Religious Ideals, Beliefs and Practices in the Lives of Women During the Reign of T'ang Ming Huang

by

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Centre for the Study of Religion
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This dissertation will examine the socio-legal parameters and the various religious attitudes that influenced the lives of women during the times of Li Lung-chi. Contemporary religious teachings and practices, as well as the lives of women at court will be emphasized. Also of particular interest here is the divergence between the religious ideals and historical reality.

This is, therefore, a very broad study of what the three main teachings, Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism conceived of as the nature of woman, what constituted a good or a bad woman, and what place and role a woman has in life and ritual. There will also be an analysis of the effects of certain women's failure to live up to an assigned set of ideals. For example, there will be some consideration of the aftermath of Wu Hou's use of Buddhism, followed by T'ai-p'ing Kung-chu and Yang Kuei-fei's use of Taoism.

The approach in this dissertation is an eclectic one; it uses historical, philosophical and sociological perspectives. The intent is not to offer a comprehensive account; rather, the hope is to achieve two main objectives. First, to render a sketch of the dissonance between the ideals and the practices of the three teachings as represented in their doctrines and philosophies on the one hand, and the behaviour of professed believers like the imperial women and the popular expressions in contemporary
religious beliefs and devotional practices on the other.

Second, to examine how this dissonance, as reflected in the actions of particular women at court, might have affected the later interpretations and development of the teachings. Entire areas have, therefore, been omitted: for example, the ritual sections concerning women in the dynastic histories, Chen-yen (True Word or Esoteric) practices and their views on women, and the habits and accomplishments of courtesans.

The two main approaches are historical and philosophical; sociological observations are built on them. Sources include dynastic and general histories, canonical and apocryphal Buddhist scriptures, moral and philosophical treatises, as well as popular literature.

The limits imposed by the source materials will be obvious. Most of the data that is straightforward descriptions of women is limited to the imperial household, the court and the upper classes. Much of the information about the lives of ordinary women can only be inferred, and often unsatisfactorily, from popular literature and prescriptive treatises. In this way, this dissertation can only be an incomplete account of women and religion during the time of T'ang Ming Huang (Brilliant Emperor).
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I would also like to thank my shih tzu, Professor Lee Rainey, who read through an earlier, close to incoherent draft of the dissertation. I am grateful to her for her interest, honesty and friendship.

And I must also thank my parents, who have both been supportive of this rather long journey. My mother, Linda Chang Mack, provided much appreciated material sustenance during my many years as a graduate student.

Finally, I want to thank my friends, Patrick Kwok and Marsha Melnik, for believing, and for their encouragement through the years.

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Hsüan-tsung's reign marks a significant point in the gradual decline of freedom for women in later generations and is interesting for that reason. I will argue that in counteracting the excesses of his grandmother Wu Chao, his paternal aunt T'ai-p'ing, his aunt-in-law Wei Hou who was the wife of his paternal uncle Chung-tsung, and his cousin An-lo who was Chung-tsung's daughter, Hsüan-tsung gained praise from later Confucian scholars. But in his revival of Taoism, involvement in esoteric Buddhism, favouritism shown towards Wu Hui-fei, and love for his notorious concubine Yang Kuei-fei and their "adopted" son, the foreign general An Lu-shan, he received harsh criticism from later historians.

While he initially offered a good model for austerity with his Confucian inspired measures, he later became first a prominent example of how emperors fall prey to women, and second, a symbol of how the ruling Li family lacked the requisite Confucian virtues to promote a truly benevolent government. In turn, his fall from a "brilliant" rule, which was at least partially attributed to his relationships with women, became one crucial element in the Neo-Confucian justification of the curtailment of a woman's place and sphere of influence. Hsüan-tsung's extravagance, his indulgence of his concubines and the "resulting" defeat thus coexisted with traditional Han views on women, Buddhist ideas of female impurity and Taoist acquiescence to the dominant views on women to contribute to the reduced circumstances of women in the later dynasties.
This shift in the perspective on women after Hsüan-tsung's reign coincides with the general tenor of change during this period. The outbreak of the An Lu-shan rebellion is recognized as a turning point in the history of T'ang thought. "The sudden disruption of over a century of internal peace stimulated the interest of intellectuals". They brought new lenses to old traditions, searching for answers to contemporary social and political problems in "history and literature (seeing them) as disciplines relevant to the contemporary situation." (McMullen, 307)

Thus, as the Confucian literati regained power in the Sung, they started where the conservative T'ang thinkers of the Yüan-ho period left off. Ou-yang Hsiu, taking a cue from the Classics, proffered the theory of nü-huo, the disaster of women; pinpointing Wu and Wei Hou as the originators. This "disaster" ends tragically with the defeat of Ming Huang through the miscreant Yang Kuei-fei. In this reference to and veneration of the original Confucian writings, Han Yü became the patron saint of a new ku-wen (ancient script) movement; and was, therefore, in the direct line of Neo-Confucian philosophy. (Pulleyblank, 113)

This dissertation will, therefore, examine the socio-legal parameters and the different religious ideals, attitudes and practices that influenced the lives of women during the times of Li Lung-chi. Contemporary religious teachings, as well as the lives of women at court will be emphasized. Also of special interest is the divergence between the religious ideals and historical reality.
This is, therefore, a very broad study of what the three main ideologies\(^1\) Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism conceived of as the nature of woman, what constitutes a good or a bad woman, and what place and role a woman has in life and ritual. In turn, there will also be an analysis of the effects of particular women's failure to live up to a particular set of ideals. For example, there will be some consideration of the aftermath of Wu Hou's use of Buddhism, followed by Yang Kuei-fei's use of Taoism; in other words, what happens when one set of values appeared deficient or insufficient in rallying and maintaining a stable society.

Hsüan-tsung (685-760)\(^2\) ruled for forty three years (713-756). His reign can be demarcated into three periods\(^3\) by the dominance of the three primary women in his life. First, in 725, Wang Hou, his one and only empress, was deposed and made a commoner. Second, in 738, Wu Hui-fei, who had been his favourite concubine even when the Empress was alive, died when she was barely in her forties. And third, in 744, Yang Kuei-fei was installed in the palace and became his favourite consort. Hsüan-tsung was forty when the Empress was deposed; he was fifty four at the death of Wu; and by the time Yang Kuei-fei was brought into his harem, he was fifty nine, and had been on the throne for twenty nine years.

This periodization coincides with the three periods used by Twitchett. The first period, 712-721, marked by the prominence of Confucian policies was characterized by the employment of ministers of humble origins from Wu Hou's time, and delineated by the death of Ts'ai-hsiang or Grand Councilor Yao Ch'ung (651-721). The second,
720-736, was marked by the steady revival of Taoism, and of the rise of Chang Yüeh, who was also a tsai-hsiang of humble origins. And the third, 736-756, was dominated by religious Taoism and Buddhism and the rise and rivalry of Li Lin-fu⁴ and Yang Kuo-chung⁵.

The tri-terminal periodization of Hsüan-tsung's reign is helpful because it highlights the ministerial and connubial influences around him; it also brings into focus his increasing personal extravagance and attitude of laissez-faire. This is especially important when considering the climate created by his actions. While he started with measures of austerity aimed at the imperial princes and princesses alike, he ended his reign with an enormous retinue of entertainers, and an unmistakable partiality for the Yang Kuei-fei, An Lu-shan and the Yang family.

The relevance of Hsüan-tsung's actions to the lives of women are twofold. First, although women were socially relatively unrestrained⁶ and appeared to be hindered only in a limited way by the potential doctrinal fetters in both Buddhism and Confucianism, the power of his consorts had been stemmed when compared to the reigns of Wu Hou, Chung-tsung and Jui-tsung, respectively Hsuan-tsung's grandmother, uncle and father. Where both Wu Hou and Wei Hou had participated in state rituals as empresses respectively in the feng-shan, a ritual thanksgiving or offering to Heaven and Earth for the success of the emperor, and the nan-chao, which is the ritual offering to the South or sacrifice for the summer solstice, Hsüan-tsung's Wang Hou performed the ts' an li, Ritual of
the Silkworm, at the beginning of the reign but did not accompany the emperor in any other major imperial sacrifices.

Moreover, Wu Hui-fei was never installed as the Empress. Wu Hou's actions of usurping the throne, establishing the Chou dynasty, and changing Jui-tsung's surname to Wu, must have been indelibly impressed on Hsüan-tsung's mind. The only legitimate Empress for Ming Huang's reign was his legal wife, the deposed Wang Hou. This "dispensability" of the Empress is important because it marked a symbolic downturn for elite women.

Second, the lavish lifestyle of the imperial family and Hsüan-tsung's later inattention to matters of state would also have profound effects on the future generations of women. Confucians like Sung Jo-hsin, author of Nü Lun-yü (A Woman's Analects), and Han Yü, a critic of popular Buddhism and Taoism, started a revival of Confucianism in the early 800's that later historians and philosophers like Ou-yang Hsiu, Ssu-ma Kuang and Chu Hsi continued. The period between 650-755 was used as a caution against nü-huo, or disaster engendered by women.

The society Hsüan-tsung ruled over and inherited was a religiously complex one. It was bound, on the one hand, by legal and social customs informed by Confucian values; yet permeated, on the other hand, by Buddhist and Taoist notions of immortality, karma, rebirth and magic. A woman could have been educated in the classics, for example, with an appreciation of shu (reciprocity), and the mutuality of jen (benevolence) and hsiao (filial piety),
but still not have stayed in her natal or conjugal families. To escape an unwanted marriage, or to live out widowhood, she might have taken her Confucianism to her fa-shih (dharma/Buddhist teacher) or tao-shih (Taoist teacher). In other words, after or simultaneous to her Confucian education, she might have learnt to copy and recite sutras like the Fa-hua Ching (Lotus Sutra), Wei-mo Ching (Vimalakirti-nirdesa Sutra) or Tu-jen Ching (Book of Salvation).

In a different situation, however, a woman could have fallen on hard times, lost familial support, become a courtesan, despite her start with a good Confucian education. Her action would likely have ended any opportunity of a good family life. Well trained in the arts of poetry, song and dance, but with no one to rely on in her old age, such a woman could still retire to a Taoist kuan (temple), and become a priest.

But not all women "used" the religions as an escape. Hsüan-tsung's sister, Yü-ch'en (Jade Perfected), was an exceptional example of a woman of firm religious conviction. She was ordained during her father, Jui-tsung's, reign. Hsüan-tsung, though currently without an empress, was clearly undeterred by a woman performing rituals for the state; he asked her in 733 and 743 to perform Taoist rituals believed to be efficacious for the protection of the empire. In 744, a year after she had received transmission from a Master Hu, she petitioned to have restored to the empire lands and households that had been given to her as a kung-chu (princess).
Hsuan-tsung initially refused her request; but, in the end, he acquiesed. However, he made sure that she retained her title, and bestowed upon her a new one T'e-ying (Especially Gracious and Lovely).

But just as Yu-chen took her religion seriously, there were other women who seemed unaffected by spiritual values. Yang Yu-huan and her sisters, like Wu Hou, Wei Hou and T'ai-ping Kung-chu before them, appeared to revel in a life of influence pedalling and material abundance. Their cumulative abuse of power subsequently generated its own powerful religious undercurrents. Through them, the Confucian belief in separate spheres of influence and the Buddhist notion of woman's particular impurity and inferiority began to coalesce into and form an unfriendly Buddho-Confucian attitude toward women.

This conservative turn in the attitudes towards women was signaled by three elements some fifty years after Hsüan-tsung's reign. First, Sung Jo-hsin wrote the Nü Lun-yü, which reinforced once again the "right" place for a woman. Second, no kung-chu remarried after Hsien-tsung. And third, the established Shan-tung families consented to marriage with the imperial family after a hundred and fifty years of refusing to marry into the imperial Li household, suggesting at least some improvement in the latter's behaviour.

But it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine exactly what part, if any, Hsüan-tsung's policies and activities played in these changes. It is perhaps enough to note that a more
conservative time followed after his dethronement.
METHODOLOGY

The approach in this dissertation is, therefore, an eclectic one. It uses historical, philosophical and sociological perspectives. The intent here is not to offer a comprehensive account of women and religion during Hsüan-tsung's time; rather, the hope is to achieve two main objectives: First, to render a sketch of the dissonance between the ideals and the practice in the three teachings, as represented in their doctrines and philosophies, the behaviour of professed believers like the imperial women, and the popular expressions in contemporary religious beliefs and devotional practices on the other.

Second, to examine how the ideals and the actions of some women might have affected the later interpretations and development of the teachings. Entire areas have, therefore, been omitted. For example, the ritual sections concerning women in the dynastic histories, Chen-yen (True Word or Esoteric) practices and their views on women, and the habits and accomplishments of courtesans have not been included.

The two main approaches are historical and philosophical; and sociological observations are built from them. Sources include dynastic and general histories like the Chiu T'ang Shu (Old T'ang History), Hsin T'ang Shu (New T'ang History) and Tzu-chih T'ung-chien (A Survey of Resources for Government). Both canonical and apocryphal scriptures like the Fa-hua Ching (The Lotus Sutra) and
Hsiang-fa Chueh-i Ching (The Book of Resolving Doubts Concerning the Semblance Dharma) are also included. In addition, moral and philosophical treatises like the date uncertain Nü-hsiao Ching (A Woman's Classic on Filial Piety) and the Tao-te Ching (The Classic of the Way and the Power) are also used; as is popular literature, including poetry and fantastic accounts like Hung-tsan Fa-hua Chuan (Accounts in Dissemination and Praise of the Lotus), and Yung-ch'eng Chi-hsien Lu (Record of the Assembled Transcendents of the Fortified Wall City).

The limits imposed by the source materials will be obvious. Most of the data that is straightforward descriptions of women is limited to the imperial household, the court and the upper classes. Much of the information about the lives of ordinary women can only be inferred, and often unsatisfactorily, from popular literature and prescriptive treatises. In this way, this dissertation can only be an incomplete account of women and religion during the time of T'ang Ming Huang (Brilliant Emperor).
I have used the traditional categorization of the three schools because they can be identified within Hsüan-tsung's reign. As his ministers clearly operated according to the Confucian ideal of "admonition", Hsüan-tsung, like his predecessors, continued to employ Taoist symbols in consolidating his power while simultaneously engaging the services of Buddhist clergy.

I do note throughout, however, doctrinal cross-fertilization. In other words, even as the teachings influenced each other, both in terms of philosophy and popular practices, they remain identifiable separate. See also section "The limits of syncretism" in chapter 1.

2. The use of the western calendar is inconsistent. Twitchett uses 712 to 756, and the editors of the Old and New Histories use 713 to 757.

3. I have used the women in Ming-huang's life to mark the periods of his reign, as suggested by Professor Guisso.

4. Li Lin-fu, also a Tsai-hsiang, was reputed to have been the paramour to Pei Kuang-t'ing's wife, who happened to be Wu San-ssu's daughter. Wu San-ssu, one of Wu Hou's newphews, was Wei Hou and Shang-kuan Chao-yung's lover. He also recommended that the Crown Prince Ying and Princes Yao and Chu be made commoners. (CTS 106)

5. Yang Kuo-chung was Yang Kuei-fei's paternal granduncle. He was also a Tsai-hsiang. He was reputed to have had an incestuous affair with Kuo-kuo Fu-jen (Lady of Kuo), Yang Kuei-fei's elder third sister.

6. The degree of freedom is measured against later dynastic China when women were severely restricted because of their bound feet and a lower standard in literacy.

7. Pulleyblank writes that "the Yüan-ho period (806-20) is looked upon as the second flowering of the T'ang dynasty, a time of partial recovery after the disastrous events of the rebellion of An Lu-shan (713-55). In particular it is the time associated with the Ku-wen ... movement for the reform of the content and style of prose writing, and with the beginnings of the revival of Confucian philosophy which culminated in Sung Neo-Confucianism ..." (77)

Nü-huo was one aspect of this "revival of Confucian philosophy." The first use of the term occurs in the Hsin T'ang Shu (New T'ang History) under the "Pen-chi" (Original Records) for Hsüan-tsung. (See "Developing a socio-political theory of nü-huo" in chapter 2.) It was used to describe the political involvement of Wu and Wei Hou. As Professor Chu correctly highlighted, nü-huo was not a new idea; the introduction to the "Hou Fei" (Empresses and Concubines)
section in the *Hsin T’ang Shu* lists the source of "women as a cause of disaster" as none other than the *Shih Ching* (*The Book of Odes*), a foundational text for Confucianism.

For example, King You (r. 781-771 B.C.E.) is criticized in the "Xiao Xu" ("Minor Preface") of the *Mao Shi* (*The Mao version of The Odes*) for being "so infatuated (with Baosi [Pao-ssu], his beautiful wife), that he bungled his rule of the kingdom and allowed it to be overrun by the armies of a non-Chinese people from the North." (Cutter, 11)

8. I am using Bokenkamp's title translation here. (1983, 469)
AN OVERVIEW OF ELEMENTS AFFECTING WOMEN'S LIVES
DURING HSÜAN-TSUNG'S LIFETIME
INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that the society which Hsüan-tsung lived in and ruled over was a patriarchal one. Two factors shaped that: first, the Legalist inspired T'ang lü, the T'ang Code of Law, that conceived of a hierarchical society based on Confucian ideas of class, age and sex; and second, the belief in complementarity, expressed in the ideas of yin and yang, and tsun (higher) and p'i (lower). In addition, women's lives were also influenced by many other factors, such as the different philosophies, popular religious beliefs and practices, and social customs. Yet, Hsüan-tsung's lifetime was also an era of unprecedented personal and social freedom. It was, therefore, a time of non-orthodoxy for at least some, if not many women.

SOURCES ON WOMEN DURING HSÜAN-TSUNG'S LIFETIME

There are numerous sources on women and religion during Hsüan-tsung's time. First, there are the various histories, which are the most Confucian; they draw portraits of ordinary women as virtuous models, and include accounts of palace and upper class women who were occasionally Taoist or Buddhist. Second, the different genres of secular and religious sources haphazardly yield brief and unsatisfactory accounts of Buddhist nuns, whose lives consequently remain somewhat obscure. Third, contemporary poetry and popular literature recount the lives of famous entertainers and courtesans who were romantically tied to scholar-officials and candidates who were
studying for the imperial examinations.

In contrast to these historical, biographical and literary sources, philosophical treatises and scriptures offer a doctrinal understanding of what each religion conceived of as the "good" woman, or the "evil" woman, versus the "real" woman, complex and imperfect in history. Thus, the "ideal" woman's behaviour often contrasted starkly with a "real" woman's actions. This tension was manifested in history: the ideals drove and altered the actions of women and men; and, in turn, their actions caused changes to the interpretations and understanding of the ideals.

The accounts about the empresses, concubines and princesses come from only a handful of texts. Details on the lives of the empresses and concubines are likely from court records; and the new and old histories include comparable entries for the huang-hou (empresses). But the sources on the princesses are less certain.

The earliest account of An-lo's activities is the Ch’ao-yeh Ch’ien-tsai, for example, was written some twenty years after her death, and is not considered an authoritative source. The next source, Ta-T’ang Hsin-yü, written over a hundred years after her death includes no new information. The most comprehensive accounts were compiled well over two hundred years after her death. The Chiu T’ang Shu does not have a section on the princesses. The rather sparse account of An-lo was presented in the entry for her mother, Wei Hou. Similarly, T’ai-p’ing was first described with her husband, under "Wai-ch’i" (maternal relatives). Texts covering the
nü-huo era are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ca. 730</td>
<td>Ch'ao-yeh Ch'ien-tsai</td>
<td>Chang Tsu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca. 820</td>
<td>Ta-T'ang Hsin-yü</td>
<td>Liu Hsiu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>945</td>
<td>Chiu T'ang Shu</td>
<td>Liu Hsu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>961</td>
<td>T'ang Hui-yao</td>
<td>Wang P'u</td>
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<td>1060</td>
<td>Hsin T'ang Shu</td>
<td>Ou-yang Hsiu</td>
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<tr>
<td>1085</td>
<td>Tzu-chih T'ung-chien</td>
<td>Ssu-ma Kuang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1041-1098</td>
<td>T'ang Chien</td>
<td>Fan Tzu-yü</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most of the information we have about the palace women are
common in, and derive from, the last five publications: Chiu T’ang
Shu, T’ang Hui-yao, Hsin T’ang Shu, Tzu-chih T’ung-chien and T’ang
Chien. The separate section on the kung-chu in the new history is
thus an important one because it signalled a shift in perspective.
The princesses' abuses of power took on greater significance, and
were treated more systematically in the later histories.

The uncertainty of the sources, aggravated by the apparent gap
between the time in which the women lived and the time in which
their accounts were recorded, make it extremely difficult to
determine the credibility of the information. The early policies
brought forward by Yao Ch'ung and Sung Ching, who served under Wu
Hou, and lived through Chung-tsung and Jui-tsung's reigns, against
the women of the inner palace and specifically the princesses,
would suggest that the descriptions were at least partially true.
Nonetheless, there is only one discernible fact: the materials were
clearly shaped in different ways, at different times, for different
agendas - political, religious and philosophical.
POSSIBLE LONG TERM EFFECTS OF THE EXCESSES UNDER WU HOU, CHUNG-TSUNG AND JUI-TSUNG

Yet, even as the dialectic between ideals and practice is generally true, it is difficult to determine how much of Hsüan-tsung's employment of Confucianism, for example, was a benevolent ruler's response to the people's burden, caused by the excesses and abuses perpetrated by and for the women at court, especially after Wu Chao's fall; and how much of the response was a political one, aimed at curbing the power of potential rivals. It was probably a combination of both. Hsüan-tsung had witnessed, as a child, much of the extravagances of the palace women; and he later suffered from them directly.

Primary examples of the excess were the relationships between Chung-tsung, his younger sister T'ai-p'ing Kung-chu (Princess T'ai-p'ing), his wife Wei Hou (Empress Wei), and his favourite daughter An-lo Kung-chu. These relationships were based on accommodation and favouritism. Chung-tsung bestowed appanages of unprecedented size on the princesses; moreover, he created administrative offices for them - ones which had been reserved exclusively for princes.²

Yet, even after the death of Chung-tsung by the alleged assassination of his wife Wei Hou, and the subsequent fall of Wei Hou and An-lo, Jui-tsung (Hsüan-tsung's father) allowed his sister, T'ai-p'ing, to maintain her fu (prefecture), while all the other princesses were disallowed theirs, in Ching-lung 4 (710). Jui-tsung favoured his sister especially as his advisor; he consulted and asked others to consult her, on a range of issues. T'ai-p'ing's
authority eventually led to a power struggle between her and her nephew, Hsüan-tsung; and Hsüan-tsung won (Wang, 1984).

So, perhaps it was to combat, discourage, and reduce this female dominance based on familial relationship and personality, that the young emperor, Hsüan-tsung, returned to the older, more established Legalist-Confucian principles to consolidate his rule. This was not a misogynist move then, against women, as women. Rather, this was a move targeted at the irregularities or abuse of social position by specific women.

The T'ang lü, in fact, recognized the equivalency of the emperor to three of his female relatives: crimes committed against the emperor's paternal grandmother, mother and wife were deemed to be equal to crimes committed against the emperor himself (Johnson, 256-257). The problem with T'ai-p'ing was the same as the problem with her mother; she was not content to be counsellor, she had deviated from her traditionally defined position and had ambitions to take power for herself. She had violated the foundational belief in complementarity.

THE THREE PERIODS IN HSÜAN-TSUNG'S REIGN MARKED BY THE THREE MOST PROMINENT WOMEN IN HIS LIFE

Hsüan-tsung's first year as emperor was thus threatened by T'ai-p'ing's attempt to overthrow him. Following that, he was careful to curb the power and influence of the women at court: he passed measures of austerity, restricted ordinations into the Taoist and Buddhist communities, asserted the supremacy of the state, and emphasized the relation of senior and junior between husband and
wife by reintroducing a reduced degree of mourning for a mother, if the father were still alive.

The programs of austerity did not last, however; and the personal influence of women close to Hsüan-tsung surfaced, even as the scope of their political influence decreased. These changes can most easily be traced through the three periods of Hsüan-tsung's reign symbolized by Wang Hou, Wu Hui-fei, and Yang Kuei-fei.

The first period (712-720) was characterized by policies and measures targeted at encouraging austerity, discouraging the ambitions of women at court especially after T'ai-p'ing's attempt to overthrow Hsüan-tsung, and controlling the substantial power of Buddhism and Taoism. Its end coincides with and is marked also by the end of the Taoist old guard, symbolized in the person of Yeh Fa-shan (Barrett, 52).

Two prominent Confucian ministers, Yao Ch'ung and Sung Ching, were active during this time; and congruent to Confucian principles, Wang Hou, Hsüan-tsung's empress, inaugurated the reign by personally attending to the tsan li (Ceremony of Sericulture).

Wang Hou was appropriately the primary personage of the inner quarters until Kai-yüan 12 (725) when, as Hsüan-tsung's first and only empress, she was reduced to the rank of commoner, because she was caught taking part in magic, in the hope of ending her barrenness. Her brother Wang Shou-i, who had arranged for the Buddhist monk to perform the ritual, was ordered to commit suicide; her banishment marked an end to the first period of restraint and economy (Twitchett, 381).
The second period (720-736) was marked by increased patronage toward Taoism, the ascendancy of Wu Hui-fei and two attempts at the throne by royal brothers-in-law, thus implicating Hsüan-tsung's half-sisters. It also marked the end of fiscal restraint for the kung-chu when Wu asked Hsüan-tsung to double the amount of land enfeoffed to their daughter, Hsien-i, to one thousand households, on the occasion of her marriage.

The emperor conceded to this request, and all the other princesses also received an increase in their holding (HTS, 83; TCTC, 213). Then, in K'ai-yüan 24 (736), Wu Hui-fei claimed that the heir apparent, Ying-wang Ying, and two other princes were trying to kill her and her son Mao, with the ultimate intention of deposing him, the emperor (Twitchett, 406). Chang Chiu-ling, however, cautioned Hsuan-tsung not to accept Wu's account; he reminded the emperor that she was the paternal grandniece of Wu Tse-t'ien, and that he should be careful of her.

The third period (736-755) was characterized by increased support for Taoists, symbolized in the administrative transfer of the religion, in 737, to the Tsung-cheng Ssu (Court of the Imperial Clan). This emphasized the connection between Taoism and the ruling house (Barrett, 59).

The period was also dominated by Li Lin-fu and Yang Kuo-chung, characterized by Hsüan-tsung's public policy of laissez-faire and his growing private extravagance. Yang Kuei-fei was the woman most favoured by the emperor toward the middle and the end of this time. Unlike Empress Wang and Wu Hui-fei, she was not herself politically
ambitious; but her brothers and sisters gained power through her.

In the twelfth month of T'ien-pao 3 (744), Yang Yü-huan became a Taoist nun before entering the palace as Hsüan-tsung's concubine, under the class of Kuei-fei (TCTC, 216). And soon, in T'ien-pao 5 (746), Yang Kuei-fei was sent away from the palace with a minor reprimand; Hsüan-tsung was so upset that he had eaten nothing even when noon came around. But he refused to call her back even as he wanted her back; instead, he took his frustrations out by whipping those who served him. In the end, Kao Li-shih had to request the return of the emperor's favourite concubine (CTS, 51; HTS, 76).

In the same year, Yang Kuei-fei was once again so favoured that Kao Li-shih, a minister, had to carry the reins and whips for her while she was riding. Furthermore, seven hundred weavers were especially hired for the Kuei-fei yuan (premises); and many, both within and outside of the T'ang empire, competed to pay tribute and offer gifts to her. Moreover, because Kuei-fei loved lichees, especially the ones from Nan Hai (South Seas), the Shu people would ride, flying to gather them back every season, so that the fruits would not rot on the way (Li Chao, 5).

Hsüan-tsung also had gifts made for her. Because Yang Kuei-fei most enjoyed music created from drumming sounds, he had a musical instrument made from jade, then decorated it with gold, pearls and other exotic gems. Then he had two gold lions made, at over 200 ching (catty) each, to appear as if they were holding the instrument (Cheng Ch'i, 12). It was probably because of this indulgence of
the concubine and the ensuing extravagance that shaped folk songs which reflected that the birth of a daughter was not necessarily an occasion for sorrow, and that the birth of a son may not be an occasion for happiness (HTS, 76; TCTC, 216).

But Yang Kuei-fei was sent away a second time in T'ien-pao 9. This time, Chi-wan pleaded her case, appealing to the fact that she had been a companion for some time, and that she was just an ignorant woman who did not know better; that it would be a pity to keep her away because of her mistake. One version of the story relates her "mistake" as offensive remarks made because of jealousy. In the end, Yang Kuei-fei apologized, and she offered a tuft of her hair as a sign of her repentance. She was taken back into the palace and gained ever more favour (CTS, 51; HTS, 76). But most offensive to the Confucians was likely her relationship with the foreign general An Lu-shan. This ended tragically when he rebels and Ming Huang loses his concubine and his empire. (See the section on "Yang Yu-huan" in the chapter on Taoism for details.)

This "disruptive foreign element" that the Confucians so objected to did not exist solely in Hsüan-tsung's personal relationships. Chen-yen or Mi-tsong (True Word or Esoteric sect), had come to be of great interest to Hsüan-tsung as well; and pien-wen (transformation) performances, also shaped by foreign influences, were given regularly at the palace. Moreover, dance and music inspired by foreign cultures became ever more popular too.

This third period, therefore, while characterised by the
increased presence of foreign influences, was also undone and marked in its ending by the insurgency of a foreigner who had been favoured by Hsüan-tsung.

LAWS CONCERNING WOMEN

The lü, during Hsüan-tsung's time, was concerned foremost with preserving the structural status quo, both within the family and the empire. This concern included the monasteries. A woman might, therefore, escape the strictures of lay life by joining a temple, but the secular laws affecting her life remained the same.

For example, the relationship between a nun and her monastic seniors was deemed similar to that of a child and parent; it required second degree mourning. On the other hand, an abbess' relationship to her nuns was of third degree mourning. As to the punishment for offenses against temple superiors, they were considered to be the same as if the offenses were committed within a family (Johnson, 32).

Women were generally considered to be junior citizens under the lü. They were not fully responsible, as men were, for the maintenance of the actions and reputations of family members unless there were no adult males present. As well, women were usually punished less for the same crime committed by a man (ibid., 30). In collective prosecution, except for rebellion and sedition, wives and sons fifteen years of age or younger had the option of redeeming their sentences by payment of copper.

Sons and daughters less than fifteen years of age were classi-
fied not only with wives, but also with the disabled, and those who were seventy years of age or more (ibid., 30-31). Able-bodied men fifteen to sixty-nine were deemed most legally accountable. However, should a family jointly commit a robbery and the eldest member is a woman, then the responsibility falls upon the eldest male anyway, regardless of his age (ibid., 32).

The inequality between men and women, and specifically between husband and wife, is further demonstrated by articles in the Law for Settling Disputes. A husband received no punishment for hitting his wife; a wife, on the other hand, would be jailed for one year if she were charged with assaulting her husband.

As for extramarital sex, the Miscellaneous Laws stated that both parties would receive one year in jail. However, if the woman were married, her prison term would be increased by two years. As for the man, his sentence remained the same (Chang Hui-chuan, 35).

This disparity was exacerbated by a woman's class and her marital position within the household. According to the T'ang-lü Shu-Yi (A Brief Commentary of the T'ang Law), a wife is fully equal to her husband; a concubine, however, can be bought and sold like goods; and a maidservant, who belongs to the slave class, was considered inappropriate as a companion.

While the laws defined and framed the socio-legal position of women generally, ministers like Yao Ch'ung and Sung Ching advocated Confucian principles at court in the interest of regaining political stability. In K'ai-yüan 1 (713), both Taoist and Buddhist clergy were commanded to do obeisance to their parents, as required in li
This law concretized the dominance of Confucianism (THY, 836), and was reinforced in K'ai-yüan 21 (733), when once again all clergy were mandated to pay reverence to their parents (Barrett, 58).

THE USE OF CONFUCIANISM IN THE POLITICAL CONTEXT

Confucianism regained ascendancy during Hsüan-tsung's reign because he needed to separate and distinguish himself from the times of Wu Chao, Chung-tsung and Jui-tsung. It was under these emperors that there were extreme abuses and extravagance associated with female influence, strength and power.

Hsüan-tsung was influenced, challenged and surrounded by power-ful women through his life. First, there was his grandmother, Wu Tse-t'ien; second, his paternal aunt-in-law, Wei Hou, wife of his uncle Chung-tsung; third, his cousin An-lo Kung-chu, favourite daughter of his uncle Chung-tsung; and fourth, his paternal aunt T'ai-p'ing Kung-chu. His experience of these women was not positive: Wei Hou and An-lo tried to prevent Jui-tsung, his father, from ascending the throne; and T'ai-p'ing then tried to overthrow him after his father abdicated in his favour. These women, together with Hsüan-tsung's concubines Wu Hui-fei and Yang Kuei-fei, were considered in the "pen-chi" (record) on Hsüan-tsung, in the Hsin-T'ang Shu, as the nü-huo, the disaster of women (5).

Hsüan-tsung naturally sought to control the power of the kung-chu early in his reign. The K'ai-yüan Hsin-chih (The New Rules for the K'ai-yüan) was symbolic of his intention and attempt, as well
as failure, to manage and moderate their power and land holdings.

The parameters were set as follows:

The elder princesses will be enfeoffed with two thousand households; younger sisters of the emperor will be granted one thousand households; personal retinue should be limited to three; the imperial households of the princes will be allotted two thousand; households of other princesses will be enfeoffed at half of this (HTS, 83 in Wang Shou-nan 1988, 134).

These new guidelines reflected a return to the Confucian principles of generational and princely privileges, and secondary status for princesses who were the emperor's younger sisters or daughters.

Hsüan-tsung justified and explained his policy thus:

(When his) entourage considered his provisions to the kung-chu inadequate, he said: "The rents from the fields of the common people do not belong to me; when soldiers are sent out to battle, ten thousand die (meaning many), and they are paid no more than a measure of silk. What have the women done to deserve more households? In order that they understand frugality, must this not be executed so?" (After that,) when the kung-chu petitioned for chariots and clothing, it was almost impossible for them to be given what they requested. (ibid.)

This Confucian and/or Taoist inspired article of restraint (Lau, 129), however, was not maintained. On the behest of Wu Hui-fei, Hsüan-tsung granted his daughter, Hsien-i, lands with over a thousand households; his half-sister, Tai-kuo, was also enfeoffed with one thousand and four hundred households, which was in excess of the guidelines. In addition, she was appointed an i-kuan (official of the district) (HTS, 83 in Wang Shou-nan 1988, 134).

TAOISM, WOMEN AND HSÜAN-TSUNG'S LOVE OF THE PERFORMING ARTS

This light regard for li was reflected also in his love for, and indulgence in poetry, music and dance. To this end, he rever-
sed a ruling put forward by Wu Hou in Lung-shuo 1 (661), when she was still Kao-tsung's consort, that forbade women to be involved with entertainment (THY, 34 in Sung, 73). Furthermore, he divested the T'ai-ch'ang Ssu, or the Court of Imperial Sacrifices (Hucker, 476), of the responsibility for the management of the performers. Instead, he instituted a new and separate structure to oversee the performing arts. In K'ai-yüan 2 (714), the Tsao-yu chiao-fang, or The Left and Right Music Offices were created (ibid., 141); and the Li yüan, or the Palace Garden, soon followed (ibid.).

More importantly, unlike Chung-tsung, who in Shen-lung 2 (706) outlawed "lascivious" music and limited the number of female musicians allowed for the various classes of officials (Sung, 73), Hsüan-tsung shared his delight in the performing arts with his ministers and the common people. He did not interfere with the officials' acquisitions of dance and music troupes; rather, he celebrated their indulgence with them. Foreign music flourished under his rule (Chang Hui-chuan, 13). As for his own enjoyment, he made little distinction between ceremonial court music and popular religious and secular music. Often, secular music was emphasized (Sung, 73-74).

As Hsüan-tsung sponsored the enjoyment of dance and music, he encouraged the growth of a veritable entertainment industry which could roughly be organized into three groups: public performers like the palace dancers and musicians; private entertainers like the courtesans of Pei Li, or North District, the courtesan
district in Chang-an; and private retainers of the newly wealthy
commercial families (Lee, 16; Sung, 75).  

In this way, Ming Huang created a burgeoning class of female
performers, a large number of whom were or became devotees of
Taoism. Their patron goddess was none other than Hsi-wang-mu. But
contrary to the freedom and natural movement associated with Taoist
notions of wu wei (non-being/non-doing or non-purposeful action)
and tzu jan (self-so-ness/the natural/naturalness or spontaneity),
the women of the North District were necessarily full of artifice
and restricted in their activities. Their most regular and
frequent chaperoned excursions away from their residences were to
lectures held at the Pao-T'ang Ssu, or Temple for the Protection of
the T'ang, every eighth, eighteenth and twenty-eighth day of the
month.

As Hsüan-tsung ignored the finer points of Confucianism, so
the actors and courtesans seemed at odds with the fundamental ideas
in philosophical Taoism. They simply aligned themselves with
religious Taoism, the religion of the imperial family. The Shang-
ch'ing Taoism that Hsüan-tsung tried to implement during his tenure
was based on a system of

"rites and ideology (that) were rooted in the idea of the
Saintly Sage, a figure close to that of the wise sovereign and
often identified with him .... Its stated purpose was a Great
Peace throughout the empire (Robinet 1997, 184)."

The celebration of this took many forms. During the 740's,
for example, Yang Kuei-fei, Hsüan-tsung's most infamous concubine,
and the actors of the T'ou Li Yüan (Peach and Pear Garden Troupe),
performed the dance, "Rainbow Chemise and Feathered Robe", in the palace. In the dance, "the feathered robe represent(ed) the wings of the goddess, Hsi-wang-mu; the rainbow chemise her dress of shimmering, many coloured clouds (Cahill 1993, 166)." But dance and music performances were not used only by the Taoists. The Buddhists also used them as a means to proselytize and educate the masses. 

COEXISTENCE OF DIFFERENT BUDDHIST SECTS

Buddhism had, during this period, continued to thrive amongst the common people, but no princess ever became a pi-ch'iu-ni (nun) under Hsüan-tsung. Undoubtedly popular and influential, Buddhism had, nonetheless, been damaged by Wu Tse-t'ien's (mis)use of it. Two years into Hsüan-tsung's reign, Yao-ch'ung memorialized against the excesses in the Buddhist practices of the princesses and relatives-in-law of the imperial family (Herbert, 6). The foreign religion was indicted as one cause of the abuse of power associated with the women, and it came under periodic purges (see Tonami for details).

But Buddhism remained popular among the commoners even after its political demise at court and more upper-class women became nuns after Wu Ts'e-t'ien's rule. For example, Lu, the wife of Tsui Hui, chose to ch'u-jia, or leave home, rather than remarry (quoted in Li Yu-chen, 58, 73, from CTS, 193; HTS, 205). Moreover, even though Buddhism had been stripped of its privilege as the state religion, it maintained high visibility in the palace through its
popular art form, the transformation performance. Hsüan-tsung enjoyed these performances from time to time even though they were tailored to the uneducated (Mair 1983, 9). He even wrote a commentary to Ting-ch'ang Chin-kang Po-je Tz'u (A Song of Singing Praises to the 'Diamond Sutra') (ibid., 11).

Hsüan-tsung also continued, like the emperors before him, to commemorate and honour Buddhist monks with stelae. He had one made for I-hsing after his death in K'ai-yüan 15 (727) (Sung [trans.], 241). In addition, Hsüan-tsung also continued to hold audiences for Buddhist clergy. In 719, he met with Hui-jih, a Ching-t'u, or Pure Land, monk who had returned from India and presented him with Sanskrit manuscripts and a statue of the Buddha. Hsüan-tsung reciprocated by bestowing on Hui-jih the name Tz'u-min, that is, "The Compassionate" (Inagaki, 117).

The Ching-t'u sect, more than the philosophical schools like T'ien-t'ai and Hua-yen, had remained vital and popular. And the start of Hsüan-tsung's reign marked new accomplishments by Buddhist monks. In K'ai-yüan 1 (713), Bodhiruci had just completed a new translation of The Larger Sutra, The Sutra on the Buddha of Infinite Life. In the same year, Chih-sheng had also just finished his K'ai-yüan Shih-chiao Lu (The K'ai-yüan Record of Buddhism), the authoritative catalogue of Buddhist translations in China until that time (Chen Kenneth 1964, 223).

The Ch'an tsung (sect) was also well represented at court. It was P'u-chi, Shen-hsiu's disciple, who accompanied Hsüan-tsung on
his journeys between Lo-yang and Chang-an. The Ch'an master also
taught meditation to hundreds of students (Kraft, 133). He was
opposed by Shen-hui, however, who labelled Shen-hsiu's lineage as
the Northern School, and criticized them for dead and dull-witted
sitting. Like the Ching-t'u sect, Ch'an was thriving.

The San-chieh chiao, or Three Level school, was another influ-
ential group; as was the Mi tsung, or the Vajrayana sect. They will
be discussed later. At the same time, the lü-shih, Vinaya Masters
or the Masters of Monastic Laws, of the Lü tsung, or Disciplinary
School, established by Tao-hsüan (596-667), though not strong, em-
phasized the ideal that Buddhism was not simply a set of teachings,
but also a monastic community that demands commitment from its mem-
bers. It advocated adherence to stringent discipline (ibid., 301).

