

Cheung Yuk Kiu:
A Heroine for All Time

萬世流芳張玉喬

An English Translation of Fong Yim Fun's Performance Script

芳艷芬演出本

1954

Scripted by KAN You Man and TONG Tik Sang

簡又文主編 唐滌生曲詞

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This Translation (Version 1.0)

by

Siu Leung LI 李小良 Alice Chow 周陳燕雯

(Cultural Studies, Lingnan University)

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Major Plays of Hong Kong Cantonese Opera: A Translation Project

香港粵劇經典劇目翻譯計劃

Kwan Fong Cultural Research and Development Programme

Lingnan University

群芳文化研究及發展部

嶺南大學

Funded by the Cantonese Opera Development Fund

粵劇發展基金資助

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ACT I

(Standing in front of the curtain, several commoners gather around an imperial edict, reading.)

(Curtain up.)

(Several commoners look up to read the imperial edict from inside the city gate.)

(Rapid percussion.) (Enter two Manchu soldiers, each wielding a big sword, slaughter each and every commoner.) (Percussion closes abruptly.)

(General Tung Yeung Garp enters grandly and accompanied by gongs and drums.)

(Six Manchu officials enter after General Tung, then spread out and stand on either side of him.)

Yeung Garp: *(recites)* My heroic battles have vanquished the Ming Dynasty,
The war horses galloped in the battlefields.
Today sees the success of conquering the twin provinces of Guangdong and Guangxi,
My feats and achievements are unmatched in the world.

(speaks) I am Tung Yeung Garp, from a family of military bravery and assigned to the battalions of the Eight Banners. Gaining the rank of nobility, I joined the military invasion led by the Prince and forced our way into the southern Ming Dynasty. We swiftly conquered the provinces of Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Fujian, and Guangdong. It was the result of my simple ruses, and not even one single arrow was wasted. Upon my light military strike on Canton, Tang Emperor Yuyue of Southern Ming committed suicide and his officials were all dead. With my great Emperor's special grace, I have been appointed Viceroy of Guangdong-Guangxi and the Minister of the Board of War. Sing my praises!

(sings) Gathering their remnant forces and causing disturbances,
How hateful are those reputed Ming Dynasty officials across Guangdong and Guangxi!
Send a rush order by a fast horse:
Li Shing Tung to return urgently and take guard.
Sitting alone in front of the city gate,
Let me wait a while for the return of the brave general.

(Li Shing Tung enters.)

Li Shing Tung: *(sings)* How laughable of Wing Ying
With just a handful of lieutenants leading a few soldiers,
Totally intimidated by the flashing brightness of my sabre.
Once I, the provincial military commander, win this battle,
I shall be able to cover the twin provinces of Guangdong and Guangxi.
Yet Tung Yeung Garp urgently orders the deployment of this brave general to return and take guard.
Just one step shy of success.
How very forlorn!

Yeung Garp: (recites) Squad Leader Li,
I have deployed your return so urgently,
You must be feeling uncomfortable at heart.
Do you know?
Chan Chi Cheong is raising a force in Jiujiang,
Fourth Cheung is hoisting his flag in Dongguan
And Chan Bong Yin is boasting his might in Shunde.
We now hear that they are talking about rescuing and grabbing Canton,
We have to use you to suppress these gangs.

Shing Tung: (recites) Yes, Viceroy.
Can you allow me to enter the city and rest first,
Since I am extremely tired?

Yeung Garp: (recites) Denied!
You have to first attack Chan Bong Yin,
Then Cheung Ka Yuk.
This is to sever their two wings.
An order this is,
You cannot disobey!

Shing Tung: (speaks) Yes.

(recites) Nobility are honorable and I am lowly.
I dare not ignore your commands.

Yeung Garp: (speaks) Remember that well.

Shing Tung: (sings) Treating me like a hound in the hill and forest,
I still feel the anger and resentment in my chest.
How startling to see the sweep of dust and yellow earth!
Let me quickly mount the city gate tower to take a look.

(Goes up to the city gate tower with his men to take a look.)

(The Ming Dynasty flag enters.)

(Chan Chi Cheong enters.)

Chi Cheong: (sings) Being a scholar yet taking up military command,
My only wish is to end the crisis.
Rescue the City of Five Rams!
With the rallying cry, morale is strong.

Shing Tung: (recites) Ha, ha! You people are merely a haphazard mob force!
Please, do not harbor any unrealistic ideas.

Chi Cheong: (recites) By our one share of hot-blooded fervidness,

We swear to take back the City of Five Rams.

Manchu Soldier: (speaks) What is your name, approaching military leader?

Sheung Yung: (speaks) Chan Sheung Yung!

Another Manchu Soldier: (speaks) What is your name, approaching military leader?

Bong Yin: (speaks) Chan Bong Yin!

Chi Cheong: (speaks) Chan Chi Cheong!

(Combat. Chan Chi Cheong and his men lose and exit.)

Shing Tung: (sings) Inciting their own deaths,
The gang soldiers must be retreating towards Gaoming, I believe.

(speaks) Pursue!

(Curtain falls.)

ACT II

(Scene: A magnificent living room, with common Gouming houses outside the window.)

(Introductory percussion. Curtain Up.)

(Kao Yuet and Sheung To at the curtain.)

Kao Yuet: (speaks) Third Young Master, be good. Why do you seem distracted all night while studying your book?

Sheung To: (recites) Kao Yuet, go away!
I am not in your custody.
Study! Study! Study!
The country is on the brink of falling and families are dying.
Studying the book all night
Makes me feel even more bitter and angry!

Kao Yuet: (recites) Third Young Master, do you remember the time
When the Senior Master left with the army,
He instructed Second Young Madam and Second Mistress to teach you, to
supervise you?
It meant you should study hard the classic texts.

Sheung To: (sings) A real man who is not able to take up arms to defend the country,
Should not be spending all day moaning on paper either.
Studying ten thousand scrolls is not as useful as charging into assaults and
taking out battle plans!

Kao Yuet: (speaks) Oh Third Young Master, do not go. Second Young Madam, second Young Madam, please come quickly to stop Third Young Master!

(*Shui Mui enters.*)

Shui Mui: (speaks) Ah To, sit back here and study!

Sheung To: (speaks) I will not study.

Shui Mui: (speaks) Alas, nephew.

(sings) I could not sleep all night,
Reciting classical teaching in my bedchamber.
With battle drums sounding like thunder,
My voice was wrought with hatred.
Why does Nephew have to remain so unreasonable?
If your father comes back and reprimands,
How am I to respond to him,
That lonely official who is so concerned for the country?
I wish young nephew would sit back at the window
And pay some respect to your depressed Second Aunt.

Shui Mui: (recites) Ah To, I want you to study well.
I beseech you to be good.
You are the one and only successor of our household.

Sheung To: (recites) Successor! (repeats)
If the entire family dies,
What is the point of leaving one successor?
I would rather go help my dad kill a few Manchu Tartars
Than be the dutiful son who pays respect at his grave for months and years.

(*Yuk Kiu enters.*)

Yuk Kiu: (sings) The cuckoos cooed,
Exhausting their tears for the country.
The City of Five Rams has been in inner turmoil,
My every step is depressed
By my wretched country and broken home.

(, speaks) Second Young Madam, why is Third Young Master sitting here with a dark look on his face?

Shui Mui: (speaks) Alas, Second Mistress, I am out of my wits counseling him. You come and counsel him. He says he wants to go and fight in the battles.

Yuk Kiu: (recites) Third young master, you come over here, come over here. (gestures)
Actually, as your stepmother
I do not dare to counsel you.

Still, you are young in age. (*gestures*)
What reasons do you have to go and court death?
A real man should weigh the consequences of his actions.
Throwing an egg against a rock,
It would easily smash to pieces.

Sheung To: (*recites*) Stepmother, what you have said is very true.
However, why do you forbid me to go and court death
Yet exhort father to do so?
Not surprising, not surprising!
You are just a concubine of my father,
A concubine!
As the saying goes “after the husband dies,
There is always another husband.”
No wonder you care not
Whether my father lives or dies!

Shui Mui: (*speaks*) See! Tell me how I ought to counsel him. (*repeats*)

Yuk Kiu: (*recites*) Third Young Master, no one exhorts your father to go to war.
Your father wants to fight
Simply because he wishes to fulfill his obligations.

Sheung To: (*recites*) Stepmother, what you just said
Was merely an attempt to deceive me.
Look, when we bid farewell,
Grandmother said a few things to father.
She said first,
All our soldiers were put together from haphazard mobs.
Although everyone had the will to sacrifice for their country,
Yet with some fishermen, some gangsters, some militia,
Some commoners, even some monks, how are they to withstand
The one million mighty Manchu army?
Second, scholars do not have the talent to be military commanders;
Father’s talent is for prime minister.
How can he withstand the demonic Li Shing Tung?
At the time father wished to listen to grandmother,
You talked about transforming filial piety to loyalty.
Thus my father went away to fight.
In fact, it is obvious that the several of you
All wanted to cause my father’s death!

Yuk Kiu: (*speaks*) Third Young Master. You do not understand. You are not like your dad.

(*sings*) How can a prime minister become a captive?
A filial son has to be pious to the parents.
It is to be hoped that after one cock dies,
Another one will keep on crowing.

If no successor remains,
Who will take responsibility for recovering the country?

(Cries.) (speaks) Third Young Master. It is not that I wish you not to sacrifice for your country with superior loyalty. I only want you to save yourself for restoring your country.

(Yuk Kiu covers face, turns back and cries.)

Sheung To: *(speaks)* Stepmother, I shall listen to you from now on.

Shui Mui: *(speaks)* Huh! Is this not vexing? I simply cannot counsel him. Only Yuk Kiu can straighten him out.

Yuk Kiu: *(Quickly dries tears.) (speaks)* Second Young Madam, do not say that. You also can counsel him well. It is only that you have a hot temper. *(gestures)* Third Young Master, rise. Come with stepmother to bid grandmother good-night then go to bed early.

Shui Mui: *(speaks)* Look, be good and go to bed early. *(gestures)* Study again in the early morning. Will you listen to your Second Aunt in the future?

(speaks) So, I shall go inside. *(Exits with Sheung To.)*

(Chan Chi Cheong enters, accompanied by percussion.)

Chi Cheong: *(sings)* Fighting in Zengcheng,
Losing Qingyuan,
Our army was already scattered.
Tonight we were defeated and have retreated to Gaoming,
It will be hard to revive the morale of the army. *(Goes inside.)*

(Yuk Kiu sees Chi Cheong.)

Yuk Kiu: *(recites)* Chi Cheong, why are you all covered in blood?
Seeing you in this shape,
I can surmise that the situation is hopeless.
Rest for a while,
Let me seek out the doctor to attend to you.

Chi Cheong: *(recites)* Yuk Kiu, everything, simply everything is over.
The reasons I come back are simply to see the Senior Madam,
Pay respect and gratitude to the ancestors
Then sacrifice myself heroically.

(speaks) Yuk Kiu, go quickly to invite Senior Madam to come out here.

Yuk Kiu: *(recites)* Chi Cheong, why should we hurt the elder's heart at a time like this?
At worst, wrap up the chaos and flee to far away Guangxi.

Chi Cheong: (recites) Guangdong or Guangxi, it's all the same.
Even Guangdong could not be defended,
Why should we bother to find a place
To hide this body that inevitably will die?

(yells) (speaks) Ask Mother to come out for me!

Yuk Kiu: (sings) Saddened to see the lonely official shedding blood and tears
On the verge of death and still caring about his mother.
With voice croaking,
Back turned in sadness,
I also am mixing tears with blood.

(calls) Kao Yuet, invite mother-in-law and the others to come out.

(Repeated quick drums. Sheung To, Shui Mui and Senior Madam enter.)

(Sheung To see Chi Cheong, throws himself at him.)

Sheung To: (speaks) Father!

Shui Mui: (speaks) Have some order! Wait and let your grandmother looks at him first.

Chi Cheong: (recites) Mother, today, this son of yours
Could not repay you for the grace of your nurturing!
As a defeated general,
I have completely wasted your years of teaching.

Senior Madam: (recites) Chi Cheong, Mother is very happy.
You have done your best to uphold your duty,
Failure or success is not the issue,
Just be a loyal official.

Shui Mui: (recites) Brother-in-Law, I am really quite aware of the situation.
I have already prepared for my carriage and luggage quietly.
Why don't we just leave?
In no more than a few hours
We will escape the battle array.

Yuk Kiu: (recites) Second Young Madam,
The prime minister will not run away again.
At this time when he makes up his mind to fulfill his duty
I wish you would not speak in these terms
And upset his dying heart.

Sheung To: (recites) Second Aunt, do not say anything if you do not know how.
That is what it meant by the saying
"Ivory will never grow out of a dog's mouth."

One more sentence
And you will surely be reprimanded by my father.

Senior Madam: (*recites*) Chi Cheong, your mother is many decades old.
What hopes are there for me?
Any hopes you have for the family members,
Hopes you have for your descendants,
Taking this opportunity when everyone is here
You can give them a word of counsel.

Chi Cheong: (*speaks*) Mother!

(*sings*) Making the last roar,
Willing to give up my life to repay the country,
To become a faithful spirit in the twin-Guang region!
Mother, do not be sad.
Today you have a son who would die for the cause,
Thereby not wasting Mother's model and teaching.
Turning back to call for my son To!

Shui Mui: (*speaks*) Young nephew, go ahead. Your father is calling for you.

Sheung To: (*speaks*) Did I not hear it? [*to Chi Cheong*] Father!

