

THE WELTANS CHAUNG IN CHINESE FOLK NOVEL: A TENTATIVE ANALYSIS

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INTRODUCTION

Human phenomena is said to be more complex than anything else. Experiment is impossible and prejudice inevitable. Yet the belief that there are always clues and hints existing somewhere keeps scholars exploring in various fields. Popular literature is certainly one of the major sources. In the present study, I intend to present some basic points of the world-view of the Chinese masses.

In the first place, time span must be indicated. To a student of human phenomena, today is always more important than yesterday. I am mainly interested in the popular literature of today in its broadest meaning. Because of the continuity of history, we really cannot separate to-day from yesterday. The problem is that the stories we hear and read today may owe their origin to the remote past. In an attempt to make more sense out of today's story we must go back to yesterday and the days before it. The periods of Ming, Ch'ing and the six decades thereafter, a span of about six hundred years, are covered in the second and third chapters of this study. The first chapter goes back to even earlier periods. But all the stories I discuss in this paper can be easily heard in today's daily life in Hong Kong or Taiwan.

I intend to examine three groups of stories and novels according to the nature of their heroes. The protagonists of the first group are fairies and nonhuman beings¹; those of the second group are a combination of fairy and mankind; those of the third group are people with extraordinary characteristics. Hence the present study is a survey from fairy to mankind; from nebulous illusion to more accurate reality.

A writer of popular literature is more relaxed in mood and is freer to give vent to his whims than the scholars who write Confucian essays or religious literature. The former is even more relaxed when the subject matter is fairy tales or James Bond style fiction. In the relaxed medium of fantasy a writer is able to express himself through the mind of non-human entities. He places himself on a different plane of being and comments on human life from this new perspective. This kind of indirect, carefree self-valuation sometimes resulted in profound insights into the nature of human phenomena. It is in this sense I try to derive some light for the quest of people's weltanschauung from these light-hearted and usually unrespected novels.

Chapter One: Myth about Fairy and Man.

Mythology is said to be like the God Proteus. The god "will make assay, and take all manner of shapes of things that creep upon the earth, of water Likewise and of fierce fire burning."² The "life-voyager" wishing to be taught by Proteus must "grasp

him steadfastly and press him yet the more," and at length he will appear in his proper shape. But "this wily god never discloses even to the skillful questioner the whole content of his wisdom. He will reply only to the question put to him, and what he discloses will be trivial or great, according to the question asked."³

In order to "grasp him steadfastly", I shall confine my investigation by putting only one question to this wily god. What was people's attitude towards life and society as reflected in these myths? Before we start trying to derive any answer from these popular tales, I should first explain why only the following six pieces are selected. What is available in the rest?

In the first place, most Chinese myths have survived only a fragmentary accounts.⁴ Secondly, these six stories seem to be more relevant to the theme in question. Thirdly, I have tried to confine the samples within a nonreligious category in order to avoid further complication. Another reason for selecting these myths is their popularity and certain similarities which existed between them. Although there is no quantitative data indicating their individual popularity, the fact that each one has its own history of development, including several different narrations, various interpretation and conversions into other forms of literature e.g., poetry and drama, left no doubt about their popularity among the Chinese people.

The Chinese myths, besides being a "fumbling effort to explain the world of nature" are also a mixture in which man has recorded his experience, interpretation and subjective desires in life and the universe. Sometimes it tells us man's feeling of his identification as a part of the universe, sometimes it tells man's desire to surpass and overcome many restrictions such as the principles of gravitation, mortality and other restrictive phenomena posed on mankind by nature. Sometimes when the myths were retold in later period by priests or statesmen, they tended to interpret them in a way that would effect their own purposes whether political or religious or both. It is very important, when dealing with these materials, to distinguish the factual narration of experience from (a) the interpretation of experience and (b) man's desire as a reflection of his experience and feelings. Thus the ever changing development of the stories themselves are the most illustrative and illuminating data. Yet again it should be noted that the following analysis is by no means conclusive but highly hypothetical.

1. *Hou-i* (后羿) *Ch'ang-ngo* (嫦娥) and *Hsi Wang-mu* (西王母)

The myth of *Hou-i* is from the following main sources: a, *ch'u-ch'i t'ien-wen* (楚詞天問)⁵, b, *san-hai chin* (山海經)⁶, and c, *huai-nan tzu* (淮南子)⁷.

Hou-i's identity is further complicated by the appearance of several different roles under the same name *Hou-i* stated in the above mentioned sources.

a. He was the god *Hou-i* who was given a red bow and some white feather arrows and was sent to the earth to help the people by the god *Chun* (俊)⁸.

b. He was the hero sent by *Yao* (堯). He shot the monsters the giant hawk (大風), and the big anake and the nine of the ten suns that burnt all the crops and plants.⁹

c. *Ch'u Yuan* (屈原) in his poems confused the god *Hou-i* with the king of *You-ch'ung* (有窮) who was also named *Hou-i* but was believed to be another

person.¹⁰

d. According to *Mencius*, *Hou-i* was shot by his own student *I'ung Mung* who learn archery from him.¹¹

e. In *huai-nan tzu*, *Hou-i* was the man who obtained some elixir from the *Queen Mother of the West*. The herb was eventually stolen by his wife *Ch'ang-ngo*. *Ch'ang-ngo* ate the elixir and then ran away from the earth and hid in the moon.¹²

These are the earliest records of the fragments of the ancient myth. Despite the fact that they are scattered and even contradictory, there are still important hints that can enlighten us in our quest of the mysterious mentality of the remote past.

The fact that the early records failed to distinguish god from mankind and mankind from animals indicates the background of the primitive world within which human individuals were making a great effort to identify themselves from the rest of all beings. The result of this effort is a reflection of their conception of life and world. In my opinion, the early myths were not created by primitive geniuses, but were rather a collection of faithful records of the psychic and mentality common to many. They were more like imple depictions of the feelings from their hearts rather than the piercing imagination of certain gifted minds. They were free from the mental setting of civilized man. In other words the early minds were not restricted by those intelligent laws like gravitation and mortality. That is why *Ch'ang-ngo* could easily "run" to the moon and hide there. It also explains why there were chances to obtain elixir from the Queen Mother of the West. The concept of the three levels, namely the heaven, the earth and the hell has yet to be established. Clear distinction between god and man was a still later invention. Then we can explain why *Hou-i* was a mighty god in some cases and a weak man in the others. While he shot the monsters and snakes and even the burning suns to death, he was certainly felt (by himself, the spectators, the myth-makers and those who preserved them) as a mighty god. Yet in the face of death he was a helpless man. In the Yin literature the honorary title *ti* (帝) was applicable both to god and man.¹³ Unfortunately, these honest records of man's feeling have always been regarded as fascinating, imaginative and creative works by today's scholar.¹⁴

When the story of *Ch'ang-ngo* was retold later, the story teller tried to rationalize it in an attempt to make it more acceptable to their own contemporary minds. *Kao Yu* (高誘 fl. 205-212) in his commentary of *huai-nan tzu* wrote:

Huan-ngo (Ch'ang-ngo) was the wife of *Hou-i*. *Hou-i* obtained some elixir from the *Queen Mother of the West*. Before he had a chance to take it, *Ch'ang-ngo* stole the herb and ate it. She then became a fairy. She ran to the moon and became a nymph.¹⁵

The concept of a fairy might be considered an acceptable reality in *Han*. Therefore, in order to explain the story particularly the part where she ran to the moon, *Kao Yu* had to identify *Ch'ang-ngo* first as a non-fairy being, then she was metamorphosed into a fairy by virtue of the elixir. Thus she could have the power to fly to the moon. In this sense, this commentary appeared as a rationalized reproduction of the earlier record as required by the more enlightened *Han* mentality. It indicates that mankind had been identified more as a non fairy being than the time

when the myth first appeared.

A more explicit example is the civilizing process of the *Queen Mother of the West herself*. One record collected in *san-hai chin* (山海經) depicted the *Queen Mother of the West* as a deity bears resemblance to a mortal but has a leopard's tail, tiger's teeth, a shrill voice and matted hairs on which she wears a tiara. She is in charge of catastrophe and mishaps.¹⁶ Other chapters of the same collection have further information about her. There were three blue birds which collected food for her. She had a stool and she lived in caves.¹⁷ On a set of Warring-States period (B.C. 403-221) bamboo strips excavated in 279 A.D., the appearance of the *Queen Mother* was not monstrous but more like a human sovereign.

On *chia-tzu* day the king called on the *Queen Mother* of the West, presenting her with white and black jade, a hundred lengths of coloured silk and three hundred of white. The *Queen Mother* bowed and accepted these gifts. On *yi-chou* day the king invited her to feast at Jade Pool, and the Queen sang this song to him: "The white clouds in the sky floats out from the mountains; The way is long, hills and rivers lie between us; If you do not die, you may come back again."¹⁸

In another later account the *Queen Mother* was described in details as a noble lady though she still wore the tiara and had two blue birds. She was accompanied by beautiful girls and rode in a violet vehicle. Another record further described the *Queen Mother of the West* in the following terms:

In her golden coat she was splendid yet dignified. At her waist she had a long belt and a sword, on her head a tiara over her knotted hair, and on her feet slippers embroidered with phoenixes. She appeared to be in her thirties, of medium height, and her beauty, divine and magnificent, was peerless. She was true goddess.¹⁹

The mental development of these story-tellers can be summarized as the following stages.

a. It was an effort to distinguish certain individuals (like the *Queen Mother*) from both mankind and animals, But the product they produced was essentially still a mixture of both. The picture of their hero, a representative of themselves, possessed many virtues and beauty of both animal and mankind like the teeth of tiger and the tail of a leopard etc. It was a stage of less realistic self-identification.

b. In the second stage the story-teller were more accurate. The king presented the *Queen Mother* with black and white jade and some color silk. The deity bowed and accepted the gifts. She sang for him. Here we find more explicit human characteristics. Civilization was in the background. Man found this more realistic picture of self-identification a very attractive one, he therefore desired to prolong the period of being.

c. In this more realistic setting story-tellers felt more comfortable and assumed to state some of their own desires -- to obtain an elixir, to discover a piece of cloth that would clean in fire or a knife that could cut jade.²⁰ The magnificent appearance of the *Queen Mother* was a combination of experience and desire. It might be an

experience enjoyed by a luxurious few and at the same time a common desire shared by many.

In short, it is a process of finding and realizing the nature of mankind. Man's desire or imagination which was generated from his past experience led him to his future reality. But the development of the story did not end at the stage of desire expressing. These early biographical works became life samples of later critics in expressing their view of life. The decision and behavior of *Ch'ang-ngo* was often questioned by the *T'ang* poets. *Li Pai* once asked: Who would feel sympathy with that lonely woman *Ch'ang-ngo*? *Tu Fu* sighed for her fate:

Think about *Ch'ang-ngo* the widow
Wonder how she passes through all
Those cold cold Autumns.

In *Li Sang-yin's* opinion:

Ch'ang-ngo should regret
That she had stolen the elixir;
Her heart was filled with loneliness
Night after night in the dark blue sky
That looks like a sea of blueness.²³

Two possible analysis could be derived from the above criticism: on the one hand, since the poets express sympathy and regret and stress the loneliness and coldness in heaven, one might say that the poets imply that the secular world on earth is a warm, delightful place to live. On the other hand, one may argue that the poets' criticism is merely about the bitterness of widowhood as opposed to matrimonial life. Therefore, their criticism should not be considered as an indication of their attitude towards worldly life versus heavenly life. Since matrimonial life is a part of secular life, the latter analysis does not necessarily contradict the former. The melancholly, cold and quiet Autumn in the dark blue heaven would appear to be a conscious contrast to the noisy, dusty, but warm, human world.

2. The Weaving Maiden and *Tung Yung* (董永)

The origin of the folklore about *Tung Yung* and his fairy wife can be traced to the *Later Han* period. Stone engravings depicting part of the story can still be seen in the *Wu-liang Temple* built around 151 A.D.²⁴ Base on this engraving and a poem by the famous prince *Ch'ao Chih* (曹植)²⁵, we can be fairly sure that this story was to some extent popular in the *Later Han* period. A more detailed account is given in *sou-shen chi* (搜神記) by *Kan Pao* (干寶, fl. 317-322).

