

***Butterfly Lovers:***  
***Leung Shanpak and Chuk Yingtoi***

梁祝恨史

An English Translation of Fong Yim Fun's Performance Script

芳艷芬演出本

**1955**

Scripted by PAN Yi Fan

潘一帆編劇

\*

This Translation (Version 1.0)

by

NG Wing Chung 伍榮仲

(History, University of Texas at San Antonio)

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## Butterfly Lovers: Leung Shanpak and Chuk Yingtoi

### *Persons in the Play and their Role-Types*

Chuk Yingtoi ( <i>huadan</i> )	Maiden disguised as a boy in order to study in Hangzhou
Leung Shanpak ( <i>wenwu-sheng</i> )	Companion and roommate of Yingtoi, madly in love with her after finding out about her identity
Yan Sum (assistant <i>hua</i> )	Personal maid of Yingtoi
Shi Kau ( <i>chou</i> )	Shanpak's personal servant
Sister-in-law (assistant <i>hua</i> )	Yingtoi's foe at home
Ma Manchoi ( <i>xiu sheng</i> )	Rich young man (cousin of sister in law) who wants Yingtoi as his wife
Chuk Kungyuan ( <i>wu sheng</i> )	Father of Chuk Yingtoi
Madame Chuk (assistant <i>hua</i> )	Mother of Chuk Yingtoi
Ma Fu and Ma Lung	Manchoi's household servants
Female woodcutter	

### Act I

*(Inside the courtyard of the Chuk family, the Moon Building is Yingtoi's private chamber. The outer-quarter of the Moon Building is the studio, where bookcases and art objects are on display. The setting is quaint. Outside the studio is the garden, where there are chairs and tables. In the background are pavilions and buildings. The courtyard is surrounded by bamboo fences; lining the fences inside are flowers and outside a few bamboo trees.)*

*(Yan Sum is watering the plants in front of curtain.)*

*(Curtain up.)*

*Yan Sum:* (recites) The Chuk family has a daughter who is now a young maiden.

She is talented and pretty, and well-learned.

Her name is Chuk Yingtoi.

Her appearance is elegant, her character refined.

As a maiden, she has yet to develop.

She doesn't pay much attention to putting on cosmetics for she loves poetry and classics.

She keeps an eye on the best essays and practices her poetry reading.

She wants to go to Hangzhou to study with Master Meng, but her father has rejected her requests.

She is upset and has felt somewhat ill in recent days and stayed inside her room.

Her heart is filled with regrets.

Out of love for her daughter, Madame Chuk has tried to change the mind of father, and yet Yingtoi's sister-in-law has been obstructive.

No wonder the maiden is sad, and I am concerned that she often weeps during the day and at night.

It does not look like she will have an opportunity to travel to Hangzhou to study. (*Continues to water the plants.*)

(*A couple of students, each carrying a school bag, walk by the courtyard.*)

*Yingtoi:* (*Sees those students walking by from her balcony, very jealous; sings*) I don't enjoy working on phoenix and dragon embroidery any more.

I would rather spend my time reading classics and reciting poetry.

I don't have to look for fireflies and white snow for light, but I don't mind reading under a lantern through the night.

They say a girl without talent is virtuous, what kind of refuse from the old feudal age this is!

Despise girls and treasure boys, it is so sad that such things are practiced in my home! (*shakes her head.*)

*Yan Sum:* (*recites*) Miss, don't just sigh day and night!

After all, the senior master's refusal to let you go afar to study is not without reason.

First, he doesn't want his child to be away from her parents.

Second, it is still not very convenient for women to travel and be away from home.

*Yingtoi:* (*recites*) I still don't understand!

Why is it fine for boys to go out and study elsewhere while girls are supposed to stay home all the time?

I think boys and girls are equal in status.

That kind of old-fashioned thinking is damaging.

It is dead wrong, Yan Sum.

*Yan Sum:* (*sings*) Miss, do not entertain such wild dreams.

What can we say given your female body!

Let's stay home and fulfill your filial responsibility.

Why make all this trouble to go afar to study!

(*speaks*) Well, if you do want to study in Hangzhou, first you have to change into a boy!

*Yingtoi:* (*speaks*) To become a boy!

(*Sister-in-law ushers in Ma Manchoi.*)

*Manchoi:* (*sings*) I am so taken by the talent and beauty of Yingtoi.

I beg you, my cousin, to be a match-maker.

Should your good work bear fruit, I will present you with a heart-felt gift.

*Sister-in-law:* (*speaks*) Let's see if we are lucky, cousin. (*enter together.*)

*Sister-in-law:* (*recites*) My younger sister-in-law, Manchoi has been a great admirer of your talent.

He hopes to spend time with you to sing songs and recite poetry.

*Yingtoi:* (*recites*) My sister-in-law, I don't consider myself learned at all.

How dare I to expose my inadequacy in front of those who really know something!

I am afraid I will make myself a laughing-stock of your esteemed relative.

*Manchoi:* (*recites*) You are so modest, Miss Chuk.

I have learned of your fine reputation, and people refer to you as "the talented maiden of Shangyu."

I hope to get to know you and benefit from your instruction.

I am myself well-learned and I believe my talent will take me very far!

*Yan Sum:* (*recites*) Miss, you see how arrogant this fellow is.

He brags about his literary skills; he sings his own praises.

Why don't we play a trick on him?

Young master Ma, our miss says she is not as good as you are when it comes to calligraphy and essay writing.

*Sister-in-law:* (*speaks*) Would you shut up!

*Manchoi:* (*sings*) Miss, you are born a natural beauty, and you are as talented as Tao Wen.

I have a deep affection for talents like yours, and I want to be the one who takes care of you.

Your eyes are beautiful and the pupils so sharp, adorned with dimples on your cheeks.

Your red lips are so attractive.

You are like a flower in full bloom emitting fragrance.  
I adore you like a butterfly devoted to a flower and I want to take care of you.  
Will you let me?  
I am ready to serve around your dressing table, and my heart for you is undivided.  
I am captivated and completely devoted.  
May we tie the nuptial knot with red silk?

*Yingtoi:* (*looks annoyed; sings*) Aiyaya, you put me on the spot; it is so embarrassing.

I don't want any rumors to spread.

Please excuse me.

(*speaks*) My apologies, sister-in-law. Please spend time with your cousin and treat him well. I am going over to a girlfriend's house not far from ours. We are schoolmates.

(*Manchoi fixes his gaze on Yingtoi as she turns and walks away; he is disappointed.*)

(*Yan Sum grins.*)

*Sister-in-law:* (*recites*) Yan Sum, why are you laughing?

I don't believe that the younger sister-in-law will stay single for the rest of her life.

Cousin, with me as the match-maker, I'll do what it takes to make sure your marital proposal succeeds.

*Manchoi:* (*recites*) Cousin, I am completely dependent on you.

If I don't get to make Yingtoi my wife, my life is not worth living!

(*Yan Sum shows her contempt as she looks at Yingtoi's sister in law.*)

*Manchoi:* (*delighted, sings*) Your promise is as good as gold.

I have every confidence in you, cousin.

Let me take leave now, and I will come to pay my respects on another day.

(*exits.*)

*Yan Sum:* (*recites*) Wife of our junior master.

As we say, aspire not to become middlemen, guarantors, or match-makers. Doing so will help keep our blessings through three generations.

Why are you so keen on being a match-maker for your cousin?

He doesn't carry himself like a man, and is so annoying and unaware of his own shortcomings.

There is no way our miss will be interested in him.

You better go use some oil to rinse your mouth to see if you can speak more smoothly; you better go sharpen your tongue before you take on this match-making business!

*Sister-in-law: (agitated, recites)* What did you say, you pitifully low servant girl? Where did you learn to utter a mouthful of criticism and sarcasm? How dare you muddle in my business! You show no respect for those above. Let me give you a good beating!

*(chases after Yan Sum.)*

*(Mr. and Mrs. Chuk Kungyuan enter.)*

*(Sister-in-law hits Kungyuan accidentally.)*

*Kungyuan: (sings)* Aiyaya! Why are you burning with anger, my daughter-in-law?

Why are you chasing Yan Sum around and trying to beat her?

Tell me what is going on!

*Sister-in-law: (knees down and recites)* Please forgive me *(repeats)*. I am trying to serve as a go-between to help out my younger sister-in-law.

That Yan Sum is out of her mind.

She poked fun at me and tried to ruin everything.

That's why I am trying to teach her a lesson.

*Kungyuan: (recites)* Yingtoi has put her mind into studying; her mate, of course, has to be very learned.

The Ma family is well respected; I wouldn't mind if our two families got even more closely related.

*Mme. Chuk: (recites)* That cannot be done *(repeats)*!

Even though we parents have the authority to decide on marital matters, Yingtoi is occupied with her studies, and not in a hurry to get married.

Let's take the time to talk this through and make the necessary inquiry before we proceed.

*Kungyuan: (speaks)* That's true. Let's wait then, my daughter in law. Yingtoi has been quite depressed since I refused to let her go to Hangzhou. She got sick. I wonder if she has gotten any better.

*Sister-in-law: (speaks)* I don't think she is sick at all. She looks quite well. She just went out to visit her schoolmate.

*Kungyuan: (recites)* Yan Sum, how is Miss doing? Is she getting better?

*Yan Sum:* (*recites*) At night, she often has a fever, and she even talks about studying in Hangzhou in her dream.

During the day, she looks good at times.

*Mme. Chuk:* (*recites*) You see. I told you we should have let her go.

If something happens to her, I will hold you fully responsible for her well-being.

*Kungyuan:* (*speaks*) What do you know!

You can't just let her do whatever she asks for.

*Sister-in-law:* (*recites*) I agree! My mother-in-law, we can't let her decide.

A young girl should never go that far to pursue an education.

I wonder what she has in mind.

*Yan Sum:* (*recites*) Wife of our junior master, why do you have to talk behind the back of our miss.

Senior Master and Madame, this may be just right.

I notice there is a fortuneteller outside the family compound.

He is known to be good. Why don't we ask him for guidance?

*Kungyuan:* (*recites*) That's an idea.

Let's hope he can point us in the right direction. Usher him in.

*(Yan Sum exits.)*

*(Yan Sum walks in with Yingtoi, who is dressed as a soothsayer and is holding a banner with these words: "diviner of the future with the power of the deity".)*

*(Yan Sum glances at Yingtoi with a smile and then enters.)*

*Yingtoi:* (*recites*) I change my appearance, that's part of my trick.

Pretending to be a fortune-teller, my goal is to pursue my studies.

*Yingtoi:* (*enters and speaks*) My honorable sir and madame. My greetings.

(*recites*) May I ask the honorable name of your family and your question?

*Kungyuan:* (*recites*) My surname is Chuk.

My daughter Yingtoi wants to go to Hangzhou for school.

As her father I didn't give my permission, so she has gotten sick from being depressed.

We want to know if her sickness will be fatal.

Please, Mr. Soothsayer, if you can help find an answer so I know what to do with this situation.

*Yingtoi:* (*recites*) May I ask how old is your daughter and what are the month, the date, and the time of her birth?

I need the information to divine accurately.

*Yan Sum:* (*speaks*) Our lady is eighteen years old.

*Kungyuan:* (*speaks*) As for her month, date, and time of her birth...

*Mme. Chuk:* (*recites*) She was born on the fifteen day of the eighth month, at the "yau" time of the day.

Please be accurate in your divination, and relay to us exactly as you learn from the deity.

*Yingtoi:* (*speaks*) Oh, so the girl was born at night, on the fifteen day of the eighth month. No wonder she is so clever.

(*takes out a turtle shell, a plate, plus a few coins*) To be accurate, we have to carefully inquire of the spirit. Now we have a maiden last name Chuk. She wants to go study in Hangzhou but her father turns her down. She has not felt well and we want to know if she will be fine. Eight times eight we have a total of sixty-four combinations. Give us the one truthful answer.

(*Shakes the coins in the shell and then drop them onto the plate.*)

One, two, single cross.

(*Shakes the second time*) One, two, double cross.

(*pretends to be frightened, shakes the third time*) One, two, triple cross.

Sir, the sign is for triple cross.

*Kungyuan:* (*speaks*) What does that mean by triple cross?

*Yingtoi:* (*speaks*) Triple cross, triple cross. It won't be good to stay home. Studying for the examination, her prospect is fine, but the sign is not good. It is really unfortunate.

*Kungyuan and his wife:* (*speak together*) What is so unfortunate, sir?

