

The Correct Interpretations and English Translations of Tang Poems and Song Lyrical Poems

Accompanied with Calligraphy and Vernacular Chinese

唐宋詩詞正解並英譯
附書法白話

KS Vincent POON

(潘君尚)

Kwok Kin POON

(潘國鍵)



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by KS Vincent Poon

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In Loving Memory of
Pui Luen Nora TSANG(曾佩鑒)

Table of Contents

Preamble I	7
Preamble II (《唐宋詩詞解讀匡謬》)	8
Li Bai, <i>A Chanted Poem Upon a River</i> (李白《江上吟》)	
Calligraphy I	22
Calligraphy II	24
Translation	26
Remarks	28
Footnotes	29
Bai Juyi, <i>An Inscription Regarding the Yuquan Temple</i> (白居易《題玉泉寺》)	
Calligraphy	34
Translation	36
Remarks	37
Footnotes	38
Xue Ying, <i>Upon the Lake on an Autumn Day</i> (薛瑩《秋日湖上》)	
Calligraphy	42
Translation	44
Remarks	45
Footnotes	45

Su Shi, Lyrics to *Nian Lu Jiao*, Commemorating the Battle of Red Cliffs

(蘇軾 《念奴嬌•赤壁懷古》)

Calligraphy	48
Translation	50
Remarks	53
Footnotes	57

Li Qingzhao, Lyrics to *A Sprig of Plum Blossom*, *The Red Lotus Flower Withered*, *the Bamboo Mat Tattered*

(李清照 《一剪梅•紅藕香殘玉簫秋》)

Calligraphy	64
Translation	66
Remarks	67
Footnotes	68

Li Qingzhao, Lyrics to *Immortal by the River*, *The Courtyard Is Profoundly Tranquil and Deep*, *so Tranquil and Deep*

(李清照 《臨江仙•庭院深深深幾許》)

Calligraphy	72
Translation	74
Remarks	76
Footnotes	79

Li Qingzhao, Lyrics to *Wulin Chun*, Late Spring
(李清照 《武陵春•春晚》)

Calligraphy	84
Translation	86
Remarks	87
Footnotes	90

Li Qingzhao, *An Inscription Regarding the Ba Yong House*
(李清照 《題八詠樓》)

Calligraphy	94
Translation	96
Remarks	97
Footnotes	97

**Lu You, Lyrics to *Professing My Innermost Passion*,
In My Prime, I Cast My Aspiration Far and Wide to Seek
*Titles of Military Glory***
(陸游 《訴衷情•當年萬里覓封侯》)

Calligraphy	100
Translation	102
Remarks	103
Footnotes	107

Bibliography 111

Su Shi
Lyrics to *Nian Lu Jiao*,
Commemorating the Battle of
Red Cliffs

蘇軾
《念奴嬌·赤壁懷古》

Calligraphy

Calligrapher (書者): KS Vincent Poon (潘君尚)

Content (內容): Lyrics to *Nian Lu Jiao*, *Commemorating the Battle of Red Cliffs*, a lyrical poem by Su Shi (蘇軾《念奴嬌•赤壁懷古》)

Style (字體): Clerical Script (隸書)

Caption (款識): 蘇軾念奴嬌癸卯君尚 (Su Shi, *Nian Lu Jiao*. Year of the Guimao, Kwan Sheung Vincent)

Seal Inscription (鈐印): 君尚 (朱文) (Kwan Sheung Vincent, red characters), 潘氏 (白文) (The Surname of Poon, white characters)

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大江東去浪淘盡千古風流人物故壘西邊人
道是三國周郎赤壁亂石穿空驚濤拍岸捲起
千堆雪江山如畫一時多少豪傑遙想公瑾當
年小喬初嫁了雄姿英發羽扇綸巾談笑間檣
櫓灰飛煙滅故國神遊多情應笑我早生華髮
人間如夢一尊還酹江月

蘇軾念奴嬌赤壁懷古



時當

Translation

蘇軾《念奴嬌·赤壁懷古》

Su Shi, Lyrics to *Nian Lu Jiao*, Commemorating the Battle of Red Cliffs

大江東去，浪淘盡、千古風流人物。故壘西邊，人道是、三國周郎赤壁。亂石穿空，驚濤拍岸，捲起千堆雪。江山如畫，一時多少豪傑。遙想公瑾當年，小喬初嫁了，雄姿英發。羽扇綸巾，談笑間、強虜灰飛煙滅。故國神遊，多情應笑我、早生華髮。人間如夢，一尊還酹江月。

