

- 34 Since coming to the frontier land,
I have taken all kinds of abuse from the
barbarians.
I have come across the horizon to the Flowery
Flag Nation;
The surroundings still fill me with thoughts
of home.
Don't despair:
All we need is profit and money.
Should our purses be stuffed with gold,
We'll pick out a date and have our homebound
whip ready.

(一)
花旗：參看歌
#3

自到邊疆地。受盡番奴欺。
天涯走過至花旗。觸景依然懷故里。
莫傷氣。祇爭財與利。
黃金擲入荷包裡。整定歸鞭有日期。

JSGJ L.12a

THREE

Lamentations of Estranged Wives

The separation of husband and wife was the most difficult emotional issue for the Chinese immigrants in the United States. Traditional Cantonese practices and unjust American immigration practices made it impossible for wives to come to the United States with their husbands unless the latter were of the merchant class. Hence, Chinatown became a "bachelor society"—a community of married men who lived without their wives—and their home villages turned into a land of widows, as married women had to live without the companionship of their spouses. Since the Cantonese practice was to make sure that a man was married before he left home to earn a living, many of these women were newlyweds when their husbands left home. These women knew little about America, known to them as Gold Mountain or Flowery Flag, where their spouses had gone to spend years of their life in toil and hardship. They knew it only as a faraway place that took away their husbands, in exchange for a seasonal remittance.

Patiently they waited for the husbands to return; many waited in vain, as their dear ones vanished in that foreign land without a trace. For some of the men, the return home was in a box that contained only their bones, shipped back home by the charity arm of their district association in the United States for a proper and final burial.

The rhymes in this section that are written in the wife's persona are laden with immense emotion. I have divided them into two groups. The rhymes in the larger group focus on the woman's feelings about separation. Her need for companionship and the lack of it led to great agony, frustration, and pain. Her world is seen as a domestic one, in which she lives for her husband's presence. In his absence, her life is miserable, unfulfilled, and meaningless, as she lacks an independent life of her own. The return of her husband from Gold Mountain rejuvenates her; his prolonged absence only withers her prematurely.

The other rhymes comprise only a minority. In them, the marriage of an intelligent woman to an inept man is looked at from the wife's point of view. In traditional China, the bride was not allowed a voice in her marriage. The matchmaker proposed and arranged the marriage, which was actually between two families; the parents of the bride and groom made the decisions. The two families' social and economic status, not the individual persons involved, had to be compatible. If a couple was poorly matched, it would lead to much grief and sorrow for both husband and wife, but more so for the woman, since the man was allowed to take another wife, whereas society scorned the woman who divorced and remarried. Interestingly enough, in these rhymes

the protest against arranged marriage is not based on the traditional standard of class compatibility, but on individuality. Probably influenced by the modern Western concept of individual compatibility, this rebellious notion is at odds with the traditional Chinese notion that the woman should never stress her own intelligence over a man's. She might resent being married to an inferior man, but her duty was to make the situation more tolerable for herself by practicing the traditional feminine virtues, or else die with that unresolved resentment. In these rhymes, however, the woman's voice emphasizes individual liberty, as she seeks conjugal compatibility by divorcing her inferior husband and marrying someone else—something unheard of in early twentieth-century China.

- 35 Husband: his foolishness is second to none.
 Life indeed is tragic for the woman.
 Seek a divorce, like an American?
 But the Chinese do not work things out
 in that way!
 A belly full of resentment,
 At the sight of him, eyes burst out in flames.
 What evil deed in my previous life made me
 married to you?
 Why me? Why did I end up with such a fool?

(一)
 一眼火起：眼睛冒火

婿蠢真無比。婦也實傷悲。
 欲將離異學花旗。(一)可恨華人無此理。
 一肚氣。眼見火就起。
 幾世修行嫁着爾。何故遇此混屯兒。

JSGJ I.40a

- 36 Husband: so dumb, second to none;
 Wife: wounded with deep resentment.
 Foolish and naive, he doesn't know when
 to have fun;
 It's a real bore to be with him at any moment.
 Alas! is this called fate?
 I am disgusted with the family, everyone.
 Had I followed the Western practice and
 made my own choice,
 Never, never would I have agreed to wed a moron.

