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UMI
SEXUALITY AND CONTAINMENT: LING MENGCHU'S EROTIC STORIES

BY

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a cultural study of a group of stories about illicit sex in the short story collections Pai'an jingqi and Erke pai'an jingqi, both of which were written by the late Ming writer Ling Mengchu (1580-1644). The whole thesis consists of two parts: introduction and translation. The translation includes four erotic stories selected from these two collections and these four stories have never been rendered into English before (though some of them have French and German versions). The introduction, instead of a potpourri of rudimentary generalizations about the author and his works, is a monograph mainly focussed on a paradox of these stories, i.e., the tension between the presentation of sexual pleasure and its containment for a moral purpose. To give a convincing explanation to this tension, the thesis examines the context -- the life of the author and the society in which he lived as much as it analyses the text -- the aspects of sexuality and the repressive mechanisms the author imposed on his erotic descriptions. In so doing, it tries to demonstrate the eroticism in the way that may help understand not only how the principle of pleasure is related to the economic base of the late Ming but also how, owing to the functioning of the state ideology, it is morally contained, contrary to what has been assumed by some Western scholars (e.g. Foucault) that “pleasure is not considered in relation to an absolute law of the permitted and the forbidden, nor by reference to a criterion of utility, but first and foremost in relation to itself.” And it is the conclusion of this thesis that these stories about illicit sex, erotic as they are, are actually mildly explicit in terms of sexual description, belonging, in its three-tier typological schema (i.e., the schema that divides late Ming erotic fiction into three basic kinds: lust, lust-love and lust-sex) of the late Ming erotica, to the category of “lust.”
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PART I

INTRODUCTION
SEXUALITY AND CONTAINMENT:
A PARADOX IN LING MENGCHU’S EROTIC STORIES

1. From Literary to Erotic Studies\textsuperscript{1}

An overriding concern with literary value on the part of North American scholars of Ming-Qing fiction seems to have been a tradition that took its preliminary shape in 1950s. In its earliest stage, critics made use of the concept and mode borrowed from the New Criticism. This can be seen from John Bishop's works\textsuperscript{2} and C.T. Hsia's \textit{The Classical Chinese Novel}. As a William Wimsat renowned in the Chinese fiction field for his intermingling of criticism with Leavisite moral severity,\textsuperscript{3} Hsia should be credited for his monolithic contribution in bringing

\textsuperscript{1} This paper is not a paradigmatic literary study, i.e., a study focused on "literariness." Long ago Edwin Greenlaw pointed out that "nothing related to the history of civilization is beyond our province." We are not, he maintained, "limited to belles lettres or even to printed or manuscript record in our effort to understand a period or civilization" and we "must see our work in the light of its possible contribution to the history of culture." But this sort of literary study, to Rene Wellek, is not "literary" but "related to the history of civilization." See Wellek, \textit{Theory of Literature} (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1849), p. 9. I may have been guilty of what Wellek criticized for my "historical" or cultural study of Ling Mengchu's erotic stories. In my opinion, however, literary study should not be confined to belles lettres or to the literature with aesthetic value; it should be much broader, although I do not mean to say that "literature will be judged valuable only as far as it yields results for this or that adjacent discipline."


\textsuperscript{3} In his preface to the Chinese version of \textit{A History of Modern Chinese Fiction}, Hsia said that he benefitted from reading R. F. Leavis' \textit{The Great Tradition} and admired very much his critical
critical studies into their culmination. But the rapid rise of structuralism soon brought about a drastic transformation. Hsia’s harsh censure of the defective construction of The Golden Lotus (The Golden Lotus) inevitably caused a strong reaction—a counter-argument ostensibly attempting a positive reevaluation under a seemingly scientific mask. The studies by Andrew Plaks on the elite nature of the four masterworks and on the allegory in Honglou meng (Dream of Red Chambers), with which he joined the old camp of redology (jium hongxue), may as well be regarded as representative discourses in this respect. Just as judgment on the English novels by Jane Austin, George Elliot, Joseph Conrad and Henry James. See C. T. Hsia (夏志清), Zhongguo xiandai xiaoshuo shi (中国现代小说史, trans. Joseph S. M. Lau (刘绍铭) et al (香港: Youlian chuban youxian gongsi, 1979). p. 6.

4 By critical studies, I mean structural, stylistic and thematic analysis, i.e., the intrinsic analysis of literary works rather than extrinsic discourse such as “bibliographical and historical scholarship,” etc. Hsia in the preface to The Classic Chinese Novel has made a clear explanation of his “critical” approach: “I am of course fully aware that the specialists commanding the highest respect in the field have been invariably those primarily concerned with bibliographical and historical scholarship. But it seems to me obvious that we cannot indefinitely neglect the critical study of classic Chinese novels until all puzzles concerning their composition and publication have been solved.” See The Classic Chinese Novel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980). p. ix. Patrick Hanan, however, points out that Hsia’s inadequate treatment of scholarly questions may be misleading to some readers and hence it is “the weakest point of his book. See Hanan’s book review of The Classic Chinese Novel, in Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies, vol. 29. 1969. pp. 294-7.

5 See Hsia, The Classical Chinese Novel, chapter 5 (mainly the beginning part). For example, in one place he criticizes the author of Jin Ping Mei for his “gross carelessness”: “In addition to his inordinate passion for inserting extraneous material into his work, he is also guilty of gross carelessness in telling his story and of adopting a certain air of sardonic jocularity that tends to destroy the illusion of realistic credibility.” See ibid., p. 173.

6 The traditional studies of Honglou meng before Hu Shi 胡适, such as Honglou meng suoyin (Searching for the Hidden Meaning of Dream of Red Chambers) by Wang Mengruan 王梦阮 and Shen Ping’an 沈瓶庵, Shiitou ji suoyin (Searching for the Hidden Meaning of The Story of the Stone) by Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培, and Honglou meng shizhen (An Interpretation of the True Meaning of Dream of Red Chambers) by Deng Kuanyan 鄧九言— which are usually referred to under the rubric of “the old camp of redology”
impressive was his teacher David Roy's corroborative endeavor, whose introduction to his own translation *The Plum in the Golden Vase* is almost equally influential. They disagreed with Hsia, and the three of them once engaged in open polemics due to their clash of opinions. Usually they have been thought to represent the two polarities of criticism, one being moral and critical and the other, scientific and analytic. Yet we can see, with hindsight, that the both groups, despite their striking differences, still fall into a same larger school whose functional mechanism is governed by the convention of literary formalism. That is to say, despite the dissimilarity between their empiricist and "modernist" critiques, their primary consideration is still the binary of canon/non-canon, literature/popular culture, intrinsic/extrinsic studies, and they still have a commonly shared belief in what is called "literariness." 

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mainly emphasize the symbolic or allusive nature of the novel. For a detailed discussion of the *Suoyin Schools* 素隱派, the schools that search for the hidden meaning of *Honglou meng*, see Guo Yushi 郭豫滋, *Honglou vanjiu xiaoshi* 紅樓夢研究小史 (A Short History of the Studies on Dream of Red Chambers) and his article "Honglou meng piping shilue" 紅樓夢研究史略 (A Brief History of the Studies on Dream of Red Chambers), in Guo Yushi, *Zhongguo gudai xisoshuo lunji* 中國古代小說論集 (A Collection of Essays on Classic Chinese Fiction) (Shanghai: Teachers University of Eastern China Press, 1984). p. 201. Andrew Plaks' *Allegory and Archetype in the Dream of the Red Chamber* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), which, in Hsia's words, "is to use the novel to prove that the Chinese mind functions differently from the Western mind in the aesthetic realm" (See C. T. Hsia's book review of *Archetype and Allegory in the Dream of the Red Chamber*, in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, vol. 39, 1979, p. 193), is very similar in the way the old *Suoyin Schools* interpret *Honglou meng*.


8 This is the term used by Rene Wellek in his *Theory of Literature*, p. 251, referring to aesthetic features of literary works.
Criticism with its major focus on literary value, however pedagogically useful, has its limitations, which are manifested most clearly in two aspects: deliberate severance of the text from its author and from the world in which the author lived, and deliberate neglect of the practical functions of literature such as the functions of historical cognition and entertainment (not aesthetic pleasure).

The literary world, they would take it for granted, is an "autonomous" entity. The text can be understood without referring to its context and the authorship can be erased too (the authorship, often collective or anonymous as in the case of Ming fiction, will not be mentioned unless a certain classical work needs to be elevated from the lower hierarchy of "popular fiction" to the "elite culture" that the literati constructed). When the reading of literature is isolated, free from the understanding of historical necessity and contingency, it simply becomes an ingenious hermeneutic wordplay, in which they can go so far — if this is not an exaggeration — as to find narrative techniques of modernist fiction in ancient Greek mythology, or even Einstein's relativity theory in Newton's classical physics. Closely related to this exclusive concern with

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9 For the view that literature is the existence of an independent, separate, irreducible aesthetic experience — "an autonomous realm of art," to use Wellek's words, see William Wimsat and Monroe Beardsley, "Intentional Fallacy" and "Affective Fallacy" (which "are written out of the assumption that a literary work has an ontological status of its own — that it is an object with a certain autonomy"), in Hazard Adams, ed., Critical Theory Since Plato (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publisher, 1992), ed. pp. 944-59.

10 Plaks' analysis of the structure of Jin Ping Mei is a typical example of a modernist reading of the pre-modern novel. For instance, in section 2 of the chapter on Jin Ping Mei, Plaks strained so much as to interpret the printing units juan 卷 as a meaningful structural design: "Of greater importance for our understanding of the underlying structure of the novel, however, is its division into the standard printing units of the juan. As far as I can tell, nearly every known printing of the two earliest recensions of the Jin Ping Mei was divided into either ten juan of ten hui 回 chapters each, or twenty juan of five hui chapters, like many of the earliest editions of Sanguo yanyi 三國演義, Shuihu zhuang 水滸傳, and Xiyou ji 西遊記, as we shall see later. This
"the verbal icon" is their overt disregard for non-literary functions of literature. There is no doubt that literature is an object of aesthetic experience; yet taking it as an object only for that purpose has resulted in a dire consequence in the past: the abandonment of non-canonical works. The canons, we admit, are very important for literary studies. The establishment of canonicity for our classical "popular fiction," thanks to the substantial efforts made by scholars like Hu Shi and Lu Xun, at least has mapped out a distinct and well-bounded contour for a teaching syllabus. Nevertheless, can we afford to let non-canons therefore be victimized? Or can we afford to ignore historical, ideological, epistemological, cultural and political values, or even the value of pleasure, with which non-canons (not necessarily "secondary" works) such as seemingly fortuitous bibliographical detail leads me to my first major point regarding the structural design of the novel, when we note that the narrative continuum of the text also breaks down into a fairly clear rhythm of ten-chapter units — punctuated by events of crucial importance to the structural outlines of the story, or of prophetic significance, in the ninth and tenth chapters of each 'decade.'" See Andrew Plaks, The Four Masterworks of the Ming Novels (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987). pp. 72-3.

11 "The verbal icon" is also the title of a book by William Wimsatt (University of Kentucky Press, 1954), which contains his two important essays (in collaboration with Monroe Beardsley): "The Intentional Fallacy" and "The Affective Fallacy." In the heyday of the New Criticism, "the verbal icon" acquired a symbolic meaning, i.e., the New Critics' emphasis on the self-reflexiveness or autonomousness of literature.

12 It is a false assumption, I agree with Edwin Greenblaw, that the teaching of literature, in the graduate school as well as in high school and college, should only center around major authors and with works acknowledged as masterpieces, and that only masterpieces such as Paradise Lost or King Lear can arouse that resonance in the soul that is the supreme experience of reading. See Edwin Greenlaw, The Province of Literary History (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press. 1931). p. 14.

13 In my opinion, some non-canonical works, such as Chi pozi zhuan 疡婆子傳 (Story of a Folly Woman) by Furong zhuren 芙蓉主人 and Xiuta yeshi 鏈榻野史 (Unofficial History of Embroidered Couch) by 呂天成 — to name the most prominent ones, are also masterpieces. For a reevaluation of Chi pozi zhuan, see Wang Xingqi, "Chi pozi zhuan fàfu" 疡婆子傳發覆 (A Re-appraisal of Chi pozi zhuan) in Ming-Qing xiaoshuo yanjiu 明清小說研究 (Studies of Ming-
scholar-beauty romances 子生小人小 (caizi jiaren xiaoshuo) and fiction dubbed as

“pornography” 淫穢小xiao (yinhui xiaoshuo)14 can provide us, even though some of them may be stereotyped, formulaic and deficient in human experience?