*Yingtoi:* (*sings*) It is unfortunate that she is a girl,  
And she won't have an opportunity to show how good she is.  
Were she to stay home, I am afraid tragedy would strike and  
terrible things could happen.

*Mme. Chuk:* (*speaks*) To follow what you are saying, then it will be better for her to be away.

*Yingtoi:* (*speaks*) You are right. To be homebound is to invite disaster. It will be a blessing to have her leave for Hangzhou for study.

*Yan Sum:* (*speaks*) Elderly master, it makes sense to let her go then.

*Sister-in-law:* (*speaks*) It is no good to let her go, my father-in-law.

*Kungyuan:* (*speaks*) Ai, how can I let her go? Yan Sum, give two ounces of silver to this gentleman.

(*Yan Sum hands money over to Yingtoi.*)

*Yingtoi:* (*speaks*) Thank you so much.

(*sings*) Why is the Senior Master so adamant in refusing to let your daughter go study?

I know for a fact that she is ambitious and determined to achieve high goals.

*Kungyuan:* (*speaks*) How would you know?

*Yingtoi:* (*sings*) Now you can see for yourself. (*takes off the mustache under her nose*)

*Kungyuan:* (*sings*) Aiyaya!

How dare you fool your father!

I am burning with anger!

(*Yingtoi turns and kneels down.*)

*Mme. Chuk:* (*sings*) She cross-dressed as a man and none of us can tell. Well, we should consider granting her request.

*Yan Sum:* (*recites*) Elderly master, miss has asked for your permission many times.

Why are you not granting her request?

*Kungyuan:* (*recites*) You people don't understand.

As a father, how can I not consider the well-being of my daughter?

None of you realize how dearly I love my daughter.

*Yingtoi:* (*recites*) Father. Don't you remember that the reigning emperor has issued an order to select beauties to enter the palace?

If I am picked, I am afraid parents and child will be set apart forever.

*Mme. Chuk:* (*recites*) Elderly master, she did tell me once that if out of misfortune she is selected, she will take her own life.

*Kungyuan:* (*recites*) Yingtoi, since you are determined to go, I can give you permission, but you must agree to the following three conditions:

First, your mother is in poor health and gets sick easily.

If she becomes seriously ill, you must immediately return home.

Second, your conduct at any time cannot be loose or unrestrained.

If you bring shame to our family, I will sever our father-daughter relationship.

Third, I have a seven-foot long red scarf that I am giving you.

(*rushes inside to get it for her.*) You should maintain your integrity always.

Otherwise, you will be using this red scarf to hang yourself when you return.

You need to remember this in your heart. (*tosses the red scarf to her.*)

(*Yingtoi looks at the red scarf in her hands.*)

Mme. Chuk: (*sings*) Aiyaya.

My daughter, what is your reply to father?

Yingtoi: (*recites*) Mother, you should not doubt my intention.

Your daughter is a woman of honor and integrity.

(*sings*) I will abide by the three conditions.

Yan Sum, come with me so we can start packing.

(*both start to walk away.*)

Sister-in-law: (*blocks the way, acts sarcastic, speaks*) Oh, I now realize my younger sister-in-law is very mischievous and can practice deception. Since the elderly master grants you permission to go, as your sister-in-law let me offer you a token as a souvenir. (*goes inside and returns with a baby carrier strap*)

Yingtoi: (*receives the strap and sings*) The item is small but it clearly is meant for ridicule.

I am not a promiscuous person.

A decent girl I am.

Sister-in-law, you are being mean!

Yan Sum: (*recites*) Wife of the junior master. Why are you giving her a baby carrier?

She is not a child any more. Why do you give her a piece of a toy?

Sister-in-law: (*recites*) Yan Sum, you don't understand.

I know what I am doing.

She is a virgin when she leaves home.

By the time she returns, who can tell if she will come home with her children.

Yingtoi: (*recites*) Sister-in-law, I, Chuk Yingtoi, am pure and virtuous.

You bring such false accusations against me.

You are so spiteful!

Kungyuan: (*recites*) You two shouldn't quarrel.

My dear daughter, remember the three conditions you have agreed to uphold.

From now on, just do your best!

Mme. Chuk: (*recites*) My daughter-in-law, don't try to provoke her.

I trust my own daughter.

*Yan Sum:* (*recites*) Miss, I will keep you company. Let's pack and get ready.

*Yingtoi:* (*recites*) Pardon your unfilial daughter and let me bid my dear parents goodbye. (exits with Yan Sum.)

*Kungyuan:* (*sings*) My daughter is going to leave.  
Who is going to stand by and serve me in the morning and in the evening?

*Sister-in-law:* (*speaks*) I am. (*appears eager to please.*)

(*Curtain down.*)

## Act II

(*In the country, lots of willow trees; a pavilion, with shades under the willows, with stone stools and tables.*)

(*Curtain up.*)

(*Shi Kau is carrying a load of books and personal luggage, enters*)

*Shanpak:* (*sings*) It has been misty along the road.

Step by step we are making our way toward Hangzhou.

A sojourner I am, leaving my native place behind,

On a long journey, in order to study under a master teacher.

I left my parents, how can I ever repay their love and guidance,

Other than by studying hard?

*Shi Kau:* (*sings*) Young master, you are such an archetypical filial son.

You have paid no attention to the beautiful sceneries on our journey.

Look at the silky green hanging from the willow trees.

How about the orioles dancing in their flight!

The bridge is arching over the steady stream.

Oh there is a big partridge by the water.

I am so relaxed on the way, but how come you look so depressed.

*Shanpak:* (*sings*) I can only see sorrow; a son away from home, anguish fills my heart.

I never return the blessing of my parents in raising me.

How can I enjoy sightseeing on my journey!

Shi Kau, we better hurry.

Don't get distracted by the scenery.

The sun will set soon.

Be on alert for bandits along the road, safety is never guaranteed.

*Shi Kau:* (*laughs heartily, speaks*) Don't be scared so easily, young master.

*(sings)* With me, Shi Kau, by your side, no one dare to pick the whisker from a tiger for they will be asking for trouble.

You see my fist is as big as a cooking pot, and I am smart.

You are under my good care.

I would be delighted if someone wanted to pick a fight.

If a robber shows up, I will manhandle him.

*(sings)* Young master let your heart be at ease, for I am here to protect you.

*(speaks)* See, there is a pavilion in front, why don't we take a rest to catch our breath.

*Shanpak:* *(speaks)* I am a bit tired. This is a good idea. *(walks up to the pavilion to rest.)*

*(Shi Kau ties the horse before taking a rest himself.)*

*(Yan Sum is carrying some luggage, and Yingtoi is approaching slowly on her horse.)*

*Yingtoi:* *(recites)* I am like a bird out of the cage.

I am using my wings to fly as high as I want, to become someone that I am proud to be.

I will never get too tired in my studies.

Dressed as a young student,

*(sings)* who will know I am a girl?

*Yan Sum:* *(speaks)* Miss...

*Yingtoi:* *(speaks)* Don't call me miss! Remember I am now your young master!

*Yan Sum:* *(sings)* Young master, although we are dressed up as males, we better be cautious.

You must be tired now, why don't we take a short break under the shade of the willow trees.

*Yingtoi:* *(recites)* Taking a rest here will be fine.

Yan Sum, go and tie my horse.

*(Yingtoi gets down from the horse and takes a seat on a stone stool under the shade of the willow.)*

*Yan Sum:* *(puts down the luggage, recites)* Sit here under the shade, young master. I will tie the horse properly.

*(Yan Sum looks for a place to tie the horse; the two horses belonging to Yingtoi and Shanpak bump into one another. Both Shi Kau and Yan Sum try to restrain them.)*

*Shi Kau:* *(recites)* Tie the horse quickly. *(repeats)*

Why don't you do it properly? Don't you know how to tie a horse?

Hey, I am talking to you.

Are you deaf, or are you mute?

*Yan Sum:* (*recites*) My goodness, you yourself are a mute! You have such a bad temper. Who is going to talk to you? How rude!

(*Shanpak and Yingtoi come over to take a look.*)

*Yingtoi:* (*recites*) What have you done, Yan Sum? Don't be so agitated. If we bump someone else's horse, we should apologize.

*Yan Sum:* (*recites*) He is rude and his words are offensive. I am so upset. I am the one who expects an apology.

*Shi Kau:* (*sings*) You skinny chap! Don't be boastful!  
I am really upset and my anger is about to explode!  
Do you know who I am?

*Yan Sum:* (*speaks*) I don't know a person lowlier than you!

*Shi Kau:* (*sings*) You are itching for a fight.

Let me raise my fist to beat you up.

*Shanpak:* (*puts himself in between, speaks*) Shi Kau, are you in the business of beating up people? Why are you so impetuous?

(*sings*) Why are you mouthing such threats?

Don't be so rude from now on.

Go and issue an apology.

(*Shi Kau is reluctant.*)

*Yingtoi:* (*sings*) Yan Sum, do you know trouble emits from your mouth?  
Why make an enemy on the road?

(*steps forward*) Please excuse this fellow's ignorance.

There is no need to use force.

(*speaks*) We are so sorry!

*Shanpak:* (*speaks*) It is my servant's fault. We owe you an apology!

*Yan Sum:* (*sings*) Please excuse me for being rude.

Accept my apology as you are generous and forgiving.

What I did is inappropriate.

My apology, you are my senior.

*Shi Kau:* (*speaks*) That sounds right and I feel so much better. Maybe it takes a fight like this to get to know one another.

(*sings*) I know my hot temper and I get angry easily.

Since you are willing to concede, we should let it go and take it easy.

*Yingtoi:* (*recites*) What a chance encounter, we are so lucky to run into you both.

May I ask for your names?

*Shanpak:* (recites) My name is Leung Shanpak.

He is Shi Kau, my house servant.

How about you two?

We are traveling to Hangzhou.

What is your destination?

*Yan Sum:* (recites) We are on our way to Hangzhou too.

My young master is Chuk Yingtoi.

He is going there to study with a famous teacher.

*Shi Kau:* (recites) We are heading to see Master Meng Kai'o. He is a famous literary figure. Can you tell us who will be your teacher?

*Yingtoi:* (recites) What a coincidence!

I am going to study with Master Meng as well.

He is well regarded for his scholarship; his essays and personal character are superior.

*Shanpak:* (recites) This is too good!

Since we will be classmates, why don't we travel together? No one will bother us on our journey.

*Yan Sum:* (recites) This is fantastic!

We don't know anyone in Hangzhou.

It won't be good if someone decides to pick on us.

*Shi Kau:* (recites) With me here, you shouldn't be concerned with safety anymore.

You see I am strong; I can handle eight or ten fellows all by myself.

My fist is bigger than a cooking pot.

*Yingtoi:* (sings) Ai, I am lonesome.

Being away from home is not easy.

It is my first time to journey so far.

I don't know anyone around this area. Will it be hard to find help if the need arises? (*lowers her head.*)

*Shanpak:* (sings) Brother Yingtoi, why do you look depressed?

Let's talk it over.

Our goals and temperaments complement one another.

Why don't we become sworn brothers!

*Yingtoi:* (speaks) I am eighteen years old. What about you, Brother Liang?

*Shanpak:* (recites) I am nineteen, so I am a year older than you.

You are my younger brother then, and I will be your older brother.

We can be as close as if we were from the same mother.

*Yingtoi:* (*recites*) Here we are by the pavilion under the shadow of the willow trees.

We will become sworn brothers as we continue our journey.

*Shi Kau:* (*recites*) This sworn thing is behind us, we better be on our way before it gets dark.

*Yan Sum:* (*recites*) Let's get going with the horses.

*Shanpak:* (*sings*) As brothers we will continue this journey together.

*Yingtoi:* (*sings*) We are no longer afraid that the trip is long and arduous.

*Yan Sum:* (*speaks*) Well, you are so strong, why don't you carry my load as well. Later on, we can switch and I can do yours.

*Shi Kau:* (*speaks*) You must have a few fathers to teach you to become so crafty! (*Carrying two loads, looks rather unhappy.*)

(*Yan Sum bears a smile on her face.*)

(*Curtain down.*)

Act III

*(Three years later.)*

*(Scene set inside; late at night.)*

*(Shi Kau sleeps with bedding on the floor.)*

*(Curtain up.)*

*(Shi Kau can't fall asleep; takes a child carrier strap from underneath his headrest.)*

*Shi Kau:* *(sings)* Ai, Yan Sum. He is hard to talk to in a straightforward manner.  
Look at his demeanor. I don't know what to think.  
His eyes and eyebrows are pure and clear.  
His appearance is so good.  
His waist is shapely; he does not look like a man at all.  
Whenever you ask him, he always denies and says I am crazy.  
I have been keeping an eye on him day and night.  
*(sings)* You see this baby carrier strap, this alone shows that he is in fact a woman.

