孔雀东南飞 Southeast Fly Peacocks

孔雀东南飞 (Literal translation: Peacock (s) Southeast Flies/Fly) translated as Southeast the Peacock Flies, or A Peacock Flying to the Southeast, or Southeast Fly Peacocks, is the first long narrative poem in Chinese literary history, which uses 357 lines, 1785 characters. It presents a tragic love story taking place in Luijiang Shire (currently Huaining county, Anhui Province) during the Jian-an period (196-220AD) of the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220AD). The poem was initially a verbal work created by common people and was probably embellished by later generations in the course of spreading. It first appears in the book 玉台新咏 (Yu Tai Xin Yong), a collection of 769 poems from East Zhou (770-255BC) to Southern Dynasty period (420-589AD), compiled by 徐咏 (Xu Yong) (507-583AD). It is later collected in the book 乐府诗集 (Yue Fu Shi Ji), Anthology of Yuefu (Music Bureau) Poems, compiled by 郭茂倩 (Guo Maoqian) in the Song Dynasty, which collected more than 5000 poems and folksong lyrics including the Ballad of Mulan of the Northern dynasty period (386-581AD).

Music Bureau (Yuefu) was formed by the imperial courts to gather literary works including folk songs and poems from common people, with a partial purpose to help the rulers to learn the lives and thoughts of people. It was unclear when it was first established, but known that it flourished in Han Dynasty (206BC-220AD). It is also known as poetry genre. Chinese poems of this genre use vernacular language and depict mostly the ordinary people. A typical Yuefu poem has regular five-syllable (characters) lines. The poem Southeast Fly Peacocks together with the Ballad of Mulan are named as "Double Bi (precious jades)" among the Yuefu poetry.

The following translation of the poem is adapted from the English versions by Anne Birrell (in The shorter Columbia Anthology of Traditional Chinese Literature edited by V. Mair,2000), 赵彦春 (Zhao, Yanchun) (http://news.iciba.com/wap/?c=show&catid=39&id=1560771) and Hans Frankel, Yale University, available at http://courses.washington.edu/chin461/suppread/Unit2_7.pdf
序曰：汉末建安中，庐江府小吏焦仲卿妻刘氏，为仲卿母所遣，自誓不嫁。其家逼之，乃投水而死。仲卿闻之，亦自缢于庭树。时人伤之，为诗云尔。

During the reign of Jian An, the Eastern Han Dynasty, Liu, wife of Jiao Zhong-qing, a clerk in the Lujiang Prefecture, vowed not to remarry after being cast off by Jiao’s mother. She drowned herself when pressured by her own family. At the bad news, Zhong-qing hanged himself on a tree in his courtyard. A contemporary, so moved, wrote this poem about it.

1. 南国东南飞， A pair of peacocks to the southeast fly;
2. 五里一徘徊。 At each five miles they look back from the sky.

3. “十三能织素，” At thirteen (I) can weave cloth
4. 十四学裁衣。 At fourteen (I) can make clothes
5. 十五弹箜篌， At fifteen (I) can play Konghou (many stringed lute)
6. 十六诵诗书。 At sixteen (I) can recite books of Poetry and History.
7. 十七为君妇， At seventeen (I) became your wife,
8. 心中常苦悲。 My heart is often full of sorrow and bitter pain.
9. 君既为府吏， Since you've become a prefect clerk away,
10. 守节情不移。 I have kept pure, my affection has never changed.
11. 贱妾留空房， I stay in the lonely room,
12. 相见常日稀。 seldom to see you.

13. 鸡鸣入机织， At cockcrow I went in to weave at the loom,
14. 夜夜不得息。 Night after night I found no rest.
15. 三日断五匹， In three days I finish five bales of cloth
16. 大人故嫌迟。 Mother-in-law still nagged at my sloth.
17. 非为织作迟， It wasn't my weaving that was slow,
18. 君家妇难为！ but it's hard to be a wife in your home.
19. 妾不堪驱使， I don't want to be driven out,
20. 徒留无所施。 But there's no way I can stay on here.
21. 便可白公姥， So please speak with mother
22. 及时相遣归。” to let me be sent home in good time. ”

