

楊顯之：瀟湘雨

Rain on the Hsiao-hsiang

By Yang Hsien-chih (active 1246)

Translated by J. I. Crump

PROLOGUE

(Enter CHANG T' IEN CHUEH in mo, old male role, TS'UI-LUAN in cheng-tan, principal female role; and servant HSING-ERH.)

CHANG *(recites)*:

One heart devoted to work for home and state,

Two brows knit by care for temple and shrine.

Yet light and footless clouds the sun itself can't penetrate.

Exile from Ch'ang-an saddened stauncher hearts than mine.

I am surnamed Chang. My given name is Shang-ying and my courtesy name, T'ien-chueh. After I passed my examinations I was employed in successive posts until, thanks to the Sage Generosity, I achieved the office of Righteous Counsellor. Then, because those favorites who wore the highest hats—Yang Chien, T'ung Kuan and Ts'ai Ching—were oppressing the people, I was faithful to my nature and convictions and spoke openly against them. My counsels were many times ignored and the Sage Presence has now sent me to 'rest' in Chiang-chou. Unhappily my wife died many years ago and left me an only daughter whose child name is Ts'ui-luan. She is eighteen years of age and betrothed to no one. Since we left the capital we have been worried each day by our travels but we have finally reached this ford on the river Huai. Since our time is limited, Hsing-erh, call the Guardian of the Ford for me.

HSING-ERH: Very well, sir.

(Enter ching, painted-face role, dressed as GUARDIAN OF THE FORD.)

FORD GUARD *(recites)*:

All the hair is worn from my thighs,
But whiskers grow on my chops.

Fast as a shooting star or lightning flash,
I make my appointed stops

Along both banks keeping watch and ward
For this is the duty of the Guard of the Ford.

I am the Ford Guard. The gentleman at the rest-house has called and I don't know what he wants of me but I'd better go see. Honored Uncle, report and say the Guardian has arrived.

(HSING-ERH reports.)

CHANG: Bring him here.

HSING-ERH: Here he is.

(They pantomime seeing one another.)

FORD GUARD: Your honor called? I wait on your orders.

CHANG: Guardian, I am under Imperial Orders to take myself and family to Chiangchou where I am to reside. There are strict limits to the time for my travel. If you do not prepare me a boat you will certainly cause me to exceed my allowed travel time. Whatever the circumstances, I must have a boat this very day.

FORD GUARD: Your honor, the Spirit of the Huai differs from the genies of most places because he demands sacrifices of cow, hog and sheep as well as paper gold, paper silver and paper money. After you have burned your incantation to the God and you find he is pleased you can set out by boat, but if he is not pleased wild winds arise from every quarter, waves roll and billows tumble in such a way that no one dares launch a craft. May I inquire, your honor, have you

performed the sacrifices?

TS'UI-LUAN: If this is how things really are, give him some money and have him arrange the sacrifices right away.

CHANG: Child, you don't understand. Your father is a proper minister of state and this is one of the official gods of the country; what need has it for more than the regular sacrifice? Have you not heard that to offer sacrifice to the wrong spirit is simply toadying?

(*recites*):

The Empire of Sung is not the rude state of Ch'u.

Nor was the clear Huai like the Mi-lo ever. I wager my lifetime of faithful service Will see me across this windy, tumbling river.

Guard, prepare me a boat this instant!

FORD GUARD: I've got the boat; now don't blame me if something unexpected happens. (*Pantomi-*

mes launching boat.)

HSING-ERH: Ya! The wind and waves are rising! What shall we do? The water is sinking the boat! Help! Help!

(*CHANG exits.*)

FORD GUARD (*rescuing the girl*): I've saved his daughter, now to search for his honor. (*Exit.*)

TS'UI-LUAN: What terrible perils! Oh papa, what trials! The Huai overturned our boat and if it hadn't been for the Ford Guard I would have perished. I don't even know if papa is still alive—the Guard has dived again and left me here by myself. What will I do?

(*Supporting role, elderly male, TS'UI WEN-YUAN, enters and sees TS'UI-LUAN.*)

WEN-YUAN: Good heavens, young lady, where do you come from? And tell me who are you?

TS'UI-LUAN: I am Chang T'ien-chueh's daughter, Ts'ui-luan, and I am eighteen years old. Papa was sent to take residence in Chiangchou so we



"That day near the bank of the stream,
The rise of the shore,
What chance had we against that towering
wind, that curling wave?"

had to make this crossing of the Huai. We did not heed the Ford Guard and made no sacrifice to the genie of the place, but directly launched our boat into the river. As we had been warned they would, the waves and wind suddenly arose and overturned the boat. Had it not been for the Ford Guard rescuing me I would never have survived.

WEN-YUAN: As I watch this young lady it becomes plain that she has never known the sting of poverty and she is certainly from an official family. I will wait with you here for a while and if his honor your father is still alive I will return you to him immediately.

TS'UI-LUAN: How long have we been waiting? Why doesn't the Guardian of the Ford return? For one thing, I can hardly stand these wet clothes on me any longer and for another it has gotten darker and I have no idea where papa has gone. Oh, heaven, am I destined to die here in distress?

WEN-YUAN: Young lady, I am Ts'ui Wen-yuan, fisherman of the Huai River, and my home is

not far from here. If you're willing to be my adopted daughter then you are welcome to come live with me. Some other day we may locate his honor your father and I will see to it that father and daughter are reunited—how does that sound to you?

TS'UI-LUAN: Good, kind sir, if you will not resent me for accepting, I am very willing to become your daughter.

WEN-YUAN: Since that's settled, follow me; we're going home.

TS'UI-LUAN (*sings*):

[*Hsien-lü Tuan-cheng Hao*]

Just as I sink beneath the urgent flood
Desperate thrusts bring me to this
strand,

Sodden, soaking wet and dripping garments
head to foot.

Had there been no kindly fisher offering
his home

Spiteful fate would have granted me
no hope.

ACT I

(CHANG T'IENTHUEH enters, leading HSING-ERH.)

CHANG (*recites*):

A boat to ferry past the river Huai,
A heart too hasty hurrying its trip,
Could it have thought that wind and wave
would rise
And call down grief enough to fell the
sky?

I am Chang T'ien-chueh who disregarded the Ford Guard and whose boat capsized in mid-crossing. I do not know what happened to my daughter, Ts'ui-luan. I want to set out in person to find her but the court's strict limits upon me press me left and right. What shall I do? For the present I will leave enquiries along my route saying that anyone who gives shelter to my daughter, Ts'ui-luan, will be rewarded with ten ounces of flower-marked silver. Then, when I have reached Chiangchou I will send men back to search slowly over the route again and see

what can be done. Oh Ts'ui-luan, my child. I die of grief for you. (*Exit.*)

(*Enter TS'UI WEN-YUAN.*)

WEN-YUAN: What did I know of joy before this morning? What passed as happiness before today? I am Ts'ui Wen-yuan and after I returned from a visit to my brother I found a young woman—the daughter of his honor Chang T'ien-chueh—whose father was travelling to Chiangchou to take up official residence. They reached the Huai crossing and, paying no heed to the words of the Ford Guard, they did not sacrifice to the god. They launched their boat and in midstream a great wind arose and mighty waves surged up, oversetting their craft. We don't know where her father has got to, but the child's destiny is somehow part of mine, so I adopted her, brought her to my home and we have become very close—a single family instead of two people. Each day, one way or another, we make out and I don't resent the fact that

we're poor. This may be because I have done a good deed. Today I'll not go out to fish. I'll stay home and see who may come this way.

(Cheng mo, *young male*, TS'UI TUNG enters.)

TS'UI TUNG (*recites*):

Yellowed scrolls, a fusty scholar beneath
the flickering light,
The Nine Classics, the Triple Annals ready
to recite.

When at last his name appears upon the
Golden List.

Then squandering his manhood will finally
seem right.

I am Ts'ui T'ung, also called Tien-shih, whose family has lived for generations in Honan. While still young I trained to be a scholar and read quite widely in the *Odes* and the *Book of History*—ten years spent cribbing and cramming to earn the pleasures and perquisites of one official post. I am on my way to the capital to sit for the examinations and now have got as far as the Huai River crossing. My father's older brother, Ts'ui Wen-yuan, lives hereabouts. I might as well visit him now that I'm here. This is my uncle's gate. I'll call him. Is anyone there?

WEN-YUAN: Who's calling? I'll open the door.
(*Pantomimes asking.*) Who is it?

