“中国人医疗条件很好，穷人可以从国库中得到药费。”还说：“城市里，很多地方立一石碑，高10肘，上面刻有各种疾病和药物，写明某种病用某种药医治。”

——关于当时中国的京城，书中作了生动的描述：中国的京城很大，人口众多，一条宽阔的长街把全城分为两半，大街右边的东区，住着皇帝、宰相、禁军及皇家的总管、奴婢。在这个区域，沿街开凿了小河，流水潺潺；路旁，葱茏的树木整然有序，一幢幢宅邸鳞次栉比。大街左边的西区，



住着庶民和商人。这里有货栈和商店，每当清晨，人们可以看到，皇室的总管、宫廷的仆役，或骑马或步行，到这里来采购。

此后的史籍对西人来华的记载，渐渐多了起来。13世纪意大利旅行家马可·波罗，尽管有人对他是否真的到过中国持怀疑态度，但他留下一部记述元代事件的《马可·波罗游记》却是确凿无疑的。这部游记中的一些关于当时中国的描述使得西方人认为是“天方夜谭”。总之，从中西文化交流史来说，这以前的时期还是一个想象和臆测的时代，相互之间充满了好奇与幻想。

从16世纪末开始，由于航海技术的发展，东西方航路的开通，随着一批批传教士来华，中国与西方开始了直接的交流。沟通中西的使命在意大利传教士利玛窦那里有了充分的体现。利玛窦于1582年来华，1610年病逝于北京，在华二十余年。除了传教以外，做了两件具有历史象征意义的事，一是1594年前后在韶州用拉丁文翻译《四书》，并作了注释；二是与明代学者徐光启合作，用中文翻译了《几何原本》。

西方传教士对《四书》等中国经典的粗略翻译，以及杜赫德的《中华帝国志》等书对中国的介绍，在西方读者的眼前展现了一个异域文明，在当时及稍后一段时期引起了一场“中国热”，许多西方大思想家都曾注目于中国文化。有的推崇中华文明，如莱布尼兹、伏尔泰、魁奈等，有的对中华文明持批评态度，如孟德斯鸠、黑格尔等。莱布尼兹认识到中国文化的某些思想与他的观念相近，如周易的卦象与他发明的二进制相契合，对中国文化给予了热情的礼赞；黑格尔则从他整个哲学体系的推演出发，认为中国没有真正意义上的哲学，还处在哲学史前的状态。但是，不论是推崇还是批



评，是吸纳还是排斥，中西文化的交流产生了巨大的影响。随着先进的中国科学技术的西传，特别是中国的造纸、火药、印刷术和指南针四大发明的问世，大大改变了世界的面貌。马克思说：“中国的火药把骑士阶层炸得粉碎，指南针打开了世界市场并建立了殖民地，而印刷术则变成了新教的工具，变成对精神发展创造必要前提的最强大的杠杆。”英国的哲学家培根说：中国的四大发明“改变了全世界的面貌和一切事物的状态”。

三

大千世界，潮起潮落。云散云聚，万象更新。中国古代产生了无数伟大的科学家：祖冲之、李时珍、孙思邈、张衡、沈括、毕昇……产生了无数科技成果：《齐民要术》、《九章算术》、《伤寒杂病论》、《本草纲目》……以及保存至今的世界奇迹：浑天仪、地动仪、都江堰、敦煌石窟、大运河、万里长城……但从 15 世纪下半叶起，风水似乎从东方转到了西方，落后的欧洲只经过 400 年便成为世界瞩目的文明中心。英国的牛顿、波兰的哥白尼、德国的伦琴、法国的居里、德国的爱因斯坦、意大利的伽利略、俄国的门捷列夫、美国的费米和爱迪生……光芒四射，令人敬仰。

中华民族开始思考了。潮起潮落究竟是什么原因？中国人发明的火药，传到欧洲，转眼之间反成为欧洲列强轰击中国大门的炮弹，又是因为什么？

鸦片战争终于催醒了中国人沉睡的迷梦，最先“睁眼看世界”的一代精英林则徐、魏源迈出了威武雄壮的一步。曾国藩、李鸿章搞起了洋务运动。中国的知识分子喊出“民主



与科学”的口号。中国是落后了，中国的志士仁人在苦苦探索。但落后中饱含着变革的动力，探索中孕育着崛起的希望。“向科学进军”，中华民族终于又迎来了科学的春天。

今天，世界毕竟来到了 21 世纪的门槛。分散隔绝的世界，逐渐变成联系为一体的世界。现在，全球一体化趋势日益明显，人类历史也就在愈来愈大的程度上成为全世界的历史。当今，任何一种文化的发展都离不开对其它优秀文化的汲取，都以其它优秀文化的发展为前提。在近现代，西方文化汲取中国文化，不仅是中国文化的传播，更是西方文化自身的创新和发展；正如中国文化对西方文化的汲取一样，既是西方文化在中国的传播，同时也是中国文化在近代的转型和发展。地球上所有的人类文化，都是我们共同的宝贵遗产。既然我们生活的各个大陆，在地球史上曾经是连成一气的“泛大陆”，或者说是一个完整的“地球村”，那么，我们同样可以在这个以知识和学习为特征的网络时代，走上相互学习、共同发展的大路，建设和开拓我们人类崭新的“地球村”。

西学仍在东渐，中学也将西传。各国人民的优秀文化正日益迅速地为中国文化所汲取，而无论西方和东方，也都需要从中国文化中汲取养分。正是基于这一认识，我们组织出版汉英对照版《大中华文库》，全面系统地翻译介绍中国传统文化典籍。我们试图通过《大中华文库》，向全世界展示，中华民族五千年的追求，五千年的梦想，正在新的历史时期重放光芒。中国人民就像火后的凤凰，万众一心，迎接新世纪文明的太阳。

1999 年 8 月 北京



PREFACE TO THE *LIBRARY OF CHINESE CLASSICS*

Yang Muzhi

The publication of the *Library of Chinese Classics* is a matter of great satisfaction to all of us who have been involved in the production of this monumental work. At the same time, we feel a weighty sense of responsibility, and take this opportunity to explain to our readers the motivation for undertaking this cross-century task.

1

The Chinese nation has a long history and a glorious culture, and it has been the aspiration of several generations of Chinese scholars to translate, edit and publish the whole corpus of the Chinese literary classics so that the nation's greatest cultural achievements can be introduced to people all over the world. There have been many translations of the Chinese classics done by foreign scholars. A few dozen years ago, a Western scholar translated the title of *A Dream of Red Mansions* into "A Dream of Red Chambers" and Lin Daiyu, the heroine in the novel, into "Black Jade." But while their endeavours have been laudable, the results of their labours have been less than satisfactory. Lack of knowledge of Chinese culture and an inadequate grasp of the Chinese written language have led the translators into many errors. As a consequence, not only are Chinese classical writings widely misunderstood in the rest of the world, in some cases their content has actually been distorted. At one time, there was a "*Jin Ping Mei* craze" among Western scholars, who thought that they had uncovered a miraculous phenomenon, and published theories claiming that China was the "fountainhead of eroticism," and that a Chinese "tradition of permissiveness" was about to be laid bare. This distorted view came about due to the translators of the *Jin Ping Mei* (*Plum in the Golden Vase*) putting one-sided stress on the



raw elements in that novel, to the neglect of its overall literary value. Meanwhile, there have been many distinguished and well-intentioned Sinologists who have attempted to make the culture of the Chinese nation more widely known by translating works of ancient Chinese philosophy. However, the quality of such work, in many cases, is unsatisfactory, often missing the point entirely. The great philosopher Hegel considered that ancient China had no philosophy in the real sense of the word, being stuck in philosophical "prehistory." For such an eminent authority to make such a colossal error of judgment is truly regrettable. But, of course, Hegel was just as subject to the constraints of time, space and other objective conditions as anyone else, and since he had to rely for his knowledge of Chinese philosophy on inadequate translations it is not difficult to imagine why he went so far off the mark.

China cannot be separated from the rest of the world; and the rest of the world cannot ignore China. Throughout its history, Chinese civilization has enriched itself by absorbing new elements from the outside world, and in turn has contributed to the progress of world civilization as a whole by transmitting to other peoples its own cultural achievements. From the 5th to the 15th centuries, China marched in the front ranks of world civilization. If mankind wishes to advance, how can it afford to ignore China? How can it afford not to make a thoroughgoing study of its history?

2

Despite the ups and downs in their fortunes, the Chinese people have always been idealistic, and have never ceased to forge ahead and learn from others, eager to strengthen ties of peace and friendship.

The great ancient Chinese philosopher Confucius once said, "Wherever three persons come together, one of them will surely be able to teach me something. I will pick out his good points and emulate them; his bad points I will reform." Confucius meant by this that we should always be ready to learn from others. This maxim encapsulates the principle the Chinese people have always followed in their dealings with other peoples, not only on an individual basis but also at the level of state-to-state relations.

After generations of internecine strife, China was unified by Emperor



Qin Shi Huang (the First Emperor of the Qin Dynasty) in 221 B.C. The Han Dynasty, which succeeded that of the short-lived Qin, waxed powerful, and for the first time brought China into contact with the outside world. In 138 B.C., Emperor Wu dispatched Zhang Qian to the western regions, i.e. Central Asia. Zhang, who traveled as far as what is now Iran, took with him as presents for the rulers he visited on the way 10,000 head of sheep and cattle, as well as gold and silks worth a fabulous amount. In 36 B.C., Ban Chao headed a 36-man legation to the western regions. These were missions of friendship to visit neighbours the Chinese people had never met before and to learn from them. Ban Chao sent Gan Ying to explore further toward the west. According to the "Western Regions Section" in the *Book of Later Han*, Gan Ying traveled across the territories of present-day Iraq and Syria, and reached the Mediterranean Sea, an expedition which brought him within the confines of the Roman Empire. Later, during the Tang Dynasty, the monk Xuan Zang made a journey fraught with danger to reach India and seek the knowledge of that land. Upon his return, he organized a team of scholars to translate the Buddhist scriptures, which he had brought back with him. As a result, many of these scriptural classics which were later lost in India have been preserved in China. In fact, it would have been difficult for the people of India to reconstruct their own ancient history if it had not been for Xuan Zang's *A Record of a Journey to the West in the Time of the Great Tang Dynasty*. In the Ming Dynasty, Zheng He transmitted Chinese culture to Southeast Asia during his seven voyages. Following the Opium Wars in the mid-19th century, progressive Chinese, generation after generation, went to study the advanced scientific thought and cultural achievements of the Western countries. Their aim was to revive the fortunes of their own country. Among them were people who were later to become leaders of China, including Zhu De, Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping. In addition, there were people who were to become leading scientists, literary figures and artists, such as Guo Moruo, Li Siguang, Qian Xuesen, Xian Xinghai and Xu Beihong. Their spirit of ambition, their struggles and their breadth of vision were an inspiration not only to the Chinese people but to people all over the world.

Indeed, it is true that if the Chinese people had not learned many



things from the surrounding countries they would never have been able to produce the splendid achievements of former days. When we look back upon history, how can we not feel profoundly grateful for the legacies of the civilizations of ancient Egypt, Greece and India? How can we not feel fondness and respect for the cultures of Europe, Africa, America and Oceania?

The Chinese nation, in turn, has made unique contributions to the community of mankind. Prior to the 15th century, China led the world in science and technology. The British scientist Joseph Needham once said, "From the third century A.D. to the 13th century A.D. China was far ahead of the West in the level of its scientific knowledge." Paul Kennedy, of Yale University in the U.S., author of *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, said, "Of all the civilizations of the pre-modern period, none was as well-developed or as progressive as that of China."

Foreigners who came to China were often astonished at what they saw and heard. The Greek geographer Pausanias in the second century A.D. gave the first account in the West of the technique of silk production in China: "The Chinese feed a spider-like insect with millet and reeds. After five years the insect's stomach splits open, and silk is extracted therefrom." From this extract, we can see that the Europeans at that time did not know the art of silk manufacture. In the middle of the 9th century A.D., an Arabian writer includes the following anecdote in his *Account of China and India*:

"One day, an Arabian merchant called upon the military governor of Guangzhou. Throughout the meeting, the visitor could not keep his eyes off the governor's chest. Noticing this, the latter asked the Arab merchant what he was staring at. The merchant replied, 'Through the silk robe you are wearing, I can faintly see a black mole on your chest. Your robe must be made out of very fine silk indeed!' The governor burst out laughing, and holding out his sleeve invited the merchant to count how many garments he was wearing. The merchant did so, and discovered that the governor was actually wearing five silk robes, one on top of the other, and they were made of such fine material that a tiny mole could be seen through them all! Moreover, the governor explained that the robes he was wearing were not made of the finest silk at all; silk of the highest



grade was reserved for the garments worn by the provincial governor."

The references to tea in this book (the author calls it "dried grass") reveal that the custom of drinking tea was unknown in the Arab countries at that time: "The king of China's revenue comes mainly from taxes on salt and the dry leaves of a kind of grass which is drunk after boiled water is poured on it. This dried grass is sold at a high price in every city in the country. The Chinese call it 'cha.' The bush is like alfalfa, except that it bears more leaves, which are also more fragrant than alfalfa. It has a slightly bitter taste, and when it is infused in boiling water it is said to have medicinal properties."

Foreign visitors showed especial admiration for Chinese medicine. One wrote, "China has very good medical conditions. Poor people are given money to buy medicines by the government."

In this period, when Chinese culture was in full bloom, scholars flocked from all over the world to China for sightseeing and for study. Chang'an, the capital of the Tang Dynasty was host to visitors from as far away as the Byzantine Empire, not to mention the neighboring countries of Asia. Chang'an, at that time the world's greatest metropolis, was packed with thousands of foreign dignitaries, students, diplomats, merchants, artisans and entertainers. Japan especially sent contingent after contingent of envoys to the Tang court. Worthy of note are the accounts of life in Chang'an written by Abeno Nakamaro, a Japanese scholar who studied in China and had close friendships with ministers of the Tang court and many Chinese scholars in a period of over 50 years. The description throws light on the exchanges between Chinese and foreigners in this period. When Abeno was supposedly lost at sea on his way back home, the leading poet of the time, Li Bai, wrote a eulogy for him.

The following centuries saw a steady increase in the accounts of China written by Western visitors. The Italian Marco Polo described conditions in China during the Yuan Dynasty in his *Travels*. However, until advances in the science of navigation led to the opening of east-west shipping routes at the beginning of the 16th century Sino-Western cultural exchanges were coloured by fantasy and conjecture. Concrete progress was made when a contingent of religious missionaries, men well versed in Western science and technology, made their way to China, ushering in an era of



direct contacts between China and the West. The experience of this era was embodied in the career of the Italian Jesuit Matteo Ricci. Arriving in China in 1582, Ricci died in Beijing in 1610. Apart from his missionary work, Ricci accomplished two historically symbolic tasks — one was the translation into Latin of the “Four Books,” together with annotations, in 1594; the other was the translation into Chinese of Euclid’s *Elements*.

The rough translations of the “Four Books” and other Chinese classical works by Western missionaries, and the publication of Père du Halde’s *Description Geographique, Historique, Chronologique, Politique, et Physique de l’Empire de la Chine* revealed an exotic culture to Western readers, and sparked a “China fever,” during which the eyes of many Western intellectuals were fixed on China. Some of these intellectuals, including Leibniz, held China in high esteem; others, such as Hegel, nursed a critical attitude toward Chinese culture. Leibniz considered that some aspects of Chinese thought were close to his own views, such as the philosophy of the *Book of Changes* and his own binary system. Hegel, on the other hand, as mentioned above, considered that China had developed no proper philosophy of its own. Nevertheless, no matter whether the reaction was one of admiration, criticism, acceptance or rejection, Sino-Western exchanges were of great significance. The transmission of advanced Chinese science and technology to the West, especially the Chinese inventions of paper-making, gunpowder, printing and the compass, greatly changed the face of the whole world. Karl Marx said, “Chinese gunpowder blew the feudal class of knights to smithereens; the compass opened up world markets and built colonies; and printing became an implement of Protestantism and the most powerful lever and necessary precondition for intellectual development and creation.” The English philosopher Roger Bacon said that China’s four great inventions had “changed the face of the whole world and the state of affairs of everything.”

3

Ancient China gave birth to a large number of eminent scientists, such as Zu Chongzhi, Li Shizhen, Sun Simiao, Zhang Heng, Shen Kuo and Bi



Sheng. They produced numerous treatises on scientific subjects, including *The Manual of Important Arts for the People's Welfare*, *Nine Chapters on the Mathematical Art*, *A Treatise on Febrile Diseases* and *Compendium of Materia Medica*. Their accomplishments included ones whose influence has been felt right down to modern times, such as the armillary sphere, seismograph, Dujiangyan water conservancy project, Dunhuang Grottoes, Grand Canal and Great Wall. But from the latter part of the 15th century, and for the next 400 years, Europe gradually became the cultural centre upon which the world's eyes were fixed. The world's most outstanding scientists then were England's Isaac Newton, Poland's Copernicus, France's Marie Curie, Germany's Rontgen and Einstein, Italy's Galileo, Russia's Mendeleev and America's Edison.

The Chinese people then began to think: What is the cause of the rise and fall of nations? Moreover, how did it happen that gunpowder, invented in China and transmitted to the West, in no time at all made Europe powerful enough to batter down the gates of China herself?