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1 Lujiang, currently called Small City, is a town located in Huaining county, Anhui Province. It was also called the town of Clerk Jiao, and Small Clerk Harbor in history. It is well known because of this famous poem, and there are many memorial sites associated with this poem in the town. [http://www.hnxsji.gov.cn/include/content.php?id=213](http://www.hnxsji.gov.cn/include/content.php?id=213)
23.府吏得闻之, The clerk heard these words,
24.堂上启阿母: And up in the hall spoke with his mother:
25.“儿已薄禄相,”Your son does not earn much,
26.幸复得此妇。 but with her I feel luckiest of all.
27.结发同枕席, We bound our hair, shared pillow and mat,
28.黄泉共为友。 Vowed to be lovers till Yellow Springs,
29.共事二三年, We have lived together two years or three
30.始尔未为久。From the start not so long a time
31.女行无偏斜, I find nothing wrong she has done.
32.何意致不厚。Why are you to her so unkind?”
33.阿母谓府吏: The mother replied to her son:
34.“何乃太区区! ” What a trifle matter you mind!
35.此妇无礼节, This woman knows nothing polite
36.举动自专由。And she is self-willed and headstrong.
37.吾意久怀忿, I can’t keep my temper at her sight;
38.汝岂得自由! How can you feel at ease for long?
39.东家有贤女, Our east neighbor has a girl fair,
40.自名秦罗敷。Her name, I know, is Qin Luo-fu.
41.可怜体无比, Her beauty ranks beyond compare;
42.阿母为汝求。I will propose a match for you.
43.便可速遣之, Dismiss this one right away
44.遣去慎莫留! Let her go and do not let her stay!”
45.府吏长跪告: The clerk fell on his knees to implore:
46.“伏惟启阿母。”I only have this to say, mother,
47.今若遣此妇, If you dismiss this wife today,
48.终老不复取! I will never marry again!”
49.阿母得闻之, The mother heard these words,
50.槌床便大怒: pounded her bed in fury:
51.“小子无所畏, “What an impious, useless son;
52.何敢助妇语! How dare you appeal for her sake!
53.吾已失恩义, As for sympathy I have none,
54.会不相从许! “And compromise I shall never make!”
55.府吏默无声，The clerk silent, without a word,
56.再拜还入户。bowed again and went back to their doors.
57.举言谓新妇，He started to speak to his wife,
58.哽咽不能语：stammered, unable to talk:
59. “我自不驱卿，"I myself would not drive you away,
60.逼迫有阿母。But it is my mother who is forcing me.
61.卿但暂还家，You just go home for the time being,
62.吾今且报府。I will have to report to my post,
63.不久当归还，Before long I am bound to be back,
64.还必相迎取。When I come back I will not fail to bring you back
65.以此下心意，Please do not you worry about this matter
66.慎勿违吾语。be sure to do what I say."

67.新妇谓府吏: The young wife told the clerk,
68.勿复重纷纭。"You need not trouble yourself any more.
69.往昔初阳岁，In the past in an early spring time,
70.谢家来贵门。I left home to come to your noble house,
71.奉事循公姥，Whatever I do I follow your mother's order,
72.进止敢自专？How dare I to do anything in my own way?
73.昼夜勤作息，I labor like mad night and day,
74.伶俜萦苦辛。And my constitution consume.
75.谓言无罪过，I'm not to blame, with no doubt,
76.供养卒大恩。For I'm filial in the main.
77.仍更被驱遣，All the same I will be cast out;
78.何言复来还! What's the use coming here again?
79.妾有绣腰襦，I have an embroidered tunics,
80.葳蕤自生光；Gorgeous they shine with a light of their own.
81.红罗复斗帐，Red silk funnel bed curtains,
82.四角垂香囊; At the four corners hang scent sachets;
83.箱帘六七十，Dressing cases sixty or seventy,
84.绿碧青丝绳。Green jasper, green silk cord,
85.物物各自异，Each one different
86.种种在其中。Including all kinds.
87.人贱物亦鄙，I am despised, and my things are also worthless,
88.不足迎后人。Not worth offering your next wife,
89. 留待作遗施，You can on someone else bestow,
90. 于今无会因。Because we will have no chance to meet again,
91. 时时为安慰，Or they can be a good keepsake;
92. 久久莫相忘!” Let us in each other’s mind stay!”