TS'UI TUNG: It's your nephew, Ts'ui Tien-shih.
On my way to the imperial examinations I stopped here on purpose to see you, uncle.

WEN-YUAN: My dear boy, come right into the house. How is your father?

TS'UI TUNG: Thanks to you, uncle, he's very well.

WEN-YUAN: Now don't you go running right off.
You must stay a couple of days.

TS'UI TUNG: Thank you, uncle.

WEN-YUAN: Well now, are you married yet?

TS'UI TUNG: Ah, I'll have to quote you what the ancients say, uncle, "First a name and then a wife." In that case, you see, I couldn't have married yet.

WEN-YUAN: The boy seems to have a bit of talent in him and I'm certain he'll get an official post. I've a mind to betroth my daughter to him. I wonder how she would like the idea. I'll call her and when she's seen my nephew I'll make my proposal. Ts'ui-luan, my child, come here.

(TS'UI-LUAN enters.)

TS'UI-LUAN: I am Ts'ui-luan and ever since I became separated from my father I have had no word

of him. I owe Old Ts'ui much for adopting me—he has treated me as though I were his own daughter—but while I live here without the slightest worry I wonder where my father can be. (*Sings*):

[*Hsien-lü Tien Chiang Ch'un*]

I raise my eyes and worry fills them.
Father, now that you are gone,
Can I trace you?
Oh, the long, long river.
Has it taken the years you had left to live?

[*Hun-chiang Lung*]

Had it not been for the fisherman who saved me
I might better have surrendered myself
and floated east on the Spring-swollen stream.
As of now I live my borrowed time each day
But papa, I still don't know if you swam or drowned.
Within the inches of my heart dwell the sorrows of a thousand years
And locked between my furrowed brows are ten parts of every misery.
My gratitude, kindly fisherman,
Who gave me love,
Who did not see me as someone from the outside world
But took me straight
To his breast as his natural child.

(*Pantomimes seeing WEN-YUAN.*) You called, father. What is it?

WEN-YUAN: Child, I have a nephew, Ts'ui Tien-shih, who was on his way to the capital to make his name, but since the road lay by my door, he has stopped to visit me. Come over here and meet him.

TS'UI-LUAN: Yes, father.

WEN-YUAN: Nephew, you could not know this but just recently I adopted a daughter whose name is Ts'ui-luan and I have called her from her quarters especially to meet you. Now don't you shy away! I want you to have a good look at her.

TS'UI TUNG: Call her over. I should be glad to meet her.

WEN-YUAN: Ts'ui-luan, come here and present

yourself properly to your elder brother.

TS'UI-LUAN: A thousand blessings.

TS'UI T'UNG: A fine woman.

TS'UI-LUAN (*sings*):

[*Yu Hu-lu*]

He clasps his delicate hands which will
climb to the moon to pluck the
cassia.¹

TS'UI T'UNG: Cousin, forgive my not recognizing
you and paying my respects so seldom.

TS'UI-LUAN (*sings*):

I mean to go forward but retreat
instead.

The best I can do is
Make my flustered obeisance, only half
concealing a deep blush.

TS'UI T'UNG: Cousin, I was destined for this
meeting.

TS'UI-LUAN (*sings*):

See the elegant grace of his form, the
delicate charm of his face.

TS'UI T'UNG: Cousin, I cannot tell when we may
meet again.

TS'UI-LUAN (*sings*):

And see the warmth and goodness of
his nature, the breadth and depth
of his sentiments.

But stay such praise or
P'an An's face will be devoid of charm
And Ts'ao Tzu-chien
Will be wanting in worth. . . .

Even his
White scholar's shirt smoothly stitched
with love-duck clasps. . . .
From head to toe
Nothing about him less than highest
style.

TS'UI T'UNG: Cousin, I came here first to find out
how my uncle was and then bid him goodbye
since I am off to sit for the imperial examina-
tions.

TS'UI-LUAN (*sings*):

[*T'ien-hsia Lo*]

Then I wish you may
Soon seize the highest rank, first place
in the academy.
Elegant style

And good fortune to match!

A Graduate's Feast in Ch'ung-lin Gar-
dens is the harvest of youth's am-
bition.

The name upon the roster exudes its
own perfume—

The dress and how it's worn bespeak
the lettered man

Who now prepares

To sport the palace flower and drink
imperial wine.

WEN-YUAN: I am already old and have no one but
this girl whom I've not got a husband for. My
nephew is quite clever, I think, and I'm of a
mind to give the girl to him to wife. I'll ask him
about it. Tien-shih, have you married?

TS'UI T'UNG: No, I've no wife—why do you keep
asking, uncle?

WEN-YUAN: Well, here I am at my age with only a
daughter and I see that you're a handsome type,
intelligent and stylish, certain to get an official
post; so I want to ask you to be my son-in-law
and later when you lay me to rest I can boast
of a little glamor. Tien-shih, let's say that she's
the "virtuous young lady" who's a match for
"the gentleman", eh? What do you say?

TS'UI T'UNG: I respectfully obey your commands,
uncle, and am much obliged to you.

TS'UI-LUAN: Father, to have saved my life is quite
enough. Why should you even want to arrange
me a marriage? (*Sings*):

[*Tsui Chung T'ien*]

You not only

Rescued me from the maw of the River
Huai

You now

'See me up the highest peak in Ch'u.'
(*Pantomimes turning aside and weeping*) Oh,
my father, (*sings*):

Your death or survival, even these re-
main clouded, impossible to know,
What hope then

That I could have a go-between make
my alliance?

WEN-YUAN: Why don't you answer me in a word,
Ts'ui-luan? "Fate is fate in any season, Nothing
happens save for a reason"—I wouldn't let you
miss your chance, child.

TS'UI-LUAN (*sings*):

¹Two euphemisms for succeeding in examinations.

Though you
 Insist marriages are things of destiny
 Yet
 It is difficult to answer in a single word
 Because of my many
 Storms of tears and clouds of worry.

WEN-YUAN: But, Ts'ui-luan, this is a happy occasion yet you cry. Stop that right now! Why, my nephew seems to have a whole head full of learning. He will certainly become an official. That's why I'm giving you to him. You know the saying, "A woman grown should not remain home." From what you see, which family's daughter is growing old at home? No, you just do as I say. Today each of you must observe the ritual so that the betrothal will be completed.

TS'UI-LUAN (*sings*):

[*Chin Chan'erh*]

Always he has had
 The greatest respect for scholars
 And now he wants to
 Bind me in marriage to one.
 So he will
 Risk the proverbial "trouble coming
 in through a mouth too often open."
 He says, instead,
 "A woman grown *should* leave home."
 Apparently he is making my betrothal
 promise—
 How can I lift my head and look at
 them?
 For even though my heart agrees with
 him
 My face still blushes wildly of itself.

WEN-YUAN (*pantomimes pulling girl and boy into position to make obeisance*): There, this day is an auspicious one for the betrothal. Nephew, go now to the capital and take your examination for an official position and when you have obtained any sort of appointment and come home exalted, remember where a bit of gratitude is due.

TS'UI-LUAN: I thank you, father; I worry only that Master Ts'ui will go away and then forget me.

TS'UI T'UNG: If I forget you, may the heavens refuse to cover me, the earth to support me and sun and moon to shine upon me.

TS'UI-LUAN: Master Ts'ui, since you must go, go, but write us as often as you can.

TS'UI T'UNG: I understand, don't worry.

TS'UI-LUAN (*sings*):

[*Chuan-sha*]

In his breast
 Lie the Lung and Huai rivers rolled up,
 His
 Sword flashes with stars from the
 Great Dipper;
 My father has
 Mated me with a phoenix, matched me
 with a regal mate.
 Thinking of you
 Walking all alone a thousand *li* through
 mountain barriers
 This night, how hard it will be to reach
 you by dream.
 When you arrive at
 The Hall of Complete Justice
 And
 Win the coveted tortoise-head prize
 I fear only that
 You will swear never to return 'til the
 Golden Roster lists your name.
 Oh, don't let it happen
 That your heart won't respond to the
 oath of your mouth,
 And don't quickly
 Forsake kin and forget kindness.

Oh, Master Ts'ui,

Do not abandon me
 To lean on my wicker gate and to fix
 my stare on ships that never come
 home.