This is not a criticism,15 but an explanation of why late Ming erotic fiction16 has been

Qing Fiction). no. 1. 1995. pp. 107-22. So far as the evaluation of Xiuta veshi is concerned, it is still rather controversial. To some critics, it “has no aesthetic value at all,” and besides, it “pollutes the air when it is circulated in society.” See “Zongxu 總序 (General Introduction) by Huang Dawei 黃達維 — the general editor of the series of the Banned Books, in Xiuta veshi. p. 23. But I believe that in the near future when more and more people pay attention to late Ming erotic fiction, we will be able to abandon our moral bias and reach a fair critical recognition about their value.

14 Sun Kaidi 孫楷第(1898-1990?), a late prominent authority on Chinese vernacular fiction, divided Ming/Qing “yanfen” 煙粉 fiction (i.e., novels of manners) into five categories, and one category is “fiction of obscenity” 煙穢 (weixie), i.e., pornography. See Sun Kaidi, Zhongguo tongsu xiaoshuo shumu 中國通俗小說書目 (Bibliography of Popular Chinese Fiction) (Beijing: Zuojia chuban she. 1957). pp. 115-162.

15 In the preceding discussion, I have mentioned some well-known scholars in the field. It is not meant to be a personal attack on them; it is just to provide evidence for my explanation of why late Ming erotic fiction has not been sufficiently studied. Actually I have a great respect for those predecessors I have mentioned, especially Mr. C. T. Hsia, who brought me into the field ten years ago and has helped me academically ever since then. If I said too little to make myself sufficiently understood and hence give a misleading impression that I did a “disservice” to their reputation. I feel sorry and apologize for that.

16 In my paper, I avoid using “pornography” for its legal and other connotations. By “erotic fiction.” I refer to any kind of fiction that is focused on sexual themes. A recent attempt to differentiate “erotic writing” from “pornography” is made by Lee Siegel, who writes: “Erotic writing preserves the inner lives — the individuality — of men and women; pornography obliterates them. The erotic encompasses the arc of desire from its beginning to its fulfillment. It traces the individual’s slow, turbulent detachment from social life through the allure and the dissolution of the social and psychological nuances that make up individuality. Pornography, however, consists of the reduction of identity to the generic consequences of desire. As counterintuitive as it may sound, pornography hypersocializes sex the way authoritarian regimes hypersocialize the community — into monotonous rituals unfolding along inexorable lines. There is, in fact, nothing secret about pornography. It is the public caricature of a private act.” See “De Sade’s Daughters,” Atlantic Monthly, Feb., 1997. In my usage, however, “erotic fiction” is simply a neutral term, indicating a legitimate literary genre without involving any value
excluded from serious studies. When the old hegemonic paradigm\(^7\) finally collapsed with the postmodern turn,\(^8\) teaching and research, as is described by Terry Eagleton in his *Literary Theory*, have been reoriented (in a new way, of course) toward an understanding of the "otherness" of literature, or even the totality.\(^9\) But there still remains an old problem, which has haunted us like a ghost, and made us vacillate as to whether we should move further. I do not claim that literature has now not ceased to be a special category nor to be discussed alongside popular culture, nor do I assert that it is isolated, as it was before, from the history of which it forms a part. In fact, with criticism having drastically shifted from its focus on the "organic" unity\(^10\) to the discussion of "signifying practices,"\(^21\) and with literary studies having become judgment.

\(^7\) "Hegemonic paradigm" is derived from the Italian theorist Antonio Gramsci's concept of "hegemony." It is not directed at anybody personally. "Hegemony," to quote Raymond Williams, "is... a lived system of meanings and values... experienced as practices... beyond which it is very difficult for most members of the society to move." See Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 110.

\(^8\) Although postmodernism cannot be rigorously defined, it is usually related to "critical pluralism." and one of its distinct feature is "decanonization": "We are witnessing... a massive 'delegitimation' of the mastercodes in society, a desuetude of the metanarratives, favoring instead 'les petites histoires,' which preserve the heterogeneity of language games. Thus, from the 'death of god' to the 'death of author' and 'death of father,' from the derision of authority to revision of the curriculum, we decanonicalize culture, demystify knowledge, deconstruct the languages of power, desire, deceit." See Ihab Hasen, *The Postmodern Turn: Essays in Postmodern Theory and Culture* (Ohio: Ohio State University, 1987), p. 169.

\(^9\) "My own view is that it is most useful to see 'literature' as a name which people give from time to time for different reasons to certain kinds of writing within a whole field of what Michel Foucault has called 'discursive practices', and that if anything is to be an object of study it is this whole field of practices rather than just those sometimes rather obscurely labeled 'literature.'" See Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota 1983), p. 205.

"something of an anomaly, a hybrid, possibly a new mutation altogether," attested by a good many books (with diverse approaches) on modernity, gender, popular culture, politics and so forth. We have indeed entered into a new epoch characterized by its sundry cultural studies, so to speak.

The problem I have in mind is rather specific. A more thought-provoking analysis of late Ming erotic fiction is still struggling to come forth in spite of all these paradigmatic changes. Except for Patrick Hanan's book on Li Yu's Rou putuan (The Carnal Prayer Mat) and Keith McMahon's dissertation on 17th century Chinese erotica, our studies in this


21 "Signifying practices" refers to a more comprehensive analysis than "pure" literary studies. For the use of the term, see Antony Easthope. Literary into Cultural Studies (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 5.


23 I refer to his book The Invention of Li Yu (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988) in which one chapter is focused on Rou putuan. According to Plaks, Hanan also wrote a paper mainly dealing with six Ming erotic novels, which is entitled "The Erotic Novel: Some Early Reflections." See A. Plaks, The Four Masterworks of the Ming Novel, Bibliography, p. 565. Since this was a conference paper (presented at Indiana Conference in 1983) and has never been published, I have had no chance of reading it.

24 The authorship of Rou putuan is an issue to be debated. Since all the extant editions of the novel bear only the pseudonym of the author: Qingchi fanzheng daoren 情痴反正道人, the early eighteenth century scholar Liu Tingji 呂庭璽 became the first one to reveal its real authorship. In his Zaiyuan zazhi 在園雜誌 (Miscellaneous Notes of Zaiyuan) Liu mentioned that Li Yu (1611-1680) was the author of Rou putuan, although he did not give sources for his attribution. In 1920s Lu Xun indicated that the stylistic features of Rou putuan are very similar to those of Li Yu's works. Later, in 1930s, Sun Kaidi also stated that Li Yu could be the author of Rou putuan. But as there is no reliable evidence other than Liu Tingji's words, the issue of the authorship is still a topic of debate among scholars both in China and abroad. For the general studies of Li Yu and his possible authorship of Rou putuan, see Chun-Shu Chang and Shelley Chang, Crisis and Transformation in Seventeenth-Century China, prologue and concerned notes. For individual studies, see Lu Xun 魯迅, Zhongguo xiaoshuo shilue 中國小說史略 (A Brief History of Chinese
respect, so far as I know, remain at the stage of what I call *marginality*. Marginality is not merely a quantitative insufficiency. With purposeful selection of some marginal works (e.g. *Honglou meng* in terms of sexual description) for discussion of sexuality\(^2\) or preference to theorize some marginal themes that are only tangentially and contiguously relevant to eroticism (puns of love-making,\(^3\) phenomenon of the virago\(^4\) and the like), the marginality is a mixture of wish and hesitation to go in for the study of erotic literature, and behind this ambivalence of attitude looms large an ethical fixation of fear, the fear of the violation of sexual taboos.

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\(^{26}\) See Andrew Plaks, "The Problem of Incest in *Jin Ping Mei* and *Honglou meng*." in Eva Hung, ed., *Paradoxes of Traditional Chinese Literature* (Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong Press). pp. 123-146.

\(^{27}\) See Katherine Carlitz, "Puns and Puzzles in *Jin Ping Mei*: A Look at Chapter 27," in T'oung Pao. pp. 216-39. Chapter 27 is one of the most salacious chapters in *Jin Ping Mei*, and Carlitz's purpose seems to prove that even in this "obscene" chapter we can find its great literary value. It seems that she did not like the idea of treating *Jin Ping Mei* as an erotic novel: "The *Jin Ping Mei*’s reputation as an ‘obscene book’ has persisted from the 1590s to this day, and the novel has suffered for it in two quite different ways. One group of readers assumes that such a book cannot have literary merit, and their preconceptions keep them from finding any. Another group, however, finds exactly the wrong sort of merit in the *Jin Ping Mei*: celebrating it as a ‘bawdy novel.’ they read the *Jin Ping Mei* as an affirmation of the sexuality it describes. Both of these approaches oversimplify the novel, which is actually concerned with the internal politics and the Ximen family, the place of Ximen family in society, and the ills afflicting late Ming society." See ibid., p. 216.

I believe that erotic fiction, which focuses on sexual themes with its own conventions, assumptions and expectations, is a legitimate literary sub-genre, and its study is necessary despite its pernicious and hurtful possibilities to the immature. We may cite Steven Marcus' pioneering study on My Secret Life as proof of the “authentic” value of this type of fiction, or quote Foucault's philosophical evaluation that in erotic literature “truth is drawn from pleasure itself, understood as a practice and accumulated as experience” to corroborate our belief of its cognitive importance. But a dichotomous framework, inspired by Yu Ying-shih's two worlds theory about Honglou meng (Dream of Red Chamber), is perhaps more helpful. After the fashion of Yu, we can bisect late Ming fiction into two empirical sub-worlds, divided not by his realistic/supernatural demarcation but by our overt/covert apartheid. The overt world is a social world, reflected, presented, and depicted through the human relationship that is anything but corporeal. whereas the covert world is basically the world of the bedroom, “almost always

29 This point of view was first put forward by Maurice Charney in his book Sexual Fiction (London: Metheun, 1981), p. 5: “Sexual fiction (i.e., erotic fiction) focuses on erotic themes, just as science fiction emphasizes science, technology and cosmology. detective novels depend on the solution of murders and thrillers seek to involve us actively in a web of suspense. I believe that sexual fiction is a legitimate literary genre (or sub-genre), with its own set of assumptions.”

30 See Steven Marcus, Other Victorians (New York: Basic Books, 1966), p. 111: “My Secret Life is important by virtue of its authenticity. It is the authentic record of what one man perceived. felt, saw, believed, and wanted to believe. Regarding it within the context of social history, we understand it as being informed at all points by a consciousness which is subjective and historical...”


32 "In his Honglou meng, Cao Xueqing 蕭雪芹 creates two distinct and contrasting worlds, which I respectively call utopian world and realistic world.” See Yu Ying-shih, “Honglou meng de liangge shijie” 紅樓夢的兩個世界 (The Two Worlds in Honglou meng), in Honglou meng de liangge shijie 紅樓夢的兩個世界 (The Two Worlds in Honglou meng) (Taipei: Lianjing chuban shiye gongsi, 1978), p. 39.
underworld, centered around the most secret and suppressed part of human behavior that "does not come into the open." One may oppose this dichotomy on the ground that the spectrum the overt world covers is much broader: it is not only societal, but also domestic and private, involving love, lust, seduction, adultery and so forth. However, the watershed is still there: it is only in the covert world that the details of sexual possession and ecstasy are presented, and the size of penis, the scent of vagina, the techniques and positions of intercourse and a variety of aphrodisiacs that help increase sexual stamina and pleasure is portrayed; and only there are we


34 Ibid.


36 See *Carnal Prayer Mat* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1990), pp. 186-7: "Vesperus sniffed her body carefully all over and found that each pore gave off a wisp of scent... until Cloud broke in: 'Have you smelt me all over?' 'Yes.' 'I'm afraid there's one place you've missed.' 'No. I didn't miss anywhere.' 'Yes, you did. You missed one place, where the scent differs from everywhere else. I might as well offer that for your appreciation too.' 'Where is it?' Cloud took one of his fingers in her hand and touched her vulva with it. 'The smell in here is different again,' she said. 'If it's not asking too much, why not sniff it and see?' Vesperus crouched down and gave several deep sniffs before scrambling up again. 'What a treasure! There's nothing more to be said. I shall love you forever!' With that, he crouched down again. parted that supreme treasure and began licking it."

