

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 • to-hue and the Boatman compete in song

(渡公) • dou-gong • Boatman

cheñ-suañ lek-jui puañ ua lieng

青山 綠水 伴 我 臉

Green hills and blue water keep me company.

chiañ-hi [siu?]-bing yu seung-beh

且喜 x鬢 如 霜 白

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

iu dik eu-nang giañ huang-bieng

又 得 與 人 行 方 便

I still have to be at the disposal of others.

(桃花) • to-hue

beh-a, kuai-se be gue-lai, ua aiñ gue-dou 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) • dou-gong • Boatman

o? ngueng-lai si a-to-hue

哦？原來是阿桃花

Oh? It's To-hue.

leu chik-ja boih-ja, aiñ keu di-go hañ?

汝七早八早，愛去底塊～？

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

(桃花) • to-hue

ueng-ghua u sing hue-lai, sueh-dao da-iañ guañ-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,

jiu aiñ hue-ge, ing-cheu ang-ying meng ua joiñ-uang sai-lou, jih-hue nie-giañ

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.

beh-a, dañ kuai-se be gue-lai!

伯啊，且快些過來！

Uncle, come quickly!

(渡公) • dou-gong • Boatman

ho! ua lai!

好！我來！

Right! I'm coming!

bhue, he he he, jui-lao jiañ do pu, jung gou-buk-geung 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.

to-hue a, gah oi-giañ teung-diou, liou e-loh-lai, e-loh-lai a

桃花啊，甲鞋囤褪掉，了下落來，下落來啊

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

（桃花）•to-hue

ho, lai jih bao-hok

好，來接包袱

Alright then, catch my bag.

（渡公）•dou-gong • Boatman

ho, gak-lai!

好，掬來！

Throw it over!

（桃花）•to-hue

a-beh, jih a!

阿伯，接啊！

Uncle, catch!

（渡公）•dou-gong • Boatman

eu? a? o? leu jia gui-giañ, sang-mak li bho toiñ-jung, dañ bao-hok [mo?] bung-jui lao-keu 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 𠂇 in the Ming-era edition of 蘇六娘, which has a similar meaning (inferred from context).

（桃花）• to-hue

beh a, mo mo mo, do ji-go

伯啊，～～～，在只塊

Uncle, look it's still right here.

（渡公）• dou-gong • Boatman

ha ha ha ha ha! ua jai ua lao-nang mak-hue, (?)-lai bhu-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）• to-hue

beh a, dañ lai-jih

伯啊，旦來接

Uncle, now catch it for real.

（渡公）• dou-gong • Boatman

ai-ia, gang-gang si leu-gai ba-hi

哎呀，剛剛是汝個把戲

Aiyah, this was all just your game.

dañ me-me e-loh-lai

旦 猛猛 下落來

Now come down quickly.

(桃花) • to-hue

ho!

好！

Alright!

(渡公) • dou-gong • Boatman

a!

啊！

Ah!

leu jia gui-giañ, bho-gao-bho-dai

汝 者 鬼罔，無交無代

You little devil, without giving any warning,

jie-señ jiu biah-loh-lai, ua jiah jung hiem-hiem boi, hiem-hiem boi

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!

“boi” also pronounced “bai”

險險 - “almost”

