

Zhu Bian Returns to Court

朱弁回朝

Yip Shiu Tak's Cantonese Opera Manuscripts
葉紹德粵劇劇本精選

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葉紹德粵劇劇本翻譯計劃

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ACT 1

Scene : Main Camp of Jin State.

Curtain rises with fanfare: one phrase of Paiji tune.

Four Jin officers enter and stand aside.

Enter HA MICHI.

HA MICHI

[Recites]

Wipe out Liao, invade Song, formidable might. All credit to this Nestor.

[Speaks]

I, HA MICHI, military strategist of Jin realm, led troops to wipe out Liao once, succeeded in no time. My Lord admires the prosperous Central Kingdom, so he invaded Song with his army, abducted the two emperors back to the north. Our tribe grazes horses down south, aiming at pursuing in triumph the vanquished and ruling the unified Central Kingdom. But the Song General Yue Fei, valiant and great warrior, engaged us in several battles and we lost. Some months ago our army retreated north, to work out our next move. And so, now being so inert, we want action. But we find no recipe for victory. Officers, the Prince will muster shortly. Attend carefully. We call for our Prince.

Music "Dabbing Scarlet Lips", *palace maids and eunuchs enter first.*

Enter JIN WUSHU.

JIN WUSHU

[Speaks heroically]

Lying drunk, the world's too crammed. My spirit subdues eternal sun and moon. Heaven and earth may be vast. WUSHU calls himself Prince.

MICHI and Four Officers

[Greet and speak]

We greet Your Highness.

JIN WUSHU

[Speaks: Haugu]

Strategist Ha, my chained cavalry in armor so invincible met defeat at Song General Yue Fei's hand. Now I still speak of it with bitterness. These few months, retreating north, we are clearly showing weakness. Now I want to assemble an army of the whole state, and fight the Yue Family Army again.

MICHI

[Speaks: Haugu]

Your Highness, they say tolerate the small things lest you upset the grand plan. We lost once, we must not lose again. Think carefully, Yue Fei is full of guile. We can't eliminate him all at once. Furthermore, we have no sure win strategy. Why wage war impetuously.

WUSHU

[Displeased, speaks: Haugu]

Strategist, remember when I conquered Liao and invaded Song, my might shook the world. What glory! Today, this fellow Yue Fei, made me flee northward, helpless and not knowing what to do. If I don't revenge this defeat, I am staying alive in vain.

MICHI

[Dissuades: Haugu]

Calm down, Your Highness, the Han people's "The Art of War" by Sun Zi says, "Know yourself and know the enemy, you will win every war." I've been pondering on a strategy for months. When we captured the two emperors, we relied on the Song Courtier Zhang Bangchang's inside job. Now I am liaising with Qin Kui, Prime Minister of Song Dynasty. [Beat] If this ruse works, we can bring Yue Fei under control. Laughable Song Court, with no good Courtiers inside, it's futile having good warriors outside. By then we need not waste one soldier, and topple the Song realm.

WUSHU

[Pleased on hearing this, sings: Gwanfa lower line]

**One day, when the whole domain is mine,
It's all thanks to Strategist's meticulous scheme.
If I can conquer the Central Kingdom,
I'll reward you with high office.**

MICHI

[Speaks]

Thanks, Your Highness.

Gong music, *enter Prince JINLONG, armed.*

JINLONG

[Sings: Gwanfa lower line]

**I hear Song emissary arrives in Jin realm,
To ask for the two emperors back.
Lest there's trickery in it,
I hurry back to camp to speak the truth.**

[Goes into camp, greets and speaks]

I greet Father.

WUSHU

[Speaks]

Son, rise and be seated.

JINLONG

[Speaks]

Thanks. [*He sits.*]

WUSHU

[Speaks: Haugu]

Son, you come into camp in a hurry, what's the matter?

JINLONG

[Speaks: Haugu]

Father, I heard Zhao Gou the Song Emperor sent ZHU BIAN, Champion Scholar, as emissary to our State, to beg father for the two emperors back. He's now awaiting audience outside. I fear he means to deceive. So I hurry here to report, be careful and be on the alert.

MICHI

[Speaks]

Your Highness, may I ask, this ZHU BIAN, how many troops does he bring?

JINLONG

[Speaks]

Strategist, ZHU BIAN brings no troops, just one attendant.

MICHI

[*Thinks for a while* and speaks: Haugu]

O Prince, if ZHU BIAN comes alone, he must have extraordinary valor. Since he wants the two emperors back, we can seize the chance to extort ransom. But ours being a superior state, how can we not stand on ceremony at all. If we breach etiquette, it damages Your Highness' reputation.

WUSHU

[Anxiously speaks: Haugu]

I've been a warrior all my life. All I know is fighting on horseback, I know not etiquette. Since the Song emissary is here, let's discuss tactics at once.

JINLONG

[Speaks]

Father.

[Sings: Long Yiwong lower line]

Now Song is just ruling a small territory.

Our State is strong and mighty.

Why fear Song emissary,

Boasting with his tongue?

**I fear he has malice at heart,
Playing some tricks secretly.
Asking for two emperors as an excuse,
But bent on assassination of Father.
Let's have men hidden in ambush,
For your own safety's sake.**

MICHI

[Speaks]

Your Highness, why so uptight.

[Sings: Gwanfa lower line]

**Song's Champion Scholar,
Knows only literary writing.
He's not used to taking arms.
I fear we breach etiquette in reception.
We will become a laughing stock,
And disappoint our people.**

WUSHU

[Speaks]

Son.

[Sings: Gwanfa lower line]

**My arms and fists of steel
Can combat the tiger.
Even if he is an assassin,
Be he Jing Ke or Nie Zheng,
I have no fear.
Now our whole state is armed,
But pity we have no literati.**

MICHI

[Speaks: Haugu]

O Prince, you mention no literati, I am reminded of someone who can shoulder the responsibility.

WUSHU

[Speaks]

Who is that?

MICHI

[Speaks: Haugu]

O Prince, the Princess, not only is she well-versed in martial arts, but she loves to read Han people's books too. She must know Han etiquette well. Let her deal with the Song emissary, that is most fitting.

WUSHU

[Speaks: Haugu]

Right. I forget my daughter, she's well-versed in Han history, and knows Han practice well. Quick, transmit my order by mouth, summon the Princess to camp.

JINLONG

[Stops him and speaks: Haugu]

Wait, Song is a vanquished state, degraded from superior to inferior realm. My sister is royalty. How can an inferior state's emissary be allowed to see such beauty.

WUSHU

[Speaks: Haugu]

Son, only the Han people forbid social intercourse between sexes. Our state does not segregate men and women. At this moment, for state reputation's sake, I must enlist the help of this versatile girl.

[Speaks]

Eunuch, summon her for me.

Eunuch obeys.

Music: Maanbaan. *Enter WAN-ER the Court Maid accompanying FEIFENG the Princess Snow Flake.*

FEIFENG

[Sings: Sigung Maanbaan lower line]

**Flower at Jin palace,
Originally of Liao royal blood.
Phoenix roosts in green parasol tree.
Dreams of home country unforgettable.
I love to study Han books,
And master both literary and martial arts.
Don't think this weak female can be bullied.
I can overcome men of steel.**

WAN-ER

[Speaks]

Princess.

[Sings: Gwanfa lower line]

**I am of Han race, passing as Jin maid.
Fortunately Princess trusts me.
Favors and confides in me, like sisters.
I lie low in monster palace,
Await chance to slay poisonous python.**

FEIFENG

[Speaks]

WAN-ER, say no more. Lead the way to camp, quick.

WAN-ER leads FEIFENG into camp.

FEIFENG

[Approaches to greet and speaks]

Father, you summon me, what is the matter?

WUSHU

[Speaks: Haugu]

Right. A Song delegate is here. I know you're well-versed in Han etiquette, you can handle him. We are all uncouth men in this camp. Besides you, daughter, none could take up this task.

WAN-ER

[Speaks: Haugu]

O Prince, what sort of man is this delegate, that the Princess must be troubled to handle him. Please tell the details.

MICHI

[Speaks: Haugu]

Hey, WAN-ER, what do you know? ZHU BIAN the Song emissary, he's the current year's Champion Scholar. If he's not outstanding in wit, how dare he come alone to plead for the two emperors back. So we rely on the Princess and her talents to uphold the prestige of our state.

JINLONG

[Speaks: Haugu]

Sister, just a defeated state's delegate, no need to make him so important. If he dares say anything offensive, I'll butcher him alive.

FEIFENG

[Speaks]

Brother.

[Sings: Gwanfa lower line]

I can subdue talent with a few words.

No need for you to brandish arms ferociously.

Song delegate comes courteously,

We should receive him politely,

Don't act rashly.

WUSHU

[Speaks: Haugu]

Son, your sister is right. He comes in good will. We should receive him with etiquette. Don't act rashly.

Just act according to circumstances. Strategist Ha, summon the Song emissary for me.

MICHI

[Obeys and speaks]

Hear this. Prince's order, Song emissary, come into the camp.

Music – Grand Gwanfa. *Enter ZHU XIANG accompanying ZHU BIAN.*

ZHU BIAN

[Sings: Gwanfa lower line]

**With my persuasive tongue,
Get the two emperors back to Lin'an.
Coming into tiger's and dragon's lair,
I fear not the ferocious Jin.**

ZHU XIANG

[Speaks]

Master.

[Sings: Gwanfa lower line]

**In barbaric realm, be cautious,
Lest words cause calamity.
Jin people are unreasonable and bullying.
Your suave words can't enlighten the obtuse.**

ZHU BIAN

[Speaks]

I have my plans. Just lead the way.

ZHU XIANG and ZHU BIAN

[*Come into camp together and speak*]

Foreign delegates greet the Prince.

WUSHU

[Speaks]

At ease.

The Zhus give thanks and stand aside.

WUSHU

[Speaks: Haugu]

Emissary, you come a long way. Do you bring any benefit to our state? What is your mission coming here?

ZHU BIAN

[Speaks: Haugu]

By order of Song Emperor, I come to your esteemed state, to ask for our two emperors back. I beg Your Highness to release them at once.

WUSHU

[Speaks]

Release the two emperors? [*Gives MICHI a meaningful look.*]

MICHI

[Comes forward, smiles and speaks: Haugu]

Song emissary, your two emperors are our prisoners of war. You wish to ransom them. Not unless you offer all your treasure and cede some Song territory, then we may entertain your wish.

ZHU BIAN *is taken aback.*

ZHU XIANG

[Speaks: Haugu]

O Prince, we ask for the Emperors back, for purpose of friendly relations, if you name so many conditions, it's out of the question.

JINLONG

[Speaks: Haugu]

Nonsense. ZHU BIAN, you are such a weakling. By what means can you get the two emperors back?

So laughable, with empty words, and you presume so much.

ZHU BIAN

[Speaks: Haugu]

Your Highness, kidnap for ransom, that's no different than banditry. Yours is a newly founded state.

You should rule benevolently to win your people's heart. Hence I make this trip, relying on my tongue alone, to show you the pros and cons, and reason with the Prince.

WUSHU

[Rages and speaks]

Rubbish.

[Sings: Gwanfa lower line]

I have mighty sword.

How can I let you wag your tongue?

I've captured the two emperors for years now.

Will I release them just upon your words?

ZHU BIAN

[Speaks]

O Prince, no need to lose temper, I am about to give good counsel and persuade you to release the two emperors.

WUSHU

[Speaks]

What do you mean?

ZHU BIAN

[Speaks]

O Prince, listen.

[Sings: slightly brisk Maanbaan lower line]

**You wish to lay foundation of an empire,
Then you should release the two emperors,
So as to show your benevolence.
Henceforth, let's fix boundaries at Yellow River,
Establish diplomatic relations,
And cease fighting.**

WUSHU

[Laughs and speaks]

ZHU BIAN, ah, ZHU BIAN. Half of your Song domain is already taken by us. And you still wag your tongue, asking me to return the two emperors. What if I won't do it?

ZHU BIAN

[Speaks]

O Prince, listen again

[Sings: Maanbaan lower line]

**Know that the Yue Family Army,
They await orders, to cross the river,
And march northward.
They are armed and ready for battle.**

[Sings: Chatjiching]

**War is risky business, so true.
Who can tell victory or defeat.
Song is vast and populous.
Our people will defend the state,
Wave after wave.**

[Sings: Gwanfa]

**Call for restoring domain,
Echoed from all four quarters.
I fear you will be beaten
Ere you build your empire.**

WUSHU, MICHI *and all are shocked.*

WUSHU *gives FEIFENG meaningful look.*

FEIFENG

[Sings: Gwanfa lower line]

**Hear his words, shocking all present.
More powerful than an army.
Even though I admire his talent,
I can't bear his arrogant looks.**

[Comes forward and speaks: Haugu]

Song emissary, I hear your words, you are exaggerating. Yue Family Army, no big deal. Hardly worth my notice. Your state's might is no match to ours. If our troops march on you, so easy to conquer your land. Today you come to beg for the return of two emperors, and you spout such rhetoric. You are too conceited.

ZHU BIAN

[Speaks: Haugu]

Princess, I hear you are well-versed in Han history, literary and martial arts. You should know, in this world, there is no invincible army. Nor an ever losing one. You want to conquer our domain, that's not so easy. When the Five Barbaric Tribes overran China, the Han people ended up victor then. Know that brute force is unreliable. Song may be weaker in might, but the whole state is as one, a people united can match a million troops.

FEIFENG

[Speaks: Haugu]

Bah, armchair strategist, what use empty words. If I emulate the Qin Emperor, conquering the Six Warring States, crushing the weak with superior might and numbers, how can your Song people repulse me.

ZHU BIAN

[Taken aback and speaks: Haugu]

Princess, tyrannous Qin conquered by force, and it could not last long. Our state is vast and populous. Even if you overcome the whole state, you cannot rule it easily. Our people constantly resist tyranny. They await opportunity for uprising. I believe you have the power to overthrow the Song Dynasty, but you can't change our ardent hearts.

JINLONG

[Loses temper and speaks]

Bah.

[Sings: Heroic abridged Fuyung (Hibiscus) lower line]

Scholars are full of big talk.

You speak outrageously.

How can meager Yue Family Army

Resist ten myriad troops.

You want the two emperors,

You should negotiate terms.

[Sings: Gwanfa]

Know you my sword is merciless,

It warns you, refrain from bragging. [Draws sword.]

WAN-ER

[Pulls ZHU BIAN aside and speaks]

Emissary Zhu.

[Sings: Gwanfa lower line]

**You're like standing under shaky wall,
Or a lamb sent to a tiger's mouth.
Your mission is not yet accomplished.
Don't talk big and court disaster.**

ZHU XIANG

[Speaks]

Master.

[Sings: Gwanfa lower line]

**Getting killed does not help matters.
Why die in alien land.
If you offend monster prince again,
We'll both become minced meat at a wink.**

ZHU BIAN

[Stops him and speaks]

You step aside.

[Comes forward to JINLONG and speaks]

Your Highness, I dare you to kill me.

[Sings: Gwanfa lower line]

**Say not a scholar is powerless.
I'll risk spilling blood in Jin realm.**

[To WUSHU]

**O Prince, you want the country's allegiance.
I hope you'll check your fierce looks now.**

WUSHU and JINLONG *are speechless.*

FEIFENG

[To Wushu, speaks]

Father.

[Sings: Jungbaan lower line]

**This Song emissary chooses death,
Rather than be insulted.
His spirit is matchless.
Song will not easily topple.
With such a talent as pillar,
More useful than doughty warrior.
Heaven sends talent to southern state.
Just right to be used by northern one.
Please persuade this talent to surrender.**

[Sings: Gwanfa]

**A talented statesman is a rare find.
Father, make the offer of appointment quickly.**

WUSHU

[Speaks]

My daughter is a great talent scout. ZHU BIAN.

[Sings: Long Gwanfa lower line]

Song Dynasty will topple soon.

You've no hope of retaliation.

Don't play tough now.

Man challenges Heaven in vain.

Song giving way to Jin is the true destiny.

You'd better surrender sooner.

They say rare bird chooses its roost.

Why shed blood and sweat for Song in vain.

ZHU BIAN

[Laughs in scorn and speaks: Haugu]

I, a Han man, fears not death. The literati value moral principle. My head may sever, my will surrenders not. Have no false hopes.

MICHI

[Speaks: Haugu]

O Prince, looks as if ZHU BIAN will not stay to be of use to us. Release him and trouble may ensue. Since it's hard to keep or release him, better behead him.

JINLONG

[Speaks: Haugu]

Bah, I've suffered you long enough, let me draw my sword in rage, and send you to the Underworld.
[JINLONG draws sword.]

FEIFENG

[Stops him and speaks: Haugu]

Brother, two warring states don't behead emissaries, as the saying goes. Killing wantonly arouses public outcry. Don't let Song courtier shed blood in Jin State.

