

王潤華：我看「長恨歌」的梨花

A Close Look at the "Pear Blossom"

By Y. W. Wong

I PROPOSE here to submit to a close reading, or "scrutiny", the image of the pear blossom as employed in Po Chū-i's poem "The Song of Enduring Woe". Looking at the flower through the microscopic view of the New Critic, I adjust my lens according to I. A. Richards' dictum that a word is always a co-operative member of an organism, the utterance, and that the meaning of a word depends upon the other words before and after it in the context. "A great writer," he says, "often gains his aim by making a simple phrase pull with or against large ranges of the language."¹

In addition to the close look, I will take the long view and place the "pear blossom" in its cultural and literary tradition and in the context of the entire body of the poet's work as well. That the meaning of the words "pear blossom" may vary from context to context is illustrated in these lines by Liu Hsiao-ch'o (劉孝綽) of the Liang dynasty, in his "Ode to the Pear Blossom" 詠梨:

*Mixed with rain, they are mistaken for
the falling dew;
In the wind, they look like flying butterflies.*

雜雨疑露落，
因風似蝶飛。

This article, originally written in Chinese and published in *The Continent Magazine* 大陸雜誌 for December 1974, is translated into English with slight modifications by the author. The lines quoted from Po Chū-i's "Song of Enduring Woe" are rendered literally, as far as possible, though borrowings are made from existing translations, including the Herbert A. Giles version and John Turner's interpretation published on pages 58-63 of this issue. —ED.

¹ I. A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1936.

The metamorphosis of the pear blossom in this couplet suggests the rich connotations inherent in this particular flower-image which appears only once in Po Chū-i's long poem.

From Water-lily to Pear Blossom

"The Song of Enduring Woe" is a narrative poem of 120 lines. The term "pear blossom" occurs in line 100. From the first line "An Emperor of Han, prizing beauty above all, longed for a face such as would topple kingdoms" 漢皇重色思傾國, to line 74 "But never once does her spirit come back to visit him in dreams" 魂魄不曾來入夢, tells the story of the Emperor's infatuation for Yang Kuei-fei. The so-called Emperor of Han actually alludes to Emperor Hsuan Tsung of the T'ang dynasty. When the poem begins, the emperor has sought his ideal of a beautiful woman for years in vain. At last he was attracted by Yang Kuei-fei, daughter of a commoner. On the strength of her talent and beauty, she became the emperor's favorite concubine. Indulging himself in sensual pleasures, Hsuan Tsung no longer bothered about affairs of state. When the rebellion of An Lu-shan 安祿山 broke out, he fled to Szechwan, taking Yang Kuei-fei with him, but on their way to exile she was strangled before his own eyes by the royal army that rose in mutiny. After the rebellion was quelled, the emperor returned to the palace a broken man, and he was haunted by the memory of his love.

When Yang Kuei-fei first gained imperial favor, Po Chū-i already compares her beauty to a flower. Line 13 reads: "Hair like a cloud, face like a flower, and golden plumes that nodded as she walked" 雲鬢花顏金步搖. Instead of naming the particular species of flower, Po Chū-i is content with the general term. He completes the comparison after the death of Yang Kuei-fei, when he

tells how the emperor was haunted by her memory in the garden (line 59)—*"In the water-lilies he sees her face, in the willow he sees her eyebrows"* 芙蓉如面柳如眉。 Only after reading this line do we realize that the water lilies which have appeared previously in the text are subtle allusions to Yang Kuei-fei. Consider line 14—

*Behind the water-lily curtains warm,
together they spent the soft spring
nights.*

芙蓉帳暖度春宵

and line 58—

*The water-lilies in T'ai-yi Pool, and
willows in the gardens of Wei-yang.*

太液芙蓉未央柳

The romantic quality of the poem is enhanced by the well-chosen *fu-yung* 芙蓉 flower: in the spring night Yang Kuei-fei lay in the bed of the emperor like a water-lily in full bloom; in the summer time she was a water-lily floating in the imperial pool.

The second portion of the poem begins with the summoning of a Taoist magician of Lin-ch'ung who claimed that he could communicate with spirits. As a messenger of the Son of Heaven, he searched high and low in the spiritual world and found Yang Kuei-fei among a crowd of fairies in a fairy mountain in the seas. At first glance, the Taoist priest recognized her and told us that her face looked like a flower and that her name was T'ai-chen 太真.

