

# 山鬼 - 屈原 (繁體版)

shan- gui^ qu- yuan' fan' ti' ban'

## The Mountain Spirit – by Qu Yuan

(Complicated Chinese script version)

馮欣明注譯 Translated and Annotated by Feng Xin-ming 2008

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### NOTE

The author, Qu Yuan (340 BCE - 278 BCE), was the famous loyal minister of the state of Chu during the Warring States who was banished by his king for trying to dissuade him from taking a series of disastrous actions, and in whose honor the annual Chinese and Korean "Dragon Boat" or *Duan Wu* Festival is held. Qu Yuan is also a great poet in his own right - fortunately many of his works have survived.

### TEXT

若有人兮山之阿，被薜荔<sup>1</sup>兮帶女蘿<sup>2</sup>。

ruo` you^ ren' xi- shan-zhi- e- pi' bi' li' xi- dai` nv^ luo'

Lo, there's someone at the mountaintop, wearing fig leaf<sup>1</sup> clothing and dodder vine<sup>2</sup> ribbons.

既含睇兮又宜笑，子慕予<sup>3</sup>兮善窈窕。

ji` han' di` xi- you` yi' xiao` zi^ mu` yu' xi- shan` yao^ tiao^

She has both expressive eyes and a ready smile: "You admire me<sup>3</sup>, Sire, for being so elegant."

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<sup>1</sup> 薜荔 *bi' li'*: this refers to *Ficus pumilis*, a member of the fig family. See *Ci Hai* ("Sea of Terms" 《辭海》), Shanghai 1989, p. 698.

<sup>2</sup> 女蘿 *nv' luo'*: this is the same as 菟絲 *tu' si-* and therefore *Cuscuta chinensis* i.e. the twining dodder herb. See *Ci Hai* (*Sea of Terms* 《辭海》), Shanghai 1989, p. 673 and Wen Huai-Sha, *Qu Yuan Jiu Ge Jin Shi* 文懷沙著《屈原九歌今釋》 (*Qu Yuan's Nine Songs with Modern Explanation*), 上海古典文學出版社 (Shanghai Classical Works Publishers). Shanghai, 1956, p. 75.

<sup>3</sup> 予 *yu'*: according to Wen Huai-Sha (文懷沙), the word here does not mean "I" as in normal classical usage but should be pronounced *shu-* and actually stands for the character 舒, such that along with the next character in the line, the term "慕舒" is formed, meaning "of a kind disposition". Then the whole sentence would mean "you are of kind disposition and very elegant". See Wen Huai-Sha, *Qu Yuan Jiu Ge Jin Shi* 文懷沙著《屈原九歌今釋》 Shanghai, 1956, pp. 75, 85, 86. I, however, find that way of stretching the word *yu'* 予 a bit difficult to accept, especially as it is used a second time later in this very work to unequivocally mean "I".

乘赤豹兮從文狸，辛夷<sup>4</sup>車兮結桂旗<sup>5</sup>。

cheng' chi' bao` xi- cong' wen' li'      xin- yi'   che- xi- jie' gui` qi'

She rides a red leopard and a wildcat follows; she has a cart of magnolia<sup>4</sup> with a flag of miniature olive<sup>5</sup>,

被石蘭<sup>6</sup>兮帶杜衡<sup>7</sup>，折芳馨兮遺所思。

pi- shi' lan'   xi- dai` du` heng'   zhe' fang- xin- xi- wei` suo^ si-

She has orchids<sup>6</sup> and wild ginger<sup>7</sup> on; she breaks off a fragrant flower to give to the one she thinks about.

余處幽篁兮終不見天，路險難兮獨後來。

yu' chu^ you- huang' xi- zhong- bu` jian` tian-   lu` xian^ nan' xi- du' hou` lai'

“I live in the bamboo groves and never see the sky; the road was hard and I came late.”

表<sup>8</sup>獨立兮山之上，雲容容<sup>9</sup>兮而在下。

biao^ du' li`   xi- shan- zhi- shang` yun' rong' rong' xi- er' zai` xia`

She stands out<sup>7</sup>, all alone, on top of the mountain; clouds billow<sup>8</sup> beneath.