Let me write a love poem to express my affection.  
*(scratches his head and concentrates in his thought.)*

*Yan Sum:* *(prepares bedding, ready to go to sleep, sings)* I have been keeping my miss company in her study for three years.  
No one seems to know our female identity.  
Shi Kau has been most skeptical and inquisitive about it.  
Thank goodness I have been firm and alert!  
*(tries to sleep.)*

*Shi Kau:* *(recites)* Yan Sum, are you going to sleep so early?  
Why don't we chitchat for a little bit?  
I just composed a love poem.  
Can you read it for me?

*Yan Sum:* *(recites)* I don't have as much time as you.  
You act like an owl with no desire to go to sleep at night, and no wonder it is so hard for you to get up in the morning.  
I don't have time for this nonsense.  
Besides, I don't know anything about love poetry.  
You should ask someone else for advice.

*Shi Kau:* *(recites)* I am not bragging.  
This poem is so well done that my target will be like falling under a spell when she reads it.

By then, even if I am no longer interested, she will go after me.  
I am confident that my ability to woo is second to none.

*Yan Sum:* (*recites*) Is that right? You make it sound like I have something to learn from you.

You are just bluffing, aren't you?

I am not going to believe you, not for a bit.

*Shi Kau:* (*speaks*) Well, let me show you a few things. I have to warn you in advance. Get some ointment in hand in case you feel dizzy after reading my poem. I am not going to carry you.

*Yan Sum:* (*speaks*) Are you that good? I better take a look.

(*takes the poem and starts reading.*)

Yan Sum is so womanly in appearance.

Her waist is so shapely and appealing.

I want to be her darling.

My desire is to keep her company for the rest of my life.

(*bashful, speaks*) You stupid Shi Kau; you are sick; and you deserve to die! I am a man, what do you mean I act womanly?

Let me tell your young master to see how he would punish you.

*Shi Kau:* (*speaks*) It is said that hitting is an expression of affection; I guess it is the same when it comes to scolding. If you are really a woman, I am going to go after you no matter what!

*Yan Sum:* (*speaks*) I am not a woman. There is no point for you to write this love poem to me.

*Shi Kau:* (*sings*) Yan Sum, do you know I am getting very sentimental about you?

We have been seeing one another for three years.

You are so dear to me.

You see, we share the room together every night.

I regard you as my most intimate friend.

(*sings*) If you are a girl, I will ask you to marry me at once.

I trust you will accept my proposal!

*Yan Sum:* (*recites*) [*speaks to herself*] He is such a silly fellow, but he is certainly passionate and trustworthy.

I know his good character.

However, my cross-dressing is a secret, and I can't possibly reveal the truth to him.

(*sings*) Brother Shi Kau, Don't be silly and make fun of me.

I have lost something.

Do you happen to have it? Please let me know.

*Shi Kau:* (*speaks*) [*to himself*] What! You lost something, what are you looking for? It must be the strap for baby carrier. Good, let me have some fun with it.  
[*speaks to Yan Sum*] What did you lose? Tell me so I can help you find it.

*Yan Sum:* (*sings*) [*to her herself*] I lost my miss's baby carrier strap. How can I tell him?

I better be very careful in case I expose the secret.

(*speaks*) It doesn't matter. Don't bother! (*walks away*)

*Shi Kau:* (*mimicking Yan Sum, speaks*) Fine. It doesn't matter. Don't bother.

(*still mimicking Yan Sum, sings*) I am absolutely sure that both the master and the servant are young maidens.

(*takes out a baby carrier strap from underneath his headrest, sings*) Oh my goodness, the scent of a woman, and it is sweeter than honey.

My heart is burning.

*Shanpak:* (*enters, and laughs upon seeing Shi Kau, speaks*) Shi Kau, what is going on with you? You act like a woman. Are you crazy?

*Shi Kau:* (*speaks*) Nothing.

*Shanpak:* (*recites*) What are you holding in your hands? Show me. Tell me what is going on.

*Shi Kau:* (*recites*) Since no one is around, let me tell you something. Junior master, you are simple and straightforward, but I am cunning and crafty. You know, young Master Chuk and Yan Sum are women. You have been sharing a bed with this person for three years, and you call one another sworn brothers. You still don't know they both are maidens.

*Shanpak:* (*recites*) What nonsense!  
You stupid fellow!  
How can you insult my sworn brother Chuk.  
You show him contempt.

*Shi Kau:* (*recites*) You think I am stupid, I think you are. I have evidence! (*shows him the baby carrier strap.*)

*Shanpak:* (*sings*) How come our brother Chuk would have such girly stuff? I am flabbergasted.

You better tell me where you found it.

*Shi Kau:* (*recites*) Let me give you my two suggestions.  
First, you need to find a way to bring up this baby carrier strap.  
If Chuk appears nervous and don't know what to tell you, this will confirm our suspicion.  
Second, invite Chuk to go swimming with you, then you can see it with your naked eyes.  
At that moment, if you express your heart and ask for her hand, the timing will be perfect.

*Shanpak:* (*sings*) This sounds good.  
However, I can't promise you I will try the first suggestion.  
That is so presumptuous and abrasive.  
(*speaks*) Maybe you can do it.

[*At that point, Yingtoi appears.*]

*Yingtoi:* (*sings*) For three years now, the string of love has been touched.  
My heart is really after dear brother Leung.  
The situation is not unlike that of the weaving maid separated from the cowherd by the Milky Way.  
Nevertheless, I am uneasy about all the suspicion and gossip that this may create.

*Shanpak:* (*speaks*) Dear Brother Chuk.

*Shi Kau:* (*grins, speaks*) What did you say? A brother?

(*Yingtoi thinks she may have given her identity away; she immediately adjusts her posture by straightening her back and shoulders.*)

*Shanpak:* (*sings*) Shi Kau, what is so funny?  
Don't be impolite to my Brother Chuk.

*Shi Kau:* (*speaks*) Brother? What brother?

(*sings*) I, Shi Kau, am not trying to be ridiculous, but it is a "she" and it will be right to address her "sister" instead.  
Since there are only three of us here, and you two have been friends for three years, we will never expose any secret.  
I, Shi Kau, am not interested in stirring up trouble and causing people embarrassment, but I have proof. (*takes out the baby carrier strap.*)

*Yingtoi:* (*looks at the strap and smiles, sings*) How can you say I am a girl!  
What kind of proof is this?  
It is a gift from my mother.  
You see, my mother and I are very close.

The strap is something to remind me not to forget my mother's instruction.

Traveling afar, this sojourning son needs to hurry up to finish his studies.

My mother simply wants me to bear this in mind.

It shows her motherly nature and her kindness.

*(speaks)* Mother said that she used this strap for me when I was little. It is a token to remind me of her love and care, so that I won't go astray. How can this strap cause you to think I am a girl?

*Shanpak:* *(nods in agreement, speaks)* Your mother knows how to teach her children indeed.

*(turning to Shi Kau, sings)* Yingtoi is right.

Shi Kau, you have misspoken.

*[turns to Yingtoi]* If he has offended you, please forgive his ignorance and silliness.

*Shi Kau:* *(pulls Shanpak aside, speaks)* Junior master, let me go and inquire about Yan Sum as well. Tonight, you better pursue the matter by checking up on the body.

*(sings)* Use step number two!

I am sure Chuk will be caught off guard and be completely exposed.

*[speaks to Yingtoi]* Master Chuk, pardon me for being so rash. My sincere apology!

Please excuse me. I better let you two go to sleep.

*(with bedding in hand, exits.)*

*Shanpak:* *(speaks)* Dear brother, please forgive Shi Kau. Well, he is mistaken, but I can understand. Look at you, you are so handsome, your face is pure and white. Your hands and fingers are soft and polished, and your feet so small. Even without the baby carrier strap, people may still mistake you as a girl. If you were really a girl, then I am the lucky one!

*Yingtoi:* *(speaks)* Aiyah. Do not tease me. Why would you be lucky if I were a girl?

*Shanpak:* *(speaks)* Do I have to make it so obvious?

*(sings)* My dear brother, if you have cross-dressed and you turn out to be a girl, I will be thrilled.

We have spent three years together as fellow students.

We share the same bed and the blanket.

Like a body and its shadow, we are never apart.  
Talking about friendship and mutual affection, our relationship is more intimate than siblings.  
If you were a girl, I would be the first one to approach you and make a proposal for the nuptials!  
Who can I thank but the moon deity for tying our red knot.  
(*sings*) My dear brother! I am just afraid that our time together like a wonderful banquet will inevitably end.  
I get sentimental and don't know what to say whenever I think of our separation.

*Yingtoi:* (*sings*) [*to herself*] Having been together for three years, I have secretly planted a seed of love in my heart.  
Like ears and sideburns rubbing, our relationship has been so close, and we are never apart as a body and its shadows have not been apart.  
Dare I unveil my love in front of him?  
Oh, I am so ambivalent about being in love.  
I feel bashful!  
He doesn't know that I am a girl.  
I don't know if I can tell him.  
Oh, so difficult!  
I can't even look at him straight now.  
[*turns to Shanpak*] Brother, too bad I am a male and we won't be able to tie our knot.

*Shanpak:* (*sings*) [*to himself*] With head lowered and murmuring to himself, is he not touched by me?  
I must be fantasizing too much, how can I turn him into a girlish body?

(*speaks*) It is so hot; I want to go to swim at night with you.  
*Yingtoi:* (*speaks*) It is kind of late to go to swim. (*pretends to sneeze.*) I have a cold. Better not, I don't want to get any worse.

*Shanpak:* (*speaks*) [*to himself*] Ha, the second step doesn't work.  
(*recites*) Sworn brother, let's go to sleep then.  
We can be together in our dreams.

*Yingtoi:* (*speaks*) [*to herself*] That's not good. I better be extra careful and be very alert.  
(*speaks*) Sounds good. Let's go to bed now. (*places a bowl of water between the two on the bed.*)

*Shanpak:* (recites) Hey, we haven't had this for several months, why are you putting this bowl of water here tonight?  
Are you afraid that I move a lot in bed making it hard for you to fall sleep?

*Yingtoi:* (recites) That's exactly right.  
You have a tendency to turn left and right while asleep.  
With a bowl of water in the middle, we can both get some sleep.

*Shanpak:* (speaks) That is reasonable. So, brother Chuk, good night.

(The third watch at night; Shanpak is sound asleep.)

*Yingtoi:* (can't help but show her love for Shanpak, sings) I often want to give my heart of love to my dear.  
I feel a sensation burning in my heart, but then it quickly turns into icy cold.

I desire to offer my love, but love I can't.

Aiyaya! How can I ...? (gets up and stands by the bed; gazes at Shanpak with great affection.)

(From behind the stage come the following from Yan Sum, recites) Wife of the junior master.

Why are you giving her a baby carrier?

She is not a child any more. Why do you give her a piece of a toy?

(From behind the stage come the following from sister-in-law, recites) Yan Sum, you have no idea.

Of course, I know what I am doing in giving my sister in law a baby carrier strap.

She is now a virgin as she leaves home.

By the time she returns, who can tell if she will come home with her children.

*Yingtoi:* (sings) When I think of all the rites and teachings about traditions and the family, I must be extra cautious as if I am walking on thin ice.

I am a virgin, and I must preserve my virginity.

I swear that I will keep my body pure as jade and clean as ice, to show my obedience to my father.

(Yingtoi goes by the window and takes a small cactus from outside; she gets back into bed and puts the cactus between her and Shanpak.)

(When Shanpak turns toward Yingtoi, he is pricked and wakes up at once.)

(Yingtoi gets up too.)

