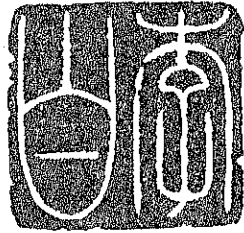


Poems by Li Po

TRANSLATIONS BY ELLING EIDE



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Fragment of Poem XLV/2
(in calligraphy attributed to Li Po)

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PREFACE FOR THE POETRY FROM A SPRING EVENING PARTY
FOR MY COUSINS IN A PEACH BLOSSOM GARDEN

This Heaven and Earth are the hostel for Creation's ten thousand forms/where light and darkness have passed as guests for a hundred ages. But our floating lives are like a dream; how many moments do we have for joy? When the ancients took out candles for nighttime revels/they had the right idea. And we the more/when warm spring summons us with misted scenes and the Great Lump of Earth lends us patterned decoration.

Assembled in this garden perfumed by flowering peaches/we shared the happiness of those whom Heaven has related. My young brothers were all talented as the poet Hsieh Hui-lien/though my own songs could only shame me before Ling-yün/his elder cousin. Yet our quiet enjoyment had not reached an end when the wit of our conversation grew more refined. We spread carnelian mats to sit beneath the flowers/let fly our winged cups and got drunk with the moon.

But if there were no handsome verse/how could you express exquisite feelings? When the poems did not succeed/we exacted forfeits in jars of wine as they did in the Garden of Golden Valley.

I

QUIET NIGHT THOUGHT

1 Before my bed the moonlight glitters
2 Like frost upon the ground.
3 I look up to the mountain moon,
4 Look down and think of home.

II

FOR THE CHIEF OF STAFF AT CHIANG-YU

1 Light on mountain vapors in the deep courtyard/
2 Down the side of paved steps the gurgling of water,
3 Wild swallows are nesting in the official lodge,
4 Clouds rising from the stream enter the ancient hall.
5 A solitary clerk passes in the slanting rays of sun;
6 With curtains rolled the disorderly peaks are green.
7 A multicolored Chief of Spirits and Immortals
8 Burning incense reads a classic of The Way.

III

RHYMEPROSE ON THE SWORD GALLERY
 (To send my friend Wang Yen on his way to Sha)

1 South of Hsien-yang/
 2 gazing in a straight line for five thousand miles/
 3 I see the soaring crags and spires of clouded ranges.
 4 There before me the Sword Gallery cuts across/
 5 Suspended from the sky
 6 to provide a passage through the center.
 7 Up above are
 8 pine winds that rustle/whistle/sough/and sigh/
 9 And there the gibbons of Pa/sadly crying to one another.
 10 On every side
 11 flying chutes rush through the chasms/
 12 Spattering stones/splashing the Gallery/
 13 surgin and gushin with frightenin thunder.
 14 Sendin off my beautiful friend. Now the partin!
 15 I wonder when that day. His comin home!

16 While gazin after him – what end to feelin?
 17 With sad notes deep inside – I sigh and moan.
 18 I watch as the azure waves go coursing eastward/
 19 And grieve as the white sun is hidden in the west.
 20 A wild goose takes leave of Yen – those autumn noises.
 21 The clouds bring sorrow to Ch'in – this evening light.
 22 But/oh/when the bright moon appears above
 23 the Sword Gallery/
 24 Let us have some wine together in our two villages/
 25 thinkin of one another.

IV

THE ROAD TO SHU IS HARD

1 A-eee! Shee-yew! Sheeeeee! So dangerous! So high!
 2 The road to Shu is hard/harder than climbing the sky.
 3 Silkworm Thicket and Fishing Duck
 4 Founded their kingdom in the depths of time/
 5 But then for forty-eight thousand years/
 6 No settlers' smoke reached the Ch'in frontier.
 7 Yet west on T'ai-po Mountain/take a bird road there/
 8 You could cross directly to the peaks of O-mei's brow.
 9 When earth collapsed and the mountain crashed/
 the muscled warriors died.
 10 It was after that when the ladders to heaven
 were linked together with timber and stone.
 11 Up above is
 the towering pillar where six dragons turn the sun.
 12 Down below on
 the twisting river colliding waves dash into the turns.
 13 The flight of a yellow crane cannot cross it/
 14 Gibbons and monkeys climb in despair.

 15 Green Mud Ridge – coiling/winding –
 16 Nine turns in a hundred steps/round pinnacle and snag.
 17 Touch the Triad/pass the Well Stars/
 look up to gasp and groan.
 18 Press a hand to calm your chest/
 sit down for a lingering sigh.

 19 I wonder as you travel west/when will you return?
 20 I fear that a road so cragged and high is impossible to climb.
 21 All I see is a mournful bird that cries in an ancient tree/
 [stanza continues]

22 And cocks that fly in pursuit of hens/
 circling through the forest.
 23 Yet again I hear the cuckoo call in the moonlit night –
 sorrow upon the desolate mountain.
 24 The road to Shu is hard/harder than climbing the sky.
 25 Whenever one shall hear this/it wilts his youth away.

26 Peak after peak missing the sky by not so much as a foot.
 27 Withered pines hang upside-down clinging to vertical walls.

28 Flying chutes and raging current/
 how they snarl and storm!
 29 Pelted cliffs and spinning stones/
 ten thousand chasms thunderous roar!
 30 The perils – this is the way they are.
 31 And woe to that man on a road so far –
 Oh why/and for what/would he travel here?
 32 Sword Gallery looms above with soaring crags and spires;
 33 One man at the pass/
 34 Ten thousand men are barred.
 35 And if the guards are not our people/
 36 They can change into jackals and wolves.

37 In the morning avoid fierce tigers.
 38 In the evening avoid long snakes.
 39 They sharpen teeth for sucking blood;
 40 The dead are strewn like hemp.
 41 Let them talk of pleasure in Brocade City/
 42 The better thing is hurrying home.
 43 The road to Shu is hard/harder than climbing the sky.
 44 Edging back/I gaze to the west/long and deep my sighs.

RETURNING TO THE MOUNTAINS ON A SPRING DAY
FOR MENG NUMBER SIX/HAO-JAN

1 The vermilion sashes left in the World of Dust/
 2 In the green mountains attending a Buddhist party/
 3 Golden cords led us on the Paths of Enlightenment/
 4 On a jewelled raft we crossed the River of Delusion.
 5 Ridge-line trees made a joinery of flying brackets/
 6 And cliff-side flowers covered the valley springs/
 7 The stupa shape put a spire on the ocean sun/
 8 And building contours rose from the river mist.
 9 A fragrant ether descended from the Three Heavens/
 10 A tolling bell linked the ten thousand ravines.
 11 When pearls for the lotus autumn were already formed/
 12 Where the canopy of pine tree denseness was finally round/
 13 The birds assembled as if they would audit the Dharma/
 14 And dragons gathered like guards for the meditation.
 15 I am sorry that these are not rhymes of flowing water
 16 Worthy of being inspired by Po-ya's strings.

VI

MY TRIP IN A DREAM TO THE LADY OF HEAVEN MOUNTAIN
A FAREWELL TO SEVERAL GENTLEMEN OF EASTERN LU

- 1 Seafarers tell of a magic island
2 Hard to find in the vague expanse
 of mist and towering waves.
- 3 In Yāeh men talk of the Lady of Heaven
4 Glimpsed by chance/dissolving and glowing/
 amid the rainbows and clouds.
- 5 The Lady of Heaven/joining the heavens/
 faces the Heavenly Span/
6 Her majesty conquers the Five Summits
 and shadows Vermilion Wall.
- 7 Heavenly Terrace rises up forty-eight thousand staves/
8 Yet tips southeast before her as if it wanted to fall.
- 9 Wanting to probe the mystery in a dream of Wu and Yāeh/
10 Through a night I flew across the moon on Mirror Lake.
- 11 The moon on the lake projected my shadow/
12 Escorting me to the River Shan.
13 The place where Duke Hsieh once retired
 stands to the present day;
14 The lucent waters swiftly purl and
 shrill-voiced gibbons cry.
- 15 Feet in Duke Hsieh's cleated clogs
16 I climbed the ladder of clouds in the blue.
17 From the slope I could see the sun in the ocean;
18 From space I could hear the Rooster of Heaven.
 [stanza ends]

19 A thousand cliffs/ten thousand turns/
 a road I cannot define;
 20 Dazzled by flowers/I rest on a stone
 and darkness suddenly falls.

21 Bears grumbling/dragons humming/
 fountains rumbling on the mountainside.
 22 Quaking before a deep forest.
 Frightened by impending spires.
 23 Green/green the gum trees. On the verge of rain.
 24 Rough/rough the river. Breaking in spray.

25 Flashing/cracking/roaring/clapping/
 26 Hills and ridges crumble and fall.
 27 The stone gates of the Grotto Heavens
 28 Boom and crash as they open wide.
 29 The Blue Dark is a rolling surge/
 where bottom cannot be seen/
 30 Where sun and moon throw glittering light
 on platforms of silver and gold.

31 The rainbows are his clothing. His horses are the wind.
 32 The Lord Within the Clouds appears.
 All things swirl as he descends.

33 Tigers strumming zithers. Coaches phoenix drawn.
 34 The immortals now assemble. Arrayed like hemp in rows.
 35 With the sudden excitement of my soul/
 my vital force is roused;
 36 I rise distraught and startled/long and drawn my sighs.
 37 There is only the pillow and mat on waking;
 38 Gone are the mists of a moment ago.
 [stanza ends]

39 The pleasures found within man's world
are also just this way;
40 All life's affairs since ancient times
are an easterly flowing stream.

41 Parting now I leave you. When shall I return?
42 Let us set the white deer free
within the blue-green shores;
43 When I must go, I shall ride away to visit peaks of renown.
44 How could I ever furrow my brow and bend my back
in service of rank and power?
45 To hurry the pleasures of love and wine
wilts man's youth away.

VII

INSCRIBED ON THE WALL
OF HSŪ HSŪAN-P'ING'S RETREAT

1 I go along chanting the wayhouse poem
2 And come to visit the immortal's dwelling.
3 His lofty tracks are lost on misty ranges/
4 The Great Void blocked by clouded forests.
5 I peer into the courtyard deserted and silent/
6 I lean on a column to dawdle in vain.
7 No doubt turned into a far-flying crane/
8 He'll be back in a thousand years or so.

VIII

LINKED VERSES ON CHANGING NINE SONS MOUNTAIN TO NINE FLOWERS MOUNTAIN WITH A PREFACE

South of Greening Sunlight County is the Nine Sons Mountain. The mountain is many thousands of feet high, and on the top are nine peaks like lotus flowers. When you examine the maps to verify this name, there is nothing you can rely upon. The Lord High Astrologer made no mention of it on his southern tour; there is nothing on the subject from the mouths of the ancients; and it is absent from the records of the famous worthies. The mysterious immortals have been frequent visitors, but the songs they write are rarely heard. Thus, I abandoned the old appellation and gave it the new label of «Nine Flowers.» At that time, I was down between the Yangtze and the Han making a study of The Way and had stopped to rest at the home of Hsia-hou Chiung. With the storm awnings open and my turban pushed back, I sat staring out at the snow in the pines. Then, I linked verses with several of the gentlemen there to pass this on to future times.

