

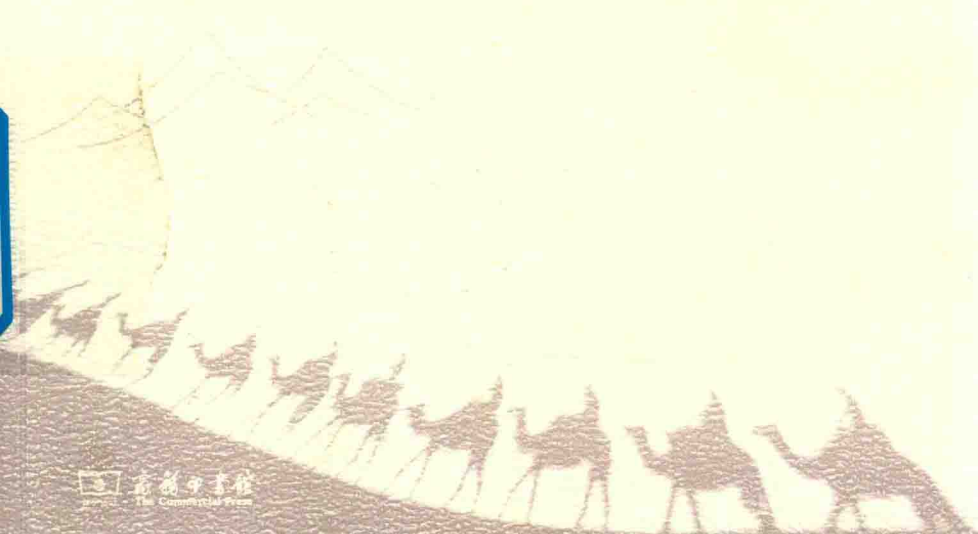


# *Hua'er—Folk Songs from* 花 *the Silk Road* 儿

*Translated by*

Yang Xiaoli Caroline Elizabeth Kano

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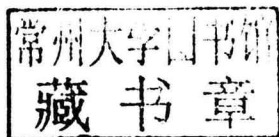
An Abridged Translation of  
*Zhongguo Hua'er Tonglun*  
(A Study of Chinese Hua'er)

written by Wu Yulin

Translated by

Yang Xiaoli Caroline Elizabeth Kano

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Hua'er — Folk Songs from the Silk Road

花儿——丝绸之路上的民间歌谣

杨晓丽

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## Foreword

The Yellow River flows by ninety nine twists and turns,  
And lakes by thousands spread in the Silvery Valley.

Spread widest, but cluster closest,  
Flocks of sheep bleat and bleat everywhere.

Knife of iron, Koran of bronze,  
Allah blesses you all the way to the Northwest.

The lines above were written in the airplane, on 7th May, 2015, on my way back from Yinchuan, the Silvery Valley, to Tianjin, where I work and live. I wrote it in the tune of Wandering Chants of Northern Shaanxi, to describe the natural environment and living conditions as well as the beliefs of the Hui People, whose Flower Folk Song is my favourite, which is again related to love and marriage:

Free flowering love, but favouring fate,  
Better Akhoond's blessing than the utterings of go-betweens.

Their freedom in love is contradictory with their traditional mar-

riage, but freedom of love and singing is the highest value for an ethnic group, freedom even in their religious belief, such as is shown:

There is a tree shade of the human world, look up,  
And you'll see a white peony in the nest on high.

The tree shade of the human world is actually the home of human spirit and the white peony is the wife of a good husband of the Hui people, especially in the folk songs of flower and youth, girls and boys, as they sing in pairs.

The poem is thus related to my trip to the Northwest as well as to the Flower Songs there.

I went to the North Minzu University in Ningxia last summer, invited by Ms. Wang Dongmei, the president of the School of Foreign Languages and Cultures, to give a speech about translating classics of ethnic groups, and I also served to give some advice to the translation group of Flower Songs headed by Yang Xiaoli. And one of the English versions I gave them as a model is as follows:

A fast horse may be fat or thin,  
Too much fat ruins a good horse;  
A broad-minded lover is my favourite  
For too much jealousy ruins a lover.

(马快不在肥瘦上，

马肥了肉坠着哩；  
 维花儿要宽肚肠，  
 心窄了吃醋着哩。)

At that time, also, I was glad to meet Ms. Wu Yulin, an expert in Flower Songs, who presented to me her major works *Zhongguo Hua'er Tonglun* (A Study of Chinese Hua'er), and another book on the performance and dance of the same kind. I was also glad to know that Ms. Wu had graduated from Shaanxi Normal University, where I had been working for many years, before she went to Japan for her doctoral degree, back with an analytical method of the research and a new journey to Northwest China and even Kyrgyzstan for a wider view of folklore and folk song study. Therefore, her work on this topic is really the most comprehensive survey of the Flower Songs. Actually she includes in this book the proper naming and singing and performing of the Flower Songs with their geographical distribution and logical classification as well as detailed description of each type of the songs. More than that, this book is not only a serious academic contribution, but also a selection of folk songs as examples for each major category, with detailed analysis for each case, thus a large number of materials provided with proper classifications and comments along with the original texts, making it all the way better and proper for readers and singers as well.

