

## 蘇六娘 ( 選 ) • sou-lak-nie (Selection)

The story of sou-lak-nie (Sixth Lady Sou) is one of the earliest known indigenous Teochew operas, set in the Teochew region and using the local language. This transcription is based on the 1957 film version produced by the 香港鴻圖影業公司 (Hong Kong Great Prospect Film Company), and adapted from Chinese subtitles by 王曉班 uploaded to [YouTube](#), with some characters changed to fit the usage in the rest of this website. Lines that are sung are indicated with a • character at the beginning.

### 桃花伶渡公鬥歌 • tho-hue and the Boatman compete in song

(渡公) • tou-kong • Boatman

tshenn-suann lek-tsui phuann ua lieng

青山 綠水 伴 我 臉

Green hills and blue water keep me company.

tshiann-hi [siu?]-ping zu surng-peh

且喜 x 鬢 如 霜 白

Even if I were to be glad about my snowy-white whiskers,

iu tik ur-nang kiann huang-pieng

又 得 與 人 行 方 便

I still have to be at the disposal of others.

(桃花) • tho-hue

peh-a, khuai-se pe kue-lai, ua ainn kue-tou a

伯啊，快些扒過來，我愛過渡啊

Uncle, paddle over here quickly, I want to cross the river.

(渡公) • tou-kong • Boatman

o? ngueng-lai si a-tho-hue

哦？原來是阿桃花

Oh? It's To-hue.

lur tshik-tsa poih-tsa, ainn khur ti-ko hann?

汝七早八早，愛去底塊～？

Where do you want to go so early in the morning?

(桃花) • tho-hue

ueng-gua u sing hue-lai, sueh-tau ta-iann kuann-si

員外有信回來，說道打贏官司

My master received a letter, saying that he has won the suit in court,

tsiu ainn hue-ke, ing-tshur ang-zing meng ua tsoinn-uang sai-lou, tsih-hue nie-kiann

就愛回家，因此安人命我前往西蘆，接回娘囡

and wants to go home. So my mistress instructed me to go to Sai-lou and fetch our young miss.

peh-a, tann khuai-se pe kue-lai!

伯啊，且快些過來！

Uncle, come quickly!

(渡公) • tou-kong • Boatman

ho! ua lai!

好！我來！

Right! I'm coming!

bue, he he he, tsui-lau tsiann to phu, tsung kou-puk-kurng ngai

未，～～～，水流正在浮，船靠不近岸

Wait a moment, the current is strong and the boat can't come close to the shore.

tho-hue a, kah oi-kiann thurng-tiou, liou e-loh-lai, e-loh-lai a

桃花啊，甲鞋囡褪掉，了下落來，下落來啊

tho-hue, take off your shoes and get in the water, get in.

（桃花）• tho-hue

ho, lai tsih pau-hok

好，來接包袱

Alright then, catch my bag.

（渡公）• tou-kong • Boatman

ho, kak-lai!

好，掬來！

Throw it over!

（桃花）• tho-hue

a-peh, tsih a!

阿伯，接啊！

Uncle, catch!

（渡公）• tou-kong • Boatman

ur? a? o? lur tsia kui-kiann, sang-mak li bo thoinn-tsung, tann pau-hok [mo?] pung-tsui  
lau-khur liou

噫？啊？哦？汝者鬼罔，雙目哩無睇准，旦包袱〔麼〕分水流去了

Huh? You little devil... you didn't look where you were throwing, and now the bag has  
been carried away by the water.

“mo” (transcribed here as 麼) meaning “then”, “on the other hand”. This is probably  
the same word written as 𠂔 in the Ming-era edition of 蘇六娘, which has a similar  
meaning (inferred from context).

(桃花) • tho-hue

peh a, mo mo mo, to tsi-ko

伯啊，～～～，在只塊

Uncle, look it's still right here.

(渡公) • tou-kong • Boatman

ha ha ha ha ha! ua tsai ua lau-nang mak-hue, (?)-lai bu-long ua?