WUSHU

[Also angry and speaks]

Daughter, say no more. ZHU BIAN, at this moment, he who obeys me lives, he who contradicts me dies. If you are smart, surrender to me, and you can keep your head. If not, I'll make you a headless ghost.

ZHU XIANG and WAN-ER are anxious.

ZHU BIAN

[*Heroically laughs thrice and sings: Chaijiching lower line*]

A patriot fears not death.

Zhang Qian the Han Emissary,

Kept the diplomatic staff,

Spread Han's glory all over Central Asia.

Lin Xiangru was valiant,

Restores jade to Zhao State,

To the chagrin of the King of Qin.

There's Su Wu, imprisoned at North Sea,

Pasturing sheep in the snow.

[Sings: Gwanfa]

China bred heroes generation after generation.

Brute force cannot bend man of iron.

WUSHU

[Speaks in anger]

How dare you.

[Sings: Faidim lower line]

In shame, anger turns to madness.

Guards, behead the Song delegate.

FEIFENG

[Stops him and speaks: Haugu]

Father, killing emissary brings inconvenience. Since he wishes to emulate Su Wu, pasturing sheep at North Sea, why not banish him to Cold Mountain, to pasture horses. [Beat] Let him suffer torment, imprisoned in ice and snow.

Beat. All present show different reactions.

WUSHU

[Speaks]

Daughter gives wise counsel.

[Speaks: Haugu]

ZHU BIAN, ah, ZHU BIAN, know you that Cold Mountain is even colder than North Sea. No grass or trees can grow there. There's neither food nor water. A weak scholar like you, how long can you endure it. Rather than suffer and die, better surrender to me.

ZHU BIAN

[Grinds his teeth, glares at FEIFENG and sings: Gwanfa lower line]

Willing to match ice and snow

With my pure moral fortitude. [Beat]

Tending horses at Cold Mountain, no problem.

Thirsty and I drink ice and snow,

Hungry and I eat my blanket.

In face of danger, I won't beg for mercy.

WUSHU

[Speaks in anger]

Bah, death is upon you, and still you talk obstinately. Guards, take the two of them to Cold Mountain, cross me not.

Exeunt two Jin officers taking ZHU BIAN and ZHU XIANG out.

WUSHU

[Sighs and speaks]

Using carrot and stick in vain, can't make the spirited talent surrender. I retire.

Exeunt WUSHU, JINLONG, MICHI and Jin officers.

WAN-ER

[To cymbals sound, pulls FEIFENG aside and speaks: Haugu]

Princess, I didn't expect you to be so cruel and callous all of a sudden, asking the Prince to banish ZHU BIAN to tend horses at Cold Mountain. Pity him, can't seek to survive or die. The outcome is unthinkable.

FEIFENG

[Sighs and speaks: Haugu]

Alas, WAN-ER, don't you know my mind? If I don't banish ZHU BIAN to tend horses at Cold Mountain, how can I preserve his life? I sympathize with the patriot. I don't mean to insult the slim-waist man.

WAN-ER

[Speaks]

Alas, Princess, there's neither water nor food at Cold Mountain. How can he make a living.

FEIFENG

[Speaks]

I have my idea. I'll whisper in your ear. [Whispers to WAN-ER.]

WAN-ER

[Speaks in joy]

Oh, so that's how it is.

FEIFENG

[Sings: Gwanfa lower line]

**I fear my efforts are not appreciated,
And he may not be used
To enduring wind and frost.**

WAN-ER

[Speaks]

Princess, you miss him already, so soon.

Abashed, FEIFENG chases WAN-ER. Exeunt together.

CURTAIN

Annotations on Act 1

1. The Song Dynasty in Chinese history was divided into the Northern Song (960 – 1127 A.D.) and the Southern Song (1127 – 1279 A.D.). The Northern Song was founded by Zhao Kuangyin (posthumous temple name Taizhu), its first Emperor who united China in 960 A.D. after conquering the Ten Kingdoms – see Li The Later Ruler Annotations. The Dynasty never ceased to face invasions from barbaric (as opposed to the civilized Han people of China—the Central Kingdom) tribes in the north. First there was the Liao Dynasty (915 to 1125 A.D.) founded by the Yelü family of the Qidan (Khitan) Tartars. Song used the tactic of alliance with Jin to topple the Liao Dynasty. Jin Dynasty (1115 – 1234 A.D.) was founded by the Wanyan family of the Nüzhen (Nuchen) tribe, who were the forefathers of the Manchus who later founded the Qing Dynasty (1644 – 1911 A.D.). (Some historians spell it “Jinn” to distinguish from the earlier Jin Dynasty which united China after the period of the Three Kingdoms.) Jin then invaded Song in turn after Liao was eliminated, overrunning half of China north of the Yangzi River. Emperor Xuanhe (this is his last era name. His temple name is Huizong), the second last Emperor of the Northern Song, abdicated in favor of his son who became the last Emperor Jingkang (temple name Qinzong). During his reign, Jin troops marched into the Northern Song capital of Bian (now Kaifeng of Henan Province), captured the two Emperors Hui Zhong and Qin Zhong as prisoners of war, and effectively toppled the Northern Song Dynasty in this “Jingkang Incident” (1127). Prince Kang (Zhao Gou by name) of the imperial family was enthroned in 1127 as the first Emperor Gaozong of the Southern Song in the new capital city south of the Yangzi, Lin’an (now Hanzhou of the Zhejiang Province). The Jin side’s Commander-in-Chief of its mighty army was Prince Wushu. On the Song side, Yue Fei the legendary national hero led his Yue Family Army to repel Jin troops. Yue’s professed aim was to march on Bian and restore(reinstate) the two imprisoned emperors. This was not viewed with favor by Emperor Gaozong, who made secret pact of truce with Jin, negotiated by Qin Kui the Prime Minister of the Southern Song. Qin ordered Yue Fei back to Lin’an from his repeated victories in the front, framed him for no definite crime and executed Yue Fei to remove this obstacle for the pact of truce. The Southern Song later used the same tactic as the Northern Song and allied with the Mongols (led by their founding father Genghis Khan) to defeat Jin, only to be left helpless and toppled by Yuan Dynasty of the Mongols in 1279 A.D under Emperor Kublai Khan, grandson of Genghis Khan.
2. WUSHU’s tactical chained cavalry formation in armor was formed by having every three horses linked together with chains in a row and carrying armored warriors, which was formidable when charging in battle. Yue Fei defeated this formation by infantry using scythes on the horses’ legs, so that chained trio horses fell down together and riders were helplessly slain.
3. The Art of War by Sun Zi (i.e. Sun Wu by name) the ancient strategist of the Warring States period (403 – 221 B.C.) is a classic of strategies in the military history of China, and contains the famous quote “Knowing one’s own situation and that of the enemy guarantees victory in every battle.”

4. While Prince JIN WUSHU and strategist HA MICHI are real figures in history with genuine Nǚzhen names, the fictitious characters JINLONG and FEIFENG have Chinese (Han language) names that have literal meanings of “Golden Dragon” and “Flying Phoenix” respectively. Phoenix the legendary bird is believed to only roost in green parasol trees. FEIFENG also has an additional title of Princess Snow Flake.
5. WUSHU mentioned two famous assassins in ancient Chinese history, viz. Jing Ke who attempted but failed to murder the Qin Emperor, and Nie Zheng who defaced himself upon failure of his assassination attempt, to make himself unrecognizable and thus protect his sister. However, his sister killed herself beside her brother’s body after all in legendary fraternal loyalty.
6. WUSHU’s opening remark to ZHU BIAN was a quote from the classic Mencius, quoting Prince Hui of Liang asking Mencius, “Old man, you come a long way, do you bring any benefits to my state?”, which led Mencius to bring in his theme of “Talk not of benefits but rather of benevolence and righteousness.”
7. ZHU BIAN mentioned the historical event of Five Barbaric Tribes Invading China in the 5th Century, setting up the Sixteen Kingdoms of the Five Barbaric Tribes, ending in the Han people ruling only the south, and unification of Northern China under the Northern Wei Dynasty (534 – 550 A.D.) of Xianbei, one of the Five Tribes. Eventually China is unified under Sui Dynasty founded by Yang Jian of Han race.
8. FEIFENG retorted, quoting the first Emperor of Qin conquering the other six of the Warring States and unifying China in 221 B.C.
9. ZHU BIAN mentioned Zhang Qian, who as emissary for Emperor Wu (157-87 B.C.) of Han Dynasty won a diplomatic victory of making Central Asia states allies of Han against the Huns.
10. He further quoted the tale of Lin Xiangru, emissary of the Zhao State to the Qin State during the Warring States period (403 – 221 B.C.), bearing the invaluable He’s jade demanded by Qin as gift and negotiating peace with Qin, cleverly succeeding in preserving the jade and bringing it back intact to Zhao. “Bringing jade intact back to Zhao” has become a Chinese proverb meaning returning an item intact to its rightful owner.
11. He last mentioned Su Wu as his role model. Su was Han Dynasty/Emperor Wu’s emissary to the Huns. He refused to surrender to the Shangyu (King) of the Huns, kept holding on to his diplomatic staff, a symbol of his loyalty to Han, and of his integrity and moral fortitude. He was banished to North Sea (now Baygal Lake in Siberia) to pasture sheep for 19 years, suffering great hardship, viz. swallowing snow to quench his thirst and eating his own blanket in hunger. He won respect for his constancy and was released by the Huns to return to Han after 19 years.

ACT 2

Scene 1

Scene: Thatch hut with stone table and chairs inside and a side window. Windy and snowy weather.

Time: Dusk.

ZHU XIANG *stands shivering at window.*

Curtain rises.

ZHU XIANG

[Shivering, sings: Baan'aan]

Ice blocks remote frontier.

Snow covers Cold Mountain.

Lamentably, suffering hunger and cold.

This is tragic.

The Princess sends warm clothes by night,

And meals by day.

But the emissary stands on principle,

Won't covet clothes and food.

I can only hide them,

And try to persuade him,

To put on more clothing and eat more,

So as to find opportunities

To bring the two emperors back.

[Speaks]

Alas, my Master is too stubborn. He works hard daily, tending horses in front of the Mountain, suffering hunger and cold, won't eat, won't put on warm clothes. I fear that in a couple more days, he'll inevitably die here beyond the frontier pass. Even though a man shouldn't shun hardship, one can be flexible and make shift. Now the sun is setting in the west. Master will be back soon. Let me prepare some food, then persuade him to sup. Alas, now we enter tiger's cave. When do we exit from dragon's loch.

[Exit into hut.]

Long Yiwong prelude. Enter ZHU BIAN holding staff, emaciated but unyielding.

ZHU BIAN

[Sings: Long Yiwong upper line]

Ashamed to take foreigner's corn,
I take snow as my meal.
I refuse to wear barbarian clothes,
I'd rather suffer cold.
Banished to tend horses at Cold Mountain,
I hate the Princess for such cruelty.
Su Wu tended sheep then,
He's my paragon.
Swallowed blanket, chewed snow,
For nineteen years.
He left behind an exemplar
Of moral principle in the world.
I fear my wish may not realize,
And I'd be ashamed to face past sages.

[Summons strength and approaches hut door.]

Enter ZHU XIANG carrying food, sees ZHU BIAN and comes forward hurriedly.

ZHU XIANG

[Speaks: Haugu]

Master, just right, I know you return by this time from horse tending, so I worked in kitchen earlier, and prepare this meal for you.

[Places food on stone table and speaks]

Master, let's eat while it's warm.

ZHU BIAN

[Sees steaming food and, in hunger, forgets himself for a while, comes to table, takes chopsticks, raises bowl and is about to eat, then thinks better of it, puts it down, solemn-faced. Speaks: Haugu]

Uncle Xiang, on Cold Mountain, there's neither food nor water. Grass and trees don't grow here. Where do you get this good food? Tell me the source quickly.

ZHU XIANG

[Hesitates and speaks: Haugu]

Eh...alas, Master, just take it while there's food. Lest you've nothing to eat even if you want to. Why bother about the source, of the robe or rice.

ZHU BIAN

[With one look at ZHU XIANG, knows the truth, slaps on the table angrily, rises and speaks: Haugu]

I won't take it. [Beat.] A gentleman doesn't drink from bandit's spring even in thirst, nor rest in inferior wood's shade even in heat, as the saying goes. I won't take anything from the foe. I'd rather starve to death at Cold Mountain.

ZHU XIANG

[Approaches him persuasively and speaks]

Master, not so hot-tempered, let me tell you the whole truth.

[Speaks: Baatlaam]

The Princess secretly pities talent.

For fear that you suffer hunger and cold,

She sends little maid in secret, Bringing
clothing and meals here.

She says banishing you to Cold Mountain

Was for reasons you must condone.

She hopes you'll keep warm and eat,

And not harm your own body.

ZHU BIAN

[Raging, speaks: Baatlaam] Taking

up mission, I am selfless.

Stepping into danger, I rely on courage.

Let her use carrot and stick,

I will not be subdued.

First banish me to Cold Mountain,

Then play pity on lonely iron bird.

Even though I am a fool,

I can see through her tricks.

[Getting faster]

Righteous spirit everlasting

As sun and moon.

Loyal heart known to Heaven and Earth,

Easy to give up life for my cause.

Hard to bend my fortitude and serve enemy.

ZHU XIANG

[Persuades again and speaks]

Master, I believe the Princess does not harbor such tricks. Why are you so prejudiced.

[Sings: Gwanfa lower line]

You took up mission, crossed frontier,

To receive back the two emperors.

You should find a way

To accomplish mission and return.

There's fish and meat to relieve your hunger and cold.

Just allay the pressing hardship.

[Speaks]

Master, even if the Princess is using tricks to please you, so as to make you surrender, you should know how to handle it. They say try hard where there's hope. How can you fold your arms waiting for death.

Don't be so stubborn. Well, might as well tell you, the buns you took yesterday, were sent by the Princess too.

ZHU BIAN

[*Heavy beat, very angrily speaks*]

Then.... I was wrong to take it. [Sings: Chatjiching lower line]

I cannot accept alms.

Su Wu returned to Court, And was praised for ages.

Li Ling surrendered to the foe, And was censured by myriads. I'd rather swallow blanket.....

ZHU XIANG

[*Closely follows to finish the line and sings*]

No substitute for rice,

You should find a good way

To overcome crisis.

Be flexible...

ZHU BIAN

[*Closely follows to finish the line and sings*]

I won't do it.

A Courtier's fortitude, heavy as mountain, If I can't, while living,

Retrieve the two emperors,

I'll spill my blood on barbarians.

[Sings: Gwanfa]

To swallow insult and stay alive, I cannot debase myself to do that.

ZHU XIANG

[*Still trying to persuade and speaks*] Alas, Master.

[Sings: Yifan Muk'yü]

They say a gentleman takes revenge

Ten years later, and it's not too late.

Just wish to wash away national shame,

And save the times.

Sun Bin of old suffered insult,

And escaped from disaster.

He took Pang Zhuan's life in the end.

There's Gou Jian too, imprisoned in Wu,

Suffering hardship so piteous.

He waited for his chance

To retaliate and restore his State.

Hope you'll put on warm clothes and eat.

Follow the historical examples.

Revenge later, destroy the barbarians.

[Speaks]

Master, I see you so lean and gaunt, how can you endure hunger and cold. I have different ideas. I'll take ten bowls of rice daily, feed myself fat and strong, even plumper than before. Master, why torture yourself. As for how to accomplish mission, just have to make a move later. That's better than dying at Cold Mountain in exhaustion, doesn't help matters at all. You listen to me, take a little food.

ZHU BIAN

[*Determinedly refuses and sings: Gwanfa lower line*]

A man must know right and wrong,

Accept favors and one must repay.

I'll swallow ice and snow

To feed my hungry bowels.

I won't take barbarian's rice

For all my life.

ZHU XIANG *keeps talking ZHU BIAN into eating.*

Slow long beat. Enter FEIFENG, and WAN-ER carrying ginseng soup, together.

FEIFENG

[Sings: Saipei]

Hearing neighing in snow storm,

I look up at Cold Mountain.

To save his life, wrongly

I banished him to suffering in snow.

Makes me endlessly sad.

WAN-ER

[*Jeeringly, sings*]

A handsome scholar's talent,

Princess has eyes for him.

Pitying thoughts time and again,

Must be pre-destined match.

To meet in dreams,

Heaven sent talent to match beauty.

FEIFENG

[*Half angry, half bashful, speaks*]

WAN-ER, I pity the talent, and inadvertently insulted him. Hence I feel uneasy, moreover.....

WAN-ER

[*Understandingly speaks*]

Moreover, though flower welcomes man, pity, man has no feelings for flower.