It took the Opium War to wake China from its reverie. The first generation to make the bold step of "turning our eyes once again to the rest of the world" was represented by Lin Zexu and Wei Yuan. Zeng Guofan and Li Hongzhang started the Westernization Movement, and later intellectuals raised the slogan of "Democracy and Science." Noble-minded patriots, realizing that China had fallen behind in the race for modernization, set out on a painful quest. But in backwardness lay the motivation for change, and the quest produced the embryo of a towering hope, and the Chinese people finally gathered under a banner proclaiming a "March Toward Science."

On the threshold of the 21st century, the world is moving in the direction of becoming an integrated entity. This trend is becoming clearer by the day. In fact, the history of the various peoples of the world is also becoming the history of mankind as a whole. Today, it is impossible for any nation's culture to develop without absorbing the excellent aspects of the cultures of other peoples. When Western culture absorbs aspects of Chinese culture, this is not just because it has come into contact with Chinese culture, but also because of the active creativity and development of Western culture itself; and vice versa. The various cultures of



the world's peoples are a precious heritage which we all share. Mankind no longer lives on different continents, but on one big continent, or in a "global village." And so, in this era characterized by an all-encompassing network of knowledge and information we should learn from each other and march in step along the highway of development to construct a brand-new "global village."

Western learning is still being transmitted to the East, and vice versa. China is accelerating its pace of absorption of the best parts of the cultures of other countries, and there is no doubt that both the West and the East need the nourishment of Chinese culture. Based on this recognition, we have edited and published the *Library of Chinese Classics* in a Chinese-English format as an introduction to the corpus of traditional Chinese culture in a comprehensive and systematic translation. Through this collection, our aim is to reveal to the world the aspirations and dreams of the Chinese people over the past 5,000 years and the splendour of the new historical era in China. Like a phoenix rising from the ashes, the Chinese people in unison are welcoming the cultural sunrise of the new century.

August 1999



前 言

(一)

李白是我国唐代最伟大的浪漫主义诗人。浪漫主义作为一种文艺思潮，是欧洲 18 世纪末 19 世纪初的社会产物。但是作为创作方法却像现实主义一样，是和文学艺术同时产生的。现实主义更侧重客观事物的描绘，浪漫主义更侧重主观感情的抒发。用中国诗艺的术语“赋比兴”来描述，现实主义作品多用赋的方法，浪漫主义多用比兴的方法。而运用比兴正是李白诗歌的一大特点。

李白生于 701 年，故乡是今天四川江油县的青莲乡。他的少年时代正当唐玄宗“开元之治”前期，那时玄宗励精图治，整个社会欣欣向荣。李白从少年时代起就胸怀大志，想做布衣卿相，以使国泰民安。725 年，李白 25 岁，经由长江三峡出蜀，一路写了《峨眉山月歌》、《渡荆门送别》等诗。到金陵后，又写了《长干行》、《金陵酒肆留别》等。五年后，他第一次到唐代的京城长安，发现有志难酬，心中苦闷，于是写了《长相思》、《行路难》、《蜀道难》等。这一批诗歌在李白一生创作中形成了第一个高潮，反映了他第一次到长安的遭遇和思想感情。他的有些作品直抒胸臆，有些是比兴言志，而《蜀道难》是以行路艰难比喻仕途坎坷，感慨

报国无门的一篇杰作。

李白离开长安之后，沿着黄河南下。735年，与友人在嵩山南麓置酒高会，写下了《将进酒》一诗，感慨盛年易逝，功业未立，但仍寄希望于未来。直到742年秋天，他已名满天下，方才奉诏入京。这时唐玄宗已经成了一个“春宵苦短日高起，从此君王不早朝”的安乐天子。他召李白进京，并不是为了任用贤才治理国家，只是需要一个出色的文人侍候他吃喝玩乐，点缀太平岁月，所以李白这时的名作是为杨贵妃写的《清平调》。杜甫写的《饮中八仙歌》写出了他在长安的生活。李白自知不为朝廷重用，三年后上书请求“还山”。玄宗也认为他不是治国之才，就赐金放他回乡。

746年，李白有越中之行，行前写了《梦游天姥吟留别》。这首诗和《蜀道难》一样，也是用比兴手法挥斥幽愤，借梦游仙山写他第二次到长安“攀龙堕天”的经历，所以最后两句说：“安能摧眉折腰事权贵，使我不得开心颜！”753年，李白在宣城与族叔李华登谢朓楼，写了一首《登楼歌》，也是愤世的作品。755年，安禄山造反，永王出兵讨伐，聘请李白入幕，不料永王和太子的矛盾演变为内战。永王败死，李白也被判处流放夜郎。759年春，李白到白帝城，遇赦获释，返回江陵，写下了著名的《早发白帝城》。760年，李白年已六十，再登庐山，又写了《庐山谣寄卢侍御虚舟》一诗，借用楚狂人嘲笑孔子的故事，暗示朝廷昏暗，从政危险，不如修仙学道。第二年他重游宣城，写了两首同情人民的诗：《宿五松山下荀媪家》和《哭宣城善酿纪叟》。762年，李白死于当涂，据说是醉后入水捉月而死。



综观李白一生，从青年时代起，直到逝世之前，都在为实现济苍生、安社稷的理想而奋斗。因为他身上浸透了伟大的政治理想和报国热情，发而为诗，自然充满了浓郁的时代气息，代表了广大人民的思想感情。他一生的经历，同盛唐时期的国运，几乎是息息相关的。早期的生活似乎充满了阳光，诗作也呈现出一派天朗气清、风和日丽的景象。诗中很少感慨，更无牢骚，即使是抒写离情别绪，也使人心旷神怡。开元中期，唐玄宗封泰山之后，骄侈之心日长，图治之心日消，李白诗中便也呈现出明暗交错、悲欢杂糅的特点。到了李白晚年，“安史之乱”后期，诗中又曾出现过希望的闪光，结果还是幻影破灭。于是他又决心修仙学道，浪迹江湖，这时即使寻欢作乐，也不过是强颜为欢，甚至是狂歌当哭了。

陈毅同志说过：“吾读李白诗，喜有浪漫味。大不满现实，遂为游仙醉。”可见李白的山水诗、神仙诗、饮酒诗、爱情诗，实际上大都是政治抒情诗，含有现实内容。因此可以说，李白是我国古代最伟大的浪漫主义诗人。现在把他的诗译成具有意美、音美、形美的英文，希望能和全世界的英语读者共享中国古诗之美。

(二)

李白是代表盛唐文化的诗人。我国古代黄河流域的北方文化，在哲学思想方面，以孔子的《论语》为代表，在文学艺术方面，以现实主义的《诗经》为典型。长江流域的南方

文化，在哲学上的代表是老子《道德经》，在文学上的典型是浪漫主义的《离骚》。而李白却是南北文化融会的典型代表。他的生平可以用杜甫的《赠李白》来概括：

秋来相顾尚飘蓬，未就丹砂愧葛洪。

痛饮狂歌空度日，飞扬跋扈为谁雄？

李白到了生命的秋天，还不能实现儒家入世的理想，为国为民，尽心竭力，而只能像一片浮云、一团飘蓬，只身漂流四方。他也不能实现道家出世的理想，求仙学道，炼丹升天，求得精神上的自由解脱。他只能高歌吟诗，狂饮度日，来浇愁解闷，正如杜甫在《饮中八仙歌》说的：

李白一斗诗百篇，长安市上酒家眠。

天子呼来不上船，自称臣是酒中仙。

这就是一个天才的悲剧，他像一个从天上贬到人间的“谪仙”，英雄无用武之地。什么时候才能实现他的凌云壮志，像庄子说的大鹏鸟那样“抟扶摇而上者九万里”呢？

李白的诗有雄浑的一面，也有飘逸的一面。雄浑的如《望庐山瀑布》：

日照香炉生紫烟，遥看瀑布挂前川。

飞流直下三千尺，疑是银河落九天。

这首诗是李白 26 岁第一次游庐山时的作品。巍巍的香炉峰上白云缭绕，在红日照耀下形成一片紫雾，仿佛冉冉上升的云烟，要把庐山和青天融成一片。瀑布像一条巨大的白练高挂在山川之间，在青山的衬托之下，云烟也似乎成了四溅的水珠，喷涌而下，简直就像银河从天而降，这样又把青天和庐山融成一片。气势雄浑，大有开天辟地之概。一个



“生”字，一个“挂”字，把山水都拟人化了，大有神工鬼斧之妙。如果不是神仙，谁能把瀑布高挂在庐山之上呢？这样，银河自上而下，云烟自下而上，就把天地融成混沌一片了。至于李白诗的飘逸风格，可以读他的《山中问答》：

问余何意栖碧山，笑而不答心自闲。

桃花流水窅然去，别有天地非人间。

这首绝句读来飘飘欲仙，超凡脱俗，有问无答。第一句问；第二句自叙面笑心闲，说明诗人热爱自由；第三句描写碧山之美，说明诗人热爱自然；第四句作结，说明山中别有天地，可算人间天堂。从诗中可以看出李白对美的热爱，以及遗世独立的风格。

李白写诗，爱用“比兴”手法，而比兴所用的形象，有的洋溢着阳刚的豪气，有的流露出柔和的秀气。有豪气的形象如大鹏鸟，在《上李邕》中，李白写道：

大鹏一日同风起，扶摇直上九万里。

假令风歇时下来，犹能簸却沧溟水。

……

大鹏其翼如垂天之云，可以凌霄冲天，正好象征诗人的凌云壮志。即使风停云散，也能掀起万丈波涛。可见气势之大，余波之威。

明月是古代诗人反复吟咏的对象，李白笔下的明月经常流露出灵秀之气，最著名的例子是《静夜思》：

床前明月光，疑是地上霜。

举头望明月，低头思故乡。

明月是圆的，所以中国人看见明月，就会想到一家人团



圆。但是西方人并没有团圆的观念，所以看到明月不一定会想到家庭团聚，同一个形象引起的联想并不相同，这是文化背景的关系。所以译成英文的时候，只好把第一句的“明月光”说成“一池月光”。又把第四句的“思故乡”说成是“沉浸在乡愁中”，这样就把月光和乡愁都比作水，二者之间才有联系。这就是说，中文用“圆”的形象联系起来的明月和思乡，在英文中改用水的形象联系起来了，由此也可看出诗人对自然的热爱。总之，文化交流，应该以互相沟通为目的，方法可以根据目的而改变。

译者把月光和乡愁都比作水，并不是译者凭空虚构，而是根据李白所用的比兴手法演绎出来的。李白在描写自然风景时，想象力丰富，如《梦游天姥吟留别》中说：

列缺霹雳，丘峦崩摧。

但在描写人的抽象情感时，反而用具体的自然风景来做比较。如下面三个例子：

1. 请君试问东流水，别意与之谁短长？（《金陵酒肆留别》）
2. 浮云游子意，落日故人情。（《送友人》）
3. 桃花潭水深千尺，不及汪伦送我情。（《赠汪伦》）

第一例把别意比作流水，可见情意长远；第二例把不可见的离情比成可见的浮云落日，形象生动；第三例把友情比作湖水，可见情深。三个例子都把情感比成自然景物。在翻译时，把可见的月光和不可见的乡愁都比作水，应该是符合李白风格的。译者应该假设：如果李白是今天的英美诗人，



他写《静夜思》会如何遣词造句呢？这时译者就要进入李白的内心，再用英文来表达诗情词义了，从这个意义上来说，译诗是再创作。

从以上的送别诗中，可以看出李白多么重视友情。而在抒发友情的送别诗中，最著名的一首可能是《黄鹤楼送孟浩然之广陵》：

故人西辞黄鹤楼，烟花三月下扬州。

孤帆远影碧空尽，惟见长江天际流。

这首七绝作于 728 年，那时李白二十七八岁，孟浩然却已四十了。李白写过一首《赠孟浩然》，诗中说道：“吾爱孟夫子，风流天下闻。红颜弃轩冕，白首卧松云。”从中可以看出他对孟浩然的敬仰。他们分别的地方是黄鹤楼，就是仙人乘鹤登天的地方，因此看到友人离别，也会想到仙人升天；看到白帆远去，又会想到黄鹤高飞。这样，诗一开始就笼罩在一片灵光仙气之中，天地似乎融成一片，人也似乎和天地合一了。其次，孟浩然要去的广陵，就是今天的扬州，当时是全国，甚至可以说是全世界最繁华的都市，而他们分别的时间又是杨柳如烟、繁花似锦的阳春三月，可以说是在最好的时光去到最好的地方，因此这句诗被誉为“千古丽句”。从黄鹤楼到广陵，长江两岸都花红柳绿，沉浸在一片美丽而幸福的氛围中。李白站在楼前，望着友人的帆船渐行渐远，消失在青天白云之间，仿佛像黄鹤一样融入了万里长空。这里我们可以想象诗人的心灵也融入天际了。最后，诗人眼里看到的只是不尽长江滚滚来，我们可以感到诗人心潮澎湃，犹如汹涌的波涛，越流越远，无穷无尽。这既象征了

诗人对友人的思念，也暗示了诗人自己的凌云壮志，冲涛破浪，一往无前。这首短诗前两句叙事，后两句写景，没有一句抒情的话，但是句句景语都是情语。从描写的景色中，我们可以感到诗人对友人的深情厚谊。这种借景写情的手法，是李白诗的一个特点，也是我国诗词和西方诗不同的地方。

不只是友情诗，就是男女之间的爱情诗也是一样。西方诗人，尤其是英国浪漫主义诗人，无论谈情说爱，都是直抒胸臆，直截了当，呕心沥血，倾诉衷肠。唐宋诗人却不相同，多是含蓄不露，借景写情，以巧制胜，以少胜多。例如李白的《春思》：

燕草如碧丝，秦桑低绿枝。

当君怀归日，是妾断肠时。

春风不相识，何事入罗帏？

诗题中的“春”字，既可以指自然界的春天，又可以托喻男女之间的爱情。第一句的“丝”字，既可以指丝线，也可以谐音指“思”（相思）。就是说在北方的妻子，看见萋萋芳草绿了，自然会想起在西方的夫君怎么还不回家，是不是桑叶太多，压弯了树枝呢？而“枝”字又可谐音“知”，就是说夫君是不是忙于丝绸的生意，因蚕桑而不“知”回家呢？由此可以看出古诗转弯抹角，一点也不直截了当，而是含蓄不露。燕草和秦桑则是借景写情。第三四句还是想象，不是事实，夫君不归，妻子相思得要断肠了，可见爱情之深。最后两句更是特写。说春风吹开了妻子床上的帐子，妻子却怪春风不尊重她的隐私，擅自闯入卧房。连春风都不许进来，更不用说陌生人了，由此可以看出妻子对夫君的忠贞



爱情，也可看出李白构思的巧妙。一个例子就能举一反三，可以算是以少胜多了。

李白的诗，无论是写友情或是爱情，都不带有悲观色彩。即使是写悲情，他也不太会用痛苦绝望的字眼。总的说来，他的诗显得平静乐观，这种乐观精神似乎出自他对生命和艺术的信念，出自他对精神自由与天人合一的不断追求。他的追求精神表现在《行路难》中，如：

长风破浪会有时，直挂云帆济沧海。

如果他感到失意或悲哀，就会买酒痛饮，借酒浇愁，如他在《将进酒》中说：

五花马，千金裘，呼儿将出换美酒，与尔同销万古愁！

既然说“万古愁”，那就不是个人的痛苦，而是千年万代，人所共有的愁恨了。他对天人合一的追求，可以从《独坐敬亭山》中看出：

众鸟高飞尽，孤云独去闲。

相看两不厌，只有敬亭山。

“孤云独去闲”中的“孤”和“闲”，不但是说天上的云，也是指地上的人，诗人和天上的云一样孤独、一样悠闲，这就是天人合一了。“相看两不厌”是说：人看山看不厌，山看人也看不厌，这也是达到了天人合一的境界，都说明了诗人对自然或对天的热爱。还有一个例子是《早发白帝城》：

朝辞白帝彩云间，千里江陵一日还。

两岸猿声啼不住，轻舟已过万重山。

白帝城在彩云之间，这似乎是仙居；一日可行千里，这

在唐代可算神速；猿鹤都是仙侣，能过万重山的轻舟自然是天河中的仙槎。第一句写空间，第二句写时间，第三句写动物，第四句写静物。无论时空动静，诗人都和神仙合而为一。无怪乎李白被称为“谪仙”了。

李白不但热爱自由和自然，也热爱美人，如《越女词》第五首：

镜湖水如月，耶溪女如雪。

新装荡新波，光景两奇绝。

“女如雪”把美人和自然美结合起来，这也是一种天人合一吧。不过李白继承屈原用香草和美人来象征君王的传统，有时字面上看起来是说美人，实际上却是指君王，如在《长相思》中说：

长相思，在长安……美人如花隔云端。

李白在长安并没有情人，即使有也不可能“隔云端”，所以美人是指皇帝。天高皇帝远，李白不受重用，政治抱负不能实现，所以就借美人抒怀了。李白对皇帝的不满，还表现在他的讽刺诗中，如他在《秦王扫六合》中讽刺秦始皇派徐市去海上寻求长生不老之药，结果还是：

但见三泉下，金棺葬寒灰！

至于他对劳动人民的同情，则体现在《丁都护歌》等诗中，这里就不一一列举了。

(三)

李白是我国在国外最著名的古代诗人。他的第一个英译



本是 1922 年由 Obata 翻译，由纽约达顿公司出版的，闻一多教授在 1926 年写了一篇评论文章。第二个英译本包括在威利的《李白的生平和诗歌》一书中，由英国阿伦及安文公司于 1950 年出版。第三个英译本包括在库柏翻译的《李白和杜甫》一书中，由英国企鹅图书公司于 1973 年出版。至于英美出版的《中国古代诗选》，选用李白的诗很多，这里不能一一列举。自 1980 年起，《李白诗选》的英译本多由国内出版。据范存忠教授在《外国语》中说：李白对英国浪漫主义诗人有过影响。这个问题我没有进行过研究，不过可以作个简单的比较。英国诗人可以用他们喜爱的飞鸟来代表：如华兹华斯的杜鹃，柯尔律治的信天翁，拜伦的雄鹰，雪莱的云雀，济慈的夜莺。那么，李白的象征就是大鹏鸟了。《上李邕》中说：“大鹏一日同风起，扶摇直上九万里。假令风歇时下来，犹能簸却沧溟水。”如果说美国意象派诗人庞德和洛威尔翻译的李白诗是“沧溟水”的话，那这个新译本就要“扶摇直上九万里”了。

许渊冲

2006 年 7 月 7 日



Introduction

I

Li Bai (701-762) is regarded as the greatest romantic poet of the Tang Dynasty (618-907) and of China of all times. Romanticism, according to *Macmillan English Dictionary*, is a style of literature, art, and music common at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th centuries that emphasized the importance of personal feelings and of nature. But as a method of writing, romanticism and realism co-exist with art and literature: romanticism is more subjective while realism is more objective. To use three terms in Chinese poetics, we may say “narration”(or “description”) is often used in realistic works while “comparison” and “association”(or similes and metaphors) are used in romantic works. In Li Bai’s poetry, we may find many similes and metaphors.

