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CHNS120

Chinese Literature

Week 04-02

Drama: *The Story of the Western Wing*

(1) Introduction

From: William H. Nienhauser, Jr. *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature* (2nd rev. ed.) (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 407-09.

(2) Main text: Book IV

From: Stephen H. West, Wilt L. Idema (trans. and ed.). *The Story of the Western Wing* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 224-52.

Hsi-hsiang chi 西廂記 (*The West Chamber Story*; also known by the alternate titles *Pei hsi-hsiang* 北西廂, *Wang hsi-hsiang* 王西廂, and *Ts'ui Ying-ying tai-yüeh Hsi hsiang-chi* 鶯鶯待月西廂記) has been praised by both traditional and modern critics not only as the masterpiece of the northern *tsa-chü** dramas, but of all Chinese drama. The story line may be summarized as follows: a young scholar of great literary promise, Chang Chün-jui 張君瑞 (Student Chang), while on his way from the capital to prepare for the examinations, stops off at a Buddhist monastery to visit an old friend who lives in the area. By coincidence, Widow Ts'ui, the wife of a deceased prime minister and a distant relative, is returning home with her two children to bury her husband. She has taken up temporary lodging in the monastery. Student Chang is immediately struck by the beauty of Mrs. Ts'ui's daughter, Ying-ying, and falls deeply in love with her. But she is already betrothed to another man (Cheng Heng). When a local military commander stages a revolt, Widow Ts'ui promises her daughter to anyone who can protect her and her daughter. Chang seizes the opportunity and has his friend, the powerful general Tu Chüeh, suppress the rebellion, thereby saving Ying-ying and her family from the bandits. But Mrs. Ts'ui reneges on her promise. Student Chang then tries to seduce the young girl, but she upbraids him for his lascivious designs. The dispirited Chang then falls ill, and eventually Ying-ying is brought by her maid servant Hung-niang 紅娘 to share his couch at night. When the affair is detected, Madam Ts'ui promises Ying-ying to Chang provided he succeeds in the state examinations. He departs, but is visited by Ying-ying's spirit in a dream; she pines away at

the monastery, waiting for news of the examination results. When Chang succeeds and returns, he finds Cheng Heng, her original fiancé, at the monastery. Widow Ts'ui has again promised Ying-ying to Cheng Heng. Through the intervention of Tu Chüeh, the lovers are finally united in marriage.

The source of the *Hsi hsiang-chi* story is the T'ang dynasty tale "Ying-ying chuan" (see Yuan Chen). The immediate predecessor and main source for the Yuan play, however, is Tung Chieh-yüan's *Hsi-hsiang chi chu-kung-tiao*.^{*} Whereas Yuan Chen's story focuses on one central theme—Student Chang's seduction and later abandonment of Ying-ying—Tung Chieh-yüan's *Madley* extensively elaborates on both plot and characterization. Furthermore to the delight of audiences and readers ever since, the *Hsi-hsiang chi* follows Tung's revision of the ending of the story: instead of rejecting Ying-ying, Chang marries her and they live happily ever after. The length (over five-thousand lines of verse) of the Tung Chieh-yüan version may help to explain the unusual length of the Yuan play, actually a series of five plays (*pen* 本), each containing four acts (*chie* 折).

Authorship of the Yuan *tsa-chü* version of the *Hsi-hsiang chi* is generally attributed to Wang Shih-fu 王實甫 (*ming*, Te-hsin 德信, fl. thirteenth century). Little is known about him. Entries in the extant versions of the *Lu-huai pu*,^{*} mention only that he was a native of Ta-tu 大都 (near modern Peking), and that he composed a total of fourteen plays, three of which are extant. Several traditional scholars, most notably Chin Sheng-t'an,^{*} held that the play was actually the collaborative work of Wang Shih-fu and Kuan Han-ch'ing.^{*} Chin and other critics maintained that Wang Shih-fu wrote the first four plays and Kuan Han-ch'ing the final one. Modern critics such as Wang Chi-szu 王季思 have convincingly argued against such a theory.

The plot construction, characterization, and superb poetry combine to make the *Hsi-hsiang chi* an outstanding work of dramatic literature. While the central conflict of pitting the natural inclinations of two

young lovers against the forces of conventional morality (represented in the play by the stern mother) is a common theme in Yuan drama, Wang Shih-fu's tightly-knit plot skillfully blends moments of heightened tension, such as the scene where the monastery is surrounded by bandits attempting to kidnap Ying-ying, with moments of comic relief, such as the sacrificial scene in the temple when Ying-ying's extraordinary beauty totally disrupts what otherwise would have been a very solemn ceremony.

Student Chang and Ying-ying are both represented as emotional and sensual youngsters in the beginning of the play, and their interest as characters derives from the sometimes unpredictable way they diverge from the standard roles society assigned to young students and virtuous maidens. Even in light of literary expectations, Ying-ying is remarkably well-characterized as a young girl who fits neither the category of the virtuous maiden nor that of the licentious woman (one must remember that she is portrayed as the *hulan* character—the "painted woman"). The most memorable character in the play is Hung-niang, Ying-ying's handmaid. Developing remarkably throughout the play, she serves as the catalyst for the actions of the other characters. Though at first on the side of conventional morality (in Part I, Act II, for instance, she reprimands Chang for making "improper" inquiries about her mistress), she later becomes more sympathetic to the two when Mrs. Ts'ui withdraws her promise of Ying-ying's hand to Student Chang. Hardly the "stock" maid-character found in most Yuan dramas, Hung-niang ingeniously tells half-truths, persuades and manipulates Chang and Ying-ying into action, and even defies the authority of Mrs. Ts'ui, all for the purpose of uniting the lovers.

But the *sine qua non* of any successful Yuan playwright was skill at composing *ch'ü*,^{*} the dramatic lyrics. Wang Shih-fu was one of the most successful at this. Whether describing a natural scene to evoke a particular atmosphere or mood, or delineating human sentiments, he composes with great skill.

This play became the basis for innumerable later adaptations. The story reappeared in Southern *ch'uan-chi*^{*} plays, and in different forms of prosimetric literature during the Ming and Ch'ing.

In our edition:

* = student, male lead

* = Oriole, female lead

* = Grinch, Oriole's maid
servant

ashamed of? Once there, just close your eyes. (Crimson, pushing female lead, speaks:) Go on! Go on! The madam is asleep! (Female lead acts out running [and leaves]. Crimson sighs and speaks:) My sister may put on a strong show, but her steps have carried there already.

"Duanzheng hao" (Crimson sings:)

Because of sister's jadelike spirit and flowerlike appearance,
He's been longing for her day and night without a break.
Let her one sincere heart erase all her heaven-cheating deception!
She leaves her painted chambers and goes to his study room;
She departs the cave of Chu and goes to Gaotang.
Learning to filch jade and attempting to pilfer perfume:
The handsome lass of Shamanka Mountain and King Xiang of Chu.
King Xiang of Chu must already be on the Terrace of Yang!

[[Crimson leaves.]]



(Male lead [enters] and speaks:) The note that Crimson gave me last night promised that I would succeed tonight. The first watch has just ended, but I still don't see her. Don't lie anymore, missy. (Student recites:)

This fine night in the world of men, is it still or not?
The comely lass from heaven above, will she come or not?

