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木 兰 词 逸 名

mu` lan' ci' yi` ming'

THE BALLAD OF MULAN – Anonymous

冯欣明英语翻译及拼音（简体版）

- English Translation and Pinyin by Feng Xin-ming (Simplified Chinese Script) -

(Note: Pinyin to enable entry by ordinary keyboard:

ji- = first tone, ji' = second tone, ji^ = third tone, ji` = fourth tone.)

唧 唧 复 唧 唧， 木 兰 当 户 织。

ji- ji- fu` ji- ji- mu` lan' dang- hu` zhi-

ji ji again *ji ji*, Mulan in front of door weave

“*Ji ji,*” and “*ji ji,*” Mulan weaves in front of the door.

不 闻 机 杼 声， 惟 闻 女 叹 息。

bu` wen' ji- zhu` sheng- wei' wen' nu^ tan` xi-

not hear machine shuttle noise only hear daughter sigh - -

“Now we don't hear the loom shuttle; we only hear our daughter sighing.

问 女 何 所 思， 问 女 何 所 忆？

wen` nu^ he' suo^ si- wen` nu^ he' suo^ yi-

ask daughter what of think ask daughter what of remember

Daughter, what are you thinking about? What are you nostalgic over?”

女 亦 无 所 思， 女 亦 无 所 忆，

nu^ yi` wu' suo^ si- nu^ yi` wu' suo^ yi-

daughter also none of think daughter also none of remember

“I am not thinking about anything, and I am not nostalgic.

昨夜见军帖，可汗大点兵，

zuó' yè' jian` jun- tie' ke^ han' da` dian^ bing-

last night see army notice khan -- big roll-call soldiers

Last night I saw the conscription notice; it's the Khan's¹ Great Call-up².

军书十二卷，卷卷有爷名。

jun- shu- shi' er` juan` juan` juan` you^ ye' ming'

army book ten two roll roll roll have father name

There are twelve scrolls of army rolls, and every scroll has Father's name.”

阿爷无大儿，木兰无长兄，

a- ye' wu' da` er' mu` lan' wu' zhang^ xiong-

“ah” father no big son mu lan no elder brother

Father has no elder son; I have no big brother.

愿为市鞍马，从此替爷征。

yuán` wéi` shì` an- ma^ cong' cí` tì` yé' zheng-

wish for market saddle horse from now for father campaign

Let me buy saddle and horse, and go to war in Father's place.”

¹ “Khan”: “Khan” is a Mongolian and Turkic title for “ruler”. The reason that Mulan's emperor was called by that term was because Mulan lived under the Northern Wei Dynasty of 386 – 535 C.E., which was ruled by the sinicized but “non-Chinese”, i.e. non-Han, Xian- Bei- (Xianbei) nationality, a formerly steppe horsemen people who originally spoke a language belonging to the Altaic family (the Mongolian, Turkic, and Manchu-Tungustic languages).

² This “great call-up” is thought to be part of the Northern Wei Emperor Tai-wu (太武帝)'s series of thirteen campaigns from 424 – 451 C.E against the Rouran, a tribe then ruling present day Inner and Outer Mongolia and thought to be descended from the ancient Turkic Xiongnu.

东市买骏马，西市买鞍鞞，

dong- shì` mai^ jun` ma^ xi- shì` mai^ an- jian-

east market buy fine horse west market buy saddle saddle-skirt

In the east market a fine horse is bought; in the west market, a saddle and its skirt;

南市买辔头，北市买长鞭。

nan' shì` mai^ pei` tou' bei^ shì` mai^ chang' bian`

south market buy bridle - - north market buy long whip

In the south market, a bridle; in the north market, a long whip.

旦辞爷娘去，暮宿黄河边，

dan' ci' ye' niang' qu` mu` su` huang' he' bian-

morning leave father mother go evening sleep Yellow River side

In the morning she says good-bye to her parents; in the evening she sleeps at the side of the Yellow River³.

不闻爷娘唤女声，

bu` wen' ye' niang' huan` nu^ sheng-

³ In Mulan's march north to join the battle against the enemy to China's north, she would have to cross the Yellow river, because all three places thought to possibly be Mulan's home town were all south of the Yellow River (see <http://baike.baidu.com/view/4025.htm>):

1. Yu' Cheng' (虞城) in northeastern Henan Province, about 110 miles due south of the present day Yellow River. Today a huge Mulan temple built during the Tang Dynasty of 618 – 907 C.E. still stands.
2. Bo' Zhou- (亳州) in northwestern Anhui Province, only 30 miles due south of Yu' Cheng' above. A Mulan temple also stands here.
3. Huang' Pi' (黄陂) in Hunan Province now part of the Greater Changsha City area. This was thought unlikely because this area was not part of the Northern Wei Dynasty's territory. Proponents of this place being Mulan's home town, however, argue that Mulan did not live during the Northern Wei Dynasty at all, but under the Tang Dynasty, when all of China was unified. A Mulan temple also dating from the Tang Dynasty still stands.

not hear father mother call daughter sound

She doesn't hear the sound of parents calling her,

但闻黄河流水声溅溅。

dan` wen` huang` he` liu` shui^ sheng- jian- jian-

but hear Yellow River flowing water sound “jian” “jian”

But hears the sound of the Yellow River's water going “jian, jian.”

