

The Happy Marriage of Red Phoenix

紅鸞喜

An English Translation of Fong Yim Fun's Performance Script

芳艷芬演出本

1957

Scripted by LEE Siu Wan

李少芸編劇

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This Translation (Version 1.0)

by

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(Cultural Studies, Lingnan University)

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ACT I

(An extravagant official's manor house, [stage] revolves to show a garden setting.)

(Stage setting: A sitting room on stage right, decorated with a qin [the Chinese "lute"], a chess set, books and paintings. A vase holding a large branch of plum blossoms sits on the table. Filled up with New Year features, extravagantly decorated, the stage revolves to show a garden setting.)

(Opens with the introductory section of the tune "Winning the Championship Banner at the Dragon Boat Race.")

(Enter four handmaids, leading Caltrop Fragrance in.)

Caltrop Fragrance: (recites) Celebrating New Year,
Hanging up the red couplets of luck;
Wishing everyone every happiness!
More money, longer life, and more children,
Red pockets of lucky money keep pouring in.
The Elder Prince is disagreeable and scary,
Really ugly, yet thinks he is noble and spirited.
Not a drop of intellectual ink inside,
All the way stupid and clumsy;
He is always fond of observing tradition.
Yet he is His Royal Highness
And no one dares to question him.
Yesterday came the Young Prince,
With top-of-the-world literary talents
And excellent equestrian skills;
As handsome as the legendary Pan An,
He excels in music and chess, calligraphy and painting.
These two brothers are really worlds apart in everything,
For they were born to different mothers,
The rightful Empress of the Central Palace has passed away.
The Elder Prince will soon make ceremonial New Year calls,
All of you better speak to him well.

(speaks) The Elder Prince is about to arrive to offer New Year greetings. Make sure that you praise him for his handsome face, or he will not give you any lucky money!

Four handmaids: (speaks) We know.

(Prince Wang enters. Hunchback, one-eyed, skin covered with pimples.)

Prince Wang: (*sings*) With fragrant carriages and precious horses,
Spring is upon the royal house,
All is prosperous on the first day of the New Year.
Because I knew my way to reincarnate,
I am enjoying such social esteem:
Reaching the status of the Elder Prince of the Jin Dynasty,
What a big deal!
I am now studying at the city of Feng Yang.
I am not bluffing at all:
With a seven-foot stature,
My beauty is worthy of boasting.
What is more, my learning could fill up five carriages,
Who would not say that I am as learned as Sima?

(*speaks*) Time flies. I've been studying at Feng Yang for three years. Luckily I'm a born talent, accomplished in music, chess, poetry, painting. You name it. However, I'm most admirable for being tall, and muscular, and very handsome. Everyone says that I have the looks of Zi Du, the literary talents of Zijian. I have both looks and talent, indeed!

(*Caltrap Fragrance and the handmaids laugh at him.*)

Prince Wang: (*Howls.*) (*speaks*) What are you laughing about?

Caltrap Fragrance: (*recites*) Today is New year's Day;
We should all show a smiling face
When we see the Elder Prince, shouldn't we?
Who does not know that Elder Prince
Will soon find his intelligence matched with a beauty?
Because Elder Prince's prettiness
Is matchless throughout the world.

Four handmaids: (*speak together*) Congratulations to Elder Prince, the handsome man will marry the pretty woman!

Prince Wang: (*speaks happily*) Good girls! You indeed understand subtleties. One big lucky red pocket for each of you. There's nothing I like more than to hear how handsome and learned I am. Flattered by such a top hat from you, I instantly feel mad with joy. (*Distributes a red pocket to each.*)

Caltrap Fragrance and Four handmaids: (*speak together*) Thank you, Elder Prince!

Prince Wang: (*sings*) My brother arrived yesterday from Hangzhou,

Because Her Highness, my mother the Empress
Ordered us to return to the imperial capital tomorrow.
Now I must go around town to offer New Year greetings
And take the chance to visit the brothels for some fun.

(speaks) I go now to offer New Year greetings. You all take very good care of the Young Prince. *(Exits.)*

Caltrop Fragrance: (speaks) The Elder Prince is hunchbacked, pimple-faced and has only one eye. Yet all the time he calls himself handsome. It's so funny that everybody is really amused to death. But if we don't praise him for his beauty, he'll be displeased. As long as we get tipped, I don't care calling a deer a horse. Let's hurry in to attend the Young Prince. *(Exits with the four handmaids.)*

(Musical introduction. Four handmaids lead the way. Red Phoenix enters, carrying a letter in her hand.)

Red Phoenix: (sings) Spring is upon Feng Yang City,
Flowers bloom in Brocade Lane.
In street after street are red blossoms
Of peaches and willows of green,
Step after step I lightly grind my teeth.
Happy to see a sunny sky of spring,
Discomfited to meet this land of debt.
Bits and pieces of my heart in dismay,
Paces and paces of my steps in disarray.

(speaks) Walking on the street, this is New Year's Day. I'd never met Prince Wang and I'm a young maiden. I'm too bashful to ask him for help. It's so embarrassing. *(Tries to return, and then speaks.)* But elder brother has lost fifty thousand taels of army provisions and is already detained at the Field Marshall's mansion. If this sum of provisions is not compensated, he will lose not only his official position, but also go to jail. His only bosom friend is the Elder Prince. He has mailed me a letter asking me to seek help. Perhaps Prince Wang may have a way. Alas, I don't have a choice. For the sake of elder brother, I must be thick-skinned and be impudent this one time. *(Knocks on door.)*

(Caltrop Fragrance enters quietly, at door.)

Caltrop Fragrance: (recites) May I ask
Who is this young lady here looking for?
Please be straightforward
With your humble maid at the door.

Red Phoenix: (Embarrassed but pretends it is nothing.) (recites)
I am here to see Elder Prince Wang.
I wonder whether he is at home?

Caltrop Fragrance: (Amazed.) (aside, speaks) How strange! The Elder prince has never been visited by any woman before. Why would such a beautiful young woman come to see him on New Year's Day? (Steps forward.)

(recites) Young lady, what a coincidence!
The Elder Prince had been out since early morning
Offering New Year greetings.
Apologies that you have come all the way.

Red Phoenix: (Disappointed.) (recites) Prince Wang is out offering New Year greetings?
I urgently need to see him on important matter.
Not finding him here,
My heart is confused and disturbed.

Caltrop Fragrance: (recites) Young lady, seeing you so anxious,
You must have a very important matter.
Can you tell me what it is
So I can tell the Elder prince?

Red Phoenix: (recites) I have to tell him in person,
I would like to wait for him here.
Could you allow me to wait for him inside?

Caltrop Fragrance: (speaks) Yes, yes. (repeats) Please do come in. (Leads Red Phoenix and the four handmaids in.)

Red Phoenix: (recites) This is indeed magnificent!
A grand and lofty mansion that reaches the clouds.
The Elder Prince must be a cultured and talented man;
Or, why would this place be filled with
Musical instruments, chess, poetry, and paintings?

Caltrop Fragrance: (recites) Yes, indeed.
The Elder Prince has always been accomplished
In music, chess, poetry, and painting.
Please make yourself comfortable here,
I still have some work to do.

Please have a seat and wait for the Elder Prince,
Do not be bashful, please feel free
To walk around and have some tea. (*Exits.*)

(A tune plays as background music. Red Phoenix sits and waits. Anxious, she gets up and walks around.)

Red Phoenix: (*speaks*) Why has he been gone for such a long time?

(sings) Not accustomed to showing my face to strangers,
This young maiden is very embarrassed.
A delicate bird in spring is fearful of the bright sun,
Suddenly hearing the fragile notes of *qin* music.

(Tune is played on the qin.)

Red Phoenix: (*speaks*) Who is it that plays the *qin* so well that it sounds like running water and falling petals? Could it be that the Elder Prince is trying to hide from me, knowing that I am here to borrow money? All right, let me go in and find out who is playing the *qin*.

(A tune plays. The stage revolves. Garden scene.)

(Red Phoenix enters the garden following the rotating stage. Four handmaids follow.)

(Prince Chan is sitting in a pavilion playing the qin.)

(Red Phoenix, upon seeing that, quickly hides behind a tree and peeks.)

Prince Chan: (*sings*) Under the plum blossoms,
Singing "Butterflies Love the Flowers."
Lightly playing the *qin* is better than the *pipa*,
I am proud that my skills on the *qin* equal Sima.
My *qin* sounds are not like sand being washed by the waves;
Worried that the tones of running water and falling petals
Would have only rare appreciative ears;
The tune of courtship for the phoenix is played in vain,
When will be the day of floating a boat with a fair maid come?
Spring may have arrived today,
But nowhere has Chang E,
The goddess in the Moon descended.

(Red Phoenix, unable to restrain herself, steps forward bashfully.)

Red Phoenix: (*recites*) The Elder Prince this must be,
Who else could play a tune on the *qin*
With such divine inspiration?

Prince Chan: (*Amazed by her beauty.*) (*recites*) May I ask the name of this fair maiden?
And for what matters concerning the Elder Prince is she here?
Can you tell me frankly?

Red Phoenix: (*recites*) Your humble maiden is Red Phoenix of the Lau Family.
I am here to see the Elder Prince upon my elder brother's order.
Please excuse my unsolicited intrusion.
You must be very surprised.

Prince Chan: (*recites*) Oh, it is Miss Lau.
What a coincidence,
Elder Prince went out early in the morning.
If you have business you can leave a message with me.
I can relay it to him,
He won't return until very late at night.

Red Phoenix: (*sings*) The fickleness of friendship in the world evokes a sigh,
What is the fair person endowed with fine talents for?
Apparently seeing but not wanting to meet,
There is much falsity in the blowing
Of hot and cold in human relations.

(*speaks*) Since the Elder Prince is not here, I should leave. I can only tell him in person. (*Wants to leave.*)

Prince Chan: (*Blocks Red Phoenix.*) (*aside, sings*) Why is she shrouded in such weariness
With an expression of deep sadness?
I am stricken with tenderness toward the fragrant jade
And sympathetically cherish the delicate flower.
Nothing wrong with substituting peach for plum,
To put to test the real feeling and the true words.

(*speaks*) Miss Lau, have you ever actually met Elder Prince?

Red Phoenix: (*speaks*) No, not ever.

Prince Chan: (*speaks*) I am actually the Elder Prince, my lady.

(*sings*) This beautiful maiden

Is not a mistaken stretch of window silk,
But a lotus that is a celestial fairy reincarnate.
Blushing, luscious face, rosy red,
The willowy waist for one arm's embrace.
Could it be that the tune on the *qin*
Has lured this rare beauty?
Dare to ask the lady what words she is to pass on.

(speaks) To what do I owe the pleasure, Miss?

Red Phoenix: *(sings)* The begonia is overcome with embarrassment,
Not a meeting of Wenjun and Sima.
Like tousled grass and rosy cloud is the heart,
Shades of peachy pink hangs on both cheeks.
Peach and plum fluttering in the wind,
Yellow sand washing by the waves.
Like the phoenix with many bright colors,
Red Phoenix feels the weary burden of the human ways.

(speaks) Elder Prince, my elder brother asked me to pass this letter on to you.
Read it and you will know. *(Hands over letter.)*

(Prince Chan takes the letter and reads.)

Prince Chan: *(speaks)* "Your Royal Highness Prince Wang, Lau Long Ching is in such fear and trepidation that I write to you, Prince Wang. I was in a momentary oversight and carelessly lost fifty thousand taels worth of army provisions. I am ashamed that I am not from a family of Shi Chong's wealth. How could I repay the amount? I am now detained at the Field Marshall's mansion as a prisoner. Redemption would not be possible without repaying the fifty thousand. Especially presented to you now is this letter of request. Please take into consideration our deep friendship and grant me a loan so that my future career will not be ruined. Your virtuous help, if offered, will be remembered forever. I am counting on the gallant bones and caring guts of Elder Prince to save my life. Wishes from a long distance upon finishing this letter that is far from adequate to express myself."

(speaks) Ah! It is that your brother has lost fifty thousand taels of army provisions, and is just asking me for a loan. I can surely do it, I surely can do it.

(sings) You need not cover your face and grind your teeth,
Fearful like a pear flower hit by the rain.
Although the coldness of humanity is reality,
Friendship is precious and talents are to be valued.

Hanging a hundred thousand golden bells up high,
A propitious moon will light up the way home.
Spring breezes will blow life into a multitude of foliage,
Fear not my beautiful lady's feeble heart.

(speaks) Guard, come!

Guard: *(Enters.) (speaks)* Any orders, Young... *(Pause abruptly.)*

Prince Chan: *(Hurriedly stops the guard.) (speaks)* Go quickly and fetch fifty thousand taels of silver. Deliver them immediately to the Field Marshall's mansion. Tell him that the Elder Prince is repaying the debt of Lau Long Ching. And he is to immediately release Lau Long with charges cleared, restored to his original office. Go, immediately!

Guard: Yes, understood! *(Exits.)*

Red Phoenix: *(speaks)* Thank You, Elder Prince.