*And by her snow-white skin and flower-
like face he knows that this is she.*

中有一人字太真，
雪膚花貌參差是。

There is no indication yet as to the species of the flower. When the priest took leave of her, we are told that Kuei-fei cried pitifully and her sorrowful face was like a pear blossom:

*Her woeful countenance all streaked with
tears,*

—*A sprig of pear blossom in the spring-
time rain.*

玉容寂寞淚闌干，
梨花一枝春帶雨。

Throughout the whole poem, this is the only couplet in which Yang Kuei-fei is compared to a pear blossom.

Among flowers, the *mu-tan* (牡丹 peony), the *shao-yao* (芍藥 dahlia) and the *fu-yung* (芙蓉 water-lily) are rated among the first rank, and they have been accepted as synonyms for feminine beauty in classical Chinese poetry through the ages. Po Chū-i's poems abound in the use of such synonyms. "Ladies of Shang-yang Palace" 上陽人 is a poem lamenting the fate of palace ladies who had been selected from among the most beautiful women of the empire. Fearing that they might attract and hold the emperor's favor, Yang Kuei-fei made every effort to prevent them from seeing the emperor. She privately ordered them to be banished to the Shang-yang, one of the many cold palaces 冷宮 where the discarded imperial concubines were kept. There these palace ladies were virtual prisoners and were destined to endure loneliness and neglect. The poem says that these ladies were only aged sixteen when they were selected and presented to the emperor, and were all as pretty as the water-lily:

*Faces like water-lilies and bosoms like
jade
Were not for the emperor to see.
For Lady Yang, looking askance from a
distance,
Had jealously banished them to Shang-
yang Palace.*

臉似芙蓉胸似玉，
未容得見君王面，
已被楊妃遙側目，
妬令潛配上陽宮。

In another poem "Thoughts before a Mirror" 感鏡, Po Chū-i celebrates a pretty lady of unknown identity by comparing her to a water-lily:

*The beautiful lady has parted from me,
Leaving her mirror in the casket.*

*Since that flower-like face was gone,
In the autumn water was no water-lily.*

美人與我別，
留鏡在匣中，
自從花顏去，
秋水無芙蓉。

The innocent young girl in "A Song for Chien-chien" 簡簡吟 is also likened to a water-lily: "*Her cheeks are like the water-lily, her eyes like willow-leaves*" 芙蓉花腮柳葉眼. In another poem entitled "Written on Shen Tzu-ming's Wall When Drunk", the beauty of a pretty singer once again suggests a water-lily:

*I love the lady singing by your window,
Her beauty is like the water-lily, and her
voice is like jade.*

愛君簾下唱歌人，
色似芙蓉聲似玉。

In the floral tradition, the *li-hua* (梨花, pear blossom), the blossom of a flowering fruit-tree, occupies a comparatively low rank. In *The Classic of Flowers* 花經 it is dubbed only "fifth class, five distinctions" 五品五命, while the *Album of Flowers* 瓶花譜 ranks it "fourth class, six distinctions" 四品六命. As a conventional symbol, the pear blossom bears associations far different from those of the water-lily. The latter functions as a symbol of feminine beauty; the former implies the unfortunate fate, or unhappy life, or the fragility of pretty women. The symbolism of the pear blossom is used in the same way in "The Song of Enduring Woe" and throughout Po Chü-i's many other poems.

Emperor's Water-lily vs. Taoist's Pear Blossom

Why does the water-lily in the eyes of the Emperor become a pear blossom in the eyes of the Taoist? The answer is not difficult to find. It is probably the viewpoints and the settings which cause the change in the images. Hsuan Tsung was a man of lust who sought for a woman of greatest beauty. His eyes therefore were half-blinded by desires that were worldly and sexual. It is no wonder that he saw Yang Kuei-fei merely as a sex object, a water-lily floating on the sea of

desire. On the other hand, the eyes of the Taoist priest were omniscient, capable of penetrating what fate had in store for everyone, the relation of cause and effect, and the inevitability of retribution. The eyes of the Taoist were a magic mirror which could penetrate all illusions, no matter how bewitching. Therefore the Taoist of Lin-ch'ung was able to foretell Yang Kuei-fei's future at once by pointing out that she was a pear blossom which would bear fruit. A flower so beautiful as would have the effect of "toppling kingdoms" must in the end bear a bitter fruit of destruction for the empire. Pear blossoms live only briefly and cannot weather the thunderstorm. At the very time the petals fall, the fruit is developed, and the green pear has a bitter taste. Yang Kuei-fei when alive was a flower in the garden of the Li family who ruled the T'ang dynasty. It is only natural that when this regal flower died the bitter consequences engendered should be borne by the same royal house that once owned her.