白話對譯 Vernacular Chinese

大江流水東奔去，浪水沖刷殆盡的、是久遠前一眾傑出人物。舊堡壘的西邊，有人說這就是、三國時周瑜(和曹操開戰)的赤壁。江邊雜亂的石塊堆得聳若入空，震懾人心的波濤拍擊著岸邊，捲起了千堆雪般的浪花。江山美麗如畫，這時期確有很多豪傑。遙想公瑾(周瑜)壯年，小喬剛嫁了給他，雄武才溢，神采煥發。從容自若、氣定神閒，談談笑笑之間、強暴的敵人(曹操)就給他殲個灰飛煙滅。家國神遊，對它還如此癡情的該是、這已生白髮的可笑的我。塵世如夢，倒不如帶酒一罇，敬向江上明月奠酒相對飲！

English

1. 大江東去，

The mighty River (大江) gushed to the East without turning back whatsoever,

2. 浪淘盡、千古風流人物。

Its waves swept and expended all bygones (千古) of distinguished character (風流人物)⁽¹⁾.

3. 故壘西邊，

On the west side of the old fortress (故壘)⁽²⁾,

4. 人道是、三國周郎赤壁。

Some said it was the Red Cliff (赤壁) where the Three Kingdoms' (三國) Master Zhou (周郎, Zhou Yu) became victorious.

5. 亂石穿空，

The chaotic rocks at the banks erupted (穿) into the sky,

6. 驚濤拍岬，

Assaulting the shores were the frightening tides,

7. 捲起千堆雪。

Which rolled up thousands of snowdrifts (雪) tall and high.

8. 江山如畫，

The homeland (江山)⁽³⁾ was as magnificent as a painting,

9. 一時多少豪傑。

Those were the days when many (多少)⁽⁴⁾ distinguished heroes (豪傑)⁽⁵⁾ were living.

10. 遙想公瑾當年，

Remembering the distant past (遙想)⁽⁶⁾ when Gong-jin (公瑾, Zhou Yu) was in his prime (當年)⁽⁷⁾,

Remarks

(I)

This prominent lyrical poem was composed by Su Shi (蘇軾, 1037-1101)⁽¹³⁾, one of the most representative poets of the Song Dynasty. Su's literary talent and extraordinary intellect were widely recognized at a young age⁽¹⁴⁾. Throughout his bureaucratic career, Su was known for his compassionate and effective governing, which garnered much respect from his colleagues and Emperors Renzong (仁宗) and Shenzong (神宗)⁽¹⁵⁾. However, his frank temperament and satire often offended many high officials, and so his bureaucrat life was filled with turmoils⁽¹⁶⁾. As such, revered literati Huang Tingjian (黃庭堅, 1045-1105), a peer of Su, once remarked:

"東坡文章妙天下，其短處在好罵，慎勿襲其軌也。"⁽¹⁷⁾

"Su Shi's literary works are wonders amongst all under heaven, yet they had the shortcomings of him being fond of scolding others, so beware not to follow him."

(translated by KS Vincent Poon)

(II)

There are several phrases in the poem that are commonly misinterpreted. One is "羽扇綸巾", which some incorrectly interpret as a reference to Zhuge Liang (諸葛亮, 181-234). "羽扇綸巾" here certainly alludes to Zhou Yu (周瑜, 175-210), not Zhuge Liang. First, its preceding texts "周郎赤壁", "遙想公瑾" and "雄姿英發" all refer to Zhou Yu, and so it is illogical for "羽扇綸巾" to suddenly portray Zhuge Liang. Second, in various literature during and after Song, "羽扇綸巾" merely means "with composure and care-

spared."