TS'UI T'UNG: I will take my leave, then, uncle, for I've a long way to go. (*He pantomimes bowing good-bye.*)

WEN-YUAN: Nephew, I wish only that you make a name for yourself soon, then fulfill your contract with my child, Ts'ui-luan, and make her mistress of an official's home. (*Recites*):

We shall wait till Spring sends you home
 for new clothes—
 To complete a good marriage takes but a
 moment of time.

TS'UI T'UNG (*recites*):

Ch'ang-o, Moon Goddess, is fond of
 young men.
 Should her great Moon Palace to be
 too hard to climb? (*Exeunt.*)

ACT II

(Enter ching as the EXAMINATION OFFICIAL leading his clerk CHANG CH'EN.)

OFFICIAL (recites):

To the Spring Office² they say belong the
peach and the pear,
Yet my gate-garden craves a richer crop.
My writing is hardly beyond compare
But my scale-pans are filled with gold so
why should I care?

My surname is Chao and my given name, Ch'ien.
A lot of busybodies call me by a soubriquet,
Sun-li.³ This year it falls to me to be the
imperial examiner. I am completely and purely
innocent of extorting cash from citizens; I
purely and simply take their I.O.U.'s for every-
thing. Well, it seems we have a candidate here
whose surname is Ts'ui, whose name is T'ung
and whose courtesy title is Tien-shih. He has
handed in his examination paper and I have
decided he's to be number one on the list though
I haven't yet given him his final test. Attendants,
summon candidate Ts'ui to me.

(Enter TS'UI T'UNG.)

TS'UI T'UNG: I am Ts'ui T'ung and I have handed
in my paper. The examiner of the day has sum-
moned me so I must go to him.

CHANG CH'EN: I report, your honor, that can-
didate Ts'ui has arrived.

OFFICIAL: Bring him here.

CHANG CH'EN: Here he is.

(They pantomime meeting.)

TS'UI T'UNG: What did you call me for?

OFFICIAL: You've handed in your paper but I
haven't given you your final test. Can you read?

TS'UI T'UNG: I'm a graduate, should I not be able
to read, your honor? How many fish can't re-
cognize water?

OFFICIAL: How many graduates can't steal a
dumpling on the festival of the ides? All right,
I'll write the characters and you read them. I
start it in the west and end it in the east, what
is it?

TS'UI T'UNG: That's the figure—one.

OFFICIAL: Ah hah—if you can recognize difficult

things like that I'll make no mistake putting
you first on the list! Now, let me ask you, can
you cap verses?

TS'UI T'UNG: I can.

OFFICIAL:

Athwart the river lies the boat

Up the bank eight men draw the tows.

TS'UI T'UNG:

Someone comes and cuts the ropes

And everyone of them falls on his nose.

OFFICIAL: Good, good! Let me try you on another
verse.

Here we have a big blue bowl

With rice all packed in tight

TS'UI T'UNG:

If your honor could only eat all that

You'd be full from morning to night.

OFFICIAL: Oh most excellent graduate! Why, with
his literary talents I've half a mind to take him
on as *my* teacher. Chang Ch'ien, ask the gentle-
man if he's married.

CHANG CH'EN: His honor asks if you are married
or not.

TS'UI T'UNG: If I am married what then? Or what
if I'm not married?

CHANG CH'EN: Your honor, he asks what if he is
married and what if he isn't.

OFFICIAL: If he is I'll send him off to Ch'in-
ch'uan to take charge. If he isn't, I have an
eighty-year old daughter to give him to wife—

CHANG CH'EN: Surely you mean eighteen-year
old!

OFFICIAL: Yes, yes, eighteen-year old.

CHANG CH'EN: Sir, my master says that if you are
married he'll send you right off to take up
duties in Ch'in-ch'uan, but if you're not he has
a daughter and would like you for a son-in-law.

TS'UI T'UNG: Hold on, now. Let me think. (*Aside*)
That girl at my uncle's, now, she wasn't raised
by our family so how do we know where she
comes from? What do I want with her anyway?
Besides, it's better to cheat the gods a little than
to let slip an opportunity. (*Turns.*) Actually, I
am not married yet.

²A poetic (though historic) name for the Board of Rites which furnished examiners.

³The first four surnames in the *Book of the Hundred*

Names are *Chao, Ch'ien, Sun* and *Li*. The passage is a type of plebeian, pedantic humor well liked by Yuan playwrights.

OFFICIAL: Since you have no wife, I will have you as my son-in-law. Chang Ch'ien, tell Plum Blossom to bring my daughter here from the chimney corner.

CHANG CH'EN: Very well.

(Enter ch'a-tan, painted female role, as the OFFICIAL'S DAUGHTER.)

OFFICIAL'S DAUGHTER (recites):

This morning the good-luck magpie cried
Foretelling the arrival of my fate.
Should even a beggar walk inside
I'd laugh and take him as a mate.

I am the daughter of the official in charge of this examination. My father has called me so I go to see him. (Pantomimes meeting.) Father, what did you call me for?

OFFICIAL: I called for you for no other reason than to get you a husband.

OFFICIAL'S DAUGHTER: How many samples did you get?

OFFICIAL: Only one, but look him over—wouldn't he make a good son-in-law?

TS'UI T'UNG: Now there's a fine looking woman.

OFFICIAL: How about your father-in-law?

TS'UI T'UNG: Oh, he's a fine one too.

OFFICIAL (turning and looking at CHANG CH'EN):
A good mother-in-law too, eh?

CHANG CH'EN: Flatterer!

OFFICIAL: Ts'ui Tien-shih, I have made you magistrate of Ch'in-ch'uan *hsien* beginning today. You and my daughter must now go and take up duties. I have a bit of a song called *Tsui t'ai-p'ing* which I will sing to see you on your way. (Sings):

[*Tsui T'ai-p'ing*]

Because your
Every talent is as it should be—
Versed in the Classics and skilled in
the Histories,
Capping poems, riddling characters,
you understand entire—I give
To you my daughter for your mate.
This kerchief,
Let me take it off and give it to you to
wear now.

(Pantomimes taking off kerchief.)

This scholar's gown,
Let me take it off and give it to you to
wear now.

(Pantomimes taking off gown.)

Now that I have stripped myself skinny-

red naked,

Chang Ch'ien, come with me. (Sings):

I might as well go to the bath house
and bathe. (Exit.)

TS'UI T'UNG: Young lady, let us put everything in order today and leave to take up my post.

(Recites):

We'll make our way past mountains far
and rivers near,
Having bade farewell to the Gates of Peach
and Pear.

OFFICIAL'S DAUGHTER (recites):

And though we've neither seal to wrap nor
kerchief to unpack,
We'll stir a storm up here and shout the
house down there. (Exit.)

(Enter TS'UI-LUAN.)

TS'UI-LUAN: I am Ts'ui-luan and after father Ts'ui adopted me as his daughter he betrothed me to Ts'ui Tien-shih, his nephew. Then his nephew left to sit for imperial examinations. That was three years ago. They say he became magistrate of Ch'in-ch'uan but he did not come to fetch me. Now father Ts'ui has told me to gather what I need for travel and I have set forth for Ch'in-ch'uan to find Ts'ui Tien-shih. Since father wants awfully to see his nephew he will come later and visit me. (Sighs) Hai! I fear that young graduates are fickle of heart. (Sings):

[*Nan-lü Yi-chih Hua*]

When finally he has
Climbed the moon-palace and plucked
the cassia branch
And received his orders by the golden
gate
The wedding chamber should blaze in
the candle-lit night.
When your name was placed on the
gilded roster
Then for you
I abandoned family hearth and home
And sought my way down the long
long road,
Resenting
Each ten-mile post that does not appear
in five.
Now I feel
Silky threads of autumn rain damping
the red dust

And oh, how
Penetrating are the souging gusts of
fall's metal wind.

[*Liang-chou*]

Now I watch
Defeated hosts of summer's leaves
spiraling through windy space
And they are
Red gouts of blood staining the powdered
face of fall.

The chill and whirring western wind
Settles old scores with defiant crysanthemums.

As I look
That patch of wood casts a shadow
That ridge of hills grows slowly indistinct.

I have walked till
My mouth is dry and my tongue bitter
My eyes swoon and my head throbs.
I cannot help
Wiping away tears and rubbing my eyes,
I cannot
Overcome the weakness at my back
and thighs.

I, I, I
Gently, gently tighten the thongs on
my sandals,
Now, now, now
Slowly, slowly settle my plaited hat.
Ai ya ya ya
Then I must slightly ease my waist
band.

Then I think of that
False-hearted,
That faithless man.
Now that you have
Gotten your post, do you require no
one to serve and none to comfort
you?