旦辞黄河去，暮宿黑山头，

dan` ci` huang` he` qu` mu` su` hei- shan- tou`

morning leave Yellow River go evening sleep Black Mountain head

In the morning she says good-bye to the Yellow River; in the evening she sleeps on the Black Mountain⁴.

不闻爷娘唤女声，

bu` wen` ye` niang` huan` nu^ sheng-

do-not hear father mother call daughter sound

She doesn't hear the sound of parents calling her,

⁴ The Black Mountain or Hei- Shan- (黑山) is thought to be the Bei^ Han^ Mountain (北罕山) in present day Gubalin Right Banner (古巴林右旗) in southeastern Inner Mongolia (see <http://baike.baidu.com/view/1183290.htm>, paragraph 4). That area, however, is not close to the Yan Mountains (燕山) the horsemen from which Mulan is mentioned in the next verse as hearing.

I think a second possibility explains things better: Black Mountain here refers to the Yin Mountains (阴山), which in Mongolian is called “The Seventeen Black Mountains”. Since the Northern Wei Dynasty is governed by an ethnic group speaking a language related to the Mongols, it's quite possible that Northern Wei Dynasty people called the Yin Mountains the “Black Mountains”. So Mulan would be at the easternmost of the “Seventeen Black Mountains”, i.e. at the Great Wall around the area of Zhangjiakou (张家口). Here, immediately to Mulan's east would be the Yan Mountains, and thus she could hear the Yan Mountain horsemen while sleeping at the “Black Mountain”.

The third possibility, that this poem is talking about the present day Black Mountain Head or Heishantou (黑山头) in northeastern Inner Mongolia 600 miles north (straight line only) of the Great Wall at Zhangjiakou and on the border with Russia, is not probable. This is too far north, far into the rear of enemy Rouran land, and is far removed from the Yan Mountains.

但闻燕山胡骑声啾啾。

dan` wen` yan` shan- hu` ji` sheng- jiu` jiu`

but hear Yan Mountain barbarian horsemen noise “jiu” “jiu”

But hears the sound of the Yan Mountains’ barbarian horsemen going “jiu, jiu.”

万里赴戎机，关山渡若飞，

wan` li^ fu` rong` ji- guan- shan- du` ruo` fei-

ten-thousand mile attend war opportunity, passes mountains cross like flying

For thousands of miles, she goes wherever the battle takes her, crossing passes and mountains as if she flew.

朔气传金柝，寒光照铁衣。

shuo` qi` chuan` jin- tuo` han` guang- zhao` tie` yi`

northern air transmits golden night-watch-claps, cold light shines-on iron clothes

Frigid air transmits the night watch claps⁵; frosty light illumines the iron armor.

将军百战死，壮士十年归。

jiang- jun- bai` zhan- si^ zhuang` shi` shi` nian` gui-

general - - hundred battle die strong men ten years return

Generals die after a hundred battles; heroes return after ten years’ time.

⁵ *Ci Hai* 辞海，1989 ed., Shanghai, p. 1453 under entry “tuo” 「柝」：巡夜者击以报更的梆子 (the clap board that night watchmen hits to announce the hour). It’s interesting here that the clap board is referred to as being a “golden” or metallic one, perhaps yellow copper, as ordinary night watch clap boards are made of wood. Perhaps in the army the night watch clap boards are made of metal?

归来见天子，天子坐明堂，

gui lai' jian` tian- zi^ tian- zi^ zuo` ming' tang'

return come see heaven son heaven son sit bright hall

They return to see the Son of Heaven, sitting in the Bright Hall.

策勋十二转，赏赐百千强。

ce` xun- shi' er` zhuan^ shang^ ci` bai' qian- qiang'

scroll merit ten two promotion, award gift hundred thousand strong

The merit scrolls confer twelve promotions⁶, awarded to thousands of strong men.