This orientation would have a profound effect on the concep-
tions about woman; because even though the groups were delineated
into sects, students would often study under different masters.
This meant that the nuns did not belong exclusively to one group.
In this way, the values propagated by the Lü tsung permeated the
practice of clerical Buddhism.

BUDDHIST NUNS WITHIN THE DIFFERENT SECTS

Individual nuns active during and around Hsüan-tsung's reign

A member of the vinaya group was Ni-chang Lü-shih27 (Li Yu-
chen, 93) of Niu-t'ou-shan, the Oxhead Mountain, which gave the
famous Ch'an lineage its name. She was one nun who followed the lü
so strictly that she was given the honorary title Ta-shih, or the Great Learned One, originally used to address bodhisattvas.

Another nun, Fa-yüan, is said to have initiated several tens of women with the Shih Sung Lü, or Ten Recitations Vinaya, which is a part of the Sarvastivadin, a Sravakayana sect, discipline. She is also said to have lectured on the Fa-hua Ching (Lotus Sutra) (T262:v.9), Wei-mo Ching (Vimalakirti-nirdesa Sutra) (T478:v.14), po-je (wisdom) sutras, and Sheh-lun (T1594:v.31), a treatise on Mahayana doctrine ascribed to Asanga.

Ju-yüan was yet another nun who was active just after Hsüan-tsung's reign. She specialized in Ni-sha-sai-lü (T14423:v.12), monastic rules for the Mahisasakas²⁸ (Li Yu-chen, 84; Ming-fu, 110; Ku 1984, 66).

The Sravakayan monastic rules in Mahayana China

The Sravakayana vinayas are of special interest in this study because of their unfriendly stance towards nuns, who were subjected to the eight special rules. The rules so limited the lives of the nuns that they never became leaders in the larger community. This had profound repercussions; the nuns had no decisive voice in shaping the direction of the sangha, and they became more and more silent and invisible (79).

Ch'an provided some relief to this. Theirs was a rhetoric of equality based on the Po-je-po-lo-mi, or Perfection of Wisdom tradition, where hsiang, or characteristics, or marks, were believed
to belong to the relative temporal realm and was therefore empty of any substantial existence (Cabezon, 137). Women were thus understood to be, in essence, not different from men.

Chen-yen and its vision of women

Esoteric Buddhism also became popular during Hsüan-tsung's time. It was in its infancy and ascendancy (Karetzky, xxv) when the emperor became a devotee of Mi-tsung (Tantrism) or Chen-yen (True Word) in his later years. Shortly after Hsüan-tsung's reign, a story seemingly influenced by esoteric beliefs demonstrates well left-handed Tantrism's rather liberal view of women which is antithetical to Confucianism.

The story describes a woman of Yen-chou (766-779), who gave sex to any man who asked. Yet, whoever took her favours became free from sexual desire forever. She died at twenty-four and was later proclaimed as a bodhisattva by a foreign monk (Yu, 68). Tantric Buddhism did not, however, become popular in China. It lost a powerful advocate after Hsüan-tsung's death.

Buddhism and Taoism in the Political Context

But even as devotional and popular Buddhism thrived, political Buddhism continued to lose ground. The attack by Han Yü and Li Ao, and the 845 persecution almost a hundred years after Hsüan-tsung, signalled the end of dominance for political Buddhism. This decline was foreshadowed by Chih-sheng, who denounced Wu Tse t'ien's Chou Buddhism as false triratna, or three jewels (Forte, 135).
discrediting of state Buddhism coincided with and reinforced Hsüan-tsung's efforts. As Chih-sheng disclaimed Empress Wu, so Hsüan-tsung disavowed himself of his grandmother's heresies.

But Hsüan-tsung did agree with Empress Wu on one Buddhist issue. In K'ai-yüan 1 (713), following Empress Wu's assessment that the Sect of the Three Stages was heretical, Hsüan-tsung dissolved the Inexhaustible Treasury of the Hua-tu Temple and redistributed its wealth. In the same year, Hsüan-tsung agreed with Yao Ch'ung when the latter accused the imperial kung-chu and their in-laws of conducting private ordinations and spending private fortunes to construct monasteries, and further charged them with immorality and evasion of taxes. Hsüan-tsung ordered his officials to purge the sangha; some 30,000 monks and nuns were laicized (Chen Kenneth 1973, 92-93; Tonami, 31). In K'ai-yüan 12 (724), Hsüan-tsung again took control of the sangha; monks and nuns were tested on their familiarity with the sutras; all who failed were laicized (ibid.).

As an emperor of the T'ang, Hsüan-tsung had to be, above all else, a Taoist. Taoism had been used to enhance and restore legitimacy to the imperial clan which was partially of Hsien-p'i, or Tartar Mongolian heritage. Restoration was crucial because the T'ang had been interrupted by the Chou, which had been justified by Buddhism and led by a woman, Wu Tse-t'ien (Twitchett, 349). At the same time, Taoism was not only a politically convenient tool, it was also an inspiration for governance, as reflected by Hsüan-tsung's commentary on the Tao-te Ching, and his inclusion of Taoist
texts in the state examinations (See Benn).

Moreover, it was a way of self-cultivation; it was also a path of personal salvation, as demonstrated by the popularity of Hsiwang-mu and the commitment of Hsüan-tsung's two sisters, Chin-hsien Kung-chu (Princess Golden Immortal) and Yü-chen Kung-chu (Jade Perfected). The two princesses were ordained as Tao-shih, or Taoist Priests, in T'ai-chi (711), during their father, Jui-tsung's reign. Hsüan-tsung's daughters, Wan-an and Ch'u-kuo, also became Tao-shih during his own reign (HTS, 83). But he was not above executing a Tao-shih. In K'ai-yüan 1 (713), he put to death Shih Sung-hsuan, who had officiated at his sisters' ordinations, because Shih had been affiliated with T'ai-p'ing, his rival (HTS, 83).

Yü-chen was especially devout. In T'ien-pao 3 (744), she appealed to Hsuan-tsung to recover, for the state, land given to her as a kung-chu. She reasoned that since she had already left secular life to be a Tao-shih, she was not entitled to the privileges of a princess, and wanted the land to be given to ordinary families. At first, Hsüan-tsung refused; but when he realized her sincerity, he finally allowed her request (HTS, 83).

SYNCRETISM IN THE LIVES OF WOMEN

But the T'ang was very complex religiously, as the popular Buddhist Yulanpen Feast, which is celebrated during the seventh month, demonstrates. It incorporated "Confucian values, Daoist cosmology, and folk customs for the release of the suffering hungry ghosts and for commemorating one's ancestors." (Lai, 109) But the
power and influence of the three teachings fluctuated during Hsüan-­tsung's reign. Moreover, they did not work in isolation from each other, as Hsüan-tsung's participation in all three shows; he wrote a commentary each for the Hsiao Ching (Classic of Filial Piety), Chin-kang Ching (Diamond Sutra) and Tao Te Ching (The Classic on the Way and Power) (Robinet 1997, 187).

Because of this, women's lives were as much shaped by an ideal of syncretism as by the individual philosophical and religious doctrines. In turn, the women themselves, and especially the kung-chu, influenced the future developments of the religions. (See especially the chapter on the women at court.) Their disregard for the contemporary sexual mores and their greed for land and power often influenced the much later developments in the religions.

K'ō Hung's (284-364 c.e.) particular syncretism (Debary et al. 1960, 257) of "Taoism within and Confucianism without" became the foundation. Buddhism was added to this philosophy that lauded the merging of "the external, social-behavioural, and this-worldly aspects of human life", with a complementary system which "took charge of its internal, spiritual and transcendental aspects". Hence the expression "Buddhism within and Confucianism without" also came into being (Chen Kenneth 1973, 20-21).

The expression of this ideal during the T'ang was first pronounced by Kao-tsu, who said, "san-chiao sui i, shan kuei i ku'ei". This can be understood to mean that although the three teachings are different, goodness rests as the unitary concern for all. Dur-
ing Hsüan-tsung's reign, this was especially reinforced by scholar-officials like Chang Yüeh and Chang Chiu-ling. In K'ai-yüan 23 (734), the emperor reinstated discussions among the three teachings, so that their ideas could be harmonized and put into service of the people (Lo, 83). This principle appears to have been operative in women's lives. One wife of a Chiang Te seemed to have embodied the ideal. She is described as possessing all the Confucian values while taking refuge in Buddhism (Wei, Vol.2).

THE LIMITS OF SYNCRETISM

But syncretism could only go so far. Despite the mood of cordial coexistence and mutual influence, a woman could not simultaneously be a pi-ch'iu-ni and a tao-shih. Furthermore, during K'ai-yüan 17 (729), in a bid to establish supremacy, the Confucian state required all Buddhist and Taoist clergy to be registered. And again in K'ai-yüan 21 (733), all clergy had to pay reverence to their parents (Barrett, 58). Tensions between Confucianism and Buddhism remained especially strong.

Yet, through all the power struggles, the ideals of hsiao (filial piety) and i (righteousness) remained primary and unquestioned. Confucians like Chang Chiu-ling (Herbert, 11, 46) were from humble homes in the south, unlike earlier Confucian scholars who were northern aristocrats. Their ascendency marked the success of the bureaucratic meritocracy installed by Wu Tse-t'ien thereby demonstrating the embeddedness of Confucianism within the state.

This historical shift from a government administered by here-
ditary aristocrats to one managed by bureaucrats chosen by merit brought forward an ironic situation. These men, who rose to unprecedented heights in the scholar-official class, through state examinations on the Confucian classics and their commentaries, because of the efforts of a woman, failed or refused to recognize and protect the gains made by its sister group, upper-class women.

Perhaps this was because of a resurgence in Confucianism; but given the Confucian ideal of complementarity, the empress, in particular, should have had a great deal of influence over the inner quarters and the moral life of the emperor. This idea is supported by section fifteen, "Censuring Unprincipled Actions", in the Nü hsiao Ching (The Scripture of Filial Piety for Woman). The incongruence of the traditional ideals and the actions of the Confucian ministers suggest another reason for their reluctance to help their female counterparts.

At court, the ministers and palace women would be natural opponents. Doctrinally speaking, each had designated spheres of influence. Any support for upper-class women would, therefore, indirectly enhance the status of the women at court. In other words, any gains made by women could detract from the authority of the ministers, if a power struggle between the two should occur.

In K'ai-yüan 27 (739), the dominance of the outer counsellors was further consolidated. Hsüan-tsung honoured Confucius as Wen-hsüan Wang (The King for the Propagation of Culture), then changed the title of his most direct descendants from Pao-sheng Hou (Marquis for Praising the Sage) to Wen-hsüan Kung (Duke for the Propagation
of Culture) (Hucker, 369, 567) thereby indirectly reestablishing the prominence of the Shan-tung families and further enhancing the importance of the traditional ministerial Confucianism in government.

THE FAILURE OF RELIGIOUS/PHILOSOPHICAL IDEALS IN POLITICS

But religious ideals were often irrelevant to many of the actions taken within the imperial family, whatever religion they espoused, with the outstanding exception of Yü-chen Kung-chu. The impotence of philosophical and religious ideals was clearly demonstrated during Chung-tsung and Jui-tsung's seven years. None of the religions, not Confucianism, not Buddhism, and certainly not Taoism, would have supported the extravagance of the emperors and their female relatives. This inapposite quality of principles can also be found in Niu Chih-p'ing's estimation of T'ang as a "liberated" feudal society.

Increased political conservatism did not immediately result in social and cultural conservatism. Although the political influence and power of women were curtailed during Hsüan-tsung's reign, women continued to enjoy some social freedom. They were relatively free to move around; they attended plays and mixed freely with men in the theatres.

The freedom of movement and association for women was most obvious during the annual festivals. During new year celebrations, women and men would drink and cross the river together. They would wash their clothes and shower liquor on the ground in worship by the shore; then they would approach the river in hopes of overcoming
their troubles. On the fifteenth of the first month, during the
daylight of light, women would flock to the marketplace at night to
admire awnings, assembled with lanterns, over the height of one
hundred feet (Chang Hui-chuan, 23).

Nuns even journeyed abroad. Chih-shou, a nun who lived in
Kuang-hsi in south west China, left for Japan and never returned66
(Ming-fu, 383). It is not surprising, therefore, that the T'ang
ideal of a beautiful woman was one with a full, round face and
generous figure, who was healthy and strong, unlike the passive,
fragile, sickly, waif-like woman favoured by later dynasties.

SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF MEN AND WOMEN AND ACHIEVEMENTS BY WOMEN

Liu Yü, a respected Confucian scholar, attuned to the notions
of separate male and female spheres, was particularly concerned
about the intermingling. He was especially disturbed by theatrical
performances and protested the unseemliness of female impersonators
and men wearing masks of beasts. He described the acts as loud and
bizarre, judged the costumes too gaudy, the music too raucous, and
the temporary stages either too broad or too high (Mair 1983, 18).

This social integration was echoed in education. Many women
were well educated in the literary arts, and with the encouragement
of the contemporary culture, there were many more women poets than
in previous or future centuries (Chang Hui-chuan, 36-37). Within
the palace there was no formal educational institution except the
Hsi-i kuan, Institute for the Study of the Polite Arts47 (Hucker,
227), originally know as the Nei wen-hsüeh kuan, the Palace
Institute of Literature (ibid.), and its members selected an educated court lady as a Learned Scholar, who in turn taught the other palace women (ibid.).

There were also women who were Confucian writers, like Ch'eng, the wife of Ch'en Mao, who wrote the Nŭ-hsiao ching (The Scripture of Filial Piety for Women), in K'ai-yüan 13 (724). Others included Taoist poets like Li Yeh and Buddhist teachers like Ni-chang. Upper class women remained active in politics and there were relatively few restrictions on their movements. They could leave the women's quarters, participate in literary activities, study the classics and play polo; they were so active socially that their social lives were almost no different from men's (Niu, 65).

Most radical of all, women went unveiled during the Hsüan-tsung's reign⁴⁸. The early and middle T'ang periods were undoubtedly times of change. There was social mobility, relative freedom of movement for women, and greater tolerance for practices like frequenting brothels. One sign of this licence was the practice of ts'an li, ceremonials for visitations with superiors, in the brothels. This meant that a man of high position would accept ritual interviews with a courtesan as he himself might be received in an audience with the emperor; this was a custom unique to the T'ang (Sung, 96).

As "liberal" as this might seem, there is no mistaking the hierarchy implicit in the ritual. Just as political conservatism does not suggest social conservatism, so cultural and recreational
freedom do not mean freedom from class discrimination. As Niu points out, this was a feudal society, regardless of the extent of freedom. In Confucian terms, a concubine, courtesan, bonded maid or slave woman was always inferior, regardless of their age. But a woman in one's paternal family of the same generation or younger, like a granddaughter, daughter, wife, cousin, or niece, was deemed junior, but of the same class and not inferior. It was only women of the older generation, like a grandmother, mother and aunt, who belonged in the same class, and who were considered seniors.

WOMAN AS FRIEND, THE POSSIBILITY OF EQUALITY

One intriguing exception to this might be woman as friend, such as Li Yeh, poet and tao-shih. There is, however, difficulty with assessing the case of Li Yeh, tzu (named) Kuei-lan. How much was she her own person? And did she choose the carefree life of a poet, and later a disciplined religious one as a tao-shih? Or was she forced by circumstances into a life of what Chou describes as "half-prostitution" (68)?

Her father was certainly not impressed with her abilities in poetry; he had reputedly said: "This girl is rich with literary talent, surely she will be a woman of lost virtue (ibid.)". Yet, Hsüan-tsung summoned her to court some time during the T'ien-pao era (742-756), and she stayed in the palace for several months; she was rewarded handsomely for her time in Ch'ang-an.

Li Kuei-lan was apparently accustomed to being in the company of prominent men. She was good friends with Chu Fang, shan-jen
(hermit) Lu Yü and shang-jen (superior person or monk) Chao Jan. On another occasion, she had a witty exchange with Liu Ch'ang-ching, a famous poet. She made fun of his sexual illness: "shan-ch'i jih-chi chieh", which means literally that the mountain air is good day and night, except that shan (mountain) is homophonous to a character meaning hernia. He retaliated, saying: "chung-niao hsin yu t'o", meaning on the surface that the flock of birds are pleased to have support; in this case, the Shan-hai Ching (The Scripture of Mountains and Seas) reading of the character niao (bird) is harmonious to tiao, which refers to male genitalia (Chou, 70-73).

This familiarity could suggest Li Yeh to be of dubious reputation, or it might reflect a liberal attitude towards talking about sexual matters, or it could illustrate informality in friendship, or all of the above. The trouble with the third interpretation, in Confucian terms, is that unrelated women and men are not to socialize with each other. But if we consider the iconoclastic nature of Taoist philosophy, then what we have may be a fringe community, a community of privileged intellectuals and nonconformists. The experience of Li Yeh must, then, be seen as exceptional, and not to be generalized to other parts of the population.

For she would likely have been unacceptable in proper Confucian society, and Buddhists would likely have disapproved of her as well. Yet, during Hsüan-tsung's reign, her behaviour would not have been out of place when compared with the palace women. The
next chapter will describe some of the behaviour of these women: the empresses, concubines, princesses and servant-girls at court.
ENDNOTES

1. "Real" has been bracketed because it is a constructed category. The most prominent accounts are presented as history about women, recorded by men, for didactic reasons. In some cases, evidence could be found either to corroborate or debunk specific facts; in most cases, however, the facts stand alone and should be used with an appreciation of its bias.

2. For details see T'ang Chih (The T'ang Rules), in chuan 8 of the Hsin T'ang Shu, and chuan 83, "Chu-ti Kung-chu".

3. As Professor Guisso correctly notes, any woman who overstepped the bounds of "virtuous" womanhood was roundly criticized by the Confucians. This included women who were politically ambitious like Wu Hou, Wei Hou and T'ai-ping on the one hand, and women who distracted the emperor from his political duties, like Yang Kuei-fei, on the other.

4. The division into three periods follows Liu Fang, who is quoted in Denis Twitchett. (463)

5. The two were P'ei Hsu-chi, husband of Huo-kuo Kung-chu; and after him Wei Pin, who was flogged to death in 725. (Twitchett, 379-380)

6. Wu Hui-fei was posthumously given the title Chen-shun Huang-hou, as she is listed in the Chiu T'ang Shu. She is simply listed as Wu Hui-fei in both the Hsin T'ang Shu and the Tzu-chih T'ung-chien. She was the grand-daughter of Wu Chao's older paternal uncle, which made her relationship with Hsüan-tsung incestuous; moreover, she was one generation older than Hsüan-tsung, which made her, in Confucian terms, additionally unsuitable.

7. This translation is based on Hucker's entry 7085 where he notes that it is "staffed principally with imperial relatives."

8. Although this policy of laissez-faire might be seen as negligence, it may have been a natural extension of the Taoist beliefs that Hsüan-tsung held. The extravagance that was later associated with Yang Kuei-fei, her family and the court was in general different in that respect; it was certainly not "Taoist", even though that might have been the association.

9. Benn uses 740 as the time Yang Yü-huan went into the convent. I have been unable to find evidence for this. The Tzu-chih T'ung-chien lists the date as T'ien-pao 3. Neither the Chiu T'ang Shu nor the Hsin T'ang Shu lists a specific date; they simply state that she became a kuei-fei at "the beginning of the T'ien-pao era." (CTS, 51; HTS, 76)
10. This detail is in the *Hsin T'ang Shu* and *Tzu-chih T'ung-chien*, but not in the *Chiu T'ang Shu*.

11. This detail is in the *Chiu T'ang Shu* and *Tzu-chih T'ung-chien* and not in the *Hsin T'ang Shu*.

12. Jealousy, is, of course, one of the seven grounds for divorcing a woman.

13. *K'ai-Vien Ch'uan-hsin Chi* (889-904) has a more dramatic account. Using her religious appellation *T'ai-chen*, Cheng Ch'i explains that she said something that offended *Hsüan-tsung* because she was jealous of another's beauty. Ming Huang became very angry, and called Kao Li-shih to banish her to her paternal home. She is then described as regretting her behaviour, and crying; she took a knife, cut and gave a tuft of her hair to Li-shih, saying: "Precious gems and exotic treasures are inadequate to present to Shang (His Highness); only my hair, which is born from my parents, can reach *ch'ieh's* (lowly concubine) meaning of ardent longing for Him." And when the emperor received her hair, he wept and commiserated; then ordered Li-shih to bring her back. (13)

14. This is supported by the section on *hun-i* (ritual of marriage) in the *Li Chi*. At the marriage ceremony, the husband and wife "ate together of the same animal, and joined in sipping from cups made of the same melon; thus showing that they now formed one body, were of equal rank, and pledged to mutual affection." (Legge, II:44)

15. The notions of law and punishment are mostly Legalist. Thus, the difference in treatment of husbands and wives cannot be justified by the Confucian ideal of equal spousal ranks; it is likely that the laws have their roots in popular tradition. The hierarchical framework of the law, however, is overwhelmingly Confucian; the Legalists were against discriminatory rules and insisted on "uniformity" or "equality" for all. (Ch'u, 226)

16. Professor Guisso is right to point out that I should emphasize that the Neo-Confucians' use of nü-huo is foremost directed at Wu Hou and Wei Hou. The following *tsan* (commentary) comes after the *Pen-chi* (Record) on *Hsüan-tsung*: (See also "Developing a Socio-political Theory of Nü-huo" in chapter two.)

Alas, the disaster women cause others is great indeed! From Kao-
tsu to Chung-tsung, in those tens of years, the state repeatedly fell victim to nü-huo; the throne of the T'ang was lost and recovered, but Chung-tsung was unable to protect himself, and Wei continued to eliminate the clan. Hsuan-tsung personally settled the chaos, this is worth examining, but again he was defeated by women, how can one not be careful?

17. I thank Professor Richard Lynn for referring me to Hucker for the standard translations for these names.

18. This reflects the Confucian view represented in Hsün-tzu, Section 20, "A Discussion of Music": "...That if music is seductive and depraved, then the people will become abandoned and mean-mannered. Those who are abandoned will fall into disorder; those who are mean-mannered will fall to quarreling; and where there is disorder and quarreling, the troops will be weak, the cities will revolt, and the state will be menaced by foreign enemies..." (Watson, 114-115)

19. The use of the word "courtesan" is somewhat problematic. The category of performers overlooks the differences between a Madonna or Barbra Streisand, and a Heidi Fleiss or May Flower Madame. Under T'ang definitions, they would all fit under "courtesan".

The unique characteristic of the T'ang "courtesan" was her literary cultivation. She was expected to have the ability, bolstered by education, to converse in an elegant, tasteful and retiring way; at the same time, she was to be talented and accomplished in singing, dancing and the playing of some musical instruments; sexual talent and favours were not emphasized (Sung, 94-95).

This would suggest that the later puritanical attitudes had not yet taken hold, and that the men likely found satisfaction with their wives and concubines at home. They seemed to be seeking from the "courtesan" fulfilment for romance, perhaps absent from their obligatory familial relationships which they were bound to and restrained by.

20. Sung also divides the performers into two large groups: first, the official one, which included women working in the palace or for ministerial and military men; second, a non-official group that included musicians and dancers who are kept by private families or who entertained the commoners.

21. I thank Professor Lynn for his suggestions of "non-purposeful action" for wu-wei and "the natural/naturalness" for tsu-juan.

22. Cahill uses the 730's as the date; although this may be right, it would have involved a very young Yang Yü-huan. 740's would have been a more likely time; Hsuan-tsung would have brought Yang into the palace already.
23. I was unable to find T'ou Li Yüan in Hucker; hence the direct translation of "Peach and Pear Garden" rather than something like Palace Gardens.

24. I am not sure that the Buddhist and Taoist performances would have been similar in style. I have not come across any materials on this question. My hunch is that the Taoists would have been much more elaborate both in music and costumes because some denominations of Buddhism, by definition, would want to present a more austere image. This assessment could be entirely wrong when one considers the very extravagant portrayals of the Pure Lands and hells in the Buddhist paintings of the time.

25. This supposition is based on the popular nature of the stories cited in the chapter on Buddhism, and statistics drawn from Li Lin-fu's 739 census. It was recorded that there were 3,245 monasteries and 2,113 nunneries for Buddhists, whereas only respectively 1,137 and 550 for Taoists (Barrett, 58).

26. No princesses became Buddhist nuns during the entire dynasty. Even for Wu Tse-t'ien, whose mother was a Buddhist, the Taoist church was what she turned to: first for purification between marriages; and second, for protection against a Tibetan proposal for marriage, for her daughter, T'ai-ping.

27. One Tse Shao-o, cited in T'ang-jen chuan-ch'i hsiao-shuo, (Romantic Tales of the T'ang), is said to have studied with this nun. Ni-chang literally means "The General of Nuns", which can be rendered as "The Most Accomplished amongst Nuns". There are no exact dates given for the nuns who appear in the next section; I have provided approximate dates wherever possible. The materials in this section have been included with the assumption that the socio-cultural conditions between the times of Wu Tse-t'ien and Hsüan-tsung were similar; not the same, but close enough that the remarks about the nuns can be generalized across the eighty years.

28. Li Yu-chen hypothesizes that although the nuns continued to chant sutras, practice meditation and focus primarily on the lü, the Mahisasakas' rules probably resulted in the nuns being denied to lecture on and write commentaries for the various sutras and sastras (84).

Ku Cheng-mei writes that the "Mahisasakas suggest that nuns' social and religious positions should be restricted because of their impurities. Therefore, they established the notorious theory of women's five obstacles for the nuns to observe. Because of the imposition of this theory and the rules, the Mahisasakas observed a radical practice of sexual discrimination (66)."

The five obstacles refer to the belief that women a) cannot be reborn as Sakra, Lord of the Gods, because of "their impure and
evil nature; b) cannot be reborn as Brahma owing to their "unlimited indulgence in lust"; c) nor as Mara because of "their arrogance towards the right dharma"; d) nor as universal monarchs since they have been "endowed with eighty-four bad qualities; e) and finally, they cannot be reborn as Buddha "because of their desire, hatred, and ignorance and the karmas accumulated through their bodies, speech and their minds (adapted from the Suryajihmi-karana-prabha Sutra quoted in Ku 1984, 73-74).

Ju-yüan's dates are given in Ming-fu's Chung-kuo Fo-hsüeh Jen-ming Tzu-tien (Encyclopedia of Who's Who in Chinese Buddhism).

29. I quote here Professor Priestley's comment on this point: "Recognizing the essential non-difference of men and women would not automatically affect the position of women. It is precisely in the 'temporal realm' that social distinctions are established. Monks and lay-people are essentially not different, but that does not mean that one should treat a monk with no more respect than a layperson."

30. Vajrabodhi, active 719-732, Shan-wuwei or Subhakarasimha and Chin-kang-chih or Vajramati were active in the promulgation of Chen-yen during Hsuan-tsung's time. Believers of Mi-tsung were mostly Indians and people from the West, probably Tibet in particular and Central Asia in general. The religion was deemed vaguely exotic; and because of the belief in the efficacy of dharanis, it was considered far superior to all previous religions in China (Karetzky, xxv).

31. I will not discuss it in detail for the reason that it was not able to sustain itself. Although Tantric Buddhism was influential, its sexual practices were not accepted in a China that generally grew progressively more conservative.

32. Tonami has this situation in two parts: First, K'ai-yüan 9, Hsuan-tsung announces the "Edict Distributing the Property of the Perpetual Treasury of the Hua-tu Temple" to other Buddhist and Taoist temples in Chang-an; second, K'ai-yüan 13, the San-chieh yuan (Three Stages Cloisters) is suppressed and utterly destroyed.

33. The dates used in the two sources are off by a year; what Tonami lists as 714 is listed as 713 in Chen. The Chinese date of K'ai-yüan 2, however, is the same. The numbers are also different. Tonami lists 12,000 or 20,000 laicized.

34. Tonami does not show this incident. He has instead K'ai-yüan 9, "Edict Forbidding Donations of Money to Buddhist Temples by Ordinary Men and Women"; 721 by Tonami's reckoning and 722 by Chen's.
35. See Hsin T'ang Shu, chuan 8 and 83; Tao Tsang (The Treasury of Taoist Writings) 990:12231, 2:16b-20b; T. H. Barrett, Taoism Under the T'ang: Religion and Empire during the Golden Age of Chinese History, 50; Charles Benn, The Cavern-Mystery Transmission: A Taoist Ordination Rite of A.D. 711; Li Feng-yu, T'ang-tai Kung-chu Ju-tao Yu Sung Kuan-jen Ju-tao Shih (T'ang Poems on Princesses Entering the Way and Bidding Farewell to Court Ladies going into Taoist Temples).

36. Maudgalyayana (Mulian), along with Sariputra, is one of the two most important disciples in Mahayana Buddhism. He was believed to have supernatural abilities in clairvoyance and magic. (208) In the Yulanpen Sutra, it is said that "Mulian saw his departed mother reborn among the hungry ghosts." He goes to the Buddha when he is unable to feed her. The sutra then records the Buddha as saying: "Your mother's sins are so grave; there is nothing that you as a single individual can do about it. You must rely on the mighty spiritual power of the assembled monks of the ten directions: for the sake of the seven generations of ancestors and those in distress, you should gather [food] of the one hundred flavours and five kinds of fruit, place it in a bowl, and offer it to those of great virtue of the ten directions." Accordingly, the monks started to chant prayers, practice meditation, concentrate their thoughts and finally they received the food; at the same time "Mulian's mother gained release from all of her sufferings as a hungry ghost," (188) saved by her son's filial piety and the power of the sangha, during the seventh month, which by Taoist reckoning, occurs during the Zhongyuan (The Middle Primordial) and is gui yue (month of the ghosts). (192)

37. Berling writes of the T'ang: "Religiously, it was complex. Because it was centralized and stable, the Confucian scholar-officials were powerful in the court and bureaucracy; Confucianism remained the state religion and Confucian classics were the basis of the state examinations. However, it was also a golden age for Buddhism and to some extent for Taoism (28-29)."

This assessment, though generally correct, needs to be modified for Hsüan-tsung's reign. Ming-huang seriously tried to introduce Taoism as a political alternative to Confucianism; and although he can be judged to have failed in the long run, the effects of his experiment were profound. Taoism became associated with the last and failing years of his reign; and it appears to have burnt itself out somehow. After the T'ien-pao era, it seemed unable to challenge Confucianism in a broad way.

38. This is a simplification of the already syncretized Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism: for example, the yin-yang Confucianism of the Han dynasty, the Legalist influences in "Confucian" law codes, Buddhist influenced popular Taoism, and sinicized "familial"
Buddhism. The Buddhism and Taoism which were "within" had already been immensely affected by the Confucianism which was "without".

39. These measures, though directed against both religions, affected Buddhism more. Taoism, being originally Chinese, had no prohibition against obeisance to parents. Moreover, in 737, the Taoist Chung-cheng Ssu was brought under the Court of the Imperial Clan Affairs to emphasize the connection to the imperial family (Barrett, 59).

40. The original text uses "brotherliness"; a more general use of the term is appropriate here.

41. "The most resolute Confucian followers...were northern aristocrats, who were best known for their classical education and for their seriousness about ritual and their strict observance of established rites and norms in family life... (This was) especially true of Shan-tung aristocrats; officials of northern origins like Wei Cheng (580-643), Li Pai-yao (565-648) and Ling-hu Te-fen (583-666)". (Chen Jo-shui, 19)

42. There have been many articles and books written about Wu Tse-t'ien, so I will not deal very much with her here. See Guisso and Forte for more details.

43. The main difference between the old families and the new ruling class, which was "civil in attitude, comparatively lowly in origin, gaining power through graduation in the civil service examinations and service in the bureaucracy (established by Wu-hou)" (Herbert, 11), was perhaps chung (loyalty) to the throne.

Chang Chiu-ling, a representative of this new resolutely Confucian class of scholar-official, was a Southerner. He wished to bring Confucian culture, and specifically ethics, to the peripheral areas of the empire. To facilitate this, he started work on a new road, in 716, over Ta-yü-ling, a mountain range that runs from Szechuan to the sea. (Ibid., 46)

44. See notes 16 and 17 in Appendix A on Fan-nü and Wei-nü.

45. Niu understands "$\text{'liberty'}$ as manifested through the political system, the selection of talent, national policy and foreign relations, philosophy, culture, education and literature". (Niu, 64)

46. The liberal climate during the T'ang meant freedom not only in physical movement but also movement through the classes. The women's experiences were not, therefore, unique to them. The openness of T'ang society gave them recreational, educational, cultural and occupational opportunities which would be closed to them later.
47. Again, for standard translations of Hsi-i kuan and Nei wen-hsüeh kuan, I thank Professor Lynn for referring me to Hucker.

48. "Since the Northern Dynasties, women often wore veils when they ventured out of the house. Women of the early T'ang followed the old system of Ch'i and Sui, they also wore veils..." (Chang, 18-19).

49. Li Yeh is listed in the Ch'uan T'ang-shih; but I have not been able to determine other sources for much of Chou's account of her life.
THE IMPERIAL WOMEN: WOMEN AT COURT
The accounts of the empresses, concubines, and princesses who were associated with the phenomenon known as nü-huo, disaster caused by women, which follow in this chapter, have little connection with religious ideals and virtue. Instead, these accounts read like a catalogue of greed, cunning, cruelty, lust, exploitation and nepotism. Why, then, include them in this study of women and religion?

There are three reasons. First, women like Wu Tse-t'ien, Wei Hou, T'ai-p'ing Kung-chu, and An-lo Kung-chu, whose actions predated Hsüan-tsung's reign, influenced the direction and content of his policies regarding imperial women, and hence, indirectly, the lives of ordinary women. It also explains, in part, his antagonism towards Buddhism, which will be discussed in the following chapters on Buddhism and Confucianism.

Second, a few of the prominent women like Wu Hui-fei, Yang Kuei-fei and her sisters, who were not generally associated with nü-huo, but who were with Hsüan-tsung after he became emperor, encouraged the emperor to ignore, or repeal, some of his earlier austerity statutes. In this way, these favourites served as additional examples for later historians and Confucians, of the self-aggrandizing, power hungry women who preceded him. Women, both before and during Hsüan-tsung's reign, served to strengthen later unfriendly scholarly sentiments against Taoism and Buddhism, with which they were associated. The lives of these women and their relationships to Buddhism and Taoism will be examined below.
These two form a basis for the third reason for the inclusion of these notorious women in this study. An analysis of the idea of nü-huo, as it developed in the source documents, suggests a gradual essentializing of, and a generalization from, the behaviour of these palace women to all women. They were used in reinforcing the Confucian doctrines of feminine subordination, seclusion and segregation. As well, the women offered convenient and living "proof" for the Buddhist belief that unenlightened women are vile and rapacious creatures, thereby reinforcing the Confucian case. (See the chapter on Buddhism for a discussion of the syncretism of Buddhism and Confucianism; see also Appendix B). In other words, these imperial women may have inadvertently served as the rallying point for Confucians anxious to control women, claiming that this would stabilize the empire.

WU TSE-T'IEN AND THE START OF NÜ-HUO

Why were these women so feared? What did they do to gain such contempt and notoriety? They were condemned because various women usurped the throne, murdered a husband, poisoned a father, exercised power independently, thus inappropriately, and committed adultery.

Nü-huo was said to have started with Wu Tse-t'ien, and in its most narrow application, refers to two of the most politically ambitious women during the T'ang, Wu and Wei Hou. But it was expanded to include others active in the same era; it came to be associated with the period before Hsüan-tsung came to power.
For Hsüan-tsung, the effects of nü-huo began early in his life. His mother, Tou, posthumously honoured as Chao-ch'eng Shun-sheng Huang-hou, was one of the many people Wu Hou killed. Tou was sentenced to death during the Ch'ang-shou era of Kao-tsung's reign (693); Hsüan-tsung was eight. The charges against her were based on the words of a palace slave girl, T'uan-erh, who accused Tou of colluding with Jui-tsung's wife, Liu, in the use of magic against the state.

Wu Hou's ruthlessness was only a small part of the problem; her biggest sin, in Confucian terms, was, of course, usurping power from the T'ang and establishing her own dynasty, the Chou. The most serious and direct repercussions of Wu Tse-t'ien's example, however, lay in the political ambitions and implications embedded in "improper" personal relationships.

*Wu Tse-t'ien as exemplar of the "Pernicious and Depraved"

The behaviour of several prominent members of the Wu clan was characterized as "perfidious", and supported these Confucian concerns. Wu Ch'eng-ssu, the eldest of her nephews, was most enthusiastic in persuading Wu Hou to establish her own dynasty, no doubt with the intention of succeeding her. Wu San-ssu had illicit relations with Shang-kuan Ch'ao-yung, named Wan-erh, and Wei Hou. And Wu Yen-hsiu carried on an affair with An-lo, then married her when she was widowed (HTS, 83). Both these men, through their relationships with women intimately connected to the emperor, undermined and endangered Chung-tsung.
Even though Hsüan-tsung had witnessed all this as a teenager, he nevertheless succumbed to yet another descendent of the Wu clan, Wu Hui-fei. She was the cause of family and dynastic disunity by accusing three of his sons of sedition. This led the emperor to kill one son, the crown prince, and to reduce the status of the other two to commoners.4

Many later writers and historians were critical of Wu Tse-t'ien's overthrow of the Li family. Her actions can indirectly be "explained" in two ways. First, she was said to have come from a merchant's family (noted in Lin Lu-chih, 12); she married T'ai-tsung and Kao-tsung during a time when the aristocratic Shan-tung families were unwilling to intermarry with the imperial family (STCH in Li Shu-t'ung, 65). The implication here is that she came from a ritually unsophisticated or inappropriate class. Yet, even though she was not of the proper class, she would have been expected to toe the Confucian line.

The second, and more potent, reason for her contrary behaviour, suggested by later historians, lay in the climate of the times. Because she existed in an era steeped in "foreign" influence, it was implied, though never stated explicitly, that her husbands and lovers were ritually inadequate, and did not understand how to control her.5 These observations on the inadequacy of the emperors, when applied to Hsüan-tsung, clearly found expression in Fan Tsu-yü's T'ang Ch'ien.

Fan criticized Hsüan-tsung for killing three sons, taking another's wife as his own, and then employing a sycophant like Li
Lin-fu as minister, so as to escape reprisal for the destruction of his clan. When Fan asked: "With what, then, can he (Hsüan-tsung) rule the empire"? he implied that Hsüan-tsung had lost the t'ien-ming, the mandate of Heaven, when he ended the foundational relationships of father and son, husband and wife, and ruler and minister.

Another critique of the emperor, which is similar in spirit to Fan's, is Chang Chiu-ling's admonition to Hsüan-tsung, after he got rid of the crown prince; it is recorded in the Ta-T'ang Hsin-yü. Chang noted that the crown prince was the foundation of the empire; that any movement involving him would sway the people's hearts. In the end, the minister was concerned that the emperor had lost the heart of a benevolent father. Thus, a woman, Wu Hui-fei, was certainly perceived and understood to be contributing to the temper of Hsüan-tsung's time; but he was also clearly held responsible for aggravating an already "deviant" situation (Fan, 172-173).

CONFUCIAN PERSPECTIVE OF NÜ-HUO: PAN CHAO'S THEORY ON MEN CONTROLLING WOMEN

Wu Hou took her place as emperor, organized gambling in the palace, even though it was illegal (Chang 1977, 29), and acquired male concubines (Ibid., 17). She was clearly, in conventional religious terms, out of control. The partly Hsien-pi ruling family was later spoken of as being insufficiently sinicized; their ethnic roots would show. These not fully Chinese emperors just did not seem to know, according to the later historians, how to control
their women; and this was perceived to be a fatal flaw.

As Pan Chao wrote in her Nü Chieh, a man who is unworthy will have no hold over his wife; and if a husband could not control his wife, then the ritual conduct manifesting his authority will be abandoned and broken. Hence, the "correct" Way of husband and wife will cease; the foundation of all human relationships will be ruined, and the natural hierarchy of things will be disregarded and destroyed.⁶

In other words, when husbands do not control their wives, chaos will ensue and women might take matters into their own hands. In addition to the grave political consequences exemplified by the two empresses, the Confucians could cite as trivial an example as the actions of Chung-tsung's daughter, I-ch'eng Kung-chu, who was married to P'ei Hsün. This princess cut off her husband's hair, which is sacrilegious in Confucian terms, and his lover's ears and nose because she was furious at the attention he lavished on her (HTS, 83 in Wang, 1988:132).⁷ Jealousy, was, of course, one of the reasons for which a woman may be divorced.

AN-LO KUNG-CHU: NÜ-HUO IN ITS THIRD GENERATION

Even worse was the behaviour of another one of Hsüan-tsung's cousin, Wei Hou and Chung-tsung's favourite daughter, An-lo⁹. She was described as incredibly extravagant, as shown by how she altered Sui Yang-ti's palace, the Ta-hsing Tien, to build Ting-k'un Ch'ih, after her father refused to present her with the public K'un-ming Ch'ih as her private bath (CYCT, 38; TTHY, 45; HTS, 83).
because the pond was a source of food for fishermen (TCTC, 50).\textsuperscript{10}

Chao Fu-wan\textsuperscript{11}, the agricultural officer, prepared (for the renovation of Tao-hsing Tien) by setting up and stacking some rocks to look like Hua Shan, ascending from east to west to a lone beam. This horizontal beam led the water\textsuperscript{12} back to a gulf in nine bends, and stones were used to form a fountain. A jewelled brazier was also made, engraved with exotic beasts and mythical animals, and in between were gullies filled with countless precious coral. (HTS, 83)\textsuperscript{13}

Not only was she extravagant, she was also disloyal to her husband, Wu Sung-hsun. She had an affair with Wu Yen-hsiu while Sung-hsun was still alive; after he died, she married Yen-hsiu. On her wedding day, she borrowed the empress' chariot, and was taken from the palace to her home.