杳冥冥兮羌<sup>10</sup>晝晦，東風飄兮神靈雨。

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<sup>4</sup> 辛夷 *xin- yi'*: this is 木蘭 *mu` lan'* and therefore *Magnolia liliflora* i.e. the flowering magnolia shrub. See *Ci Hai* (“Sea of Terms” 《辭海》), Shanghai 1989, p. 2228 and p. 1400.

<sup>5</sup> 桂 *gui'*: this is 桂花 *gui` hua-* also called 木犀 *mu` xi-* and is therefore *Osmanthus fragrans*, i.e. the devilwood or miniature olive shrub, which has very small flowers. See *Ci Hai* (“Sea of Terms” 《辭海》), Shanghai 1989, p. 1458 and p. 1401.

<sup>6</sup> 石蘭 *shi' lan'*: *Ci Hai* would only say that 石蘭 is a “fragrant herb (香草)”, while *Qu Yuan Jiu Ge Jin Shi* says it's 山蘭 i.e. *Cymbidium virescens*, an orchid. I choose “orchid”. See *Ci Hai* (“Sea of Terms” 《辭海》), Shanghai 1989, p. 1841 and Wen Huai-Sha, *Qu Yuan Jiu Ge Jin Shi* 文懷沙著《屈原九歌今釋》, Shanghai, 1956, p. 75.

<sup>7</sup> 杜衡 *du` heng'*: this is *Asarum forbesii* i.e. the pungent wild ginger herb according to *Ci Hai* (“Sea of Terms” 《辭海》), Shanghai 1989, p. 1412.

<sup>8</sup> 表 *biao^*: *Ci Hai* says that 表 *biao^* in ancient writings can mean “standing out, distinctly tall” (“突出，屹然獨立貌”). See *Ci Hai* (“Sea of Terms” 《辭海》), Shanghai 1989, p. 1375.

<sup>9</sup> 容容 *rong' rong'*: *Ci Hai* says that one (ancient) meaning of 容 is “something that covers up or hides (障蔽物)” and so I use “billow” to convey the opaqueness of the clouds. See *Ci Hai* (“Sea of Terms” 《辭海》), Shanghai 1989, p. 2022.

yao^ ming' ming' xi- qiang- zhou` hui` dong- feng- piao- xi- shen' ling' yu^  
The day darkens and light disappears; the east wind wafts and the gods send rain.

留靈修<sup>11</sup>兮憺忘歸，歲即晏兮孰華予。

liu' ling' xiu- xi- dan` wang` gui- sui` ji` yan` xi- shu' hua' yu'  
“Waiting for my lord<sup>11</sup>, I am sad and I forget returning home. The years will be late soon; what will make me beautiful?”

採三秀兮於<sup>12</sup>山間，石磊磊兮葛蔓蔓。

cai^ san- xiu` xi- yu- shan- jian- shi' lei^ lei^ xi- ge' man` man`  
She picks the Three Flowers in<sup>12</sup> the mountains. The rocks are many and piled; the vines are spread all over.

怨公子兮悵忘歸，君思我兮不得閑。

yuan` gong- zi^ xi- chang` wang` gui- jun- si- wo^ xi- bu` de' xian`  
“I blame you, Sire; I am desolate and forget returning home. Perhaps you are thinking of me but you don't have time?”

山中人兮芳杜若<sup>13</sup>，飲石泉兮陰松柏。

shan- zhong- ren' xi- fang- du` ruo` yin^ shi' quan' xi- yin- song- bai^  
The person in the mountain is fragrant as the *Pollia* flowers<sup>13</sup>; she drinks from the spring in the rocks and finds shade under the spruce and pine.

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<sup>10</sup> 羌 *qiang*:- *Ci Hai* says that 羌 in ancient works such as ones by our author Qu Yuan, can be just a word used at the beginning of a clause to “help the sentence” and is devoid of much meaning other than “it is thus” (“作語助，用在句首，無義…一說猶乃”). See *Ci Hai* (“Sea of Terms” 《辭海》), Shanghai 1989, p. 2156.

