山鬼 - 屈原 (繁體版)
shan- guî^ qu- yuan' fan' ti' ban'

The Mountain Spirit – by Qu Yuan
(Complicated Chinese script version)

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http://www.tsoidug.org/Literary/Mountain_Spirit_Comp.pdf
(To Simplified Chinese 到简体版: http://www.tsoidug.org/Literary/Mountain_Spirit_Simp.pdf)

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，被薜荔兮帶女蘿。
ruo` you^ ren’ xi- shan- zhi- e- pi` bi` li` xi- dai’ nv^ luo’
Lo, there's someone at the mountaintop, wearing fig leaf clothing and dodder vine ribbons.

既含睞兮又宜笑，子慕予兮善窈窕。
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, Sire, for being so elegant.”

1 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.

2 女蘿 nv’luo’: this is the same as 蕾絲 tu’ si- and therefore Custcuta 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.

3 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”.

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乘赤豹兮从文狸，辛夷４车兮结桂旗５。
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 magnolia４ with a flag of miniature olive５,

被石蘭６兮带杜衡７，折芳馨兮遗所思。
pi’ shi’ lan’ xi- dai’ du’ heng’ zhe’ fang- xin- xi- wei’ suo^ si-
She has orchids５ and wild ginger６ on; she breaks off a flagrant flower to give to the one she thinks about.

余处幽篁兮终不見天，路险难兮獨後來。
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８独立兮山之上，雲容容９兮而在下。
biao^ du’ li’ xi- shan- zhi- shang’ yun’ rong’ rong’ xi- er’ zai’ xia’
She stands out７, all alone, on top of the mountain; clouds billow８ beneath.

杳冥冥兮羌１０晝晦，東風飄兮神靈雨。

４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.

５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.

６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.

７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.

８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.

９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.
留靈修兮悼忘歸，歲即晏兮孰華子。
“Waiting for my lord, I am sad and I forget returning home. The years will be late soon; what will make me beautiful?”

採三秀兮於山間，石磊磊兮葛蔓蔓。
She picks the Three Flowers in the mountains. The rocks are many and piled; the vines are spread all over.

怨公子兮惱忘歸，君思我兮不得閑。
“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，飲石泉兮陰松柏。
The person in the mountain is fragrant as the Pollia flowers; she drinks from the spring in the rocks and finds shade under the spruce and pine.

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10 莘 qiang-: Ci Hai says that 莘 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.

11 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 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.

12 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, 王 here is not a preposition at all but should be pronounced wu and used in conjunction with the next character shan 石 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.

13 杜若 du’ ruo’: this is Pollia japonica, a herbaceous plant with longish leaves and white flowers.
You are thinking of me, no? Doubt suddenly arises.

The thunder drums and the rain darkens; the apes go “jiu, jiu” and also cry at night.

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


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

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

16 *you*: according to Zhu Quan 《楚辞》 the word 又 you meaning “also” should actually be the homonym 又 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 《楚辞》, Yunan University Press, 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, 又 you can also mean a certain wildcat but wildcat cries are not very loud.