(sings) I had thought friendship was flimsy as a smoky hue,
Relationship wrought with falsehood.
You had avoided our meeting,
Played the *qin* in the flowery shade instead.
Time and again I bit to pieces my tiny silvery teeth;
Instead you are all gallant bones and gentle guts,
A magnanimous one.
What a drop of golden dew from the poplar twig!
What a reincarnation of the chivalrous Gu Ya Ya!
Twice and thrice this young woman
Bows in gratitude for the kindness.
In your service like dogs and horses,
In this life and after.

(Bows thrice, speaks) I am leaving, Elder Prince. *(in the act of exiting)*

(Prince Chan bars her.)

Prince Chan: *(recites)* Miss Lau, it is only right for friends to back up each other in need.
Why should you need to take it to heart?
I had avoided our meeting just now
Simply because of a worry about clandestine circumstances.
Your brother will be returning home safely right away.
You need not hurry back.
Just now I played the *qin*, you followed it

To the garden upon hearing the tune,
So you must be a connoisseur.
Is it possible that you hold your steps
So I could play the tune *Connubial Bliss of the Phoenix*
For young Miss's advice?

Red Phoenix: (*recites happily*) While Red Phoenix Lau does know
A little about rhythm and tunes,
How dare she uses the word advice?
You, Elder Prince, have incomparable talent.
It is most opportune for me to listen and learn,
I'll listen to your tune of *Connubial Bliss of the Phoenix*
Before taking my leave for home.

Prince Chan: (*speaks*) Miss Lau honors me indeed. Please sit here and let me show my clumsy skill.

(*Sits at the qin.*) (*sings*) Underneath the tree
With spring blossoms the fragrant breeze wafts,
Glancing at her.

(*Plays qin, steals glances of Red Phoenix.*)

Red Phoenix: (*Takes up tune.*) Lowering eyes with bashful fear,
He takes a glance, I indeed feel scared;
Delicately surface the rosy hue.

Prince Chan: (*Takes up tune.*) Indeed an elusive transformation
Of the Lady in the Moon,
Love sick dream of a celestial match. (*Steals glance.*)

Red Phoenix: (*Takes up tune.*) He looks elegant and refined,
How could my heart not love his great talent?

Prince Chan: (*Takes up tune.*) Delicate as a painting of blossom and moon,
I wish to have hanging all day long.

Red Phoenix: (*Takes up tune.*) Sound of the *qin* arouses endearing words.

Prince Chan: (*Stands.*) (*sings*) Meeting by chance like duckweed and water,
With fate it's possible to meet
Over a distance of a thousand miles.

I hope the *qin* tune
Sings to a harmonious match and home.

Red Phoenix: (*sings*) A small piece of charred paulownia log,
Two verses of a courting tune.
Fearful of being licentious, over-stepping propriety,
Making an effort to suppress
My riotous heart and running emotion.

(*speaks*) Elder Prince, I have to take my leave. I live in Plum Blossom Lane
Number one. Come visit if you find the time.

(*Smiles, exits with four housemaids, drops an earring in the rush.*)

Prince Chan: (*sings*) Fleeting glance of a frightened wild goose
Leaving an exquisite vision,
Who would manage to pluck the Begonia blossom?
Smiles overflowing from the pear intoxicate the spirit,
Such a beauty is certainly invaluable.

(*Kicks earring, sees it, picks it up.*)

(*speaks happily*) Now here's an opportunity.

(*sings*) Paying a visit with the pretext
Of returning the golden earring,
So heartfelt the love and longing for the flawless jade.
Wishing to while away the spring night
Inside the warm canopy of the Lotus.
Having the pleasure of Red Phoenix
Marrying my humble self.

(*Stage revolves back to sitting room scene*)

(*Prince Chan walks to sitting room, exits.*)

(*Prince Wang enters.*)

Prince Wang: (*sings*) All the way strolling people looked at me,
When women saw me all the more
They laughed ha and hee.
It must be that seeing this imposing stature of mine,
The women kept staring and gazing.

(speaks) Good-looking men have this advantage.

(Enters door.)

Prince Wang: *(speaks)* Caltrop Fragrance.

(Caltrop Fragrance quietly enters.)

Caltrop Fragrance: *(speaks)* Elder Prince.

Prince Wang: *(recites)* There is no one here in the sitting room.
What are you doing hiding inside?
You must have dozed off.
If it were not New Year's Day today,
I would have scolded you right away.

Caltrop Fragrance: *(recites)* Elder Prince, I am not dozing inside.
Because you are going back to the capital tomorrow,
I am just packing your luggage.
Just now a very beautiful girl came looking for you,
She waited a long time and then left.
I forgot to ask for her name at the time,
She appeared to be from a wealthy family.

Prince Wang: *(recites)* A very beautiful girl looking for me?
That's strange. Why were you so careless
And didn't ask her to leave her name?
If a beautiful girl has come looking for me,
It must mean my peach blossom luck has arrived.
As long as there is a beautiful girl
I would pay any price.

Caltrop Fragrance: *(recites)* I was indeed careless at the time.
She talked to Second Prince for a while,
And then she left.
I have performed my job badly.

([Red Phoenix's] Housemaid enters.)

Housemaid: *(speaks)* As soon as Miss arrived home she asked me to deliver a poem to Prince Wang. I'm here at the doorstep of the Prince's mansion. Let me knock on the door. *(Knocks.)*

Caltrop Fragrance: (Steps out of the front door.) (speaks) Miss, who are you looking for?

Housemaid: (speaks) My Lady Red Phoenix Lau asked me to deliver a poem to Elder Prince Wang. Is he here?

Caltrop Fragrance: (speaks) He's here. You can just leave it with me.

Housemaid: (speaks) Thank you. *(Delivers poem, exits.)*

(Caltrop Fragrance enters.)

Caltrop Fragrance: (speaks) Elder Prince, Miss Red Phoenix Lau sends you this poem. *(Passes poem.)*

(Prince Wang takes poem.)

Prince Wang: *(Reads)* "Red Phoenix is like the flawless jade,
At twenty just reaching marriageable age.
No fear that appreciative listeners to the tune are few,
The spring warbler will be there to accompany the sunset hue."

(speaks) So, even Red Phoenix Lau admires my handsome looks. The whole poem distinctly shows that she favors me. This time something is really in the air.

(sings) Why did the phoenix of color today here fly?
Right away, my chin drops off from laughter and smiles.
The Feng Yang lady of talent sends me a poem that allures,
I must strive to have the beauty in marriage captured.

(speaks) If I see Long Ching I shall make the proposal right away. *(Sits down happily.)*

(Lau Long Ching enters.)

Lau Long Ching: (sings) Spring returns to earth,
Filled with peach blossoms.
Breaking the cage of jade,
Out the wild horse flew.
Do not say that human relation
Is paper thin like smoky hue.
The borrowed east wind could never be valued,
Happy at heart with the old friend's deep affection,
Having just been released
From the iron lock and copper cangue,

Before returning home
I would call on the master benefactor.

(speaks) Prince Wang, with deep affection for an old friend, has lent me fifty thousand taels of silver. Thereupon, the army provision loss could be repaid, my freedom regained. I have to first come to thank the Elder Prince before even going home. If not for him my future career would have been in complete ruins. This is a grace weightier than the mountain. This is the place. Let me go in to express my gratitude.

(Enters, kneels to greet Wang.)

Lau Long Ching: (speaks) Thank you Elder Prince.

Prince Wang: (recites in surprise) Long Ching, why did you kneel
And prostrate yourself upon seeing me,
And say thank you repeatedly?
On New Year's Day it is not a customary etiquette
That you have to speak in such terms.

Long Ching: (recites) Elder Prince, while you do not
Expect a return for your benevolence,
Yet I, Lau Long Ching, standing
Upright between heaven and earth,
Cannot let even the benevolence
Of a meal slip my mind for a minute,
Let alone my loss of the
Fifty thousand taels of army provisions.
I was detained in the Field Marshall's mansion
And today had asked my third sister Red Phoenix
To deliver a letter to borrow the money from you.
If it's not you who lent me
The fifty thousand taels of silver just now,
I don't know the day and year
On which I will be acquitted for home.

(Prince Wang much surprised.)

Prince Wang: (speaks aside) How strange! Where have I lent him the fifty thousand provisions?
(Thinks.) I see. The one who looked for me just now was his sister Red Phoenix.
It must have been that my younger royal brother saw what a beauty she was, so
he lent her the money in my name. This time, better act first to gain the
stronger position. Red Phoenix is reputed to be the topmost alluring beauty

with both talent and looks. Besides, she has sent me the poem, all because she admired my reputation of being handsome and learned. With such a good breeze would I not know how to maneuver the sail?

(speaks) Long Ching, why bring up such a trivial matter? Nevertheless I have something to discuss with you.

(sings) Red Phoenix looks as beautiful
As the peach blossoms,
My heart longs for her very much. Her beauty
Overwhelms Feng Yang,
And she is not yet married.
I was born of royalty and aristocracy,
Good in talent and learning;
What a couple is a talented gentlemen
And a beautiful lady,
They would make a great anecdote.
I am thoroughly statuesque
Like a jade tree facing the breeze,
She is thoroughly delicate, an incomparable girl.
I would be willing to give you fifty pairs of new shoes.
May I know if you would allow me
To set the high magpie bridge?

(speaks) With my handsome looks I don't suppose I would be a disgrace to your younger sister?

Long Ching: *(speaks)* You want to marry Red Phoenix?

(sings aside) He looks as ugly as Zhong Kui,
Like a piece of tile burnt to ruin.
Hunch-backed, pimple-faced, scary to people;
Red Phoenix is beautiful like colorful hues.
Although given the heavy obligation
It is only right to agree on the match;
Yet how could a phoenix of color
Be forever tied to the crow?
It is also a concern that the intelligent wife
Could hardly sleep beside the foolish husband;
If married to this person she might as well be widowed.

(speaks to Wang) The Elder Prince is a golden branch and jade leaf. My younger sister is fragile like cattail and willow. The upper and the lower do not match.

Prince Wang: (*recites*) I am deeply in love with Red Phoenix
And will swear to the truth of it.
As you have received my grace,
You should let your younger sister marry.

Long Ching: (*recites*) I have received Elder Prince's grace,
How dare I cheat on you?
Still, marriage should be voluntary,
I do not wish for a blind and silent match.

Prince Wang: (*recites*) I also agree with voluntary marriage.
You can ask Red Phoenix whether
She is willing to marry.
I am a beautiful figure, a dashing person,
I guarantee that when Red Phoenix
Knows of my proposal
She will immediately consent
And never go back.

Long Ching: (*recites*) Fine. I shall go home immediately
To ask Red Phoenix, and see what she says.
If she accepts of course
I shall not be of a different mind;
If she does not accept
Please forgive us and leave it at that.

Prince Wang: (*recites*) Not desiring such a handsome husband—
Would she be thinking of spinsterhood instead?
A one hundred percent acceptance.
You just go and ask her clearly,
She will agree for sure.

(*speaks*) Go home and ask, then reply right away. I guarantee she will want me.

Long Ching: (*sings*) A word of farewell and going back home,
To clearly ask the delicate young girl.
I suppose it would hardly work out, this ugly match.
Yet forgetting the benevolence
And failing the right act makes the heart fearful.
(*Exits.*)

Prince Wang: (*sings*) The marriage will be sure,

Nine catches out of ten;
I will return to the capital
After announcement of the match.

(Curtain.)

Act II

(Scene: Garden of the Plum Blossom Cottage.)

(Red Phoenix enters, with much on her mind.)

Red Phoenix: *(sings)* Deftly playing the *qin*, clear singing voice,
Accompanied by the trace of butterflies.
The scene of alluring *qin* notes continued playing,
Roused the limitless feelings of the dainty lady.
Limitless feelings, how can I bear to hear it again?
Gentle guts and gallant bones
Aroused the senses further.
Statuesque jade tree facing the breeze
Leaving visions of slenderness,
Riotous heart and running mind
Like floating duckweeds.
I couldn't understand why—
Just one time meeting face to face,
It has unsettled both spirit and mind.

(Walks to and fro.)

(Red Lotus Lau quietly enters, crooked face, thick-lipped.)

Red Lotus: *(speaks)* Red Phoenix.

(Red Phoenix did not hear.)

Red Lotus: *(speaks loudly)* Red Phoenix, Red Phoenix, Red Phoenix!

Red Phoenix: *(alerted, speaks)* So Second Elder Sister has come out. I almost cannot hear you calling me.

Red Lotus: *(sings)* I called three times straight,
You did not answer, with lowered head.
Like having much on your mind, unable to calmly sit.
Today spring arrived to the world, how celebratory!

Also, Elder Brother has repaid the provision money
And can come home.
Why are you wordlessly harboring worry, fidgeting?
Indeed it makes me suspicious of the clouds and rain.
What has caused you to be shaken in heart and mind?
Could it be that the young maiden,
With spring feeling in her heart,
Admires the pair of mandarin ducks,
Together as one in life?

(speaks) Younger sister, you must be holding spring in your heart, longing for marriage. That is why even today, New Year's Day, you seem to have a heavy heart.