- Shanpak:* (*sees the cactus, and becomes upset with Yingtoi, recites*) Sworn brother, what are you doing?  
This hurts; it almost kills me.  
Please take it elsewhere.  
Otherwise, how am I going to sleep?
- Yingtoi:* (*speaks*) Sleep? It is almost sunrise.  
(*Rooster crows and the sun is up.*)
- Yan Sum:* (*brings in a letter, recites*) Young master, you have a letter from home. Read it.
- Yingtoi:* (*finishes reading, recites*) My mother is getting very sick. This letter from home asks me to return immediately.  
(*speaks*) Brother Leung, regarding your suspicion, why don't you take a look at the letter?
- Shanpak:* (*speaks*) [*the letter reads as follows*] My son Yingtoi: You have been studying in Hangzhou for three years. Your mother misses you terribly and is getting sick as a result. You should pack up and return home at once, to comfort your parents. Your father.  
(*looks at Yingtoi with sadness, sings*) This letter from home urges you to go back immediately.  
I am at once depressed and very reluctant to see you leave.  
Last night I was so playful with my words.  
Now it seems certain that we will part soon.
- Yingtoi:* (*sings*) My mother is sick at home.  
I should depart for my return journey.  
Let me first bid farewell to my teacher.  
Then we will arrange a boat homeward bound.  
(*exits with Yan Sum.*)
- Shi Kau:* (*enters and speaks*) Good morning, young master. How did the plan go last night?
- Shanpak:* (*dejected, speaks*) It didn't go anywhere.
- Yan Sum:* (*enters and recites*) Young master Leung.  
My young master has purchased the ticket to head home.  
(*speaks*) The boat will depart this afternoon.
- Shanpak:* (*speaks*) Sworn brother has to leave so quickly!
- Shi Kau:* (*recites*) Yan Sum, how can I bear to see you leave!  
We have been working together for the past three years.  
On the eve of our separation, my eyes are filled with tears.
- Shanpak:* (*sings*) Today, I send you away on the South Shore.

It will be a tearful goodbye.

*(exit together.)*

*(Curtain down.)*

ACT IV

*(In the countryside; there will be five different sets of sceneries.)*

*(Hills and other distant sceneries in the background, with willows; along the field embankment are holes, with brackish water crabs.)*

*(Curtain rises.)*

Shi Kau: *(holding a tray with wine and cups, enters, sings)* I am sending off Yan Sum.  
She leaves in such a hurry.  
As I think it over, both Yan Sum and Master Chuk are definitely women.  
Too bad my young master is so dull.  
They shared a room and a bed for three years.  
How can he not see through the deception?  
Now we are to part ways.  
My heart aches!  
How can we squander our opportunity, losers we are!  
I am so fond of Yan Sum.  
Today, we are bidding goodbye at the pavilion, and she will be on her journey.  
I asked for an advance from my wages earlier.  
With some dishes and wine, I will send her off.  
My eyes are all red. *(wipes his tears.)*

Yan Sum: *(carries a piece of luggage, enters and sings)* I have spent three years with Shi Kau.  
I am sad now that we are to part ways.  
Let me share my sentiments and sadness with him.  
How can my heart not feel the pain!

Shi Kau: *(sad, recites)* Sister Yan Sum.  
Oh, I am sorry. Brother Yan Sum.  
As you know, we two have been together for three years.  
Inseparable, such as the steelyard is never away from the weigh.  
But now, we are to be separated like birds going in different directions.  
You see, I cried quietly by myself last night and my eyes are now swollen.

Yan Sum: *(recites)* Hey, Brother Shi Kau.  
We are men, how can you refer to us as birds going in different directions [*this idiom applies to couples*].

Don't try to show off; you don't have much to show.

*Shi Kau:* (*recites*) I only put it that way.

Oh, heaven! Oh, heaven!

Since you let me and Yan Sum become friends for three years,  
You shouldn't separate us so quickly.

Moreover, Yan Sum looks so pretty.

The voice is soft,

The fingers all tender,

Exactly like a woman.

If indeed a woman you were, I would go ahead and marry you.

I swear I am not daydreaming.

*Yan Sum:* (*recites*) You are taking advantage of me, Brother Shi Kau.

We are men, how can we two get married.

You must be crazy about women.

Even if you are not ashamed of yourself, you should be sensitive  
about my feelings.

*Shi Kau:* (*speaks*) Every man loves women! You fool!

(*sings*) Why would I be embarrassed for wanting a wife?

I blame heaven for being so uncaring.

I don't get it, I really don't get it.

For me, you are much better as a female than a male.

From now on, I am afraid I will get a cold every night.

My feet will be so cold, sleeping by myself.

I will be calling on you every night in my dreams.

We can only meet in our dreams.

I wish you would turn into a maiden, so we can be united like a  
phoenix and a dragon.

*Yan Sum:* (*speaks*) You are out of your mind, Brother Shi Kau. I am as  
well-built as a man should be. How can I become a woman? We  
are to go separate ways soon. Things like this happen, making  
you realize life is but a dream. (*seems sad.*)

*Shi Kau:* (*sings*) We humans all have feelings.

And I have special feelings toward my friends.

Since our masters are behind and still some distance away, let the  
two of us get a drink.

(*speaks*) I have a lot of things I want to share with you from my  
heart. Since they are not here yet, let us go over to the pavilion. I  
have asked for an advance from my wages and have bought

some wine and "lo-mei." We are going to finish the drink one last time, and that will be it. Younger brother, if you don't accept this invitation, you are not a friend.

*Yan Sum:* (*speaks*) Don't say this. Take it back and think of something better to tell me. Of course, we can go and have a drink to say goodbye. (*exit together.*)

(*Shanpak and Yingtoi enter, holding hands.*)

*Shanpak:* (*sings*) It is like a dream. (*repeats*)  
We are to go separate ways and my heart is very heavy.  
I bid my brother goodbye.  
After you leave, the room will be empty.

*Yingtoi:* (*sings*) We can see one another but in our dreams.  
My heart is filled with sadness because we will be separated by a thousand and ten thousand miles.

*Shanpak:* (*sings*) Feeling lonely, because we will be separated, east and west.  
With tears, I send you away.

(*Along the field on the embankment are two brackish water crabs.*)

*Yingtoi:* (*speaks*) Brother Leung, do you know what these two are?

*Shanpak:* (*speaks*) Oh, these two, they are little crabs, aren't they?

*Yingtoi:* (*speaks*) No, they aren't little crabs. They are brackish water crabs.

(*sings*) Brother, you are sending me away, crossing the bridge to the east.

You see the brackish water crabs.

Can you tell which one is male and which one is female?

They seem to be holding their hands to bid goodbye, how sentimental they must be?

They are getting on to the embankment.

One is leaving, the other is bidding farewell.

I can't tell which is which, male and female.

Can you tell? (*points her finger as she makes this suggestive remark.*)

*Shanpak:* (*sings*) I am not interested in the brackish water crabs.

It doesn't matter to me which one is male and the other female.

Walking slowly, I am bidding my brother farewell.

You are already so far away in my eye.

Don't you see the sadness on my face?

*(Yingtoi walks over to the other side, sees a pair of butterflies dancing in the air.)*

*Yingtoi:* *(touched by such spectacle, sings)* Brother, you are seeing me off.

Do you notice the butterflies are flying together among the flowers?

Gliding along, they are dancing in the wind and showing their affection.

They are enjoying themselves as they share such deep love.

They are whispering to one another.

What a pair of lovers!

Planting the flower of love, love will come.

Brother, are you like a butterfly?

Would you want to dance in a pair?

Brother, have you ever tried to compose love poetry?

*Shanpak:* *(sings)* I am not concerned with a pair of butterflies dancing in the air right now.

Regrets fill my heart in view of our separation.

This song of departure, I sing with tremendous sadness.

For three years, we have shared the same bed and blanket.

This moment of your departure, I dread.

My heart is troubled as if imprisoned by the entangling willows.

Who care if the butterflies are circling the flowers!

*(sings)* I grind the iron ink stone and cannot come up with love poetry.

Dear, if you were a girl, we would be tying our knot as a couple.

*(speaks)* Alas, it is too bad you are not a girl!

*Yingtoi:* *(speaks)* Aiyah, you are kidding again. But what if I am really a girl?

*Shanpak:* *(delighted, speaks)* That would be wonderful! I would marry you. But unfortunately, you aren't! Well, let's keep on going.

*(The two are holding hands; the scene changes: there is a boat in the distance and a swan goose flies across the sky.)*

*Yingtoi:* *(sings)* Brother, you are sending me off at the pavilion.

You see, there is a boat far away on the river.

The silly boatman is rowing so hard, and yet the boat is hardly moving.

He doesn't know how to take advantage of the wind blowing in his direction.

He is like trying to move the pier to accommodate his vessel; that is laughable.

*(pauses)* He needs to move his vessel instead.

Someone should give him a hand.

Brother, why don't you yell and tell him to use the sail.

The wind is blowing in his direction.

No reason to use the oar instead.

He is so dull.

*Shanpak:* *(speaks)* Oh no! With the wind behind his back, he doesn't know to set his sail. How stupid. You don't need to get upset.

*(recites)* I hate the sight of a boat.

It reminds me that you will soon be riding on one, nothing but sadness fills my heart.

Traveling on a boat, you will be journeying across hills after hills.

I get sentimental and melancholic as we are to part ways.

Brother, even as your departure can inspire lyrics and poetry, I am just not up to the task.

This is too hard to bear; I am despondent.

My tears are streaming down, and my face turns red.

Upon our separation, you need to take good care, eat a bit more and wear enough clothes.

Don't worry about me lest you have a hard time falling asleep.

*(A swan goose flies across the sky.)*

*Shanpak:* *(recites)* Do you see the lonely swan goose without any company?

*(sings)* Its lonesomeness is exactly like mine.

I am miserable because of your pending departure.

Our three years of friendship are so dear.

Brother I am sending you off. *(holding hands as they walk.)*

*(The scene changes again, by a lotus pond, with a pair of mandarin ducks in the water.)*

*(Shanpak and Yingtoi stand on the bridge, looking down at the mandarin ducks.)*

*Yingtoi:* *(speaks)* Brother Leung, what are those swimming together in the water?

*Shanpak:* *(speaks)* What are they? Probably water ducks.

- Yingtoi:* (speaks) Not water ducks. They are mandarin ducks.
- Shanpak:* (speaks) Really, I thought they were water ducks.
- Yingtoi:* (speaks) As it is said: for those who know, they are mandarin ducks; for those who don't, call them whatever.  
(sings) By the pond, the hanging willows face the wind in despair.  
The mandarin ducks by the embankment play with one another.  
They cross their necks, how intimate they are.  
They go here and there in the water.  
You see, they are chasing one another.  
Inside the pond, what a matching pair of mandarin ducks, sharing mutual affection.  
You see how leisurely they spend time together.  
They seem to be laughing at your sorrowful expression.  
Brother, don't be troubled and don't let the mandarin ducks poke fun at you.
- Shanpak:* (sings) Mandarin ducks play in the lotus pond.  
Side by side, they move in unison.  
They don't understand the pain of separation in the human world.  
The situations are completely different.  
With their necks crossed, they swim together playfully.  
In our case, by saying goodbye, you will be gone.  
We will be separated, east and west.  
Seeing the mandarin ducks in the water makes me feel worse.  
In the middle of the night, I will hug my cold blanket all alone with sadness.
- Yingtoi:* (speaks) So human beings are worse off than the birds.
- Shanpak:* (speaks) Brother Chuk. After you leave, I will be very lonely. In your case, you will be reunited with your family. But for me, you will be far away. Let me go a little further with you. (*Holding hands, they walk down the bridge to the other side.*)
- (The scene changes again into the interior of a Buddhist temple with the statue of the moon deity on the altar; they enter the temple hall.)
- Yingtoi:* (recites) Brother, we are now inside a temple.  
The statue of the deity looks lofty and dignified.  
It holds a silky red string in hand.  
What does that mean?
- Shanpak:* (recites) You see that white-breasted deity;

It is the statue of the moon elderly who puts people in pairs as married couples.

He does it by pulling the string.

*Yingtoi:* (*recites*) Brother, why don't you ask the moon deity to tie our knot as a married couple?

*Shanpak:* (*recites*) As brothers, we are better than spouses.  
There is no need to join together as a couple on the blue bridge.

*Yingtoi:* (*sighs; recites*) Too bad it is sculpted from wood and earth.  
I doubt if the moon elder can be of help to me.

*Shanpak:* (*recites*) My brother is outstanding in appearance and talent.  
You will be matched with a talented lady to fulfill your dream.

*Yingtoi:* (*recites*) A talented young scholar should be matched with a girl of equal talent.

Unfortunately, fate can keep them apart even after they have met.

(*sings*) [*to herself*] How much more need I say before he will understand!

(*recites*) Brother, let's leave the temple and go outside.