Po Chü-i was a devout Buddhist and well-versed in Taoist doctrines. It was no surprise to find a great deal of Buddhistic and Taoist allusions in his poems. In his authoritative study of "The Song of Enduring Woe", Chen Yin-ko has pointed out that before the existence of Po Chü-i's poem and of Chen Hung's "Tale of the Song of Enduring Woe", the tale had not been expanded beyond the historical narrative. In other words, the later development of the tale about the adventure in the Taoist paradise must have been first introduced by Po Chü-i and Chen Hung in their respective works.² The didactic tone of the poem as expressed by the opening line clearly foreshadows the disastrous ending of the romance. The poem is, at least in this respect, similar to those of religious tales which were written to popularize Buddhist or Taoist teachings. Po Chü-i seemed to be fond of using plant or flower imagery to convey his Buddhistic or Taoist message. His poem "Concubines in the Imperial Graveyard" 陵園妾 is about ill-fated imperial concubines who were sent to the imperial graveyard as waiting maids. Once they were there, they were doomed to a life of despair.

²Chen Yin-ko 陳寅恪, *Poems of Yuan Chen and Po Chü-i: A Textual Study* 元白詩箋證稿, Peking, Wenh-sueh ku-chi k'an-hsing-she 文學古籍刊行社, 1955, pp. 1-41.

It was the kind of determinism in ancient Chinese thinking that beautiful girls were mostly predestined to unhappy marriages and life-long suffering that is reflected in the poem's description of the relation between flowers and leaves:

*Her complexion is like a flower and her
fate like a leaf.
As thin as a leaf is her fate—ah, how
helpless she is!*

顏色如花命如葉，
命如薄葉將奈何！

In another poem entitled "Mother Leaving Her Children" 母別子 the poet tells about a general who took a second wife and abandoned the first, after having been promoted for some distinguished service. The beautiful bride is also compared to a water-lily:

*Receiving a new mate and discarding the
old:
The one a water-lily on his palm, the other
a thorn in his eye.*

新人迎來舊人棄，
掌上蓮花眼中刺。

The first wife was banished from the house, while the children she bore were kept behind. Po Chū-i describes the suffering of the abandoned wife with a reference to the inevitable fate of petals on a branch:

*Just like the pear and plum trees in the
garden—
The flowers fell in the wind, but the
fruits remained on the branch.*

應似園中桃李樹，
花落隨風子住枝。

The Red-White Contrast

The *fu-yung* in Chinese may refer to either the water-lily or the woody species, *mu fu-yung* 木芙蓉, but in "The Song of Enduring Woe" it is definitely the former. White and red water-lilies are frequently mentioned in Chinese poetry. The fact that the plant grows in water helps explain why water is a

recurring image in the poem. One should also notice that Hua-ch'ing Pool was the centre of Hsuan Tsung's orgiastic revelry, and therefore the water-lily is the most apt comparison for the glamorous Yang Kuei-fei.

According to some historical sources, Hua-ch'ing Pool was decorated with water-lilies sculpted in white jade, a tribute from An Lu-shan, a Tartar general in the service of China.³ The water-lily as an image is realistic as well as symbolic. It not only reveals a great deal about the private life of the royal couple, it also contains rich allusions. Through the term "water-lily curtains" 芙蓉帳, the poet introduces a story from *Ch'eng-tu Stories* 成都記, which says that during the rule of Meng Hou-chu 孟後主 *fu-yung* flowers were planted everywhere in Ch'eng-tu, the capital city, and in the fall, while the flowers were in full bloom, they were gathered to dye mosquito curtains which were later called *fu-yung* curtains. This allusion in turn throws light on two parallel episodes in Hsuan Tsung's real life. He once ordered thousands of *shao-yao* flowers to be planted in the garden, and selected three thousand beautiful women into his harem, the most lovely of whom he picked to adorn his water-lily curtains in the spring nights.