93. 鸡鸣外欲曙，The cock crew, outside it was getting light,
94. 新妇起严妆。The young wife got up and carefully dressed.
95. 著我绣夹裙，She puts on her broidered lined gown,
96. 事事四五通。Every piece she tried four or five times.
97. 足下蹑丝履，On her feet she wears silken shoes,
98. 头上玳瑁光。On her head the tortoise shell combs gleam.
99. 腰若流纨素，Round her waist she wears white silk,
100. 耳著明月珰。On her ears she wears bright moon pendants.
101. 指如削葱根，Her fingers are like peeled scallion stems,
102. 口如含朱丹。Ruby rouge on her lips appears.
103. 纤纤作细步，Minutely she takes small steps,
104. 精妙世无双。so perfectly beautiful, no equal.
105. 上堂拜阿母，She went up the hall and took leave of the mother.
106. 阿母怒不止。The mother was still angry and did not keep her.

107. “昔作女儿时, “When I was a girl very small,
108. 生小出野里。In my poor village I ran wild.
109. 本自无教训，So manners I know not at all,
110. 兼愧贵家子。Unworthy of your son so noble,
111. 受母钱帛多，You’ve treated me in a big way,
112. 不堪母驱使。And yet I fall short and now leave.
113. 今日还家去，I’m going back home just today;
114. 念母劳家里。And leave you all the chores I grieve.”

115. 却与小姑别，To his sister she said good-bye,
116. 泪落连珠子。While pearly tears from her eyes shed.
117. “新妇初来时, “When as a bride I first came by
118. 小姑始扶床：Little sister-in-law could just touch the bed.
119. 今日被驱遣，Now I am being expelled,
120. 小姑如我长。And you’ve grown as tall as I.
121. 勤心养公姥，Care for Mother with all your heart,
122. 好自相扶将。Be nice and help all you can.
123. 初七及下九，On the double seventh day and last ninth of each month,
124. 嬉戏莫相忘。when you are having fun please keep me in mind."
125. 出门登车去，She left the gates, stepped onto the carriage, departed
126. 淋落百余行。Tears feel in more than a hundred streams.
127. 府吏马在前，The clear's horse was in front,
128. 新妇车在后。the young wife's cart behind.
129. 隐隐何甸甸，Clatter clatter, how it rumbled, rumbled,
130. 俱会大道口。they both stopped at the main road corner.
131. 下马入车中，He got off his horse, and got in her carriage,
132. 低头共耳语：Lowered his head and whispered in her ears:
133. “誓不相隔卿，I swear I won't be parted from you,
134. 且暂还家去。just go home for a little while.
135. 吾今且赴府, Today I will have to go to the office,
136. 不久当还归。But I will return before long.
137. 誓天不相负！”I swear to Heaven I will not betray you!”
138. 新妇谓府吏： The young wife told the clerk,
139. "感君区区怀！“Your love I do appreciate.
140. 君既若见录，If your faith of love remains fast,
141. 不久望君来。Please come back before it's too late.
142. 君当作磐石，Like bed rock you should stand all the blast,
143. 妾当作蒲苇。I will be a willow twig so pliant,
144. 蒲苇纫如丝，That, thin like silk thread, remains tough,
145. 磐石无转移。The bed rock never moves or shifts.
146. 我有亲父兄，I have a blood brother,
147. 性行暴如雷，who has a hot temper.
148. 恐不任我意，I fear he will not allow me to do as I wish,
149. 逆以煎我怀。"When I think of this my bosom boils."
150. 举手长劳劳，They raised their hands in a long, long farewell,
151. 二情同依依。For both loves the same wishful longing.
152. 入门上家堂，She entered her own house,
153. 进退无颜仪。approaching and withdrawing with a loss of face.