Born in 701 at the Lotus Village of Riverside County (in modern Sichuan Province), Li Bai passed his youth during the reign of Emperor Xuan Zong (or Bright Emperor 713-741) when the Tang Dyansty enjoyed its highest prosperity, so the young poet cherished a lofty aspiration to serve the country with might and main. In 725, Li Bai left his homeland at the age of twenty-five, passed the Three Gorges and traveled along the Yangtze River, when he wrote *The Moon over the Eyebrow Mountains* and *Farewell beyond the Thorn-Gate Gorge*, in which both the moon and water are personified, and which reveal his deep love of nature as well as of his native land. After his arrival at Jinling, he wrote *Ballads of a Merchant’s Wife* and *Parting at a Tavern in Jinling*. Five years



later he came for the first time to Chang'an, the Tang capital, in the hope of meeting people of influence who might help him to realize his political ideal. Disappointed, he wrote *Lovesickness* in which he compared his yearning to the love for a woman, *Hard is the Way of the World* and *Hard Is the Road to Shu* which is supposed to be his most important work in the first period of his verse-making.

In 735, he wrote *Invitation to Wine* in which he revealed his love of drink was due to his disappointment in his career. Famed for his poetry, he was summoned to the capital in 742 to write poems and songs for the emperor and his favorite mistress, of which the best-known are the three stanzas on *The Beautiful Lady Yang*. In 744 he left Chang'an for Luoyang where he met Du Fu and a warm friendship and exchange of poems began and lasted lifelong. In 746, he traveled in the south and wrote *Mount Skyland Ascended in a Dream* which ends in the following verse:

*How can I stoop and bow before the men in power
And so deny myself a happy hour?*

In 753, he visited Xuancheng (in modern Anhui Province) and wrote many poems in the Pavilion of Xie Tiao, including the following lines:

*Cut running water with a sword, 'twill faster flow;
Drink wine to drown your sorrow, it will heavier grow.*

In 755, An Lushan raised the standard of rebellion, and Li Bai was called to join the loyal forces led by Prince Yong in an attempt to resist the rebels. His political aspirations revived and he wrote his *Song of Eastern Expedition of Prince Yong* (One of Eleven Poems). When the Prince was defeated, he was banished to Yelang (in modern Guizhou Province) until an amnesty was declared in 759. When he regained his liberty, he wrote his joyful quatrain *Leaving the White Emperor Town at Dawn* (Others believe it was written much earlier). In 760, he revisited Mount



Lu (in modern Jiangxi Province), and wrote the *Song of Mount Lu*, which manifests his conversion to Taoism. In 762, he died at the age of sixty-two, chanting his last verse *On Death Bed*.

II

Li Bai is representative of High Tang culture, combination of Northern culture represented by Confucian philosophy and the *Book of Poetry*, and Southern culture represented by Taoist philosophy and the *Elegies of the South*. His life may be summed up by Du Fu's quatrain *To Li Bai*:

*When autumn comes, you're drifting still like thistledown:
You try to find the way to Heaven, but you fail.
In singing mad and drinking dead your days you drown.
O when will fly the roc, and when will leap the whale?*

In the autumn of his life Li Bai could not fulfill his Confucian ideal to serve the country but wander lonely like a drifting cloud. Nor could he find spiritual freedom in Taoism, which taught him to seek the way to Heaven. So he could not but chant poetry and drink wine to drown his sorrow as described by Du Fu in *Eight Immortal Drinkers*:

*Li Bai could turn sweet nectar into verses fine;
Drunk in the capital, he'd lie in shops of wine.
Even imperial summons proudly he'd decline,
Saying immortals could not leave the drink divine.*

Here we see the tragedy of a genius staying lonely on earth like an angel fallen from Heaven. When could he realize his aspiration to fly to the sky like the fabulous roc?

Li Bai's poetry is marked by masculine grandeur and natural grace.



For instance, *The Waterfall in Mount Lu Viewed from Afar* is typical of its grandeur:

*The sunlit Censer Peak exhales incense-like cloud;
The cataract hangs like upended stream, sounding loud.
Its torrent dashes down three thousand feet from high
As if the Silver River fell from azure sky.*

He wrote this quatrain probably at twenty-six when he first visited Mount Lu in northern Jiangxi Province. This poem, in which heaven and earth seem to merge into one, reads as if it were written by an immortal or an angel fallen from on high. The first line describes the peak which looks like a censer in which incense is burned to gods or immortals, but the incense turns into wreaths of cloud in sunlight as if the mountain began to blend with Heaven. The verb to “exhale” is used to personify the peak so that the mountain may seem to evaporate into the sky. In line 2 the word “upend” is employed to show that the poet believed there was a Creator in the universe, for who could upend a stream but gods and immortals? In line 3 the verb to “dash” shows the power of the waterfall and the grandeur of the Creator. In line 4 “the Silver River” is coined to give a new image to the Milky Way. Here we see on the one hand the mountain peak going up to blend with the sky and on the other the Milky Way coming down to mingle with the earth.

As for the other characteristic of Li’s poetry, we may read *A Dialogue in the Mountain* which is full of flowing grace:

*I dwell among green hills and someone asks me why,
My mind carefree, I smile and give him no reply.
Peach blossoms fallen on running water pass by,
This is an earthly paradise beneath the sky.*

This quatrain reads as smooth as the running water with peach blos-



soms fallen on it. It is a dialogue without an answer. The first line is a question, the second shows the poet's love of freedom, the third his love of nature, and the last his love of beauty and his image of paradise. This verse is full of natural grace.

Li Bai's imagery may either be sublime or graceful. One of his favorite images is the fabulous roc:

*If once together with the wind the roc could rise,
He would fly ninety thousand li up to the skies.
E'en if he must descend when the wind has abated,
Still billows will be raised and the sea agitated.*

Here we may say the roc is as vigorous in body as the poet is in mind, and the giant bird symbolizes the poet's love of freedom.

Another favorite image of his is the moon, for instance, in his well-known quatrain *Thoughts on a Silent Night*:

*Before my bed a pool of light —
O can it be frost on the ground?
Eyes raised, I see the moon so bright;
Head bent, in homesickness I'm drowned.*

In the last line the verb to "drown" is used to compare both moonlight and homesickness to water so as to find a link of connection between them. This quatrain is as popular in China as the song *Home Sweet Home* is in the West. The words are simple, but they could arouse the feeling deep in the heart and common to the millions.

In describing natural scenery, Li's verse is characterized by a swift and fierce imaginative sweep. For instance, he writes in *Mount Skyland Ascended in a Dream*:

*Oh! lightning flashes
And thunder rumbles,*



*With stunning crashes
Peak on peak crumbles.*

Even in describing human feelings, Li Bai always compares them to natural phenomena. For instance,

*1. Oh! ask the river flowing to the east, I pray,
If he is happier to go than I to stay!*

(Parting at a Tavern in Jinling)

*2. Like floating cloud you'll float away;
With parting day I'll part from you.*

(Farewell to a Friend)

*3. However deep the Lake of Peach Blossoms may be,
It's not so deep, O Wang Lun, as your love for me.*

(To Wang Lun Who Comes to Bid Me Farewell)

In these three couplets his friendship with common people is revealed and his parting sorrow compared to the parting day, its length to a river and its depth to a lake.

Li Bai is wellknown for his friendship with Meng Haoran, for whom he has written the following quatrain *Seeing Meng Haoran Off at Yellow Crane Tower*:

*My friend has left the west where the Yellow Crane towers
For River Town green with willows and red with flowers.
His lessening sail is lost in the boundless azure sky,
Where I see but the endless River rolling by.*

This quatrain was probably written in 728 when the twenty-eight-year-old Li Bai parted with the forty-year-old poet Meng, of whose "high value all the world is proud" and who, "white-haired lies beneath the pine and cloud." The place where they bade farewell was Yellow Crane Tower, from where, according to the legend, an immortal flew to Heaven



on the back of a yellow crane. Hence, seeing an old friend off at the tower might be associated with the immortal ascending to Heaven and the white sail with the white cloud and the yellow crane. In the very beginning of this quatrain heaven and earth are joined together by the crane and a blissful atmosphere is thus created. Then the place where Meng was going was really a heaven on earth for Yangzhou was the most prosperous city in the world during the eighth century, and the time they parted was the best season of the year. So the blissful atmosphere continued to pervade all along the river. Then Li Bai watched his friend's ship sail farther and farther away until it vanished from view and merged into the sky. Here we seem to feel the poet's heart dilate and become boundless as the heaven. In the end, what was left before the poet was only the rolling river and we seem to see his longing for his friend become endless as the river which also merged into the sky. The first couplet of this quatrain is a beautiful narration and the last a description of the beautiful scenery. There is not a single word about the poet's feeling, yet we can feel his heart beat with the rolling waves. Perhaps that is the reason why this quatrain is considered one of the best farewell poems in China.

In describing love between man and woman, unlike English romantic poets who are subjective, direct, profound and elaborate, Li is objective, suggestive, subtle and simple. We may read for instance *A Faithful Wife Longing for Her Husband in Spring*:

*With Northern grass like green silk thread,
Western mulberries bend their head.
When you think of your home on your part,
Already broken is my heart.
Vernal wind, intruder unseen,
O how dare you part my bed screen!*



In this poem Li Bai describes the tender love of a wife for her husband. The first couplet does not tell us directly that the husband has been far, far away for a long, long time, but hints at the fact that he is in the North where grass has turned green, and that his wife is left in the West where mulberry leaves have just grown thick. The second couplet is a simple contrast between their heart and thought. The third couplet is very subtle to insinuate how much the wife loves her lord and how faithful she is to him. She would not allow the wind to part her bedcurtain and intrude into her bed, let alone any human intruder. This instance shows how the Chinese poet would suggest more than express.

Even in describing sorrow, Li Bai is little given to expressions of despair or bitterness. His poetry on the whole is calm, at times sunny in outlook. It appears to grow out of certain convictions that he held regarding life and art out of a tireless search for spiritual freedom and communion with nature. For instance he writes in *Hard Is the Way of the World*:

*A time will come to ride the wind and cleave the waves,
I'll set my cloud-white sail and cross the sea which raves.*

When he felt sad, he would find consolation in drinking as he said in *Invitation to Wine*:

*My fur coat worth a thousand coins of gold
And my flower-dappled horse may be sold
To buy good wine that we may drown the woe age-old.*

We can see that his woe was not short-lived personal sorrow but age-old common woe. His communion with nature may be seen in *Sitting Alone in Face of Peak Jingting*:

*All birds have flown away, so high;
A lonely cloud drifts on, so free.
We are not tired, the Peak and I,*



Nor I of him, nor he of me.

The words “lonely” and “free” of the second line apply not only to the cloud but also to the human spectator and to the mood of the entire poem. So we can see the communion between the poet and nature. For another example, we may read his *Leaving the White Emperor Town at Dawn*:

*Leaving at dawn the White Emperor crowned with cloud,
I've sailed a thousand li through Three Gorges in a day.
With monkeys' sad adieux the riverbanks are loud,
My skiff has left ten thousand mountains far away.*

The White Emperor Town crowned with cloud looks like an abode for immortals. In the second line there is a marked contrast between the long distance and the short time. To go a thousand *li* in one day's space would seem impossible in ancient China for human beings but possible only for gods and goddesses. Here we see the poet more likened to an immortal than to a man. In the third line we hear the sad adieux of monkeys who were considered as companions of Taoist immortals. In the last line we see the fleeting movement of a skiff which looked like a leaf used by gods or goddesses to float on water. Thus a celestial atmosphere is created in this terrestrial quatrain. That is one of the reasons why Li Bai was called a poet immortal.

Li Bai's poetry frequently contains a strong element of fantasy and the supernatural. It is known for its lyrical innovative imagery and great beauty of language. His love of nature is revealed in many poems; his love of solitude in *Sitting Alone in Face of Peak Jingting*; his love of friends in his poems for Meng Haoran, Wang Changling, Du Fu, Wang Lun and his *Elegies on Master Brewer Ji of Xuancheng* and on his Japanese friend Abe Nakamaro; his love of children in his poem *Written for My Two Children in East Lu*; his love of drink in *Drinking Alone*



under the Moon. As for his love of beauty, we may read the following verse in his *Songs of the Southern Lass*:

*The rippling dress vies with the rippling stream,
We know not which by which is beautified.*

Some of his poems deal with the love of beauty in appearance, but with political aspiration in reality, for instance, *Lovesickness*. His sympathy for the oppressed people and lonely women is shown in the *Song of the Tow-Men* and *The North Wind*. On the other hand, his antipathy against the oppressing rulers is revealed in his *Crows Going Back to Their Nest* — *Satire on the King of Wu* and *The Emperor of Qin* who sought elixir of immortality in vain. The latter ends by the following:

*(We but see) Buried in underworld, the ashes cold
Of Emperor of Qin in coffin made of gold!*

III

Li Bai is the best-known Chinese poet in the world. The first English version of his poetry is *The Works of Li Po* translated by Shigeyoshi Obata and published in 1922 by Dutton in New York, on which Professor Wen Yiduo wrote a critical essay in 1926. The second version is included in Arthur Waley's *The Poetry and Career of Li Po* published in 1950 by Allen & Unwin in London. The third is *Li Po and Tu Fu* translated by Arthur Cooper and published in 1973 by the Penguin Books. Since 1980, many editions of Li Bai's poetry have been published in China. It is said that Li Bai has exercised influence on English romantic poets, I am not sure of that, but I think we may make a comparison between them. English poets may be symbolized by the birds they sing of, Wordsworth by the cuckoo, Coleridge by the albatross, Byron by the eagle, Shelley by the

skylark, and Keats by the nightingale. Then Li Bai can be symbolized by the fabulous roc by whom "*E'en if he must descend when the wind has abated, / Still billows will be raised and the sea agitated.*" American imagists Ezra Pound and Amy Lowell were also translators of Li Bai's poetry. May I not say that they are two billows raised by the roc? Sorry to say, their translations of Li Bai failed to "build up the blue dome of air" (Shelley) where the roc has to fly, so "I arise and rebuild it again" (Shelley: *Cloud*), and build a dome over the agitated sea.

Xu Yuanchong

July 7, 2006



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李太白



太白少夢筆頗生花自是天才倍膽沉酣中謾文未常錯誤而興不醉之人相對談事
皆不出太白所見時人歸為醉聖其詩放浪縱恣擺脫塵俗模寫物象體格豁達杜
甫稱其詩無敵志氣宏放飄然有超世之心亦喜縱橫擊劍晚好黃老云

李白画像（见清代上官周《晚笑堂竹庄画传》）

访戴天山道士不遇

犬吠水声中，
桃花带露浓。
树深时见鹿，
溪午不闻钟。
野竹分青霭，
飞泉挂碧峰。
无人知所去，
愁倚两三松。



Calling on a Taoist Recluse in Daitian Mountain^① without Meeting Him

Dogs' barks are muffled by the rippling brook,
Peach blossoms tinged with dew much redder look.
In the thick woods a deer is seen at times,
Along the stream I hear no noonday chimes.
In the blue haze which wild bamboos divide,
Tumbling cascades hang on green mountainside.
Where is the Taoist gone? None can tell me,
Saddened, I lean on this or that pine tree.

① In present-day Sichuan Province.

登锦城散花楼

日照锦城头，
朝光散花楼。
金窗夹绣户，
珠箔悬琼钩。
飞梯绿云中，
极目散我忧。
暮雨向三峡，
春江绕双流。
今来一登望，
如上九天游。



On the Flowery Tower in the Town of Silk^①

The sun shines on the Town of Silk, the Tower
Is steeped in morning glow as strewn with flowers.
By golden windows and embroidered doors,
The pearly curtains hang on silver hooks.
Into green clouds a flight of stairways soars;
The gloom's dispelled at such sunny outlooks.
The evening rain towards Three Gorges flies;
Around the town wind rivers crystal-clear.
Today I come to feast on this my eyes
As if I visited Celestial Sphere.

