

**PING** Hola, Pang! Hola, Pong! Since the fatal gong is waking the Palace and walking city, let's be ready for any event: if the stranger wins, for the wedding; and if he loses, for the burial.

**PONG** I'll prepare the wedding!

**PANG** And I, the funeral!

**PONG** The red, holiday lanterns!

**PANG** The white, mourning lanterns!

**PANG** and **PONG** Incense and sacrifices...

**PONG** Gilded coins of paper..

**PANG** Tea, sugar, nutmeg!

**PONG** The fine scarlet palanquin!

**PANG** The great, well-made bier!

**PONG** The singing priests...

**PANG** The moaning priests...

**PONG** and **PANG** And all the rest, as the ceremony requires... in its infinity of details!

**PING** O China, o China, who now starts and leaps restlessly, how happily you used to sleep filled with your seventy thousand centuries!

**ALL THREE** Everything was going along according to the world's ancient law. Then Turandot was born...

**PING** And for years now our holidays have become joys of this order:

**PONG** ...three strokes of the gong,

**PANG** ...three riddles,

**PING** ...and off with the heads!

**PONG** and off with the heads!

**PANG** The Year of the Mouse there were six.

**PONG** The year of the Dog, eight.

**ALL THREE** And during the current year, the terrible Year of the Tiger, we've reached thirteen already, counting the one about to go! What work! What boredom! What have we become? We're the executioner's Ministers!

**PING** I have a house in Honan with a little blue lake all surrounded with bamboo. And here I am, wasting my life, wearing out my brain over the sacred books... When I could go back there to my little blue lake all surrounded with bamboo!

**PONG** Go back there! I have forests, near Tsaing, than which none are lovelier, but their shade is not for me. I have forests than which none are lovelier!

**PANG** To go back there! I have a garden near Kiù, that I left to come here, that I'll never see again!

**ALL THREE** And here we are, wearing out our brains over the sacred books!

**PONG** And I could go back to Tsaing...

**PING** And I could go back there...

**PANG** And I could go back to Kiù...

**PING** ...to enjoy my blue lake...

**PONG** Tsaing...

**PANG Kiù...**

**PING Honan... all surrounded with bamboo!**

**PONG ...and I could go back to Tsaing!**

**PANG ...and I could go back to Kiù!**

**ALL THREE O world, filled with mad lovers! We have seen the suitors arriving! Oh, so many! So many! We've seen all those suitors arriving! O world, filled with mad lovers!**

**PING Do you remember the regal Prince of Samakand? He made his application, and how joyfully she sent him the executioner!**

**PONG And the bejewelled Indian Sagarika, with ear-rings like little bells? He sought love, and was beheaded!**

**PANG And the Burmese?**

**PONG And the Prince of the Kirkhiz?**

**ALL THREE Killed! Killed!**

**PING And the Tartar whose bow was six cubits high! who wore rich skins?**

**PONG and PANG Executed!**

**PING Beheaded...**

**ALL THREE Kill...execute... Slaughter... Farewell to love! Farewell to our race! Farewell, divine lineage! And China comes to an end! But should the night of surrender come...**

**PONG I will shake up for her the soft feathers!**

**PANG I want to perfume her chamber!**

**PING I will lead the bridal pair, holding the lamp!**

**ALL THREE Then the three of us in the garden will sing of love until morning... like this...like this: No longer is there in China, luckily for us, a woman who refuses love! There was only one, and she who was ice is now flame and ardour! Princess, your empire extends from the Tse-Kiang to the immense Yangtze!**

**PING But there, within the filmy hangings, is a husband who reigns over you!**

**THE MINISTERS You smell already the aroma of kisses, already you're a woman, you're filled with languor! Everything whispers in the garden, and golden bells tinkle... They whisper amorous words, as the flowers are pearled with dew! Glory to the lovely, exposed body that now knows the mystery it ignored! Glory to their ecstasy and to Love, which has conquered and has given peace to China again!**

**PING We're dreaming, while the palace is already swarming with lanterns, servants and soldiers! You hear the great drum of the green temple! Already the infinite clogs of Peking are clattering!**

**PONG You hear the trumpets! Peace, indeed!**

**PANG The ceremony is beginning!**

**ALL THREE Let's go and enjoy this umpteenth torture!**

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