I. Text

Mulberry Along the Lane 陌上桑

The sun rises from the southeast corner, 日出东南隅
Shines on our Qin clan house. 照我秦氏楼
The Qin clan has a pretty girl, 秦氏有好女
She calls herself Luofu. 自名曰罗敷
Luofu delights in raising silkworms and picking mulberry leaves. 罗敷喜蚕桑
She picks mulberry leaves at the southern corner of the wall, 採桑城南隅
Blue silk strands form her basket ties, 青丝为笼系
A cassia twig serves as its handle. 桂枝为笼钩
On her head is a falling chignon; 额上倭堕髻
On her ears are bright moon pearls. 耳中明月珠
Of golden silk is her skirt, 缃绮为下裙
Of purple silk is her jacket. 紫绮为上襦
When passersby see Luofu, 行者见罗敷
They put down their loads, stroking their beards.

When young men see Luofu,
They remove their caps and fiddle with their head cloths.

Plowmen forget their plows;
Hoers forget their hoes.

When they return, they complain about each other—
It’s all because of looking at Luofu.

The grand warden comes from the south,
His five horses stop, pacing up and down.

The grand warden sends forth an officer,
To ask from what house is this pretty girl.

“The Qin clan has a pretty girl,
She calls herself Luofu.”

“What is Luofu’s age?”

“Not quite twenty yet.
A little more than fifteen.”

The grand warden asks Luofu,
“Would you like to ride with me?”

Luofu steps forward and answers,
“How stupid is the grand warden!

The grand warden has his own wife,
And Luofu has her own husband.

In the east, of a thousand-plus horsemen,
It is my husband who takes the lead.
How can one recognize my husband?
On a white steed followed by a black colt.
Blue silk strands are tied to the horse’s tail,
Yellow gold halters the horse’s head.
On his waist is a windlass-style sword;
It is worth millions of cash!
At fifteen he was a petty bureau clerk.
At twenty he was a court grandee.
At thirty he was a palace gentleman.
At forty he dominates an entire city.
He is man of a pure white skin,
Thin sideburns and a slight beard.
Elegantly and gracefully he paces in his bureau,
Slowly he walks within his residence.
A thousand men sit there,
All say my husband is exceptional.”
II. Episode Notes

• The *Guojin zhu* 古今注 ([Notes on Past and Present]) by Cui Bao 崔豹 (fl. 300), cited in Guo Maoqian’s *Yuefu shiji* (Collection of *Yuefu* Poetry) contains a story about a wife surnamed Qin 秦 that wisely prevented the advances of an official.

• “Dengtuzi haose fu” 登徒子好色賦 (Rhapsody on Master Dengtu, the Lecher) is collected in the *Wen xuan* 文選 (Refined Selections of Literature)

• The *Lienü zhuan* 列女傳 (Biographies of Various Ladies), compiled by Liu Xiang 劉向 (77 BCE-6 BCE)

III. Textual Source