154. 阿母大拊掌，Her mother clapped hands in surprise,
155. "不图子自归,"We did not expect that you return by yourself.
156. 十三教汝织，I taught you how to weave at your thirteen years old,
157. 十四能裁衣。You could make clothes at fourteen.
158. 十五弹箜篌，You could play Konghou at fifteen,
159. 十六知礼仪。You know etiquette and decorum at sixteen,
160. 十七遣汝嫁，At seventeen I married you off,
161. 谓言无誓违。You vowed women’s rules you’d obey;
162. 汝今何罪过，What fault have you committed,
163. 不迎而自归？Why did you come alone today?”
164. 兰芝惭阿母：So put to shame Lan-zhi replied:
165. “儿实无罪过。” “Mother, I’ve done no wrong indeed.”
166. 阿母大悲摧。At this her mother sadly cried.
167. 还家十余日，Since she came back ten days had gone;
168. 县令遣媒来。The magistrate’s agent came here:
169. 云有第三郎，“Our magistrate has a third son,
170. 窈窕世无双。handsome no equal.
171. 年始十八九，Though only eighteen or nineteen years old,
172. 便言多令才。eloquent, with many talents ”
173. 阿母谓阿女：The mother told the daughter,
174. “汝可去应之。” “You should accept the offer.”
175. 阿女含泪答：The daughter choked back the tears,
176. “兰芝初还时，"When I came back home,
177. 府吏见丁宁，The clerk constantly insisted,
178. 结誓不别离。we vowed to each other not to abandon each other.
179. 今日违情义，If I am against my feeling and obligations,
180. 恐此事非奇。I am afraid it is not right.
181. 自可断来信，To the matchmaker please say nay,
182. 徐徐更谓之。” And say to the matchmaker gently and clear.”
阿母白媒人： The mother explained to the matchmaker,

“贫贱有此女， "The daughter of this poor and unworthy family,

始适还家门。 was sent out to be married but came back home.

不堪吏人妇, Unfit for a clerk's wife,

岂合令郎君？ How could she be a match for such a fine lord?

幸可广问讯, Please go somewhere else to inquire;

不得便相许。 we cannot respond to your offer at this time. "

媒人去数日, Soon after the go-between went,

寻遣丞请还, Came another from the mayor.

说有兰家女, So uttered the messenger sent:

承籍有宦官。 You have an official forbear.

云有第五郎, The mayor’s blessed with a fifth son,

娇逸未有婚. Who’s still a single gentleman,

遣丞为媒人， And in beauty second to none;

主簿通语言。 I would make a match if I can.

直说太守家, The mayor’s scribe clearly told me

有此令郎君, That the lad loves your daughter fair,

既欲结大义, And wants me a go-between to be.

故遣来贵门。 So I have come for this affair.

阿母谢媒人: The mother thanked him profusely:

“女子先有誓, “My daughter swore an oath,

老姥岂敢言 " how can I make the decision?"

阿兄得闻之, The elder brother heard this,

怅然心中烦。 He was disappointed and disturbed in his heart.

举言谓阿妹: He told his younger sister,

“作计何不量! "Why do you not use head when making plans?

先嫁得府吏, You first married to the clerk,

后嫁得郎君。 in the next marriage you can get a noble lord,

否泰如天地, A difference as between heaven and earth,

足已荣汝身。 this marriage could bring your honor enough.

不嫁义郎体, Not to marry this fine gentleman,

其往欲何云？ " what will be your future hereafter? "

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兰芝仰头答：Lanzhi raises her head and said,

“理实如兄言。”What you said is true,

谢家事夫婿，I left home to serve my bridegroom,

中道还兄门。I returned to your house midway.

处分适兄意，Brother I’d obey unreserved,

那得自任专！how could I act on my own.

虽与府吏要，Although I have a vow with the clerk.

渠会永无缘。we will stay apart for ever.

登即相许和，I am ready to give my consent,

便可作婚姻。” please go ahead to make the arrangement.

媒人下床去。The matchmaker came down the couch,

诺诺复尔尔。Overfilled with satisfaction.

还部白府君：Then to the mayor he went ahead:

“下官奉使命，“Your subordinate has carried out your order,

言谈大有缘。our discussion has met with great success.”

府君得闻之，The mayor hear of this,

心中大欢喜。his heart full of delight.

视历复开书，He consulted a calendar and books of horoscope.

便利此月内，fortunately in this month,

六合正相应。All six correspondences are fitting,

良吉三十日，The thirtieth is a lucky day,

今已二十七，today is already 27th,

卿可去成婚。you may go to conclude the nuptials.”

交语速装束，Discussions on both sides hastened the wedding gifts,

络绎如浮云。In succession like floating clouds,

青雀白鹄舫，A boat decorated with green birds and white snow goose.

四角龙子幡。At the four corners were dragon banners.

婀娜随风转，softly curling in the wind.

金车玉作轮。A gold coach with jade wheels,

踯躅青骢马，prancing piebald horses,

流苏金镂鞍.colored silk threads and gold stitched saddles.