① Present-day Chengdu, capital of Sichuan Province.

峨眉山月歌

峨眉山月半轮秋，
影入平羌江水流。
夜发清溪向三峡，
思君不见下渝州。

The Moon over the Eyebrow Mountains^①

The crescent moon looks like old Autumn's golden brow,
Its deep reflection flows with limpid water blue.
I'll leave the town on Clear Stream for Three Gorges now.
O Moon, how I miss you when you are out of view!^②



① In present-day Sichuan Province.

② The moon was screened from view by the riverside cliffs.

巴 女 词

巴水急如箭，

巴船去若飞。

十月三千里，

郎行几岁归？



Song of a Woman of Ba^①

The River fast like arrow flows,
Your boat as if on wings swift goes.
Ten months, a thousand miles away,
When will you come back? On what day?

① Present-day Sichuan Province.



荆 州 歌

白帝城边足风波，
瞿塘五月谁敢过？
荆州麦熟茧成蛾，
缲丝忆君头绪多。
拨谷飞鸣奈妾何？



The Silk Spinner

The White King^① Town's seen many shipwrecks on the sands.
 Who dare to sail through Three Gorges in the fifth moon?
 The wheat is ripe, the silkworm has made its cocoon.
 My thoughts of you are endless as the silken strands.
 The cuckoos sing: "Go Home!" When will you come to homeland?

① Or the White Emperor Town in present-day Sichuan Province, situated on the northern shore of the Changjiang (Yangtze) River.



渡荆门送别

渡远荆门外，
来从楚国游。
山随平野尽，
江入大荒流。
月下飞天镜，
云生结海楼。
仍怜故乡水，
万里送行舟。

Farewell beyond the Thorn-Gate Gorge^①

Leaving Mount Thorn-Gate far away,
My boat pursues its eastward way.
Where mountains end begins the plain;
The river rolls to boundless main.
The moon, celestial mirror, flies;
The clouds like miraged towers rise.
The water that from homeland flows
Will follow me where my boat goes.



^① In present-day Hubei Province.

望庐山瀑布

(二首选一)

日照香炉生紫烟，
遥看瀑布挂前川。
飞流直下三千尺，
疑是银河落九天。



The Waterfall in Mount Lu^① Viewed from Afar (One of Two Poems)

The sunlit Censer Peak exhales incense-like cloud;
The cataract hangs like upended stream, sounding loud.
Its torrent dashes down three thousand feet from high
As if the Silver River^② fell from azure sky.



① Or the Lu Mountains in present-day Jiangxi Province.

② The Chinese name for the Milky Way.



望庐山五老峰

庐山东南五老峰，
青天削出金芙蓉。
九江秀色可揽结，
吾将此地巢云松。



The Five Greybeard-Like Peaks of Mount Lu Viewed from Afar

Southeast of Mountain Lu, Five Peaks of Greybeard stand
 As golden lotus carved by Heaven's azure hand.
 If I could drink in beauty of the Rivers Nine^①,
 Here I would make my nest amid the cloud and pine.

① Jiujiang in present-day Jiangxi Province, means "nine rivers."



望 天 门 山

天门中断楚江开，
碧水东流至此回。
两岸青山相对出，
孤帆一片日边来。

Mount Heaven's Gate^① Viewed from Afar

Breaking Mount Heaven's Gate, the great River rolls through,
Its east-flowing green billows, hurled back here, turn north.
From the two river banks thrust out the mountains blue,
Leaving the sun behind, a lonely sail comes forth.



① In present-day Anhui Province.

杨 叛 儿

君歌《杨叛儿》，
妾劝新丰酒。
何许最关人？
乌啼白门柳。
乌啼隐杨花，
君醉留妾家。
博山炉中沉香火，
双烟一气凌紫霞。



A Love Song

You sing a lover's lore;
I urge you to drink more.
What touches you and me?
Crows nest on willow tree.
Crows hide 'mid poplar flowers;
Drunk, you stay in my bowers.
Behold the censer and the sandalwood in fire!
Two wreaths of smoke combine and rise higher and higher.





长干行

(二首)

一

妾发初覆额，
折花门前剧。
郎骑竹马来，
绕床弄青梅。
同居长千里，
两小无嫌猜。
十四为君妇，
羞颜未尝开。
低头向暗壁，
千唤不一回。
十五始展眉，
愿同尘与灰。
常存抱柱信，
岂上望夫台！
十六君远行，
瞿塘滟滪堆。
五月不可触，
猿声天上哀！
门前迟行迹，
一一生绿苔。
苔深不能扫，
落叶秋风早。
八月蝴蝶黄，
双飞西园草。
感此伤妾心，



Ballads of a Merchant's Wife (Two Poems)

I

My forehead covered by my hair cut straight,
I played with flowers pluck'd before the gate.
On a hobbyhorse you came upon the scene,
Around the well we played with mums still green.
We lived close neighbors on riverside lane.
Carefree and innocent, we children twain.
I was fourteen when I became your bride,
I'd often turn my bashful face aside.
Hanging my head, I'd look towards the wall,
A thousand times I'd not answer your call.
I was fifteen when I composed my brows,
To mix my dust with yours were my dear vows.
Rather than break faith, you declared you'd die.
Who knew I'd live alone in a tower high?
I was sixteen when you went far away,
Passing Three Gorges studded with rocks gray,
Where ships were wrecked when spring flood ran high,
Where gibbons' wails seemed coming from the sky.
Green moss now overgrows before our door,
Your footprints, hidden, can be seen no more.
Moss can't be swept away: so thick it grows,
And leaves fall early when the west wind blows.
The yellow butterflies in autumn pass
Two by two o'er our western garden grass.
This sight would break my heart, and I'm afraid,



坐愁红颜老！
早晚下三巴，
预将书报家。
相迎不道远，
直至长风沙。

二

忆妾深闺里，
烟尘不曾识。
嫁与长干人，
沙头候风色。
五月南风兴，
思君下巴陵。
八月西风起，
想君发扬子。
去来悲如何，
见少别离多！
湘潭几日到？
妾梦越风波！
昨夜狂风度，
吹折江头树。
森森暗无边，
行人在何处？
好乘浮云骢，
佳期兰渚东。
鸳鸯绿蒲上，
翡翠锦屏中。
自怜十五余，
颜色桃花红。
那作商人妇，
愁水又愁风！



Sitting alone, my rosy cheeks would fade.
Sooner or later, you'll leave the western land.
Do not forget to let me know beforehand.
I'll walk to meet you and not call it far
To go to Long Wind Sands or where you are.

II

Brought up while young in inner room,
I knew nor wind nor dust that rose.
Since you became my dear bridegroom,
I've leaned on Sands from where wind blows.
In the fifth moon south wind is high,
I know you're sailing the river down;
In the eighth moon west wind comes nigh,
I think you'll leave the river town.
I'm grieved to see you come and go:
We sever longer than we meet.
When will you come home? Let me know!
To cross the waves my dream is fleet.
Last night a violent wind blew,
Breaking the trees by riverside.
So dark the boundless waters grew!
Where could your roving ship abide?
I'd ride upon a cloud-like steed
To meet you east of River Green
Like two love birds amid the reed
Or kingfishers on silken screen.
I pity my fifteen-odd years,
Like blooming peach my face is warm.
But I'm a merchant's wife in tears,
Who worries over wind and storm.

金陵城西楼月下吟

金陵夜寂凉风发，
独上高楼望吴越。
白云映水摇空城，
白露垂珠滴秋月。
月下沉吟久不归，
古来相接眼中稀。
解道澄江净如练，
令人长忆谢玄晖。



On the Western Tower of Jinling^①

The cool breeze blows on silent night in Town of Stone,
To view the south I mount the high tower alone.
White clouds and city walls mirrored on ripples swoon;
Dewdrops look like pearls dripping from the autumn moon.
Crooning long, I won't go back, drowned in moonrays;
How few are connoisseurs in my eyes since olden days!
Seeing the river crystal-clear and silver-white,
How I miss the unforgettable poet bright!



① The poet gives free rein to his imagination in describing the scenery of Jinling or the Town of Stone: clouds could swoon, pearls could drip from the moon, and the poet could be drowned in moonlight. The unforgettable poet refers to Xie Tiao (464-499).



金陵酒肆留别

风吹柳花满店香，
吴姬压酒唤客尝。
金陵子弟来相送，
欲行不行各尽觞。
请君试问东流水，
别意与之谁短长？



Parting at a Tavern in Jinling^①

The tavern's sweetened when wind blows in willow-down,
A Southern maiden urges the guests to taste her wine.
My dear young friends have come to see me leave the town,
They who stay drink their cups and I who leave drink mine.
Oh! ask the river flowing to the east, I pray,
If he is happier to go than I to stay!

① Present-day Nanjing, capital of Jiangsu Province.



夜下征虏亭

船下广陵去，
月明征虏亭。
山花如绣颊，
江火似流萤。



Passing by the Triumphal Tower at Night

My boat sails down to River Town^①,
The Tower's bright in the moonlight.
The flowers blow like cheeks that glow,
And lanterns beam as fireflies gleam.

① Present-day Yangzhou in Jiangsu Province.

上 李 邕

大鹏一日同风起，
扶摇直上九万里，
假令风歇时下来，
犹能簸却沧溟水。
时人见我恒殊调，
见余大言皆冷笑。
宣父犹能畏后生，
丈夫未可轻年少。



The Roc —To Li Yong^①

If once together with the wind the roc could rise,
He would fly ninety thousand *li* up to the skies.
E'en if he must descend when the wind has abated,
Still billows will be raised and the sea agitated.
Seeing me, those in power think I'm rather queer;
Hearing me freely talk, they can't refrain from sneer.
Confucius was in dread of talents that would be;
A sage will ne'er look down upon a youth like me.

① In 726 Li Bai sought the patronage of Li Yong, official who was more than twenty years older than he.

静 夜 思

床前明月光，
疑是地上霜。
举头望明月，
低头思故乡。



Thoughts on a Silent Night

Before my bed a pool of light—
O can it be frost on the ground?
Eyes raised, I see the moon so bright;
Head bent, in homesickness I'm drowned.

黄鹤楼送孟浩然之广陵

故人西辞黄鹤楼，
烟花三月下扬州。
孤帆远影碧空尽，
惟见长江天际流。



Seeing Meng Haoran Off at Yellow Crane Tower^{①②}

My friend has left the west where the Yellow Crane towers
For River Town green with willows and red with flowers.
His lessening sail is lost in the boundless azure sky,
Where I see but the endless River rolling by.

① In Wuchang, capital of Hubei Province.

② Meng leaves for the most beautiful town at the most beautiful time of the year.

长相思

(二首)

一

长相思，
在长安。
络纬秋啼金井阑，
微霜凄凄簟色寒。
孤灯不明思欲绝，
卷帷望月空长叹。
美人如花隔云端。
上有青冥之高天，
下有渌水之波澜。
天长路远魂飞苦，
梦魂不到关山难。
长相思，
摧心肝！

二

日色欲尽花含烟，
月明如素愁不眠。
赵瑟初停凤凰柱，
蜀琴欲奏鸳鸯弦。
此曲有意无人传。



Lovesickness (Two Poems)

I

I yearn for one
Who's in Chang'an^①.
In autumn crickets wail beside the golden rail;
The first frost, although light, invades the bed's delight.
My lonely lamp burns dull, of longing I would die;
Rolling up screens to view the moon, in vain I sigh.
My flower-like Beauty is high
Up as clouds in the sky.
Above, the boundless heaven spreads blue screen;
Below, the endless river rolls its billows green.
My soul can't fly o'er sky so vast nor earth so wide;
In dreams I can't go through mountain pass to her side.
We are so far apart,
The yearning breaks my heart.

II

Flowers exhale thin mist when daylight fades away;
The sleepless feels sad to see the moon shed silken ray.
My harp on phoenix-holder has just become mute,
I'll try to play upon lovebird strings of my lute.
My song's a message. Who
Will carry it to you?

① The Tang capital.

愿随春风寄燕然，
忆君迢迢隔青天。
昔时横波目，
今作流泪泉。
不信妾肠断，
归来看取明镜前！

I'd ask spring wind to bear it up to the frontiers.
Between you and me there is the boundless blue sky.
Do you remember my wave-like eyes of days gone by?
Now they become a spring of tears.
If you do not believe my heart is broken, alas!
Come back and look into my bright mirror of brass!



登新平楼

去国登兹楼，
怀归伤暮秋。
天长落日远，
水净寒波流。
秦云起岭树，
胡雁飞沙洲。
苍苍几万里，
目极令人愁。

Ascending Xinping Tower^①

Leaving the capital, I climb this tower.
Can I return home like late autumn flower?
The sky is vast, the setting sun is far;
The water clear, the waves much colder are.
Clouds rise above the western-mountain trees;
O'er river dunes fly south-going wild geese,
The boundless land outspread 'neath gloomy skies.
How gloomy I feel while I stretch my eyes!



① In present-day Shanxi Province.



蜀道难

噫吁哉，危乎高哉！
蜀道之难，难于上青天。
蚕丛及鱼凫，
开国何茫然！
尔来四万八千岁，
不与秦塞通人烟。
西当太白有鸟道，
可以横绝峨眉巅。
地崩山摧壮士死，
然后天梯石栈相钩连。
上有六龙回日之高标，
下有冲波逆折之回川。
黄鹤之飞尚不得过，
猿猱欲度愁攀援。
青泥何盘盘，
百步九折萦岩峦。
扞参历井仰胁息，
以手抚膺坐长叹。
问君西游何时还？
畏途巉岩不可攀。
但见悲鸟号古木，
雄飞雌从绕林间。
又闻子规啼夜月，愁空山。
蜀道之难，难于上青天，



Hard Is the Road to Shu^①

Oho! behold! how steep! how high!
 The road to Shu is harder than to climb the sky.
 Since the two pioneers
 Put the kingdom in order,
 Have passed forty-eight thousand years,
 And few have tried to pass its border.
 There's a bird track o'er Great White Mountain to the west,
 Which cuts through Mountain Eyebrows by the crest.
 The crest crumbled, five serpent-killing heroes slain,
 Along the cliffs a rocky path was hacked then.
 Above stand peaks too high for the sun to pass o'er;
 Below the torrents run back and forth, churn and roar.
 Even the Golden Crane can't fly across;
 How to climb over, gibbons are at a loss.
 What tortuous mountain path Green Mud Ridge faces!
 Around the top we turn nine turns each hundred paces.
 Looking up breathless, I can touch the stars nearby;
 Beating my breast, I sink on the ground with long sigh.
 When will you come back from this journey to the west?
 How can you climb up dangerous path and mountain crest,
 Where you can hear on ancient trees but sad birds wail
 And see the female birds fly, followed by the male?
 And hear homo-going cuckoos weep
 Beneath the moon in mountains deep?
 The road to Shu is harder than to climb the sky,

① Present-day Sichuan Province.



使人听此凋朱颜。
连峰去天不盈尺，
枯松倒挂倚绝壁。
飞湍瀑流争喧豗，
砅崖转石万壑雷。
其险也如此，
嗟尔远道之人胡为乎来哉！
剑阁峥嵘而崔嵬，
一夫当关，
万夫莫开。
所守或匪亲，
化为狼与豺。
朝避猛虎，
夕避长蛇。
磨牙吮血，
杀人如麻。
锦城虽云乐，
不如早还家。
蜀道之难，难于上青天，
侧身西望长咨嗟！



On hearing this, your cheeks would lose their rosy dye.
Between the sky and peaks there is not a foot's space,
And ancient pines hang, head-down, from the cliff's surface,
And cataracts and torrents dash on boulders under,
Roaring like thousands of echoes of thunder.
So dangerous these places are,
Alas! why should you come here from afar?
Rugged is the path between the cliffs so steep and high,
Guarded by one
And forced by none.
Disloyal guards
Would turn wolves and pards,
Man-eating tigers at daybreak
And at dusk blood-sucking long snake.
One may make merry in the Town of Silk^①, I know,
But I would rather homeward go.
The road to Shu is harder than to climb the sky,
I'd turn and, westward look with long, long sigh.

① Chengdu, capital of Sichuan Province.



行路难

(三首)

一

金樽清酒斗十千，
玉盘珍羞直万钱。
停杯投箸不能食，
拔剑四顾心茫然。
欲渡黄河冰塞川，
将登太行雪满山。
闲来垂钓碧溪上，
忽复乘舟梦日边。
行路难，
行路难，
多歧路，
今安在？
长风破浪会有时，
直挂云帆济沧海。

二

大道如青天，
我独不得出。
羞逐长安社中儿，
赤鸡白狗赌梨栗。
弹剑作歌奏苦声，
曳裾王门不称情。
淮阴市井笑韩信，
汉家公卿忌贾生。



Hard Is the Way of the World (Three Poems)

I

Pure wine in golden cup costs ten thousand coppers, good!
Choice dish in a jade plate is worth as much, nice food!
Pushing aside my cup and chopsticks, I can't eat;
Drawing my sword and looking round, I stamp my feet.
I can't cross Yellow River: ice has stopped its flow;
I can't climb Mount Taihang: the sky is blind with snow.
I can but poise a fishing pole beside a stream
Or set sail for the sun like a sage in a dream.
Hard is the way,
Hard is the way.
Don't go astray!
Whither today?
A time will come to ride the wind and cleave the waves,
I'll set my cloud-white sail and cross the sea which raves.