37 See *Carnal Prayer Mat*, chapter 3.

38 Aphrodisiacs 貞藥 (chunyao) appear frequently in erotic fiction. The earlier erotic story "Feiyan waizhuan" 飛燕外傳 (Unofficial History of Zhao Feiyan) first mentions the aphrodisiac *shenxu jiao* 秘憚膠, a tiny red pill used in the Han dynasty. *Xiuta yeshi* has a graphic description of two different kinds of aphrodisiac designed for external use for men and women. The ointment for men was to be applied to their "jade stalk" 玉莖 (jujing) to make it bigger, harder and more staminal, while the pill for women was to be inserted into their "vaginal orifice" 淫戶 (yinhü) to
shown how a husband encourages his wife to have sex with his homosexual partner,\(^3\) how a mother instigates her virginal daughter to be deflowered by her own lover,\(^4\) and how sexual orgies are performed with the participation of a close circle of people: couples, maids and manservant.\(^5\) If we are incapable of imagining any new pleasures in this world, we can at least enjoy a different kind of pleasure: “pleasure in the truth of pleasure.”\(^6\) Without this “truth of enable it to become tighter and more slippery. See \textit{Xiuta yeshi}, p. 62. Erotic fiction sometimes also tells us what aphrodisiacs were made of. For example, the recipes of aphrodisiacs \textit{sanzu dan} 三芝子 and \textit{butian jieming dan} 補天接命丹 are given respectively in \textit{Xinhua tian} 杏花天 (When Apricot Trees Were in Bloom) and \textit{Shier xiao} 十二笑 (Twelve Smiles). For details, see \textit{Xinhua tian}, p. 23; \textit{Shier xiao}, chapter one.

\(^3\) See \textit{Xiuta yeshi}, pp. 44-7.

\(^4\) See \textit{Langshi} 浪史 or \textit{Langshi qiguan} 浪史奇觀 (History of Amorous Adventures), in \textit{Zhongguo guyan xipin congkan} 中國古艳稀品叢刊, \textit{juan} 1, p. 15: “The story goes that the daughter Miaoniang 妙娘 was startled by the violent noises her mother made in intercourse with Stud 浪子. After Miaoniang calmed down and fell asleep, Stud went to her wing-room and sneaked to her bed without awakening the maid. Lifting the quilt, he went down on the girl and planted a kiss on her scented cheek. Miaoniang woke up from her dream and asked, “Who is this?” “Your boyfriend,” Stud replied. Seeing it was Stud, Miaoniang asked, “What brings you here for?” Stud said, “I want to fuck your cunt, sweetheart.” Miaoniang turned and pushed him away. The woman then came over to the bed. “My daughter,” she said, “please do as he’s asked. Being a woman, you’ll be laid sooner or later.” Miaoniang said, “Whatever he likes to do, he can do to you, mother. I don’t like to be bothered by him. No, I don’t.” The woman said, “One day you’ll be laid anyway, my silly girl. Although his cock is big, it is as soft as cotton and won’t hurt you at all when you put it in that place. To start with this nice cock is not bad. It can prepare you for your future husband’s hard cock when you get married and make you suffer less.” Miaoniang said, “I feel kind of embarrassed, though.” “There’s nothing you should feel embarrassed about,” the mother said. “Every woman does that. I myself have made it with him just now. I love him. He is my sweetheart. That’s why I let you share him with me. I didn’t expect that you would reject this handsome scholar. You’ll miss a golden chance.” Miaoniang then turned to Stud and said, “Please do it slowly.”


pleasure.” can we fully understand why Robert van Gulik says that after the Manchus conquered China in 1644 (this is where he concludes his Sexual Life in Ancient China), “there occurred profound changes in the Chinese attitude to sex?”43 And can we fully understand how these “profound changes” have been related to the process of Chinese history?44

Now it is time to undertake a further shift: from cultural studies into the study of eroticism. The study of the erotic mainly focuses on the erotic fiction produced in the late Ming


44 It seems to me that sexual openness and freedom have often been related with the process of modernization. In modern society people believe in free spirit and hold an open attitude toward sex. Obviously, this modern world outlook is antithetic to the classical ideology, an ideology that stresses the conformity to reason and takes lust (as well as other desires) as negative. In the late Ming, especially in the latter half of the sixteenth century, the Neo-Confucianism as the classical ideology was generally in crisis when the elite began to demand more freedom of individuality and less restriction upon sexuality. Though the late Ming China still largely vacillated between old concepts and new ideas, it was nonetheless gradually moving toward what we call modernity. After the Manchu took power in 1644, however, a reversed movement started. With an unprecedented emphasis on collective choice and the interests of majority of people, it forced personal energy, be it unconscious or conscious, to be conditioned by social norms and forced sexual desire to be purified into an accepted form of love or sensibility. As a result, the Neo-Confucian classical ideology again became dominant, ruling in Chinese intellectuals until the early twentieth century. The discontinuity of the “Chinese Renaissance” in the Qing eventually, in my opinion, brought about the political and economic decline of the country in her last two centuries, and in understanding this descending historical process from the late seventeenth century onward, the degree of sexual openness can serve us as a sensitive indicator. To be sure, this is not to say that Neo-Confucianism or Confucianism itself should be negated. As a Chinese ethical and philosophical system, Confucianism has its own value despite its conflicting aspects with some of modern concepts. As Tu Wei-ming points out, Confucianism is particularly enlightening in its inquiries into the issues such as physical and psychological balance and the relationship between nature and human being, and it can therefore supplement the Western paradigm of modernity in developing values other than freedom, equality, legal institutions, market economy and the like. Tu also believes that the revival of China depends not merely on her economic growth; it depends on the regeneration of Confucianism too. See Chen Lizhi 陈智立. “Rujia wenhua yu xiandai hua — Tu-Weiming jiaoshou fangtan”儒家文化與現代化 --杜維明教授訪談(Confucian Culture and Modernity: An Interview with Professor Tu Wei-ming). Renmin ribao 人民日報 (People's Daily), overseas edition. July 16, 1998, p. 3.
It is not meant to be a paradigmatic detachment from cultural studies, which despite internal crises and controversies are still evolving. Rather, it is an intensification, a deepening, or a continuation of the subject of sexuality in the area of literature. It may be compared to the New Historicism in that it is also an inquiry related to the discipline of history, but it differs from the historical study that interprets history by making use of fictive narratives as, for example, what Bret Hinsch does in his work on the history of Chinese homosexuality. It may sometimes be quite similar to sociology or psychology in its detailed discussion of sexuality, yet it is not mainly

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45 By late Ming, I refer to the 17th century. Scholars have been inclined to use the term "Ming-Qing" to refer to this period. But "Ming-Qing" as a periodization usually covers the whole late imperial period from the 14th century up to the early twentieth century. I admit that some of erotic fiction were published after 1644, i.e., after the Ming House was overthrown. But in view of the southern locations in which majority of erotic fiction were published, and in view of the existence of the Southern Ming regimes which lasted until 1662 (for details, see Lynn Struve, The Southern Ming), and of the resistance of the government in Taiwan which was first established by Zheng Chenggong and persisted for another twenty years after the last Southern Ming regime was destroyed, I think "late Ming" is perhaps a better term in describing the erotic fiction that was mostly produced in the 17th century. To my knowledge, only Ruvi jun zhuhuan, an erotic short novel about the female Emperor Wu Zetian's sexual life, was published before the 17th century. For a discussion of the authorship and date of this work, see Liu Hui's article.

46 The characteristic features of the New Historicism is clearly described by Louis A. Montrose: "There has recently emerged within Renaissance studies, as in Anglo-American literary studies generally, a renewed concern with the historical, social, and political conditions and consequences of literary production and reproduction: The writing and reading of texts, as well as the process by which they circulated and categorized, analyzed and taught, are being reconstrued as historically determined and determining modes of cultural work; apparently autonomous aesthetic and academic issues are being reunderstood as inextricably though complexly linked to other discourses and practices — such linkages constituting the social networks within which individual subjectivities and collective structures are mutually and continuously shaped." See Louis A. Montrose, "Professing the Renaissance: The Poetics and Politics of Culture," in Aram Veeser, ed., The New Historicism (New York: Routledge, 1989), p. 15.

concerned with the classification of sexual behavior, nor with its distribution in various strata of society, nor its normalcy and abnormality in terms of social circumstances or psychic gestalt. The major task of the study of the erotic is to define the nature of late Ming erotic fiction, explore the social milieu in which it appeared, and describe its forms, features, functions, values as well as other aspects that are textually or contextually relevant to this literary sub-genre. Given the scope of its undertaking, the study of the erotic may as well be called poetics of eroticism.

In what follows, however, I do not plan to offer a general poetics of eroticism exploring the whole uncharted subject. I shall, instead, choose an individual writer, Ling Mengchu 凌濛初 (1580-1644) and concentrate on a group of his stories which, I think, can be categorized as erotic fiction. This group of erotic stories are taken from his two short story collections, Pai'an jingqi 拍案驚奇 (Slapping the Table in Amazement) and its sequel Erke pai'an jingqi 二刻拍案驚奇 (Slapping the Table in Amazement, Second Collection), and all of them are characterized by a notable paradox. On the one hand, they are portrayals of sensuality meant to be enjoyed for the reader's pleasure, but on the other hand, technical and thematic constraints are imposed for a moral purpose. We are just at the beginning of our understanding of this contradictory

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48 Although quite a few scholars have mentioned the causes of the rise of erotic fiction in the late Ming, their arguments, due to the nature of their studies, have never been fully elaborated. For example, in his Zhongguo gudai xingwenhua 中國古代性文化 (The Sexual Culture in Ancient China), Liu Dalin 劉達臨 calls our attention to five social factors that he thought were related to the rise of erotic fiction: 1) the trammels of Confucian ethics, 2) the high-handed policies of the Ming regime, 3) the lascivious life style of the imperial families, 4) the loss of ancient sexual manuals, and 5) the appearance of sprouts of capitalism. See ibid., pp. 792-793. But his explanations, like those made by other scholars, are too brief to be convincing. For a more detailed and sophisticated analysis, further efforts in this respect have yet to be made.

phenomenon, a tension that marks his stories as well as to lesser degrees a large part of late Ming erotic fiction.50

In my study I will investigate the authorial and social contexts that gave rise to such a tension, and show, in my textual analysis, the features of the sexuality and the ideological repression imposed by the author. In so doing, I will depict the eroticism in a way that may help us to understand not only how the principle of pleasure is related to the economic base but also how, owing to the functioning of the state ideology, it is morally contained, contrary to the assumption by some Western scholars that “pleasure is not considered in relation to an absolute law of the permitted and the forbidden, nor by reference to a criterion of utility, but first and foremost in relation to itself.”51 Through a particular emphasis on the polarizing relationship between the material and spiritual aspects in Ling's fictive narratives, I shall attempt to prove that this tension is attributable to the chiasmic formulations of “the historicity of texts and textuality of history.” and a typological schema at the end of my discussion will help show that Ling's stories, because of their dualistic presentations of the enjoyment of the flesh and an accompanying moral containment, are different from other types of late Ming erotica.52

The reason that I focus upon Ling Mengchu is not simply because I have translated his

50 For example, according to Chen Cuiying 陳翠英, Feng Menglong’s 馮夢龍 (1574-1644) works are also characterized by this contradiction. “Feng's deep concern with sensuality reveals that he transcended the tradition. But his nostalgia for the old ethical order, which he manifested in his moral teaching, discloses that he was still fettered by the traditional ideology.” See Chen Cuiying. Shiqing xiaoshuo zhi jiazhiguan tantao 世情小說之價值觀探討 (An Exploration of the Axiological View in the Novels of Manners) (Taipei: National Taiwan University Press, 1996), p. 84.

51 Foucault, History of Sexuality, vol. 1, p. 57.

52 I will explain this in detail in the conclusion.
erotic stories, which, so far as their sexuality is concerned, are not as substantial as some of the erotic fiction produced in the same period. He merits our attention mainly because his stories are typical in projecting the erotic and sinful reciprocity that I have mentioned.