(一) 笨
 (二) 有味：沒有趣味
 (三) 已：作「己」

婿墜真無比。(一) 歸妹暗傷悲。
 愚蒙不識鬧趣時。與他相隨儂有味。(二)
 果命否。家人厭太氣。
 例若泰西由自己。(三) 斷無肯順嫁呆痴。

JSGJ I.39a

- 37 I ended up with a simpleton husband;
The fun and games in life, all betrayed.
Just look at him: stupid, clumsy, like a lump
of clay,
A good-for-nothing, skilled in neither craft
nor trade.
O, my whole life is wronged—
I resent the red string binding us together by
mistake.*
If, by chance, this marriage can be dissolved,
I would be most happy to throw out another bouquet.†

(一) 細：作「晒」；負晒：完全辜負了

湊着庸愚婿。風流負却細。^(一)
見佢呆蠢似團圞。工商唔曾熟一藝。
屈該世。赤繩怨錯繫。
設若婚姻能拆解。花毬再拋也開懷。

JSGJ L.40b

*“Red string” is a metaphor for a nuptial relationship.

†“To throw out a bouquet” is a reference to the popular legend of Wang Baochuan (translated as *Lady Precious Stream* by S. I. Hsiung), who threw out an embroidery bouquet to the public to select her marital mate. Xue Rengui, a poor soul, caught her bouquet, and she married him despite his poverty.

- 38 Unexpectedly I heard Husband say that
He's about to study abroad.
My mind is confused, as tangled up as hemp
fibers.
So we have money, but what do I care!
Who wouldn't be afraid—
To live like a widow in my young age?
If it's not proper for me to tag along,
What ingenious scheme can I dream up to keep
him to me, close and dear?

乍聞夫婿話。遊學去歐亞。
令奴心事亂如麻。即使有錢都係假。
誰唔怕。青春生守寡。
倘若隨行失大雅。憑何妙計挽留他。

JSGJ L.23a

- 39 Husband says he's going to Gold Mountain
And doesn't listen to my pleas.
In the still of night, full of thoughts, I cannot
rest my eyes.
Standing before the dresser alone, I face a
grieving reflection.
I wonder
What man doesn't treasure a lover's bond?
Youth, once gone, will never return;
We may become rich, but wealth is really
nothing!

(一)
不恨：不愛惜

郎話去金山。總唔聽奴諫。
靜夕思量難閉眼。粧台獨立對愁顏。
想一番。情義誰不恨。
青春過了唔再返。縱然富貴也當閒。

JSGJ 1.51b

- 40 The sailing date approaches in quick pace.
Husband will be off to Gold Mountain.
At first I thought it was all fun and excitement;
Who would see it, in our youthful years, as a
cruel separation?
But suddenly—
An endless remorse, aroused by his parting.
Husband says he must go; I plead: don't go so soon;
Don't leave this young woman all by her lonesome
self, grief-stricken.

船期催緊板。夫婿往金山。
當初只話鬧風繁。誰料青春生拆散。
恁陣間。離情無限恨。
君話出門去且慢。免教寂寞怨紅顏。

JSGJ 1.23a

- 41 Dear Husband, you mention a journey to Europe
and America;
Side by side in bed, softly I speak words of
advice:
Once you have made some small gain, hurry home;
Be on guard, there are vices of which you may not
even be aware.
By all means, remember:
Years go by in the twinkling of an eye.
Work hard, earn gold and silver, prepare for our
later years;
And, at this moment, we still don't have an heir.