哈哈哈哈哈！我知我老人目花，x-來誣弄我？

Ha ha! I know that my eyes are old and long-sighted, and you still want to tease me like  
this?

(桃花) • tho-hue

peh a, tann lai-tsih

伯啊，旦來接

Uncle, now catch it for real.

(渡公) • tou-kong • Boatman

ai-ia, kang-kang si lur-kai pa-hi

哎呀，剛剛是汝個把戲

Aiyah, this was all just your game.

tann me-me e-loh-lai

旦猛猛下落來

Now come down quickly.

(桃花) • tho-hue

ho!

好！

Alright!

(渡公) • tou-kong • Boatman

a!

啊！

Ah!

lur tsia kui-kiann, bo-kau-bo-tai

汝者鬼罔，無交無代

You little devil, without giving any warning,

tsie-senn tsiu piann-loh-lai, ua tsiah tsung hiem-hiem poi, hiem-hiem poi

照生就拚落來，我隻船險險擺，險險擺

you jumped down so suddenly that my boat almost capsized!

“poi” also pronounced “bai”

險險 - “almost”

(桃花) • tho-hue

boi no, boi no. peh a, lur [mo] ho tsienn-tshiu, tsung boi poi

𦵇𦵇𦵇, 𦵇𦵇𦵇, 伯啊, 汝 [麼] 好槳手, 船𦵇擺

No, no, Uncle, you have good control of your oars, the boat will not capsize.

(渡公) • tou-kong • Boatman

he he he, tann khia-ho, khia-ho

～～～, 旦倚好, 倚好

Heh, then stand fast, stand fast.

e? tho-hue a, kau tui-ngai hueng-liou hng

耶? 桃花啊, 到對岸還了遠

To-hue, it will be some time before we reach the other bank.

lur ho-m tshiang tiou-kua lai kip a-peh thiann-thiann tsek-e

汝好唔唱條歌來給阿伯聽聽一下

Come sing some songs for Uncle to listen.

(桃花) • tho-hue

peh a, lur mo ia-si (?) tshiu tshiang-kua-kiann, ainn li tsiu-lai tau-kua

伯啊, 汝 [麼] 也是 X 手唱歌㗎, 愛哩就來鬥歌

Uncle, you are also a good singer, if you want we could have a singing competition.

(渡公) • tou-kong • Boatman

tau kua? ai-ia ainn tsiu lai!

鬥歌? 哎呀愛就來!

A song duel? If you want to, bring it on!

hur, lur mai thoinn ua lau-nang boi tshiang-kua

許，汝勿睇我老人 耆唱歌

Don't think that this old man can't sing.

ua-kai kua-kiann kau tua-lua

我個歌囡到大X

My songs are [...]

tsek-tshoinn poih-peh kang-lur tau, tau-kau lur u-khau m-kann khua

一千八百共汝鬥，鬥到汝有口唔敢誇

I have a thousand eight hundred songs to compete with yours, we'll compete until you have nothing to say.

lai, ua tsek-ming kho, tsek-ming tshiang, a lur soinn, lur soinn

來，我一面舸，一面唱，啊汝先，汝先

Come, I'll row and sing at the same time. You go first.

（桃花）• tho-hue

mai, lur soinn

勿，汝先

No, you first.

（渡公）• tou-kong • Boatman

huann ainn ua soinn? ia ho, lur lai thiann

還愛我先？也好，汝來聽

You even want me to go first? That's just as well. Listen:

• tsiann-gueh peh-hue khai, peh-ia peh-hue khai

正月百花開，百呀百花開

In the first month, a hundred flowers bloom, a hundred o hundred flowers bloom.

• peh-hue khai lai (?)-tiep khuang

百花開來 x蝶狂

A hundred flowers bloom and the butterflies go into a frenzy.

• tsa-me kai hng-mung bo tsienn-so

昨暝 個園門無上鎖

Last night, the gate to the garden was not locked.