Chi Cheong: (*sings*) You are the descendent of our Chan family.
The burden on your shoulders weighs a thousand catties.
"Pursue the study of books but do not enter the government;
Pursue farming the fields but do not acquire land."
(The lines are from the original will. They cannot match the singing smoothly.)
I hope Son will keep this firmly in mind.
With restrained tears, calling for my lady Kiu.
Do consider the youthfulness of this boy,
You would teach him and raise him to be an adult,
Harboring the orphan, I hope.
Next to counsel my son To:
You should listen to the teaching of your stepmother,
Do not mind that she came from a bordello.
You need to know that her learning and talent are incomparable,
A female scholar amidst this, the end of an era.
Bowing and calling for my lady Kiu,
I only hope you would shoulder this responsibility.

(*speaks*) Yuk Kiu, in future responsibility for the old and the young will be turned over to you.

Shui Mui: (*speaks*) Why not turned over to me?

Yuk Kiu: (*sings*) Hearing the sorrowful words my tears start to ooze,
No concern for taking on the arduous responsibility.

With hardly contained tears to comfort the lonely official,
Support the old and harbor the young,
Your humble wife will keep firmly in mind.
I am ashamed not to have a good scheme to help our fate,
I can only repay the master with my modest self.
Bowing again, kneeling to the gods,
Witness my unwavering faithfulness.

Chi Cheong: (speaks) Thank you, Yuk Kiu.

(Sound of explosion, fire light shows in background, battle drum rolls.)

(Repeated quick drums.)

Pak Hing: (speaks) Oh! All is lost, all is lost! Why on earth is master in such shape?

Chi Cheong: (recites) Pak Hing, you came back from outside.
Do you know what the military situation is like?
Speak, speak!
Why are you standing there, trembling non-stop?

Pak Hing: (speaks) Very bad, very bad! (gestures) Hey, I need to catch my breath before I can speak.

(recites) Master, Commander Chan Bong Yin has sacrificed in Qingyuan.
He was stabbed thrice,
And jumped into the river;
Yet he survived,
Then was captured and butchered by Manchu tartars.
I even heard that
When he was butchered
His heart popped out.
And scared to death dozens of Manchu soldiers.

Chi Cheong: (recites) Sigh! I did not expect Bong Yin to die before me.
Ah Hing, what are in fact the morale and sentiments of the people in the city now?
Do speak! There is no need to be so scared.

Pak Hing: (Fumbles.) (hurriedly recites) Master, today Canton was captured
By the Manchu military leader Li Shing Tung,
Slaughtering all the way as they entered the city.
I also heard people said that they wanted to capture you alive;
How can I not be frightened out of my wits?
Eh, let us run! (repeats)

Senior Madam: (recites) Chi Cheong, do go!
Rather than losing and being captured
Why not flee to far away?

Shui Mui: (recites) Better to leave, Brother-in-law,
To keep your life for later.
Why must you sacrifice right at this time?

Chi Cheong: (speaks) You should not try to persuade me. Ah Hing, go to my room and bring out my official attire. The rest of you go back inside. I want to dress up formally to meet that treacherous official and betraying thief! Ah Hing, bring out my formal outfit. The rest of you go inside.

Chi Cheong: (speaks) Ah Hing, if you are so scared, why not go back inside?

Pak Hing: (Retorts.) I am not scared. The master is not afraid, no reason for us servants to be afraid.

(Four Manchu soldiers enter with sabers.)

Shing Tung: (sings) Captured Jiangu, settled Fujian,
Establishing achievements unmatched in the world!
Fell Zhejiang, broke Canton,
My reputation already went near and far!
With one person's effort alone to take in the four provinces,
Who else but me?
Searching the city at midnight,
Not letting the defeated military leader fled.

(speaks) The Prime Minister's residence is closed and locked. It looks desolate. I believe Chan Chi Cheong must have got wind of the matter and fled.

Soldiers, come and break the door!

Manchu Military Leader Ching Hark: (speaks) Yes!

(All enter the mansion.)

Pak Hing: (speaks) Please sit down, please sit down.

Shing Tung: (recites) Chi Cheong my elder,
I could not have guessed
That you would be in formal attire,
Sitting there, so calm and steady.
What in fact do you want now?
I, Li Shing Tung,
Can decide your fate in this night!

Chi Cheong: (recites) Shing Tung,
Fate is decided by one such as me.
I want to do the right thing with dignity,
Sacrificing my life for the country.
I do not want to be like you,

Surrendering to the Manchus,
Losing loyalty and integrity
In return for this momentary pompous arrogance!

Pak Hing: *(speaks)* Yes, bawl him out!

Shing Tung: *(recites)* Chan Chi Cheong, Chan Chi Cheong!
There is a saying “Those who know to go with the time are the heroes.”
A real man wants to have high positions and hefty rewards.
It makes no difference what dynasty he serves.
I am not as stupid as you, so foolish!

Chi Cheong: *(recites)* Shing Tung, what you said was quite right.
As the saying goes,
“A meaty meal for grandpa’s funeral,
A meaty meal for grandma’s funeral.”
This tactic is superior indeed,
It does not matter which dynasty one serves.
Yet there is nothing more base than for a Han Chinese, blood and bone,
To kowtow and deflect serving the Manchus!

Shing Tung: *(speaks)* Go, go, go!

(sings) I lowered my temper as
I entered the door simply due to some respect.
Angry again and raising my eyebrows,
I shall seize you and bring you back for interrogation.

(Shouts.) Soldiers, come! Tie him up for handling by the Provincial Commander.

Ching Hark: *(speaks)* Yes!

Chi Cheong: *(speaks)* Don’t worry, I shall go with you.

(sings) I wish my head would hang over the training square
To incite the nationalistic spirit of the people.
Even Master Bong Yin had had his heart’s blood spilled over the traitors.
Would Chi Cheong harbor the thought of stealthily dragging on with life?

Pak Hing: *(speaks)* I will go along too. I am moved by my master’s words even if you are not. The old servant wishes to follow the master, with words to call you down the young treacherous official! The saying is “There is no guesthouse in the afterworld.” Who is there to bring the wine and pour the tea? It does not matter if I die as well.

Shing Tung: *(speaks)* Go, go, go! You old slave is not qualified to enter the Provincial Commander’s house. Someone come and put Master Chan in cuffs.

Ching Hark: *(speaks)* Yes!

Pak Hing: My, my, my. The devil gets to you.

(Rapid percussion. Sheung To enters, attempts stabbing Shing Tung with a small knife. Shui Mui enters next.)

(Shing Tung takes away Sheung To's knife.)

Shing Tung: *(recites)* Hah! Who is this child,
Grabbing a toothpick and attempting robbery?
Trying to kill me with a small knife,
You are brave indeed!

(Shui Mui signals Sheung To not to disclose his identity.)

Sheung To: *(recites)* Second Aunt, go away!
Why should I not say it?
I am the youngest son of the prime minister,
My eldest brother Sheung Chun already died in the battlefield,
My second eldest brother Sheung Lan disappeared in battle.
What is the point of leaving me alive?
As the saying goes, "A tiger father has no puppy son."
Kill me too you treacherous official!

Shing Tung: *(recites)* Go, go!
Soldiers, come! Take him too.
Report to the Provincial Commander that
This bad boy should not be spared,
It is most important to take out the root when cutting the weeds!

Ching Hark: *(speaks)* Yes!

Pak Hing: *(speaks)* The devil gets him again.

Shui Mui: *(recites)* Li Shing Tung, arrest me as well!
I shall tell you who I am very honestly.
I am the younger sister-in-law of Prime Minister Chan,
The wife of Chan Chi Sing.
Even a woman knows shame.
I could not stand you
Swaggering about and putting on airs no regard for others.

Shing Tung: *(speaks)* Go, Go! Arrest, arrest, arrest! *(Manchu soldiers arrest and exit.)*

Shing Tung: *(Enraged.) (sings)* I am so angry that my chest is in danger of bursting!
From now on I will not spare anyone.
Chop, chop, chop!
Let there be bodies all over the splendid parlor!
Only then would I be able to release the anger in my heart. *(gestures)*
Soldiers, come! *(gestures)*

Hold the knife and stand here,
Everyone in Chan Chi Cheong's household,
Chop them up one by one as they come out.
At the end chop the old man, the old slave! (*gestures*)
Soldiers, come and bring a chair.

Pak Hing: (*speaks*) In words it was alright. At heart I am in fact afraid. My legs are weak. Ah! I am to be the last of the killings. Honorable Squad Leader, I am not afraid of death. I would rather take the lead and die as the first one. There is a common saying that "in committing crimes one should grab the first chance, in executions the worst is to be the last." Seeing everyone else die one by one, leaving me to the last, how painful that is!

Shing Tung: (*speaks*) Denied! I order you to call those in Chi Cheong's household to come out one by one, to be killed as each one enters.

Pak Hing: (*speaks*) Sigh! No! It cannot be, it cannot be!

Shing Tung: (*speaks*) Go, go!

Pak Hing: (*speaks*) Whoever I call is to be killed. I do indeed have the mouth of a crow. Don't worry. I won't call you. (*gestures*) It can't be helped. The only thing is to ask for those who are old and useless to come out first. (*gestures*) Third auntie, fifth grandaunt, all you old gossipy women do come out!

(Various old servants enter and are killed.)

Shing Tung: (*speaks*) Call again!

Pak Hing: (*speaks*) No more. All killed.

Shing Tung: (*speaks*) Ask Senior Madam Chu to come out!

Pak Hing: No, no! Senior Madam is the head of the family. How can I?

Yuk Kiu: (*speaks from inside*) Hold your saber! (*repeats*)

(Repeated quick drums, enters.) (immediately, recites) Squad Leader Li, I hope you will not kill this old lady of mine.
I, Cheung Yuk Kiu, am willing to die
In place of my mother-in-law
With no regrets forever. (*gestures*)

Shing Tung: (*recites*) Dying in place of your mother-in-law,
These words of yours were heroically spoken, quite so.
Nevertheless I have already decided,
Under my precious saber
I will not spare anyone with the name of Chan.

(Shing Tung sees Yuk Kiu, [enchanted].)

Shing Tung: (*Shouts.*) Soldiers, come! (*gestures*) Help Senior Madam Chu up. Bring a chair for Senior Madam Chu to sit. (*gestures*)

Yuk Kiu: (*sings*) Thank you for the grace of sparing
The old lady from being killed.
How can I endure seeing her with her white hair,
Depart her spirit under the sword?
Kneeling with respect to the Squad Leader,
And asking again:
I am not begging for pity like a dog wagging its tail,
I had, from early on, hoped instead to sacrifice for integrity and the cause.
I would like to borrow the steel saber from your hands
Let me in sadness slash my own neck.

(*speaks*) Squad Leader, spare my mother-in-law, that is all that I wish for. Give me the saber.

Pak Hing: (*speaks*) Second Mistress, you must not die. The Third Young Master has been arrested by them and brought to the Provincial Commander's place.

Yuk Kiu: (*speaks*) The Third Young Master was arrested by them?

Shing Tung: (*speaks*) Cheung Yuk Kiu, you will not die.

(*sings*) With each puff of fragrance from the blossoming flower,
With each note of fragility from the entreating bird;
Even with my liver of steel and courage of iron,
My spirit is dissolved.
I have never given regard to life and death
In the battle array,
Half my life has been on battle horses.
When have I seen such a beauty
That causes the downfall of a kingdom?
I cannot help but hold her lightly,
Much concerned and pitying.

Shing Tung: (*recites*) Yuk Kiu, what you have wished of me I have done.
Would you be able to do what I hope of you?
I cannot treat you as "Madam Chan,"
You are only a concubine in the Chan family.
Yuk Kiu, do you understand what I mean?
One look at you and I know you are highly intelligent.

(*speaks*) Do you understand?

Pak Hing: (*speaks*) What is there to understand, with no leads and clues to the question?

Yuk Kiu: (*recites*) Squad Leader, I understand what you mean.
Yet I do not think it a proper idea.
(*Sneers.*) Squad leader, with your continuous winning

There is no fear of a lack of beautiful women.
Why should you prefer this person,
A faded flower, a willow twig spoiled?

Pak Hing: (*recites*) No wonder, smart is indeed smart!
Hah, with just such a small hint
She got all that was meant.
It cannot be. It cannot be, even for a concubine.
Is a concubine not a person?
She has the same social status.

Shing Tung: (*Grins superficially.*) (*recites*) Oh, all right, Yuk Kiu.
I will not force you.
Since you are not willing to save the lives of the entire family yourself,
I should not go out of my way
To spare this elder.

(*Shouts.*) Come, take Senior Madam Chu to the Provincial Commander's place!

Yuk Kiu: (*sings*) Weeping, kneeling and pulling on your robe,
Shocked to hear the shout,
So sad that it broke my wandering mind to pieces.
This ill-fated flower
Is already faded and broken;
How dare it accept the special favor?
Turning back to the old mother-in-law,
Who poured her tears of the aged to exhaustion.
Anger and hatred are quietly rising,
Holding my tears in secret:
Pondering, once more, that painful instruction
Still lingers in my heart.
Calling on Squad Leader (*gestures*) not to be upset,
Listen to my statement made in tears:
If you would accept my humble requests
Then I would give myself to you.

(*speaks*) (*Accompanied by tune.*) Squad Leader, I, Yuk Kiu, was originally a woman from the bordello with not much of a status in the Chan family. If Squad Leader would fulfill my wish, and at the same time with the approval of my mother-in-law, I would not have you waste your favor on me. There are three points to my wish: One, not to harm Senior Madam Chu. Two, spare the descendant of the Chan family, the young boy Sheung To whom you arrested just now. Third, not to slaughter the common people. Squad Leader, if you can do it, I believe it is not a serious matter for the Prime Minister to make a gift to you of a concubine.

Shing Tung: (*sings*) Thinking hard in bitterness, then smiling again;
Willing to spare the Chan family in return for the jade beauty.

Lightly lifting the beautiful lady,
You may ask the old lady for her assent.