Red Phoenix: *(speaks)* Second Elder Sister, you are so absurd.

(sings) I am not like you,
Every day holding spring feeling
And portraying a hundred postures,
Every night longing to marry, unable to dream;
I am simply loitering in the garden
Admiring the plum blossoms
To which in comparison I am even more pure.

(speaks) Do you think everyone is like you, longing for marriage all day?

Red Lotus: *(recites)* I am indeed ashamed of my appearance,
Fearing every night. I realize I was born ugly,
Love unrequited every time.
Regardless of the powder I put on
And the rouge I fix,
The many postures and demeanors,
The boys when they see me
Will not even say a word.
I am getting close to thirty in age,
Will surely become unsold leftovers.
How can I be blamed for
Holding spring and longing for marriage?
The worst part is not being able
To get married despite repeated trying.

(speaks) You see how sad at heart I am, Red Phoenix!

Red Phoenix: (*recites*) Second Elder sister—
You are only twenty-eight this year;
Although looking somewhat ugly,
You cannot be regarded as terrifying.
I believe you will surely be married,
There is no need for you to be sad day and night.
The saying is, “Marriage is destined by heaven.”

Red Lotus: (*recites*) How can I help but be sad?
You are pretty and only just over twenty,
Of course you need not be anxious to get married.
I am twenty-eight this year,
Soon to become an old maid.
What ways are there to hold me back
From the anxiety to marry?
I have one favor to ask of you.
In front of the boys
Say that I am your younger sister,
I will present you as the elder sister,
Then they would not realize that I am so old.
Although I am old,
Yet I am like an old and small egg-plant, teeny-weeny.
People should believe my small stature to be younger,
Hopefully one day
Heaven will bring me a good marriage.

Red Phoenix: (*speaks*) No problem. If I see boys I shall present you as the younger sister. You will present me as the elder sister. As long as you can make a good match, I am willing to agree to be the elder sister.

Red Lotus: (*recites happily*) Red Phoenix, so it’s a deal.
If I could find a husband,
I shall reward you with gratitude.
I believe elder brother will be coming back soon,
Let us sit here in the plum wood and wait.
Very soon the family flesh and bone
Will be whole and full,
It could be considered a dispersion of the clouds
Revealing the brightness of the moon.

(Sits together with Red Phoenix on the stone bench admiring plum blossoms.)

(Long Ching enters.)

Long Ching: *(sings)* Spring arrives in Feng Yang,
The whole world celebrates.
The close friend's profound feeling
Is to be especially saluted,
I almost gave away a bright future career.
The Prince is infatuated and proposes marriage;
With regard to repaying the grace
The match should be facilitated.
With regard to love for the younger sister,
How could it be endured to wrong the dainty girl?
Returning to the plum wood with a heavy heart,
Half glad half sad, hard to decide.

(speaks) Going back to speak with younger sister, younger sister will surely disagree and not accept. It can't be helped. Go back first and see. *(Enters.)*

Red Phoenix: *(very happy, recites)* Elder Brother,
You return today unscathed
And can go back to your former position;
The Prince is indeed admirable in his friendship.

Red Lotus: *(recites)* You are not further detained today
And can resume the official position,
It is all due to the Elder Prince.
We really do not have any idea
How to repay his deep friendship
And magnanimous deed.

(Long Ching sighs.)

Red Phoenix: *(surprised, recites)* Elder Brother,
You are back today and should be happy.
Why do you have nothing to say and keeps sighing?
It makes me puzzled and confused.

Red Lotus: *(recites)* That's right, Elder Brother.
Why do you seem to be so uneasy?
What is it in your heart?
You should tell your sisters clearly.

Long Ching: *(speaks)* Certainly there is something that made me uneasy.

(sings) The golden bird welcomes spring,
Flowers blossoming in brilliant red.
How fortunate am I to return to the homestead,
Receiving the benevolence of the Prince.
Knotting grass and holding jade rings in the mouth,
Any favors requested should have been accepted.
A small red phoenix
Inadvertently attracted the caring butterfly,
Has caused me to be caught between crying and laughing.
The Elder Prince proposed marriage to wed Red Phoenix,
Which is what made it so hard to reply.

(speaks) Red Phoenix, what would you have Elder Brother do?

Red Phoenix: *(happily speaks)* Elder Brother, why is it hard to do?

(sings) You have always claimed to be wise,
And should know quite well what to decide.
What is the reason to hesitate and to be unsure?
How can it be forgotten the benevolence ocean deep.
There is a saying,
“A benevolent fruit received from someone
Should be remembered a thousand years.
A flower to wear received from someone
Will be fragrant for ten thousand years.”
For repaying and for friendship,
Red Phoenix is willing to agree.

Long Ching: *(speaks)* Younger Sister, how can you marry him?

(sings) You willingly agree to marry,
I have to state it clearly.
He is one-eyed, pimple-faced,
His look not regular, obese, humpbacked;
Indeed quite unlike human form.
How could a colorful phoenix go with a crow?
You should consider thoroughly before saying yes.

(speaks) His look is indeed hideous.

Red Lotus: *(speaks)* Then it is better not to accept, younger sister.

(sings) One-eyed, pimple-faced and humpbacked!
Your look is beautiful as a flower,
Possible to overturn a state.
How can a gorgeous woman be matched to Zhong Kui?
It's another fear that the snoring in bed
Will sadly awaken you from your dreams.

Red Phoenix: *(speaks)* I have met him. You don't have to worry on my behalf.

(sings) Elder Brother must be teasing,
Red Phoenix has fallen in love on the spot.
Even if he is humpbacked, one-eyed and pimple-faced,
I am willing to be the red phoenix
In marriage together, caring for life.

Long Ching: *(much surprised, recites)* Red Phoenix—
Elder Brother is not joking, he is indeed hideous.
You even mentioned fallen in love with him on the spot,
Are you changing your consideration
In order to repay the benevolence?

Red Phoenix: *(recites)* Elder Brother,
Repaying benevolence is also a reason I agree;
Yet I am also marrying willingly,
You may decide and reply to him to tie the red string.

Long Ching: *(recites)* Indeed it is strangeness born of strangeness,
The strangest of strange.
So many whom you did not favor yet him you like,
Since you do agree, I shall do as you want.
However, in future do not blame your elder brother,
Don't say that I want to repay the grace
And have caused you to be sad for life,
Complaining about your fate.

Red Phoenix: *(recites)* Elder Brother, you may rest assured.
I would not blame you,
And I certainly will not regret.
I can attain a match to Elder Prince with one meeting,
It is indeed a case of harmonious matrimony of phoenixes.

Long Ching: (*speaks*) Since you are so determined to marry him, I shall give him my agreement.

(*sings*) You are as gorgeous as a peach blossom,
Overwhelming a distance of ten *li*.
Led astray by intelligence with too much intelligence.
Even the talented Feng Yang lady covets illusive glamour.
The hideous devil turns out to have much peach blossom luck.

(*Speaks*) Alright, if Elder Prince comes to propose, I shall accept him. Really, don't you blame elder brother in the future.

Red Phoenix: (*speaks*) Don't be so long-winded. I already said that in the future I would not blame you no matter what.

Long Ching: (*speaks*) It's good that there will be no complaints. In that case I will go and give my agreement to the Elder Prince right away.

Red Phoenix: (*speaks*) Then you better go quickly.

Long Ching: (*speaks*) I'll go then. (*Goes out the door, exits.*)

Red Lotus: (*recites*) Red Phoenix, I cannot understand.
So many gentlemen of the nobility are in pursuit of you
Yet you would not even glance at them.
Why would you favor an Ugly Devil Yang Fan?
Even if it's for repaying benevolence,
There is no need to put yourself into a sorrowful situation.

Red Phoenix: (*recites*) Second Elder Sister, don't be so silly.
If he is indeed so hideous,
How could I agree to wed?
Elder Brother must be testing
My willingness to repay the grace,
Deliberately saying that he looks ugly.
In fact he is incomparably talented,
Handsome in face, and young.

Red Lotus: (*recites*) Then that is good for you,
Soon to get married.
As for me it is a pity that at twenty-eight
I still have no idea when I shall get married.

Would it be that after becoming a white-haired maid,
I shall retire to the quietness of the monastery by myself?

Red Phoenix: (*recites*) Second Elder Sister—
Why do you need to worry so much?
You certainly will be able to get married.
As the saying goes,
“All people can form their respective match.”
You have no need to burden your heart.
I shall go inside to finish embroidering
The pair of mandarin duck pillowcases.
I seem now to be half happy and half in anxiety.
(*Exits bashfully.*)

Red Lotus: (*sighs, speaks*) Indeed similar people have different fates, similar umbrellas have different handles.

(*sings*) Underneath my eyes
The spring red almonds blossoms flower,
Sensing the scene now further saddens the feeling.
With lowered head strolling,
Facing plum blossoms in forlornness,
Sighing time and again, grieving my fate.
(*Sits down facing plum blossoms, sighs.*)

(*Drum rolls, Prince Chan holds earring, enters.*)

Prince Chan: (*sings*) Winds chilly and crisp,
Voices of swallows warbling heard in the garden wood.
Walking on and on, passing blossoming shrubs,
Hard to find the way.
Looking for her, looking at her (*repeats*),
Beauty overwhelmed the heart.
You are beautiful like ice, abounding love
In the heart unknowingly flowed,
Making a pretext to visit while
There are few people around.
Arriving at the door gate without realizing—
Searching for plum blossom trees all over Feng Yang,
Stepping on mossy tracks over distances immeasurable,
Seeking directions from shepherd boys,
Sought countless times.

Losing so much time before finally knowing.

(looking at the door, speaks) Plum Cottage, Number 1, Plum Blossom Lane, this is the place. It took me the better half of a day to find it, I would enter uninvited.

(Enters door.)

(Red Lotus sees and swoons.)

Red Lotus: *(recites)* Handsome man, handsome man.
Who are you looking for coming here?
I have never seen you before.
I am Red Lotus Lau, just eighteen this year.
Everyone compliments me for being
Quiet and meek, with decorum.

(Takes powder and makes up.)

Prince Chan: *(recites)* I have come here to look for Miss Red Phoenix Lau.
Will you say if she is here? Please let her know.

Red Lotus: *(recites)* So you are looking for Red Phoenix.
Red Phoenix is my elder sister,
I am even younger than she is.
Would it not be better that you
Look for me rather than her?
I bashfully request to have your name and surname.

Prince Chan: *(recites)* So you are the younger sister of Red Phoenix.
Indeed an ugly person has a hundred weird acts.
I am the reigning Prince Regent,
Here to visit Red Phoenix.
Please do not strike these artificial poses here.

Red Lotus: *(Bursts into speaking.)* So it is the Prince. No luck. Prince, please sit and wait. Let me ask my elder sister to come out and see you.

Prince Chan: *(sings)* How quiet and elegant
The brilliant plum wood,
Birds competing in warbles
Underneath the plum blossom trees.
I wish to be a butterfly calling on the bloom,

This body seems to have arrived in Penglai.

(Red Phoenix enters, bashfully greets.)

Prince Chan: *(recites)* Miss Lau, I the Prince visit today with special sincerity.
I realize it is like intruding on Xishi,
Please pardon my momentary impetuosity.

Red Phoenix: *(speaks aside)* He must have received my poem, and Elder Brother asked him to come and see me. Elder Brother is understanding indeed.

(recites) How fortunate to have the Prince honor this humble abode.
It makes Red Phoenix feel overwhelmed with the favor.

Prince Chan: *(speaks)* You are being modest, Miss Lau.

(sings) The Phoenix boudoir is peony-red,
Plum blossoms facing the eyes gorgeous.
One blossoming twig that overwhelms the town of Feng Yang,
Trace of fragrance seeping from clouds of hair.
Slight make-up superior to heavy cosmetics,
How often can one see such a pretty vision
Of a plum blossom in the chill?
The tune is one fated destiny;
The tune is two mutual feelings.
No need for words, we are already understood.
Dropping the golden earring while
Bashfully smiling the smile.
Trinkets slowly swaying to and fro.

(speaks) I am returning the golden earring to you with special sincerity, Miss Lau.

Red Phoenix: *(Takes earring.) (speaks)* Thank you for the trouble, Elder Prince.

(sings) Blossoms playing with their shadows,
Shadows clear in the pond.
Cleansed lotus and precious ducklings
Racing with floating duckweed.
Finished listening to the play of *qin*,
Overwhelmed by every word.
Happy and worried by the proposed match
Not yet fixed.

Agreeing to a commitment of three life-times,
The virgin bashful to the extreme.
Looking at each other's eyes, afraid to see
The butterfly lost among the flowering shrubs.

(speaks) Elder Prince, please make yourself comfortable and wait for my elder brother's return and excuse me. *(Attempts to exit abashed.)*

Prince Chan: *(Stops her.) (speaks)* Miss Lau,

(sings) The flying butterfly enters the gate,
Floral fragrance drugged the senses,
The moment of infatuation not gone still.
Nonetheless not daring to express the heart's feeling,
I admitted to having attempted Xima's seduction by *qin*.
Not sure if the tune of pursuit was clearly understood,
Wishing for the poem to be written on red leaf.
Unhinging the shiny pearl as a gift for betrothal.