1 The Sublime Immanency is divided between two forces;
2 The mysterious mountain blossoms with nine flowers.

—Li Po

3 Storeyed pillars impede the lethargic sun;
4 Half the wall is bright with the clouds of dawn.

—Kao Chi

5 Accumulated snows shine in the dark shaded valleys;
6 Flying currents spew against the bright sunny cliffs.

—Wei Ch'ān-yā

7 A green glitter, the light from trees of jade;
8 In the blue distance, the homes of feathered men.

—Li Po

LI PO'S RIDDLE NAMING CLOUD-RITUAL HSŪ

Cloud-Ritual Hsū/an accomplished flute player from Jen-ch'eng County (the modern Chi-ning in Shantung)/was the grandson of Li Mo/China's most famous flautist/who served in the Buddhist Music Section of the Imperial Pear Garden Conservatory. According to a story in the T'ang collection called «Rumors from the Sweet Marshes/» sometime about 795/Cloud-Ritual gave the poet Wei Ying-wu the following account of how he acquired his given name:

«At the beginning of the Heavenly Treasure reign/when I was just a month old/an Imperial Party returning from the Feng Ritual in the east made a stop at Jen-ch'eng/and my grandfather learned of my being born. When he saw me/he was extremely pleased and took me to the scholar Li Po to request that he create for me a lucky name. Master Li had just sat down in a restaurant with a wine flag and was ordering wine in a loud voice/when Mr. Ho-lan/the proprietor/who was over ninety years old/invited them to drink in one of the upper rooms. My grandfather played a sophisticated flute to accompany the wine/and Master Li/grasping his brush/drunkenly wrote a poem across my chest:

1 What man is that beneath the tree?
2 Not talking truly is my pleasure.
3 If talking reaches mid of day/
4 The mist thanks Heaven for Ch'en's Treasure.

My grandfather complained/'I ask the scholar for a name/and now I can't understand what he has written!' To this Master Li replied/'The name is in the poem. «The man beneath a tree» gives

you a tree and a child; the character for «child» written beneath the character for «tree» gives you the character for your surname «Li.» Then / «not talking» means that there is no one speaking; the character for «no one» combined with the character for «speaking» gives you the character for «Mo.» The character for «pleasure» is composed of the character for «daughter» and the character for «child»; a daughter's child is a grandson. When «talking reaches mid of day /» you are speaking about noon; the character for «speaking» written beside the character for «noon» gives you the character for the surname «Hsü.» Finally / «the mist thanks Heaven for Ch'en's Treasure» refers to the clouds appearing for the Feng Ritual; that is to say / it was a «cloud ritual.» Thus you get / «Li Mo's grandson / Hsü of the Cloud Ritual.»»

X

TO SECRETARY YÜAN OF CH'IAO COMMANDERY
REMEMBERING OLD TIMES TOGETHER

1 I remember Dreg-Hill Tung at Lo-yang years ago;
2 South of Fording-Heaven Bridge he built a tavern just for me.
3 With yellow gold and white jade rings
to buy our songs and laughter/
4 Once drunk/I would go for months
snubbing the princes and lords.

5 The world's proud and worthy came/
visiting clouds in the blue/
6 But among them all/with you alone my heart was always free.
7 We turned the mountain/churned the sea/
did everything with ease/
8 Spilled our feelings/poured our thoughts/
kept nothing in reserve.

9 I started once for South of Huai to climb the cinnamon trees;
10 You remained north of the Lo sadly dreaming of me.
11 But I could not bear the parting.
12 I returned to wander with you.

13 With you I wandered far away to visit Fortress of Immortals/
14 A thirty-six bend journey along the river's twisted coil.
15 The whole stream at our departure
was bright with a thousand flowers/
16 And we traversed ten thousand ravines
filled with the pine-wind sound.
17 On silver saddles with bridles of gold
we reached the open plain/
[stanza continues]

18 And the Governor from East of Han came out to greet us there/
19 While the Taoist sage of Purple Sunlight
20 Played welcome on a sheng of jade.
21 And in his dwelling/Clouds-for-Supper/
the music of immortals rose/
22 Winding/resonant/and subtle/
a phoenix singing with his hen.

23 Sleeves flapping/flutes demanding/
about to fly like an immortal/
24 The governor from East of Han got up drunk to dance.
25 Hands brought a brocade robe/spread it to cover me/
26 And I/drunk/sprawled to sleep/pillowed on a thigh.

27 At that feast our minds and spirits
soared through the Nine Heavens/
28 But stars depart/the rain will scatter/passing with the dawn.
29 We flew our ways at the Ch'u frontier
to distant mountains and streams;
30 I returned to the mountains to search for my ancient nest;
31 And you crossed the Wei Bridge/going back to your home.

32 At home your distinguished father/
brave as the tiger and panther of old/
33 Became the Governor of Ping Prefecture
and subdued the barbarian horde.
34 So you called for me in the Fifth Month
to cross the T'ai-hang Range;
35 Broken wheels do not tell of the miserable Sheep Gut road.

36 I arrived at the northern capital
with the months deep in the year/
[stanza continues]

37 So grateful for your kindness and disregard for gold.
38 With carnelian cups and delicate food
on dishes of darkest jade/
39 You made me drunk and fed me full
till I lost all thought of home.

40 Then/time to time/we would go out
to a bending west of the wall/
41 Where the flowing water is like blue jade
at the Chin Ancestral Shrine.
42 Our drifting boat would float along/
while flutes and drums would play;
43 The tiny ripples were dragon scales/
and the tufts of sedge were green.

44 In the mood/we took out girls
to lose ourselves in the moment at hand.
45 How can it be that willow flowers
are so much like the snow?
46 Red-rouged and getting drunk/
they seemed so right in the slanting sun/
47 The clear depth of a hundred-foot pool
reflecting kingfisher beauty.

48 With kingfisher beauty graceful/alluring/
and crescent moon aglow/
49 Each lovely girl sang by turn
and danced in her gossamer gown.
50 A fresh wind blew the songs up into the sky/
51 Where songs and tunes would circle round
as wandering clouds flew by.
[stanza ends]

52 Such times of joy and happiness will be hard to find again;
53 Going west I offered up my own «Long Willows Poem/»
54 But clouds in the blue at the Northern Towers
cannot be counted upon/
55 And the white head from the eastern mountains
turned and went back home.

56 South of Wei Bridge I met you once;
57 North of Ts'o Terrace we parted again.
58 And did you ask how many regrets
our parting brings me now?
59 The fallen flowers at the end of spring whirl into a blur.

60 Words cannot exhaust it.
61 My feelings cannot end.
62 I call my boy/he kneels in wait as I tie and seal my poem
63 To send to you/remembering you/a thousand miles away.

XI

ON PARTING IN A WINE SHOP AT CHIN-LING

- 1 White Gate in willow flowers/and the shop is all perfume/
- 2 A Wu girl warms the wine and calls the guests to try.
- 3 Here the fellows of Chin-ling bid each other goodbye/
- 4 Staying behind or going/each drains his cups of wine.
- 5 I suggest that you try asking the easterly flowing stream/
- 6 Does it or these parting thoughts run the longer way?

XII

EAST OF LU COMMANDERY
SENDING OFF TU NUMBER TWO/FU
AT STONE GATE MOUNTAIN

1 Drunk at our parting/now how many days?
2 Our view from this height is all terrace and pools.
3 Why should we talk of the Stone Gate road?
4 We still have another gold flagon to try.
5 Autumn waves fall on the River Ssu;
6 Sea colors brighten the To and Fro Mountain.
7 The far flying tumbleweeds go separate ways/
8 But first let us empty these cups mid the trees.

XIII

SENT TO TU FU
FROM BENEATH THE CITY WALL AT SANDHILL

1 Why have I come here after all?
2 To rest in retreat by the Sandhill wall.
3 By the side of the wall are some ancient trees
4 With the sounds of autumn both night and day.
5 But I can't get drunk on the wines of Lu/
6 And my feelings are wasted in the songs of Ch'i.
7 My thoughts of you like the River Wen
8 Go rolling southward endlessly.

XIV

TO SEND TO TU FU AS A JOKE

1 I ran into Tu Fu by a Rice Grain Mountain/
2 In a bamboo hat with the sun at high noon.
3 Hasn't he got awfully thin since our parting?
4 It must be the struggle of writing his poems.

XV

TO SEND TO CHENG YEN
MAGISTRATE OF LI-YANG
AS A JOKE

1 Magistrate T'ao/drank every day/
2 Didn't know it was spring in his five willow trees.
3 His plain old zither didn't have any strings/
4 And he filtered his wine with his kudzu hat.
5 Beneath his north window in refreshing breeze/
6 He says he's the subject of old Fu-hsi.
7 So when is he coming to visit Li Village
8 To meet with a kinsman who lives in his image?

XVI

HSIANG-YANG SONG

1 As west behind Hsien Mountain the setting sun would fall/
 2 Put your hat on backwards/get lost beneath the flowers.
 3 And Hsiang-yang's little archins will clap their hands in time/
 4 Block the street and jostle and sing «White Copper Greaves.»
 5 If passersby should query what makes them laugh this way/
 6 They're jeering Mister Mountain/drunk as a blob of clay.

7 O cormorant ladle. O parrot shell cup.
 8 In a hundred years six thousand and three
 ten-thousands of days/
 and in a day you must be sure three hundred cups to pour.
 9 See the Han's waters far away/green as a mallard's head/
 10 Just like the grape
 when the must is set to ferment for a second time.
 11 If that river will transform to make us springtime wine/
 12 Then the risings of yeast could terraces build
 upon that hill of lees.
 13 A steed that's worth a thousand in gold
 I'd swap for a serving girl/
 14 To drunken sit on a saddle carved and sing «Plum Petals Fall.»
 15 At the side of a cart I'd hang at a slant
 a single bottle of wine/
 16 With phoenix sheng and dragon pipes
 to urge each other along.
 17 In the market place at Hsien-yang/sigh for a yellow dog?
 18 Better by far/beneath the moon/to pour from a golden jar.
 19 Oh/don't you see/
 for His Lordship Yang from the days of the Chin/
 that chunk of old memorial stone?
 [stanza continues]

20 His tortoise head erodes away/the moss and lichens grow.
21 My tears cannot fall for him.
22 My heart cannot mourn for him.
23 Who can worry what happens after the body is gone?
24 Gold ducks and silver mallards bury ashes dead and cold.
25 The fresh wind and shining moon/no need for a coin to buy/
26 The jade mountain will fall on its own/
nobody pushes it down.

27 O Sha-chou ladle. O Ironman pot.
28 Li Po to share life and death with you.
29 King Hsiang/the clouds and rain/where are they today?
30 The river waters eastward flow/at night the gibbons cry.

XVII
TAKE WINE

- 1 Grape Wine. Golden Bowls.
2 And a girl from Wa / just fifteen / bundled on a blooded horse.
3 Indigo blue she paints her brows / red brocade are her shoes /
4 Speaking her words a little askew
 she temptingly sings her songs.
5 At the feast on tortoise-shell mats
 she gets drunk in your arms.
6 In bed behind the lotus curtains what will she do to you?

XVIII

WHITE WALNUTS

1 In red gauze sleeves seen so distinctly/
2 On a white jade plate/at a glance/they are gone.
3 I think of an old monk at the end of his chanting/
4 Telling crystal beads in the arm of his robe.

XIX

JADE STEPS LAMENT

1 White dew forming on the steps of jade
2 Invades gauze stockings as the night grows old;
3 And so letting down her crystal curtain
4 She mistily watches the autumn moon.

XX

A SUITE IN THE CH'ING-P'ING MODE

Part One

- 1 As clouds think of her clothing/as blossoms think of her face/
2 Spring wind caresses the railings
and dew is thick on the flowers.
3 If you do not find her by the Mountain of Numerous Jewels/
4 You may head for the Jasper Terrace
to meet her beneath the moon.

Part Two

- 1 A branch of red voluptuousness/the dew congealed perfume/
2 For clouds and rain on Sorceress Mountain/
why go breaking your heart?
3 I wonder who could be compared in the palaces of the Han?
4 Would it be dear Flying Swallow
trying new powder and rouge?

Part Three

- 1 Beauty to topple a nation in the company of famous flowers/
2 They always succeed with His Majesty
making him look with a smile.
3 Knowing that the spring wind may bring regrets unending/
4 North of the Aloeswood Pavilion
they lean on the balustrade.