2. Erpai and its Author

Ling Mengchu was a prolific writer. Fiction is but a small fraction in the entire body of his voluminous works. The twenty or more works he wrote, edited and compiled include short stories, plays, poems, popular songs, essays, literary criticisms, political treatises and exegetic studies of the classics. if we do not take into consideration some possible unattributed pieces

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53 Except for fiction, drama and sanqu 歌 曲 verses, most of Ling Mengchu's works are listed in Huzhou fuzhi 湖州府誌 (The Local History of Huzhou Prefecture, woodblock edition 1874) and Wucheng xianzhi 氾程縣誌 (The Local History of Wucheng County, woodblock edition 1881). According to these two local histories, Ling wrote, edited, and compiled the following works: collections of poems and prose Guomeng ji 國門集 (The Gate of the Capital, First Collection), Guomeng ji yi ji 國門集乙集 (The Gate of the Capital, Second Collection), Jijiangzhai shiwen 集講齋詩文 (Prose and Poems from Jijiang Studio), and Yan Zhu ou 燕筑謡 (Songs to Yan Zhu), studies of the classics Shengmeng chuanshi dizhong 聖門傳詩嫡宗 (The Book of Poetry Handed Down from the Direct Disciples of Confucius) (to which Shengong shishuo 沈公詩說, The Poetics of Master Shen Pei, is attached). Yan shiyi 言詩翼 (A Guide to the Understanding of The Book of Poetry ) Shini 詩尼 (Some Inquiries into The Book of Poetry). Shijing renwu kao 詩經人物考 (A Study of Historical Figures in The Book of Poetry), Zuozhuan hezheng 左傳合譯 (The Combined Commentaries on The Commentary of Zuo). Houhan shu zuanping 後漢書纂評 (History of the Latter Han with Annotations and Commentaries), Ni Si Shihan vitong buping 倪思史漢異同補評 (Ni Si's Supplementary Comments on the Difference between Records of the Grand Historian and History of the Latter Han), and Shanding Songshi buyi 刊定宋詩補遺 (Supplementary Material to Song Poetry, A Revision) (this title appears in Kong Lingjing's 孔令鏡 Zhongguo xiaoshuo shiliào 中國小說史料 as Shanding Songshi buyi 刊定宋史補遺, Supplementary Material to History of the Song, A Revision, see Kong Lingjing, ibid., p. 130), political treatises Jiaokou shice 剿寇十策 (Ten Suggestions for Eradicating the
Rebels), anthologies (compiled and annotated by him or in collaboration with other people) Xuanfu 选赋 (Selected Prose-Poems), Heping xuanshi 合評選詩 (Selected Poems with Collective Commentaries), Tao Jingjie ji 陶靖節集 (Works of Tao Jingjie) (with introduction), Dongpo Shangu chanxi ji 東坡山谷禅喜集 (Su Dongpo and Huang Shangu's Inner Bliss from the Chan Meditations), and Nanvin san lai 南音三齣 (Three Kinds of Southern Sound) (to which his work on the art of drama Tanqu za zha 談曲雜札, Notes on the Southern Drama, is attached), and miscellaneous works Jibian dudan 工編蠹談 (A Collection of My Old Manuscripts). Dangzhi houlu 荒時後錄 (A Later Record of the Debauchery), and Yingteng sanzha 盈藤三札 (The Three Precious Letters). See Huozhu fuzhi, juan 59. p. 1131; Wucheng xianzhi, juan 31. According to Wang Gulu 王古魯, Ling also wrote another two works: Huoni gong 惡溺供 (A Confession of My Indulgence), and Guoce gai 國策概 (A General Introduction to Intrigues of the Warring States). See Wang Gulu, "Benshu de jieshaon"本書的介紹 (Introduction to Erke pai'an jingqi), in Zhang Peiheng 章培恒, ed., Erke pai'an jingqi. pp. 764-765. Fu Xihua 傅惜華 mentions that a work on the art of drama entitled Qulu 曲律 (Rules of Drama) was Ling's work too, but Hanan says that he did not know on what evidence Fu attributed this work to Ling. See Hanan, The Chinese Vernacular Story (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 234. And according to Ye Dejun 葉德均 and Shi Changyu 石昌渝, Ling was also the editor or co-editor of the following two works: Wusao hebian 吳骚合編 (The Combined Edition of the Songs of Wu) and Dongpo shuzhuan 東坡書傳 (A Collection of Letters of Su Tongpo). See Ye Dejun, Ling Mengchu shiji xinian 凌濛初事跡新編 (A Chronological Account of Ling Mengchu), in Ye Dejun. Xiaoshuo xiqu congkao 小說戲曲敘考 (Assorted Studies on Fiction and Drama) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979), vol. 2, p. 586; Shi Changyu, "Ling Mengchu," in Liu Shide 劉世德, ed., Zhongguo gudian xiaoshuo baike quanshu 中國古代小說百科全書 (An Encyclopedia of Classical Chinese Fiction) (Beijing: Zhongguo gudai xiaoshuo baike quanshu chuban she, 1993), p. 304. According to Ling's "Muzhi ming" 軍誌銘 (Tomb Inscription) written by Zheng Longcai 鄭龍采, the title Dongpo shuzhuan should be Su Huang Chidu 苏黃尺箋 (Letters of Su Dongpo and Huang Tingjian), and Ling also edited Shiliu guo chunqiu shanzheng 十六國春秋斠正 (A Revised Edition of the Annal of Spring and Autumn of the Sixteen States). See Zhou Shaoliang 周紹良, "Qumu congshi" 書目叢拾 (Some Additions to the Titles of Drama), in Xuejin manlu 學林漫錄 (Random Records of Scholars and Academic Works), no. 5. 1982. p. 100. As for Ling's composition of popular literary works, we know that he wrote at least nine northern plays (Hanan who wrote at least eight northern plays, see Hanan, The Chinese Vernacular Story, p. 143), the titles of which are as follows: Mang ze pei 萬獸配 (Choosing a Spouse in a Hurry), Qiuran wen 琪髯翁 (Curly-beard Man), Song Gongming niao yuanshao 宋公明關元霄 (Song Gongming throws the New Year Festival into an Uproar), Diandao yinyuan 奈倒姻緣 (Reversed Marriage Destiny), Mohu yinyuan 摩忽姻緣 (A Temporary Union), Juedi baochou 拔地報仇 (Diggging a Hole into the Ground to Take Revenge), Ni Zhengping 妮正平 (Ni Zhengping), Liu Bolun 劉伯倫 (Liu Bolun), and Taohua zhun 桃花莊 (The Peach-Flower Village). Besides, he wrote three southern plays: Xuehe ji 雪荷記 (Snow Lily), Hejian ji 合劍記 (The Match of the Swords) and Qiaohe shanjin ji 邪和殤記 (The Lapel). Qiaohe shan is a complete reworking of Gao Lian's 高濂 play Yuzan ji 友賢記 (Jade Hairpin), to which Ling objected on account of its ornate diction. See Zeng Yongyi
that were not recorded in local gazetteers and in some other sources. However, a large part of his oeuvre is not extant,\(^{54}\) and the majority of his non-fiction writing has not been easily accessible since few of them were reprinted after their original publication.\(^{55}\) His main extant works, which

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54 "Ling Mengchu's works, so far as we know, number over twenty. But most of them are not extant and only a few are available." See Hu Shiying 胡士瑒, *Huaben xiaoshuo gailun* 話本小說概論 (A General Introduction to *Huaben* Stories) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), vol. 2, p. 461. See also Liu Bendong 劉本棟, *Pai’an jingqi kaozheng* 拍案驚奇考證 (Studies on *Pai’an jingqi*), in *Ling Mengchu yu Erpai* 涙漣出與二拍 (Ling Mengchu and his *Erpai*) (Taipei: Tiany'i chuban she, 1982), p. 62. Of the nine northern plays, five were lost and only four are extant. See Zeng Yongyi, *Ming zaju gailun* 明代雜劇概論 (A General Introduction to the Northern Plays of the Ming Dynasty) (Taipei: Taipei jiaxin jijin hui, 1967), p. 329. Ling also wrote a number of *sanqu* verses. Two sets of *sanqu* verses can be found in *Taixia xinzou* 太霞新奏 (Celestial Air), a *sanqu* anthology compiled by Feng Menglong, *juan* 6, pp. 226-230 and pp. 247-251. Another three sets are included in *Wusao hebian* (The Combined Edition of the Songs of Wu), an anthology Ling compiled in collaboration with Zhang Xuchu 張旭初. See Ye Dejun, p. 586. Some titles of *fu* 賦 (prose-poems) he wrote are recorded in Zheng Longcai's tomb inscription, such as "Daishan fu" 村山賦 (Rhapsody on Mount Dai) and "Beishu fu" 北輸賦 (Songs to the Successful Transportation to the North). See Ye Dejun, p. 583 and p. 585. (The translation of these titles may not be completely correct, because some of them are quite ambiguous. Without seeing the books, I have to rely on my own subjective judgment.)

55 To my knowledge, Ling's extant non-fiction works were never reprinted in the twentieth century except for *Nanvin sanlai*, an anthology that contains 97 sets of *sanqu* verses, 27 *xiaoling* 小令 lyrics and 132 southern plays. See Hu Shiying, *Huaben xiaoshuo gailun*, vol. 2, p. 462. But according to Chen Duo, *Nanvin sanlai* contains 100 independent sets of *sanqu* verses, 28 *xiaoling* lyrics and 136 *sanqu* verses taken from 44 southern plays. See Chen Duo, "Ling Mengchu," in *Zhongguo gudai xiqu jia pingzhuan* 中國古代敘曲家評傳 (Critical Biographies of Playwrights in Ancient China) (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou guji chuban she, 1992), p. 439. The play *Qiaohe jian* (The Lapel), which Ling completely re-wrote on the basis of Gao Lian's play *Yuzan ji*, was not extant. Only five sets of its *sanqu* verses are kept in *Nanvin sanlai*. See Chen Duo, ibid.

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have been read with pleasure from the time when he was alive to the present day\(^\text{26}\) and have
endeared him to modern readers, are obviously his two *huaben* 話本\(^\text{57}\) story collections, *Pai’an*

\(^{26}\) Ling’s *Pai’an jingqi* achieved a great commercial success after its publication. This is why, at
the urge of his publisher, he wrote a sequel, *Erke pai’an jingqi*. See Ling Mengchu, preface to
Erke pai’an jingqi. Whether the second collection was as successful as the first one, we do not
know. But judging from the popularity enjoyed by the anthology *Jingu qiguan* (Unusual Stories Old and New) which contains 11 stories from *Erpai*, and also judging from the publication of some imitating works such as *Sanke pai’an jingqi* 三刻拍案驚奇 (Slapping the Table in Amazement, the Third collection) written by Lu Yunlong 陸雲龍 (fl. 1628) and published in the Chongzhen 崇禎 period too (1628-1644), we have reason to assume that *Erke pai’an jingqi* must have been well-received as well.