Yuk Kiu: (speaks) Senior Madam, you have probably heard what we said.

(Cries.) What do you think?

Pak Hing: (speaks) Sigh! What do you expect the Senior Madam to say, Second Mistress?

(sings) Do not ask.
It would only bring pain.
Senior Madam is saddened and speechless.
I know what she thinks, in its entirety.
She is in her final years like a brief candle,
Close to the other world.
How could she endure seeing you coerced
To marry again to your shame?

Senior Madam: (sings) It is a matter of enduring temporary pain
All for saving the offspring.
Keep the Chan lineage alive,
Who else could but you?

Yuk Kiu: (speaks) Senior Madam, I do know it is hard for you to answer me. If you permit, people in the world will laugh at your selfishness in ruining my integrity and chaste reputation. Senior Madam, from what Pak Hing said, I know it is hard for you to take a position. Senior Madam!

Shing Tung: (recites) Yuk Kiu, Senior Madam did give assent.
You will come with me right away.
No point to say much more now,
You will understand the person I am in time.

Yuk Kiu: (recites) Squad leader, please wait for me a while.
I have to pay respect and bid farewell to the Chan ancestors,
And bid farewell to all my family.

Shing Tung: (recites) Go, Yuk Kiu.
Why take on this unnecessary sadness?

Yuk Kiu: (recites) Squad Leader, would you allow me to take one or two servants?
Getting along these many years,
Only they would know well my heart.

Shing Tung: (speaks) Sure, sure. Who do you like?

Yuk Kiu: (speaks) Kao Yuet, Pak Hing, you will come with me? (Kao Yuet and Pak Hing nod.)

Shing Tung: [to soldiers] (*speaks*) Clear the way and return to the official's mansion!

Senior Madam: (*sings*) Although the Chan descendant is saved,
I am embarrassed. Unbearable feeling!

(*Curtain falls.*)

ACT III

(*Provincial Commander's Mansion, eight Manchu soldiers, four Manchu military leaders, four Manchu officials.*)

(*Percussion. General Tung Yeung Garp enters.*)

Yeung Garp: (*sings*) Commanding over the wind and clouds,
With accomplishments that will go down in history for a thousand ages;
Disturbances suppressed in four provinces
A show of my high achievements.
Squad Leader Li, he has secreted away the seal.
Does that mean he harbors disloyalty in his heart, attempting conspiracy?
When the birds are done with, the bow can then be hidden.
For the time being, better handle it with pretense.

Yeung Garp: (*speaks*) Stand on both sides. (*Option to smoke the water pipe tobacco.*)

Eight Manchu officials together: (*speaks*) Yes!

Yeung Garp: (*speaks*) Why do you come to see me in my Provincial Commander House?

Manchu official A: (*recites*) Reporting to your respectable Commander,
Chan Chi Cheong has already been captured by Li Shing Tung,
And taken to the Provincial Commander House for handling.
They are now in the custody of Hung Tin Chork.
May we enquire how your honorable Commander wants to handle them?

Yeung Garp: (*speaks*) Oh, Chi Cheong captured? Someone come!

(*recites*) Give my order for Hung Tin Chork to see me as soon as possible.
This is an issue, the superior moral character of Chan Chi Cheong.

(*Tin Chork enters and pays respects.*)

Tin Chork: (*speaks*) Your respectable Commander!

Yeung Garp: (*speaks*) Rise. (*Laughs.*) Chan Chi Cheong has been under your custody. Have you treated him badly? This person should absolutely not be ill-treated.

(recites) (gestures) Ah! You go in and pass on my instructions to the superintendent:

Engage one hundred child entertainers,
Fully equipped with musical instruments.
Dress up in red attire, gather in the inside parlor.
No one is to go half a step without my instructions.

Tin Chork: *(speaks)* Yes! *(gestures)* Commander, what in fact is the meaning of this? I do not quite understand.

Yeung Garp: *(speaks)* Hey!

(recites) I have engaged these young players to play music
In welcome of Chan Chi Cheong.
Do you know?
Chan Chi Cheong is the topmost loyal official in Guangdong.
You really have no understanding of your master's ways.
After all these long years,
Muddle-headed more and more.

Tin Chork: *(speaks)* Yes, yes. Your respectable Commander, the preparation is all set.

Yeung Garp: *(speaks)* Take a seat by the side.

(Shing Tung comes on stage, Pak Hing follows, [on their way to see Yeung Garp].)

Shing Tung: *(sings)* The three-point agreement,
I have it firmly at heart all this time.
Today is the date for interrogation
I cannot discredit myself with the beautiful lady in the green parlor.

(speaks) I promised Yuk Kiu to spare forever the descendent of the Chan family.
Yet I made the mistake of all mistakes, the mistake of sending Chan Chi Cheong's son along to the Provincial Commander. I am afraid there is little chance for his survival. What else could I possibly manage to do to keep my promise?

Pak Hing: *(recites)* What you have said, you must do.
So I am following you in each and every step,
Because Yuk Kiu told me to watch and see how you would manage.
The temperament of Yuk Kiu,
You have no idea.
Her disposition is staunch,
She will never be bullied.
Do you remember that when you left home,
She hung on to your sleeve repeating her request?
If today things do not go as expected,
I fear she would immediately take her own life.

Shing Tung: (*speaks*) Go! You have no leave to speak. You will come with me inside pretending to be my servant.

(Enter together.)

(Pay respect to Commander together.)

Yeung Garp: (*recites*) My, my, Squad Leader Li.
You have broken the defense of Canton
With arduous effort and great difficulty.
It is only right that you should take some well-deserved rest.
Why do you come today unbidden?
What is the reason for this?

Shing Tung: (*recites*) Hee, hee! Nothing really!
For one I wish to convey my best regards to the Commander;
Then also to see how You, Commander,
Would deal with that hero Chan.
So I have come to pay my respect in person,
Not daring to hesitate.

Yeung Garp: (*recites*) Shing Tung, how did you think I would deal with him?
I have already engaged one hundred child entertainers
In preparation to welcome Master Chau.

Shing Tung: (*recites*) Rightly so! Rightly so!
I did not want to make it difficult for Chan Chi Cheong either.
Still, because of my duty
I could not do anything but capture him.
Exceptionally good of you, Commander, to make such allowance,
Not to mention he and I were colleagues in times past.

Yeung Garp: (*speaks*) Squad Leader, please sit down.

Yeung Garp: (*speaks*) Give my order to bring Chan Chi Cheong and the others. (*gestures*) Give instructions to begin the music.

(Ensemble plays the tune "A Piece of Gold.")

(Manchu soldiers escorting Shui Mui and Sheung To enter, Chi Cheong follows.)

Yeung Garp: (*speaks*) Who are you? Who are you?

Shui Mui: (*speaks*) I am Chan Chi Cheong's younger sister-in-law, lady of Chan Chi Sing.

Sheung To: (*speaks*) I am the youngest son of Chan Chi Cheong, Chan Sheung To.

Pak Hing: (*speaks*) I am Chan Chi Cheong's ... (*gestures*) Chan Chi Cheong's good friend,
Squad Leader Li Shing Tung's old attendant.

(All the above lines and gestures accompanied by "A Piece of Gold.")

Yeung Garp: (*Sees Chi Cheong.*) (*speaks*) Chi Cheong, why do you not kneel?

Chi Cheong: (*speaks*) Who are you that I should be kneeling to you?

Yeung Garp: (*speaks*) Master Chau, Master Chau, you and I have a long friendship. I am considering sparing your life. Why do you not kneel to me when you see me?

Chi Cheong: (*speaks*) That is a joke! You have betrayed the court, willing to be a Manchu crook. What friendship is there left between me and you? (*Spits.*)

Yeung Garp: (*recites*) Chan Chi Cheong,
I in fact hold you in deep respect.
Yet the way it looks,
You are no more than one of those hard-headed Confucian scholars.
Heaven has now blessed us Manchu.
The whole world has settled down.
With you relying on the few petty gangsters from land and sea,
What is the use of it? (*gestures*)
Why are you so arrogant in front of me?

Chi Cheong: (*recites*) Tung Yeung Garp,
I admonish you not to speak to me anymore.
I shall repay the Ming emperor with my one death,
Willing to endure the suffering.

Yeung Garp: (*recites*) Fool, fool!
Ming emperor, Ming emperor!
What emperor is there for the Ming Dynasty now?
Where is the emperor?
Why am I not even aware that
There is still an emperor for the Ming Dynasty?

Chi Cheong: (*recites*) Silly one!
Do you know there is in Guangxi the Emperor Yongli?
I, Chi Cheong, achieved one of the top three levels in the civil examination
Under the deceased Emperor Shenzong,
Granted grace by the court for generations.
Kneel to you I never will,
Why bother to persist?

Yeung Garp: (*speaks*) Chi Cheong, you really would not kneel?

Shing Tung: (*speaks*) Chi Cheong my elder, do kneel down . Our commander is most concerned about face.

(*sings*) What is the problem of merely kneeling
While you are here?
He who is concerned about petty acts is not a real man.
Not to mention that here in this parlor

With officials standing all around,
It seems improper to be so arrogant.

(softly speaks) You have to let the Commander emerge with grace.

Chi Cheong: *(speaks)* Bah! You go away!

Yeung Garp: *(speaks)* Chi Cheong, will you kneel or not?

(sings) Chi Cheong, if you do not kneel,
Do not blame me for having no restraint!
Calling for the guards,
Put him ready for severe torture.

(Shouts.) Guides, come! If he will not go on his knees, beat him until he falls on his knees. No appreciation for my kindness!

(Guards take order, beat Chi Cheong with clubs, several rounds.)

(Chi Cheong spills blood, falls on the ground, roars with laughter.)

Chi Cheong: *(sings)* Alas, my garment dyed with blood.

Shui Mui: *(sings)* On the ground howling,
So cruel a scene of such cold-heartedness.
Hard to endure the sight of spilling blood soaking the garment,
Wishing heaven would bless the lonely official,
Let him not suffer the pain!
Shocked to see the ruthless clubs
Beating him close to death and rise again, then again!

Sheung To: *(speaks)* Father!

(sings) Embracing Father and howling,
Ashamed, no way to guard him from the clubs.
Willing to take his place myself, to suffer the pain,
Weeping and kneeling to beg the fierce tiger.
So very sad, shouting in grief.
Make a wish for compassion,
For exception to grant him his life.

(Begs pitifully.) (speaks) Your honorable Commander, do release my father!

Yeung Garp: *(speaks)* Go, go, go, a mere callow youth! I would not deign to speak to you.
(gestures)

(recites, without haste) Chi Cheong, you would rather crawl on the ground
Than kneel on your knees.
You are stubborn indeed.
I am not asking you to kneel to me.

Am I in worried that there are not enough people to kowtow to me?
What I meant was that you should kneel to the Manchu Prince.
You will not kneel.
Have you no consideration for your aged mother?

Chi Cheong: (*recites*) You may rest assured.
I recall when I, Chan Chi Cheong took the army,
I had apprised my mother.
She was happy for my righteous uprising.
She said fulfilling loyalty to the country was fulfilling filial piety.
So I have absolutely no concern over my aging mother.

Yeung Garp: (*recites*) Ah, Chan Chi Cheong, Chan Chi Cheong!
Then are you not worried that I shall discontinue your lineage,
And put your young son under the axe?

Chi Cheong: (*recites*) This is your call, not mine.
It is up to you whether to execute him a thousand times,
Or stab him ten thousand times!

Yeung Garp: (*sings*) So enraged my eyes could only stare,
Bewildered, totally upset.
No wonder it was said a kind person is hard to be.
I made a benign effort; he had no appreciation at all.
How could one feel the pain before the needle pricks?
Once the needle pricks then there come the howls of grief!
Execute, execute, execute.
I shall first kill his son,
Then his mother.

Shing Tung: (*speaks*) Hold it!

(*sings*) Commander, do hold and give allowance.
Your honor, do not tremble with anger.
I wish you would be broad-minded and forgive Master Chau.
Spare his son from slaughtering.
Why not use this little son to persuade his father?
It was said the feeling for family flesh and bone
Is impossible not to have.
Chi Cheong is essentially good material to make use of,
It is better that your honor would give second thoughts.

Yeung Garp: (*speaks*) What? Use the son to persuade his father?

Pak Hing: (*speaks*) Your honor, I know quite well that it is not my place to speak but I shall say a few things anyway.

(*sings*) Do you know? (*repeats*)
Let me tell you the truth.

The Prime Minister loves this young son the most.
I also admire the great idea of the Squad Leader,
Move him with the feeling for family flesh and bone.
Why have the boy killed first?
Prime Minister Chan has a family of loyal martyrs,
Not a light problem to deal with.

Yeung Garp: (*speaks*) Move him with the feeling for family flesh and bone?

Shui Mui: (*sings*) Why bother to hesitate?
Why ponder to plot the moves?
Why the need to put your heads together murmuring?
The Prime Minister embraces the will to sacrifice for the cause,
No fear for sharp axe and steel sabre,
Why do you bother to delay the moment?
Why not fulfill him soon?

Yeung Garp: (*speaks*) Squad Leader, speaking from my heart I am really reluctant to kill him.
You are right. Let me quietly use his son to move him.

Yeung Garp: (*recites*) Little To, Little To.
Are you afraid that I shall ask someone to drag you to the East suburb square to
cut off your head?
Needless to say, you are afraid.
Be so good, go up to persuade you father.
Ask him to surrender.
Your father loves you the most.
In his heart he would not wish for you to be
Stabbed a thousand times, slashed ten thousand times. (*gestures*)

Sheung To: (*recites*) You, you Manchu! (*repeats*) (*gestures*)
Your words are like honey
Yet your heart is like a wild tiger's.
At the age of three I started my learning,
My father taught me to be loyal and to repay my country.
He taught me year after year,
The word loyalty is ingrained in my mind.
You should not use the son to move the father,
I want to sacrifice to preserve my filial piety.
I do not want to disappoint grandmother,
Our loyalty and martyrdom will go down in history
Shining like the sun and moon.
No fear for the saber, no fear for the axe.