XXI

SONGS FOR THE CH'ING-P'ING MUSIC

Number One

- 1 A spring day in the palace gardens/
2 New finery displayed by orioles' flames/
3 Cleverly hunting for the «One Hundred Plants»
they battle beneath the flowers/
4 Just merely competing to win a peck full of pearls and beads.
- 5 Late in the day they repair the remains of their make-up
6 And expertly dance to «Rainbow Skirts» for the Throne.
7 Everyone says these waists are so slender and modest/
8 But twisting and turning they make the Emperor smile.

Number Two

- 1 A clear night in the women's quarters/
2 The moon probes the golden window cracks/
3 Behind curtains of jade/the duck and the drake
spewing orchid and musk
4 As the hours drop into the fragrant residue in the silver lamps.
- 5 The ladies for His company never talk about sleeping alone/
6 But He has six palaces and three thousand in silks and gauze.
7 For His single smile they have each tried a hundred charms/
8 And the directive of the Imperial Heart has gone to whom?

Number Three

1 The mist is deep/the waters wide/
2 There's no way to get a message through/
3 There is only the moon far beyond the clouds
 in the azure sky of day/
4 Deliberately shining to spite me in the void of our separation.

5 All day long I keep finding things to grieve me/
6 My sorrowing brow is a lock that will not turn.
7 Night after night ever leaving half of the cover/
8 I wait for your soul's return to me in a dream.

Number Four

1 Phoenix hen coverlet/phoenix cock quilt/
2 And night after night always sleeping alone
3 While that red wax candle on the silver stand
 to make me suffer the more
4 Hatefully goes on imitating my continuous pearls of tears.

5 Though flower-like faces have only a so-much of time/
6 You toss me aside to drift on the Hsiao and the Hsiang.
7 Propped on my pillow I rue the cold water-clock sound/
8 The drop/drop/dripping can break a sorrowing heart.

Number Five

- 1 Up at dawn in the elegant room/
2 Someone reports the falling of snow.
3 When the window blinds are rolled up high
to view the auspicious omen/
4 Distantly the courtyard steps are lost in pristine splendor.
5 In the vitalizing air/light draws smoke from the burners/
6 On hoary-leaved plants the cold forms pendants of jade.
7 Apparently in Heaven the immortals on a drinking spree/
8 Grabbing at the white clouds crumbled them to powder.

XXII

STRINGS OF JEWELS FOR BODHISATTVAS

Number One

1 The foot-loose forever are saying life in the south is fine/
2 The foot-loose can only be happy down in the south growing old.

3 Before they are old they never go home/
4 Going home breaks too many hearts.

5 Where embroidery screens have hinges of gold/
6 Drunk they lodge in the thickets of flowers.

7 When the freshets of spring are bluer than sky/
8 On painted boats they sleep to the rain.

Number Two

1 The woods below are overcast/the mist is like a weave/
2 The cold hills in a single band are heartbreakingly green.

3 Darkness enters the lofty house/
4 Upstairs someone is sad.

5 Vain to wait on the steps of jade/
6 The lodging bird flies home in haste.

7 Whither goes his homeward course?
8 To a distant inn or a near one.

Number Three

1 Raising her head she suddenly sees the Heng-yang goose go by/

2 A thousand cries/ten thousand words/how do you limit a heart?

3 Unbearable having a heartless man/

4 He sends not a single line.

5 She weeping returns to the spite of her room/

6 Her rouge getting soaked with tears.

7 But wait until time for the goose to go back/

8 There won't be a letter to post him.

XXIII

ENTWINED BRANCHES

- 1 In a cover of snow the palace rooms are sealed/
2 Through curtains of gauze a confusion of gold and green.
3 Attacking and pressing the balustrade:
4 Scented hearts pure and plain.
5 Plum branches gently swayed.
6 She blows on the fragrant embers in the jewelled lion;
the cloud of musk is thick.
7 Her red silks and green quilts perfumed.
- 7 On a cape delicately painted with descending clouds/
8 Drops of tears in the Palace for Manifestation of the Male.
9 Inches away yet remote from the Throne:
10 The Lord's favor is severed.
As if a thousand miles away.
11 She stares through a curtain of rock crystal beads;
the bamboo twigs are cold.
12 Waiting while the goat cart never arrives.

XXIV

AUTUMN IN THE OSMANTHUS PALACE

Number One

1 Immortal maid descending. Double-Perfection Tung.
2 In the Han palace when the night was cool/
she played a sheng of jade.
3 At the end of the tune she went away
to attend her immortal duties;
4 Ten thousand doors/a thousand gates/
and only the light of the moon.

Number Two

1 Maid of the Milky Way. Face refined with jade.
2 Her cloud-curtained carriage often descends
into the world of man.
3 Knowing a road to the Nine Heavens/
she leaves without a trail;
4 But softly/softly the perfumed breeze
puts life into bangles and jewels.

XXV

REMEMBERING THE BEAUTY OF CH'IN

- 1 The sound of the flute is stilled.
2 When dreams with the Beauty of Ch'in are ended,
 moonlight on the houses of Ch'in.
3 Moonlight on the houses of Ch'in.
4 Year after year the sight of the willows –
5 Pains on parting at Pa-ling Bridge.
- 6 Clear those Autumn Festivals high on the Pleasure Fields.
7 On the ancient road from Hsien-yang,
 even the sounds and dust are gone.
8 The sounds and dust are gone.
9 West wind/last rays of sun –
10 On the tombs and towers of the House of Han.

XXVI

THREE/FIVE/AND SEVEN WORDS

1 Autumn wind fresh/
2 Autumn moon bright/
3 Fallen leaves gathered / scatter again/
4 Cold ravens roosting / sounding alarms.
5 Missing you - seeing you - knowing what day/
6 These moments - this night - coping is hard.

XXVII

THE BALLAD OF LONG BANK

Number One

1 When my hair was first in bangs/
2 I used to pick flowers and tease from the door.

3 Then my love would ride out on a bamboo horse
4 To circle the wellhead and play with green plums.
5 We lived together in the village of Long Bank/
6 Two little children without doubt or mistrust.
7 At fourteen/I became your wife/
8 A bashful face that never could smile/
9 I drooped my head/faced the dark wall -
10 To your thousand calls/not one reply.
11 At last fifteen/I unfurrowed my brow/
12 Vowed to stay with you like ashes with dust.
13 Could you cling to a piling like the man in a flood/
14 Would I ever be climbing the Spouse-Vigil Tower?
15 I was sixteen when you went away
16 To Rough River Rock in Threatening Gorge/
17 In the Fifth Month you must not run a foul/
18 And cries of gibbons are sad in the sky.
19 The tracks by the gate where you slowly departed/
20 In each one now the moss grows green.

21 The moss is deep/I can't sweep it away/
22 Autumn is early/we have falling leaves.
23 In the Eighth Month the butterflies came/
24 Flew in pairs through the western garden.
25 When I think of this/my heart starts breaking/
26 I sit and grieve/and my face grows old.

27 Whenever you finally leave Triple Pa/
28 Send a letter ahead to let us all know.
29 I'll go out to meet you/not caring how far -
30 I'll go right down to Long Wind Shore.

Number Two

1 I remember when I was a single girl
2 And knew nothing of smoke and dust in the world/
3 But now having married a Long Bank man/
4 I'm at Sandy Point to check on the wind.

5 In the Fifth Month when the south wind rises/
6 I think of you coming down from Pa-ling.

7 In the Eighth Month when the west wind starts/
8 I worry about you departing from Yang-tzu.

9 With this coming and going/what is my heartache?
10 There is little of seeing and too much of parting.
11 You'll be reaching Hsiang-t'an in how many days?
12 In my dreams I leap over the wind and the waves.

13 Last night a wild wind went by/
14 It blew down trees by the riverside.
15 Everything water and dark without edges/
16 Where was a place for a traveller to be?

17 Visitors from the north have included real nobles/
18 And the whole of the river was filled with red robes.
19 Evenings they came along shore for their lodging/
20 And wouldn't move eastward for several days.
21 I pity myself at fifteen or so/
22 I had a pink face with peach blossom skin.
23 Who would be the wife of a merchant man/
24 To grieve about water and grieve about wind?

XXVIII

CHING-CHOU SONG

- 1 Below White Emperor Fortress/plenty of wind and waves/
2 Threatening Gorge in the Fifth Month/
who dares running through?
- 3 At Ching-chou the wheat is ripe/cocoons are making moths.
4 Reeling silk/I think of you - and then loose ends abound!
5 The scatter-grain flies singing - oh/what am I going to do!

XXIX

SPRING THOUGHTS

1 When the grass in Yen is still jade thread/
2 The mulberries of Ch'in are drooping green boughs.
3 The days when your mind is filled with returning/
4 Those are the times when my heart is breaking.
5 But the spring wind and I have been strangers/
6 What is it doing in my gauze bedcurtains?

XXX

THE WARDROBE MISTRESS FROM CH'IN

1 When the Emperor dwelt in the Night-Is-Young Palace/
2 I came as a maid to fold away clothes.
3 I had never been favored by the Purple Hall/
4 Yet I ventured to brush off the bedstead of gold.
5 The flood may come, but I will not flee;
6 Let the bear approach, still I shall remain.
7 Frail body supporting the sun and the moon/
8 Like the trembling light of the firefly.
9 I would that His Majesty, gathering turnips/
10 Not be displeased with the parts down below.

XXXI

WU SONGS IN MISS MIDNIGHT'S STYLE

Spring

1 In Ch'in was a lady named Lo-fu
2 By a blue stream picking mulberry leaves/
3 Her white hands on the green branches/
4 And red makeup bright in the sun.
5 «The silkworms are hungry/I am ready to leave/
6 So you with five horses have no need to stay.»

Summer

1 On Mirror Lake's three hundred miles
2 The buds burst into lotus flowers.
3 In the Fifth Month when Hsi-shih came/
4 The oglers lined the Jo-yeh stream.
5 Turning her boat/not awaiting the moon/
6 She went back home to the King of Yüeh.

Autumn

1 The moon is a disk over Ch'ang-an
2 And silk falling echoes from ten thousand doors/
3 The autumn wind blows without ceasing/
4 Always with thoughts of the Jade Frontier.
5 When will they quell the barbarian rabble?
6 When will our husbands come back from the war?

Winter

1 The post rider leaves in the morning/
2 One night to pad jackets for war.
3 Pale hands pull the chill of the needle/
4 Can they possibly pick up the shears?
5 Cutting and sewing to send far away -
6 How many days to the camp at Lin-t'ao?

XXXII

FIGHTING SOUTH OF THE WALL

Number One

1 Last year fighting at the source of the Sang-kan/
 2 This year fighting on the Onion River road/
 3 They have washed their weapons in the waves
 on the seas of T'iao-chih;
 4 They have pastured their horses on grass
 in the snows of the T'ien-shan.
 5 Across ten thousand miles the long campaigns and battles/
 6 The Three Armies completely exhausted and old.

 7 For the Hsiung-nu murder and killing
 are the work of plowing;
 8 From of old they have seen only white-bone
 and yellow-sand fields.
 9 Where the House of Ch'in built a wall against the barbarians/
 10 The House of Han still has the signal fires burning.

 11 The signal fires burn without ceasing.
 12 The long campaign has no time for ending.
 13 Fighting in the wilds they die in hand to hand combat;
 14 The losers' horses cry and sorrow toward Heaven.
 15 Crows and kites peck at human intestines
 16 And carry them off to hang them from withered trees.
 17 Soldiers are splattered all over the weeds and the grasses/
 18 And being a general is something useless to be.
 19 Then know that weapons are truly the tools of misfortune/
 20 Only used by The Sage when he has no other way.