赍钱三百万，a wedding gift of three million coins,

皆用青丝穿。all strung on green cord.

杂彩三百匹，assorted silks, three hundred bolts,
249. Fine fish and dainties obtained from climes far-flung,
250. Four or five hundred servants
crowding up to the mayor's gate.

252. The mother told the daughter,
253. "I just got the letter from the mayor,
tomorrow they will come to fetch you.
Why do you not make yourself clothes,
do not be unprepared!"

255. The daughter did not say a word,
sobbed with handkerchief in her mouth
her tears fell as if poured.
She moved her glazed table and stools,
And placed them beneath her window.
With left hand she grasped the scissors and measuring rod,
with right hand she took the silk material.
In the morning she finished an embroidered lined skirt
In the evening she finished a think gauze browse.
with grief thoughts she stepped out and cried.
The clerk heard of this change,
He asked for leave to go home.
When he was still two or three miles away,
his horse neighed with a mournful sound.
The young wife recognized the horse neigh,
she put on shoes to come out to meet him.
depressed she waited for him afar,
She knew it was her loved one.
She patted the sandal with her hands,
her sigh could make everyone sad.
"Since you left
Course of things was out of hand.
果不如先愿，What happened is not as I wished for it,
又非君所详。nor as you imagined it.
我有亲父母，I have my parents forcing me
together with my brothers.
以我应他人，They married me to another man,
君还何所望！”what do you hope for?"
府吏谓新妇：The clerk told the young wife,
“贺卿得高迁！”congratulations to your lofty advancement.
磐石方且厚，The bedrock still square and firm,
可以卒千年：could endure a thousand years.
蒲苇一时纫，The plying reed is tough only for a while,
便作旦夕间。from morning to the evening.
卿当日胜贵，You will prosper and move up day by day,
吾独向黄泉！”I will go to the Yellow Springs alone!”
新妇谓府吏： The young wife told the clerk,
“何意出此言？！"Why did you say that?!
同是被逼迫，you and I were both coerced.
君尔妾亦然。So were you and so was I.
黄泉下相见，We will meet under the Yellow Springs,
勿违今日言！”let us not go against what we said today!"
执手分道去，They held hands then went separate ways,
各各还家门。returned to their different homes.
生人作死别，Still alive parted for death,
恨恨那可论？Grief, grief, how could it be told?
念与世间辞，The resolved to depart from this world,
千万不复全！never again to be whole.
府吏还家去，The clerk returned home,
上堂拜阿母：Up in the hall bowed to his mother,
“今日大风寒，"Today the great wind is cold,
寒风摧树木，the cold wind stripped trees.
严霜结庭兰。Severe frost forms on the orchid in the courtyard,
儿今日冥冥，Your son's life is coming to an end.
令母在后单。Leaving Mother to live alone.
故作不良计，This is my own evil design,
勿复怨鬼神！Please do not blame ghosts and sprits.
命如南山石，May your life be like rocks of the South Mountain,
四体康且直！You stay healthy and strong!"
阿母得闻之，The Mother heard of this,
零泪应声落：responded in tears:
“汝是大家子，"You are a son of a great family,
仕宦于台阁。that holds office government position for generations.
慎勿为妇死，You must not die for a mere wife,
贵贱情何薄! Between noble and base there is no obligation.
东家有贤女，Our east neighbor has a fair daughter,
窈窕艳城郭，Meek and mild, the loveliest in town.
阿母为汝求，Your mother will seek her for your wife,
便复在旦夕。" We will receive a response in no time."
府吏再拜还，The clerk bowed again and left,
长叹空房中，sighing long sighs in his lonely room.
作计乃尔立。He vowed in heart, standing erect,
转头向户里，turned his head towards his mother's door,
渐见愁煎迫。suffering from the searing pressure of grief."
其日牛马嘶，On that day horses and cattle neigh,
新妇入青庐。The young wife entered the wedding tent.
奄奄黄昏后，Slowly after dusk had fallen,
寂寂人定初。Quietly people started to settle down.
“我命绝今日，"My life will end today.
魂去尸长留！My soul will depart, only my corpse will stay." 
揽裙脱丝履，She lifted her skit, took off her silk shoes,
举身赴清池。raised her body and jumped into the clear pond.
344. 两家求合葬, The two families asked for a joint burial,
345. 合葬华山傍. Jointly buried together by the side of Mountain Hua.
346. 东西植松柏, East and west were planted pine and cypress,
347. 左右种梧桐. Left and right were set Wu-tong (parasol) trees.
348. 枝枝相覆盖, Their boughs overlap or stretch abreast,
349. 叶叶相交通。And leaves embrace each other tight,
350. 中有双飞鸟, Wherein a couple of birds fly,
351. 自名为鸳鸯. called Yuan-yang (Mandarin ducks).
352. 仰头相向鸣, Lifting their heads they call to each other,
353. 夜夜达五更. every night till the fifth watch (just before dawn).
354. 行人驻足听, Travelers stop and listen,
355. 寡妇起彷徨. widows wake up with dismay.
356. 多谢后世人, Be warned, people of later generations,
357. 戒之慎勿忘. learned this lesson and never forget!