The next day, with a large group of ministers gathered in T'ai-chi Tien, the princess again, in a loud clear voice, paid her respects to the emperor, then to the officials in the south; the ministers, in reciprocity, all prostrated themselves and bowed their heads. T'ai-ping and her husband Wu Yu-chi then performed a puppet dance to wish the emperor a long life. All the officials were presented with several hundred thousand bolts of silk and a general amnesty was pronounced. (HTS, 83)

The home of another princess was taken and given to An-lo; the peasants from the surrounding lands complained bitterly when asked to support the newly established household. When the new home was ready, the palace was empty because most of the cavalry and palace musicians accompanied An-lo to her new home; the emperor personally welcomed his closest ministers there. Yen-hsiu's young son from a previous marriage, who was only several years old, was given a title and enfeoffed. Then after the first month of his grandson's birth, Chung-tsung again granted general amnesty (HTS, 83).

Confucian interpretations of An-lo's behaviour

The impropriety of all this, in Confucian\textsuperscript{14} terms, was stag-
gering. First, An-lo should not have had an affair, especially with a man who was already "married out" by Wu Hou, to a foreigner; second, she should not have continued her infidelity by wedding her paramour; third, Chung-tsung should not have sanctified it by making it such a stately affair, especially because it was the second ceremony, and moreover, for a daughter; and fourth, the ministers should not have submitted and prostrated themselves before a symbol of such impropriety.

As if this were not enough, An-lo, along with her sisters Ch'ang-ning and Ting-an, indulged their servants who regularly captured the sons and daughters of commoners for use as slaves. When the minister, Yuan Tsung-i, caught and jailed these servants, An-lo would go to the emperor and complain, and her people would be released against Yuan's protests (HTS, 83).

But perhaps her worst infringement, in Confucian terms, was in writing her own imperial orders, then covering them when she presented them to her father, so that he could not see what he was signing. Nevertheless, he signed them. She also wanted to be given the title Huang-t'ai-nü, Crown Princess; Chung-tsung refused her, but with no reprisals (CTS, 51). An-lo was so powerful that she indiscriminately sold certificates validating Buddhist clerical status, and created ranks of formal non-functional officers (HTS, 83; TCTC, 208).

Hsüan-tsung witnessed all this before he was twenty-five, and had to reform much of the non-functional bureaucracy that An-lo helped create. But An-lo's final and most unfilial act was the
poisoning of her father, in collusion with her mother, Wei Hou.

WEI HOU AND SHANG-KUAN CH'AO-YUNG: WU TSE-T'IEI'N'S MOST ENTHUSIASTIC ADHERENTS

An-lo was really the third generation of nü-huo. Wei Hou, Wu Hou's daughter-in-law, inherited the Wu political mettle. She was every Confucian's nightmare: unfaithful to her husband, lax with her children, she ended her career by doing the unthinkable - she murdered her husband, the emperor.

But she was not always like that. When Wu Tse-t'ien dethroned Chung-tsung, he was so despondent that he wanted to commit suicide; Wei Hou consoled and counselled her husband. During their many years of hardship, Chung-tsung had this to say: "Every day that we see the sun in the sky, I vow that nothing will come between the two of us."15

But the ghost of Wu Tse-t'ien appears again. Not only were her two paternal grandnephews, Sung-hsün and Yen-hsiu, variously dallying with, and married to, her granddaughter An-lo, her nephew San-ssu, who was also the first father-in-law to An-lo, was having an affair with Wei Hou (CTS, 51; TCTC, 208). Moreover, according to the Chiu T'ang Shu, Shang-kuan Ch'ao-yung, one of Chung-tsung's concubines, was also having an affair with San-ssu; in fact, it was she who encouraged Wu San-ssu's presence at court. Once in, San-ssu became so familiar with the emperor and empress that he played gambling games with the empress in bed, while Chung-tsung stood to the side and kept score.

This lack of formality is hardly Confucian or Buddhist. It
may have vague overtones of Taoist *feng-liu* (wind current/romance); but even in that, San-ssu and Wei-hou's interest in power would have been much too worldly for even state Taoism. Furthermore, both Wei Hou and Shang-kuan Ch'ao-yung's behaviour were, by contemporary Confucian standards, immoral. At the same time, however, Chung-tsung's actions were also implicitly "heretical". A diagram of the interconnectedness of the various relationships follows:

**Three generations of the Wu clan and their involvement with imperial women who are noted by brackets**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wu Hou's half brothers:</th>
<th>Yüan-shuang</th>
<th>Yüan-hsing</th>
<th>Shih-jang</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chung-tsung's cousins:</td>
<td>Ch'eng-ssu</td>
<td>San-ssu</td>
<td>Yu-chi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His wife and sister:</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Wei Hou)</td>
<td>(T'ai-p'ing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His concubine:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Shang-kuan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His nephews:</td>
<td>Yen-hsiu</td>
<td>Sung-hsun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His daughter:</td>
<td>(An-lo)</td>
<td>(An-lo)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When tabulated this way, one can easily understand the concerns of the scholar-officials, later historians and philosophers. *Wei-hou's failure to live up to "T'ien-hsia wei kung"*

"For the people, everything under Heaven" is the Confucian ideal; it is the goal and the endeavour of the emperor, his ministers and all public servants. Wei Hou's actions were contrary to this. First, she favoured An-lo, who was allowed a personal retinue just like the princes,¹⁶ even though she was a princess. This, together with the establishment of attending staff for six other princesses, was unique in history because no princesses had been given a full retinue before (THY, 6; TCTC, 208).
Second, Wei Hou decreased the entitlement of I-ch'eng Kung-chu and other princesses to half of T'ai-p'ing's, because they were not her daughters (CTS, 51). Third, Ch'ang-ning, another one of the empress' daughters, received land in both capitals that should have been returned to the people (HTS, 83).

Fourth, when there was famine in Kuan-chung, the ministers implored Chung-tsung to move to the eastern capital so that resources would not be wasted on getting supplies to the palace. Wei Hou refused to go because her family was in the south-east of Ch'ang-an; instead, she ordered P'eng Chun-ch'ing, a wu (female shaman) to warn the emperor that it was be unfelicitous to go to Loyang. Chung-tsung stayed because of her words (TCTC, 209).

This tendency towards favouritism also manifested itself in the clique that formed around Wei-hou in the palace. Shang-kuan Wan-erh was of course at the forefront, together with her mother, Ch'eng. But there were also other concubines involved. Ch'ai and Ho-lou, following the example of An-lo, along with other palace women, practiced nepotism by employing their relatives, accepted bribes, granted official positions, and issued certificates for Buddhist monks and nuns. Wei Hou also allowed, illegitimately, the wu, Chao, into the palace's inner quarters, and gave her the title of Lung-hsi Fu-jen. In time, the wu's power rivalled even that of Shang-kuan (CTS, 51; TCTC, 209; HTS, 76).

Under Shang-kuan's advocacy, the empress submitted a petition to the emperor to restore three of Wu Hou's policies: that one should mourn three years for one's mother; that twenty-three be the
age of majority; and that conscription end at fifty-nine. Chung-tsung accepted all three proposals. But more important symbolically was the adoption of another innovation by Wu Tse-t'ien: the empress participating as an officiant at state sacrificial rituals.\textsuperscript{21}

Wu-hou rationalized this by using the notions of complementarity and distinctiveness of ch'ien and k'un. She argued that the understanding of their separateness was what distinguished the Chinese from their neighbours. Thus, the tasks of honouring ancestral empresses and preparing for the worship of the spirit of the earth naturally belonged to the inner quarters, and not the officials of the public realm as Kao-tsung had intended.

\textit{Wei Hou participates in "nan-chao", the summer solstice sacrifice}

In Ching-lung 3 (709), Chu Ch'in-ming and Kuo Shan-hun suggested that the empress help in the upcoming sacrifice. T'ang Chao and Chiang Kan-hsu objected; but Wei Chu-yüan ascertained, in detail, the principles of the ceremony from classical commentaries and, in a brief decree, agreed with Ch'in-ming's opinion.

Thus Wei Hou acted as second officiant at the sacrifice for the summer solstice, with the prime minister's daughter as "ch'i-niang", or the "pure lady", who attended to the basket used during the rite. Ch'in-ming then wanted An-lo to participate as the final officiant in the ceremony; this was stopped, however, because the ministers were unanimously against it.

The officials during Chung-tsung's reign thus agreed to Wei Hou's participation using the same logic that Wu Hou had used to
become the complementary officiant at the feng-shan ceremonies. This inclusion of women in the state ceremonies was, however, also cancelled by Hsüan-tsung.

Hsüan-tsung's decision was based on Hsu Chien's argument that the emperor is both father and mother to the people, thus implicitly circumventing the inclusion of the empress in state matters. This being so, the emperor is merely performing his filial duties by sacrificing to the earth spirit that represents his female ancestors. This suggests that the emperor is in a separate category of cosmic "bisexuality", embodying both husband and wife (inferred from being both the father and mother of the people), so that he is, literally, fully complete in himself before his ancestors.22 (TTHY, 198)

In the sixth month of Ching-lung 4 (710), Wei Hou poisoned23 Chung-tsung but did not announce his death until she had arranged for the young Wan Huang Ch'ung-mou to be crown prince. She had already appointed herself as the empress-dowager, even as Wan Huang ascended the throne at the pronouncement of Chung-tsung's death. She was supported in her efforts by members of both the Wei and Wu clans; but, in the end, T'ai-p'ing Kung-chu and the twenty-five year old Li Lung-chi defeated them, and Jui-tsung inherited the throne. The final figure involved in nü-huo during this period was T'ai-p'ing. She will be described in the chapter on Confucianism.

ANECDOTAL ACCOUNTS OF THE PRINCESSES' EXCESSES

Chang Tsu, Hsüan-tsung's contemporary, uses one isolated example for the extravagances of the palace women in An-lo kung-

54
chu. He cites three examples: First, there was the three feet tall, elaborately bejewelled censer, in Lo Chou's Chao-ch'eng ssu, which she commissioned (37). Second, as noted earlier, there was the man-made forty-nine li Ting-k'un ch'ih, which had to be altered and constructed from Sui Yang-ti's Ta-hsing Tien because her father, Chung-tsung, had refused to privatize it as hers. Third, she had a dress that was elaborately made from feathers of many different (rendered as a hundred) types of birds (38).

Chang's recounting of An-lo's excesses is anecdotal. Ta-T'ang Hsin-yü, on the other hand, approaches the material differently. Liu Su, writing around the 820's, explicitly contextualizes Wei Hou's behaviour in terms of traditional cosmology, history and ritual, and quotes Huan Yen-fan as advising Chung-tsung thus: "In my examination of occasions in the past where emperors have shared political power with their wives, I have found none who did not lose their empires and perish with their families. To use yin to control yang is to go against Heaven." He then goes on to quote the I on the inappropriateness of a woman's involvement in politics, and the Shu on the inevitable destruction of a family led by a woman, represented by a hen crowing in the morning (34).

Han Yü, who was critical of things foreign and non-Confucian, that is, Buddhism and Taoism, was also writing during this period (deBary, 371-378); as was Sung Jo-hsin, the author of the Nü Lun-yü. There was already some distance in time from the era of nü-huo; these writers lived approximately sixty years after Hsüan-
tsung's death. But Liu Su, Han Yü and Sung Jo-hsin appear to represent the beginning of an era wherein a more systematic critique of the imperial women started.

Yet, even though the disapproval of Wu Hou by the historians and philosophers was strong, it was the cumulative effect that was crucial in the attack against the palace women. Wu Hou was not only unacceptable for what she did; more than that, she was dangerous because she set an example for her daughter, daughter-in-law and granddaughter, and set in motion the nü-huo.

DEVELOPING A SOCIO-POLITICAL THEORY OF NÜ-HUO

Criticisms against Wu Hou, considered to be the originator of nü-huo, existed long before Hsuan-tsung took power. Ministers like Sung Ching and Yao Ch'ung were careful to institute policies that would protect Ming Huang from the resurgence of the likes of Wei Hou, An-lo and T'ai-p'ing Kung-chu. This aspect of critique was, therefore, clearly not new. Even Chiu T'ang Shu, the first of the histories to be completed, and which was written during a time of political instability, does not single out women as a cause for Hsüan-tsung's defeat in his "Pen-ch'i" (9); but the first T'ang history does end with this comment in its section on "Hou-fei":

The virtue of k'un is like a groove, the vermilion teaching has brightness. Wei and Wu ruined the state, and the climate among the court women was soaked with destructiveness. Virtuous indeed was Empress Chang-sun29, how great is the correct deportment of motherhood. (52)

This short admonition criticizes the two seditious empresses,
but ends with a positive model. Moreover, it remains a traditional Confucian critique of individual women. The notion of collectivity may have been influenced by the T'ang Hui-yao, written at around the same time, which remarks, "the climate among the court women was soaked with destructiveness." The T'ang Hui-yao certainly describes the excesses of the empresses and the princesses, and it quotes Yuan Ch'u-k'e as saying: "The woman has the inner quarters. The man has the outside realm. There is difference between men and women. The rigid and the yielding must be separated." (69) But, like the Chiu T'ang Shu, the text remains, in general, a traditional critique and does not offer a unitary theory on nü-huo.

The Hsin T'ang Shu, however, is a different story. Its "Hou-fei" section ends with no citation of any virtuous empress; instead, it compares the two infamous ones. The focus has decidedly shifted to the negative. The Hsin T'ang Shu concludes that the two empresses were not the same. Although Wu Tse-t'ien was tyrannical and usurped the throne, she ruled in her own right and did not abuse the ministers; the commentator suggests that that is why she was able to stay in power so long. Wei Hou, on the other hand, used the power of Chung-tsung; she was lewd, corrupt, inconsistent in her policies and, worst of all, she poisoned her husband. That is why, the commentator surmises, she did not last long and Hsüan-tsung defeated her easily. (76)

The outstanding feature of the Hsin T'ang Shu, however, lies in the section it sets aside for the kung-chu. The editors conso-
lidated details from other sources, and came up with a generally unflattering picture of the princesses. (83) More importantly, the "Pen-chi" for Hsüan-tsung ends with this:

Alas, the disaster women cause others is great indeed! From Kao-tsu to Chung-tsung, in those tens of years, the state repeatedly fell victim to nü-huo; the throne of the T'ang was lost and recovered, but Chung-tsung was unable to protect himself, and Wei continued to eliminate the clan. Hsüan-tsung personally settled the chaos, this is worth examining, but again he was defeated by women...How can one not be careful!

Here is the first effort at providing a wider analysis. The traditional element of individual case studies for edification is still here; so the concept of nü-huo is not a "new" one. What is new is the scope of these cases and the realization that even the most brilliant emperor can finally be undone by women. Thus the fall from one of the high points of Chinese history became associated with the "danger" of women.31

Integration of the nü-huo idea into later histories and philosophy

This is not to say that women were blamed for all ills. Fan Tsu-yü, for example, who wrote T'ang Chien, and who also contributed to the Tzu-chih T'ung-chien, put the responsibility of Hsüan-tsung's defeat squarely on the emperor himself. Fan believed that small-minded villains were able to deceive Ming Huang because he had not yet rectified his heart. (84)

When Ming Huang killed32 three of his sons, and took into the palace for himself another son's wife, and then used Li Lin-fu as minister, in order that he not be charged with guilt for the killing of his clan, the three relationships between father and child, husband and wife, ruler and minister, which form the foundation on which human relationships stand, have been extinguished. With what can he rule all under Heaven? (81)
Chu Hsi, writing some fifty years after Fan Tsu-yü, added a different layer of interpretation to the material. In *Chu-tzu Yü-lei* is this assessment: "(T)he T'ang originates from Yi-ti (foreigners), so it is not strange that indecent acts should emanate from the boudoir." (Chan 1989, 116; quoted in Chang Hui-chuan 30, and Sung 70). To the danger women posed was added the offensiveness of foreign cultures. In this way, the behaviour of women became a standard and measure for the degree of "civilization".

**THE BEHAVIOUR OF THE PALACE WOMEN AND THE EFFECTS ON THE POLICIES AND PRACTICES OF RELIGION**

The impact of the imperial women on the lives of ordinary women is an indirect one. Their legacy takes a form that is different and less visible than the doctrinal misogyny of Buddhism or the cosmologically justified subservience of women in the Taoist and Confucian yin/yang ideology of complementarity. Rather, these women, from Wu Tse-t'ien to Yang Kuei-fei, were perfect illustrations of the cautionary remarks against women found in religious and philosophical writings.

First, from the Buddhist encyclopedia, *Fa-yüan Chu-lin*: "Being intimate with women, kingdoms and families are lost (see Appendix B)." Second, from the *I Ching*, quoted in the *Chiu T'ang Shu*: "When the Way is rectified in the family, then all will be stable under Heaven." Otherwise, the implication is, all will be chaos. Third, often quoted from the *Shu Ching* is this phrase that appears in the
Ta-T'ang Hsin-yü: "When a hen crows at dawn, that signals the end of the family."

In historical terms, the instances of instability caused by these women was represented through three generations of the Li family and five emperors. First, Kao-tsung was controlled by Wu Hou, who then succeeded him illegitimately by dethroning her sons Chung-tsung and Jui-tsung. Second, Chung-tsung was first deposed by his mother, then poisoned by his wife and daughter. Third, Jui-tsung managed to escape from harm because he first acquiesced to his mother, Wu Hou; then in his later reign, abdicated in favour of his son, Hsüan-tsung. Fourth, Hsüan-tsung faced his first insurrection which was led by his paternal aunt and Jui-tsung's beloved sister, T'ai-p'ing; then Wu Hui-fei, through innuendo, caused the death of the Crown Prince and the demotion of two princes to commoner status; and, in the end, it is believed, Hsuan-tsung lost his empire, in part, because of his devotion to Yang Kuei-fei and her family, which led to his lack of attention to matters of state.36

Immediate effects

Hsüan-tsung, in trying to avoid the fates of his paternal grandfather, father and uncle, sought to control and prevent, through law, the power of women in the palace. But this had unintended effects; the suspicions about the integrity and intentions of Wu Hui-fei, for example, and the precautions taken against her, meant that she never became empress.37 This not only curtailed her ambitions; it simultaneously undermined the possibility of womanly
counsel. The ideal that a wife, and in this case, the empress, should rule the very substantial inner quarters in the way that a minister manages outer affairs, so that the ruler, even if unwise, could still establish and maintain his place in the world, became difficult to achieve.\textsuperscript{38}

There might, however, be another explanation: The women, in their traditional role as inner counsellors, were challenges and potential hurdles to the ministers' own authority. This tension should not be forgotten when considering the antipathy between the scholar-officials and the palace women. The exclusion of women from the realm of influence seems, therefore, to fit neatly into this development toward absolutism.

Thus Hsüan-tsung's anxiety for his own security, reflected in his ministers' similar concerns, militated against the traditional role of woman as counsellor. Even though women experienced increased freedom in fashion, association, expression, movement and education,\textsuperscript{39} these liberties did not last; they had no basis in law. In fact, traditional rituals were interpreted conservatively; and it was the same conservative spirit that continued to work against woman. Within thirty to fifty years of Hsüan-tsung's demise, writers like Sung Jo-hsin, Li Chao and Han Yu were buttressed by Liu Su, who had recorded the excesses of the women at court in Hsuan-tsung's time.

This conservatism manifested itself clearly during Hsien-tsung's reign; for example, princesses who had children were not allowed to remarry. The definitive evidence of "better" Confucian
behaviour on the part of the imperial women was also manifested during Hsien-tsung's reign. For the first time during the T'ang, a Shan-tung aristocratic family agreed to marry a princess: Chi-yang Kung-chu was betrothed to Tu Tsung. Furthermore, there were no more remarriages among princesses after Hsien-tsung's reign.41

This conservatism was later reinforced by Wang P'u when he wrote in the "Kung-chu chi-lu" (Miscellaneous Accounts of the Princesses), that "the communication between husband and wife is the beginning and end of socialization,42 (and) the start of all human relationships (THY, 6; Wang 1988, 123)."

Despite the apparent success of Hsüan-tsung's Confucian effort there is irony in the futility of his earlier laws in containing the influence and power of the women at court during his own reign. He ruled against43 (TTHY, 198) Wu (THY, 7) and Wei Hou's (CTS, 51) interpretations favouring the participation of women in the feng-shan offerings to the Earth, as a counterpart to the emperor's sacrificing to Heaven; but the power, influence, needs and wants of his two most prominent concubines remained uncurbed. They simply worked through him, ignored the statutes, and continued to wield a good deal of personal power.

Effects on historians

The collective actions of the imperial women, Hsüan-tsung's later attachment to both Wu Hui-fei and Yang Kuei-fei, his indulgence of their partisan interests and extravagances as opposed to his early measures of austerity, fuelled a puritanical Confucianism that started with people like Sung Jo-hsin, Li Chao and Han Yü less
than a hundred years after his reign.

This conservative tendency was aggravated by the constant threat of foreign invasion from the north after the rebellion of An Lu-shan. The foreign general's favoured status as the adopted son of Hsuan-tsung and Yang Kuei-fei, and his relationship to his adoptive mother, which will be discussed in the chapter on Taoism, highlighted the "problem" of women and foreigners: disloyalty.\textsuperscript{44} In this way, the concept of nü-huo, which was conceived of from a reactionary T'ang Confucianism, in turn contributed to the growth of a much more elaborate Buddho-Taoist-Neo-Confucianism.\textsuperscript{45}

These women classified as nü-huo were, therefore, most valuable to later Confucians because they offered dramatic studies in, and unambiguous illustrations of "pernicious and depraved" women, the last and a relatively small category in Liu Hsiang's Lieh-nü Chuan. The effect of this handful of "pernicious and depraved" women, however, far outweighed their numbers. It is possible that they shifted the balance in the traditional lieh-nü categories.\textsuperscript{46}

The original range in Liu Hsiang's biographies was basically reduced to two: "Chaste and Obedient" and "Pernicious and Depraved". The reduction suggests a much simplified perspective on women that is based on an ethic divided into a duality of good, chaste and apolitical women versus bad, lewd and ambitious ones. The categories of "wise", "righteous" and "able in reasoning and understanding"\textsuperscript{47} were, in most part, retired and became relatively neglected. A comparison between the sections on "Lieh-nü" in the two
dynastic histories confirms this.

*Effects on the philosophers*

In the end, the prominent women at court unintentionally, and indirectly, helped to justify the increasingly circumscribed and diminished lives of women. The incestuous and lascivious behaviour of the emperors was attributed to the influence of "barbarian" cultures and the Hsien-pi blood in them.

In this way, a man's restraint and a woman's virtue, like Wei Shu and Ts'ui Mien's rationale for recognizing the distinction between father and mother⁴⁸, rested on the superiority of Confucianism that saw itself as representing Chinese culture. The virtue of Chinese women slowly came to be associated with the virtue of the nation. As Ch'eng I wrote during the Sung:

People today consider indecent liberties and improper intimacies as normal and therefore consider correctness and tranquility as abnormal, without realizing that these are the normal and lasting ways of the relationship between husband and wife (Chan 1989, 173).

He continues to say that "(m)arriage is a match. If one takes someone who has lost her integrity to be his own match, it means he himself has lost his integrity (ibid., 177)." The connection of women and virtuous behaviour can also be seen when the question was put to Ch'eng I as to whether a widow might be allowed to remarry if she were alone, poor, with no one to rely on; his answer was uncompromising:

This theory has come about only because people of later generations are afraid of starving to death. But to starve to death is a very small matter. To lose one's integrity, however, is a very serious matter.
Wang Fu elaborates on the implications of this remark almost a millenium after the death of Hsuan-tsung during the Ch'ing. He likens a woman who remarries after widowhood to a minister who surrenders to an enemy without fighting (ibid.).

The Confucian concern for stability, its relative success in the early T'ang, the subsequent nostalgia for such a civilization, the persistent threat of foreign invasion, the fear of women as one potential root of chaos preventing the recovery of such brilliance, and the systematic exposition of the historical details on nü-huo, conspired to encourage layer upon layer of interpretation about women. But before we look further into Confucianism, we will examine Buddhism, the religion of choice for the imperial women.
ENDNOTES

1. The clear exception to this is the example of Yu-chen Kung-chu. Her account can be found in the chapter on Taoism.

2. Please see page 13 and endnote 16 in chapter 1.

3. See Guisso and Forte for accounts of Wu Tse-t'ien.

4. See the chapter on Confucianism for details.

5. Remarks about the foreignness of this period bracket the beginning and flourishing of the restoration of Confucianism. First, there is Han Yü's diatribe against Buddhism as a foreign religion. And second, there is Chu Hsi's comment that reprehensible behaviour emanating from the palace inner quarters is to be expected because the origins of the ruling house is i-ti (barbarian).

6. Nancy Swann's translation follows:

   The Way of husband and wife is intimately connected with Yin and Yang, and relates the individual to gods and ancestors. Truly it is the great principle of Heaven and Earth, and the great basis of human relationships...For these reasons the relationship cannot but be an important one.

   If a husband be unworthy then he possesses nothing by which to control his wife...If a husband does not control his wife, then the rules of conduct manifesting his authority are abandoned and broken...the natural order of things are [sic] neglected and destroyed. (84)

7. I have translated pi as "lover" rather than "concubine". This conveys the undetermined status of the woman involved.

8. Wang includes the description of I-ch'eng peeling the skin of the woman's genital area. This is not in Hsin T'ang Shu.

9. An-lo is covered under Wei Hou (51) and Wai-ch'i (206) in Chiu T'ang Shu, and on her own, separately in Hsin T'ang Shu.

10. There are differences in the three accounts of this project. The Chiu T'ang Shu lists the manager as Yang Wu-lien, and not Chao Fu-wan, as in the Hsin T'ang Shu; only the Ch'ao-yeh Ch'ien-tsai describes it as Sui Yang-ti's Ta-hsing Tien; and only the new history gives the details on its construction.

11. In employing a state official for her private use, An-lo is transgressing a primary principle in Confucianism.
12. The text does not say where the water comes from or what mechanism is used to bring it up to the top.

13. These details were not provided in the Ch'ao-yeh Ch'ien-tsai. I have not come across any source with these descriptions.

14. I am not privileging Confucianism here; rather, I use it as a yardstick for two reasons. First, it is the traditional, and still nominal, standard of the state, even if the behaviour of the actors at court would suggest otherwise. Second, it is the prism through which later scholar-officials, historians and philosophers will view the situation.

15. Guisso has a slightly different interpretation of this comment. He writes that Chung-tsung "is said to have promised her complete authority in the event of his restoration." (1979: 322)

16. See the first chapter for more details on what happens to the princesses during Hsüan-tsung's reign. Guisso writes that "(a) princess was entitled only to an administration to manage the revenues of her fief of maintenance. A royal prince not only had a much larger fief administration, but a group of preceptors, a large household administration, and (a) large (number of) bodyguards and palace guards." (1979: 323 fn.87)

17. In the western capital, she took Kao Shih-lien's house and the old barracks for the Tso-chin-wu-wei. In the eastern capital, she got Wing-Ch'ang yūn when it was to be destroyed, and Wei Huang-t'ai's property when he died.

18. I thank Professor Paper for pointing out the need to use the Chinese term wu, rather than the more ambiguous word "shaman".

19. This particular point is not included in the old history.

20. I thank Professor Paper for bringing to my attention that the wu had been banned from the palace. Wei Hou's bringing in of Chao, into the palace, is therefore symbolic of the general rise in the position and power of women within the palace.

21. See the section, "Taoism under Wu Tse-t'ien, Chung-tsung and Jui-tsung", in the chapter on "Taoism", for a description of the balance in gods and goddesses worshipped in Taoist ceremonies on Sung Shan in 683. When Kao-tsung was preparing for the Ch'ien-feng (666) feng-shan ceremonies, he had intended to use officials as the second and also final officiants. Wu Tse-t'ien objected to this. She reasoned that it would be inconsistent to use the officials as secondary officiants if the altar for the sacrifice to Heaven was associated with the previous emperors Kao-tsu and T'ai-tsung; and that the sacrifice to the spirits of the Earth, or land and grains, was asso-
ciated with the empresses T'ai-mu and Wen-te. In the performance of a task, the T'ai-hou, or emperor's mother, is the one who is to be complemented by the officers. The explanation is that:

Ch'ien and k'un have their specified places. The meanings of firm and flexible have already been differentiated. The ching (or classics) explain their distinctiveness. This is the difference in principles between the middle and external [China and her neighbours]. To create harmony at the jade altar, is to find what is appropriate for the spirit of the earth. The task of arranging for sacrificial platters for meritorious worship really belongs to the work of the inner quarters. Especially when ancestral empresses are being honoured, attend personally to the marvellous sacrificial feast; how can this be delegated out to the ministers and officials? That the women of the inner quarters should participate in the sacrificial worship is carefully examined in this reasoning. (THY, 7)

22. I thank Professor Paper for pointing out that the "loss of these ritual roles would have meant a major transformation of elite female status." I use this again in chapter 4, page 112, under "Wang Hou and her barrenness, the unintended side effects."

However, a lot more work needs to be done in this area: a systematic tracing of female participation in rituals from the beginning to the end of the dynasty would be necessary to map the extent of the change in roles.

23. Guisso, citing both Chiu T'ang Shu and Tzu-chih T'tung-chien, writes: "There is no real evidence for the charge ...." The credibility of the sources is a thorny problem. I am not sure what parameters one might use to accept one "reasonable" fact and reject another. By reasonable, I mean "consistent with other elements" and "rational"; that is, a description or assertion should not be out of character, incongruous with other facts and supernatural.

24. Likewise, Li Chao in his T'ang Kuo-shih Pu describes the attention lavished on An Lu-shan by Hsuan-tsung, Yang Kuei-fei and her sisters, and then continues to describe the famous concubine's love of lichee and the rush of couriers to Nan-hai and back, so she might have the fruits fresh (5). Again, it is isolated incidents that are reported; there is no systematic critique on the impropriety of women, nor the inferiority of the "foreign" culture of An Lu-shan.

25. I understand that the genres and hence the objectives of the writings were different. The point is to try to trace the development from the gathering and recording of disparate facts to the formation of the theory of nü-huo.
26. See the section "Taoism under Hsüan-tsung", in the chapter on "Taoism".

27. The polemic against her penned by Lo Pin-wang is one example. He writes: "The woman Wu, who has falsely usurped the throne, is by nature obdurate and unyielding, by origin truly obscure." He continues that she has "killed her own children, butchered her elder brothers, murdered the ruler, poisoned her mother." A partial translation can be found in Guisso, "The Reigns of the Empress Wu, Chung-tsung and Jui-tsung (684-712)". (295)

28. The ministerial commentary does mention the intrusion of Wu Tse-t'ien on the T'ang. However, it attributes the fall of Hsüan-tsung not to his indulgence of Yang Kuei-fei and An Lu-shan; but rather to the misuse of personnel, in the ministers Li Lin-fu and Yang Kuo-chung. (9)

29. This is T'ai-tsung's empress.

30. I am using O'Hara's translation here. This also makes it consistent with the translation of Nü-hsiao Ching.

31. See the section on "Women and State Taoism" in the chapter on "Taoism". The discrepancy in the old and new accounts of Yang Yu-huan's entry into the Taoist convent can easily be integrated into the emerging theory of nü-huo; it certainly reinforces the destructive influence of women.

32. This is not quite right. Hsüan-tsung killed the crown prince and demoted two others to commoner status.

33. Chu Hsi oversimplifies here. Although "indecent" and "undecorous" behaviour during Kao-tsung, Chung-tsung and Hsüan-tsung's reigns were certainly not uncommon, it must be noted that after Hsien-tsung, no princesses remarried. The imperial family also began intermarrying with the Shan-tung families, which probably indicated "improved" behaviour on the part of the imperial women. Moreover, Sung Jo-hsin finished her NÜ Lun-yü when Han Yü was also active. In other words, there was already a considerable shift underway, in the perspective on women, from Hsüan-tsung's time.

34. I am not suggesting that the notions of subservience and separation were not originally in Confucianism; simply that the yin-yang system reinforced them.

35. I am thinking of the Han Confucianism of philosophers like Tung Chung-shu and Liu Hsia, which was coloured by yin-yang ideology.

36. The matter is, of course, much more complicated than that. As Denis Twitchett writes, "by 742 Hsüan-tsung was already fifty-seven
and had spent thirty extremely active years on the throne."
His age, his interest in Taoism and several other factors
must also be considered. (1979, 413)

37. The T'ang Hui-yao, written in the 900's at about the same
time as the Chiu T'ang Shu, refers to Wu Hui-fei as a huang-hou.
(THY, 3)

38. The argument found in Charles Benn's 1977 thesis, "Taoism as
Ideology in the Reign of Emperor Hsüan-tsung (712-755)", however,
supports the idea that the emperor was the primary force in the
centralization of power in the throne. He writes:

Most rulers prior to Hsüan-tsung's time derived their support
from that elite (of aristocratic clans), an unsatisfactory
alliance because the proud clans did not accept subordination
readily. Hsüan-tsung was the first to realize the potential
of the emperor's image for focusing mass allegiance, and to
attempt creating a broad, popular base for his power through
the national celebration of his birthday, the dissemination of
imperial icons and the propagation of his claim to semi-
divinity (321).

39. This ideal is embodied in the story of Wei-nü, quoted in the
Hsiao Ching, and originally recounted by Liu Hsiang (see fn. 17 in
Appendix A).

40. Sung Jo-hsin, also mistakenly know as Jo-hua, was one of
every-tsung's (780-804) favourites. She wrote the Nü Lun-yü, focusing on
purity and chastity. This was a didactic work, written in a semi-
vernacular style, so that unschooled woman could easily understand
it. This has been used as a standard manual for women's education,
with Pan Chao's Nü Chieh, until recent times. (Lee Yu-hwa, 45)

41. Li Shu-t'ung writes that there were no remarriages amongst the
princesses after Hsiao-tsung (87). This is not right. There were
four remarriages during the times of Hsiao-tsung and Hsien-tsung.
806 was the last date of remarriage for a T'ang princess.

42. I have translated chiao-fa not as educating and transforming,
but as socializing, because the latter includes elements from both
ideas in the former. Moreover, rather than just translate tuan as
either the beginning or the end, the context suggests both.

43. Chang Yüeh argues that "Heaven is the emperor's father, and
Earth is the emperor's mother. And although Earth can be thought
of symbolically as the empress, it can also be considered the em-
peror's mother. If that were the case, then what criticisms could
possibly be levied against a son sacrificing to his mother?" Chang
then continues to say that because Wei Hou served as the secondary
officiant, punishments for her sins followed. The lesson he drew
from this was that many disasters will result if an official or a woman performed the sacrifices.

44. Mou's findings support this. She writes that "in comparison to Liu Xiang's The Biographies of Women, in which motherhood (which is associated with sagacity) is exalted above all other categories, the BoW (Lieh-nü section in the Hsin T'ang Shu) sections do not prioritize motherhood; rather, the main focus is on the paradigms of daughters, wives, and widows" because Confucian motherhood had already been "in a sense... instituted in the pantheon of Confucian sagehood."

I would suggest that the "importance" of motherhood is not the cause of the shift. Both Wu Hou and Wei Hou were mothers; indeed, they were "mothers of the state", yet they were ferociously destructive. It seems to me that the fear of the potential power of mothers is what created an urgent emphasis on "loyalty" in its different manifestations.

Nevertheless, I do agree with Mou's assessment that "the same virtues of filiality, loyalty, and chastity are extolled repeatedly in all three paradigms, with each emphasizing one of them: for a daughter, filiality is the most important paradigm; for a wife, loyalty; and for a widow, chastity." (131)

45. The Confucianism of Sung Jo-hsin and Han Yü is rather simple and straightforward, and primarily adopts the classical style of ministerial admonition and counsel. Cheng-Chu's Sung Confucianism is more complex. It takes on Buddhism and Taoism, and in the process, builds a syncretic system. It integrates a cosmology much influenced by Taoism, with an emphasis on meditation likely adopted from Buddhism, while maintaining the Confucian focus on relationships and their levels of differentiated love and obligations, and balancing that with the idea of universal love.

This ongoing concern about women is echoed in the continued involvement "with the problems of the evolving bureaucratic imperial system. It is therefore not surprising that when the Confucian literati again came into their own in the Sung dynasty they should have to some degree started where the T'ang thinkers stopped. Han Yü became the patron saint of a new Ku-wen movement and is in the direct line of Neo-Confucian philosophy ...." (Pulleyblank, 113)

46. Susan Mann makes a similar observation: "Confucian biography could be negative as well as positive, as in Liu Xiang's collection. But as time passed, negative models disappeared from didactic works, while positive models for womanly behaviour changed. After the Tang dynasty (618-906), individualized tales of ascetics, mystics, and bold, independent filial daughters fade from the historical record. In their stead we find myriad repetitious
formulaic stories of women who commit suicide in the name of chastity or who dedicate their lives to serving their parents-in-law in the name of celibate widowhood." (2)

47. The categories are taken from O'Hara (xi).

48. See the chapter on Confucianism.

49. A different manifestation of this hierarchical rigidity is Ch'eng I's comment that to "obey is the foundation of serving parents (Chan 1989, 172)." He counsels that the way for a son to get into his mother's heart "lies in going backward, bending his will to obey, and following his mother." He continues to say that this is the "way for strong ministers to serve weak rulers (ibid., 171)."

72
INTRODUCTION

What one notices most about Buddhist nuns during Hsüan-tsung's reign is their absence from records of public life\(^1\) - at court, in the administration of the sangha, and the provision of social services\(^2\). We have many records of prominent monks like Hui-fan, T'ai-ping's favourite monk (Wang, 1087); P'u-jun of the Pao-ch'ang ssu, who helped Hsüan-tsung in his struggle against Wei Hou (ibid., 1085); Ming-wu, who performed a fertility ritual for Wang Hou; and I-hsing, who counselled Hsüan-tsung against an extravagant dowry for Yung-mu Kung-chu. But we have very little data on any Buddhist nuns who might have been influential. Li Yu-chen lists twenty-two nuns who were active during Hsüan-tsung's reign, not a single one has a substantial biography. Information on lay women is likewise scanty.

This is especially strange when 739 census figures show the dominance of Buddhism over Taoism: 3,345 monasteries and 2,113 nunneries for Buddhists, and respectively only 1,137 and 550 for the Taoists; that is, there were approximately four times as many Buddhist nunneries as there were Taoist ones.\(^3\) Because of this limit in primary sources,\(^4\) this chapter will be restricted to a general description of Buddhism and its effects on women in Hsüan-tsung's reign.

There will be descriptions of popular beliefs and practices from fictional accounts, but there will also be a broad examination of the doctrine(s) on women. The use of Confucianism to reinforce Buddhism, a comparison of their similarities and differences, and
the long term implications of these elements will also be included.

THE INFLUENCE AND DESTRUCTION OF THE SAN-CHIEH CHIAO

We know that Buddhism was extremely popular at the time, and that many of the most respected Mahayanist sutras like the Fa-hua Ching Lotus (T262,v.9), Wei-mo Ching (Vimalakirti-nirdesa) (T478, v.14) and Sheng-man Ching (Srimala-devi) (T353, v.12) have positive portrayals of iconoclastic and highly evolved female beings. We also know that historically, the San-chieh-chiao (The Three Levels Teaching or Sect of the Three Stages) had been most influential and was supported by powerful statesmen, imperial princes, and at one time, even Empress Wu (Hubbard, 274).

This influential organization, however, also suffered continuous imperial hostility (ibid.) and was finally destroyed by Hsüan-tsung in K'ai-yüan 13 (725). It had, however, set up a mutual aid "bank" known as the Inexhaustible Storehouse (Wu-chin-tsang), which served as the prototype to other temple-based lending institutions (ibid.).

Buddhists not only engaged in financial aid, they were also the first to open free dispensaries, establish free hospitals, to which even the state contributed support. In addition, their members also provided for chains of free or low-cost hostels and they involved themselves in charitable enterprises like building bridges and planting shade trees along well-travelled roads (Wright, 75).

Assuming that both nuns and laywomen would have helped in all
these areas of social work, their absence is puzzling. But it is even more puzzling and remarkable when one considers the ascendancy of women at court and the popularity of women Taoist priests and poets during this particular time. (See the chapters on Confucianism and Taoism for details.) Possible explanations for this situation can be found in Kajiyama and Ku's analyses of the weakness in the position of Buddhist nuns in China that follow later in this chapter. The disparity in the "visibility" of Buddhist nuns vis a vis other women is not surprising when the unfavourable or inferior position of nuns to monks is considered.

**FANG-PIEN: A MAHAYANIST CONCEPT IN CHINA**

The invisibility of the Buddhist nuns is just one difficulty in writing about Buddhist women during Hsüan-tsung's time. The other is the religion itself. For Mahayana philosophers, the Buddhist religion itself is an "expedient device". Symbols like the great bodhisattva in human form, or concepts such as hell and purgatory are understood to be provisional. That is, they are generated to appeal to and to serve variously as motivation and warning to ordinary people. The need for fang-pien or upaya kaushalya (skills in means) assumes that most people cannot immediately understand emptiness and non-attachment; hence the need for strategic means to lead them to full awareness. (Overmyer 1990, 199)

The effect of this strategic thinking is an odd one. Women are simultaneously described as being more defiled and insightful than men; and they are, at the same time, also portrayed as incor-
rigible temptresses and committed compassionate teachers.

