An Annotated Translation of Mao Xiang's *Reminiscences of the Convent of Shadowy Plum-blossoms* (Part Two)

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In *Reminiscences of the Convent of Shadowy Plum-blossoms*, Mao Xiang recorded his memories of his concubine Dong Xiao-wan, who died an early death. Dong Xiao-wan was a courtesan in the Qinhuai district of the southern capital, Nanjing. In Part One, which appears in the last number of this journal, I translated the first third of the *Reminiscences*, which describes events up to the time Dong Xiao-wan succeeded in marrying into Mao’s family.

This is the second third of the account, which consists of details of their daily lives.

In this section, Mao Xiang first gives us vivid descriptions of sightseeing in Jinshan, Suzhou and Jiaxing, an account of the Moon festival in Nanjing, and many other details of their leisure activities. Next, he describes the relationship between Dong Xiao-wan and his family. He writes that Dong was always polite and kind and that she never fought with members of his family. Mao’s legal wife also took care of her and treated her kindly.

Mao then describes his concubine’s talents, with special emphasis on her literary abilities. When Mao tried to compile a complete collection of Tang poems, she assisted him in arranging materials and interpreting poems.

According to Mao Xiang’s account, Dong was a connoisseur of calligraphy, paintings, tea and incense. In his description of her interests, Mao seems also to have drawn on his own deep learning.