[Xianlü mode:] "Dian jiangchun" (Student sings:)

Standing still on quiet steps,
The night is deep, and fragrant incense mists
Are spread over this realm of gold.²
Desolate and lonely is the study;
Drowned in depression is a roving reader of books.

"Hunjiang long" (Student sings:)

Where are the colored clouds?
The moonlight is like water, soaking tower and terrace;
The monks are in their meditation cells;
Ravens caw in courtyard sophoras.
Wind plays the sounds of bamboo:
I take it for the echo of her golden pendants.
Moonlight moves the shadows of flowers:
Can it be the jade person coming?
My damned eyes suspended in expectation,
My passionate breast burning in anxiousness,

² A common term for a Buddhist temple.

Crimson Coerces Onole to Go to Her Tryst with the Student

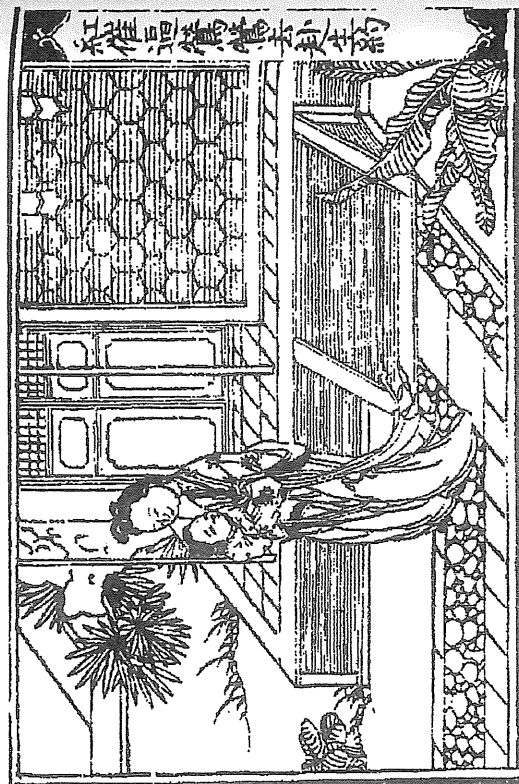
VOLUME IV OF THE DELUXE, COMPLETELY ILLUSTRATED, AND ANNOTATED STORY OF THE WESTERN WING

A Clandestine Meeting of Ram and Clouds

Act 1

(Female lead enters and speaks:) Last night Crimson took my note to Student Zhang, setting a tryst to see him tonight.¹ I'll wait until Crimson comes, and talk it over with her. (Crimson enters and speaks:) Sister ordered me to deliver a note to Student Zhang in which she promised a rendezvous tonight. But I'm afraid that young mistress of mine is lying again, and that will finish him off. It's no joke anymore. I'll see what she says when I get there. (Female lead speaks:) Straighten up my bedroom, Crimson, I want to go to sleep. (Crimson speaks:) If you are going to sleep, how will you dispose of that student? (Female lead speaks:) What about that student? (Crimson speaks:) There you go again. It's no joke to send a person to his death. If you go back on your word again, I'm going to inform on you to the madam and tell her you sent me with a note to set up a rendezvous with him. (Female lead speaks:) You little hussy! You're really a pain in the neck. I'm burning with shame—how can I go? (Crimson speaks:) What's there to be

¹ "Last night" and "tonight" may refer to the nights of performance rather than time within the play, since the action seems to run on without interruption.



My heart and body a single piece—
I do not know how to deal with them.
I had best sheepishly lean on this gate and wait.
In utter silence, the blue-green simurgh brings no letter,
The yellow dog carries no news.³

(Student speaks:) She's on my mind every minute twenty-four hours of the day.
But how could you know?

115a

"You hulu" (Student sings:)
Love thoughts, drowsy and confused, my eyes too tired to open,
From my solitary pillow
My dream soul flies to the Terrace of Yang in Chu;
Could I have known my suffering for her would go on day and night?
Better never to have met this city-topping vamp.
When people commit transgressions, they must chastise themselves,
Without being afraid to reform.
I intended to keep my heart alert, "treating the wise as wise and slighting sex,"⁴
But I had no defense against the way that she would suddenly come to mind.
"Tianxia le" (Student sings:)
I can only lean firmly against the gate, hands propping my chin;
I have no way of guessing
Whether she will come or not.
The madam's side, I guess, is hard to leave.
I gaze for her until my eyes are worn through,
I long for her until my heart grows constricted.
Probably my "karmic enemy" is not at liberty.

115b

(Male lead speaks:) If she's not here by now, then isn't she just lying again?

³ Blue-green simurghs were the messengers of the Queen Mother of the West. The birds once visited the Martial Emperor of Han's palace on the seventh day of the seventh month and presaged a visit by the Queen Mother herself. The simurgh is a messenger, then, but one that is a harbinger of a visit by the sender. The reader should note that the seventh day of the seventh month is also the one day of the year that the Herdboy and Weaving Girl meet. The dog of the second couplet is the fabled Yellow Ear (Huang'er) of the Six Dynasties poet Lu Ji (261–303). He earned messages home for his master, who was stationed in the capital.

⁴ These three lines are adapted from the *Analekts*. The first is a paraphrase of *Analekts*, 1.8: "The Master said, 'If a gentleman is not taken as weighty, then he provokes no awe and his learning will not be solid. One should make conscientiousness and sincerity one's mainstay. Have no friends but one's equals. If wrong, reform without fear.'" The second is from *Analekts*, 1.7: "Zixia said, 'A man who treats the wise as wise and disesteems sexual attraction can exhaust his strength in service to his parents, can exert himself in service to his lord, and is one whose words can be trusted in interaction with friends. Even though he is called unlearned, I would say he is learned.'"

"Nuozha ling" (Student sings:)
If she's really willing to come,
Then morning's radiance has left her noble quarters.
If she'll really be here,

Then spring will burst forth in my simple study.

But if she does not come,
Like a rock I'll sink into the great ocean.

I count the steps she has to go
And wait, clinging to the window sill.
Please tell her, her of many talents:

"Que ta zhi" (Student sings:)
"Of that cruel lecture you gave me,
I have no memory in my heart.

Now that I've won your change of mind and turn of heart,
Night has gone and the daylight is here.
Vainly I have cast amorous glances

By now for half a year—
I barely made it through those times!"

(Student speaks:) Young lady, if you don't come this time,

"jisheng cao" (Student sings:)
I'm set to suffer,
Prepared to be borne away.

Well, I've forced myself to live on water and tea in a strange land.
All because that detestable creature taught my heart to bear torture⁵
And manipulated this sincere heart until just a carcass was left alive.
If one were to order the Bureau of Astronomical Observations to compute my

sorrows of this half year,

Truly it would be more than ten loads in a heavy wain.

(Crimson enters and speaks:) Missy, I'll go over; you stay here. ([Crimson] acts out knocking on the door. Male lead asks:) Who is it? (Crimson speaks:) Your mother from your former life. (Student speaks:) Missy, come on, I'm waiting. (Female lead greets male lead. Male lead acts out opening the door. Male lead kneels and speaks:)⁶ What abilities do I, Zhang Gong, have that a divine sylph should trouble herself to descend from heaven? Am I sleeping or dreaming?

"Cunli yagu" (Student sings:)

All of a sudden I see her detestable countenance—

(Male lead speaks:) Was I ever sick?