Total: 357 lines, 1785 characters.

Pictures: http://www.yuwen100.com/gzyw/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=171
Southeast Fly The Peacocks

A pair of peacocks southeast fly;
At each mile they look back and cry.

"I could weave," said Lan-zhi, "at thirteen
And learned to cut clothes at fourteen;
At fifteen to play music light;
At sixteen to read and to write.
At seventeen to you I was wed.
What an austere life I have led!
You're an official far away;
I toil as housewife night and day.
At daybreak I begin to weave;
At night the loom I dare not leave.
I've finished five rolls in three days,
Yet I am blamed for my delays.
Not that my work is done too slow,
But hard your housewife's role does grow.
If Mother thinks I am no good,
What use to stay, although I would?
Will you come and to Mother say,
Send me back home without delay?"

Jiao Zhong-qing came home at her call
And said to his mother in the hall,
"I'm destined for a humble life;
By fortune I have this good wife.
We've shared the pillow, mat and bed,
And we'll be man and wife till dead.
We've lived together but three years,
Which not too long to me appears.
She has done nothing wrong, I find.
Why should you be to her unkind?"

His mother said then in reply,
"You are indeed shortsighted. Why,
This wife of yours with me goes ill;
She always does whate'er she will.
I've been offended by her for long.
How dare you say she's done no wrong?
In the east there's a match for you,
A maiden whose name's Qin Luo-fu,
A peerless beauty of this land.
I'll go for you to ask her hand.
Now send your slut out of our door!
She should not stay here anymore."

Zhong-qing knelt down with trunk erect
And said to her with due respect,
"If you should send away my wife,
I won't remarry all my life."
The mother was angry at his word;
Her strumming on the stool was heard.
"Has filial reverence come to nil?
Defend your wife against my will!
You are such an ungrateful son!
Of your request I will grant none."

Zhong-qing dared not speak anymore,
But bowed and entered his own door.
He tells his wife when she appears,
His voice choked so with bitter tears,
"Not that I would send you away,
But Mother won't allow you to stay.
Return to your brother's house, so
That to my office I may go.
When I have finished my work, then
I'll come and fetch you home again.
Do not be grieved to say adieu,
But keep in mind what I've told you!"

"Nay, make no care to come for me!"
To her husband addresses she.
"One early spring day, I recall,
I left home for your entrance hall.
I've done what Mother ordered me.
Dare I be careless and carefree?
I do hard labour day and night;
Alone I toil with all my might.
I think I have done nothing wrong,
Still with Mother I can't get along.
To what avail to talk about
Returning now I'm driven out!
"I'll leave my jacket of brocade,
Whose lacings bright of gold are made,
And my canopy of gauze red,
Whose four corners with perfume spread,
And sixty trunks and coffers tied
With silken threads all in green dyed,
Where different things you will find;
Not two of them are of a kind.
They are as cheap as I, it’s true,
Not good enough for your spouse new.
So as gifts you may share them out,
As we can’t meet again, no doubt.
Keep them in memory of me!
Forgetful we can never be.”