Brother Leung, do you see the well?

(*Both look down into the well and see their reflections.*)

*Yingtoi:* (*sings*) I really appreciate you, brother, for coming this far to bid me farewell.

You see our reflections down in the well.

My face is all red.

Yours is also just an image without any noise, not unlike a mute.

You look very dull and jaded.

What is on your mind?

*Shanpak:* (*taken aback by the remark, speaks*) Nothing.

(*sings*) You too should not indulge in self-pity as you gaze your own reflection in the water.

I know you are getting sentimental.

After I bid you goodbye, it is hard to tell when we will meet again.

(*continue to walk together, holding hands.*)

(*The scene changes; a pavilion by the pier along the river; a lot of hanging willows along the river; close by is a cemetery; a pair of white geese swim in the water.*)

(*Shanpak in front and Yingtoi right behind.*)

*Yingtoi:* (*sings*) Brother, you look so sad. This farewell is too hard on you.

My heart is stirred; how can I restrain it?  
Raising my head, I see the surrounding countryside.  
There is also a gravesite for couples.  
The willows flow under the setting sun.  
The east wind brings forth many regrets.  
See the geese at play, amidst the wave.  
Thanks my older brother for accompanying me this far.

*Shanpak:* (*sings*) Dear brother, you are so sentimental.  
No reason to read too much into the surroundings as a reflection  
of our conditions.  
Along the green water bay are white geese.  
Most of them are in pairs, how touching!

*Yingtoi:* (*recites*) I don't understand. (*repeats*)  
Why is that most of the time the goose will be following the male  
gander?  
The male is in the front and the female right behind.  
She is quaking for her male companion, but the gander seems  
unaware.  
The male is insensitive.

(*speaks*) Hey, do you think the husband and the wife are buried  
together in that cemetery for couples?

*Shanpak:* (*recites*) The white geese are just like the mandarin ducks.  
I really can't pay much attention to them.  
As far as the cemetery for couples,  
Couples sleep and die together.  
This sadness over our separation overwhelms me.  
How do you handle it so well and have time to think of all these  
questions?

*Yingtoi:* (*sings*) We spent three years together.  
We shared a blanket and laid on the same bed.  
Should we die and be buried in the same tomb,  
I would be much gratified.

*Shanpak:* (*sings*) Brothers are different from spouses.  
Don't get carried away by your emotions.  
We can't possibly be buried together.  
This is just not right.

*Yingtoi:* (*sings*) I have good news for you, my brother Leung.  
I can be the go-between for you and my younger sister.

She is a maiden at home.

*Shanpak:* (*sings*) I do not consider myself worthy.  
Like a pheasant, my lowly origins can't match with a phoenix.  
Dear brother, you desire to be a matchmaker,  
But I don't know if your sister would comply.

*Yingtoi:* (*delighted, speaks*) Don't worry. If I like something, my sister will like it too.

(*recites*) The two of us, brother and sister, look exactly the same,  
and are of the same temperament and character.

Let me leave you with a token as a betrothal gift.

In my hands here is a pair of jade butterflies.

*Shanpak:* (*recites*) Thank you so much.

This will make us closer than ever in our relationship.

Dear brother, you have treated me with utmost consideration and care.

*Yingtoi:* (*speaks*) Here is my address. (*hands it over.*) As soon as you are done with school, come see me at once.

(*sings*) There will be three more months before the end of the school year.

Do not miss this appointment.

Otherwise, this perfect plan will be for naught.

Do not disappoint me on this important matter.

Any delay may ruin our plan.

(*The boat is here; Shi Kau and Yan Sum at the bow, and both are wiping their tears.*)

*Shi Kau:* (*alights, recites*) Young master.

Yan Sum and I found this boat.

It is going to leave anytime now.

I can't help but cry.

*Yingtoi:* (*speaks*) Brother Leung, you have kept me company for a long way, and I am afraid we have to bid goodbye.

Please keep your promise to visit me on time.

Don't make me worry.

*Shanpak:* (*speaks*) No need to be concerned, Brother Chuk.

Allow me to toast you for your departure.

I wish you a safe journey! (*toast*)

*Shi Kau:* (*recites*) Hey, Brother Yan Sum. Let me also toast you.

As the saying goes, brothers are like limbs.

We are sworn brothers, and are closer than real siblings from the same parents.

Let's empty the cups till our faces get red. (*offers wine.*)

(*Yan Sum gets to the pier and drinks with Yingtoi.*)

*Yingtoi:* (*sings*) Brother, you must study hard.  
One day, you will ride on the crest of success.  
A cup of wine to mark our separation;  
Mixed with tears;  
Sorrow and regrets fill my chest.

*Shanpak:* (*sings*) Let's bottom up!  
In three months, we will be reunited.  
Tugging at the robe, I hold your hand to bid farewell.  
One day, I will blow my flute to attract a phoenix.

*Shi Kau:* (*sings*) Yan Sum, I hope you are not lying to me.  
You said I can marry your sister.  
After the school year, I will visit the Chuk Family Hamlet with my young master.  
You prepare the dowry.  
Make sure you have the water basin and chamber pot.

*Yan Sum:* (*sings*) Brother Shi Kau, you need not be concerned.  
Study hard.  
Keep your young master company and come visit with him.  
Take good care!

(*Boatman urges travelers to get on.*)

(*All cry.*)

*Shanpak:* (*sings*) The sleeves and the front of my robe are soaked with tears.

*Shi Kau:* (*sings*) Pitiful me, I cry like a baby!

(*All exit.*)

(*Curtain down.*)

## Act V

(*Countryside; by a bridge.*)

(*Ma Fu and Ma Lung carry loads of gifts, enter.*)

*Manchoi:*(*upbeat, sings*) I am so happy that nuptial bliss is upon me.  
To impregnate a girl;  
My darling is adorable.  
Chuk Yingtoi, she is attractive and charming.

A talented young girl, brilliant as Tao Wen.

She has a tiny waist.

*(sings)* Tomorrow is the day to present betrothal gifts to her family.

I am so excited and happy for myself.

*(Ma Fu and Ma Lung carry the gifts over hills and across bridges; stop and can't go any further.)*

*Manchoi:(recites)* You two are taking a break here.

Don't you realize that I am in a great hurry?

*Ma Lung: (recites)* Young master.

We have to take a break for we are breathless.

My back is hurting so badly.

*Ma Fu: (recites)* We have gone a long distance.

You are walking and you don't feel the pain.

We are carrying a big load of presents, and it is exhausting.

*Manchoi:(recites)* I know you must be tired.

Rest assured big tips are coming.

Take a short break.

Once we resume, we will go fast no matter how much further and how hard the journey.

*(Shi Kau is carrying some luggage with clothing, enters.)*

*Shanpak: (enters and sings)* I have been longing for days and nights, and even my spirit seems to be in a dream.

I am getting frail and emaciated.

To visit my dear friend Yingtoi,

I have traveled quite a distance on the road.

*Shi Kau: (looks miserable, sings)* No wonder people say "for a candlewick to turn into iron", it takes forever.

I don't feel good about this trip.

Now we arrive at a fork.

My heartbeat is so fast, and I don't know what to do.

*(speaks)* It is not good, young master. We got to a fork, and I have no idea which road will take us to the Chuk Family Hamlet.

*Shanpak: (speaks)* All you need to do is ask. Go over that side to inquire about it, Shi Kau.

*Shi Kau: (looks full of himself, speaks)* Hey!

*(Manchoi is upset with Shi Kau for being so impolite and doesn't respond.)*

*Shi Kau: (speaks)* Hey, how do you get to the Chuk Family Hamlet?

*Manchoi: (speaks)* Hey, how do you get to the Chuk Family Hamlet?

*Shi Kau:* (speaks) I am asking you!

*Manchoi:* (speaks) I am asking you too.

*Shi Kau:* (speaks) Bad luck, I am asking a dead fellow.

*Manchoi:* (speaks) You are cursed, rascal!

(*Shi Kau gets upset and is about to beat Manchoi.*)

(*Manchoi is ready for a brawl.*)

*Shanpak:* (quickly takes *Shi Kau* aside, sings) We lost our way here;

*Shi Kau*, you shouldn't be so impetuous.

You better restrain yourself.

Otherwise, something worse may happen.

(speaks) Make your inquiry in a nice and gentle manner. That way, people will be happy to give you an answer.

*Shi Kau:* (restrained, sings) Okay, I will keep my temper.

It is hard, but I try not to be a bully.

Hi, my friend, do you know how we can get to the Chuk Family Hamlet?

Please be kind enough to let us know.

*Manchoi:* (speaks) [*to himself*] It should be to the east. Let me point him in the wrong direction.

(speaks) You will have to go over a few hills for it is quite far away. Just keep on going; cross the bridge when you see one.

(sings) Face west the whole time;

It is a long journey ahead.

(speaks) We need to get going; you just keep heading west.

(exits with *Ma Lung* and *Ma Fu*.)

*Shanpak:* (sings) *Shi Kau*, from now on you should always be polite toward others.

Don't ever be frivolous and flippant in dealing with people.

We shall go over hills after hills and cross bridges after bridges.

Toward the setting sun we shall head.

(*Shi Kau is a bit upset; carrying the luggage, he travels a long way going up and down many hillsides and crossing bridges and bridges.*)

*Shanpak:* (in front, urging, speaks) You are rather slow. Let's hurry up; the sun is about to set.

*Shi Kau:* (catches his breath, sings) Carrying such a load is hard, and I feel like a fat lamb.

My body is dripping cold sweat.

Why don't I ask again?

What if that nasty fellow decided to get even and trick me?  
(*speaks*) There is a person coming this way. Let me ask her very gently.

(*enters the woman woodcutter.*)

Shi Kau: (*walks up and greets, speaks*) Woman, can you tell me how to get to the Chuk Family Hamlet?

Woodcutter: (*speaks*) Hey, you are cursed. How come you are so dumb? When are you going to die?

Shi Kau: (*tugs at Shanpak, recites*) You see, young master!  
Nobody cares whether you are courteous or not;  
All you can do is to get physical and intimidate people.

Shanpak: (*recites*) She looks like she is a young girl.  
You address her as a woman.  
No wonder she curses you.  
(*walks up*) Sister, please forgive him.  
We are on our way to the Chuk Family Hamlet to visit a friend.  
Can you please give us directions?

Woodcutter: (*recites*) I see. You are going to the Chuk Family Hamlet.  
You are heading in the wrong direction.  
The place is to the east.  
You have traveled in the opposite direction for quite awhile.  
After this hill, it will still be far away. (*exits*)

Shanpak: (*speaks*) It is all because of you, Shi Kau! That person tricked us because you were rude.  
(*sings*) Now we have to walk back on the original route.  
It may take us till next morning.  
Let's turn around immediately.  
Shi Kau, you are to be blamed.

Shi Kau: (*bitter, sings*) I am so exhausted that it seems my soul is no longer with my body.  
Let's turn around then and continue this miserable trip over the bridge.

(*Curtain down.*)

## ACT VI

*(Inside a garden, the stairs lead up to a terrace that is surrounded by a red fence and oversees a lotus pond; mandarin ducks in the water; there are buildings and pavilions in the background; chairs and a table, with lots of flowers.)*

*(A bright moon.)*

*(Yan Sum in front of curtain, setting up an incense burner.)*

*(Curtain up.)*

*Yingtoi:* *(in a woman's dress; covered with a winter snow gown; stands by the fence, sings)* Leaning on the fence, my heart is filled with sorrow.

I look at my shadow and at once lament my lot.

I am full of anguish and anxiety during the day.

My heart is without any warmth during the night.

The courtship with my darling is broken.

I am afraid my dream will be shattered.

My insides are rent.

*(she walk slowly and her steps are not very sturdy.)*

*Yan Sum:* *(by Yingtoi's side, holding her, recites)* Miss, I see you are sick and your steps are not firm.

Let me inform the Senior Master and Madame to call a doctor to check on you.

*(about to leave, stopped by Yingtoi.)*

*Yingtoi:* *(recites)* Yan Sum, no need.

My heart aches, and that can't be healed by a doctor.

When Brother Leung arrives, and if my father withdraws his order,

I will get better without the use of any medicine.

*Yan Sum:* *(smiles, speaks)* I see. So your sickness is really caused by longing.

*Yingtoi:* *(speaks)* This is not your business. You are not supposed to make fun of me.

*Yan Sum:* *(sings)* A woman passionately in love, too bad her love has caused her so much distress.