That is why this book was chosen to be translated, with some abridging and editing for English readers. Yang Xiaoli told me in the

summer vacation last year while I was in the United States with my family, that the translation was coming to a close and preparation for publication was needed. And I was supposed to write a foreword for the English version after proofreading it through. I was too glad to agree, for it had been one of my favourite topics of research and translation. One of the beneficent achievements, I noticed, was that the original text of each song was provided with Chinese Pinyin for easier readership, and footnotes and comments for further reference. I highly appreciate the new edition of the Chinese Flower Songs and I hope foreign readers will enjoy it.

Can you guess what I am doing now, at this moment?

Of course, I am reading Professor Wu's book, reading the songs one by one, comparing the English version with the original text, and making my own judgment about the translation quality, while at the same time, I am thinking of the days gone by when I stayed in the Silvery Valley, Yinchuan as is pronounced in modern Chinese. The silvery moon rose on one of the May flowery nights, and it shone brilliantly over the *Ming* Lake, or Brilliant Lake on the school campus, as we walked by the watering pond, talking about the Flower Songs with the silvery scene in view. At that time, my creative mind was stimulated by everything around and some words occurred to me so beautifully visualized that they could not but become a poem later on. And I jotted it down while I was waiting for my flight at Yinchuan Airport the other day:

### **While Flowers in Full Bloom**

While flowers in full bloom, oh,  
You stand by the moonlit Ming Lake;  
I stand under the willow by Weiming Pool.

While flowers in full bloom, oh,  
You sit in the reading room in Hiroshima;  
I sit by the sakura at Nankai University.

Perhaps, last time  
While flowers in full bloom,  
You and I wandered on the Cambridge campus.

Perhaps, next time  
While flowers in full bloom,  
You and I will twinkle over the Manhattan skyline.

Zhu Mo

7th May, 2015

9:15

At Yinchuan Airport

As poetic imaginations go, images jump from one place to another, say, from Yinchuan to Beijing (Weiming Pool is on the campus



of Peking University), from China to Japan, and then from China to the United States where I would go. Yet shoddy wording in the translation above is obvious against the wonderful word in Chinese “Man Hua'er” (漫花儿), it could mean that the flowers occur to you as a sea of blooms on the hill slope, or the flowering songs greet your ear as good music to blur with the view, the way the Northwesterners in China talk while they go out, they do not say “go out” but simply “go romance” (逛, 浪) and you know how romantic these folk fellows are! Without poem or poetic language, in case of mentioning Flower Songs, it is not up to the expectations of the people and land there. It is a pity that translation cannot do so well, and the romantic spirit is gone in English.

My attention had been paid to Hua'er for quite some years, but it wasn't until recent years that I began to translate one or two of them. And I put my translation in the newly published book entitled *Chinese Folk Songs and Their English Translation* published by The Commercial Press in 2014. I noticed that the basic pattern of Hua'er in *Hehuang* Area is a four-line pattern, as is shown below:

### **The Flower Songs in *Hehuang***

A walnut tree in bloom, none has seen it.

But the walnut is already this big.

We two talk and talk, none has seen it.

But our fame is already this big.

The first two lines and the last two lines have a similar sentence structure, which makes a contrast and a point of interest for the readers, the English as well as the Chinese.

核桃树开花是人没有见

核桃树开花是人没有见，

绿核咋这么大了？

我两个说下的人没有见，

空名声咋这么大了？

Another folk song is more complex and difficult to express, especially in English. Judging from the shape of the three-line pattern of each stanza, one may have an image or impression that it takes the form of a shoulder pole with two buckets at the ends, indicated by the two parallel longer sentences in each stanza. But that shape is impossible to keep in the English translation, that is to say, we translate the meaning not the form. The following is the song in both languages:

青石头根里的药水泉

青石头根里的药水泉，

担子担，

桦木的勺勺子舀干；

若想叫我俩的婚缘散，

三九天，  
青冰上开一朵牡丹。

### Hot Spring Wells up

Hot spring wells up from behind the Greensickness Peak,  
To carry it (in buckets), with a shoulder pole,  
And drain it with a birch wood spoon.