Po Chū-i gives no indication as to the color of the *fu-yung* flower. The afore-mentioned white-jade sculpture of water-lilies in Hua-ch'ing Pool may bear the shape of the flower, but where the whole poem is concerned, the flower is not necessarily white. It is the literary context in which the flower occurs that determines the interpretation. When Yang Kuei-fei appeared in the second half of the poem, she is wearing a "flower cap", but there is no mention of the species of flower or its color. In Chen Hung's prose account of the romance, Yang Kuei-fei is all dressed in red; and the words—

*There is a lady wearing a golden crown in
the shape of a water-lily, and a silk gown
in purple color. . . .*

³In Vol. 612 of *The Complete Prose of T'ang* 全唐文, we find an article entitled "Account of Hua-ch'ing Pool" 華清池記 which is written by Chen Hung. It is a detailed account of An Lu-shan's presentation of stone water-lilies and the private life of the emperor at Hua-ch'ing Pool.

見一人冠金蓮，披紫綃……

associate her directly with the *fu-yung*. In the first half of Po Chü-i's poem there are many references to bright, rich colors: rouge 脂, golden house 金屋, golden plumes 金步搖, and golden-hair-bird 金雀. The frequent use of shiny colors can be explained by the fact that the world of Yang Kuei-fei in her golden days was glittering and luxurious. Furthermore, Hsuan Tsung's empire was enjoying its age of splendor. It is interesting to note that the late Father John Turner's English translation of "The Song of Enduring Woe" reflects the pervading redness in the poem. I am surprised to find that he even added the red color to the water-lilies in the T'ai-yi Pool by translating the phrase "T'ai-yi *fu-yung*" into "The rosy lilies yet in T'ai-yi Pool", and rendered the term "*chiao fang*" 椒房 into "crimson chamber". This suggests that perhaps Turner had the same theory in mind when he did the translation. Put in such context, one cannot resist seeing the water-lily in red color in the first half of the poem. This redness is in strong contrast to the whiteness which pervades the Taoist world in the second half. The red-white contrast in turn helps to increase the ironical effect of the theme of the poem.

In T'ang times, red was the color of the court-dress of high-ranking officials of the central government. Those who obtained the position of third rank and above wore purple. Those who had obtained fourth or fifth rank wore crimson. For minor officials, those of the sixth and seventh ranks wore dark green, while the eighth and ninth rank officials wore light green.⁴ Redness in pre-modern China was a sign of nobility, beauty, authority, opulence and grandeur. This explains why old palaces, temples, yamens and rich men's mansions all had red walls or red doors. Women of rich families also mostly wore red and Yang Kuei-fei's preference for yellow skirts in her real life was considered very unusual.⁵ Apart from this, the red color in "The Song of Enduring Woe" has its

⁴See Vol. 31, *T'ang China Directory* 唐會要, article "Dress and Adornment" 服飾.

⁵See Chuang Shen 莊申, "Women's Dresses and Adornment in the T'ang dynasty" 唐代婦女的服飾, *Ming Pao Monthly* 明報月刊, October 1973.

Buddhistic significance. Redness in a religious context is a symbol sometimes of stupidity, sometimes of dream, sometimes of the mundane world.

The pear blossom is snow-white in color. The author obviously has no intention of using it to imply the beauty of Yang Kuei-fei, for Chinese poets usually use red flowers such as the *mu-tan* and the *shao-yao* to symbolize a girl's beauty and nobility. On the most superficial level, the white of the pear blossom suggests Yang Kuei-fei's complexion—"snow-white skin and flower-like face". What is the significance of the shift from the pink water-lily to the snow-white pear blossom? The fading of color itself seems to symbolize the vanishing of the rosy hue from the cheeks and lips of the youthful woman, and a change from good fortune to a life of doom. Read at this level, the whiteness acquires another meaning: the pale, woeful countenance of a woman in the midst of her wretchedness. In both cases, the author makes use of an object drawn from nature as a symbol for the fragility of all life and of all earthly beauty. The change of color is indeed natural. As I have mentioned before, the water-lily may be red or white, thus in respect of color it bears affinity with the pear blossom.

The word "white" in Chinese evokes a sense of purity, emptiness and cleanliness. Yang Kuei-fei in the second half of the poem is known by her Taoist name T'ai-chen. The purgatory T'ai-chen lived among exquisite fairies in the Taoist paradise. The whiteness of the pear blossom suggests that she was by then a woman of pure heart and cleansed mind, qualities which Buddhists and Taoists highly value. It is important to remember a background episode. After taking Yang Kuei-fei away from Prince Shou and before making her an imperial concubine, Hsuan Tsung appointed her as a Taoist nun. The title T'ai-chen was actually given her by the Emperor.