(Red Phoenix turns on her back, much abashed.)

Red Phoenix: *(sings)* The heart fell soon after meeting,
Yet not daring to be carried away.
Sounds of the *qin* moved my heart,
The heart understood very well.

Prince Chan: *(sings)* Your feeling, do not be cold like ice.
You have to think of the feeling and promise,
I will love you lady forever.

(speaks) Promise me, Miss Lau.

Red Phoenix: *(sings)* Abashedly Red Phoenix has listened to it all.
Could only secretly,
Secretly wish for making the match.

(speaks) You must ask my elder brother.

(Extremely bashful, tries to exit.)

(Red Lotus brings refreshment, pulls Red Phoenix back.)

Red Lotus: *(sings)* Elder sister, no need to be abashed.

Already the Moon Fairy of Matrimony
Has tied the red string.
I have prepared good wine to celebrate the meeting,
You should drink up every cup.
Handsome boy matching the beautiful girl,
My mouth went dry with envy.
Elder sister is truthful to you,
No need here for these twists and turns.

(speaks) The elder sister has told elder brother that she would agree to marry you. On seeing each other why be embarrassed? Each person will drink three toasts of engagement to celebrate the successful engagement. It is unacceptable not to drink.

(Prince Chan pours wine.)

Prince Chan: *(sings)* Happy that Red Phoenix will be shining
In my life, like the two stars
Going across the Milky Way to be together.
This cup of wine warmed for the betrothal,
Celebrates in advance the good match made in heaven.

(speaks) I shall drink a cup first. *(Drinks up and pours another.)*

(sings) Wishing for entwined branches to grow on the tree.
My lady you should drink up right now. *(Toast to Red Phoenix.)*

Red Phoenix: *(Takes wine bashfully.) (recites)* I was born with low capacity for drink.
And fear that it is hard to withstand
The strength of intoxication.

Red Lotus: *(Interrupts.) (speaks)* Drink it up, Elder Sister. Do not be blocking and hindering the moment.

Red Phoenix: *(sings)* Flushing peach red in face,
Could only abide my lord.
Picking up the golden cup
With unspeakable bashfulness. *(Drinks.)*

Red Lotus: *(recites)* You drink up, he drinks up,
Absolutely not to leave any behind.
Another cup for each of you,

Wishing that you stay together as a beautiful vision
Until your hair turns white.
Pouring the wine,
To be drunk from each other's cups
With crossed arms.

Prince Chan: (*recites*) Already I have the spring breeze
On my face, happy to the extreme. (*Drinks.*)

Red Phoenix: (*recites*) Not acceptable not to drink.
Nothing else to do but finish the drink. (*Drinks.*)

Red Lotus: (*recites*) Everyone drinks the third cup,
The worst case that could happen is drinking to tipsiness.

Prince Chan: (*recites*) Everyone drinks up.
Growing fruit from the blossoming bloom
In days to come, what propitiousness. (*Drinks.*)

(Red Phoenix tries to refuse the drink, forced down by Red Lotus.)

(Prince Chan with some degree of intoxication.)

Prince Chan: (*sings*) In days to come,
The treasured horse and fragrant carriage
Will welcome the emerald lady.
Hurried to finish making-up the Phoenix Parlor,
To be in company of glory and honor.
Three cups of warm wine intoxicates the spirit,
Suddenly feeling tipsy,
Sways this way and that.

(Falls down drunk.)

Red Phoenix: (*sings*) Unused to what's in the cup,
Red Phoenix could hardly refuse the love in the wine.
The Jade hill fell down among the plum wood.
There is the fear that the person might not wake up.
Even when the night becomes quiet.

(Falls down drunk.)

(Night watch gong sounds.)

Red Lotus: *(speaks)* Terrible, it's completely dark already. The two of them finished three drinks and were drunk to unconsciousness. It can't be. When elder brother returns in a minute and sees this he will certainly scold me for being immodest and meddling. Why don't I take the two of them to Red Phoenix's room to sleep, then figure what to do when they wake up. Since the two of them will certainly be engaged, and are already drunk, why should there be a concern to be in the same bed? If not, how can they pass the night? Calling me foolish all the time, in fact one does not realize how very smart I am.

(Supports Red Phoenix and Prince Chan to go up the parlor, exits.)

(Second night watch gong of the night.)

(Long Ching enters.)

Long Ching: *(sings)* Birds asleep, flowers in bed, people quiet,
Lights in ten thousand households bright as day.
Spring breezes delivering glory of brocade garments,
Together with the family again tonight, the heart is most joyful.

(Enters the door not seeing anyone.) (speaks) Red Phoenix, Red Phoenix.

(Red Lotus enters.)

Red Lotus: *(speaks)* Elder Brother.

Long Ching: *(speaks)* Where is Red Phoenix?

Red Lotus: *(recites)* It's ...it's ... it's because Red Phoenix
Was out with too much walking today,
She was very tired and has gone to bed very early.
Do not go in and wake her.

Long Ching: *(recites)* Red Phoenix must have been
Exhausted today because of me,
I would not want to disturb or wake her,
Let her rest. Red Lotus—
Did the Elder Prince come to look for me today?
I have been worried all day about
Not being here to greet him in person.

Red Lotus: *(recites)* Ye... ye... ye...

The Elder Prince has not come.
It's late now. Elder brother
You also should go inside to sleep.
The night will soon be quiet
And the night watch gongs finished.

Long Ching: (*recites*) I am also very tired,
I am going inside to sleep.
You should go to bed too,
Don't just play with making-up
With rouge and powder all night.
Like a mustard plant in October,
The heart fidgets all day long. (*Exits.*)

Red Lotus: (*speaks*) Elder brother has gone to bed. Let me quietly ask Elder Prince to leave
and come back again tomorrow to propose. So Elder Brother will not know
about it and say we girls were too aggressive about seeing men, bringing the
blush to one's cheek by his words. (*Exits.*)

(*Third night watch gong.*)

Red Lotus: (*speaks*) Good lord!

(*sings*) Traces of fragrance remain in the embroidered canopy,
The dream of Mount Wu has been awakened.
A pair of mandarin ducks with necks crossed
As if together in one life,
The candlewick with happy pops
Still throwing visible light;
Wrongly the gentleman of jade
Was put beside the vision of beauty.
My goodness, a transgression of spring breeze,
How abashed the dainty lady.
In spring the night rain could
Hardly be hidden from others.
It was all destined to happen because of
This meddling spring moth.
(*speaks*) How terrible. If Elder Brother comes to know about it, how could we
ever hear the end of it?

(*Red Phoenix and Prince Chan enter together.*)

[*Prince Chan*]: (*recites*) Why was I in the same bed and quilt with Red Phoenix
Leading to this cloud and rain love affair?

Red Lotus: (*sings*) I thought since you would be man and woman soon,
It would not matter to sleep together till dawn.
You just have to hide the secret,
Or Elder Brother will reprimand you for immodest behavior.

(*speaks*) Elder Brother has gone to bed. Prince, you had better leave soon; so he
does not put all the blame on me. (*Exits.*)

Prince Chan: (*sings*) The curtain heavily falls,
The person awakened.
Entering the dream of Mount Wu.
Intoxicated, not realizing that the butterfly
Was drugged by the blossoming shade,
Inadvertently engaging in the affair.

Red Phoenix: (*sings*) Sighing and regretting the drunkenness,
That muddled and confused the character of the person.
Shamed and abashed to the extreme,
Red Phoenix fearing to acknowledge the beautiful night.

Prince Chan: (*sings*) The heaven had the heart to make the match,
Worries no more.

Red Phoenix: (*sings*) I really should not have.

Prince Chan: (*sings*) I am passionate and indeed love you, my lady.

Red Phoenix: (*sings*) Passing the beautiful night after intoxication,
The spring breeze pitying the drooping flower.
Too intolerable to recall the sensation of it,
Dreams awaken, the sun bright red.
Forlorn the day with the drooping flowers,
Candles with crafted Phoenix not yet burnt.
Ashamed of the sight of the quilt,
Plucking the lotus of jade,
The dissipated night of cloud and rain.
How many times shattered by anger,
The little red caltrop.
Red Phoenix is not to be like

Last year's person to be forgotten;
You must not go back on the passion,
Must submit the pledge of betrothal.

Prince Chan: (*speaks*) Rest assured, Red Phoenix.

(*sings*) With the high bridge of magpies already set,
Respect paid to the twin stars.
With the dream of Wushan mountain
Already entered into and awakened.
The Gaotang cloud and rain
Still has an unfinished affair.
I am not the heartless Wang Kui, Pan Bizheng,
I will absolutely not act flurried and restrained;
I will borrow the one hundred thousand
Flower-protecting golden bells.
Delicate lady, you can open up your heart,
We shall definitely be together in one life
Like the pair of mandarin ducks.

(*speaks*) I shall return to the capital tomorrow and speak to my Royal Mother,
then welcome you to the capital. You need not worry.

(*The fourth night watch gong.*)

Red Phoenix: (*sings*) Would anyone reveal the secret love affair?
Dawn will come soon,
Hurried on by the drum and gong,
I can only wish for timely preparation of
The matrimony carriage,
Not letting the bird have just the lonely body
And one single shadow.

Prince Chan: (*sings*) Tonight, attaining the happy match with Red Phoenix,
In the coming year the happy marriage will certainly take place.
To be apart just for a little while, don't be saddened.
The one truthful heart is attested to by heaven.

(*speaks*) Once I go back to the capital I shall arrange to wed you right away. You
should take good care of yourself. (*Exits.*)

Red Phoenix: (*sings*) Awakened from the dream of romance,

Quietness in Plum Cottage,
Regret that there are no colored wings
To see him off on the way.
Every night the silver lamp jests at the drooped petals,
I can only look afar from the balcony.
To welcome the sight of the returning wild goose.
(Exits.)

[*Long Ching and Prince Wang enter.*]

Long Ching: (*sings*) Today the blossoms will bloom
Intertwined on one stalk,
Repaying the benevolence is essentially the way of things.
Red Phoenix is willing to be the golden phoenix,
Agreeing in person with acceptance.

Prince Wang: (*sings*) I have position, wealth and generous demeanor,
Ranking first around town in handsomeness.
This rainbow colored prince is going for a proposal,
Obviously it is as settled as carrying weighty oil.

Long Ching: (*speaks*) Please come inside my humble abode and have a seat, and I shall ask
Red Phoenix to come out and speak with you in person. (*Enter together.*)

Long Ching: (*recites*) It was indeed as you guessed.
My younger sister agreed right away,
Willing to be engaged to your highness in marriage.

Prince Wang: (*recites*) I knew there would not be any problems,
With this stature of mine,
The magnificent size and the many curves,
Besides being fair skinned and handsome,
Features in the right places, needless to say,
needless to ask, as soon as women see me
They take me to heart like pots of honey.

(*speaks*) You were going to ask Red Phoenix to come out?

Long Ching: (*speaks*) Good. Please sit down for a short while and let me ask Red Phoenix to
come. (*Exits.*)

(*Long Ching pulling Red Phoenix, enter.*)

Long Ching: (*speaks*) Red Phoenix, the Elder Prince is now inside. You and he should speak in person on the match, so you will not blame elder brother in future.

Red Phoenix: (*speaks*) I have said I would not blame you. What need is there to speak in person?

(*sings*) Shamed to recall the dissipated dream
Of cloud and rain,
How to endure meeting again and talk about the affair?
Red Phoenix is willing to make the match,
I shall comply with elder brother on everything.
(*Exits bashfully.*)

Long Ching: [to Prince Wang] (*speaks*) Red Phoenix is bashful and dare not meet with you. She asked me to make the decision on her behalf. I am determined to wed Red Phoenix to you. Would you say when you will be coming with a pledge for the betrothed?

Prince Wang: (*recites*) Tomorrow I shall return to the capital
Together with my Royal Younger Brother
To see my Royal Mother in person.
As soon as I return I shall immediately
Present the case to Royal Mother
And welcome your younger sister to the capital.

Long Ching: (*sings*) A red plum blossom to be buried in earth and dung,
I really cannot understand what has been going on.
Will repay the benevolence serving
As a dog or horse in the next life,
Kindness high as the sky, forever be appreciated.

Prince Wang: (*sings*) Becoming family as my brother-in-law,
I shall of course bestow on you glory and glamor.
I will appoint you general to guard Copper City,
Because of your many talents both civil and martial.

(*speaks*) Very good, I shall speak to General Commander Zhao to confer to you the position of general in defense of Copper City. After I return, I shall immediately welcome your younger sister. (*Exits.*)

Long Ching: (*sings*) It is not yet a happy matrimony today.
Connubial matches are always hard to make clear. (*Exits.*)

(Curtain.)

Act III

(Scene: Imperial Court.)

(Eight Imperial Officials enter.)

Marquis of Dingyuan: (recites) The debate over choice of a crown prince by the Empress
Has gone on for half a year;
The decision whether to choose Elder Prince or
Second Prince to be the crown prince is still not made.