Yet Ch'en Heng-che, who wrote in the early twentieth century, suggests that the Buddhist "influence upon the life of the Chinese woman was decidedly that of an unmixed evil (60)." However, there are other writers like Rita Gross, Yuichi Kajiyama, Ku Cheng-mei, Kathryn Tsai and Nancy Schuster, who would argue for a more positive and balanced evaluation of Buddhist influence and attitudes towards women.

The differences in opinion mark the difficulty in evaluating the effects of Buddhism on women in China. Given fang-pien, there is no one Buddhist attitude toward women, but rather, various attitudes, depending on the situation that the man or woman is in. The differences were most marked in the radically variant and seemingly incongruous sects such as the Pure Land and Ch'an. But they did share similar ideas like the belief in different eras in history and the unequal capacities of human beings.

Different levels of teachings were, therefore, offered to alleviate the suffering of human beings. They were framed within the foundational pillars of tz'u-pei (karuna or compassion) manifested through action, and chih (prajna or wisdom) manifested in k'ung (sanyata or emptiness). These teachings, along with devotional practices, were classified and understood within Chih-i and Fa-tsong's systems of p'an-chiao (doctrinal categorization), derived from the Fa-hua Ching, and likely influenced by the interpretation of mo-fa by the San-chieh chiao.
MO-FA AND THE DIFFERENT CLASSES OF HUMAN BEINGS

There must have been a sense of urgency conveyed by the notions of varying capacities and times. During mo-fa, the "end of the dharma" or degenerative times, human beings were thought to be totally bereft of any noble qualities like virtue, wisdom, and compassion, which are important to Buddhism (Hubbard, 272). The Pure Land sect, the most popular during Hsian-tsung's reign, like the San-chieh chiao, also taught that the degeneration of the dharma was a congenital disease of the human condition (ibid., 273).

The Hsiang-fa Chueh-i Ching (The Book of Resolving Doubts Concerning the Semblance Dharma) (T2870, v.85), an influential Chinese apocryphal text that professed to be the final words of the Buddha before entering parinirvana, and which dates from the mid-sixth century, explains more thoroughly the idea of mo-fa. It criticizes the clergy for its laxity, extravagance and lack of charity. It then goes on to describe how some monks will "preach the dharma obsequiously and with distortion in order to curry favor with the people." Others will recite magical spells to cure illnesses; some will even employ heterodox methods of meditation to tell fortunes. Still others will "practice acupuncture and moxibustion and other types of medicine as a means of getting clothing and food." And laypeople, following the diminished examples of the monks, will engage in trade and seek profit. Some will consume alcohol, be disorderly, sing, dance, play music and chess. The only bright spots in this age of degeneration will be
the bodhisattvas who benefit sentient beings (ibid., 267).\(^{13}\)

The most striking feature of this internal critique of Buddhism is that it predates and anticipates Yao Ch'ung and Sung Ching's memorials against Buddhism. Where the Hsiang-fa Chueh-i Ching is concerned with the clergy, Yao and Sung were troubled by the way that Buddhism was practiced by the palace lay congregation; that is, the palace women during Hsuan-tsung's reign.

While the text might sound, in part, overly prescriptive and supportive of rules, it does not neglect the central Mahayana idea of fang-pien. Another excerpt sets the balance:

...Sometimes I preach the observance of precepts, and at other times I preach perseverance. Or again sometimes I commend meditation, while at other times I commend wisdom. Or again sometimes I commend ascetic practices. Or again sometimes I commend contentment. Or again sometimes I commend disciples. Or again sometimes I commend bodhisattvas. In such a way (my teaching) varies in accordance with the differing potential (of people). In future, all the evil monks will not comprehend these intentions of mine and each will adhere to his own view, attacking one another (over who is) right or wrong, and thereby destroying my teaching (Tokuno, 263-264).

This flexibility in means reflected in Hsiang-fa Chueh-i Ching reinforces the idea in the Fa-hua Ching. This discussion of means has direct bearing on Buddhist attitudes of and towards women. As Ku Cheng-mei notes, it is according to the notions of fang-pien that a female bodhisattva will be created to "solve the problem of living beings' attachment to women".\(^{14}\)

This Mahayanist rebuttal to this Sravakayana view that woman is especially defiled is based on k'ung. Kajiyama writes that
Mahayana Buddhism tried to free women through the philosophy of emptiness promulgated by the Prajnaparamita and other such sutras; and failing that, women would be saved by devotion.

The philosophical pivot of this soteriological wheel is the belief that men and women alike were empty of essential nature. For those unable to grasp this, however, the Buddha Amitabha, in his incarnation as the Bodhisattva Dharmakara, "propagated the doctrine that all women who devote themselves (to him)...would be born in his paradise (54)."

P'AN-CHIAO AND ITS MEANING FOR WOMEN

The Chinese inherited an immense corpus of Buddhist writings without fully understanding its history. Valiant attempts were made to sort out the conflicting ideas; p'an-chiao, the systematic categorizing of the sutras, was the result of the attempt (Kenneth Ch'en 1964, 305-311).15

The mundane functioning of p'an-chiao can be illustrated by a case which does not involve women. Chiao-jan, a T'ang monk, serves as a practical illustration. He had, as a monk, given up writing poetry because he thought it inappropriate for a Ch'an practitioner; he only resumed his literary endeavors after he was persuaded "that these scruples were based on 'the mistaken views of the lesser vehicle' (Watson 1992, 40)". Thus p'an-chiao had very real power and applications in daily clerical behaviour, which would, in turn, influence actions taken by laypeople.
In an odd way, contemporary scholars of Buddhism and Buddhist women are currently doing some p’an-chiao of their own. Kajiyama, for example, proposes five stages of development: first, the primitive stage held no discrimination; second, during the first century BCE, some four hundred years after the death of the Buddha, the theory that women cannot become Buddhas came into being; third, just before the common era, the idea of sexual transformation gained currency, and the Buddhas Aksobhya and Amitabha were said to sympathize with the miseries of women; fourth, the early Mahayana sutras like the Astashasrika-Prajnaparamita, Fa-hua Ching and the three Pure Land sutras, were written; and in the fifth and final stage, concepts like k’ung and fo-hsing (Buddha nature), were incorporated into sutras like the Vimalakirti-nirdesa and Srimala-devi. But the latter radically states that a woman can become enlightened just as she is, as a woman (70).

Ch'an master Ma-tsu Tao-i (709-788), and T'ien-t'ai master Chan-jan, would likely have been comfortable with Kajiyama's scheme; both used a rhetoric of equality (Cabezón, 137, 145). Yet, nuns had historically been prepared for ordination by monks like Gunavarman, who translated the P’u-sa ti Ching (Bodhisattva Bhumi Sutra) (T1581,v.30), which argues that "women are inherently weak in intellect and virtue (Schuster 1985, 102)."

This inconsistency of views about women, on the one hand equal and not different from men, yet conceived as "weak in intellect and virtue" on the other, can be settled doctrinally by the concept of
Simply put, the teaching varies according to the level of attainment by the practitioner. But an analysis of Buddhism's effects on women must consider not only the perceived spiritual capacities of women and men, but also the issues of class, marital status, level of education, and age.

**PORTRAYALS OF ORDINARY WOMEN IN FA-YÜAN CHU-LIN**

In 668, two generations before Hsuan-tsung's reign, Tao-shih (?-683) finished compiling the famous encyclopedia, *Fa-yüan Chu-lin (Forest of Gems in the Garden of Law)*. Tao-shih did this in celebration of Kao-tsung's support and encouragement of the clergy. Kao-tsung had asked monks and nuns to pray for the welfare and prosperity of the state and to manifest the emperor's virtue and authority to the people (Chen Kenneth 1964, 219).

Tao-shih thus manifested the emperor's virtue and authority by editing a cautionary essay on ordinary women. He used Confucius to buttress Buddhist notions of female inferiority. He quotes from the *Lun-yü* the infamous lines: "People of low birth and women are hard to deal with. If you are friendly with them, they get out of hand; if you keep your distance, they resent it (The Analects 17:25 in Waley, 216-217; T2122, v.53)._"  

Aside from this direct quote from Confucius, Tao-shih's section on "Hsu nü" (Common Women) is surprisingly similar in tone and content to the Confucian assessment of wicked women in the seventh chapter of Liu Hsiang's *Lieh-nü Chuan, "Biographies of Pernicious
and Depraved Women". They both make the point that cunning, devious and lascivious women are dangerous. The section on "Hsu nü" begins like this:

"Laywomen, ordinary women, are sick with many poisons. The Buddha said that their evil and deviance are much greater than men's...Being intimate with women, kingdoms and families are lost. To touch them is as if to pick up a poisonous snake... A family becomes poor and suffers all because of women. To leave home and lose one's life is also because of women. The lack of harmony at home is also because of women. The reversal of roles between men and women is also because of women...Thus are the errors that cannot all be described. Sentient beings are thus to be greatly pitied. They are always burning in the fires of desire and cannot leave it; hence, calamity and suffering continue ceaselessly." (T2122,v.53)

Tao-shih was describing "ordinary", ignorant and unenlightened women; he was not speaking about all women, and in this way, even an essay so clearly anti-woman cannot be considered entirely misogynist. This is especially true when one examines the last part of the introduction where Tao-shih shifts from a focus on women to "sentient beings" in general. This shift suggests that the discussion of the destructiveness of women's sexual power is another way of speaking about men's attachments.

BUDDHISM AND CONFUCIANISM

Despite the similarities between Confucianism and Buddhism, however, there is a crucial difference. Confucianism focuses on the personal qualities of women because they affect political stability; and woman is perceived to be at the heart of the family, which is in turn taken to be the foundation of the harmonious functioning of the empire. Woman, the keeper of the private, inner
quarters, is thus held to be the "root" of the state. Women are, in theory, therefore, to be respected. At the same time, however, because they are so important, their actions must be circumscribed.

In this way, Confucianism certainly shares Buddhism's concern for the negative model expressed in the immoral and unenlightened woman. And for that reason, Confucianism, again like Buddhism, is especially interested in the potential destructiveness of a woman's sexual power.

But Confucianism does not consider human beings, especially women, to be innately, physically impure. It must regard positively the body and its intended procreativity, because the relationship between a man and woman is held to be the heart of society. Confucianism and Buddhism are irreconcilable in this. Yet it is perhaps here that Buddhism has made the deepest impression on the Chinese psyche. The following passage is taken from the Ta wei-te t'o-lo-ni Ching (Mahatejadharani Sutra) and quoted in the Fa-yüan Chu-lin, and can hardly be mistaken for being either Confucian or Taoist; it is particularly Buddhist.

Ananda, there are five types of vermin that live in women that men do not have. These five parasites live in the vagina. In each lives eight thousand more, with two heads and mouths. They are like the point of a needle, always bothering and biting women, making them act. Acting again and again, the women are led on by the parasites; this is why it is called irritation. Licentious women do not accord with the dharma, and from karmic causes they start lascivious actions, counting on the fact that men know no limits and satisfaction. (T2122,v.53)

This virulent description and its assumptions about the nature of women demand that special action to be taken against these spe-
cially flawed beings. The Eight Chief Rules\textsuperscript{25} and the Five Hindrances\textsuperscript{26} made sure that when these degenerate beings entered the sangha, they would be controlled and made subservient.

Yet, on the other hand, Ennin's record of a service performed after the Hui-ch'ang persecution in 845,\textsuperscript{27} shows that monks and nuns participated equally, although the service was led by a monk (Reischauer, 222). Nevertheless, the rules can certainly be considered unfair or uncompassionate. The Mahisasakas, a Sravakayana sect, had an explanation that can be applied to the eighth rule, which stipulates that a nun, no matter what her seniority is, should always regard a monk as senior to herself, regardless of his tenure with the sangha.

This pivotal idea that the Mahisasakas held determined that a nun's good karma could not bring an improved existence, either in this life or in the future, religiously or socially (Ku 1984, 75). This unforgiving accounting of a woman's existence, as Nancy Falk insightfully comments, inflicted damage which was subtle and of a worldly nature. The discriminatory provisions meant that women would never be in the life of the community completely, since they could not participate in the monks' division. In that way, the nuns, and by extension the laywomen, would have no decisive voice in shaping the direction of the sangha (ibid., 79).

THE REPERCUSSIONS OF SYNCRETIC CONFUCIAN-BUDDHISM ON WOMEN

These Buddhist beliefs in the innate super-impurity of women, and its consequent prohibitions, reinforced by the parallel Confu-
cian idea of the inner quarters as the only proper place for women, spilled over into the society at large. This could, therefore, have been one of the first developments in the gradual confinement of women; not only physically, as propagated by the Confucians, but also spiritually, as described by the Buddhists. Li Yu-chen supports this idea when she suggests that it was probably because of the lū of the Mahisasakas that the nuns of the T'ang dynasty no longer commanded the audiences they did in previous dynasties, and no longer wrote commentaries on sutras28 as they had during earlier times (83-84).

This merging of Confucian and Buddhist forms and ideas is found in Pao-ch'ang's rationale for compiling the Pi-ch'iu-ni Chuan in 516 c.e.. He wrote that he wanted to "expound on the dharma in order to chiao fa (teach and transform the people), just as the wind (blows and) bends the grass (Cissell, 141)." The image of the wind and grass itself is taken from the Lun-yū, 12:19: "The essence of the chün-tzu (virtuous person) is that of wind; the essence of hsiao jen (small-minded person) is that of grass. And when a wind passes over the grass, it cannot choose but bend (Waley 1938, 168)." Moreover, the form, its content and intentions are also reminiscent of the Confucian Lieh-nü Chuan. And here again, we find parallels in the lieh-nü tradition and the Indian Therigatha29 (Songs of the Women Elders). Given this syncretic approach, it is not surprising that Li Yu-chen finds Confucianism and Buddhism coexisting in the
There are three common points in the family background of the nuns: First, Confucianism is the education for the family; second, the observance of li is very strict; third, Buddhism is the clan's religion (73).

This could of course, explain the eerie absence of influential nuns during Hsüan-tsung's reign. Tsai, like Schuster and Li, believes that the lü made nuns subordinate (131). The acculturation of the monastic rules suggests that the Sravakayana lü complemented, were consistent, did not conflict, and generally accorded with the contemporaneous Chinese notions of social relations. The explicit rules confirmed the spirit of li; they both demanded submission. Confined to sutra chanting, meditation and devotional practices sanctioned by the lü, the nuns nevertheless maintained the ultimate spiritual and pedagogical tool of self-immolation.

Recorded in 670, fifteen years before Hsüan-tsung's birth, by the monk Hui-hsiang in Hung-tsang Fa-hua Chuan, is the story of two nuns, who were sisters, who sacrificed themselves in 629 c.e., at the market in Ching-chou. This ritual has scriptural support in the Fa-hua Ching, and historical precedence in Shan-miao, a nun of the Sung dynasty, who burned herself as meritorious work (Tsai, 192-194). Shan-miao is especially lauded by Pao-ch'ang in the Pi-ch'iu-ni Chuan because he regarded suicide by fire as the highest form of ascetism (ibid., 115).

Self mutilation and sacrifice were not restricted to suicide by fire; there were also the stories of Gautama, in a previous
incarnation as a bodhisattva, who cut himself up to feed a hungry tigress, and the king who is killed protecting the dharma (Ku 1991, 167). Some of the examples of self-sacrifice are fanciful and grotesque by Confucian standards; but even here, Buddhism is reinforced by traditional Confucian values: virtuous women, as well as men like Ch'u Yüan, have consistently resorted to suicide as the final statement on virtue throughout Chinese history.

**Further reinforcement of Buddhism by Confucianism**

As with their negative portrayals of immoral women, Confucians and Buddhists reinforced each other in their accounts of virtuous women, measured by the lack of sexual activity, especially captured in the image of a widow who refuses to remarry. After the reign of Wu Hou, the number of nuns from families of the gentry increased. But even more importantly, the sangha became the refuge for widows who refused to remarry (Li Yu-chen, 73).

One case reflecting such religious syncretism in laywomen's lives is cited in Wei Hsi-tseng's Wei-chia-hsüan chuan-chi (The Complete Collection on the Descendants of the Wei Family), about the wife of a Chiang Te:

The mistress guarded herself with the four virtues, and maintained harmony within the household and amiability without. She respected her elders and cared for and loved the young. She loved all her in-laws...and took refuge in the Buddha, the Sangha and the Dharma (vol.2, n.p).

But this dominance of Buddhism created a curious situation during Hsüan-tsung's time. The religion was associated with and held accountable for the establishment of secular female power and hence
subject to periodic purges; yet it simultaneously and manifestly supported the Confucian ideal of "virtuous" widowhood. Moreover, it confirmed, within its cloisters, the subservience of women by the eight chief rules.

It should perhaps not be a surprise, then, that there was a "harmonization" of the conservative strands in the religions soon after Hsüan-tsung's time: as noted in the previous chapter, "The Imperial Women", no widowed princess remarried after 806, during Hsien-tsung's reign (Wang 1988, 123; Li Shu-t'ung, 87).  

POPULAR AND SCRIPTURAL ACCOUNTS OF THE SUPERNATURAL

But for every straightforward account like the wife of Chiang Te, there are one or more matching supernatural ones. One such negative account appears in the encyclopedia Fa-yüan Chu-lin under the section on the "Four Grades of Saintship". The essay "Miscellaneous Matters" describes a wife who is very attractive, but turns out to be a lascivious ghost who drinks human blood and eats human flesh (T2122,v.53).  

Chang Tsu compiled the Ch'ao-yeh Ch'ien-tsai during the 730's, and he included supernatural tales illustrating the principle of jealousy and retribution. One woman Jen, wife of Fan Lüeh, cut off the nose and ears of her husband's favourite concubine; but Lueh did nothing about it. Then, Jen got pregnant and gave birth to a daughter without ears and nose.  

(CYCC cited in Niu, 59)
Buddhism is thus brought into service against jealousy in women during a time when the keeping of a large number of concubines had become very popular (Niu, 60). Again, Buddhism reinforced the foundational Confucian disapproval of jealousy. Rather than creating a story that criticizes a man's greed in keeping more than one woman, popular stories suggested that it was the jealous women who were the gravest sinners.

The supernatural accounts were not exclusively negative; the popular stories were balanced by positive scriptural stories. Nancy Schuster notes that the portrayals in sutras were often

"literary creations, not historical personalities. They (were) ideal images, sometimes even mythical figures - supremely wise and witty teachers of the Buddhist Dharma, miracle-workers, precociously clever little girls, queens and princesses, and magical goddesses who are all devotees of the Buddha." (89).

THE FA-HUA CHING AND WEI-MO CHING

The most striking element about the mythical female beings is the lack of their real life counterparts; here, the challenge of doctrine would appear to exceed human spiritual capacity. Unlike the numerous "real" examples of virtuous women, dedicated and self-sacrificing nuns, accounts of iconoclastic girls and women are rare indeed. Two exceptions are found in The Recorded Sayings of Layman P'ang (Sasaki et al.).

Layman P'ang, a Ch'an devotee, reputedly lived 740-808, late in or just after Hsüan-tsung's reign. He and his daughter Ling-chao made a meager living selling bamboo utensils; the story starts
like this:

The layman was sitting in his thatched cottage one day. "Difficult, difficult, difficult," he suddenly exclaimed, "(like trying) to scatter ten measures of sesame seed all over a tree!"

"Easy, easy, easy," returned Mrs. P'ang, "just like touching your feet to the ground when you get out of bed."

"Neither difficult nor easy", said Ling-chao. "On the hundred grass-tips, the Patriarch's meaning'.

What one finds here, is a wife contradicting her husband, only to have their daughter negate, and outshine, both of them. The prominence and wisdom attributed to a young girl here is reminiscent of the naga princess in the Fa-hua Ching; the naga princess who shows Sariputra, a venerated elder in the Sravakayana tradition, that he is mistaken to view a woman's body as "filthy" and not a "proper Dharma-receptacle". She offers the Buddha her priceless gem which he accepts immediately; she then turns into a man and possesses "perfect bodhisattva conduct".

As Miriam Levering notes, the story gives a double message: on the one hand, a woman becomes a Buddha only after having traded her female body for a male body; on the other hand, a woman most definitely can achieve Buddhahood. As for Ch'an devotees, this story "emphasizes the extraordinary and rapid transformation that comes with enlightenment, a transformation on which there are no limitations (24)."

As for the goddess in the Wei-mo Ching, there were, indeed, no limitations; she turned Sariputra into a woman after he asked what prevented her from changing out of her female body. She said:

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... all things are neither made nor changed, and they are not made and not changed, that is the teaching of the Buddha... All things and living beings are just the same; they do not transmigrate, nor are they born! 39

THE IDEA OF TRANSFORMATION FOR ORDINARY WOMEN IN THE SUTRAS

Yet the notion that the contemporary age was an evil age and that women were dangerous objects of temptation persisted. During the mo-fa, counsels the Fa-hua Ching, the bodhisattva is to have no desire to look at a woman, even as he is preaching to her. And if he should enter someone's house, "he does not talk with little girls, or maidens, or widows .... If he preaches the Dharma to a woman, he does not bare his teeth when smiling nor show his chest (Hurvitz, 209)."

And if, during this time, the sutra goes on to say, there is a woman who hears the scripture and practices it as it is preached, she will go, at the end of her life, to the Sukhavati, or Ching-t'u (Pure Land). 40 This is the dwelling place of the Buddha Amitayus (ibid., 300), where he is surrounded by a multitude of great bodhisattvas. This is the perfect single Buddha-land,

...where men and gods may consort, each able to see the other, with no evil destinies, also without women, all living things born by transformation, there being no lewd desires, all having gained great supernatural penetration....(ibid., 159)

The idea of transformation and the soteriology of being born in the Ching-t'u (Pure Land) is especially important here because the Ching-t'u sect is primarily patronized by women (Stevenson, 360). The description of this Sukhavati is elaborated on in the
three Ching-tu sutras; and it is the bodhisattva Dharmakara, in his thirty-fifth vow, who gives women the option of transformation, if they should "wish to renounce womanhood (Inagaki, 247; Garma Chang, 344)" and enter into his realm.41

Unlike Amitayus' Pure Land, Aksobhya's does have women; but these are no ordinary women, they are "better than the best in this world ... (Garma Chang, 323)." Moreover, neither mother nor child is sullied by conception or birth. As in Amitayus' realm, all things are born from non-sexual means. Women hold no attraction for men (ibid., 317), and men take delight exclusively in the dharma (ibid., 323).

Although this appears to denigrate women, Kajiyama quotes the Ta O-mi-t‘o Ching (Great Amitabha Sutra) (T364, v.12), which says that in "the land of Aksobhyata, there are women, but they undergo no sufferings from pregnancies, deliveries, and so forth (68)." In other words, "impurity" is less the issue than is suffering. The Buddhas of the Pure Lands, therefore, recognize the particular sufferings of women, and enable women to transcend them. In this way, the absence of normal circumstances for women, or their very absence, is not an indication of prejudice against women, but rather, the Buddha's compassion and the consequent elimination of attributes that create a woman's suffering.

During Hsüan-tsung's reign, this idea of transformation was prevalent and further reinforced in the Sutra on the Merit of Bathing the Buddha, translated in 710, by I-ching (635-713). In it is
a statement of the efficacy of bathing the Buddha image. One reward for a man is that he will never again receive the body of a woman, and will quickly achieve enlightenment (Boucher, 67)."\(^{42}\)

This sutra, which is probably apocryphal, straddles the worlds of the clergy and sutras, and the illiterate masses and popular beliefs and stories. It is not a philosophical text; rather, it describes the ritual of bathing the Buddha in order to gain merit. Tales edited\(^ {13}\) for the masses were often concerned with the concept of karma. Many were supernatural and focussed on encouraging virtuous behaviour. One such collection was the Hung-\(tsan\) fa-hua chuan (Accounts in Dissemination and Praise of the "Lotus Sutra").

KARMA AND POPULAR RENDITIONS OF PHILOSOPHICAL IDEAS

The Hung-\(tsan\) Fa-hua Chuan\(^ {14}\) was probably written by a monk named Hui-hsiang, during Hsüan-tsung's reign. The last recorded account is dated 706 CE. One story about a virtuous nun is dated 689. When pressed by a district office manager, the nun, whose name has been lost, had "remained firm in her chastity and refused to give in to him (Stevenson, 444)." The district manager Chu, angered by her rejection, made trouble for the abbey; the nun, in the meantime, appealed to the power of the Fa-hua Ching. Not long after, Chu travels to the abbey. He has wicked intentions, and on the pretext of official business, he spends the night.

But the very instant he sought to find his way to the nun's quarters, his lower extremities were seized with a burning pain and his male member dropped off. Rivulets of perspiration streamed from his skin, leprous ulcers broke out over his
entire body, and his eyebrows, beard, and sideburns all fell out. The office manager grievously recanted, but even after trying a hundred remedies, he still was never completely cured (444).

In the Ch'ao-yeh Ch'ien-tsai, there is also a story about a virtuous woman by the name of Li who lived during Hsüan-tsung's reign. She was widowed at eighteen, within the first year of her marriage. She dreamt that a very elegant gentleman wanted to marry her; but she never accepted. In order to overcome the demon, she wrote a fu, a charm or talisman, and chanted spells, but nothing stopped the recurrence of her dream. Li sighed and remarked that nothing would move her from widowhood. She then reasoned that the demon had persisted probably because she was still attractive; so she cut off her hair, never washed her jute clothing, nor looked after her appearance, and she covered her face and body in soot. The demon then appeared, thanked Li, remarking on her virtue, and never returned (Niu, 62-63).

In the same collection, there is also the story about Ho, the wife of Hu Liang, a district deputy. Hu had a concubine of whom his wife was very jealous. One day, when Hu was away, Ho heated some nails and burned the concubine's eyes with them; the concubine then strangled herself.

Ho became pregnant after this, and gave birth to a snake; its sockets had no eyes. She asked a Ch'an master about this, and the master replied: 'Fu-jen (lady) had previously burnt iron and branded a woman's eyes with it. Because fu-jen's nature is venomous, that's why the snake is your karma; it is the woman who was burnt. Fu-jen must look after this snake properly in order to escape ill fortune. Otherwise calamities will befall you.' The snake was killed after this; Ho's eyes deteriorated, and she never regained her sight (Niu, 59).
Many of the popular stories contain the two themes of virtue and karma: virtue expresses itself in good karma; evil expresses itself in bad karma. This is not surprising when one recalls Tao-shih's judgement that ordinary women and men are filled with desires and must be saved from themselves.

THEORETICAL EQUALITY BUT CLERICAL AND SOCIAL INEQUALITY

Has Buddhist influence been overwhelmingly negative in the lives of Chinese women? The answer can, perhaps, be found in the concepts of non-discrimination, intention and karma. Because desires are seen to be bad, some sentient beings wish to eliminate desires and the suffering generated from desires. The intention itself, however, brings its own kind of attachment and suffering: namely the denigration and hatred of women, in the intention of suppressing desire, so that some men might remain pure and virtuous. Thus each "solution" creates its own suffering.45

Seen in its own terms, Chinese Buddhism must, indeed, be sexist and misogynist. Ironically, its core belief of the three poisons - greed, hatred and ignorance, easily explains the phenomenon of patriarchy and misogyny.

Men and women alike, unaware of their interrelatedness, a Buddhist might say, set themselves apart by grasping at attributes like gender, class and ethnicity. They then try to gain privileges and advantages, and denigrate each other. One way to end this cycle of blame and prejudice, a Mahayanist Buddhist might suggest, would be to appeal to each person to uncover and develop her own Buddha-nature,
and thus move towards enlightenment".

This promise of respect for all, female and male, is endorsed in *The Refuge of the Four Buddhas of the Universal Dharma*, an apocryphal text of the influential *San-chieh chiao*. It supports equal respect with a quote from the *Fa-hua Ching*:

"...the bodhisattva Never Despise (Sadaparibhuta) worshiped all among the four classes of beings, that is, monks, nuns, male and female lay devotees, as the same because they possess the true essence of the matrix of enlightenment and buddha nature (Hubbard, 282)."

With all its variations and permutations, Buddhism certainly had its liberal devotees during Hsuan-tsung's time. It was, after all, during the T'ang that the nun Jingzhen exclaimed: "I will become a Buddha!", the five hindrances not withstanding (Georgieva, 52-3). It was also during the T'ang that the nun Chih-shou lectured on both the *Nieh-p'an Ching* (*The Nirvana Sutra*) (*T2*, v.1) and *Wei-mo Ching*; travelling freely, she left China for Japan, and never returned.

But in the end, Buddhism must be considered to be an oppressive force, as well as a liberative one, during Hsüan-tsung's time. While some nuns were confined by the rules, others travelled, studied, taught and passed on their knowledge; none was outstanding, but many widows found solace in the sangha. Laywomen were described as impure; yet many were considered virtuous, and taught that their very impurity was the embryo of their liberation.

The creative edge of Buddhism, however, appeared to have been greatly diminished; it had become an "established" religion. It
may have given refuge to some women, but in doing so, some of its more misogynist doctrines contributed to the progressive slide in the liberties T'ang women enjoyed. The notions of the comparative impurity of women and the negative karma of being reborn as a woman fostered a new dimension in the Chinese understanding of women. At the same time, however, it reinforced the traditional ideals of a woman who is yielding, virtuous, respectful and entirely submissive to the men in her life, as we shall see in the next chapter on Confucianism.
ENDNOTES

1. It is difficult to say if the nuns were, in fact, inactive in the public realm or whether the sources are exclusionary in their records. I thank Professor Priestley for encouraging me to make clear this ambivalence.

2. See Li Yu-chen for an account of nuns who were active at this time.

3. See the section "Taoism under Hsüan-tsung" in the chapter on Taoism. Although the number of clerical residences does not correspond definitively to the size of the church, it probably reflects roughly the proportionate membership at large in this case, because the court appears to have disproportionately supported the Taoists, while upper class women seem to have been committed more to Buddhism. These two constituents may have balanced each other, thereby yielding a potentially proportionate representation of clerical residences to size of membership.

4. This absence of materials on women is consistent with the general Buddhist understanding with the relatively low and unimportant positions of women in the sangha. Confucians, in this context, compares favourably in their formal and institutional inclusion of women in the dynastic histories.

5. See the section on Buddhism in the introductory chapter for details.

6. See the section on women in the sutras later in this chapter for details.

7. I thank Professor Paper for especially highlighting this point.

8. "In spite of the fact that Buddhism from India had enriched the Chinese culture in general and Chinese philosophy in particular and had produced, by its union with Confucianism, the Neo-Confucianism of the Sung dynasty...It is (perhaps) ...that particular background under the influence of the Indian attitude toward women that made it possible for...(the) torture (of footbinding)..." (Ch'en Heng-che, 60-61)

Professor Lynn notes that this is "ridiculous". I would agree, if Chen's argument were taken to mean that Indian influence alone were used to "explain" footbinding. However, there is the question of how a culture that values the body as given by ancestors and hence "sacred" comes to accept footbinding. As this chapter suggests, it was the Buddhist doctrines of female impurity and inferiority, and its rituals of self-immolation working together with Confucianism that contributed to the gradual decline in the quality of life for women, which is in part marked by footbinding.
This negative influence from Buddhism is also supported by Lai's contention that "the story of the damnation of Mulian's mother shows how China accepted and assimilated Buddhism at the expense of the Chinese conception of the feminine." She goes on to explain this by positing that "Mulian, as an agent of Buddha's almighty, heavenly and redeeming patriarchy, is a composite of Buddhist virtues, Confucian filial piety, and Daoist Shamanism in the form of yang. Mulian's mother, on the other side of this is binary opposition, becomes the sinful, infernal 'feminine other' imprisoned in 'the realm of yin' ... Buddha and Mulian are represented as heavenly males granting salvation and redemption, while Mulian's sinful mother is represented as the infernal female who symbolizes greed, selfishness, and ignorance."

9. See the chapters on upaya in the Fua-hua Ching and Wei-mo Ching.

10. See Frederick Streng, Emptiness: A Study in Religious Meaning for a full exposition of sunyata.

11. In it is the famous story of a father and his sons, who are playing in a burning house; the story describes the father's attempt to lure his children to safety by promising various toys (Hurvitz, 62-63).

12. "...In the future, at the time of the semblance dharma age, immeasurable disasters and calamities and loathsome events (will occur). What are they? All the clergy and laity will not be conscious about the rules of the dharma. (For example), a donor might arrange a gathering to invite monks, but he will dispatch men to guard the gates and protect the doorways in order to screen out (uninvited) monks and not allow them to join the gathering. If impoverished beggars wish to enter seeking food, (the guards) again will bar their passage and not allow (them to enter). This sort of gathering merely wastes food and drink, and is devoid of the slightest portion of wholesomeness."

"Moreover, there will be sentient beings who see other people congregate and carry out meritorious activities; but, merely seeking name and fame, they will exhaust family wealth and use it for donation. But when they see the impoverished and the orphaned, they will curse them and drive them away without offering even one iota of help. Sentient beings like this are called 'those whose performance of good deeds is perverted.' They are ignorant and insane in cultivating merit and are called 'unjust producers of merit.' ... (Tokuno, 261-262)."

13. Because this text was considered apocryphal, it was not a part of the canon. However, it appears to have influenced major thinkers like Chih-i (538-597) and Chi-tsang (549-623). (Tokuno, 260)
14. It is said that "...a Bodhisattva will appear in a woman's image on two occasions: (1) A Bodhisattva will appear in a female image to respond to living beings' desire for enjoying lust...(2) A Bodhisattva will appear in a female image to correct the Sarvastivadins' view of women (Ku 1984, 179)."

An excerpt from the Fa-hua Ching supports Ku's observation. "The bodhisattva Fine Sound "displays a variety of bodies, here and there preaching this canon to the beings. Now he displays the body of king Brahma; now he displays the body of the god Sakra...now he displays the body of a bhiksu, bhiksuni, upasaka, or upasika; now he displays the body of the wife of an elder or householder; now he displays the body of a lady of a civil servant; now he displays the body of a girl...Even in the inner quarters of a king's palace, changing into a female body, he preaches this scripture...(301)."

But of the most relevance to Chinese Buddhism is the bodhisattva He Who Observes the Sounds of the World (310). "He" is the famous Kuan-yin, who turned into a "she", for those "who can be conveyed to deliverance by the body of the wife of elder, householder, official or Brahma...The Bodhisattva He Who Observes the Sounds of the World, having achieved such merit as this and by resort to a variety of shapes, travels in the world, conveying the beings to salvation...(315)."

15. For an account of Hua-yen's system of p'an-chiao, see Liu Ming-wood's "The P'an-chiao System of the Hua-yen School in Chinese Buddhism."

16. The "egalitarian rhetoric is based on the strong belief, emphasized in the Perfection of Wisdom (Prajnaparamita) tradition, that distinguishing characteristics or 'marks'...belong only to the relative temporal realm and are empty of any substantial existence... (Cabezon, 137)."

Chan-jan writes that only a person who aids by means of Principle, and has seen the Principle of Buddha-nature, can be called a chang-fu. He quotes the Nirvana Sutra saying: "One who has seen the Buddha-nature, even if she be a woman is also called 'man (nan-tzu)'." He goes on to equate nan-tzu with chang-fu (145).

17. See the partial translation of the Fa-yüan Chu-lin in the appendix.

18. Buddhism initially used Taoist ideas to establish itself in China. We are accustomed to thinking of philosophical Taoist and Mahayanist ideas as sympathetic to each other. But there is a similarity between Sravakayana and Confucian attitudes towards women that is often overlooked.
19. Tao-shih was not alone in drawing support from Confucius. Tao-hsüan (596-667) also did this. In arguing for self-immolation, he quoted from Lun-yü, 15:8: "The determined scholar and the man of virtue will not seek to live at the expense of injuring their virtue. They will even sacrifice their lives to preserve their virtue complete." And, also from Mencius, 6A:10: "So, I like life, and also like righteousness. If I cannot keep the two together, I will let life go and choose righteousness." (Jan, 260)

20. The text contains eight chapters. They are: i) The Correct Deportment of Mothers; ii) The Virtuous and the Wise; iii) The Benign and Wise; iv) The Chaste and Obedient; v) The Chaste and Righteous; vi) Those Able in Reasoning and Understanding; vii) Pernicious and Depraved Women; viii) Supplementary Biographies. The laudatory biographies can be compared to Pao-chang's Pi-ch'iu-ni Chuan (Biographies of Nuns); and, to a lesser extent, the Chait'o or Therigathas (Songs of the Sisters)(T99, v.2), which were probably chanted by the first nuns.

21. There is a hint of feudal class bias here. However, Li Yu-chen's study of nuns during the T'ang dynasty shows a mix of different classes in the sangha.

22. Li Yu-chen cites the example of Ya-chou K'ai-yüan temple's practice of keeping women out of one of the halls on the premise. This was probably recorded some time during, but perhaps after, Hsüan-tsung's reign; the era is proposed based on the name of the temple: K'ai-yüan:

"...And in Hung-chou, on Pai-chiang Shan, at the death of the monk Hai-ch'an, his disciples erected a tombstone, and together discussed how to keep up the grave and five other such related matters. One item was that \"within the grounds, there would be no altar nor pagoda for nuns and lay-people (Li yu-chen, 94)." It must be noted, however, that Chinese Buddhism also believes that the "spirit", that is, the fo-hsing or Buddha Nature, is innately pure. In this way, Buddhism also argues for the "purity" of all human beings.

23. From Mencius: "...A man and woman living together is the most important of human relationships (Lau, 139)."

24. I have been unable to locate this sutra in the Taisho edition.

25. For details, see the section on Buddhism in the introductory chapter.
26. See also the section on Buddhism in the introductory chapter for details. (Ku 1984, 73-74)

27. I am assuming here that the structure of the services have remained the same, or have at least stayed similar, a hundred years after Hsuan-tsung's reign.

28. In Pao-ch'ang's Pi-ch'iu-ni Chuan, the nun Chih-sheng is described as having written commentaries (Cissell, 226); and a second nun, Miao-chih, is said to have lectured on Wei-mo Ching and the Srimala-devi Sutra (ibid., 225).

An even more intriguing note is that Po-hsien (ibid., 90; Ming-fu 1984, 20-21), a nun, had been assigned, during the Sung in 466, as a clerical administrator (Cissell, 208-209), just as the inner quarters would have been managed by women. This was discontinued, however, because "it did not accord with Buddhist principles (Ming-fu, 21)."

In organizational duties, therefore, Buddhism appears to be more conservative and exclusionary than Confucianism.

29. The ultimate goals of Buddhism and Confucianism are clearly different; the similarity I wish to point to is the categorization of the women of virtue as wise, benevolent and virtuous under the major relational classes of mother, wife and daughter.

30. Paul Williams notes that other Vinayas were "available in Chinese translation, and Chinese monks, almost completely Mahayana, generally adhered to the Sarvastivada and Dharmaguptaka Vinayas." He goes on to say that "there was no significant attempt, indeed no need, to construct and impose a systematic Mahayana Vinaya rivalling those of the non-Mahayana schools ... (because the) Mahayana was not a rival school." Mahayana and non-Mahayana monks lived side by side with each other, as Chinese pilgrim monks would have observed on their travels to South Asia. They were, therefore, simply adhering to tradition by not creating a new set of rules.

31. "A mound of earth had been set up. Using wax-coated cloth they bandaged themselves up to the top of their heads, so that only their faces and mouths were free. Like a mountain a crowd of people gathered around them and singing worshippers clustered like clouds. The two women together chanted the Fa-hua Ching, notably the "Bodhisattva Medicine King' chapter. The elder sister was first to set fire to the head of the younger sister. Then also the younger sister set fire to the head of the elder sister. (They became) two torches brightening the night together with equal brilliance. The flames descended to their eyes while with their voices they transmitted the light. Gradually (the fire) descended to their noses and mouths. Then (the chanting) stopped just when the light of dawn started to break and together they sat as the sky
lit up. At the same time the fire transformed (them) (huohua). Their bodies were broken and destroyed, (only) their tongues were found both intact. All the people were impressed and raised a great stupa for them (Georgieva, 58)." (Also used in Stevenson, 434.)

Not all monks approved of self-immolation. I-ching and Hsuan-tsang were two T'ang monks who disapproved of its trivialization (Jan, 257). They argued that the case is different for the bodhisattva, an enlightened being, who acts to benefit others and is beyond the ken of samsara (ibid., 259)

32. I thank both Professors Paper and Priestley for pointing out that this bodhisattva is none other than the historical Buddha.

33. These stories are taken from the Upasakasila-sutra (T1488: vol.24, 11041c).

34. See endnote 34 in chapter 2, "The Palace Women".

35. The story about the wife is prefaced by the rationale for relating it: "It is because of the many loves and desires that there is no quietude: Lust, anger, ignorance and frivolity. The mind has not yet been stilled; that is why there is turmoil." After the wife is recognized and labelled a ghost, the husband is said to disbelieve what people tell him.

"But his suspicions were finally aroused and he wanted to find out if there were any truth to the gossip. So, one night, he lay in bed and snored as if he were asleep. His wife thought he had gone to sleep and stole out of bed and into the city. She went to the graveyard and he followed after her; and he saw his wife remove her clothes and accessories, and then take off the face she had on. Her face turned ugly; long teeth grew from her mouth, the top of her head lit up and her eyes were red like fire. She looked grotesque as she headed toward the corpses, grabbed their flesh in her hands and bit into and ate them. The husband thus saw this and knew that she was not a human being but a ghost. He then rushed home and got into bed.