⁵ For "detestable creature," see play 1, act 2, n. 2.

⁶ The logical order of the stage directions is reversed here; this is probably a mistake for "Male lead acts out opening the door. Female lead acts out greeting male lead."

[(Student sings:)]

She has cured 90 percent of my queasiness.

Since I was chastised earlier,

Who could have expected tonight's joyous loving?

Oh, missy, you are so considerate,

I, this untalented Zhang Gong, must kneel and make obeisance.

Thus small student lacks Song Yu's face,

Pan An's looks,

Cao Zhi's talents.⁷

Sister,

Please take pity on me, who has to live as a traveler!

116b

"Yuanhe ling" (Student sings:)

Her embroidered shoes, barely half a span,

Her willowy waist just fills a single armful;

Bashful and embarrassed, she refuses to lift her head

But keeps grasping the mandarin-duck pillow

Her cloudy coif seems to let slip its golden harpuns:

How it suits her, the bun at her nape awry.

117a

"Shangma jiao" (Student sings:)

I loosen the knotted buttons,

Untie her silken waistwrap;

Orchid musk spreads through my secluded study

O cruel one, you can really make me suffer.

Al,

Why aren't you willing to turn your face to me?

"Sheng hulu" (Student sings:)

Here to my breast I press her pliant jade and warm perfume—

Al,

Ruan Zhao has reached Mount Tiantai.⁸

Spring has come to the realm of men, flowers sport their color!

Gently she adjusts her willowy waist

And lightly splits the flower's heart:

Dew drips; the peony opens.

"Reprise" (Student sings:)

I just wet the tip, and she becomes numb all over:

Fish and water find harmonious concord;

From the lovely fragrance of the tender pistil the butterfly collects at will.

⁷ The son of Cao Cao (155–220) and a famous poet from the late Han and Three Kingdoms period.

⁸ See play I, act 1, n. 27; note that, like Peach Blossom Fount, Mount Tiantai may allude to sexual union.

Partly resistant, partly eager to give,
Now alarmed, now full of love—
A sandalwood mouth kisses fragrant cheeks.

(Male lead kneels and speaks:) Thank you, missy, for not rejecting Zhang Gong. Tonight I was allowed to share your pillow and mat, and on another day I shall repay this favor like a devoted servant.⁹ (Female lead speaks:) In a single second I have thrown away my body, precious as a thousand pieces of gold. My body and my life I entrust to you forever. May you never disdain me in the future and make me lament my white hair.¹⁰ (Male lead speaks:) How would I ever dare such a thing! (Male lead acts out inspecting her handkerchief.)

"Houting hua" (Student sings:)

Its spring silk was at first sparkling white,

But now I see a red fragrance has sprinkled its tender color.

(Female lead speaks:) Oh, how embarrassing! Why are you inspecting it?

[(Student] sings:)

Below the lamp I steal a glance;

I place it next to my breast.

Oh, how marvelous!

My whole body feels great;

I do not know whence spring came.

But this incapable budding talent Zhang.

This lonely traveler from Western Luo—

Ever since I encountered your beauty,

I longed for you so much that I couldn't get you off my mind.

I was anxious and saddened by obstacles;

My love-longing had no relief.

O my loved one,

How grateful I am for not being chastised.

"Luyue'er" (Student sings:)

I will treasure you as my own precious heart,

Since I've sullied your pure whiteness.

I forgot to eat, neglected to sleep, vented heart's suffering;

But if I had not endured it with a true heart and struggled through with sincerity,

Would it have been possible that from the bitterness of our love-longing such sweetness would come?

⁹ The Chinese text actually reads, "On a later day I will repay you as a dog or a horse", that is, in a subsequent incarnation he will be reborn as a dog or a horse and will serve her with the unquestioning devotion of these animals—a conventional phrase used to express gratitude.

¹⁰ On the "Lament on White Hair," see p. 68.

"Qing ge'er" (Student sings:)

We've consummated tonight's, tonight's joyous loving;
My soul has soared beyond welkin's, welkin's clouds.
From the moment I saw you, my passionate darling,
My emaciated carcass has been thinning to a hemp stalk;
Tonight's harmonious concord—I still can't believe it.
Dew drips on fragrant dust;
The wind is quiet on still steps.
Moonlight shoots into my study;
Clouds lock away the Yang Terrace.
I ask for a clear answer;
I still believe you've come in last night's dream¹¹—
Oh, stubborn sorrow!

118a

(Female lead speaks:) I'm going back lest the madam look for me when she awakens. (Student speaks:) I'll see you out, mussy.

"jisheng cao" (Student sings:)

How elegant!
Too beautiful!
As soon as I see her, I suffer.
Don't see her for a second: she has you wondering;
See her for just a while: she's got you in love.
Tonight we met within bed-curtains of azure gauze;
When will I again untie your wastwrap of fragrant silk?

(Crimson speaks:) Come bow to your mother. Student Zhang, my congratulations. Missy, we'd better go.

[(Female lead and Crimson leave.)]

118b

(Student recites:)

The gathering is finished, each goes his way;
How shameful to hear the ashram bell ring after the meal:
For ten years darkened by dust and grime,
But now at last engaged by azure gauze.¹²

"Coda" (Student sings:)

Spring desires shone through her creamy breasts,
Spring colors spread across the jet of her brows.

¹¹ In a rare oversight, Wang Shifu here makes reference to a dream sequence that occurs in the all-keys-and-modes but not in the drama. In that sequence, Zhang Sheng, ill, dreams that he has consummated his union with Oriole, only to be disappointed when he awakens.

¹² For the story of Lü Mengzheng, see pp. 19–20.

Now devalued are the jade and silk of the human realm:

Apricot-flower skin and peach-blossom cheeks

In the color of the moonlight,

Oh, so lovely, display the more their red and white.

She descends from fragrant steps and lazily paces the dark green moss.

What moves me are the arched shoes, phoenix-beak narrow!

Alas, small fry like me are without talent;

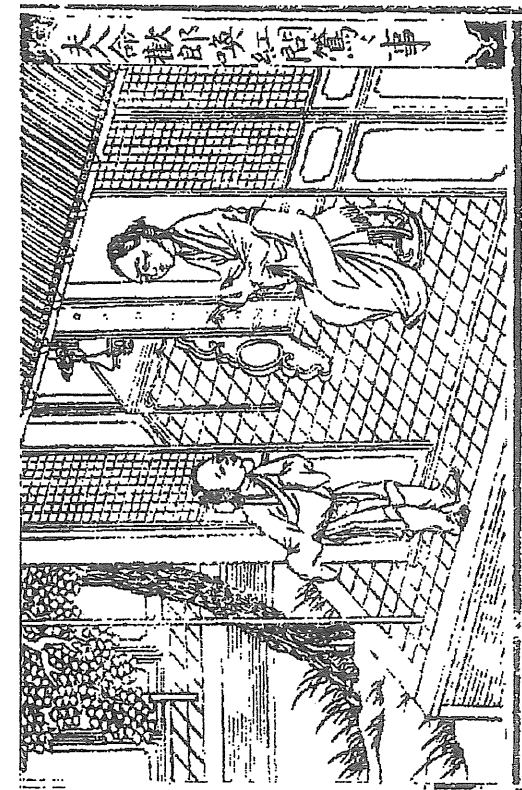
Thank you, my lovely, for deigning to love me.