Number Two

1 The battle field is a swirling blur/
2 The fighting men like swarms of ants/
3 The air is heavy and the sun-wheel red/
4 And the brambles are purple with the dye of blood/
5 And the crows with their beaks full of human flesh
6 Have stuffed themselves till they cannot fly.
7 Yesterday's man on top of the wall
8 Beneath the wall is a ghost today.
9 Still the banners are like an array of stars/
10 And the war drums' sound is not yet done/
11 And out of my family/husband and sons
12 All are there in the sound of the drums.

XXXIII

SONG OF THE HEAVENLY HORSE

1 From the Scythian cave came the heavenly horse/
 2 With tiger-stripe back and dragon-wing bones.
 3 Neighing to clouds in the blue. Shaking a mane of green.
 4 Orchid strong jaw sinew/speed tokened cheeks/
 he vanished when he ran.
 5 Over the Kunlun. To the West Edge of Earth.
 6 His four feet never stumbled.
 7 At cockcrow groomed in Yen/at dusk he was foddered in Yāeh/
 8 The path of a spirit/a lightning flash/galloping past as a blur.

9 A heavenly horse command. A flying dragon response.
 10 Eyes bright as the Evening Star/his breast a brace of ducks/
 11 His tail was like a comet/his neck like a thirsty crow;
 12 Red light spewed from his mouth/
 in his sweat canals were pearls.
 13 He once accompanied the Timely Dragon
 to leap in the heavenly streets/
 14 Haltered gold and bridled moon that shone in the City of Stars.
 15 A spirit apart/proud and assured/
 he vaulted the Nine Domains;
 16 But even with white jades like a mountain/
 who could venture to buy?
 17 He turned and laughed at the Purple Swallows/
 18 Thought to himself/«How dumb your kind.»

19 The heavenly horse dashed forward.
 He longed for the sovereign's coach.
 20 The reins let out he could leap and rear
 to tumble the passing clouds.
 [stanza continues]

21 But his feet moved in check for ten thousand miles/
22 And he gazed from afar at the gates to the throne.
23 If you meet no horseman like Master Cold Wind/
24 Who will notice a scion of vanishing light?

25 White clouds in a blue sky/
26 The hills are far away.
27 When the salt wagon piled high climbs the precipitous grade/
28 One violates custom and runs against reason/
fearing the close of day.

29 Po-le's art to curry and clip was lost along the way/
30 In my youth they used my strength/they cast me off in age.
31 I would like to meet a T'ien Tzu-fang
32 That he/in pity/might care for me/
33 But though he had Jade Mountain grain/
34 My flesh could not be healed.
35 A hard frost in the Fifth Month
withered the buds on the cinnamon tree/
36 In the stall I furrow my brow/
the bit of injustice in my teeth.
37 I beg that you will redeem me/send me off to Emperor Mu/
38 That I may yet play with my shadow
and dance by the Jasper Pool.

XXXIV

ON MY WAY INTO EXILE AT YEH-LANG
REMEMBERING OLD TIMES
ROAMING AMID THE PEACH BLOSSOMS AT AUTUMN SHORE

1 The peach blossoms come with the freshets of spring/
2 When the white rocks emerge and disappear.
3 Then stems of Old Man's Beard will sway/
4 And the moon is midway in the sky by day.
5 And along the old trails before you know
6 The first little fists of the bracken show.
7 Returning from Yeh-lang three years from now/
8 It is here I'll refine those golden bones.

XXXV

GAZING AT QUINCE TREE MOUNTAIN

1 I get up early to watch the sunrise/
2 Evenings I watch the birds fly home.
3 A stranger's heart grows sour and thorny/
4 Especially here on Quince Tree Mountain.

XXXVI

EARLY DEPARTURE FROM WHITE EMPEROR FORTRESS

1 At dawn I took leave of the White Emperor
 in the midst of luminous clouds/
2 The thousand miles to Chiang-ling/
 I have returned in a single day.
3 With the voices of gibbons on both banks crying incessantly
4 My frail boat had already passed
 ten thousand towering mountains.

XXXVII

IN PRAISE OF A GOLD AND SILVER PAINTED SCENE
OF THE BUDDHA MANIFESTATION IN THE
PURE LAND OF THE WEST
WITH A PREFACE

I hear that west of the golden sky/in the place where the sun sinks away/separated from China by ten trillion Buddhist lands/there is a World of Ultimate Joy. The Buddha of that country has a height of sixty trillion yojanas/as uncountable as the Ganges' sand. The white hairs between His eyebrows curl and turn to the right like five Sumeru mountains/and the light from His eyes is clear and bright like the waters of the four oceans. He sits erect preaching The Law/abiding forever in tranquility.

The lakes there gleam with golden sand; the banks are lined with jewelled trees. Railings and balconies enclose it all/and netting is stretched on every side. Colored glazes and mother-of-pearl from the giant clam decorate the storied halls. From crystal and carnelian comes the splendor of the glittering stairs. All this the sundry Buddhas have affirmed; these are not mere empty words.

This gold and silver painted scene of the manifestation in the Pure Land of the West was erected for her late husband/His Lordship Wei/Governor of Hu Prefecture/by the Lady Ch'in of P'ing-i Commandery. Her Ladyship embodies the parity of ice and jade and exemplifies the teaching of the mother's sage-like goodness. In the love and loyalty of the marriage bond/she hopes for him to be lifted up from the dark paths of purgatory/and for the depth of their children's filial devotion to see him perfected in luminous blessing. Thus has she pledged her precious things and sought out famous artisans.

Applying gold they have created the foundation; painting with silver they have supplied the figures. Through the power of the Eight

Dharmas/the waves move on the Blue Lotus pools/ and fragrant flowers from the seven jewels shine in relief against the golden ground. Whatever is caressed by the refreshing breeze is as if it were producing the five musical notes/so that a hundred and a thousand kinds of sublime music all seem to be set in play.

Be it one who has already expressed the prayer/or one who has not yet expressed the prayer/be it one who has already been born/or one who has not yet been born/devout contemplation for seven days will give him rebirth into that land. Infinite is the power from the merit of this. We may ponder it/but it is hard to explain. In praise I say:

1 Looking toward the west where the sun sinks away/
2 Behold afar that Face of Great Compassion.
3 Eyes pure as the waters of the four oceans/
4 His body shines like a mountain of purple gold.

5 By diligent contemplation we can surely be reborn/
6 Thus the acclaim of Ultimate Joy.
7 Mid pearl netting and trees of precious jewels/
8 The flowers of Heaven are scattered in fragrant halls.

9 In this painting it is all before our eyes/
10 And in prayer we entrust ourselves to that spiritual realm.
11 On the ocean of power from the merit of this/
12 Let divine intercession be our boat and bridge/
13 That eight billion kalpas of human sin
14 May be as frost swept away by the wind.
15 Let all think on the Buddha of Eternal Life/
16 Ever praying for the light of His jade-like hair.

XXXVIII

UP INTO THE CLOUDS MUSIC

1 West of the golden sky/
 2 Where the white sun sinks away/
 3 Old K'ang/the Barbarian Birdie/
 4 Was born in that Scythian cave of the moon.
 5 Awesome and craggy the features of his face/
 6 Measured and precise his manner of bearing.
 7 Green jade glowing/glowing/the pupils of his eyes/
 8 Yellow gold curling/curling/the hair upon his temples.

 9 Flowery canopies hang down to his lower lashes/
 10 A lofty mountain looms over his upper lip.
 11 Not seeing his strange/uncanny form/
 12 How could you know the Lord of Creation?
 13 The Great Way was this mummer's stern father/
 14 Primal Ether this mummer's elderly kin.
 15 He played with P'an-ku/patting his head/
 16 And pushing the carriage turned Heaven's wheels.
 17 He says he saw when the sun and the moon were born/
 18 Cast from water-silver and the essence of fire.
 19 While the solar crows had not yet come out of the valley
 20 And the lunar rabbit was still a half-hidden form/
 21 Nā-wa toyed with the yellow earth
 22 And lumped it into ignorant humans/
 23 Scattering them to the Six Directions/
 24 Thick/thick/like dust and sand.
 25 When birth and death go on endlessly/
 26 Who could guess that this barbarian is a realized immortal?

 27 Since the Jo Tree was planted by the Western Ocean
 28 And the Fu Mulberry was set in the Eastern Sea/
 29 To the present day/how great the time?
 [stanza continues]

30 The twigs and leaves are ten-thousand miles long.
31 The Middle Kingdom had Seven Sages/
32 Then along the way collapsed into chaos.
33 His Majesty answered the upturn of fortune/
34 And a dragon flew into the city of Hsien-yang.
35 As when the Red Eyebrows set up their Tab/
36 And White Water restored the Glory of Han/
37 So/angrily seething/the Four Seas moved/
38 And for Him great spreading waves arose.
39 When He stepped to tread the Purple Tenuity/
40 Heaven's Gates opened of their own accord/
41 And the old barbarian responding to Utmost Virtue
42 Came east to present his immortal actors:
43 Lions in the five colors/
44 Phoenixes with the nine perfections.
45 These are the old barbarian's poultry and hounds/
46 Singing and dancing they have flown to God's Town/
47 Proudly prancy/swirly whirly/
48 Advancing/retreating/and dressing on line.

49 He is good at barbarian songs. He offers up Chinese wine.
50 He kneels upon two knees. He presses both elbows together.
51 Scattering flowers/pointing to Heaven/
raising his pallid arms.
52 He worships the Dragon Countenance.
He offers long life to The Sage.

53 Northern Dipper may wobble. South Mountain may fall.
54 But/O Son of Heaven/as nine nines are eighty-one
and so many times ten thousand years/
long may You drain the ten thousand years cup.

XXXIX

A LU MOUNTAIN SONG
FOR THE PALACE CENSOR EMPTY-BOAT LU

- 1 I am/in fact/the Madman of Ch'a/
2 Making fun of Confucius with a Phoenix Song.
3 In my hand I carry a green jade cane/
4 And set forth at dawn from Yellow Crane Hall.
5 On the Five Summits I search for immortals
 and never complain how far/
6 For all my life I have liked to roam
 in the mountains of renown.
- 7 Lu Mountain stands in splendor at the side of Southern Dipper/
8 The nine panels of Folding Screen are covered in cloud brocade/
9 And shadows fall on the shining lake
 giving an eyebrow indigo light.
10 Golden Gates reveal before me a curtain between two spires/
11 The Silver River falling down
 to drape three bridges of stone.
12 Incense Burner and waterfall face each other from far away/
13 The twisted cliffs and serried peaks
 rise in cerulean blue.
14 Green shadow and red cloud intensify with the sun at dawn/
15 And birds fly on/but never arrive/
 where the skies of Wu are long.
- 16 Atop the heights a majestic view of all the Heaven and Earth/
17 The Great River rolls forever and going will never return.
18 Yellow clouds for ten thousand miles color the driving wind/
19 White waves on the Nine Circuits
 are flowing mountains of snow.
 [stanza ends]

20 I like to sing about Lu Mountain.
21 Lu Mountain is my source of song.
22 At rest I gaze in the Mirrors of Stone to purify my heart;
23 The places Duke Hsieh travelled/in green moss sink away.

24 Sublimed cinnabar/taken soon/banishes worldly care/
25 A threefold withering of your heart/
 and The Way can be attained.
26 Above I see the immortals in the midst of luminous clouds/
27 Proceeding to court in the Palace of Jade
 with lotuses in their hands.
28 I have already promised Boundless
 to meet on the Ninth Frontier;
29 I wish I could take Lu Drifting along
 to roam the Supremely Pure.

XL

CLIMBING HsIEH T'IAO'S NORTH TOWER
AT HSŪAN IN AUTUMN

- 1 The river city is as in a picture/
- 2 This mountain evening I gaze through clear skies.
- 3 The two streams are inserted mirrors/
- 4 The paired bridges are fallen rainbows.
- 5 Chimney smoke is chilling the oranges/
- 6 Autumn light ages the phoenix trees.
- 7 Who would suppose that on the North Tower
- 8 Leaning into the wind I'd be filled with Duke Hsieh?