At dawn she roses at the cockcrow
And made up with care, ready to go.
She put on an embroidered gown
And checked it over, up and down.
She put on shoes made of brocade,
Of tortoise shell her hairpin’s made.
Her waist was girt with girdle white,
Her earrings shone like moonlight bright.
She had tapering finger tips,
Like rubies were her rouged lips.
She moved at slow and easy pace,
Unrivalled in the human race.
She came to his mother in the hall,
Who said no tender words at all.
“While young, before I was a spouse,
I lived but in a country house.
Not well instructed or wide read,
For noble heir I was ill-bred.
Though kindly you have treated me,
Yet I’m not dutiful,” said she,
“So I must go back in despair,
Leaving to you all household care.”

She said to his sister good-bye;
Bitter tears trickled from her eye.
“When your brother and I were wed,
You came around our nuptial bed.
You are as tall as I today,
When I am to be driven away.
Take good care of your mother old,
And take good care of your household!

When maidens hold their festive day,
Do not forget me while you play.”

She went out and got on the cart;
Tears streamed down, heavy was her heart.
Jiao Zhong-qing rides before, his mind
Turning to his wife’s cart behind.
The cart’s rumble’s heard to repeat,
The husband stops where four roads meet.
He gets down from his horse, comes near
His wife and whispers in her ear,
“I swear not to leave you long, my spouse.
Return now to your brother’s house.
When I have finished my work, then
I’ll come and fetch you home again.
I swear to heaven high above.”

Lan-zhi says to her husband dear,
“I’m touched by your love sincere.
If I’m engraved deep in your mind,
Come then in time and not behind!
If as the rock your love is strong,
Then mine as creeping vine is long.
The vine’s resistant as silk thread;
No one could lift a rock o’erhead.
But my brother’s temper is hot,
Look on me kindly he will not.
I am afraid he’ll never care
What I like, and it’s hard to bear.”
They wave their hands with broken heart,
From each other they will not part.

Lan-zhi came to her mother’s place,
Feeling embarrassed in disgrace.
Her mother clapped loud in surprise:
“How can you come back in this guise!
You were taught to weave at thirteen;
To cut the clothes at fourteen;
At fifteen to play music light;
At sixteen to perform the rite.
At seventeen you were a bride;
By your husband you should abide.
Had you done nothing wrong at all,
Why come back alone to my hall?”
Lan-zhi told her mother the truth,  
Who was moved to tears, full of ruth.

She had been back many a day,  
A go-between then came to say,  
“Our magistrate has a third son,  
Whose good looks are second to none.  
Though at eighteen or nineteen years,  
For eloquence he has no peers.”  
Her mother said to her, “consent  
To this proposal benevolent!”  
But she only answered in tears,  
“Can I forget my married years?  
My husband vowed when we parted then,  
Never should we sever again.  
If I should break my word today,  
I would regret for ever and aye.  
Will you please tell the go-between  
Gently and clearly what I mean?”  
Her mother told the messenger,  
“This humble daughter of mine, sir,  
Sent back by an official of late,  
Can’t match son of magistrate.  
Why not inquire another house  
Where may be found a better spouse?”

No sooner had gone this messenger  
than came one from the governor.  
“You have a daughter fair,” said he,  
“Of an official’s family.  
Our governor has a fifth son,  
Unmarried, he’s a handsome one.  
My lord’s secretary asked me  
His lordship’s go-between to be.  
I was told to say openly  
I come for my lord’s family.  
His son will have your daughter for spouse.  
That’s why I’m sent to your noble house.”  
Mother Liu thanked the messenger,  
But said she could not order her  
Who’d made a vow, to break her word.

By Lan-zhi’s brother this was heard;  
As it troubled his worldly mind,  
He spoke to Lan-zhi words unkind.  
“Why don’t you, sister, think it o’er?  
You left then an official’s door;  
Now you may marry a noble son;  
Good luck comes when bad luck is done.  
If you refuse this honour great,  
I know not what will be your fate.”  
Lan-zhi replied, raising her head,  
“Brother, it’s right what you have said.  
I left you once to be a spouse  
Sent back, again I’m in your house.  
So I’m at your disposal now.  
Can I do what you don’t allow?  
Though I vowed to my husband dear,  
We cannot meet again, I fear.  
So you may marry me at will,  
My obligation I’ll fulfill.”