(Male lead speaks:) If you don't reject me, mussy, please be of like heart of passion.

[(Student] sings:)

You must do your best to be here earlier tomorrow night!

[(Student leaves.)]



The Old Lady Sends Happy to Summon Crimson in Order to Ask about Onole

118b

Act 2

(Old lady, leading young child, enters and speaks:) These past few days I've been keeping an eye on Onole, and I've noticed that she is flustered when talking but that her energies are doubled. Her slender waist is unlike earlier days. Could she have had the daring to do it? (Happy speaks:) Last night, when you were asleep, I saw sister and Crimson go to burn incense. They stayed out a long time; I finally went to sleep. (Old lady speaks:) Crimson shoulders the responsibility for this affair. Call Crimson! (Young child calls Crimson. Crimson [enters] and speaks:) Brother, why are you calling me? (Young child speaks:) Mother knows you and sister went into the flower garden. Now she's going to thrash you. (Crimson speaks:) Missy, you've dragged me into it now Brother, go on ahead; I'll be there shortly (Crimson acts out calling female lead. [Female lead enters.] Crimson speaks:) Sister, the affair is out in the open. The madam is calling for me. What shall I do? (Female lead speaks:) Dear sister, please keep the lid on it. (Crimson speaks:) Oh, fuck! Well, you've been quite circumspect! I'm going to say that you've done it. (Female lead recites:)

As soon as the moon is round, dark clouds will obscure it;
When flowers blossom, violent rains are called forth to ruin them.

[Yuediao mode:] "Dou anchun" (Crimson sings:)
I told you to go by night and return by light

119a

So it might "last as long as heaven and earth."¹

Because you clutched the rain and transported the clouds,
My heart was always in my mouth.

You should have gone between moonrise and sunset—
Who told you to sleep there all through the night?

The old madam's wiles are manifold,
Her temper is violent.

There will be no use now for my clever words and flowery speech
That turn nothing into something!

"Zihua'er xu" (Crimson sings:)

The madam has guessed that this bankrupt sourpuss has become her new son-in-law,

That missy has become the lovely bride,

And that this little hussy has been their secret go-between.

Now your sprung mountains let their halcyon green fall slack,

Your pupils lie frozen in their autumn waters.

Other changes aren't worth mentioning:

Just try to fasten the belt of your skirt

Or button the frogs across the front.

Compared to your earlier and slimmer self,

You've gained a lot of energy

And a special kind of romantic charm.

(Female lead speaks:) Answer carefully when you get there, Crimson. (Crimson speaks:) When I get in front of the madam, she'll surely ask, "You little hussy,

"Jin jiaoye" (Crimson sings:)

"I ordered you to guard and observe her wherever she went or stayed!

Who told you to lead her on to mischief and to let her wander astray?"

If she questions me on this point, how can I plead innocence?

"You should sentence her on the count of conspiracy!"

(Crimson speaks:) It is fitting that you be chastised. What did I scheme for?

"Tiaoxiao ling" (Crimson sings:)

Within the embroidered bed-curtains you were "bound together round and round,"²

¹ From the last couplet of Bo Juyi's "Song of Unending Sorrow" ("Changhen ge"), a ballad of Tang Xuanzong's love and loss of the Precious Consort Yang. After the two lovers have met again on a magic isle, she tells him of her desire for eternal love; but the poem ends: "Heaven goes on, earth endures, but there is a time they will end; / This vexation threads on and on, and will never be broken."

² Both lines of this couplet refer to sexual activity. The first line is from Mao no. 118 of *The Book of Poetry*, the first stanza of which reads:

And you had it all: the upside-down phoenix and flip-flopped smurgh.
But outside the window I lightly coughed a number of times,
Standing on the dark green moss until my embroidered slippers were frozen
through.

Today my tender skin will be raised in welts by a thick cudgel.

O sister,
All my good offices—
What did I do them for?

(Crimson speaks:) Sister, please wait here. I'll go over there. If I can talk her around, then don't be happy; if I can't, then don't be upset. (Crimson acts out greeting old lady. Old lady speaks:) Why don't you kneel down, you hussy? Do you know with what crime you are charged? (Crimson speaks:) I do not know of any crime. (Crimson kneels down and speaks:) I do not know of any crime! (Old lady speaks:) You still stubbornly deny it. If you tell the truth, I'll let you off; if you don't tell the truth, I'll beat you to death, you hussy! Who ordered you to go with sister to the flower garden? (Crimson speaks:) We never went! Who saw us? (Old lady speaks:) Happy saw you go. You still deny it? (Old lady] acts out beating Crimson. Crimson speaks:) Don't sprain your hand, madam. Please stay your rage and stop your anger to listen to my story

120b

"Gui santai" (Crimson sings:)

Sitting at night, just finished with our embroidery,
I was idly chatting with sister,
And our talk turned to brother Zhang's long illness.
The two of us, without telling you,
Went to visit him in his study.

(Old lady speaks:) What did he say when you asked about him? (Crimson speaks:) He said

([Crimson] sings:)

Said, "The madam—the affair is finished!—
She's turned favor into a feud
And midway changed my joy into grief."
He said, "Crimson, you go on ahead for the while,
And let your young mistress stay behind for a time."

(Old lady speaks:) But she's just a young girl! Why did you let her stay behind?

Round and round, the firewood bound,
The three stars are in the sky
What night is tonight?

The night I see this good man.

The song has traditionally been read as expressing the joy of a happily married couple. In popular literature, the first two words of the opening line, "round and round" (*doumou*), have come to stand for sexual congress.

"Tusi'er" (Crimson sings:)

I thought it was only for the divine needle and hot dharma moxa;
Who expected swallow friendship and oriole mating?
The two of them have been sleeping together for over a month now;
What need is there to inquire into the facts one by one?

"Shengyao wang" (Crimson sings:)

They don't recognize grief, don't recognize sorrow;
Their paired hearts are a perfect fit.

Madam, you'd better stop when it's night to stop.

Why must you suffer now to trace down every clue?

The proverb says, "A girl grown up should not be kept."³

(Old lady speaks:) You hussy, you're responsible for it all! (Crimson speaks:) It is not Student Zhang's crime, or my sister's, or mine—it's your mistake alone, madam. (Madam speaks:) Now this hussy fingers me! How could it be my mistake? (Crimson speaks:) Trust is the root of man: "To be a man and be without trust—I do not know if such is possible. A large cart without crossbar, a small cart without yoke—how can one drive them?"⁴ When earlier the troops sealed off Universal Salvation, you promised that you would give your daughter to whoever could make the troops withdraw. If Student Zhang had not admired the beauty of the young mistress, would he have been willing to go to the trouble of devising a plan to make the troops withdraw? But when the troops withdrew and we all were safe, you, madam, went back on your earlier word. Can that be anything but a breach of trust? Once you were unwilling to conclude the affair as promised, then you should have rewarded Student Zhang with gold and silk and sent him on his way. You should not have kept him here and asked him to stay in the study and so cause a frustrated girl and single man to steal glances at each other. That's why you have this affair, madam. If you don't put this affair to rest right now, madam, first of all, you'll dishonor the chancellor and secondly, when Student Zhang is a famous name in the world, will he accept having been dishonored after bestowing such a favor? If you take the matter to court, then you, madam, will be sentenced for failing to keep strict control in the family. If the court inquires further into the case, they will find out that you, madam, turned your back on what was right and ignored a favor. How can you maintain your reputation as a woman of wisdom? I, Crimson, would not dare presume to decide what's right, but I hope that you, madam, will give the matter your consideration. The best would be to pardon this small transgression and complete the grand affair. "Moisten to remove a blemish" isn't that the best way out?