Are you now so pressed
You could not fill even half a letter
with news?

Because there must come a day when I
shall see you once again

I must search my thoughts most carefully
now.

But I have already reached Ch'in-ch'uan; I had
better ask someone. (*Turns toward the ku-men*

and inquires) Brother, if you would be so kind,
where can I find the house of Ts'ui Tien-shih?

VOICE (*from off-stage*): It's the door in the "figure
eight" wall right ahead of you.

TS'UI-LUAN: Sir; may I leave this bundle here while
I go inquire of my family—I'll be right back
for it.

VOICE: It'll be no trouble; go ahead.

TS'UI-LUAN: Is anybody there at the gate? Will you
go tell the master his wife is here?

SERVANT: Lady, you must have the wrong place.
He already has a wife.

TS'UI-LUAN: What did you say?

SERVANT: I said the master already has a wife.

TS'UI-LUAN (*sings*):

[*Mu-yang Kuan*]

That has to be

Only idle talk.

What can it mean?

He must be

Growing thorns where none properly
grow.

Three years have gone by since we
parted

But not for

One moment did I dream of being
unfaithful.

I know he cannot

Have been willing to forsake the wife
of his hardest years—

He has! He has

Got himself a woman, some delicate
slip of a girl

The better to destroy the hapless wife
of his poverty.

Ai ya, ai ya, ai ya,

False-hearted, faithless indeed, Ts'ui
Tien-shih!

Good brother gateman, will you report that I
am here?

SERVANT (*pantomimes report*): May it please your
honor, your wife has arrived at the gate.

OFFICIAL'S DAUGHTER: Here, you good-for-
nothing, what are you saying?

SERVANT: That the master's wife is at the gate.

OFFICIAL'S DAUGHTER: She's his wife? Then I'm
the serving wench?!

TS'UI T'UNG: This idiot must have a pair of left-
hand ears. Wife, leave us and wait inside. I'll go
see her.

TS'UI-LUAN (*pantomimes seeing him*): Oh, Ts'ui Tien-shih, how could you have been so faithless! Why didn't you send for me when you got your appointment?

OFFICIAL'S DAUGHTER: Now here's a fine thing! You said you had no wife—then how is it a second one has popped up? Why, you distillation of jackass! You quintessence of beast! I shall surely die of rage. (*She pantomimes frothing with anger.*)

TS'UI T'UNG: Now wife, calm yourself! She is nothing but my family's slave girl. She ran away from the house after she had stolen a silver wine ewer and trivet and I've been looking for her ever since without success. Now she's come to give herself up in the manner of the moth dashing itself against the flame. Attendants! Take her away, strip her and flog her for me! (*Servant pantomimes seizing TS'UI-LUAN who refuses to prostrate herself.*)

TS'UI-LUAN (*sings*):
 [Ke-wei]
 I did but wait
 To be a wife who would follow her
 mate, and sing the lyrics for the lute
 he plays.
 Could I know you had married without
 divorce and taken a trollop to wed?

OFFICIAL'S DAUGHTER (*speaks angrily*): May heaven strike you down! Do you hear her revile me?

TS'UI T'UNG: Why haven't you people taken her away and flogged her!

TS'UI-LUAN (*sings*):
 And so he would have me
 Pulled standing or dragged prostrate
 down from his magistrate's dais.

Ts'ui Tieh-shih, (*sings*):
 You must remember the time
 We swore together
 That solemn oath.

TS'UI T'UNG: Nonsense! I never made any oath.

TS'UI-LUAN (*sings*):
 Did you not say
 "I will not be faithless, not be faith-
 less," and swear upon heaven and
 earth?

TS'UI T'UNG (*striking the table repeatedly*): If you flunkies keep acting as though she were my wife—if you don't drag her off, strip her and

flog her good and proper, I'll show you some of my own handiwork and every last one of you will be conscripted! (*SERVANT pantomimes throwing TS'UI-LUAN to the ground and beating her.*)

TS'UI-LUAN (*sings*):
 [K'u Huang-t'ien]
 The pillar of my spine aches as though
 cut by knives!
 The blows leave purple welts beside
 black bruises!
 What a cold and savage rain falls now!
 What hot searing blows and lingering
 pain!
 How can I bear that pitiless, pitiless
 stave
 That strikes through skin to bone,
 That crushes my brain, pierces my
 mind,
 That shatters flesh and snaps sinew,
 That lets blood and destroys the soul.
 I am dying
 I am dying
 Of pain.
 One thing I must ask you,
 O heartless Tien-shih.
 Why have you
 Thrust this nameless crime on me?

TS'UI T'UNG: You're begging for a name to your crime? That I can give you. You, there, on her face tattoo the words "runaway slave", and have her sent under guard to Shamen Island.

SERVANT: Yes, sir.

TS'UI-LUAN (*sings*):
 [Wu Yeh-t'i]
 You scant-fated cut-throat,
 Whose reckless will would brand my
 face
 And sentence me to penal transporta-
 tion,
 Has the world yet witnessed a more
 lawless act?
 If I should cry till my breath moaned,
 my voice hissed,
 I could not rid myself of the sobs that
 wring my breast.
 If heaven is just
 It must take pity on me.
 I wish only that I could see

In many a Yuan play with domestic and social life as subject matter, moral rectification is employed at the end to gratify the audience's concern for those who have been wrongly treated. As the basic unit of Chinese society, the family receives special attention in the hands of the dramatists; marital devotion, alongside friendship and fraternal love, is highly praised, its violation is denounced, and wrongdoings often corrected by a turning of the wheel of fate. Such is the chain of action set forth in Rain on the Hsiao-hsiang.

The leading singing part of the play is reserved for Ts'ui-luan, the ill-used wife, but a strong balance of soliloquy, dialogue and regular-meter verse delivered by other characters adds to the dramatic effect and helps bring to life a tangled skein of human relationships. A play that has enjoyed long-lasting popularity, Rain on the Hsiao-hsiang demonstrates the dramatic skill of Yang Hsien-chih, author of eight plays of which this is the only one extant. He was a contemporary and close friend of Kuan Han-ch'ing (關漢卿), to whom he was known to have given advice on the art of playwriting.

This is the third Yuan tsa chü (雜劇) to appear in Renditions in whole or part. In the last issue we introduced Ghost of the Pot and Rain on the Wu-t'ung Tree. Professor Crump of the University of Michigan has published the translation of one other Yuan play, Li K'uei Carries Thorns in Anthology of Chinese Literature, Vol. I (Grove Press, New York, 1964).

Your own blood-uncle appear this
instant
So both of us could testify
And he could judge where the truth
must lie,
And watch you, quick-lipped, slick-
tongued,
Convince him some public or private
crime was mine.

TS'UI T'UNG: Attendants, send for a strong-
shanked, fleet-footed guard to transport this
runaway slave to Shamen Island. Have him take
her there and make the trip in such a way that
she's more likely to arrive dead than alive.

TS'UI-LUAN: Oh, Ts'ui Tien-shih, what malice!
(Sings):

[Huang-chung Sha]
Don't don't don't
I beg my lord do not carry out the
scheme, the trick you plan!
For now now now
A new judge sits on sacred T'ai-shan in
the court of speedy retribution.
You you you

Man of little faith
Believe there has been a crime.
My my my
Woman's frail auguries
Must have been at fault!
Haste haste haste then
To send me off today
To drive me from this place.
I shall go, go, go
And may someone pity her
Who journeys by herself.
Fine fine fine
Will be the strands of thought in my
heart
And dark my reflections on them.
How cruel cruel cruel
To have no resource but one's self.
How will I manage and live?
This must must must—
Cannot help but end
With a corpse lying across the road.
Aiyo! Merciful heaven, if only I could
know
In what place I'll be driven to death!

OFFICIAL'S DAUGHTER: My lord, suppose she *is* your former wife, are we not doing a great wrong? Why not let her stay here as a slave? That will certainly keep people from talking.

TS'UI T'UNG: Wife, stop suspecting! Where would I have got another wife?

OFFICIAL'S DAUGHTER: Just the same, she said she wants to stand by you face to face with your uncle—what about that?

TS'UI T'UNG: I do have an uncle and she was a slave in his house. He sold her to me. She's not at all bad to look at but her fingers are light and her feet quick. She robbed me and I looked all over for her. Now she's found me I hardly think I can pardon her. This trip she'll have to con-

tend with the damp of fall rains and when it begins to work on the wounds left by her flogging she'll have no more chance of living than she deserves. Come, I'll go with you to the rear chambers and order some wine. (*Recites*):

Happy, this day! I caught a runaway slave!