(*Grabs and faces Garp, puts up a hand to strike, with tears.*)

Shing Tung: (*speaks*) Why do you not have regard for life and death?

Chi Cheong: (*speaks*) Good strike, good strike!

(sings) Father, son, entire family to be loyal martyrs.
I cannot help but smile and stroke the little boy,
Praise to him for knowing how to repay the country's grace.
I am fully convinced now of Yuk Kiu's good teaching.

Yeung Garp: *(speaks)* Guards, come! Take him away. Kill, kill, kill!

Altogether: *(speak)* Yes!

Shing Tung: *(speaks)* Commander!

(sings) Even though this boy is unreasonable,
Your honor should reconsider;
Do not shout execution unnecessarily,
You need to keep in mind the people's morale.
Prime Minister is highly virtuous and prestigious,
He holds the admiration of all Han Chinese people.
If at this time Master Chau died in your hands,
It would surely incite resentment from the people in the streets.
Why not grant your grace again?
Your recognition and respect for excellence will spread far and wide,
Lauded for generations in posterity.
Your righteousness high as heaven,
Your humble subordinate cares for your honor,
Hence this repeated advice.

(speaks) Commander, if it were someone else I would not care to remind him.
Nevertheless, Commander, you are indeed laudable, worthy of admiration from
others. That is why I do so.

Yeung Garp: *(recites)* Well, well! Hearing these few words from you,
My heart feels so comfortable.
Even the King of Hades enjoys wearing flattering top hat.

Pak Hing: *(speaks)* That's right, that's right! Even the King of Hades likes to put on top hats.
This is a common slang indeed.

Yeung Garp: *(recites)* It is not possible not to execute Chan Chi Cheong.
His refusal to surrender
Will make an inevitable slash in his neck.
Chi Cheong, as for your mother, your son, your younger sister-in-law,
I shall not slay them.
You do not respect me
Yet I shall respect you.
On this, it is only me, Tung Yeung Garp, who could do so.
Guards, come, banish this woman and boy from the Commander house.
The two of them will not make such noises here after this.

(speaks) Banish them!

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Shui Mui: (recites) Do not banish me.
I also want to fulfill my integrity,
I would rather follow my elder brother-in-law to death here.

Sheung To: (recites) Do not banish me.
We father and son will live together, die together;
Never parting ways.

Shing Tung: (recites) Better go, better go, nasty boy!
Indeed I have toiled so hard for you.

Pak Hing: (recites) Third Junior Master, go away quick!
You would have lost your life.
If your stepmother had not married Squad Leader Li,
Ten screws would not be enough
To fix your little head on your shoulder.

Yeung Garp: (recites) Chi Cheong, I really cannot stand it.
I will not slay your son,
Will not slay your mother.
Yet you do not have one word of thanks for me.
Why do you behave so badly as a person these days?

Chi Cheong: (recites) Tung Yeung Garp, why should I thank you?
You do this simply out of hypocrisy, to buy people's hearts.
Do you think people are foolish?
Who is there that does not know of your treachery,
Which is worse than that of the treacherous Cao Cao?

Yeung Garp: (recites) Saw him to death! (repeats)
Someone come. Take him to the East suburb square.
I distinctly want you to find a saw and saw him to death,
So it will be as painful as possible as he dies.

Two Manchu officials: (speak) Commander, how can a person be sawed to death?

Chi Cheong: (recites) Fools, fools!
Let me teach you about it.
Sawing a person requires wooden boards.
Simply find two pieces of wood to sandwich the person
And then it is possible to saw him to death.
It is laughable that you only care to do evil acts,
But do not have this knowledge.

Yeung Garp: (speaks) Escort him out!

(Manchu soldiers escort Chi Cheong out. Exit.)

Shing Tung: (sings) Commander you are so good at managing difficult issues,

Your maneuvering skills are so superior.
I should take leave to go back to the office,
I will visit your Commander's house again in another day.

Yeung Garp: (sings) Chi Cheong could not be bought,
My wish was in vain.
With tears, executing the lonely loyal official,
I am agonized at heart!

(Outside the Provincial Commander Mansion.)

Yuk Kiu: (sings) Standing all this time before the window,
Shedding tears again and again, crying in grief.
Today is the date for interrogation,
Adding to the agonized feeling.

(speak) Sigh! Everything, everything, do not speak about it further. Although Squad Leader Li has promised me, yet I do not know what the situation was today. It is late in the evening already. The Squad Leader has not yet returned. So I quietly come to the Commander House to find out the news. Sigh! The Commander House is already closed. How dare I enter?

[Sitting room of Chan Chi Cheong's residence.]

Yuk Kiu: (speaks) Alas , Third Junior Master, you are alright?

(recites) Everyone is alright?
Third Junior master, tell your stepmother quickly what happened today.

Sheung To: (recites) Stepmother, indeed thanks and no thanks!
I am alright; Second Aunt is alright; grandmother is alright.
Father has been taken to the East suburb execution ground and put to death.

(speaks) I forbid you to cry. I would not have you put on an act.

Yuk Kiu: (recites) Third Junior Master, why do you talk like that?
Your father has already sacrificed for integrity and fulfilled his duty.
How can I not feel the pain at heart?

Sheung To: (recites) What pain?
I would say you are so very happy at heart.
Everything you have said to me is a lie.
Do you think that I am not aware you have lost yourself to Li Shing Tung?
Beneath your mask,
You are nothing but a ruthless villain.

(speaks) Do not speak to me from now on!

Yuk Kiu: (voice raised, speaks) Third Junior Master, Third Junior Master!

(sings) Third Junior Master, would anyone willingly ruin her chastity?
I know I have been totally defaced with dirt.
I hope you will always remember this moment
To avenge this wrong in time.

(Cries.) (speaks) Third Junior Master, tell your Second Aunt for me to take good care of your grandmother. Third Junior Master, you had a narrow escape. You should make a firm resolve to be a good man...

Sheung To: *(speaks)* I do not need you to tell me what to do. Let me instruct you: Go back and serve your Squad Leader Li well. I have not yet spoken wrongly of you. You are just a concubine. After the husband dies there is always another husband. Bah!

Yuk Kiu: *(sings)* Who would know that my fragile heart is shattered into a million pieces.
This solitary grief can only be cried out in the rain.

(Curtain falls.)

ACT IV

(Scene: Half sitting room, half garden.)

(Kao Yuet stands at the curtain)

Kao Yuet: *(recites)* Things in the past were too heartbreaking.
The Prime Minister was already dead.
Counting the days to now,
It happens to be the seventh cycle of seven days of mourning.
The poor madam has come to pay her respects secretly.
Crying in the day, crying in the night,
The sound of crying has not ceased. *(repeats)*

(Ensemble plays tune.)

(Yuk Kiu enters from stage left in Manchu attire, goes to desk, picks up a book, reads and then puts it down, recites a poem softly.)

Yuk Kiu: *(recites poem)* "The young woman in her boudoir does not know of grief.
Dressed up, she mounts the green tower on a spring day.
Catching a glimpse of the green willows at the footpaths among the fields,
She regrets encouraging her husband to seek his name among the nobility."

(Picks up another book.) "Sworn on their lives to wipe out the Huns,
Five thousand crack soldiers perished on barbaric soil.
Piteous the bones lying by the Wuding River,
The men still linger in the dreams of the inner chambers."

(speaks) Ah Yuet, are the candles and incense lit?

Kao Yuet: *(speaks)* Coming! I am lighting them now.

Yuk Kiu: *(sings)* (Mr Kan You Man repeatedly instructed that the traditional tune be adopted in the singing here. Therefore, only a couple of characters in the original lyrics were sparingly altered to fit in the rules of prosody.)
Lighting candles and incense.
In front of the deceased's portrait,
Kneeling to bow, giving sacrifice.
Wishing the enlightened spirit of my deceased spouse
Would stop for a moment deigning to hear my statements.
Remembering that year,
Master succeeded in the civil examination at an early age,
Gaining the third graduate status.
With a stance in court, loyal, upright, incorruptible,
A reputation dazzling the capital.
Remembering my husband Chau,
Incomparable learning and talent,
Refined scholar unmatched among the generations.
Renovating the South Garden,
Promoting local culture,
Organizing literary groups, writing poems.
This ill-fated blossom, fortunate to be pitied by Master,
Made me one of the maids.
In the Jade tower, husband and wife
With deep love for each other.
Waning moon, fading flowers.
Enduring shame to preserve the orphan,
Pitying the beloved son, holding secret tears,
Until the time comes, uneasy at heart.
I am willing to take on Master's dying wish,
Here at the foot of White Cloud Hill,
My determination will never sway.
Serving the country and the family,
Till death will I cease.

(Shui Mui enters, cries.)

Shui Mui: *(sings)* Thinking of Yuk Kiu serving the enemy,
Ruining her integrity,
Time and again I secretly hate her baseness.
I would rather that we did not meet again
Because of the splinter in my heart.

(speaks) I would not have come. However, considering that in a few days it will be the Squad Leader's birthday, and an invitation has been sent to our house. Senior Madam gave regard to Yuk Kiu's face and insisted that I send a gift. And

so I have borne the gift here. Hah! I had not expected that the Squad Leader was not such a nasty person after all. He insisted that I stay until his birthday before I leave. And so I simply take the opportunity to come in and see that despicable person.

Yuk Kiu: (recites) Ah ya, Second Young Madam, Second Young Madam!
How come you have come here?
Is our mother-in-law in good health?
Sigh! It is fortunate that mother-in-law still has you to attend to her.

Shui Mui: (Sneers.) (recites) Yuk Kiu, I think the term “mother-in-law” was not aptly used.
Alas Yuk Kiu, look at you!
You are beautiful like a Manchu woman now.
Your demeanor has completely changed.
Indeed today is better than the old days.

Yuk Kiu: (recites) Second Young Madam, why do you talk like this?
The reason for me to ruin my integrity,
Did not mother-in-law tell you about it?
I realize your words are mixed with spite.

Shui Mui: (recites) Yuk Kiu, it is true that mother-in-law has told me.
You really do have to re-marry.
It is nothing. I simply said you were fortunate.
Do you think it easy to be allowed to wear Manchu attires?
Indeed this person next to you is dying with envy.

Yuk Kiu: (recites) Yes. I know it would not be possible
To vindicate myself, to wash clean my name.
If you hate me so much, however,
Why bother to meet here?

Shui Mui: (recites) Yuk Kiu, speaking from my heart
I had not wanted to see you.
Yet mother-in-law instructed me to tell you,
And I have no choice but to do that.
Second Junior Master Sheung Lan has returned from the battlefield.
I cannot withhold that from you.

(rushing gongs and drums)

(Pak Hing enters)

Pak Hing: (recites) Yuk Kiu, Yuk Kiu,
Why did you arrange things this way?
The Squad Leader is coming in.
He would be angry to see this.
How can we hold a funeral here?
It is not as if we were home. (repeats).

(Repeated rapid drums)

(Shing Tung enters.)

Shing Tung: (speaks) Yuk Kiu, what is this book that you are reading? Bring it over to me for a look.

Pak Hing: (speaks) Do you, Squad Leader, know the words? You are a bumptious guy from Shanxi.

Yuk Kiu: (speaks) Ah Hing, bring the poetry to the Squad Leader to have a look. This is a posthumous writing by my sister, Lady Cheung. It is called "The Green Lotus Collection." (gestures)

Shing Tung: (speaks) My, my. Why is there a poem here? Who did this?

Yuk Kiu: (speaks) It was me. It is called "Rhyme of Sorrowful Reading."

Shing Tung: (speaks) Ah, let me read it out to you.

(Reads aloud.) "The half piece of feeling is hard to detect."

(gestures) Great verse! You and Lady Cheung are indeed sisters.

Pak Hing: (speaks) Squad leader, you read wrong. Let me read it to you. (gestures)

"The rich tune and the feeling are hard to detect,
Watching the lotus branches in knots overcomes some grief.
Fine fragrance spreading far, absorbed in rhymed words,
Given over to refined sayings that would be left behind."

Shing Tung: (recites) Yuk Kiu, come over, come over. (gestures)
Why do you look sad all day long?
I do hope you will smile just once for me.

Yuk Kiu: (recites) Squad Leader, I really cannot smile.
I almost could not write the word smile.

Shing Tung: (speaks) I do want you to smile. (repeats) Let me tell you a story about my former boss to make you laugh. You will laugh for sure.

(recites) Ko Kit, he was my former boss.
Speaking of Ko Kit,
He came from the bandits,
Joined the army of Li Zicheng,
fierce with no one else like him.
Li favored him the most,
Adopted him to be his son,
Gave him leave to come and go among the women.

No one had expected him to be so loose
That he seduced one of that thief's women.
The treacherous Li almost died in anger.
Speaking of it,
It is utterly hilarious!

(Roars with laughter.) (speaks) See how hilarious it is?

Pak Hing: *(speaks)* This is exactly "no one else made to laugh so you laugh by yourself." If I were like you I would not have earned my meals.

Shing Tung: *(speaks)* This one did not make you laugh. There is yet another that will make you laugh for sure, which is this Tung Yeung Garp right under our eyes. At his matured age, he is afraid of ghosts. Ha ha!

(recites) Ever since Prime Minister Chan died in the suburb square,
The ghost has appeared to him every night,
Scarring him half to death.
He dare not sleep every night,
Has to gather his concubines around him.
Then one night, t
There was a mouse at the head of the bed.
It probably smelled the perfume,
So it tugged at his pigtail.
He was so scared he jumped up
And almost fell to his death.