Tung Yung of *Han* lived in *Ch'ien Ch'en*. His mother died when he was a child. He lived with his father and worked in the field. When his father died, he had no money for the coffin and the funeral. He, therefore, sold himself as slave so that he could buy a coffin and hold the funeral. His master appreciated his good personality and gave him ten

thousand cash and sent him back home. Tung Yung moaned for three years and then returned to his master in attempt to repay the debt by serving him. On his way, *Tung Yung* met a women who said to him, "I would like to be your wife." He then took the woman with him to his master. His master said, "I have given you the money. You are free." Tung replied, "Because of your generosity, I could bury my father's body. Though I am a very ordinary man, I shall insist on repaying you with my labor." The master asked, "What can she do?" *Tung* answered, "She can weave." The master said, "If you insist, let her weave a hundred piece of silk for me." Hence, *Tung Yung's* wife wove for the master and finished her task in ten days. Then she told *Tung Yung*, "I am the weaving maiden in heaven. The God appreciated your filial piety and sent me to help you to pay your debt." After saying this, she flew back to heaven and disappeared.²⁶

This story is further elaborated in a hand written fragment from the *T'ang* period. First, *Tung Yuang* had a house and at least some land: however, he did not sell them, because he wanted to repay (報) his parents "personally". Second, Both *Tung Yung* and the weaving maiden shed thousands of tears at the time of their separation. Third, an episode about the adventure of *Tung Yung's* son, *Tung Chung* (or *Tung Chung-shu*) who went in search of his fairy mother has been added to the story.

The most important part of this story is the sorrowness and sadness experienced by the two protagonists because of their separation. The celebrated scene "The Separation in the Shade of the Ash Tree" is so moving that it became a model drama a long time ago. A *Ming* copy and a early *Ch'ing* copy (1661) of this scene are extant. The latter one is indeed a master piece of literature. I shall translate the relevent part of this scene so that we can have a clearer picture of this fairy's attitude towards secular life.

- Tung: ... Here is the flourishing ash-tree whose green leaves has created such a nice shade. Let me just lay down my stuff here and wait for a little while.
- Fairy: ... He is so happy that he goes far ahead of me. Alas! How would he know we are going to be separated today!
- Tung: Did you mention "separate"?
- Fairy: No! No! I meant that I leave lady *Sai-chin* today.
- Tung: Ah!
- Fairy: Where are we now?
- Tung: Don't you know this place? Here is the ash-tree under which I met you for the first time.
- Fairy: Then you should thank him (the tree).
- Tung: I am waiting for you, so we can thank him together. (They bow to the tree.)
- Tung: Ash-tree, Ash-tree! I bow to you.
- Fairy: Darling, shouldn't you call him our match-maker? I have heard people say that they would remember their matchmaker for three generations. It is only a hundred days for us, so we really should thank him.
- Tung: (Bows again) Thank you so much, my matchmaker. I have paid three years debt in a hundred days. Each time I think about it, I can't stop being very happy about it.

- Fairy: He is so happy, but my tears flow down my cheeks.
Tung: Sweetheart, why are you crying?
Fairy: ... because I cannot walk. The mountain is high. The river is deep and my shoes are a little too small..
Tung: I knew you couldn't walk.
Fairy: Let us sit down for a while.
Tung: Let me get you a stone to sit on. (They sit down.)
Tung: Master *Fu* is indeed a kind man.
Fairy: Why?
Tung: Well, he dined with me today and he gave me some money to spend on the way.
Fairy: *Lady Sai-chin* is nice too.
Tung: How is that?
Fairy: She feasted me and gave me some money also. Let us see how much money each of them gave us? (They took out the silver and found that it was originally one piece but it had been split into two.)
Tung: Ah! As a matter of fact it was one piece but separated.
Tung: Now I know that Master *Fu* is in fact rather stingy. Why didn't he simply give us the whole piece instead of cutting it? Wouldn't it be even better?
Fairy: In fact, it is an omen.
Tung: What would that be?
Fairy: It means that we must be separated. (一定分開)
Tung: Oh, No! That is no good. Let us change it
.....
Tung: I told you to follow me. See, where are you going?
Fairy: Where are we going?
Tung: Going home! Are you dreaming?
Fairy: You go to your home, I go to mine.
Tung: But how can we go to your home in this manner! If you really want to visit your family, wait until I fulfil my three years moaning period. Then you will ride in a sedan-chair and I will ride a horse and we will go there together. If we go in these clothes. I will lose face.
.....
Fairy: I am your wife. But, do you know the date of my birth?
Tung: We have been husband and wife for a hundred days, yet I still know nothing about your birthday. When is it?
Fairy: It is now, today, this month and this year.²⁷
Tung: No wonder! Today is in fact your birthday. I pay my respect. (He bows.) I wish that you will live as long as the *South Mountain* and that your blessings will be as abundant as the *Eastern Sea*. (The fairy starts crying.)
Tung: Please don't cry. It is a joyful thing to have a birthday.
Fairy: I have to go up...
Tung: You have to go up; I have to go down. Don't be silly. Let's go home.
Fairy: But I have to go up to heaven!

Tung: I told you don't drink too much today. We haven't talked enough on earth, how could we speak in heavenly language? Please, no more nonsense!

Fairy: Oh! Darling, please listen to me. I am in fact a fairy from the ninth heaven. The God noticed your filial piety and sent me down to help you. A hundred days is the time limit. Now I have to go back.

.....

Tung: Told you not to drink ... Are you really drunk?

Fairy: You still don't believe me. If I am not a fairy, how could I weave ten pieces of fancy silk in a day and a night, and yet still have time to make you a pair of shoes. Just think about it.

.....

Both: (sing) Most painful is to part! And we shall never know when you and I would see each other again.

.....

Fairy: (in tears) You don't know about it. The God ordered that I should come down at noon and be back at noon. I fl should be late, even if it is an hour or even a quarter of an hour, it would be an unforgivable mis-take!

.....

(The fairy kneels, holding her face upwards, hands grasping Tung's clothes.)

Fairy: Oh, God! God! What a cruel trick you have played on me! You sent me down to the earth, why must I go back again? If I must go back, why did you send me down in the first place? Just look at *Tung Yung*. When he says part, his tears burst... Oh, my husband, my love! You said you can't possibly let me go, but I can't either. Not to mention a hundred days, even if it is one night, the tenderness and kindness would last for a hundred nights. If it is hundred nights, the love would be as deep as the ocean. You can't possibly leave me nor can I. How could stand seeing you suffer like this? My heart is broken to pieces!²⁸

Several of the important aspects of this story should be noted. First, human morality, filial piety in this case, caused the fairy to come down from heaven. The theme that the fairy was sent down by the God to help or reward somebody is very different from the prevalent interpretation in the later period. In the later interpretation, most of the furies only descended to the earth when they were demoted as a punishment for certain wrong doings. (This theme will be further elaborated in the second chapter.)

Second, during the separation, the fairy was obviously unwilling to leave the earth. This is again another contrast to the later narratives where men and women endeavored to reach "metamorphosis" (羽化飛昇) to become a fairy, in other words, to leave this world and enter the fairy world.

Third, the conflict of the story centers around separation: husband separates from his wife; and the fairy separates from the earth. The absence of the enemies of secular poverty, cruel government, and other evils that rise from human wickedness and selfishness - is another point that should be noted.²⁸ In contrast to the story like Walt Disney presentation which is designed for children, these fairy tales were written for adults and about the emotions of adults.

Finally, the fairy became pregnant during the hundred days. She told Tung Yung before she left him that if the baby should be a boy, she would bring it to *Tung Yung*, but if it should be a girl, the baby girl would be raised in heaven and live as fairy like her mother. It seems to me that the different destiny of the male female baby also reminds us of a positive attitude towards secular life. A clearer view still has to be derived by comparing with the later narratives of the same kind.

3. *Chih-nu* (織女) and *Niu-lang* (牛郎)

The names of *Ch'ien-niu* (牽牛) and *Chih-nu* (織女) appeared before the creation of the love story. We found these two very much humanized astronomical names in *shih-chin* (The Book of Poems), *shih-chi* and *huai-nan tzu*.²⁹ At the end of *Later Han* period, the famous *gu-shih* (古詩) *ch'ao-ch'ao ch'ien-niu hsin* (迢迢牽牛星) gives the main elements of this myth: a herd boy, a weaving maiden and a pretty stream that separates them.³⁰ There is no doubt about the popularity of this story because many famous scholars and poets either mentioned or wrote poems based upon it. *Yen Chih-tui* (顏之推 531-591) cited a poem related to this story in his *Yen-shih chia-hsun*.³¹ *Tu Fu*, *Pai Chu-i* and *Tu Mu* all have written verses about this story.³² The narrative was recorded in the fifth century.

To the east of the heavenly river, there was a weaving maiden who the grand daughter of the heavenly God. She worked so hard that she did not even have time to care about her appearance. The God felt sympathy for her lonely life, so he gave her in marriage to the herd boy. Who lived to the west of the river. She stopped working after the marriage. The God in his anger ordered her back to the east bank of the river and allowed her to meet the herd boy once every seven nights.³³

According to *ch'ih-yuan* (蛺蝶), *chin-ch'u sui-shih chi* (秦楚歲時記) by *Tsung Lin* (宗麟) written in the *Liang* period (502-551) gives the same narrative. However, he elaborates that the maiden had been weaving heavenly cloth made from clouds, moreover, he states, perhaps mistakenly, that the meetings were arranged for the seventh day of the seventh month. Thus there would be only one meeting each year.³⁴ This theme of a once a year meeting was also followed by a later writer *Wu Chun* (吳濬 469-520) in *su ch'ih hsie chi* (讀齊譜記).³⁵ The famous *T'ang* romance about *T'ang Ming-huang* and *Yang Kuei-fei* also mentioned that one night, in their secret oath, *Ming-huang* and *Kuei-fei* compared themselves as *Niu-lang* and *Chih-nu*.³⁶

In this story, the heavenly God is sympathetic with the young fairy who was his own grand daughter. In consideration of her loneliness, the God married her to a herd boy. It is not clear whether the herd boy is a man or a fairy. Only later accounts clearly state that *Niu-lang* is a young man who worked as a herdsman. In either case, it is clear that heavenly life was not perfect. Companionship was desirable. Matrimonial life is suggested as a kind of consolation or reward, and by the same token, to deprive someone of it was a punishment.

This story has been told almost in every province in China, but each place has its own version. The narrative adjustments in order to make the story more persuasive took place from time to time. In a twentieth century version recorded in *Fukien*

goes like this:

Niu-lang and *Chih-nu* were demoted to the earth because they teased each other at the birthday party of the *Heavenly Queen*. *Niu-lang* was born to a very poor family and *Chih-nu* to rich one. Somehow they fell in love with each other but were not able to get married. Finally, *Niu-lang* died in sorrowness and *Chih-nu* committed suicide.³⁷

This is probably the most distorted version of this myth; yet it sheds light on our enquiry into people's view of life.

4. *Lung-nu* (龍女) and *Liu-Yi* (柳毅)

I shall not try to relate a complete narrative of *Liu-Yi's* story here because it has been translated into English and printed by the Foreign Languages Press (Peking, 1954) under the title of "The Dragon King's Daughter". There is no doubt of the popularity of this story for it served as the theme for a number of dramas written in later dynasties.³⁸

Lu Hsun's summary would serve the purpose of getting a frame work of the story.

The *Dragon King's Daughter* by *Li Chao-wei* (of T'ang) tells of the scholar *Liu Yi* who, on his way back to the *Hsiang River Valley* after failing to pass the civil service examination, meets a girl in *Chingyang* tending sheep. She tells him she is the Dragon King's daughter, banished here by her husband and his parents, and she begs *Liu Yi* to take a letter to her father, the lord of *Tungting*. The dragon king's hot tempered brother, the *Lord of Chientang*, kills the girl's husband, brings her home and urges *Liu Yi* to marry her; but the scholar refuses. After *Liu Yi's* wife dies he moves to *Nanking* where he marries a daughter of the *Lu* family from *Fanyang*, who proves to be the dragon king's daughter. Later he goes to *Nanghai*, then returns to *Tungting*. His cousin *Isueh Ku* meets him once on the lake and is given fifty pills of elixir; but after this no more is heard of *Liu*.³⁹

It is alleged that the narrative is of Indian origin. However, since the names of the waters, *Tung-t'ing* (*Hu*) and *Ch'ien-t'ang* (*Chinag*), are Chinese geographical names and the nature of the waters also fits to the characteristics of the two dragons, I think the tale reflects the emotion of Chinese people, whether or not it had a foreign source. The relevant point of the story could be outlined as follows. First, there were sufferings even in the magic world of the dragons. Of course, that does not necessarily mean there were less sufferings in the human world.

Second, the dragon king himself pursued knowledge and was very interested in human affairs.