(一)
妨：作「防」

君話遊歐美。枕畔細囑咐。
蠅頭寬利早歸期。切勿邪行唔覺起。
須緊記。轉瞬多歲紀。
勤取金銀妨晚裡。眼前還未有孩兒。

JSGJ II.10a

- 42 Exuberant willows, playful along the riverside;
A distant journey, revealed in the young woman's
eyes.
Her mothlike brows are locked in sorrow; trees
become a blur.
With no sight of her husband, sorrow besieges her.
Remembering the peak of Wu Mountain,*
No longer possible, the dreams of clouds and rain.[†]
Great grief and resentment are sown by separation.
All in the cries of orioles, the calls of swallows.

柳色堤邊弄。佳人遠目送。
蛾眉愁鎖樹朦朧。未見君子憂忡忡。
憶巫峰。難成雲雨夢。
幾多幽恨離情種。都在鶯啼燕語中。

JSGJ I.27a

*“Wu Mountain” is a metaphor for a lovers’ rendezvous or the act of sexual intimacy. It originated from a Han dynasty myth about Emperor Wu (reigned 140–86 B.C.).

[†]“Clouds and rain” alludes to the act of sexual intimacy.

- 43 Once you sing the parting song,
I'll end up living in loneliness and pain.
Ten thousand miles of clouds and mountains
tear apart the bliss of our love,
While my life is young and vital and in full
spring.
Husband is on a distant journey—
Who wouldn't be worried?
Even if he should come back in triumph and
grace,
The tender years of my life will have all but gone
to waste.

(一)
着緊：着急

驪歌君一詠。儂就苦零丁。
雲山萬里隔恩情。奴况青春纔值令。
增長征。問誰唔着緊。
縱然衣錦回鄉井。畢竟拋荒妄妙齡。

JSGJ 1.22b

- 44 After we wed,
I am lacquer and husband, glue.*
At sixteen my life is in full blossom;
A hundred delights fill us to our hearts' content.
Sadly I am forsaken,
Living for a long time in solitude.
The way parents-in-law behave is hard to explain.
O, what can I do but live through these days of
prolonged delay?

(一)
有能較：參看歌#2

婚期于歸後。共郎漆與膠。
百般快活遂心頭。及笄幾年花正貌。
惜丟拋。冷淡多時候。
爹媽施爲響啟口。推延日子有能較。

JSGJ 1.42b

*“Glue and lacquer” is a conventional metaphor used for an ideal marital relationship.

- 45 Enjoining the words thousands of times:
 Deep is our love as we share the pillow.
 I ask Husband: you're leaving now, but when
 will you return?
 Take pity on your wife living like a swan, all
 alone.
 Quietly I sigh.
 Alone in bed I cannot close my eyes.
 I can't stop the fleeting years;
 Letters of love, soaked with tears, all sent to you,
 my dear.

致囑言千萬。情濃在枕間。
 問郎今別幾時還。憐奴獨處如孤雁。
 暗自嘆。孤眠難入眼。
 歲月催人無計挽。淚灑情書達君顏。

JSGJ I.28b

- 46 Since you've sojourned to America, Husband,
 My heart aches for you all the time.
 Unable to share my feelings, my brows are
 besieged with sorrow;
 I grieve that we're at opposite ends of the
 earth.
 Mourning at midnight,
 I cannot fall asleep in the gauze-tented bed.
 Thinking, wondering, O, who is the trusted
 friend?
 Who will deliver my message to the Flowery Flag
 Nation?

自君遊歐美。妾每心記記。
 幽懷難遞鎖愁眉。惱恨天涯隔兩地。
 午夜悲。羅幃難入寐。
 籌度孰為賢知己。代奴傳語到花旗。

JSGJ I.50a

- 47 We had been wed for only a few nights;
Then you left me for Gold Mountain.
For twenty long years you haven't returned.
For this, I embrace only resentment in my bedroom;
Heaving a sigh
For the faraway sojourner who hasn't come home.
Everything brings me sorrow; I no longer care about
my appearance,
Endless longing for you leads only to streams of
falling tears.