"Ma lang'er" (Crimson sings:)

That budding talent is a champion of cultured writings;

³ From a common saying: "There are three things that should not be kept: old silk-worms should not be kept, old people should not be kept, and a girl grown up should not be kept."

⁴ From *Analekts*, 2.22.

Elder sister is a leader among noble maidens:

One is thoroughly versed in the three creeds and nine schools;
One is perfectly adept at patterning and embroidery.

"Reprise"

It is a fact,

So don't neglect

To promptly act.

Why turn a benefactor into an enemy?

He called out his old friend, the White Horse General,

To behold that rebel and robber, the Flying Tiger.

"Luosiniang" (Crimson sings:)

Because you are completely at odds with Laureate Zhang,

You bring shame and disgrace on Chancellor Cui.

In the end it will involve your own flesh and blood:

Madam, you should consider it with utmost care.

(Old lady speaks:) What this little hussy has said is right. I ought not to have raised such a good-for-nothing daughter! If I were to take it to court, I would defile our family reputation. Enough! Our family counts among it no man who has transgressed the law, no woman who has married twice. I'll have to give her to this scoundrel. Crimson, call that hussy here! (Crimson greets female lead and speaks:) Congratulations, sister. She had the cudgel out as quick as a flash, but she swallowed my line. I didn't have much to fear. Mother is calling you now and wants to complete your union. (Female lead speaks:) How embarrassing! How will I be able to face the madam? (Crimson speaks:) What is there to ashamed of in front of your mother?

"Xiaotao hong" (Crimson, scolding female lead, [sings]:)

On that night the moon had barely risen above the willow tops,

But you had already made a tryst with your lover after dusk.

I was so ashamed, I turned my head and bit the sleeve of my garment;

But when I fixed my eyes

And looked, I saw the tapering tips of your shoes.

One was so unrestrained in passion, she couldn't stop;

One fucked away with moaning sounds.

Ah, then why didn't you suffer the truest bit of shame?

(Female lead acts out seeing old lady. Old lady speaks:) Or else, how have I raised you that you would commit such an act now? It must be my bad karma. Who is to blame? If I were to take it to court, I would disgrace your father. This is not the act of a member of the chancellor's family. Enough! Enough! Who has been so unlucky to bring up a daughter like mine? Crimson, go the study and summon that beast! (Crimson acts out calling student. [Male lead enters and speaks:]) Missy, why are you calling me? (Crimson speaks:) Your affair is out in the open. Now the madam calls you to betroth the young lady to you. My young mistress

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has already confessed, so you'd better go on. (Male lead speaks:) I'm so scared! How can I see the madam? Who squealed to her? (Crimson speaks:) Don't feign such scruples. Just go on.

"Xiaotao hong" (Crimson, scolding female lead, [sings]:)⁵

Since the affair has leaked out, how can it be stopped?

It was I who confessed all.

Our family will provide the tea and the wine to bring it to an end.⁶

Don't be sorrowed.

There is no need for an engagement contract or use of a go-between.

I'm giving up my instructorship and won't take any more students⁷ —

You turned out to be a sprout that wouldn't bud.

Bah, you're just a pewter spear that looks like silver.⁸

(Male lead acts out greeting old lady. Old lady speaks:) Oh, what a fine and budding talent! Haven't you ever heard, "If it is not the virtuous behavior of the Former Kings, I do not dare practice it"?⁹ I'd like to take you to court, but I'm afraid of disgracing our family record. Now I gave Or else to you as wife. But for three generations our family has not welcomed a son-in-law clad in white.¹⁰ Tomorrow you will leave for the capital to take the examinations. I will watch over your wife. If you obtain an official position, then come see me. If you fail, don't bother. (Crimson speaks:) Student Zhang, my congratulations!

"Dongyuan le" (Crimson sings:)

A single stroke of the pen wipes out love's longing;

Now you can unfurrow the earlier wrinkles on your brow

Your beautiful love and secret joy have just stirred,

And since you can do it

[(Crimson speaks:)] Student Zhang, just look:

[(Crimson sings:)]

Does such a lovely face as this

Need someone else to enjoy it?

(Old lady speaks:) Have your baggage ready tomorrow. We'll prepare fruits and

⁵ "Female lead" is obviously an error for "male lead."

⁶ Normally, the young man's family prepared tea and wine when asking for the girl's hand in marriage.

⁷ Roughly equivalent to "I've had it with you."

⁸ Something that looks like the real thing but is not. We read this as a reference to the "spear that is too easily bent," a barb directed at Zhang's manhood.

⁹ From the "Section on Grandees" ("Qingdaifu zhang") in *The Classic of Filial Piety* (*Xiaojing*), the most elementary of exemplary texts in the Confucian canon.

¹⁰ I.e., one who has yet to pass the examinations and don the robes of office—a student or a commoner.

wine and invite the abbot to come along with us to see Student Zhang off at the ten-mile pavilion.¹¹ (Female lead recites:)

"Go tell the willows on the banks of the western river,
'Prepare your green eyes to see the traveler off.'"¹²

"Coda" (Crimson sings:)
When you come back, the flutes and drums in the painted hall will sound
spring's daylight;
A pair, a smurgh mate and phoenix friend, will be arranged.
Only then will I accept the red reward for being matchmaker,¹³
Only then will I drink the wine for thanking relatives.

[(All leave.)]

¹¹ Mileage was marked every five *li* along major roads. This refers to a pavilion erected at the first ten-*li* marker outside of town.

¹² This last line is lifted from a poem by a Jin poet of the twelfth century who recited it on the way to his execution.

¹³ The "red reward" was red patterned cash given to the matchmaker on the third day after the marriage, when the man's family gave a banquet for the parents, the matchmaker, and the parents of the wife. This banquet was called "wine for thanking relatives."



Ornole Sees the Student Off and Weeps as They Part

Act 3

(Old lady and abbot enter. [She] opens.) Today we are sending Student Zhang off to the capital. I've arranged for a banquet at the ten-mile pavilion. The abbot and I have gone ahead. What's keeping Student Zhang and missy? (Female lead, [leading Crimson], and male lead, [leading lute boy], enter together. [Female lead] speaks:) Today I'm seeing Student Zhang off to the capital to take the examinations. Already upset by emotions of separation, I encounter now this atmosphere of late autumn. How vexing! (Female lead recites:)

Grief and happiness, gathering and separation: a single cup of wine.
South, north, east, and west: a myriad-mile journey.

[Zhengong mode:] "Duanzheng hao" (Female lead sings:)

A sky azure and clouded,
An earth flowered yellow;

The western wind is stiff; northern geese fly southward.

At dawn what dyes the frosted woods the flush of drunkenness?
It will ever be the tears of separated lovers.

"Gun xiqu" (Female lead sings:)

I am vexed that our meeting was so slow

And resent that your departure is so quick.

The willow threads are long, and the jade colt is hard to fetter;¹

¹ *Luist* (willow threads) is an exact homophone for a phrase meaning "intent to keep

I am vexed that I cannot hire the sparse woods to hold back the slanting sunbeams.