In the human imagination, the immortal world or *hsien-ching* 仙境 is usually associated with a boundless stretch of clouds and mists, hence it is inseparable from whiteness, nothingness and purity. This can explain why the poet used such expressions as "*Borne on the clouds, charioted upon ether*" 排雲馭氣, "*But nowhere in these vast areas can her place be found*" 兩處茫茫皆不見 and "*The fairy mountain engulfed in the mysterious void*" 山在虛無縹緲間, all of which invoke the character-

istic world of the immortals. In this Taoist paradise lived the now immortal Yang Kuei-fei, known by the name T'ai-chen. As a nun, her quality and complexion perfectly matched the background color and atmosphere. If we convert the poem into a painting, the two worlds would come out in two different background colors, the mortal one predominantly red, the immortal one white.

Pear blossoms are small, white, fragile things, and their blossoming time is brief, the petals falling off easily in the rain and wind of late spring. Because of their frailty and brief life, Chinese poets of the past had made them a symbol for the fragility of beauty and the unfortunate fate of women. Po Chü-i's "Pear Tree on the River Bank" 江岸梨 is an admirable instance of such application:

*The pear blossom, hoping to have an
affinity with the leaves,
Is blooming on a river bank and disturbing
the gentleman.
Like a young widow in a chamber,
She has a white face and is wearing a
white blouse and a green skirt.*

梨花有意緣和葉，
一樹江頭惱煞君；
最是嬌閨少年婦，
白粧素袖碧紗裙。

In "The Song of Enduring Woe", the pear blossom, because of its connotation of paleness and ill-fate, evokes the loneliness and helplessness of Yang Kuei-fei. In the Taoist paradise, she was indeed living like a "young widow."

The Flower of the "Pear Garden"

Through the use of the words "Rainbow Robes and Coat of Gossamer" 霓裳羽衣 and "Players of the Pear Garden" 梨園子弟, the image of the pear blossom takes on another dimension. The romance of the Emperor and Yang Kuei-fei was closely associated with the "Pear Garden", and out of this context emerges the "Flower of the Pear Garden", an image rich with connotations.

More is revealed in this image about the humble origin of Yang Kuei-fei, her happy hours with the emperor, and her tragic death. Yang Kuei-fei was born to the house of a commoner. She was originally married to Prince Shou, the son of

Emperor Hsuan Tsung. Attracted by her beauty, the emperor planned to take possession of her. Under the pretence of making her a Taoist nun, the emperor forced his son to divorce her, giving him another bride in compensation. Shortly afterwards the emperor threw off his mask and took her into his harem to be his concubine. On the day the title *kuei-fei* was conferred on her, the music of "Rainbow Robes and Coat of Gossamer" was played. Historians say that Yang Kuei-fei was a gifted musician and dancer in her own right. It was with her help that Emperor Hsuan Tsung set up the "Pear Garden", a training centre for singers, actors and musicians. In time the term "Players of the Pear Garden" came to include not only the actors, singers and dancers but all the palace ladies as well.⁶ Being a court dancer and the most beautiful of them all, Yang Kuei-fei was naturally the "Flower of the Pear Garden".

The Line "The hair of the Pear Garden Players is white with age" 梨園弟子白髮新 appears after the emperor had returned to the capital after the death of his favorite concubine. Haunted by the shadow of the past, he found the scene of the garden unchanged, and that the "Pear Garden Players" were still living, but all had become old women. The phrase "Rainbow Robes and Coat of Gossamer" occurred twice in the poem, first as a prelude to the rebellion of An Lu-shan, and later to describe the graceful carriage of Yang Kuei-fei as she emerged in the Taoist paradise. The irony is obvious: the "Pear Garden Players" who had been less fortunate or totally neglected were able to live longer. They might be looked down upon by Kuei-fei in the past, but now they were the eye-witnesses of her tragic death by strangling underneath the pear tree.