The dragon king was a long time in coming, and *Liu* asked the warrior, "Where is the *Lord of Tung-t'ing*?" "His Majesty is in the *Dark Pearl Pavilion*," was the reply: "He is discussing the *Fire Canon* with the *Sun priest*. They will soon have finished." "What is the *Fire Canon*?" asked *Liu*. "Our king is a dragon," replied the warrior, "so water is his spirit, and with one drop of water he can flood mountains and valleys. The priest

is a man, so fire is his spirit, and with one torch he can burn the largest palace of the world. Since the properties of the spirits are different, they have different effects. As the Sun priest is expert in the principles of men, our king has asked him for a talk." He had just finished speaking, when the palace gate opened, a mist seemed to gather, and a man in purple holding a jasper sceptre appeared. The warrior leapt attention, saying, "This is our king." Then he went forward to report *Liu's* arrival.

The dragon king looked at *Liu* and asked, "Are you not of the world of men?" *Kiu* replied that he was, and bowed. The king greeted him in return and asked him to be seated. "Our watery kingdom is dark and deep," said the dragon king. "And I am ignorant. What has brought you, sir, from such a distance?"⁴⁰

The dragon King's attitude does not necessarily suggest that the human world was superior than that of the dragon's. Yet it seems to suggest that the latter was not very much superior to the human world, because he was willing to put his daughter in a human position and let her marry to a young scholar.

Third, *Liu Yi's* encounter with the Lord of *Ch'ien-t'ang* would also enlighten us in our quest of the contrast between the human world and an imaginary non-human world as existed in the minds of the masses.

The day after, he was feasted again in the Pavilion of Limpid Light. The *Prince of Chien-tang*, heated with wine and lounging on the couch, said insolently to *Liu*, "A hard rock can be smashed but not made to yield, and a gallant man can be killed but not put to shame. There is something that I would like to suggest to you. If you agree, then all will be well between us. If not, we can perish together. How about it?" "Let me hear what it is," said *Liu*. "You know, the wife of the *Lord of Ching* river is our sovereign daughter," said the prince. "She is an excellent girl with a fine character, and is well thought of by all her relatives. She was unfortunate enough to suffer indignities at the hands of that blackguard, but that is over now. We would like to entrust her to you, and become your relatives for ever. Then she who owes you gratitude will belong to you, and we who love her will know she is in good hands. A generous man shouldn't do things by halves. Don't you agree?" For a moment *Liu* looked grave. Then he laugh, and said, "I never thought the *Prince of Ch'ien-t'ang* would have such unworthy ideas. I have heard that once when you crossed the nine continents, you shook the five mountains to vent your anger; and I have seen you break the golden chain and drag the jade pillar after you to rescue your niece. I thought there was no one as brave and just as you, who dared risk death to right a wrong, and would sacrifice your life for those you love. These are the true marks of greatness. Yet now, while music is being played and host and guest are in harmony, you try to force me to do your will in defiance of honour. I would never have expected this of you. If I met you on the angry sea or among dark mountains, with your fins and beard flying and mist and rain all around, though you threatened me with death I should consider you a mere beast. I would not count it against you. But now you are in human garb. You talk of manners and show a deep understanding of human relationships and the ways of them. You can behave better than many gallants in the word of men, not to say monsters of the waters. Yet you try to take advantage

of your strength and temper — under the pretence that you are drunk — to force me to agree to your proposal. This is hardly right. Of course, I am small enough to hide under one of your scales, but I dare risk your anger. I hope you will reconsider your proposal.” Then the prince apologized. “Brought up in the palace, I was never taught etiquette,” he said. “Just now I spoke wildly and offended you — I deserved a rebuke. Don’t let this spoil our friendship.” That night they feasted together again as merrily as ever, and *Liu* and the prince became great friends.⁴¹

Human values and culturalism have entered the picture in the above quoted passage. Again it suggests a positive attitude towards human life as reflected in *Liu*’s speech.

Fourth, *Liu Yi* and his dragon wife stayed in the earthly society for quite a long time. They did not withdraw to the watery world until the government officials started to bother them (for elixir). During their stay (which was more than forty years), they were free from the menace of illness, physical decline and death. Moreover, they were extremely rich.

The last episode of this story throws more light on our enquiry.

At the end of that period, *Liu*’s young cousin, *Hsueh Ku*, lost his post as magistrate of the capital and was sent to the southeast. On his journey *Hsueh* crossed *Tungting* lake..... “We have not been separated long,” said *Liu*, “yet your hair is turning grey.” “You are fated to become an immortal, and I to become dry bones,” retorted *Hsueh* with a smile. *Liu* gave *Hsueh* fifty capsules, and said, “Each of these capsules will give you an extra year of life. When you have finished them, come again. Don’t stay too long in the world of men, where you can only find yourself in troubles.”⁴²

It seems paradoxical that *Liu Yi* gave *Hsueh* fifty capsules to prolong his life on earth and at the same time advised him not to stay too long in the world of men. I consider this to be the best statement illustrating man’s conception of earthly life. *Liu Yi* seems to be saying that one’s life in the world (of his time of course) was worth prolonging for fifty years; yet, it was not worth prolonging for too long a period. In other words, it seems that was telling his cousin, “Don’t be captivated by your own illusion of this colorful world. You can only find trouble.” Yet, the world was at least illusorily beautiful, otherwise, *Liu Yi* would not offer *Hsueh* fifty more years as a present.

5. *Pai-she* (白蛇) and *Hsu Hsuan* (許仙)

The last story I would like to discuss in this chapter is the folklore of the White Snake. This story was popular during the *Southern Sung* period (1127—1279). The *Sung* narrative survived in *chin-shi t’ung-yen* (警世通言) edited by *Peng Mung-lung* of late *Ming*.⁴³ In the middle of the sixteenth century this story was used to entertain people by some blind minstrels in *Hang Chou* area. By the end of that century, it was adapted into opera and put to the stage.⁴⁴ It also appeared in many forms of literature and was widely welcomed by the populace. It tells the story of a young drug store manager named *Hsu Hsuan* who met two pretty women at the famous West Lake in *Hang Chou*. The lady was dressed in white clothes and her maid in green. Later it

happened that *Hsu* married the lady in white. He was then punished by the local government and was sent to *Su Chou* to serve at the labor camp because the silver given him by Lady White proved to be stolen money. He bribed the camp chief and was therefore allowed to stay in a friend's house and worked with him. Soon Lady White appeared in *Su Chou* and they lived together again. Hsu was then arrested for the second time because the clothes given to him by Lady White was stolen from a pawn shop. This time he was beaten and sent to *Chen-chiang* labor camp, where again he was allowed to live in a relative's house. Once again Lady White came to *Chen-chiang* and they reunited. Finally he realized that Lady White was a monster. With the help of a Buddhist monk, he eventually captured her and imprisoned her under a pagoda on which a spell had been cast.

What should be noted is the following: (a) Lady White's persistence to live as a human being and her intense desire to enjoy human life; (b) her profound affection for *Hsu Hsuan*; and (c) her reluctance to return to the form of a snake at the order of the monk. In some later version, her desire for human life is even more exaggerated. Each time when she was forced to leave *Hsu*, she cried bitterly. She risked her own life and experienced great sufferings in attempt to save *Hsu Hsuan's* life. All these point to this snake's strong desire for human life; yet, this snake is a creation of man's imagination. In other words, it indirectly expresses man's message illustrating his own weltanschauung.

6. Summary

In this chapter we examined six stories. No matter whether they are myths or folklore or even foreign imported tales, they all have self-identification function as mentioned. Whether the story tellers and listeners were self-conscious or not when exhibiting their concepts of life through these stories is not the quest of this study. The quest is what these concepts are. A comparison between the earlier versions and the later ones would lead to a rather convincing analysis.

When these stories first appeared, they seem to depict the earth as a beautiful place in which to live. Life was lovable withing the limitation of nature. Non-human beings tried to break or bypass natural limitation of nature in an attempt to have a share of this good life. Fairies who belonged to the heavenly world came down to join men and their earthly life. The river that separated *Niu-lang* and *Chih-nu* was the symbol of natural limitation. The time limit (hundred days) set by the heavenly God was a natural limit in another form. The fairy, a being supposedly superior than human being, was obviously willing to give up her heavenly life and stay on the earth. The nature and natural appearance of a snake is of course the furthest limit of nature that barred a snake to enjoy even a brief moment of human life. She had to cultivate herself for more than a thousand years before she was able to appear in the form of a woman. This indicates the price which was worth paying to enter the human world. Lady White's friend, *Ch'ing Ch'ing*, a green fish or a green snake in later versions, lived in the world without matrimonial life, yet she was contented to be the maid of Lady White.

The story of *Ch'ang-ngo* who ran away from the earth seems to contradict this

analysis. In defence of my analysis, I would point out the following observations: First, the moon and the earth might be within a same "world" in ancient minds before astronomy or astrology was well developed. *Ch'ang-ngo* running to the moon was something like her running to the other side of the lake. Therefore, the fact that she ran to the moon might not mean that she wanted to be severed from the earth and earthly life. Second, there is no indication of her motivation. In the early version, "she took the elixir and ran to the moon" does not necessarily mean "she took the elixir in order to go to the moon." There is no motivation linking the cause and the effect. The absence of such a link seems to suggest that there was no such "need" to leave the earth. Third, the disapproving response of the *T'ang* poets strongly endorsed the positive attitude towards earthly life.

The return of *Liu Yi* and his wife *Lung-nu* to the dragon's watery world serves to moderate this analysis from being too optimistic. Many times mankind was indeed in a dilemma to decide whether the earth and earthly life was adorable or detestable. *Liu Yi's* attitude suggested at the very least earthly life was not that detestable.

Man has always had a strong desire for long life. Even *P'eng-chu* who allegedly lived seven hundred sixty years was once said to complain that his life was short.⁴⁵ The desire for a long life can be interpreted in two ways. One is one wishes to live for a longer period of time because he enjoys life. The other is that he wants to postpone the arrival of death because he is afraid to die and to face the judgment of hell and the horrible punishments which he believes though with great reluctance. Of course there can be a third one which combines both. The second one does not necessarily mean a positive attitude towards life.

Kan Pao (fl. 317–322) recorded a story which is illustrative in this respect. Once, an old man went to see *Prince An of Huai-nan* (淮南王安) who indulged in taoism (好道術). The gate porter said to him, "My lord desire to have along life, but sir, you don't seem to be able to extricate yourself from getting old. Therefore, I hesitate to report your arrival." Upon hearing this the old man transformed himself into a handsome youth and was immediately welcomed by the prince with great courtesy.⁴⁶ The attached condition to *ch'ang-sheng* (long life) was *bu-lao* (not being old). The term *ch'ang-sheng bu-lao* (長生不老) itself agrees with our first interpretation that life is beautiful.

Another notable common point shared by these stories is the emphasis on matrimonial life. That seems to agree with the nature of the society in which the stories were generated. In a comparatively simple society, political relations were marginal. Government enters the picture increasingly in the chronological order of the stories. In the first story, *Ch'ang-ngo* and *Hou Yi*, there was no government. The relation was between God and man (with his immediate family). In *Tung Yung* the world was a little larger; God and his daughters in heaven; *Tung Yung*, his parents and his creditor on the earth. The relationship that links these characters were: *Tung's* love and obligation to his parents and to his creditor; the benevolence of God towards people; and the love between husband and wife. In other words it was the relation between God's family and man's family.

God (and his family).

man (and his family)

The basic unit that rested at the two ends of this relation was family. In the story of *Niu-lang* and *Chih-nu*, we find the same relationship. In "*Liu Yi*" and "*Pai-she*" (Lady White) which were obviously created much later we find the shadow of government emerging from the background. But the stories were still basically family affairs. Therefore, the love between God and man; parents and children; husband and wife was most emphasized. It meant the greatest, if not the whole, part of life.

A very contradicting notion can be found in *Ming* and *Ch'ing* period fairy stories or religious narratives. The tragedy of Kuan-yin (or Princess Miao-san 妙善公主) and the story of Ho Hsien-ku (何仙姑) exactly reverse this favorable view of matrimony and familism. Matrimonial life was so detestable that they would die to avoid it. The two stories are obviously related in some way. The latter (*Ho Hsien-ku*) might be a reproduction of the former. The major difference is that one was a princess and the other a daughter of a drug store owner.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, the popularity of these two stories indicates a change of peoples' view towards matrimony. Both of the two girls were willing to die instead of being forced (by their fathers) into matrimonial life irregardless of who the man was. It presents a strong contrast indicating that the importance of matrimonial life in earlier period was diminishing.