Pak Hing: *(speaks)* Squad Leader, the stories you tell do not make her laugh. She wants to hear stories of loyalty and integrity in order to laugh. Go away and let me make her laugh.

(recites) Master Cheung Ka Yuk
Who died for the country in Dongguan.
He had nine arrows in his body
And jumped down to the pond.
With the wounds he could still dive,
And dived for almost a thousand *li*.
There's no Dragon Palace under the water,
He needed to take a breath.
Raising his head
He hit the bottom of a large boat!
Bong Yin is dead,
Our Master is dead.
The three of them will be bosom friends in the nether world.
The Twin-Guang region has Three Loyalties:
They are known as the Three Virtuous Men of Late Ming.

Pak Hing: *(recites)* It is not the first time we could not make her laugh. Why don't you, Squad Leader, and I do some duet acting?

(gestures)

Yuk Kiu: *(speaks)* Alas! Have mercy the two of you and do not try to make me laugh.

(Kneels to ShingTung.) (recites) It is hard to show my teeth,
Do you see the teardrops still on my cheek?
Do you know I have always been a reserved person?
Trying to laugh yet failing,
It is indeed a painful joke.
Squad Leader, do not loiter in this boudoir,
I, Lady Kiu, is on the verge of crying.

(speaks) Squad Leader, I would kneel to you and beg you. Do not force me to laugh!

Shing Tung: *(speaks)* Sigh! Then there is nothing to be done.

(sings) My heart is confused. *(repeats)*
Downcast, even one laugh I could not beg;
And I have no good ideas how to unknot the furrowed brows.
Yuk Kiu, why not go and squander some money.
I can see that you have little entertainment,
Closeted lonely in the inner chamber.
I am making to you a present of five thousand taels of silver,
As a small token of the deep concern in my heart.

(speaks) Here. This is a draft for five thousand taels of silver. Take it and have fun. *(gestures)*

Pak Hing: *(speaks)* With money, there is no need to worry about not finding entertainment, Lady Squad Leader.

(sings) I will take you for a bowl of sampan congee.
In Lychee Bay,
All sampans are decorated with wine banners.
Or why not go to the Four-Arch Tower,
Filled with sidewalk stalls over there,
Are lots of histories and classics from former dynasties.
Go up to White Cloud Hill.
If you want to pray to the gods,
Why not visit the Temple of Fairy Cheng?
Your fair sister Lady Cheung
Was also in Canton when she died from illness.
Out in the West suburb,
There is the Grave of Hundred Blossoms,
Where countless gentlemen made tablet inscriptions.
Kwan Yin Hill, Five-story Tower,
Are comparable to the Big Banyan.
“Before buying the watermelon,

There was Mr. Buck-tooth;
Before the City of the Ram,
There was the Temple of Bright Filial Piety.”
That’s a popular saying.
(Speeds up the tempo.)
The West Gate is best for roast goose legs,
The Sand River Town is most famous for its flat noodles.
If you have tried it and want the taste again,
It’s cheap and good and agreeable.
If you don’t like any of these,
Then I’ll simply take you to see Cantonese opera.

Yuk Kiu: *(speaks)* Ah, Cantonese opera? Why not? Rather than staying in the boudoir quietly feeling depressed all day, it is better to go and listen to some fine Cantonese arias. What reputed troupes are there? Any outstanding shows?

Shing Tung: *(speaks)* Oh yes, oh yes! Behind our Military Commander Mansion, a big bamboo theater has been set up for the celebration of the Kwan Yin Birthday Festival not long ago. It’s still there. A few days ago the neighborhood again invited a top troupe there, and it is still performing now.

Pak Hing: *(speaks)* Yuk Kiu, yes, yes! I hear people saying that the leading military actor in the troupe, called Hero Shao, looks quite like our Prime Minister. Go take a look!

Yuk Kiu: *(speaks)* Then, Squad Leader, will you be accompanying me?

Shing Tung: *(speaks)* No, no. I hate going to the theater. Just hearing the noise of gongs and drums annoys me. And I have to go back to the government office.

Yuk Kiu: *(speaks)* In that case I shall go with Pak Hing. It is two o’clock now. The gong and drum probably have started. We are going.

(Yuk Kiu and Pak Hing both exit.)

Shing Tung: *(sings)* Not able to court a smile from the beauty,
I cannot help but have brows in deep knots.

(Curtain Falls.)

Act V

(Curtain down.)

(Kao Yuet, Ping Shum at stage front, arrange flowers.)

(Introductory percussion. Curtain up.)

(Ensemble plays tune.)

Ping Shum: (recites) Sister Kao Yuet, since you have followed Madam to enter our Squad Leader household,
I have two questions that I would therefore like to ask you.
Ever since Madam married into this family,
She has not been seen to smile even once.
Before she married into this family,
Was she also of this disposition?

Kao Yuet: (recites) Hardly. In the old days
You would not know how light-hearted and lively Madam was.
In the past, the time in the Jade Chamber,
I saw her laughing from morning till night.
Now that she does not laugh,
I guess it has to do with mood.

Ping Sum: (recites) Alas, Sister Kao Yuet,
Not only does our Honor hope she will laugh,
Even I, Ping Shum, hope she will laugh.
It is so difficult to get a laugh from her.
If one goes to buy a lottery ticket when she laughs,
For sure it will hit the pool.

Kao Yuet: (recites) Then do not hold up your hope to win big.
In fact, it is already a good sign that she does not cry.
With a life experience such as hers,
How do you expect her to come out with laughter?

(Ping Shum looks back stage.)

Kao Yuet: (speaks) Ping Shum, where are you going so stealthily?

Ping Shum: (speaks) I am in a rush to buy lottery tickets.

Kao Yuet: (speaks) That's strange! Why is she laughing so much tonight?

(Pak Hing enters.)

Pak Hing: (sings) Madam is laughing as she walks,
The bitter-melon face becoming a honey pot.
On other days she would not be dragged along,
Why are her footsteps tonight lithe and almost relaxed?

(Ensemble plays tune. Yuk Kiu enters, giggles, in flirting manner, seemingly mindlessly.)

(Yuk Kiu, gestures fitting together with the tune, muses, smiles, muses, giggles, at the end covers her mouth and howls with laughter non-stop.)

(Pak Hing sees that and follows: smiles, muses, giggles, at the end covers his mouth and howls with laughter non-stop.)

Yuk Kiu: (speaks) Pak Hing, what are you laughing at?

Pak Hing: (startled, speaks) How do I know what I am laughing at?

(recites) Madam has made me so confused.
I was watching the opera with you in the bamboo theater.
You watched and became dumb.
When that Hero Shao came on stage in his grand gown and armor,
You immediately laughed out loud
And left your seat right away.
You laughed all the way home.
I am a fan but you are not.
Why are you are so unlike your recent self?

Yuk Kiu: (laughs) (recites) Ah ya, really, I have already stopped laughing.
Now that you mentioned Hero Shao,
I cannot help but laugh.
Ah Hing, after I watched that scene,
I really am in an indescribably happy mood.

Pak Hing: (recites) That scene was not so great to watch after all.
Why are you so moved?
Ah, I see!
You must have realized that Hero Shao
Looked exactly like our Prime Minister Chan,
So you have this lighthearted mood, right?

Yuk Kiu: (recites) No. Looking alike would only make me sad,
It would not make me excited. (gestures)
Ah Hing, you go immediately to the bamboo theater,
Invite that Hero Shao
To quietly come here to see me.
Go, go.
I believe the Squad Leader
Will not return home early tonight.

Pak Hing: (speaks) What? Quietly brings Hero Shao here to see you? (gestures) No, no. It
would scare me to death!

(sings) I'm so shocked.
My head swings, my eyes fixed!
Your humble servant dare not take Madam's order.
How can actors be brought in the door?
Should the Squad Leader find out,
I'm afraid this old slave would not live;
Not to mention that Hero Shao looks so handsome and refined,
Unlike that second painted-face actor Big Bull Ping!

(*scared, speaks*) Ma...Madam! If you asked me to invite Big Bull Ping here then no one would gossip. If we invited Hero Shao, people would readily gossip. Madam you do know the temper of Squad Leader, unlike others... If you like him, why don't we go see the show every night? Given we have several thousand taels of silver, it would last forever for seeing the show! Invite him here? No way, no way!

Yuk Kiu: (*Acts spoiled.*) (*speaks*) Ah Hing, go. Do you want my mood to go on being so bad? Go!

Pak Hing: (*speaks*) Oh, I'll go, I'll go. (*At stage front, frightened, complaining.*) Bring, bring, bring! A mistake to bring her to the show. (*Helplessly. Exit.*)

Yuk Kiu: (*speaks*) Kao Yuet, there is not much to do. Why don't you turn in early and go to bed?

Kao Yuet: (*Perplexed, at stage front.*) (*speaks*) Sigh! After Madam came back from watching the opera, things are getting complicated!

Yuk Kiu: (*sings*) Facing the lamp alone,
Missing the Han Chinese tunes;
Who could know the feeling of this aggrieved woman?
Listening time and again to the metallic sound of the clapper and *pipa*,
Would that not make one happy and excited?

(*Hurriedly.*)

(*Pak Hing pulls Wong Shao up the road. Frightened, wipes sweat off. Enters. At stage front.*)

Wong Shao: (*speaks*) Hey, you drag me running like crazy, running like crazy, what for?

(*sings*) Just now I painted my face to go on stage,
Telling the story to whoever.
Now the paint and blush still on my face not yet washed away.
Not seemly to meet the Madam in such a great hurry,
Let me go back and fix my attire. (*gestures*)

Pak Hing: (*Hand pulls tight Wang Shao's.*) (*speaks*) If you go back and then come again it would likely get us into big trouble. Come in now and meet the Lady of the Commander. You should be careful! I am not going in with you. I want to sit in front of the door to keep watch. If the Commander comes in from the back door, I'll take you out from the front. If he returns from the front door, then I'll take you out in the back.

Wong Shao: (*annoyed, speaks*) Then why bother to meet?

Pak Hing: (*speaks in haste*) Just go inside! (*repeats*) (*Sits at the front gate, keeps watch while wiping off sweat.*)

Wong Shao: (*Enters.*) (*speaks*) My respectable Madam Provincial Commander.

Yuk Kiu: (speaks) Sir, please sit down.

(Both sit.)

Yuk Kiu: (recites) The way I have someone invite you here,
I realize it is abrupt.
However, I went with Ah Hing just now to appreciate your art,
I am in deep admiration of you.
You are indeed to be admired and respected.

Wong Shao: (recites) Your words are too kind (repeats).
Madam, this is nothing but petty skills.
So, Madam you do enjoy watching Cantonese opera regularly?
Cantonese opera is great.
If written by someone with dedication,
It can be said to have a good influence on morals and society.

Yuk Kiu: (recites) Certainly. Yet there is one other thing that I admire about you.
Speaking of it my own first sense is a feeling of shame.
I am a Han Chinese, but now dressed in Manchu attire.
(Sighs.) Alas! How very many Han people are wearing Manchu outfits now?
What I admire about you the most is that
You can still be wearing the attire of the Great Ming Dynasty,
Not losing a bit of the nature of a real man.

Wong Shao: (recites) Oh, hearing these words from Madam
I realize that you are not an ordinary person.
We are one of the ten non-compliers.
The saying is that “whores comply, actors do not comply.”
Only we can preserve the attire and culture of Great Ming.
That is why brothers of the Pear Garden
Secretly take pride in this.

Pak Hing: (At stage front murmurs.) (speaks) Why does the chat gets longer and longer?
(Acts anxiously and returns to his previous position.)

Yuk Kiu: (recites) Sir, forgive my curiosity in asking you this extra question.
You put on the great Han attire every night,
What is your feeling inside?
Please trust that I will not betray you.
I wish you would share with me
The genuine spirit of the brothers of the Pear Garden.

Wong Shao: (long recites) Madam, you ask me so candidly,
So I should reply to you more candidly.
The sentiments of the people today,
This is not limited to the brothers of the Pear Garden,
Who would not be remembering Han China?

Madam, madam, you have been to see our show,
Did you not sense from the stage
The sounds of our hearts with guarded tears?
(*Holds fists tight in rage.*)

(*sings*) National affairs are too bitter and sad.
Ever since banners appeared in Tuo Cheng,
Even animals and poultry can find no peace.
Day and night with singing voice,
So sad until the voice breaks,
Still cannot awaken dull minds.
The most terrible,
How many shameless descendants of Han China
Favored the top hat with peacock feathers granted by the Manchus.
The three thousand brothers of the Pear Garden,
Shedding tears behind the curtain, behind other people's back.
Secretly picking up the attire,
Gazing again and again.
Looking southward to heaven with raised head,
How many cries in tears,
The broken dreams lament,
That the light be with us again?
Restraining sad tears,
Making a greatly aggrieved plea,
This is the true color of actors.
(*Covertly dries tears, smiles bitterly.*)

(*speaks*) Madam, forgive me. I am too impulsive. My words were too blatantly said.

(*Yuk Kiu listens and nods all along, gets excited and then overcome by deep sorrow.*)

Yuk Kiu: (*Weeps.*) (*speaks*) Wong Shao, don't be so sad. There will be a day.

(*sings*) The sorrowful person listening to the sorrowful words,
Looking at each other with tears,
Could neither laugh nor cry.
Everything lies in what is unsaid.
Wishing you could retain the attire for the time to come.

Wong Shao: (*recites*) Madam, I, Wong Shao, am an intelligent person.
I understand why tonight you had wanted to see me so urgently.
Alright, madam.
If there is anything we can do for you in the future,
We shall crush our bodies to powder and our bones to pieces to comply with your orders.