The incenses have been prepared for awhile.

Go ahead to ask Sheung-O [*the legendary lover on the moon*] to grant your wish.

*(Chuk Kungyuan and his wife enter.)*

*Kungyuan:* *(recites)* My dear daughter.

This is already the third watch at night.  
Why are you not in bed?  
Don't waste your time to worship the moon.  
You should retire and go to sleep now.  
Tomorrow, Young Master Ma will come to present the betrothal gifts.  
Many people are envious of this marriage.

*Yingtoi:* (*recites*) Father, I hope that because you love me so much that you will reject this marital agreement.  
This matter is about my happiness and my future.  
I hope that I have a say regarding my marriage.

*Kungyuan:* (*angry, speaks*) Certainly not.

*Mme. Chuk:* (*recites*) Aiyah, my daughter.  
Isn't it now too late to discuss this matter?  
Your father has already accepted this proposal by the Ma family.  
As parents, aren't we in consideration of the future of their daughter?  
Don't worry.  
Our future son-in-law Ma Manchoi is the son of an official.  
He is honorable and wealthy.  
Your parents are very mindful of your future well-being.  
Tomorrow you will become a daughter-in-law of the Ma family.

*Yingtoi:* (*speaks*) Oh, father and mother... (*glance at Yan Sum*).

*Yan Sum:* (*nervous, recites*) Senior Master and Madame. Miss has pledged herself to marry Young Master Leung Shanpak.  
She wants to have your blessing and approval.  
Mr. Leung is a hardworking student.

*Kungyuan:* (*upset, speaks*) Surely not!  
(*recites*) I have looked very carefully into this matter and finally settled on this choice.  
The Ma family is very respectable.  
We all wish our daughters to be married well;  
That's most reasonable.  
Any clandestine agreement made on personal terms casts a black mark on the family.  
Marriage is an important matter, and ought to be under the control of the parents.

*Yingtoi:* (*recites*) I have already decided. (*repeats*)

I would not change my mind even upon death.  
Father, you love me.  
Please be considerate of your daughter's feelings.  
Otherwise, I will be miserable for the rest of my life.

*Mme. Chuk:* (*recites*) Daughter you are so stubborn.  
You don't give other's advice consideration.  
Your father's order is firm.  
Tomorrow will be the day of your betrothal.

*Yan Sum:* (*recites*) Please pardon your servant for speaking up for my miss.  
Miss and Mr. Shanpak have been together for three years.  
They have such affection for one another as if they were siblings.  
I am an eye witness.  
This is far more preferable than the nuptial agreement with the  
Ma family.  
Please reconsider.

*Kungyuan:* (*very angry, sings*) My misgiving is that you, my daughter, are  
disobeying your father's order.  
Don't ever bring this up again.  
I have already confirmed the marital agreement and you will be  
married to Manchoi.  
Your love for Shanpak better be severed immediately.

(*Upon hearing, Ying almost faints; Yan Sum helps take her to own room.*)  
(*Rooster crows; sunrise.*)

(*Shi Kau carries the luggage, enters.*)

*Shanpak:* (*recites*) My heart is like an arrow on the bow.  
I miss Yingtoi and am eager for our reunion.  
Undeterred by the difficult journey, I hurry on horse back.  
(*sings*) Upon arrival here at the Chuk Family Hamlet;  
Let's get ready to meet up with people. (*gets down from the  
horse.*)

*Shi Kau:* (*ties the horse, sings*) I am so exhausted and my legs and back  
are all sore.  
I was tricked into running in circle after circle.  
For an entire morning, we walked down the wrong path.  
I really wanted to give that person a good beating.  
Well, unlike my young master who is flexible and ready to  
accommodate,  
I, Shi Kau, am strong willed and bad tempered.

We have taken numerous turns, perhaps as many as thirteen of them.

Now we finally get to the Chuk Family Hamlet.

My energy is all spent!

*Shanpak:* (*recites*) Shi Kau, I think this is the right place.

You better go and make an inquiry in the most polite manner.

If it is the right one, ask for Brother Chuk.

Say that Leung Shanpak is here to visit.

*Shi Kau:* (*recites*) We have made numerous turns.

In front of the house are three bamboo trees.

The wall is red and the willows are green.

This must be it.

Hanging here is a plaque saying: "Blessing from the heavenly hosts".

Ok, let me make an inquiry.

Hey, anyone inside?

Our young master is here to visit your young master.

Please announce our visit to the host.

(*Yam Sum hears the noise and comes out, happy, speaks*) Oh, are you Brother Shi Kau?

*Shi Kau:* (*speaks*) Well, I don't think I know you. How do you know me?

Why are you staring at me like this? Oh, I understand. You must be Yan Sum's sister.

*Yan Sum:* (*recites*) [*to herself*] Ha, how can he be so stupid? He can't recognize me face to face. Ok, let me have some fun with you.

(*speaks*) Yes, I am. Who are you looking for?

*Shi Kau:* (*happy, speaks*) Oh, your brother is not here. Let me introduce myself. I am a good friend of your brother called Shi Kau. I come with my master Leung to see your master Mr. Chuk Yingtoi.

*Yan Sum:* (*joyous, speaks*) Oh, is that right? Why don't you and your master Leung come in first? Let me go announce your arrival. (*really excited, exits.*)

*Shi Kau:* (*turns around, speaks*) Young master. Yan Sum's sister is really pretty. She goes inside to announce our arrival. She asks us to go inside first.

*Shanpak:* (*delighted, speaks*) That's good. Let's go inside then.

*(enters with Shi Kau; looks around and is surprised not seeing anyone, speaks)* Shi Kau, did we enter through the wrong door?  
How come there isn't anyone here?

*Shi Kau:* *(speaks)* I don't think so. I am not that stupid. Yan Sum's sister ushers us to come in. Let's sit down first. I am so tired.

*(Yingtoi comes out, accompanied by Yan Sum.)*

*Yingtoi:* *(sings)* It should have been a happy reunion.

But it turns into a tragic encounter.

I am so reluctant to go in.

The sooner I tell him the truth,

The sooner he will be heartbroken.

What choice do I have but to try to make the best out of it?

*(walks slowly; Yan Sum's company gives her courage.)*

*(Shi Kau seems to notice the familiar faces but is unsure.)*

*Yan Sum:* *(can't wait any longer, speaks)* Master Leung.

*(Shanpak is stunned by the sight of Yingtoi dressed as a woman; dare not look at her straight, turns toward Shi Kau.)*

*Yingtoi:* *(sad, speaks)* Brother Leung, How are you?

*Shanpak:* *(ecstatic, speaks)* What! You, you, you...

*(sings)* Are you Yingtoi's sister?

You greet me here at the family hall on behalf of your brother.

Where is my brother Yingtoi?

How come he is not here?

*Yingtoi:* *(sings)* I... I don't have any sister at home.

This is Yingtoi right in front of you.

I am a woman.

I dressed like a man in order to travel to study.

*(Shanpak and Shi Kau both seem shocked.)*

*Shanpak:* *(speaks)* I see. So you and Yingtoi's sister are the same person.

That's good.

*Shi Kau:* *(sings)* My eyes are so sharp.

I saw through this a long time ago.

My master, however, is too trusting and gullible.

He has been deceived for three whole years.

Now, you come clean with your own confession.

As we say, the dagger finally reveals itself at the end of the rolled map;

Everything is now clear.

- Shanpak:* (*sings*) At the time of our separation, you wondered aloud why someone would not set sail with wind blowing behind his back. Silly me who was completely clueless to your hints! Good sworn brothers now become good spouses. Thank heaven for tying the knot for this beautiful union.
- Yingtoi:* (*extremely bitter, but puts up a smile, speaks*) Now you finally understand, Brother Leung.
- Shanpak:* (*ecstatic, speaks*) Yes, I understand. I am quite smart after all.
- Shi Kau:* (*speaks*) I saw this the whole time. I am really smart.
- Yan Sum:* (*speaks*) For goodness sake, no reason to brag at this time.
- Shi Kau:* (*feels kind of slighted, speaks*) What a put-down! What "a bowl of cat noodle"!
- Yingtoi:* (*sobs, speaks*) Brother Leung, I am afraid you are too late.
- Shanpak:* (*speaks*) Why is it too late?
- Yingtoi:* (*sings*) My heart sinks before I can utter a word;  
My heart is pierced before I can open my mouth.  
We have cultivated such affection for one another for three years.  
Now, this romance will dissolve, like the moon in the water or a flower in a mirror.  
The longing in our heart will shatter into pieces.  
The blooming flower is awaiting the butterfly;  
But its beauty has drawn instead the attention of the bees.  
As it happens, what was good has now been derailed,  
Like being struck by a sword, without mercy, fallen from the sky.  
I am under bondage to a marriage that I have not sought.  
I can only blame my authoritarian father.  
I am betrothed to Ma Manchoi.  
I blame you as well for being late for our reunion.
- (*Shanpak and Shi Kau look at one another.*)
- Shanpak:* (*sings*) Aiyaya! I was late;  
And I ruined our nuptial promise.  
My dear, do you love me or do you love Manchoi?  
Please make this very clear.
- Yingtoi:* (*recites*) Brother Leung, your question is now meaningless.
- Shanpak:* (*bitter, recites*) My dear Sister Chuk, please go and ask your father to reconsider.  
Tell him your resolute opposition to that proposal.  
Do whatever you can so we can be together.

- Yingtoi:* (*recites*) My father has made it clear that he will not grant our request to tie the knot.  
He considers that an affront to traditional teachings and morals.
- Shi Kau:* (*recites*) Hmm...  
Her father is a stubborn fellow, no wonder.  
Miss, you need to match his stubbornness with yours and simply refuse to give up.  
He is the one who made the promise, so let him marry that fellow.  
If you are resolute and resist to the end, there must be a way.  
I, Shi Kau, am not bragging, but with my help, we can do it.
- Yan Sum:* (*recites*) Don't be so obnoxious!  
Tomorrow will be the day of betrothal.  
Even if you were Kung Ming reborn,  
It is too late!
- Shanpak:* (*distressed, sings*) It is fate that sets us apart.  
With great sadness, I return this betrothal gift to you my dear.  
This pair of jade butterflies won't be able to fly together.  
With tears in my eyes, I hand them back to you.  
With a broken heart, I, I, I... will just head home. (*return the jade butterflies*)
- Yingtoi:* (*takes the butterflies and after a good look, hands them over to Shanpak, sings*) The jade butterflies are for you to keep as souvenir.  
Dear, keep them.  
We cannot fly together like butterflies this life.  
I hope this pair will remind you of me.  
(*sobs, speaks*) Brother Leung, in fulfilling my filial obligation, I can't at the same time fulfill our love. I ask you to forgive me. Let us talk over a cup of wine. Yan Sum, you take Shi Kau to the guest room for a meal and then prepare a banquet for us.
- Yan Sum:* (*speaks*) Yes. (*exits with Shi Kau.*)
- Yingtoi:* (*speaks*) Brother Leung, please head to the terrace and have some wine. Wine will take away the sadness. Please, Brother Leung.
- (*Yan Sum brings everything on a tray, set up the table on the terrace.*)
- Shanpak:* (*bitter, speaks*) What a way to drown our sadness with wine.  
Sworn sister, please.
- (*Both ascend the terrace.*)

- Yingtoi:* (*sings*) With wine to mark our separation,  
Today, let's be drunk together again.  
Hard to tell if it is bitter or sour.  
My dear you are overtaken by sorrow.  
My insides are rent.  
You have a bright future ahead of you.  
Why allow yourself be detained by our sorrowful relationship?
- Shanpak:* (*sings*) I hold the grape wine in my hand.  
I can't utter a word.  
Dear, I am devastated because of you.  
Don't you know my heart is filled with sorrow?  
With regrets, our romance has been severed.  
All I can do is to finish off this cup,  
And bid farewell to my dear.
- Yingtoi:* (*speaks*) Dear Shanpak, do you have to leave now? (*knows it won't be good to keep him any longer.*)
- Shanpak:* (*speaks*) I...am afraid I have to.
- Yingtoi:* (*speaks*) Let me... send you off.
- Shanpak:* (*speaks*) Previously when I sent you on your way, my heart was full of ambivalence. It was not a good feeling, but it brought forth certain sweetness.
- Yingtoi:* (*speaks*) Ai, today, it is my turn to send you away and my heart is pierced. I hope, dear, you can share with me all the words of separation.
- Shanpak:* (*completely distraught, walks down the stairs, sings*) Any last word would have been drowned in sorrow.  
Face to face with you, I only have tears.  
Seeing you now, I am in pain.  
I can't bear to stay here with you any longer.  
Upon departure, sorrow saturates my heart.
- Yingtoi:* (*keeps walking with him, sings*) I bid you farewell with much anguish in my heart.  
I sob silently inside my heart.  
We missed the chance for our wonderful romance.
- Shanpak:* (*sings*) Don't cry any more my dear.  
Don't try to bid me goodbye at the gate.  
The relationship is broken even though our feelings linger.
- Yingtoi:* (*sings*) Today, I send my dear away with unspeakable emotion.