First Imperial Official: (recites) We should urge the Empress to confer the title soon.
Since she has held court behind a screen for ten years,
It is only right to choose a crown prince
To rest the minds of the millions of citizens.

All together: (speaks) This makes sense.

(Four eunuchs, four palace maids leading the way for the Empress, enter.)

Empress: (recites) Ministers, you have hastened this Sorrowful House to hold court this
morning,
What do you have to present?

Marquis of Dingyuan: (recites) Presenting to the Empress,
The hundred civil and martial officials all very much
Desire the Empress to establish a crown prince,
As the two princes have grown up into adults,
Ready to govern the state and attend to the family.

Empress: (sings) Ten years staying put within the palace rim,
Sadly remembering the deceased Emperor;
Alone, unhappy, who to turn to for comfort,
Only the small swallows in front of the palace
That I raised and nurtured.
How pitiful my natural born son is like the devil at night,
Born foolish, unbearable to speak of;
The younger son was born statuesque,
Talented and learning incomparable,

Will be able to perform great deeds.
Yet I have already made up my mind
To establish my own son on the throne.
It is hateful that the various officials have objected,
It could not be accomplished over the past half year.
Today the urging is there again to establish the crown prince,
It has indeed filled my heart with trouble.

(Speaks) Courtiers, summon the two princes to the imperial court.

(Eunuch takes order.)

Eunuch: *(speaks)* The Empress' decree, summon the two princes to the imperial court!

(Prince Wang, Prince Chan enter together.)

Prince Wang: *(sings)* Awakened all of a sudden,
The cock has crowed.

Prince Chan: *(sings)* Missing Red Phoenix with my heart,
Caring for the great beauty.

Prince Wang: *(sings)* Crazy for the blossom,
Regardless of day or night.

Prince Chan: *(sings)* Tidying garment and hat,
Paying highest respect.

(Enter together, pay respect.)

Empress: *(recites)* Royal sons, today the officials at large
Urged me to select and establish the crown prince.
They have said what is needed is a capable one
To hold heaven and earth in his palm.
That is why the Sorrowful House summons the two of you
To compare and see who has the ability to be crown prince.

Marquis Dingyuan: *(recites)* Would the two princes talk about
The strategy for defending the state
And stabilizing the country
Here in front of the imperial court?
Whoever has ability to govern the country
Would then deserve to be the Emperor of Jin,
Not disappointing the expectations of the people.

Prince Wang: (*sings*) I am weak in courage,
Not daring to kill a chicken.
With regard to defending state and stabilizing country
I have not a clue what it is all about.
I only know I like to pursue girls in my life,
Since I was born handsome
I will surely take a beauty home.
As long as there is wine and flowers,
And money to spend,
What do I care about holding heaven and earth in my palm?
What do I know about state governance and family attendance?

(Officials shake their heads and sigh.)

Prince Chan: (*sings*) With regard to defending the state,
Drill on skills and plan for governance;
Further, apply benevolence and might alike.
With regard to state regulations,
Clear policy on reward and punishment.
Not permitting cultivation of self-interest
And fraudulent practices.
With regard to concern for the people,
They should be cared for like children,
Not letting even a half one be lost.
With regard to being an Emperor,
One cannot be addicted to wine and women,
Should dedicate to state rituals day and night.

Marquis Dingyuan: (*recites*) Empress, Elder Prince is by nature intellectually mediocre,
Besides being born of a concubine.
The second prince is bright and smart in character,
And born of the deceased empress.
On behalf of the hundred civil and martial officials,
I plead that the Empress
Confer on Second Prince the title of Crown Prince.

(Empress troubled and helpless.)

Empress: (*recites*) Very well. Ah Wang, you have no way
To put on a good show for your royal mother.
The Sorrowful House will confer

The title of Crown Prince on Prince Chan.
Inside my heart, I cry with sadness and anger.

(speaks) Second royal son, come to the front and listen to the decree.

Prince Chan: *(Comes to the front.) (speaks)* Present.

Empress: *(speaks)* Conferred to be Crown Prince of Jin.

Prince Chan: *(speaks)* Thank you Empress.

(sings) Debating for over half a year, today it is settled.
I shall certainly work hard and with care in court;
Relations among natural bones and flesh
Have always been good,
Royal elder brother,
Your frequent encouragement and support please.

Prince Wang: *(sings)* I am by nature lazy
And have gotten used to being carefree,
Whoever is emperor is fine by me.
No need to wake up at three quarter past the fifth gong,
To put on the dragon robe and mount the throne.

(Gate-keeping Officer Wong enters.)

Wong: *(recites)* Presenting to the Empress, General Lau Long Ching of Copper City,
Having raided and wiped out the Southern barbarians,
Now awaits decree at the Meridian Gate
To see the Empress and present the whole.

Empress: *(recites)* Summon him to the imperial court right away,
The Sorrowful House will certainly reward his magnificent achievement.

(Gate-keeping Officer Wong passes on decree.)

Wong: *(speaks)* The Empress' decree, Lau Long Ching to be presented in court in formal attire.

Long Ching: *(sings)* Successful battle dissolving layers of besiege,
Lying drunk in the battle field, awash in foul blood.
Pleased in the spring breeze,
Accompanied by horse trots;
Holding the belt, lifting the robe,

Hurried to kneel and bow.

Empress: (*speaks*) Officer Lau, stand.

Long Ching: (*speaks*) Thank you Empress.

Empress: (*sings*) Officer Lau is indeed a brave young man,
With a tiger's courage, mighty in spirit.
How did you raid and wipe out the Southern barbarians?
Make haste, in detail present.

Long Ching: (*sings*) With one cry, arms waving, wielding the sword,
Two nights raiding the camps, playing smart tricks;
Fought until the gods wailed and the devils cried,
The danger abated.
With a cavalry of only five hundred,
Relying on nothing but hot blood,
Defense made.
Today returning triumphant, all because of
The Empress' heavenly might,
The feat was accomplished at this time.

Empress: (*sings*) It was certainly a magnificent effort and accomplishment
That you could dissolve all the layers of besiegement;
You are conferred the title of Marquis of Might and Bravery,
The Sorrowful House wants to reward in accordance with merit.

Long Ching: (*speaks*) Thank you Empress.

Prince Wang: (*recites*) I want to have a chat with you,
I have looked for your return until my neck grew long.
In the half year I had many times
Raised it with Royal mother.
Royal Mother said the Crown Prince was to be chosen
And would not permit that I marry a wife until then.
Because of that I have been waiting all day long,
Just like a fisherman's hen.
Today Royal Younger Brother is chosen to be Crown Prince,
I should also be blooming two flowers on the same stalk.
Would Royal Mother give permission for me
To take Red Phoenix as wife, pick her up
To come to the palace with no loss of time?

Empress: (recites) Officer Lau, Elder royal son
Wants your younger sister Red Phoenix to be his wife,
Could you in your heart refuse?

Long Ching: (recites) Your humble officer has brought
My two sisters to stay in the capital.
Given that the Elder Prince does not mind
The modest sedge and willow,
How fortunate am I that I could take the honor?

Prince Chan: (recites) Royal Elder Brother, are you marrying
The elder sister or younger sister?
Please clarify the whole.

Prince Wang: (recites) I am marrying the younger sister of course.
That way it would be a suitable match.
Otherwise, how could a phoenix match a pheasant?

Prince Chan: (recites) Then I am well assured.
It is indeed heaven-made and earth-designed
That you marry his younger sister.
Royal Mother, I have many times requested for your permission
To marry the elder of Officer Lau's sisters to be my wife,
You had said not to talk about marriage
Before the Crown Prince was selected.
Today the Crown Prince has been decided,
I expect Royal Mother will permit me and his sister
To be the two flowers blooming on the same stalk.

Empress: (recites) The throne has been conferred to you,
You may do as you please,
Royal Mother dare not go against your will.
Nevertheless, Officer Lau, are you happy to marry
The elder of your sisters to the Crown Prince?

Long Ching: (Puzzled.) (sings) The Crown Prince
Is handsome as Pan An; young, statuesque,
Talent and learning matched by none.
Countless colorful beauties of good families bedazzled by him,
Why would he propose in court to wed the ugly ghost?
Indeed it is like the preserved duck
Made before winter,

There is in the world such drollery.
Crown Prince, my younger sister
Is crossed-eyed and thick-lipped,
How could she be worthy of
The position of Crown Princess?

Prince Chan: (recites) Clearly you are making a pretense
And are not willing to marry your sister to me.
Even if she is big-lipped and cross-eyed
I promise it will not be an issue.

Long Ching: (recites) Crown Prince, you are a jade leaf
From a golden branch and will certainly
Be disgusted upon seeing her.
You will surely blame your humble officer
For marrying the little crow.

Prince Chan: (recites) I have said it is absolutely not an issue.
You should not be making excuses to refuse.
Would it be that even the prestigious
Crown Prince is unworthy to be with your sister,
Respecting each other until our hair turns silver?

Long Ching: (speaks) Your humble officer wouldn't dare. (repeats)

Empress: (recites) Officer, you are indeed pointless, too pointless,
No more excuses and refusal.
Your two sisters, upon entering the imperial palace,
Will be pampered and treasured in body and flesh ever after.
Deliver the decree that the wedding will be held today,
Two weddings to be held at the same time.
Royal sons, make haste back to the imperial palace,
Change your attire to welcome the great beauties.

(*Prince Wang, Prince Chan very happy, speak together*):

Thank you Royal Mother. (*Exit together.*)

Empress: (recites) Decree to courtiers,
Proceed to the General's mansion and welcome
The two ladies to the palace for wedding without delay.

(Gate-keeping Officer Wong takes decree, exits.)

Long Ching: *(sings)* Dense fog over my head, so astonishing.
Red Phoenix, why would she marry the ugly Zhong Kui?
Crown Prince, why does he want to wed the cross-eyed chit.
Indeed thinking about it has worn out my heart, liver and lung.

(Gate-keeping Officer Wong enters.)

Wong: *(speaks)* The two Miss Lau's have already changed into wedding garments,
awaiting decrees at Meridian Gate.

Empress: *(speaks)* Instruction to start music playing.

(Small door opens, Prince Wang, Prince Chan enter.)

(Two handmaids supporting Red Phoenix, head covered, two handmaids supporting Red Lotus, head covered, enter.)

(Prince Wang with Red Phoenix, Prince Chan with Lotus, perform wedding rituals, exit together.)

Empress: *(recites)* Today both royal sons set up
Households and marry wives,
The Sorrowful House is unsure whether to be
Comforted or saddened.
Today the rightful empress's son has to be
Enthroned as emperor,
It caused me unspeakably grief.
Officials, you complimented the second royal son as
Flawless in morals and virtues, which was why
I selected him to be the Crown Prince.
If he engages in deeds that damage morality
And ruin virtues, the Sorrowful One will
Certainly demote him as Prince,
Unworthy of the prestigious position at the pinnacle.

(speaks) Deliver decree to lay a sumptuous banquet so people everywhere in
the empire can enjoy together. Imperial court adjourned. *(Exit together.)*

Long Ching: *(sings)* I keep feeling uneasy,
Heart and gall in my mouth;
Worried again that the wrong matches will
Forever be muddled in regret. *(Exit.)*

(Curtain.)

Act IV

(Scene: Magnificent Palace parlor.)

(Scene layout: large canopied bed in the middle, side table with red candles, crafted with dragon and phoenix, for wedding.)

(Four palace maids with palace lights leading Red Phoenix, enter.)

(Four palace maids quietly exit.)

Red Phoenix: *(sings)* Fearful of traces remaining from the spring dream,
Waking up on the embroidered pillow with apprehension.
The peach blossom bearing fruit,
Intolerable to be inquired about;
Inclining on all the railings, how many levels again?
Fortunately, Red Phoenix has been sought in matrimony
To forge a mandarin-duck alliance.
The palace blossoms and candle lights
Both wielding shades of red,
Fearful and very much shamed,
Having flowered and borne fruit.

(speaks) In the past few months I kept looking forward to the Elder Prince in the Phoenix Boudoir, to hasten preparation for the wedding, and have been disappointed. Most urgently, I have borne in the young maidenly womb.

(bashfully sings) Luckily, today
The grand wedding ceremony can be held.
It might be said heaven has listened
And complied with one's wish;
Yet in thinking about the imminence of coming due,
Giving birth after marrying for not too long,
Indeed it would be a joke that tickles people to death.
Indeed I have no idea what to do.
(Sits down, half anxious half happy.)

(Four palace maids with palace lamps leading Prince Wang, enter.)

Prince Wang: (*sings*) Wedding night, the happiest,
I have now been matched in the Phoenix alliance.
A pair of mandarin ducks so suited to each other,
They are indeed superior upon superior.
Tonight the cloud and rain will be happily sought
In the dream of Penglai,
Scholar and beauty
Particularly well-matched.
Tonight, the tall bridge of magpies
Has been set, so spirited.
This handsome Prince with so much talent,
Will of course meet with the luck of peach blossom.

