

KUO: If I were to follow you, to leave this world, what Taoist companions do you have over there?

LÜ: If you follow me and leave this world, I will show you two of my Taoist companions.

KUO: Which two?

LÜ: (sings—tune of *Huang-chung-wei*)
*I will let you see Lan Ts'ai-ho, who dances in the spring wind
 with his six Yün-yang boards.*

KUO: And the other one?

LÜ: *I will let you see Han Hsiang-tzu, who could make peonies bloom
 through the winter snow.*⁵⁵
Hurry, turn back now, without delay.

KUO: Sir, I will see you off down the stairs.

LÜ: (continues singing)
Coming down the river tower, near the waterfront.
 (speaks) Alas! Hsü Shen-weng could not wait. He has left.

KUO: Where?

LÜ: (sings)
Start the boat. Hoist the sail.
 (Speaks) Kuo Ma-erh, come aboard.

KUO: You go first.

LÜ: I'll go first.

KUO: (pushes Lü) I will push this goddamn man into the water.

LÜ: (speaks) This fool almost pushed me into the water. (sings)
*I'll go to the P'eng-lai Palace and Fang-chang Mountain,*⁵⁶
Those who would see me off don't have to go west to Yang-
*kuan.*⁵⁷
*And I don't have to stare at Wei-ch'eng with tears in his eyes.*⁵⁸
 (Lü exits)

KUO: He has gone. I have been bothered by him the whole day. I haven't sold any tea. It's getting late. I'd better put the boiler away and close my shop. (to his wife) Let's go home.
 (both exit)

INTERLUDE

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KUO MA-ERH: (enters) Ever since I met that Taoist, whenever I close my eyes I would hear him say, "Kuo Ma-erh, follow me, leave this world." How can I leave this world. I no longer sell tea, now I sell

wine under the Yueh-yang Tower. I have to buy some appetizers. I'd better not go down the main street. I'm afraid I'll meet that crazy Taoist again. I'll take this alley.

LÜ: (enters, dashing toward Kuo) Kuo Ma-erh, where are you going?

KUO: (to the audience) I tried to avoid him, but I bumped right into him. (to Lü) Sir, I no longer sell tea under the Yueh-yang Tower. I now sell wine. I would like to invite you to drink three cups of wine in my shop.

LÜ: So you invite me to drink three cups of wine. I've gotten drunk twice before on that tower. Now you invite me again—to get drunk once more.
 (they walk together toward Kuo's shop)

KUO: Come up the stairs. Sir, have a bowl of wine.

LÜ: You have one too.

KUO: Sir, have another bowl.

LÜ: You, too.

KUO: I'll take you downstairs.

LÜ: Kuo Ma-erh, follow me. Leave this world.

KUO: How can I leave this world? If I were to leave, what shall I do with my wife?

LÜ: Kill your wife.

KUO: Kill my wife? But, then, who would pay for her life?

LÜ: Why, you would pay for her life.

KUO: That is just fine! But, even if I wished to kill my wife, I couldn't. I have no weapon.

LÜ: Isn't this a fine sword? (shows Kuo his sword)

KUO: Sir, this is a fine sword.

LÜ: (sings—tune of *Shang-hua-shih*, in the mode of *Hsien-lü*)
*This sword had accompanied me thirty years wandering on the
 sea.*
Each night its brilliance shone upon the north star.
 (speaks) Kuo Ma-erh, I will give you this sword, but I want a gift in return.

KUO: What sort of gift do you want?

LÜ: (continues singing)
I want a woman's bloody head.

KUO: That sounds easy for you!

LÜ: (still singing)
For you—a flower by the wall, a willow by the roadside.