Yuk Kiu: (*recites*) Wong Shao. Keep this in mind.

Everyone has a responsibility.
If you make an effort,
I make an effort,
He makes an effort,
The saying is that “a common will can make a city.”

(Pak Hing, head covered with sweat, sees Shing stepping into the mansion.)

Pak Hing: (knowing not what to do, speaks) He’s coming back, he’s coming back!
(Trembles.)

(Ensemble plays tune.)

(Yuk Kiu signals Wong Shao to hurriedly exit at stage left, and escorts him.)

(Shing Tung, gestures fitting together with the tune, shows an unjustly inflicted sadness. Hands behind his back, he enters at stage right.)

(Pak Hing sees Shing Tung. Terrified, dull-witted, not knowing whether to cry or to laugh.)

Shing Tung: (speaks) Ah Hing, where did Madam go? When I came back just now I heard from outside the wall the sound of Madam talking to a man. Who was that?

Pak Hing: (even more terrified, speaks) It...it...it...it...it’s just me. (Gives a bitter smile.)

Shing Tung: (shouts) Nonsense! The voice did not sound like yours!

Pak Hing: (even more terrified, immediately speaks) It...it...it’s just me. I am like a wood thrush and have several voices. See, I went to the theater with Madam and has learnt...learnt...learnt...learnt several singing styles in different voices...

Shing Tung: (speaks) Nonsense! Ah Hing, let me tell you, do not bring just anyone to come and meet Madam!

Pak Hing: (speaks) Yes, yes. Not again.

Shing Tung: (speaks) What? Not again? That obviously means you have brought someone in.

Pak Hing: (speaks) No, no! Your honor just gave the instruction and I said not again. Not again means from now on.

Yuk Kiu: (speaks) Shing Tung, you are back?

Shing Tung: (in bad temper, speaks) I am back.

Yuk Kiu: (Deliberately powders.) (speaks) Ah Hing, why didn’t you bring a chair for his Honor to sit? (gestures) Maid, why didn’t you bring a tea for his honor to drink? (gestures)

Shing Tung: (Sits.) (speaks) My, my, why is there such great service when I come back tonight? (gestures) I have never seen you put on powder before. (gestures) Have you finished powdering, Yuk Kiu?

Yuk Kiu: (Still leaning next to the jade column and powders.) (responding, speaks) Yes. I'm done.

(Puts down the mirror. Behaves in an extremely unusual, relaxed manner.) (sings)
Eyes sleepy, just pushed away the quilt.
Half awake, making up a little,
The golden hairpin fell, untidy streaks.

(with music backing, speaks) Maid, ah ya! Why are you so careless? How can you bring such a hot tea for his honor to drink? (Picks up the cup and blows over the tea to cool it.)

(sings) Streaks of perfumed, fragrant steam would awaken the stomach.
The fragrant tea in the cup immersed with sweet feeling,
Leaving a soft, warm savor.

(Hands over the tea to Shing Tung.)
Who could sense the feeling in it?
Take a look at my smile, so lithe.

(speaks) It is suitable for drinking now. Drink it. (Smiles.)

Shing Tung: (Holds the cup, astonished.) (speaks) Yuk Kiu, why have you started to smile? Yuk Kiu, why are you putting on powder? (gestures) I know. Ah Hing,

(recites) Do you know what made your Madam so happy tonight? (gestures)

Pak Hing: (hurriedly, speaks) I know, I know. (hand covering mouth) What is it that I know? I am always so quick in tongue and words my whole life.

(recites) Your honor, how would I know what has made her smile?
Just now she was also laughing when she walked.
Not only laughed, but peals of laughter!
(Imitates Yuk Kiu's laughter.)

Shing Tung: (recites) Sigh, Yuk Kiu!
If it is not for special emotional stirrings,
Your attitude would not have become like this.
Is it that you have found spiritual sustenance?
Or you definitely would not have been so stirred up tonight.

Yuk Kiu: (recites) Shing Tung, you are indeed ridiculous!
Usually I do not have anything to laugh about.
Now everything you say is making me laugh.
You are silly. Other than yourself,
What else is there upon which I could find spiritual sustenance?
With a great hero right here before me,
Would I not get my spiritual sustenance from him
But rather than from a nameless pawn?

- Shing Tung:* (*Shows a stern face, suddenly shouts.*) Yuk Kiu, do not take me for a fool!
- (*sings*) Before this, a thousand pieces of gold
Could not buy that laugh of yours;
Why tonight you laugh unrestrainedly?
Eyes sending ripples of passion,
Even more unlike your usual demeanor.
- (*speaks*) Yuk Kiu, the way you are laughing, there must be a purpose, a plot!
- Yuk Kiu:* (*Covers mouth, giggles.*) (*speaks*) Alas it is so ridiculously funny! It made me laugh so hard! (*Turns to hold her sides in even louder laughter.*)
- Pak Hing:* (*Imitates Yuk Kiu.*) (*speaks*) Alas, it is so ridiculously funny! It made me laugh so hard. (*Turns to hold his sides in even louder laughter.*)
- Shing Tung:* (*shouts*) Ah Hing, I give you no leave to laugh!
- Pak Hing:* (*At stage front, tries hard to stop laughing.*) (*speaks*) Not laughing but wanting to laugh is hard. Laughing and wanting not to laugh is harder.
- Yuk Kiu:* (*speaks*) Shing Tung, have mercy and don't try to make me laugh all night long. Laughing too much is bad for health. You have no cause to be here suspecting even the cloud and the rain. I laughed. There is a reason for it.
- Shing Tung:* (*nervously, speaks*) What is the reason? Can you speak?
- Yuk Kiu:* (*speaks*) Alas, really! I'll speak, I'll speak. You need not be so nervous.
- (*recites*) Today I went to see the plays,
Dragged down in a mood of depression.
Yet as soon as the gong roared,
I became happier and happier as I watched.
I watched transfixed,
Receiving and sensing with heart and spirit.
Let me imitate the military actor in full shape on stage:
Pulling straight the pheasant feather on the helmet,
Holding the order tablet from the general;
Swaggering in martial glory,
Winning the very first combat.
It awoke my spirit and swept away my great sorrow.
Perhaps you would come with me to the theater every night?
I become happy when I am at the stage!
- Shing Tung:* (*Smiles, sits.*) (*speaks*) Oh, so you came back from Cantonese opera.
- (*recites*) Yuk Kiu, you are not a child anymore.
Why are you still so interested in watching the military plays with fighting and killing?
Martial plays would not make one laugh.

You must have set eyes on a very good comedian,
With funny pranks and jests,
To change you into this amusing character.

Pak Hing: (recites) No counting on that happening!
If I could not tempt her to laugh,
Who else could have tempted her to laugh?
I was trained as a comedian too!
Who is there that does not call me Jester Hing?

Shing Tung: (recites) Yuk Kiu, most probably the story was funny,
The lyrics were funny, is that so?
Recently Cantonese opera plays
Do have humorous stories, tight and smart plots.

Yuk Kiu: (Shakes head.) (recites) No, no. The story was not funny,
The lyrics were not funny either.
Only the costumes led me to laugh.
Seeing the Great Ming attires again:
Bright red robes, black satin official hats,
How solemn, how astute!

Shing Tung: (speaks) Oh, well, what is so funny about costumes? Every dynasty has its own
attires. Every dynasty has its own decrees and systems. Just like me now. Does it
not look nice what I wear?

(sings) Unicorn embroidered on the mandarin square,
Jade belt around waist of a tiger.
Top hat with red feather for First Rank official,
Horse-hoof cuffs adorned with court beads on the side.
It is also glamorous to no end!

Yuk Kiu: (speaks) Alas! Such attire causes an eye-sore just looking at it!

(sings) With lowered horse-hoof cuffs,
Perfectly like the shape of bull and horse.
Trailing a large braid at the back,
Like a pig's tail strolling on the roads.
Men are not animals,
Why bother to drag a feather behind?
Neither horse nor ass, rather like a sedan chair bearer,
In the past only sedan chair bearer would wear a tassel.
Squad leader, you made me unable to laugh, try as I might,
Because of my contempt over the impropriety of your costume!

(speaks) See, lowering the arms and bending from the waist, shrinking the back,
swaying while walking, let me imitate it for you. (gestures) Would you not say it

looks like a homeless dog wandering in the street? Shing Tung, this is what is called "a beast in clothes."

Shing Tung: (*speaks right at the beat*) Shut up, shut up, shut up!

(*recites*) Yuk Kiu, if you were not my wife,
I would have slapped your mouth.
Even if you dislike it to the extreme,
You cannot insult the attire of our Manchu court.
It is punishable with execution if someone hears us. (*gestures*)
Yuk Kiu, since you will laugh when you see the Ming dynasty attire,
I can quietly wear it for you to see when I come back from the office.
If it can make you laugh, when there is no one around,
I will go without the hat and feather.

Yuk Kiu: (*recites*) Ah ya Shing Tung! Really?
Do not placate me to make me happy.
If you are willing to put on the attire of Great Ming in front of me
I would indeed laugh continuously.

Pak Hing: (*recites*) Your honor, will you wear it or not?
Let me go to the bamboo theater and borrow a few pieces,
The design to be at your command! (*Stimulated.*)

Shing Tung: (*speaks*) No need! I have quietly hidden away a few pieces of relics from Great Ming. They were the official attire worn by my father. Ah Hing, just go inside and ask Ah Ping to bring them out to me.

(*recites*) To gain that laugh from the beauty,
I would promise to do anything.

(*Pak Hing exits with rapid steps.*)

(*Yuk Kiu makes up to Shing Tung, drums his back.*)

(*Six maids and Ping Shum carry black satin official hat, pants, enter with Pak Hing.*)

(*Shing Tung enters pavilion, puts on hats, robes, comes out, sits formally.*)

(*Yuk Kiu watches, claps, laughs in peals.*)

Shing Tung: (*recites*) Alright, Yuk Kiu.
After you have laughed let us leave it here.
In fact I have been worrying while I was wearing it.
If someone saw this they would say
I was extremely disrespectful to the court. (*Gestures to remove.*)

Yuk Kiu: (*recites*) Shing Tung, either you do not put it on,
Or you put it on and do not remove it.
I wish you would wear it month after month, year after year,

Wear it every hour and every minute.
Since you love me,
You should comply with my feeling.

(Shouts.) I won't let you remove it!

Shing Tung: *(falls off chair, repeated quick drums.) (recites)* Yuk Kiu, Yuk Kiu, put it on and not allowed to remove it!
Does this not amount to asking me to revolt?
How can we revolt,
You want me killed?

Yuk Kiu: *(recites)* Squad Leader, why do you have to take it with such shock and surprise hearing me say this?
I am not asking you to revolt.
I am asking you to rectify!
You originally received the grace of the Great Ming,
With the position of Commander.
I simply ask you to revert to your former career.
Why have you turned aghast in hearing it?

(speaks) I am asking you to rectify! Rectify! Rectify!

Shing Tung: *(speaks in shock)* Yuk Kiu, keep your voice down! *(repeats)*

(Shouts.) Ah Hing, quickly shut the front door! Do not let the passersby see me.
(Gestures, shouts at maids.) What are the several of you doing there? Crawl back in! What is so good listening to all this? *(gestures in great anger.)*

(Maids exit in rapid steps.)

Pak Hing: *(speaks at stage front)* So, that laugh of our madam is to be used for this.

Shing Tung: *(sits down, wipes sweat, hesitant, agitated)* *(speaks)* Yuk Kiu, you can say anything to me in future. But the word you just said, you should absolutely not say it to me!

Yuk Kiu: *(stamps feet, pouts)* *(speaks)* I want to say it. *(repeats)* Rect...

Shing Tung: *(Throws himself at her immediately, covers her mouth.) (speaks)* Sigh! Have you gone mad, Yuk Kiu?

(sings) Just like thunder in a dry sky, I am scared!
Heart fearful, flesh pounding, no calmness sitting or standing.
Pick up the plan for the posterity of a thousand years,
Be esteemed when there is esteem.
My families are held hostage in Song Jiang district
Like birds caged,
How can rectification be rashly talked of?
(looking around vigilantly)

The Prince has favored me above the rest,
Hence my reputation spread to four provinces.
Former grace was good,
New favor is hard to be forgotten.
Rise and fall is destined by heaven!

Yuk Kiu: (*Sneers.*) (*speaks*) Squad Leader, then you are too forgetful of your ancestral origin!

Pak Hing: (*Interjects.*) (*speaks*) Forgetful of ancestral origin! Forgetful of ancestral origin!

Shing Tung: (*Shouts.*) Beat it! Am I to be criticized by you servants and slaves casually?

Yuk Kiu: (*sings*) You were immersed in the Ming Emperor's grace from your youth,
You should not be forgetful of your original nature.
You should again acknowledge the former grace,
Lose not your heart because of new favor.
With no integrity how could respect from others be gained?
A real man should leave a good name
For a thousand years and ten thousand generations.
Since ancient times there were no flawless ones,
One mistake and it is possible to backtrack.
Why give in to temptation in this manner?

(*speaks, accompanied by tune*) Squad Leader, why do you cover your ears almost entirely and not listen to me? For my part, I have from Prime Minister's words learnt a thing or two about your history. You recommended yourself to be a subordinate under Ko Kit. Yet in Hunan, Ko Kit was conspired against and put to death. At the time the Manchu army came south, Prince Fook was destroyed. At that point you had nowhere to turn to, and indeed were with no other way out and forced to surrender. It was pardonable, pardonable.