FEIFENG

[*Feigns anger and speaks*]

WAN-ER, say no more, lead the way, quick.

WAN-ER *leads FEIFENG to door of hut.*

ZHU XIANG

[*Sees FEIFENG and WAN-ER, hurriedly to ZHU BIAN speaks*]

Master, the Princess calls in person.

[*Comes forward and greets*]

Princess, Miss WAN-ER.

ZHU BIAN *gives a cold look, turns his head away in disdain.*

WAN-ER

[*Comes forward and speaks: Haugu*]

Emissary, our Princess knows you tend horses at mountain, that you're not used to such suffering, so she boils ginseng soup for you herself, and comes in person to enquire after you. The Princess cares for you very much. Don't let down her admiration.

[*Puts down the soup and speaks*]

Emissary, take it while it is warm.

ZHU BIAN

[*Laughs in scorn, pushes it away and speaks: Haugu*]

No, thanks. The Princess is Jin royalty. I, ZHU BIAN, am a mere Song delegate. Our positions are different, it's them and us. [Beat] Moreover I am a prisoner now, like a caged bird. A lowly groom of horses, I don't deserve the Princess' concern.

FEIFENG *is speechless at this irony.*

ZHU XIANG

[*Speaks: Haugu*]

Master, the Princess cares for you a lot. Hungry, and she sends food. Cold, and she sends clothing. Not to mention she condescends to come calling on you. Even if you don't accept the kindness, you shouldn't make offensive remarks.

FEIFENG

[*Speaks: Haugu*]

Emissary, I always value talent. Can't bear to see talent slain. Hence I asked Father to banish you to tend horses at Cold Mountain. I just wanted to save you from danger. I knew you would misunderstand me and bear me grudges, therefore I come in person, to tell you the whole truth, hope you'll forgive my dilemma then.

ZHU BIAN

[*Chuckles* and speaks]

So I could preserve my life at Cold Mountain, chew snow, swallow blanket and tend horses, all thanks to you, Princess. Won't I understand your intentions?

[Sings: Abridged Fuyung ("Hibiscus") lower line]

You want southern talent

To be used by northern realm.

Lure me to defect to enemy camp.

Now you deign to come to Cold Mountain,

Just to test my inclinations.

WAN-ER

[Continues and sings]

The Princess' favors, weighty as mountain.

Pity, your heart and eyes are both blind.

Who wants you to defect to barbaric realm?

Don't think so highly of yourself.

FEIFENG

[Continues and sings]

Know you not it's easy to die,

But hard to shirk one's duty.

Pray wait for opportunity.

One day you'll succeed and return home.

ZHU XIANG

[Continues and sings]

The Princess' words are ponderous,

Her intentions noble.

Don't think lightly of it.

[Sings: Gwanfa]

Live longer to wait for chances,

And one day you'll succeed.

ZHU BIAN

[*Blinded by fury*, speaks]

Hey, will I still retain fortitude then?

[Sings: Gwanfa lower line]

I'd bury thin bones in snow,

Just wish to leave purity of spirit behind.

If I can't succeed, I'll die.

My loyal heart is seen by all.

WAN-ER

[Speaks]

Emissary, since you are book-learned, you must have heard the saying: Death may be feather-light or weighty as mountain.

ZHU BIAN

[Speaks]

Hey, little Palace Maid, parroting books vainly. Do you know the meaning.

WAN-ER

[*Can't restrain herself* and speaks: Haugu]

Emissary, WAN-ER is of Han race. I am literate. I remember Jin troops marching south, my family's all killed. Bent on revenge, I joined the militia, learning books and martial arts. I was then sent on an inside job, was favored by the Princess, and we are on the same side. We think alike. I pass as a maid, but Her Highness treats me as a sister. Now I discuss death with you, Emissary, its lightness and weight, just to remind you of your duty. If by dying, you can accomplish your mission, then death is weighty as mountain. If dying and your mission is unfulfilled, you are dying in vain, and letting down your heavy duty. Would you rather await opportunity to have the two emperors back, or die futilely in a glacier?

ZHU BIAN

[Speaks aside: Haugu]

Hearing WAN-ER's hearty words, there is reason in it. Why is she and Princess on same side? Is there trickery? Alas, I, ZHU BIAN, am at others' mercy today, can't choose life or death, stay or go. I mean to accomplish mission, but Heaven disposes, I am powerless.

FEIFENG

[Speaks: Haugu]

Emissary, where there's a will, there's a way, the Old Fool fulfilled the wish of moving mountain. Why lose hope all at once. I respect loyal Courtier. Just ashamed I can't help more. I advised Father to make you surrender, then suggested banishing you to tend horses here, all for preserving your life, to accomplish your great mission. Alas, do you know my misfortunes are more miserable than yours now.
[Sadly.]

ZHU BIAN

[Heavy beat. Speaks: Haugu]

Princess, you are of royal blood, how can you compare with me. Can you tell me in detail your sad past?

FEIFENG

[Speaks]

Emissary, listen, please.

[Sings: Faansin Jungbaan lower line]

I am of Liao royalty blood. [Beat]

ZHU BIAN

[*More surprised* and speaks]

You are a Jin Princess, why say you're of Liao blood?

WAN-ER

[Speaks]

Emissary, let the Princess go on.

FEIFENG

[Sings: Faansin Jungbaan lower line]

**I am of Liao blood,
Sadly, invaded by Jin.
I lament my state's demise,
My broken home, a race trampled.
This orphan fledgling, after the disaster,
Was forced to be adopted daughter of Jin Prince.
A phoenix caged, lamenting leaving my nest.
Pain is not rootless.
I wish one day to restore my nation.
With one breath left,
I'll see my old home country.**

[Accelerating]

**Conquered domain is no more.
Only vain hope remains in my heart.
Liao is toppled, Song confined to the south.
We suffer the same misfortune.**

[Sings: Gwanfa]

**I earnestly await revenge.
If you die, who shoulders the responsibility.**

ZHU BIAN

[*Moved*, speaks]

Princess, I wronged you, I wronged you. [*Ashamed and speechless.*]

ZHU XIANG

[Speaks]

Master.

[Sings: Gwanfa lower line]

**Don't let down the Princess,
She encourages you so sincerely.
And pity her, homeless and stateless,
No nest to return to.
She sends clothes and food,
To save you from hunger and cold.
Pluck up your courage now,
And it is not too late.**

WAN-ER

[Sings: Gwanfa lower line]

I'm bent on revenge against oppression.

I hope emissary succeeds and returns.

You are lucky to have Princess' care.

Don't complain now to anyone.

ZHU BIAN

[Ashamed and speaks]

Princess.

[Sings: Faansin "Willow Color In Field"]

Facing you at Cold Mountain,

Secretly weep and sigh.

I lament phoenix suffering ill.

In alien land, I'm imprisoned,

Hard to get two emperors back.

Tending horse at deserted mountain,

I wronged you. Please forgive me.

I bow to you again.

FEIFENG

[Continues and sings]

We have the same aim.

The debt of blood will be repaid,

Sooner or later.

Kill the wicked, wash away shame,

All in good time.

Work hard to fulfill weighty task.

WAN-ER

[Continues and sings]

All races ally against jingoism.

Eliminate war henceforth.

People rejoice in salvation.

Bonds are severed one day.

ZHU BIAN

[Continues and sings]

Teary eyes view woes and ills

Of home and country.

I lament when can I go home.

In Song counties, people are suffering.

I stamp my foot and sigh.

FEIFENG

[Continues and sings]

**Su Wu of Han stayed in barbaric land,
Pastured sheep at remote north,
He suffered all woes.
A prisoner for two decades,
He returned to home country at last.
I encourage you to endure
These trying times.**

WAN-ER

[Continues and sings]

**Please keep warm and fed.
You will bring emperors back to Han pass.**

ZHU XIANG

[Sings: Gwanfa lower line]

**Rejoice at clearing all misunderstanding.
Heavy is the task, lament not road is long.
Tend horses at Cold Mountain
To await opportunity.
One day you will be successful
And return to home country.**

FEIFENG

[Speaks]

Uncle Xiang is right. If emissary can wait patiently, the day of success will come.

ZHU BIAN

[Speaks]

Princess, I am honored, you charge me with national duty, I dare not disobey and let you down. So precious that we have the same woe. Our fates are connected. Now I have a presumptuous request, but find it hard to utter.

FEIFENG

[Abashed, speaks]

Emissary, just say it.

ZHU BIAN

[Speaks: Haugu]

Princess, you grieve at broken family, and I long for my home country. We have the same feelings, we are close as blood relations. I wish... [Pause]

I wish to be your sworn brother. [Beat] I wonder if you accept my sincerity.

FEIFENG turns from joy to slight disappointment. But she gradually appreciates ZHU BIAN's sincerity and is torn between happy and sad.

WAN-ER

[Pulls FEIFENG *aside* and speaks: Haugu]

Pshaw, Princess, your efforts all wasted. I thought he'd understand your feelings. Turns out he's more obtuse than a rock.

FEIFENG

[Shouts]

Shut up.

ZHU XIANG

[Pulls ZHU BIAN *aside* and speaks: Haugu]

Master, don't you see: Flower smiles to beckon. Bird wants to fly into your arms. Who wants to be sworn siblings? She longs for your love letter.

ZHU BIAN

[Shouts]

Busybody.

FEIFENG

[Smiles, *come forward* and speaks: Haugu]

Emissary, you don't mind racial difference, that's more than I can hope for. I'm willing to be sworn siblings with you, even better than born of same mother.

ZHU BIAN

[Holds her hand and asks]

May I know the Princess' age?

FEIFENG

[Speaks]

I'm eighteen.

ZHU BIAN

[Speaks]

Then I am two years your senior.

FEIFENG

[Speaks]

I greet Elder Brother.

ZHU BIAN

[Speaks]

Younger Sister.

FEIFENG

[Leans on ZHU BIAN as she greets him, feels embarrassed and speaks.]

Elder Brother.

[Sings: Gwanfa lower line]

**Don't lament wish not fulfilled
Of having emperors back.
I'll help you secretly,
To allay your worries.
As siblings, let's be trusting.
Our hearts glow with the sages' way.**

ZHU BIAN

[Moved at her words, holds her hand with concern and speaks]

Sister, for my sake, I cause you trouble. I am sorry at heart. Hope you'll be cautious in everything.

FEIFENG

[Speaks]

Put your mind at rest, Brother, I'll be cautious in every way. It's getting late now, inconvenient for me to tarry. Take care, Brother, I take my leave.

ZHU BIAN and ZHU XIANG see FEIFENG and WAN-ER off. *Exeunt the women.*

ZHU XIANG

[Gives ginseng soup to ZHU BIAN and speaks: Haugu]

Master, take the ginseng soup while it is still warm. Well, I really don't understand. Since the royal flower loves talent, why has Master no guts to love flower.

ZHU BIAN

[Loudly speaks: Haugu]

What do you know. Princess and I are sworn siblings and close as blood relations now. Don't you speak nonsense, and tarnish this rose amid thorns.

[Sings: aside Gwanfa lower line]

**Alas, sever personal love,
To preserve public justice.
My mind is disturbed like waves.**

Lights dim. Projection: "Six years later."

Interlude music.

If major scene change, then drop curtains to separate the scenes.

CURTAIN

Scene 2

Scene: Outside thatch hut, a raised platform of earth, the hut has window. Background of sandy desert.

WAN-ER

[Enter carrying food. Sings: Long Gwanfa upper line]

**Bringing meals daily,
Six years pass in a wink.
Emissary longs to bring two emperors back.
Pity him, tending horses at Cold Mountain.
Life is hard.
Bad news comes, so frightening.
Says two emperors died at midnight,
I am too scared to tell the truth.
How should I handle it.**

[Speaks]

Sadly, emissary suffered for six years, just wishing to bring two emperors back. Who'd have thought, Xuanhe and Jingkan, both emperors died. Won't it break his heart with despair. Princess bade me just now, repeatedly, to be roundabout in telling emissary, and comfort him with nice words. I think on hearing the news, emissary will be broken-hearted, crying and wailing. Then what am I to do.

[Thinks for a while.]

He's tending horses and not yet back. Why don't I discuss with Uncle Xiang first, before I break the news to emissary. Isn't that wise?

[Approaches door of hut and speaks]

Uncle Xiang.

ZHU XIANG

[Enters, sees WAN-ER, comes forward quickly and speaks]

WAN-ER, you bring meals so early today.

WAN-ER

[Speaks]

Ah, I'm a bit early today. Oh, yes, is emissary not yet back from tending horses?

ZHU XIANG

[Speaks: Haugu]

Alas, Master is ill. He caught cold last night. Now he's lying sick inside, won't eat or drink.

WAN-ER

[*Alarmed to hear this and speaks*]

Oh, emissary is ill.

[*Speaks aside*]

Alas, now I don't know whether to tell or not.

ZHU XIANG

[*Studies her and enquiringly speaks*]

WAN-ER, you look frightened. What's the matter?

WAN-ER

[*Hesitates and speaks: Haugu*]

Eh...news came, shocking, since emissary is not well, forgive me for not telling. I fear if he hears the news, the grief will kill him.

Enter ZHU BIAN from inside hut, holding staff and with sick look, stops on hearing that and eavesdrops.

ZHU XIANG

[*Alarmed to hear it and speaks: Haugu*]

Oh, from what you say, looks as if this is a grave matter. Since Master is unwell, he shouldn't be agitated as well. Why not tell me the truth. When Master recovers, then I'll tell him everything.

WAN-ER

[*In a dilemma and speaks: Haugu*]

Alas, in fact even if he's not ill, hearing this news will kill him. Sadly, he tends horses at Cold Mountain for six years. All his wishes are denied.

Heavy beat, ZHU BIAN *is shocked.*

ZHU XIANG

[*Anxiously speaks*]

WAN-ER.

[*Sings: Gwanfa lower line*]

Why hesitate to speak.

Better tell me the truth.

Nothing is unspeakable.

You can withhold it for a while,

But not forever.

WAN-ER

[*Sings: Gwanfa lower line*]

Hearing the truth, remember

To keep it secret.

Don't add trouble to his illness.

Bad news came from Wuguo City. [Beat]

The two emperors died all at once.

ZHU BIAN

[Enter falteringly to cymbals, comes forward, holds WAN-ER's hand and enquiringly speaks]

WAN-ER, just now you said, the two emperors died. Is that true?

WAN-ER

[Stammers and speaks]

So....you heard it all.

ZHU BIAN

[Asks again, in graver tone, and speaks]

WAN-ER, is it true, true?

WAN-ER

[Speaks]

True, true.

ZHU BIAN

[Heavy beat, in despair and grief, sings: Gwanfa lower line]

Aiyaya, bad news shattering.

Mission can't be accomplished.

Eternal regret.

Bring two emperors back.

Wish is in vain.

I can't help being shocked.

My soul is shattered.

ZHU XIANG

[Speaks comfortingly to ZHU BIAN: Haugu]

Alas, Master, they say, you can't bring the dead back to life. You must curb your grief. Besides, you are stricken with illness. How much more sorrow can you bear.

ZHU BIAN

[Hopelessly speaks: Haugu]

Two emperors already dead. Emissary ashamed to be powerless. Staying alive, I can't escape the blame for failing my mission. How can I live on in shame.

WAN-ER

[Comfortingly speaks: Haugu]

Emissary, two emperors dead, but new emperor enthroned already in Lin'an. You should find a way, to return to Song realm. Plan washing away national shame later. That beats dying in alien land to follow emperors' fate.

ZHU BIAN

[Sighs and speaks: Haugu]

Alas, if the two emperors were alive, JIN WUSHU could still use me to work out his ransom extortion scheme. Now the two hostages are dead. JIN WUSHU's dream is in vain. Even if he doesn't kill me, it's hard to hope he'll release me.

WAN-ER

[Speaks]

Emissary.

[Sings: Gwanfa lower line]

In crisis, the loyal are too few.

I'll help you leave the beast's lair.

Let me fetch the Princess here quick.

We'll work out a way together

To send you back to your state.

[Speaks]

Emissary, curb your sorrow for the time being. Let me get the Princess here, to work out a good plan together.

[Exit.]

ZHU XIANG

[Comfortingly speaks]

Master, the way things are, no use to grieve so. Just act with circumstances.

ZHU BIAN

[Sighs and speaks]

Alas, Uncle Xiang, the two emperors died, as Courtier, I can't even pay them last respects. Just pay respects looking up skyward. Hurry and prepare the sacrifice, meat and wine.

ZHU XIANG

[Taken aback and speaks]

Alas, Master.

[Sings: Chatjiching lower line]

Grass and trees can't grow on Cold Mountain.

Sacrifice can only be simple.

Forgive me, I can't do what you ask.

The two emperors' soul

Will understand, I believe.