The wife found her way back soon after, and came to her puzzled husband's bed and resumed sleeping as before; and her husband saw his wife's grace and beauty and still wanted to be intimate with her. If he were to remember her at the cemetery eating the corpses' flesh, and even though he had felt disgusted and afraid, he still lusted after her in his heart when he turned to look at her.

Thus a man becomes a returner if he sees external forms as pleasant and good, and his lust will still be moved. If however, he tells himself that external forms are filthy, disgusting and unclean, his
lust will be extinguished immediately (T2122, v.53)."

The point of the story is not to denigrate women; rather, it tries to warn men of the potentially devastating effects of lust. But as in the case of the lu, it is women, as a general class, who suffer the consequences of being ghostly cannibals.

36. This recording of fictional or supernatural accounts has a long history. Wang Yen, who lived during the late 400's and the early 500's, compiled the Ming-hsiang chi, after he experienced strange events. Georgieva remarks that some of these accounts look similar to biographies in Pao Ch'ang's Pi-ch'iu-ni chuan, and they also made their way into the Fa-yüan chu-lin. (49 and 67)

37. I use quotation marks here to emphasize the nature of some of the descriptions. They are supernatural and self-serving, suggesting, of course, clerical ulterior motives. In this way, the model female Buddhist citizens are suspect, to varying degrees, with regard to their veracity. Stevenson likewise expresses doubt about the assessments of the "exemplary female devotee espoused in the canonical sources..." (360)."

The issue of veracity here is comparable to Confucian attempts to define virtue, and which women are virtuous by the definition. In the end, the results say as much, if not more, about the writers than the women.

38. The following is taken from the chapter entitled "Devadatta" in the Fa-hua Ching:

"The bodhisattva Wisdom Accumulation asked "Are there any beings who, putting this scripture into practice by the strenuous application of vigor, speedily gain Buddhahood, or are there not?"

"Mansjuri said: 'There is the daughter of the dragon king Sagara, whose years are barely eight. Her wisdom is sharp-rooted, and well she knows the faculties and deeds of the beings. She has gained dhara...She has profoundly entered into dhyana-concentration...she produced bodhi-thought, and has attained the point of non-backsliding. Her eloquence has no obstructions, and she is compassionately mindful of the beings as if they were her babies. Her merits are perfect. What she recollects in her mind and recites in her mouth is subtle and broad. She is of good will and compassionate, humane and yielding. Her will and thought are harmonious and refined, and she is able to attain to bodhi."

"...(the bodhisattva Wisdom Accumulation doubted this and said,) I do not believe that this girl in the space of a moment directly and immediately achieved right, enlightened intuition."
"Before he had finished speaking, at that very time the daughter of the dragon king suddenly appeared in front [of them]..."

"At that time, Sariputra spoke to the dragon girl saying, 'You say that in no long time you shall attain the unexcelled Way. This is hard to believe. What is the reason? A woman's body is filthy, it is not a Dharma-receptacle... Also, a woman's body even then has five obstacles...(details are given.) How can the body of a woman speedily achieve Buddhahood?"

"At that time, the dragon girl had a precious gem, whose value was the [whole] thousand-millionfold world, which she held up and gave to the Buddha. The Buddha straightway accepted it. The dragon girl said to the bodhisattva Wisdom Accumulation and to the venerable Sariputra, 'I offered a precious gem, and the World-Honoured One accepted it. Was this quick or not?'

"He answered, saying, 'Very quick!'"

"The girl said, 'With your supernatural power you shall see me achieve Buddhahood even more quickly than that!'"

At that time, the assembled multitude all saw the dragon in the space of an instant turn into a man, perfect bodhisattva-conduct...bodhisattvas, voice-hearers, gods, dragons, the eightfold assembly, humans and nonhumans, all from a distance seeing that dragon girl achieve Buddhahood and universally preach Dharma to the men and gods of the assembly of that time, were overjoyed at heart and all did obeisance from afar...The bodhisattva Wisdom Accumulated, as well as Sariputra and all the assembled multitude, silently believed and accepted (199-201).

39. The following is from the Wei-mo Ching:

"...(the goddess appears when Mansjuri and Vimalakirti are discussing the 'great compassion', 'equanimity' and 'great joy'...) having heard this teaching of the Dharma of the great heroic bodhisattvas, and being delighted, pleased, and overjoyed, (the goddess) manifested herself in a material body and showered the great spiritual heroes, the bodhisattvas, and the great disciples with heavenly flowers. When the flowers fell on the bodies of the great disciples, they stuck to them and did not fall...(Sariputra remarks that the flowers are inappropriate and should be shaken off...) (58)."

"The goddess said, 'Do not say that, reverend Sariputra. Why? These flowers are proper indeed! Why? Such flowers have neither constructual thought nor discrimination. But the elder Sariputra has both constructual thought and discrimination."

"Reverend Sariputra, impropriety for one who has renounced the
world for the discipline of the rightly taught Dharma consists of constructual thought and discrimination. But the elders are full of such thoughts. One who is without such thoughts is always proper (59).

The goddess goes on to say that the teaching that 'liberation is freedom from desire, hatred, and folly' is for the excessively proud; for those free of pride, they are taught that 'the very nature of desire, hatred, and folly is itself liberation (60).'

Sariputra later challenges the goddess by asking what prevents her from transforming herself out of her female state. The goddess replies: "Although I have sought my 'female state' for these twelve years, I have not yet found it. Reverend Sariputra, if a magician were to incarnate a woman by magic, would you ask her, 'what prevents you from transforming yourself out of your female state?" The elder answers: "No! Such a woman would not really exist, so what would there be to transform?" The goddess turns Sariputra into a woman, and says to Sariputra: "If the elder could again change out of the female state, then all women could also change out of their female states. All women appear in the form of women in just the same way as the elder appears in the form of a woman. While they are not women in reality, they appear in the form of women. With this in mind, the Buddha said, 'In all things, there is neither male nor female (61-62)."

40. Leon Hurvitz translates this as world-sphere Comfortable (300); Inagaki translates it as Utmost Bliss.

41. The Ling-pao Taoists took this idea of female sinfulness and transformation, and adapted it to their teachings. More will be said about this in the chapter on Taoism.

42. The following is quoted from the Sutra on the Merit of Bathing the Buddha.

"Noble son, the consequence of performing this bathing of the Buddha image is that you and the great multitude of men and gods will presently receive wealth, happiness, and long life without sickness; your every wish will be fulfilled. Your relatives, friends, and family will all be at ease. You will bid a long farewell to the eight conditions of trouble and forever escape the fount of suffering. You will never again receive the body of a woman, and will quickly achieve enlightenment (67)."

The ritual of bathing the baby Buddha is still performed each year during the celebration of Buddha's birthday. Although the sutra may be apocryphal, its effects can, nevertheless, be felt.
43. Daniel Stevenson writes that miracle tales are gathered locally from oral tradition. "... (T)hey were selected, reworked, and disseminated by literate lay and monastic figures .... (M)any of these tales were told time and again, sometimes at formal ritual gatherings before audiences containing persons of every ilk --- mendicants and laypersons, educated and uneducated. On this basis the miracle tale can be understood as 'popular' in the sense of anonymous and generic --- a body of literature that reflects religious motifs which are universal to Buddhist monastic and lay life rather than the province of one particular sector or stratum (1995, 428)."

44. "The collection draws extensively upon earlier Buddhist biographical and miracle tale compendia, the most important sources being Huijiao's (Hui-chiao) Biographies of Eminent Monks, Daoxuan's (Tao-hsuan) Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks (Xu gao seng zhuan), and Tang Lin's Tales of Miraculous Retribution (Mingbao ji). To this preexisting body of material the Hongzan fahua zhuan adds numerous contemporary accounts of Sui and early Tang figures who are connected specifically with Changan and its extended environs. Nearly all of these entries date from the latter half of the seventh century, with latest recorded dated in the collection being 706 c.e. (Stevenson, 428)."

45. Buddhist philosophy anticipates this in k'ung and wei-shih (mind only). In positing no-defilement, defilement is created; and in this duality, this failure to see things as they are, Buddhists would say, suffering continues.

46. See Sallie King, The Buddha Nature Treatise for an exposition on the Buddha Nature. The Refuge of the Four Buddhas of the Universal Dharma has this to say about the tathagatagarbha: "The matrix of enlightenment is the principle, and worldly consciousness is the mind. The matrix is true, and consciousness provisional. It is also called the four unconditioned noble truths...It is also called the one truth because it is ultimate and true, with neither destruction nor attainment...It is also called suchness in itself, because it is equal and nondual..."

"The matrix of enlightenment and the conditions and forms have no beginning or end, and thus truth and untruth are dependent upon each other, neither separate nor distinct...Truth and untruth both take shape with the same matrix like the ocean and the waves (a simile drawn from the Lankavatara Sutra)...Therein it is taught that the matrix of enlightenment gives rise to the cause and fully ripens the fruit, changing the small into the great and transforming the common into the noble. All this is due to the efficacious power of the Buddha as the matrix of enlightenment (Hubbard, 279)."

Consult also The Awakening of Faith and Srimala-devi Sutra for
alternative explanations on the *Tathagatagarbha* and Buddha Nature.
CONFUCIANISM
INTRODUCTION

Much of this chapter will describe the lives of upper class women and the Confucian ideals of the time. Information about women from the other classes comes mainly from popular literature which suggests that Buddhism and Taoism were the more powerful influences in their lives. To what degree Confucian values affected the lives of lower class women is impossible to say. Annual celebrations where men and women intermingled freely would suggest that the more conservative brand of Confucianism had yet to be enforced. As for upper class women, they were certainly educated in Confucian values, but the actions of the kung-chu and Yang sisters, for example, would suggest that they were not very much influenced by them.

Some upper class women received a good education, and the kung-chu enjoyed luxuries like embroidered gowns, pearl and jade jewellery. Both groups also seemed relatively free to divorce and remarry; but this cannot be generalized to the other classes.¹ This chapter, therefore, presents a severely lopsided view of Confucianism, and the lack in the practice of it, limited by the available sources. We do not know what percentage of the peasantry venerated, or how they venerated, ancestors. We are ignorant of their living arrangements, and whether they had an adapted version of the inner quarters.

The analysis that follows, therefore, deals almost entirely with state policies, the lives of upper class and palace women, and the ideals of Confucianism. It must necessarily remain a limited account of the ideals of Confucianism and how it affected the
personal, familial, social and political lives of women in general.

Some of Hsüan-tsung's actions and policies suggest Confucian and Taoist influences, but his later indulgence of both Wu Hui-fei and Yang Kuei-fei indicate unconfucian behaviour and a dissonance between policies and actions. It would seem that, while his actions were more influential during his time, his policies were more influential after his death.

THE IMPORTANCE OF HIERARCHY IN CONFUCIANISM

Confucian views on women are simple, compared to Buddhist ideas of unequal spiritual capacities, and the resulting need for fang-pien and separate lü. To a T'ang Confucian, a woman would be just as capable of achieving virtue as a man; the primary difference between them was in their roles. Confucians saw social problems as primarily that: social, and not ontological. Hence the belief that the world would be right, if only children were socialized properly. In large, it was assumed, or rather, it remained unquestioned that everyone had a similar if not the same capacity for virtue, whether young or old, women or men. This is one curious face of equality in Confucianism: all people have the same innate capacity for virtue. Disorder is understood to be a result of inadequate socialization, deviation from li, and the non-fulfilment of social roles; disorder was not understood to be derived from some congenital ignorance and a resultant evil time, as suggested by some Buddhists.

The linchpin to Confucianism is, therefore, familial hierarchy;
a woman, no matter her class, is junior to her husband and her parents-in-law. One of the first statutes that Hsüan-tsung passed ensured that women of the imperial family who married away from the palace into a lower class should not receive homage from her parents-in-law (THY, 6). This encouraged the palace women "to know their place."

From this familial hierarchy comes a corollary: a functional hierarchy; a division of labour. That women should stay in the inner quarters is natural, and absolutely necessary, because it is women who will educate and rear the children properly, while men work amid the outside world. Women must, therefore, be virtuous, morally cultivated and aware of their place in the world, in order that children be good, obedient and also aware of their place in the world. It is in this way, Confucianism holds, that families can be harmonious; and harmonious families would, in turn, form the foundation of a peaceful empire. As Liu Hsu wrote in the Chiu T'ang Shu:

When one analyses the reasons for the lamentable destruction of previous and ancient ruling families, they mostly stem from troubles introduced by junior members; the chaos of junior members must begin in the incorrectness of the side apartments. As the I [Ching] says: "When the way of the family is correct, then the empire will be tranquil and secure." (The truth) is none other than this. (CTS, Hou-fei)

This simple truth is not wrong if one does not consider conditions that allow for the "incorrectness of the side apartments." When one ignores the lack of strong ministers, the threat of foreign intervention and invasion, the emotional immaturity and moral weakness in an emperor, and a system that encouraged no systematic
guidelines of succession, then the assignment of responsibility for the fall of a dynasty and empire to women is convenient, and at least partially correct. Confucians, however, have disregarded the possibility that trouble from the women's quarters can just as often be a consequence of a weak administration, as a cause for it. Nevertheless, some of Hsüan-tsung's first moves as emperor were to curb the power and influence of women.

CONFUCIAN EFFORTS DURING THE FIRST PERIOD
The legacy of Wu Hou and T'ai-p'ing kung-chu

One woman, more than any other, set the tone to Hsüan-tsung's policies toward women: T'ai-p'ing kung-chu, his paternal aunt. She impressed upon him early that he needed to control the women in his palace; and Confucianism became his tool. T'ai-p'ing was the most powerful woman in the empire when Jui-tsung abdicated in favour of Hsüan-tsung. She had opposed her brother's decision, for she and the young prince already shared an embattled history.

Sung Ching and Yao Ch'ung had suggested to Jui-tsung that she be ensconced in the eastern capital Lo-yang, away from Ch'ang-an, in order to prevent conflict with the crown prince Li Lung-chi. But Jui-tsung refused; he said that he could not send his only surviving sibling away. But even as her brother defended her, T'ai-p'ing, on hearing of the plan, suggested to the emperor that his son might have had something to do with it. Thus she implied that her nephew, Li Lung-chi, was plotting against her. The young Hsiang Wang was so frightened that he immediately disassociated himself from Yao
and Sung (Wang 1993, 1089).

T'ai-p'ing was her parents' favourite child; she first gained much of her holdings from them. Wu Hou thought that she and her daughter were cut from the same cloth, and often involved her in matters of state. Before Yung-ch'üan (682), when the princes were given lands with eight hundred to one thousand households, and the princesses were given lands with three hundred when they married, T'ai-p'ing alone was given fifty more.

Later, during the Sheng-li era (698), towards the end of Wu Hou's reign, T'ai-p'ing was given three thousand households. Then, in Shen-lung 1 (705), as a reward for helping to capture and put to death Wu Hou's two lovers, the Ch'ang brothers, she was given five thousand households plus the added title of Chen-kuo; in addition, her daughters were enfeoffed. These lavish assignments from the throne were topped by the appointment of bodyguards.

In this way, T'ai-p'ing consolidated much of her power under her oldest brother, Chung-tsung (HTS, 83). Then finally, under Jui-tsung, when all prefectures for princesses were repossessed, hers alone was maintained (THY, 6 in Wang, 1081). Thus her power continued to increase under Jui-tsung, who relied on her judgement in affairs of state. He favoured and doted on her (ibid., 1087), so much so that Liu Yu-ch'iu asked Chang Chao to plead with Hsüan-tsung, then Hsiang Wang, to curb her power. Chang exposed the plot, but Jui-tsung did nothing about it (HTS, 83 in ibid., 1089).

This struggle did not end with the enthronement of Hsüan-tsung; rather, it gained momentum. In the seventh month of the
young emperor's first year, T'ai-p'ing plotted to overthrow him. She failed. But her actions and her nominal involvement in Buddhism had lasting effects; they contributed to the direction that Hsüan-tsung's policies took toward both Buddhism and women.

But the fates of women varied across the different classes. As the imperial princesses and wives of ministers and officials came under scrutiny during Hsüan-tsung's early years, many of the palace servants were retired, and some were demoted. These women's lives became more circumscribed. To the upper class women and the servants who had been demoted, this may have resulted in some inconvenience. For the servants who were retired, however, this could have meant both a relief from the tedium inside the palace and the unforseen joy of seeing their families again; but it could also have meant unexpected hardship in having to find a new livelihood.

Hsuan-tsung started his reign with efforts guided by Confucianism; however, his commitment to Confucianism did not last. As we shall see, programs of austerity gave way to extravagance, and attention to matters of state gave way to indulgence in private pleasures. Furthermore, Confucian scepticism of magical Buddhist and Taoist practices gave way to a fascination with popular religious practices; and a strategy of decision making based on consultation with ministers gave way to unquestioned reliance on ministers. Women who were able to do well under these circumstances were those who were skilled in dance and music, like Chao Li-fei and Yang Kuei-fei.
Symbolic and political measures taken to affirm Confucianism

During K'ai-yüan 1 (713), Wang Hou performed the ceremony of the ts'an (silkworm) in the first month of spring (HTS, 1-2:122; TCTC, 210), thereby continuing a ritual that dates from the times of the Li Chi (Book of Ritual). This ritually confirmed the place of women in the empire: the private realm, the inner quarters where they could care for their families. This symbolic gesture was reinforced in the eighth month of the same year when, after T'ai-p'ing's rebellion, Hsüan-tsung prohibited the presence of female musicians (HTS, 123).

In K'ai-yüan 2 (714), Yao Ch'ung petitioned the throne about people who had falsely acquired clerical status in order to escape required government service. Yao noted that they were perverting the true law, and as such, should be returned to lay life. Hsüan-tsung agreed, and approximately twelve thousand women and men were defrocked. However, his attention was not focused exclusively on the religious communities. In the seventh month of the same year, he demoted palace women who wove brocade one rank; women below the rank of imperial consort could no longer wear jewellery made of pearls and jade, nor garments which were embroidered. As well, women were ordered to dress appropriately to their husband or son's rank, further reinforcing the secondary status of women.

These policies of austerity continued. Commoners were prohibited from casting statues of Buddha and copying sutras, and the ministerial families were forbidden to have any dealings with both
Buddhist and Taoist clergies. Then during the eighth month, rumours that the emperor was looking for women to fill the side apartments of the palace reached Hsüan-tsung; to disprove this, he released women from the back palace who were not usefully employed, and they were allowed to return home.

Yet, even in the midst of these Confucian inspired reforms, there was a hint of private ambition over public good: in the twelfth month, he appointed as heir apparent his second oldest son, Szu-lien, born of Chao Li-fei; Chao Li-fei was an entertainer and one of Hsüan-tsung's favourite concubines (TCTC, 213). This disinherit his oldest son, Szu-chen, who was Liu Hua-fei's son. So the son of the favourite concubine benefited from his mother's position contrary to proper Confucian practice.

EXTRAVAGANCE IN THE SECOND PERIOD
Reinforcing Confucian foundations and arguing for their superiority

The subservient role of women was furthered reinforced in the seventh month of K'ai-yüan 7 (719), when Lu Fu-ping appealed to Hsuan-tsung to repeal Wu Chao's innovation which had been continued through Chung-tsung's reign under Shang-kuan Chao-yung's advocacy (see p. 50). He wanted the difference in mourning for one's mother, when the father is still alive, to be reinstated. Instead of the three years of mourning that Wu Hou had instituted, Lu wanted to return to the traditional period of one year. Hsüan-tsung agreed, and ruled to reinstating the different degrees in mourning one month later. The issue was, however, by no means resolved because some
Confucians supported the idea that one's mother is as important as one's father, and that the symbolism in the degrees of mourning should reflect this.

The matter was revisited in K'ai-yüan 24 (736); Hsüan-tsung's earlier decision stood. The arguments used in support of it are revealing. Wei Shu and Ts'ui Mien reasoned that while animals know their mothers but not their fathers, and barbarians say that there is no difference between mother and father, all city dwellers know to respect their fathers, and the educated especially venerate their paternal ancestors; thus, one cannot consider one's father's and mother's family as the same (TCTC, 214; HTS: Hsiung-li). The recognition of the distinction between father and mother was therefore interpreted as a mark of civilization.

Hsüan-tsung should and must, therefore, naturally follow the I Li (The Book of Rites) in the ritual of mourning. By extending this logic of hierarchy, starting from the most primitive to the most sophisticated, and by using the principle of wen-fa (literary civilization), it was suggested that this was what made the Chinese human, as well as culturally superior, and thus different from animals and barbarians. An analysis of whether this is Confucian is beyond the scope of this dissertation; but the significance of the acceptance of this argument is profound, and lies in the subtle and immeasurable effects of the reinstitutionalization of the secondary status of motherhood to fatherhood. For, on the one hand, one is encouraged to think of a mother as the foundation of the family, yet on the other, the rituals say that it is the father, after all,
who is the more important. As a civilized human being, one must make the father senior and the mother junior; otherwise, one would be no better than the barbarians.

Wang Hou and her barrenness, the unintended side effects

This nod toward a more traditional Confucianism was supported by other actions. In K'ai-yüan 11 (723), Hsüan-tsung built the Li-cheng Shu-yüan (Academy in the Hall of Elegance and Rectitude) so that scholars would have a place to gather, and be on hand, should he have any questions while studying. Again, the reaction to this gesture was not unanimous. Chang Yüeh lauded the emperor for his efforts, praising him for attending to scholarship during a time of prosperity, rather than indulging in women and other sensual pleasures. Lu Chien, however, criticized him for wasting money on something that would not benefit the country. But Hsüan-tsung continued undeterred. In K'ai-yüan 13 (725), he renamed Chi-hsien Tien (The Hall of Gathered Immortals) to Chi-hsien Tien (The Hall of Gathered the Virtuous). He explained that immortals are falsely created, but that the virtuous are the true aids to the empire (TCTC, 214).

However, even though Confucianism appeared dominant, politics played no less a role than philosophical idealism in Hsüan-tsung's decisions. This "favouring" of Confucianism must also be evaluated in context of Hsüan-tsung's movement away from the Confucian principle of complementarity: The participation by the empresses Wu and Wei in state rituals was rationalized away in 725. This was likely done to avoid having to install Wu Hui-fei as empress, after
the disposition of Wang Hou.

The minister, Hsu Chien, successfully persuaded Ming Huang that he, as the T'ien-tzu (Son of Heaven), embodied within himself a unique cosmic bisexuality, derived by his being both the "father and the mother" of the people; hence, could rightfully perform rituals by himself, singularly, without his "natural" female complement, implied in the contemporary Yin-yang Confucianism. The role of the empress was thus diminished when compared to the times of Wu and Wei Hou.

The renaming of the hall was, therefore, probably engendered by the same spirit of political expedience that caused Wang Hou's deposition in K'ai-yüan 12 (724), after her brother, Wang Shou-i, employed the Buddhist monk Ming-wu to perform a cure for her barrenness (CTS, 51; HTS, 76; and TCTC, 212). The use of magic in the palace was a crime punishable by death; Wang Shou-i was sentenced to death in the same year.

Wang Hou had been wise to worry; in K'ai-yüan 10 (722), the year after his trusted minister Yao Ch'ung died, Hsüan-tsung had tried to use the excuse of her barrenness to get rid of her. This unconfucian act was accompanied by another later in the same year. He started to prepare a dowry for his daughter, Yung-mu, that was the same size as T'ai-p'ing's; he only stopped after the Buddhist monk, I-hsing, objected to the extravagance, and pointed out the effect that such indulgence had on T'ai-p'ing (TCTC, 212; THY, 6).

But the demotion of Wang Hou had marked irrevocably "a watershed with regard to the life of the elite female." This
unfavourable shift for elite women was thus ironically caused by the solution to seemingly small and unimportant details: Wang Hou's demotion to commoner status and her banishment from court in K'ai-yuan 12 (724), and the will to keep Wu Hui-fei from becoming empress in order to prevent a second Wu Hou. The solution itself was elegantly simple: Reinterpret the roles of the emperor and the empress within the performance of state rituals. This disharmonious absence of an empress was justified by the cosmic bisexuality of the emperor and resulted in the discontinuation of her participation in state rituals.

The emergence of Wu Hui-fei and the wane of Confucianism

Hsüan-tsung had been on the throne for ten years; and he was now thirty eight years old and experienced as a ruler. The empire was stable, generally peaceful, and prospering. With such success, he became less circumspect. He had wanted to make Wu Hui-fei his empress and reconsidered only after her connections to Wu Tse-t'ien was pointed out to him. Although she was treated as if she were the empress when she was alive, she was known only as Wu Hui-fei (CTS, 51; TCTC, 213). She was posthumously honoured as Chen-hsün Huang-hou. 23

In K'ai-yüan 15, Hsüan-tsung ordered the palace women below the rank of consort to rear silkworms, weave silk, and to become proficient in women's work. During the summer solstice, the wives of the ministers of the Left and Right Offices were each presented with raw silk (TCTC, 213).

Properly speaking, these gestures should have been executed by
the empress. But this was one contradiction during Hsüan-tsung's reign: on the one hand, the subordinate position of women was renewed and reinforced; yet on the other hand, where women had autonomy and responsibilities within traditional Confucianism, they no longer had them under Hsüan-tsung's rule. In other words, they experienced both the reinstatement of the restrictions and a reduction in the scope of their worth and function. This is not surprising since much of the effort at court was directed at controlling the political power of the kung-chu and hou-fei.

As political power was carefully restricted, the personal power and influence of Wu Hui-fei, for example, increased and remained mostly unchecked. In the seventh month of K'ai-yüan 23 (735), Hsien-i, Wu's daughter, married; the allotment of her fief was increased from the appointed five hundred to one thousand households (see introductory chapter). The other kung-chu of the same level also saw the size of their fiefdoms increased.

This concession marked the beginning of arbitrariness in Hsüan-tsung's decisions. Where I-hsing had been able to advise him against the size of the dowry that would accompany Yung-mu, and he was persuaded against appointing Wu as empress, Wu was successful in gaining preferential treatment for her daughter. Regardless of the Confucian statutes instituted to date, this marked the triumph of the private over the public.

But this was only the start. The third period saw the abandonment of any pretense to uphold Confucian values. Hsüan-tsung gave over his power to Li Lin-fu and the Yang family.
Hsu-an-tsung's retirement from ruling in the third period

"As long as one has ability and courage, what need is there for a classical education?" Li Lin-fu made this comment during K'ai-yüan 24 (736), in response to Chang Chiu-ling's disagreement with Hsuan-tsung over his decision to honour Niu Hsien-k'e with title and land. Chang was taking the role of Confucian minister seriously, admonishing Hsuan-tsung for what he saw to be a bad decision. But the emperor was now fifty one years old, had been on the throne twenty three years, was likely tired of nagging Confucian ministers, and probably thought he knew better.

In the same year, the crown prince Ying Wang Ying, Ngo Wang Li Yao, and Kuang Wang Li Chu were complaining about the unfair treatment of their mothers, compared to Hsuan-tsung's favourite Wu, when Yang Hui overheard their conversation, and reported it to Wu Hui-fei. Wu immediately reported this as an act of sedition to her husband, and demanded that the princes be downgraded to commoners (TCTC, 210 in Twitchett, 406). Chang Chiu-ling advised that the princes should not be falsely accused of sedition. In response, Wu sent word to let Chang know that, if he extended a helping hand, his position as prime minister would be guaranteed for life.

Ever the Confucian minister, Chang promptly reported this to Hsuan-tsung. The princes were saved; but from then on, Li Lin-fu made it his business to isolate Chang from the emperor. In the next year, K'ai-yüan 25 (737), Chang was finally demoted; he was unable to protect the princes from yet another round of
accusations. Li Lin-fu, on the other hand, rather then going to the aid of the princes, again told Hsüan-tsung that the princes' attempt to overthrow him was a private family business, and as such, not within his purview as a minister of the state. The emperor then chose to demote his sons to the status of commoners.

After the death of his beloved Hui-fei in the twelfth month of the same year, he executed the crown prince Ying Wang in the next year. Then after a year of indecision, he appointed Chung Wang Yü as heir apparent on the advice of the eunuch Kao Li-shih, against Li Lin-fu's recommendation of Shou Wang Mou (TCTC in Twitchett, 413).

Even though this was a small victory for Kao, Li's power was clearly demonstrated in T'ien-pao 3 (744). When asked by Hsüan-tsung if the people were contented, Kao suggested that the emperor should tour the city for himself, to see how the people were doing, rather than relying so heavily on Li's reports. Hsüan-tsung became furious, and Kao never crossed him again.

Yang Kuei-fei and Hsüan-tsung's retreat from court

But the emperor had not entirely abandoned Confucianism. In K'ai-yüan 27 (739), Hsüan-tsung posthumously honoured Confucius as Wen-hsüan Wang. The next year brought another blow to Hsüan-tsung; Chang Chiu-ling died, and with him went the old guard. In T'ien-pao 3 (744), when Hsüan-tsung was fifty nine, he saw Yang Yü-huan, wife of his son Mao, and he wanted her; and so she entered a Taoist temple as a nun, so that later she could be brought into the palace. In the eighth month of T'ien-pao 4 (745), Yang Yü-huan was
made Kuei-fei. In contrast, just eight months before, Hsüan-tsung had mandated that each family in the empire should possess a copy of the Hsiao Ching (The Classic on Filial Piety) (HTS, 5).29

There were, by this time, no more elderly Confucian scholars, nor Buddhist monks of I-hsing's stature, and certainly no Taoist priests to counsel the emperor against this. Within the year, Hsüan-tsung loved the twenty six year old Yang Kuei-fei as much as he had loved Wu Hui-fei.30 By T'ien-pao 7 (749), the Yang family had gained so much power through Yü-huan that when the Yang sisters arrived at court, everyone, including Hsüan-tsung's sister Yü-chen Kung-chu, did not dare to remain seated.

So, despite the numerous formal efforts at Confucianism, Hsüan-tsung ended his reign with a very unconfucian relationship with Yang Kuei-fei. He further aggravated the desecration of tradition by allowing the Yang family to gain control, the Lieh-nü admonitions not withstanding.

MARRIAGE, REMARRIAGE AND DIVORCE IN MING HUANG'S TIME

Like all emperors before him, Hsüan-tsung used women as an important resource in international relations; he employed them to ho-ch'in, or to nurture a good relationship through marriage. But none of the ten princesses who were married out of China during his reign were his daughters. They were often maternal nieces, like Yung-lo, Ching-lo and I-fang; or daughters of ministers, like Chin-he (Wang 1992, 149-150).

As for the real princesses, several remarried during Hsüan-
tsung's time. One, Ch'ı-kuo Kung-chu, was married three times (Wang 1988, 93-96). It is unclear whether the princesses remarried after a divorce or the death of their husbands. Nevertheless, this lends credibility to Po Chu-i's observation, in his Pai-hsiang-shan Shih (Poem of the White Fragrant Mountain), that women from rich families married easily and regarded their husbands lightly; whereas women of little means found it difficult to get married; and when they did marry, they spent the end of their lives looking after their in-laws (Li Shu-t'ung, 67). In other words, Confucianism might have, by default, informed the lives of poor women, but not the rich ones.

By far the most prominent royal divorce was the one we just encountered: that of Hsüan-tsung's favourite son by Wu Hui-fei, Shou-wang Mao. He divorced his wife so that Hsüan-tsung could marry her. Hsüan-tsung's taking his son's wife as his own is merely a generational variation of his grandfather and great grandfather's incestuous relationships with his grandmother, Wu Tse-t'ien.

The exceptional case of Wu Tse-t'ien remarrying her husband's son after his death highlights the plight of a widow. Even when she was the emperor, she never again remarried after Kao-tsung's death. As for Hsüan-tsung's case, he took what he wanted; Yang Yü-huan and her young husband's reactions are not recorded. Po Chu-i, soon after Hsüan-tsung's reign, described a woman's pain in A Woman's Bitter Suffering. "The closeness between husband and wife", he wrote, "means that they are as one body, unto the horizon
of death, let alone (the fluctuations of) sorrow and joy." But he went on to compare a widow to a stalk of bamboo, which once broken by wind, is broken forever, and will not be regenerated; whereas a widower, he likened to a willow branch, which will grow back when snapped by wind.

In other words, despite the traditional ideal of unity in husband and wife, Po surmised that the husband often took lightly the principle of growing old together; and should the wife wish to speak about it, she had to repeat herself several times, hoping for her husband's attention (Li Shu-t'ung, 87). Here again, we witness the discrepancy between Confucian theory and social reality.

But a wife was not entirely unprotected. The law stipulated that if a wife were divorced for no good reason, the husband who tried to divorce her would be imprisoned for a year and a half. If the wife had committed one of the ch'i-ch'u (the seven reasons for divorce), but had the privilege of the san-ch'u (the three prohibitions against divorce), the husband would be caned one hundred times, and the possibility of reconciliation would be pursued. However, a woman cannot leave her husband; her sentence for leaving would be two years in prison. And if she remarries after she leaves him, her prison term will be extended by two degrees (Li Shu-t'ung, 88-89).

Divorce was available, but proceedings could only be activated by the husband. The support for divorce came from a prominent if unexpected quarter: Pan Chao, the author of Nü Chieh (Admonitions
for Women). The well respected Han author had written that if there were physical violence, if harsh words were spoken, and love were missing, then a marriage should rightly be dissolved.

This alternative was probably more easily taken by women during the early T'ang, compared to women in later dynasties. This was true especially under Hsüan-tsung because ordinary women would likely not have suffered the stigma usually associated with divorce since the women at court frequently divorced and remarried. Moreover, as Po Chu-i noted in his poem, Ch'ang-hen ke (Song of Eternal Sorrow), Hsüan-tsung's taking his son's divorced wife as concubine substantially boosted the value of daughters. Many families wished for daughters rather than sons, because they recognized the advantage that could be garnered by a daughter favoured by the emperor.

FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT AND FASHION

There is no doubt that Hsüan-tsung continued to allow the freedom of movement for women during his reign; during the early T'ang, both peasant women and court ladies rode horses, and knew how to hunt (Ibid., 29). Moreover, Chang Hsüan's painting, "Lady Kuo-kuo and Her Sisters Setting Forth on an Outing", clearly presents the liberty of court ladies and upper class women (Cahill, 20). When out on an excursion, they would sometimes take off their red skirts when they encountered particularly popular flowers, and form a tent with their skirts, under which they would have a picnic (Chuang, 113; Chang Hui-chuan, 29).
A fashion unique to Hsüan-tsung's reign was that women dressed up as men (Chuang, 106). At the same time, some of the silk skirts worn by the imperial women were woven with gold threads as fine as hair. The patterns included different plants, phoenixes, swans, mandarin ducks, peacocks and ch'í-lín (a mythical animal; sometimes translated as "unicorn") (Chuang, 111). Short sleeve jackets were also popular, and there were expert weavers at the palace creating these garments (ibid., 116).

From the start of the K'ai-yüan period, women wore Hu style hats, and no longer covered their faces during outings (CTS, 40 in Chang Hui-chuan, 19). They used cosmetics, and drew flowers on their faces, a practice begun by Shang-kuan Chao-yung to cover the tattoo on her face (ibid., 22). There were twelve different hairstyles in vogue; and often women would wear wigs (ibid., 118).

EDUCATION AND CONFUCIAN IDEALS IN THE NÜ-HSIAO CHING

If palace women did not offer the models necessary for a good Confucian society, where might the ideals be found? Tradition has it that in K'ai-yüan 13 (726), Lady Ch'eng, wife of a San-lang (title of a minor official position) Miao, presented her work, the Nü-hsiao Ching to Hsüan-tsung39. She wrote it as a guide, because she wanted to make sure that her niece, who was to be married to Yung Wang, would know how to behave in the palace (see appendix I).

Ch'eng is clearly drawing on the authority and tradition of Pan Chao, who wrote her Nü Chieh for her daughters. Pan is used as
the main narrator, Ch'eng as the commentator. In this way, Ch'eng's
treatise can easily be contextualized in the Confucian learning of
the time. This is primarily represented by the Wu Ching (Five
Classics)⁴⁰, required of men sitting for the imperial examinations,
which included the Shih, Shu, Li, I, and Ch'un-ch'iu. In addition,
twenty one other authors were also required reading. Among them
were commentators of the traditional classics like Tsao Ch'iu-ming,
Shih Tzu-hsia, Kung-yang Kao, Ku-liang Ch'ih, Tai Sheng, Tzu An-
kuo, Liu Hsiang, Ma Yung, and Wang Pi.⁴¹

The substance of the treatise is an overview of the general
principles represented in the Classics, and their commentaries,
about women.⁴² Of special interest is Liu Hsiang, from whom a great
deal of material is taken, and whose view on yin and yang, recorded
in his Shuo-yüan, is generally representative:

Yang is the senior of yin. For birds, the hsiung (male) is
yang, and the tz'u is yin. For domestic animals, the chuang
(strong) is yang, the p'in is yin. For the common people, the
fu (husband) is yang and the fu (wife) is yin. In the home,
the fu (father) is yang, and the tzu (child) is yin. For the
empire, the chun (emperor) is yang, and the chen is yin. Thus
yang is noble, and yin is humble. Yang as honorable, and yin
as yielding, (this is) the way of Heaven (quoted in Pao, 41;
also see endnote 16).

It is, however, important to remember that this difference in
nobility and humility, honour and submissiveness, does not affect
the capacity for virtuous behaviour. Just because a woman is
conceived of as lower, humble and submissive, it does not follow
that she is conceived to be innately devoid of or lacking in
virtue. Of the seven categories⁴³ in Liu Hsiang's Lieh-nü Chuan,
only one is on evil women; the other six are all models of women who were wise, benevolent, righteous, obedient, compassionate and intelligent.

The advice in the Nü-hsiao Ching is, therefore, not surprisingly, antithetical to much of the kung-chu's behaviour. For example, Ch'eng clearly writes that in public places, a woman "always covers her face. At night, she walks with the light of a candle; if there are no candles, she stops. Sending off her brothers, she does not step beyond the threshold of the inner quarters."

She goes on to say that if a woman has "an excellent deportment and an insinuating appearance", then one must be very careful. This is supported by Confucius' comment in the Lun-yü that a person who has clever words and a seductive appearance is very seldom virtuous (17:17). Instead, a woman who is a chün-tzu (a virtuous person) uses respectful yielding. A chün-tzu does not argue with others. Rather, she harmonizes and shows what is good and what is bad through li and yüeh (music) (sec. VII).

A good woman is, above all else, kind to younger siblings. Kindness is, therefore, the most basic requirement for hsiao. Other qualities encompassed by the ideal of hsiao are familiar ones: they are humility, frugality, being bright and full of wisdom, and generosity in human relations (sec. I).

Different types of hsiao according to social class
Ch'eng goes on to distinguish four kinds of hsiao. The first three are directed at the upper classes and are primarily concerned with the functions of the women's position. These women of privilege are expected to be models of virtuous behaviour, and a beneficial influence on the masses, as they work alongside their husbands. This idea of affecting the behaviour of the general populace by virtuous behaviour is again supported by the Lun-yü, where Confucius describes the chün-tzu as the wind, and the people as the grass (12:19).

These upper class women are enjoined to care for everyone, and to abandon no one. They are also persuaded to be careful, to be sure not to ridicule anyone, especially hsiao-jen. As well, they should see to it that there are no discrepancies in the distribution of wealth. Moreover, they are reminded to manage well all matters dealing with death and ancestral spirits; they must properly prepare for worship, so that no harm will come to the descendants.

Beyond these common elements, their other functions vary. The empress and concubines are expected to have many children. At the same time, however, there is caution for them not to be lascivious. The wives of court officials should perform their responsibilities calmly, and with restraint. They must be upright, respectful, and without self-interest, so that they might prevent the start of evil, and preserve a climate of sincerity. The wives of the provincial officials must speak and behave in ways that are above reproach.
Moreover, if they do not wish rumours to spread, they must make sure to stop them immediately (sec., II-IV).

Commoners are the last of the four categories of women. Here it is clear that "women do not participate in public affairs." Their main concerns are with weaving and keeping the altars of the ancestors (sec., V). In addition, there is general advice that applies to all four groups.

First, all women are to serve their parents-in-law with li and hsin (trustworthiness). In the morning, they are to be alert; and in the evening, tranquil. Second, they are to serve their husbands with te (virtue), and i (righteousness). Wives are, after all, indispensable to their spouses' success because "Heaven's brilliance exists because of Earth's gain." Third, all women, rich and poor, are reminded not to be proud when occupying a position of privilege nor to be disorderly, when in a humble position. Moreover, they should avoid competing, because by competing, they will learn to be cunning. Fourth, jealousy must be stayed. And a woman who is virtuous does not follow beauty with her eyes, nor linger on pleasant sounds; rather, she is submissive, correct, straight, harmonious and gentle. Fifth, women are told that if their husbands "are not behaving according to the Way", then the men should be cautioned. But, if he is correct, the women are advised that they will attain virtue (sec. VI-XV).

Ch'eng's essay also includes two sections on women as mothers. The first describes ideal comportment during pregnancy, since it is
believed that the education of a child begins in the womb. The second admonishes women to use love to harmonize their children on the one hand, but sternness and resolution in their instruction on the other. It is assumed that as mothers, women are the children's first teachers. Hence, they should, and must, be vigilant in their words and actions.

The remainder of the treatise consists mostly of examples drawn from Liu Hsiang's Lieh-nü Chuan. Fourteen women were included. There are nine positive descriptions which laud women who are chaste, virtuous, wise counsellors and a conscience to their husbands. Of the five negative ones, all criticize the danger of a woman's seductive charms.