The horse proceeds slowly, slowly;
My carriage follows swiftly, swiftly
We had scarcely reported our evasion of love's longing;
Just broaching the theme, we are separated again.²
As soon I heard the word "leaving" spoken,
My golden armbands grew loose.
From far away I had only to see the ten-mile pavilion,
And my jade white flesh wasted away
Can anyone understand this vexation?

(Crimson speaks:) Sister, you're not made-up today (Female lead speaks:) O Crimson, how can you understand my heart?

"Daodao ling" (Female lead sings:)
Seeing them preparing the carriage, the horse,
I couldn't help my summering, boiling anger.
What desire did I have
Daintily and prettily to make myself up with moles and beauty spots?
All prepared are the quilts and the pillows,
But I'll have to sleep in drowsy confusion.
From now on, my gown and my sleeves
Will be soaked from the constant wiping of countless tears.
Oh, it kills one with depression!
Oh, it kills one with depression!
Later on, letters and messages
You must hurriedly, hastily send to me.

(They act out arriving.)

(After they greet old lady, she speaks:) Student Zhang, you sit with the abbot. Missy, you sit over here. Crimson, you bring the wine. Come forward, Student Zhang. You are a member of the family now. Don't keep such a distance! Today I give Onole to you. Don't disgrace my child in the capital. Put all your energies into becoming the head of the list. (Male lead speaks:) Relying on your ample support and on the talents in my heart, I will find obtaining official position no more than picking up a mustard seed. (Bald one speaks:) Madam, you've made the right decision. Student Zhang is not one to fall behind others. (After offering

one behind." "jade colt," while referring to Zhang's horse, is also a common trope for the sun.

² "Broaching the theme" (*poiti*) is the point in a poem where the main theme is introduced; it is also the second stage of the so-called eight-legged essay required of examination candidates. A rough paraphrase would read, "We had just gotten started when we had to part."

a cup of wine, he sits down. Female lead heaves a sigh.)

"Tuo bushan" (Female lead sings:)
Felled by western winds, yellow leaves fly in confusion;
Tinged by cold mists, sere grass spreads afar.
At the feast mat he sits stuck at the side,
Wrinkling sorrowed brows, as if nearly dead and buried.

"Xiao Liangzhou" (Female lead sings:)
I see him stop his welling tears, daring not let them fall
Lest others know
Suddenly seeing each other, we bow our heads,
Heave heavy sighs,
Rearrange our garments of plain silk.

"Reprise"
Even though later we'll become a fine couple,
How can we keep now from grievous weeping?
My mind's like a fool's,
My heart as if drunk—
Last night and today
Pare away the small round of my waist.

(Old lady speaks:) Missy, offer a cup of wine. (After Crimson has passed her the wine, female lead acts out offering a cup. She heaves a heavy sigh [and speaks].) Please drink this wine.

"Shang xiaolou" (Female lead sings:)
Before the joy of our union ended,
The sorrow of separation had taken over.
I call to mind our secret passion of earlier evenings,
Our marriage of last night,
And our separation of today.
I have known full well, these last few days,
The flavor of love's longing;
But it turns out nothing when compared to the grief of separation—
That is tenfold more!

"Reprise"
Those young in years
Lightly part for distant places.
Those shallow in feeling
Easily discard their partners,
Never thinking of thigh pressing thigh,
Face hugging face,
Hand holding hand.

For you to be the son-in-law of Chancellor Cui

Means glory for the wife, honor for the husband.
For me, finding a double-headed lotus³
Far outstrips passing the examinations as head of the list!

(Crimson speaks:) Sister, you haven't eaten breakfast. Drink some gruel. (Female lead speaks:) Crimson, how can I choke down any gruel?

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"Manting fang" (Female lead sings:)

You offer me food too insistently!
We were face-to-face for only a moment,
Then parted in an instant's time.
Were it not that mother and child must exercise restraint at this banquet,
I'd have a mind to "lift the tray as high as my brows."⁴

"Reprise"

Even though we've been together only an hour or so,
By rights we should eat as husband and wife at the same table.
Such romantic signals from the eyes
Trip thoughts of the feelings behind them
And nearly turn me into a husband-watching rock.

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(Old lady speaks:) Crimson, offer a cup of wine. (Crimson finishes the action of offering wine.)

"Kuaihuo san" (Female lead sings:)

The wine and food that will be brought
Will taste like earth and mud.
Even if they were earth and mud,
At least they'd have the taste of earth and the smell of mud.

"Chao tianzi" (Female lead sings:)

What fills jade cups, warm and overflowing,
As crystal clear as water,
Are mainly tears of love's longing.
The tea and food before my eyes,
Of course I want to eat,
But vexation fills my sorrowed stomach.
Empty fame on the horns of a snail⁵
And profit as tiny as a fly's head
Tear the mandarin ducks apart.

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³ A single stalk of lotus with two flowers—a metaphor for a marriage of perfect happiness.

⁴ See play III, act 2, n. 15.

⁵ Both phrases meaning useless ventures. "Horns of a snail" alludes to a story from the *Zhuangzi* in which two kingdoms were established on the separate horns of a snail. The kingdoms gradually destroyed each other fighting over the territory between the horns.

One here,
One there—
One passing of the cup is one drawn-out sigh.

(Old lady speaks:) Get my carriage ready; I'm going back first. Young lady, you may follow later with Crimson.

[(Old lady leaves.)]

(Male lead acts out taking leave of bald one. [Abbot speaks:] I have nothing to say about your trip, but I'm set to buy a list of those who've passed the examinations. Don't let this monk be missed at the wedding banquet. Be careful, sir! Take care when riding. (Monk recites:)

From now on, I've no mind to venerate the sutras and penitences;
I'll only listen for the first sound of springtime thunder.⁶

[(Bald one leaves.)]

"Sibian jing" (Student sings:)

In a wink the cups and platters are scattered about;
Your cart heads east,
My horse faces west.⁷
Both sides tarry and linger; in the setting sun, mountains stretch their halcyon green athwart.
Where will I stay tonight?
Even in a dream, hard it would be to track me down.

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(Female lead speaks:) Student Zhang, whether you get an office or not, come back as fast as you can! (Male lead speaks:) Missy, your heart is troubled—but once gone I will snatch the head of the list clean away! Truly it is, "If there is a road that leads to the blue empyrean, I will arrive in the end; if my name is not on the golden plaque, I vow not to return!"⁸ (Female lead speaks:) I have nothing else to give you for your trip but a quatrain I have improvised to send you off. (Female lead recites:)

I'm rejected and discarded; where are you now?

In those times you drew close to me of your own accord.

Now you will again bring out the passion of former times

And love whoever is before your eyes.

⁶ The announcement of the list of successful candidates in the spring.

⁷ These lines are taken from the famous ballad "Southeast the Peacock Flies" ("Kongque dongnan fei"), the story of a happy couple forced to separate by the young man's mother; they eventually commit suicide when the young woman's mother tries to marry her off to a wealthier family.

⁸ A common vow of the candidates who went to the capital for the examinations; only a small minority actually passed.

(Male lead speaks:) You are mistaken, missy. Would I, Zhang Gong, dare love anyone else? Allow me to add a quatrain to bare my heart. (Male lead recites:)

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A human life is naught but constant distant partings.

Who among all is the closest to my heart?