Pak Hing: (*at Yuk Kiu's side, speaks*) Pardonable. (*repeats*)

Yuk Kiu: (*Continues to speak.*) Yet now you have an opportunity. Why do you not deploy the military strength of the entire province to plot for restoration? Why not submit the entire province to Emperor Yongli to support the dragon's rise? Squad Leader, when you said "former grace was good, new favor is hard to be forgotten," it was wrong. The so-called "new favor" is only bestowed to you, yourself. Your ancestors were highly ranked for generations. Consider from which dynasty their favor came. A person cannot forget his ancestral origin, Squad Leader!

Pak Hing: (*Interjects again.*) (*speaks*) Drink the water, think of the source.

Shing Tung: (*Listens, gets angry, pushes Hing, weeps in sorrow.*) (*speaks*) Do you think I did not realize that it was wrong to surrender to the Manchus? You think I did not realize I had betrayed generations of my ancestors?

(*sad and angered, sings*) A lonely effort cannot support a big house.

Incriminated, the whole family and nine related clans would have be slain.
Do you realize I have children not yet of age?

And the elderly, like wind-blown shadows before the candle?

(Covers ears, sits down.) Don't speak to me anymore. *(repeats)*

Yuk Kiu: *(speaks)* Squad Leader, I shall speak the same thing whether you cover your ears or you do not. I know. If you still have a conscience, if you cannot endure, if you cannot accept this bitter, healing potion from me, you should not think that in rectification the nine clans would face execution! *(The above accompanied by tune.)*

(Shing Tung listens, pretends to cover ears but listens secretly, naively.)

Pak Hing: *(speaks)* Madam, you just speak on. He can hear it. His hands are off his ears. He is just making a show.

Shing Tung: *(Stamps feet.) (speaks)* Ya!

Yuk Kiu: *(speaks)* Squad Leader, do you know the old saying that "after the birds are finished the effective bow will be put aside; after the sneaky rabbits perish the hound will be coddled"? I am saddened.

(sings) Your whole family and the nine clans are not secured.
Smart and alert Minister Tung [Yeung Garp] is,
Watchful eyes like tigers', no mercy.
The official seal has not been submitted, a pretext it left.
Manchus appear very ferocious,
Fallen into traps eventually, one day.

(speaks with warm feeling and vehemently) Why haven't you handed over the seal of Guangdong Provincial Commander to Minister Tung? If he presents the case to the Manchu Emperor that you intend to revolt, can you preserve the lives of the nine clans? The two hundred of them in Song Jiang will certainly perish if you revolt. They will perish the same if you do not revolt. Which way do you want them to perish to make it worthwhile, Squad Leader?

Shing Tung: *(Listens, wipes sweat, seizes the seal hanging around his waist.)*

(recites) This is an ominous thing.
I am giving it to you to keep for me.
Without a high profile,
It may be possible to preserve our lives.
(Hands over the seal to Yuk Kiu.)

Pak Hing: *(Gets right close to Shing Tung.) (recites)* Your honor,
Die lying down,
Die standing upright,

Better not die falling face down.
Die with the back turned it's possible to face the sun and sky.
Hesitating, undecided,
Wasting the brain you have over your life!

(sad percussive hits, Yuk Kiu weeps in pain.)

(Pak Hing fits together with the sad percussive hits, moves right up to Shing Tung.)

Shing Tung: *(speaks)* [to Yuk Kiu] Don't you cry. [to Pak Hing] You, shut your mouth! I am a highly reasonable person. Are you afraid that I do not know what to do? *(gestures)* In a few days it will be my grand birthday celebration. When we have the hundreds of officials all gather together, this Commander will make the right decisions and actions. *(puts sleeves in order, exits.)*

Yuk Kiu: *(Wipes tears, excited.) (recites)* Ah Hing, come over here. *(gestures)*
Take the several thousand taels of silver that I have to Hero Shao.
You and he will gather the elders and the countrymen,
The brothers of the Pear Garden,
To do their parts for the Ming court.
How should this money be used?
Other than a portion for acquiring theatrical costumes from all around,
The remaining... *(whispers to Pak Hing's ear)*
Be careful, this is not a light responsibility!

Pak Hing: *(Takes silver.) (speaks)* Ah! So that was the painstaking reason why Madam wanted to find Hero Shao. *(Exits hurriedly.)*

Yuk Kiu: *(sings)* Lighting the incense to pray
Only wishing that one smile would attain success! *(Exits.)*

(Curtain falls.)

Act VI

(Scene: Commander Mansion Birthday Celebration Hall.)

(Introductory percussion.) (Yuk Kiu, Pak Hing, Shui Mui all at curtain.)

Yuk Kiu: *(speaks)* Ah ya! Ah Hing, today is indeed a day to be happy about.

Shui Mui: *(speaks)* Hah! I can hardly expect that the word happy would come out of your lips nowadays. Cheung Yuk Kiu, Cheung Yuk Kiu! Nothing I have said when I scolded you in the past was incorrect.

Pak Hing: *(speaks)* Second Young Madam, what do you know? In the future I hope you will eat when you see a meal, sleep when you see a bed, but open your lips less.

Shui Mui: (*speaks*) What? Of course I know. Have I scolded her wrongly now? You ask all these people whether I scolded her wrongly. For a woman who has lost chastity, in times of happy occasions, I would think she would give some thought to the lonely souls in the underworld. Yet she is only happy for the new man, not hearing the crying sounds of the ghost at night. The sort of person she is, should she not be scolded, not be slapped?

Pak Hing: (*speaks*) Second Young Madam, don't you move your hands!

Yuk Kiu: (*speaks*) Ah Hing, come here. (*gestures*)

(*recites with bitter smile*) Sigh, Ah Hing.
It has been said, teased, or scolded, left up to others.
At this time why do we bother with her so much?
A few days ago I gave you the five thousand taels of silver;
Did you manage to do in accordance with what I have planned?

Pak Hing: (*recites*) Madam, everything is done properly.
For this task of yours,
I almost went without sleep for three nights.
Following Hero Shao for three days and nights,
Not leaving the bamboo theater by half a step.

Shui Mui: (*speaks*) Huh. Is it not too bad, you say? So she had used her charm to extort money from the Commander, to make up to the brothers of the Pear Garden.
(*Stamps feet.*) Despicable, despicable!

Yuk Kiu: (*recites*) Ah Hing, I told you not to be bothered with her so much.
(*seriously*) Ah Hing, today is unlike any other day.
As it is said, success or failure depends on this one try. (*Weeps.*)
Wishing the prime minister's spirit would help me,
Permitting success, not failure.
Go quickly to find Hero Shao and bring him here.
(*Whispers to Pak Hing's ear at stage front.*)
(*softly*) I hope it will scare the gall of the dauntless and ruthless to pieces.

Shui Mui: (*speaks*) Old slave, you go ahead and make an effort to pimp for her. You had better watched your head carefully to keep it in place.

Pak Hing: (*recites*) I have no time to waste with you. (*gestures*)
Madam, I am going right away. (*Weeps.*)
But I am so worried.
Today with all the dauntless and ruthless men gathered here,
I'm afraid it is impossible for you to have your wish.

Yuk Kiu: (*speaks*) Ah Hing, go! I...I have some hold on this. (*gestures*)

Shui Mui: (*speaks*) Yuk Kiu, come over here.

(*sad and angered, recites*) I, Shui Mui was also a fallen person.

It seems I should not be reprimanding you in any way.
If you would admit that you are cold-blooded,
A wanton woman, then so be it.
Yet you would have it that you are high and noble.
(*cries.*) I have no regrets for you.
I regret for Prime Minister Chan,
That he did not have the eyes to know people.

Yuk Mui: (*recites*) Shui Mui, it is better that you rest yourself.
Why bother to express this meaningless grievance here?
I believe not only you,
But many more people do not know me, Cheung Yuk Kiu, clearly.
Not to say you are any more than a young, ignorant little chit.

Shui Mui: (*recites*) Do I not know you clearly?
You are a woman who knows only to go with those in good positions,
And reject those in misfortune.
You are a prostitute from the bordello who betrayed the master for glamour.
Liu Rushi, GuHengbo,
Even they were not so base as you, so unashamed!

Yuk Kiu: (*recites*) Shui Mui, strike as you wish.
If you have the patience,
You may sit here for a while longer.
Then you would know if Cheung Yuk Kiu should suffer from your dainty palms.

Shui Mui: (*speaks*) I would not care to. It is not worthy. I do not have time to sit here
watching you and Hero Shao stealthily pledging love to each other. (*Stamps
feet.*)

(*sings*) You, this loose woman,
Fed and clothed, now goes for lust;
Trying to play the *pipa* to another man.
You should know such affairs could not be kept secret.
Watch out that one day you are not executed
By being cut in half at the waist in the public market.
(*speaks fiercely*) Yuk Kiu, you better remember this! (*Exits.*)

Yuk Kiu: (*speaks*) No wonder, no wonder. It is not so easy to gain understanding from
other people. (*Dries tears.*) Maid, are the wine and food ready? The tables and
chairs tidied?

Yuk Kiu: (*speaks*) Sigh, I do feel quite comforted. It is exceptional that after the collapse
of the country, there are still those who miss Han China. (Singing begins with
the theme song "Wishing the Smile that Befalls a City Would Leave a Good
Name Forever." The new song "Nostalgia" is to be kindly arranged by Yuet Sang,
and sung in the *fanxian* mode.)

(*sings*) Pains and grief in the heart,
Tears behind others shed.

Flashes of blue light from the oil lamp flickering at dawn,
Saddened that my husband's spirit has not returned.
Losing integrity, was it for greed?
Shamed neither by betrayed grace.
Staunchness and loyalty not reduced in will and heart,
Grieving tears rolled for home and country.
Containing tears, raising head towards Southern Sky, to swear;
Wishing to take advantage of the one smile,
To revive the gall of the warriors.
Watching the crescent moon in the far sky,
Shining stealthily still on the mortal world.
If it is not possible to restore the various provinces,
No sense to face the world with this stealthy life.
Wordlessly facing the blue light,
Spirit crushed in the jade boudoir.
Cried to exhaustion morning after morning, night after night.
Holding tears, inclining by the perfume burner,
Afraid of mockery from the pure lotus leaf.
How many attempts to untie the belt as a loop for the gallows?
Death is lighter than a feather,
Yet with such born beauty,
That dismal demise did not seem right.
One evening on entering the Pear Garden,
Seeing again the great Ming attires,
I was then moved to laugh.
A laugh inciting the hero's heart,
With so many pleas in tears and blood,
Then the dauntless man incited to rebel.
Lacking in good people dedicated to the country,
Who would know about the brothers of the Pear Garden,
All wondrous men concerned for country?
Like the few kapok trees,
Lonely blossoming in the City of Five Rams.
Who is there that does not have in him righteousness and loyalty?
With painted face on stage, robes soaked in tears,
Wanting to replay the music of Han.
Willing to sacrifice together, suffer together,
Wishing only to set the heart on wiping out the thieves.
This day the Han costume to glamorously shine,
In future to shine even more brightly.
Breaking the hairpin of phoenix,
Smashing the music of mandarin ducks;
Enduring shame for survival,
Do not mock me, Yuk Kiu, for indiscriminate love.
Tonight making up like a phoenix in full color,
Successful step to take place among chatter and jests.
Do not let the sacrifice of the Three Loyalties of Twin-Guang be in vain,
Do not let the pain left from Coal Hill be in vain.

Do not say that a mere woman has limited prestige and power;
Upon the light laugh hangs the rise or collapse of empires,
Upon the softly knitted brow lies the force of change.
Wishing for success with the one smile,
The Han flag again to stand, the Han gates retaken.
In deep contemplation, hearing the arrival of guests,
Holding back worries from my brows,
Showing the bearing of distinguished elegance.

Voice Inside: (speaks) Governor General arrived!

Yuk Kiu: (speaks) Ten thousand blessings to Your Honor Tung.

(Four Manchu soldiers enter.)

Yeung Garp: (recites) Madam Li, today as soon as I enter the door of our Provincial Commander Mansion,
I felt that there was something wrong and unpleasant to the eye.
Li Shing Tung is a Provincial Commander of our great Manchu court.
You are a titled lady of great Manchu court.
Why do you wear Han attire, adopt Han greetings?
Say, if I do reprimand it, it is no laughing matter.

Yuk Kiu: (Thinks.) (recites) Master Tung, why be angry as soon as you set eyes on me?
Regarding the stipulations of the Manchurian court,
I do know a few things.
As it was said, "Men comply, women need not comply,"
It is one of the ten "non-compliances."
On female's costume there was no clear stipulations.
Why should your honor bother to reprimand unnecessarily?

Yeung Garp: (recites) Madam Li, you were able to make a point on this.
There is another point you cannot defend.
With my status, my position,
Coming here tonight to be a celebration guest,
Why is it that Shing Tung does not come down the front steps in welcome,
But treats me with such slight?

Yuk Kiu: (recites) Master Tung, most probably Shing Tung realizes that the honor of your presence tonight is highly ceremonious,
And dare not meet you haphazardly.
He is probably changing inside.

Yeung Garp: (speaks) Changing?

(sings) Squad Leader slights the guest with intention.
Who would not know that the Manchurian attire is quite simple?
Even with putting on the top hat and trailing the feather,
It should not have caused such a delay.

(Holding anger, sweeps sleeves, goes to stage right, sits down in displeasure.)
Scoundrel!

Yuk Kiu: *(speaks)* Ah ya, so slack indeed! Yes, why is it that the Squad Leader has not come out even now? Kao Yuet, Ping Shum, go inside and hurry your master!

Kao Yuet and Ping Shum: *(speak together)* Ah ya Madam, Master is indeed changing his clothes inside.

Yuk Kiu: *(speaks)* Master Tung, did you hear that our master is indeed changing his clothes inside?

Yeung Garp: *(speaks)* Pfui! *(Sits with his back to the others, not to look at stage left.)*

(Shing Tung enters [stage left].)

Wing Wo: *(speaks)* Master Tung, Master Tung! Master Li has come out. Take a look, take a look!