\(^{57}\) The reason that I deliberately indicate they are *huaben* stories is because *huaben* as a defined
sub-genre in the category of short fiction differs very much from both modern Chinese and
Western short stories. Literary scholars in America are inclined to use the term “vernacular
stories" to refer to *huaben* stories. But the problem is that “vernacular stories” were not always
written in the vernacular. It is quite often that we find *wenyan* 文言 elements in those *huaben*
stories, and some of them, like “Lanqiao ji" 藍橋記 (The Blue Bridge) in *Qingping shantang
huaben* 清平山堂話本 (Qingping Shantang Huaben Story Collection) and "Qian sheren tishi
yanzi lou" 錢會人題詩燕子樓 (Mr. Qian Wrote a Poem in the Building of Swallow) in *Jingshi
tongyan* 煒世通言 (Popular Words to Warn the World) were completely written in *wenyan*.
Moreover, a large number of stories published in late Qing (if we do not take modern and
contemporary stories into consideration) can also be called “vernacular stories," but they are
obviously different from *huaben* stories. *Huaben* stories were not only written in the vernacular,
but also have the stylistic features that were related to the commercial story-telling. It is these
features that made them a distinguished sub-genre of fiction. For detailed discussions of *huaben*
genre, see Patrick Hanan The Vernacular Short Story and his article “The Early Chinese Short
168-207; Hu Shiyin. *Huaben xiaoshuo gailun*; Ouyang Daifa 歐陽代發. *Huaben xiaoshuo shi*
話本小說史 (A History of *Huaben* Fiction). The meaning of *huaben* may be open to discussion.
Since Lu Xun, it has been generally accepted that *huaben* refers to the “base text” 底本 (diben)
used by the professional storyteller. But a Japanese scholar Masuda Wataru 増田涉, who was the
translator of Lu Xun’s *Zhongguo xiaoshuo shilue* (A Brief History of Chinese Fiction), argues in
an article published in 1965 that *huaben* should be interpreted either as "story" or "source of
story" rather than "base text." His point of view has been quite influential, especially in the West.
Recently the Chinese Ming-Qing fiction scholar Xiao Xinqiao 蕭枚橋 published an article, in
which he maintained that Lu Xun’s explanation of the meaning of *huaben* is correct, although
sometime *huaben* can indeed be interpreted as “story" or "source of story." See Xiao Xinqiao,
“Guanyu *huaben* dingyi de sikao”關於話本定義的思考 (An Inquiry into the Definition of
the term *huaben* is interpreted, scholars remain quite consistent on the stylistic features that
jingqi or Chuke pai'an jingqi 初刻拍案驚奇 (Slapping the Table in Amazement, First Collection)\(^{58}\) and Erke pai'an jingqi, usually collectively referred to in abbreviation as Erpai 二拍 (Two Slaps).\(^{59}\)

Composed in the style and format set up by Feng Menglong's 馮夢龍 Sanyan 三言 (Three Words) story collections,\(^{60}\) each collection of Erpai contains also forty stories.\(^{61}\) In all, Erpai was supposed to have eighty stories. Yet the best copies of the two collections that we now have, the distinguish huaben from other fiction genres.

\(^{58}\) In fact, the first collection was originally published under the title Pai'an jingqi and it was not until after the second collection had been published that the words “Chuke”初刻 (first collection) were added in order to make the first collection distinguishable from its sequel. See Li Tianyi. “Chongyin Erke pai'an jingqi xu (Preface to the Reprint of Erke pai'an jingqi), in Erke pai'an jingqi, p. 5.

\(^{59}\) This abbreviated title is widely used by Ming-Qing fiction scholars and I will hereafter refer to these two story collections by using this abbreviation.

\(^{60}\) Ling thought that Gujin xiaoshuo 古今小說 (Stories Old and New) and other two short story collections edited by Feng Menglong maintain a rather high moral tone and consistently offer moral precepts which demolish the vicious practices of the day. Therefore, in writing Erpai, he followed the example of Sanyan not only in offering moral instruction, but in imitating the style and format as well. Feng's influence on Ling's writing of Erpai has been noticed and discussed by Ming-Qing fiction scholars. See, for example, Hanan. The Chinese Vernacular Story, p. 140; Hu Shiying. Huaben xiaoshuo gailun, p. 261; Liu Bendong. “Pai'an jingqi kaozheng,” in Ling Mengchu vu Erpai, p. 62; Ouyang Daifa. Huaben xiaoshuo shi, p. 258.

\(^{61}\) See Ling Mengchu, preface to Erkepai'an jingqi: “Whenever my friends visited me, they would ask me for one of my stories to read, and on finishing it, would invariably slap the table and exclaim. 'What an amazing thing!' The news was spied out by a book merchant, who asked me to let him publish the stories. So I copied them out and put them together. They are in total forty stories... As the first collection of my stories has been well received, the book merchant wished to publish another collection. I smiled, and said, "One collection is enough!" But I had, in the past, collected some interesting news and strange anecdotes, and had never elaborated them into stories. Thinking that many of them might be useful source materials for stories, I could not help but agree to write the second collection, which also contains forty stories."
copies of the Shangyoutang 尚友堂 editions printed in the late Ming,\(^2\) which have been
preserved in the Japanese libraries\(^3\) and reprinted for Chinese readership in 1950s and in recent
years with or without expurgation,\(^4\) have actually left us only with seventy eight stories. For

\(^{2}\) The best edition of Pai’an jingqi was discovered by Toyoda Minoru 豐田積 of Tokyo
University in 1941. Toyoda Minoru came upon a copy of a forty-chapter edition in the library of
a temple in Japan and then reported it in an article entitled “Minkan yanjikkanban haku
kyoko oyobi suiko shiden hyorin kan no shutsugen (The Discovery of Both the Ming Forty
Chapter Edition of Pan’an jingqi and the Complete Text of Shuihu jichuan pinglin).” See Li Tianyi
李田意, “The Original Edition of Pai’an jingqi,” in Pai’an jingqi (Hong Kong: Youlian
chuban youxian gongsi, 1986). Before the discovery of the original Shangyoutang edition, what had been
available to Chinese readers were mainly Qing reprinted editions which contain only thirty
six stories. So far as we know, there are as many as nine reprinted editions published in the
none of them contains more than thirty six stories. See Li Tianyi, “Chongyin Erke pai’an jingqi
yuankanben xu.” in Erke pai’an jingqi (Hong Kong: Youlian chuban youxian gongsi, 1986), p. 2. That is why Lu Xun says that Pai’an jingqi contains thirty
six stories. See Lu Xun, Zhongguo xiaoshuo shilue (A Brief History of Chinese Fiction). in Lu Xun
quanji 魯迅全集 (The Complete Works of Lu Xun) (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chuban she.

\(^{3}\) The copies in Japanese libraries were manually transcribed and photocopied by Wang Gulu
and Li Tianyi. For their experience of seeking the books in Japan, see respectively Wang Gulu's
article “Baihai yishao lu” (A Scanty Record of the Sea of Fiction), in Chuke pai’an jingqi, annotated and collated by Wang Gulu (Hong Kong: Gudian
wenxue chubanshe, 1976), pp. 739-752, and Li Tianyi’s article “The Original Edition of Pai’an jingqi” which is attached to
the unabridged edition of pai’an jingqi (Hong Kong: Youlian chuban youxian gongsi, 1986).

\(^{4}\) In 1950s two editions of Erpai were published. One is the edition collated, punctuated, and
annotated by Wang Gulu and published by Renmin wenxue chubanshe 人民文學出版社 in
mainland China, and the other is collated and punctuated by Li Tianyi (without annotation) and
published by Zhengzhong shuju 正中書局 in Taiwan. Both were abridged editions, in which all
sexual words or sentences are removed (the exact number of the words expunged are indicated).
The best edition now available to us is the unabridged edition collated and punctuated by Li
Tianyi and published by Youlian Chuban Youxian Gongs in Hong Kong. Not only sexual
descriptions are unexpurgated, but marginal and interlinear comments are preserved as well.
story 23 in the second collection, without having been "slightly abridged," was repeated from
the first collection, and the last chapter "Song Gongming nao yuanxiao" (Song Gongming Throws the New Year Festival into an Uproar) is a play, ostensibly added to round out
the number.65

Among these seventy eight stories, there are at least seven stories, about one-tenth of the
total, which fall into what I call the sub-genre of erotic fiction and of which I have translated five
into English.67 True, Ling has long been reinstated as one of the greatest men of letters in Ming
literature and his Erpai, considered to be his own creation68 despite what he admits in his preface

65 There is a missing paragraph in the modern reprinted edition of Erke pai'an jingqi published
in 1950s by Renmin wenxue chubanshe. Hanan thought that the story in the second collection is
the original Ming editions in Japan, the Ming-Qing fiction scholar Zhang Peiheng (1930-)
found that the two stories are exactly same. Since the modern reprinted edition was based
on the version manually transcribed by Wang Gulu from the Cabinet Library's copy, there are quite a few copying errors, which include the missing paragraph. In fact, the story in the
second collection is exactly same as the one in the first collection. See Zhang Peiheng, "Jiaodian
shuoming" (Explanatory Notes on Collation and Punctuation), in Erke pai'an jingqi
(Shanghai: Guji chubanshe 1983), p. 2.

66 Judging from the central margins, story 23 was taken from the first collection and the play
also came from some other source. Besides, story 5 and story 9 have different imprint on the
central margin, so they are probably not the original stories either. See Zhang Peiheng, ibid., pp.
1-2

67 The five stories I have translated into English are as follows: "Fatal Seduction" (story 6 from
the first collection), "Two Monks and One Woman" (story 26 from the first collection), "The
Wife Swappers" (story 32 from the first collection), "The Elopement of a Nun" (story 34 from the
first collection) and "In the Harem" (story 34 from the second collection). The other two stories,
which can also be considered as erotic, are "Son and Lover" (story 17 from the first collection)
and "The Approdisiacs" (story 20 from the second collection).

68 See, for example, Zheng Zhenduo, "Ming-Qing erdai de pinghua ji" 明清二代的評話集 (Huaben Story collections in the Ming and the Qing Dynasties), in Zheng Zhenduo. Zhongguo wenxue lunji 中國文學論集 (Collected Essays on Chinese Literature) (Hong Kong: Guangqing chuban she, 1979), vol. 2, p. 600; Li Tianyi, "Chongyin Erke pai'an jingqi xu," in
that his stories were based on "piecemeal sources" 古今雜碎事 (gujìn zásuì shì), has been highly valued as collections of masterpieces, inferior, according to common critical comments, only to Feng Menglong's Sanyan in the whole corpus of the late Ming huaben stories. But his

Pai'an jingqi, p. 2; Liu Bendong, "Pai'an jingqi kaozheng," in Ling Mengchu yu Erpai, p. 2. What Liu says perhaps represents a general evaluation of Ling's contribution to the development of Chinese vernacular fiction: "Feng Menglong's Sanyan was a compilation of stories written in the Song, Yuan and Ming dynasties, and Feng only polished these stories and add a few stories of his own to the anthologies. Erpai, however, selected piecemeal sources, old and new, and elaborated those materials interesting to audience and readers into stories. Therefore, Erpai were completely [Ling's] own creation." See Liu Bendong, "Pai'an jingqi kaozheng," in Ling Mengchu yu Erpai, p. 2.

69 See Ling Mengchu, preface to Pai'an jingqi.

70 For example, Sun Kaidi in his article "Sanyan Erpai yuanliu kao" 三言二拍源流考 (An Investigation of the Sources of Sanyan and Erpai) highly praises Erpai. He says: "The strong point [of Erpai] is selection of topics, or construction of a story line on the basis of a small matter. Usually the source material in the original work is only about a hundred words, recounting some anecdote that are rather boring. In Ling's stories, however, such pieces of information are effusively expanded into thousands of words, and the description of scenes and expression of feelings become so vivid that they can even form a picture before your eyes. As [Ling] turned the cliche into the miraculous and the tragic into merriment of humor, his efforts should be considered as a creation. If he had not been a talent of imaginative power, nor did he know the ways of the world, he could certainly not have been able to make such an achievement." See Sun Kaidi, "Sanyan Erpai yuanliu kao," in Cangzhou ji 滄州集 (Works of Sun Kaidi) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1965), vol. 1, p. 193. Some scholars, however, are rather critical of Ling's Erpai. "Ling took literature either as vehicle to relieve personal frustration and make cynical expressions or as an instrument to preach morality. He never intended to reflect actual life and expose the contradictions of society. This kind of attitude greatly limits Erpai in both thematic depth and artistry." See Hu Shiyi, Huaben xiaoshuo gailun, vol. 2, p. 463. But Hu Shiyi admits that, except Sanyan, almost all late Ming huaben stories are even worse than Ling's Erpai. See Hu Shiyi, p. 474.

71 Lu Xun thought that Erpai cannot be compared to Sanyan: "When Stories to Awaken the World was published, Two Slaps were produced to rival it. But as Two Slaps are rather flat in description, and their source materials are insufficient and uninteresting, they fall below the standard of Feng's work." See Lu Xun, Zhongguo xiaoshuo shilue, p. 210 (The translation is Yang Hsien-yi and Gladys Yang's with some changes). Lu Xun's comments are influential and most of Ming-Qing fiction scholars agree with Lu Xun on the evaluation of Erpai. "In his A Brief History of Chinese Fiction, Mr. Lu Xun comments on Two Slaps, saying that they are 'rather flat
erotic stories, especially those I have translated, have been dismissed because of their "explicitly erotic descriptions" of "obscene behavior," and this sort of moral censure has, regrettably, made these stories disappear from the realm of academic studies and translation.

