山鬼 - 屈原 (简体版)
shan- gui^ qu- yuan' jian' ti' ban'

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

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http://www.tsoidug.org/Literary/Mountain_Spirit_Simp.pdf

(To Complicated Chinese 到繁體版: http://www.tsoidug.org/Literary/Mountain_Spirit_Comp.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，被薜荔兮带女萝。
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.

既含睇兮又宜笑，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.”

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1 薜荔 bi’ li‘: this refers to Ficus pumilis, a member of the fig family. See Ci Hai (“Sea of Terms” 《辞海》), Shanghai 1989, p. 698.

2 女萝 nv’luo’: this is the same as 茧丝 tu’ si- and therefore Custcuta chinensis i.e. the twining dodder herb. See Ci Hai (Sea of Terms《辞海》), Shanghai 1989, p. 673 and Wen Huai-Sha, Qu Yuan Jiu Ge Jin Shi 文怀沙著《屈原九歌今释》 (Qu Yuan's Nine Songs with Modern Explanation), Shanghai Classical Works Publishers). Shanghai, 1956, p. 75.

3 予 yu’: according to Wen Huai-Sha (文怀沙), 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 文怀沙著《屈原九歌今释》 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”.

乘赤豹兮从文狸，辛夷^{4}车兮结桂旗^{5}。

She rides a red leopard and a wildcat follows; she has a cart of magnolia^{4} with a flag of miniature olive^{5},

被石兰^{6}兮带杜衡^{7}，折芳馨兮遗所思。

She has orchids^{6} and wild ginger^{7} on; she breaks off a flagrant flower to give to the one she thinks about.

余处幽篁兮终不见天，路险难兮独后来。

“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，云容容^{9}兮而在下。

She stands out^{8}, all alone, on top of the mountain; clouds billow^{9} beneath.

杳冥冥兮羌^{10}昼晦，东风飘兮神灵雨。

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^{4}辛夷 xin- yi’: this is 木兰 mu` lan’ and therefore Magnolia liliflora i.e. the flowering magnolia shrub. See Ci Hai (“Sea of Terms”《辞海》), 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”《辞海》), Shanghai 1989, p. 1458 and p. 1401.

^{6}石兰 shi’ lan’: Ci Hai would only say that 石兰 is a “fragrant herb (香草)”, while Qu Yuan Jiu Ge Jin Shi says it’s 山兰 i.e. Cymbidium violascens, an orchid. I choose "orchid". See Ci Hai (“Sea of Terms”《辞海》), Shanghai 1989, p. 1841 and Wen Huai-Sha, Qu Yuan Jiu Ge Jin Shi 文怀沙著《屈原九歌今释》, 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”《辞海》), Shanghai 1989, p. 1412.

^{8}表 biao^4: Ci Hai says that 表 biao^4 in ancient writings can mean “standing out, distinctly tall” (“突出，屹然独立貌”). See Ci Hai (“Sea of Terms”《辞海》), 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”《辞海》), Shanghai 1989, p. 2022.
The day darkens and light disappears; the east wind wafts and the gods send rain.

留灵修兮憺忘归，岁饥晏兮孰华予。
“Waiting for my lord, I am sad and forget returning home. The years will be late soon; what will make me beautiful?”

采三秀兮于山间，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.

怨公子兮怅忘归，君思我兮不得闲。
“I blame you, Sire; I am desolate and I forget returning home. Perhaps you are thinking of me but you don’t have time?”

山中人兮芳杜若，饮石泉兮阴松柏。
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 翣 *qiang*—*Ci Hai* says that 翣 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” (“作语助，用在句首，无义…一说犹乃”). See *Ci Hai* (“Sea of Terms” 《辞海》), Shanghai 1989, p. 2156.

11 灵修 *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《屈原九歌今释》文怀沙著 (*Qu Yuan’s Nine Songs with Modern Explanation*), Shanghai, 1956, p. 71, I stick to the definition given by *Ci Hai* to *ling’ xiu*- 灵修: 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” 《辞海》), Shanghai 1989, p. 1202.

12 According to Wen Huai-Sha《屈原九歌今释》, Shanghai, 1956, p. 76 and p. 86, 於 here is not a preposition meaning "in" 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.

13 杜若 *du’ roo*: this is *Pollia japonica*, a herbaceous plant with longish leaves and white flowers.
君思我兮然疑作\textsuperscript{14}。

jun- si- wo^ xi- ran' yì' zuo'

“You are thinking of me, no?” Doubt suddenly arises\textsuperscript{14}.

雷填填\textsuperscript{15}兮雨冥冥，猨啾啾兮又夜鸣。

lei' tian' tian' xi- yu' ming' ming' yuan' jiu- jiu- xi- you` ye` ming'
The thunder drums\textsuperscript{15} and the rain darkens; the apes go “jiu, jiu” and also\textsuperscript{15} cry at night.

凤飒飒兮木萧萧，思公子兮徒离忧。

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 depart from 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 \textit{Li Su}, which also talks about unrequited love, though from the male's point of view. As in \textit{Li Su}, this poem begins brightly but then there is the "arriving too late" and the mood turns melancholic - actually in \textit{Li Su} it gets even worse and turns despondent. Like \textit{Li Su}, this poem is also an evocative masterpiece.

REFERENCES


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

\textsuperscript{15} 填 \textit{tian'}: in ancient usage this word can mean the sound of drums according to \textit{Ci Hai}《辞海》, Shanghai 1989, p. 623.

\textsuperscript{16} 又 \textit{you'}: according to Zhu Quan 諸泉 the word 又 \textit{you'} meaning “also” should actually be the homonym 又\textit{you'} meaning “a long tailed black ape mentioned in ancient works” as defined in \textit{Ci Hai}《辞海》, Shanghai 1989, p. 925. See Zhu Quan 諸泉, \textit{Chu Ci}《楚辭》, 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\textit{you'} can also mean a certain wildcat but wildcat cries are not very loud.