(translated by KS Vincent Poon)

Thus, taking turns to toast one another (人與人相敬酒) is known as "還酬", which can be seen in:

I. (宋) 劉辰翁《須溪集》: "有懷數友還酬一尊."⁽³⁵⁾

II. (明) 吳寬《寄壽施煥伯七十》: "少待登堂成一笑, 手持春酒獻還酬."⁽³⁶⁾

Similarly, "還酌" means "taking turns with the nonliving to toast each other", which can be seen in:

(i) (宋) 何夢桂《赤壁夢鶴》: "遼海千年約未寒, 一樽還酌大江干(岸)."⁽³⁷⁾

(ii) (元) 耶律鑄《次韻閩州述事》: "為誰携斗酒, 還酌魯公祠."⁽³⁸⁾

"還酌" is a custom where one drinks to toast the nonliving and then spills wine onto the ground as if the nonliving toasts back. Thus, "還酌江月" is better interpreted as "to spill and drink, taking turns with the River's moon to toast each other" than simply "to spill wine as an offering to the moon".

Footnotes

(1) "風流" here means "outstanding (傑出不凡)", as in 蘇軾《與江惇禮秀才書》之一: "僕雖晚生, 猶及見君之王父也. 追思一時風流賢達, 豈可復夢見哉!" See 《漢語大詞典》. Shanghai: 上海辭書出版社, 2008, pp.611-612.

(2) "故壘" here means "an old fortress from the distant past (古代的堡壘)", as in 《晉書•李矩傳》: "劉聰遣從弟暢步騎三萬討矩, 屯於韓王故壘." Ibid., p.487.

(3) "江山" here means "homeland (國家的疆土)", as in 《三國志•吳志•賀劭傳》: "割據江山, 拓土萬里." Ibid., pp.915-916. Some interpret "江山" as merely "the rivers and mountains near the Red Cliffs". Such is too narrow and restrictive for the succeeding phrase, "Those were the days when many great heroes were living (一時多少豪傑)".

(4) "多少" here means "many (許多)", as in 杜牧《江南春》詩: "南朝四百八十寺, 多少樓臺煙雨中." Ibid., p.1176.

(5) "豪傑" here means "distinguished persons (才能出眾的人)", as in 《管子•七法》: "收天下之豪傑, 有天下之駿雄." Ibid., p.33.

(6) "遙想" here means "remembering the distant past (悠遠地回想)", as in 孫綽《遊天台山賦》: "非夫遠寄冥搜, 篤信通神者, 何肯遙想而存之." Ibid., p.1144.

(7) "當年" here means "prime years (壯年)", as in 《墨子•非樂上》: "將必使當年, 因其耳目之聰明, 股肱之畢強, 聲之和調, 眉之轉朴." 孫詒讓間詁: "王云: '當年, 壯年也.' 當有盛壯之義." Ibid., p.1390.

(8) "羽扇綸巾" here means "with composure and carefree ease (瀟灑從容)". See Remarks (II) for further elaborations.

(9) "強虜" here means "mighty and ruthliess enemies (強暴的敵人)", as in 薛能《獻僕射相公》詩: "強虜外聞應喪膽, 平人相見盡開顏." See 《漢語大詞典》. Shanghai: 上海辭書出版社, 2008,

This book provides concise and correct translations of several popular Tang poems (唐詩) and Song lyrical poems (宋詞), including those by Li Bai (李白, 701-762 AD), Bai Juyi (白居易, 772-846 AD), Xue Ying (薛瑄, ?-? AD), Su Shi (蘇軾, 1037-1101 AD), Li Qingzhao (李清照, 1084 – 1151 AD), and Lu You (陸游, 1125-1210 AD). Annotated line-by-line translations are presented in neat and simple words that are easy to understand, with each line's true meaning revealed by extensive research. Vernacular Chinese translations are also given. In addition, every poem is accompanied by Chinese calligraphy to enhance readers' appreciation of traditional Chinese culture.

Tang poems and Song lyrical poems are known for their elegant and straightforward language. Yet, Chinese interpretations often contain critical mistakes. Most English translations additionally suffer from excessive fancy language that is hard to follow. This book aims to fix all these maladies of arbitrariness, which is relatively common in both Eastern and Western academia.