In description and their source materials are insufficient and uninteresting.' This is an incisive criticism. In my opinion, most of the stories in Ling's Two Slaps are poor adaptations. There are occasionally, some stories that may attract our attention, but they are at best just easy to understand. Compared with Three Words, they cannot but be considered somewhat inferior. However, as Two Slaps are broad in subject matter, they are usually mentioned in juxtaposition with Three Words by vernacular fiction scholars. For this reason, these two collections cannot be ignored." See Sun Kaidi, "Sanyan Erpai yuanliu kao," in Cangzhou ji, vol. 1, pp. 193-4. "On the whole, Two Slaps are inferior to Three Words in both thematic and artistic presentation." See Ouyang Daifa, Huaben xiaoshuo shi, p. 261. But some scholars maintain that Erpai are as good as Sanyan. "Two Slaps are rich in expression and quite readable. Like Feng's Sanyan, they are also immortal works." See Zhang Jinglu 張靜盧, postscript to Pai'an jingqi. Quoted from Li Tianyi, "Chongyin Erke pai'an jingqi xu, p. 7. "Sanyan and Erpai represent the achievement of the simulated huaben stories in the Ming dynasty. They had strong influence both on the contemporary and the later literature." See You Guo'en 沈國恩, et al., Zhongguo wenxue shi 中國文學史 (A History of Chinese Literature) (Hong Kong Zhongguo tushu kanxing she, 1986), vol. 4, p. 114.

72 See Hu Shiyiing, Huaben xiaoshuo gailun, vol. 2, pp. 463. Similar critiques can be found in almost all the Chinese literary histories published in mainland China. For example, You Guo'en says that "quite a few stories [of Erpai] are full of erotic descriptions... 'One Woman and Two Monks.' 'The Wife Swappers' and 'In the Harem' are typical bad examples of this." See You Guo'en. et al. Zhongguo wenxue shi, vol. 4, p. 120.

73 To my knowledge, nobody has ever studied the sexual aspects of these stories except a brief reference to the story "In the Harem" in Keith McMahon's Causality and Containment. As for translation, these five stories have never been rendered into English before (although there are French and German translations which include some of these stories, see L'Amour de la Renarde, trans. Andre Levi; Chinesischer Liebesgarten, trans. Tsung-tung Chang). Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang’s translation Courtesan’s Jewel Box includes five stories from Erpai — four stories from Pai’an jingqi and one story from Erke pai’an jingqi (a large part of that collection was devoted to the translation of stories from Sanyan), but none of them are the stories I have translated here. Another book of translation by John Scott under the title The Lecherous Academician includes four stories from Erke pai’an jingqi. Although Scott intended to produce "in the fullness of time," a translation of all seventy-eight stories from both collections, his plan has not yet been realized. For more information of academic studies and translation of Ling’s Erpai, see Wang Lina 王麗娜, "Sanyan Erpai yu Jingu jiguan haiwai cangben, waiven fanyi ji yanjiu zhuzuo" 三言二拍與今古奇觀海外藏本, 外文翻譯及研究著作 (The Editions of Sanyan,
A biographical sketch of Ling is necessary before we start to discuss his fiction.\textsuperscript{74} My aim is not to give a comprehensive account of his life,\textsuperscript{75} nor simply to list the facts and data available as some other scholars have done, but to present, by making use of all the material at hand, a picture with its own angle and focus, which, partial or spotty as it may be in portraying him as a complex and multifaceted man, will be nonetheless conducive to our better understanding of his erotic fiction.

Ling Mengchu, also known as Ling Xuanfang 凌玄房 and Ling Chucheng 凌初成,\textsuperscript{76} was

\textbf{Erfai} and \textit{Unusual Stories Old and New} in overseas libraries, and their translations and studies," in \textit{Zhonghua wenshi luncong} 中華文史論叢 (Studies on Chinese Literature and History), vol. 29, 1984, pp. 177-217.

\textsuperscript{74} For the biographical account of Ling Mengchu, I mainly rely on \textit{Huzhou fuzhi}, \textit{Wucheng xianzhi}, Ye Dejun's "Ling Mengchu shiji xinian," as well as some secondary sources such as Hu Shiyi's \textit{Huaben xiaoshuo gailun}, Hanan's \textit{The Chinese Vernacular Story} and articles by Wang Gulu, Li Tainyi, Li Houji 李厚基, Shi Changyu and Chen Duo about Ling's life and works. Unfortunately, \textit{Lingshi zongpu} 凌氏宗譜 (The Clan Genealogy of the Ling), in which Ling's tomb inscription written by Zheng Longcai is contained, is not accessible to me.

\textsuperscript{75} In the afterword to his translation of Ling's stories, John Scott says that "it is ironic that the finest writers of traditional fiction and drama in China, such as Master Ling, remain for the most part mere literary ghosts; apart from their great plays and novels we have little more than their names and rarely as much as that." See \textit{The Lecherous Academician} (London: Deutsch, 1973), p. 162. This statement, not without a bit of exaggeration, is largely true as far as Ling Mengchu is concerned. Without seeing the whole \textit{Lingshi zongpu}, it is obviously unwise for me to attempt to write a comprehensive biography for him.

\textsuperscript{76} Ling Xuanfang and Ling Chucheng were Ling Mengchu's courtesy names. His other less used courtesy names were Ling Bo 凌波 and Ling Bo'an 凌波岸. Since he was the nineteenth child among his generation in Ling's clan, he was sometimes called by his contemporaries Ling Shijiu 凌十九 (Ling the Nineteenth). In addition, he had a pen-name (or sobriquet), Jikongguan Zhuren 杰空觀主人, which he used for his two short story collections, \textit{Erfai}. Incidentally, we should note that, in order to avoid Emperor Kangxi's 康熙 taboo name in the Qing dynasty, his courtesy name Xuanfang was changed to Yuanfang 元房 in \textit{Huzhou fuzhi}, \textit{Wucheng xianzhi} and some other books. See Ye Dejun, "Ling Mengchu shiji xinian," p. 577. \textit{Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao} 四庫全書總目提要 (A Complete Annotated Bibliography of the Books in the Four Branches of the Imperial Library) lists his works under the name Ling Zhicheng 凌稚成."
a native of Huzhou 湖州 prefecture in Zhejiang province. He was born in 1580 in the district of Shengshe 晉舍 in the eastern Wucheng 烏程 county. This was a scenic spot under the administrative jurisdiction of Huzhou, close to Lake Tai 太湖 and remarkable for its abundance of agricultural products. His family had lived there ever since his great-great-grandfather Ling Fu 凌敷 married uxorilocally into the Min family very distinguished in the local area.

In reviewing the familial milieu in which Ling was brought up, two points of particular significance may be brought out. They may help explain why Ling was strongly influenced by Confucianism and why he was engaged in writing and publishing after he failed the provincial examinations.

this name only appears in the above-mentioned bibliography, Ye Dejun thought it was a mistake. See Ye Dejun, ibid.

77 See Li Houji. "Guanyu Erpai de zuozhe Ling Mengchu" 關於二拍的作者凌濛初 (About the Author of Two Slaps Ling Mengchu), in Guangming ribao 光明日報 (Guangming Daily), May 4, 1958.

78 See Ye Dejun. p. 577.

examinations. First, he was a descendent of a line of officials/scholars. His grandfather, Ling Yueyan 凌約言 was juren 舉人 (the second degree holder in the civil service examinations). and the family seems to have reached its peak in prosperity and success when he served as Vice Director 貞外郎 (yuanwai lang) of the Board of Justice in Nanjing. His father, Ling Dizhi 凌迪知, passed the state-level examinations and received the highest academic jinshi 進士 degree. Yet Ling Dizhi was not as successful in his official career as his father. Despite his fairly promising start as the Supervising Secretary for the Bureau of Construction 营缮司

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80 For the pedigree of Master Jichuan 吉川 branch, see Ye Dejun, p. 578. According to Zheng Longcai, Ling's ancestors assumed high positions in late Yuan and early Ming. See Zhou Shaoliang, "Quhai congshi," in Xuelin manbu, p. 96. With the information provided by Huzhou fuzhi, we know the line of officials/scholars in the Lings can at least be traced back to Ling Mengchu's great grandfather Ling Zhen 凌震. Ling Zhen, with his qualification as a student at the National Academy, once served as sub-director 訓導 (xundao) of the local official school in Qianyang 前陽 county. He was a virtuoso in writing prose in classic style, and was especially good at composing poems. For some years his essays and poems were even circulated among the literati who did not know him. His writings were collected in Lianxi ji 績溪集 (The Works of Ling Zhen), which was kept by his family members and has never been published. See Huzhou fuzhi, juan 75, pp. 1428-1429. But according to Zheng Longcai's tomb inscription, Lianxi ji was published. See Zhou Shaoliang, ibid.

81 Ling Yueyan, also known by his courtesy name Jimo, got his juren degree in the year gengzi 廣子 of Jiajing 嘉靖 reign, i.e., in 1540. He first served as Prefect of Quanjiao 全椒 Prefecture, and was later promoted to the position of Vice Director of the Board of Justice in Nanjing. In his childhood, he received education in classics and poetry from his father, Ling Zhen, and his poems have the flavor of Tang poetry. See Huzhou fuzhi, juan 72, p. 1363. Ling Zhen's works include Fengsheng ge jianchao 凤笙閣簡草 (Works from the Studio of Reeds) and Jiaomian ji 椒澗集 (Predilection for Peppers). See Huzhou fuzhi, juan 58, p. 1112.

82 Ling's grandfather reminds us of the "grandpa" — a censor in embroidered garment who saves his libertine grandson Yi 銖 from the verge of death in the story "The Wife Swappers." Judging from their close resemblance, Ling seems to have been quite proud of his grandfather.

83 Ling Dizhi was the eldest son of Ling Yueyan, also known by his courtesy name Zhizhe 稚哲 and his alias Yiquan. He got his jinshi 進士 degree in the year bingchen 丙辰 of the Jiajing reign, i.e., in 1556. See Huzhou fuzhi, juan 75, p. 1430.
(yingshan si) in the Board of Works, he lost this much-treasured position because of his impartial handling of construction materials during the period of his superintending the building of ten praying altars.\(^8^4\) He was demoted to the assistant prefectship in Dingzhou 定州 and later years saw him transfer in succession from one post to another at the same level\(^8^5\) before his retirement at an early age.\(^8^6\)

Secondly, there was a strong tradition of literary pursuit and publication among Ling's

\(^{84}\) According to \textit{Huzhou fuzhi}, the building of ten praying altars needed three million of earthenwares. A certain high-ranking official concealed some ready-made earthenwares and asked for new earthenwares. Yet Ling Dizhi checked with the inventory of the goods in stock and found out the concealed earthenwares. Because of this, he offended that high-ranking official, who later slandered him and made him demote to a lower official position. See \textit{Huzhou fuzhi, juan 75}, p. 1430.

\(^{85}\) Ling's father Ling Dizhi also served as Assistant Prefect of Daming 大名, Acting Prefect of Kaizhou 凯州, and Assistant Prefect of Changzhou 常州. See \textit{Huzhou fuzhi, juan 75}, p. 1430; Ye Dejun, p. 578. Patrick Hanan, who checked with some local gazetteers, said that the string of "higher positions" (actually they were positions of the same level) given by the genealogy is not borne out by the local histories, because these positions are not mentioned by the 1854 \textit{Daming fuzhi} 大名府誌 (The Gazetteer of Daming Prefecture): 10:33. See Hanan, \textit{The Chinese Vernacular Fiction}, note 2 for chapter 7. But in the case of Ling Dizhi, a native of Huzhou prefecture, I think \textit{Huzhou fuzhi} is more reliable than \textit{Daming fuzhi}. According to \textit{Huzhou fuzhi}, we know that Ling Dizhi did assume all the official positions given by the genealogy.