And this trip she takes assures me her doom.

OFFICIAL'S DAUGHTER (*recites*):

But if truly you married her once long ago,

You'd better go look for a job as a groom!
(*Exit.*)

ACT III

(*Enter CHANG T'EN-CHUEH leading HSING-ERH and follower.*)

CHANG (*recites*):

The trip south to Chiang-chou gave me three views of Spring.

To look back brings tears and a wrench at the heart.

Lonely, this night, with its cloud-blocked moon

Which lighted the hour that drove us apart.

I am Chang T'ien-chueh and it is already three years since my daughter and I capsized in the boat on the Huai. By the grace of my sovereign it was decided that I was able and upright, frugal and firm and that my thoughts were ever for my state and not my family. I have been given the post of Reviewer of Punishments and presented the sword of power and the gold seal of authority by which I may order executions without the need to memorialize the throne. It is the sage intent of his majesty that I should discover debauched officers and their depraved subordinates and pass judgement on the obscurities in the laws. Aged and somewhat infirm I still cannot shirk my duties. Grief and longing for my daughter Ts'ui-luan have grizzled the hair at my temples and my eyes have dimmed—I am not the same man who passed by here once before!

Several years ago I sent men everywhere to search and inquire but no word either for good or ill. . . . And now it has turned fall again. How will I stand its sharp wind and cold rains, its passing geese and the cry of insects! I look on the scene before me with never a companion to distract my fears and relieve my depression.

It has begun to cloud up and rain, Hsing-erh, let us be on our way.

(*recites*):

From the moment I became an officer of the court,

In every petty fashion vexed with bitterness,

My native heath lay dreamed of a thousand *li* away,

My horse's saddle beneath me dusted by three thousand days.

Parted from my own flesh by life,

My family's heritage blown away or drowned.

An autumn dusk like this will always summon up

Unbidden thoughts to crowd 'round about me.

Now hear the

Steady susurrations of the rain

Matched by a

Thickening and coupling of the clouds.

Yellow chrysanthemums—the eyes of
brazen beasts.

Red leaves—the scales of fire-dragons.
Plunging lines of the mountain range loom
up.

Mumbling voices of the river swell loud.
My servant-boy is wearied by the road
untraveled—

All of him the picture of a soul over-
whelmed.

Hsing-erh, what lies up ahead?

HSING-ERH: Master, the Lin-chiang posthouse is
just a little further on.

CHANG: As soon as we reach the Lin-chiang post-
house I am going to rest; it is true, "On the
Long River the wind speeds a traveler; at the
lonely posthouse rain delays the parting guest."
(*Exeunt.*)

(*TS'UI-LUAN enters wearing cangue and
followed by guard.*)

TS'UI-LUAN: Oh, what rain!

(*recites:*)

First in women's halls my years were spent
Then before a court I stood alone.

Next, barred from home by banishment
I endure the rain to reach my last im-
prisonment.

Brother, is your only concern to see that your
staff can reach my back so you can beat me
continually? I cannot believe your heart is so
hard that there is not a speck of pity left in
you. (*She pantomimes grief.*) Oh, heaven,
heaven, I have a true grievance, I carry weighty
wrong on my back.

(*sings:*)

[*Huang-chung Tsui-hua Yin*]

Suddenly I hear
The drums of a weird, uprooting wind
Which makes still worse

This violent rain pouring from giant
toppled caldrons.

Hobbled by pain, creeping down the
road ahead,

Pressed in turn by wind and rain.

Oh, when will these pelting raindrops
cease?

Before my eyes

They put to trial and flogged to ruins
all my womanly beauty

And

Who in this wild and weary waste will
stand against them as my advocate?

GUARD: Move along faster, the rain grows worse
all the time.

TS'UI-LUAN (*sings:*)

[*Hsi Ch'ien Ying*]

So great

The rain the road vanishes as I walk.

Who knows

Which of hell's gates is found on
Shamen Island?

Alas, Alas!

The very air condenses into cloudy
brume

And as I walk

Drowned wheelruts work pitfalls to
trap and seize my legs.

And soon will

Wrench a thighbone from its socket.

How will I stand either

The gleaming, streaming rain upon my
head

Or the sliding, subsiding mud beneath
my feet?

(*She pantomimes slipping and falling.*)

GUARD: Now why did you fall down?

TS'UI-LUAN: Brother, it's slippery here.

GUARD: A thousand, ten thousand, people walk
around without falling down once, but you have
to fall on your face. Now I'm going to walk
through there and if I slip I'll say no more, but
if I don't I'm going to break both of your legs
in two so you can keep your balance on four
legs.

(*He pantomimes walking past and falling
down.*)

Help me up! Young woman, you'd better walk
over that side, this side seems somewhat slippery.

TS'UI-LUAN (*sings:*)

[*Ch'u Tui-tzu*]

Now you have made me anxious over
where to place my feet

Just as it grows so wet

That no sure place is left to step.

When we ate I dried these tattered rags
before the fire

When we took the road, rain drenched
me through to the sash that binds
my waist.

When I fell I must have lost from there
my comb of buckthorn wood.

GUARD: What is it now?

TS'UI-LUAN: I've dropped my buckthorn comb!

GUARD: Let it lie! I'll buy another up ahead.

TS'UI-LUAN: Brother, please look for it; when we
get there you may want to comb your hair too.

GUARD: You're enough to worry a man to death.

(He pantomimes stepping gingerly on something.)

I think this is it. Wash it off in that puddle and
if it is your comb then get a move on again, will
you?

TS'UI-LUAN *(sings):*

[Yao-p'ien]

In my

Heart I dread and brood as I think

Of the

Three things that can suddenly end my
life.

GUARD: What three things? I'll listen if you want
to tell me.

TS'UI-LUAN *(sings):*

Those clouds. They can

Mask the sky and sun so gates will all
be early shut against me.

That wind. Now it appears violent
enough

To wrench out rocks, spatter sand and
tear up tall trees.

That rain. Surely

Its straight shafts and slanting strands
will drive me to despondent death.

GUARD: All right, now, if you're going to go, go.

If you don't I'll just have to beat you.

TS'UI-LUAN: Oh, good brother,

(sings):

[Shan-p'o Yang]

Please,

Please stop your angry shouts.

Do you imagine everything is solved
By thirty lines of insisting tongue-
twisting lip-curling malediction?

The road shifts and toils

The water frets and coils

And frightens me shivering, shaking,
incapable of taking a forward step.

If you add to this the welts of your
staff

I'll be helpless to take even half a pace
And then, good brother, though you beat
me to death

(sings):

Would this add to your share of good
luck?

GUARD: Stop! You've too many tongues and too
much mouth. This season the fall rain soaks
everything and each day it is harder to travel
than the last so come on now, walk as I do!

TS'UI-LUAN *(sings):*

[Kua-ti Feng]

See him stare and glare, bulge his eyes,
call and rage

In puffing heaves that strain his breast.

But I

Am sodden wet, with scarcely will to
try to see the road ahead.

Aiya, I cannot

Move this poor, beaten body.

GUARD: What? Not moving yet?

TS'UI-LUAN *(sings):*

Yes! Force one foot forward! Another
foot now!

Whenever can I rest again?

Now! Step to this side! Step to that.

Everywhere lie lakes and streams.

Fortune's ill wind and evil wave

Have sent me bound to this place

Where every trace

Of fellow travelers has melted out of
sight

In this empty

Watery fastness that mounts up the
darkening night.

Oh, brother,

(sings):

Brother, how will you get me through
this day?

GUARD: Now what's the trouble?

TS'UI-LUAN: Brother, the water's so deep and the
mud's so clinging—how am I supposed to walk?
Pity me, brother. Give me a hand, I beg you, to
help me across.

GUARD: So help me! You're going to pester me to
death for sure. Here, I'll help you across. Tell
me, how did you happen to be a servant in his
house and why did you take his money so that
now he wants me to see you dead?

TS'UI-LUAN: I never was his servant and I stole no money—

(sings):

[*Ssu-men-tzu*]

Let me tell you,

Good brother, my complaints one by one.

The Magistrate, your master, is my husband, he is truly.

Everything I've said is true—not falsified one bit.

I sought him out to reunite a family once again

But he had wed another.

Then he foreswore himself and said I was a slave.

I give my oath,

I'm falsely charged and wrongly judged.