(一) 咁：這麼
(二) 潸潸：作「滑滑」

洞房方幾晚。離別去金山。
廿年咁久未見還。令我閨幃空抱恨。
一聲嘆。遠遊駕莫返。
覩物生愁容懶扮。相思無限淚潸潸。

JSGJ 1.51a

- 48 I count on my fingers: a year is about to end.
In the embroidery room, a young woman laments:
I am still somewhat young—
Yet time passes ever so quickly, in the blink
of an eye,
Gone and never to return;
No one can detain it.
Enjoy life when the time is right, don't ever delay.
Alas, no thanks to Husband, who has yet to come
home.

(一) 新眼：眨眼

屈指年將晚。繡閣佳人嘆。
算來還有幾朱顏。光陰易過如斬眼。
去唔返。幾多人難挽。
行樂及時唔好慢。虧奴夫婿未曾還。

JSGJ 1.34b

- 49 The pair of mandarin ducks has been split apart;*
 The rouge-faced woman is left with a broken heart.
 How she regrets urging Husband to go to the
 Golden Gate.
 So many oceans, so many mountains—her spirit
 dies while she waits.
 Without a moment of peace—
 Youth goes away swiftly.
 Disheartening surroundings, a chaotic mind,
 How can she bear the full moon in the still of the
 night!†

拆散鴛鴦伴。紅顏切胆肝。
 悔教夫婿往金門。重水重山魂望斷。
 刻難安。青春容易轉。
 親物傷情心緒亂。何堪宵靜月團圓。

JSGJ II.53b

* A pair of either mandarin ducks or lovebirds is a metaphor for a man and woman deeply in love.

† "Full moon" is a literary allusion for the reunion of lovers, family members, or friends.

- 50 Husband is in North America.
 He leaves me so easily for some gain!
 This makes me lonely, as I guard the scented
 bedroom by my lonesome self,
 Giving up the gaiety of life at the age of
 twenty-two!
 It's so frustrating.
 This cold bedding keeps me from sleep.
 I light the lamp, and again write him a letter
 from home,
 Dear love, I ask, have you decided when to
 return?

良人在北美。重利輕別離。
 令奴寂寞守香閨。屈了風流年廿二。
 真激氣。衾寒難入寐。
 挑燈又寫家書寄。問郎曾否定歸期。
 (一) 屈：辜負
 (二) 激氣：令人惱怒

JSGJ II.52b

- 51 Husband is stranded in a travelers' inn;
 The rouge-faced woman, restless in her sleep,
 Drafts a letter and asks the geese to take it to
 the Golden Gate;*
 In it she pours out her deep feelings:
 Dear love, please read on,
 Our happy days are few.
 Hurry, hurry home to share my pillow.
 Spare me from growing cold and lonely under
 our jade-green quilt.

良人羈旅館。紅顏寢不安。
 修書勞雁往金門。內寫衷情恁一歎。
 請郎看。風流日子短。
 快快來歸同枕伴。免奴翠被獨生寒。

JSGJ II.36a

* "Geese," see song 28.

- 52 Pressing poverty led to desperation;
 And Husband took off to Gold Mountain.
 It's been three years, or is it five, and I haven't
 seen him come home.
 Many times I write and ask the geese to deliver
 my letters to him:†
 O, far away from home,
 Pity the mandarin ducks torn apart by separation.†
 How can I get you back to cheer me up?
 Just come home, rich or poor, I simply don't care
 anymore!

因窮催緊板。良人往金山。
 三年五載未見還。每作迴文書寄雁。
 隔鄉關。鴛鴦憐拆散。
 怎得回家慰妾恨。有無銀兩亦當閒。

JSGJ I.23b

* "Geese," see song 28.

† "Mandarin ducks," see song 49.