THE OLD AND NEW LIEH-NÜ CHUAN

No single outstanding Confucian woman appears in the dynastic biographies for Hsüan-tsung's reign. Sung T'ing-yü's wife, Wei, from a prominent Shan-tung family, is included in the Chiu T'ang Shu for her literary abilities. She is, however, excluded from the Hsin T'ang Shu.

The Hsin T'ang Shu laments the absence of such virtuous women. As if in reaction to this void, it includes several new entries of no specific time, apparently in order to illustrate the correct deportment of a mother, filial piety in two daughters, and five examples of virtuous widows.

But in Confucian terms, there is still imbalance in the outer
and inner realms. Whereas the early K'ai-yüan period was marked by earnest ministers like Yao Ch'ung and Sung Ching who desired "a 'restoration' of the T'ang and a moral regeneration of its policies", the inner quarters were bereft of strong leadership.¹⁵

This lack of powerful women at the beginning of the K'ai-yüan period can partly be explained as the result of deliberate efforts by the court to curtail and prevent the appearance of the like of Wu Tse-t'ien, Wei Hou, An-lo Kung-chu and T'ai-ping Kung-chu. Certainly, when one considers the substance of the K'ai-yüan Hsin-chih, the actions embodied in the new statutes were directed against excess and sedition, and not per se, against women.

Furthermore, both Yao Ch'ung and Sung Ching had been ministers under Wu Hou, and as such, could not be considered "traditional" Confucian scholar-officials for having served under a woman-emperor. Theirs and Hsüan-tsung's primary concerns, at the start of the reign, were with usurpation and rebellion and not misogynist policies. (See note 3.)

In the end, however, although Hsüan-tsung may be considered a Confucian in his use of ministers and in his policies, he was no Confucian when it came to the women in his life. Here, he appears to have been a sensualist, especially in his later years. From this perspective, it may be concluded that Confucianism played little or no part in the lives of palace and upper class women. In turn, it may be suggested that ordinary women also were not much affected by Confucianism, because the climate fostered by the court would have been one of extravagance, indulgence and abandon.

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However, Hsüan-tsung's Confucian legacy is not, perhaps, to be discovered during his time, but rather, long after his era of "brilliance". His policies, his bringing to heel of palace women, his forsaking of the higher principles he had started with, and his reversion to the sins of his ancestors, can all be interpreted as failures in counsellors of both inner and outer courts; and the repercussions for women were far reaching.

As described in the chapter on "Imperial Women", Neo-Confucians saw the failure of the T'ang as a call to strengthen Confucianism by systematizing it for more effective opposition against Taoism and Buddhism. In so doing, they established the "superiority" of the imperially sponsored Chinese religion and philosophy. Confucianism's central tenet of complementarity, as it was expressed in the superiority of men and the inferiority of women, was emphasized.

More importantly, chastity, loyalty and obedience, seen as the quintessential distinction of Chinese women, became virtues above all others. In this way, Hsüan-tsung's initial triumph and his eventual demise became one step in the unintended decline in the status of women in dynastic China. Continuing from this step, the next chapter will examine Taoism and its effects on the lives of women during the T'ang.
1. Lin Lu-chih writes that T'ang poetry and novels would suggest that all women, and not a particular class, were free in love. This is questionable. First, the women in literature are fictional creations; second, they do not represent the ordinary peasant, but rather, the accomplished courtesan or woman of some education affiliated with the scholar-official class (8). See also Tung Chia-tsun and Li Shu-t'ung.

2. His programs of austerity, for example, can easily be categorized as Taoist; the section on Taoism will explain why. However, the spirit of thrift and hard work can reasonably be considered Confucian as well.

3. I am thinking of an inherited Han Yin/Yang Confucianism here. It is also important to remember that Confucian ministers like Yao Ch'ung and Sung Ching served under Wu Chao, a female emperor, which should theoretically be "unthinkable" in an ideologically conservative Confucianism for two reasons: first, the Shu clearly says that a woman holding power in the family, let alone the empire, is a sign of trouble; and second, ministers should resign or die, rather than serve under an illegitimate dynasty, as the Neo-Confucians like Ch'eng I would argue later (Chan, 1967:177). T'ang Confucianism, therefore, seems accommodating, and not as rigid in its attitudes toward women, as later Sung Li Hsüeh.

4. I am grateful to Professor Priestley for pointing out the contradictory opinions reflected in the Lun Yü on this matter of the capacity for virtue. Analects 17:2, "By nature, near together; by practice far apart" appears to contradict 16:9 which says:

"Highest are those who are born wise. Next are those who become wise by learning. After them come those who have to toil painfully in order to acquire learning. Finally, to the lowest class of the common people belong those who toil painfully without ever managing to learn."

5. It is said that in the pursuit of virtue, one should yield to no one. not even one's teacher (Analects, 15:35). There is also the story in Mencius about the innate liang-hsin (good heart) in everyone, as demonstrated by the feeling of compassion felt when one sees a child falling down the well (II.A:6). As well, it is important to note Hsün-tzu's belief that because we lack goodness, we seek it in learning (Section 23).

6. There is, nevertheless, a tendency in Yin-yang Confucianism to assign to women the negative traits. This appears to have been applied more to social roles than to the nature of each person's moral being. Tung Chung-shu writes in "Chi-i" (Foundation of
Righteousness) that a wife's role is to help her husband (321). He also writes that because yang is superior, and yin inferior, then even if a husband is from the lower class, he is still yang; this should have serious repercussions for the kung-chu (290). But as we have read, the kung-chu often behaved badly toward their husband's concubines (see the chapter on the kung-chu). Tung wrote after the rule of Lu Hou, and he points out that it is wrong for the emperor to make his concubine the empress; calling this "fu-ch'ieh chih tao" (the way of women and concubines), he notes that this will result in bloodshed for the people (348). He is clearly opposed to lasciviousness in an emperor.

This changes, however, after the T'ang dynasty. The Neo-Confucians are more inclined, with their understanding of ch'i, to assign some innate moral inferiority in women. A discussion of such a topic is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

There is also the notorious remark by Confucius about nü tzu (women in general, or female servant specifically) and hsiao-jen (male servants) (Analects, 17:25). If one were to interpret nü-tzu as "woman", then this could suggest a common, though not necessarily an innate, flaw in women.

7. This can vaguely be compared to the Buddhist idea of suffering. Neither Taoism nor Confucianism have that Indian notion of abiding unsatisfactoriness. The rudimentary scheme of yin and yang would suggest that unhappiness need not be taken so seriously; it will wax and wane, just like natural phenomena such as the seasons, the sun and the moon. Then later, with the emphasis on the "Chung-yung" (Doctrine of the Mean), the harmonization of emotions, the avoidance of extremes, becomes a central focus.

8. I am thinking here of the more negative teachings of the San-chieh-chiao and the Ching-t'u sect, and not considering as much the more pervasive Chinese Buddhist belief in the Buddha nature.

9. The most notorious support for this is the quote from the Shu Ching that says that a woman being dominant in the family is like a hen crowing at the break of dawn; it is unnatural and augurs bad luck.

10. This restates the foundational three steps in attaining stability: self-cultivation, keeping order in the family, and governing the empire.

11. The Chiu T'ang Shu has a slightly different account. It includes an interim arrangement when T'ai-p'ing possessed one thousand, two hundred households. But it does not mention I-ch'eng, Hsin-tu,
Ting-an and Chin-ch'eng as princesses who also received postings traditionally reserved for the princes. Instead, it highlights T'ai-p'ing and Wei Hou's daughters, that is her nieces Ch'ang-ning and An-lo, as the kung-chu who were presented with the postings. (CTS, 183).

12. She had seven children: two sons and two daughters with her first husband, Hsueh Shao, and two sons and one daughter with her second husband Wu Yu-chi. Wu Hou, her mother, had Yu-chi's wife murdered, so that T'ai-p'ing might marry him. (CTS, 183)

13. T'ai-p'ing supported Jui-tsong against Wei Hou and An-lo Kung-chu in their bid to overthrow Chung-tsung and the T'ang dynasty, in the style of Wu Tse-t'ien. After Ching-yun 1 (710), T'ai-p'ing gained even more trust from Jui-tsong.

14. Hsüan-tsung was twenty-nine when he ascended the throne.

15. This struggle is described in the Hsin T'ang Shu and Tzu-chih T'ung-chien in some detail. The editor of the Hsin T'ang Shu notes that Ou-yang Hsiu criticizes the Chiu T'ang Shu for not making explicit categories for "loyal" and "treacherous" ministers. The inclusion of an entire section, in the Hsin T'ang Shu, of "Chu-ti Kung-chu" ("Princesses under the various Emperors"), addresses the Neo-Confucian need to list the "good guys" versus the "bad guys". Most of the princesses are not described in a complimentary way; they support the notion that the weakness and fall of the dynasty rest on the shoulders of these women, most of whom are classified in the records on Hsuan-tsung's reign under the phenomenon called the nü-huo, the disaster of women (HTS: 5).

16. T'ai-p'ing's favourite monk was one Hu-jen (Tartar), Hui-fan (CTS 183). When Hsüeh Lien-kuang asked Chung-tsung to examine the monk's abuses, the princess spoke up for him, and Lien-kuang was punished instead. (HTS, 83)

17. Herbert writes that Hsüan-tsung was very much a "Confucian". He employed "ministers who combined political acumen with Confucian moral qualities, and the recruitment at a lower level of officials who could be expected to be loyal to the throne and benevolent and just in their dealing with the people (43)."

The honouring of Confucius seems to signal a change in Hsüan-tsung's earlier strategy. Moreover, his indulgence of the Yang family and Li Lin-fu suggests a major shift in his interest in governing.

18. This is typically Confucian. One early use of nature to justify human behaviour is likening the dominance of men to the crowing of the rooster in the morning. Chuang-tzu subverts this
tradition by using differences in nature to encourage diversity in the human world.

19. Hucker has this listed as Li-cheng Tien Hsiu-shu Yüan. (303)

20. Hucker has this listed as Chi-hsien Yüan (Academy of Scholarly Worthies), renamed from Li-cheng Tien Hsien-shu yüan and makes no mention of the Chi-hsien Tien (Hall of Gathered Immortals). (131)

21. See chapter 2, "Wei Hou participates in `nan-chao', the summer solstice sacrifice" on pages 51 to 52.

22. I am quoting Professor Paper's observation here.

23. The Chiu T'ang Shu lists her as Chen-hsun Huang-hou, under the section on "Empresses", whereas the Hsin T'ang Shu does not; and neither does the Tzu-chih T'ung-chien.

24. This is quoted from TCTC, 214.

25. See TCTC, 214. Chang Chiu-ling argued that Niu Hsien-k'e's success in battle was a function of his job, and unworthy of a title. Niu should certainly be rewarded in gold, silver and silk, but not land. Hsüan-tsung then accused Chang Chiu-ling of arrogance; reminding Chang that he also came from a lowly family, so that he should not be so quick to judge Niu by where he came from (they were both from Kuang-chou, which was not well developed at that time).

26. Ying Wang was the son of Chao Li-fei; Li Yao was the son of Huang-fu Te-i; and Li Chu was the son of Liu Tsai-jen.

27. Yang Hui was the husband of Hsien-i Kung-chu, the daughter of Wu Hui-fei.

28. In K'ai-yüan 13 (725), Hsüan-tsung had visited Confucius' birthplace in order to pay respect. He was on his way back from a state ritual at T'ai Shan.

29. The Chiu-T'ang Shu lists the date that Hsüan-tsung edited the Hsiao Ching as K'ai-yüan 10 (723). This is just one year prior to Ch'eng's treatise, Nü-hsiao Ching. The Hsiao Tao (Way of Filial Piety) was also popular at this time. See sub-section "Syncretism with Buddhism and Confucianism" in the chapter on Confucianism.

30. This episode is recorded in the Chiu T'ang Shu, Hsin T'ang Shu and Tzu-chih T'ung-chien. The latter two, however, include many more details than the former. This reflects the interest the two later histories have in exposing nü-huo.
31. I put it this way because legally, it would have been impossible for Yang Yü-huan to divorce her husband.

32. See Wang 1988, 124. See also note 19 above.

33. I bracket the word incestuous since the relationships are not biologically incestuous. Confucian li, however, as employed by Han Yü, for example, certainly considers a woman being consort to both father and son as incestuous.

34. See note one.

35. The ch'i-ch'u for a wife include: i) having no children, ii) lasciviousness, iii) not serving her in-laws, iv) stealing, v) jealousy, vi) having an infectious or incurable disease, vii) contentiousness.

36. The Three Prohibitions Against Divorce by a husband were: if a wife had mourned her in-laws' death; if she had been taken as wife when her husband was poor, after which he became prosperous or famous; or if she had no home to return to.

37. Pan Chao is particularly important because of her continuing influence. The Nü hsiao ching (Scripture on Filial Piety for Women), although reputedly written by the wife of Ch'en Mao, used Pan Chao as the central narrator. The book will be discussed later in the chapter.

38. Pan Chao is recorded in the Han Shu as saying: "Should actual blows be dealt, how could the matrimonial relationship be preserved? Should sharp words be spoken, how could conjugal love exist? If love and the proper relationship both be destroyed, then husband and wife will be separated (Buxbaum 52)."

39. See Julia Murray (1988: 96,106) for a discussion of the validity of this claim. The first appearance of a scroll illustrating the Nü-hsiao Ching predates Hsüan-tsung and Lady Ch'eng; it is attributed to Yen Li-pen who died 673. Even though the historicity of this is by no means clear, I have included it because it illustrates well the code of behaviour expected of women within their different social ranks. It also reinforces the importance of the Hsiao Ching that Hsüan-tsung recommended to the people in the T'ien-pao era, from which much of the woman's version is adapted.

See also note 23.

40. Lisa Raphael cites and summarizes Professor Guisso's position on the treatment of women in the Wu Ching thus: "According to Guisso, the Classics refer to 'the nature of women' for only three
reasons: to justify existing stereotypes of women, to warn men against the dangers women present, and to foster a sexual hierarchy. He argues that the Five Classics depict women not as individuals but in stereotyped life cycle roles: as daughters, wives and mothers."

Raphals goes on to adapt Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz's work, as European cultural historians, to the Chinese experience. She argues that although the "typological element would seem to be stereotypical life cycle roles," she goes on to suggest that "the topos of women as agents of virtue and chaos may have ... a mythological origin in the stories of the mothers and consorts of the founders and losers of dynasties ... The result is a representation of female virtue at the centre, rather than the periphery, of dynastic rule."

In other words, euhemerization in Chinese civilization applies not only to its heroes, but also to its heroines.(25)

41. The other twelve were Fu Sheng, Kao T'ang-sheng, Mo Ch'ang, Ch'eng Chung, Tu Tzu-Ch'un, Lu Chi, Ch'eng Hsuan, Fu Chien, Ho Hsiu, Wang Hsiao, She Yuan-k'ai and Fan Ning.

42. See Guisso and Kelleher for details and varying opinions on the concept of the ideal woman and her role in society.

43. The seven include: 1) Correct deportment of mothers, 2) Virtuous and wise, 3) Benign and wise, 4) Chaste and obedient, 5) Chaste and righteous, 6) Able in reasoning and understanding, 7) Pernicious and depraved (O'Hara).

44. This is quoted from the Hsiao Ching.

45. See section 15, and note 17, in Appendix A. Duke Huan reportedly said: "Let the wife rule the inner apartments and Kuan Chung manage outer affairs. I, (the King), although unwise, am still capable of establishing my place in the world."

46. See above endnote 38.
TAOISM
INTRODUCTION

Where Buddhism was difficult to write about because of the scant source materials and the concept of fang-pien (see the chapter on Buddhism), Taoism is likewise difficult because of the lack of material, and the various levels of practice and interpretation that existed during Hsüan-tsung's time.¹

First, there was philosophical Taoism, which encompassed the writings of Lao Tzu, Chuang Tzu, Lieh Tzu and Wen Tzu². Second, there was religious Taoism, which focussed on salvation; both its communal and individual practices can roughly be categorized into three major schools: Shang-ch'ing, Ling-pao and the T'ien-shih; they concentrated on good works, outer alchemy, meditation and fasting³. State Taoism was the third stream; it used the philosophical and religious traditions to justify the legitimacy of the ruling house; offered a political alternative to Confucianism; and functioned as a ritual and religious conduit to divine powers. And fourth, like Buddhism, there was the hsu-fa (the common way, or popular Taoism), which included trance induction in its practices; it was considered "heterodox" by some high priests.⁴

These divisions are important because they offered different Taoist opinions on women. Like Confucianism and Buddhism, Taoism yields conflicting views on women. To convey the perspectives systematically, this chapter will deal first with the history of the religion, which offered one context for the lives of Taoist women; second, the practice of the religious aspects; and third, the structure of the various philosophies and doctrines will also
be examined. The overall assessment is surprisingly patriarchal, contrary to claims of proto-feminism by professors of Taoism like Ellen Chen, and of positive doctrinal views on the position of women by scholars like Kristofer Schipper.

But as in the previous chapters, the analysis will be limited by source documents. The discussion will be confined primarily to upper class women like the princesses and courtesans; ordinary women remain once again mostly invisible.

THE EMPLOYMENT OF TAOISM FOR THE STATE

A brief history leading up to the first three T'ang emperors

The partly Hsien-pi Li family of the T'ang was not the first to use Taoism as a political tool. During the 400's, Ts'ui Hao used Taoism to sinify the rulers of Wei (Barrett, 14). Then Chou Wu-ti, who ruled from 560-78, sponsored the compilation of the encyclopedia Wu-shang Pi-yao. This drew mostly on the aristocratic Shang-ch'ing tradition from southern China, but also included elements from the T'ien-shih Tao (The Way of the Celestial Masters) from Szechuan in the west, and the ideas and practices of Buddhism.

Taoism was used consciously as an indigenous alternative to Buddhism. This was especially true for Kao-tsu and T'ai-tsung who were eager to establish the legitimacy of their dynasty (ibid., 28). The Mao Shan Shang-ch'ing school was the most popular during the T'ang; its patriarchs supported the ruling house, and the relationship was reciprocal.
T'ai-tsung built a temple, T'ai-p'ing kuan, for Wang Yüan-chih, the most prominent Taoist cleric of the day. In turn, Kao-tsung built the Hao-t'ien kuan to commemorate T'ai-tsung in 656. The name referred to the supreme power of heaven; in this way, the family line, state cult and the church were symbolically united (ibid., 28-30).

Shang-ch'ing taught that the transmission of teachings from the divine to the human worlds happened between members of the opposite sex. Many of its texts were written by men about their attempts to gain instructions for enlightenment; stories of women finding divine husbands, however, were rare (Cahill 1986, 157). Nevertheless, this might explain the popularity of Hsi-wang-mu, and the general concern over the presence of goddesses at sacrifices. Far from being a concern for women, it was a manifestation of the use of the principle of womanhood for the sake of men.

The feminine principle did not, however, only remain abstract; a copy of the San-wang Wen (Writ of the Three Lords) "stressed the importance of T'ien-hou as the representative of a long era of political peace and stability (Barrett, 37)." In 674, Kao-tsung and Wu Hou assumed the titles of T'ien-huang (Heavenly Emperor) and T'ien-hou (Heavenly Empress), thereby confirming and encouraging the popularity of the idea. And, in 678, the Tao Te Ching was included as a compulsory text for the state examination (op. cit.).
Taoism under Wu Tse't'ien, Chung-tsung and Jui-tsung

The 683 state sponsored sacrifices on Sung Shan, two years before Hsüan-tsung was born, are also of interest. Wu Hou must have been pleased with the equal representation of deities worshipped, male and female; this would have been consonant to her petition, in 666, for proportional representation of women during the feng-shan ceremonies.6

Included as goddesses were the mother of Hsia-hou Ch'i, the early Hsia ruler, and Hsi-wang-mu. After Kao-tsung's death, the goddesses gained even more prominence. In mid-684, the Hsüan-nü (Mysterious Female), who was associated with the legendary Huang-ti (Yellow Emperor), was said to have appeared on a cloud of auspicious colour to confer an elixir upon Wu Hou. Lao Tzu's mother was given the honorific title of Hsien-t'ien T'ai-hou (The Empress Dowager of the Primordial Heaven), and her statues were put into temples dedicated to Lao Tzu.7

Finally, in 688, Wu Hou assumed the title of Sheng-mu (Sage Mother), after numerous prophecies supporting her authority were established. These prophecies were derived from the Lady Tzu-wei, also a goddess of the Mao-shan Shang-ch'ing school (Barrett, 41). At the same time, the status of Taoist nuns was quite high.

But, in 691, Wu Hou granted precedence to Buddhists; perhaps in order to forge a distinct identity for her Chou dynasty, and to distance herself from the T'ang ruling house. But perhaps it was also because the Taoist clergy had declared illegitimate a copy of
the _San-wang Ching_ (Scripture of the Three Lords), which said that any woman in possession of it would become an empress (ibid., 24). The Buddhists, with their _Ta-yün Ching_ (Great Cloud Sutra), might have seemed more accommodating. Moreover, she was already empress, and she wanted to be emperor, alone, with no complement.

In this way, Taoism had continued to be associated with the state and remained prominent until the late 600's. Late in life, Wu Hou's involvement with Taoism resumed as she became interested in immortality (Barrett, 44). As Confucian a minister as Yao Ch'ung wrote the following lines implying Wu Hou's success in seeking immortality:

>(L)ong ago, a Chou King declined the bounty of the Turquoise Pond, And a Han ruler felt anxious and ashamed at the Jade Tree Palace, Now, on the other hand, we have auspicious mists paired with beautiful breaths. (Cahill 1993, 132)

Nevertheless, Taoism was eclipsed by Buddhism until Chung-tsung reinstated Taoism as the state religion after the death of Wu Hou. But it was also under Chung-tsung that the Taoists lost an important doctrinal battle. In 705, the _Hua-hu Ching_ (The Scripture on Converting the Barbarians) was declared a forgery (Liu 1993, 173; Cheng 1993, 639).

The greater gains for Taoism were made under Jui-tsung. He rescinded Buddhist privileges, and the two religions once again had equal status on ceremonial occasions. Moreover, he presented the mansion that had belonged to Wei Hou's son to the Taoists; and he did the same with his two residences-in-exile in T'ai-yüan and Loyang. He then committed two of his daughters to the convent, and
had their residences converted (Barrett, 48).

**Taoism under Hsüan-tsung**

Hsüan-tsung continued this tradition and two of his daughters also became Taoist nuns. He himself was initiated into the Shang-ch'ing school and was conferred a high level ordination by Wang Han-kuang in 748 (Barrett, 69; Robinet 1997, 186). But he began his reign cautiously. Mindful of the princessly connections of priests like Shih Ch'ung-hsuan, who had participated in the 672 ordination of T'ai-p'ing into the Taoist church, and had presided over the investiture of Yu-chen and Chin-hsien Kung-chu (ibid., 35; Benn 1991, 17). Hsüan-tsung executed him in 713, in the second year of his reign, apparently to the delight of the general populace.

But ever careful, it was not until 720, after the death of the old guard, symbolized by Yeh Fa-shan, who had performed the Ho-t'u¹⁰ ta-chiao¹¹ (Thanksgiving for the River Chart) in 678, under Kao-tsung (ibid., 33), that Hsüan-tsung started actively to promote Taoism under his control.

The Tao Te Ching was once again singled out in 721. In the same year, he invited Ssu-ma Ch'eng-chen, who had stayed clear of the politics, down from T'ien-t'ai Shan (mountain) for an audience at court (Barrett, 52-53). It was also during this period that the first compilation of the Tao-tsang started; it was finally completed in 748 (Hu, 448; Robinet 1997, 187).

In 730, lectures on Lao Tzu were sponsored by the court; then, in 735, Ssu-ma Hsiu, a newly minted Tao-men wei-i shih (Commissioner
of Ritual for the Taoists), asked that a copy of the Tao Te Ching, with Hsüan-tsung's commentary, be engraved on stone, at various places in the capital. Two years later, the state administration of the Taoist church was brought under the Court of Imperial Clan Affairs, thereby further reinforcing the connection between the ruling family and the religion (Barrett, 59).

But even with all the support, a census taken by Li Lin-fu, in 739, showed that Buddhists still outnumbered Taoists. There were 3,245 monasteries and 2,113 nunneries for the former, compared with 1,137 and 550 respectively for the latter (ibid., 58; Feng-yu Li, 163); but it was an improvement from 722 for the Taoists, who had only 16 institutions in contrast to 91 Buddhist ones in Chang-an. By contrast, in 739, there were just under three times more Buddhist monasteries than Taoist ones; and just under four times more Buddhist nunneries than Taoist ones.

As for Hsüan-tsung's policy on education, he had propagated the study of Lao Tzu at the expense of the Shang Shu (Book of History) and Lun-yü as early as K'ai-yüan 21 (733) (Liu 1993, 173). And in K'ai-yüan 25 (737), he formally set up a Taoist curriculum and examinations that included four books: Lao Tzu, Chuang Tzu, Wen Tzu and Lieh Tzu. And, in order to bring Taoist teachings to the local level, he established the Ch'ung-hsuan hsüeh (Worship of the Mysterious School or College of Taoist Studies) to prepare candidates for the Taoist civil examination (Barrett, 65).

Then, in K'ai-yüan 29 (741), he tried to establish a government
based on the Taoist principle of "rest for the populace" that would result in a diminishing of punishments, and the simplification of administrative policies (Barrett, 59; Liu 1993, 175). In the same year, he ordered the construction of temples dedicated to Lao Tzu: there would be a Hsüan-yüan huang-ti miao (Temple of the Mysterious Primordial Emperor) in each of the two capitals, Chang-an and Loyang; and one in each province (Barrett, 62; Liu 1993, 173). Moreover, a request was granted that Buddhist and Taoist clergy should be tried according to religious rules with no interference from the civil authorities (Barrett, 60).

But T'ien-pao 1 (742) was the watershed. T'ien T'ung-hsiu, a staff member of one of the princes, reported that Lao Tzu had appeared to him, and had announced the location of a Pao (Treasure or Talisman) (Barrett, 62). The requisite pao was found in T'ao-lin Yüan; and the reign title K'ai-yüan was changed to T'ien-pao (Liu 1993, 173).

From then on, Lao Tzu was continuously and cumulatively honoured; and the names of the temples dedicated to him became more and more grand. Statues of Chuang Tzu, Lieh Tzu, Wen Tzu and K'eng-sang Tzu were placed in the temples, along with statues of Lao Tzu and K'ung Tzu; however, no records mention the inclusion of statues of Lao Tzu's mother. Instead, statues of the chief ministers were added. The people, or at least the bureaucrats, responded to all this with enthusiasm; many reported miracles and the discovery of yü-chih (an auspicious fungus) and chen-fu (jade talisman).
The discontinuation of the statue of Lao Tzu's mother is an important shift; it suggests a change in perspective, a lessening of the focus on the feminine. This change was consistent with the other measures Hsüan-tsung had taken to limit and control the practical and symbolic power and field of influence of women.18

This shift to an all male statuary pantheon in the temple thus seems to support the idea of a natural antipathy between ministers and politically ambitious aristocratic and upper class women. That is, potentially influential women were a threat to the all male establishment and needed to be confined.

Outside of politics, and on a more personal level, however, the teachings of the need for sensual discipline and restraint, frugality, and the cultivation of peace and stability in the empire seems to have gone unheeded. This incongruity was obvious: on the one hand, Hsüan-tsung was trying to promote Taoism; on the other hand, he was sabotaging its reputation by the association with his extravagance, doting on Yang Kuei-fei, and laxity with her family and An Lu-shan.

The emperor's laissez-faire approach to his personal relationships encouraged an environment where the men of the ruling class often had large numbers of concubines; and even the ones who had comparatively only a few, had san ch'i ssu ch'ieh (three wives and four concubines); that is, many. It is difficult to estimate the damage that Ming Huang wrought on the religion because of the associations made between Taoism and the behaviour of the women at court. Suffice it to note what Han Yü19 wrote about a Taoist
character, Tung Fang-shuo:

But Fang-shuo was not corrected by punishment; Supported by imperial compassion, he became even more brash and arrogant. He insulted and cheated the Son of Heaven; In broad daylight, he urinated at the basilica offices. Then one morning, without even parting words of instructions, Carrying away his body, he skimmed auroral pink clouds in a watchet sky. (Cahill 1993, 164-165)

Tung was thus cast as Hsi-wang-mu's spoilt brat; the relationship was not unlike the one between members of the Yang family, An Lu-shan and Hsüan-tsung. A description will follow later.

RELIGIOUS TAOISM

Magic in popular practice

The belief in magic appeared to be central in religious Taoism. This manifested itself in two extremely different ways. In political terms, it was believed that by reciting the most popular contemporary scripture Tu-jen Ching²⁰ (The Scripture for Conveying Human Beings) for ten times, it would be efficacious for all the men and women in the empire; that is, they would achieve long lives (56).

In personal terms, long life and immortality were portrayed in dramatic and miraculous terms. One nü-chen (female perfected or immortal), Pien Tung-hsüan, was said to have been swept toward heaven in broad daylight and united with the way of Lou (name of a star). In the Hsien-yüan P'ien-chu (The Edited Pearls of the Garden of Immortals), it was also told that her hair suddenly turned black when she was eighty, and that her teeth, which had fallen out, all
grew back. Then finally, after the ritual of shih-chieh (release of the corpse), a split hull, which resembled sloughed off skin, was found behind her brain (Wang Ch'ung-nien, 602).

Women were clearly as worthy and capable of salvation, and also as capable of becoming immortals as men, even though their practices differed from men's. Women were said to lien-hsing (cultivate form) to stop menstruation, while men lien-ch'i (cultivate energy) to prevent loss of semen (Peng, 30).21 However, a subtle grading of men and women was introduced into Taoism.

**Syncretism with Buddhism and Confucianism**

In the T'ai-chang Hsüan-i Chen-jen Shuo Ch'uan-chieh Fa-lun Miao Ching (The Wondrous Scripture of the Wheel of the Law), is this remark: "If a women will, in solitude, contemplate this scripture, she will be transformed into a man (Bokenkamp 1983, 473)." This is a variation of Bodhisattva Dharmakara's vow before he achieved enlightenment and became Amitabha. This attitude toward women is a novel one for Taoism; contrary to Buddhism, the feminine, if not the female, as will be discussed later, had always been considered preferable over the masculine in Taoism.

But there was an even more basic change in the cosmology. The "Chen-huang ling p'ien" (Spirit of the true or perfected Lord) in the Tu-jen Ching lists three worlds. The first is the world of desire, where men and women are attached to each other. The second is the world of forms, where the people are still lightly contaminated
by dust (the phenomenal world), and have been unable to stop trans-
migration; but they will forget the root of form on hearing the "K'ung-tung chang" (empty cave section), because they will under-
stand with emptiness.

The third is the world of no form, where the inhabitants will
 gain immediate enlightenment and extinguish transmigration; they
 will experience great happiness, and numinous light will shine in
 the ten directions, and all will live in the Pai-yü ching (White
 jade capital), where the heavenly emperor lives (Hu Tao-ching, 448-
449).  

These three worlds are different from the traditional ones of
gods, humans and demons (Bell, 380). Transmigration, a new idea,
is introduced; while others like the inferiority of the worlds of
form and desire, and the undesirability of sexual attachments are
articulated and reinforced. The change, therefore, is not so much
an abandoning of an old set of beliefs, but rather a shift in
emphasis. Whereas the Taoism of Lao-Chuang was about balance, a
complement of desires and no desires, the later syncretized Taoism
focussed more on no desires.

This inclination toward accommodation was not exclusively to
Buddhism. Where philosophical Taoism made fun of Confucianism,
religious Taoism sought to coopt it. Very early in its development,
the wu ch'ang (five constants), jen, i, li, chih, hsin, were incor-
porated into the "Commands and Admonitions for the Families of the
Great Dao".

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(The author wants) to cause the ruler to be humane and his ministers loyal, fathers magnanimous and sons filial, husbands faithful and wives chaste, elder brothers respectful and the younger obedient - in short to bring peace to all below Heaven . . . but evil lords and ministers struggle for influence, fathers and sons are not close to one another, husbands and wives envy one another, and divisions arise between brothers. In the name of public good, you practice selfishness, male and female lightly engage in erotic excess. You transgress both heaven and earth and destroy the five constants. Outwardly you seem to be true, but inwardly you are not. (Bokenkamp 1997, 174)

This tract was probably written about 255 by one of Chang Lu's students. Bokenkamp notes that it was new that women were made subject to men according to the Confucian five constants. But as a later discussion will show, this is perhaps not so new (ibid., 156; and see the section on "Taoist philosophy and women").

The difference here that is of interest is the admonition for men to be "faithful". This, it seems to me, is different from the Confucian notions that a man should most clearly be benevolent, righteous and all else associated with ch'ien. Faithfulness, on the other hand, calls to mind more the characteristics of a junior member. The important point here, however, is the fact that the Taoism of the T'ang was syncretic in its structure; and that it had already gathered within it a long history of syncretism.

The popularity of the *Hsiao Tao*²³ (Way of Filial Piety) during this time illustrates the syncretism well. Hu Hui-ch'iu (d.703), a Taoist master, promoted Hsu Hsün, a prefect who lived during the Chin, in the 300's, as the foremost saint and patriarch of the *Hsiao Tao*. Hsu's teacher was Wu Meng, who was is said to have healed plague-stricken people with charm-water (Schipper 1985, 815-816).
The *Hsiao-tao Wu Hsu erh chen-chün chuan* (*Biography of the Perfected Lords Wu and Hsu of the Way of Filial Piety*) was used to celebrate the ascension of Hsu Hsün on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, *chung-ch'iu chieh* (mid-autumn's festival), during Hsüan-tsung's reign (ibid., 827).

(T)ens of thousands of people gather at Chung-ling. Chariots and horses with much noise crowd the place. Men and women, standing close to each other like the teeth of a comb, link their arms and dance and sing. (ibid., 829)

In this celebration, local concerns and organizations, the Taoist church and its ritual submission for favourable winds and rains, domestic and national peace and prosperity were all united (Schipper 1985, 832).

**WOMEN AND STATE TAOISM DURING HSÜAN-TSUNG'S REIGN**

**Expediency and exploitation of the religion**

Taoism was also called into political service for the women of the imperial household on at least two occasions. First, for T'ai-p'ing, it was a way to avoid a marriage of alliance to a Tibetan; but her commitment to the religion proved false when she eventually married. Second, Yang Yü-huan, akin to Wu Hou before her, entered the nunnery after she was divorced from Shou Wang Mou, her first husband, for a "purifying intermission", before she married Hsüan-tsung, her father-in-law. The integrity and credibility of institutional Taoism was thus undeniably and directly compromised.

**Yu-chen Kung-chu and commitment to the religion**

But not all the connections between the court and Taoism were
utilitarian ones. There was at least one genuine commitment to the church by Yü-chen Kung-chu, Hsuan-tsung's sister, also known by her religious appellation, Shang-ch'ing Hsüan-tu Ta-tung San-ching Shih (HTS, 83). 28

Yü-chen was ordained into the Shang-ch'ing tradition during Jui-tsung's reign, over two years in 711 and 712, by Chang Wan-fu, at a ceremony presided over by Shih Ch'ung-hsuan (Barrett, 50; Benn 1991, 9 and 151). She was ordained after her sister Chin-hsien's initiation in 706, one year after the overthrow of Wu Hou. She finally received her higher ordinations in 743; 29 she was given transmission of, and performed over a period of two weeks, the Pa-lu (Eight Registers), San-tung Tzu-wei Ling-shu (Numinous Texts of the Three Caverns in Purple Writ), and the Chi-ch'i (Nocturnal Annuciation) (Benn 1991, 15).

Yü-chen was a working priest. 30 Twice during her brother's reign she was asked to perform rites to benefit the state (Benn 1991, 14). The first was in 735 when she received a mandate to visit Ssu-ma Ch'eng-chen, the Shang-ch'ing Patriarch, at Hsi-wang-mu's Wang-mu Shan (Mountain of the Queen Mother), in order to conduct the Retreat of the Gold Register. This ritual was believed to be efficacious in the protection of the nation, and it also ensured the salvation of the emperor. 31

The second time, Yü-chen was dispatched to Ch'iao-chün in 743, 32 on the border of Honan and Anhwei, to Chen-yüan Kung (Palace of the True Origin), where Lao Tzu was said to have been born. She
was asked to perform a rite to express Hsuan-tsung's gratitude to Lao Tzu for revealing the location of a T'ien-pao (Heavenly Treasure).

The most remarkable and distinctive characteristic about Yu-chén, however, was her religious values. In T'ien-pao 3 (744), she petitioned Hsüan-tsung thus:

The previous emperor allowed ch'ieh\(^3\) to leave the family; yet today I still enjoy the (use) of a princess' residence (and) take food from rents and taxes. I sincerely wish to relinquish the title of princess, surrender the apportioned land, (and) return it to the imperial household.

Hsuan-tsung refused her request. So Yü-chén replied: Ch'ieh, the granddaughter of Kao-tsung, daughter of Jui-tsung, (and) your highness' younger sister, cannot be considered as inferior under Heaven. So why hold on to the title of princess in name, and the availability of a bath\(^4\) in order to be considered superior?

Hsüan-tsung, realizing her resolve, acceded to her request (HTS,83). This selfless action appears to have had little effect on Ming Huang. The Confucian principle of woman as wise and virtuous counsellor failed to manifest itself; Hsüan-tsung kept to his extravagant ways, and continued to be dominated by his need for Yang Kuei-fei.

**YANG YÜ-HUAN**

*An Lu-shan and his connection to Yang Yü-huan*\(^5\)

But perhaps the most offensive, or most objectionable element in Yang Kuei-fei and Hsüan-tsung's behaviour, in Confucian terms, was their relationship to the hu general, An Lu-shan, who came into their lives in the middle of the T'ien-pao era.
Hsüan-tsung was clearly very fond of An Lu-shan; he loved him as if he were his and the Kuei-fei's son. When visiting and paying respects to the emperor and his concubine, the general paid respect only to Yang Kuei-fei; Ming Huang asked him why. The general answered that for his people, only the mother was acknowledged, and not the father; for this reason, Hsüan-tsung released An Lu-shan from the usual formalities (Cheng Ch'i, 8).

Favoured by the emperor and his concubine, An Lu-shan was with them constantly. Ming Huang fearing that someone might poison his protege with wine, bestowed on him a gold plate, which was strapped onto the general's upper arm; this meant that whenever asked to drink, An Lu-shan had imperial permission to decline (Cheng Ch'uhui, 21).

Then there was the time when Hsüan-tsung asked what An Lu-shan had in his big fat belly. An Lu-shan answered that there was nothing else except the pure heart of a child, implying lovingness toward Hsüan-tsung, the father. The emperor was won over by his guileless words, their closeness increased, and the emperor loved him.

And finally, An Lu-shan was admitted into the inner quarters of the palace, which was, very likely, the worst infringement on Confucian notions of li. The celebration of the foreign general's birthday would have been particularly offensive to conservative sensibilities. On that day, the emperor and his Kuei-fei presented An Lu-shan with a substantial collection of garments, precious implements, wine and delicious delicacies.
After three days, An Lu-shan entered the forbidden apartments and Kuei-fei used a brocade as a large blanket to bundle him up; she then had the palace servants use a five colour palanquin to lift him up. The emperor was delighted when he saw this, and awarded Kuei-fei with "bathing the son" money, and again rewarded An Lu-shan; then they partied until they were exhausted before retiring.

From that time on, An Lu-shan came and went from the women's apartments without hindrance. He kept company and ate with Kuei-fei in her residence; he would spend the night with her; and even when there were peculiar noises heard from outside, the emperor would not be suspicious of them.

Furthermore, An Lu-shan's relationship with the emperor and his Kuei-fei extended beyond them. An Lu-shan often sat with Yang Yü-huan's sisters as brother and sisters; again, a gross encroachment of Confucian li (Li Chao, 5). And so Fan Tsu-yü wrote in the T'ang Chien:

Ming Huang did not believe his own sons, and yet he favoured a foreigner, considering it to be amusement .... How is it that Heaven had seized his brilliance, and used the barbarians to create chaos in Hua (China) for instruction? (85)

Laid bare here is the issue of chung (loyalty), a concern for both the Confucians and Taoists. Chung is in many ways the heart of the traditional ideology; manifested also as hsiao, it is the way of the junior members in society.

Cast in this light, An Lu-shan was disloyal as a vassal, Kuei-
fei as a concubine, the Yang sisters as subjects and Yang Kuo-chung as a minister. Hsüan-tsung was thus conceived of as operating in a moral vaccuum, entirely unsupported by counsellors either of the inner or outer realms.

Yang Yü-huan’s sisters and their cousins

Hsüan-tsung's love of Yang Yü-huan benefitted many in her family. All three of her sisters were given titles: The oldest sister was enfeoffed as Han-kuo Fu-jen, the third sister was entitled Kuo-kuo Fu-jen and the eighth sister was ennobled as Ch'in-kuo Fu-jen. Likewise, Kuei-fei's paternal male cousins Hsien and Ch'i were both made officials.

These five families were often asked favours. They responded by taking bribes and becoming busy in "official" matters. In turn, rather than censuring them, Hsüan-tsung showered them with gifts and favours; and they continued to be extravagant. Han-kuo, for example, gathered one hundred lamp trees, each eighty feet high, and their light exceeded the light of the moon (Wang Jen-yu, 27).