Kwan Sheung Vincent POON (潘君尚, 1979-)

KS Vincent POON, of Nanhai descent, was born in British Hong Kong and emigrated to Canada with his family at age eight. He completed his BSc with high distinction in Biochemistry and Physics, MSc and BEd degrees, and a Certificate of Management, all at the University of Toronto. At a very young age, Vincent studied traditional Chinese culture and calligraphy under the careful tutelage of his father, Dr Kwok Kin POON (PhD, HKU), a renowned scholar. He has mastered scribing the clerical, cursive, semi-cursive and standard scripts and is adept at translating Chinese to English. Vincent authored various books with his father, which include *A Narrative on Calligraphy by Sun Guoting* (《英譯書譜》), *English Translation of Classical Chinese Calligraphy Masterpieces* (《英譯法書》), *The Correct Interpretations and English Translations of Tang Poems and Song Lyrical Poems* (《唐宋詩詞正解並英譯》), as well as *An English Translation and the Correct Interpretation of Laozi's Tao Te Ching* (《英譯並正解老子道德經》). Independently, he authors the *Calligraphy Meets Philosophy* (《尚語》) series.

潘君尚，原籍南海，生於英治香港。八歲隨父母移民加拿大。畢業多倫多大學，獲生化系一級榮譽理學士、教育學士、理學碩士、商業管理文憑。自幼跟隨父親潘國鍵博士研習中國文化及書法，深得父親所傳。隸、草、行、楷四體兼善之外，亦擅長中英翻譯。已出版著述，計有與父親合譯之 *A Narrative on Calligraphy by Sun Guoting* (《英譯書譜》), *English Translation of Classical Chinese Calligraphy Masterpieces* (《英譯法書》), *The Correct Interpretations and English Translations of Tang Poems and Song Lyrical Poems* (《唐宋詩詞正解並英譯》), *An English Translation and the Correct Interpretation of Laozi's Tao Te Ching* (《英譯並正解老子道德經》), 及個人專著 *Calligraphy Meets Philosophy* (《尚語》) 系列。

Kwok Kin POON (潘國鍵, 1949-)

Kwok Kin POON was born in Guangzhou, raised in Hong Kong, and now resides in Toronto. He graduated from The Chinese University of Hong Kong (BA, MPH, DipEd), the University of Hong Kong (MA, PhD), and OISE University of Toronto (MEd). He studied Chinese history under Professor YAN Gengwang (嚴耕望), Chinese calligraphy under his maternal grandfather TSE Hay (謝熙), and Chinese painting under RONG Shushi (容漱石). Dr. POON is a seasoned teacher, historian, calligrapher, and columnist and has held exhibitions in Hong Kong and Canada. His publications include *《北魏與蠅螭關係研究》*, *《國鍵文集》*, *《潘國鍵書法集》*, *《國鍵畫選》*, *《孫過庭書譜白話對譯》*, *《寫在信仰荊途上》*, *《年在耳順》*, etc.. He also co-authored with KS Vincent POON *A Narrative on Calligraphy by Sun Guoting* (《英譯書譜》), *English Translation of Classical Chinese Calligraphy Masterpieces* (《英譯法書》), *The Correct Interpretations and English Translations of Tang Poems and Song Lyrical Poems* (《唐宋詩詞正解並英譯》), as well as *An English Translation and the Correct Interpretation of Laozi's Tao Te Ching* (《英譯並正解老子道德經》).

潘國鍵，1949年生於廣州，長於香港，廣東南海人。畢業中文大學新亞書院(榮譽文學士)、研究院(哲學碩士)、教育學院(教育文憑)、香港大學中文系(文學碩士、哲學博士)及加拿大多倫多大學安省教育學院(教育碩士)。治史師從史學大師嚴耕望教授，書法師承外祖父名書法家謝熙先生，亦當師事名畫家容漱石先生。潘氏長期從事歷史研究、書法創作及文史教學工作，並為港加兩地報章撰寫專欄。曾於港加舉行書法展覽會。今隱居多倫多市。著有《北魏與蠅螭關係研究》、《吐谷渾種裔及其成族與初期歷史(手稿)》、《北周疆域考》、《國鍵文集》、《潘國鍵書法集》、《孫過庭書譜白話對譯》、《老子道德經正解並白話對譯》、《寫在信仰荊途上》、《年在耳順》等等，並與兒子潘君尚(KS Vincent POON)合譯 *A Narrative on Calligraphy by Sun Guoting* (《英譯書譜》), *English Translation of Classical Chinese Calligraphy Masterpieces* (《英譯法書》), *The Correct Interpretations and English Translations of Tang Poems and Song Lyrical Poems* (《唐宋詩詞正解並英譯》), *An English Translation and the Correct Interpretation of Laozi's Tao Te Ching* (《英譯並正解老子道德經》)。

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