- 53 Husband stays in a foreign land;
His suffering there leaves me grief-stricken.
Idle, sitting alone with knitted brows, I count:
Alas, over twenty years of my precious youth
have gone to waste.
Long sighs and long resignation—
Unable to sleep, I toss and turn.
Distant cries of geese arouse my melancholic
solitude;*
Many times, I dream of flying to the Flowery
Flag Nation.

郎君居異地。難情動妾悲。
無聊獨坐鎖雙眉。屈指韶光虛廿幾。
長歎歎。展轉難成寐。
恍惚雁聲愁觸起。幾回飛夢到花旗。

JSGJ 1.51a

* "Geese," see song 28. Here they also symbolize the migratory return of a sojourner.

- 54 A mere mention of Husband's journey—
A journey one thousand miles away from our
bedroom—
And my heart is shattered into bits and pieces.
What young woman indeed is willing to sleep alone?
Grief and resentment, all piled up.
A pair of mandarin ducks, separated in two places.*
Let me ask you, my young peers in rouge:
How would you feel if you were severed from
your husband?

講起君行旅。寸心就割碎。
路遙千里隔閨闥。孰肯青年甘獨睡。
惱恨堆。鴛鴦分兩處。
試問妙齡紅粉隊。生離夫婿意何如。

JSGJ 1.23a

* "Mandarin ducks," see song 49.

- 55 Dear husband, ever since you sojourned in a
foreign land,
I've lost interest in all matters.
All day long, I stay inside the bedroom, my
brows knitted;
Ten thousand thoughts bring me endless remorse.
In grief, in silence.
I cannot fall asleep on my lonely pillow.
Over the walls comes neighbors' laughter,
piercing through my ears, vexing me with envy.
No thanks to you I alone must endure this misery.

(一) 有心機：沒有興趣
自君遊異地。百事有心機。^(一)
蘭房終日鎖雙眉。萬種尋思愁莫已。
暗傷悲。孤枕難成寐。
惱煞隔牆笑微耳。虧奴獨自嘆淒其。

JSGJ 1.23a

- 56 Fond thoughts of my man: a million emotions.
My husband, a sojourner in Gold Mountain.
Pity this lonesome rouge-faced young woman:
I can live through the day, but not the night.
In my embroidery room,
Misery, with no end in sight.
The sixteen-year-old Seung Ngo is made into a lonely
swan.*
Disheartened by a parting song, my tears quietly flow.

(一) 恨：作「限」
懷人情千萬。夫婿客金山。
可憐寂寞咁紅顏。得過日時難過晚。
綉房間。淒涼無可恨。^(一)
二八嫦娥如孤雁。忍聽驪歌淚暗彈。

JSGJ 1.24b

* In early Chinese mythology, Seung Ngo (Chang E or Heng E), wife of Hau Yu (Hou Yi) who shot down nine suns, stole the elixir of life and fled to the moon. In popular literature, Chang E symbolizes a woman with goddess-like beauty.

- 57 Husband has gone to a country far away.
 The sorrows of separation are manifold in kind.
 The bedroom is desolate; the quilt, chilly.
 How can a single pillow be my mate in my lonely
 sleep?
 My restless sleep?
 With emotions suspended, depression lingers on.
 I am thinking of my man, who hasn't yet returned
 from the ends of the earth;
 I look up, and the moon, so round and full, brings
 me insurmountable frustration.*

君適他邦遠。離愁幾百般。
 羅幃寂靜嘆襟寒。孤枕獨眠誰作伴。
 睡不安。情牽難解悶。
 懷念天涯人未轉。舉頭惱煞月團圓。

JSGJ 1.28a

* "Full moon," see song 49.