II

The way is broad like the blue sky,
But no way out before my eye.
I am ashamed to follow those who have no guts,
Gambling on fighting cocks and dogs for pears and nuts.
Feng would go homeward way, having no fish to eat;
Zhou did not think to bow to noblemen was meet.
General Han was mocked in the marketplace;
The brilliant scholar Jia was banished in disgrace.



君不见，昔时燕家重郭隗，
拥彗折节无嫌猜。
剧辛乐毅感恩分，
输肝剖胆效英才。
昭王白骨萦蔓草，
谁人更扫黄金台？
行路难，归去来！

三

有耳莫洗颍川水，
有口莫食首阳蕨。
含光混世贵无名，
何用孤高比云月。
吾观自古贤达人，
功成不退皆殒身。
子胥既弃吴江上，
屈原终投湘水滨。
陆机雄才岂自保。
李斯税驾苦不早。
华亭鹤唳讵可闻？
上蔡苍鹰何足道！
君不见，吴中张翰称达生，
秋风忽忆江东行。
且乐生前一杯酒，
何须身后千载名！



Have you not heard of King of Yan in days gone by,
Who venerated talents and built Terrace high
On which he offered gold to gifted men
And stooped low and swept the floor to welcome them?
Grateful, Ju Xin and Yue Yi came then
And served him heart and soul, both full of strategem.
The King's bones were now buried, who would sweep the floor
Of the Gold Terrace any more?
Hard is the way.
Go back without delay!

III

Don't wash your ears on hearing something you dislike
Nor die of hunger like famous hermits on the Pike!
Living without high fame among the motley crowd,
Why should one be as lofty as the moon or cloud?
Of ancient talents who failed to retire there's none
But came to tragic ending after glory's won.
The head of General Wu was hung o'er city gate;
In the river was drowned the Poet Laureate.
The highly talented scholar wished in vain
To preserve his life to hear the cry of the crane.
Minister Li regretted not to have retired
To hunt with falcon gray as he had long desired.
Have you not heard of Zhang Han who resigned, carefree,
To go home to eat his perch with high glee?
Enjoy a cup of wine while you're alive!
Do not care if your fame will not survive!



从 军 行

百战沙场碎铁衣，
城南已合数重围。
突营射杀呼延将，
独领残兵千骑归。



Song of a General after the Break-Through^①

After a hundred battles, his armor is worn,
The southern town surrounded ring on ring in the morn.
When he breaks through and kills the chief of Tartar peers,
He comes back with a thousand beaten cavaliers.

^① This quatrain describes a general with his armor outworn and his cavaliers beaten after a break-through.

送友人入蜀

见说蚕丛路，
崎岖不易行。
山从人面起，
云傍马头生。
芳树笼秦栈，
春流绕蜀城。
升沉应已定，
不必问君平。

To a Friend Departing for Shu

Rugg'd is the road, I hear,
Built by the pioneer.
In front steep mountains rise;
Beside the steed cloud flies.
O'er plank-way trees hang down;
Spring water girds the town.
Decid'd our rise and fall,
Do not bother at all!



春夜洛城闻笛

谁家玉笛暗飞声，
散入春风满洛城。
此夜曲中闻《折柳》，
何人不起故园情？



Hearing a Bamboo Flute on a Spring Night in Luoyang^①

From whose house comes the song of the jade flute unseen?
It fills the town of Luoyang, spread by wind of spring.
Tonight I hear the farewell song of *Willows Green*.
To whom the tune will not nostalgic feeling bring?

① The eastern capital during the Tang Dynasty.



日 出 入 行

日出东方隈，
似从地底来。
历天又复入西海，
六龙所舍安在哉？
其始与终古不息，
人非元气，
安得与之久徘徊？
草不谢荣于春风，
木不怨落于秋天。
谁挥鞭策驱四运？
万物兴歇皆自然。
羲和！羲和！
汝奚汨没于荒淫之波？
鲁阳何德？
驻景挥戈。
逆道违天，
矫诬实多。
吾将囊括大块，
浩然与溟滓同科。



Song of Sunrise and Sunset ①

From the east the sun comes around;
 It seems to rise from underground.
 Crossing the sky, it sinks in the sea of the west.
 Where could the six dragons driving it take their rest?
 It never changes from beginning to end.
 Man is not a spirit,
 Could he accompany it
 As a dear friend?
 Grass will not for its growth thank the spring breeze;
 Leaves won't complain of autumn when fallen from trees.
 Who could drive summer and winter, autumn and spring?
 Nature rules over rise and fall of everything.
 O Driver of the Sun,
 What on the boundless waves have you done?
 O Herculean Son,
 How could you wield your spear to stop the Driver's run?
 You go against the law divine.
 What you do is quite out of line.
 I would embrace the universe
 To be one with Nature for better or for worse.

① The legend went that the Driver of the Sun rode on six dragons, but the poet doubts it and jeers at the legendary Driver and the Herculean Son who could stop his run. At last the poet would become one with Nature.



塞 下 曲

(六首选一)

五月天山雪，
无花只有寒。
笛中闻《折柳》，
春色未曾看。
晓战随金鼓，
宵眠抱玉鞍。
愿将腰下剑，
直为斩楼兰。

Frontier Song **(One of Six Poems)**

In summer sky-high mountains white with snow,
In bitter cold no fragrant flowers blow.
Songs on the flute are heard of *Willows Green*,
But nowhere is the vernal colour seen.
From dawn till dusk to beats of drum they fight;
With saddle in their arms they rest at night.
From scabbard at my waist I'd draw my sword
To kill the chieftain of the Turki horde.





关 山 月

明月出天山，
苍茫云海间。
长风几万里，
吹度玉门关。
汉下白登道，
胡窥青海湾。
由来征战地，
不见有人还。
戍客望边色，
思归多苦颜。
高楼当此夜，
叹息未应闲。

The Moon over the Mountain Pass

From Heaven's Peak the moon rises bright,
Over a boundless sea of cloud.
Winds blow for miles with main and might
Past the Jade Gate which stands so proud.
Our warriors march down the frontier
While Tartars peer across Blue Bays.
From the battlefield outstretched here,
None have come back since olden days.
Guards watch the scene of borderland,
Thinking of home, with wistful eyes.
Tonight upstairs their wives would stand,
Looking afar with longing sighs.



乌 夜 啼

黄云城边乌欲栖，
归飞哑哑枝上啼。
机中织锦秦川女，
碧纱如烟隔窗语。
停梭怅然忆远人，
独宿孤房泪如雨。



The Crows Crying at Night

'Neath yellow clouds the crows fly home by city wall,
They caw amid the leaves in tree tops at nightfall.
The wife of Western Plain weaves brocade at her loom,
Behind the misty screen she murmurs — but to whom?
She stops her shuttle, thinking of him far away,
And weeps, so lonely in her bower night and day.





春 思

燕草如碧丝，
秦桑低绿枝。
当君怀归日，
是妾断肠时。
春风不相识，
何事入罗帷？



A Faithful Wife Longing for Her Husband in Spring^①

With Northern grass like green silk thread,
Western mulberries bend their head.
When you think of your home on your part,
Already broken is my heart.
Vernal wind, intruder unseen,
O how dare you part my bed screen!

① The wife is so faithful to her husband that she would not allow the vernal wind to part her bed screen.



三五七言

秋风清，
秋月明。
落叶聚还散，
寒鸦栖复惊。
相思相见知何日？
此时此夜难为情！

Yearning

Fresh autumn breeze,
Bright autumn moon.
Fallen leaves gather and scatter around the trees;
Cold-stricken crows soon fall asleep and wake as soon.
I long for you. When can I see you? On which day?
How can I bear this lonely night? What can I say?





怨 情

美人卷珠帘，
深坐颦蛾眉。
但看泪痕湿，
不知心恨谁。

Waiting in Vain

A lady fair uprolls the screen,
With eyebrows knit she waits in vain.
Wet stains of tears can still be seen.
Who, heartless, has caused her the pain?



玉阶怨

玉阶生白露，
夜久侵罗袜。
却下水精帘，
玲珑望秋月。



Waiting in Vain on Marble Steps

The marble steps with dew turn cold,
Silk soles are wet when night grows old.
She comes in, lowers crystal screen,
Still gazing at the moon serene.





长 门 怨

(二首)

一

天回北斗挂西楼，
金屋无人萤火流。
月光欲到长门殿，
别作深宫一段愁。

二

桂殿长愁不记春，
黄金四屋起秋尘。
夜悬明镜青天上，
独照长门宫里人。

Sorrow of the Long Gate Palace^① **(Two Poems)**

I

The plough has turned around and hangs o'er Western Tower,
None but the fireflies sail the gloom of Golden Bower.
The lonely moon which peeps in Palace of Long Gate
Will shed more sorrow on the dweller desolate.

II

Does Laurel Bower where grief reigns remember spring?
On the four golden walls the dusts of autumn cling.
The night holds up a mirror bright in azure sky
To show the fair on earth as lonely as on high.



① The Long Gate Palace was the dwelling of a disfavored queen of the Han Dynasty.



子夜吴歌 (四首)

一

秦地罗敷女，
采桑绿水边。
素手青条上，
红妆白日鲜。
蚕饥妾欲去，
五马莫留连！

二

镜湖三百里，
菡萏发荷花。
五月西施采，
人看隘若耶。
回舟不待月，
归去越王家！

Ballads of Four Seasons (Four Poems)

Spring

The lovely Lo Fo^① of the western land
Plucks mulberry leaves by the waterside.
Across the green boughs stretches out her white hand;
In golden sunshine her rosy robe is dyed.
“My silkworms are hungry, I cannot stay.
Tarry not with your five-horse cab, I pray.”

Summer

On Mirror Lake outspread for miles and miles,
The lotus lilies in full blossom teem.
In fifth moon Xi Shi^①, gathers them with smiles,
Watchers o'erwhelm the bank of Yoya Stream.
Her boat turns back without waiting moonrise
To royal house amid amorous sighs.

① Lo Fo and Xi Shi were beautiful ladies.





三

长安一片月，
万户捣衣声。
秋风吹不尽，
总是玉关情。
何日平胡虏？
良人罢远征！

四

明朝驿使发，
一夜絮征袍。
素手抽针冷，
那堪把剪刀！
裁缝寄远道，
几日到临洮？

Autumn

Moonlight is spread all o'er the capital,
The sound of beating clothes far and near
Is brought by autumn wind which can't blow all
The longings away for far-off frontier.
When can we vanquish the barbarian foe
So that our men no longer into battle go?

Winter

The courier will depart next day, she's told,
She sews a warrior's gown all night.
Her fingers feel the needle cold.
How can she hold the scissors tight?
The work is done, she sends it far away.
When will it reach the town where warriors stay?





将进酒

君不见黄河之水天上来，
奔流到海不复回！
君不见高堂明镜悲白发，
朝如青丝暮成雪！
人生得意须尽欢，
莫使金樽空对月。
天生我材必有用，
千金散尽还复来。
烹羊宰牛且为乐，
会须一饮三百杯。
岑夫子，
丹丘生，
将进酒，
杯莫停。
与君歌一曲，
请君为我倾耳听。
钟鼓馔玉不足贵，
但愿长醉不复醒。
古来圣贤皆寂寞，
惟有饮者留其名。
陈王昔时宴平乐，
斗酒十千恣欢谑。
主人何为言少钱，
径须沽取对君酌。
五花马，
千金裘，
呼儿将出换美酒，
与尔同销万古愁。



Invitation to Wine

Do you not see the Yellow River come from the sky,
 Rushing into the sea and ne'er come back?
 Do you not see the mirrors bright in chambers high
 Grieve o'er your snow-white hair though once it was silk-black?
 When hopes are won, oh! drink your fill in high delight,
 And never leave your wine-cup empty in moonlight!
 Heaven has made us talents, we're not made in vain.
 A thousand gold coins spent, more will turn up again.
 Kill a cow, cook a sheep and let us merry be,
 And drink three hundred cupfuls of wine in high glee!
 Dear friends of mine,
 Cheer up, cheer up!
 I invite you to wine.
 Do not put down your cup!
 I will sing you a song, please hear,
 O hear! lend me a willing ear!
 What difference will rare and costly dishes make?
 I only want to get drunk and never to wake.
 How many great men were forgotten through the ages?
 But great drinkers are more famous than sober sages.
 The Prince of Poets feast'd in his palace at will,
 Drank wine at ten thousand a cask and laughed his fill.
 A host should not complain of money he is short,
 To drink with you I will sell things of any sort.
 My fur coat worth a thousand coins of gold
 And my flower-dappled horse may be sold
 To buy good wine that we may drown the woe age-old.



美人出南国

美人出南国，
灼灼芙蓉姿。
皓齿终不发，
芳心空自持。
由来紫宫女，
共妒青娥眉。
归来潇湘沚，
沉吟何足悲？

The Beauty Born in South

The Beauty comes from South,
Blooming like lotus flower.
Her teeth brighten her mouth,
She's lofty like a tower.
Long since palace maids vied
To outshine beaming eyes.
Come back to riverside,
Her songs turn to sad sighs.





赠孟浩然

吾爱孟夫子，
风流天下闻。
红颜弃轩冕，
白首卧松云。
醉月频中圣，
迷花不事君。
高山安可仰？
徒此揖清芬。

To Meng Haoran

Dear Master Meng, I hail you from the heart,
Of your high value all the world is proud.
Red-cheek'd, from cap to cab you kept apart;
White-haired, you lie beneath the pine and cloud.
Drunken with wine as oft as with moonlight,
You love the blooms too much to serve the crown.
Of lofty mountain how to reach the height?
We can but breathe your fragrance the wind brings down.





夜泊牛渚怀古

牛渚西江夜，
青天无片云。
登舟望秋月，
空忆谢将军。
余亦能高咏，
斯人不可闻。
明朝挂帆席，
枫叶落纷纷。

Thoughts of Old Time on a Night-Mooring near Cattle Hill

I moor near Cattle Hill at night
 When there's no cloud to fleck the sky.
 On deck I gaze at the moon so bright,
 Thinking of General Xie^① with a sigh.
 I too can chant — to what avail?
 None has like him a listening ear.
 Tomorrow I shall hoist my sail,
 'Mid fallen maple leaves I'll leave here.



① General Xie of the Jin Dynasty (265-420) praised a young poet who chanted his poem one moonlit night on the river by Cattle Hill (in present-day Anhui Province).



客 中 行

兰陵美酒郁金香，
玉碗盛来琥珀光。
但使主人能醉客，
不知何处是他乡。



While Journeying

How flavorful is golden-tulip Lanling^① wine!
Filling my bowl of jade, in amber it will glow.
It is enough if you can make me drunk, host mine,
No more nostalgia in foreign land shall I know.

① In present-day Shandong Province.

陌上赠美人

骏马骄行踏落花，
垂鞭直拂五云车。
美人一笑攀珠箔，
遥指红楼是妾家。



To a Fair Lady Encountered on the Road

I trample fallen flowers on a steed so proud,
And flick my whip at a cab of five-colored cloud.
The jeweled curtain drawn reveals a lady fair.
Smiling, she points to a mansion red, "My house is there."





登太白峰

西上太白峰，
夕阳穷登攀。
太白与我语，
为我开天关。
愿乘泠风去，
直出浮云间。
举手可近月，
前行若无山。
一别武功去，
何时复更还？

Ascending the Snow-White Peak^①

Ascending from the west the Peak Snow-White,
Not till the sun goes down I reach its height.
The snow-white Morning Star tells me to wait
Until he opens the Celestial Gate.
I wish to ride cold wind and floating cloud
To touch the moon and dwarf all mountains proud.
But once I left behind the Western land,
Could I return to the summit where I stand?



① Or the Great White Mountain in Shanxi Province.

登广武古战场怀古

秦鹿奔野草，
逐之若飞蓬。
项王气盖世，
紫电明双瞳。
呼吸八千人，
横行起江东。
赤精斩白帝，
叱咤入关中。
两龙不并跃，
五纬与天同。
楚灭无英图，
汉兴有成功。
按剑清八极，
归酣歌《大风》。
伊昔临广武，
连兵决雌雄。
分我一杯羹，
太皇乃汝翁。
战争有古迹，
壁垒颓层穹。





Reflections on the Ancient Battlefield at Guangwu^①

The Emperor of Qin had lost his deer^②,
 And heroes chased it as thistle-down flies.
 The Prince of Chu was brave without a peer,
 With purple flashes in double-pupiled eyes.
 He called eight thousand Southern youths to fight,
 From eastern River shore they swept the foes.
 The Duke of Han had killed the Serpent white,
 And breaking through the Pass, his war cries rose.
 Two rival Dragons reigned not at same time,
 And five propitious stars appeared on high.
 Chu perished for lack of ideal sublime;
 The Duke expanded his realm beneath the sky.
 He cleared eight borders with the sword he did wield,
 And came back drunk and sang *The Great Wind Song*^③.
 His army once came to this battlefield,
 And fought the Prince to see who was the strong.
 His father, captured, would be boiled alive,
 "My father's yours," he said, "in weal and woe."
 Of ancient war few relics still survive,
 The ramparts crumble to mounds high and low.