XLI

A FAREWELL DINNER FOR MY UNCLE LI YŪN/THE COLLATOR/
AT HSIEH T'IAO'S TOWER IN HSŪAN PREFECTURE

- 1 That which has forsaken me/
the days that were yesterday and could not be detained.
- 2 That which has confounded me/
the day that is today full of trouble and woe.
- 3 A long wind sends the autumn goose
 across ten thousand miles/
4 Faced with this it is only right to get tipsy upon a tower.
- 5 Patterns out of P'eng-lai/the style of Chien-an times/
6 Along the way/with Little Hsieh/
 they came forth fresh and clear.
- 7 Full of soaring inspiration/man's heroic thoughts will fly/
8 He wants to climb the heavens to inspect the shining moon.
- 9 Draw a knife to cut the water/the water/still flows on/
10 Raise a cup to banish grief/grief is grief the more.
11 When a man's life within this world does not satisfy/
12 Let him at dawn leave down his hair
 and push his boat from shore.

XLII

A CHANT ON EAST MOUNTAIN

- 1 Taking out girls to Mock East Mountain/
2 Full of regretting I mourned for Hsieh An.
3 My girls this morning were like the moon amid flowers/
4 The graves of his girls were cold in the weeds.
5 Now three hundred years since the white rooster dream
 in which your death was foretold/
6 I sprinkle wine as an offering to you
 sharing what we have enjoyed.
7 Getting tipsy, I improvise a dance from Kokonor/
8 And autumn wind blows away my cap of purple silk.
- 9 There was that time for you. There is this time for me.
10 If I sing «in a torrent like the flooding stream»
 why should that be strange?

XLIII

INSCRIBED AT SUMMIT TEMPLE

1 The night we stayed at Summit Temple
2 I could reach up and touch the stars.
3 We did not dare to talk aloud
4 For fear of disturbing the men in Heaven.

XLIV

SEEING THE CUCKOO FLOWERS AT HSÜAN

1 In Shu I have heard the cuckoo bird/
2 At Hsüan again seeing cuckoo flowers;
3 One call/one return/for my heart one breaking/
4 Triple Spring/Third Month/remembering Triple Pa.

XLV

DRINKING ALONE IN THE MOONLIGHT

Number One

1 Beneath the blossoms with a pot of wine/
2 No friends at hand/so I poured alone/
3 I raised my cup to invite the moon/
4 Turned to my shadow/and we became three.
5 Now the moon had never learned about drinking/
6 And my shadow had merely followed my form/
7 But I quickly made friends with the moon and my shadow/
8 To find pleasure in life/make the most of the spring.

9 Whenever I sang/the moon swayed with me/
10 Whenever I danced/my shadow went wild.
11 Drinking/we shared our enjoyment together/
12 Drunk/then each went off on his own.
13 But forever agreed on dispassionate revels/
14 We promised to meet in the far Milky Way.

Number Two

1 Now/if Heaven didn't love wine/
2 There wouldn't be a Wine Star in Heaven.
3 And if Earth didn't love wine/
4 Earth shouldn't have the town of Wine Spring.
5 But since Heaven and Earth love wine/
6 Loving wine is no crime with Heaven.
7 The light/I hear/is like a sage/
8 The heavy/they say/is called the worthy.
9 If I have drunk with the sage and worthy/
10 What need have I to search for immortals?
11 Three cups and I've mastered The Way/
12 A jarful and I am at one with Nature.
13 A man can get hold of the spirit of drinking/
14 But no point explaining to those who abstain.

Number Three

1 Third Month in the city of Hsien-yang/
2 And a thousand flowers make the day a brocade.
3 Who would sorrow alone in the springtime?
4 Faced with this you must drink straightaway.
5 Failure/success/and long span or short
6 Are fates that Creation decreed from the start/
7 But a cup makes life and death the same
8 And the ten thousand things are distinguished no more.
9 I get drunk and lose track of Heaven and Earth;
10 Sinking/I go to my pillow alone.
11 Then not to know the existence of me/
12 This is the pleasure highest of all.

Number Four

1 I have ten million sources of sorrow/
2 But only three hundred cups of wine.
3 My sorrows are many and the cups are few/
4 But pouring a cup keeps sorrow away.
5 And I know that I have the sage in my cup/
6 For in my cups my heart always smiles.
7 Go hide on Mount Shou-yang/refuse the Chou grain;
8 Be frequently empty and starve like Yen Hui.
9 And after a lifetime with no joy in drinking/
10 What will you do with your hollow fame?
11 A crab claw is the Golden Elixir;
12 A hill of dregs is Paradise Mountain.
13 The thing to do is drink good wine;
14 Go out with the moon and get drunk on a tower.

XLVI

INSCRIPTION ON AN OLD TOMB AT KUANG-LING

1 The sun it is an arrow. The moon it is a bow.
2 The four seasons bend man down. Oh, it has no end.
3 But only if it happens that the moon and heavens die/
4 Will no one know the Nothing of man flowing with the stream.
5 Mountains and rivers in splendor. Blue the vault of sky.
6 And in the very middle/oh/the exalted lady lies.
7 The gibbons cry/the birds all sigh/the mist is growing dark/
8 For a thousand and ten thousand years/
 wind in the cypress and pines.

XLVII

IN PRAISE OF WU TAO-TZU'S PAINTING OF
THE VENERABLE PRECIOUS-RECORD

1 Like the moon upon the water
2 That after all cannot be seized/
3 His mind was of that Wonderful Nothing
4 Belonging to no one in world or space.
5 In a lute of brocade/with bird talon fingers/
6 He travels alone without rival or peer.
7 His scissors make even/his ruler will measure/
8 His fan is a riddle to set forth the word.
9 In greens and vermilions this holiest face/
10 What is his dwelling/where is the place?

XLVIII

MY MIND WHEN GETTING UP DRUNK
ON A SPRING DAY

1 To be in this world is like a great dream;
2 Why let life be a burden of care?
3 So I have been drunk the entire day,
4 Lying in a heap in the portico.
5 Adjusting my clothes, I stare into the yard,
6 Where birds are singing amid the flowers.
7 If you wonder what the season might be,
8 Spring wind tells the flitting orioles.
9 This moves me to the verge of sighs,
10 But before I can sigh, the wine is poured.
11 Lustily singing I await the moon,
12 Songs done, I am freed of ties to the world.

XLIX

LATE BLOOMER AT THE FRONT OF MY GARDEN

- 1 A Queen Mother of the West peach tree is planted in my yard;
- 2 After three thousand warming springs/
 it finally had a flower.
- 3 This strain and delay producing a fruit
 was laughed at all around/
- 4 But when I climbed up to pick it/aah/aah/I sighed aloud.

L

OLD TAI'S WINE SHOP

1 When Old Tai goes down below,
2 He may still make Young Springtime brew,
3 But there's no Li Po on the Terrace of Night,
4 So who in hell will he sell it to?

POEMS OF LI PO

Translated by Elling Eide

One hundred and fifty copies have been printed
in Hammer Uncial type on Iyo paper
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The characters for LI PO on the title page
are from a seal impression in the
«Ho-shih yin-shih» or «Mr. Ho's History in Seals»
(published in 1623), a rare work containing
the impressions of seals for famous historical
figures cut by Ho T'ung, a distinguished
Ming dynasty seal carver
from T'ai-ts'ang County in Kiangsu.
This reproduction of Li Po's seal is through the
courtesy of the Treasure Room of
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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE AND FINDING LISTS

by Elling Eide

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

Saying the English words "leap awe," without a pause between them, gives one a very respectable approximation of "Li Po," the name of China's most famous poet, who was usually called "Li T'ai-po" by his contemporaries—and by meticulous scholars of later dynasties—to avoid the discourtesy of using his personal name. When looking for references to him in Western literature, one should be prepared to recognize these names in a variety of other spellings: Lii Bor, Lii Taybor, Li Bo, Li Bai, Li Pai, Lè Pih, Ly-pe, Li-Taï-Pé, Lithaïpe, Lipo, Rihaku, Ri Taihaku, etc.

Li Po was born in 701, somewhere in Central Asia—perhaps as far west as Afghanistan—and he died in late 762 or early 763, in the vicinity of Tang-t'u, about fifty miles up the Yangtze from Nanking, after a lifetime that spanned the golden reign of the T'ang emperor Hsüan Tsung and the catastrophe of the An Lu-shan Rebellion. China in his day possessed the largest empire and the most cosmopolitan society that the world had ever seen, and the capital at Ch'ang-an, with twelve five-hundred foot wide thoroughfares and a population approaching two million (including three thousand women in the imperial harem), was the greatest walled city in all of history. Art and scholarship flourished in that rich environment, but it is poetry above all for which the T'ang dynasty is known, and it is Li Po who stands out as the most striking poet of the T'ang. His own name and all the surviving names for members of his immediate family seem to be at least partly based upon Turkish names or related in some way to the culture of Central Asia, so we may guess that his "foreign" background contributed to the unusual freedom and variety of his poetry as well as to the dashing and eccentric figure that he cut in T'ang society, but it is on two more certain counts that Li Po remains exceptional among Chinese men of letters: First, he never even attempted the civil service examinations for a government career, though he lived at a time when that was the expected thing to do; and, second, he was, nonetheless, one of the very few writers of any dynasty to be immediately and universally acclaimed as a genius by his contemporaries. That judgment of his talent has survived the centuries, both in literary circles and among the common people. Li Po still descends with remarkable frequency to offer new compositions at the spirit-writing sessions that are a part of Chinese popular religion.

The fifty titles presented here constitute only about one-twentieth of Li Po's extant work, but in selecting the pieces for translation, I have tried to keep in mind both the reader who comes to Li Po for the first time and the scholar who has been reading him for years. Even while seeking poems to represent a variety of moods, styles, and occasions—including at least four pieces (IX, XXXVII, XXXVIII, and XLVI) that were probably written for pay—I have, at the same time, tried to include

and juxtapose certain specific poems so that they might usefully point toward the answers to various long standing literary, historical, and biographical questions. No piece has been selected simply because it lent itself easily to translation. On the contrary, I have made a special effort to include poems that seemed to present some of the most awkward problems and insurmountable challenges.

Approximately half of the selected pieces are “old favorites,” regularly read and frequently translated or anthologized. Among these will be found a half dozen or so of Li Po’s most famous poems: “Quiet Night Thought” (I), probably the world’s most memorized poem; “The Road to Shu is Hard” (IV), the most famous and most discussed of all Li Po poems (Li Po grew up in Shu, the modern Szechwan—also called Pa or Triple Pa in his poetry—and for the Chinese, this poem is the epiphany of Li Po); “To Secretary Yüan of Ch’iao Commandery Remembering Old Times Together” (X), the poem known as “Exile’s Letter” in the Ezra Pound translation; “Jade Steps Lament” (XIX), also translated by Pound and very frequently anthologized; “Song of the Heavenly Horse” (XXXIII), remarkable for its autobiographical candor, combining self-criticism with some extraordinary jabs at the officialdom and the ethnocentrism of Chinese society; “A Lu Mountain Song for the Palace Censor Empty-Boat Lu” (XXXIX), one of the most complex and skillfully crafted of all Chinese poems; and “Drinking Alone in the Moonlight, Number One” (XLV/1), a sonnet-like gem that is perhaps even more highly esteemed in the West than it is in China.