[Speaks to music]

Master, on Cold Mountain, there's neither household nor village. Where can I find wine and meat for sacrificial use?

ZHU BIAN

[*Helplessly* sings: Chatjiching lower line]

**Can't help it, let platform be altar.
Tear as candle, heart as incense,
Sand as rice, black and white rocks
As livestock for sacrifice.**

[Sings: Gwanfa]

**Blood and tears can't be poured.
Quick, prepare pure spring water.
Do not delay.**

ZHU XIANG

[Speaks]

Alas! For a bowl of water, I must walk a long way, Master, you are not well, you can't be untended for a moment.

ZHU BIAN

[Speaks]

Say no more, go quickly. [*Exit* ZHU XIANG]

ZHU BIAN

[*Bowing to sky*, recites]

Sun and moon hidden at remote frontier,
When can I avenge my country.
I cut out my heart,
To write down the people's grief.
Weeping blood, my face remains drawn.

[Paiji start. Sings: "Flower in the Rain" half line Saanbaan]

**Heaven and earth filled with sorrow.
Two emperors died at icy mountain.
My heart harbors myriad woes.
Hero shame-faced, looks homeward
Across a hundred miles of sandy dust.
Can't raise tearful eyes,
Think of Song domain, half lost.
Six years gone, mission not accomplished.
Weep in alien land,
Lament my life of sorrow.
Imprisoned at Cold Mountain,
Guilt-ridden and ashamed.**

[Sings: Yifaan Jungbaan lower line]

**A night of wind blowing myriad miles of sand,
Can't hide a thousand tears weeping the times.
When will national shame be washed away,
And people's grief satisfied.
Lament two emperors' death.**

Hateful barbarians tyrannous and brutal,
I stay alive for six years in vain,
Suffering all mortal sorrows.
Preserve fortitude, that may be pardonable,
Failed mission is unforgivable.
Imprisoned outside frontier,
Hard to decide life or death,
Leave or stay.

[Music]

Ill body tormented a thousand times.
Weeping blood, pray hear my plea.
Courtier away from state
Laments national crisis.
Loyal subject's tears exhausted
In barbarian dust.
Looking south, when will imperial force
March back and stop
Barbaric cavalry bullying around.

[Sings: Yifan Muk'yü]

Poor me, six years caught in
Tiger's and wolf's lair.
Can't accomplish weighty mission.
Can't escape blame,
Having loyalty in vain.

[Sings: "Duan Family Bridge" middle section, slightly free tempo in first line]

Can't hope to return to Song domain.
Fearful, desert all around,
Can't move one step.
Who pities solitary loyal one, Shamed
and insulted in icy mountain. I lament
my lords met disaster.
Crying to pay respects, tears overflow.
Heart is broken and cold.
Emissary at frontier,
On mission with no fear.
Delay not in restoring emperors.
Mission can't be accomplished,
I weep tears of blood.

[Music changes. Sings: Yilau]

Bad news strikes, courage shattered.
I hold back tears in vain,
Tending horses at cold mountain for six years,
I wail two emperors' death.
Pity, can't hold back violent waves.

[Music conclusion. Aggrieved and fainting.]

Enter ZHU XIANG carrying bowl, sees this, throws bowl off, runs forward to support him.

ZHU XIANG

[Speaks]

Master, Master.

[Sings: Hoche Gwanfa lower line]

Your grief and indignation

Can't remove national calamity.

You should return to Court,

Seek order to kill barbarians.

Heaven sent great talent,

Wherefore helplessly weep and sigh.

ZHU BIAN is overcome with grief.

Enter FEIFENG and WAN-ER to music accompaniment.

ZHU XIANG

[Sees the two, a bit relieved and speaks: Haugu]

Alas, Princess, you come just in time. My Master just now heard the bad news, pain and illness torture him. He cries over the dead souls, he's filled with woe and worry.

FEIFENG

[Comes forward, comfortingly speaks: Haugu]

Brother, I heard WAN-ER report, that you suffer from illness, and lament the emperors' death. So I hasten here to comfort you. You stayed for six years in barbaric land, preserving the Han staff of fortitude. Though the two emperors died, they would appreciate your loyalty. I was in council just now, JIN WUSHU heard of their death, and had ideas of killing you. He said, releasing tiger back to the hills, trouble would ensue. Why grieve and be downcast, thus removing a pain for the enemy.

ZHU BIAN

[Sighs and speaks: Haugu]

Sister, for six years, you've cared about me in every way. I have nothing to repay you. Since JIN WUSHU won't tolerate me, I'd rather die heroically of grief, than be beheaded at execution ground.

WAN-ER

[Speaks: Haugu]

Emissary, your death matters little. What matters is your great talent. Now your heart is troubled in grief for not accomplishing your mission. In fact, though the emperors are dead, you can still achieve great things. Why not calm down and ponder, find a way to sneak back to Song land. Later, assemble a righteous army to eradicate the barbarians, restore the country, even if you die, you have no regret.

Heavy beat, ZHU BIAN is stunned.

Music begins: "18 Beats of Barbaric Horn" first passage, accompanies speech.

ZHU BIAN

[*Aggrieved*, speaks to music]

Alas, at this moment, I can't stay nor leave. What shall I do?

FEIFENG

[Speaks to music]

Brother, Song is confined to a part of the domain, and needs manpower. You should save yourself to be of use to the state. Having the two emperors back is minor compared to restoring state. You want to accomplish great things, how could you be at wit's end.

ZHU BIAN

[Speaks to music]

General of defeated army is no hero, as the saying goes. Emissary of failed mission, I dare not speak of state affairs.

FEIFENG

[Speaks to music]

You want to shirk your duty for restoring state.

ZHU BIAN

[Sings: "18 Beats of Barbaric Horn"]

Lamentably, state affairs hopeless.

Blood and tear stain my sleeves.

In memory of two emperors deceased,

I cry grievously at Cold Mountain.

I regret staying alive for six years.

[Music interlude.]

ZHU BIAN

[Speaks to music]

Alas, I can't accomplish minor affairs, [*Grievously*] how can I shoulder a heavy responsibility.

FEIFENG

[Speaks to music]

Brother, the emperors' death, that's not your fault. Why blame yourself so much.

[Continues to sing]

Brother, why down-hearted all at once.

How can you despair

In face of trial.

You should save the people.

There's the ancient saying:

Many disasters make state prosper.

Hope for washing off shame,

And restoring the state.

Sincerely, I counsel you in good will.

One day your grand plan may proceed.

**Overcome external enemy,
End calamity of war,
Restore Song State.**

[Music interlude.]

ZHU BIAN

[Speaks to music]

Imprisoned for six years, not easy to return to Court. Even with strategic talent, how can I restore home country.

WAN-ER

[Speaks to music]

Emissary, why worry about not easy to return to Court.

[Continues to sing]

**How can you allow your country
To suffer defeat even beyond its frontiers.
You should return to the state.
I am willing to risk for you,
Try every way to help you go back.
I hope you will plan restoration,
Wipe out the external threats,
Fear not hardship in restoring Han domain.**

ZHU XIANG

[Sings: Yifaan Long Gwanfa lower line]

**You've kept your good name for six years,
You must use strategy to save the country too.**

[Points to WAN-ER]

**WAN-ER knows about the woe of statelessness.
A hero does not worry about
The difficulty of state restoration.
I can only cry to encourage talent.
Hope you'll salvage the crisis
Single-handedly.
Why be foolishly loyal,
Listen to everybody's earnest counsel.**

[Music plays.]

ZHU BIAN

[Sighs *painfully*, continues to sing: "18 Beats of Barbaric Horn"]

**Restore my state's domain,
My power alone is small.
Beyond frontier, in sickness,
I cry for the two emperors.
Shockingly, dead all of a sudden.**

**I fail my mission,
Trapped in deserted mountain.
So ashamed, how can I return home.**

FEIFENG

[Continues to sing]

**Don't be ashamed of failing mission.
Brother, go back, pluck up your courage.
One day you will restore the state,
Defeat the barbarians, set the domain in order.
Shoulder the thousand-catty responsibility.
Don't fear loneliness and sickness,
Hard to break out of imprisonment.
I swear I'll release you
To return to home country.**

WAN-ER

[Continues to sing]

**Lament this weak girl,
Her household destroyed by war.
I just hope you will wash away the shame,
And salvage the national crisis,
Kill all the barbarians,
Feed on their flesh in hunger.**

ZHU BIAN

[Continues to sing]

**I regret I can't fulfill my aim,
Too late to go back now.
I am in despair, dispirited totally.
In Wuguo City,
I could not escort back
The two emperors.
Ashamed to be caged at remote frontier.
The Roc wishes to spread its wings,**

[Grief stricken]

And grieves at wings broken all at once.

FEIFENG

[Gravely censures and speaks]

Brother, your thinking is wrong.

[Sings: Chatjiching lower line]

**Lament a world in turmoil.
State seeks talents.
Two emperors died in captivity.**

**You can't be foolishly loyal
And escape blame.
Don't you see people suffering,
Misery in sight everywhere.
How can you tolerate
Barbarians overrunning the country.
I hope you will use your strategy,
Destroy the enemy's will.
Let hero achieve merit and return,
Save the state and the people,
Do not delay.**

WAN-ER

[Sings: Chajiching lower line]

**Wish obtuse rock can awaken.
Wish emissary accept good counsel.
Restore state, kill barbarians.
The state tolerates not invasion.
Barbarians not conquered yet,
Do not shirk duty.
In exile, lessen not your talent,
In future, your merits surpass
The whole mortal world.**

[Sings: Gwanfa]

**Restore old domain from scratch.
Don't waste your loyalty and valor.**

ZHU XIANG

[Speaks]

That's right.

[Sings: Gwanfa lower line]

**A hero should be of use to the state.
Can't let barbarians take over
The Song domain.
How can you
Have the heart to see
Wolves feed on the subdued people's blood,
They long to see Song's troops return.**

ZHU BIAN

[*Heavy beat, moved* and sings: Grave Gwanfa lower line]

**Aiyaya, solemn and righteous
Words of reproach.
I feel doubly ashamed.
You enlighten the confused.
Hope I can break out of the cage
And return to my state.**

FEIFENG

[Speaks]

Brother.

[Sings: Faidim lower line]

I'll make a risky move,

Let Brother go back.

Durable grass fears not strong wind.

I shun not going through fire and hot water.

[Sings: Gwanfa]

Undo the golden lock, release the dragon.

Woman can be brave too.

ZHU BIAN

[Gratefully speaks]

Thanks, Sister.

FEIFENG

[Speaks]

Brother, don't be impatient. Sooner or later, good news arrives. You are not well, hope you'll take good care. WAN-ER, lead the way, back to the palace.

[Exeunt with WAN-ER.]

ZHU BIAN *and* ZHU XIANG *see them off.*

ZHU XIANG

[Speaks]

Master, Princess is so helpful, how precious. She will find a way, to let Master go back to Song land. I hope you will pluck up your spirit, don't let down the Princess who encourages you so earnestly.

ZHU BIAN

[Sighs and sings: Gwanfa lower line]

I lament my mission not accomplished,

I wish to die of shame.

Courtier in foreign land,

Will go home carrying regret.

CURTAIN

Annotations on Act 2

1. ZHU BIAN's "ashamed to take foreigner's corn" is an allusion to the tale of the brothers Boyi and Suqi, who were loyal to the Shang Dynasty (circa 1800 – 1400 B.C.) to the extreme of feeling ashamed to take as food what they considered as "Zhou corn" after the Zhou Dynasty toppled Shang, and starved to death as a result at Shouyang Mountain.
2. ZHU XIANG refers to two historical tales of "source of the robe or rice". The first tale is about Fan Jú (called Fan Shu), a talented strategist of the State of Wei during the period of the Warring States (403 – 221 B.C.), who was framed as traitor by compatriot Xú Jia out of jealousy and suffered greatly, hence on escaping he swore vengeance one day. Fan later convinced the King of Qin to adopt the strategy of allying with the distant states and attacking the close by ones. He became premier of Qin under a false name. Xú Jia came to Qin as emissary and Fan disguised as a pauper in rags to call on him. Xú showed both repentance for his past wrongs, and sympathy for Fan, offering his own robe to Fan. Fan thereupon forgave Xú. The second tale is about the laundress who washed clothes in the river, took pity on the impoverished and starved Han Xin, and gave him rice. Han promised to repay her and she said she did not expect any return. When Han Xin helped the first Emperor of Han Dynasty in founding the empire and was made a prince, he repaid the laundress handsomely.
3. ZHU BIAN cited the ancient fable of an impoverished scholar starving on the street and eventually died of hunger by choice, after refusing to accept food offered with a "pitying sigh" interpreted by him as a show of contempt and insult.
4. ZHU BIAN quoted, in contrast to Su Wu, Su's contemporary General Li Ling, sent by Emperor Wu of Han to attack the Huns with an army of 5000. His troop used up all arrows and he had chosen to surrender to the Huns and accepting an office in the Huns' army. When Northern Song was at war with Liao, the head of the legendary Yang Family Warriors, Yang Ye, was ambushed and killed himself by knocking his head on the tombstone of Li Ling's grave, signifying contempt for Li's surrender.
5. ZHU XIANG quoted the ancient strategists Sun Bin and Pang Zhuan, both of the State of Wei in the period of the Warring States and disciples of the same mentor. Jealous of Sun's talent, Pang framed him and had his legs crippled. Sun escaped to serve the State of Qi, ambushed Pang at Maling Path and killed Pang in revenge. "Bin" means "Crippled", and is Sun's assumed name.
6. ZHU XIANG quoted the war between the warring states Wu and Yue. When King Fu Cha of Wu defeated Yue, King Gou Jian of Yue was imprisoned in Wu Palace as a slave. He nursed vengeance spirit by lying on firewood and tasting gall to goad himself. Eventually he restored Yue and conquered Wu.

7. FEIFENG quoted the ancient fable of the Old Fool Moving Mountain, which tells of an old man mobilizing his family to try to remove a mountain blocking his way bit by bit. A wise man calls him an Old Fool. But he explains his concept that, even though he probably will die before achieving this goal, his sons and their sons will carry on generation after generation, and the determined effort sustained through time will successfully move the whole mountain one day. The fable's moral is therefore "where there is a will there is a way".
8. ZHU XIANG quoted from Confucius the saying that a gentleman has a heavy responsibility (i.e. of benevolence) and a long way (i.e. until death) to carry it out.
9. The two emperors in captivity and have their death reported in Scene 2 are the abdicated Huizong whose reign was last styled Xuanhe, and his son Qinzong, whose reign was Jingkan.
10. Wuguo City (literally Five State City) is present day Yilan in Manchuria.
11. The "Roc" is used to signify the legendary big bird "peng" described in the ancient Chinese Classic "Zhuang Zi".
12. WAN-ER quoted the tale of Monk Daosheng (respectfully addressed as "Shenggong" or "Grandpa Sheng") who used to preach Buddhist teachings to a circle of rocks, and the rocks would nod to signify their comprehension. The relic of "Shenggong Rocks" are allegedly still seen on the Huqiu Mountain, Suzhou today: the very place where Monk Daosheng preached.

ACT 3

Scene: Woods in mountain (Best to have a decorative tree on one side for arrows.)

Tune: From noon to sunset.

Curtain rises to music: "Dragon Boat Race Champion" beginning.

Percussions. *Enter Jin officers first, followed by FEIFENG, JINLONG, WAN-ER and HA MICHI together accompanying WUSHU. Tableau.*

WUSHU

[Sings: Wuilunghong]

Trying out horse in the woods,

Lightly bending silver bow.

Same heroic elegance as before.

[Sings: Ancient style Yiwong lower line]

Hunting in front of the mountain,

So very leisurely blithe.

[All assume individual poses.]

FEIFENG

[Continues to sing]

Female general beats men.

Treasured arrow and magic bow,

I am proud of my extraordinary skills.

JINLONG

[Sneers and continues to sing]

A girl is so weak.

No match to my born doughtiness,

Nonpareil in this world.

[Strikes a pose.]

WAN-ER

[Continues to sing]

Don't brag, don't boast.

Why not have a contest,

To see who's better and who's worse.

WUSHU

[*Stopping them* and speaks]

You are siblings, why fight?

[Sings: Gwanfa lower line]

No wonder, youngsters all love to win,

Won't be subdued in public.

Don't start a quarrel over a small matter,

And forget your fraternal bond.

FEIFENG

[Speaks]

Father, I just want an archery contest with my brother, it won't damage our harmony. Father may rest assured.

JINLONG

[*Arrogantly* speaks]

Father, you know I always love my sister. If she loses and throws a tantrum, I'll concede the championship to her.

FEIFENG

[*Indignantly* speaks]

I don't need your concession.