When compare the earlier versions with the later ones, the theme of family love disappeared more and more into the background. The story of *Niu-lang* and *Chih-nu* told in twentieth century South *Fukien* is rather different.⁴⁸ First, the heaven appeared as a large organization in which the birth-day party of the *Heavenly Queen* was an annual occurrence of great importance.⁴⁹ Second, the lustful behavior of *Niu-lang* and *Chih-nu* at the party contributed to their demotion from heaven to earth. The notion that coming down to the earth was a punishment is certainly very illustrative to our enquiry. This demotion theory is by no means limited to one story. One may find this theory in almost every novel that relates the two levels of heaven and earth. Most of these novels appeared after late *Sung* which I will discuss in the next chapter. Third, when *Niu-lang* and *Chih-nu* came to, the earth, they were separated by the conflict between rich and poor. At last *Niu-lang* died in great sufferings and *Chih-nu* committed suicide. What a horrible tragedy! Yet it was developed from a beautiful myth of two fairies who was allowed to meet each other once every seven days. And the reason is to exaggerate their indulgence of matrimonial happiness.

The twentieth century version of *Ch'ang-ngo* is that *Ch'ang-ngo*, was a courageous girl who wittily resisted the will of the tyrant *Hou Yi*. *Hou Yi* had been a hero who made great contribution to his people before he was the king. But after the people made him king and when he was politically powerful, he became a tyrant. The major conflict was between the people and the tyrant. *Ch'ang-ngo*, *Hou Yi*'s sweetheart,

turned her back on him and turned out to be his vital enemy. In later versions, *Tung Yung* or his son had to be a *ch'uang yuan* (狀元) because political career was indispensable to a perfect life then.⁵¹ This is true also in the case of the son of Lady White.

The last point I want to mention in this chapter is the function of power. *Tung Yung's* wife possessed the extraordinary power to weave. Dragon King's daughter had the magic power to create tremendous wealth and to prolong people's life. Lady white was able to create (sometimes steal) silver and fight whenever she thought necessary. Most of the power were not used to fight, but to create happiness instantly and directly. Wealth, marriage and long life are happiness in concrete forms. In the later period which will be discussed in the next chapter, the role of power is somewhat different: power was used to against another power.

To sum up, life reflected in the earlier versions of these stories was less sophisticated and beautiful in itself. Because both human being and non-human beings expressed their desire to live on the earth as members of the human race for a longer period of time.

Chapter Two: *Yen-i* Novels

1. Definition

Fiction in its broadest definition can be categorized in many ways, depending on what measurement is adopted and what purpose is aimed at. In regard to forms of literature the group we examined in the first chapter and that of this chapter are of entirely different kinds. Yet in our enquiry of people's *weltanschauung*, it is justifiable to put them together and compare. The novelist's tendency to reveal their concept of life and society was the same while the forms in which they exhibited their ideas were different. In my opinion, different technology of communication highly contributed to the difference of forms. In other words the first group of stories in chapter one was mostly orally delivered and the second group, in this chapter, was all printed when printing technology and the price of paper made the publication of fiction possible. This explains why we find numerous different versions of each story of the first group and much more lengthy and detailed narratives in the second group. Thanks to the inventors of movable printing, we have inherited most of our ancestor's best novels. But because of the numerous quantity of the stories that could be qualified into the second group and because of the lengthy narrative of each of them, it is impossible to give even the briefest summary of any of the novels cited in this chapter. Therefore, I must content with just listing the more significant works on the next page.

I shall call this group of works *yeh-i* novels (演義小說). It is easier to date the period of this group. The earliest seem to appear at the late *Sung*, and the latest in Early *Ch'ing*. It covers a period from approximately the mid thirteenth century to the mid seventeenth century. It includes what Meng Yuan-lao (孟元老 c.1147) called historical novels (講史小說) and *sho tieh-ch'i-erh* (說鐵騎兵) in Nai Te Weng's

(鹿得翁 fl.1230) terminology. The difference between these two terms seems little. The former could be interpreted as national history and the latter would just center on a family (like the *Hsuehs* and *Yangs*) or a single hero like *Yueh Fei* (岳飛). *Hsuo san-fan* (說三分) and *hsuo wu-tai* (說五代) are also included in this group. The Chinese character *hsuo* (說) seems to mean that these were copies kept by professional story tellers. *Lu Hsun* has pointed out that *Ch'uan-hsiang san-kuo-chi p'ing-hua* (全相三國志平話) was printed with pictures on each upper half page, therefore it was also used to entertain those who could read. But many novels with the characters *yen-i* attached to their titles written during and after the *Ch'ing* period

yen-i novels

1. da-sung hsuan-ho i-shih
sui-hu chuan 水滸傳
 2. ch'uan-hsiang san-kuo chih p'ing-hua 全相三國志平話
san-kuo yen-i 三國演義
 - * 3. san-sui p'ing-yao chuan (1620) 三遂平妖傳
 - * 4. yin-lei chuan 英烈傳
 5. feng-shen yen-i 風神演義
 - * 6. san-pao t'ai-chien hsi-yang chi t'ung-su yen-i 三寶太監西洋記通俗演義
 - * 7. hsuo t'ang 說唐
 - * 8. liang-chin yen-i 兩晉演義
 9. cheng-hsi ch'uan-chuan 說岳傳全
 10. cheng-hsi ch'uan-chuan 征西全傳
 - * 11. liang-sung chih-chuan 兩宋志傳
 - * 12. wu-hu p'ing-hsi 五虎平西
- * written in Ming

like *nan-shih yen-i* (南史演義), *pei-shih yen-i* (北史演義) and *hung-yang yen-i* (洪楊演義) etc. should be excluded due to an entirely different mental setting of the authors which I shall discuss later in this chapter.

I do not use the convenient term "historical novels" because it fails to mark another important aspect of the novels. These works are in nature mythical as well as historical. Most of the heroes in these historical novels (like *Yueh Fei* and *Hsueh Ting-san*) were in their nature a combination of mankind and non-human being of heavenly origin. The powers they possessed were also a combination of mythical magic (仙家法力) and heroic, physical force (英雄勇武). It is this duality in nature of the second group of novels that links the first and third group of works presented in this study. *Lu Hsun* put *feng-shen yen-i* (風神演義) and *san-pao T'ai-chien his-yang chi t'ung-shu yen-i* (三寶太監西洋記通俗演義) under the category of "novels of

god s and devils". Yet historical heroes and their adventures were to a great extent involved in these two books. In the definition of the present study, *feng-sheng yen-i* (風神演義) and *san-kuo yen-i* (三國演義) are of the same group telling us the same message: some aspects of common people's weltanschauung mainly at *Ming* period.

2. The Link between the first group and the second Group

In order to justify that the two groups were related despite the fact that they appear in different forms of literature I shall present some examples.

In *da-sung hsuan-ho i-shih* (大宋宣和遺事) appeared at the turn of *Sung* and *Yuan*) the thirty-six heroes were called general-stars (星宿). They were thirty-six stars of *T'ien-keng Hall* (天罡堂) in the heaven and were sent to the earth by God. On earth they appeared as the leaders of bandits and later as military officers who allegedly put down the rebellions launched by *Fang La* (六將), *T'ien Hu* (田虎) and *Wang Ch'in* (王慶). Again it should be noted that whether the narratives are historically true or not is not the quest of the present study.

Sui-hu chuan (水滸傳) developed the same story and enlarged its narratives and also maintained this theme of the heavenly origin of the heroes. According to *Chou Liang-kung*, "it was generally believed that *Lo Kaun-chung* wrote this novel in one hundred chapters, beginning each with some mythical preamble then in the *Chia-chin* period (1522-1566) *Kuo Hsun* (郭勳) reprinted the work, cutting out the preambles and leaving the main text only."⁵⁴ The cutting of these mythical preambles is by itself a very important clue to the change of the people's psyche.⁵⁵

In the first chapter of *ch'uan hsiang san-kuo-chih p'ing hua* (全相三國志平話) the heavenly God (who was the grand father of *Chih-nu* (織女) was there judging worldly affairs. The case was rather interesting. The soul of *Liu Pang*, the first emperor of the *Han* Dynasty, was sent back to the earth to become the last emperor. So were the souls of those who helped him in his struggle to the throne and were eventually killed by him (*Liu Pang*) after his success. Only this time they were to split the *Liu Pang*'s empire as a revenge.

General *Yueh Fei* was a hawk who guarded Buddha in the Western Heaven. His opponent was a dragon (or snake). This buddhist hawk was demoted to the earth (謫到下界) because he killed an innocent in heaven. *Hsueh P'ing-kuei* (薛平貴) and his son were heavenly tigers (白虎星). The powerful taoist master who appeared in *San sui p'ing yao chuan* (三遂平妖傳) was an old fox. The story of *Chu Yuan-chang* (朱元璋) in *yin-lieh chuan* (英烈傳) is very illustrative to the theme of this chapter.

⁵⁴The Heavenly God (玉皇) had taken his seat. All the deities went forward to pay their respect. The God said, "Things on the earth are very confusing recently. The people are suffering. What should we do to these evil spirits?" A minister stepped out and said, "I will be on duty next year in charge of the earth. In my opinion, the wars do not stop mainly because there is no holy emperor born to the earth. . . . I think we should select a righteous family and then give it the holy baby." The God said, "I agree, but all the emperors were sent from the stars. If we want to unite the earth we should also send down a star. Which one of you is willing to go down there?" He asked again and again,

but no one answered him. The God said angrily, "How can you bear to see the confusion of the lower level (下界)? I have asked four or five times and nobody makes a sound. Though you would temporarily fall down to the dusty world, you would come back soon. So why hesitate like that?" Upon hearing this, the Golden Boy and the Jade Maiden who stood on either side of the God smiled to each other. The God asked at once, "Why are you smiling? I shall send you two to the earth. You will be the emperor and queen. Don't say no. I will send you down by the ninth month next year." When the two declined again and again, the God said, "So you are afraid to suffer down there! I shall send other stars down to help."⁵⁶

Many fairies who appeared in the later versions of "*Tung Yung*" and "*Lady White*" also appeared in *feng-sheng yen-i* and other *yen-i* novels. It seems to me the actors who played in these dramas were still the same (The same God and the same fairies); what has been changed is the author's reflection of the world. Unlike the fairies of the first group, these deities came to the earth through the body of women. Therefore they became a combination of mankind and heavenly being (fairy).

3. Family verses Political group

It has been mentioned in chapter one that the nuclear family was the basic unit of life, and family life was the most important part of earthly life. But in the second group of novels, the roles of family and family life changed rather drastically. Family life was by no means considered the most important, hence it could be ignored or even sacrificed for other reasons. The matrimonial dyad between husband and wife no longer appeared as dominant as in the first group. There are many cases illustrative of this change. Following are some of them.

a. Case in *San-kuo yen-i* (三國演義)

Marriage of convenience was not at all uncommon in *san-kuo yen-i*. Chastity was not very much extolled but was subject to manipulation of political tactics. *Tiao-ch'an* (刁蟬 chapter 8) the famous beauty was coldly used to induce internal conflict between *Tung Chuo* (董卓) and his adopted son *Lu Pu* (呂布). She successfully made *Lu Pu* kill *Tung Chuo* by making love to both of them. The man who engineered this plot was praised with a poem at the end of the chapter. Nobody has ever questioned the chastity of this famous beauty. One often finds her picture on today's calendars. Morality has no room in *san-kuo yen-i*. The only value extolled is the obligation and loyalty between the members of the same political group. In the first chapter of *ch'uan hsiang san-kuo chi p'ing hua*, the God wants everybody to know that *Liu Pang* was punished because he failed to observe this obligation.

Sun Ch'uan (孫權) arranged for his sister to marry *Liu Pei* (劉備) only because *Sun* wanted to imprison (or kill if necessary) *Liu Pei*. Nothing was mentioned either time when *Liu Pei* heard the news of the death of his two wives. One of them died in protecting his son. When he received the death news of his two "brothers" (*Kuang Yu* and *Chang I'ei*) each time he threw himself to the ground cried bitterly until he was unconscious. What a strong contrast: A pretty widow was persuaded to marry another man, the man refused angrily because he had political obligations - a much

more important life goal. When *Chao Yun* handed over *Liu Pei's* son *A-tou*, whom *Chao* had rescued in the battle field at the risk of his own life, *Liu Pei* threw the baby to the ground because carrying the child endangered *Chao's* life. The dyad of political brotherhood was the strongest, not that of father and son.

b. *Fan Li-hua* (樊梨花) in *Cheng hsi chuan chuan* (征西全傳)

The dyad between daughter and father, sister and brother were not much better than that of husband and wife. Fate (命) which was arranged by Heaven (or God), was more important and powerful than filial piety.