From now on, we two will be separated and be very far way from one another.

*(Butterflies start to dance.)*

*Shanpak:* *(sings)* Dear, you have already accompanied me past our studies.  
The butterflies by the building are clinging to one another.  
Oh butterflies, you stay together in pairs.  
I have to be alone on my way.  
Three years of deep affection now vanish.

*Yingtoi:* *(sings)* Dear, even on the eve of our separation, the lingering feelings are hard to sever.  
This is tragic and our dream is over.  
Every drop of my tears stains my face.  
*(sings)* In the past, I likened us to butterflies.  
Today, I am more like a cuckoo weeping in blood.

*Shanpak:* *(sings)* My bones will turn into ashes, but my bitterness won't be vanquished.  
I only blame my lack of fortune.  
How can I accuse you for being heartless and lay any blame on you?

*(Yingtoi holds Shanpak's hand.)*

*(Mandarin ducks play in the lotus pond.)*

*Yingtoi:* *(sings)* I walk my darling to the lotus pond.  
Closely together people can see us.  
Not unlike mandarin ducks.

*Shanpak:* *(sings)* We can't really be together like mandarin ducks.  
Unable to tie my nuptial knot with you I blame my lack of fortune.  
*(speaks)* I completely understand your difficulties. Yingtoi, please don't feel sad because of me.

*Yingtoi:* *(Sings)* From now on, we won't be seeing one another.  
Our love and devotion will come to an end.  
I blame heaven for being so cruel.

*Shanpak:* *(sings)* Alas our romance has to end.  
We blame heaven for letting our love affair go astray.

*Yingtoi:* *(sings)* The romance we have had was full of glamour;  
But our love at this moment is overwhelmed by sadness.  
From now on, it will be impossible to see you anymore.

*Shanpak:* *(sings)* Our love cannot... cannot be terminated.

Love can endure, but nonetheless our desire can never be fulfilled.

The moon in the distance is supposed to shine on a perfect union.

Yingtoi, however, will not be marrying her lover.

*Yingtoi:* (*sings*) Darling, you are so madly in love,  
But we are destined to be apart.  
Despite our longing we are not allowed to wed.  
Our romance has a tragic ending.

(*Yingtoi and Shanpak keep on walking.*)

*Shanpak:* (*recites*) Dear, you have accompanied me to the eastern building.  
A pair of swallows are over there.  
They are engaged in an intimate conversation.  
Seeing them reminds me of my misery.

*Yingtoi:* (*recites*) I send you over to the south side of the pond.  
The wind blows, and our reflections in the water are no longer whole.

Now, we hold hands and stand side by side.

In a short while, I can no longer behold your dear face.

*Shanpak:* (*recites*) Dear, you send me over to the west of fence.  
There, a parrot is eager to offer its advice.  
It urges me to head home.  
The time we spend here is not worth it;  
It only causes us more pain.

*Yingtoi:* (*recites*) Dear, I send you to the north of the main hall.  
Your heart is filled with anguish, and so is mine.  
This is where we will be separated.

Dear, we won't be seeing one another again! (*together they cry.*)

(*Shi Kau, Yan Sum, Kungyuan, Mme. Chuk, sister-in-law, Manchoi enter, together with the housemaid carrying food on a tray.*)

*Sister-in-law:* (*sarcastic, recites*) Oh. My sister-in-law, you and this schoolmate of yours are really close.

So close that you two would hug as you cry together.

Hey, you should be reminded that you have already accepted the betrothal gifts from the Ma family.

This isn't how you are supposed to conduct yourself.

I see, that's what you have been learning at school.

But don't bring it home, please.

Even if you are not ashamed of yourself, we are embarrassed.

*Kungyuan:* (*recites*) Now, I see the reason why you have been so insistent on rejecting the marriage proposal.

It is all because of this fellow student!

What you did makes me fume with anger!

*Mme. Chuk:* (*recites*) My daughter, please listen.

You have already accepted the Ma family's betrothal presents.

You are a member of the Ma household.

Whatever love or feeling you have had ought to be severed.

*Yan Sum:* (*recites*) Miss. It is rather pointless to dwell on it any more.

It is all a matter of fate.

*Shi Kau:* (*recites*) Young master. All we can say is that we were late!

It is now too late to do anything. It is over.

She will be married into the Ma family because we were late for three days.

Let's go.

No use to linger.

No use for you two to keep on talking.

*Shanpak:* (*slowly, very bitter, recites*) I will leave now, Yingtoi.

I blame myself for the lack of luck.

If we will to meet again, it will be over in the Yellow Spring  
[Hades].

(*speaks*) Shi Kau, give me a hand.

(*Shi Kau comes over to help.*)

*Manchoi:* (*blocks the way, speaks*) Why in a hurry, Mr. Shanpak? Please stay and attend the banquet tonight before you go.

(*sings*) Take a look.

I am the lucky one when it comes to romance.

This pretty girl will become my spouse.

A talented man and a fine-looking woman make a perfect couple.

This gorgeous beauty has now been claimed,

By me and she is all mine.

When it is time for the bride to travel on the fragrant carriage to her new home,

You should be on hand to bless the couple.

At the time we conclude the nuptial union, please honor us with your presence and attend the banquet.

(*speaks*) Mr. Shanpak, I heard that you are my fiancé's classmate and that you two are sworn siblings! In that case, you will

become my brother-in-law. Today your younger sister will formally accept the betrothal presents. You shouldn't hurry to leave. Since we are all family, you should stay to attend the banquet. Don't be a stranger, my future brother-in-law.

Shanpak: (*almost coughs blood, speaks*) Thank you so much.

*Sister-in-law*: (*sarcastic, recites*) No need to be thankful ahead of the banquet. My cousin is right.

Mr. Leung is not only a classmate of my sister-in-law;  
He is her sworn brother.

In other words, he is my cousin's future brother-in-law.

For you to have traveled this far to visit and then skip the banquet altogether, this comes across as discourteous.

Of course, I understand if you are in a hurry to go home.

In that case, have a piece of the special pastry prepared for the betrothal occasion.

Sister-in-law, it will be the best if you serve it yourself.

*Manchoi*: (*laughs heartily, recites*) Indeed.

Go ahead to serve my future brother-in-law a piece of the wedding pastry.

*Shanpak*: (*receives the pastry, sighs deeply, tears well up in his eyes, coughs blood, recites*) Wedding pastry. (*repeats*)

(*Yingtoi holds her kerchief for the blood dripping from his mouth.*)

*Shi Kau*: (*holds Shanpak with his arms, speaks*) Young master, take good care.

(*sings*) You people deliberately provoke him to the point of coughing blood.

Watch out for your last two years – you are cursed.

All your sayings and actions are meant to hurt.

At times of thunder and lightning, you better watch out.

*Shanpak*: (*recites*) I would rather die for love and go to the Yellow Spring; That would be better than staying alive to witness my darling join someone else's household.

I now bid you farewell tearfully.

I hope that during Qingming every March,

My darling will come visit my grave.

*Shi Kau*: (*speaks*) Your hope is no hope at all. Young master, let us just leave. (*holding Shanpak with his hand, exit together.*)

- Yingtoi:* (throws herself after Shanpak, wails, sings) When you depart, it will be separation forever.  
To thank my darling for his devotion, I will not be marrying another person.  
I hope to die for my lover.  
My loyalty and devotion will remain unadulterated.  
(attempts to commit suicide.)
- Manchoi:* (tries to restrain her, sings) Dear, you have to let go.  
Why give up your life!  
I am willing to cherish you like golden bells protecting flowers.  
Why are you still whimpering and nursing regrets?
- Sister-in-law:* (speaks) Aiyah, she said she is going to take her own life.  
Father-in-law, what are we supposed to do?
- Kungyuan:* (recites) So you are using suicide to put pressure on me.  
Ok, if you are so stubborn, and have no desire to observe your filial responsibility,  
You don't have to get married.  
Let us both die and meet down in Yellow Spring.  
(speaks) Let me take my own life first!
- Yingtoi:* (recites) Ai, my father, please don't harm yourself.  
I will obey your order and offer myself as an example of filial piety.
- Kungyuan:* (sings) My desire is to stay wealthy and keep my honor the rest of my life.  
I am so glad that this wedding is going to go forward as planned.
- (All exit.)  
(Curtain down.)

## FINALE

(On a tombstone is inscribed the following: "Huiji Baisha Hill Master Leung Shanpak"; Shi Kau burns incense and kneels in front of the grave.)  
(Curtain up.)

*Shi Kau:* (sings) Cry and cry, I am becoming so distraught.  
I am angry at Manchoi.  
My heart is overwhelmed with sadness.  
Oh...you were so deeply in love that you died for her.  
(sings) Full of sorrow, you perish.  
I am heartbroken, alas, how can life be so unjust!

Now, you can no longer have any offspring.  
The Leung ancestors consider you a fool!  
You should not have vanished as such;  
You should not have cared so much.  
For the reason of marriage and for love, you gave up your life.  
You were consumed by the sickness of love.  
Because of love, your body is now forever covered by yellow earth.  
Four planks of woods make up your abode.  
Your darling he took away, so as a ghost you need go after Manchoi.  
You died from sickness but somebody actually did you in.  
Oh my junior master Leung, you died way too young.  
For three years, you were clueless.  
For three days, you were late.  
Now, someone is soon becoming a daughter-in-law in the Ma family.  
And a ghost like you can only lament and resent your terrible fate.  
I wail and wail in front of your lonely grave.  
The other is in a joyous celebration to become a new bride.  
The more I think about what has happened,  
The more I feel indignant.  
How about you now in Hades?  
Are you not upset?

*(noises from approaching horses back stage.)*

*Shi Kau:*       *(speaks)* Hmm.. Chuk Yingtoi's wedding procession is going to pass through here Huqiao Town on her way to Ma Family Hamlet. This is really adding insult to injury. Fine! Let me take a good look at this shameless person.  
*(sings)* My junior master is dead, how dare you come by to make a scene.  
Known for my bad temper, I am more than ready to give you a good shake-up so you can go meet your maker!  
I am so angry.  
My heart is burning.  
Just wait and see what is coming your way!

*(noises of horses; the woman matchmaker in front of the marital sedan carrier; Yan Sum alongside; Yingtoi in her funeral dress rides on the sedan carrier.)*  
*(Yan Sum looks very sad; Shi Kau sees her approaching, is visibly angry, with both his hands on the waist.)*

*Yan Sum:*       *(recites)* We arrive at the grave of young master Leung.

Hello, Brother Shi Kau, Brother Shi Kau.

This is the eve of our miss's wedding, but she puts on a funeral gown of hemp to come before young master Leung's grave. Our miss longs for the junior master, and the love in her heart has not changed.

*Shi Kau:* (*upset, recites*) Even though your name Yan Sum means the heart of a person, I will call you now the heart of a beast! Like putting soy sauce to rice, you are adding color to things to make yourself look better.  
Give me a break!  
I curse your miss.  
Because of her, my young master died needlessly.  
Better hurry up and get out of my way.  
Even if she wants to burn some incense and pay homage, I won't let her.  
You are such hypocrites, like, as we say, a cat weeping for a mouse!  
Are you ready to go into your own coffin? Maybe I can help!  
(*rubs his fist with his hand.*)

*Yan Sum:* (*speaks*) You are so rude and impetuous!  
(*sings*) You are rude, and also stupid!  
I don't even bother to talk to you.  
My miss is wronged and has no way to get out.  
She is a victim of "blind marriage".  
You are crazy and insane.  
My miss is hapless in dealing with her parental arrangement for her wedding.  
You make no distinction between right and wrong.  
You are so ridiculous.  
Don't you know because you two were late for three days, my miss is forced to marry into the Ma family?  
Your young master has inadvertently hurt not just himself but the other.  
Don't you blame the tragedy on this suffering woman!  
(*speaks*) If our miss was really going after another fellow, would she have come here gowned in her funeral dress on the eve of her wedding? She conducts herself as a widow. Her love and her feeling are genuine. You haughty and stubborn fellow!