(桃花) • to-hue

bhoi no, bhoi no. beh a, leu [mo] ho jieñ-chiu, jung bhoi boi

𨋖𨋖𨋖, 𨋖𨋖𨋖, 伯啊, 汝 [麼] 好 槳手, 船 𨋖 擺

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

(渡公) • dou-gong • Boatman

he he he, dañ kia-ho, kia-ho

~~~~, 旦 倚好, 倚好

Heh, then stand fast, stand fast.

e? to-hue a, gao dui-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.

leu ho-m Chiang diou-gua lai gip a-beh tiañ-tiañ jek-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) • to-hue

beh a, leu mo ia-si (?) chiu Chiang-gua-giañ, aiñ li jiu-lai dao-gua

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) • dou-gong • Boatman

dao gua? ai-ia aiñ jiu lai!

鬥歌? 哎呀 愛 就 來!

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

heu, leu mai toiñ ua lao-nang bhoi Chiang-gua

許，汝勿睇我老人 奮唱歌

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

ua-gai gua-giañ gao dua-lua

我個歌囡到大X

My songs are [...]

jek-choiñ boih-beh gang-leu dao, dao-gao leu u-kao m-gañ kua

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 jek-ming ko, jek-ming Chiang, a leu soiñ, leu soiñ

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）• to-hue

mai, leu soiñ

勿，汝先

No, you first.

（渡公）• dou-gong • Boatman

huanñ aiñ ua soiñ? ia ho, leu lai tiañ

還愛我先？也好，汝來聽

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

• jiañ-ghueh beh-hue kai, beh-ia beh-hue kai

正月百花開，百呀百花開

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

• beh-hue kai lai (?) - diep kuang

百花開來 x 蝶狂

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

• ja-me gai hng-mung bho jieñ-so

昨暝 個園門無上鎖

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

• to-hue tao-jao lai dou-gang, loi-ia loi lai dou-gang

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) • to-hue

o, pieng me ua, tai ua lai

哦，騙罵我，待我來

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

(渡公) • dou-gong • Boatman

dieh leu ia

着汝也

It's your turn.

(桃花) • to-hue

• yi-ghueh bhak-mi-hue, bhak-a bhak-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 kui-liou kui beh-hue, beh-hue hue-loh eu sing-jieñ

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.

• dung-biñ hiah-gak ho ang-ge, loi-ia loi ho ang-ge

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) • dou-gong • Boatman

o, (?)-lai bai-chai ua lao-nang

哦，X 來擺踩我老人

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

e-yik bho-nang lai to-jo leu jiu jai 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!

• sañ-ghueh iñ sang-bue, iñ-ia iñ sang-bue

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-bue iñ-jeu liang-tao-ge, leu bi iñ-jeu m-seng-dui

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 leu-pou keu iu-hue, loi-ia loi keu iu-hue

西蘆呂浦去又回，～呀～去又回

From sai-lou to leu-pou you go to and fro, loi-ia-loi you go to and fro.

sai-lou 西蘆 is the hometown of gueh gi-chung 郭繼春, the lover of sou lak-nie,  
whereas leu-pou 呂浦 is the hometown of sou lak-nie.

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

(桃花) • to-hue

• si-ghueh 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-jeu?] guaň-jui jieñ gik-ieng, leu bi [lou-jeu?] do gi jieñ

鷗鷺趕水上揭陽，汝比鷗鷺多枝槳

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

揭陽 gik-ieng, one of the counties of 潮州 die-jiu subprefecture, is usually pronounced today as gik-ieñ.

• jek-ni si-kui siu gang-bieng, loi-ia loi siu gang-bieng

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) • dou-gong • Boatman

je, yu-bi yu-mo-tiañ, je nai oi-dik keu 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-ghueh be leng-jung, ang-lam lek-neung yu giañ-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-gai neung-gung hah leu i?

哪個郎君合汝意？

Which young gentleman will catch your fancy?

• a-beh jo bhue lai diañ-hung, loi-ia loi lai diañ-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) • to-hue

• lak-ghueh su tiñ-si, su-a su tiñ-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 lao-jieñ gak li-gi, ng u li-gi jeu-gi gak

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 dang-sañ-ngou-nie, where 黃五娘 ng ngou-nie tossed a lychee branch from her balcony to 陳三 dang-sañ as a sign of her love.

• mieng-eng a-beh leu hui sim-gi, loi-ia loi hui sim-gi

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) • dou-gong • Boatman

chik-ghueh si...

七月時.....

In the seventh month...

(桃花) • to-hue

chik-ghueh jo-ni? jo m-chiang?

七月做呢？做唔唱？

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

(渡公) • dou-gong • Boatman

ai-ia, m-dui ia, bho sieñ jui-lao do dua

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.

jiah-jung hiem-hiem bung-i pu-gao sang-goi chui

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) • to-hue

ai-ia, beh a, me-me chuk-lak, jung be hue-lai keu 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) • dou-gong • Boatman

ho ho, leu do kia-ho, kia-ho a

好好，汝在倚好，倚好啊

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

(桃花) • to-hue

beh a, leu meng-ki ja se, lai ji-dou-tao deng 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) • dou-gong • Boatman

ji-gai jeu-yieng oi, ha ha ha ha ha

只個自然～，哈哈哈哈哈

Of course, haha!

• ua lao-nang ia chong hao-señ lai, hao-señ gai sim-seu ua oi jai

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) • to-hue

• nang gao-lao lai [su?]-hok lao, gueng-nang oiñ-seu ia buk-gai

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.

chuk-lak a!

出力啊！

Row hard!

(渡公) • dou-gong • Boatman

ho, leu kia ho, tai a-beh lai loh hiang jieñ. kia 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, to-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.”