

The Solution

The puzzle consists of 5 poems by the famous Chinese poet 李白 (Li Bai or Li Po), two of which I readily recognize from my studies of Chinese. In each of the poems, there are erroneous characters. These erroneous characters lead to the solution of the puzzle. Clues in the flavor text include ‘big 5’, which refers to a coding scheme for Chinese characters, and a well known poem by Libai has him drinking wine with the moon and his shadow for company.

Original Characters yield

白帝城之州名

which translates to literally: “white emperor city’s province name”

‘white emperor’ is actually the name of a city, BaiDi

Although the city of Baidi is currently in the Chongqing Municipality which was formed in 1997, which has all the political and economic ramifications of being a province, it is still located in Sichuan Province. The Chinese Consulate says, if you asked what province 白帝城 is in, “It would be safe to say that the answer is 四川.”

Substituted Characters yield

國語羅馬拼音

which translates to literally: “country language net horse spell sound”, which doesn’t make much sense

“country language” is another way of saying Chinese

“net horse” in Hanyu Pinyin romanization is luoma. These two words are the transliteration of Rome.

“spell sound” means phoneticize

The six words, 國語羅馬拼音, represent a commonly used romanization system in Taiwan, which uses the 'sz' construction for the word 四. If the teams use this system of romanization, it should lead them to the 'Szechuan' spelling of 四川.

Helpful websites:

www.zhongwen.com

<http://www.chinapage.com/libai/libai1.html>

www.romanization.com

Correct Poems

朝辭白帝彩雲間
千里江陵一日還
兩岸猿聲啼不住
輕舟已過萬重山

青山橫北郭
白水遶東城
此地一爲別
孤蓬萬里征
浮雲游子意
落日故人情
揮手自茲去
蕭蕭班馬鳴

風吹柳花滿店香
吳姬壓酒喚客嘗
金陵子弟來相送
欲行不行各盡觴
請君試問東流水
別意與之誰短長

故人西辭黃鶴樓
煙花三月下揚州
孤帆遠影碧空盡
惟見長江天際流

Puzzle Poems

朝辭國語彩雲間
千里江陵一日還
兩岸猿聲啼不住
輕舟已過萬重山

青山橫北郭
白水遶東羅
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煙花三月下揚拼
孤帆遠影碧空盡
惟見長江天際流

有耳莫洗潁川水
有口莫食首陽蕨
含光混世貴無名
何用孤高比雲月
吾觀自古賢達人
功成不退皆殞身
子胥既棄吳江上
屈原終投湘水濱
陸機雄才豈自保

... (ends abruptly)

有耳莫洗潁川水
有口莫食首陽蕨
含光混世貴無音
何用孤高比雲月
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... (ends abruptly)

國語羅馬拼音對照表

本表提供國音第二式及 Wade-Giles 拼音法。國音第二式拼音法係民國 75 年元月 28 日教育部所公告之拼音法

Table with 12 columns: 國音第一式, 國音第二式, WG, 國音第一式, 國音第二式, WG, 國音第一式, 國音第二式, WG, 國音第一式, 國音第二式, WG, 國音第一式, 國音第二式, WG. It lists various Chinese characters and their corresponding Romanizations in multiple systems.