可汗问所欲，木兰不用尚书郎，

ke^ han' wen` suo^ yu` mu` lan' bu` yong- shang` shu- lang'

khan -- ask what want mu lan don't use administer books official

The Khan asks what she wants. "Mulan doesn't need to be an Imperial Cabinet Official⁷,

愿借明驼千里足，送儿还故乡。

yuan` jie` ming' tuo' qian- li^ ju' song` er' huan' gu` xiang-

wish borrow bright camel thousand mile feet send child return old village

I'd like a good camel's thousand-mile hooves, to carry me back home."

⁶ *Op. Cit.*, p. 1511, under the entry "zhuan" 「转」：迁调官职 (to change official position).

⁷ *Op. Cit.*, p. 1258, under the entry "shang shu lang" 「尚书郎」：“魏晋以后尚书各曹有…官…综理政务，通称尚书郎 Since the Wei and Jin Dynasties the various departments of the Imperial Cabinet ... have officials ... who administer overall affairs and are generally known as *shang shu lang*。”

爷娘闻女来，出郭相扶将。

ye' niang' wen' nu[^] lai' chu- guo' xiang` fu' jiang-
father mother hear daughter come, leave city-wall each-other support support-help

Hearing that Daughter is coming, the parents come outside the city walls, supporting⁸ each other.

阿姊闻妹来，当户理红妆。

a- zi' wen' mei' lai' dang- hu` li[^] hong' zhuang-
“ah” big-sister hear little-sister come, in-front-of door puts-on red makeup

Hearing that Little Sister is coming, Big Sister puts on her makeup⁹ in front of the door.

小弟闻姊来，磨刀霍霍向猪羊。

xiao[^] di` wen' zi' lai' mo' dao- huo` huo` xiang` zhu- yang'

little little-brother hears big-sister come, grind knife “huo” “huo” towards pig goat

Hearing that Big Sister is coming, Little Brother sharpens the knife, eyeing the pig and goat.

开我东阁门，坐我西阁床。

kai wo[^] dong- ge' men' zuo` wo[^] xi- ge' chuang'
open my east bedroom¹⁰ door sit my west bedroom bed

“I open up my east bedroom door; I sit on my west bedroom bed.

脱我战时袍，著我旧时裳。

tu- wo[^] zhan- shi' pao' zhuo' wo[^] jiu` shi' shang`

⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 1120 under entry “jiang” 「将」：扶助 (support and help).

⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 1120, under entry “zhuang” 「妆」：妆饰，…如…「…对君洗红妆」 (makeup, as in “... in front of you, sire, I wash off my makeup”).

¹⁰ *Op. cit.*, p. 998, under entry “ge” 「阁」：卧室 (bedroom).

take-off my war time coat put-on my old time clothes

I take off my wartime clothes; I put on my old times dress.”

当窗理云鬓，对镜贴花黄。

dang- chuang- li[^] yun' bin` dui` jing` tie- hua- huang'

at window arrange cloud temple-hair, facing mirror paste flower yellow

At the window she arranges cloud-like hair; facing the mirror she pastes on her yellow forehead ornaments.¹¹

出门看伙伴，伙伴皆惊惶，

chu- men' kan- huo[^] ban` huo[^] ban` jie- jing- huang'

come-outside door see partner -- partner -- all afraid shocked

She comes out to see her comrades; her comrades are all shocked.

同行十二年，不知木兰是女郎。

tong' xing' shi' er` nian' bu` zhi- mu` lan' shi` nu[^] lang'

together march ten two years do-not know mu lan is female lady

“We march together for twelve years, and we don't know that Mulan is a lady!”

雄兔脚扑朔，雌兔眼迷离，

xiong' tu` jiao[^] pu- shuo` ci' tu` yan[^] mi' li'

male rabbit feet hops beginning, female rabbit eyes indistinct unclear

“The male rabbit hops from the beginning¹²; the female rabbit's

¹¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 634, under entry “*hua huang*” 「花黄」：装饰…以金黄色纸剪成星月花鸟等形贴于额上…(ornament…pasting on the forehead golden yellow paper cut into the shape of star, moon, flower, or bird…)

¹² *Op. Cit.*, p. 1709, under entry “*shuo*” 「朔」：初始 (at the beginning); 此二句则形容如何辨别雄雌兔 then it's possible that these two lines describe how to distinguish

eyes are misty¹³;

两兔傍地走，安能辨我是雄雌？

liang[^] tu` bang` di` zou[^] an- neng` bian` wo[^] shi` xiong` ci`

two rabbit along ground run how can distinguish I is male female

Both rabbits are running along the ground; how can you tell whether I am male or female?"

between male and female rabbits。但亦有可能「扑朔」为拟声辞，形容雄兔走路 but “*pu shuo*” may also be an onomatopoeia, describing the male rabbit’s run.

¹³ *Op. Cit.*, p. 1183, under entry “*mi li*” 「迷离」：糶糊不明 (indistinct, unclear).