Then, during the tenth month, when Hsüan-tsung was at Hua-ch'ing Kung, the families would visit the emperor; and they would each go with their magnificently elaborate entourage. They were so wealthy that none could compare with them.36

The most offensive behaviour, however, was probably the incest between Yang Kuo-chung and Kuo-kuo; they were half brother and sister (CTS, 51; HTS, 76). Perhaps it was because of the relationship with Kuo-chung that this third sister was especially powerful. She led a raiding party of some one hundred workers to seize Wei Ssu-
li's residence. Not only that, she was also lax and lenient with her servants, who were bullies in their turn, but who also, like her, went unpunished (Chuang, 107).

Other connections

The Yang family's behaviour was not associated with either Buddhism or Taoism specifically. In a negative sense, however, the weakness of Confucianism was apparent. But there were actions during Hsüan-tsung's reign which could be related directly to Taoism.

As more kung-chu entered the convent, palace servants followed because they were required to care for the kung-chu, the rituals and the various institutional activities; and also because, as in Wan-an Kung-chu's case, she was given one thousand households when she became a Tao-shih in T'ien-pao 7 (748), which would have translated into a great deal of work (THY, 69). But in addition to this, the Taoist kuan (temple) also became a convenient place to retire old female servants (Li Feng-lin, 186).

Likewise, the kuan became a home to aging courtesans and prostitutes. This venue became so popular for working women after Hsüan-tsung's reign that it is difficult to consider a female Tao-shih without the association with prostitution. Li Kuei-lan, for example, who had been invited to the capital by Hsüan-tsung (Barrett, 71), is surrounded by innuendo that she was a sing-song girl before she became a Tao-shih (Chou, 68; see the section on
"Woman as friend, is equality possible?" in the "General Introduction" chapter).

But not all female Tao-shih were of such dubious origins. There was a woman by the name of Liu, wife of Chung Yuan-p'ei, and younger sister of Ch'uan-p'ai, who was initiated by Wu Chü (7-778). She is said to have been virtuous and well-educated. She authored an article called Mü-i (Rules for women), which was also known as Chih-hsün (Straightforward Instructions). Both her sons were government officials, as was one of her grandsons. She eventually lived as a hermit on Lu Shan.

In this way, women filled the institutions of religious Taoism under state patronage. But this presence of women was not reflected in philosophical Taoism; women are hardly considered in the "classical" Taoist texts.

TAOIST PHILOSOPHY AND WOMEN

Four Taoist texts, the Tao Te Ching, Chuang Tzu, Lieh Tzu and Wen Tzu were offered for the innovative Taoist state examinations instituted by Hsüan-tsung. Because of this, they will be the only texts included in the following analysis.

Tao Te Ching

First and foremost, the character nu, or woman, is not used in the book at all. Two characters are used instead: tz'u, which can be used for both human beings and animals; and p'in, which is used
exclusively for animals. P'in is first used in chapter six:

The spirit of the valley never dies.
This is called the mysterious female.
The gateway of the mysterious female
Is called the root of heaven and earth.
Dimly visible, it seems as if it were there,
Yet use will never drain it. (Lao Tzu, 6)

Then again in "One who possesses virtue in abundance is comparable to a new born babe: ...It does not know the union of male and female (ibid.:55)...." 38 And the last mention of it is as follows:

A large state is the lower reaches of a river -
The place where all the streams of the world unite.
In the union of the world,
The female always gets the better of the male by stillness.
Being still, she takes the lower position. (ibid., 61)

The use of the female is, notably, symbolic. In his commentary on Lao Tzu, Hsüan-tsung wrote that shen (spirit, god) functions mysteriously and is difficult to name; that is why the feminine "spirit of the valley" is used to explain it (Wang Chieh, 13). Hsüan-tsung then continues that it is also called the "mysterious female" because it is profound; and that the term is also used so that the accomplishment of the Great Way can be understood. It, the hsüan-pin, is able to ying39 (respond) infinitely, and thus can be the mother of all things (ibid., 14).

The feminine imagery, however, is used for male purpose - improving the art of government. This is not surprising when one considers the ease with which the text was singled out for government sponsorship; it reinforces doctrinally the all male temple pantheon of sages and ministers, as well as the all male

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government. More importantly, Lao Tzu confirms and supports the traditional place for women, which is lower, even if, unlike the Confucians, this time with sexual overtones. It is seen to be the advantage of the female to be still and lower, in other words, entirely passive, so that she can "get the better" of the male by stillness. Implied here is a natural passivity associated with femininity, which reinforces Confucian understanding.

There is one other place where male and female are considered together, and in turn associated with a baby.

Know the male
But keep to the role of the female
And be a ravine to the empire.
If you are a ravine to the empire,
Then the constant virtue will not desert you
And you will again return to being a babe. (Lao Tzu, 28)

While there is a preference for the feminine in the discussion of hsiung (male), and tz'u and p'in (female), neither term refers exclusively to human beings. Tz'u can be used for both animals and human beings, whereas pin is applied only to animals.

The promotion of the feminine, in its abstract nonhuman form, is apparent again in Hsüan-tsung's exposition of "When the gates of heaven open and shut/ Are you capable of keeping to the role of the female (ibid.:10)". Here, he refers to the I Ching, and writes that the opening and closing refers to changes, and that a sage uses emptiness and takes the way of the tz'u-pin to move with changes in order to use the many to benefit the one. 40

Nowhere in Hsüan-tsung's commentary is there the suggestion
that women are "equal" or hold an exalted place in human society. Rather, his exposition shows that men are enjoined to take the strategy of femininity, which is described as passive, lower and still. In other words, Ming Huang did not seem to have considered women nor the concerns for and about women to be a part of the Tao Te Ching. What Hsüan-tsung thought about Chuang Tzu is not known; but it is here that Taoist philosophy is most sympathetic to women.

Chuang Tzu

Like the Tao Te Ching, the Chuang Tzu is not so much anti-Confucian as supra-Confucian. And again, like the Tao Te Ching, the Chuang Tzu can be quite obscure. But whereas Lao Tzu's terseness is the cause of ambiguity, the Chuang Tzu's opacity is compounded by its style; that is, the use of parody, fictional characters, fanciful descriptions and lack of stable reference points. The result is that often the reader is not quite sure what the author's opinion might have been. Consider the following:

(T)here was great consternation in the world, and the Confucians and Moists all came forward, creating for the first time the rules of ethical behaviour. But what would they say of these men who nowadays make wives of their daughters? (Watson, 165)

What is the Chuang Tzu speaking to here? The hypocrisy of the Confucians, or the ineffectiveness of rules, or both? Is the author ignoring the role of the women completely? Or has he failed to consider them because he understands them to be "victims" and not mistresses of their own destiny? Can we deduce from any, or all of
this, that he was hostile to all attempts to improve behaviour? But the *Chuang Tzu* is notoriously hard to define; because of this, we can have no definitive answers.

The passage quoted above, if Watson is correct, did not stop Hsüan-tsung from making his daughter(-in-law) his wife. But perhaps he found truth in the following passage, in his relationship with Yang Kuei-fei.

The yin and yang shine on each other, maim each other, heal each other; the four seasons succeed each other, give birth to each other, slaughter each other. Desire and hatred, rejection and acceptance thereupon rise up in succession; the pairing of halves between male and female thereupon becomes a regular occurrence ... The principle of following one another in orderly succession, the property of moving in alternation, turning back when they have reached the limit, beginning again when they have ended - these are inherent in things. (Watson, 291)

We might gather from this that this author of the *Chuang Tzu* does not believe in the dominance of any one sex. Rather, the natural state is change within a cycle of polarities in which men and women relate to each other.

If the *Chuang Tzu* is unusual in the use of anecdotes, malformed and socially marginal characters, imaginary animals and nature spirits, it is exceptional also in the use of goddess-women as central characters without confining them to the traditional roles of mother, wife or daughter. In the author's creation of mythical women as wise women, he is comparable to the Buddhist writers who crafted the tales of the Naga Princess, the goddess who duelled with Sariputra and the almost historical Queen Srimala.

But it would be a mistake to accept this as evidence of sup-
port for women. Both the shamanistic tradition from which parts of the Chuang Tzu were drawn, and the popular religion to which the corporate Chuang Tzu became a patriarch, involve revelatory and ecstatic communication between the gods and human beings of the opposite sex. In this way, the Woman Crookback as teacher, and the Queen Mother of the West as sage, can hardly be considered a nod to feminist inclinations (Watson, 82-83).

As to the two other women included in the Chuang Tzu, they were primarily used as props to illustrate the qualities of the men in the story. First, there is the story about the crippled and conventionally unattractive Ai T'ai-to. Women are said to offer up themselves as his concubines when they hear him speak.

There can be many different "lessons" here. One might be that the inner beauty of a person far outweighs his external appearance. Another may be that women have enough intelligence to recognize a good man when they see one. But the focus of the story seems to be on Ai T'ai-to and how he is attractive to women. In this way, the women appear secondary in the story; they are almost presented as a reward for a man who practices the way diligently (ibid., 72).

The second story involves Chuang Tzu himself, and his reaction to the death of his wife. It is a touching story, but again, his love for his wife is secondary to the insight he gains about the inevitability of death (ibid., 191-192).43

Finally, there is the description of the sage, who is said to have skin like ice or snow, and is gentle and shy as a young girl (Watson, 33). But, like Lao Tzu's use of tz'u and pin, Chuang Tzu's
use of the feminine builds on conventional stereotypes and does not indicate an interest in or concern about women.

However, at the spiritual centre of Chuang Tzu's philosophy is unity. In this general way, women may be construed as equal to men. Hence this evocation: "Embrace the ten thousand things universally ... (For) the ten thousand things are unified and equal (ibid., 179)." The story about Lieh Tzu illustrates this well.

He went home and for three years did not go out. He replaced his wife at the stove, fed the pigs as though he were feeding people, and showed no preferences in the things he did. He got rid of the carving and polishing and returned to plainness, letting his body stand alone like a clod. In the midst of entanglement he remained sealed, and in this oneness he ended his life. (97)

Lieh Tzu becomes sexless, as a clod, which is reminiscent of the Great Clod, the symbol of the creator. In this, there is evidence that some parts of philosophical Taoism support the abolition of hierarchy of any sort.

This idealism is stated explicitly in the Lieh Tzu⁴⁴. In one description of paradise is this statement: "Old and young live as equals, and no one is ruler or subject; men and women mingle freely, without go-betweens and betrothal presents (Graham, 102)." And in the same spirit is the account of an imaginary country in the Far North-west.

In this country there are no teachers and leaders; all things follow their natural course. The people have no cravings and lusts; all men follow their natural course ... none of them dies before his time. They do not know how to prefer themselves to others, and so they neither love nor hate ... they make only journeys of the spirit. (34)
Yet, at the same time, there is acknowledgement of the social reality, and not only the professed ideal. To Confucius' question as to why he is joyous, Jung Ch'i-ch'i answers with three reasons: first, of the myriad things he could have been born as, he was fortunate enough to be born human; second, he was born a man, the more noble of the two sexes; and third, he has lived to ninety, and has enjoyed a long life (ibid., 24).

In other words, the inferiority of women within the material world is recognized by this author. But this is clearly not the whole story. The balance to this materialistic fragment is offered by a Lin Lei. He explains that he was joyful because he never learnt to behave himself when he was young; that he never strove to make his mark when he was growing up; that he had no wife and sons; and that he was old and close to his death (ibid., 25).

Confucius is then portrayed as telling Tzu-kung this: All men understand the joy of being alive but not its misery, the weariness of growing old but not its ease, the ugliness of death but not its repose. (Graham, 26)

It would seem then, that the first part of the story signified the traditional Confucian perspective; and that the second part demonstrated the Taoist attitude of having no preferences. In this, philosophical Taoism can perhaps be understood as not so much anti-Confucian as supra-Confucian, transcending and encompassing Confucian values.

Wen Tzu

Wen Tzu seems to bear this out. Under the section "Tao-te" (virtue), is this statement:
(If) chün ch'en (ruler and minister) have the tao, there will be loyalty and benevolence; (if) fu tzu (father and son) have the way, there will be kindness and filial piety; (and if) shih shu (officials and common people) have the way, there will be consideration and love. So it is that when there is the way, there is harmony; when there is no way, there is trouble. (462)

There is no mention of women here; the pivotal Confucian relationship between husband and wife is omitted. This would suggest that the main audience for the Wen Tzu would likely be male. The qualities espoused in the passage are traditional enough, however, that one might conclude that the expectations of women would also be traditional. This is reinforced by the section on "Shang-te" (superior virtue, or virtue of the ruler) which supports the traditional view that a woman should have only one husband:

One pool cannot hold two dragons; one female cannot have two males. When there is one, then there is stability; when there are two, then there is conflict." (480)

At the same time, in a passage on the sage, in the section titled "Shou-jao" (keeping to the weak), men are described as following the path of steadfastness, and women an unchanging one.46 This suggests that women, as well as men, can become sages; that men and women are viewed as equal in the pursuit of immortality.47

A more unconventional remark, however, comes in the section "Hsia-te" (lower virtue; or virtue of the people). It suggests that it is according to 1i that men and women live together and mix with each other as if there were no difference. This, of course, cannot be the 1i of the upper classes; and this is one of the few recorded hints that the social structure of the masses was understood to be

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very different from the upper classes; and it is only sensible that the strict segregation of men and women did not reach down to the lower classes. In this way, it also reflects the difference in the work of the mass of women, in contrast to upper class women.¹⁸

But aside from the comments made about women noted above, the Wen Tzu, like the three other texts, was really not concerned with nor directed at women. Although philosophical Taoism was radical and idealistic in its search for and advocacy of freedom, non-discrimination, peace, stability and universality, it had little specific to say about women.⁴⁹ Religious Taoism, on the other hand, focussed on the methods, some magical, of personal and national salvation, which both men and women could use for themselves, or for the benefit of others.

But in Taoism's accommodation of its competition, Confucianism and Buddhism, conservative elements crept in and mostly overwhelmed the more radical ones. Finally, in Hsüan-tsung's use of both, they became institutionalized, and began to be associated with imperial decadence and immoral behaviour.

In this way, Taoism lost its potential to challenge the status quo, or to be an "alternative" to the establishment. Rather, it became one version of a pan-Chinese religion, with the same underlying principles: such as the discipline of the senses; loyalty in the five Confucian relationships; and karma, rebirth, and celibacy in Buddhism.
1. Professor Paper notes that "there is some apparent confusion in the interrelating of daojia to daojiao. The first is not the ideological basis of the second, as could be read into the concluding statements. Secondly, different from rujia, its was not a continuing evolving tradition from the standpoint of ideological texts, although it was a developing, viable tradition in relation to the arts, etc. It is the daojiao tradition, with its relative sex egalitarianism that had the potential to influence the world of the elite."

This is true. The "apparent confusion" is attributable to two factors: First, even if the Daojia is not the only ideological basis of Daojiao, it is, however, one of its sources. Moreover, the simultaneous support of both by the state would suggest or "force" a more coherent than "true" relationship between the two, especially when one considers the claim to legitimacy through kinship to Lao Tzu.

Second, Daojiao's "relative sex egalitarianism" is not necessarily different from the Confucian idea of "separate spheres." Daojia's use and privileging of feminine imagery, but its general adherence to traditional (Confucian or popular/cultural) notions of the feminine (yielding, passive, etc.), go a long way to explain Daojiao's "capitulation" or apparent ease in "coopting" Buddhism's more anti-female stance.

2. K'eng-seng Tzu, listed with the other books as required reading for the state examinations on Taoist classics, is excluded because it was proven to be a forgery by Wang Shih-yüan. (Barrett, 67-68)

3. Sexual practices have not been included here because the writings of later Taoists like Tu Kuang-t'ing (850-933) suggest that a more conservative Taoism had been effected by both Buddhist and Confucian influences. This process will be discussed later in the chapter.

4. In high Taoist rituals, the technique of falling into trance is considered to be an "exaggerated but useless devotion at best, and as downright tomfoolery in most cases." (Schipper JAS, 34)

5. But, at the same time, unlike the fate of the Ta-yün Ching in Buddhism, the Taoist clergy disavowed a copy of the San-wang Ching (Classic of the Three Lords), which claimed that any woman who possessed it would become an empress (Barrett, 24). The source of this story, however, is Buddhist, taken from the encyclopedia Fa-yüan chu-lin; the credibility of this story is therefore strained.
6. See the section "Wei Hou participates in 'nan-chao', the summer solstice sacrifice" in the chapter on "The Imperial Women".

7. There is no mention of the statues of Lao Tzu's mother being removed after the fall of Wu Hou. Conversely, there is no mention that they were kept either.

8. See above note 4.

9. See Forte and Guisso for details on how Wu Hou used this sutra to fortify her rule as a cakravartin (world ruler).

10. The Ho-t'u or Lo-shu (Writing from the River Lo or the Lo Document) are "prototypes of heavenly responses". They confirm the notion of reciprocity between heaven and human beings, that heaven responds to virtue, thereby tacitly approving a particular person, time, or behaviour. (Robinet 1993, 24)

11. Chiao can be understood to be a cosmodrama: "a rite of cosmic renewal performed at regular intervals on behalf of the community by the Taoist clergy." (Cahill 1993, 162-63)

12. These numbers are given by the Ta T'ang Liu-tien. The Hsin Tang Shu has a different set of numbers: it lists 776 monasteries and 988 nunneries, totalling 1,764 institutions versus 1,687, which includes 1,137 for the monasteries and 550 for the nunneries. The statistics from the new history almost double the nunnery count. Regardless of which numbers are right, there was a substantial increase in the number of Taoist nuns from earlier times, especially if one considers that they would have been mostly located in the two capitals. (F.Y. Li, 163)

13. The comparison is not a direct one. One set of statistics is national, and for clerical residences only; whereas the other is local, restricted to the capital, Ch'ang-an, and includes the more general category of "establishments", and not just monasteries and nunneries. It should, nonetheless, convey a rough approximation of the proportionate difference in representation. Given this proviso, the 739 numbers can be considered an improvement for Taoists, from the situation in 722, when there were 91 Buddhist establishments in comparison to only 16 Taoist ones in Chang-an. In other words, there were almost 6 times more Buddhist institutions than there were Taoist ones. (Robinet, 187)

14. The number of clerical dwellings does not necessarily reflect the number of clergy, nor the extent of the congregation. However, the figures do offer a rough guide to the comparative popularity and strength of the two religions. The involvement of the court women, and the elaborate initiation ceremonies for Yu-chen and Chin-hsien Kung-chu, would suggest that Taoism was more an alternative for the aristocratic and the wealthy, whereas Buddhism

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was more the choice for the average woman.

15. He also ordered each household, I would assume here ministerial households, to possess a copy of the Tao Te Ching, replacing the Shang Shu and Lun-yü. (Robinet 1997, 186)

16. A Pao is believed to be miraculously sent by Heaven to signify approval and protection. Correspondingly, a fu, that is, a dynastic talisman, is understood to be Heaven's response and approval of a virtuous sage-king (Robinet 1993, 24).

17. See Barrett, Benn, Ching-ch'eng Liu and Isabelle Robinet for details.

18. See subsection "Immediate effects", under "The behaviour of the palace women ...", in the chapter on "Imperial Women".

19. See the section "Anecdotal accounts of princessly excesses" in the chapter on "The Imperial Women".

20. The full name for this scripture is Ling-pao Wu-liang Tu-jen Shang-pen Miao Ching. It was used as the scripture to be examined on for the official examination for investiture. (Bokenkamp 1997, 373).

21. I have been unable to find background information on this article. But even if the date is much earlier or later than the T'ang, the information should still be appropriate.

22. These three worlds, as Professor Priestley correctly noted, are Buddhist: kamaloka, rupaloka, and arupoloka.

23. See the section on "Yang Kuei-fei and Hsüan-tsung's retreat from court" in the chapter on Confucianism.

24. The ordination of T'ai-p'ing happened in 672. Cahill lists avoidance of marriage as a reason for a woman to be a nun. However, the second part of the same reason, to live an independent life away from the family, clearly did not apply to T'ai-p'ing. She was still very much a part of the imperial household. (1993, 216)

25. See footnote 26 in the chapter on Confucianism. Legally, a wife could not divorce her husband. For this reason, the contemporary legal structure has been used, rather than the relationship reflected by the personal entanglements.

26. This term is taken from Cahill, where she lists the reasons for becoming a Taoist nun. (216)
27. See the section on "The main sources describing the women at court", in the chapter on "Imperial Women", on the shift in perspective from the Chiu T'ang Shu to the Hsin T'ang Shu.

There are two different accounts of Yang Kuei-fei's entry into the nunnery. The Chiu T'ang Shu suggests that she had already joined the convent when she appeared in Taoist dress, with her religious name, T'ai-chen, when she was summoned to court by Hsüan-tsung, because someone had recommended an audience on the strength of her beauty. The Hsin T'ang Shu, on the other hand, recounts the emperor's meeting his son's wife before she was separated from her husband; then, the new history records that it was Yang Yü-huan who suggested that she become a Taoist priest, and arranged for a new wife for Shou Wang Mou.

This is consistent in the increased focus and attack on the women at court; the accounts on Yang Kuei-fei imply a growing hostility and willingness to assign blame disproportionately to women, and supports the hypothesis of an emergent theory of nü-huo.

28. When the Taoist priest Chang Kuo was given Yü-chên to wife, he refused. (Cheng Ch'u-hui, 11)

29. Benn has this as 753 (15). 743 is more likely because the transmissions were said to have taken place after she visited Ch'iao-chün to perform the rite to thank Lao Tzu for revealing the whereabouts of the T'ien-pao, on Hsüan-tsung's behalf (see point two below). It was in T'ien-pao 1 (742) that T'ien Wen-hsiu had dreamt about Lao Tzu; and Benn also uses 743 as the year she received the Pa-lu and San-tung Tzu-wen Ling-shu (15) on Sung Shan.

30. It is difficult to say whether there were many female priests. Li Lin-fu's 739 numbers show 550 nunneries; but this tells us very little about how many nuns there were, how active they were, and what activities they were involved in. This situation regarding Taoist nuns needs more research.

31. "The rite had the power to harmonize the forces of nature, prevent natural calamities and disasters, prolong the life of the emperor, and guarantee the prosperity of the empire." (Benn, 15)

32. See note 21 above.

33. Ch'ieh is used here as a diminutive form of I, of addressing oneself. I have kept the Chinese character because "lowly woman", "lowly me" or "concubine" all seem inappropriate.

34. This sounds strange, but I reasoned that access to a bath may have been, in medieval China, a mark of a great deal of wealth.
35. Note that most of the following passages are translations from the original sources. For the sake of easy reading, I have not cited them as direct quotes.

36. This is in the Chiu T'ang Shu and not the Hsin T'ang Shu.

37. I have been unable to find a copy of this, and assume that it is now lost.

38. The rest of Lau's translation is as follows: "... yet its male member will stir. This is because its virility is at its height." (Lao Tzu, 55) At Professor Priestley's suggestion that the newborn in Lao Tzu is not as indisputably male as Lau's rendition might convey, I read again this section in the original Chinese. This is my conclusion and the reason why I have not included it in the main text.

The ascription of maleness to the newborn by D.C. Lau may be considered over-interpretation. The Chinese words "... erh ch'uan-tso, ching chih chih yeh" can be translated as "(even though the newborn does not know the union of male and female, it) already (possesses) the complete functions (of sexual organs), (and) its essence reaches the ultimate."

39. See above note 9 in this chapter. That Heaven and Earth can and do kan-ying (that is, to be moved and to respond) is a central understanding of Taoism.

40. Under the hexagram Han, this explanation follows: "The chün-tzu receives people in emptiness." He is, above all, to be humble.

41. Because the Chuang Tzu is a multi-authored composite text, it should be noted that it contradicts itself in parts, and as a result, lacks consistency.

42. There are alternative translations to this passage, reinforcing the variance in interpretation for Chuang Tzu throughout. The following are two other translations: "At first the relationships were duty observed; but what about the women of today (Giles, 150)?" A second alternative is: "This so frightened the world that Confucianists and Mohists came into existence. Their rise was quite natural, but today they remind us of the ladies (Ware, 101)."

43. The hidden relevance and pointedness of this story comes from its comparison to the other male religious figures. First, there was Confucius, who is said to have divorced his wife. Then there was Mencius, who is said to have been filial to his mother but unjustifiably critical of his wife, according to his mother. And third and last, and certainly not the least, Gautama, whose mother is said to have died soon after his birth, and who reputedly repeat
edly refused entry to the sangha to his adoptive mother, who is also his mother's sister; and who also abandoned his wife and son to find enlightenment. Chuang Tzu, therefore, seems quite loving in comparison.

Professor Priestley notes that it is "hardly fair to compare the Buddha's going forth, a socially recognized act of renunciation for a higher good, to Confucius's divorcing his wife because (presumably) of some inadequacy on her part."

There is not enough information about Confucius's divorce to judge why he divorced his wife. However, one might suggest that divorcing one's wife who is immoral, for example, is within Confucianism a "recognized act of ... a higher good": namely the maintainence of ethical and spiritual purity of one's lineage. Put another way, taking to heart the consideration of familial benefit (the cutting off a diseased limb of a wife) over personal passions (love of one's wife) is the religious responsibility of a chun-tzu.

44. Like the Chuang Tzu, the Lieh Tzu is also a composite text.

45. Although one can never be entirely sure that this is fictional, it should be quite safe to speculate that this account of Tzu-Kung and Confucius is imaginary.

46. "So it is, for those who discourse on achieving the method of the mind, that when it comes to indulging in what is desired and distancing what is hated ... that there is nothing that (the sage) delights in, nothing that (she) is angered by, nothing that gives (her) happiness, and nothing that makes (her) suffer. The ten thousand things are mysteriously the same; there is no negative and no positive. That is why men have the discourse of unitary steadfastness; and women have the path of no change." (Wen Tzu, 433)

"Unitary steadfastness", i-ting, can also be translated as "unitary tranquility". To reflect and achieve symmetry with "the path of no change", however, "unitary steadfastness" seems more appropriate.

47. This is not different from the Confucian idea that women are just as able as men to cultivate their virtue, or the majority Buddhist view that both sexes have Buddha Nature. It is only that the methods are different for men and women in the two indigenous philosophies, and the same for Buddhism; and that the objectives are also different in the division of inner and outer realms in Confucianism, but the same in immortality for Taoism, and enlightenment for Buddhism.

48. See section V, "Commoners", in Appendix A, for the responsibilities of the wife of a commoner.
49. Professor Lynn comments that although little was said about women, "woman's way is the right way."

This is true, to an extent. When we consider that "the Way that can be spoken/taken is not the true Way," however, "woman's way" appears not to be as definitive. Moreover, the willingness to use violence in the Tao Te Ching, for example, "to arrest and put to death those who innovate"(136), suggests a strategy that is decidedly "non-womanly".
CONCLUSION
There is no doubt that Hsüan-tsung's China was a man's China. To be sure, a woman of that time was freer than a woman in later dynastic China; but a woman remained junior in law, reflecting traditional notions of tsun and p'i. Moreover, a woman was not accountable for a family in the way that a man was; and even after a woman had left her family and joined a Buddhist or Taoist church, she would still have been subject to the authority of the monks or priests.

It was Hsüan-tsung's indulgence of his consorts and his love of music and dance that allowed for a climate of relative freedom for women - in movement, and in recreational, cultural and educational opportunities. Paradoxically, however, it was his policies aimed at curtailing both the real and symbolic power of palace women like Wei Hou, An-lo and T'ai-p'ing Kung-chu that were transmitted to later generations. For example, he reversed his grandmother, Wu Hou's, innovation of instituting the same degree of mourning for both father and mother in the case of the other still being alive; Hsüan-tsung reduced the three years back down to one year of mourning for one's mother if the father was still alive.

So it was that even as women gained social freedom, they lost political and legal advantages gained under Kao-tsung, Wu Hou and Chung-tsung's reigns. Upper class women, especially, felt the effects of the reduced symbolic significance in the Empress's role. The demotion and banishment of Hsüan-tsung's one and only empress, Wang Hou, resulted in Hsüan-tsung's performance of state rituals by himself; this solitary ritual performance was justified by his
ministers through the attribution of his symbolic cosmic bisexuality. More importantly, later historians judged that even though he had started with the "right", Confucian way he was ultimately waylaid by women; and that this deviation was manifested in his growing extravagance and later laissez-faire policies. These actions would inadvertently contribute to the gradual decline in the freedom in the lives of women because it formed one part in the explanation for nü-huo.

Ming Huang's favouring of Wu Hui-fei, Yang Kuei-fei and An Lu-shan was pivotal to the cause of restraining women and restricting their sphere of influence, championed by later historians like Fan Tsu-yü, Ou-yang Hsiu and Ssu-ma Kuang. The two concubines and his "adopted" son, the foreign general, along with Wu Hou and Wei Hou, the progenitors of nü-huo, and others like T'ai-p'ing and An-lo served to illustrate disloyalty and the dangers in women who overstepped their boundaries as outlined in the Li Chi, Shih Ching and Shu Ching, and summarized in the section on "Pernicious and Depraved" women in Liu Hsiang's Lieh-nü Chuan.

This classical interpretation of the palace women as a cause of instability and chaos within a century of peace and stability that lasted three generations and five emperors was buttressed by Tung Chung-shu's traditional notions of yin and yang. In turn, this was reinforced by Buddhist beliefs in the impurity and inferiority of women. The anti-woman lü that resulted from this predictably limited the reputations and scope of activity for nuns;
they were considered junior to the monks, no matter how old they were, thereby eliminating the one avenue of seniority for women in Confucianism: age. Furthermore, unlike her Confucian counterpart who had the distinctive and theoretically indispensable role of "inner counsellor", the nun held no such special role within the sangha. It was, therefore, in these ways that Buddhism eroded the place of women in Chinese society.

As to laywomen, many became Ching-t'u devotees. Here, in this sect, the esteem for women was worn even thinner; women learnt that they would be protected and saved by O-mi-t'o-fo if they prayed to him with a sincere wish of forsaking their female bodies. The promise to believers was simply this: If they called on O-mi-t'o-fo with all their minds and hearts, they would be transformed into men when they die and born into the Pure Land of the West, thereby circumventing human rebirth. As more and more women sought refuge in the sangha, these ideas of female impurity, inferiority and transformation gained broad currency and added a new layer to the indigenous Confucian impulse of containing the power and influence of women.

As to state sponsored Shang-ch'ing Taoism, it had, by the T'ang, adopted various conservative Confucian and Buddhist ideas. For example, women were considered junior to men rather than complementary; and, as in the Ching-t'u sect, women could seek salvation by praying for transformation to a male body. But perhaps the most damaging element, evaluated through the eyes of later Neo-Confucians, was the use of the Taoist kuan as a sanctuary
for women during the early T'ang, but especially during Hsüan-tsung's reign: First, as an escape for T'ai-p'ing Kung-chu in her avoidance of ho-ch'in to the Tibetans; second, as a transitional stop for Wu Hou and Yang Kuei-fei before they married their respective second husbands; and third, as a "retirement home" for courtesans and princesses. This employment of Taoism by the imperial household and female entertainers very likely diminished the chances of Taoism being an ameliorant in the lives of women.

In the end, the conservative Neo-Confucian perspective on women that arose after the fall of Hsüan-tsung, delineated by writers like Sung Jo-hsin and Han Yü of the T'ang, and Ou-yang Hsiu, Ssu-ma Kuang and Chu Hsi of the Sung, was the result of many factors. These factors included traditional notions of yin and yang, conservative legal views of women, Buddhist beliefs in the "otherness" of women, Ming Huang's indulgence of Wu Hui-fei, Yang Kuei-fei and An-lu-shan, his favouring of the Yang family, and his attempt to raise Taoism above Confucianism, and the Taoist acquiescence to all the above.

But whereas the various streams flowed together to form an unfriendly Buddhho-Taoist-Confucian view on women, it is likely that the use of Buddhism and Taoism by the state increased the ire and resentment of later Confucian scholars. It is perhaps because of this that Buddhism and Taoism were isolated and then targeted in an attempt to ensure that neither will ever again challenge Confucianism in the same way. Ironically, it was probably this dominance of Confucianism on the state level that precluded the
more radical and potentially liberating notions about women, in both Taoism and Buddhism, from the theorizing about women in the circles of the philosophizing Confucian elite.

Perhaps it was in this battle of the religions that the fates of women were sealed. The association of Wu Hou with Buddhism, and T'ai-p'ing and Yang Kuei-fei with Taoism, gained them no favour. Moreover, with Buddhism tangled up in its own misogyny, and the Taoist establishment rendered as conservative as the Buddhist and Confucian institutions on the issue of women, presumably to gain popularity, women lost potent allies in the more radical edges of the two alternatives to Confucianism.

In the end, therefore, both as a "victim" of female power and the author of policies curbing the power and influence of women, Hsüan-tsung's reign, or more accurately, his fall, was seen by Neo-Confucians as marking the end of a hundred years of nü-huo in the early T'ang. In retrospect, Neo-Confucians understood this to be an important transition from peace and stability to chaos and instability. For this reason, therefore, the An Lu-shan rebellion signaled a significant shift in the conceptualization of women in medieval China.
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<td>Chiu T'ang shu</td>
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<td>CYCT</td>
<td>Ch'ao -yeh ch'ien tsai</td>
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<td>KTCHC</td>
<td>K'ai T'ien ch'uan hsin chi</td>
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<td>TTHY</td>
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Tradition has it that the *Nü-hsiao Ching* (The Scripture of Filial Piety for Women) was written by a Lady Ch'eng, wife of a certain Miao, a minor official during Hsüan-tsung's reign. She presented it to the throne in K'ai-yian 13 (726), on the occasion of her niece's marriage to Yung Wang.

Lisa Raphals writes in *Sharing the Light* that this treatise not only emphasizes the "distinctions between men and women, but (that it) also stresses the importance of women cultivating talent both in household management and in their ability to admonish their husbands indirectly." She goes on to note that the "work is written by a woman for women." (252)

The following is a translation of *Nü-hsiao Ching* from a 1922 collection with neither title nor publication date. It can be called up under Huang-ti Shou San-tzu Hsuan-nü Ching (The Scripture of the Mysterious Maiden as Taught by the Yellow Emperor to His Three Sons), BP1714 C5 H83. It is also included in *Nü-erh Shu-chi* (A Collection of Readings for Young Girls). Again there is no publication date; the call number is PL1115 C42 1903.¹

**Cheng presents her treatise to the emperor**

Your humble servant has heard that it is the nature of heaven and earth to treasure the (principles of) strength and softness, (as) the way of husband and wife emphasizes li and i. Jen, i, li, chih, and hsin² are the five eternal principles. The source of these five eternal principles is in the distant past. In summary, the primary focus is on hsiao (filial piety). The filial person affects (even) the ghosts and spirits, and moves heaven and earth. There is nothing that its essence does not reach, and it uses the way of husband and wife as the beginning of all relations. To examine its gains and losses is no small job. The I Ching emphasizes ch'ien and k'un, which is why there is differentiation in the system of yin and yang.

¹ I have provided the University of Toronto call numbers in case a reader might wish to look at the copy I was working from. The dates 1922 and 1903 are the library acquisition dates and not the publication dates.

² These are benevolence, righteousness, behaviour in accord with rites, wisdom and trustworthiness.
Under the li of high officials is the fact of husband and wife. Each time your humble servant Ch'en scans the words left by the ancient sages, and looks to the actions taken by these sages who have gone before, never has there not been three (attempts at) self-examination and sighs for a long time, (as your humble servant) fondly hopes that the excellent past impressions can caution your humble servant's niece. (This is) especially so that (she might) meet Your divine favour: (Your) plan (for her) to be the wife of (Your son), Yung-wang.

Since infancy she has grown up in the women's quarters; (and) she has not transgressed the Shih (Book of Odes) and Li (Book of Rites). As to having an audience (with the emperor as outlined in) the classics, (it is feared that she will be) offensive as if (she were) uneducated; (so) day and night (she is) worried and terrified. (This is why your humble servant) hands over this collection, so that the principles can be a guide to the way of women.

(Your humble servant) presents to the emperor the ritual of wife and concubine, which narrates and determines, at the same time, the true meaning of the classical books and histories. (Because there are) no alternatives, hence it is recorded (here). These unworthy words come to eighteen chapters, each forming a section. (It) is entitled Mū-hsiao Ching. From the empress down to the common woman, it is unheard of that there should be a woman who achieves fame without practising filial piety.

Your humble servant dares assume to act on her own responsibility: although (the writing) is not (good) enough that it would be hidden in the various grottoes, yet it can in a small way help (relations in) the inner quarters. (Your humble servant) must forthwith presume that (Your Highness) has not heard of this, which is why (your humble servant) prostrates at an imperial audience waiting for punishment. Your humble servant Cheng sincerely fears death and punishment. (The fear of) death and punishment engender careful words.

Section I: Understanding righteousness in the start of a lineage

Ts'ao Ta-chia had some free time and the ladies-in-waiting sat (with her); Ta-chia said: "In the old days, the sage-emperor's two daughters understood the way of filial piety. They were married off to Kuei-jui (and) were humble, yielding, respectful, frugal. Having considered extensively the Way of women, (they were also) virtuous, bright and full of wisdom. To avoid difficulties with

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3 The "hidden" quality might suggest the sacred or revelatory nature of the texts.
people, you (must) listen to this." The women retreated from their seats and spoke these words: "(We) women are stupid; (we) have not understood the great one's last lectures. (Now we) will stop to hear your words."

Ta-chia said: "To learn, (you must) concentrate. (If you have a question), ask it so it can be answered. Listen often and set aside points you are doubtful of; (this) can be your guide to life. If you can hear these words, act according to your duties. I will explain them to you. People who are filial are abundant over heaven and earth. Be generous in human relations (so that you will) move ghosts and spirits, and affect the animals. Show respect according to propriety; act after careful consideration; do not boast of your goodness; be harmonious, gentle, pure, chaste, submissive, benevolent, intelligent, filial, compassionate, virtuous, then (you will have success on your path) and there will be no censure.

The Shu says: What is hsiao? Hsiao is simply being kind as to a younger sibling; this is its meaning.

Section II: The Empress and Imperial Concubines

Ta-chia said: A happy marriage and many children are the virtues of the empress and imperial concubines. (Their) concern is in improving (their) goodness and not to be lascivious in their sexuality; day and night to contemplate, to the point of anxious diligence, so that moral teachings will be increased among the people and punishment will be (used) in the four seas. The above constitute the "hsiao" of the imperial women.

The Shih says: "The sound of drums and bells in the palace can be heard outside."

Section III: Officials

A senior person can occupy a position of respect and restrain (herself); (she) can evaluate her hard work with no self-interest; and she understands what she sees and hears. A household of Shih and Shu practices the way of ritual and music, and acts according to them. That is why to be famous without goodness is considered a calamity. To have little virtue and be in a senior position is regarded to be hampered by injury. How can there be no warning? To assume responsibilities calmly and act in an upright way, not to lose rituals so that descendants can be harmonized and the ancestral temple preserved, the above are the hsiao of the wives of the officials. The I says: "Prevent evil, preserve sincerity, and virtue will be extensive and transform (the people)."

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Section IV: Heads of State

If it is not according to the law of ritual, do not dare to wear (inappropriate) clothing. If it is not the words of the Shih and Shu, dare not speak it. If it is not moral behaviour according to trustworthiness and righteousness, dare not do it. If (you) do not wish people to hear (of something), (you) must not comply and speak of it. If (you) do not wish people to know, (you) must not conform and behave (that way). If (you) do not wish people to spread rumours, (you) must not comply and take that path. Prepare yourselves with these three, then you will keep the ancestral rites. The above are the hsiao of the wife of the state ruler.

The Shih says: "To gather artemisia at fishponds on islets, (the point is in) its function. This is the work of ministers."

Section V: Commoners

In performing the way of a wife, share the benefit of righteousness. Put others first and yourself last. Look after your parents-in-law by weaving garments, making sacrifices and offerings at the altar. These form the hsiao of the common person's wife. The Shih says: "Women do not participate in public affairs; (they) rest in the cultivation of silkworms and weaving."

Section VI: Serving Parents-in-law

A woman, in serving her parents-in-law, respects (them) the same as her father, and loves (them) as her mother. This is the meaning of "the person who serves equally". To be the person who administers (household duties, this is according to) ritual. When the rooster first crows, wash and rinse your mouth, get dressed in order to greet (your in-laws). In winter, keep them warm; in summer, keep them cool. Be tranquil in the evening and alert in the morning. (Cultivate) reverence in order to straighten the women's quarters; have righteousness in order to square (morally) the outside. Establish li and hsin (trustworthiness) and then act.

The Shih says: "A woman has to journey far from her siblings and parents.

Section VII: Three Talents

The women asked: "Is the husband's greatness that great?" Ta-chia

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4 The three are Heaven, Earth and Humans.
replied: "The person of husband is Heaven. How can (you) not serve him? In ancient times, when a woman married, it was known as returning home. To move Heaven, (from your father's house), to serve your husband, (its) meaning has ancient roots; it is the teaching of Heaven. The righteousness of Earth is the conduct of humans. (To embrace) the nature of Heaven and Earth as a human being, this is the principle of Principles. Heaven's brilliance exists because of Earth's gain. Prevent indolence, attend to ritual, (and you) can complete your family. Then first act with universal love; (but) a chün-tzu (a virtuous person) does not forget her (duties of) hsiao and tz'u (compassion); (she) manifests them in te (virtue) and i (righteousness), (and) the chün-tzu acts on them happily. Before all else, use respectful yielding; a chün-tzu does not argue with others. Using ritual and music, a chün-tzu harmonizes and demonstrates good and bad. A chün-tzu knows (what is) prohibited.