\(^{86}\) According to Li Houji, a scholar who also saw Ling's epitaph written by Zheng Longcai (which he borrowed from Zhou Shaoliang 周绍良, the editor of People's Literature Press), Ling Dizhi could not get along well with his colleagues, so he quit the job and returned to his native place. At that time he was only 38. He devoted rest of his life to writing and publication. See Li Houji, "Guanyu Erpai de zuozhe Ling Mengchu:" Wang Zhizhong 王枝忠, "Mingmo zhuming de tongsu xiaoshuo jia Ling Mengchu jiqi Erpai" 明末著名的通俗小說家及其二拍 (The Late Ming Famous Writer Ling Mengchu and his Two Slaps), in Wang Zhizhong, \textit{Gudian xiaoshuo kaolun 古典小說考論 (Studies of Classic Fiction)} (Yinchuan: Ningxia renmin chuban she, 1992), p. 152. \textit{Huzhou fuzhi}, however, does not mention his discordance with "the times." It only says that he quit his job and went back home to wait upon his father and lead a life of reading and writing in his later years. See \textit{Huzhou fuzhi, juan 75}, p. 1430.
family members and his relatives. His uncle, Ling Zhilong 凌稚隆, was a committed scholar, and was also known as a famous publisher. The works published by him include not only editions and versions of the early histories with collected comments, but general reference books as well. Ling's father, often in collaboration with his brother, found himself enjoying very much the life of collating, annotating, editing and compiling literary classics after he had officially

87 Ling Zhilong was originally called Ling Yuzhi 凌遇知. See Ye Dejun, p. 578. He was the third son of Ling Yueyan, and his courtesy name and his alias were respectively Yidong and Leiquan. See Huzhou fuzhi, juan 75, p. 1432. The old Huzhou fuzhi (i.e., the one published in the Wanli 萬歷 reign of the Ming dynasty) says that Ling Zhilong was Ling's father, but Ye Dejun made a point of bringing our attention to this mistake. See Ye Dejun, p. 578. Maybe, in my surmise, this is not simply a mistake. Judging from his collaboration with his uncle in scholarly studies of the classics and from other evidence, Ling might have been adopted by his uncle after his father died. Whether this is true or not remains to be investigated.

88 Ling Zhilong was widely read and erudite. His father Ling Yueyan was a well-known historian. Ling Zhilong carried forward this family tradition and completed his father's unfinished work. His studies on Zuozhuan 左傳 (The Commentary of Zuo), Shiji 史記 (Records of the Grand Historian), and Hanshu 漢書 (History of the Han), which are mainly directed at the annotations made by previous scholars, enjoyed great popularity after their publication. See Huzhou fuzhi, juan 75, p. 1432. His academic works include Chunqiu zuozhuan pingzhu ceyi 春秋左傳評林測義 (A Critical Study of the Annotations of the Commentary of Zuo on The Annual of Spring and Autumn), Mingong liezao 名公類藻 (Classified Literary Works of Celebrities), Wuche vinrui 五車音瑞 (Five Carts of the Sounds of Characters; it should be noted that Peiwen yunfu 飄文韻府, The Dictionary with Examples published in the Kangxi reign of Qing dynasty, was actually its expanded version), Shiji pinglin 史記評林 (A Collection of Commentaries on Records of the Grand Historian), and Hanshu pinglin 漢書評林 (A Collection of Commentaries on History of the Han). See Huzhou fuzhi, juan 58, p. 1111.


90 The works Ling Dizhi wrote, edited or collated include Daxue yanyi bu yingcui 大學行義補 (A Supplement to the Elaborations on The Great Learning), Shiji pinglin (in collaboration with his brother Zhilong), Wanxing tongpu 婉星統譜 (Biographies of Ten Thousand Historical Figures) (to which Shizu bokao 氏族博考, An Extensive Investigation of Clans, is attached), Lidai diwang xingxi tongpu 歷代帝王姓系博考 (Biographies of the Emperors in Previous Dynasties), Wenlin qixiu 文林綽秀 (Selections from the Literary Classics) (in collaboration with his brother), and Mingshi lieyuan 名士類苑 (Biographies and Anecdotes of High-ranking Officials). See Huzhou fuzhi, juan 58, p. 1110.
Among Ling's generation, his two elder brothers, Ling Zhanchu and Ling Runchu, who were born to his father's first wife and died young—several years before Ling was born—were recognized fine essayists, especially good at composing prose in the classical style. And Ling also had a cousin from the Mins (with whom the Lings had intermarried over generations) who was rather well-known for initiating fine editions.

Ling Zhanchu, whose courtesy name was Yuanmin, was a student of the National Academy. He was the author of two books, *Bizhou zhai ji* (Works from the Worn-out Broom Studio) and *Heti shu* (Works of Big Hoofs). Wang Shizhen 王士貞 (1526-1590), the well-known scholar in the Ming, wrote a preface for *Heti shu*, in which he praised Zhanchu as a productive writer. According to Wang, the meaning of the title *Heti shu* is a self-warning against his fast writing. See *Huzhou fuzhi, juan 59*, p. 1131.

Ling Runchu, whose courtesy name was Xuanxia, was the author of *Tanshi lu* (An Account of my Regret over the Time Passed). See *Huzhou fuzhi, juan 58*, p. 1114.

Ling Zhanchu was born in 1550 and died in 1573; Ling Runchu was born in 1551 and died in 1570. See Ye Dejun, p. 579-80. The year of Ling Runchu's death is also recorded in *Huzhou fuzhi*. See *Huzhou fuzhi, juan 58*, p. 1114. Ling Mengchu was the fourth son, born to the concubine Lady Jiang in 1580 when his father Ling Dizhi was fifty-one years old. See also Ye Dejun, p. 579.


“Shengshe is a place... peopled by the two clans, the Lings and the Mins, who intermarried with each other over generations.” See Feng Mengzhen 馮夢禎, *Kuaixue tang riji* (The Diary from the Quick Snow Hall). Quoted from Ye Dejun, p. 582.

The fine editions published by the Mins were usually printed in two-colors or multi-colors. From 1616 on, a steady stream of Min editions was issued, to which a dozen different editors' names are attached. The most prominent name among the Mins was Ling's cousin, Min Qiji 孟季. See Hanan, *The Chinese Vernacular Story*, p. 142. Min Qiji, whose courtesy name was Jiwu and whose alias was Yuwu, was a licentiate. He was not very eager to get higher academic degrees, but was very fond of writing and publishing books. He edited, collated and published ten classics including *Guoyu* (The Records of the Warring States), *Zhangguo ce* (Intrigues of Warring States), and *Mengzi* 孟子 (Mencius). If anybody found a single mistake in these ten classics he had collated and published, he would reward him with a whole set of the
Ling appeared to be very gifted as a child. He was admitted into a local official school when he was only eleven years old — much earlier than ordinary students, and became a salaried licentiate 廉膳生（lingshan sheng）\(^{97}\) at the age of seventeen.\(^{98}\) That is, in our modern phraseology, he passed the entrance examinations and entered a college in his early teens, and began to live on government scholarship before he even reached his adulthood. As a precocious adolescent, he was unusually brilliant and immensely ambitious, driven by an urge to succeed in whatever he undertook.\(^{99}\) Prior to his undertaking the provincial examinations, he had already published books. So the books he had published were widely circulated among literati for perusal, and finally became what is called “rare editions” 善本（shanben）. See Huizhou fuzhi, juan 76, p. 1438.

\(^{97}\) This is the highest grade of licentiate 生員（shengyuan）. In the Ming, students of official schools sponsored by prefecture or sub-prefecture government are divided into three kinds: 廉膳生（salaried licentiate），增廣生（licentiate without salary），and 附學生（licentiate on probation）. In the early Ming, all the students of official schools got financial aids from the government. Every month the government provided students with 6 dou （decalitre）of rice as well as meat and fish. But later more and more students wanted to get into official schools and the enrollment was therefore enlarged. The students who were admitted on the basis of the enlarged quota were called 增廣生. They were not eligible for government financial support. Later, still more students wanted to get into official schools. Those who were admitted outside the quota for 廉膳生 and 增廣生 were called 附學生. They could only be placed on probationary basis. Usually newly admitted students were put on probation first. It was only after taking the annual examination that they could fill vacancies for 增廣生 and 廉膳生 if they showed that they had a good academic standing. If a 廉膳生 spent 10 years at official school without making a marked progress, the government could punish him by demoting him to the rank of secretary for yamen 衙門 or demanding him to return the financial aid he had received from the government. But if a 廉膳生 was excellent in his studies, he could enter the National Academy at the recommendation of his local official school. See Guo Qijia 郭齊家, Zhongguo gudai xuexiao he shuyuan 中國古代學校和書院 (Official and Private Schools in Ancient China) (Beijing: Kexue jishu chuban she, 1995), pp. 105-6.

\(^{98}\) See Zheng Longcai’s tomb inscription. Quote from Ye Dejun, p. 580.

made himself known among the circles of scholars and officials with a well-written letter, which
he addressed to Master Liu — Chancellor of the National Academy 劉大司成 (Liu da sicheng).
Ling, in front of his colleague, was full of praise for his astonishingly excellent writing.100

Ling was quite hectic in his twenties. Not only was he a young man of talent determined
to succeed in his career, but he seemed to be an ethical hedonist as well, romantically inclined
and experienced in sexual adventures. Having observed three-year mourning period for his
father's death, he married with a woman surnamed Shen 沈, and his wife bore him a son just after
he turned twenty-five.101 Later he took a concubine surnamed Zhuo 卓, who bore him another
four sons.102 It is during this period that he began traveling frequently in the Lower Yangtze
River area and made many friends. Along with his schoolmates, he enlarged his acquaintances in
his new literary circles, among which were celebrities such as Feng Mengzhen 馮夢禎 (1546-
1605).103 Wang Zhideng 汪知登 (1535-1613),104 Chen Jiru 陳繼儒 (1558-1639).105 Tang Xianzu

100 Chancellor Liu was surprised by Ling's well-written letter, and showed the letter to his
colleague Geng Dingli 戲定理. Geng told Liu that his elder brother Geng Dingxiang 戲定向, 
Vice Censor-in-Chief in the Wanli reign (for his biographical details, see Zhang Tingyu, 張廷玉
Mingshi 明史, juan 22, pp. 5816-5817), had once highly valued him as a would-be nationally
famous scholar. Ling, since then, had become well-known among high-ranking officials. See


102 The genealogy does not mention when Ling took his concubine Zhuo. Based on the birth
date of the first son borne by his concubine, their union must have taken place before Ling was
thirty five. See Ye Dejun, p. 582. Whether Ling had other concubines we do not know, because
usually the genealogy only list the name(s) of the concubine(s) who gave birth to son(s).

103 Feng Mengzhen was a relative of Ling Mengchu by marriage. See Feng Mengzhen,
Quaixue tang ji 快雪堂記 (Records from the Quick Snow Hall), juan 60. Quoted from Hanan, 
The Chinese Vernacular Story, p. 141. Ling's association with Feng is recorded in Feng's
Kuaixue tang riji. "Today is the eighth day, sunny. Early in the morning, I set out. Having
traveled about ten miles I arrived at Shengshe... After lunch, the boat drove into the harbor. It
It is not unlikely that he knew Feng Menglong 馮夢龍 too. Suzhou 蘇州, where Feng Menglong lived, was the

took about a mile to get to the Lings residence, where, outside the gate, I was received by the Lings' two brothers. The elder brother is called Mengchu, styled Xuanfang, and the younger brother is called Junchu, styled Xuanjing." Quoted from Ye Dejun, pp. 580-581.

104 Wang Zhideng, whose courtesy name was Bogu, was a native of Changzhou county. He could write poems when he was only ten years old. Later he enjoyed a great popularity as a famous writer. See Mingshi (History of the Ming) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), juan 176, p. 7389. Wang Zhideng wrote a preface for Ling's first publication, Hou Han shu zhuangping (The History of the Latter Han with Annotations and Commentaries). See Hanan, The Chinese Vernacular Story, p. 141.

105 Chen Jiru, whose courtesy name was Zhongchun and whose alias was Meigong, was a native of Huating 華亭, Songjiang 松江 prefecture. He lived as a recluse on Mount Kun 昆山 and completely devoted himself to writing. He was very good at writing poetry and prose, and his calligraphy was strongly influenced by Su Shi 蘇軾 and Mi Fu 米芾. As a famous scholar, he declined several times the job offers from the Ming court on the pretext of his poor health. His works are voluminous, including Meigong shihua 澤公詩話 (Works of Chen Jiru) and Sheshan shihua 靖山詩話 (Commentary on Poetry from Mount She). See Tan Zhengbi 譚正璧, Zhongguo wenxue jia da cidian 中國文學家大辭典 (A Great Dictionary of Chinese Writers) (Hong Kong: Wenshi chuban she, 1961), p. 1215.