HA MICHI

[*Comes forward, smiles* and speaks: Haugu]

Princess, forgive my impertinent remarks, if it is a literary contest, you will surely win. If it is an archery contest, a girl is weaker in build, no match to the doughty Prince.

FEIFENG

[Speaks: Haugu]

Not necessarily so. The Strategist's remarks just now are biased against girls. I trained in archery and horsemanship since I was small. I am no female weakling, that can be bullied.

JINLONG

[*Laughs* and speaks: Haugu]

Sister, displaying slight skills before an expert, you make your Brother laugh. As to gift of the gab, I concede you surpass your Brother. But in a match of martial arts, you will merely lose face in public.

FEIFENG

[Speaks]

We shall see.

WAN-ER

[Speaks: Haugu]

Your Highness, empty words are useless, a war of words to no avail. How about this, the hills over there are full of rare birds and beasts. Why not go hunting together, and see who gets the first game.

JINLONG

[Speaks]

Let's go, you think I'm scared of you.

WUSHU

[Speaks]

Hey, in that valley, hungry wolves often appear. Don't go there!

WAN-ER *is anxious.*

FEIFENG

[Calmly speaks]

Relax, Father.

[Sings: Gwanfa lower line]

Brother is brave, called the invincible.

Father need not worry.

Not to mention my excellent archery.

Why fear wolves opening hungry mouths.

JINLONG

[Sings: Gwanfa lower line]

My iron arms can subdue tigers.

My strength can split a steer in halves.

Riding alone I slay generals, seizing standards.

Who's afraid of beasts on the hills.

FEIFENG

[Pleadingly speaks]

Father, I go in Brother's company, nothing can go wrong. Please, Father, let us go.

WUSHU

[Speaks, *seeing no other way*]

Alright, alright, if you insist, I won't be a spoilsport. Remember, come back soon. Don't make me worry about you.

FEIFENG & JINLONG

[Speak together]

Thank you, Father.

FEIFENG

[Signals with a wink and speaks]

WAN-ER, lead the way and go first.

WAN-ER takes the hint, exeunt leading JINLONG and FEIFENG.

HA MICHI

[Speaks: Haugu]

O Prince, the sun blazes overhead. Let's turn into the woods, to rest a while, then go hunting again.

WUSHU

[Speaks: Haugu]

Hm, so pleased to see my son and daughter are so brave. I wish we conquer the Middle Kingdom in one decisive battle in future. Lead the way, men.

Exeunt all.

Music prelude starts.

Enter CHEN HU leading four militia men from left.

CHEN HU

[Sings: Gwanfa lower line]

I lament the Song Emperor is imbecile,

His courtiers are cowards.

It falls on us peasant folk,

To resist foes as militia.

Now we come to Jin realm,

Regardless of danger, with plans made,

To rescue the loyal patriot.

WAN-ER

[Enters, approaches CHEN HU and speaks: Haugu]

Brave sirs, you dare to intrude forbidden area of Jin realm, I ask you, do you know how high is the sky,
how deep is the earth.

CHEN HU

[Recognizes the password, cautiously speaks: Haugu]

Little Miss, of course I do. Sky high, not as high as man's heart. Earth deep, not as deep as human relations. We the brave Hans counter the same foe.

WAN-ER

[Speaks with glee]

You come at Leader Fang's orders to reinforce us?

CHEN HU

[Speaks]

That's right.

WAN-ER

[Speaks: Haugu]

You come just in time. The Jin Prince will come hunting soon. Act according to plan, quickly, hide behind the thickets.

CHEN HU

[Speaks: Haugu]

Miss, we won't fail the mission. Let him fall into the trap. Ambush on two sides.

[*Exeunt with militiamen.*]

WAN-ER

[Sings while looking about: Gwanfa lower line]

**I wish the fish takes the bait
And not let down the fishing hooks in river.
I must be calm and well at ease,
Lest I reveal the ingenious plan. [*Exit.*]**

Music starts: Faansin "Crying Over Dead Soul".

Enter FEIFENG and JINLONG, make poses.

JINLONG

[Sings: Faansin "Carefree Bliss"]

Great archery, never met my match.

FEIFENG

[Continues to sing]

I will be second to none.

JINLONG

[Sings]

**Frail girl facing me,
Bound to lose face in shame.**

FEIFENG

[Sings]

**Let's compete in archery,
And see who is better.**

JINLONG

[Sings]

**If I show my skills,
I'll surely win over frail females.**

FEIFENG

[Sings]

Can hit willow at a hundred paces.

Let's duel with bow and arrow.

Music winds up as they make poses.

WAN-ER

[Enters with hares in hand and speaks: Haugu]

Your Highness, Princess, many rare birds and beasts over there. I was there first, and had tried my skills.

[Shows hares.]

JINLONG

[Sneers and speaks]

Catching a couple of hares, I'll say you've got some skills.

Dizi sound imitating goose.

All three look up.

JINLONG

[Speaks: Haugu]

Sister, geese flying overhead, just good for our archery contest. Let us use bow and arrow together, and see who downs first game.

FEIFENG

[Speaks nodding]

Do I fear you.

They both shoot at the geese.

Goose shot by FEIFENG. (Falling goose could be shown in abstract way.)

JINLONG is dejected, having lost.

FEIFENG

[Speaks happily: Haugu]

Brother, did you see how, my arrow's not shot in vain, but right on target. You are not as good as I, you should bow in front of me.

JINLONG

[Face-savingly speaks]

Who knows if you or I shot it.

WAN-ER

[Speaks: Haugu]

Why argue, Princess, let's go together, and pick up the fallen goose, check the marking on the arrow, and we know who's best.

JINLONG

[Sullenly speaks]

Bah, go and pick it up then.

FEIFENG

[Winks and speaks]

WAN-ER, come with me.

[Exeunt with WAN-ER]

JINLONG

[Sings grudgingly: Gwanfa lower line]

I regret being arrogant,

How sad, to lose to a little girl.

But a small setback is no defeat.

Let me pluck up my courage,

And contend with her again.

[Self-consolingly speaks]

She wins in shooting geese only. As to fighting tiger and killing lion, how can she surpass me then.

Enter CHEN HU and militia men. They hold JINLONG at bay.

CHEN HU

[Speaks]

Young JINLONG, don't move.

JINLONG

[Surprised and helpless, speaks]

You, who are you, how dare you be rude to me.

[He tries to resist.]

CHEN HU

[Speaks to stop him: Haugu]

Hold it, Young JINLONG, you are trapped, if you know better, hold still and be caught. Or else, archers on both sides will serve you well.

JINLONG

[Speaks after one look and not daring to move: Haugu]

Bah, you dare to cross the border and kidnap me, what for?

CHEN HU

[Speaks: Haugu]

Bah, kidnap and extort ransom, that's your usual trick. Now we just follow your example. We just want JIN WUSHU to release ZHU BIAN back to his country, if your father does not accept, don't blame us for doing you harm.

JINLONG

[Speaks undauntedly: Haugu]

You want me as hostage for exchange. One day I'll clean out your lair, and slaughter you all, leaving no survivor.

CHEN HU

[Speaks]

Say no more, come, take him back to the stockade.

Exeunt militia with JINLONG, followed by CHEN HU.

Lighting changes to sunset.

Enter WUSHU, MICHI and Jin officers.

WUSHU

[Sings: Gwanfa lower line]

**Sunset and night is falling,
Still my two children not yet back.
Suspicion arises in my mind,
Riding up here, I investigate in person.**

HA MICHI

[Points and speaks]

O Prince, don't worry, they are coming back now.

Enter FEIFENG and WAN-ER holding goose and hares.

WUSHU is relieved to see them, then finds JINLONG missing.

WUSHU

[Speaks: Haugu]

FEIFENG, you tarry for so long, makes your Father worry about you. Well, why is your Brother not back together with you? Is he still hunting at the back of the hills?

FEIFENG

[*Exchanges look with WAN-ER and approaches WUSHU.* Speaks: Haugu]

Father, I went to the back of the hills to pick up the goose just now. And I asked Brother to wait here. Now we've got the goose and come back, we couldn't find Brother. I've looked around with WAN-ER, and combed the whole hillside.

WAN-ER

[Speaks: Haugu]

O Prince, just now His Highness had an archery contest with Princess, he lost and he didn't take it well. I believe he's upset and left early, to return to the Palace.

WUSHU

[Speaks: Haugu]

Not so, not so. I come this way and haven't seen him at all. Where has he gone, makes me very worried.

Arrow carrying letter is shot in.

All turn to look.

HA MICHI

[Speaks]

O Prince, arrow letter shot from afar, don't know what it is.

WUSHU

[Anxiously speaks]

Quick, get it for me to see.

MICHI takes letter and hands to WUSHU.

WUSHU

[Reading, speaks]

"Jin Prince uses base trick, forcefully imprisons ZHU BIAN at Cold Mountain. Now we take your son as hostage, in exchange for the emissary's freedom. You have until tomorrow, come to the border, make the exchange at the hillock. You are not allowed to bring troops, or your son's head will be at risk." (Repeat.)

All exchange looks. FEIFENG and WAN-ER grin secretly. WUSHU and MICHI are frightened.

WUSHU

[In rage, sings: Faansin "Tease Daji" ending line]

Aiyaya, I won't rest until I kill the knaves.

[Sings: Gwanfa upper line]

Let me mobilize troops,

Pursue the ringleader,

Clean out their lair,

Slaughter all the rogues.

FEIFENG

[Speaks]

Father.

[Sings: Chatjiching lower line]

Tolerate not the small thing,

And you may spoil the big plan.

Now Brother is in their hands,

Don't throw stones in a glass house.

Release the emissary,

And Brother can be rescued.

Weigh the matter,

You can only submit for the time being.

**You want to catch the ringleader,
Where can you search for him.
Beware of asking for trouble,
And cause Brother's life.**

[Fakes sorrow and speaks to music.]

Father, Brother is now meat in the butcher's hand. Besides, ZHU BIAN's life or death, stay or departure, matters little to our state. Why not set him free, in exchange for Brother back. Then we plan retaliation later.

WUSHU hesitates.

HA MICHI

[Speaks to music]

O Prince, ZHU BIAN is a great talent, once we let the tiger go free, it would be trouble in future. O Prince, you should think again.

WAN-ER

[Speaks to music]

Strategist, ZHU BIAN spent six years, at Cold Mountain, living a dog's life. He's turned emaciated and bony already. His talent is all exhausted. Shall we sacrifice His Highness for an insignificant delegate?

[Sings: Chatjiching lower line]

**There's no strategy to keep the cake and eat it.
Strategist, you frown and brood in vain.
O Prince sighs and shakes his head.
How can one disregard love for flesh and blood.
If you don't release little ZHU BIAN,
His Highness can't stay alive.**

[Sings: Gwanfa]

**I can't bear to see O Prince
Losing his male heir.**

WUSHU

[Sighs and sings: Gwanfa lower line]

**Alas, thinking of love for flesh and blood,
I can't leave it aside.
Can't stand being helpless, without a bright idea.
I can only set the emissary free,
In exchange for my son back.**

[Grinds his teeth.]

I must have my revenge at a later date.

FEIFENG

[Speaks]

Father.

[Sings: Gwanfa lower line]

Just have Brother back unscathed.

Let's plan later for revenge.

WUSHU

[Speaks]

Daughter speaks sensibly. Guards, return to palace.

Exeunt all.

CURTAIN

Annotations on Act 3

1. FEIFENG quotes the proverb “Hit willow at a hundred paces”, from the story of the Zhou Dynasty archer Yang Youji of Chu who could hit a willow leaf with arrow at the distance of a hundred paces.
2. The expression “clean out the lair” is a proverb from the Han Dynasty history, referring to destruction of the base of the Huns, using the expression of “destroying the lair and cleaning out the cave.”
3. JINLONG’s “leaving no survivors” is a proverb saying literally “leaving neither poultry nor dogs alive.”
4. FEIFENG’s “Don’t throw stones in a glass house” is the English equivalent of the original Chinese proverb which says literally “Don’t throw stones at a rat for fear of smashing (pottery or porcelain) wares.”
5. The expression “Turned emaciated and bony” is actually from the Qing Dynasty (1644 – 1911 A.D.) novel “Chinese Ghost Stories (“Liao Zai”).” It means literally “all flesh gone, leaving the skeleton standing”, a vivid metaphor.

ACT 4

Scene: Woods on right wing, The Yellow River (Huanghe) as backdrop, and ferry pier on left wing.

Time: Day

ZHU BIAN

[Sings off: Saubaan, one line]

Back to my country.

Curtain rise. Music prelude: Maanbaan. *Enter ZHU XIANG carrying bag and holding delegate's staff, together with ZHU BIAN.*

ZHU BIAN

[Sings: Sigung Maanbaan lower line]

Six years imprisoned in barbaric domain.

Back to Song land at last.

I thank her chivalrous act,

Smashing the lock to release the whale.

I mourn in tears the late emperors.

Facing the wind, I miss my bosom friend.

How unbearable this parting forever.

Don't pour out my heart,

Just shed tears in vain.

Music. ZHU BIAN *looks back sadly*. ZHU XIANG *sees this and comforts him*.

ZHU XIANG

[Speaks]

Young Master.

[Sings: Unpreluded Long Gwanfa lower line]

See, your mind is disturbed,

Your spirit unstable,

Looking back in vain at every step.

This old man knows it all.

While rejoicing escape from tiger's trap,

Can one's heart not be moved

After six years together.

**Lament not easy to part,
But hard to meet again.
Parting and reunion, sad and happy,
It is all predestined.**

ZHU BIAN

[Embarrassed, then regains composure and speaks]

Uncle Xiang.

[Sings: Gwanfa lower line]

**I am ashamed of not completing mission.
Hence I mourn the two emperors sadly.
I am her sworn brother,
Heaven can testify our pure relationship.**

ZHU XIANG

[Chuckles and speaks]

Master, we are alone here, no need to pretend.

[Speaks rhythmically: Baatlaam]

You are stupefied, why deny it.
She pities lonely drake,
You pity lonely duck.
You two share the same loneliness.
Seeing each other without loving,
That was the force of circumstances.
Pity, she admires your talent,
And sees it buried in sea of woe.
Your admire beauty,
Which is imprisoned in sorrow, in sorrow.

ZHU BIAN

[Exposed, yet still denying and speaks: Baatlaam]

You speak nonsense,
Suspecting me with a crooked mind.
I preserve the Han staff for six years,
Only pity mission unaccomplished.
A tragic goose trapped in the net,
I was fortunate to be rescued by a princess.

[His feelings showing]

Homecoming alive, I lament having no way to thank her.

[He cannot help looking back with feelings]

ZHU XIANG

[Sighs and speaks]

Master.

[Sings: Gwanfa lower line]

**“Sunrise in the east, rain in the west.
One can say it is not balmy or it is.”
You go now, there’s no meeting again.
Hope you’ll curb your sorrow,
And return to Song territory.**

[Takes a look and speaks]

Master, this is Yellow River Ferry. Let’s go to the pier, and wait for the official boat.

ZHU BIAN

[Sighs and speaks]

Alas, words from my heart are not allowed to be sent by wind. My tears, from now on, will freeze with grief.

[Exeunt with ZHU XIANG]

Music starts.

FEIFENG

[Sings off: Faansin “Parting at Autumn River”, one line]

To see him off, I defy Prince.

[Enters and sings: Faansin “Wang Zhaojun Pacifying Barbarians”]

**Cross high mountains, take footpaths,
See him off to Han city.
In future, myriad leagues apart,
Sorrow remains.**

[Speaks to music]

Alas, now he goes to the south, and I stay in the north. Once parted, no meeting again. So I steal away from father, take short cut to see him off here.

[Takes a look]

This is the Yellow River Ferry. Why is there no sign of him.

[Continues to sing]

**Raise my eyes, make out stream and path.
I hate geese crowing at heartbreaking ridge.
Track him, explore deserted hills.**

[Looks around as she sings]

Enter ZHU BIAN and ZHU XIANG while she sings.

ZHU BIAN

[Continues to sing]

**A thousand sighs can’t tell parting sorrow,
My mind uncalmed, I hear her call my name.
Tears fall.**

[Speaks]

Princess.

FEIFENG

[Sees ZHU BIAN, *approaches in frenzied joy* and speaks]

Zhu – Emissary Zhu.

ZHU BIAN

[Speaks]

Princess, just as I am thinking how hard it is to meet again, I am glad to see you as if descending from heaven.

FEIFENG

[Speaks]

I hear Brother is going home, so I take a short cut, to come and see you off.

ZHU BIAN

[Speaks]

Thank you, Princess.

They see that ZHU XIANG is there, and cannot speak freely.

ZHU XIANG

[*Knowingly* speaks]

Master.

[Sings: Gwanfa lower line]

Today, tiger returns to the mountain,

Dragon to the sea,

Thanks to Princess's chivalrous help.