The other half of the selection consists of pieces that are rarely read, amusing, bawdy, curious, or controversial for one reason or another. Many of these have never before been translated into any Western language, and five of them (IX, XXII/1, XXII/3, XXXII/2, and XLVI) are not even registered in the Kyoto concordance to Li Po’s poetry. A special feature of this group is the inclusion of all of the *tzu* or “new lyrics to familiar tunes” attributed to Li Po (Nos. XX-XXVI). The attribution of two of these (XXII/2 and XXV) has been so endlessly debated in China as to leave the impression that there are no others, and this is the first time that they have all been brought together in a single volume in any language. Also somewhat special—a counterbalance to the received impression of Li Po as a Taoist poet—is the inclusion of five pieces (V, XVIII, XXXVII, XLVI, and XLVII) that show him equally at home with the themes and vocabulary of Buddhist teaching. (In the original, No. V is also a fine specimen of the intricate “regulated verse” that came to prominence in the T’ang, while in No. XLVII, we have a rare example of Li Po using the archaic four-word meter.) In reading these, one should remember that the Buddhist doctrine of “Nothingness” or “Emptiness” is not a nihilistic denial of the phenomenal world, but rather, as with the Taoist concept of “The Way,” it is an affirmation of the “Oneness” of all things when the distinctions imposed by the human mind have been swept away. We may note—perhaps with a twinge of

envy—that for Li Po and many others, losing oneself in drink provided a means of blurring those distinctions so that the loneliness of individuality might give way to a comforting sense of identity with the eternal order. Thus, many of Li Po's drinking poems are something a bit more than mere celebrations of good times with wine, and one would be hard pressed to decide whether a poem like "My Mind When Getting up Drunk on a Spring Day" (XLVIII) has a Taoist or a Buddhist undertone. With drowsiness substituted for drunkenness, we have this same blending of philosophies and blurring of distinctions in the very famous poem, "Spring Dawn," by Li Po's friend, Meng Hao-jan (689-740):

Asleep in spring unaware of dawn,
And everywhere hear the birds in song.
At night the sound of wind and rain,
You'll know how much from the flowers gone.

Since I have just mentioned "regulated verse" and the archaic "four-word meter," this would seem the appropriate place for a brief consideration of Chinese prosody. For that purpose, one may oversimplify a bit and think of the Chinese language as being monosyllabic, tonic, and logographic. That is to say, the words are only one syllable long, each word has an inherent musical tone, and each is written with a character that, like our numeral "5," for example, is a logograph representing a particular one-syllable word. (There are, to be sure, a great many homonyms, but they are usually written with different characters.) This made it natural for the Chinese to identify their most common meters—the four, five, and seven-word meters—by reference to the number of words in the line. Thus, in the four-word meter, there would be four words, four syllables, four stresses, and four characters to the line. In Li Po's day, the five and seven-word meters were the norm, and they were the meters that he most frequently employed, notwithstanding the fact that he is especially famous for his irregular lines with as few as three or as many as fourteen words. The intricate "regulated verse" (*lü-shih*) may be in either the five or the seven-word meter, but with it there are elaborate rules for creating couplets in which the two lines will have parallels in imagery and syntax, but contrasts in the inherent musical tones of the words employed. The name of Li Po's friend Tu Fu is virtually synonymous with "regulated verse," and it was also favored by his friend Meng Hao-jan. Li Po himself used the form only infrequently—and that contributes to the fun when we see him using it so purposefully (poem No. V) in writing to Meng Hao-jan.

I hope, of course, that these translations may prove enjoyable to read and that they may even preserve some faint impression of the original prosody, but I would stress here that my first goal has been accuracy and the faithful restatement of what the poems are saying, such that even a reader who does not know Chinese might,

with some confidence, engage in a serious discussion of, at least, the ideas and the imagery and their order of presentation. I have occasionally added a word or two to preserve a pun, reinforce a joke, maintain a rhythm, or clarify an obscurity, but I have never knowingly omitted any thought or image that I detected in the poems, preferring to err with an over-translation that might provoke a criticism rather than with an under-translation that might obscure a possibility. At the same time, I have attached the greatest importance to preserving the structure or “geography” of the poems—the balances and contrasts of imagery, the sequences of thought, the shifts of focus, the hills and valleys, the progressions, tensions, and lulls. Taking these into account seems to me virtually as important as understanding the words—and, indeed, it is sometimes essential to an understanding of the words. Inevitably, I have often had to rearrange the sequence of words within the line in order to produce acceptable English, but in no case have I ventured to rearrange the sequence of the lines. The end-stopped line, the couplet, and the stanza (normally indicated only by rhyme change in the original) are the basic building blocks of Chinese poetry, and—thanks to Carolyn Hammer’s careful adjustments and painstaking numbering of the lines—the arrangement of these has been rigorously preserved. The reader may feel confident that line three in the fifth stanza of any given translation is line three in the fifth stanza of the original. One might note, however, that in the case of the “new lyrics to familiar tunes” there are some special stanza divisions dictated by tradition or the lost music, rather than by any change in rhyme. Songs to the tunes called “Entwined Branches” (XXIII) and “Remembering the Beauty of Ch’in” (XXV) are always divided into two stanzas even though there is no change of rhyme. With “Strings of Jewels for Bodhisattvas” (XXII), where we have “strings of couplets about fancy ladies,” each couplet is a “two-line stanza” with a different rhyme, but traditionally there is a *major* stanza break between couplets two and three.

Please also note that no amount of tinkering could make the ingenuity of every pun, allusion, or multiple reference immediately obvious to the Western reader. Often, the best I could do was to adjust my words so that he might catch something of the effect on a second reading after the connections had been explained. The “One Hundred Plants” (in XXI/1), for example, was a game in which T’ang ladies competed to see who could assemble the finest collection of flowers or medicinal herbs. The “threefold zithering of your heart” (in XXXIX) has a threefold relationship to its context: (1) It denotes making your heart pure as zither music through the Taoist practice of breath control concentrated on the three “cinnabar fields” of the body; (2) it implies the expression of secret feelings by allusion to the poet Ssu-ma Hsiang-ju (179-117 B.C.), who “zithered his heart” when he played a “Phoenix Song” to seduce the widow Cho Wen-chün; and (3) it calls attention to Li Po’s zithering of his own heart with the three refrains of his own “Phoenix Song” in the second stanza. In the same poem, when Li Po refers to the semi-legendary “Lu

Drifting” (Lu Ao), we know that he means his friend Empty-Boat, because in the *Chuang-tzu* the ideal man is likened to an untied boat that is both “empty” and “drifting along.” There is similar complexity—and a pun upon a pun—in poem No. XLVII. The Venerable Precious-Record (A.D. 418-514), famous for his ability to see into the future, carried a monk’s staff from which he had suspended a scissors “to make things even” (*ch’i*), a ruler “to measure” (*liang*), and a fan to brush away “dust” (*ch’en*). This made him a kind of walking prognostication. His scissors and ruler predicted the rise of the Ch’i (479-501) and Liang (502-556) dynasties, and his fan “set forth” (*ch’en*) the name of the Ch’en (557-589) dynasty to follow. The extreme example, of course, is Li Po’s riddle (IX), which is composed entirely of word games and puns, and today one needs more than Li Po’s own explanation to understand the relevance of the last line to Cloud-Ritual’s name. “Ch’en’s Treasure” is a mythical creature with the body of a man and the head of a rooster that flies in from the southeast during the night and crows to wake up the roosters of the world. This potent sun symbol is sometimes called the “Heavenly Treasure,” the name that Emperor Hsüan Tsung took for the new reign title that he inaugurated in 742. At the same time, “Ch’en’s Treasure” also recalls a “divine talisman” concocted by the emperor’s twenty-fifth son, the Prince of Ch’en, in an effort to convince the public that the spirit of Lao-tzu had authorized the change. This “cover-up” may have been tried because of gossip holding that the emperor’s “Heavenly Treasure” was really his new concubine, the illustrious Yang Kuei-fei—the lady among the peonies for whom the “Suite in the Ch’ing-p’ing Mode” (XX) is said to have been composed. In any event, the emperor cancelled plans for a Feng Ritual at the top of T’ai Mountain to report to Heaven on the glory of his reign, and in 742, the year of Cloud-Ritual’s birth, this awesome ritual was performed only by the clouds.

In addition to cases like the above, where the translator has trouble finding the right wording so that there may, at least, be a framework to support his subsequent explanation, there are many cases where the words are no problem, but there is still some special connection that needs to be explained. The reference to Po-ya in Li Po’s poem to Meng Hao-jan (V) is a straightforward allusion recalling a famous friendship between two men who were perfectly in tune. When Po-ya happened to think about flowing water while he played the zither, his friend Chung Tzu-ch’i complimented him saying that his playing was like flowing water. But the thing that makes this allusion perfect is not now obvious even to the Chinese: Li Po has woven echoes from Meng’s poetry into a majority of the other lines. The clue to this is line 11, which is virtually indecipherable until one discovers that Meng has a poem, written in autumn, with a line about “dew on the lotus gradually turning to pearls.” (The “canopy finally round” in the next line is another straightforward allusion. Chariot canopies in ancient China were made round to symbolize the sky. Thus, the two lines are saying, “Morning, before the dew had dried, in a place where the pines made a separate sky.”) A similar, but much simpler, case is the poem (No. XV) in

which Li Po describes the lifestyle of Magistrate T'ao, the poet T'ao Ch'ien (A.D. 365-427). It is actually T'ao Ch'ien's own works that supply all the elements of the description. Finally, there are the individual words and terms for which there is no conceivable English that would have all the necessary associations. The frequently mentioned "clouds in the blue" may be simply "clouds in the blue" or they may represent height and high aspirations. Then again, like the "sea colors" (in XII), they may also be representing the scholar-officials through reference to the color of their robes. (Red robes, on the other hand, are sometimes court nobility, but usually they are attractive, young girls—professional girls in particular. That's why the court flotilla in "The Ballad of Long Bank, Number Two" [XXVII/2] couldn't get moving for several days.) In much the same way—in the right context—references to gold (or metal), the color white, and the Morning or Evening Star are capable of representing Li Po himself, since "Po" means "white" and "T'ai-po" ("supremely white") is one name of Venus, the "Metal Star," that governs the western regions. ("T'ai-po" is also the name of a famous mountain with which Li Po identifies.)

From what I have already said, it must be obvious to everyone that Chinese poetry does rhyme. It always has. Usually the rhymes come at the end of every other line (the second line of each couplet), but with Li Po, in particular, it is common to have more frequent rhymes. I have not, however, made any significant effort to reproduce the rhyme—it would be impossible without great violence to the statements of the poems, and even if it were possible, I am not sure that the result would be as satisfying as one might suppose. The fact is that the force of rhyme has somewhat different vectors in English and Chinese poetry. In Chinese it is a centripetal or binding force holding together the highly paratactic, end-stopped lines, while in English it tends to be more a centrifugal force, creating comparable tensions as it stresses the flow of the relatively hypotactic language with its frequent run-over lines. There is more to rhyme than merely the pleasing repetition of certain sounds, and when we put paratactic Chinese into hypotactic English, a good part of its Chinese function is automatically taken over by the additional English words. To add rhyme on top of that might have the effect of adding too much specificity—or too much glue. This, I think, is one reason why there is often a naive, nursery-rhyme quality to many of the rhymed translations from Chinese. Here, in the present translations, a few rhymes have turned up accidentally, and after worrying about them, I have let them stand. So far as I can recall, there is only one case (the last stanza of XLI) where this accidental rhyme corresponds with the rhyming of the Chinese. (Nos. IX and L were rhymed more or less intentionally to reinforce their impact as humorous trifles.)

I should note one more thing that I have done—perhaps more for my own satisfaction than for the benefit of the reader. I am always vaguely annoyed when a translator tells me that the poem he offers is "one of three" or "the second of four." I

have, therefore, made it a point always to include all of the poems in a group or set under a single title, even though they may not be equally good, and even though it may be far from clear that Li Po himself intended for them to be grouped together. For somewhat similar reasons, I have included all three of Li Po's poems to his friend, the almost equally famous poet Tu Fu (712-770). These are very frequently referred to, but it is hard to find translations of all three of them together.

