

## DU RENJIE

### TUNE: PLAYING THE CHILD

A PEASANT KNOWS NOT THE THEATRE

(I)

People live happy when in time blows wind and falls rain,  
But as we peasants none's so cherrful and gay  
In bumper year of mulberry and grain  
When no official disturbs us everyday.  
My vow fulfilled, I should perform the rural rite,  
So I go downtown to buy incense and candles bright.  
As I pass by the fair,  
I see colored ads hanging there.  
Nowhere have I seen a more noisy crowd, nowhere!

(II) THE LAST BUT SIX

I see a man keep the gate open with one hand,  
Crying loud: "Come in please, please!  
Late, you'll find the house full and nowhere to sit but stand.  
First, actors will perform *the Moon and Breeze*,  
And then the play of an actor wellknown to this land.  
It's easy to find a place to enjoy and pause,  
But hard to win your hearty applause."

(III) THE LAST BUT FIVE

I pay two hundred coins and I'm let in.  
I enter, mount a wooden slope and hear a din.  
I see an amphitheatre with seats in tier.  
Looking up, I see a tower like stage appear;  
Looking down, I find the crowd like a whirlpool,  
And women musicians sitting on the stool.  
It is not a sacred procession long.  
Why do I hear without cease drum and gong?

(IV) THE LAST BUT FOUR

For several rounds a maiden comes forth and back,  
Then she leads a group of four from the rear.  
Among them there's a villain clown,  
Whose head is wrapped in a hood black,  
With a brush on the ear;  
Whose face with lime is white,  
Streaked with paint black as night.  
What will he do?  
From top to toe,  
He wears a motley gown.

(V) THE LAST BUT THREE

He reads some verse  
And sings some song,  
There's nothing wrong.  
Who knows which's better and which worse?  
I only remember many words sweet.  
What at the end is said?  
He bends his head and keeps close his feet.  
After the prelude, the melodrama will be played.

(VI) THE LAST BUT TWO

One actor plays the role of grandpa old,  
Another acts the waiter of a wine shop.  
They walk and talk of life,  
And at the central place they stop,  
Seeing a young woman standing under the screen.  
The grandpa covets her as wife,  
And asks the waiter to be go-between,  
How much grain, rice, peas and wheat  
She wants as dowry and how many feet  
Of cloth, silk, satin and brocade, all told.

## 300 YUAN SONGS

### (VII) THE LAST BUT ONE

Told to go forward, ay!  
The grandpa dare not backward go.  
Told to raise his foot high,  
He dare not put it low.  
He turns back and forth as he is led,  
Anxious at heart, he starts  
And breaks the leather-wrapped hammer into two parts,  
I mistake it for a broken head,  
And fear they'll go to court after,  
But unexpectedly I hear them burst in laughter.

### (VIII) THE LAST SONG OR EPILOGUE

Hard pressed to pass water, I make for the door.  
Though I try to hold it back so as to see more.  
But how can I be set free?  
I am afraid these sons of bitch will laugh at me.