• tho-hue thau-tsau lai tou-kang, loi-ia loi lai tou-kang

桃花偷走來渡江，～呀～來渡江

To-hue sneaked off to cross the river, loi-ia-loi to cross the river.

(桃花) • tho-hue

o, phieng me ua, thai ua lai

哦，騙罵我，待我來

Oh, so you are pretending to scold me. Just wait for my turn.

(渡公) • tou-kong • Boatman

tieh lur ia

着汝也

It's your turn.

(桃花) • tho-hue

• zi-gueh bak-mi-hue, bak-a bak-mi-hue

二月木棉花，木呀木棉花

In the second month, the kapok flowers bloom, the kapok o kapok flowers bloom.



• ang-hue khui-liou khui peh-hue, peh-hue hue-loh ur sing-tsienn

紅花開了開白花，白花花落與身上

After the red flowers come the white ones, the white flowers fall on one's body.

• tung-pinn hiah-kak ho ang-ke, loi-ia loi ho ang-ke

脣邊額角好安家，～呀～好安家

Cheeks and forehead show that it's good to settle down, loi-ia-loi good to settle down.

loi-ia-loi - onomatopoeic expression

(渡公) • tou-kong • Boatman

o, (?)-lai pai-tshai ua lau-nang

哦，X 來擺踩我老人

So, you've come to make fun of an old man.

e-zik bo-nang lai tho-tso lur tsiu tsai ia hng!

下日無人來討坐汝就知呀哼！

If no one wants to come on board tomorrow, you'll have to answer for it!

• sann-gueh inn sang-pue, inn-ia inn sang-pue

三月燕雙飛，燕呀燕雙飛

In the third month, the swallows fly in pairs, the swallows o the swallows fly in pairs.

• sang-pue inn-tsur liang-thau-ke, lur pi inn-tsur m-seng-tui

雙飛燕子兩頭家，汝比燕子唔成對

A pair of flying swallows make a couple, unlike the swallows you don't have a partner.

• sai-lou lur-phou khur iu-hue, loi-ia loi khur iu-hue

西蘆呂浦去又回，～呀～去又回

From sai-lou to lur-phou you go to and fro, loi-ia-loi you go to and fro.

sai-lou 西蘆 is the hometown of kueh ki-tshung 郭繼春, the lover of sou lak-nie,  
whereas lur-phou 呂浦 is the hometown of sou lak-nie.

The place name lur-phou is written as 呂浦 in the Ming-era edition, but also given as  
li-phou 荔浦 in some publications.

(桃花) • tho-hue

• si-gueh hou-mieng-mieng, hou-a hou-mieng-mieng

四月雨綿綿，雨啊雨綿綿

In the fourth month, the rain is continuously falling, the rain o the rain is continuously falling.

• [lou-tsur?] kuann-tsui tsienn kik-ieng, lur pi [lou-tsur?] to ki tsienn

鷗鷺趕水上揭陽，汝比鷗鷺多枝槳

The cormorants race across the water to kik-ieng, unlike the cormorants you have an oar.

揭陽 kik-ieng, one of the counties of 潮州 tie-tsiu subprefecture, is usually pronounced today as kik-ienn.

• tsek-ni si-khui siu kang-pieng, loi-ia loi siu kang-pieng

一年四季守江邊，～呀～守江邊

Through the four seasons in a year you keep watch at the river bank, loi-ia-loi keep watch at the river bank.

(渡公) • tou-kong • Boatman

tse, zu-pi zu-mo-thiann, tse nai oi-tik khur a?

這，愈比愈孬聽，這奈會得去啊？

As this goes on it sounds even worse on the ear, how can I let this slide?

• ngou-gueh pe leng-tsung, ang-lam lek-nurng zu kiann-hung

五月扒龍船，紅男綠女如行雲

In the fifth month, the dragon boats come out to race. The youth turn out as if walking on clouds.

• na-kai nurng-kung hah lur i?

哪個郎君合汝意？

Which young gentleman will catch your fancy?

• a-peh tso bue lai tiann-hung, loi-ia loi lai tiann-hung

阿伯做媒來定婚，～呀～來定婚

Uncle will play matchmaker and find you a match, loi-ia-loi find you a match.

