Topic 8  Pentasyllabic Shi Poetry: Landscape Poetry
Guest Host: Lucas Bender (Yale University)

Episode 22  Landscapes of the Mind

I. Texts

Lu Ji (261-303), “The Summons of the Recluse”
陸機 招隱詩

As light breaks, my heart is not easy;¹
I shake out my clothes, to go walk for a while.²
I’ll go walk, yet where should I go?
the hidden one is in a deep valley
Dawns he gathers herbs from a southern torrent;
dusks he rests at West Mountain’s foot.³
Light branches image out a towering building;
dense leaves form a halcyon curtain.

¹ The opening of this poem may recall “Wind and Rain” 風雨 from the Shijing: “When I have seen the gentleman, how could I not be at ease?” 既見君子，云胡不夷
² “Shaking out one’s clothes” may derive from “The Fisherman” 漁夫 in the Chuci: “Qu Yuan said, ‘I have heard that someone who washes his hair will necessarily brush off his cap, and someone who bathes will definitely shake out his clothes’.” 屈原曰：吾聞之，新沐者必彈冠，新浴者必振衣
³ “West Mountain” may be Mt. Shouyang, where the famous recluses Boyi 伯夷 and Shuqi 叔齊 lived at the end of the Shang dynasty. Note the contrast between the recluse, who rests at night, and the speaker, who was up before dawn.
“Whistling Brambles” accumulate in magnolia groves;
“Circling Fragrance” lingers in the flowering trees. 4

How melodious are the rivulets of the mountains,
where flying cascades scour ringing jade. 5

Mournful tones approach numinous waves,
and lingering echoes spread to the deep places. 6

Such supreme music depends on nothing,
why dilute the pure and simple?

Since wealth and status cannot be guaranteed,
I’ll unyoke my carriage and follow my desires. 8

Tao Qian (365-427), “Drinking Ale” #5

I built my hut in the human realm,
and yet there’s no noise of horse and carriage.
I ask you: how is this possible?
When the mind is distant, the place becomes remote.
Picking chrysanthemums by the eastern hedge,

[Translated by Lucas Rambo Bender]

4 “Whistling Brambles” is the name of a traditional music (mentioned, for instance, in “Summoning the Soul” 招魂). Obviously the name is apt here. Some have claimed that “Circling Fragrance” is the name of a dance.
5 “Ringing jade” could refer to the tinkling of waist-ornaments at court or to court music.
6 There is an untranslatable pun in this line, as fuqu 赴曲 means to ‘move to the beat of music’.
7 Again, this line contains an untranslatable pun, with music and joy being written with the same character, le/yue 樂.
8 This line recalls the Analects: “Kongzi said, “If wealth could be guaranteed, I would even be willing to be a carriage driver [to attain it]. But since it cannot be guaranteed, I will follow what I love” 子曰：富而可求也，雖執鞭之士，吾亦為之。如不可求，從吾所好。” It is unclear whether this is spoken in the voice of the original speaker, or in the voice of the recluse he is imagining.
I gaze wistfully at South Mountain.⁹

The mountain’s auras are lovely at dusk;
winging birds return together.
In this return there is some truth,
but about to explain it, I’ve already forgot the words.¹⁰

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⁹ That is, Mt. Lu 南山, famous for its places of both Buddhist and Daoist retreat. Floating chrysanthemum flowers in ale was supposed to prolong one’s longevity.

¹⁰ This last line alludes to the Zhuangzi 庄子: “Words exist to carry meaning; when one gets the meaning, one can forget the words. Where can I find someone who has forgotten words, so that I can have a word with him?” 言者所以在意, 得意而忘言。吾安得忘言之人而與之言哉。

[Translated by Lucas Rambo Bender]
Poems read in Mandarin by Zhao Wenxuan

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II. Episode Notes

- The *Classic of Poetry*, the *Shi jing* 詩經
- *Chu ci* 楚辭, the *Songs of the Southlands*
- “Shan gui” 山鬼, from the “Jiu ge” 九歌 (“Nine Songs”) in the *Chuci*
- “Summons of the Soul” 招魂, in the *Chuci*
- “Great Summoning” 大招, in the *Chuci*
- “Summoning the Recluse” 招隱士, in the *Chuci*
- Western Jin 西晉 (266-316)
- Eastern Jin 東晉 (317-420)
- Zhang Yi 張翼 (fl. 344-361)
- Kang Sengyuan 康僧淵 (fl. 300-350)
- Zhi Dun 支遁 (314-366)
- Sun Chuo 孫绰 (320-377)
- Chaisang 柴桑 county, modern-day Jiuzhang 九江, Jiangxi 江西
III. Textual Source