① The battlefield in present-day Henan Province where Xiang Yu, Prince of Chu, fought against Liu Bang, Duke of Han, who won and became the first emperor of the Han Dynasty in 206 B.C.

② His throne.

③ The first seven-character poem written by Liu Bang, which reads as follows:

The great wind rises and drives clouds away.

I come home now that I hold the world under sway.

Where are my brave men to guard the frontiers today?



猛虎啸洞壑，
饥鹰鸣秋空。
翔云列晓阵，
杀气赫长虹。
拨乱属豪圣，
俗儒安可通？
沉湎呼竖子，
狂言非至公。
抚掌黄河曲，
嗤嗤阮嗣宗。

Fierce growling tigers fill the caves with dismay,
And hungry eagles cleave the autumn sky.
The morning clouds still make a battle array,
And war cries seem to pelt the rainbow on high.
To end disorder is the deed of sage.
Pedantic scholar^①, how dare you declare
Drunken, the Duke was fellow of village?
You're mad and frenzy, unjust and unfair.
I clap my hands in view of this battleground,
And laugh away your ignorance profound.



① Ruan Ji, scholar of the Jin Dynasty (265-420), who said on his visit to the battlefield at Guangwu that there was no hero in the world and a village fellow like Liu Bang had risen to fame.

南陵别儿童入京

白酒新熟山中归，
黄鸡啄黍秋正肥。
呼童烹鸡酌白酒，
儿女嬉笑牵人衣。
高歌取醉欲自慰，
起舞落日争光辉。
游说万乘苦不早，
著鞭跨马涉远道。
会稽愚妇轻买臣，
余亦辞家西入秦。
仰天大笑出门去，
我辈岂是蓬蒿人？



Parting from My Children at Nanling^① for the Capital

I come to hillside home when wine is newly brewed,
 And yellow chicken feed on grains which autumn's strewed.
 I call my lad to boil the fowl and pour the wine,
 My children tug me by the sleeve, their faces shine.
 I sing away to show my joy when wine is drunk;
 I dance to vie in splendor with the sun half sunk.
 Though it is late to offer service to the crown,
 Still I will spur my horse on my way to renown.
 The silly wife despised the talent not yet blest,
 I'll leave my family and journey to the west.
 Looking up at the sky, I laugh aloud and go.
 Am I a man to crawl amid the brambles low?



① In present-day Anhui Province.



清平调词

(三首)

一

云想衣裳花想容，
春风拂槛露华浓。
若非群玉山头见，
会向瑶台月下逢。

二

一枝红艳露凝香，
云雨巫山枉断肠。
借问汉宫谁得似？
可怜飞燕倚新妆。

三

名花倾国两相欢，
长得君王带笑看。
解识春风无限恨，
沉香亭北倚阑干。



The Beautiful Lady Yang (Three Poems)

I

Her robe is made of cloud, her face of flowers made,
Caressed by vernal breeze, freshened by morning dew,
Charming as Fairy Queen in her Mountain of Jade
Or Goddess of the Moon in her palace sky-blue.

II

A branch of peony with her fragrance impearled,
Sweeter than Mountain Goddess^① bringing showers in dreams,
Unrivalled by the beauties of the ancient world,
Not even by Flying Swallow^② in her dress that gleams.

III

The beauty gazes at the flower she admires,
Winning the monarch's smiling gaze from hour to hour.
Gratifying Spring wind's insatiable desires,
She leans on balustrade north of the Fragrant Bower.

① The Goddess of Witch Mountain made love with King Xiang of Chu in his dreams.

② Flying Swallow was the favorite of Emperor Cheng of the Han Dynasty (reigned 32-6 B.C.)



忆 东 山

(二首选一)

不向东山久，

蔷薇几度花？

白云还自散，

明月落谁家？

The Eastern Hill^① **(One of Two Poems)**

Once more I come to Eastern Hill.
How many times has blown the rose?
White clouds gather and scatter still.
Where sinks the moon of yore? Who knows?



① Xie An, poet-governor of the 4th century, resided in the Eastern Hill where there was a Cave of Roses, and he built the Hall of White Cloud and the Hall of Bright Moon on top of the hill (in present-day Zhejiang Province).

乌 栖 曲

姑苏台上乌栖时，
吴王宫里醉西施。
吴歌楚舞欢未毕，
青山欲衔半边日。
银箭金壶漏水多，
起看秋月坠江波，
东方渐高奈乐何！

Crows Going Back to Their Nest **—Satire on the King of Wu^①**

O'er Royal Terrace when crows flew back to their nest,
The king in Royal Palace feast'd his mistress drunk.
The Southern maidens sang and danced without rest
Till beak-like mountain-peaks would peck the sun half-sunk.
The golden clepsydra could not stop water's flow,
O'er river waves the autumn moon was hanging low.
But wouldn't the king enjoy his fill in Eastern glow?



① The King of Wu held perpetual revelries with his favorite mistress Xi Shi in his Royal Palace in the 5th century B.C.

大车扬飞尘

（“古风”其二十四）

大车扬飞尘，
亭午暗阡陌，
中贵多黄金，
连云开甲宅。
路逢斗鸡者，
冠盖何辉赫！
鼻息干虹霓，
行人皆怵惕。
世无洗耳翁，
谁知尧与跖！



Eunuchs and Cock-Fighters^①

The dust which eunuchs' carriages raise
 Darkens at noon the public ways.
 Of their gold the eunuchs are proud;
 Their mansions rise to scrape the cloud.
 I meet those who can make cocks fight,
 With caps and cabs, so fair and bright.
 Into rainbows they blow their breath,
 Passers-by are frightened to death.
 There is no connoisseur in this age.
 Who can tell a thief from a sage?



^① The poet criticizes the rich and influential eunuchs and cock-fighters.

下终南山过斛斯山人宿置酒

暮从碧山下，
山月随人归。
却顾所来径，
苍苍横翠微。
相携及田家，
童稚开荆扉。
绿竹入幽径，
青萝拂行衣。
欢言得所憩，
美酒聊共挥。
长歌吟松风，
曲尽河星稀。
我醉君复乐，
陶然共忘机。





Descending Zhongnan Mountain^① and Meeting Husi the Hermit

At dusk I leave the hills behind,
The moon escorts me all the way.
Looking back, I see the path wind
Across the woods so green and grey.
We come to your cot hand in hand,
Your lad opens the gate for me.
Bamboos along the alley stand
And vines caress my cloak with glee.
I'm glad to talk and drink good wine
Together with my hermit friend.
We sing the songs of wind and pine,
And stars are set when singings end.
I'm drunk and you're merry and glad:
We both forget the world is sad.

① South of Chang'an, the Tang capital.



月下独酌

(四首选一)

花间一壶酒，
独酌无相亲。
举杯邀明月，
对影成三人。
月既不解饮，
影徒随我身。
暂伴月将影，
行乐须及春。
我歌月徘徊，
我舞影零乱。
醒时同交欢，
醉后各分散。
永结无情游，
相期邈云汉。



Drinking Alone under the Moon **(One of Four Poems)**

Amid the flowers, from a pot of wine
I drink alone beneath the bright moonshine.
I raise my cup to invite the Moon who blends
Her light with my Shadow and we're three friends.
The Moon does not know how to drink her share;
In vain my Shadow follows me here and there.
Together with them for the time I stay
And make merry before spring's spent away.
I sing and the Moon lingers to hear my song;
My Shadow's a mess while I dance along.
Sober, we three remain cheerful and gay;
Drunken, we part and each may go his way.
Our friendship will outshine all earthly love,
Next time we'll meet beyond the stars above.

把酒问月

青天有月来几时？
我今停杯一问之。
人攀明月不可得，
月行却与人相随。
皎如飞镜临丹阙，
绿烟灭尽清辉发。
但见宵从海上来，
宁知晓向云间没。
白兔捣药秋复春，
嫦娥孤栖与谁邻？
今人不见古时月，
今月曾经照古人。
古人今人若流水，
共看明月皆如此。
唯愿当歌对酒时，
月光长照金樽里。



Reflections on the Moon While Drinking

When did the moon first come on high?
 I stop drinking to ask the sky.
 The moon's beyond the reach of man;
 It follows us where'er it can.
 Like mirror bright o'er palace wall,
 When clouds disperse, it's seen by all.
 At night, it rises out of the sea;
 At dawn, who knows where it can be?
 Jade Hare^① is not companion boon
 For lonely Goddess of the Moon.
 We see the ancient moon no more,
 But it has shone on men of yore.
 Like flowing stream, they passed away;
 They saw the moon as we do today.
 I only wish when I drink wine,
 Moonlight dissolve in goblet mine.

① According to Chinese legend, the Jade Hare keeps company with the lonely Goddess of the Moon.



灞陵行送别

送君灞陵亭，
灞水流浩浩。
上有无花之古树，
下有伤心之春草。
我向秦人问路歧，
云是王粲南登之古道。
古道连绵走西京，
紫阙落日浮云生。
正当今夕断肠处，
骊歌愁绝不忍听。



Farewell at the Old Pavilion^①

We part at the Pavilion Old;
The river flows its water cold.
Above we see trees not in bloom.
Below the vernal grass in gloom.
I ask a wanderer if we go astray;
He says an ancient poet took this way.
The way extends to the west capital,
Where floating clouds at sunset veil the palace hall.
Heartbroken here and now I part with you.
How can we bear to hear songs of adieu?

① The poet parts with his friend at the Old Pavilion by the riverside where was buried Emperor Wen of the Han Dynasty.



白云歌送刘十六归山

楚山秦山皆白云，
白云处处长随君。
长随君，
君入楚山里，
云亦随君渡湘水。
湘水上，
女萝衣，
白云堪卧君早归。

Song of White Cloud
— Farewell to Liu the Recluse

From the mountains you come; to the mountains you go,
White clouds will follow you high and low,
High and low.
When you come into Southern mountains high,
Following you, o'er Southern streams white clouds will fly.
O'er Southern water blue,
There's ivy cloak for you,
You should go back and lie on cloud as white clouds do.





秋日鲁郡尧祠亭上 宴别杜补阙范侍御

我觉秋兴逸，
谁云秋兴悲？
山将落日去，
水与晴空宜。
鲁酒白玉壶，
送行驻金羁。
歇鞍憩古木，
解带挂横枝。
歌鼓川上亭，
曲度神飙吹。
云归碧海夕，
雁没青天时。
相失各万里，
茫然空尔思。



Farewell to Two Friends in Lu^① on an Autumn Day

I feel that autumn's glad.
 Who says that autumn's sad?
 Hills bring down setting sun;
 Water and sky seem one.
 Drink wine from pot jade-white;
 From golden horse alight.
 Repose and set it free;
 Hang belt upon old tree.
 Chant by the stream aloud!
 Songs soar into the cloud.
 Back to blue sea clouds fly,
 Wild geese lost in blue sky.
 Like them we'll sever too,
 In vain I'll long for you.

① Present-day Shandong Province.

鲁郡东石门送杜二甫

醉别复几日，
登临遍池台。
何时石门路，
重有金樽开？
秋波落泗水，
海色明徂徕。
飞蓬各自远，
且尽手中杯。



Farewell to Du Fu at Stone Gate^①

Before we part we've drunk for many days
And visit'd all the scenic spots and bays.
When at the Gate of Stone shall we meet and drain
Our brimming golden cups of wine again?
The autumn waves of River Si still flow;
The seaside mountains stand in morning glow.
You'll go away as thistledown will fly,
So let us fill our cups and drink them dry.



^① In present-day Shandong Province.

沙丘城下寄杜甫

我来竟何事？
高卧沙丘城。
城边有古树，
日夕连秋声。
鲁酒不可醉，
齐歌空复情。
思君若汶水，
浩荡寄南征。



To Du Fu from Sand Hill Town^①

Why have I come here after all
To live alone the whole day long?
There're but old trees by city wall,
From dawn till dusk but Autumn's song.
I can't be soothed by wine of Lu,
Nor moved by local melody.
Like River Wen I think of you,
Whose waves roll southward endlessly.



① In present-day Shandong Province.



戏赠杜甫

饭颗山头逢杜甫，
头戴笠子日卓午。
借问别来太瘦生，
总为从前作诗苦。

Addressed Humorously to Du Fu

On top of Hill of Boiled Rice I met Du Fu,
Who in the noonday sun wore a hat of bamboo.
Pray, how could you have grown so thin since we did part?
Is it because the verse composing wrung your heart?





梦游天姥吟留别

海客谈瀛洲，
烟涛微茫信难求。
越人语天姥，
云霞明灭或可睹。
天姥连天向天横，
势拔五岳掩赤城。
天台四万八千丈，
对此欲倒东南倾。
我欲因之梦吴越，
一夜飞度镜湖月。
湖月照我影，
送我至剡溪。
谢公宿处今尚在，
渌水荡漾清猿啼。
脚著谢公屐，
身登青云梯。
半壁见海日，
空中闻天鸡。
千岩万转路不定，
迷花倚石忽已暝。
熊咆龙吟殷岩泉，



Mount Skyland^① Ascended in a Dream —A Song of Farewell

Of fairy isles seafarers speak,
 'Mid dimming mist and surging waves, so hard to seek;
 Of Skyland Southerners are proud,
 Perceivable through fleeting or dispersing cloud.
 Mount Skyland threatens heaven, massed against the sky,
 Surpassing the Five Peaks and dwarfing Mount Red Town.
 Mount Heaven's Terrace, five hundred thousand feet high,
 Nearby to the southeast, appears to crumble down.
 Longing in dreams for Southern land, one night
 I flew o'er Mirror Lake in moonlight.
 My shadow's followed by moonbeams
 Until I reach Shimmering Streams,
 Where Hermitage of Master Xie^② can still be seen,
 And clearly gibbons wail o'er rippling water green.
 I put Xie's pegged boot
 Each on one foot,
 And scale the mountain ladder to blue cloud.
 On eastern cliff I see
 Sunrise at sea,
 And in mid-air I hear sky-cock crow loud.
 The footpath meanders 'mid a thousand crags in the vale,
 I'm lured by rocks and flowers when the day turns pale.
 Bears roar and dragons howl and thunders the cascade,

① Or Sky-Mother Mountains in present-day Zhejiang Province.

② Master Xie was a Jin-Dynasty poet who was fond of mountaineering and made himself special pegged boots for climbing.



慄深林兮惊层巅。
云青青兮欲雨，
水澹澹兮生烟。
列缺霹雳，
丘峦崩摧。
洞天石扇，
訇然中开。
青冥浩荡不见底，
日月照耀金银台。
霓为衣兮风为马，
云之君兮纷纷而来下。
虎鼓瑟兮鸾回车，
仙之人兮列如麻。
忽魂悸以魄动，
恍惊起而长嗟。
唯觉时之枕席，
失向来之烟霞。
世间行乐亦如此，
古来万事东流水。
别君去兮何时还？
且放白鹿青崖间，
须行即骑访名山。
安能摧眉折腰事权贵，
使我不得开心颜！



Deep forests quake and ridges tremble, they're afraid!
 From dark, dark cloud comes rain;
 On pale, pale waves mists plane.
 Oh! lightning flashes
 And thunder rumbles,
 With stunning crashes
 Peak on peak crumbles.
 The stone gate of a fairy cavern under
 Suddenly breaks asunder.
 So blue, so deep, so vast appears an endless sky,
 Where sun and moon shine on gold and silver terraces high.
 Clad in the rainbow, riding on the wind,
 The Lords of Clouds descend in a procession long.
 Their chariots drawn by phoenix disciplined,
 And tigers playing for them a zither song,
 Row upon row, like fields of hemp, immortals throng.
 Suddenly my heart and soul stirred, I
 Awake with a long, long sigh.
 I find my head on pillow lie
 And fair visions gone by.
 Likewise all human joys will pass away
 Just as east-flowing water of olden day.
 I'll take my leave of you, not knowing for how long.
 I'll tend a white deer among
 The grassy slopes of the green hill
 So that I may ride it to famous mountains at will.
 How can I stoop and bow before the men in power
 And so deny myself a happy hour?

登金陵凤凰台

凤凰台上凤凰游，
风去台空江自流。
吴宫花草埋幽径，
晋代衣冠成古丘。
三山半落青天外，
二水中分白鹭洲。
总为浮云能蔽日，
长安不见使人愁。

On Phoenix Terrace at Jinling

On Phoenix Terrace once phoenixes came to sing,
 The birds are gone but still roll on the river's waves.
 The ruined palace's buried 'neath the weeds in spring;
 The ancient sages in caps and gowns all lie in graves
 The three-peak'd mountain is half lost in azure sky;
 The two-fork'd stream by Egret Isle is kept apart.
 As floating clouds can veil the bright sun from the eye,
 Imperial Court now out of sight saddens my heart.





劳 劳 亭

天下伤心处，

劳劳送客亭。

春风知别苦，

不遣柳条青。



Pavilion Laolao^①

There is no place that oftener breaks the heart
Than the Pavilion seeing people part.
The wind of early spring knows parting grieves,
It will not green the roadside willow leaves.^②

① In present-day Nanjing.

② The Chinese had the custom of breaking off a green willow branch by the roadside and presenting it to the departing friend. The last line implies that the wind of early spring is unwilling to let friends sever.