Fan Li-hua, and alien beauty who mastered taoist mythical power was told by her taoist teacher that she was fated to marry a T'ang general *Hsueh Ting-san* (薛丁山), who already had two wives when she first met him. When the two came to meet each other on the battle field, she caught him three times, each time letting him free after he made an oath that he would marry her. Each time, he broke the promise. When the commander in chief, the general's father, heard the report, he was told that this was the great fortune of the emperor. If this girl should serve in the T'ang army, she would be of great value in putting down the western rebellions. Hence the adviser was sent as the matchmaker. Meanwhile, *Fan Li-hua* returned to her castle and told her father that the enemy had been defeated. The old general was pleased. Then the barbarian beauty added, "Father, My taoist teacher told me that I am fated to marry this man. At first I was afraid that this man might be very ugly. Today I have seen him on the battle field. He is very handsome and also very good in the art of fighting (武藝). Therefore I did not kill him; I was afraid to go against my master's order. I let him go and I believe that he will send for us tomorrow. I wish that you would agree that we should be a vassal to the T'ang Dynasty." Upon hearing this, the old general said in extreme anger, "You shameless woman! Marriage is always decided by the parents ... It is of no use to spare your life." Then he drew his sword and brought it over her head. She sprang away to escape the deadly blow. At last when there was no room to escape, she drew her sword to defend herself. The old warrior was even more enraged, he shouted, "You dare to kill your own father?" Just when he launched another tremendous blow, his foot slipped on the floor and his throat fell upon the beauty's sword. He fell and died. Her two brothers rushed in with swords in hands. It so happened that she hacked them to death in fighting. Later the girl told her mother. "Mother, my father and brothers were dead. I shall not let you suffer. We must bury them first. If *Hsueh Ting-san* should know this, the marriage would be impossible." Then she surrendered the gate to the T'ang army next day. The wedding ceremony was ordered on the same day of her surrender. Everybody except *Hsueh Ting-san* was happy about the marriage. When the couple were left alone in their chamber at night, *Hsueh* asked, "All the friends and relatives have come to the ceremony, could I ask why that your father and brothers did not show up today?" "They were sick," she replied. *Hsueh* said, "I don't believe it. We will be husband and wife only if you clarify the matter first, otherwise, I am leaving now." *Fan Li-hua* blushed in great embarrassment and she thought, "The fact would come up anyhow. Since the ceremony is over, I shall tell him the truth." After hearing the story, *Hsueh* drew his sword and they had a fierce fight. The other two wives rushed in, once pulled away

Hsueh and the other grasped *Fan*. *Hsueh* was later told by his father "You must go back to her and apologize or I shall punish you in accordance with martial-law." *Hsueh* then was beaten and jailed because he insisted on going against his father's order. *Fan Li-hua* left in tears and went back to her taoist teacher. In the mountain her teacher told her why she was fated to marry *Hsueh*. *Fan* and *Hsueh* were in fact the Jade Maiden and Golden Boy who served the Heavenly God (玉皇). At one of the birthday parties (of the Heavenly Queen), both of them carelessly broke some jade and crystal. The God was angry and was about to punish them. The old fairy of the South Pole explained that they broke these treasures because they were thinking about worldly affairs (思凡) (a term which strongly refers to matrimonial life). Then he suggested "I wish your Majesty would pardon them and send them down as a punishment. Let them marry each other in accordance with their fate." *Hsueh* later in the story had to apologize in a very humiliating way because the Dynasty needed her help. There were many marriages in this novel, yet very few, if not none at all, love stories. Each marriage was openly used either to repay a debt or to enroll a general (female mostly) for the imperial army. Political ends were the most common and legitimate reasons that caused a wedding. Even aphrodisiacs could be legitimately used if necessary.⁵⁶

It should be pointed out here that *Fan li-hua's* father's death due to falling upon her sword seems rather suspicious. There are other versions saying that she simply killed her father and brothers intentionally because she was told *Hsueh* would marry her only if she did that.

c. *Pei-sung chih chuan* (北宋志傳) and *Yang chia Chiang Yen-i* (楊家將演義)

This kind of patricide pattern episode was not limited to *Fan Li-hua's* story alone. It was an important model plot of the *yen-i* novels. Strangely enough, according to my observation, the protagonists of this episode were particularly popular in women's circles.⁵⁷ But the family killing episode has often been carefully revised or totally cut out when reprinted. The story that *Fan Li-hua* accidentally killed her father was probably the product of a revised edition. The story of *Mu Kuei-yin* (穆桂英) presents another example. According to a *Ch'ing* edition which still printed a *Ming* preface, the story goes like this.

In attempt to defeat the barbarian general *Hsiao T'ien-cho*, a dragon, the *Sung* generals needed a piece of dragon wood (降龍木), to produce a mystic weapon. The wood was grown in the castle of a group of bandits. When *Mu Kuei-yin*, the chief of the bandits, caught the *Sung* general *Yang Tsung-pao* (楊宗保), instead of killing him she wanted to marry him. *Yang* thought, "What I want is the dragon wood. If I don't accept her proposal now, I would not only not get the wood, I might also lose my life. I shall accept the proposal first and then see what to do later." *Mu Kuei-yin* was pleased when she heard that her proposal was accepted. She feasted the young general and sent him back to his camp. *Yang's* father was angered by his son's decision. The old general put *Yang Tsung-pao* under detention. The reason was that while serving one's country, one should not consider any personal passion. While in prison, *Yang* told his friend general *Meng Liang*, "Only you can understand me. It is certainly to the advantage of the whole army if we can have someone like *Mu Kuei-*

yin to help us. Please to see her. First ask for dragon wood. Second, ask her to come and help us." *Meng* delivered the message and was refused. When he tried to convince her, *Mu* replied, "Do you want to know how sharp sword is?" *Meng* then said to himself, "If I don't take extremely drastic action, she will not come with me." So he waited until dark and then set *Mu's* castle on fire. While the bandits were trying to put out the fire, *Meng* went into the castle and killed *Mu's* family (家小) and then fled with the dragon wood. At first *Mu* wanted to take revenge, but finally she decided to surrender and marry *Yang*.⁵⁸ Again in other versions it is *Mu* herself who killed the whole family. Therefore, I doubt that this version has also been revised. Yet, in a 1956 edition "*Yang-chia-chiang yen-i*", *Hsiao T'ien-cho* is no more referred to as a dragon. The family killing episode was totally cut out. *Meng* set the castle on fire only to take the dragon wood.

d. The case in *Wu-hu p'ing hsi* (五虎平西)

In the story of general *Ti Ch'ing* (狄青), nearly one fourth of the novel is contributed to the barbarian princess *Pa-pao nu* (八寶女). She met *Ti Ch'ing* on the battlefield, caught him with her mystic weapon (法寶) and wanted to marry him. But to serve the emperor and carry out his mission was *Ti Ch'ing's* only concern. Princess *Pa-pao* was deeply in love with *Ti Ch'ing* while *Ti* only married her for other reasons. He coldly deceived her and at last left her. In *Ti Ch'ing's* mind there was only one goal — to fulfill his mission for the emperor. *Ti Ch'ing's* psyche during his honeymoon period is of extreme interest.

The couple chatted for a while and the day turned dark. The court maids served the ordinary night feast and they had a few drinks. Meanwhile, *Ti Ch'ing's* body was in an extremely comfortable environment, yet his soul was in profound misery.⁵⁹

Saying he wanted to take a nap, *Ti Ch'ing* sent all the maids out and started to search for the princess's mystic weapons. (法寶). When he came to the third chest, he found them right there. Thinking that it was not fair to take them, he just hid the weapons in a secret place. In a great hurry he seized his own mystic weapons and opened the door. The maids asked, "Aren't you going to take a nap My lord?" He replied, "I couldn't sleep. Now, I want to go out for a while. I shall return soon. If the princess asks, say I am strolling somewhere nearby." The maid said, "Please return early." He nodded and went out for his horse and armor. The guards hastily handed over his armor and asked, "My lord, do you need me for company today?" *Ti Ch'ing* said, "Now that I know my way and the hunting sites, I don't think I need you anymore." Then he rode out. On the way he sighed and said to himself, "The princess' Love is indeed warm and sincere. Yet today I have to forsake her. It is not that I have no feeling at all. It is because a man who lives in the world must be loyal to his king and filial to his parents. How can I simply betray my emperor and forget about my mother. How can I just stay here and indulge myself in this happy alien country! Princess, I hope my leaving will not hurt you too much."⁶⁰

When the princess caught up with him at the border, he said, "Now, I must tell you the

truth. I was born in the central land (中原之地) and my ancestors have been serving the Sung Empire for generations. Every one of the family has a royal and noble record. When I was in my childhood, I determined that I should serve my country whole heartily. I surrendered, yet it was not what I really wanted to do. I married you only to buy me time and this chance. My body is here, yet my heart is in the central land."⁶¹

These statements make it clear that a man's choice between a woman's love and his political obligation was the latter.

e. *Na-cha* in *Feng-sheng yen-i*

The last episode I shall cite is the strange story of *Na-cha* (哪吒) and his father *Li Chin* (李靖). *Na-cha* was the forceful disciple of a taoist fairy *T'ai-i chen-jen* (太乙真人). He was sent to the earth (through a woman's womb) to help the *Chou* clan (周室) in their conquest against the last king of the *Yin* Dynasty. The personal background of *Li Chin* is also illustrative to our enquiry. *Li Chin* who also knew some mystic magic (五行遁術) was the disciple of another taoist master. But it was difficult for him to reach metamorphosis, therefore he was sent from the mountain to serve King *Chou* of *Yin* and was allowed to enjoy worldly blessings. (享受人生之富貴). It should be noted here that this indicates two different levels of value. The highest goal was metamorphosis. The second one was worldly blessings (富貴). In other words there was something better than secular life, yet secular life had value in itself.

By nature *Na-cha* had a very forceful character. When he was seven years old, he killed the dragon king's son and his spirit guard. He also wounded the dragon king himself when the latter went to appeal to the court of the Heavenly God. Before long he killed a student of another fairy (who was a stone spirit) and wounded another. The dragon kings of the four seas eventually made their appeal and came to arrest *Na-cha's* father and mother. The way that *Na-cha's* master taught him to extricate his parents from trouble was very strange. He told the dragons, "One should be held responsible only for his own action. Since it is I who killed the spirit and the dragon, I shall repay it with my life. In order to "disassociate" myself from my parents, I shall now return my flesh and bones and intestines etc. to my parents in front of you. From now on I shall have nothing to do with them." The dragon king replied, "That sounds fair enough; at least you can save your parents and be a filial son." Then *Na-cha* drew his sword, scraped down his own flesh from the bones and took out the inner parts of his body and let loose his soul. His mother collected the fragments of his body and buried them. Acting in accordance with his master's instruction, his soul managed to persuade his mother in her dream to build a temple with a gold painted statue of him in it. Thus with people's worship of him, he could recover his body gradually. Unfortunately, after six months, *Li Chin* found out about it. Because *Na-cha* had caused him so much trouble, the angry father smashed *Na-cha's* statue and burnt the temple. With the help of help of six months worship, *Na-cha's* soul managed to fly to his teacher's mountain and complain about it.

His teacher's comment is rather interesting. The righteous taoist master said, "*Li Chin's* action is unjustifiable, since you have given him back bones and flesh."

Then with his almost unlimited magic power he rebuilt *Na-cha* a even more handsome and forceful body with two lotus flowers and three leaves. The taoist master said to him, "I am sorry that *Li Chin* has smashed your body." *Na-cha* replied, "Master, My heart cannot rest without revenge." Then the master gave him more mystic weapons and sent him to *Li Chin*.

When *Na-cha* came to *Li Chin*'s house, he shouted, "*Li Chin*, you come out!" The guards immediately reported to *Li Chin*, "The third younger lord is out there with two wheels with fire under his feet and a spear also with fire in his hand. He is yelling my lord, your name. What should we do?" Then the father and son had several fights, each time *Li Chin* had to run for his life with *Na-cha* chasing at the back. Finally *Li Chin* was rescued by Buddha and another taoist master. Strangely enough, not a single fairy or buddha except *Na-cha*'s brother denounced *Na-cha* for wanting to kill his father, although eventually *Na-cha* was forced to recognize *Li Chin* as his father. *Na-cha* is one of the most important dieties (probably the most well known figure) in the novel, yet the author arranged for him to become disassociated from his parents first and then portrayed him as wanting to kill his father. When *Na-cha* asked for justice, his brother retorted, "There is never an unjustifiable father under the sky" (天下無不是之父). This statement sounds highly ironic to me. Someone suggested that this story is based on the conflict between the early *Ch'ing* general *Hsang Ko-hsi* (尙可喜) and his son *Hsang Chih-hsin* (尙之信). It is not necessarily true when we look at all these family breaking stories together.