The go-between learned what they said,  
To his lord’s house he went ahead.  
He said his errand was well done;  
The lord rejoiced for his fifth son.  
He found in the almanac soon  
The auspicious date of that moon.  
He said to his subordinate,  
“The thirtieth day is the best date.  
That is only three days ahead.  
Arrange the marriage in my stead.”  
The lord’s order was given loud;  
People bustled like floating cloud.  
They painted with bird designs the boat  
And with dragons the flag afloat.  
A golden cab with wheels trimmed with jade  
And golden saddles for steeds were made.  
Three thousand strings of coins were sent  
And silks to the bride with compliment.  
Delicacies from land and sea  
Were bought by two corteges or three.

Mother Liu told her daughter, “Word  
Comes from the governor have you heard?  
Tomorrow is your wedding day.  
Put yourself in bridal array.  
Make your own dress ere it’s too late!”

Edited and compiled by S. Liu, Page 16 of 18
Lan-zhi sat in a pensive state. 
She sobbed beneath her handkerchief, 
And streaming tears revealed her grief. 
She dragged a marble-seated chair 
Towards the windows in despair, 
In her left hand the scissors bright 
And silk and satin in her right. 
At noon a jacket new was made 
And at dusk a robe in brocade. 
Behind dark clouds the sun down crept, 
Grief-stricken, she went out and wept.

Zhong-qing, at this news of his spouse, 
Asks leave and starts out for her house. 
After a short ride on his way, 
His horse makes an anguished neigh. 
This neigh is familiar to her ears; 
She comes out before he appears. 
She gazes afar, at a loss 
What to say when he comes across. 
She pats the horse when it comes nigh, 
And then says with a woeful sigh, 
"Alas! Since you parted with me, 
What's happened we could not foresee, 
Our hope cannot be realized. 
On hearing this, you'll be surprised. 
I was compelled by my own mother 
Together with my tyrant brother 
To wed another man at last. 
What can we do? The die is cast."

Jiao Zhong-qing tells his former wife, 
"I wish you a happier life! 
The lofty rock steadfast appears; 
It will stand for thousands of years. 
However resistant the vine may be, 
'Twill lose its toughness easily. 
May you live happier day by day! 
Alone to death I'll go my way." 
"Why say such cruel things to me?" 
To her former husband says she, 
"We are compelled, both you and I 
How could I live if you should die? 
Even dead, let us together stay!"

Forget not what we’ve said today!" 
They stand long hand in hand before 
They go each to his or her door. 
No lovers know a sharper pain 
Than to part till death joins them again. 
They’re willing to breathe their last breath; 
A severed life is worse than death. 

Jiao Zhong-qing went home full of gloom; 
He went straight to his mother’s room. 
“Today the cold wind blows down trees; 
Bitten by frost, the orchids freeze. 
I fear my life will end like the tree, 
Leaving you alone after me. 
That’s what such forebodings proclaim. 
Don’t lay on gods or ghosts the blame! 
May you like hillside rock live long 
With your four limbs both straight and strong!"

On hearing this, his mother shed 
Copious tears before she said, 
“As one of noble family, 
A high official you should be. 
How could you die for such a wife? 
Don’t play down on your noble life! 
There’s a maiden in east neighborhood, 
Beside her no one else is good. 
I have wooed her to be your spouse; 
Soon the reply will come to our house.”

Zhong-qing retired to his empty room, 
Determined not to be a bridegroom. 
He sighed and glanced towards the hall, 
Seeing his tragic curtain fall. 

In the blue tent on her wedding day 
Lan-zhi heard cows low and steeds neigh. 
At dusk the ghostly twilight waned; 
The guests gone, lonely she remained. 
“My life,” she thought, “will end today. 
My soul will go, but my body stay.” 
She doffed her silken shoes to drown 
Herself in uprolled wedding gown.
This news came to her Zhong-qing’s ear;  
He would not be severed from his dear.  
To and fro in the yard paced he,  
Then hanged himself beneath a tree.

Their families, after they died,  
Buried them by the mountainside.  
Pine trees were planted left and right,  
And planes and cypresses on the site.  
Their foliage darkens the ground;  
Their branches intertwined are found.  
A pair of peacocks fly above;  
They are well known as birds of love.  
Heads up, they sing song after song,  
From night to night, and all night long.  
A passer-by would stand spellbound;  
A lonely widow would wake dumbfound.

People of later generations, I pray,  
Do not forget that bygone day!

Minor edition on the translation from  

Pic: http://www.yuwen100.com/gzyw/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=171

Pic: http://www.52xrs.com/list/K.htm