丁都护歌

云阳上征去，
两岸饶商贾。
吴牛喘月时，
拖船一何苦！
水浊不可饮，
壶浆半成土。
一唱都护歌，
心摧泪如雨。
万人凿盘石，
无由达江浒。
君看石芒砀，
掩泪悲千古！



Song of the Tow-Men

They tow a boat and upstream wade
Between two shores alive with trade.
Under the heat pants buffalo.
O think what pain it is to tow!
The water's muddy and can not
Be drunk: thick silt fills half the pot.
When tow-men sing their song's refrain.
With broken heart, tears fall like rain.
Ten thousand quarry-men would groan
To haul to riverside rough stone.
If rocky mountains could have ears,
Would they not melt into sad tears?

苏台览古

旧苑荒台杨柳新，
菱歌清唱不胜春。
只今惟有西江月，
曾照吴王宫里人。



The Ruin of the Gusu Palace^①

Deserted garden, crumbling terrace, willows green,
Sweet notes of *Lotus Song* cannot revive old spring.
All are gone but the moon o'er West River that's seen
The ladies fair who won the favor of the king.

① The Gusu Palace in present-day Suzhou is where the King of Wu with his beautiful Xi Shi held perpetual revelries till the king of Yue annihilated him in the fifth century B.C.



越中览古

越王勾践破吴归，
义士还家尽锦衣，
宫女如花满春殿，
只今惟有鹧鸪飞。



The Ruin of the Capital of Yue

The King of Yue^① returned, having destroyed the foe,
His loyal men came home, with silken dress aglow,
His palace thronged with flower-like ladies fair;
Now we see but a flock of partridges flying there.

① The King of Yue destroyed the kingdom of Wu in the 5th century B.C.



越女词

(五首选三)

一

长干吴儿女，
眉目艳星月。
屐上足如霜，
不着鸦头袜。

三

耶溪采莲女，
见客棹歌回。
笑入荷花去，
佯羞不出来。

五

镜湖水如月，
耶溪女如雪。
新妆荡新波，
光景两奇绝。



Songs of the Southern Lass (Three of Five Poems)

I

The Southern lass is fair and bright,
Her eyes and brows shame moon and stars.
Her feet in sandals are frost-white,
The crow-head shoes would look like scars.

III

A maiden gathers lotus in the creek;
Singing, she turns round, seeing passers-by.
Smiling, she hides 'mid lotus blooms her cheek
And won't appear again: she seems so shy.

V

The waves of Mirror Lake look like moonbeams,
The maiden's dress like snow on water side.
The rippling dress vies with the rippling stream,
We know not which by which is beautified.



渌水曲

渌水明秋月，
南湖采白蘋。
荷花娇欲语，
愁杀荡舟人。

Song of Green Water

O'er water green the autumn moon shines bright,
On Southern Lake they gather lilies white.
The lotus-blooms so lovely as to speak,
Outshine the bashful oarswomen's fair cheek.



闻王昌龄左迁龙标遥有此寄

杨花落尽子规啼，
闻道龙标过五溪。
我寄愁心与明月，
随风直到夜郎西。





To Wang Changling Banished to the West

All willow-down has fallen and sad cuckoos cry
 To hear you banished southwestward beyond Five Streams.
 I would confide my sorrow to the moon on high
 For it will follow you west of the Land of Dreams.^①

① Present-day Guizhou Province.



战城南

去年战，
桑干源；
今年战，
葱河道。
洗兵条支海上波，
放马天山雪中草。
万里长征战，
三军尽衰老。
匈奴以杀戮为耕作，
古来惟见白骨黄沙田。
秦家筑城备胡处，
汉家还有烽火燃。
烽火燃不息，
征战无已时。
野战格斗死，
败马号鸣向天悲。
乌鸢啄人肠，
衔飞上挂枯树枝。
士卒涂草莽，
将军空尔为。
乃知兵者是凶器，
圣人不得已而用之。



Fighting in the South of the Town

Last year we fought
 At River's source;
 This year, we fight
 Along its course.
 We've washed our swords in Parthian seas off bloody stains,
 And grazed our horses on the grass in mountain's snow.
 For miles and miles we made campaigns
 Till weak and old our warriors grow.
 The Tartars live on killing as on ploughing land,
 Bleach'd bones of olden times are buried in the sand.
 Under the Qin^① against the foe Great Wall was raised;
 Under the Han^② the beacon fires still blazed.
 See beacon fires on the frontier!
 Still warriors fight from year to year.
 In wilderness the fighters die,
 Riderless horses neigh toward the sky;
 Crows pecking human entrails flee
 And hang them on a withered tree.
 The blood of soldiers smears the grass.
 Without them what could generals do?
 War is a fearful thing, alas!
 For rulers wise, 'twould be the last means resorted to.

① The Qin Dynasty (221-207 B.C.).

② The Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-220 A.D.).

谢公亭

谢亭离别处，
风景每生愁。
客散青天月，
山空碧水流。
池花春映日，
窗竹夜鸣秋。
今古一相接，
长歌怀旧游。



Pavilion of Xie Tiao^①

Where the two poets parted,
The scene seems brokenhearted.
The moon's left in the sky;
The stream flows with deep sigh.
The pool reflects sunlight;
Bamboos shiver at night.
The present like the past;
Long, long will friendship last.



① Xie Tiao (464-499) was a poet who parted with another poet at Xuancheng and built a pavilion there. Disfavored, he was put in jail and died in prison. Disgraced, Li Bai came to the pavilion and sighed for Xie's misfortune.

听蜀僧濬弹琴

蜀僧抱绿绮，
西下峨眉峰。
为我一挥手，
如听万壑松。
客心洗流水，
馀响入霜钟。
不觉碧山暮，
秋云暗几重？



On Hearing a Monk from Shu Playing His Lute

A monk from Shu his green lute brings,
 Coming down the west peak of Mount Brow.
 He sweeps his fingers o'er its strings,
 I hear the wind through pine-trees sough.
 A running stream washes my heart,
 With evening bells its echo's loud,
 I do not feel the sun depart
 From mountains green and autumn cloud.





寄东鲁二稚子

吴地桑叶绿，
吴蚕已三眠；
我家寄东鲁，
谁种龟阴田？
春事已不及，
江行复茫然；
南风吹归心，
飞堕酒楼前。
楼东一株桃，
枝叶拂青烟；
此树我所种，
别来向三年。
桃今与楼齐，
我行尚未旋。
娇女字平阳，
折花倚桃边；
折花不见我，
泪下如流泉。
小儿名伯禽，
与姐亦齐肩；
双行桃树下，
抚背复谁怜。
念此失次第，
肝肠日忧煎；
裂素写远意，
因之汶阳川。



Written for My Two Children in East Lu

Mulberry leaves in Southern land are green,
 The silkworms thrice in sleep must have been.
 In Eastern Lu my family stay still.
 Who'd help to sow our fields north of Lu Hill?
 It's now too late to do farmwork of spring.
 What then am I to do while travelling?
 The southern wind is blowing without stop,
 My heart flies back to my old familiar wine-shop.
 East of the shop there's a peach tree I've missed,
 Its branches must be waving in bluish mist.
 It is the tree I plant'd three years ago,
 If it has grown to reach the roof, I don't know.
 I have not been at home for three long years.
 I can imagine my daughter appears
 Beside the tree and plucks a flower pink.
 Without seeing me, she must have, I think,
 Shed copious tears. My younger son has grown
 Up to his sister's shoulders. 'Neath full-blown
 Peach tree they stand side by side. But who's there
 To pat them on the back? I feel, whene'er
 I think of this, so painful that I write
 And send to them this poem on silk white.



清溪行

清溪清我心，
水色异诸水。
借问新安江，
见底何如此？
人行明镜中，
鸟度屏风里。
向晚猩猩啼。
空悲远游子。

Song of the Clear Stream^①

The Clear Stream clears my heart;
Its water flows apart.
I ask the River New,
“Why transparent are you?”
On mirror bright boats hie;
Between the screens birds fly.
At dusk the monkeys cry;
In vain the wayfarers sigh.



① This poem describes the scenery on the Clear Stream and the poet's feeling on leaving it.



答王十二寒夜独酌有怀

昨夜吴中雪，
子猷佳兴发。
万里浮云卷碧山，
青天中道流孤月。
孤月沧浪河汉清，
北斗错落长庚明。
怀余对酒夜霜白，
玉床金井冰峥嵘。
人生飘忽百年内，
且须酣畅万古情。

君不能狸膏金距学斗鸡，
坐令鼻息吹虹霓。
君不能学哥舒，
横行青海夜带刀，
西屠石堡取紫袍。
吟诗作赋北窗里，
万言不直一杯水。
世人闻此皆掉头，
有如东风射马耳。

鱼目亦笑我，
谓与明月同。
骅骝拳跼不能食，
蹇驴得志鸣春风。
《折杨》《皇华》合流俗，
晋君听琴枉《清角》。



For Wang the Twelfth Who Drank Alone on a Cold Night^①

It snowed on southern shore last night;
 You drank alone with keen delight.
 Clouds float for miles and miles like rolled-up mountains high;
 The lonely moon drifts in the midst of the sky.
 The same lonely moon swims in Silver River clear;
 The evening star is bright when Dipper stars appear.
 You think of me drinking on a night white with frost;
 The golden well with rails of jade in ice is lost.
 Men live like floating clouds within a hundred years,
 So we should drink our fill like our ancient compeers.
 You cannot do as the eunuchs fond of cock fight,
 Who blow their breath like rainbow bright.
 You cannot do as the general with sword in hand,
 Who won his violet robe by slaughter on the land.
 Writing verse or prose, by north window you remain;
 Ten thousand words not worth a cup of water plain.
 Hearing of this, people would turn their heads away,
 Just as a horse with ears hurt by east wind would neigh.
 The fish's eye mistaken for a pearl laughs at me,
 Saying I cannot shine as the moon or as he.
 A horse can't gallop when it has nothing to eat;
 A donkey brays in spring breeze though crippled in feet.
 The common people like to sing the vulgar thing.
 How could the sacred lute please a secular king?

① The poet talks about his friendship, his desposal of slanderers, his love for the hermit and the loyal general, his sympathy with Li and Pei unjustly punished by the prime minister, and his wish to wander on the lake like General Fan with the Beauty in 473 B.C.



巴人谁肯和《阳春》？
楚地犹来贱奇璞。
黄金散尽交不成，
白首为儒身被轻。
一谈一笑失颜色，
苍蝇贝锦喧谤声。
曾参岂是杀人者？
谗言三及慈母惊。

与君论心握君手，
荣辱于余亦何有？
孔圣犹闻伤凤麟，
董龙更是何鸡狗！
一生傲岸苦不谐，
恩疏媒劳志多乖。
严陵高揖汉天子，
何必长剑拄颐事玉阶！
达也不足贵，
穷也不足悲。
韩信羞将绶灌比，
祢衡耻逐屠沽儿。
君不见李北海，
英风豪气今何在？
君不见裴尚书，
土坟三尺蒿棘居？
少年早欲五湖去，
见此弥将钟鼎疏。



By popular musicians no fine music's played;
 The Southerners usually look down on rare jade.
 No friendship will be made when I've spent all my gold;
 Though my hair turns white, I receive but glances cold.
 My face has lost color when I speak in low voice;
 For slanderers like flies make a deafening noise.
 The sage's a murderer, how could that be believed?
 The rumor thrice heard, the sage's mother was deceived
 We speak our bosom hand in hand and face to face.
 What do I care about vain glory or disgrace?
 Confucius only grieved no phoenix would appear.
 Why should we hold these lower animals in fear?
 Proud all my life long, with them I'm not in accord;
 In disfavor, I'm alienated from the lord.
 The hermit said to the emperor goodbye.
 Why should he serve with his long sword in palace high?
 The successful are not those we adore,
 Nor the unsuccessful those we deplore.
 General Han was ashamed of his compeers;
 A loyal man dispises one at whom he jeers.
 Have you not seen Li of North Sea?
 Brave as he was, where now is he?
 Have you not seen Secretary Pei
 Buried among thorns? What to say?
 While young, I wished to wander on the lake;
 Now older, from the dreams of glory I'm awake.



秦王扫六合

(“古风”其三)

秦王扫六合，
虎视何雄哉！
挥剑决浮云，
诸侯尽西来。
雄图发英断，
大略驾群才。
收兵铸金人，
函谷正东开。
铭功会稽岭，
骋望琅玕台。
刑徒七十万，
起土骊山隈。
尚采不死药，
茫然使心哀。
连弩射海鱼，
长鲸正崔嵬。
额鼻象五岳，
扬波喷云雷。
髻鬣蔽青天，
何由睹蓬莱？
徐市载秦女，
楼船几时回？
但见三泉下，
金棺葬寒灰！



The Emperor of Qin

The Emperor had swept the world of his foes,
 Looking around like a tiger he rose.
 He broke the floating clouds while wielding swords,
 Westward to pay their homage came all lords.
 He made great plans and formed decisions wise,
 In front of him all heroes dwarfed in size.
 He melted weapons into statues of brass,
 And opened to the East the frontier pass.
 He built a monument on Eastern Hill,
 And rode to Southern Tower to gaze his fill.
 He worked seven hundred thousand slaves
 To build in deep mountain recess his graves.
 He sought elixir of immortality,
 These contradictory deeds puzzle me.
 He bent his bow to shoot the monster whale
 Sweeping the sea with its enormous tail.
 Its head and nose erect'd like mountains proud,
 And water spouted like thunder and cloud.
 Its dorsal fin might cover azure sky.
 Could seamen find the Fairy Islands^① high?
 The alchemist with maidens went to sea.
 When could their galleys come back? We but see
 Buried in underworld, the ashes cold
 Of Emperor of Qin in coffin made of gold!

① The Emperor of Qin (reigned 246-210 B.C.) sent an alchemist to sea to seek for elixir of immortality in the Fairy Islands. The alchemist reported that a monster was barring the seaway and the Emperor shot dead a giant whale.

拟古十二首(其九)

生者为过客，
死者为归人。
天地一逆旅，
同悲万古尘。
月兔空捣药，
扶桑已成薪。
白骨寂无言，
青松岂知春？
前后更叹息，
浮荣何足珍？

Life and Death^①

The living are but passers-by,
And those are going home who die.
The sky and earth are hotels just
For all to grieve over age-old dust.
The Moon Goddess lives long in vain;
The sacred tree's cut down with pain.
The bleached bones can nor speak nor sing.
Could green pines feel the warmth of spring?
Ancestors and posterity,
Don't prize but sigh for vanity!



① This is a philosophical poem in which the poet equalizes life and death, imagines the sacred tree cut down, from which rose the sun, and sighs for the vanity of man.

登高丘而望远海

登高丘，
望远海。
六鳌骨已霜，
三山流安在？
扶桑半摧折，
白日沉光彩。
银台金阙如梦中，
秦皇汉武空相待。
精卫费木石，
鼋鼉无所凭。
君不见，
骊山茂陵尽灰灭，
牧羊之子来攀登！
盗贼劫宝玉，
精灵竟何能？
穷兵黩武今如此，
鼎湖飞龙安可乘？



Mounting the Height^① and Viewing the Sea

Mounting the height,
 I gaze afar.
 Six Giant Turtles' bones emerge on sea, frost-white,
 I do not see where the Three Fairy Mountains are.^②
 The Tree Divine half broken,
 The sun's great splendors wane.
 Celestial palace is a dream unawakened
 Emperors sought in vain.
 The sea could not be filled with stones,
 Nor could the gap by Turtles' bones.
 Have we not seen imperial tombs in ruins lie,
 Which shepherds set on fire?
 The bandits came to rob your jewels of value high.
 What could you do, imperial liar?
 Such is the end you warmongers obtained.
 Could immortality be ever gained?

① Mount Tiantai in present-day Zhejiang Province.

② According to Chinese legend, elixir could be found in the Fairy Mountains borne by Giant Turtles on the sea, but six Turtles were killed and Fairy Mountains floated off we know not where.



北 风 行

烛龙栖寒门，
光耀犹旦开。
日月照之何不及此？
惟有北风号怒天上来。
燕山雪花大如席，
片片吹落轩辕台。
幽州思妇十二月，
停歌罢笑双蛾摧。
倚门望行人，
念君长城苦寒良可哀。
别时提剑救边去，
遗此虎文金鞞鞶。
中有一双白羽箭，
蜘蛛结网生尘埃。
箭空在，
人今战死不复回。
不忍见此物，
焚之已成灰。
黄河捧土尚可塞，
北风雨雪恨难裁！



The North Wind

The candle-holding Dragon curls o'er Polar Gate^①,
 Only at dawn his flickering light will radiate.
 Nor sun nor moon will shine there far and nigh,
 Only the howling northern wind blows down from the sky.
 The snowflakes from north mountains, big as pillows white,
 Fall flake on flake upon Yellow Emperor's Height^②.
 The twelfth moon sees the wife in lonely bower sit,
 She will nor sing nor smile, with eyebrows tightly knit.
 She leans against the door and looks at passers-by,
 Thinking of her husband who with cold might shiver
 Beyond the Great Wall and sigh.
 When he started, his sword in hand,
 To save the borderland.
 He left her two white-feathered arrows in a golden quiver.
 The pair of arrows mid cobwebs and dust remain.
 Her lord who fell in battle won't come back again.
 How could she bear to see the tiger-striped quiver?
 She tries to burn it into ashes.
 Building a dam, we may stop the flow of Yellow River.
 How could the northern wind assuage her grief that gashes!

① According to Chinese myth, the North Pole was illuminated by the candle held by a dragon whose eyes would make day when opened and night when closed.