In the first group of stories, we find family an almost unbreakable unit. The son had deep concern for his parents (*Tung Yung*'s case). The father had deep concern about his daughter (Dragon King's case). The husband and wife unit was very difficult to break. God and nature were the only external powers that could break the matrimonial atom. As a contrast, in the second group we find internal conflict developed within the family. Daughters wanted to get rid of their father and brothers for the sake of their own marriage. Husbands not only had no concern for their wives, they coldly used them for political ends. Though the wives in most cases still had deep passion for their husbands, yet it takes two-way love to form a strong unit. Otherwise the husband was likely to run away like *Ti Ch'ing* did. Therefore, it might be justifiable to say that family was no longer the basic unit as an object to serve in the second group of novels. What was served instead was a political group - the state. One might argue that there were these military families like the *Hsuehs* in *T'ang* and the *Yangs* in the *Sung* period. My interpretation is that these families were considered as main posts supporting the state. Without the state, the existence of these families would have become meaningless. If there was any conflict between the family and the state, it is very clear that the latter had all the priorities. Fathers want to kill their sons for the sake of the state was not uncommon in these novels.

The family breaking episodes and the justification of obvious unfilial behavior may worth further discussion. In many prefaces of the novels, the publishers made it clear that these novels meant to show people what was good and what was not good. The narratives meant to manifest the significance of loyalty and filial piety. It should be beyond doubt that whatever the protagonists did was regarded righteous both by the publishers and the readers. The question is how did this seemingly anti-familism

come to contradict the traditional familism (in Max Weber's term) in accordance with the Confucian canons?

In this regard, we have to bring social structure into the picture. It is clear that these novels have rarely been recognized or cited by any scholars. These novels were allegedly being written by some degenerated literati who failed to master the Confucian Arts. And the stories were used to entertain the masses who were in the lower level of the society. Most of them were ill-educated or non-educated. The people who worked towards officialdom would discard these novels with a smile full of despite. Therefore these stories circulated in a large but rather exclusive group — the masses excluding the elite. There should be a distinguishable difference between the family concept of the elite and that of the less educated. To the former, family was an important political agent. One's political career was closely related to the fortune of his family. To the latter, family was merely a natural unit of life. Selling one's wife, daughters and sons was a rather common phenomenon in the poor sector of the society. Thus the concept of family was rather loose in this sector. A violent physical fight between the son and father happened more likely in a small, poor workers family than in a large rich family. Besides, filial piety was one of the most important qualifications for government positions. Another related question is: if not familism — why patriotism? The ever increasing foreign menace in the *Sung* period and the alien rule of *Yuan* might have heavily contributed to the overwhelming "patriotism" and "nationalism" seen in the *yen-i* novels. The family had to give in for the political group — the state.

4. The Role of Power and Emperor

In all the novels of the second group, power was invariably directed to serve a political group. Unlike the stories in chapter one, mystic power was rarely used to increase productivity like *Tung Yung's* wife did, or to create wealth directly. History was considered the result of the coordination of fairies (gods) and heroes/heroines. Many heroes were born to the earth solely to fulfil his mission. And the mission was always in supporting a certain political group. *Na-cha* was born to serve *Chou* clan and *Yueh Fei* to support the *Sung* dynasty. In many cases, to serve the state became the only goal of life.

Since it was a political group fighting against another group, coordination between the group members and leadership was of vital importance. The way to guarantee leadership was of vital importance. The way to guarantee leadership and coordination was to manifest the value of "loyalty" and "righteous obligation" (忠義). The term "yen-i" literally means to manifest the "obligation" (or personal loyalty). In *da-sung hsuan-ho i-shih* (大宗宣和遺事) the thirty-six general stars were sent down to the earth to realize and manifest loyalty and righteous obligation (廣行忠義). *Kuang Kung* (關公) in *san-kuo yen-i* was regarded the incarnation of these two qualities. The first chapter of *chuan-hsiang san-kuo-chih p'ing-hua* (全相三國志平話) manifests the obligation of a political leader to his supporters. If he failed to observe his obligation, he was subject to punishment by the heavenly God. *Liu Pang's* empire was thus taken away from his family by the God.

In many novels, the place where the brothers (or bandits) held conference was

often called *shu-i T'ang* (聚義堂) or *Chung-i T'ang* (忠義堂). In this sense the character "i" can be translated as loyalty and obligation between colleagues. Loyalty was the link that relates brothers of the same group. In military adventure, it was a necessary condition leading to success. After the leadership was confirmed, the leader would then claim himself king (稱王), then the relation of brotherhood automatically changed into loyalty between king and vassals (忠守君臣之義). *Kuang Kung* once mentioned his relationship with *Liu Pei* was first of brotherhood and then of king and vassal (先兄弟後君臣). His profound loyalty and allegiance to *Liu Pei* makes him the symbol of these two qualities in Chinese society. Even today *Kuang Kung* is worshipped in every police station in Hong Kong. He gives our law enforcers confidence in their colleagues, thus providing them with a sense of security.

All powers (both physical force, mystic magic and political power) were regulated by these two qualities. Self-sacrifice was required in helping brothers and serving the king. The king to whom a mandate was given by the heavenly God was the center of the group. It was justifiable to serve him because he was the agent that led to happiness; he was the source of wealth and nobility. The theme becomes more apparent when we examine the way these novels end. Most of the stories end either at the beginning of a new dynasty or right at the revival period of a long dynasty. It was so arranged by the authors for two reasons. First, it was to give the king or emperor a period of ruling time in order to justify the struggle. The mandate also qualified the descendants of the emperor to rule for a period time. Second, it was to give the loyal brothers who fought for the group a period of time to enjoy the reward *fu-kuei* offered by the emperor. Very often we find at the end of the stories that the hero and his sons or sometimes wife were made prince or princess as a reward for their service. And many times, the family of the hero was prosperous for generations (累世榮昌). Many of these novels meant to praise gratefully the great struggle that brought the dynasty into being or that revived it. In this way, the authors lauded the practical value of these two qualities - loyalty and allegiance (忠義) in a narrative form.

This theme is very different from that in some novels written in the *Ch'ing* period e.g. *nan-shih yen-i* and *pei-shih yen-i*, that bitterly point out the factors that caused the fall of a certain dynasty. These works were excluded from the second group because they do not manifest the "i" which is the essence of the *yen-i* novels.

The authors reasoned that the people could have a peaceful and happy life only under a stable government. And the people could have a stable government only if there was a right man to be the emperor. Furthermore, there should be no little man who surrounded the emperor and corrupted the government. Therefore, power was directed to three major functions:

- a. to make the right man emperor,
- b. to eliminate all the little men who corrupted the government and invited foreign invasions,
- c. to defend the country from foreign invasions.

In short, it was to use force to put the right man to the throne and keep him on it because he was the source of everybody's happiness.

Summary of Chapter Two

I shall call people's conceptions of life depicted in chapter one pattern one, and that of chapter two pattern two. In pattern one we observed fairies or other non-human beings coming to the earth to join a nuclear family and create wealth and happiness for certain individuals. In pattern two, as a contrast, family is no more the most important unit of life; fairies and other non-human beings come to the earth to join a political group to create or support a certain government.

In pattern one the relation between heavenly God and the people was a direct one, but in pattern two, the relation became indirect,

the emperor and his government became an agent working in between God and the people.

In pattern one, earthly life seems as good as heavenly life or even better. In pattern two, it is clear that heavenly life was better than earthly life. If a fairy did something wrong, he was sent down to the earth to experience some earthly sufferings and carry out political missions as a punishment or compensation. After he fulfilled his mission he was allowed to return to heaven. If a man worked hard towards "metamorphosis," and if he was unable to reach it, he was allowed to enjoy secular happiness on the earth temporarily. When he had fulfilled all the requirements (功德完滿) he then was allowed to metamorphose into a fairy (as in *Li Chin's* case).

The change of the valuation of the earthly life is an important point this study intends to present. This change was further developed during and after the *Ch'ing* period along the same direction which I will discuss in chapter three.

Chapter Three: *Wu-hsia* Novels1. Definition of *Wu-hsia* Novel

Since the time of "*Chun Ch'iu*" (春秋) there were assassins and special agents operating on political missions, or because of personal loyalty.⁶² In *Shih Chi* (史記) assassins and *yu-hsia* (遊俠) became a social phenomenon.⁶³ *chien-hsia chuan* (劍俠傳) written by *Tuan Chen-shih* (報成式? -836) gave us a more vivid concept of *yu-hsia* (遊俠). In my definition, a *hsia-ke* (俠客) or *wu-hsia* (遊俠) is a mysterious hero/heroine who mastered the art of fighting (武功) or magic power (劍仙通術) and who would unselfishly help the weak and poor in their fight for justice. The definition of *wu-hsia* novel (武俠小說) is the novel with *hsia-ke* as the protagonists written in the *Ch'ing* and Republican periods. *Wu-hsia* novels can be further divided into two sub-groups: those written before the 1911 revolution and those written after that. The *Ch'ing wu-hsia* novels served as a link between the *yen-i* novels and the *wu-hsia* novels during the transforming period. Hence, it bears much similarity to the *yen-i* novels. Due to the low cost of printing in the twentieth century, it is impossible to give an exhaustive list of them all. However, a list of the most popular and relevant works will serve the purpose of this study.

1. *erh-nu ying-hsiung chuan* by Wen K'ang (c. 1868)
兒女英雄傳 文康
2. *san-hsia wu-i* by Shih Yu-k'un (1879)
三俠五義 石玉琨
3. *Ch'ien-lung yu Chiangnan* (author unknown)
乾隆遊江南
4. *Cheng-te yu Chiangnan* (author unknown)
正德遊江南
5. *ch'i-chien shih-san hsia* (author unknown)
七劍十三俠
6. *Huan-chu lou-chu*
 - a. *su-san chien-hsia* 蜀山劍俠
 - b. *ngo-mei ch'i-ai* 峨嵋七矮
7. *Chin Yung* (金庸):
 - a. *shu-chien en-ch'ou lu* 書劍恩仇錄
 - b. *pi-hsueh-chien* 碧血劍
 - c. *she-tiao yin-hsiung chuan* 射鵰英雄傳

- d. sheng-tiao hsia-lu 神鵲俠侶
- e. yi-t'ien t'u-lung chi 倚天屠龍記
- f. hsiao-ngo Chiang-hu 笑傲江湖

8. Ssu-ma Ling

- a. kuan-lo fung-yun lu 關洛風雲錄 (關洛英雄)
- b. pa-piao hsiung-fung 八表雄風
- c. chien-sheng chuan 劍神傳

2. *Wu-hsia novels of the Ch'ing Period*

It is most obvious that the *wu-hsia* novel owes its origin to the *yen-i* novel. They all tell legendary stories of heroes who master the art of fighting (武藝) or taoist magic power (法力). The most significant difference between the two is in the different roles of power. In the *yen-i* novels power was directed to serve the emperor only, but in the *wu-hsia* novels, power was directed to serve the people instead of the government. But, while helping the people in solving their personal problems, *wu-hsia* in the Ch'ing novels did not adopt an antagonistic attitude towards the emperor, even though they were apparently critical to the government.

a. *Erh-nu yin-hsiung chuan* (兒女英雄傳)

In *erh-nu yin-hsiung chuan* written by Wen K'ang (c. 1868) government malpractices were one of the key issues. *Hsu Shih* has pointed out that Wen K'ang (文康) did not mean to criticize the government, but he unconsciously recorded the problem of the time. In chapter eleven (of the novel), Wen wrote, when thirteen corpses were found in an isolated temple, the magistrate said, "Well, call in the coroner to examine these corpses first." An old clerk immediately shook his hand and gave the magistrate a hint with his eyes. The magistrate dismissed the others and asked, "May I ask why you shook your hand when I order the coroner to come?" The clerk replied, "We must not investigate this case. According to the regulation, if a magistrate fails to arrest a murderer(s) who took more than three lives, he shall be punished. Now there are more than ten deaths. If you openly investigate the case, and if it happens that you fail to arrest the killer, just think about your own future!" Then the clerk explained that very likely these people were killed by a *hsia-ke*⁶⁴. He suggested, "Let us just pick out three of them, the fat monk, the other monk with hairs and the woman." he then asked the magistrate to order the *ti-pao* (地保) to submit a report to the magistrate's office. The report should state that one monk killed the woman out of jealousy and the other killed this monk and then committed suicide. Everybody who accompanied the magistrate and saw the corpses was entitled to have a share of the properties found in the temple. Thus they covered the real case. This kind of criticism implied by the tale by no means indicates that the author was antagonistic to the emperor or his administration. On the contrary, the emperor was addressed as

a "sage" (聖人) in a very serious manner by the author⁶⁵.