- 58 Where is my husband now?
 Before the vanity, I no longer care to paint my
 brows.
 Spring catkins from the fields fly in through the
 curtains;
 Orioles' cries startle and frustrate me.
 O, silly me—
 I cannot sleep with only a pillow.
 Aroused by the sorrow of parting, a sorrow without
 an end,
 I longingly recall plucking willow branches at the
 Farewell Pavilion.*

夫婿棲何地。臨粧懶畫眉。
 陌頭飛絮入羅幃。惱煞鶯啼鶯去耳。
 心癡癡。孤枕難成寐。
 離愁觸起情何已。回憶長亭折柳枝。

JSGJ 1.27a

* "Plucking willow branches at the Farewell Pavilion" is a literary allusion to a woman bidding farewell to her journeying lover/husband. The reference was popularized in the *West Chamber Romance* (*Xixiang ji*), a Yuan dynasty drama based on a Tang dynasty tale of premarital love.

- 59 I have finished my needlework for the night.
 My mood is as chaotic as hemp fibers.
 My blossoming years have been wrongly wasted
 And I cannot even share with you the parting
 sorrow, a sorrow so immense in my mind.
 A heart left dangling.
 One day is three autumns.
 Privately I pray Heaven to grant me this wish:
 Let my husband come home early and in triumph.

今宵刀剪罷。情緒亂如麻。
 却因辜負妾年華。滿腹離愁難共話。
 心掛掛。一日三秋也。
 竊願天緣能可假。等君衣錦早還家。

JSGJ 1.28b

- 60 Youth is a blossom, a fleeting span.
 How can you take leave for a distant place?
 I grieve that I have no wings to fly by your
 side.*
 Alone, hugging the scented quilt, I endure the
 sleepless nights.
 I mourn, in silence.
 A cold breeze comes through the curtains.
 In melancholy, I wonder where that faraway
 frontier is,
 And who will I rely on to deliver the traveler's
 clothes to my dear.

花信過容易。君何竟遠離。
 恨無比翼兩相飛。獨抱香衾眠不寐。
 暗自悲。寒風透幕至。
 悵望遼陽何處是。憑誰代妾寄征衣。

JSGJ 1.27b

* "To have wings and fly side by side" alludes to the lovers' closeness. It originates from *Erya*, an ancient reference classic, and its romantic reference was popularized in the Tang dynasty by poet Bo Juyi (772-846) in his poetic rendition of the romance between Emperor Xuanzong (reign years 713-55) and his consort Yang Guifei.

- 61 I have sewn a fox-fur coat; it's ready to be sent.
 I look for someone to deliver it for me.
 The road to the frontier city is distant, beyond
 the vast horizon;
 Can somebody do me a favor, and take it to my
 husband?
 I've prepared it well.
 How can Husband get it?
 If there are trains as in the West,*
 I will be spared the terrible hassle of sending it by
 mail.

(二)
 艱：作「難」

(一)
 細：作「晒」；整妥晒：完全
 整理妥當

縫好狐裘遞。尋人代我帶。
 邊城路遠隔天涯。邊個任勞呈夫壻。
 整妥細。怎得郎收啟。
 若行火車效西例。免奴寄服咁艱捱。

JSGJ I.52b

*“West” refers to the United States.

- 62 I wish to send traveler's clothes
 To my husband somewhere outside.*
 Is there a courier going to that end of the sky?
 I hope it will reach Husband in time.
 Humbly I bow;
 On whom can I rely?
 On the frontier, most fearsome are the strong
 winds and snows.
 Sorrowful are those who endure the blizzards in
 thin clothes.

(一)
 邊個：誰人

欲把征袍遞。良人在亞西。
 有何驛使到天涯。願得應時呈夫壻。
 頓首拜。邊個能藉賴。
 塞外最愁霜雪大。可憐衫少受風淒。

JSGJ I.52b

*“Outside” could also be rendered as “Sierra.” The Chinese characters *a-sai* in this line might be a phonetic reversal for rhyming purposes.

