



How to Read Chinese Poetry Podcast

Topic 15 Long Song Lyrics (*manci*) of the Song Dynasty

Guest Host: Xinda Lian (Denison University)

Episode 48 Su Shi: Meditation on the Past

I. Text

To the tune “The Charm of Niannu”: Meditation on the Past at Red Cliff (Su Shi)

蘇軾 念奴嬌·赤壁懷古

The Great Yangtze runs east,

Its waves have swept away heroes of past ages.

Lying to the west of the old fort, it is said,

Is the Red Cliff, known because of Zhou Yu of the Three Kingdoms.

Rugged stone walls pierce the sky.

Angry waves beat the banks,

Churning up water like piles of frosty snow.

The mountains and the River look like a painting,

And how many heroes were once here!

Thinking far back, I see Zhou Yu,

With Little Qiao as his new bride,

dà jiāng dōng qù
大江東去

làng táo jìn qiān gǔ fēng liú rén wù
浪淘盡、千古風流人物

gù lěi xī bian rén dào shì
故壘西邊人道是

sān guó zhōu láng chì bì
三國周郎赤壁

luàn shí chuān kōng
亂石穿空

jīng tāo pāi àn
驚濤拍岸

juǎn qǐ qiān duī xuě
捲起千堆雪

jiāng shān rú huà
江山如畫

yì shí duō shǎo háo jié
一時多少豪傑

yáo xiǎng gōng jǐn dāng nián
遙想公瑾當年

xiǎo qiào chū jià liǎo
小喬初嫁了

Beaming with valor.

He has feather fan in hand and is in silk headdress, and

while chatting merrily,

The powerful enemy vanishes in flying ash and smoke.

My mind wondering over the old kingdom,

I become so sentimental that one may well laugh at me:

Too early have gray hairs crept onto my head.

Life is like a dream,

So let me offer this cup to the moon over the river.

xióng zī yīng fā

雄姿英發

yǔ shàn guān jīn tán xiào jiān

羽扇綸巾談笑間

qiáng lǚ huī fēi yān miè

強虜灰飛煙滅

gù guó shén yóu

故國神遊

duō qíng yīng xiào wǒ

多情應笑我

zǎo shēng huā fà

早生華髮

rén jiān rú mèng

人間如夢

yì zūn huán lèi jiāng yuè

一尊還酹江月

[Translated by Xinda Lian]

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

Chinese poems recited by Zhan Aifan and Zhao Sikun

II. Episode Notes

- Meditation on the past or *huaigu* 懷古
- Theme of “Life is a dream”
- Zhou Yu 周瑜 (175–210); the Three Kingdom period 三國 (220–280)

III. Textual Source

Xinda Lian. “Ci Poetry: Short Song Lyrics.” In Cai Zong-qi, ed., *How to Read Chinese Poetry: A Guided Anthology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 262-285.