At the end of the story, the author used nearly two chapters to describe the excitement and happiness of the *An* (安) family when the son, *An Chi* won the the third place at the imperial examination.

b. *San-hsia wu-i* (三俠五義)

San-hsia wu-i tells the story of *Pao-kung* and the *hsia-ke* who helped him in bringing justice to the people and in solving their problems. *Pao-kung* was a government official (a judge). He represented the emperor as well as the good elements of the government. Therefore the attitude of the *hsia-ke* who helped him was essentially on the same side as the emperor, though they sometimes might steal from the imperial household at night just for fun. Their goal was to eliminate the bad elements in the society. This is quite different from the *yen-i* novel type: namely, that once the right man was put on the throne, it meant the end of the struggle and thus the end of the story. It suggests that people were suffering even with the right man on the throne. The theme is also very clear in other works of the same kind like *shih-kung an* (施公案), *P'eng-kung an* (彭公案) and many others⁶⁶. The relation pattern between Heaven, emperor, *hsia-ke* and the people is shown in the following diagram.

c. *Cheng-te yu Kiang nan* (正德遊江南) and *Ch'ien-lung yu Kiangnan* (乾隆遊江南)

Among the other *wu-hsia novels*, *Cheng-te yu Kiangnan* and *Ch'ien-lung yu Kiangnan* were of a different pattern. These two works tell the stories of adventures of the two emperors in disguise. In their adventures, they also helped people in their fight against violence and corrupt government officials. In this way the emperors themselves assumed the roles of *hsia-ke*. Hence, the emperor came to serve the people directly.

This exception phenomenon also matches the type: the emperor and the *hsia-ke* fighting (at the same side) against evil elements of the society. At the end of the stories, the *hsia-ke* would accept the reward given them by the emperor for their services.

d. *Ch'i-chien shih-san hsia* (七劍十三俠)

The story of *Hsu Ming-k'ang* (徐鳴皋) in *ch'i chien shih-san hsia* also matches the same model. He helped people in their fight against evil officials and eventually supported the emperor. In one place the author criticized the government soldiers through the person of the *hsia-ke*: "Bandits in fact are the soldiers, while soldiers are the bandits. They started killing and robbing. In a moment there were men crying and women screaming everywhere." But, the novel ends in a way very much like a *yen-i* novel.

3. *Wu-hsia* Novels after the 1911 Revolution

In the post-1911 model, the *hsia-ke* took the people's side and the emperor took the other side and was represented as the major source of people's sufferings. The *hsia-ke* were fighting either against the emperor or sometimes simply ignored his existence and fought against evil power from other sources.

It should be noted that in this group of novels, no emperor was a righteous hero, to say nothing of being a sage. This change of model not only indicates a change of political institution, but also a further deterioration of people's trust in the administration.

a. *Shu-san chien-hsia* (蜀山劍俠)

Shu-san chien-hsia by *Huan-chu Lou-chu* (還珠樓主, 20th century) is in fifty volumes, each volume having more than nine hundred thousand words. Strangely enough, nothing about the government was mentioned except in the first chapter where the author gives the date, the second year of *K'ang-hsi* (康熙). This long novel has much similarity to *feng-sheng yen-i* (封神演義), *cheng-hsi chuan chuan* (征西全傳) and *ch'i chien shih-san hsia* (七劍十三俠). It was about wars between good sword-fairies (劍仙) and the evil ones. Yet unlike *feng-sheng yen-i* and the others, the heroes were not fighting for the government nor for any other political group, but fighting for righteousness itself. The result of every issue was fated in

accordance with the Heaven's will. It was a long complicated war between righteous and evil. Yet righteous was not represented by the emperor, but by the taoist school called *ngo-mei* (峨嵋). The goal of the war was half to help the people (爲民除害) and half to help the sword-fairies themselves in their pursuit of metamorphosis through self-cultivation.

b. *Wu-hsia* Novels Written by *Chin Yung*

Chin Yung (金庸 查良金庸) is probably today's most popular *wu-hsia* novel writer in Southeast Asia. Most of his works were printed in the 1950's and 1960's and many of them have been translated into various Southeast Asian language to entertain non-Chinese readers. Problems of government are prominent in his works, although instead of serving the government, the heroes created by *Chin Yung* were vigorously fighting against the emperor and his administration.

Shu-chien en-ch'ou lu (書劍恩仇錄), his first and one of his best *wu-hsia* novels, tells the story of the way between *Chen Chia-lo* (陳家洛) and *Emperor Ch'ien-lung*. It vividly describes people's suffering under *Ch'ien-lung's* regime. In order to manifest this theme, the author arranged for *Emperor Ch'ien-lung* to be caught by the heroes of the *Red Flower Society* (紅花會 , a secret society) during his *Chiangnan* tour. During his captivity the heroes took turns in telling the emperor many tragic and cruel stories concerning the people. They starved him in an attempt to let him know the feeling of starving. But the heroes did not succeed in their attempt to convert the emperor. *Ch'ien-lung* was too cowardly to accept the challenge. So he decided to go against the heroes. At the end of the story, *Chen Chia-lo* had to lead his *hsia-ke* group to the western border and live outside of the Chinese regime.

Pi-hsueh-chien (碧血劍) tells the war between *Yuan Ch'eng-chih* (袁承志) and *Emperor Ch'ung-chen* of Ming Dynasty. With *Yuan's* help, *Li Chih-ch'eng* (李自成) took over the capital. *Ch'ung-chen*, the *Ming* emperor, committed suicide. Unlike *yen-i* novels, *Yuan* did not receive *fu-guei* (富貴) from the new emperor. On the contrary, he was so disappointed by *Li Chih-ch'eng* and *Lis* men that he led his hero group to live on an island isolated from the China continent, thereby disassociating themselves from the government which was regarded the major source of people's sufferings.

In *she-tiao yin-hsiung chuan* (射鵰英雄傳) *Kuo Chin*, the hero, who grew up in *Mongolia*, in defence of the *Sung* empire, fought against *Genghis-khan*, who was almost a father to *Kuo* in his childhood and later his father-in-law. It seems that *Kuo Chin* was serving the *Sung* government at the end of the story. But the significant point is that he never accepted any official position in the government. He was not a general nor a magistrate. It is clear that he remained a people's hero (大俠) defending the people *Hsiang Yang City* (襄陽) from *Mongol* invasion. *Kuo Chin* defended the emperor's interests only because they coincided with the interests of the peoples.

At the end of *I-t'ien t'u-lung chi* (倚天屠龍記), one of his later works, he offer an even clearer example of this theme. *Chang Wu-chi* (張無忌) was the hero of the book. *Chang* and his followers helped *Chu Yuan-chang* (朱元璋) in his struggle for the throne. *Chu* eventually became the first emperor of the *Ming* dynasty. Again,

unlike the *yen-i* novel model, *Chang* was not made a prince by the new emperor, and he did not receive any *fu-guei* in any form from the new government which owed its very being to his effort. On the contrary, *Chu Yuan-chang* appeared to be a mean person after he had achieved the throne. He engineered a wicked plot and drove *Chang Wu-chi* out of the society by disappointing him. It happened that *Chu* captured *Chang* and his lover *Chao Ming*. But *Chu* hesitated to kill such a forceful man and was afraid to face the result of killing this leader of *hsia-ke*. He arranged for *Chang* to overhear a conversation between two of *Chang's* best brothers. The two said to each other, "Let us kill him for good." *Chang* misunderstood the conversation and thought that even his best friend wanted to kill him for *Chu's* sake. He was so disappointed that he lost all confidence in people. His heart was dead upon hearing the conversation, so he decided to withdraw from all of these conflicts. He responded exactly as *Chu Yuan-chang*, the most cunning and mean person, had planned. With *Chang's* almost unlimited force (武功) the two of them easily broke out and disappeared. The place he escaped to was neither the border area nor an island.

Chin Yung wrote down the last lines of this long novel: *Chang's* sweetheart, *Chao Ming* said to him, "You have promised to do me three favors, now I have a third one for you." *Chang* was alarmed again, because her first two "favors" almost cost him his life. *Chao* then smiled and asked, "Would you paint my eyebrows for me?" *Chang* smiled in release and replied, "From now on, I shall paint your eyebrows everyday." Thus he found his escape in painting his wife's eyebrows.

4. Social Background and Mental Setting of the *Wu-hsia* Novels

As mentioned in the introduction, today is more important than yesterday, not only because we can see and remember more of what happened today, but, by understanding more about today, we may also gain more (or lose less) tomorrow. The modern *wu-hsia* novels were produced in China from 1911 to 1949; an even larger quantity appeared in *Hong Kong* from 1949 to the present. I shall not attempt to present an account of the social history of China or *Hong Kong*, but rather confine myself to the relevant social phenomena which have contributed to the popularity of *Wu-hsia* novels. As we compare the social reality with the narratives of today's *wu-hsia novels*, we will find that the latter is a mixture of this reality and its reflection. As *Hu Shih* in the preface he wrote for *erh-nu yin-hsiung chuan*, has pointed out:

Neither *An Hsueh-hai's* nor *An Chi's* (the two protagonists of the above mentioned novel) portrayal is based on the life of the author himself. At the most, we can only say that they were the "ideal men" who appeared in the authors mind during his later years as he repented of his earlier life. In my opinion, (the style of writing in) *erh-nu yin-hsiung chuan* and (in) *Hung Lou Meng* are opposite. Both *Ch'ao Hsueh-ch'in* and *Wen K'ang* had experienced *fu-guei* (富貴) before they became poor and started writing novels. But *Ch'ao Hsueh-ch'in* would honestly describe the evils both in himself and in his family, while *Wen K'ang* not only was reluctant to write about the factors that contributed to the fall of his family, but even tried to portray an ideal, perfect family. *Ch'ao* was describing his family while *Wen* wrote about the reverse of (what happened to) his family ... *Wen K'ang* would not honestly describe his regretful "past", but created an "ideal family"

in order to realize his unachieved life goal in his imagination Therefore, we should regard *erh-nu yin-hsiung chuan* as the sweet dream of a stupid, corrupted *Manchu* ex-bureaucrat who lived in poverty and sorrow in his old age. But, because the author unconsciously preserved materials of social history ... it is even more valuable than those consciously written historical records.⁶⁷

The analysis of *Wen K'ang's* psyche is certainly illuminating to our understanding of the *wu-hsia* novel writers. Chinese history in the century 1850-1950 witnessed a weak central government, corrupted local bureaucracy and ever increasing foreign meance. Injustice, poverty and stupidity were the norms of the society. The old system was so corrupt to the extent that "men were eating were" in Lu Hsun's terminology. Yet those who have been eaten or were about to be eaten could do little about the situation. Like *Wen K'ang*, if an "ideal life" could not be achieved in reality, the writers sought to satisfy themselves and their readers through the imagination. The authors wrote about heroic adventures which were quite the opposite of their experiences; the readers would buy their stories and find consolation in them. *Wu-hsia* novels served as a place where could escape from the regretful reality.

People in Hong Kong in the 1950's and early 1960's (before the 1966-67) used to see the police beating up innocent hawkers who peddled in the streets and failed to run away when the police came. Shop owners and factory managers could not do business unless they yield to all kinds of corruption. Constant feelings of insecurity and humiliation were the common experience of the majority in everyday life. But, on the other hand, there were always chances to become rich if one hit at the right place. Ever enlarging commercial and industrial activities offered most of these chances. Many merchants who had started a small firm producing plastic flowers or wigs became millionaires in a few years. The government was very helpful and cooperative in developing commerce and industry, though corruption was unavoidable. Labor was cheap but of high quality. Markets in the United States and the commonwealth countries were nearly unlimited. All one needed was the "opportunity" and of course a small amount of capital. Then one could approach the export and import offices in the tall buildings at the Central District. It was such a social setting which generated the three basic elements of *wu-hsia* novels: chivalry, fatalism and individualism.

