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A Tree That Blossoms

Hsi Murong

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FIVE POEMS BY HSI MURONG

translated and with notes by Sufen Lai

A Tree That Blossoms*

How can I make sure you encounter me
At the moment when I am most beautiful?

For that,
In front of the Buddha,
I have prayed
For five hundred years,
Beseeching him to let us happen in a remembrance
Engraved with earthly moments of permanence.

So the Buddha incarnated me into a tree,
Growing beside the road of your destined journey.
Under the sunlight, it cautiously blossoms with timid fragrance.
Each of its flowers embodies a previous life's longing.

When you walk near, please listen carefully
While the shivering leaves echo my awaiting passion.

But you stride past without ever noticing,
Leaving behind you
A ground covered with the fallen.
My darling,
Those are not petals;
They are my withered heart.

—10·4·1980

* One of the 12 poems selected from works of contemporary Chinese poets, this is engraved on a plaque in the Shi Tien area in Sung Chiang Park in Taipei, Taiwan. Shi Tien means "poetry field," an allusion to the rice field, which provides the staple of the Chinese diet. The term reflects how much the Chinese value poetry.