In the poem "Hu-hsuan Dancers" 胡旋女 Po Chü-i used the term "*li-yuan*" 梨園 literally when mentioning Yang Kuei-fei's rise to power: "She has been bestowed the title of Kuei-fei in the Pear Blossom Garden" 梨花園中册作妃. The auditory association aroused by the sound of the word *li* 梨 deserves our attention. The poet, consciously or unconsciously, puns on the word *li* of *li-hua*, which has the same sound as *Li* 李, Hsuan Tsung's family name. Thus *li-hua* has an ambiguous mean-

⁶See articles on Rites and Music, *Old History of Tang* 舊唐書禮儀志音樂志.

ing. It can mean the pear blossom or the flower of the T'ang dynasty of the Li family, in other words, the national flower of T'ang China. This kind of punning in poetry and fiction was found to occur with unusual frequency during the transitional periods between dynasties. In *Story of Seas and Mountains* 海山記 there is a scene in which the plum tree 玉李 flourishes while the arbutus 楊梅 dies. The author puns on the words *li* and *yang*. The former has the same sound as Li 李, the family name of the reigning house of T'ang, while the latter is identical in character and sound with the surname of the rulers of the Sui 隋 dynasty. Thus the allegory contained in the scene was that the Sui dynasty is on the verge of collapse while T'ang is rising to power. In *Story of the Labyrinth* 迷樓記, another fictional work believed to be written during the same period, the obscure author also implies the fall of the Sui dynasty and the establishment of T'ang by describing a landscape in which willows 楊柳 are dying while plum flowers are blooming beautifully.⁷

The Pear Blossom and the Tragedy under a Pear Tree

How much meaning can be concentrated in a single image? To what extent can one achieve condensation in a poem? In such discussion Ezra Pound's two-line poem "In a Station of the Métro" is often quoted. One day in Paris, Pound got out of the *métro* at La Concorde. In the subway he saw many beautiful faces, some of children, some of women. He spent all that day trying to find words for what this vision meant to him, but failed at his first attempt. He later wrote a poem of 30 lines, and shortly afterwards turned it into a poem of half that length. He destroyed both because these were poems of "second intensity". The final version was finished a year later and it contains only two lines:

*The apparition of these faces in the crowd;
Petals on a wet, black bough.*

As one of the briefest and most celebrated of

⁷See Shionoya On 鹽谷溫, *An Introduction to Chinese Literature* 中國文學概論, tr. Sun Liang-kung 孫良工, reprinted Taipei: K'ai-ming Shu-tien, 1970, pp. 357-360.

Imagist poems, it describes the scene of a subway by using a simple comparison of the faces to petals on a bough.

Po Chü-i's classic line "A sprig of pear blossom in the springtime rain" bears close resemblance to Pound's poem in its way of achieving simplicity and complexity. Both compare faces with flowers, one on a bough and the other on a twig. Nevertheless, it seems fair to say that Po Chü-i's image is the richer in meaning because he had explored the words to their fullest appropriate limits. Ezra Pound himself probably would accept my opinion because he believed that Chinese is a better medium for poetry than English.

According to some sources, when the mutiny broke out in Ma-wei 馬嵬, Yang Kuei-fei was conducted by the chief eunuch Kao Li-shih 高力士 to a pear tree under which she was strangled. Ironically, the pear-tree was in front of a temple.⁸ There is no reliable evidence to prove that Po Chü-i was familiar with this anecdote and that he was conscious of it at the time he wrote the poem. If Po Chü-i's pear blossom image was drawn from the Ma-wei tragedy, then the process of creating the image is also similar to that of Pound's.

Whatever might be the prototype of the pear blossom, it does not change the fact that the pear blossom as an image is by itself effective in evoking the tragic ending under a pear tree. Intimately related to both the theme and tone of the poem, it emerges in the overall structural analysis as the one image that Po Chü-i used to impart to us his compassionate yet ironical attitude towards the subject of his poem. By means of it, he conveyed sympathy for the ill-fated Yang Kuei-fei, but he also condemned the Emperor Hsuan Tsung's obsession with sensual pleasure and criticized his royal concubine's abuse of power.

⁸In the article "Fruits" 果 in Vol. 969 of *T'ai-ping yü-lan* 太平御覽, there is such a quotation: "*The History of T'ang* says: Hsuan Tsung arriving at the Ma-wei post, Kao Li-shih was ordered to hang Kuei-fei under a pear tree which was in front of a Buddhist temple." I do not find any identical statement in either the *Old History* or the *New History*. In Lo Shih's 樂史 *The Private Life of Yang Kuei-fei* 楊貴妃外傳 there is a sentence which reads: "Li-shih strangled Yang Kuei-fei under a pear tree which was in front of a Buddhist temple."