Had I not met her, she who understands my music,

Who, who would have loved me, this ever-sighing one?

"Shua hai'er" (Student sings:)

I weep red tears, soaking my lapels and sleeves

Wetter than the Constable's blue gown.⁹

The shriek goes eastward, westward flies the swallow.

Before I have set out, you ask when I will return.

Although we will be parted a thousand miles from this very moment on,

Let us drink to the end this one cup of life's wine.

Flushed with wine before I even drink—

From my eyes blood flows,

And within my heart all turns to ash.

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"Fifth from Coda" (Female lead, counseling student, [sings]:)

When you reach the capital, adapt yourself to the local climate;

While on the road, be moderate in your food and drink.

Always take good care of yourself, pace your body's strength;

Go to sleep early in the rain and dew of desolate villages,

Rise late in the wind and frost of country inns.

Astride your horse in the autumn winds—

That is the hardest time to take proper care,

When you most need help and support.

"Fourth from Coda" (Female lead sings:)

To whom can I lay plant of my anxiousness and sorrow?

My love-longing is known only to me.

Old heaven does not care if one grows haggard:

My tears will fill the nine curves of the Yellow River to overflowing;

My hatred will press the three peaks of the Flowery Marchmount down.¹⁰

And when evening comes, I will lean depressed on the western loft

And watch to the end this evening light, this old road,

This sere grass, this long dike.

"Third from Coda" (Female lead sings:)

Happily smiling, together we came;

Bitterly weeping, alone I return.

Returning home, if I go within the silken bed-curtains,

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⁹ See play II, act 4, n. 16.

¹⁰ Huashan, the Flowery Marchmount, one of the five sacred peaks of China, is located south of Puzhou, just across the Yellow River. It figures as a prominent landmark of the area.

Yesterday's embroidered quilt, warm with fragrance, keeps spring behind.

That tonight's halcyon blanket grows cold, you will know in a dream.

It is not my intention to cling to you;

But when I see you clutch the saddle to mount the horse,

I cannot stop tearful eyes and sorrowed brows.

(Male lead speaks:) Do you have any words to give me in counsel?

"Second from Coda" (Female lead sings:)

Don't worry that your texts are equal to the task but your luck is not;

I only fear that you'll divorce your wife and take another.

Don't you let fish and geese go through a whole spring without messages;

Here I will have the blue smurgh send letters to you without fail.

"If my name is not on the golden plaque, I vow not to return"

Is good and well, but remember this:

If you see another flower in a distant country,

Don't tarry there as you did here.

"First from Coda" (Female lead sings:)

Blue mountains screen the one I'm sending off,

The sparse woods refuse to do me favors,

As a thin mist and evening haze hide him from my view

Evening light, old road, no human speech;

Ripening millet, autumn winds, listen to his horse whinny

Why am I so loath to mount my carriage?

So swiftly I came;

How slowly I leave.

(Crimson speaks:) The madam has been gone a good long time. Sister, let's go home.

"Coda" [(Female lead sings:)]

Amid four bounds of mountain colors,

In the single lash of the lingering rays,

A vexation that encompasses all the human realm fills my bosom.

How can a carriage so small

Cart it all away?

(Crimson and female lead leave.)

(Male lead speaks:) My boy, let's do the first leg quickly and find a place to stay for the night. (Male lead recites:)

My tears surge like flowing waters;

My sorrows fly with countryside clouds.

[(Male lead and lute boy leave.)]

Leaning on the coral pillow, we arched our bodies,
Pressing cheek against cheek.
The more inspected in detail,
The more astounding my detestable one.
Letting down her cloudy locks with jade combs aslant,
She was just like the new moon half-spewed forth.

(Male lead speaks:) Here we are already. Where's the innkeeper? (Innkeeper enters and speaks:) Sire, please take our finest room.

[[Innkeeper leaves.]]

(Male lead speaks:) Lute boy, take the horse. Light the lamps. I don't want to eat anything at all; I just want to sleep. (Servant speaks:) I'm worn out too. I just want to rest. (Servant) acts out spreading his blankets at the foot of the bed and sleeping.
Male lead speaks:) Can sleep come to my eyes tonight?

"Luomei feng" (Student sings:)

In the traveler's lodge, I lay on a lonely pillow;
Autumn crickets sound from surrounding fields.

What urges sorrow on is a paper window torn by the wind.

The quilt of the lonely sleeper is thin, and I shiver:
Piercing, chilly cold—will I ever get warm?

(Male lead acts out sleeping. Female lead [enters] and speaks:) After I had taken leave of Student Zhang at the long pavilion, I couldn't get him off my mind. While the madam and my serving girl were both asleep, I secretly fled from the city to catch up with him so we might travel together.

"Qiaomu cha" (Female lead sings:)

Fleeing through deserted faubourgs and open fields,
I can't control the beating of my heart.

Puffing and panting, I can't put two breaths together.

Hurry, hurry and catch up!

"Beat the grass, you'll scare the snakes."¹

"Jiao zhengpa" (Female lead sings:)

He is now dragging my heart toward him,

¹ From an old anecdote about a person who accuses a yamen clerk of corruption. The magistrate who reviews the case knows that he himself is as corrupt as his underling, so he writes on the accusation, "Although you have beaten the grass, I am the one who is the startled snake!" Xu Wei, the Ming dramatist, has pointed out, however, that this saying was already divorced from its original connection with corruption by the fifteenth century. Ormle is using it in two senses here: to scare the snakes out of her path; and to caution herself to make sure that no one else knows she is chasing after Student Zhang: "If I beat the grass, I'll stir up the snakes!"



The Student Dreams in the Inn that Bandits Pursue Ormle and that She Goes Out to Repulse Them

Act 4

(Male lead, leading servant, enters on horseback and opens:) We are already thirty miles from East of Pu. Strawbridge Inn lies ahead. We'll stay there tonight and go on early tomorrow. This horse refuses to run, no matter what I do! (Male lead) recites a poem:)

A single lash of journey's color urges the departing horse;
Ten thousand pecks of traveler's sorrow draw out a new poem.

[Shuangdiao mode:] "Xinshui ling" (Student sings:)

Gazing at East of Pu: the monastery is obscured by evening clouds.

Pained by feelings of separation: half of the forest is yellowed leaves.

The horse is slow, its rider is listless;

The wind is strong, the ranks of geese are awry.

Separation's vexation doubles and doubles

At the broaching of the theme: the very first night.

(Male lead speaks:) Calling last night's enjoyment to mind, who could imagine today's lonely desolation?

"Bubu jiao" (Student sings:)

Last night the perfume of the halcyon quilt was thick, infusing us with orchid musk.

And so I cannot avoid this distant road.
 I have deceived the madam, who is so adept at restrictions,
 And evaded the serving girl, who is constantly at my side.
 I'm thinking about his wounded sighs as he came to mount his horse
 And how I wept until I seemed a fool.
 Of course my heart is not depraved;
 But from our parting to sun's first setting,
 I've been so sorrowed, I've come to a dangerous peak,
 And so emaciated, I've reached the point of snapping.
 We've only been separated half a day,
 And already my halcyon skirt has grown three or four pleats too large.
 Has anyone ever been ground down like me?