(*speaks*) Red Phoenix, upon seeing my handsome face could hardly help feeling content in her mind and heart. Go outside all of you. Do not stand in the way of the Prince on his wedding night. (*Four palace maids exit.*)

Prince Wang: (*speaks*) Let me behave with good manners, act gentle and calm, so Red Phoenix will realize that I am generous and refined, a husband hard to come by. She will be very glad for sure. (*Enters.*) (*speaks*) Passing civil examination is the highest achievement—wait, being the Prince I am already more prestigious than passing the civil examination so that part is superfluous. Passing the wedding night is the other high achievement, so talk about that instead. Proceed to make the greeting between husband and wife, then we can do that. Greeting, Miss Lau!

Red Phoenix: [*Sees Prince Wang.*] (*much surprised, recites*) Who are you?
Entering the bridal suite
Without words of announcement,
You are insolent indeed.

Prince Wang: (*recites*) Miss Lau, how come your question is so strange?
I am your newly wedded husband,
By the name of Prince Wang.

Red Phoenix: (*shocked, sings*) He is pimple-faced and one-eyed,
Scary to death;
Humpback and an eye-sore,
Anger boiling at heart upon the sight.
You are too blatantly insolent,
Pretending to be Prince Wang.
I want to shout for the palace maids
To have you arrested. (*Tries to shout.*)

Prince Wang: (*Stops her.*) (*speaks*) Miss Lau, I am the genuine Prince Wang, exchangeable if not.

(*Sings*) It is so funny!
Tonight Red Phoenix is getting married,
Why are you tempestuous, harboring anger?
Look at me Prince Wang, elegant and refined,
Coveted to death by so many rouge-powdered beauties;
This good bridegroom, exchangeable if fake.
Why would you be suspicious for no reason?
I am weighty and statuesque,
Where could you find a husband like this?
(*Speaks*) Let us have a toast to our match.
(*Tries to pull Red Phoenix.*)

Red Phoenix: (*Avoids in hurry.*) (*recites*) There is no way
I would believe you are Prince Wang,
Prince Wang looks like Pan An,
Not bad-looking like you,
Obviously you are here to muddle things.

Prince Wang: (*recites*) Are you saying that I am not good-looking?
Proper and square and can be put to stand
On both ends, you must be joking with me;
Joke on something else.
Let us not waste the valuable time:
Ten taels of gold for a quarter.
I want to have a drink with you and an intimate chat.
(*Again wants to come close to Red Phoenix.*)

Red Phoenix: (*Avoids.*) (*recites*) You should not come closer.
You still will not admit to faking?
Would I not recognize Prince Wang?
I have met him.
You had better go or when Prince Wang comes in
Your head will not be safe.

Prince Wang: (*recites*) Ridiculous.
Other than me where would one find a Prince Wang?
You must have seen an apparition.
Ah! I see. You went to see me to borrow money

On New Year's Day this year,
I happened to have gone out to make New Year visits.
The one who lent you money
Was my Royal Younger Brother.
He must have used my name,
The one you saw was not Prince Wang but Prince Chan.

Red Phoenix: (*great shock, sings*) Oh no!
Shocked to hear it,
Agitated to soul and spirit.
The northern plum erroneously fell
By the side of the southern River Chu,
In panic and losing direction,
Abdomen in severe pain.

(*speaks*) Oh no! (*Hurries inside the canopy.*)

Prince Wang: (*sings*) Girls usually make pretense,
She obviously loves me, Prince Wang.
Look at her, lowering her head,
Smiling lightly and getting behind the silk curtain.
Intimate together, I better not waste the spring night.
(*Tries to enter the canopy.*)

(*Baby cries.*)

Prince Wang: (*in shock, sings*) Oh no, fruit borne before flowering!
I am so mad that right away my head swims.
I want to find elder brother-in-law to ask for explanation,
Of all bridegrooms in the world
I must have the worst luck. (*Exits.*)

(*Prince Wang pulling Long Ching, enter.*)

Prince Wang: (*speaks*) You served me *right!* (*repeats*)

Long Ching: (*recites*) Elder Prince, why do you have anger all over your face?
Dragging me to the palace parlor,
Seemingly with a heart full of grievances.

Prince Wang: (*recites*) Indeed you practiced good discipline at home,
You did me a *service!*
In vain I have made it a point to move you up,

You caught me between laughter and tears tonight.

Long Chins: (recites) Elder Prince,
I have willingly married Red Phoenix to you,
You should be happy and contented.
Why did you say that I served you wrong,
And talk about the good discipline at home?
Indeed I find it hard to understand the reason behind.

Prince Wang: (recites) Lau Long Ching!
You are still making pretense here.
I have not yet passed the wedding night
And already I have a son.
All those great gifts you could have made me
Yet you did not, you gave me a green hat!

(Baby cries.)

Long Ching: (in shock, sings) Cries of the baby shattering the hero's gut,
Where had the haunting affair come from?
It is unfathomable.
Red Phoenix is not a fragrant wildflower,
Who seduced the almond bloom
To creep out of the eastern wall?

Prince Wang: (sings) Tonight my head is completely in color,
You are all complicit, a basket of demons and spirits.
I shall present the case to Royal Mother
To investigate the affair.
At this time I am more sorrowful and even angrier.

(speaks) Ask her with whom she is having a relationship. I shall go and ask Royal Mother know to pursue this affair. To be overtaken by someone going into the final stretch, it is not to be accepted.

(Long Ching very angry, goes to the canopy, grabs Red Phoenix, carries baby.)

Long Ching: (speaks) What good deed you have done! (repeat)

Red Phoenix: (recites) Elder Brother, on this affair I was indeed wrong,
Yet you need not be furious like a little tiger
Right upon seeing me.

Acknowledging the familial love between brother and sister,
You should inquire with patience and thoroughness.

Long Ching: (*recites*) Red Phoenix, you have the audacity to speak like this!
You have destroyed the family's reputation
Ruined your name and chastity,
Giving birth before getting married.
The fact that I have not killed you with one blow
Of the sabre is already an acknowledgement
Of familial love between brother and sister.

(*Slaps Red Phoenix.*)

Red Phoenix: (*recites*) Elder Brother, you are within your right to slap me.
Yet I have come to this,
A peach blossom bearing fruit, all because of you.
And you slap me tonight!
Don't you think I have a temper too?
You may be furious but I am furious even more.
(*Furiously slaps Long Ching.*)

(*Long Ching very angry.*)

Long Ching: (*recites*) Oh, you behaved badly
And further you strike your brother,
You are a shrew indeed.
How did Elder Brother cause you this?
Did Elder Brother tell you to flirt with the boys?
Did Elder Brother tell you to go astray, to get pregnant?
You made me lose my soul and drop my spirit tonight,
I could swallow you alive.
You bad girl, you would even fight back and slap me,
And spray blood on other people,
Shifting responsibility to the others.
(*Slaps Red Phoenix in anger.*)

Red Phoenix: (*speaks*) Elder brother, hold your strikes. I shall speak out, see if it is not all your fault.

Long Ching: (*speaks*) Speak up, bad girl. Let us see how Elder Brother has wronged you.
(*Sits.*)

Red Phoenix: (*speaks*) You listen—

(*sings*) Unburdening the spring heart in tears,
Overnight the plum blossom drooped.
Inadvertently listened to a tune of *qin*,
If I were not in Feng Yang
For borrowing a loan from the royal family,
How would I have come to be
A red almond crept outside the wall?
Meeting again in the little plum wood,
Red Lotus making the match.
Wronged by intoxication,
Dreamed the cloud of Mount Wu.
The one I encountered was in fact Prince Chan,
Erroneous match resulting in regret.

(*speaks*) If you had not asked me to venture outside to borrow money, how could I have met Prince Chan? Second Elder Sister, in consideration that you had already agreed to the match, helped me and Prince Chan to the same quilt and pillow after we were drunk. How was I to know that Prince Chan was not Prince Wang? If Prince Wang was so bad-looking, why would I be willing to wed him? Would you say it was my fault? It was all because of you Elder Brother!

Long Ching: (*speaks*) Red Phoenix, Elder Brother was wrong to slap you, scold you.

(*sings*) Cannot blame little Red Phoenix,
With spring across her brows;
So there is a story with cause and end.
Two couples of wrong lovers, a destiny of calamity,
Tragically met with misfortune.
Swaying candlelight wielding red shades,
Candlewick still burning bright,
How is it to be taken, bearing fruit on a wedding night?
Grieving of the night rain that could not be kept hidden,
How could I protect this red almond that has drooped?

(*speaks*) Elder Prince has gone to tell the Empress. If there is to be accountability, what would you say there is to be done?

Red Phoenix: (*recites*) Elder Brother, why do you have to be so upset?
If the Empress knew she would forgive us,
It was just a misunderstanding for the time

That has resulted in the wrong matches.
Besides this flesh and bone is that of Second Prince,
I believe the Empress and Elder Prince will take some pity.

Long Ching: (recites) You are wrong, Red Phoenix.
Prince Chan was not born of the Empress,
But was from the bloodline of the then rightful empress.
Prince Wang is the natural born of the Empress.
The only reason that the Empress set up
Prince Chan as Crown Prince is because of
His incomparable talent
Coupled with unmatched conduct
with everyone looking up to him.
If she knows Prince Chan met you,
Stealing the Elder Prince's name,
Ending in an illegitimate match
Without going through a proper match-maker,
She would certainly take the opportunity to severely reprimand him.
We are guilty of course,
The Second Prince will even lose
The prestigious position as the Crown Prince.

Red Phoenix: (recites) Elder Brother, what are do we do?
If the Empress and Elder Prince ask me who the lover is,
Would you have me hide it from them?

Long Ching: (recites) If it is told,
Not only are we in trouble ourselves,
Second Prince could even lose the throne.
I am at this moment totally lost
With no idea what to do.
It was all because of you
Wrongly allying your heart.

(Prince Chan dragging Red Lotus, enters.)

Prince Chan: (recites) Elder-brother-in-law,
What have you done to me?
I wanted to marry Red Phoenix, not Red Lotus.
Why did you muddle and confuse the marriages?

Long Ching: (recites) I have tonight all night been made the scapegoat.

If you had wanted to marry Red Phoenix,
Why did you say you wanted to marry the elder sister?
I told you already that she was bad looking,
You then said you would not blame me.
It is unfathomable what you people have done,
To have come up with these two screwed-up matches.

Red Phoenix: (recites) Second Prince, the first problem was that
You did not tell me you were Prince Chan.
The second problem was that
Elder Sister was concerned that
She would be regarded as an old maid,
So she claimed to be my younger sister.
That is why there is this mess today,
Accumulating misfortune.

Red Lotus: (recites) It was all because of me trying to be smart.
I thought since you were going to be engaged anyway,
Helping you to sleep together drunk was not a big problem.
Worse still, I had acclaimed to be Red Phoenix' younger sister,
So it was one mistake after another.
Nevertheless, there is no need to worry,
You two brothers can talk it through and clarify.
At the worst I would take the disadvantage
And marry that ugly apparition.

Prince Chan: (recites) That's right.
Fortunately it is all within the family.
I believe among brothers, it could be agreed upon.

Red Phoenix: (recites) Second Prince, your belief is wrong,
The Empress has been trying to catch you in the wrong.
As soon as you have done something wrong
She could annul your throne.
If I speak out on this muddled illegitimate affair
Between us, not only will she not sympathize with us,
On the contrary, you would face severe penalties.

Prince Chan: (sings) Wealth and prestige are like the floating cloud.
Rivers and mountains of the country,
I would rather not care.
An ardent heart cannot be heartless.

How could I disappoint the one on the pillow beside me?
Further, who is there to defend the peach blossom
That has borne fruit?
How could the wild wind and riotous rain
Be allowed to break the begonia's soul?
I must admit to it, admit to the affair;
I cannot blame the suffering beauty.

Long Ching: (*speaks*) You cannot admit to it, Second Prince.

(*sings*) It is necessary to weigh the importance,
You should not be overly enamored.
It is impossible not to hide this affair,
You have to consider the country and the people.
The Empress has always been cruel at heart,
Why should the public together suffer
Over this sacrifice for love?
You need to realize the country is weighty
And love is light,
Second Prince you cannot overly indulge in love.

Red Phoenix: (*speaks*) Second Prince, you should not sacrifice the throne because of me.

(*sings*) Love is a smoky cloud,
Mountains and rivers are like embroidery.
The haunting affair grows into a haunting, haunting regret,
The gut wrenching one facing the gut wrenching one;
The unfortunate drooped blossom has come into ill-fortune,
Why be a burden to oneself and a burden to others?
You have to consider the society, reject private feelings,
The fallen flower in the palace is beyond protection.

Red Lotus: (*speaks*) Second Prince, you have to listen to our advice, give thought to the future of the country.

(*sings*) Taking apart the phoenix robe,
Shattering the mandarin duck pillows.
I am so sorrowful seeing this, grief unrestrained,
It is usual in the sea of love to have tearful stains.
Even though the delicate flower is caught in wind and rain,
Most likely it will mean suffering in this human world.
Not necessarily a complete break of the soul of fragrance,

I am willing to be a pair of phoenix in pretense.
One of these days the two of you could
Re-complete the broken mirror.
Drink the toast with arms crossed.