The Shih says: "If you understand this philosophy, you will be able to protect yourself."

Section VIII: Government by Hsiao

Ta-chia said: "During ancient times, a good woman used hsiao to govern the nine degrees of kin. (She) dared not abandon the wives of the lowly and the young; how much more, then, her younger siblings. That is why she gained the delight of her six relations. (She who) uses the service of her parents-in-law as family governance would not dare to insult (even) the chickens and dogs, how much more, then, (her avoidance of ridiculing) hsiao-jen (inferior persons). That is why they gain the approval of high and low. (She who) uses the serving of her husband to manage the inner quarters dare not lose the respect of the servants, let alone then, (the respect) of a chün-tzu. Therefore, (she is) able to win over others. From the serving of her parents, of course, comes the sacrifice to settle peacefully her parents (at their death), so that their ghosts may (still) enjoy (what they had in life). These are used to keep the nine degrees of kin in harmony. If the distinction between wealth and poverty are not generated, disaster will not be created. That is why a good woman uses hsiao to govern

5 This is quoted from Classic of Filial Piety, chapter seven. See Julia Murray, 1988: 98 and 107.
6 This is also quoted from Classic of Filial Piety, (ibid., 99 and 107.
7 The six relations include parents, siblings, spouse and child(ren).
the high and low ranks.

Thus the Shih says: "Neither forgetful nor erring, observe the old rules." 8

Section IX: Wise and Intelligent

The women said, "Dare we ask about the virtue of wives: Is there nothing that should be added to wisdom?" Ta-chia said: "People have Heaven and Earth to carry yin and hold yang; they have the nature of intelligence and wisdom. (If they) practice, there is nothing that cannot be of benefit; how much more if (one) uses (one's) heart-mind. Formerly, King Chuang of Ch'u was late in holding audience at court. Fan-nü entered and said: "Why have you ended court so late; do you not feel tired?" The King said: "Today (I) spoke with a virtuous person, (and am) happy so that I do not feel that it is late." Fan-nü said: "Dare (your humble servant) ask with which virtuous person you were speaking?" (The King) said: "Yu Ch'iu-tzu." Fan-nü covered her mouth and laughed. The King was surprised and asked her (about her reaction). She replied: "Yu Ch'iu-tzu may be virtuous but he is not yet loyal. Your humble servant has been fortunate enough to serve in the back palace as a lady-in-waiting for eleven years, managing toiletries and cleaning. Your humble servant has been promoted to chiu-nü; currently, there are two who are more senior (and) seven with equal status. Your humble servant understands the love that could thwart a concubine, (so that) favour would be taken away from the concubine. Yet, (your humble servant) would not dare to use the private to cloud the public, (and so) wishes the King to observe more and listen broadly. Yu Ch'iu-tzu has now held his position for ten years; the people he recommends are, if not his descendants, then relatives from his ancestral clan. (I) have not heard any report that he advances the good and retires the bad; how can that be considered virtuous? The King told him this and Yu Ch'iu-tzu did not know what to do. So he avoided his home and slept in the open in the inner apartments of the palace. (The King) then sent someone to welcome Sun Shu-ao, and received him, and made him a minister. So it was with the wisdom of one conversation that the feudal lords did not dare to spy on (Ch'u); and his army finally conquered (all) in the country. This was due to the efforts of Fan-nü.

The Shih says: "One who wins people over, prospers; one who loses people, perishes." It is also said: "The harmony of words, it is good."

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8 This whole section is taken from the Shih Ching, poem no. 249, "Admirable and Amiable". See footnote 35 in Murray, 1988: 107.
Section X: Recording Virtuous Conduct

Ta-chia said: "A woman, in serving her husband, puts up her hair to greet him; thus (she) has the dignity of (the interaction between) a lord and his ministers. In pouring water (for her husband) to wash (his) hands, and in offering food, there is the respect between father and son. In announcing (one's) retreat before going, there is the way of older and younger siblings. Being always sincere over time, there is the trust between friends. Having no blemish in word or deed, there is thus the capacity for managing the home. Prepare (yourself) with these five attributes; then you can serve your husband. When in a position of privilege, do not be proud; when in a lowly position, do not be disorderly. (When) among your own class, do not compete for advantage and become proud and thereby endanger (yourself); (if you are) in a lowly position and become disorderly, (you will) embarrass (yourself); (if) among your own class (you) compete, (you will) become cunning. (If) these three traits are not eliminated, even though (your marriage) is harmonious as the harp and lute, (you) are still not fulfilling the role of a wife.

Section XI: Five Punishments

Ta-chia said: "The five punishments belong to the three thousand (laws); yet there is no crime greater than jealousy. That is why it is at the head of the seven reasons for divorce. Be virtuous, submissive, correct, straight, harmonious, gentle, and without jealousy; manage (what is) within the secluded women's quarters, and have no communication with the outside world. (A woman's) eyes do not follow beauty; (her) ears do not linger on sounds; the desires of (her) ears and eyes do not go beyond her work: that is the teaching of the sages. You (should) walk that path.

The Shih says: "(When you encounter) an excellent deportment and an insinuating appearance, be very careful. This ancient teaching is an example; the dignity of decorum is strength.

Section XII: Explaining the Essential Way

Ta-chia said: "In serving (her) husband's siblings, a woman must be strenuous and exhaust li. In receiving or serving (her) brothers' wives, (she) must incline (her) heart-mind and empty righteousness. (She) uses kindness in soothing those who have no family, and wisdom when aiding a chün-tzu; in responding to (her) brothers' wives (she is) trustworthy. (Her) countenance, when entertaining
guests, comes close to reverence; when dealing with wealth, (she is) incorruptible and generous. Not unlawful in action, (she will) surely be moral. Virtuous, yielding, strenuous in effort, (she) avoids laziness, and finally, is careful. When speaking, (she) uses sparingly words obsessed with passions. In public places, (she) always covers (her) face. At night, (she) walks with the light of a candle; if there are no candles, (she) stops. Sending off her brothers (she) does not step beyond the threshold (of the inner quarters). This is the essential Way of a woman. You must remember this.

Section XIII: Explaining Trustworthiness

The Way of establishing Heaven is called yin and yang; the Way of establishing earth is called softness and strength. Yin and yang, strength and softness are the beginning of Heaven and Earth. Male and female, husband and wife, are the start of human relationships. When ch'ien and k'un are intimate, who can come between them? The wife is Earth, the husband Heaven; not one can be dispensed with. Thus when the husband has a hundred tasks, the wife (works along him) with one will. For men there is the principle of remarriage; for a woman, there is no writing that supports remarriage. (In) this, the wife of Tsai's" Plantago Poem" can be used as an admonition; (her) firmness of will is to be admired. The widowed wife of Wei" understood shame. Formerly, King Chao of Ch'u went out for a pleasure trip, leaving Chiang, (his wife), on the Ch'ien Terrace. As the river was rising, the King had made an agreement with his wife that the person (he would) send to meet and rescue her must have the Seal of Commission. (The King dispatched) an official who left hurriedly without taking leave (of the King) and so did not carry the Seal of Commission. When he reached Chiang,

10 "The Wife of the Man of Tsai" is the fourth entry in the section entitled "Chaste and Obedient" in O'Hara (trans.), Lieh-nü Chuan, (107-108). She disregarded her mother's advice to change her betrothed.

11 "The Widowed Wife of Wei" is the third narrative from the same section as footnote seven (ibid., 106-107). The daughter of the Marquis of Ch'i was "given in marriage to the prince of Wei and she arrived at the city gate only to find the duke dead but she did not turn back." She entered Wei and mourned for three years, after which the current prince asked to marry her; she refused to violate her widowhood and wrote: "My heart is not a stone; It cannot be rolled. My heart is not a mat; It cannot be folded away."

12 "Chiang, Wife of Ch'u Chao-wang" is also in the "Chaste and Obedient" section of the Lieh-nü Chuan, (117-118). It is narrative ten in O'Hara.
(she) said: "This inferior person has heard that a chaste woman, on principle, does not go against an agreement. A courageous person does not fear her death. Not leaving, this inferior person understands that it will be certain death; but (there is) no Seal, (and a person) dares not counter an agreement. Leaving will ensure life, but staying alive without trustworthiness is not equal to keeping to righteousness and dying. Understanding (Chiang's resolve), the official returned to pick up the Seal. In the meantime, the water rose and the high terrace collapsed. (Hence Chiang) preserved her trustworthiness; thus you (should emulate) her example to encourage yourselves.

The I says: "The crane cries at Yin, (and) the virtuous are harmonized by it."  

Section XIV: Explaining Fame

Ta-chia said: "A woman serving her parents is filial piety; and accordingly, this loyalty can be transferred to her parents-in-law. In serving her sisters, (there) is righteousness; and accordingly, this yielding can be transferred to her sisters-in-law. Because of (the soundness of her) household management principles, her principles can be heard by her six degrees of relatives". This is to use (proper) actions to succeed within the inner quarters, and to establish fame for future generations.

Section XV: Censuring Unprincipled Actions

The women asked: "If, indeed, one can gain fame so that people will hear of one's life by being modest, chaste, filial and righteous, (and by) serving one's mother-in-law, and respecting (one's) husband, dare (we) ask how a wife's following her husband's commands is considered virtuous?" Ta-chia said: "What words are these? In ancient times, (when) King Hsuan of Chou was late to court, Queen Chiang  took off her hairpins and earrings  and awaited (the

13 This is taken from the Chung Fu (Inner Truth). The suggestion is "of influence at a distance" (Wilhelm and Baynes, 701). Confucius reputedly commented on this line thus: "The superior man abides in his room. If his words are well spoken, he meets with assent at a distance of more than a thousand miles... Through words and deeds the superior man moves heaven and earth. Must one not, then, be cautious?" (ibid., 237-238)

14 These are her parents, brothers, husband and children.

15 "Queen Chiang of (King) Hsuan of the Chou Dynasty" appears as the first narrative in the section, "Virtuous and Wise" of the
judgement of) her crime in the Yung-hang. (From then on), King Hsuan rose early for her. Han Ch'eng-ti ordered Pan Chieh-yü to accompany him in his carriage; Chieh-yü refused, saying: "Your humble servant has heard that the brilliant emperors of the Three Dynasties all had virtuous ministers at (their) sides; (it was) unheard of that concubines rode with (them); Ch'eng-ti changed his countenance for her. King Chuang of Ch'u was addicted to riding and hunting, but Pan-nü would not eat the wild game. King Chuang was moved and abandoned hunting for her. From this, (you) can observe that (if) the Son of Heaven is cautious, even if (his) ministers are without principles, he will not lose his empire. (If) the feudal lords are cautious, even if (their) ministers have no principles, (they) will not lose their territories. (If) the officials are cautious, even if their ministers are without principles, (they) will not lose (their) families. (If) scholars are cautious, their friends will not be apart (from those who have) good reputations. (If) a father is cautious, (his) son will not, therefore, fall into unrighteousness. (If) a husband is cautious, (his) wife will not, therefore, enter into heterodox ways. It is because Wei-nü reformed Duke Huan of Ch'i that (he) no longer listened to lascivious music. Chiang of Ch'i chased Duke Wen of

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16. These actions signify that a woman is guilty of some fault and expected to be judged and punished.

17. This is a long corridor where guilty palace women were kept.

18. Pan Chieh-yü was a favourite of the emperor's until she was displaced by Chao Fei-yen. Her biography is the fourteenth account under "Supplementary Biographies", in the Lieh-nü Chuan, (230-235). She was an aunt to Pan Chao, the Han author of Nü Chieh.

19. "Chi, nee Fan, of King Chuang of Ch'u" is number five under "Virtuous and Wise" (O'Hara, 56-58).

20. "Chi of Wei, Wife of Duke Huan of Ch'i" is included as number two under "Virtuous and Wise" in the Lieh-nü Chuan (O'Hara, 50-52). Duke Huan reputedly said: "Let the wife rule the inner apartments and Kuan Chung manage outer affairs. I, (the King), although unwise, am still capable of establishing my place in the world."

21. "Chiang of Ch'i, Wife of Duke Wen of Chin" is number three under "Virtuous and Wise" (O'Hara, 52-54). She is described as "just and honest" even though she killed a servant. "Her words and actions were not careless. She urged Wen of Chin to action and also to return to his kingdom without doubting. The Duke's (Hsien,
Chiu (out of Ch'i), and (he) succeeded in his bid for hegemony. That is why, if your husband is not behaving according to the Way, you should caution him. In addition, (if he is correct, you should) obey (your) husband's commands. (In doing so,) you will attain virtue.

The Shih says: "When a plan has not proceeded far, it is right to use great caution."

Section XVI: Instructing the Fetus in the Womb

Ta-chia said: "Human beings have received (from Heaven) the principle of the five constant virtues. (A person is) born and has a particular nature. In practice, feeling goodness (she) will be good; feeling evil (she) will be evil. Although (the fetus) is nurtured in the womb, it is as if it has not been taught. In ancient times, a woman who was pregnant did not sleep on her side; did not lean when sitting; did not break (the practice) of standing (in attendance); did not eat food with perverse tastes; did not answer to heretical ways. She did not eat food (that) was not cut properly; (nor) sit on a mat (that) was not straight. (Her) eyes did not look at evil objects. (Her) ears did not listen to extravagant sounds. (There were) no arrogant words (from her) mouth. (Her) hands will pick up no perverse instruments. In the evening, (she) will chant the classics. In the morning, she will speak of li and yüeh (music). The child she will give birth to will have form and countenance which are proper and correct, (and whose) talents and virtues will exceed others. The instruction of the fetus in the womb is thus.

Section XVII: Correct Deportment of Mothers

Ta-chia said: "Being someone's mother, (you must) understand the li of being a mother. Use love to harmonize your children; instruct them with sternness and resolution. In action, be fitting to li; in speech, always quote the classics. When a boy is six, teach him numbers and the names of places. At seven, boys and girls must not sit or eat together. At eight, they (should be) learning the Hsiao Hsüeh (The Small Learning). At ten, (their obedience) will be to a teacher. They will announce their going out, and they must present themselves when they return. Their excursions must have a regular itinerary. What is being learnt must be completed. Your dwelling is not to claim precedence over the place of the household gods. Do not sit in the middle of the mat. Do not walk in the

who had been assassinated) son (Wen) would not listen. Chiang plotted with Fan (Wen's uncle) to get him drunk and carry him off. In the end he became the feudal lord of the whole country."
middle of the road. Do not stand in the middle of the door. Do not scale heights, (and) do not visit (cavernous) and hollow places. Do not slander carelessly nor laugh carelessly. Do not have private wealth. When standing you must be straight and correct; your ears do not eavesdrop. Allow for the differences between men and women, and keep your distance (in order) to escape suspicion. Do not use the same towel and comb. When a girl is seven, teach her according to the four virtues and the deportment of motherhood.

Thus the mother of An-shu of the Huang-fu family has said: "Meng-mu moved three times so that she could teach (Meng-tzu) to be a good person. To preserve and pass on a teaching (based on) butchering, to trust in where (you) reside and not ask about the neighbourhood renders you dull in understanding in the extreme.

The Shih says: "To instruct your child, (you) must treat it as if you were growing grain."

Section XVIII: Raising the Issue of the Bad

The women said: "The goodness and respect in the Way of women is heard through the lives (of others). We humble ones are unintelligent and are willing to dedicate our whole lives to practicing it. Dare we ask if the people of old also had dishonourable women?" Ta-chia said: "The rise of the Hsia dynasty was (due to Yu's power) at T' u-shan; its destruction was due to Mo-hsi. The rise of Yin was because of Hsin; its destruction was because of Tan-chi. The rise of Chou because of T'ai-jen; its destruction was with Pao-ssu. The kings of these three dynasties all lost their empires because of women. (They) died and their empires were

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22 These four include her appearance, which is to be clean and tidy but not seductive; her virtue, which is to be manifested in chaste and benevolent behaviour; her work, which includes making sacrifices, preparing food, and weaving clothes for the family; and lastly, her speech, which is to be gentle and straightforward, and which need not be clever or scholarly.

23 "Mo-hsi of Chieh of the Hsia Dynasty" is the first narrative under "Pernicious and Depraved Women" in the Lieh-nü chuan (186-187).

24 "Tan-chi of Chou of the Yin Dynasty" is the second entry under "Pernicious and Depraved Women" (187-189).

25 "Pao-Ssu of King You of Chou" is also listed under "Pernicious and Depraved Women" in the Lieh-nü Chuan, as the third entry (189-192).
lost, how much more so (the suffering of the feudal lords); and how much more so the scholar-officials; and how much more so the common people. So the disastrous death of Shen-sheng started with Li-nu's accusation about (his poisoning) the sacrificial wine and meats. To give rise to nan-feng, from this you can observe it. Women who bring prominence to their families, there are these; women who bring disaster to their families, there are those too. (The extent of their destructiveness is) as Ch'en Yu-shu's wife, Hsia, (who) killed three husbands; disgraced (and caused the death) of one son, one Duke (Ling), and the departure of two officials; and because of her, one country was lost. Her evil is extreme. Six families' fortunes were destroyed because of one woman. How fearsome. If (you) take the way of goodness, then (things) will not come to this.

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26 "Li Chi of Duke Hsien of Chin" is also described in "Pernicious and Depraved Women" (196-199). Li Chi was the stepmother of Shen-sheng, the crown prince; she maligned him and led Duke Hsien to chaos. When the chief tutor advised Shen-sheng to tell his father, Duke Hsien, that he had been framed, the crown prince replied: "Since my lord is old, if I enter and explain, then Li Chi will die and my lord will be disturbed." He then committed suicide.

27 "Nan-feng" (South Wind) is the poem that Yao used to teach the people about hsiao.

28 I was unable to find a wife of Ch'en. I did find "The Wife of Hsia, a daughter of Ch'en" (201-204). See footnote one under narrative nine in "Pernicious and Depraved Women"; the correct description should be the daughter of Cheng, of the state of Ch'en. "The wife of Hsia, a daughter of the House of Ch'en, was the mother of the minister...Her appearance was beautiful without equal and in her person were centred ability, sagacity and art. Although old in years, yet she appeared as if she had been rejuvenated; three times she was queen and seven times a wife..."
The *Pa-yüan chu-lin* (Forest of Gems in the Garden of Law), a Buddhist encyclopedia, was compiled by Tao-shih in celebration of Kao-tsung's support of the clergy. It was completed in 668. A partial translation of the section on *Su-nü* (Common Women) in the *Pa-yüan Chu-lin* from Taisho 2122:v.53 follows.

**The Meaning (An Introduction)**

Laywomen, ordinary women, are sick with many poisons. The Buddha said that their evil and deviance are much greater than men's. They either falsely paint their faces, use jewellery and powder, or they wear beautiful clothes to seduce foolish men; or they pose seductively, singing and laughing flirtatiously; or they ask questions, sigh and hum while staring reverently; or they expose their shoulders, chests and arms to cover their face and head; or they saunter and sway their figure with each step; or they open and close their eyes, pretend to be sad or happy, seducing stupid men and making their hearts wild. Such is their endless cunning and deceit that are difficult to describe fully. As long as a man is intoxicated and beguiled, he will be led astray. This is like a thief with all kinds of tricks. It is also like a decorated vase that holds dung; (its appearance) deceives people. (Furthermore,) it is also like casting high a net to catch birds and throwing a tight-knit net to bring in the fish. Or, it is like a blind person falling into a dark pit; or a moth flying into a flame; or like flies greedily enjoying a stinking corpse. Being intimate with women, kingdoms and families are lost. To touch them is as if to pick up a poisonous snake. A woman's words are like honey but her heart is like the chen, a poisonous bird. A family becomes poor and suffers all because of women. To leave home and lose one's life is also because of women. The lack of harmony at home is also because of women. The reversal of roles between men and women is also because of women. The parting of ways between brothers is also because of women. The alienation of relatives is also because of women. Falling into degenerate ways is also because of women. The lack in the birth of sages is also because of women. Obstructing the way of good karma is also because of women. Not attaining the effects of saintliness is also because of women. Thus are the errors that cannot all be described. Sentient beings are thus to be greatly pitied. They are always burning in the fires of desire and cannot leave it; hence, calamity and suffering continue ceaselessly.

**Artful Deception**

As spoken in the *Avadanas* of old, there was a woman from Sravasti, who was carrying her child and a jar to get water from the well.
An attractive man was sitting to the right of the well, entertaining himself by playing the ch'in. At the time, the woman became obsessed by this man; and the man, in return, also very much desired this woman. The woman was so lost in desire that she tightened the rope around her child's neck and let the child down into the middle of the well. (When she realized what she had done), she raised the rope and brought the child out of the well, but the child had died immediately. So distressed was she, that she called out to Heaven, crying.

(In another instance), the Buddha was at Kausambi (or Vatsapattana, a country in central India); the king's name was Udayana. There was a Brahmin named Mati; his daughter's (features were) well proportioned and (her) beauty was rarely seen in the world. Her father saw that his daughter's appearance was little found in a country; (and so he) named her Unsurpassed. There was not anyone from all the aristocrats in the neighbouring states who did not ask for her hand. The father said: If there is a man who matches her beauty, I will agree to the betrothal.

Both mother and father went to see the Buddha to give him their daughter in marriage. The wife recognized the marks of the Buddha and realized that he is the World-Honoured One; she told her husband that the Buddha must be pure to the extent that he will not return to carnal desire, and that if the Buddha should wish not to marry their daughter, they should not be ashamed or embarrassed.

[A verse which has similar meaning to the prose has been omitted.] Mati scolded her saying, "A woman cannot understand; if you are unhappy, then leave by yourself." He then offered Unsurpassed to the Buddha, and the Buddha rejected her; and in responding to Mati's comment that his daughter had no blemishes, the Buddha replies:

Deceptive are the physical eyes. When I look at her now, I see nothing good from her head to her toe. You see hair on her head, but hair is nothing but fur; the tails of an elephant and a horse are the same as her hair. Under the hair is the skull; the skull is made of bones; the pig's head (you see) at the butcher's, is the same as her head. In the head is a brain; the brain is like mud and stinks, and is offensive to the nose; and if you put it on the
ground, no one can even bear to step on it. The eyes are like pools, filled with tears; and there is drivel in the nose, and the mouth has saliva. The chest holds the liver and lungs; they all have an unbearable stench. The intestines, stomach and the bladder are all full of urine and feces; the stink of decay is difficult to describe. The chest is like leather, and holds many impurities. The four limbs, the hands, feet and bones all support one another. But the flexing of the muscles, and the suppleness of skin, depends on breath; and that is the thing on which all movements depend. It can be compared to the mechanical operation of a wooden figure. The puppet falls apart when the power which maintains it ceases; every joint becomes separated and the hands and feet are scattered about in confusion. Such is the nature of a human being. What good is there (in the body)? And yet you say that there is no one who matches her beauty.

The Buddha then recounted the story of the three beautiful daughters of Mara, who turned into old women when he rejected their temptations. He rejected Unsurpassed; but Mati, undeterred, said that if Buddha will not have her, he will give her to the king, Udayana. The king accepted the daughter with great joy.

The rightful queen was a follower of the Buddha. She had attained the path of srotaapanna. This Unsurpassed (used) to slander her

29 I have used Professor's Priestley's translation here. I had rendered this as "you can surely step on it" (as surely as you would step on the mud). Mo is thus used as an adjective suggesting "great" or "extensive", and hence "surely".

30 I have used Professor Priestley's translation here. It is much better than mine, which was: "(Thus), I will finish my exposition and dissection of the human body: at every joint, separate (yourself ) from the wolfish nature of your hands and feet."

31 A srotaapanna is a Stream-winner, one who has chosen to take up religious life and counter the stream of transmigration. When the path of the Stream-winner is fulfilled, the practitioner will become an Arhat. Again, I thank Professor Priestley for pointing out the pertinent details here.

32 "This", a translation for ch'ih, refers to the queen's belief in the Buddha; a point not previously well documented and queried by Professor Priestley. I have also used "slandered" as suggested by Professor Priestley. I had originally used "told", which is clearly not strong enough for the Chinese chen. "Slander",

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mother before the king; the king was deceived by her words; he shot one hundred arrows at the queen. The queen saw the arrows but was unafraid and completely without anger; she concentrated and meditated on the Buddha's compassion and kept kneeling towards the king. The arrows circumambulated the queen three times and returned to the king, dropping in front of him; all one hundred arrows behaved like this. Thus the king became distressed and frightened.

The king then apologized to the Buddha, and asked to seek refuge in him. The Buddha sighed; the king had repented, taking the way of the enlightened, and so the Buddha accepted him. The king went on to say that if one does not understand that disaster results from one's judgement, that has been thrown into disarray by a woman, then how would one know to distance oneself from women?

The king then said: "I wish that the Buddha would explain to me the changes of hell and the filth of women." And the Buddha answered: "Then listen. Men have the evils of cruelty/violence and stupidity/ignorance, and yet they still want to enjoy a woman's charms." The king replied: "Very good. I wish to receive your enlightened teachings." The Buddha continued: "Men have four evils" that you must know quickly. There are, in the world, lascivious men who are always desirous of seeing attractive women; hearing enchanting sounds, they wander far from and then abandon the right dharma, questioning the real and believing evil doctrines. They are caught in a net of desire, destroyed by blind darkness, and bound to passions like a slave fears his master; lusting after female beauty without considering the fierce stench exposed by the nine openings; confused in lust, like a pig in a privy, not recognizing its foul ordour...

The Buddha continued to say that this dullness brought on by pas-
sion is the first evil. To make matters worse, the man neglects his parents; treating his wife as a precious jewel, wishing only to be with her, disliking to see his parents, and forgetting the gift of his life and his parents' nurturing him; this, the Buddha noted, is the second evil. He went on to speak of the third: not recognizing the sutras' warning against karmic effects of joy and disaster, careless in acting licentiously, casting oneself into the trap, falling definitively into evil ways and never changing, this is the third evil way. The fourth evil way is to use things to chase after lewd ways: using treasures to buy other men's wives, or killing domestic animals to sacrifice to the spirits, or men and women drinking, singing and dancing together with much entertainment all day long. There are illicit affairs and happiness is sought for the moment with no consideration for the stench emanating from the suffering from hell. First, it is ridiculous; and second, it is pitiful and contemptible. It is akin to being insane and incapable of knowing its wrongfulness. This is the fourth evil.

[Verses have been omitted.]

Thus the Buddha spoke. And king Udayana was happy and he took refuge in the Buddha, the Sangha and the Dharma, after he heard and understood the evils of women.

Chung-ni (Confucius) declared that "people of low birth and women are hard to deal with. If you are friendly with them, they get out of hand; and if you keep your distance, they resent it." This is according to the classics. Deceptive and poisonous women have

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34 This is from The Analects, 17:25 (Waley).
eighty four characteristics.\textsuperscript{35} There are eight major ones that the wise hate: 1) jealousy, 2) blind anger, 3) reviling others in scurrilous language, 4) cursing, 5) suppression and subjugation of others, 6) stinginess, 7) deception, 8) poisonous. These are the eight major characteristics. This is why women are so full of strange and fascinating ways. So, wish to abandon flattering words and evil ways; seek after the true dharma so that you may leave home early to the benefit of others and yourself.

And, according to the commentary on the \textit{Mahaprajnaparamitopadesa}\textsuperscript{36}, there was a fisherman who was smitten by the king's daughter, and was unable to drink or eat. His mother asked him what the matter was. He told her and his mother went to the palace and presented fleshy fish, fowls and meat for the princess and never took anything for them. The princess asked why; and the mother explained and begged the princess to rescue her son from wasting away, lusting after her. The princess then told the mother that she will be at a particular temple, behind a statue of the god; she told the mother that her son's wish has been granted. On that day, he should wash, and put on new clothes, and wait behind the statue. When the time came, the princess said to her father: I am having bad fortune and will go to the temple to pray for happiness.

The king replied: "Very good." Five hundred chariots were immediately ordered to go to the temple; once there, the entourage was ordered to stop at the door; the princess went into the temple alone. The god of heaven reflected on this, and thought the action inappropriate. The king was an almsgiver, and the princess should not be destroyed and shamed by a man of such low birth. So the god made the fisherman very tired, so that he would sleep so soundly that he could not be woken up. When the princess came in, she saw

\textsuperscript{35} I have been unable to find what they are.

\textsuperscript{36} I think Professor Priestley is correct when he writes that "The Chih-tu Lun must be the Ta Chih-tu Lun, Mahaprajnparamitopadesa, a commentary on the 25,000 Perfection of Wisdom Sutra." Taisho 1509.
him in deep sleep; she pushed him, but he did not wake up. So she left him a necklace worth 100,000 tael of gold, and left. After the fisherman woke up, he saw the necklace and asked the people around, and knew that the princess had there. He became unhappy, resentful and angry that he had not gotten what he had wanted. His lust burnt within him, burning him to death. This is evidence that a woman's heart does not discriminate between the worthy and the lowly; she follows only her lust.

And a treatise of the Sarvastivada says: "It is better to be bitten by a snake than to transgress with a woman. There are three elements that can cause a snake to harm a person: sight, touch and bite. A woman can also harm in three ways. If a man sees a woman and lascivious thoughts arise, his good dharmas 37 will be destroyed. If you touch a woman's body, you commit a crime of medium severity, wherein the good dharma will be destroyed. If you have intercourse with a woman, you have committed a serious crime, and good dharmas will be destroyed. (There are seven points of comparison between the consequences of the harm from being bitten by a poisonous snake versus the harm wreaked by a woman.) First, if harmed by a poisonous snake, only this body has been harmed; if harmed by a woman, innumerable bodies (over many lives) would be harmed. Second, if harmed by a poisonous snake, you will harm only this body; 38 if harmed by a woman, the shan-fa shen 39 would be harmed. Third, if harmed by a poisonous snake, the body of the five vijnanas would be hurt; if harmed by a woman, the body of the six vijnanas 40 would be hurt. Fourth, if harmed by a poisonous snake, you can still enter the pure sangha; if harmed by a woman, you would not be allowed into the monks' sangha. Fifth, if harmed by a poisonous snake, you can be born into the heavens, and you can

37 I thank Professor Priestley for pointing out that this refers to the "kusaladharmas, the phenomena that one tries to produce and maintain within oneself." He continues to write that "good dharmas are present karma which will bring favourable circumstances in the future."

38 Again, I must thank Professor Priestley for pointing out the meaning of wu-chi shen as follows: "Wu-chi" is "avyakrta", i.e. neither good nor bad. The physical body is the result of past karma and so avyakrta, like all results."

39 Professor Priestley notes that the shan-fa shen is "not the Dharmakaya as generally understood, but the body or collection of good dharmas." He also notes that this "is the concept which the doctrine of the Dharmakaya seems to have evolved from."

40 The first five are sight, sound, taste, smell, touch; the sixth is the mind.
meet sages in this life; if harmed by a woman, you would enter the three evil ways. If harmed by a poisonous snake, you can still achieve the results of the sramanyas; if harmed by a woman, there would be no achievement of the Eightfold Path. Seventh, if harmed by a poisonous snake, a person can be saved by good thoughts; if harmed by a woman, all would abandon you and you would have no heart for joy. For these reasons, it is therefore better to be bitten by a snake than to touch a woman.

Moreover, the Ekottoragama says: A woman has five powers to be disrespectful to her husband. Which five? First, beauty; second, kin; third, wealth; fourth, sons; fifth, self-control. It is because a woman has these five powers that she is able to be disrespectful to her husband. But a man has a power that will overcome the woman; the so-called power of abundance. Now, the evil Mara Papiyan also has five powers; they are namely, form, sound, fragrance, taste and touch. The ignorant cannot attain transcendence like the Noble Ones because they are attached to these five ways. The disciple's single power, (which is rooted in the) freedom from licentiousness, is not bound by Mara's power; he is therefore able to distinguish the dharma of birth, old age, sickness and death, overcome the five powers of the Evil One, and not fall into the sphere of the Evil One, and to reach nirvana. At that time, the World-Honoured One spoke this verse:

Moral discipline is the way leading to Nirvana
Licentiousness is the way of death
Where there is no greed, there is no death
In losing the way, one kills oneself.

At this time, the World-Honoured One said to the monks: "Women have five desires. Which five? First, to be born into a wealthy family; second, to marry into a wealthy family; third, to make her husband do her bidding; fourth, to have many sons; and fifth, to do as she pleases at home. These are her five desires."

41 These are the lower paths of transmigration: hells, hungry ghosts and animals.

42 As Professor Priestley points out, they are the levels of Stream-winner, Once-returner, Never-returner and Arhat.

43 Compare this with I. B. Horner's list of beauty, wealth, kin, sons, virtue (51, quoted from Samyutta Nikaya, 37, iii: 25-27 [1-3]). She also mentions the power of anger from Anguttara Nikaya iv: 223. Horner goes on to quote: "The husband...is said to continue to get the better of her by virtue of the power of authority alone, against which her powers could not prevail (52)."
And, according to the Mahatejadharani Sutra: The Buddha said to Ananda, it is like putting a drop of water to wet a heap of sand and the water can pass through the heap of sand. It is thus like a woman who makes thousands of men suffer the retribution of desire; there is no satisfying her. There are three dharmas that a woman never tires of: first, self importance; second, enjoying desires at the side of her husband; third, offering phrases that are sad and beautiful, by which she works on the feelings of her husband. And, Ananda, there are five types of parasites that live in women which men do not have. These five parasites live in the vagina. Of each type of parasites there are eight thousand more, with a mouth at each end. They are like the point of a needle, always bothering and biting women, making them act. Acting again and again, the women are led on by the parasites; this is why it is called irritation. In licentious women, this special dharma, as a result of karma, produces lascivious actions. Their desire for and their attachment to their husbands know no limits and satisfaction. If such a woman sees a man, she would immediately speak pleasing words, and look reverently and intimately (at him). She will look again and again, watching for the man's intentions and thinking of sensual matters. She looks at him with depravity and wishes to gain a similar response in his face. Her teeth bites on her lower lip; her face becomes bluish purple; and because of her desireous heart, sweat is running down her brows. If sitting languorously, she will be unwilling to rise; and if standing, she will not wish to sit down. She will then use a wooden stick to draw on the ground; waving her two hands. She will take three steps and on the fourth step gaze left and right. Or she will be at the door, and from her cheeks frequent sighs will be let out. Walking crookedly and bent over, she will lift her garment with her left hand and slap her thigh with the right. She will also use her fingernails to scrape her teeth; then use twigs to pick her teeth, and hands to scratch the back of her head. Exposing her legs and neck she will call for her children. While walking beside them, she will stumble and look quickly in all directions. By such signs as these, you should understand: When you know that a woman's lust is rising, you must tire of this (lust); leave it and do not let it (affect you) so that you transmigrate to be reborn into the great darkness.

Again, according to the Cheng-fa-nien Ching (Meditation on the Good Dharma Sutra), the heavenly bird said to the gods: "A woman is not an ordinary or permanent friend; she is like a light that never

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44 I thank Professor Priestley for his suggestion on how "ai mei yen", lamenting good or beautiful words, can be translated here.

45 The translation here also uses Professor Priestley's words.
goes out; and her constant complaining is like a pattern drawn into a rock."

[Some verses omitted.]

Again, the Pratitya-samutpada-sastra (Oral Explanation from the Agamas of the Twelve Conditions) says: There was an arhat who saw, with his heavenly eye, the many women who have fallen into hell; so he asked the Buddha why (there were so many women in hell). The Buddha answered: For four reasons: first, their greed for jewels and clothing, and their many other desires; second, envy; third, love of gossip; and fourth, their many seductive and lascivious postures. And that is why so many women fall into hell.

[Some verses omitted.]

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"Professor Priestley questions how "a light that never goes out", which is clearly an example of permanence, can represent the impermanence of a woman's friendship. A colloquial Chinese saying describing a person who is unable to set his own limits or does not know when to stop as "a candle that will not go out unless blown out", explains the less than complimentary comparison of a woman to "a light that never goes out".

47 The twelve links are: ignorance, action, consciousness, name and form, the sense organs, touch, sensation, craving, grasping, existence, birth, old age and death.
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Chia-t’o T99:2 伽陀經
Fa-hua Ching T262:9 法華經
"Su-nü" in Fa-yüan chu-lin T2122:53  作步耶法華經
K’ai-yüan Shih-chiao lu T2154:55  闍耶跋摩傳
Nieh-p’an Ching T2:1  闍耶跋摩傳
P’u-ya ti Ching T1581:30 傳說
Sheng-man Ching T353:12  傳說
Shih-erh yin-yuan lun T1651:32  三阿彌陀經
Ta O-mi-t’o Ching T364:12  增一阿彌陀經
Tseng-i o-han Ching T125:2  增一阿彌陀經
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GLOSSARY FOR CHINESE TERMS

Proper Names
An Lu-shan
An-lo Kung-chu
An-shu, Huang-fu
Ch'ai
Chan
Chan-jan
Chang Chao
Chang Chiu-ling
Chang Kuo
Chang Tu
Chang Wan-fu
Chang Yueh
Chang-sun Li-fei
Ch'ang-an
Ch'ang-hen ke
Ch'ang-ning Kung-chu
Ch'ang-shou
Chao (shaman)
Chao Fei-yen, Chao Li-fei
Chao Jan
Chao Lu-wen
Ch'ao-jih-ming san-mei Ching
Chao-ch'eng Shun-sheng Huang-hou
Fa-hua Ching
Fa-tsang
Fa-yüan
Fan Lüeh
Fan Ning
Fan-nü
Hai-ch'an
Han Yü
Han Ch'eng-ti
Han-kuo fu-jen
Hao-t'ien kuan
Ho Hsiu
Ho, Hu Liang ch'i
Ho-lou
Ho-t'u ta-chiao
Hung tsan fa hua chuan
Hou-fei
Hsi-i yüan
Hsi-wang-mu
Hsia-hou Ch'i
Hsia-te
Hsiang Wang
Hsiao Ching
Hsiao Hsüeh
Hsiao Tao
Hsien-i Kung-chu
Li-cheng Tien Hsiu-shu-yüan
Li Chi
Li Han-kuang
Li Lin-fu
Li Lung-chi
Li Pai-yao
Li Yeh, Chi-lan
Li Yüan
Li-nü
Li-shih
Lieh Tzu
Lieh-nü
Ling-hu Te-fen
Ling-pao
Liu, Chung Yuan-p'ei ch'i
Liu Ch'ang-Ch'ing
Liu Hsiang
Liu Hua-fei
Liu Tsai-jen
Liu Yu-ch'iu
Lo Chou
Lo Pin-wang
Lo-shu
Lo-yang
Lu Yü
Lu Ch'un

麗正殿 修書院
禮記
李谷先
李林甫
李隆基
李百藥
李 плохо
李蘭
李震
李藻
李子
李德馨
李寶Ｃ
李元沛
李長卿
劉向
劉華
劉
高宗
劉
洛陽
陸羽
陸淳

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Shan-miao
Shan-tung
Shang-ch'ing
Shang-ching Hsüan-tu Ta-tung San-ching Shih
Shang-kuan Chao-jung, Wan-erh
Shang-te
Shen-hsiu
Shen-hui
Shen-lung
Shen-sheng
Sheng-mu
Sheng-man Ching
Shih Ch'ung-hsüan
Shih-sung-lü
Shou Wang Mao
Shou-jao
Shuo-wen
Shuo-yüan
Ssu-ma Cheng-chen
Ssu-ma Hsiu
Ssu-ma Kuang
Su-ch'i
Shu
Sui Yang-ti
Sung Ching
Sung Jo-hsin
T'ien-huang
T'ien-pao
T'ien-shih
T'ien-t'ai Shan
T'ien T'ung-hsiu
T'ing-ch'ang Chin-kang Po-je tz'u
Ting-an Kung-chu
Ting-k'un Ch'ih
Tou
Ts'ai
Tso-Ch'iüu Ming
Tso-yu chiao-fang
Tso-chin-wu-wei
Ts'ui Hao
Ts'ui Hui
Ts'ui Mien
Tsung-cheng Ssu
Tu-jen Ching
Tu Tsung
T'u-shan
T'uan-erh
Tung-fang Shuo
Tung Chung-shu
Tz'u-min
Tz'u-wei
Wai-ch'i
温王重茂
王后
王弼
王士源
王守一
王遜之
王母山
魏，宋庭瑜妻
魏，徵
尊后
魏，泰醫療
衛士，齊恒公妻
文子
文玄王
文德
武承嗣
昭
武崇訓
武惠妃
吳猛
武三思
Yung-lo
Yung-mu Kung-chu
Zhong yuan (Chung yüan)

General terms
chang-fu
chen
chen-fu
chi-chiu
ch'i (energy)
ch'i (wife)
ch'i (spirit of the earth)
ch'i-ch'u
ch'i-lin
ch'i-niang
ch'ien
ch'in
chiao-hua
chih
ching
chu-ti kung-chu
ch'u-jia
chün-tzu
chung-niao hsin yu t'o
fa-hsin
fa-shih
方便 
風 
流 
封 
佛 
性 
父 
婦 
符 
停 
女 
符 
道 
和 
親 
和 
相 
孝 
人 
心 
信 
雄 
蛇 
胡 
琴 
后 
佛 
后 
儒 
父 
化 
義 
一定 
應 
古 
文
shen

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shih-chieh
shu

su-fa

&%

su-nu
tao-shih
V i e n - h s i a w e i kung

Vien-ming

tiao
ts'an li (Ceremony of Silkworms)

ts'an li (Ritual for meeting with

tsih

tzu (chil?)

tzu-jan

tz u-pei
wen- hua

wu wei

yin
ying

G-chih

-k%'

a?&

v-

superiors)