It might be nice if I could claim to have been equally methodical about the order in which the translations are arranged. The arrangement tends, in fact, to be very loosely chronological, but it is primarily what seemed to me a pleasing and reasonable orchestration of the individual performances. The *Finding List* that follows will provide dates for the poems—to the extent that they are presently knowable—along with the Kyoto concordance numbers and references to the translations by Shigeyoshi Obata and Rewi Alley. That list will also provide the specialist with basic information about the editions I have used.

No one is more aware than I that—despite my best efforts—these translations still contain many lines and references that will be obscure or puzzling to the general reader. There are, for that matter, quite a few points that would be difficult for the Chinese reader, too. This is poetry that blossoms best with a mulch of annotation, and even in the extensive Chinese commentary, there are questions that have not yet been adequately explored.

Any Chinese reading these poems would know that the legendary Queen Mother of the West lives with her handmaidens by the Jasper Pool, where she cultivates the peaches of immortality that fruit every three thousand years, and where she once entertained Emperor Mu of China, singing him a song about “white clouds in a blue sky.” He would also know that “autumn waves” are often the seductive glances of agreeable ladies and that references to Sorceress Mountain, King Hsiang, or “the clouds and rain” are usually the unmistakable suggestions of sexual intimacy. He would, however, probably have some difficulty with the sustained eroticism of “Hsiang-yang Song”—a Westerner wouldn't dare to suggest that the vulgar meaning of “tortoise head” could have any relevance there—and that same Chinese reader would never question the commentators who have managed to interpret “Wardrobe Mistress from Ch'in” without having to see that Li Po has made the last couplet hilariously bawdy by adding a single word to a quotation from the *Classic of Songs*. Similarly, though that reader would enjoy a note recalling the harem ladies (in XXIII) who used to spread salt in the corridors and tie bamboo twigs to their doors to entice the goat that selected their emperor's companion for the evening, he would not much like a note—and there would be none—to suggest that the “houses of Ch'in” (in XXV) were probably bordellos, or that in the T'ang dynasty, the cuckoo, beloved symbol of homesickness, could also occasionally be—as in the West—a “dirty bird.”

The Chinese reader would, of course, know that Yen represents north China, that Lu and Ch'i are in the northeast, that girls from Wu or Yüeh are "southern belles," and that Ch'in represents central or north central China—just as he would know that Hsien-yang represents Ch'ang-an (the modern Sian), that Pa-ling Bridge, a favorite parting place near Ch'ang-an, has nothing to do with Pa-ling on the Yangtze, and that White Emperor Fortress is a Gibraltar-like rock at the western entrance to the Yangtze gorges. (In Chinese the Yangtze is called simply the "Great River" or the "Long River," but the "Yang-tzu" in poem No. XXVII/2 probably is the place that gave rise to the Western name.) The Chinese reader would also know that "cuckoo flowers" are azaleas, that the Heng-yang goose carries the mail on a north-south route, and that "feathered men" are immortals of an especially elusive variety. So, too, it would probably be obvious to him that the white, unripe walnuts (in XVIII) were being picked by a still attractive lady. He might not guess, however, that she would most likely be using the walnuts to make a rinse for darkening her hair, showing a worldly concern in marked contrast with the old monk who was likewise coping with life by pushing "round objects" into his sleeve. It is similarly doubtful whether the Chinese reader would guess or remember that "wandering clouds" (in X) was a hairstyle worn by fashion conscious T'ang ladies, who sometimes also painted crescent moons on their foreheads. Fortunately, he will know about the blood-sweating, heavenly horses from Ferghana, and there will be a note to remind him that "thirsty crows" were the downspouts on the eaves of buildings in ancient China. Unfortunately, that same note will probably suggest that "pearls in the sweat canals" is a scribal error for "vermilion in the sweat canals." In fact, it is quite probable that Li Po was referring not to the color of the blood, but to the pearl-size lesions produced by the nematodes that cause the bleeding.

And so it goes. It will take another book much larger than this to provide a truly adequate annotation. I merely offer this little sampling in the hope of suggesting the color and complexity of the poems—and to rescue a few lines from total obscurity.

Still more inadequate are the acknowledgments that I can offer here. Properly done, they would be a list far longer than anyone would care to read. Rather than offend some, I shall run the risk of offending all and simply mention the one man whose help may be of most significance to my readers: Professor Lien-sheng Yang of Harvard, who has patiently gone over all of the translations. The translations themselves are dedicated to the memory of Charles E. Ryberg, 1945-1967, Lieutenant, USMC.

Elling O. Eide
Indianola
7 October 1983

FINDING LISTS

The columns headed "Kyoto Index" give the number of the piece in the *Ri Haku kashi sakuin* or "Concordance to the Poems of Li Po" (Kyoto: Jimbunkagaku Kenkyūsho, 1957), which is keyed to the major editions. My primary text for these translations has been the facsimile Sung edition in the same series as the "Concordance." For poems not found in the Sung text, the Wang Ch'i edition of 1758 has been my point of departure. For poems not in either of these two texts, the sources will be given in the list itself. I have, of course, consulted other editions, including the extant T'ang anthologies, the *Imperial Register of Tz'u Prosody*, Kubo Tenzui's three-volume *Ri Taihaku shishū* in the "Zoku-kokuyaku Kambun taisei" (Tokyo: Kokumin Bunko, 1928), and the new *Li Po chi chiao-chu*, 2 vols. (Shanghai: Ku-chi, 1980).

"Obata's Number" is the number of the poem's translation in Shigeyoshi Obata's *The Works of Li Po* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1922). "Alley's Page" is the page on which the poem appears in Rewi Alley's *Li Pai: 200 Selected Poems* (Hong Kong: Joint Publishing Co., 1980). There are, of course, many other translations, but of the books wholly or largely devoted to Li Po, these two would seem most likely to be available to the general reader. Obata provides a good bibliography with references to individual poems translated by other important translators such as, Arthur Waley, Florence Ayscough and Amy Lowell, Ezra Pound, and the Marquis d'Hervey Saint-Denys, who published his remarkably accurate translations (*Poésies de l'époque des Thang*) in 1862. I have noted a few additional items at the end of the *Finding Lists*.

"Chan's Dates" are those suggested by Chan Ying in his *Li Po shih-wen hsi-nien* or "Chronology of Li Po's Prose and Poetry" (Peking: Tso-chia, 1958). My own comments on the dating are given in parentheses. The dates Chan gives are often simply the earliest or most probable year in which the poem might have been composed. Thus, many of our suggestions are similar approximations differently expressed, and the real differences between us are not so great as they might appear. Since Li Po was born in 701, dropping the initial "7" from any date will give his age at the time by Chinese reckoning.

FINDING LIST

POEM NUMBER	KYOTO INDEX	OBATA'S NUMBER	ALLEY'S PAGE	CHAN'S DATE
Li Po's Preface	1029	————	————	———— (Perhaps 735-740.)
1	0188	27	195	———— (After 725, likely after 744.)
2	1114	————	————	———— (Before 725, ca. 720.)

Note: The word "ancient" in line 4, missing in all printed editions, has been supplied from a rubbing of this poem in Mi Fei's calligraphy preserved by the National Central Library, Taipei.

3	1001	————	————	743 (Perhaps 730-731 or 738-740.)
4	0062	74	50	743 (Perhaps 730-731 or 738-740.)
5	0445	————	————	739 (Perhaps 734-739.)
6	0467	77	————	746

Note: In lines 9, 23, and 45 I follow the readings of the *Ho-yüeh ying-ling chi*.

7	1081	————	————	———— (Ca. 748.)
8	0916	————	————	754
9	————	————	————	———— (742)

Source: *Kan-tse yao*, 18a-20a, in the PPTSCC edition of the *Hsieh-chin t'ao-yüan*. For a discussion, see *T'ang Studies*, No. 1 (1983), pp. 8-20.

10	0427	59	————	746 (746-753)
11	0482	75	44	743 (Many dates possible.)
12	0523	————	————	746 (Perhaps 745.)
13	0422	80	91	746
14	1082	12	88	———— (746 or later.)
15	0347	————	————	754
16	0207	————	————	734
17	0957	61	————	———— (Perhaps 730-750.)
18	0903	————	————	———— (Perhaps 730-750.)
19	0142	18	186	———— (Perhaps 743-745.)

20/1	0156	6	————	744	(Perhaps 743.)
20/2	0157	7	————	744	(Perhaps 743.)
20/3	0158	8	61	744	(Perhaps 743.)
21/1	1092	————	————	————	(Probably 743-744.)
21/2	1093	————	————	————	(Probably 743-744.)
21/3	1094	————	62	————	(730-750, perhaps 743-744.)
21/4	1095	————	62	————	(730-750, perhaps 743-744.)
21/5	1096	————	63	————	(Perhaps 743-744.)
22/1	————	————	————	————	(730-750)

Source: *Tsun-ch'ien chi* (Mao Chin edition), A.5a.

22/2	1063	————	————	————	(730-750)
22/3	————	————	————	————	(730-750)

Source: *Tsun-ch'ien chi* (Mao Chin edition), A.5b.

23	{1090 1091	————	————	————	(Probably 743-744.)
24/1	1088	————	————	————	(Perhaps 743-744.)
24/2	1089	————	————	————	(Perhaps 743-744.)
25	1064	————	————	————	(730-750, likely after 743.)
26	0934	100	223	————	(730-750)
27/1	0116	105	11	————	(Ca. 754?)
27/2	0117	106	————	————	(Ca. 754?)
28	0103	70	8	725	(Perhaps 734-740.)
29	0194	56	193	————	(730-750)
30	0161	————	————	————	(730-750)
31/1	0196	101	58	————	(No evidence.)
31/2	0197	102	————	————	(No evidence.)
31/3	0198	103	59	————	(Perhaps 730-745.)
31/4	0199	104	60	————	(No evidence.)
32/1	0066	97	117	747	(Certainly before 753.)
32/2	————	————	178	————	(No evidence.)

Source: *Wen-yüan ying-hua*, 196.10a; also in Wang Ch'i, 30.11a.

33	0071	————	————	744	(757 seems probable.)
34	0837	————	————	759	(758 seems probable.)

POEM NUMBER	KYOTO INDEX	OBATA'S NUMBER	ALLEY'S PAGE	CHAN'S DATE	
35	0727	————	151	754	
36	0746	47	155	725	(Surely 759.)
37	1042	————	————	————	(742-758, perhaps 742-744.)
38	0084	————	————	757	(758-759 also possible.)
39	0438	113	————	760	(Or late 759.)
40	0725	14	————	753	(753 seems very good.)
41	0594	————	125	753	(After 758, perhaps 760-761.)
42	0234	————	————	726	(Probably somewhat later.)
43	1105	15	47	————	(No evidence.)
44	0931	————	132	755	(Before 758; 755 seems good.)
45/1	0796	54	68	744	(730-750)
45/2	0797	81	————	744	(730-750)
45/3	0798	————	————	744	(730-750)
45/4	0799	————	————	744	(730-750)
46	————	————	————	————	(Ca. 754?)

Source: *Complete T'ang Poems*, 32.21a.

47	1045	————	————	761	(Ca. 756?)
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Note: The translation is based upon the text presently found engraved on the stele at the tomb of the Venerable Precious-Record, now located adjacent to the Wu-liang Temple in Nanking. Quite inexplicably, this engraving is in calligraphy distinctly different from that in the rubbings of the complete stele (ca. 1900) preserved by the Field Museum of Natural History, and it provides readings that are superior to those of either the rubbings or the standard printed editions of Li Po's work. Wu Tao-tzu's portrait of the Venerable Precious-Record survives, however, only in the rubbings. On the stele, as of 1980, it was completely worn away.

48	0816	53	————	————	(Ca. 740?)
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Note: The translation is based upon the text of the *Chia-hsiu T'ang t'ieh* Sung dynasty rubbing, which has been reproduced in reverse print on the lining of the wrapper.