GUARD: Hearing it told this way our magistrate seems to have done a great wrong. But there's nothing I can do about it now. Come, move faster.

TS'UI-LUAN (sings):

[*Ku Shui-hsien-tzu*]

He, he, he has

Such a venomous sting.

Would, would, would

He not hoodwink his very soul to work some harm on me?

You, you, you are all

Savage, ravaging bailiffs and jailers

I, I, I am just

A weak and meekly suffering convict
Ache, ache, aching from
The toll your staves take on fragile
flesh

And the cold, cold, cold

Metal fetters ringed stiffly round my
neck.

And so, so, so

A person's driven to a hell on earth in
innocence

And wronged, wronged, wronged

She cannot plead in court in her de-
fense.

Brother,

(sings):

Come, come, come

With me—my only warrant against
destruction!

GUARD: It's growing dark. Move along now so we can find lodging for the night.

TS'UI-LUAN (sings):

[*Sui-wei*]

The feelings of Heaven must be drawn
by the heart strings of man

For here

Upon my face the many tracks of tears
that overflowed my eyes.

(Oh, heavens, heavens)

And down them

Run teardrops as numerous as the
drops of this autumn rain.

(*Exeunt.*)

ACT IV

(*Enter posthouse KEEPER in clown-villain make-up.*)

KEEPER (recites):

Back and forth to greet and send

With never any stay.

Fetch and carry! Food and fodder! Guests
are on their way.

The king's officials quarter here—with
them I have no quarrel,

But—

To their boots and lackeys, grooms and
squires, a host is always prey.

I am the keeper of Lin-chiang posthouse and
yesterday an outrider came to say that the great
judge would be passing this way and I must not
fail to clean up the hostel. Here is a gentleman
coming now.

(*Enter TS'UI WEN-YUAN.*)

WEN-YUAN: I am Ts'ui Wen-yuan and I have not
heard a word since I sent my adopted daughter,

Ts'ui-luan, to find my nephew so I have journeyed myself to Ch'in-ch'uan prefecture to see her. But since it is getting dark and raining I must stay over night at this posthouse and continue early tomorrow.

KEEPER: Ho there, old man, what are you doing?

WEN-YUAN: The rain has become so great that it worries me, sir, and I've nowhere to stay further on. If you can find any place at all for me in this hostel I will leave first thing tomorrow.

KEEPER: Old man, you must understand that we will have a great judge staying with us so there can be no disturbance. You may rest in the cookshed.

WEN-YUAN: Thank you very much.

(Enter CHANG T'EN-CHUEH leading HSING-ERH and attendants.)

CHANG: I am Chang T'ien-chueh and I have reached the Lin-chiang posthouse. Hsing-erh, are you very wet?

HSING-ERH: Master, this rain is so heavy it has soaked through every part of my clothing.

CHANG: Since that's the case let us take shelter in the posthouse.

KEEPER (greeting them): I am the keeper of the Lin-chiang posthouse and I bid you welcome to it. Please enter, my lord, and rest.

CHANG: Hsing-erh, I am so weary from this entire day in the saddle that I must sleep for a while. Allow no one to disturb me for if I'm awakened I'll give you a beating. Tell the others what I have said.

HSING-ERH: Yes, sir. Keeper, I order you to allow no disturbance, for my master is going to rest and if he is wakened he'll beat me and I'll take care of you.

KEEPER: That I knew.

(Enter TS'UI-LUAN and GUARD.)

TS'UI-LUAN: Dear brother, my guard, all the rain in heaven is falling on us.

GUARD: This much rain could just drown a man. I wouldn't mind resting a while myself. . . . Shamen Island prison certainly takes a bit of walking to reach.

TS'UI-LUAN: Brother, the rain gets worse.

(sings):

[Tuan-cheng hao]

So heavy the rain! Wind gusts as from a fan!

High in empty air they have twined together

Neither heeding the traveller's woes, buffet

His head and face.

[Kun Hsiu-ch'iu]

That day near the bank of the stream, The rise of the shore,

What chance had we against that towering wind, that curling wave?

In each side the sight struck chill to the heart.

The wind blew, piercing us with its arrows.

The rain fell, water pouring from a cistern.

This storm that I watch now I know bodes ill.

My destiny provokes punishments and summons calamity.

The water drenching this Hsiao-hsiang scenery

Is dark with lamp-black which wet clouds paint across the skies,

And tears flow from my eyes.

GUARD: Here, here, now! Don't fuss so about it.

We'll go to the Lin-chiang posthouse and spend the night. (Pantomimes calling at the door.) Keeper! Open up!

KEEPER: Well, here's another one! Let me open the door. You two have a nerve with the great judge in here trying to rest! Now you stay outside and if you make a rumpus I'll break your legs for you. I'm closing the door.

GUARD: What luck! A great judge staying here so we can't even make a sound. Oh, well, I'll take off my jacket and try to wring it dry. (Pantomimes undressing.) Yah! I still have a biscuit in my sleeve pocket. Might as well eat that.

TS'UI-LUAN: Brother, what are you eating?

GUARD: A biscuit.

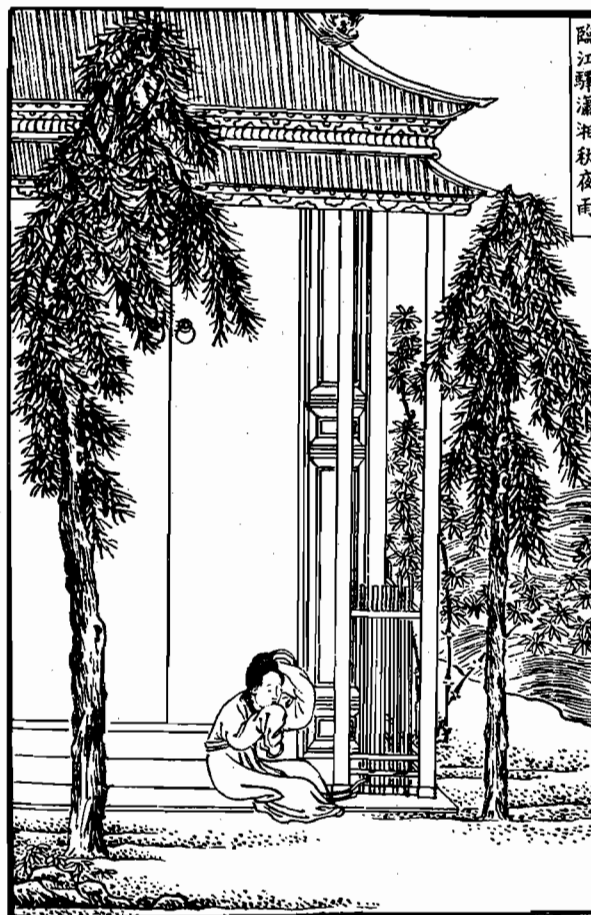
TS'UI-LUAN: Brother, could I have some?

GUARD: Every time I'm eating something you're looking for something to eat. Oh well, take some.

TS'UI-LUAN: Brother, could you give me a little more?

GUARD: But it's only one biscuit! I give you some and it's not enough . . . eh-h-h, I suppose I

*"The water drenching this Hsiao-hsiang
scenery
Is dark with lamp-black which wet clouds
paint across the skies,
And tears flow from my eyes."*



should give you the whole thing!

TS'UI-LUAN (*sings*):

[*Pan-tu-shu*]

I plead with my guard for food but
How impossible to explain to him the
hunger in me.

He has taken this storm-swept journey
by force and walked me

Till my sinews are slack, my strength
is gone and shudders of dizziness

Sweep my body, which is all pain and
ten parts weary.

I, I, I, must drowse, must sleep.

[*Hsiao Ho-shang*]

I, I, I have pressed on through this
night which has seemed a year.

I, I, I hide my anger against heaven for

I, I, I must be paying in full for some
dread oath

Sworn in a former life. My, my, my
eyes are wept dry

My, my, my throat is cracked with
sobs.

Come, come, come brother—How will
I swallow this

Biscuit you have given me?

Aiya heaven! Here am I in this place but who
knows where my father is?

CHANG: Oh, Ts'ui-luan, my child, I shall die of
grief over you. This moment through closed lids
I saw my daughter before me. Just as she was
telling me what happened to her years ago
someone startled me awake.

My evening years came long ago.

"My dream is broken, my spirit spent."

Soul wretched and hostel silent.