Yeung Garp: *(speaks)* Huh, go away! He has come out, so let him come out. Would he not crawl over here and kowtow to me? Is it necessary that I go and kowtow to him, stupid?

Wing Wo: *(speaks)* Your servant be damned! *(repeats)* But, no, no Master. Turn and take a look at him. It is so shocking!

Yeung Garp: *(speaks)* What! *(Falls off chair, strokes beard. Slowly, slowly, eyes crossed, looks back at Shing Tung.)*

(Yuk Kiu picks up immediately from this act and moves up to and helps fix Shing Tung's attire and sits him solemnly, extremely proud and relaxed.)

Yuk Kiu: *(speaks)* No fear, no fear. Master Tung, stand firm, stand more firmly.

Yeung Garp: *(speaks)* Shing Tung, come here, come here. *(gestures)*

(recites) Shing Tung, what is the meaning of all this from you?
Do you know what attire it is that you are wearing?
Shing Tung, ever since you married Cheung Yuk Kiu,
You have become a fool.
From which dynasty do you in fact receive your graceful remuneration?
From which dynasty do you have your meals?

Shing Tung: *(recites)* Master Tung, Minister Tung!
I only know that I have had the grace of great Ming and received remuneration from great Ming.
I no longer want to be a bull or a horse,
Putting on the horse-hoof cuffs,
Trailing a cow-tail,
Like a beast rampaging all around.

Yuk Kiu: (speaks) Great answer, great answer! How could I not give in to laughing? How not to give in to happiness, Squad Leader?

Yeung Garp: (speaks) Shut up!

(recites) Li Shing Tung, Li Shing Tung!
What a waste for the Prince to have raised you.
From what you are saying,
Is it not obvious that you intend to revolt against the Manchu court?

Shing Tung: (recites) Tung Yeung Garp, Tung Yeung Garp!
I am not revolting against Manchu,
I am rectifying!
Yuk Kiu was right in what she said.
The land is our land,
The court is our court.
Hey Yeung, Garp, Yeung Garp,
I hope you will put your heart and effort with me,
Return everything to the Ming emperor,
Banish the Manchu tartars out of the Han gate.

Yeung Garp: (sings) It was said "listening to a woman,
Forgetting the ways of heaven."
No wonder the saying "it is difficult for a hero to get through a beautiful lady."
Today you rebel against the court with a single arm, (*roaring laughter*)
Consider how an egg could be used as a bomb?
(*Wields the sword to show his prowess.*)
Shing Tung, you are foolish like a pole!
How many sabers can one sword withstand?
One share of effort, consider how little use that is!
To win the favorable heart of a beauty,
You are courting death.
Shing Tung, you should not try to dry up the entire sea for a mere little fish,
Not burn the entire forest for a mere little bird.
Right now if I am not giving regard to our long years of fellowship,
You would have been dead under my ruthless sword a long while back!

Shing Tung: (sings) There remains the spark that will burn the field,
One share of hot-blood could slay the king of Loulan.
If my precious sword has not been well ground from early on,
Consider how you would have managed to take over the four provinces?

Yuk Kiu: (speaks) Shing Tung, you need not be furious. Master Tung, having such a prestigious position today, is of course an extraordinary person. Ah Yuet, get a chair for your master. Let me discuss it with Master Tung. I believe Master Tung has in-depth understanding and rational sense, well-versed in world affairs.

Yeung Garp: (speaks) Go away! I do not want flattery. Do not smile at me. Your laugh has already sent Li Shing Tung to his burial. Do you want to take the aged life of

Tung Yeung Garp with another laugh? (*Sweeps sleeves. Pays no attention.*)
Soldier, bring a chair!

(*Wing Wo quickly brings a chair to stage front right.*)

Yuk Kiu: (*sings*) With a smile pledging an earnest request,
Do not mind my doing it again.
And I hope you, bright Master, would open your intelligent eyes,
Do you not see the bones in hilly piles, hatred still not subsided?
So many common people from the former dynasty have revolt in their hearts,
Voices, voices against invasion of our Han land!
Voices of songs spreading among battle camps,
What a tune "All Red the River"!
Your bright Master, please look down and acknowledge the feelings of the
people.

YuengGarp: (*speaks*) What a big joke! You think about it closely!

Yuk Kiu: (*speaks*) Your Honor, what would you have me think about?

Yeung Garp: (*speaks*) Go away, go away! I am not asking you to think. I am asking Shing Tung
to think!

Shing Tung: (*speaks*) Think about what?

Yeung Garp: (*speaks*) Shing Tung, rise and listen to me.

(*sings*) Do not let feminine gentleness
Break your spirit.
Since when could heaven be turned by a single hand?
Wealth and prestige,
There is originally a limit, a limit.
You have a bed and want the quilt,
You have the crown and want the fairy hill.
I hope you will think more closely,
Listen to my good advice and admonition.

(*recites*) Shing Tung, you are in fact a Han,
Yet you have such treatment from the Manchu court,
What more do you want?
Look around you,
Your home is the gold-gilded, jade-laid Commander Mansion,
Your attire is the Phoenix gown for First Rank officials.
One birthday celebration,
A banquet of a hundred tables would be served.
How many Han people can be enjoying luxuries like you?
Your wish was really not that high at first.
You settled the four provinces,
Took over more than fifty official seals.
I know, do you think I am dull?

The one provincial seal you have hidden and would not pass on to me
Was precisely the one for Guangdong.
Your hope is simply to govern Guangdong.
Today your wish is fulfilled;
You shall have had a good laugh in a hidden place.
Shing Tung, someone in a good dream does not want to be awakened soon.
The incomparable glory and prestige you have so arduously attained,
Why, because of a woman, in one moment have it destroyed?
Are you now more awake?
Do you remember where the two hundred in your household are?
Why have the entire family perish
To bet on a name in rectification?

(Shing Tung wipes sweat while listening. Falls off chair.)

Shing Tung: *(sings)* Aiyaya! The cold sweat unwillingly streaking down! *(Rises.)*

Yuk Kiu: *(speaks)* Shing Tung, where are you going? I want you to sit down again!

(recites) Why are you wiping sweat while listening?
It is only late spring.
I, I understand now.
If you would soften in a moment,
Why bother with firmness just now?
(speaks) You would now... where are you going?

Shing Tung: *(recites)* Yuk Kiu...Kiu.
While I was listening just now
I have been thinking, thinking.
And my body gets warm.
It is nothing. I just feel warm. I just feel warm.
I want to go inside and change my clothes.

Yuk Kiu: *(recites)* Shing Tung, I want you to sit down again.
I understand.
Do you want to go inside, change into the clothes for beasts, then come out
apologize to Master Tung?
(Cries.) Shing Tung, I have made so much effort
To see you mighty today.
Sigh! How would I guess that your grand will would turn into icy coal
Even before it gets started.

(speaks, interrogatively) Say it! Are you thinking of going inside to put on the
beastly attire?

Shing Tung: *(speaks)* Oh no, no, no! Yuk Kiu, you love me so much, and Master Tung equally
loves me. You love me, with the hope that I will have a reputation for posterity.

Master Tung loves me, with pity on my present life. Yuk Kiu, Yuk Kiu, let it be!
World affairs, they are easier known than done.

Yeung Garp: (*speaks*) It is alright. (*repeats*) A mere false alarm. (*repeats*) Cheers everyone!
(*repeats*)

Yuk Kiu: (*speaks*) Shing Tung, Shing Tung. Where did it go, the might you just showed?

Shing Tung: (*speaks*) I go...go...go... to a place where it could not be found, Yuk Kiu!

Yuk Kiu: (*speaks*) Sigh, Shing Tung!

(*sings*) Weeping, kneeling, tugging your garment,
Do you see the tears and blood forming in my eyes?
Embracing Squad Leader madly and shouting,
So love your armor, shiny and bright,
So love your Dragon Spring sword, glittering with spark.
Why lower your head and murmur?
A real man should not be like wind-blown willow seeds,
Swaying attitude unable to firmly stand.
A million lives outside the gate,
Three Loyalties with blessings in the underworld.
Hope you would raise your arm at this time.
Weeping, kneeling, and again begging with grief!
I hope you will abandon this high position and sacrifice for the country's plight!

Shui Mui: (*speaks*) Your honor, you should definitely not listen to her! I could not endure
seeing you betrayed by her.

(*recites*) I am from the Chan family.
I also want your early demise.
Why should I enlighten you this day?
Yet Cheung Yuk Kiu is too vicious.
In the past she betrayed my elder brother-in-law.
Today she wants to bring you to death.
Why does she want you to revolt?
Because she wants you leave this world sooner.
Why does she want your early death?
I heard it. (*repeats*)
She asked Pak Hing to take the five thousand taels of silver you had given her to
that actor Hero Shao.
She thought everyone was totally blind.
Your honor, you think about it.
If she does not kill you with someone else's knife,
How could she and Hero Shao be together as a couple?
You are too foolish and pitiful a person.
That is why I bear witness of her viciousness to you.

Yeung Garp: (*speaks*) So, that is why. (*repeats*) Listen to it, stupid!

(Yuk Kiu desperately cries.)

Yuk Kiu: *(speaks sorrowfully)* Shing Tung, do you believe in what Shui Mui said? Sigh! Seeing you like this, I am warm even if you are not. *(Takes off capes, exposes dress with blood, howls with laughter.)*

(recites) Shing Tung, Shui Mui did not know me clearly, I am not saddened by it. You do not know me clearly, I am too disappointed.

What is the reason for me to marry you?

I do not seek wealth.

I do not wish for glamour.

I extend my life a bit simply for the glory of tonight.

Losing chastity is shameful,

Yet losing chastity to fulfill integrity

Does not take away the loyalty of the beauty!

Shing Tung, on this night,

I shall die if you rectify,

I shall die if you do not rectify.

I have prepared to spill the blood from my neck over the banquet,

Making the sacrifice as an admonition by death.

(Suddenly takes short knife for suicide, shows blood.)

Shing Tung, you should not cry,

You should laugh.

If a woman like me can do this,

What should a real man think of? ...

Sigh! I cannot say anymore...

A thousand words expressed in an embrace.

Yuk Kiu is dying.

I, Yuk Kiu dare not enjoy wealth by myself.

I shall die before your honorable now,

To set your gentleman's will.

I hope you will rise up now,

Submit this grand seal to Emperor Yongli.

Yuk Kiu will die in peace!

Shui Mui: *(speaks)* I did you injustice, elder sister-in-law! ...

Shing Tung: *(Stares at sword, stamps feet.) (sings)*
Picking up again the Dragon Spring sword this time again,
Anger rising to my head because of the beauty.
How could a hero be less than a woman,
Anger burning in the eyes!

(Wong Shao leads rebels quietly on stage.)

Yeung Garp: *(Screams insanely.)* Prime Minister Chan's apparition! *(repeats)*

Wong Shao: *(recites)* Master Tung, you need not be afraid!

Appearing before your eyes is not just the one apparition of the Master Prime Minister Chan,
Indeed there are thousands and ten thousands of wronged souls, phantoms and ghosts
Demanding your evanescent life.
If you want to be free from the tangling with spirits wrongly accused,
I advise you to also turn against the Manchu court!

Pak Hing: *(recites)* Hey Old Tung, Old Tung!
Your spirit has been scared off.
What more can you achieve?
You better stand as told
And walk as told.

Shing Tung: *(recites)* Yeung Garp, I am determined to rise up!
If you are willing,
Go together with us all.
If you are not willing,
I will make a sacrifice to my flag with the blood from your neck,
To strengthen the courage of the three armies!

Yeung Garp: *(recites)* I shall rebel too! *(repeats)*
Shing Tung, I believe you should not rise up right away.
To sharpen the army,
First tidy up the way it looks.
In such a hurry, where do we find so many Ming outfits?
This is indeed a tricky point.

Wong Shao: *(speaks)* Don't you worry. I, Hero Shao, have well prepared.

Yeung Garp: *(speaks)* What! So you are the actor Hero Shao? I have been tricked!

Shui Mui: *(speaks)* He looks exactly like my elder brother-in-law!

Wong Shao: *(sings)* Who says actors are forgetful of the country's plight?
Do you realize that brothers of the Pear Garden grieve over the hard times?
The great Ming costumes,
We could not bear to destroy them even now!

(speaks) It was said "prostitutes to comply, actors no required to comply."
(continues, sings) Madam Cheung Yuk Kiu was really to be complimented.
Five thousand pieces of silver given over to the civilians,
Acquiring thousands of costumes from the Pear Garden.
Retained to prepare for uprising,
To strengthen the military march.
Witness the elders waving flags,
Cheering in unison at this very moment!

Shing Tung: *(recites)* Thanks to the Pear Garden!

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Gratitude to the Pear Garden!
Lend us attire for uprising,
March off for a valiant start on this day.

Pak Hing: (*recites*) Master, you need not thank Hero Shao.
You should thank Cheung Yuk Kiu.
These theatrical costumes were bought with her five thousand taels of silver.
See, there was an intent.
Otherwise why would I, Ah Hing,
Bury myself in the troupe all day for nothing?

Yuk Kiu: (*speaks*) Shing Tung, would you not help me to go take a look?

(*speaks*) Will all of you not change into the Great Ming attire right away?

(*sings*) Today the beauty has the flag revert to Han,
The general returns to order and assists in restoring the dragon emperor.
Dawn comes soon,
Drums thundering,
A glimpse of light bright to the eyes. (*Dies.*)

Shing Tung: (*sings*) Carrying the body in uprising,
Execute the Loulan King;
Loyalty and martyrdom going down in history
To be lauded by posterity.

Wong Shao: (*sings*) Heroine for all time, that beautiful lady!

(*All sing coda together.*)

(*Final curtain.*)