49	0905	————	————	————	(No evidence.)
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Note: Poem No. 0996a is found in the commentary to No. 0996. Chinese and Japanese scholars appear to regard 0996 as a serious lament, and they treat 0996a as if it were a mere textual variant. It seems clear to me that the two, though nearly identical, are independent pieces that Li Po tossed off as jokes to amuse, repay, or commemorate a couple of friendly tavern keepers. No. 0996 is titled, "Lament for Venerable Chi, the Good Brewer of Hsüan," and the text runs as follows:

When Venerable Chi is down below,
He may still make his Old Spring brew.
But day never dawns on the Terrace of Night,
So who in hell will he sell it to?

The fact that Hsüan is called "Hsüan City" in the Chinese title suggests that No. 0996 was composed between 742 and 758, when that was the official name. A good guess would be 753-755. There is no evidence for the date of 0996a, for which the title is simply "Old Tai's Wine Shop." In both poems, the "in hell" is my addition to reinforce the joking tone that I perceive.

REVERSE FINDING LIST

KYOTO INDEX	POEM NUMBER	KYOTO INDEX	POEM NUMBER	KYOTO INDEX	POEM NUMBER
0062	4	0467	6	1064	25
0066	32/1	0482	11	1081	7
0071	33	0523	12	1082	14
0084	38	0594	41	1088	24/1
0103	28	0725	40	1089	24/2
0116	27/1	0727	35	1090	23
0117	27/2	0746	36	1091	23
0142	19	0796	45/1	1092	21/1
0156	20/1	0797	45/2	1093	21/2
0157	20/2	0798	45/3	1094	21/3
0158	20/3	0799	45/4	1095	21/4
0161	30	0816	48	1096	21/5
0188	1	0837	34	1105	43
0194	29	0903	18	1114	2
0196	31/1	0905	49	1119	Li Po's "Note" at the end of this volume.
0197	31/2	0916	8		
0198	31/3	0931	44		
0199	31/4	0934	26		
0207	16	0957	17		
0234	42	0996a	50		
0347	15	1001	3		
0422	13	1029	Preface		
0427	10	1042	37		
0438	39	1045	47		
0445	5	1063	22/2		
				POEMS NOT IN THE KYOTO CONCORDANCE:	
					9
					22/1
					22/3
					32/2
					46

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

Some of the most accurate Li Po translations ever published are the French versions in Paul Demiéville, ed., *Anthologie de la poésie chinoise classique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1962), which includes ten of the pieces in the present selection:

POEM NUMBER	KYOTO INDEX	DEMIÉVILLE PAGE	POEM NUMBER	KYOTO INDEX	DEMIÉVILLE PAGE
4	0062	223	36	0746	239
6	0467	235	41	0594	234
18	0903	231	45/1	0796	226
19	0142	238	48	0816	244
27/1	0116	221	50	0996a	242

Arthur Waley's *The Poetry and Career of Li Po* (New York: Macmillian, 1950; reprint by Hillary House, 1958) is still the standard English language biography, even though it is rather unsympathetic and somewhat out of date. For something very recent that also reflects a present day Chinese understanding of Li Po, see Sun Yü, *Li Po—A New Translation* (Hong Kong: Commerical Press, 1982). Coincidentally, Sun Yü, a motion picture director and script writer (born 1900), studied English literature at the University of Wisconsin, where Obata did his graduate work in English a few years earlier (1917-1918), and where Chan Ying is currently (1983-1984) a visiting professor of Chinese. There is a moderately detailed discussion of three poems (VI, XXXIII, and XXXIX) in my own essay, "On Li Po," in *Perspectives on the T'ang* (New Haven: Yale, 1973), pp. 367-403.

A NOTE ON ILLUSTRATIONS

The illustrative materials accompanying these translations—the Li Po seal, the calligraphy, the portrait of the Venerable Precious-Record, and the sketch of the “Peaks of Splendor”—are limited to a few items that are not likely to be available even to the specialist with a university library at his disposal. A convenient source of additional aid is James Cahill’s *Chinese Painting* in the “Treasures of Asia” series (Lausanne: Skira, 1960), which provides excellent color reproductions of several paintings with special relevance to Li Po and his poetry:

Page 28: *Emperor Hsüan Tsung’s Flight to Shu* (anonymous 11th century copy of an 8th century composition?).

This painting could hardly serve better if it had been commissioned to illustrate poem No. IV, “The Road to Shu is Hard.” Note the corbelled roads linking together the “ladders to Heaven.” Hsüan Tsung—called “Ming-huang” in Cahill’s book—fled to Shu in 756, when the rebel An Lu-shan seized the capital.

Page 90: *Portrait of Li Po* by Liang K’ai (mid-13th century).

For everyone who knows it, this is the “definitive” portrait of Li Po.

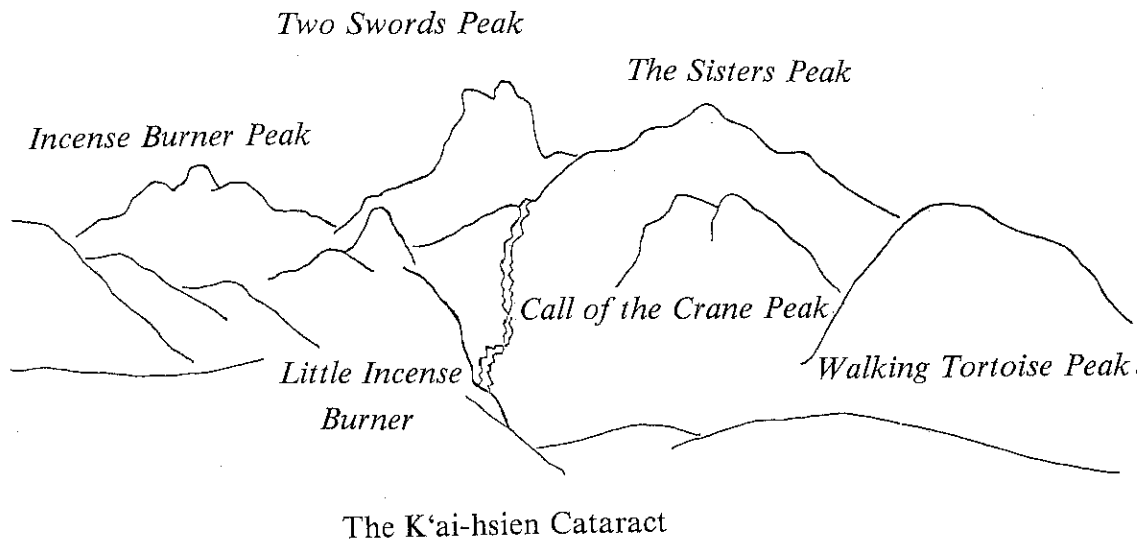
Page 100: *Yang Kuei-fei Mounting a Horse* by Ch’ien Hsüan (ca. 1235-1301), probably a copy after Han Kan (fl. 740-756).

The illustrious and notorious Precious Consort Yang was Hsüan Tsung’s favorite concubine. On 15 July 756, during his flight to Shu, the emperor was forced to have her strangled by the chief eunuch Kao Li-shih in order to appease his soldiers who held her responsible for the events leading to the An Lu-shan Rebellion. The paintings on pages 20, 21, 22, and 57 are also valuable for their suggestions of dress and manners in the T’ang.

Page 183: *Waterfall on Lu Mountain* by Tao-chi (1641-ca. 1717).

This painting is the illustration for a Li Po poem, but the reproduction does not include the top, which is inscribed with poem No. XXXIX, “A Lu Mountain Song for the Palace Censor Empty-Boat Lu.” This particular waterfall, the San-tieh Ch’üan or “Threefold Fountain” (also called “The Water-Curtain”), plunges in three stages a distance of some 1200 feet and is the one referred to in lines 10 and 11 of the poem. The one mentioned in line 12 is the K’ai-hsien Cataract (also called the Hsiu-feng Falls) on another part of the mountain.

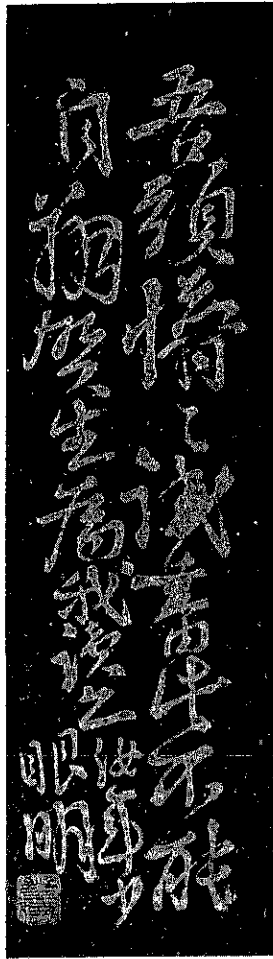
Apart from these paintings reproduced in the Cahill book, I would mention just three other items that I have found particularly relevant and enjoyable. The first two are plates 111 and 116 in Vol. 3 of Osvald Sirén's *Chinese Painting* (New York: The Ronald Press, 1956), which show a T'ang lady and T'ang monk, such as Li Po might have had in mind when he wrote "White Walnuts," poem No. XVIII. The third is the painting of Hsüan Tsung's horse "Night-Shining White" by Han Kan (fl. 740-756), which is now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. There are reproductions in various books on Chinese art—see plates 99 and 100 of the Sirén volume, for example—but perhaps none is so good as the post cards and posters currently available from the Metropolitan. It is perfectly possible that Li Po himself once looked at this very painting and highly probable that he was familiar with the horse. Indeed, if he had any particular horse in mind when he wrote his autobiographical poem "Song of the Heavenly Horse" (No. XXXIII), this is the horse that it most likely would have been. Li Po was fond of playing with words and names, and he could hardly have failed to note that he and this horse both had names using the word "white" in a way that calls to mind the planet Venus and the western regions. But one must assume that it is only coincidence that Han Kan's horse is tethered and afraid—just like the horse in Li Po's poem.



The Hsiu-feng or "Peaks of Splendor" section of the Han-yang Peaks on Lu Mountain. The K'ai-hsien Cataract is also called the Hsiu-feng Falls. (After an on-site sketch by the translator.)

The portrait of the Venerable Precious-Record serving as the frontispiece for this volume is a direct print from a rubbing of the stele at Precious-Record's tomb, now located adjacent to the Wu-liang Temple in Nanking. Two rubbings of this stele, from ca. 1900, are preserved by the Field Museum of Natural History which kindly made them available for photography. The engraved portrait, the central detail on the stele, was presumably after an original painting by Wu Tao-tzu (fl. 710-760), who enjoys the reputation of having been the greatest painter of the T'ang, even though none of his original works survives. According to information on the stele itself, the portrait was first cut onto stone in the T'ang dynasty and was re-engraved during the Yüan. It is said that this Yüan engraving was destroyed by a fire during the Ming, but that the portrait was engraved for a third time in 1757, on the basis of an ancient rubbing. Li Po's "appreciation" of the painting (poem No. XLVII), in calligraphy attributed to Yen Chen-ch'ing (708-784), was engraved directly above the portrait. As of 1980, the portrait was completely worn away, but the "appreciation" had been re-engraved.

The fragment of poem No. XLV/2 preceding the translations and the complete text of poem No. XLVIII on the lining of the wrapper are reverse prints from the fragmentary Sung dynasty rubbing of a Li Po scroll in the collection known as the *Chia-hsiu T'ang t'ieh* or "Calligraphy from Chia-hsiu Hall." Li Po's "postscript note," which comes at the end of that scroll, following poem No. XLVIII, is reproduced as a direct print on the following page. Of the various rubbings purporting to represent Li Po's calligraphy, this Sung specimen probably has the best claim to authenticity.



“My head is no good anymore. When I tried to write this out, I couldn’t decipher it myself, and Master Ho had to read it for me. But you are young and your eyes are sharp.”

(Li Po’s postscript note at the end of the scroll preserved in the *Chia-hsiu T’ang t’ieh*.)