Our marriage wells up from behind the Greensickness Peak,  
To testify it, in the frigid weather of winter,  
And see the peony grows on the icy cliff.

It is of great interest to us how the native speakers of the English language translate Chinese folk songs, and how much different their translation is from Chinese translators' version, or how much foreigners know about the Chinese Hua'er from the Northwest.

*The Columbia Anthology of Chinese Folk and Popular Literature* edited by Victor H. Mair and Mark Bender is an example, in which a whole chapter is devoted to introduce the Flower Songs from Northwest China. They have a group of people working together for a better result since the songs are collected by Ke Yang (Han), Ye Jinyuan (Hui), and Kathryn Lowry and translated and introduced by Kathryn Lowry.

Here is a paragraph introducing Hua'er in the book:

Flower songs (*Hua'er*), a type of folk song common in northwestern China, are sometimes classified by Chinese researchers as *shan'ge* (mountain songs). Flower songs are sung at local festivals held in rural areas of Gansu and Qinghai provinces and in the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, an area of over sixty thousand square miles<sup>①</sup>. The Linxia Hui Autonomous Prefecture, located in southwestern Gansu Province, is an area where flower songs and so-called flower song festivals (*hua'er Hui*) are especially prevalent. The area is home to approximately sixteen ethnic groups, including Han Chinese, Hui, and Dongxiang. There are also a number of Bao'an, Salar, Tu, Tibetans, and others. As song traditions that involves people of many ethnicities in the region, flower songs employ local Han Chinese dialects (though most participants are not Han), intermingling vocabulary and grammar of the Tu, Salar, and Tibetan languages. (p. 93)

花儿是中国西北地区常见的一种民歌，中国研究者有时将其归入山歌。花儿经常在当地乡村的节日演唱，遍及甘肃、青海和宁夏回族自治区（面积为六万平方英里）。临夏回族自治州位于甘肃西南地区，这一带的花儿和花儿会特别流行。这一地区居住着大约十六个民族，包括汉族、回族、东乡族。还有保安族、撒拉族、土族、藏族等。由于这一带许多民族都有歌唱的传统，花儿采用了汉语方言（尽管多数演唱者并不是汉族），其词汇和语法则结合了土

① Inaccurate information. In fact, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region has an area of around 25,600 square miles (66,400 km<sup>2</sup>). (数据有误。实际上宁夏回族自治区面积约2.56万平方英里，6.64万平方公里。)——作者注

族、撒拉族和藏族的语言。(笔者译)

The following are two Hua'er songs quoted from the same book:

[Example one]

The moon shines, this bright lamp, how is it so brilliant?

Who hung it high up over the Southern Heaven's Gate?

Dear sister is the peony, ruler of the flowers.

Compared with a bird in flight,

She outdoes the phoenix up in the clouds.

(Ye Jinyuan, to the tune "Major  
Melody of Xunhua", p. 97)

[Example two]

Oh — half the sky is clear, and half is cloudy.

Half it's cloudy, half's got the sun coming out.

Oh — this Young Man, listen clearly.

I shall instruct you:

Mu Guiying, she originally defended King Song [of Liao].

(同上, p. 97)

Occasionally, notes and comments are provided to help readers understand Chinese names of persons or places, and historical or legendary

figures, at other times even *Hua'er* and *Shaonian* themselves become confusing and need clarification: Young Man (*Shaonian*) is capitalized because it refers to the song type, not to a person. As noted, in Qinghai the terms *shaonian* and *hua'er* are used interchangeably for “flower songs”.

I highly appreciate this kind of translation of Chinese folk songs.

At last, I hope that the translators from China and from other countries could work cooperatively in the translation and study of the Chinese *Hua'er*, and we also hope that the English version of *A Study of Chinese Hua'er* could be a success in introducing the Chinese folk music to the English-speaking world.

Let the voice fresh from the flowering folk songs from China be widely heard throughout the world.

Wang Hongyin (Zhu Mo)

Nankai University, Tianjin, China

First draft on 25th May, 2016

Revised on 11th June

## 武宇林序

斗转星移，中英学者经过三个春秋的跨国合作研究，英文版《丝绸之路上的民间歌谣——花儿》一书终于问世了。作为中文原著《中国花儿通论》作者，回首此书的诞生过程，思绪万千，感触良多。