[Aside]

Your word can dispel all her sorrow.

I've always known when I'm not wanted.

[Speaks]

Master, let me look out for official boat, then come back to tell you. Princess, please excuse me.

[*Makes face at ZHU BIAN and exit.*]

FEIFENG

[*Hesitatingly* speaks]

Brother...

ZHU BIAN

[*Forgetting himself, holds her hand* and speaks]

Sister.

FEIFENG

[*Sadly but sensibly withdraws her hand, sighs and sings: Yifaan Muk'yü*]

Alas, I want to tell my feelings,

But can't raise the subject.

Sadly I weep and cannot speak.

ZHU BIAN

[*With self-control, though knowing her feelings, and speaks*]

Sister.

[*Continues to sing: Yifaan Muk'yü*]

I can't repay your debt in this life.

Wish I could repay as your slave in the next.

FEIFENG

[*Humbly continues to sing*]

I lament Yellow River can't merge with Yangzi.

ZHU BIAN

[*Cannot console her, continues to sing*]

Pity we become Orion and Scorpio,

Tears shed stealthily.

FEIFENG

[*Self-pityingly continues to sing*]

Pity me, ill-fated like peach blossom.

ZHU BIAN

[*Comforting her, continues to sing*]

Don't be infatuated, spring wanes,

Orioles and butterflies wilt.

FEIFENG

[*Wipes tears, forces a smile and speaks*]

Brother, you are a great Courtier, I am of inferior nature. How dare I match and taint a talent. Please forgive my mistaken words.

ZHU BIAN

[*Immediately following and speaks*]

Sister is too harsh.

[*Music.*]

FEIFENG

[*Affectionately tender and cannot bear to part, speaks*]

Brother.

[Sings: "Lament Deep in the Palace"]

**I cannot bear to part,
Unsolvable sorrow of separation.
Languishing, I can only shed tears.
Making long sighs, tears turning icy,
Separated by thousand leagues of ranges,
Dreams too distant to make out. [Heart-broken]**

ZHU BIAN

[Cannot help being passionate and speaks]

Sister, I let you down too much.

[Continues to sing]

**No predestined match in this life,
I pray for renewed vows in the next.
How unbearable, parting words,
Turning tragically into heart-broken sound.
I weep for faded song, short dream,
And lamentable eternal woe.**

[Music interlude]

FEIFENG

[Speaks to music]

If our souls can be together, that is all I wish for. Alas, for six years....

[Sings: Long Yiwong lower line]

**Six years of wasting away plus sorrow.
Spring flowers, autumn moon, add to depression.
I dare not send my sentiments by wind,
Lest secret love tarnishes your name.
Fan Li of yore vanquished Wu in one battle,
I am glad to see you return home,
In anticipation of great Song's revival.
In future you will lead to victory like Zu Di,
Waving horsewhip and save the common people.**

[Music]

ZHU BIAN

[Speaks to music]

Sister, today I return to home country, all thanks to your help. What worries me is that, after I have left, I fear your father will see through your true allegiance, compromising you the innocent to suffer.

FEIFENG

[Shocked, then calms down and speaks to music]

As long as Brother can return home, I rejoice even in death.

ZHU BIAN

[Passionately speaks]

Sister.

[Sings: Faansin Jungbaan without prelude]

A hundred mishaps, lucky to survive.

You save my life, I owe you a lot.

Mountain's height, sea's depth,

Are no match to your love for me.

The Yue bird returns to the south nest,

I fear the secret may be disclosed.

While I escape from wolf's den,

You'll fall into tiger's trap.

I am like a fish escaping the net,

You, a bird fearful of bowstring's twang.

I wish we can fly together,

Wing on wing, into Han pass.

I dare not indulge in momentary pleasure,

Just hope to save you from danger.

Prevent wind and rain ill-treating fallen petals,

Destroying your fragile flower-like life.

FEIFENG

[Sings with prelude]

I am gratified with your goodwill.

I fear being talked about as eloping girl.

ZHU BIAN

[Sadly, speaks to music]

Alas, if so, I feel even more guilty if you should meet misfortune all at once.

FEIFENG

[Holding back tears, comfortingly speaks to music]

Brother, put your mind at ease. You see, kidnap of the Prince, that's done by Han militiamen. JIN WUSHU will not suspect me at all. If I flee now together with you, won't it be confessing my guilt. Then JIN WUSHU will have an excuse, to mobilize and attack. It makes you bear a bad name, and Song realm suffer from war again. In that case, in saving you, I'll be implicating you.

ZHU BIAN

[Compassionately speaks to music]

Alas, thinking of your safety, how can I go back with my heart at ease.

FEIFENG

[Solemn-faced, speaks to music]

Brother.

[Sings: Faansin Chatjiching without prelude]

**They say patriotism outweighs love.
You should strive for the people,
Repulse the invaders, restore peace.
I am willing to die to save a talent,
I hope you will help the weak and endangered,
To repel the monster.
Hope you'll cross the River soon,
And I'll be your inside spy.
No peace until wolfdung smoke is extinguished.**

[Sadly sings: Gwanfa upper line]

**Alas, you have a country to return to.
Pity me, my realm's in ruins,
Impossible to restore.**

ZHU BIAN

[Speaks]

Sister.

[Sings: Gwanfa lower line]

**Wish our troops march north,
The day we conquer the Central Kingdom,
I'll help you restore your home country.
You call your enemy father,
Waiting for opportunities,
A heroine worthy of respect.**

FEIFENG

[Sings: "Cutting Spring Silk" without prelude]

**Unbearable grief. I lament lone swallow,
Trapped in enemy nation, overcome with self-pity.
Myriad sorrows criscrossing.
I treasure talent.
Please go back home, Feed horses, hone swords,
Eradicate all ugly barbarians.
You must clean up the den and caves,
Build the Great Wall with flesh and blood.
Clear away all national shame.**

[Speaks to music]

Alas, I lament broken nest and home. I dare not hope for national restoration one day. Just hope you'll raise righteous standards, destroy strong foes, relieve pain for oppressed people all over the world, share peace and prosperity together, then I am satisfied.

ZHU BIAN

[*Touched, holds her hand, speaks to music*]

Sister.

[Continues to sing]

**Pouring heart out all of a sudden,
Encouraging me to restore my country,
And volunteer to fight.
Your nobleness is worthy of esteem.**

FEIFENG

[Continues to sing]

**I can't forget being oppressed.
I hate barbarians bullying with might.
I lament people scattered asunder,
Victims suffering from war.
All I see is bloodshed!**

ZHU BIAN

[Continues to sing]

**Weeping, you hearten me,
I am grateful for your protection,
Saving me at risk of your life.
I make you worry for my sake.
Pity, we have to part.
Returning to home country all at once,
The way is long, dreams from afar.
How can I tell you
Parting sorrow, tears fall before I speak.**

FEIFENG

[Continues to sing]

**In a daze, grief fills my heart.
Tears fall secretly, I fear
Not being allowed to meet you in dreams.**

ZHU BIAN

[Continues to sing]

**In future, I command troops,
Clear the land of barbarians,
In Heaven, I'll see the Virgo again.**

FEIFENG

[Continues to sing]

I fear I'd have gone to Hades.

ZHU BIAN

[Continues to sing]

**Weeping, I hope the Beau's feelings
May not be hurt.**

FEIFENG

[Continues to sing]

**I lament it's hard to meet again.
My sorrow is unbearable.**

ZHU BIAN

[Continues to sing]

**Alas, my dreams are shattered in southern chamber,
My spirit lingers in northern ridge.
Blood and tears stain my collar.**

FEIFENG

[Feeling sad to part, speaks]

Brother.

[Sings: Yifaan Gwanfa lower line]

**I hope you won't forget public righteousness
For the sake of personal feelings.
A thousand-catty burden is on your shoulder.
Meeting is hard, parting is even harder.
Myriad parting sorrows can't be told in full.
*[Turns her back and wipes tears.]***

ZHU BIAN

[Speaks to music]

Sister.

[Sings: Faansin Yiwong baanmin without prelude]

**Downcast in wind and rain,
Equally sad, speechless, tears burst.
Sorrow traps Divine Maiden,
Grief overwhelms Dong Yong.
Alas, parting forever, unbearable woe.
In future, separated by silent Milky Way,
When will we renew our old affection.**

FEIFENG

[Heart-broken, sings: Faansin Yiwong lower line]

**Ill-fated one, sobbing, tells her heart's feelings.
Longing in vain, parting is saddest.
I lament parting sorrows, old and new,
When will they all be consoled.**

ZHU BIAN

[Continues to sing]

**I lament shattered nation.
Soul mates sadly have to part.
I weep over forlorn mountains and seas.
I sigh over dying love and eternal woe.**

FEIFENG

[Continues to sing]

**Coming, like Spring dream, dreads clarity.
Going, like Autumn clouds, disperse easily.
Pity, light wings turn to dust.
I loath also frail petals adrift.**

ZHU BIAN

[Sadly continues to sing]

**Holding hands, doubly hard to part.
When will we meet again.
I lament the fog- bound departing way,
How sad, clouds bury meeting path.**

The two look at each other in melancholy.

Enter ZHU XIANG, shaking his head on seeing how they are.

ZHU XIANG

[Goes forward and speaks]

Alas, Master.

ZHU BIAN and FEIFENG separate on hearing his voice.

ZHU XIANG

[Sighs and speaks]

Alas, they say seeing off a thousand leagues, eventually must part. It is late now. The official vessel has arrived for a while. You Brother and Sister have said your farewell. Why still find it hard to part.

FEIFENG

[Tragically cries]

Brother.

ZHU BIAN

[Cries]

Sister.

ZHU XIANG

[*After a long sigh, sings: Yifan Muk'yǔ*]

**Alas, lamentably, all are illusions,
The moon's reflection in water, the flowers in the mirror.
Dreamer wakes up, and love debts are repaid.
Blame me not for severing entwined boughs,
Your love is separated north and south,
Poles apart.**

[Speaks]

Princess, you must part, willy nilly. You love each other for years, don't I know your plight. If you can sacrifice yourself, to enable Master to return home, why can't you bear a moment's pain at parting?

On hearing this, ZHU BIAN and FEIFENG cover their faces and weep in shame.

ZHU XIANG

[*Sympathetic and morosely sings: Yifan Muk'yǔ*]

[*Pointing at ZHU BIAN*]

You, don't lament unkind fate.

[*Pointing at FEIFENG*]

**You, don't grief over sad life.
May Heaven bless you one day,
Bring your twin stars together.
I hope barbaric smoke may be cleared soon,
And we can pray for re-uniting severed love.**

FEIFENG

[*Suppressing her sentiments with sense gradually and speaks*]

Brother, "When two lovers have lasting feelings. Why value being together daily." I hope you will not be bogged down by affections, but give priority to state affairs.

ZHU BIAN

[*Holding back tears and speaks*]

Sister, your weighty words speak your heart. I will remember them for my whole life.

FEIFENG

[Speaks]

Brother.

[Sings: Yifan abridged "Hibiscus" lower line]

**I dare not complain about too few meetings,
Not willing to part, your return journey is delayed.
I hope you will stem the deluge,
And serve your state and people.**

ZHU BIAN

[Continues to sing]

**I'll turn sorrow into strength,
Let my flesh and blood be the Great Wall.
One day I'll smash the Yellow Dragon,
And help Sister escape the tiger trap.**

ZHU XIANG

[Continues to sing]

**With love, Heaven will grant our wish,
Severed hairpin can re-unite,
Shattered mirror can shine again.**

FEIFENG

[Sings: Yifaan brisk Chatjiching upper line]

**A thousand leagues, see you off home.
Chisel in bag shows its sharp point.**

ZHU BIAN

[Continues to sing: upper line]

**State crisis at hand,
I keep reminding myself.
At parting, I thank you again,
For giving me a new life.**

ZHU XIANG

[Sings: Yifaan Gwanfa lower line]

**Master, the sun is sinking in the west,
See you not the official boat embarking.**

FEIFENG

[*With a bitter smile, speaks*]

Brother.

[Sings: Jingsin Gwanfa lower line]

**For six years, brows knitted.
Let me see you off with a smile.
I wish you success in future,
Broken cup may be whole again.**

ZHU BIAN

[*Still finding it hard to part, speaks*]

Sister.

FEIFENG

[Holding back tears, bitter smile, cuts in and speaks]

Brother, Sister may have lasting love. I hope you won't be short on ambitions.

[Sadly, half hiding her face weeping]

Go on, you – go.

ZHU BIAN

[Heart-broken, speaks]

Sister.

[Sings: (In ancient style) Faidim lower line]

Myriad woes entwine my heartstrings.

Heart-rending, parting is like flower shadows.

Phoenix couple separate and swallow their tears.

[In faansin tone]

Tearful eyes look at one another.

[Beat, music continues on Gung note]

FEIFENG

[Painfully speaks]

Brother, take care.

ZHU BIAN

[Sighs and sings: Gwanfa upper line]

Enduring pain, make out the way home.

[Speaks]

Sister, take care. Your Brother goes.

Not wanting to leave at first, gnashes his teeth, exeunt with ZHU XIANG in pain.

FEIFENG watches from afar, secretly pining.

WAN-ER

[Enter quickly and sings: Gwanfa upper line]

The Wolf Lord has murderous plot.

Luckily I warily see through it.

Crossing mountains, taking narrow paths,

I fear sad goose falls into tiger's trap.

[Sees FEIFENG, speaks]

Ah, so Princess is here.

[Calls]

Princess, Princess. *[Pants]*

FEIFENG

[Hears the call, turns and sees WAN-ER, comes forward quickly and speaks]

WAN-ER, why look so terrified, why hurry here.

WAN-ER

[*Anxiously speaks*]

Princess, don't ask so many questions, where is Emissary Zhu now?

FEIFENG

[*Speaks*]

The Emissary has crossed the river, on his way home, soon he'll arrive at south bank of Yellow River.

WAN-ER

[*Alarmed and speaks*]

Aiya, that's bad.

FEIFENG

[*Taken aback, asks*]

WAN-ER, what has happened, please tell me quick.

WAN-ER

[*Speaks*]

Princess.

[*Speaks in rhythm: Baatlaam*]

Hateful JIN WUSHU,

Plays secret plot to murder.

Fearing Song Emissary may return home,

And Song will prosper in future,

He sent a letter to Song Court yesterday,

Giving orders to the traitor there,

To frame the loyal one as having surrendered,

Hence never tried to win the two emperors back

For six years.

Coming home this time,

He is going to do inside job.

The Song Emperor is so stupid,

He will demolish his own Great Wall.

[*Gets faster*]

I, watchful, see through the plot.

I hurry here, hope you'll come up

With a good strategy soon,

To prevent the Emissary's being wronged

And dying in dishonor.

FEIFENG

[*Alarmed as she listens, heavy beat, sings: Solemn Gwanfa lower line*]

Aiyaya, no need for blades to kill.

Hateful wolves show cruel visage.

[Gwanfa]

Alarming words shake my soul.

I am aghast with horror.

WAN-ER

[*Anxiously* speaks: Haugu]

Alas, Princess, no time to waste. Quickly think of a foolproof way to rescue ZHU BIAN.

FEIFENG

[*At her wit's end*, speaks: Haugu]

Alas, WAN-ER, sadly I am helpless. I can think of no way to save him from harm.

WAN-ER

[Speaks: Haugu]

Alas, you must think of a way, even though at your wit's end. Have you the heart to see, a sheep sent into the tiger's mouth, and ZHU BIAN dying for no fault of his.

FEIFENG

[*Thinking, firmly* speaks: Haugu]

Hmm, to save the Song minister, I shun no danger. Go inform the Han militiamen, tell them to cross the River together by night, and intercept him along the way. I'll follow later, leading troops, to relieve them. So long as the Emissary escapes danger, I am willing to give up my head.

WAN-ER

[Speaks]

Good.

[Sings: Gwanfa lower line]

I'll contact the militia,

To go to Song territory.

FEIFENG

[Sings: Gwanfa lower line]

I go back to palace

To lead my woman troops.

Exeunt separate ways.