And the path in the sky has reached
autumn;

The landscape is mournful.
 Night is endless in this river town and
 The sound of the watcher's bell vexes me.
 It makes an old man chill with dread
 Or simmer with impatience.
 Crickets of the cold chirp,
 Geese from the border fort cry,
 The wind of metal soughs
 And the rain rustles.

It may have been that heartless wind and rain
 which kept my eyes from closing!

"Melancholy as all the water of the Hsiang
 which rolls on forever. Like the rains of
 autumn—each drop the sound of grief
 itself."

But I just finished telling that worthless Hsing-
 erh not to allow any disturbance. He's been
 careless no doubt, and should be given a beating.

HSING-ERH: I gave the hostler his orders but he
 paid no attention. I'll give him a beating. (*Panto-
 mimes beating the KEEPER*). You good-for-
 nothing, I told you there was to be no rumpus,
 but you've wakened my master and he's going
 to beat me, so I'll beat you.

KEEPER: Uncle, stop! Go get some sleep yourself.
 It was all the fault of that prisoner's guard. I'm
 opening the door to beat that no-good (*panto-
 mimes beating the GUARD*). You, guard, I told
 you there would be no rumpus! You and your
 snuffling and crying have waked up his honor
 and I've been taking a beating from his escort.
 Now you get yours!

GUARD: But it was all the blubbering of this hard-
 case!

(*recites*):

Oh, you are a fine Meng Chiang Nü
 carrying winter clothes a thousand *li*,
 A virtuous Madam Chao whose scarlet
 skirt was caked with earth.

Though you weep more than empress
 Ngo-hwang

Who would want *your* tears to dapple the
 bamboo?

TS'UI-LUAN:

(*recites*):

Let me speak, brother
 I am not allowed anger.
 The wrongs I've suffered
 Who will plead them for me?
 From this day forth, brother

I shall swallow both bitterness and voice.
 Never again will I wail or weep from pain.

CHANG: Oh, Ts'ui-luan, my child, how I ache for
 you. I was telling you the things that happened
 to me after we were parted at Huai Ferry—but
 someone woke me from my dream.

(*recites*):

First because my heart was ill at ease,
 Next because my mind was all uncertain,
 As soon as my eyes closed father and child
 were met again.

Even as I struggled to tell the doubts of
 those years gone by,
 Suddenly the startled dream fled.

From where came the cruel sound; what
 was it?

—the clink-clank of armored horseman?
 —the cold, stiff thump of wet garments
 against the laundry block?

—the chittering of crickets in a deserted
 stairwell sounding through my win-
 dow?

—geese returning to southern eddies from
 beyond the reach of heaven?

But now I stop my chant and listen closely
 It is nothing but

The wild wind and rushing rain that
 summon me awake.

I face this grey prospect having lost all
 who were close to me,

What wonder then

Grief sours my heart more and more?

My child, do you live still the life I knew
 Or have you come back to this mansion
 earth in another form?

Are you wealthy, honored?

Or captive, slaved?

A white-haired father in the lonely hostel
 ponders, wonders.

Ah, heaven!

But his daughter in the bloom of her
 years is somewhere anguished!

I told you, Hsing-erh, there was to be no noise!
 Now you've wakened me. (*Pantomimes striking
 HSING-ERH.*)

HSING-ERH: Don't beat me, master, it was that
 damned hotel-keeper. (*He pantomimes going
 out and seeing KEEPER.*) You, keeper! I told
 you there would be no disturbance; what do you
 mean by waking my master?

(recites):

I gave you
A thousand commands,
Ten thousand warnings
But you have allowed loud
Weeping and mournings.
And since my master beat "aiyah!" from
me
I shall thump an "Uncle!"
From thee!

KEEPER: It's all the fault of that prisoner's guard
outside this door. I am opening it and I'll beat
that good-for-nothing.

(recites):

What matter if
The rain has soaked you through and
through?
It gives you no call to weep
"Wu-hu"!
And if his escort gives me mine
I will break your mother's spine!

GUARD (recites):

All he hears is a raised voice. . .
His door pops open in a rage at the noise.
Had you ever wandered you would always
be kin
To the traveler. Instead, you begin
Without question to belabor someone
Cursed with
a manacle-bearing
cangue-wearing worry-minded
tear-soaked stinking female
Who woke that posthouse mounted
gold-badge Panjandrum
who first lops off a man's
head and then asks him what he's
done!

I've put up with hunger and suffered cold, be-
cause I've no love for the rod and now I find
it's just as close to my skin as before. It would
be a lot better to butt the wind and brave the
rain on the highroad again to find someplace
else to spend the night.

TS'UI-LUAN (recites):

In all meekness I beg you, brother,
Please hear my deepest feelings.
Find it in you to take pity on me
And you will mean as much to me as my

blood parents.

Speak no more of further travel,
Of blistered feet, the ropes of rushing rain,
The arrow wind's wild thrumming.

You said we'd find peace in the post-
house,

How can you drive us forth again by
angry talk?

You would seek some barnyard inn or
village public house

But in this cavernous darkness who could
find the place?

I would end my life in the jaws of wild
beasts

Or the bellies of the river's fish.

In no time the temples' matin bells will
ring.

Allow us, I beg you, to shelter here still,
Out of the night rain on the Hsiao-hsiang.

CHANG: Well, dawn has come. Hsing-erh, go to the
main door, find the person who has disturbed
this whole night and bring him before me!

(HSING-ERH brings the GUARD and TS'UI-
LUAN).

TS'UI-LUAN: (recognizing her father) It's my Papa!

CHANG: Ts'ui-luan, my child! Oh, where have you
been these three years! What are you doing
wearing cangue and manacles!

TS'UI-LUAN: Oh Papa! You had no way of knowing,
but after we were separated I was adopted by
Ts'ui the elder and he married me to his nephew,
Ts'ui T'ung. Ts'ui T'ung went off to seek his
fortune and was made magistrate of Ch'in-ch'uan
prefecture. When he didn't send for me I went,
at Ts'ui the elder's bidding, to find him. But
how could I even suspect he'd taken another
wife? Having accused me of being a runaway
slave, he sent me off under guard to Shamen
Island and all the way here I would sooner have
died than lived. Oh, Papa, what will you do as
my advocate?

CHANG: Open the cangue and fetters! The faith-
less, worthless. . . Where are my attendants?
Quickly! Off to Ch'in-ch'uan prefecture and
bring Ts'ui T'ung to me!

TS'UI-LUAN: Papa, he is in charge at Ch'in-ch'uan.
Just sending your man to take him will not vent
my spleen. I must lead them to him and take

him myself, to watch the perverse crab⁴ with a cool eye while he ends his days in my cooking-pot!

(Exit with attendants.)

(Enter TS'UI T'UNG)

TS'UI T'UNG: I am Ts'ui T'ung and that woman the other day really was the one my uncle gave me to wife. I flogged her with enough clatter to get her tried as runaway and sent to Shamen Island—having already told the guard that a dead prisoner would be better than a live one. I wonder why he's been gone so long and has sent back no message? My wife has made enough noise at me about this already. (Pantomimes being startled.) Hello! My eyes are twitching like mad! I suppose that means she's coming over for another debate.

(Enter TS'UI-LUAN and attendants.)

TS'UI-LUAN: Here we are in Ch'in-ch'uan already.

Attendants, open the door and go in (Pantomimes seeing TS'UI T'UNG). There is Ts'ui T'ung, men, take him for me!

TS'UI T'UNG: Now this is queer! Where did you all come from?

ATTENDANTS: We arrest you by order of his honor the great judge.

TS'UI-LUAN: Did you think I had come for an audience with you, Ts'ui T'ung? Strip off his cap and sash, you men, and lock him up tight.

TS'UI T'UNG: Woman, take pity! Remember, "the husband is the wife's heaven."

TS'UI-LUAN (sings):

[K'uai-huo san]

The moment I was dragged from here,
drawn like a dying dog,

I knew "my husband was my heaven."

But have faith in your flexible heart
and glib tongue.

Move off!

(sings):

They will doubtless persuade my father
to set you free.

TS'UI T'UNG: Now that I know she's the daughter

of a great judge I'll remind him he's my father and everything will come out all right!

TS'UI-LUAN: There is also a shrew around here; men, bring her out for me.

(Attendants drag out the OFFICIAL'S DAUGHTER.)

OFFICIAL'S DAUGHTER: I am gently bred and the daughter of an officer! How dare you drag me about like a scullery wench! You know that for what a woman gets into the husband is always to blame. Ts'ui T'ung did it all; none of this is any concern of mine.