*Shi Kau:* (apparently touched, speaks) You are right. What you said, Yan Sum, makes sense. I cannot be more obstinate and ridiculous. Accept my apology.

(sings) Since your miss is full of love for my master, why not invite her from the sedan carrier to come over to the grave? My young master's spirit would surely appreciate her deep affection and true love.

(speaks) Go and inform your miss.

*Yan Sum:* (comes over, speaks) My lady, we have arrived at Huqiao Town and Master Leung's grave is right in front. Will you demount from the sedan carrier?

*Yingtoi:* (comes down from her sedan carrier, speaks) Where is my dear Shanpak's grave?

*Yan Sum:* (speaks) Right over there. (points at the grave.)

*Yingtoi:* (reads from the tombstone, speaks) Huiji Baisha Hill Master Leung Shanpak's tomb. (repeats) Aiyah. (touches the tombstone and cries.)

(*Shi Kau and Yan Sum both cry.*)

*Yingtoi:* (sings) Seeing this new tomb, my heart is broken.

I cry for my darling, I am Chuk Yingtoi.

One day, people who have no idea who I am would just make fun of me.

Dear brother, why are you silent today?

(speaks) Please let me wail at the grave by myself for awhile.

(*Shi Kau, Yan Sum, matchmaker, and others exit.*)

*Yingtoi:* (sings the theme song "Willingly I turn into a butterfly to flutter around the lonely grave")

(speaks) How can a flower bloom in the aftermath of such a tragedy! I send forth my sorrows and regrets down to the spring terrace of hell. Yingtoi is not a woman without love. My broken heart has rendered me half crazy.

(sings) I regret, I lament, that this life has brought me only sorrow.

My tears are streaming down my cheeks.

I lament the bitterness of life;

For love, I suffer much.

My darling is gone; down to the spring terrace.

I should not have done so;

But because of bashfulness, I failed to unveil my love to my darling.

We read together every day.

We shared a bedcover every night.

What intimacy!

I still recall fondly the three years we spent together. (*indulges in her thoughts.*)

(*The spirit of Shanpak appears over the grave; looks visibly angry at Yingtoi.*)

*Shanpak:* (*from behind the stage, speaks*) You don't need to pretend to cry for me. Other people may be deceived. They see you dressed in a funeral gown and offer me sacrifices; they may consider you full of love and acting righteously. In reality, you are a devil when it comes to love affairs. Leave me alone. Leave immediately. If you are truly in love with me, why don't you die for the cause of love? Why don't you give up your life for the sake of our relationship? Leave, I don't want your sacrifice. You better go and get married.

*Yingtoi:* (*saddens, speaks*) My dear Shanpak. You need to understand my situation. Let me explain everything to you.

(*moves forward trying to touch Shanpak.*)

(*Shanpak's spirit disappears.*)

*Yingtoi:* (*unable to reach Shanpak; upset, speaks*) So, he blames me and he even scolds me. I need to explain my situation to him, but when I tried to approach him, he already disappeared. Am I in a fantasy? Did I make it up? Oh, how terrible it is to be misunderstood and yet without any way to share my feeling. Now we are separated by life and death; my heart is broken and there is no way for me to reach you. I am not leaving. I need to cry my heart out here and now!

(*sings*) How sad it is to love,

But love I do even though it is so sad.

My blackened eyebrow brought me only regrets.

My dear you are dull-witted,

You add only to my regrets.

Love, when filled with disenchantment, causes my tears to flow.

My tears overflow.

My affection is enraptured by sadness.

The flower is so ready but no butterfly arrives.

Rather the bee comes, and so the flower is no more.

You, butterfly, are desirous of the flower!  
My darling, why were you late, and late you were for three whole  
days!

Three years of intimate relationship cannot be untied.  
We rested together, ate together, and went in and out together.  
Our separation sinks my heart.  
The earth on your grave is not even dry.  
The purple earth nonetheless has my darling buried.  
Now there are only white willows and dry weeds to keep you  
company down in the lonely spring terrace.  
Oh spirit, oh spirit!  
My heart is broken and sadness wells up in me.  
My affection for you remains true.  
It is not too much to ask that your tomb open for me.  
Then we can fly together to the paradise.  
Come spirit, I once planted my seed of love in my heart.  
But I let myself drown in the raging currents of love.  
I desired your arrival, but you arrived not.  
Blind marriage ruins my life.  
My dream can no longer come true.  
I lament my darling's sacrifice of life for love.  
My hatred is directed at Ma Manchoi.  
I offer you a libation of wine.  
May you search and understand my heart for you.  
Know that I wail at your grave.  
In the offering are wheat rice and paper money.  
The ashes are like butterflies dancing in the air.  
Is your spirit not coming back?  
Even the candles seem dripping in tears, sad as I am.  
Wine and tears flow together.  
My voice is gone, and my wailing for my darling is incessant.  
Three cups of wine are for libations to my darling.  
The fragrance from the incense rises.  
I shall repay my darling down in the spring terrace.  
(*sings*) I am wailing like a cuckoo.  
Darling, may you take my spirit with you, so I can depart from  
this bitter sea.  
My heart is pierced, my circumstances are sorrowful.

Such anguish and bitterness are mine.

I want to turn into a butterfly and flutter over the grave.

This page of history shall forever be immortalized.

*(Lightning and thundering, and the grave opens up slowly.)*

*(Shi Kau, Yan Sum, matchmaker, sedan chair carriers all enter.)*

*(Yingtoi is glad to see the grave open and she leaps into it.)*

*(Everyone panics but can't do anything about it.)*

*(The grave shuts back to its original form.)*

*(A pair of butterflies dance above the grave.)*

*Yan Sum:* *(addressing the matchmaker, speaks)* I will go to tell my senior master, and you go at once to inform young master Ma.

*(People exit.)*

*Shi Kau:* *(stunned and not knowing what to do; slowly approaches the butterflies and tries to touch them, and smiles, speaks)* Haha, my junior master Leung and Miss Chuk. Now you two are spending time together as intimately as you want. People wonder what the depth of love can deliver. The tomb opens itself for you two. You two can be a pair of lovers up in heaven, and appear together like two deep-fried breadsticks always side by side. Thanks for flying out this last time so that I, Fatty Kau, can see.

*(sings)* What a beautiful and matching couple.

Too bad I am left alone without a lover, languishing like an opium addict.

*(speaks)* Well, I better stop singing; my voice is not the most delightful! Now, I can say proudly that our young master has outdone the son of the Ma family. Let me go and buy some more candles and incense. My young master and Miss. Chuk are going to have a good time together in the underworld. *(exits.)*

*(The pair of butterflies keep on flying.)*

*Shanpak:* *(dressed in a special Han-style gown with butterfly wings as sleeves, sings the theme song "Enlivening a lover's grave".)*

I regret, and I also blame myself.

Love has deeply hurt me.

By falling madly in love, I invited tragedy.

I am now in the spring terrace, in Hades.

Someone took my darling, what an awakening!

I harbor misgiving against my lover.

She reneged on our pledge of love.

She shouldn't have ended our romance.  
Our affection and feeling toward one another are no longer the same.  
How dare you marry Ma Manchoi.  
Such love I should not have nurtured.  
The resulting tragedy embitters me.  
(*speaks*) The tomb was opened for my lover. My lonely spirit remembers my dear. Our love can now be resumed through life unto death. Beyond the tragedy, this flower of love can be nurtured.  
(*sings*) In death, we like branches can connect.  
While alive, we could not fly together.  
This Shanpak is so deeply in love.  
With you my dear, we are to walk toward the paradise.  
Previously, our sweet dreams could not be fulfilled.  
From now on, our love can be consummated with utter intimacy.  
At last, my sending you off over ten pavilions is not wasted.  
The three years I spent with you as a fellow student under the same window are worthy!  
In recollecting, I recognize what I did and didn't do.  
You pointed to the mandarin ducks and butterflies with a gentle smile.  
Too bad I was clueless, and you kept trying.  
You sent me, Shanpak, signs of love and hints of affection.  
Preoccupied with your imminent departure, I didn't pay much attention.  
So you were upset to the extent that you didn't want to say one more word.  
I didn't realize then that my dear you were displeased because I was so dull.  
You talked about the big red wedding sedan carriage and the butterflies.  
You wondered aloud why people wouldn't go further with the wind on their back.  
It shouldn't be that way.  
Your words carry so much subtlety, and with hidden meanings, to send me messages of your affection.  
But I was totally clueless.

How could a person be so stupid!  
(*sings*) Overwhelmed with sadness due to our imminent  
separation,  
I failed utterly to grasp your message beyond the obvious.  
You said you had a younger sister, still a maiden at home.  
You tried to offer me pointers, but I was foolish beyond measure.  
You were budding with love from your heart.  
I was completely inert and uncomprehending, unable to think of  
anything but our separation.  
How difficult it was to bid your farewell,  
And we parted with a goodbye.  
You did invite me over to visit.  
I was late for three days, a huge mistake that cost me dearly.  
As a result, Manchoi took my darling!  
It should have been a joyful gathering when we met.  
But it turned into a sorrowful reunion.  
In tears, we bid farewell at the pavilion.  
I fell sick because of my longing for you upon our separation.  
Even with the sweetest dew and best medicinal plants,  
Nothing could save me from a sea of tragedies.  
The tune from your flute reached my heart.  
Dear, you were about to be married.  
My life perished!  
I died for love.  
Dear, you gave up yours.  
We are buried together like mandarin ducks,  
Our love endures.

*(A few stars and a truncated moon appear on the sky; Shanpak exits.)*

*(Four house servants, each carrying a spade or hoe, and matchmaker enter.)*

*Manchoi: (Dressed in his groom's red wedding gown, oil on his face, sings)*

Today is my wedding day!  
Tragedy strikes.  
The terrifying news shocks me, Ma Manchoi.  
Yingtoi, how dare you dress in a funeral gown and express your  
love for a dead fellow.  
You took off your wedding dress and came to wail at the grave.  
The tomb of Shanpak flung open.  
My anger didn't subside;

My indignation cannot be pacified.

I will pry open the grave and see if I can get back my lover.

*(reads the inscription on the tombstone, speaks)* The grave of Leung Shanpak. *(repeats)* *(seizes a hoe and about to dig into the grave.)*

*(Shi Kau, Yan Sum, taking Kungyuan and Mme. Leung, arrive and stop him.)*

*Shi Kau:* *(recites)* You rascal!

What are you doing digging the grave of my young master?

If you dare to touch it,

I will give you a good beating with my fists.

*Yan Sum:* *(recites)* Our miss would rather die than marry you.

She is now wedded to master Leung in Hades.

Well, if you are so upset, you can join them down below.

*Kuanyuan:* *(recites)* Oh, my daughter was so madly in love with Mr. Leung.

It was my mistake to force her into this marriage arrangement.

*Mrs. Chuk:* *(recites)* Alas, I lost my daughter.

You are without luck as the groom.

I, too, am in grief.

*Sister-in-law:* *(recites)* What! I can't believe that Mr. Leung's ghost is so powerful!

He sucked my sister-in-law into the grave.

How strange for a ghost to refuse to give up his love for a live person like that.

*Shi Kau:* *(recites)* Now you see.

You better be careful.

The ghost of my master could very well come after you for all your misdeeds. I am not trying to scare you.

The two of them are bonded together by their devotion and loyalty to one another.

They are now united as a wedded couple down in Hades.

*Manchoi:* *(sings)* Aiyaya! I swear I will pry open the grave.

Anger fills my chest, I can't bear it!

How dare you take my Yingtoi!

She is my wife.

She is a daughter-in-law of the Ma family.

I will take back my lover.

*(The heavens appears in the background; a bridge with stairs on both sides)*

*(Ten fairies all dressed in Han-style gowns with sleeves like butterfly wings stand on the bridge.)*

*(Shanpak and Yingtoi each dressed in a special Han-style gown with sleeves like butterfly wings in front of the moon palace.)*

*(The ten fairies now walk down from the bridge.)*

*(Shanpak and Yingtoi walk down the stairs from the moon palace, dancing as they descend.)*

*Shanpak: (sings) I love the flower blossom; Yingtoi is now buried!*

*(End.)*