



How to Read Chinese Poetry Podcast

Topic 14 Short Song Lyrics (*xiaoling*) in the Song Dynasty

Guest Host: Maija Bell Samei

Episode 46 “I ask you, how much sorrow can there be?”: Later Literati Song Lyrics

I. Text

To the Tune, “Beautiful Lady Yu” (Li Yu)

李煜 虞美人

Spring flowers, autumn moon—when will they end?

Past affairs—who knows how many?

Last night in the small pavilion the east wind came again.

I dare not turn my head toward my homeland in the moonlight.

The inlaid balustrade and jade stairs must still be there

—It’s only the youthful faces that have changed.

I ask you, how much sorrow can there be?

Just as much as a river full of spring waters, flowing east.

chūn huā qiū yuè hé shí liǎo
春花秋月何時了

wǎng shì zhī duō shǎo
往事知多少

xiǎo lóu zuó yè yòu dōng fēng
小樓昨夜又東風

gù guó bù kān huí shǒu yuè míng zhōng
故國不堪回首月明中

diāo lán yù qì yīng yóu zài
雕闌玉砌應猶在

zhī shì zhū yán gǎi
只是朱顏改

wèn jūn néng yǒu jǐ duō chóu
問君能有幾多愁

qià sì yī jiāng chūn shuǐ xiàng dōng liú
恰似一江春水向東流

To the Tune “Sand in Silk-Washing Stream” (Yan Shu)

晏殊 浣溪沙

A new song, a cup of wine;

Last year’s weather at the old pond terrace.

The setting sun sinks in the west—when to return?

Do what one may, blossoms will fall;

As if we knew each other, the swallows come back

In the little garden I pace a fragrant path alone.

yì qǔ xīn cí jiǔ yī bēi
一曲新詞酒一杯

qù nián tiān qì jiù chí tái
去年天氣舊池臺

xī yáng xī xià jǐ shí huí
夕陽西下幾時回

wú kě nài hé huā luò qù
無可奈何花落去

sì céng xiāng shí yàn guī lái
似曾相識燕歸來

xiǎo yuán xiāng jìng dú pái huái
小園香徑獨徘徊

[Translated by Maija Bell Samei]

English poems recited by Dr. Andrew Merritt and Mrs. Deborah Merritt

Chinese poems recited by Zhan Aifan and Zhao Sikun

II. Episode Notes

- Li Yu 李煜 (937-978)
- jun 君 (second-person pronoun)
- shi 詩 (lyric poem)
- lingzi 領字 (line-leading words)
- Yan Shu 晏殊 (991-1055)
- wu yi zi yan yuan 無一字言怨 (not a word speaks complaint)
- Tang shi Song ci 唐詩宋詞

III. Textual Source

Samei, Maija Bell. “Ci Poetry: Short Song Lyrics.” In Cai Zong-qi, ed., *How to Read Chinese Poetry: A Guided Anthology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 245-261.