TS'UI-LUAN: (angrily) Lock her up at once!

OFFICIAL'S DAUGHTER: Don't yammer so! When my father was in office he especially liked to sing *Tsui T'ai-p'ing*; I even got so I could do it. Dear lady, listen while I sing it for you.

(sings):

[*Tsui T'ai-p'ing*]

I see you are as brilliant as Chao-chün

I see you are as beautiful as Hsi-shih

Why should you have been light of
hand,

Quick of foot and steal? Surely this
was perjury by Ts'ui T'ung.

TS'UI-LUAN: Attendants, lock her up!

OFFICIAL'S DAUGHTER: Aiyā! Here am I, a bride still wearing her phoenix cap and sunset robe, about to be locked in a cangue!

(Pantomimes removing of phoenix cap.)

(sings):

I take off my phoenix cap

With its Eight Treasures picked out in
thread of gold.

(Pantomimes taking off the sunset robe.)

I unfasten my sunset robe.

These I bequeath to lady Chang⁵ as
her dower

I would be happy now simply to be-
come her maid.

TS'UI-LUAN: Attendants, they are locked up and in custody. Take them off to stand before my father!

(Exeunt.)

was not likely to be trusted by the Chinese.

⁴This relatively harmless crustacean is a villain in Chinese simply because of his sidewise progress: the common Chinese term for perverse and tyrannous behaviour is *heng-hsing* which, analysed, means "sidewise movement, movement across the grain." Obviously a critter whose normal mode of locomotion is on the bias

⁵Ts'ui-luan's maiden name. Within the framework of the drama there was no way for the Official's Daughter to know this but the Yuan playwright often has a fine scorn for such niceties.

(Enter CHANG T'YEN-CHUEH.)

CHANG: I wonder why it's taking my child so long to manage the arrest of Ts'ui T'ung?

(Enter TS'UI-LUAN with TS'UI-T'UNG and the OFFICIAL'S DAUGHTER in custody.)

TS'UI-LUAN: Father, I have brought you the two villains.

CHANG: You worthless wretch, how dare you behave as you did! When I write the court I will tell them you, an official of the realm, did set aside your own wife and did take—as calm as you please—an illegal wife and did thus warp the laws and call down upon your head the heaviest of penalties! For now, take them through the streets and then behead them.

TS'UI WEN-YUAN: (Enters excitedly.) Who is making all the fuss? I must go see. (Pantomimes recognition.) But it's Ts'ui-luan! My child, where have you been?

TS'UI-LUAN: Oh, father,⁶ when I found Ts'ui T'ung, he had taken another wife. Not only that, he swore I was one of his runaway slaves and he had me sent off under guard to Shamen Island. Luckily I met my Papa and now Ts'ui T'ung is going to be executed.

TS'UI WEN-YUAN (pleading): Good lady, could you not spare his life for an old man? Could you consider it?

TS'UI-LUAN (sings):

[Pao Lao erh]

Such an enemy was he in this life
That he must have wronged me in
another.

I live only to offer his head on the
alter of vengeance.

TS'UI T'UNG: Uncle, ask her again. Tell her I'll divorce the other one this very day and be her husband again.

TS'UI WEN-YUAN: Good lady, spare him!

TS'UI-LUAN (sings):

What thrill of compassion could make
me

Feel fondness again for him?

But can I turn my back on one

Who showed both these emotions for
me?

I am fallen into anger here or resent-

⁶She has been using *tieh-tieh* for her biological father, a form of address which translates directly into the English "daddy" as far as phonology is concerned. I feared "daddy"

ment there.

Wounds upon the heart set the teeth
against each other

And hurl wrath against the heavens.

(Brings TS'UI WEN-YUAN before her father)

Papa, this is Ts'ui Wen-yuan who saved my life and for his sake only let us let Ts'ui T'ung off.

CHANG: I don't see why we should pardon Ts'ui T'ung!

TS'UI WEN-YUAN: Your Honor, your daughter once was given, in all propriety, to my nephew as his wife. He now proposes to put aside the other woman and live with your daughter as a proper husband. Would this not be for the best?

CHANG: Child, what is your opinion?

TS'UI-LUAN: Well, marriage is the whole life of a woman, and it did occur to me that if Ts'ui T'ung is executed who can say whether I would get another husband? All right, if you take the woman, have "shrew" tattooed on her face and sentence her to be my servant I'll agree.

CHANG: Your decision is reasonable: Attendants, bring the scoundrel over here. For the sake of Ts'ui Wen-yuan I remit the death penalty. You will invite the man who saved you to live and be supported to the end of his days in your home. My daughter will become Ts'ui T'ung's wife again and that other woman will be spared the punishment of the tattoo because of the position of her father on the Board of Rites, but she must become the serving maid of my daughter.

OFFICIAL'S DAUGHTER: He's both the father and the magistrate. But his position is so high that my father will never be able to save me from this judgment. If I must be your maid then maid I will be—let me warn you, though, a maid can go anywhere in a home a wife can, so do not imagine you will have a husband all to yourself!

CHANG: Bring the cap and sash and return them to Ts'ui T'ung. When he has married my daughter he will return to Ch'in-ch'uan to resume his duties.

(TS'UI-LUAN and TS'UI T'UNG both handle the sash and cap. OFFICIAL'S DAUGHTER, dressed as servant, makes obeisance.)

was too kittenish to be equivalent in tone and have used "papa". Here she uses *fu-ch'in* to her adoptive father. This address is formal but not stilted.

Who would have thought, my child, that there
would come a day such as this after we were
separated at the Huai river ferry!

TS'UI-LUAN (*sings*):

[*Huo Lang'erh*]

Recalling the foundered ferry on the
Huai

I know my destiny had run out.
Certain it was that remnants of a family
Would see the Yellow Springs.
But a levee-watcher saved a life,
Ts'ui the Elder paired me with my
destined mate.

Yet who could foresee this day—
Father and child united,
Husband and wife restored?

TS'UI T'UNG: Heaven knows no sweeter event than
the reunion of father and child or the reconcili-
ation of husband and wife. I have the lamb
slaughtered and the wine made ready to set out
a banquet. I raise my cup to toast my father-in-
law. (*He pantomimes raising cup.*)

TS'UI-LUAN (*sings*):

[*Tsui T'ai-p'ing*]

You, O heartless Graduate, not only
Struck such a blow to the weak aug-
uries of the tender girl
That the mirror of Princess Lo Ch'ang
was barely made whole,
But undertook a trial which came to
nought.

Oh, Papa, you are so highly placed
Your hand is felt in the Sen-lo Palace
of the ruler of the dead.

Oh, Ts'ui T'ung, return happily to
Ch'in-ch'uan;

Oh, Ts'ui-luan, endure, and with firm
step enter Wu-ling,

For all of this has transpired by the
mercy of heaven.

(*sings*):

[*Sha-wei*]

Henceforth let the zithern play, the
lute thrum

Nor will we speak again of braving
wind and rain.

Let it be the phoenix taking her second
mate!

Birds flown away from one another,
twining

Their necks together in affection!

Let the plucked flower be a double
lotus on a single stem;

If you will heed the plaint of *Pai-t'ou*
Yin

I will be as dutiful as Meng Kuang—
Not that I remember only sweetness
and forget my wrongs,

Only that my childish heart is all too
soft.

CHANG (*recites*):⁷

First the ferry sank beneath the Huai,
father and child drifted to the ends of the
earth. Word of the other vanished without
trace, but longing, hoping never ceased.
I know the aged are unlikely to have their
wishes fulfilled, but some god's under-
standing must have been stirred to com-
passion, for a fisherman adopted the
daughter and the younger Ts'ui was soon
honored with a post. The good things
turned to bad: she fell afoul of evil
schemes, "an oath of vengeance filled her
heart." Far went her search even to Ch'in-
ch'uan.

Returned is the sword fallen in the
dragon's den.

The mirror halves on the phoenix-stand
are united again.

Bed-candles this night shine on one an-
other,

The couple's joy, they fear, belongs to
dreams, not to men.

⁷The epilogue to any act can be in verse. Usually four
lines with a rhyme scheme of *aaba* is used. In *Rain on the*
Hsiao-hsiang, Chang T'ien-chueh's entire final speech is
actually rhymed and metrical, though I have treated only
the last four lines that way, for they contain the usual
conventional sentiments regularly voiced in the epilogue.

(For Chinese text of Act IV see page 157)