It is of great interest to find that the high productivity of Hong Kong *wu-hsia* novels was (and still is) closely related to the prosperity of Hong Kong newspaper business. With a population between three and four million⁶⁸ living in an area of less than 400 square miles, Hong Kong had more than twenty five daily and evening newspapers, each carrying every day at least one thousand words of a continuous, lengthy *wu-hsia* novel. The paper *Chin Yung* owns used to have three continuous *wu-hsia* stories appearing everyday. What interests me is the contrast between the local news and the narratives of the novels. One often found all kinds of drastic stories in the news section: policemen beating hawkers; bus conductors wounding passengers; tried society members estabbing innocent victims to death; gansters robbing banks and youngsters committing suicide because of heart breaking love affairs. But, when

turned to the story section (小說版, or 副刊), there he found justice and integrity, chivalry and righteousness. In the *wu-hsia* novels, the *hsia-ke* were making fun of the emperor, killing wicked policemen (of *Manchu* government), punishing evil district magistrates and taking care of the poor people. The feeling of intensity and worry created by the news or in the reader's own experience was thus relaxed a little, and his unachieved "ideal life" appeared in the narrative, even if only for a brief moment.

Fatalism (generated from opportunism) was another main source that provided highlights to the *wu-hsia* novels. I have mentioned that "rare opportunities" and "chances" were the dreams of those who had ambitions in Hong Kong. Yet those who actually did seize it in reality were few (when comparing with the population). However, in the *wu-hsia* novels almost all the *hsia-ke* had luck enough to find these "rare chances". The readers were satisfied to some extent by reading these "chance getting" narratives which, although highly desired, were in real life quite unreachable. I shall cite some examples here from the works of *Chin Yung* who is considered one of the most skillful *wu-hsia* novel writers. There are two kinds of "luck" in the *wu-hsia* novels: the congenital and the non-congenital. By congenital I mean heroes of the novels who were born extremely clever, handsome, and related to important persons in the country. Non-congenital luck was the good fortune they encountered after their birth.

Ch'en Chia-lo (陳家洛) the hero in *shu-chien en-ch'ou lu* (書劍恩仇錄) was portrayed by the author as the younger brother of Emperor *Ch'ien-lung*⁶⁹ and the son of a very powerful secret society leader. In his childhood he was sent to the most powerful master of fighting art (who lived in the Mountain T'ien) to be his disciple. At the end of the story he himself became a great master - again because of a rare opportunity: he accidentally found something in the north pole area that helped him master the most sophisticated principle of fighting art. To add to his luck, two beautiful princesses of a Moslem state fell in love with him.

Yuan Ch'en-chih (袁承志) the hero of his another book, *pi-hsueh-chien* (碧血劍) was the son of a famous general, born handsome and intelligent. He was also sent to the most powerful master of the time (who lived in the Mountain Hua) to learn the art of fighting. Furthermore, he accidentally found a secret canon of another great master, and eventually became a more powerful fighter than even his own master. More than four pretty girls fell in love with him, including the beautiful princess of emperor *Ch'ung-chen*. *Kuo Chin* (郭靖) the hero of *Chin Yung's* another book, *she-tiao yin-hsiung chuan* (射雕英雄傳), was not born clever, but he had the chance to drink a medical snake's blood, and became a very powerful fighter. He was also taught by one of the most powerful masters of the time, *Hung Ch'i-kung* (洪七公). Many pretty girls wanted to be his wife. Among them was the daughter of *Genghiz-khan*. He also became the most powerful master of the time because he accidentally obtained a secret canon left by the *Bohdidharma* (達摩).

All the other stories fall into the same model. The authors offered the hero of the novel power and beautiful women under the name of "good fortune" or "fate" in order to satisfy the readers who did not have these things in real life. If the authors were to restrain themselves from writing these handy "golden opportunity" plots, there probably would have been no *wu-hsia* novels at all. The success of the heroes

was not a self-perfecting process (like Richard Bach's Johnathen Livingstone Seagull), but the miracle type experiences of a group of extremely "lucky" men perfected by fate. Since there was a great demand for "good luck story", therefore, the writers wrote to satisfy this demand. It seems to me that the prevalent opportunism in the Hong Kong society contributed to the generation of this demand. Unlike *Wen K'ang*, the successful *wu-hsia* novel writers have become rich themselves. Because the "dream" was shared by many, not merely the author alone, the author simply reproduced them and sold them to the public.

In the second group of stories, power was directed to achieve a collective goal. But power in the *wu-hsia* novels was used to achieve individual goals. In the second group, the heroes meant to bring happiness to all through a good emperor. In the third group, the hero would only help those whom he met (路見不平拔刀相助). In many cases, the heroes in the *wu-hsia* novels were involved in political activity. The hero group might want to put some one on the throne for the good of people. But they themselves were always consciously divorced from the political group. Because they never meant to participate in the government, these heroes were often referred to as people like "free clouds and wild cranes" (0000000) by the authors. Their goals were essentially for themselves.

There were many "strange individuals" (怪人) in the stories. These strange individuals — often very forceful — would do only what they liked to do. They never paid any attention to the government. It is clear the authors mean that they did not trust the government.⁶⁹ They would help people sometimes, but never enthusiastic. It seems that they knew too well that many other people were not getting the help of forceful *hsia-ke*. So they never assumed the role of a *hsia-ke*. These men only pursued their own goal; they would fulfil the promise they promised; but never volunteer their service as *ahsia-ke* would. The personality of *Huang Yao-shi* (0000 00), *Chou Pai-t'ung* (金記郎君) in *pi-hsueh-chien*; and *Ch'en Cheng-te* (陳正德) *Kuang Hsueh-mei* (關雪梅) in *shu-chien en ch'ou lu* were highly appreciated by the readers in my observation. The activity of these people who cared only for their personal goals were another high-light of the *wu-hsia* novels. To these individuals, power — or the art of fighting — built in the body was the only goal of life. Someone was referred to as a *wu-chih* (武痴) which means a fighting-art fanatic. In *shen-tiao hsia-lu* (神鵲俠侶), one of the greatest master called himself *Tu-ku Ch'iu-pai* (獨孤求敗) which means a lonely man who would appreciate being defeated. He was lonely because there was no one better than him in the world, which made it hard for him to achieve further progress. Power, or the art of fighting, in the third group of stories, was to a great extent, the goal of life itself. I consider this a reflection of the prevalent individualism in the society. To sum up, *wu-hsia* novels produced in Hong Kong were highlighted by chivalry, fatalism and individualism which were desired (like chivalry and fatalism) and prevalent (like fatalism and individualism) in the Hong Kong society.

Summary

The actions in *yen-i* novels usually took place on the national level and in large scale, but the actions in the *Ch'ing wu-hsia* novels were on a much smaller scale and were very often individual actions like the story of *shi-san mei* (十三妹), in *erh-nu yin-hsiung chuan*. Although the *hsia-ke* in the post-1911 novels were sometimes organized in some way, the actions, most of the time, were individual in nature. This means that if patriotism or royalism were the main themes of the *yen-i* novels, partisanship and individualism played more important roles in the *wu-hsia* novels. The *Ch'ing wu-hsia* novels took the side of the emperor while the *hsia-ke* created in the republican period did the opposite.

There are two types for *wu-hsia* stories which are divorced from the power of the emperor. One has the *hsia-ke* fighting against the emperor as in the story *shu-chien en ch'ou lu* (書劍恩仇錄). In the other, the story simply ignores the existence of the emperor as in *shu-san chien-hsia* (蜀山劍俠). Although most of the popular *wu-hsia* novels written after the revolution in Hong Kong and Taiwan will fall under one or the other of these models, they shared the common ground of fighting against evil and relieving the people from their sufferings. Very few, if any, of the stories would take the side of the emperor throughout. Heaven played a much less important role in *wu-hsia* novels than in *yen-i* novels, even less in the works after the 1911 revolution. The relationship between the people, emperor and *hsia-ke* and Heaven was like the following diagram.

What is significant in the diagram is that the heroes no longer stand on the same side of the emperor as those of *yen-i* novels did. Help and relief were directly derived from the *hsia-ke*, not from the government. Yet there was no guarantee of finding a *hsia-ke* as one could find the government, whereas evil doings and wicked persons were prevalent everywhere. Hence, the pictures of people's life depicted in the *wu-hsia novels* were essentially dim ones. The *hsia-ke* himself became a hero only because of luck; that is, he had seized "an opportunity that could hardly be met in a hundred generations (·百世難逢之奇緣)". The power (or art of fighting) one acquired did not depend on the time and labor one put into it, but on one's luck and personal quality, matters that were decided as soon as one was born. Furthermore, the author

can always create an "instant hero" of tremendous force by having him eat some sort of miracle substance or find certain secret formula of the highest level of the fighting art. Therefore, fatalism was in fact the only way to success. Yet even after a hero had become greatly successful, the author did not allow a resolution in which the people's sufferings were relieved. At the end of most *wu-hsia* novels, the world again fell into the hands of wicked emperors, while the heroes disappeared from the society.

CHAPTER FOUR A STATEMENT OF THE HYPOTHESIS

In chapter one, we examined the love stories of fairies and mankind. Fairies came to the earth directly to help and share a part of man's life. In chapter two, the protagonist was a heavenly fairy but born to the earth as a human hero through the body of a woman to "fix" the world which was temporarily out of order. In chapter three, we discussed the struggle and failure of heroes with no heavenly origin. In these three groups of stories, we saw the diminishing function of Heaven and the increasing function of government.

The story about a fairy who came to earth and wanted to stay; the fairy-hero combination who fought and won on the earth but wanted to return to heaven; and the heroes who struggle and lost and wanted to escape from the society, strongly suggest a change in the world-view of the authors as well as the readers. If the weltanschauung of pattern one was an inaccurate illusory account of relatively early civilization; the second pattern was an unworkable formula prescribed by the feudal-minded Ming writers; and the third pattern was simply a sweet dream of a disappointed contemporary Chinese. The story from fairy to hero is also a story between illusion and reality. In an attempt to identify the change in the shortest form, I wrap the ideas in three terms: optimism, reformism and pessimism. It must be noted here that these three terms are used in a way to indicate the direction and inclination of a changing attitude rather than describing a well-defined stage of mentality. These terms tend to show a difference in degree, rather than a difference in nature. The following is a tentative statement of the hypothesis supported by the analysis given in the former chapters.

Part One

Three patterns of general attitudes toward life and society can be derived from the mentioned three groups of works.

- I. Optimism
 - a. Life is beautiful (within the limitations of nature).
 - b. Man has a strong desire for long life.
 - c. Man is not antagonistic toward the earthly, secular world, but more antagonistic toward natural limitations.

- d. The happiness of matrimonial life is emphasized.
2. Reformism
 - a. Happiness is accessible only after struggle.
 - b. Royalism (忠君思想) is the way that leads to happiness.
 - c. People's happiness depends on the establishment of a "right" emperor to whom a mandate has been given by Heaven.
 - d. Political grouping are more important than family; Political career is much more important than family life.
 - e. There are always small men surrounding the emperor, scattered in the local areas, corrupting good practices and inviting foreign invasion. Therefore, the struggle is to eliminate these small men and confirm the authority of the emperor.
 - f. Determinism is the rule of success and failure.
 3. Pessimism
 - a. Secular life by itself is contemptible and miserable.
 - b. Evil doing and wicked men prevail in the world. The emperor and his administration are unable to relieve its people. Sometimes (or most of the times) the administration itself is the origin of all crimes.
 - c. Only in some particular cases, certain *hsia-ke* appear to punish the wicked and relieve the innocent people.
 - d. There is no guarantee of finding a *hsia-ke*, to say nothing of becoming one.
 - e. Fatalism becomes the rules, everything depends on luck and fate. Even the *hsia-ke* himself becomes a forceful man simply by fortune.
 - f. In most of the cases, there is no final solution for pervasive evils. (Especially those have their origin built in the political institution.) The *hsia-ke* in the end disappears from the secular society into the darkness of mountains, remote border areas or overseas.

Part Two

1. It seems that all the three aspects might have existed simultaneously since the time of *Ssu-ma Ch'ien*.
2. But, one of the three tends to be dominant in certain particular period.
3. The second pattern was dominant from late *Sung* to *Ming*, and especially highly developed in the *Ming* period. Internal unrest and foreign invasion might have contributed to this development. The third pattern was dominant in the *Ch'ing* and Republican periods. The time and space covered by the communist regime must be excluded from this pattern because of entirely different way of life. But today's Hong Kong, Taiwan (or even Singapore) may be included in this pattern. The people's loss of confidence in political institutions has contributed to the development of the third pattern. Quantitatively speaking, because of lack of data, it can only be said that the first pattern might be dominant sometime somewhere before the *Sung* period.