Long Ching: (*speaks*) For the moment think no further about it. Find some way gradually over time.

Prince Chan: (*sings*) A bout of gut wrenching,
A bout of bitterness and grief.
Two drops of tears, on the cheek have stained.
How to endure
Burning of the *qin* and cooking of the crane?
The ten thousand golden bells ringing in vain,
How helpless to get flurried with one's hand folded.
Letting fall the blossoms like a drizzle,
Upon my heart, how could I not feel sad?

Red Phoenix: (*sings*) Back then when the flower was in bloom,
I happily encountered my lord,
Tonight the flower is in ruin,
Only regret remains, in vain.
Have to let the pouring torrents destroy the flower,
Rashly, confined to seclusion, broken hearted.
Hoping, with luck in some future year,
No longer will the mirror remain broken,
Nor the hairpin split.
Now I believe the Creator does play tricks with human fate,
From now on the golden lady will be falling adrift every night.

(*Four eunuchs, for palace maids, Prince Wang, Empress enter together.*)

Empress: (*recites*) Red Phoenix Lau, one would not have guessed,
With your generations of scholarly family background
And also incomparable leaning and talent,
You would be so loose in decency
And so much beyond refinement that
The peach blossom has borne fruit on the wedding night.
It made the Sorrowful House so very angry.

Prince Wang: (*recites*) Red Phoenix, who is your lover?
Let us see who has the gall

To overtake this Prince in going into the stretch.
Let me sweep his one life to the dark underworld.

Red Phoenix: (recites) My, my lover, I do not know his name,
And I do not know where he is now.
In any case, I have lost my virtue only in this instance,
Hope the Empress and Prince would give some pity.

Empress: (recites) Nonsense. How is it possible
Not to know the name,
And not knowing the whereabouts?
Clearly it is a pretext to hide.
If it is not spelled out, blame not the Sorrowful House
for executing the law of the state.

Long Ching: (recites) It's, it's... Her lover's name is Not Know Where.
He has abandoned Red Phoenix, I'm afraid there is
No way to locate in the vast ocean of people.

Prince Wang: (recites) Obviously lying.
If you still will not divulge the truth,
After I find out your guilt
It will be even more severe.
In effect this Prince already has some inkling of it.

Prince Chan: (recites) Royal Mother, Elder Royal Brother—
Red Phoenix is my... my elder sister-in-law,
Just lightly punish her and then let it rest.
The world has many beauties,
Elder Royal Brother can find another.
Why bother to investigate here and there?

Empress: (recites) How can we help investigate?
You better speak soon.
If I find out who had the gall to seduce
A woman from a good household,
I shall definitely pronounce his guilt
Among the officials and the people.

Long Ching: (recites) Empress, Elder Prince,
We brother and sister would willingly
Bear responsibility for the guilt.

Red Phoenix' lover is indeed untraceable,
Why press on it too hard?

Red Lotus: (*recites*) Why do you have to ask the left and ask the right?
Elder Brother and Red Phoenix dare not speak,
I shall speak. Her lover is...
Is the opera actor Sun Ma Sze Tsang!

Empress: (*furious, sings*) Covering up with rhetoric and lies,
It makes me burn with fury.
Behead the brother and sister at the Meridian Gate,
Executing the law of the land is not a cruelty.

Prince Chan: (*recites*) Royal Mother would better to be
Compassionate and grant special grace,
A young lady with spring in her heart
Might easily have got into trouble.
The one wrong step has been taken,
Ending in ever after regret.
Upon turning back,
Already it's a hundred year old.
With a mind to sympathy,
Pleading sadly.
Punish light, so she will not be
A haunting soul in the sea of passion.

Empress: (*recites aside*) He lent the gold and silver
Faking his name,
My Royal Son has already told me.
Obviously that beast had plucked the flower,
Hence the pleading now.
I would have pricked their lies yet it is hateful
That they would not divulge even at threat of death.
As I am in the light and they are in the dark,
They can hardly cover up forever.
Very well, since Royal Son you have pleaded,
The Sorrowful House is very compassionate,
You brother and sister will be demoted
And Exiled to Mount Lu,
To be confined in seclusion for life.
Red Phoenix to stay in White Cloud Nunnery,
Long Ching to gather wood nearby.

Take the little bastard with you,
Let him suffer hunger and thirst to avenge my anger.
What would you say—
When her lover knows how he has hurt everyone
Can he rest peacefully in bed?

Prince Chan: (*recites aside*) Every word and phrase is like cutting with knife.
Bitter and grievous tears of love swallowed
Behind the back of others.
You should realize the great compassion of the Empress,
Endure even if there is sorrow.

Red Phoenix: (*sings*) Since the beginning of time
Beauties are destined to terrible fates.
From now on, I will be chanting Sanskrit
With sorrow for countless months.
The baby swallow held in my breast
Will be well loved and cared for,
Responsibility for rearing and nurturing him
Will be shouldered.

(*speak together with Long Ching*) Thank you Empress for sparing our lives.

Empress: (*speaks*) Let courtiers escort them on their way.

(*Eunuchs take decree, escort Long Ching, Red Phoenix, holding baby, exit.*)

Prince Chan: (*sings aside*) Under my eyes the jade lady goes in sorrow,
Ashamed, powerless to protect the skirt in red.
Unfortunately, born into the Royal family,
At this time my heart is pierced through by a sharp knife.

Red Lotus: (*Pulls Prince Chan.*) (*sings*) You have to restrain
The bitterness and grievances, not letting it out,
You must realize and be alert to others
Who look on like preying tigers.
Make haste, bid goodnight to the Empress
And go back to the palace wing.
As the night quiets down,
The night watch gong almost over,
You should sleep in peace.

Prince Chan: (*speaks*) the Royal Son takes leave. (*Red Lotus helps Prince Chan, exit.*)

Empress: (recites) The bastard must have had
An affair with Red Phoenix, or he would not
Have been so lost in mind and downcast in spirit,
He will certainly go to Mount Lu to look for Red Phoenix.
When there is evidence and proof
His succession to the throne can then be annulled.
I shall put up with it for now.

Prince Wang: (recites) It is trivial to let him take the throne,
Yet it is painful to the heart
To know he took Red Phoenix.
I had thought tonight
The Lotus canopy would be warm,
How could I know I would be holding on
To a cold quilt all alone?

(Eunuch holds letter, enters.)

Eunuch: (speaks) Presenting to the Empress, the Crown Prince left the palace gate at night, leaving a letter and asking this slave to present it to the Empress. Would Empress please take a look. *(Presents letter.)*

Empress: *(Takes letter.) (reads)* "The Royal Son has left, could not endure being a heartless Wong Kui and does not covet the richness of mountains and rivers of the country, willing to concede the throne, going to look for Red Phoenix. Hoping the Empress will take pity."

(speaks happily) Then I can really relax.

(Red Lotus quietly enters when the Empress reads letters, listens in hiding.)

Prince Wang: (recites) So indeed it was Royal Younger Brother
With Red Phoenix in the pass of spring breeze.
Although he says now to concede the throne to me,
Yet having lost Red Phoenix,
I have no one to help cover me with the quilt.

Empress: (recites) Royal Son, do you worry that there will be no other beauties?
Now that you have got back the throne,
My ten years of effort have not gone in vain.
It is fortunate that heaven has answered one's wish,
I have exiled them to Mount Lu to suffer.

It is not for them to harbor any conspiracy at heart.

(speaks) I have to go to bed. Return to the palace. *(Exits with eunuchs and palace maids.)*

(Red Lotus dodges, enters after the Empress exits, holds Prince Wang.)

Red Lotus: *(recites)* Elder Prince,
Now that Second Prince has admitted to it all,
The way of the Empress' heart and gut
Is indeed too cruel;
I have no way not to make a noise.
Although you have a different mother from Second Prince,
Yet you have a sibling relationship.
Second Prince and Red Phoenix fell in love on the spot,
As the saying goes,
"Lady with beauty, gentleman with learning,"
It is only right that they make a match.
Now they even have a baby,
You should not be so cruel and let them suffer
In poverty and bitterness for life.
You are slow in mind,
With no talent and ability,
How can you govern the country?
Even if the Empress is set in her mind,
The hundred civil and martial officials will certainly object.
You are bad-looking, pimple-faced,
One-eyed and humpbacked,
So would rightly be a suit to me.
How could it be a match to the beauty of Red Phoenix?
Hold your heart and ask yourself,
Should you or should you not
Complete the good deed for others,
Letting Second Prince take hold of heaven and earth.

(Takes a basin of water, enters.) (speaks) You have never looked at your own face in your life. Would you please take the basin of water and see your reflection. *(Puts water on table.)*

Prince Wang: *(Looks at reflection, shocked.) (sings)*
So I am humpbacked, pimple-faced and one-eyed,
Seventy percent a spook, thirty percent man.
Me, this ugly demon, how to match with Red Phoenix;

Me, this foolish person, how to take on the big task.

(speaks) I know it now. I shall go right away to kneel to Royal Mother. To welcome them back here. Let Royal Younger Brother take back the position of Crown Prince. I shall marry you in a well-suited match.

Red Lotus: *(sings)* Although you look bad yet your nature is kind,
I am willing to accompany you
Forever by your side, morning and night.

(speaks) Let's go get the hundred civil and martial officials, kneel to the Empress together until she consents.

(Exit together.)

(Curtain.)

Final Act

(Scene: Mount Lu revolving to scene of heavenly cloud, revolving to scene of celestial bridge in heaven.)

(Scene layout: Mountain rock throughout, entrance to White Cloud Nunnery by the side with door that can open and close, two stone seats outside door, several plum trees; revolves to scene of cumulus cloud in heaven, then again revolving stage changes to scene of celestial bridge among mist and cloud, then back to original Mount Lu scene.)

(Curtain Rises.)

(Red Phoenix enters from door of White Cloud Nunnery.)

Red Phoenix: *(sings)* Back on that day
The sound of the *qin* could attract the phoenix,
Golden cup and warm canopy intoxicated the Lotus.
So shameful, the one pass of spring breeze
Turning to root of sorrow.
Good time, watery soft, seemed an illusory dream,
The road leading to Mount Wu,
The encounter in vain.
Now I do believe goddess Nüwa
Had been playing tricks upon people,
Hence mistaking the golden dragon.

Birds in flight during the night,
Alarmed by the bow,
Candle light swaying with shades of red,
Resigned to a sigh—
The country is weighty, love is light.
The sun shining bright red,
The pair of phoenix broken up;
Sadness in heart could only on heaven be blamed.
Phoenix gone, empty boudoir,
The heart is like a green pine tree;
Every night, with worry,
The cold coverlet hugged alone.
A small paulownia *qin*,
Who is there to sing together?
Cannot endure to look back,
The moon is hazy.
In dreams deeply in love, so greatly aggrieved.
Chanting Sanskrit sutra, dissolved in tears.
When will the day be,
The swallow in flight can return to the nest?
When will the day be,
The strings on the *qin* will sound again?

(Speaks) I have been exiled to White Cloud Nunnery to repent. Two months have gone by without notice. It is New Year's Day again today. The Plum blossoms have just as brilliantly bloomed. Regrettably I am by myself with a lonely shadow. The saddest part is that within the nunnery, the Buddhist ladies said children could not be kept. And so my son has to be given over to Elder Brother to look after. Every day, Elder Brother has to gather wood then take care of the baby for me. Indeed, it is such toil for him. Today the Buddhist ladies inside the nunnery have all gone down the mountain to pay New Year visits, leaving me alone here. Every day at this hour, Elder Brother would bring the boy here to let me have a look. Let me sit at the door to wait for them.

(Sits on stone seat.)

(Long Ching, carrying firewood loads on his shoulder, baby on his back, enters.)

Long Ching: *(sings)* Sounds of chopping board
Come and go with the intermittent wind,
Wintry cold.
Ten thousand *li* of clouds and mountains,
Frosty with heavy dew.

Fallen leaves from parasol trees drifted by,
Fully covering the lane.
Fragrance from plum blossoms still carried by the wind.
Sigh, I make my livelihood from gathering firewood,
Covering the Northern range and the Southern peak.
All for deep love between flesh and bone,
Together, no fear of being sorrowful and bleak.

(Baby cries.)

(Long Ching lowers firewood load, takes down baby clumsily.)

Long Ching: *(Speaks)* Wet again, the whole back is soaked.

(Red Phoenix hears, hurries to front.)

Red Phoenix: *(recites)* Elder Brother, every day you have to
Cut firewood and at the same time look after my son.
Over your entire life you only knew how to be an official,
How could you know about looking after babies?
I have caused you to suffer extreme hardship,
It was all because of my moment of passion.
(Takes baby and kisses.)

Long Ching: *(recites)* Younger sister, coming to this point,
The mistake that should not be made has been made,
What is there to complain about?
The only hope is that when Second Prince
Comes to the throne, then there will be
Days of re-making the broken mirror,
You should not be so sad all day.
Look at your son, plump and big,
I have to feed him rice gruel at every meal.
Every night he makes so much noise
That I have no sleep,
Indeed hard to look after.
Now that you can carry him for a while,
I can finally relax.