<sup>11</sup> 靈修 *ling' xiu*:- while there are different interpretations of this sentence, such as that found in *Qu Yuan Jiu Ge Jin Shi* by Wen Huai-Sha 《屈原九歌今釋》文懷沙著 (*Qu Yuan's Nine Songs with Modern Explanation*), Shanghai, 1956, p. 71, I stick to the definition given by *Ci Hai* to *ling' xiu*- 靈修: sovereign (君王). Thus I use it here to mean sovereign in the figurative sense, i.e. “my lord” as might be used by a woman to address her husband. See *Ci Hai* (“Sea of Terms” 《辭海》), Shanghai 1989, p. 1202.

<sup>12</sup> According to Wen Huai-Sha *Qu Yuan Jiu Ge Jin Shi* 文懷沙著 《屈原九歌今釋》, Shanghai, 1956, p. 76 and p. 86, 於 here is not a preposition at all but should be pronounced *wu* and used in conjunction with the next character *shan* 山 to mean *wu shan* 巫山 or the Wu Mountains (near present day Chongqing city in Sichuan province). I find this a bit too far-fetched for my taste.

<sup>13</sup> 杜若 *du` ruo`*: this is *Pollia japonica*, a herbaceous plant with longish leaves and white flowers.

君思我兮然疑作<sup>14</sup>。

jun- si- wo^ xi- ran' yi' zuo`

"You are thinking of me, no?" Doubt suddenly arises<sup>14</sup>.

雷填填<sup>15</sup>兮雨冥冥，猿啾啾兮又<sup>16</sup>夜鳴。

lei' tian' tian' xi- yu' ming' ming' yuan' jiu- jiu- xi- you` ye` ming'

The thunder drums<sup>15</sup> and the rain darkens; the apes go "jiu, jiu" and also<sup>16</sup> cry at night.

風颯颯兮木蕭蕭，思公子兮徒離憂。

feng- sa` sa` xi- mu` xiao- xiao- si- gong- zi' xi- tu' li' you-

The wind goes "sa, sa" and the trees go "xiao, xiao": "I think of you, Sire; in vain I try to leave my sorrow."

### COMMENT

While historically Confucian scholars have interpreted this work to be an allegorical reference to a loyal minister to whom his king no longer listens, I think this can also be interpreted as a love poem pure and simple; the subject is merely the common theme of unrequited love. Except for the line about doubt arising, I do not see any line that can be interpreted as veiled allusions to the king-minister relation, the way I do in Qu Yuan's long poem *Li Su*, which also talks about unrequited love, though from the male's point of view. As in *Li Su*, this poem begins brightly but then there is the "arriving too late" and the mood turns melancholic - actually in *Li Su* it gets even worse and turns despondent. Like *Li Su*, this poem is also an evocative masterpiece.

### REFERENCES

1. Wen Huai-Sha, *Qu Yuan Jiu Ge Jin Shi* 文懷沙著《屈原九歌今釋》 (*Qu Yuan's Nine Songs with Modern Explanation*), 上海古典文學出版社 (Shanghai Classical Works Publishers). Shanghai, 1956.
2. Zhu Quan 諸泉, *Chu Ci* 《楚辭》, Yunan University Press 雲南大學出版社, Kunming, 2004.
3. *Ci Hai* ("Sea of Terms" 《辭海》), Shanghai 1989.

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<sup>14</sup> An alternate interpretation of this line is "You did think of me but doubt arose."

<sup>15</sup> 填 *tian'*: in ancient usage this word can mean the sound of drums according to *Ci Hai* 《辭海》, Shanghai 1989, p. 623.

<sup>16</sup> 又 *you`*: according to Zhu Quan 諸泉 the word 又 *you`* meaning "also" should actually be the homonym 狢 *you`* meaning "a long tailed black ape mentioned in ancient works" as defined in *Ci Hai* 《辭海》, Shanghai 1989, p. 925. See Zhu Quan 諸泉, *Chu Ci* 《楚辭》, Yunan University Press 雲南大學出版社, Kunming, 2004, p. 35. I, however, think it unlikely that Qu Yuan would put in "apes" then would follow with a specific ape in the same breath. True, 狢 *you`* can also mean a certain wildcat but wildcat cries are not very loud.