② The Yellow Emperor was and is still believed to be ancestor of the Chinese people and inventor of south-seeking compass.

横江词

(六首选一)

人道横江好，
依道横江恶。
一风三日吹倒山，
白浪高于瓦官阁。



The Crosswise River (One of Six Poems)

They say the Crosswise River good;
I say the Crosswise River rude.
If winds should blow three days, e'en hills would be blown down,
And waves rise higher than the Temple^① in the town.

① The Temple was 240 feet in height, to the southwest of present-day Nanjing. •



远别离

远别离，
古有皇英之二女，
乃在洞庭之南，
潇湘之浦。
海水直下万里深，
谁人不言此离苦？
日惨惨兮云冥冥，
猩猩啼烟兮鬼啸雨。
我纵言之将何补？
皇穹窃恐不照余之忠诚，
雷凭凭兮欲吼怒，
尧舜当之亦禅禹。
君失臣兮龙为鱼，
权归臣兮鼠亦虎。
或云尧幽囚，
舜野死，
九疑连绵皆相似。
重瞳孤坟竟何是？
帝子泣兮绿云间，
随风波兮去无还。
恸哭兮远望，
见苍梧之深山。
苍梧既崩湘水绝，
竹上之泪乃可灭。



Sorrow of Separation

Severed for aye
 From the two princesses of ancient day^①,
 Emperor Shun was buried south of the lake,
 Where the two rivers meet awake,
 And flow for miles and miles into the sea.
 From the sorrow of separation who is free?
 The sun is gloomy, veiled by dark cloud;
 In mist and rain the monkeys wail and ghosts cry loud.
 Of what avail is all that I say?
 The Royal Dome knows not my loyalty;
 Its thunder roars against me.
 Even emperors to successors should give way.
 When the king's not supported, the dragon turns into fish;
 The rats in power become tigers as they wish.
 Emperor Yao was put in jail;
 Emperor Shun died in the field to no avail.
 Alike the Nine Mysterious Peaks loom.
 Where to find Emperor Shun's lonely tomb?
 The princesses wept among the cloud green;
 They're gone with the wind and waves, unseen.
 They gazed from afar and shed tears;
 Now only the deep green mountain appears.
 Only when mountains crumble and rivers go dry
 Would the tear-specked bamboos vanish from the eye.

① The legend goes that the two princesses were daughters of Emperor Yao and wives of Emperor Shun who died by the side of Dongting Lake and were buried at the foot of the Nine Mysterious Peaks. The princesses wept over the death of Emperor Shun and their tears specked the bamboos.

山中问答

问余何意栖碧山，
笑而不答心自闲。
桃花流水窅然去，
别有天地非人间。





A Dialogue in the Mountain

I dwell among green hills and someone asks me why,
My mind carefree, I smile and give him no reply.
Peach blossoms fallen on running water pass by,
This is an earthly paradise beneath the sky.

自遣

对酒不觉暝，
落花盈我衣。
醉起步溪月，
鸟还人亦稀。



Solitude

I'm drunk with wine
And with moonshine,
With flowers fallen o'er the ground
And o'er me the blue-gowned.
Sobered, I stroll along the stream
Whose ripples gleam,
I see no bird
And hear no word.



独坐敬亭山

众鸟高飞尽，
孤云独去闲。
相看两不厌，
只有敬亭山。



Sitting Alone in Face of Peak Jingting^①

All birds have flown away, so high;
A lonely cloud drifts on, so free.
We are not tired, the Peak and I,
Nor I of him, nor he of me.

① North of Xuancheng, in present-day Anhui Province.

宣州谢朓楼饯别校书叔云

弃我去者，
昨日之日不可留。
乱我心者，
今日之日多烦忧。
长风万里送秋雁，
对此可以酣高楼。
蓬莱文章建安骨，
中间小谢又清发。
俱怀逸兴壮思飞，
欲上青天览明月。
抽刀断水水更流，
举杯消愁愁更愁。
人生在世不称意，
明朝散发弄扁舟。



Farewell to Uncle Yun, the Imperial Librarian, at Xie Tiao's Pavilion in Xuanzhou^①

What left me yesterday
Can be retained no more;
What troubles me today
Is the times for which I feel sore.
In autumn wind for miles and miles the wild geese fly.
Let's drink, in face of this, in the pavilion high.
Your writing's forcible like ancient poets while
Mine is in Junior Xie's clear and spirited style.
Both of us have an ideal high:
We would reach the moon in the sky.
Cut running water with a sword, 'twill faster flow;
Drink wine to drown your sorrow, it will heavier grow.
If we despair of human affairs,
Let us roam in a boat with loosened hairs!

① Xie Tiao or Junior Xie (464-499) was a poet of the Jin Dynasty, who built a pavilion or the North Tower in Xuanzhou (present-day Xuancheng in Anhui Province).



秋登宣城谢朓北楼

江城如画里，
山晚望晴空。
两水夹明镜，
双桥落彩虹。
人烟寒橘柚，
秋色老梧桐。
谁念北楼上，
临风怀谢公。

On Ascending the North Tower One Autumn Day

The scroll-like River-town's steeped in twilight,
 In view of mountains 'neath a lucid sky.
 Two rivers, mingling, form a mirror bright,
 Two bridges like rainbows fallen from on high.
 The cottage smoke has chilled the orange flower;
 The autumn hue has oldened the plane trees.
 Who ever dreamed I'd come up Northern Tower
 To meditate on Xie in western breeze?



送友人

青山横北郭，
白水绕东城。
此地一为别，
孤蓬万里征。
浮云游子意，
落日故人情。
挥手自兹去，
萧萧班马鸣。



Farewell to a Friend

Green mountains bar the northern sky;
White water girds the eastern town.
Here is the place to say good-bye,
You'll drift out, lonely thistledown.
Like floating cloud you'll float away;
With parting day I'll part from you.
We wave and you start on your way,
Your horse still neighs: "Adieu! adieu! "





秋 浦 歌 (十七首选二)

一

炉火照天地，
红星乱紫烟。
赧郎明月夜，
歌曲动寒川。

二

白发三千丈，
缘愁似个长。
不知明镜里，
何处得秋霜？

Songs of Autumn Pool

(I) The Blacksmith

The furnace fire makes bright the earth and sky,
Into the purple smoke red sparks wild fly.
The blacksmiths' faces flush in moonlit night,
Their songs would fill the river cold with fright.

(II) My White Hair

Long, long is my whitening hair,
Long, long is it laden with care.
I look into my mirror bright;
From where comes autumn frost in sight?



赠 汪 伦

李白乘舟将欲行，
忽闻岸上踏歌声。
桃花潭水深千尺，
不及汪伦送我情。





To Wang Lun Who Comes to Bid Me Farewell^①

I, Li Bai, sit aboard a ship about to go,
When suddenly on shore your farewell songs overflow.
However deep the Lake of Peach Blossoms may be,
It's not so deep, O Wang Lun, as your love for me.

① This is the poet's most popular farewell song.



哭晁卿衡

日本晁卿辞帝都，
征帆一片绕蓬壶。
明月不归沉碧海，
白云愁色满苍梧。



Elegy on Abe Nakamaro^①

My Japanese friend Abe left the imperial shore,
His single sail turned round for the three Fairy Isles.
The moon has sunk in the sea to return no more,
The land's overspread with gloomy clouds for miles and miles.

① Abe Nakamaro came to China (referred to as the imperial shore in this poem) in 717 at the age of 20 and did not return to Japan (referred to as the three Fairy Isles) till the winter of 753. It was rumoured that he (referred to as the moon) was drowned in the sea and Li Bai wrote this poem.



永王东巡歌 (十一首选一)

三川北虏乱如麻，
四海南奔似永嘉。
但用东山谢安石，
为君谈笑静胡沙。



Song of Eastern Expedition of Prince Yong **(One of Eleven Poems)**

Three River Valleys overrun by Northern foes,
People within four seas flee to the Southern land.
If Master Xie^① again from Eastern Mountain rose,
He'd quell with ease the rebels as he'd sprinkle sand.

① Xie An fought against heavy odds and won victory in 382. Here the poet alluded to himself.

与史郎中饮听黄鹤楼上吹笛

一为迁客去长沙，
西望长安不见家。
黄鹤楼中吹玉笛，
江城五月《落梅花》。





On Hearing the Flute in Yellow Crane Tower

Since I was banished to the riverside town,
Looking westward, I've found no house I'd call my own.
Hearing in Yellow Crane Tower the flute's sad tune,
I seem to see mume blossoms fall in the fifth moon.^①

① The mume blossoms blow in winter or spring, not in summer (the fifth moon).
Hearing the flute, the poet became so sad as to take summer for winter.

早发白帝城

朝辞白帝彩云间，
千里江陵一日还。
两岸猿声啼不住，
轻舟已过万重山。



Leaving the White Emperor Town^① at Dawn

Leaving at dawn the White Emperor crowned with cloud,
I've sailed a thousand *li* through Three Gorges in a day.
With monkeys' sad adieux the riverbanks are loud,
My skiff has left ten thousand mountains far away.

① In present-day Sichuan Province.

与夏十二登岳阳楼

楼观岳阳尽，
川迥洞庭开。
雁引愁心去，
山衔好月来。
云间连下榻，
天上接行杯。
醉后凉风起，
吹人舞袖回。





Ascending the Tower of Yueyang^① with Xia the Twelfth

On scenes so vast the Tower feasts our eye;
 The river stretches into the Lake of South^②.
 Taking away our sorrow, wild geese fly;
 Green mountains throw the moon up from their mouth.
 Make of white cloud a comfortable bed,
 And pass around wine-cups in azure skies.
 Drunken, let cooling breezes blow and spread
 Our dancing sleeves which flap like butterflies.

① In Hunan Province.

② The Dongting Lake.

陪族叔刑部侍郎晔及中
书贾舍人至游洞庭
(五首选一)

南湖秋水夜无烟，
耐可乘流直上天？
且就洞庭赊月色，
将船买酒白云边。



**On Lake Dongting
(One of Five Poems)**

Vaporless is the Southern Lake on autumn night.
Could we be borne to Heaven by the rising tide?
If we could borrow from Lake Dongting the moonlight
To guide us skyward, we'd drink with clouds by our side.





江 上 吟

木兰之枻沙棠舟。
玉箫金管坐两头。
美酒樽中置千斛，
载妓随波任去留。
仙人有待乘黄鹤，
海客无心随白鸥。
屈平词赋悬日月，
楚王台榭空山丘。
兴酣落笔摇五岳，
诗成笑傲凌沧洲。
功名富贵若长在，
汉水亦应西北流。

Song on the River^①

In a ship of spice-wood with unsinkable oars,
Musicians at both ends, we drift along the shores.
We have sweet wine with singing girls to drink our fill,
And so the waves may carry us where'er they will.
Immortals could not fly without their yellow crane;
Unselfish men might follow white gulls to the main.
The verse of Qu Ping^② shines as bright as sun and moon,
While palaces of Chu vanish like dreams at noon.
Seeing my pen in verve, even the mountains shake;
Hearing my laughter proud, the seaside hermits wake.
If worldly fame and wealth were things to last forever,
Then northwestward would turn the eastward-flowing river.



① In Hubei Province.

② Qu Yuan (340-270 B.C.) was a loyal minister and great poet in the state of Chu.



夜宿山寺

危楼高百尺，
手可摘星辰。
不敢高声语，
恐惊天上人。



The Summit Temple^①

Hundred feet high the Summit Temple stands,
Where I could pluck the stars with my own hands.
At dead of night I dare not speak aloud
For fear of waking dwellers in the cloud.

① In present-day Hubei Province.



庐山谣寄卢侍御虚舟

我本楚狂人，
凤歌笑孔丘。
手持绿玉杖，
朝别黄鹤楼。
五岳寻仙不辞远，
一生好入名山游。
庐山秀出南斗旁，
屏风九叠云锦张，
影落明湖青黛光。
金阙前开二峰长，
银河倒挂三石梁。
香炉瀑布遥相望，
回崖沓嶂凌苍苍。
翠影红霞映朝日，
鸟飞不到吴天长。
登高壮观天地间，
大江茫茫去不还。
黄云万里动风色，
白波九道流雪山。
好为《庐山谣》，
兴因庐山发。
闲窥石镜清我心，
谢公行处苍苔没。
早服还丹无世情，
琴心三叠道初成。
遥见仙人彩云里，



Song of Mount Lu
—To Censor Lu Xuzhou

I'm just a freak come from the South,
 With frank advice e'er in my mouth.
 Holding at dawn a green-jade cane,
 I leave the Tower of Yellow Crane.
 Of the long trips to Sacred Mountains I make light,
 All my life I have loved to visit famous height.
 Lu Mountains tower high beside the Wain Stars bright
 Like a nine-paneled screen embroidered with clouds white.
 Their shadows fall into the lake like emerald;
 Two peaks stand face to face above the Gate of Gold.
 A waterfall is hanging down from Three Stone Beams,
 Cascades of Censer Peak like upended silver streams.
 Cliff on cliff, ridge on ridge lead to the azure skies,
 Their green shapes kindled by flaming clouds at sunrise
 Barring the boundless Heaven's vault where no bird flies.
 I climb to view the sky o'erhead and earth below,
 The ne'er-returning waves of the River onward go.
 In yellow clouds outspread for miles I see wind blow,
 Nine foaming tributaries splash like mountain snow.
 Of Mountain Lu I love to sing,
 Of my poetry it is the spring.
 I gaze at the Stone Mirror, my hear purified,
 I seek the poet Xie's path which green mosses hide.
 Elixir swallowed, I care not what people say;
 The zither played thrice, I begin to know the Way.
 I see from afar immortals in the cloudy land,

手把芙蓉朝玉京。
先期汗漫九垓上，
愿接卢敖游太清。





They come to celestial city, lotus-bloom in hand.
I'll go before you somewhere beyond the ninth sphere
And wait for you to wander in the Zenith Clear.



豫章行

胡风吹代马，
北拥鲁阳关。
吴兵照海雪，
西讨何时还？
半渡上辽津，
黄云惨无颜。
老母与子别，
呼天野草间。
白马绕旌旗，
悲鸣相追攀。
白杨秋月苦，
早落豫章山。
本为休明人，
斩虏素不闲。
岂惜战斗死，
为君扫凶顽。
精感石没羽，
岂云惮险艰？
楼船若鲸飞，
波荡落星湾。
此曲不可奏，
三军鬓成斑。



Song of Yuzhang^①

The horses neigh to hear the north wind blow,
 The rebels^② occupy the Northern Pass.
 The Southern armour bright as lake-side snow,
 When will our men be back from war? Alas!
 Half of them are aboard, ready to part,
 E'en yellow clouds look gloomy and turn pale.
 Old mothers see their sons off, sad at heart,
 Crawling amid wild grass, they weep and wail.
 Around the flags turn steeds which parting grieves,
 They chase each other, foaming at the mouth.
 Beneath autumn moon the poplars shed their leaves
 Early which cover mountains of the South.
 I am a man living in time of peace,
 Not used to fighting or exchanging blows.
 But I am not afraid to fight without cease,
 And sweep away our formidable foes.
 Our concentrated efforts could break stone
 And enemy however hard they are.
 Our galleons swift like whales which might have flown
 O'er waves which surge in the Bay of Falling Star^③.
 This isn't a tune for army-men to play:
 On hearing it, their hair would soon turn gray!

① Present-day Nanchang, capital of Jiangxi Province.

② An Lushan who rebelled in 755.

③ Present-day Poyang Lake of Jiangxi Province.

哭宣城善酿纪叟

纪叟黄泉里，
还应酿老春。
夜台无李白，
沽酒与何人？





Elegy on Master Brewer Ji of Xuancheng^①

For thirsty souls are you still brewing
Good wine of Old Spring, Master Ji?
In underworld are you not ruing
To lose a connoisseur like me?

① In present-day Anhui Province.

宿五松山下荀媪家

我宿五松下，
寂寥无所欢。
田家秋作苦，
邻女夜舂寒。
跪进雕胡饭，
月光明素盘。
令人惭漂母，
三谢不能餐。



Passing One Night in an Old Woman's Hut at the Foot of Mount Five Pines

I lodge under the five pine trees,
Lonely, I feel not quite at ease.
Peasants work hard in autumn old;
Husking rice at night, the maid's cold.
Wild rice is offered on her knees;
The plate in moonlight seems to freeze.
I'm overwhelmed with gratitude.
Do I deserve the hard-earned food?



宣城见杜鹃花

蜀国曾闻子规鸟，
宣城还见杜鹃花。
一叫一回肠一断，
三春三月忆三巴。



Azalea Blooms Viewed in Xuancheng

I've heard home-going cuckoos sing in Western Towers^①,
And here and now I see the blooming cuckoo flowers^②,
I turn away: my heart will break to hear them sing,
For they remind me of my homeland in late spring.



① In present-day Sichuan Province, homeland of the poet.

② Chinese name for azalea flowers which bloom when cuckoos cry "Go home!" and, according to Chinese legend, shed bloody tears.

临 终 歌

大鹏飞兮振八裔，
中天摧兮力不济。
余风激兮万世，
游扶桑兮挂左袂。
后人得之传此，
仲尼亡兮谁为出涕？



On Death Bed

When flies the roc he shakes the world,
In mid air his weakened wings are furled.
The wind he's raised still stirs the sea,
He hangs his left wing on sun-side tree.
Posterity mine, hear, O, hear!
Confucius dead, who'll shed a tear?