CURTAIN

Annotations on Act 4

1. “Sunrise in the east, rain in the west. One can say there is no sun or there is love.” These are lines from a famous poem playing on the puns of the characters for “sunny” and “loving”, both pronounced as ‘qing’, and here translated as ‘balmy” to denote both “sunny” and “loving”.
2. The “Yellow River“ is a literal translation. It is also translated by sound as “Huanghe”.
3. ZHU BIAN names the stars (constellations) Orion and Scorpio, called “Shen” and “Shang” in Chinese astrology, as metaphor; they being two stars seen at different times that will never meet.
4. FEIFENG quotes the historical tale of the conflict between Warring States of Wu and Yue. When Yue was conquered by Wu, Fan Li the Yue minister presented the beauty Xishi to the King of Wu. She succeeded in charming him into neglecting state affairs, executing his own general and releasing the prisoner of war Gou Jian, King of Yue, back to his own realm. Gou Jian and Fan Li finally attacked and conquered Wu.
5. She goes on to quote the historical hero Zu Di of Jin dynasty (265 – 420 A.D. – this Jin is not the same character as WUSHU’s Jin dynasty) who led the Jin troops to recover all the land south of the Yellow River hitherto occupied by barbarians. Zu and his colleague Liu Kun lived and studied together, but Zu beat Liu in rising early daily at cockcrow to practice swordsmanship. This gives rise to the proverb “Rise and play the sword at cockcrow”. Liu also stated his fear of losing to Zu “Waving his horsewhip ahead of me”, which engenders another proverb, used by FEIFENG here.
6. FEIFENG’s “eloping girl” refers to the Tang Dynasty tale of “Red Duster”, a songstress identified by the red duster she held in her hand, who recognized Li Jing as a hero, eloped with him and saw him help found the Tang Dynasty.
7. “Wolfdung smoke” is the signal system used by barbarian invaders, transmitting smoke signals by burning wolfdung on high walls. To extinguish wolfdung smoke is therefore to drive out all barbarians.
8. “In Heaven, I’ll see the Virgo again” is the metaphor used by ZHU BIAN to mean meeting the chaste maiden FEIFENG again.
9. ZHU BIAN quotes another legend about the scholar Dong Yong’s romance with the Divine Maiden, under the huai tree (Chinese scholartree). The Divine Maiden bore Dong’s son and returned the baby to Dong before she was recalled to Heaven.

10. FEIFENG quotes lines from Qin Guan's famous Ci (lyric poem) about the legendary Cowherd and Weaver stars who meet only once a year on the seventh of the Seventh Moon on a bridge formed by magpies over the Milky Way that separates them. These immortal lines are "when two lovers have lasting feelings, why value being together daily."
11. "Smash the Yellow Dragon" is a famous warcry of Yue Fei the legendary Song general, Yellow Dragon being the capital city of Jin at the time.
12. FEIFENG quotes a Chinese proverb from the history classic, using the metaphor "a chisel will show its sharp point even if hidden in a bag", to describe talent will eventually be recognized.
13. WAN-ER calls JIN WUSHU by the barbarian title "Wolf Lord".
14. "Demolish his own Great Wall" is a metaphor used to criticize Chinese emperors who fell for tricks used by invaders in the form of rumors of treason deliberately spread, against generals defending the frontiers, causing these generals to be wrongly executed by the emperors.

ACT 5

Scene: At first, city gate at left wing; later scene changes to wilderness.

Time: Day

Music starts one line.

Curtain rise.

Villagers enter from both wings together.

Villagers are dressed in modest but fresh clothes and look spirited.

VILLAGER A

[Speaks rhythmically: Baatlaam]

Wartime breeds patriots.
In crisis, honor is visible.
The Emissary's loyalty is rare.
Unbending for six years,
Imprisoned at barbarian frontiers,
So glad to see him coming home at last.
His integrity equals Su Wu,
His talent and strategy outshines Zhang Qian.
So everybody scrambles to see great hero.
All vie for first to welcome ZHU BIAN.
Hope he returns to Court and save the state,
Salvation for all the people from disaster.

VILLAGER B

[Speaks: Haugu]

Fellow Villagers, you see, Emissary Zhu is a pillar of the state, loved by all the people. He preserves integrity, returns in honor. This is Song's good fortune. Hope he returns and resolve to kill the barbarians, rallying the peasants to join in combat.

VILLAGER A

[Sighs and speaks: Haugu]

Alas, if every minister at Court is patriotic like ZHU BIAN, Song Dynasty wouldn't come to such a mess. Sadly, the emperor is incapable. Crafty Courtiers undermine the state. Ministers are greedy for money, warriors are cowards preserving their lives. Hence our great nation is overrun by alien tribes. We the common people long for the pillar that holds up Heaven, returning to put the old realm in order.

VILLAGER B

[Speaks]

Ah, it is getting late. The Emissary will be here soon. Let us stand aside, to welcome him.

ALL

[Speak]

Good.

[Line up outside city gate.]

Music starts. *Enter ZHU XIANG accompanying ZHU BIAN, holding staff.*

ZHU BIAN

[Sings: Long line Yilau]

Preserve Han staff,

Return to Central Kingdom.

Knitted brow for six years,

Showing a smile for the first time.

This day, I come back home,

With regret that I cannot achieve my mission. [Shows sadness.]

ZHU XIANG

[*Consoling*, continues to sing]

Remember: trapped in barbaric realm,

Suffering so much fright and hazard.

Pity, asking a tiger for its skin,

The wish to welcome emperors back is unfulfilled.

No matter how they used carrot and stick,

The upright hero could not be moved.

If the mountain and river have souls,

They'd appreciate your heart.

Music continues in Yilau tune, prelude on Seung note, accompanying speech.

ZHU XIANG

[Speaks to music]

Master, JIN WUSHU may be unreasonable, but our being able to return from danger, it's all due to your unyielding to threats. Preserving honor and returning to Court, you have a clear conscience. Why so sad?

Wait until reporting to Court, then slay rebels and wash away shame, that's not too late.

ZHU BIAN

[*Unconsoled*, sings: Yilau lower line at changed tempo]

Ashamed at failing mission,

Regrets hard to vent.

Though I never yield or surrender,

I fear my reputation is tarnished.

[Music continues with gongs and drums.]

VILLAGERS

[Seeing ZHU BIAN from afar, cheering together and speak]

Emissary Zhu is coming.

ZHU XIANG

[Gloating, continues to sing]

I see people cheering along the way,

Welcoming us in front of the Pass.

ZHU BIAN

[Continues to sing]

I am ashamed at not achieving aspirations.

[Sings: Hoche Gwanfa Lower Line]

Surprised to see cheering crowd,

I am abashed even more.

[Hesitant and not daring to advance.]

ZHU XIANG

[Speaks]

Master, today you come home in glory, the populace cheer and welcome you. How can you let them down. Go forward to meet your kinsfolk.

[He pushes ZHU BIAN forward.]

Villagers all crowd around him, paying homage.

VILLAGER A

[Speaks: Haugu]

Emissary Zhu, we heard about your return to Han territory, so we gather all villagers and hasten to welcome you outside the Pass, to show how the common folks miss you.

VILLAGER B

[Speaks: Haugu]

Emissary Zhu, you stayed six years in barbarity, unyielding in face of threats, so venerable, your patriotism, that is worth respect by all the people. We hope you'll repel the invaders for us. So we may see days of peace in future.

ZHU BIAN

[Touched, speaks]

Fellow kinsfolk villagers.

[Sings: Gwanfa lower line]

Can't bear to see people's tears

Shedding in barbarian turmoil.

I'll wash away barbaric stink with blood.

Two Rivers, a hundred counties,

**Our beautiful country,
Can't let barbarians occupy
Even a single inch of our land.**

Villagers rejoice.

VOICE OFF

[Speaks]

The Commander arrives.

Villagers part on two sides.

Enter from inside city gate four Song Soldiers, carrying sabers and holding whips, leading Commander.

COMMANDER ZHOU

[Sees ZHU BIAN, with treachery, approaches Zhu, bows and speaks: Haugu]

Emissary Zhu, forgive me, being occupied with official duties, I could not welcome you from afar. I am aware of my discourtesy.

ZHU BIAN

[Returns bow and speaks: Haugu]

Don't mention it, don't mention it, having COMMANDER here to meet me, I thank you for your reception.

COMMANDER

[Grins treacherously and speaks]

Emissary.

[Sings: Long Gwanfa lower line]

You were held in barbaric land for six years,

Your loyalty is rare.

Chewing snow, swallowing blanket,

Your spirit remains unchanged.

Faithful and unbending, surpassing old sages.

His Majesty rewards the loyal with favors,

And sends Imperial Commissioner to this Pass.

Your whole family had bathed in imperial favors. [Beat]

Just await your return to receive your share.

ZHU BIAN shows surprise and mirth, COMMANDER steals a grin.

ZHU XIANG

[Pulls ZHU BIAN aside and speaks]

Master, you are in luck this time.

[Sings: Gwanfa lower line]

**No wonder: survive disaster,
And destined for ample blessings.
Resurrected salted fish becomes priced seafood.
I believe you'll make nobility, if not premiership.**

[Beat. Speaks]

When Imperial Commissioner comes, not surprising if I'll get appointment too.

[Continues to sing: Gwanfa upper line]

But I have no ambition for honor.

ZHU BIAN

[*Heavy beat, slow percussive rhythm, shows joy and sings: Gwanfa lower line*]

**My six years' hardship is not in vain.
Secretly I rejoice in bitterness all ended,
Turning into sweetness.
Let me straighten my garb,
Await imperial order to return to Court.**

VOICE OFF

[Speaks]

Imperial Commissioner arrives.

ZHU BIAN, ZHU XIANG and COMMANDER together stand at ceremony in reception. Enter with pomp two Eunuchs carrying wine pot and cup, together with Imperial Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER

[*Holds up edict and speaks*]

Rebel Courtier ZHU BIAN, receive edict.

[*Heavy beat. ZHU BIAN is shocked.*]

COMMISSIONER

[*Stern faced and loudly speaks*]

Rebel Courtier ZHU BIAN, still won't kneel and receive edict.

ZHU BIAN

[*Sober, in shaking voice speaks*]

COMMISSIONER, your servant, on diplomatic mission to Jin realm, tended horses at Cold Mountain for six years, and still preserving the Han staff. I consider myself blameless, and dare not receive edict.

COMMISSIONER

[Speaks]

Daring rebel, still won't kneel and receive edict, dare you disobey His Majesty.

[*ZHU BIAN kneels reluctantly to edict.*]

COMMISSIONER

[*Reads edict and speaks*]

“Criminal Courtier ZHU BIAN, on diplomatic mission to Jin realm, surrendered to the enemy for six years, forgetting nation and home. Today, returning with mission failed, he plots to carry out an inside job. Having executed his whole family, and in order to prevent treachery, we give him a wine pot of poison, and order him to end his own life.” Edict read, utter your thanks.

ZHU BIAN

[*Heavy beat, outraged, sings: Faansin “Teasing Daji” ending line*]

Aiyaya, can’t imagine Emperor wrongs

And kills the loyal.

[*Sings: Gwanfa upper line*]

I lament my slaughtered family.

Wrongly accused, couldn’t make self defence.

[*He grieves, on Si note.*]

COMMISSIONER

[*Speaks*]

Come forward, give wine.

Eunuch obeys and pours wine to give to ZHU BIAN.

Villagers show their concern and indignation.

Heavy beat. ZHU BIAN faces poison wine, filled with sorrow and anger, holding staff in trembling hand.

Music “White Arrow Pierces Sun” prelude starts.

ZHU BIAN

[*Sings: Faansin “White Arrow Pierces Sun”*]

Lamentably, power is lofty, life is cheap.

Sadly, I am speechless.

Having been through myriad trials and tribulations,

For six years, my loyalty and upright spirit lasts.

I bemoan the Emperor knows not right from wrong,

Burying my whole family, deeply wronged. [*Outraged.*]

Preserving Han staff,

[*Facing staff, in pain, sings on*]

Who can see my loyal heart.

I can’t bear to have my bad name

Passed down for millennia.

Loyal or traitorous, let posterity judge.

This loyal soul dies with the staff.

[*Snaps Han staff, heavy beat, stares at wine cup, makes to take wine.*]

ZHU XIANG

[*Stops him in tears, tucking his clothes and speaks*]

Master.

[Sings: Yifaan Muk'yü]

**Don't be foolishly loyal and kill yourself.
How can you just stand there and be framed.
Had you known the Emperor would
Force you down to the Underworld,
Might as well tend horses at Cold Mountain,
Rather than return to Central Kingdom.**

[A bit faster]

**You kill yourself for foolish loyalty.
Henceforth, who will restore the state.
Save the nation, you should use your talent,
Save the people, you should stay alive.**

ZHU BIAN *pushes* ZHU XIANG *away*.

Villagers come forward to stop him.

VILLAGER A

[Speaks: Haugu]

Emissary, hateful emperor is imbecile. The Court is filled with wicked traitors. Why sacrifice yourself for nothing. You should think for the state and the people.

VILLAGE B

[Speaks: Haugu]

Emissary, the incompetent emperor, crossed to South of the Yangzi, settling aside. Made the abandoned people everywhere wander and lose their homes. We hope you will think of the big picture, don't follow the foolishly loyal and give up life.

VILLAGERS

[Speak together]

Emissary Zhu, do not give up life needlessly.

COMMANDER

[Speaks angrily]

How dare you, daring little commoners, making rubbish remarks in contempt of Court.

[Calls Song Soldiers.]

Guards, drive them off.

Four Song Soldiers wave whips to drive off Villagers. Villagers are indignant but overpowered, grinding their teeth and opposing soldiers unflinchingly.

COMMISSIONER

[Speaks]

ZHU BIAN, you still won't take poison wine, what are you waiting for.

ZHU BIAN

[Filled with grief and rage, heavy beat, bitterly grins and sings: Faidim lower line]

**Afraid to die and survive,
That will shame loyal ones,
Carrying regret and sorrow,
I perish in Ghost Palace.**

[He makes to drink, on Che note.]

[Villagers stop him.]

Enter WAN-ER, CHEN HU, and the militiamen. Seeing this, WAN-ER hurries forward, and snatches cup from ZHU BIAN. CHEN HU and militia cover for ZHU BIAN and ZHU XIANG.

COMMANDER

[Draws sword to protect COMMISSIONER, repulsing WAN-ER and speaks: Haugu]

Bah, rebel woman wherefrom, how dare you make trouble at frontier Pass.

WAN-ER

[Speaks: Haugu]

Cur Official, hateful Song Lord is tyrannical, destroying his own Great Wall, harming the people, ruining the state. We fight for the cause of the people, and rescue the loyal.

COMMISSIONER

[Speaks: Haugu]

How dare you, mutineers and rebel commoners, showing contempt of Court. If you know better, disperse at once.

CHEN HU

[Speaks angrily: Haugu]

Traitor, you secretly colluded with Jin realm, to murder the loyal on purpose. I wish I could send you to the Underworld with one stroke of my blade.

COMMISSIONER

[Speaks in shameful rage]

Nonsense.

[Sings: Gwanfa lower line]

Slandering others, bent on talking yourself off.

No respect of Imperial law, hideous crime.

Execute ZHU BIAN first,

Then bury rebel commoners in Ghost Palace.

[Speaks]

Kill.

COMMANDER *rushes to kill ZHU BIAN but is stopped by WAN-ER.*

CHEN HU

[Indignant, goes forward, grabs COMMISSIONER, throws him on the ground, points at him and speaks]
Wicked traitor.

[Sings: Gwanfa lower line]

**Let me raise my blade
And kill the wolf first,
Won't let you vaunt your fangs and paws.**

He slays COMMISSIONER.

Meanwhile, COMMANDER fights with WAN-ER.

CHEN HU takes the opportunity to rescue ZHU BIAN and ZHU XIANG to one side.

WAN-ER is no match to COMMANDER, exeunt with militia.

COMMANDER

[Speaks]

Men, after them.

[*Exeunt with Song Soldiers in pursuit.*]

Music: Grand Saubaan

Lights dim, change of scene from Pass to Wilderness.

FEIFENG

[Sings off: Saubaan one line]

Shout and staunch Huanghe waves.

[*Enter four Women Soldiers first amid percussion.*]

FEIFENG

[*Enters with horsewhip and lance, and sings: Sapjiching lower line*]

Hurrying steed, cross mountains and plains.

Woman soldiers ferocious like thunder and lightning.

Come to Song land, I brandish my lance

To help Song and save talent.

For personal love, I live or die with no regret.

To uphold justice, can't let warmongers prevail.

[Sings: Gwanfa]

Speeding in silence, reins not slackened,

Crossing rivers and hills, not minding long way.

Noises of fighting off.

FEIFENG

[Sings: Gwanfa lower line]

Alarmed to hear murderous noises everywhere,

Dust rises in front of hill.

Lead my troop to the rescue without delay,

Lest wild beasts harm great talent.

*Exeunt Four Women Soldiers at her hand's waving, followed by FEIFENG.
Enter Four Jin Soldiers amid gongs.*

JINLONG

[Enters and sings: Heroic Gwanfa lower line]

**Sister leads troops to Song land,
I take shortcut to enter Central Kingdom.
Lest I lose at the very end,
I won't let her rescue ZHU BIAN
Out of personal favor.**

[Flourish.]

Enter WAN-ER, CHEN HU and Militia, leading ZHU BIAN and ZHU XIANG.