- 63 The young, rouge-faced woman cherishes her husband
And fears most a separation: one here, the other there.
My dearest love, why must you make a living in a
foreign land?
Besieged by sorrow, our youthful years are totally
wasted.
O, be on your guard:
Don't be corrupted by vices.
As an old saying goes: So many young men wander
all over the world,
Drifting around, forgetting the poor wife of husk
at home.*

紅顏愛夫婿。最怕各東西。
君何異地作生涯。兩誤青春愁莫解。
須警戒。切莫邪行歪。
古語江湖多子弟。飄身忘却糟糠妻。

JSGJ I.24a

*“Wife of husk”: the wife who shares the suffering (“eats husk”) with her husband before he becomes rich and prominent, as seen in the heroine Zhao Wuniang in *Pipa ji* (The Lute), a Yuan dynasty drama written by Gao Ming (fl. 1354).

- 64 Since you left for North America,
You haven't thought of me for twenty long years.
You've banished me to solitude and to my knitted
brows.
It's wrong for lovers to be separated in two places.
O, you are bad!
You don't feel a thing for your poor wife.
You care only for your fun and games outside.
And I must live with the fate of separation for the
rest of my life!

自君遊北美。廿年不我記。
丟僕孤寡鎖雙眉。枉屈鴛鴦分兩地。
可惡汝。唔念諧連理。
在外風流顧一已。虧奴半世守生離。

(一) 唔念：不想念

JSGJ II.39b

- 65 I am petrified by crazy nightmares
 And Husband doesn't seem to care.
 When we were married, as husband and wife,
 that year,
 I thought he would treasure our conjugal tie.
 Alas, who would have guessed:
 He is a cruel wolf at heart.
 He abandons me to solitude; my eyes are puffy
 from tears.
 He lingers around Gold Mountain, and of me,
 he is hardly aware.

(一) 料唔中：料想不到
 (二) 咁樣：如此
 (三) 流戀：多作「留戀」

累奴成顛夢。婿作不關痛。
 昔年與彼結雌雄。估佢夫妻情義重。
 料唔中。(一) 咁樣(二) 狼心種。
 丟妾形單哭眼腫。金山流戀(三) 弗思儂。

JSGJ II.39b

- 66 The betrothal presents were not yet prepared,
 When husband-to-be sojourned in Gold Mountain.
 It's been over sixteen years and he has not
 returned.
 He doesn't care about my grief and resentment
 in the bedroom.
 Quietly I sigh;
 I am dying from all this thinking.
 Why are you, my dear man, so nonchalant?
 You waste my youth, as if it were nothing!

聘禮猶未辦。夫婿客金山。
 年逾二八都唔還。(一) 不理閨中人憾恨。
 暗自嘆。條腸想到爛。
 做乜(二) 郎君心恁散。誤我青春作等閒。

(一) 唔還：不回來
 (二) 做乜：為何

JSGJ II.40a

- 67 Right after we were wed, Husband, you set
out on a journey.
How was I to tell you how I felt?
Wandering around a foreign country, when
will you ever come home?
You are wasting many joyous years of our
precious youth.
My spring heart has turned to ashes.
Poverty does not allow me the luxury of a choice.
But let it be known to all my sisters:
Don't ever marry a young man going overseas!

于歸夫出外。有口實難開。
遨遊異國幾時回。負却風流經數載。
春心灰。家貧無可奈。
寄語同羣諸姊妹。出洋子弟勿相配。

JSGJ 1.23b

- 68 The ship *SS Asia* has arrived.
But Husband has not come home on it.
Perhaps a delay, and he is on the *SS China*?
Or maybe he's returning on the *SS Korea*.
O, my mind is full of worries—
I hope the news is not false.
I am waiting: *SS Manchuria*, *SS Mongolia*...
Finally the geese bring a word and everything
turns blurry.*

(一) 埋：到達。
(二) 毡拿：船名；多作「差拿」；
即「中國」號船。
(三) 唔係：不是。
船埋^(一)亞細亞。良人未到家。
抑或期延搭毡拿^(二)。恐由高麗抵中華。
心掛掛。想必唔係假^(三)。
等候滿洲蒙古也。雁字寄來眼花花。

JSGJ 1.51b

*“Geese,” see song 28.