"Jinshang hua" (Female lead sings:)
 Our destined marriage
 Had just been safely settled,
 When, alas, fortune and fame
 Forced us apart.
 From insufferable sorrows
 I had barely awakened,
 When a longing from which there's no escape
 Started all over again.
 A pure frost cleanses azure waves;
 White dew falls on yellowed leaves.
 Up and down, down and up, the road sinks and turns;
 Winds rise from every direction in the fields,
 Scouring wildly left and right.
 Here I flee and race—
 Where does he rest in his weariness?
 "Qingjiang yun" (Female lead sings:)
 Sheepishly he sits silently in the room of an inn,
 Facing in depression a year-long night.
 Evening rains urge on the cold katyids;
 Morning winds blow away the remnant moon.
 Where will he sober up from wine tonight?

(Female lead speaks:) He's in this inn. I'll have to knock on the gate. (Male lead speaks:) Who's knocking? It's a girl's voice. I'll open the door and look. Who could it be at this time?

"Qing Xuanhe" (Student sings:)
 If you are human, hurriedly declare yourself;
 If you are a ghost, disappear immediately!

(Female lead speaks:) It's me! The madam was sleeping, and I was thinking. Now

he's gone, when will I see him again? So I came to go on with you.

([Student] sings:)
 Hearing this, I pull her by her fragrant silken sleeves²—
 So, it was you all the time!

(Male lead speaks:) Missy, such ardor is hard to find.

"Quao pai'er" (Student, pitying female lead, [sings]:)
 Your character is such, you really give it your all.
 You haven't given a thought to your clothes:
 Your embroidered shoes have been stained by dew, water, and mud,
 And the soles of your feet ruined by walking.

(Female lead speaks:) It was all for you. I didn't care how far it was! (Female lead sobs.)

"Tianshui ling" (Student, explaining female lead, [sings]:)
 I imagine how you neglected sleep and forgot to eat,
 Your perfume dissipating, your jade diminishing.
 "Flowers open, flowers fall,"
 But I still feel that's off the mark³—
 Rather: the pillow cold, the covers chilly;
 The phoenix alone, the smurgh lonely;
 The moon so round by clouds obstructed.
 I conjure up what pain you must have felt.
 "Zhegu ling" (Student sings:)
 A human life, I think, suffers most bitterly from separation.
 How touching! A thousand miles of passes and mountains
 You've traversed all alone.
 Could such soul-baring dedication
 Be rewarded with treacherous infidelity?
 Even though for a while the flower is tattered, the moon is incomplete,
 Don't ever think you'll be "a sunken jug, a broken hairpin."⁴

² To test whether she's real and not a ghost.

³ Flowers will grow in the next spring, but the person will be gone.

⁴ From a ballad by Bo Juyi, "Pulling a Silver Flask from the Bottom of the Well" ("Jingdi yin yiping"), that recounts the story of a girl who elopes with a young man but is forced, after living with him for five years, to leave him because they have not been formally married. The pertinent lines read:

From the bottom of the well a silver flask pulled;
 The silver flask starts up, the woven cord breaks.

On a stone the jade harpin honed;
 The jade harpin, about to take shape, snaps in the middle.
 And what of the flask's sinking and the harpin's snapping?
 They are just like my parting today from you, my lord.

I don't fancy the high and mighty,
Don't envy the proud and opulent.
Alive, we'll share the same blanket;
Dead, we'll share the same grave.

(Extra clown and party, costumed as soldiers, enter and shout. [Extra clown speaks:] We saw a girl crossing the Yellow River a moment ago, but we don't know where she went. Bring a torch! It's clear that she's fled into this inn. Bring her out! Bring her out! (Male lead speaks:) What do we do now? (Female lead speaks:) You stand back. I'll open the gate myself and confront them.

"Shuixianzi" (Female lead sings:)
Stubbornly you surround the Monastery of Universal Salvation, set to work
with spades and picks;

Cruelly, you grab our throats, pull out swords and axes.

Rebellious hearts and gluttonous eyes are by nature deformed.

(Student speaks:) Let me confront them. (Female lead speaks.)

([She] sings:)

Don't speak;

Stand back.

(Extra speaks:) Whose daughter are you to cross the Yellow River in the dead of the night? (Female lead speaks:) Don't talk nonsense.

([Female lead] sings:)

General Du—you know him as a hero—

He'll glance just once and turn you into salted pickles;

He'll point just once and transform you into blubber and blood.

He'll come riding a white horse!

(Extra grabs female lead and leaves [with clown and party]. Student speaks:) Ai, so it was a dream all the time. Let me open the gate and look—all I see is a whole heaven of dew vapor, a whole earth of frosty flowers. The morning star has just appeared, and the remnant moon is still bright. (Student recites:)

Without reason swallow and magpie clamor on the highest branch,⁵

On a single pillow a dream of mandarin ducks fails to coalesce.

"Yan'er luo" (Student sings:)

Green, so green, the wall is high, the willows are half-hidden;

Still, so still, the gate is closed, the night is clear autumn.

Sparse, so sparse, on tips of forest trees, winds that fell the leaves;

Dark, so dark, at the edge of clouds, a moon that penetrates the window

⁵ A magpie's screech signals the arrival of a lover.

"Desheng ling" (Student sings:)

What startled me awake were quivering bamboo shadows: dragons and snakes
set loose;

A flutteringly empty Zhuang Zhou: a dream of butterflies.⁶

Thrumming, humming, the urge of weaving never rests;⁷

Sounding, resounding, the sound of fulling blocks never breaks off.⁸

Painful, sensitive, the wound of parting;

Vexing, guling, such a fine dream was hard to give up.

Chilling, chilling, cold moans:

That lovely and dainty jade person—where is she now?

(Servant speaks:) It's dawn. Let's do the first leg of our journey now and cook later.

(Male lead speaks:) Innkeeper! Here's the money for the room. Please saddle my horse. ([Student] recites:)

She grasps his hands at time of parting, sends her husband off;
He grasps the saddle, and before she speaks, her soul is lost.

"Raise your head, and the sun is near, Chang'an far away!"

"Dusk after dusk, dawn after dawn, do not lean at the gate."

"Yuanyang sha" (Student sings:)

Willow strands are long,

Near to catching up my emotions;

Water sounds are muffled,

Like a person's sobbing.

Slanting moon, last of the lamp,

Half-bright, not extinguished.

Truly it is said, "Old hatreds go on and on,

New sorrows knot in profusion."

My hatred stuffed with parting's sorrow,

What fills my chest cannot be washed away

Unless brush and paper replace throat and tongue.

My thousand kinds of longing—to tell to whom?

"Luosiniang" (Student sings:)

All because of a single office, half a position,

We're kept apart by a thousand mountains and myriad waters.

⁶ The well-known story of Zhuangzi's butterfly dream: when he awakes, he does not know if is Zhuangzi, who has dreamed of a butterfly, or a butterfly, who is dreaming that it is Zhuangzi.

⁷ Crickets, whose thrumming call sounds like a shuttle thrown quickly through a loom, were called "urges of weaving."

⁸ A set element of autumnal verse: the blocks upon which winter clothing was cleaned for wear.

[[Both leave.]]

Title: Little Crimson brings the happy affair to completion;
The madam inquires into the facts of the case.

Name: At the Long Pavilion she pours the wine of parting;
At Strawbridge Inn he dreams of Oniole.

VOLUME IV OF THE DELUXE, COMPLETELY ILLUSTRATED,
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