

## Meng Jiangnu Weeps

Over 2,000 years ago, in China, there lived a young man called Fan Ziliang and his young sweetheart, Meng Jiangnu. They loved each other very much and looked forward to getting married and living happily ever after. But, on the day of their wedding, a terrible thing happened. The Emperor of China was building a Great Wall to keep out his enemies and protect his people. He needed many thousands of men to build this Great Wall, and often he had to force them to work for him. Fan Ziliang was one of these men, and on the very day of his wedding he was dragged away to work on building the Great Wall.



For five long years, Meng Jiangnu waiting at home for her husband to return, but he never came. One night, while she was sleeping, Meng Jiangnu dreamed that she saw her husband, wearing very thin clothes and shivering with cold. When she woke up she immediately started to make some warm, padded clothes for Fan Ziliang, and as soon as they were made she set out to look for him.

Meng Jiangnu bravely made the very long journey on foot, crossing mountains and rivers in her search for her husband. When, after many moons, she came to the Great Wall, she looked everywhere for her husband, but she couldn't find him. Eventually she found someone who had known her husband, but he sadly told her that Fan Ziliang had died and was buried somewhere under the Great Wall, along with many thousands of other men.

Meng Jiangnu was heart-broken. She sat down at the foot of the Great Wall and she wept. She wept day and night for her beloved husband, knowing that she would never see him again. She wept so much that her weeping caused a great stretch of the Great Wall to fall down. In the rubble she found the bones of her husband, and she gathered them together so that he could be properly buried.

The Emperor was very angry that Meng Jiangnu had made his Great Wall fall down, and ordered that she should be brought to him, to be punished. But when he met her and saw how beautiful this sorrowful lady was, he fell in love and decided to marry her.

Meng Jiangnu had no choice but to agree, but she asked the Emperor for one favour before she married him: that Fan Ziliang be given a grand funeral. As soon as the funeral was over, she decided to escape the Emperor and to be with her husband forever, and she threw herself gladly into the sea, to drown. The people of China built a temple near the Great Wall in memory of this beautiful, loyal lady, who loved her husband so much.