(桃花) • tho-hue

• lak-gueh su thinn-si, su-a su thinn-si

六月署天時，署啊署天時

In the sixth month, the weather is hot, hot o hot is the weather.

• ngou-nie lau-tsienn kak li-ki, ng u li-ki tsur-ki kak

五娘樓上掬荔枝，阮有荔枝自己掬

Fifth Lady casts down a lychee branch from the tower. We can cast down a lychee branch by ourselves.

An allusion to the story of 陳三五娘 tang-sann-ngou-nie, where 黃五娘 ng ngou-nie tossed a lychee branch from her balcony to 陳三 tang-sann as a sign of her love.

• mieng-eng a-peh lur hui sim-ki, loi-ia loi hui sim-ki

免用阿伯汝費心機，～呀～費心機

We don't need you, Uncle, to waste your effort, loi-ia-loi to waste your effort.

(渡公) • tou-kong • Boatman

tshik-gueh si...

七月時.....

In the seventh month...

(桃花) • tho-hue

tshik-gueh tso-ni? tso m-tshiang?

七月做呢？做唔唱？

What happens in the seventh month? Why did you stop singing?

(渡公) • tou-kong • Boatman

ai-ia, m-tui ia, bo sienn tsui-lau to tua

哎呀，唔對呀，無想水流在大

Aiyah, something's wrong, I did not expect the current to be so strong.

tsiah-tsung hiem-hiem pung-i phu-kau sang-koi tshui

隻船險險分伊浮到雙溪嘴

The boat was almost carried away to the mouth of the river.

雙溪 - This could be a “false cognate” loan word from Malay *sungai* (“river”)

(桃花) • tho-hue

ai-ia, peh a, me-me tshuk-lak, tsung pe hue-lai khur a

哎呀，伯啊，猛猛出力，船扒回來去啊

Aiyah, Uncle, put more effort into it, row the boat back on course.

(渡公) • tou-kong • Boatman

ho ho, lur to khia-ho, khia-ho a

好好，汝在倚好，倚好啊

Alright, alright, stand fast where you are, stand fast!

(桃花) • tho-hue

peh a, lur meng-khi tsa se, lai tsi-tou-thau teng ua

伯啊，汝明起早些，來只渡頭等我

Uncle, do come somewhat earlier tomorrow, and wait for me at the river bank.

(渡公) • tou-kong • Boatman

tsi-kai tsur-zieng oi, ha ha ha ha ha

只個自然～，哈哈哈哈哈

Of course, haha!

• ua lau-nang ia tshong hau-senn lai, hau-senn kai sim-sur ua oi tsai

我老人也從後生來，後生個心事我會知

This old man was young once; I know how young people think.

(桃花) • tho-hue

• nang kau-lau lai [su?]-hok lau, kueng-nang oinn-sur ia puk-kai

儂到老來[舒?]服老，管人閒事也不該

When one is old, [one should be comfortable in one's old age?] and not bother about other people's business.

tshuk-lak a!

出力啊！

Row hard!

(渡公) • tou-kong • Boatman

ho, lur khia ho, thai a-peh lai loh hiang tsienn. khia ho a!

好，汝倚好，待阿伯來落向槳。倚好啊！

Alright, you stand fast, and wait for me to row. Stand fast!

This version of the opera cuts off this scene at the seventh month. In other versions, tho-hue and the boatman continue taking turns until the boatman begins with the “thirteenth month” and loses the competition because there is no thirteenth month (see Helga Werle, “**Notes on Chiuchow Opera**”, *J. Royal Asiatic Soc. Hong Kong Branch* (1975) vol. 15, pp. 71-87).

Werle writes of this scene: “This is a most delightful scene, a fully choreographed dance with the music based on Chiuchow [Teochew] folk tunes. The music and the dance are fresh and cheerful. This opening shows characteristic features of Chiuchow opera; it is beautiful, lighthearted and full of songs and dances.”