Red Phoenix: *(sings)* Son, you have a mother who could not nurture you.
Do you realize your birth mother cries
Every night shedding tears of blood?
Looking afar towards the palace gate,

The swallow could not return.
When will the dream of mandarin ducks be complete?

Long Ching: (*sings*) Younger Sister, separation and togetherness,
Sorrow and happiness, all heaven destined;
One of these days the golden lock
Will be opened to let out the golden dragon.
I have to carry the firewood
And take the baby back to the cold shed,
As I have to buy rice, and salt and groceries.

(*speaks*) Help put the baby on my back. I still have to buy rice and groceries,
take them back to the tiny thatched shed to make supper.

Red Phoenix: (*speaks*) I have never been to your tiny thatched shed. Today the Buddhist
ladies have all gone down the mountain. No one is here. Let me go back with
you to wash the clothes. Look at you and the baby, it is hard to tell how many
days you have not had a change of clothing. Let me lock the door and go down
together with you.

(*Locks door, carries firewood loads with Long Ching, exits.*)

(*Prince Chan enters.*)

Prince Chan: (*shouts*) Red Phoenix (*repeats*), where are you? It is two months already without
one's noticing. I didn't know the way, and I fell sick on the way. It is only now
that I arrive in Mount Lu. I had no idea where White Cloud Nunnery is. I had to
look for it everywhere, shouting as I went along.

(*sings*) The swallow in flight has been left adrift,
The man once loved now seems a stranger,
Deep sorrow at heart.
A night of passionate dreams last year;
This year, the two separated and apart.
Looking for the colorful phoenix,
Going to the edge of the sky;
Again and again
Through thinly wooded forests and misty trees.
In days past, bejeweled buildings and palaces of jade,
Intolerably cold;
Today, ten thousand *li* of peaks and hills,
Freezing with frost and dew.
Blaming myself, blaming myself, during that one night,

The wandering butterfly and the unrestrained bee
Tragically brewed disaster, causing
The reputed blossom, reputed blossom anxiety,
Regret and pain;
Intoxicated in the night, intoxicated in the night,
Staying over in the boudoir.
The moon set, the crows cried,
Fragrance from the quilt carried off in the night,
The wrong, regrettably, hard to overturn.
Questioning heaven,
Why make me grow my own regret, regret?
Pity myself, constrained by the imperial court,
Not able to follow the example of God Donghuang,
And borrow the spring wind.
That phoenix of the Southern Hill
Fell on the Peak of Wu.
Could not help to sigh, where among
The ocean of people to find the beautiful face?
On that day playing the *qin* underneath the plum tree,
Hearts linked by the magic touch of the rhinoceros horn;
Thinking a tune in pursuit of the phoenix would lead to
A harmonious dream for the mandarin ducks.
Who could have thought matrimonies were wrongly set
With unending regret!
The empire is not weightier than love,
How could it be endured to have the swallows,
east and west in separate flights?
Further, the peach blossom bearing fruit
Makes one more deeply sad.
She even sacrificed herself for others,
Indeed a character upright as the winter pine.
Walking along, I sigh, dissolved in tears,
Leaving her in desolation,
Suffering the wild mountain's freezing cold,
I regret that it was too much of an injustice,
Hiding the story, too foolish.
It should be known—
Prosperity, glamour and the throne, are
Ultimately all illusions,
Willing and preferring to give them away.
Inadvertently planted the field of jade,
Regrets from the night,

Voiced in complaints to the sky.
The heart of heaven manipulating,
Mandarin ducks separating.
Gut wrenched in the old palace,
One day, in grief and anger,
Furiously broke the cage,
To seek the unfinished match, the old love.
Sadly, illness has caused delay on the way,
Even though dreams come every night,
Could only send the dreams of longing away.
Going through main roads,
Going into mountains,
Unwittingly covering ten thousand li,
Regrettably hard to make the encounter.
Peak Wu in green, Mount Chu in sorrow,
Brushing aside the willow, parting the blossoms,
Sworn to find my beloved.

(speaks) White Cloud Nunnery, this is the place. Let me go in right away to find Red Phoenix.

(Sees locked door, disappointed.) (sings)
Why is the door heavily locked?
The fragrant track is nowhere seen.
Spells of dizziness, soul swaying, spirit going,
Would like to make a dream of Mount Wu.

(Fainted in front of door, dreams.)

(Scene change to heaven, with celestial clouds.)

(Six fairies carrying flower baskets enter.)

(Small fairy carries flower basket leading Red Phoenix, in fairy form. Enter.)

Red Phoenix: *(recites)* Body in a void, drifting,
Spring breeze whiffs through the threshold,
Bringing dense fragrance from the bloom.
Heavy mist and fog over ten thousand *li* of cloudy hills,
Celestial tunes, wonderful dances in the moon palace.

(sings) The clouds bring to mind thoughts of apparel,

The flowers bring to mind thoughts of appearance.
The spring blossoms, ten thousand violet, one thousand crimson.

All Fairies: (*Sings together*) The spring blossoms,
Ten thousand violet,
One thousand crimson.

(Red Phoenix sings and dances with fairies)

Red Phoenix: (*sings*) Clouds dispersed,
Moon shifted,
Flowery shadows swaying.
Gold threaded voices of singing go afar to Peak Chu,
Pearl studded hairpin crafted with phoenix;
Lotus flowers made with jade,
Adorned coiffure half loosened,
Time and again dancing all over Mount Wu.

All Fairies: (*sings together*) Time and again dancing all over Mount Wu.

(Red Phoenix sings and dances with fairies.)

Red Phoenix: (*sings*) A river with misty reeds
Flowing through the eastern cloud,
An eyeful of flowery clouds sent on with the wind.
Laughable that earthly people indulge in dreams,
Ending with nothing but,
Seeping through the curtain, the crescent moon.
The ten thousand kinds of
Emotion, separation, union, sadness, joy,
How could they compare with
The colorful phoenix surging in the sky?
Forever piling up the golden corn,
Coming to emptiness.
Whisking away the envelope of mist,
Timid of the spring breeze,
Fair as powder, crimson as rouge,
Too many to be counted;
The three refrains of the plum blossom tune,
Never to be ended.

Red Phoenix: (*sings*) Free and easy, the happy celestial grotto.

All fairies: (sings) Free and easy, the happy celestial grotto.

Red Phoenix: (sings) Spring comes and goes, not knowing where,
The fairy mountain, separated from the Phoenix boudoir.
Every night, dew of jade and winds of gold,
Every cloud, in varied color, goes along.
Dreams of mandarin ducks, dreams of butterflies,
Dreamed into the twelve hills of Mount Wu,
Where would one live if not in Penglai land?
Bracelets and pendants tingling,
Glamorous, the peach blossom red.

All Fairies: (sings) Bracelets and pendants tingling,
Glamorous the peach blossom red.

(Red Phoenix sings and dances with fairies.)

Red Phoenix: (sings) Birds flying in pairs, wings in unison,
Sense of spring fills the Mount Wu grotto.
No longer would one see flowers adrift, falling,
In a blouse of golden feather,
A dress of soft cloud, dancing.
The spring moth that does not grow old,
Floating in the mist and cloud all day.
Not envious of the hair pin of jade,
Not envious of the edifice of jade.
The pleasure, no need for speaking words.
Yet thinking of the swallow upon my bosom,
Love smooth as water
Aroused the heart for worldly matters.
Desolate, happiness of the old days like a dream.
The two tunes of *qin*, like flowing water,
Came the end of spring,
Turned to nothingness.
The clean ice and pure jade
Tainted by dirt and dust,
Love of bone and flesh weighty as the mountain.

Little Fairy: (recites) Sister Red Phoenix,
You have already become a fairy,
Everything and all things worldly have evaporated
Like smoke and dispersed like cloud.

Your son has
Goddess Mother Wang to take care of him,
You need have no worry.
We sing celestial tunes
And dance ethereal steps every day,
How pleasurable. Would you not say—
You should not arouse your worldly heart.

Red Phoenix: (recites) Very well.
With you all to have fun together,
Even if I have new worries and old regret,
They will have to evaporate
Without a shadow, without a trace.

(speaks) Let us dance another round then.

(*Red Phoenix and fairies dance together.*)

(*Prince Chan quietly enters watching the dance until finish, goes up, grabs Red Phoenix.*)

(*Fairies scared, exit together.*)

Prince Chan: (recites) Red Phoenix, I have looked for you so hard,
So you have become a fairy in heaven,
I want you to return to the human world,
To relive the past dream.

Red Phoenix: (recites) Second Prince,
Do you think Red Phoenix would not rather?
Yet the celestial and the worldly
Are barred from each other,
I can no longer
Ride the phoenix and dragon with you together.

Prince Chan: (recites) I don't care if the celestial and worldly
Are barred from each other.
I have found you after so much hardship,
I must have you, carrying our son,
Come back to the earthly world,
So I will not be hugging the cold quilt alone.

Red Phoenix: (recites) Without Mother Wang's permission,
I can hardly be involved in the earthly world again.

Your son is also being looked after by Mother Wang,
You need not worry about him.
When he grows up
He will be the golden dragon of the Jin Empire.

Prince Chan: (*sings*) I have given up prestige and glory for love.
Why are you icy-gutted, cold-faced, fearful of reuniting?
I want to take the jade hand to the world of dust,
Together savoring shabbiness and poverty.

(*Pulls Red Phoenix.*)

Red Phoenix: (*sings*) At this time the fragrant heart is
As disorderly as the willow twigs,
The peony reflecting the sun's glamorous red.
It is an offence against heavenly decree
To speak of love and emotion,
Nothing else one could do but to hurry off.

(*Pushes Prince Chan away, runs.*)

(*Prince Chan pursues.*)

(*Stage revolves to scene of celestial bridge in heaven.*)

(*Little fairy carries baby, stands on bridge with six fairies.*)

Little Fairy: (*recites*) Sister Red Phoenix, Mother Wang knows
That the two of you still have an unfinished love wish,
So she asked us to give back to you your flesh and bone.
Go back to the human world,
Reunite in the harmonious phoenix match.
We celestial fairies deliver you the son
To fulfill our deep sisterly love.

(*Fairies give baby to Prince Chan.*)

(*Lights off, stage revolved back to original scene of Mount Lu.*)

(*Red Phoenix, fairies, baby quietly exit during scene change.*)

(*Prince Chan sleeps in the same area.*)

(*Buddhist woman enters.*)

Buddhist woman: (recites) I live in the nunnery, the cave,
Chanting Sanskrit sutras every day.
It has been twenty years,
The dream of prosperity and glory seen through.
Today is New Year's Day,
I went down the hill to hand out money,
Helping the many people in poverty,
so they would not suffer hunger and cold.
The sun has set, it is evening,
I shall return to the cave right away.

(Walks and steps on Prince Chan.)

Prince Chan: (Wakes, hugs her taking her to be Red Phoenix.) (speaks) Good. You come back with me to continue in our former destiny. My deep love and heavy sense of obligation have not been in vain.

(Buddhist woman pushes away Prince Chan in anger.)

Buddhist woman: (recites) What?
Have you taken to blindness all of a sudden?
At my age you still want to harass me?
You better go away soon,
You have no idea that in more than twenty years,
I have become devoid of the sensory.

(Opens lock, enters door, exits.)

Prince Chan: (sings) In the dream the fairy would deliver my son,
Waking, it was all an illusion.
How could the flesh and bone
On Mount Lu be reunited again?
Just like in the dream, with intense love and obligation.

(Four palace maids carrying commander's plaques, four senior eunuchs carrying parade umbrellas, Red Phoenix in carriage carrying baby, Red Lotus in carriage, Prince Wang, Long Ching on horseback enter.)

Prince Wang: (recites) Younger Royal Brother,
Elder Royal Brother has clarified everything,
And further realized that there
Should not be selfish views between brothers;

Royal Mother has also been convinced
By me and the hundred civil and martial officials.
You will now wed Red Phoenix, and I Red Lotus;
You are the Crown Prince, I remain the Prince.
I am bad-looking and lack skills,
You are handsome and intelligent,
You would have the respect of the people.

Long Ching: (*recites*) Today it is like
The cloud being dispersed revealing the moon.
I shall resume my original position,
Thanks to the high and great favor of the Empress.

Red Phoenix: (*recites*) The broken mirror is round again,
And you have the throne back.
It is indeed
A double happiness that all people would cheer.

Red Lotus: (*recites*) Beautiful girl marrying handsome man,
Bad-looking girl marrying ugly man,
The way things to work in heaven and earth.
I shall not be an old maid in the future,
With a husband now no matter what.

Prince Chan: (*recites*) Spring has indeed sprung today,
I really am not in a sweet dream.

Prince Wang: (*recites*) Younger Royal Brother,
Our Royal Mother has decreed that
You return to court immediately,
And be crowned at the coronation.
Joy to the World!
Joy with the people!

Together: (*sings*) The fair sun shines in glory
On the happy marriage of Red Phoenix.
All are blessed in the joyousness of the new spring!

(Final Curtain.)