The Rebellion, Li Bo
Chapter 58. Climbing Flower Mountain

An Lushan’s forces have captured Luoyang, the Eastern Capital. Li Bo climbs Mount Hua, the Sacred Mountain of the West, the “Lotus Flower Mountain.” It guards the entrance to Chang’an, the Western Capital, not yet fallen to the rebels.

Ancient Air #17

In the west I climb Flower Mountain. Far far off I see bright stars, their pure hands holding lotus blossoms. With weightless feet they pace Great Purity, rainbow skirts trailing broad sashes, billowing as they float higher through the Heavens. They invite me to climb Cloud Terrace and salute the immortal Wei Shuqing. As in a dream, I follow them, riding a wild goose into the purple dark. I look down, there’s the Luoyang River swarming with Tartar troops as far as I can see. Blood flow smears the prairie grasses, Wolves and jackals wear the robes of office.

古風 其十七

西上蓮花山，迢迢見明星
素手把芙蓉，虛步躡太清
霓裳曳廣帶，飄拂升天行
邀我登雲台，高揖衛叔卿
恍恍與之去，駕鴻凌紫冥
俯視洛陽川，茫茫走胡兵
流血涂野草，豺狼盡冠纓
The story of Wei Shuqing is told in the *Biographies of Holy Immortals* (Shenxian zhuan 神仙傳).

Wei Shuqing was from Zhongshan. He attained immortality by ingesting mica ("cloud mother" *yunmu* 雲母). One September day in 109 BCE, the Martial Emperor of Han dwelt at leisure in his upper palace. Suddenly a man, riding a chariot of floating clouds pulled by white deer, landed before the palace. Startled, the Emperor asked him who he was. He said, "I am Wei Shuqing of Zhongshan." The Emperor replied, "If you’re from Zhongshan, then aren’t you my subject?" Wei did not respond, he just disappeared.

"With weightless feet they pace the Heaven of Great Purity." That pace is a great magical gait, a retracing of the stars around and through the Dipper, like this:

![Diagram](image)

*Fig. 72. A diagram showing the inwardly spiraling pattern of Yubu (top) and the dipper pattern of Bugang (bottom).*