本书基于笔者中文原著《中国花儿通论》翻译而成，而后者基于日文专著《丝绸之路口传民歌“花儿”研究》，这是笔者在日本广岛大学的博士论文。提及笔者的日本留学，与本书译者之一的英国籍史若兰教授不无关系。我们相识于 20 多年前的 1994 年，当时，笔者作为宁夏政府公派的一名海外技术研修员，来到日本岛根县立女子大学进修学习，而若兰教授是该校英文教员。宁夏和岛根县于 1993 年缔结了友好关系，按照协议，宁夏每年都向岛根派遣研修员，笔者就是其中之一。命运安排我们两人在日本岛根县立女子大学相识，而博大精深的中国文化让我们成为挚友。用若兰教授的话说：“在日本的这所大学里，就我们两个外国人，好多习惯都一样。你是中国人，而我是学中文的英国人，我喜欢中国和中国文化。感谢上帝把你派到我身边！”其实，若兰教授的中文水平相当不错，她 1974 年毕业于英国伦敦大学亚非学院（SOAS）汉语言文学专业，会讲流畅而标准的汉语普通话。她之所以选择中文，是受了父亲的影响。出生于 50 年代的她，少年时期跟随油画艺术家的

父亲及家人到过很多国家。受那个时代风潮的影响，十分向往东方文化，尤其是向往东方古国——中国。而后之所以对中国“花儿”民歌感兴趣，也可以说是受到了声乐艺术家的母亲的影响。1976年2月，她有幸参加了英方组织的中国参访团，去了北京、上海和杭州等地。同年8月，得到英国文化协会的奖学金资助，在北京语言大学短期留学。其后，来到东方国度之一的日本从事英文教学，并于1983年考入日本广岛大学，攻读中国文学专业的博士前期课程，即硕士课程，研究方向是中国现代作家戴望舒的诗歌研究，可谓是此次“花儿”民歌翻译合作研究的伏笔。其间，她邂逅了一位会汉语的日本男生，后来成为她的丈夫。她说，从英国初到日本的她，还不太会说日语，俩人便用汉语交流与沟通，最终结为伉俪，并有了可爱的一儿一女，她也长期定居日本，一直在大学从事英文及中文教学工作。1994年夏，笔者来到她所在的岛根县立女子大学进修了8个月。其后，在她和一些日本友人的帮助下，笔者于1995年9月再次来到日本，考入岛根大学，攻读教育学（美术教育）硕士学位，开始了10年之久的留学生涯。3年后的1998年秋，若兰教授再次举荐并支持笔者考入其母校日本广岛大学文学研究生院硕博连读，开始了中国“花儿”民歌的研究之路。日本留学期间，我们都在做兼职中文教师。为了有一本得心应手的汉语教材，我们于2000年合作编辑出版了日文版《实用中国语基础课本——石井先生的北京三周》（日本南云堂出版社）的教科书，被岛根大学、京都大学等选作大学教材，也是我们各自首选的汉语教科书，这是我们的第一次学术合作。她在那本书的署名为“狩野キャロライン”，这是她的日本名字。按照日本习俗，女性婚后和丈夫同姓，后面是自己英文名字的日文音译。据此，笔者为她取了中文名字“若兰”，



她十分中意。本书中，使用了该中文名字署名，前面并加上了父亲的姓氏“史密斯”的“史”。

笔者在广岛大学的研究方向为“中国西部口传民歌‘花儿’研究”，其间，每年暑假都回国到甘肃、青海、宁夏和新疆各地，沿古丝绸之路进行“花儿”的田野调查，取得了珍贵的第一手材料。该研究多次得到日本文部省和其他团体的奖学金资助，也享受过“小林节太郎纪念基金会”的博士生研究资金。最终形成的博士论文得到了日本博士生导师及学界的充分肯定，于2004年12月顺利通过答辩，获得文学博士学位。之后，日本导师推荐笔者的日文博士论文《中国西部口传民歌“花儿”研究》在信山社出版。出版社对此评价：这是日本出版界第一本关于中国西部少数民族民歌的书籍，其研究对象有独自性，研究内容有独创性，研究水平有高度性，日语表达有准确性。并建议书名为《丝绸之路口传民歌“花儿”研究》，还给予了出版补贴。2005年8月，这部32万多字的专著在日本公开出版发行。2008年，该著作获宁夏第十次哲学社会科学优秀成果奖著作类“一等奖”。

2005年初笔者回国，来到北方民族大学工作以来，继续开展“花儿”研究。翌年，赴中亚吉尔吉斯斯坦调研境外古丝绸之路的“花儿”民歌，以及西北各地“花儿”新动态，进一步补充完善了日文版的“花儿”专著，于2008年在宁夏人民出版社出版《中国花儿通论》。这部约40万字的中文专著，系统地阐述了我国非遗之一的“花儿”民歌的历史渊源、流派、分类、形式、内容、修辞、民族特色和文化遗产等内容。全书梳理、引用了780多首原生态“花儿”，展示了中国西部的回、汉、撒拉、东乡、保安、土、藏、裕固、蒙古族，以及中亚东干族“花儿”的奇特艺术魅力。并附有笔