JINLONG

[Blocks their way and speaks: Haugu]

Maid, so you are the insider traitor, helping the enemy emissary, you are deliberately mutinying.

WAN-ER

[Speaks: Haugu]

Bah, I, WAN-ER, is originally Han child. I ought to save the loyal Han emissary.

ZHU BIAN

[Speaks: Haugu]

Little JINLONG, I, ZHU BIAN, came to Jin realm as emissary, just to welcome two emperors back, and build friendly relations with neighbor state. You shouldn't try repeatedly to harm me, using such nasty tricks.

ZHU XIANG

[Speaks: Haugu]

Little villain, that time when you were kidnapped, by militia on our side, if we disregarded our pact, you would have died. When your realm set delegates free, why do you arrange wicked plot, framing us, and now pursue to kill us. Where is your integrity.

JINLONG

[Speaks]

Nonsense, when I want to kill, I kill. I don't know what is integrity.

[Sings: Heroic Chatjiching lower line]

**Being kidnapped then, unspeakable shame.
Forced to release delegates back home.
Makes Father very upset all day.
Use this trick to frame you.
Remove chronic threat first,
Then conquer Central Plains.
You make so many plans to save ZHU BIAN.
Now he cannot hope to escape alive.**

[Sings: Gwanfa]

My nickname is Living Death.

You cannot survive my lance.

CHEN HU

[Speaks]

Bah.

[Sings: Faidim lower line]

Can't let little rogue wag his tongue and brag.

[Sings: Gwanfa]

With one stroke I send you to the Underworld.

Battle charges.

JINLONG and CHEN HU fight.

Exeunt WAN-ER leading ZHU BIAN and ZHU XIANG.

Exeunt CHEN HU who is beaten, with militiamen.

Exeunt JINLONG with Soldiers in pursuit.

Music starts: "Weep for Dead Souls".

Enter WAN-ER, CHEN HU, ZHU BIAN, ZHU XIANG and Militia in disarray.

ZHU BIAN

[Sings in fright: Yilau lower line]

**Lamentably, despite high heaven and deep sea,
I fear I cannot fly or submerge.**

ZHU XIANG

[Continues to sing]

**Like road ends at sundown,
Can't help trembling in terror.**

WAN-ER

[Continues to sing]

**Even if danger is all around,
I risk death to combat the enemy.**

CHEN HU

[Continues to sing]

With one last breath,

[Sings: Hoche Gwanfa upper line]

I swear to rescue the loyal.

COMMANDER

[Enter, leading Song Soldiers, blocks their way, laughs and speaks: Haugu]

Ha ha, you have nowhere to go, coming to a dead end, your chance of survival is severed.

WAN-ER

[Speaks: Haugu]

Villain, don't gloat, I'll die with you together here, in front of the hill.

ZHU BIAN

[Speaks: Haugu]

Commander Zhou, I, ZHU BIAN, care not about life or death. You are a Han descendant, I hope you repent in time, don't be the Barbarian's falcon and hound.

COMMANDER

[Speaks laughingly: Haugu]

ZHU BIAN, a hero knows the times. Blame yourself for not knowing the times. Don't blame my cruelty on you.

Battle rages.

WAN-ER and COMMANDER fight.

CHEN HU leads ZHU BIAN and ZHU XIANG, trying to exit.

Enter JINLONG leading troops and stopping them.

CHEN HU and JINLONG in duel.

WAN-ER and COMMANDER in duel.

ZHU BIAN and ZHU XIANG caught in the middle with nowhere to run.

JINLONG

[Speaks: Baatlaam] You

go up to Heaven,

I chase you to Heavenly Palace.

COMMANDER

[Speaks: Baatlaam] You

go down to earth,

I chase you to the Underworld.

WAN-ER

[Speaks to Commander: Baatlaam]

You know better, live and let live.

CHEN HU

[Speaks to Jinlong: Baatlaam] Enemy

and our side won't co-exist.

ZHU BIAN

[Speaks: Baatlaam]

Pressing so hard, wicked at heart.

ZHU XIANG

[Speaks: Baatlaam]

Risking death, must escape from beasts.

JINLONG and COMMANDER close in on two sides, CHEN HU and WAN-ER repulse with all their might.

JINLONG

[Sings gloatingly: Gwanfa lower line]

How can mantis stop cart wheel.

Now I chop off root of trouble.

So glad to catch all in the net,

I show only arrogance on my face.

ZHU BIAN and ZHU XIANG are in dire danger.

CHEN HU and WAN-ER are growing weak.

Enter FEIFENG leading Woman Soldiers, wards off COMMANDER.

FEIFENG

[Speaks]

Cur official, surrender your life.

[She fights with COMMANDER.]

JINLONG wants to help him. WAN-ER and CHEN HU together block his way.

Four militiamen protect ZHU BIAN and ZHU XIANG.

FEIFENG slays COMMANDER.

Exeunt Four Song Soldiers in flight.

JINLONG strives to force CHEN HU and WAN-ER off.

FEIFENG hurries forward to fight with JINLONG.

Please take trouble to meticulously rehearse the above melees.

JINLONG

[Speaks: Haugu]

Little slut, you secretly love Han man, betray Father and country. If you know better, restrain yourself in time, or else I will show no mercy.

FEIFENG

[Speaks: Haugu]

Bah, you hateful father and son, play dirty trick to frame people. Your heart is wicked, you debase a noble nation's dignity.

JINLONG

[Speaks]

Bah.

[Sings: Quick Maanbaan lower line]

**Little strumpet handmaid, treasonous,
Defect and sleep with black bird.
Betraying blood relations, forgetting paternal love,
You can't escape censure.**

[They fight.]

FEIFENG

[Blocks him, sings: Quick Maanbaan lower line]

**Save great talent, preserve justice,
My heart shines like sun and moon.
Repulse might, eliminate violence,
Ever recall ethnic cleansing vendetta.**

[They fight.]

JINLONG

[Speaks angrily]

How dare you.

[Sings: Faidim lower line]

**Flame of rage rises to eyebrow.
Phoenix nest wrongly harbors icy swallow.
I regret letting alien stock live then.**

[Sings: Gwanfa]

**Furiously pluck Liao flower,
To allay my anger.**

[He fights fiercely with FEIFENG.]

CHEN HU and WAN-ER come forward to help her.

JINLONG is beaten. Exeunt with Jin Soldiers in defeat.

ZHU BIAN

[Thanks FEIFENG and speaks: Haugu]

Sister, to save my life, you choose to mutiny.

FEIFENG

[Speaks: Haugu]

Brother, to save you, I shun no danger. Just hope you'll take the lead for the people.

Enter JINLONG, up on a hillock, with bow and arrow.

WAN-ER

[Speaks: Haugu]

Hateful Song Monarch is tyrannical, Jin Emperor is cruel. We should be on the same front, with people all over the country.

ZHU XIANG

[Speaks: Haugu half a line]

Alas, now not sure where to go.

CHEN HU

[Speaks: Haugu half a line]

Why not come to my stockade, and discuss how to handle the situation.

JINLONG *secretly shoots at ZHU BIAN.*

WAN-ER

[Notices this by chance and crying out, speaks]

ZHU BIAN, beware.

FEIFENG *turns to look, uses her body to block ZHU BIAN and is shot by the arrow.*

WAN-ER *and CHEN HU together go forward and slay JINLONG.*

ZHU BIAN

[*At the same time, supports FEIFENG and speaks*]

Sister.

ZHU XIANG

[Calls at the same time and speaks]

Princess.

WAN-ER and CHEN HU

[Turn and come forward, sadly watching her condition, and together speak]

Princess.

CHEN HU

[Speaks]

Aiya, Princess is badly wounded, let's carry her to a village house nearby, and give her treatment quickly.

FEIFENG

[Speaks]

No need, lamentably, arrow piercing heart, I know I won't live. Just keeping Brother unharmed, I will die with no regret.

ZHU BIAN

[*Grief-stricken, and speaks*]

Sister, to save your Brother, you are willing to sacrifice your life. Even if I die a hundred times, I can't clear my own guilt.

FEIFENG

[*Gasping slightly, forces a smile and speaks*]

Brother.

[Sings: "Lament Deep in Palace" last passage]

My soul is not yet cold,

My color not yet changed,

Don't shed tears for Sister.

ZHU BIAN

[*Sadly continues to sing*]

My heart is pierced by myriad arrows.

Sister, you save ZHU BIAN in vain.

WAN-ER

[*Continues to sing*]

Sound upon sound of sorrow.

Tears fly, heart breaking,

Grief and lament.

FEIFENG

[*Continues to sing*]

Dying, I hearten Brother,

Pity the common people who are suffering.

ZHU BIAN

[*Continues to sing*]

I shoulder the heavy responsibility alone.

I vow to realize your last words.

WAN-ER

[*Continues to sing*]

Life and death, sorrow and pain:

Rain sweeps fallen petals.

I secretly blame Heaven.

[*She weeps in sorrow.*]

"Lament Deep In Palace" music accompanies dialogue.

ZHU BIAN

[*Speaks*]

Sister.

WAN-ER, CHEN HU and ZHU XIANG

[*Speak together*]

Princess.

FEIFENG

[*Holding back tears in pain and speaks*]

Alas, everyone must die, why need you lament so grievously. Brother, you have outstanding talent. You should make it your responsibility, to achieve the salvation of people. Know that a country is built upon people. Without the people's trust, how can a country last. Not to mention monarchs in history have always been harsh ingrates. Why give up your life serving only one household, one surname. I hope you will shift your loyalty from the ruler to the nation, the people. Eliminate tyranny for the people. Relieve pain and suffering for all creatures. Then, even if you shed blood, lose life, your name will be immortal for millennia.

CHEN HU

[Speaks]

Emissary, the Princess speaks sage words. We hope you'll serve the country, the people, brace yourself, strive for your goal. That will be the people's good fortune.

ZHU BIAN

[*Moved deeply, heavy beat, sings: Grave Gwanfa lower line*]

**Aiyaya, righteous words of encouragement,
A rod on my head with a shout,
Makes me unspeakably ashamed.**

[Remorsefully speaks]

I erred, I shouldn't be foolishly loyal. I should wipe out invasion for my country, relieve suffering for the common folk. Sister, I'll do as you bade, and eradicate tyranny for the people.

FEIFENG

[*Smiles and speaks*]

Brother.

[Sings: Yifaan Jungbaan upper line, slightly brisk]

**With your hand you can reverse destiny,
Brush clouds apart to show sunlight.
For the country, for the people,
Clear away unrest all over the land.**

ZHU BIAN

[*Holding back tears, continues to sing*]

**Never forgetting public justice,
I can't sever personal feelings.
I ache when sorrow heaps on parting in life,
I lament endless regret upon parting in death.**

FEIFENG

[Continues to sing]

**In tears I call on WAN-ER,
You follow the Emissary to save the people.**

WAN-ER

[Continues to sing]

I weep blood to thank the Princess,

You care for me and hearten me.

FEIFENG

[Continues to sing]

I also wish Han militia volunteers

Will strive to salvage crises and difficulties.

CHEN HU

[Continues to sing]

I'll kill myself to help the weak,

Risk my life to fight tyranny.

ZHU XIANG

[Sings with interlude]

I pray tyranny be eradicated soon,

Our task may thus be completed.

FEIFENG

[Weakening, and speaks]

Brother, I die, I have a little wish, I want to tell you, I wonder if you are willing to hear it?

ZHU BIAN

[Speaks]

Sister, please speak.

FEIFENG

[Half shy, half gleeful, speaks]

Brother, I've pined for you for six years, admiring your talent and looks. In this life, I can't be your wife,

I wish to be your wife after death. That is all I wish for.

ZHU BIAN

[Moved to tears and speaks]

Alas, I am ashamed of my foolishness. You love me and that's my blessing. I lament destiny plays tricks

on man, won't let lovers be together for life.

FEIFENG

[Speaks]

Alas, love is over in this life. Just hope for the next, love severed like silk, hard to break.

ZHU BIAN

[Speaks]

FEIFENG Wife.

FEIFENG

[*Panting*, speaks]

Husband Zhu. [Sings:

Yifaan Naamyum]

This homeless swallow,

Silently thanks merciful Heaven.

I lament my ill-fated life,

Yet lucky to have your love.

ZHU BIAN

[Continues to sing]

Six years pining, alas, I deserve little boon,

Fortunately I can still embrace Moon Goddess.

FEIFENG

[*Snuggles in contentment* and continues to sing]

I call lover quietly a thousand times.

Years of secret vows happily fulfilled.

ZHU BIAN

[*Sadly* continues to sing, slightly faster]

Alas, in this life we can't be married.

FEIFENG

[Continues to sing]

May we be lovebirds in the next.

ZHU BIAN

[Continues to sing]

Sister buries sadness,

I embrace sorrow.

FEIFENG

[Sings more slowly]

Lament not my life or death.

Hope you'll save people from suffering.

I'll die smiling.

[She dies smiling.]

ZHU BIAN

[*Madly* speaks]

FEIFENG Wife.

WEN-ER, CHEN HU and ZHU XIANG

[Speak together]

Princess.

Music starts, prelude of Chewu tune.

CHORUS

[Sing off]

**Till Heaven and Earth grow old,
Only endless regret remains,
Turns into blood,
To be used as ink for writing poetry.**

ZHU BIAN *embraces* FEIFENG 's body tightly, turns from sorrowful to passionate, tableau of all freezing.
Curtains.

FINAL CURTAIN

Annotations on Act 5

1. “In crisis, honor is visible” is a line from “Zheng Qi Ge (Song of Upright Spirit)”, a celebrated long poem of five-character lines by the Southern Song patriot Wen Tianxiang who, in the last days of the Dynasty, loyally fought against the Mongol invaders and wrote this poem to expound, and thereby immortalize, his patriotic spirit.
2. The Villagers compare ZHU BIAN to the two most famous diplomats/emissaries of the Western Han Dynasty sent out by the Emperor Wu: Su Wu to the Huns (already covered in earlier annotation) and Zhang Qian to a number of small Central Asia (Silk Road) states to conclude treaties with them as allies of Han against the Huns.
3. ZHU XIANG cites the proverb “asking a tiger for its skin”, meaning asking somebody (usually a self-seeking or even evil character) to do something good but something against that somebody’s own interest, i.e. mission impossible.
4. Execution of the entire household is common punishment for a criminal found guilty of treason. Giving a criminal punishable by death sentence the option of suicide by drinking poison is supposed to be merciful, in that it allows the prisoner to die with his body intact (as against having his head cut off in execution).
5. “Foolishly loyal” is the historians’ evaluation of Yue Fei, the famous Song general who led the Yue Family Warriors against the Jin invaders led by Wushu. His openly declared objective was to fight his way back northward and restore the land conquered by Jin north of the Yangzi, to march into the Jin capital, and to welcome the two Emperors Huizong and Qinzong taken prisoner (thereby bringing to an end the Northern Song Dynasty) by the Jin hordes. This was a threat to the Emperor Gaozong who was enthroned as first Emperor of Southern Song (ie. “Crossing to the South of the Yangzi and settling aside”) and who through his Prime Minister Qin Hui was negotiating peace treaty with the Jin Dynasty to allow him sitting firmly on the throne in peace, ruling over the southern half of China at the price of losing the northern half to Jin permanently. Hence Qin recalled Yue Fei to Lin’an the capital of Southern Song (now Hangzhou in Zhejiang Province) and executed Yue to remove the obstacle to the peace treaty. Yue, who had an army in his command on the verge of victory and restoration of the country, was criticized in history as “foolishly loyal” to the Court in obeying the summons back to be executed, thus dashing the hopes of restoration for the nation.
6. JINLONG’s “lose at the very end” is a Chinese proverb which uses the metaphor ‘fail to build a mound due to missing one last basket of earth’.

7. JINLONG's "My nickname is Living Death" refers to the Chinese myth of "Wuchang Ghost", the legendary "policeman" sent by the King of the Underworld to "arrest" souls of humans reaching their time of death, and bring them down to the Underworld, ie. He is the "Soul Snatcher" similar to the Western Grim Reaper figure with the hood and scythe.
8. "Falcon and hound" are "assistants" to hunting, used as metaphor for henchmen of a tyrannical regime.
9. JINLONG quotes another Chinese fable of the "Praying mantis trying to stop the cartwheel", only to be crushed, satirising one trying to do something beyond one's ability, the weak challenging the strong.
10. JINLONG uses the proverb "Phoenix following the Crow", a colorful metaphor of a multi-color mythical bird marrying a black bird. (FEIFENG's name means "flying Phoenix").
11. ZHU BIAN's "A rod on my head with a shout" is allusion to a famous anecdote of how a monk of the school of the Zen Buddhism made a disciple reach "comprehension (of the Way) all of a sudden" by hitting him on the head with a rod while shouting at him at the same time.