106 Tang Xianzu, whose courtesy name was Ruoshi 琴士, was a native of Linchuan 臨川 in Jiangxi province. He got his jinshi degree in 1583 and thereafter served briefly as a local official. For his biographical details, see Zhang Tingyu, Mingshi (History of the Ming), juan 230, pp. 6015-6016. In his later years, Tang mainly devoted himself to the writing of drama and composed a number of plays, of which Mudan ting 牡丹亭 (The Peony Pavilion) is the most famous one. His poetry and prose are collected in his Yuming tang ji 玉茗堂集 (Works from Jade-tea Hall). For his literary achievement, see "Qianyan" 前言 (Foreword) by Xu Suofang 徐素芳, in Tang Xianzu ji 湯顯祖集 (Works of Tang Xianzu) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), pp. 1-14.

107 Yuan Zhongdao was the youngest of the three Yuan brothers. He received jinshi degree in 1617. His writings are collected in Kexue zhai ji 珍雪齋集 (Works from Jade Snow Studio). In 1609, he visited Ling at Zhenzhu Bridge 珍珠橋 in Nanjing. However, what he recorded is only the picture by Liu Songnian 劉松年 which Ling hang on his wall. See Yuan Zhongdao, Youju shilu 遊居拾錄 (A True Record of My Travel and Sojourn), juan 3, in Kexue zhai ji (Shanghai: Guji chuban she, 1989), vol. 3, p. 1151.

108 Hanan thought it was likely that Ling met Feng in Nanjing 南京 in 1627. The evidence is
destination of the first journey that he made after his mourning period was over, and thereafter he went to Nanjing 南京 via Suzhou several times.\textsuperscript{109} A senior by six years, Feng was a popular literary writer whom Ling admired very much.\textsuperscript{110} Hanan has already pointed out strong resemblances between these two men in their background, in their quest for official career and in

\begin{flushleft}
that Feng’s preface to his third collection of \textit{huaben} stories was dated mid-autumn of 1627 in Nanjing, where in the same year Ling began to take up the writing of \textit{Pai’an jingqi}. “The examinations.” Hanan said, ”gave writers a chance to exchange manuscripts and publishers a chance to strike deals, and Feng may well have been one of the colleagues who slapped the table in amazement over Ling’s first stories. The contact between the two men may have extended over a long period: Ling’s first collection was published about a year later, in Soochow.” See Hanan, \textit{The Chinese Vernacular Story}, p. 145. Feng Baoshan 馮保善 in his article, “Ling Mengchu jiaoyou xintan” 凌濛初交遊新探 (A New Investigation of Ling Mengchu’s Friends), also indicates that Ling might have known Feng. He gave reasons as follows: (1) both Ling and Feng were about the same age; (2) Feng lived in Changzhou county of Suzhou prefecture, while Ling lived in Huzhou, and these two place are very close, separated only by Late Tai; (3) when Ling visited Suzhou in 1604, Feng was also in Suzhou; (4) both of them highly thought of each other; Feng selected two sets of Ling’s \textit{sanqu} verses in \textit{Taixia xinzou} (Celestial Air) — a \textit{sanqu} anthology he compiled, and also wrote the following comments: “Chucheng (i.e., Ling Mengchu) is a bright talent, who is able to write fine songs at will” (see Feng Menglong, \textit{Taixia xinzou}, \textit{juan} 6. p. 230); Ling in his preface to \textit{Pai’an jingqi}, praises Feng as a writer whose \textit{Sanyan} story collections “maintain a rather high moral tone and consistently offer moral precepts which demolish the vicious practices of the day.” See \textit{Ming-Qing xiaoshuo yanjiu}, no.1, 1995, pp. 75-76.

\textsuperscript{109} Ling lived in Nanjing several times, which was mentioned by himself and also by somebody else. See, for example, Yuan Zhongdao, \textit{Youju shilu}, \textit{juan} 3. in \textit{Ke xuezhai ji}, vol. 3. p. 1151; Ling Mengchu, preface to \textit{Pai’an jingqi}. Ling’s mother Lady Jiang also died in Nanjing and Ling carried her coffin back to Huzhou. See Feng Mengzhen, \textit{Kuaixue tang riji}, \textit{juan} 28. Quoted from Ye Dejun, p. 582. The reason that Ling lived in Nanjing was perhaps to fulfill the residence requirement as a student at the National Academy. In one of his \textit{sanqu} verses, “Xibie ” 借別 (With Reluctance to Part), Ling describes himself as “a traveler in Nanjing” and mentions that he “attended the National Academy there and liked to hum verses in the courtyard when he had spare time.” See \textit{Taixia xinzou}, in \textit{Feng Menglong quanj\textit{i}} 馮夢龍全集 (The Complete Works of Feng Menglong) (Shanghai: Guji chuban she, 1993), vol. 8. \textit{juan} 6. pp. 226-227.

\textsuperscript{110} See Ling Mengchu, preface to \textit{Pai’an jingqi} (no page number).
their literary achievements. Yet I would like to add one more piece of evidence: Ling also resembled Feng in his libertinism.

While Feng was notorious for frequenting brothels, there is no definite evidence regarding a similar proclivity in Ling's life. However, one of his stories, "The Elopement of a Nun," might perhaps be read as autobiographical. Master Wenren 闻人生的, the hero of the story, also lives in Huzhou. As a seventeen-year-old, Wenren looks like Pan An 潘安 and is as

111 "Both men came from large cities — Ling from Wuxing 吴兴 (Huzhou) in Zhejiang, across the lake from Feng's Soochow. Both men failed to pass the provincial examinations, and each eventually gained a modest post by means of a tribute studentship... both men were known as dramatists and critics of the drama and there are clear parallels between the strong opinions they held on its diction and subject matter." See Hanan, The Chinese Vernacular Story, p. 140.

112 Feng Menglong, probably because of his failure in the examinations, frequented bars and brothels in the fashion of the Wei-Jin 建安 literati. Wang Ting 王挺 (1618-1677) in his elegiac poem describes Feng as a libertine "who enjoyed himself visiting the women's quarters and playing games among the flowery courtesans." See Ouyang Daifa, Huaben xiaoshuo shi, p. 191.

113 Although Ling wrote "Huoni gong (A Confession of my Indulgence), a work about his sexual dissipation, yet this work is not available to me (probably it is not extant) and I have no way to ascertain whether it is really about his libertinism. In his sanqu 詩曲 verses "Xibie," he does mention that his wife and family lived in Huzhou and he, alone in Nanjing, fell in love with a woman. Judging from his descriptions of the way the woman greeted him and of her consummate skill at playing lute in a midnight, she was perhaps a high-class courtesan. See Taixia xinzou, juan 6, in Feng Menglong quanj, vol. 8, p. 227. But in "Xibie" Ling did not provide information to whether he frequented brothels or widely associated with courtesans and prostitutes.

114 As long as the source material for this story remains absent, we have reason to assume that this story was drawn from Ling's own experience. Scholars like Sun Kaidi, Wang Gulu, Hu Shiying and Tan Zhengbi have made substantial contributions to the study of the sources of Erpai. But none of them was able to discover source(s) for this story. See Sun Kaidi, "Sanyan Erpai yuanliu kao." in Cangzhou ji, pp. 182-194. Wang Gulu, "Benshu de jiashao" (An Introduction to This Book), in Chuke pai'an jingqi, pp. 4-9; Hu Shiying, Huaben xiaoshuo gailun, vol. 2, pp. 569-610, and Tan Zhengbi, Sanyan liangpai ziliao (Sources of Three Words and Two Slaps) (Shanghai: Guji chuban she, 1981), vol. 2, pp. 573-900.
gifted as Zijian 子建.\textsuperscript{115} He is not only handsome, refined and romantic, but also knowledgeable and experienced. None of his friends fails to respect him.\textsuperscript{116} With the only picture left to us that shows the old majestic Ling wearing his official hat,\textsuperscript{117} we are not quite certain if Ling in his youth may be likened to that handsome protagonist in "The Elopement of a Nun." Yet Ling did bear resembleances to Wenren in talent, scholarship as well as in friendship with a large circle of literati, who admired him so much that "they came to visit him from a thousand miles away."\textsuperscript{118}

Moreover, both Ling and Wenren shared a very similar family background: (1) Wenren moved with his grandfather from Shaoxing 绍興 to Huzhou because his grandfather receives a place as a tutor in a family there,\textsuperscript{119} while Ling's family emigrated to and settled in Huzhou because, as I have mentioned before, Ling's great-great-grandfather married into a local distinguished family; (2) Wenren seems to lose his father at tender age, and so did Ling, who was bereaved of his

\textsuperscript{115} See Pai’an jingqi, vol. 2, p. 730. Pan An probably refers to Pan Anren 潘安仁 (247-300), a famous poet in the West Jin. Here Pan An obviously stands for a handsome man, although for the time being I could not find a relevant anecdote about Pan An as a good-looking youth. Zijian refers to the famous poet Cao Zhi 曹植 (192-232), whose courtesy name was Zijian. He was the third son of Cao Cao 曹操—the founder of the Kingdom of Wei 魏 and was well-known as a literary genius. In Chinese literary history, Cao Zhi is often mentioned as a representative poet in Jian-an 建安 period. He was also good at writing fu 素 and prose.


\textsuperscript{117} This picture was found by Ye Dejun in Lingshi zongpu. Ye made a photocopy of it and lent it to Wang Gulu when Pai’an jingqi was going to be reprinted. See the caption of the picture in Pai’an jingqi published by People’s Literature Press in 1957.

\textsuperscript{118} See Zheng Longcai, “Muzhi ming.” Quoted from Feng Baoshan, “Ling Mengchu jiaoyou xintan.” in Ming-Qing xiaoshuo yanjiu, no. 1, 1995, p. 76.

\textsuperscript{119} See Pai’an jingqi, vol. 2, p. 730.
father when he was twenty\textsuperscript{120} and was left alone with his mother; (3) Wenren's mother is anren 安人,\textsuperscript{121} i.e., the wife of a rank 6b or 6a official,\textsuperscript{122} and this honorific title is approximately equal to yiren 宜人 granted Ling's own mother,\textsuperscript{123} who, as a daughter of the director of one of the Six Boards,\textsuperscript{124} was the lady of a rank 5 official.\textsuperscript{125} (4) Wenren's uncle (or adoptive father) is a Supervising Secretary 主事 (zhushi) in the central administration,\textsuperscript{126} while Ling's own father once served as the Supervising Secretary of the Bureau of Construction in the Board of Works; (5) Wenren's wife, the former nun Jingguan 靜觀, is about the same age as Wenren, whereas Ling's own wife Shen 沈 was only a few months older than Ling.\textsuperscript{127} Given these striking analogies, we have reasons to infer that Wenren's familiarity with gay life, his formation of the intimate relations with a host of nuns during his sojourn in a nunnery for preparing for the provincial examination, and his capability of being a satisfactory lover without being a Don Juan are probably drawn from his own life experience.

Some scholars indicate that a main characteristic of Chinese autobiographic fiction is its

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{120} See Ye Dejun, p. 580. According to Lingshi zongpu, Ling's father died in the fifth day of the twelfth month in the year gengzi of Wanli reign, i.e., in 1600. See Ye Dejun, p. 580.
\item \textsuperscript{121} See Pai'an jingqi, p. 736.
\item \textsuperscript{122} See Charles Hucker, A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China, p. 104.
\item \textsuperscript{123} See Lingshi zongpu, juan 6. Quoted from Ye Dejun, p. 581.
\item \textsuperscript{124} See Feng Mengzhen. Kuaixue tang riji, juan 59. Quoted from Ye Dejun, p. 581.
\item \textsuperscript{125} See Charles Hucker, ibid., p. 267.
\item \textsuperscript{126} See Pai'an jingqi, vol. 2, p. 732.
\item \textsuperscript{127} See Ye Dejun, p. 580. But Ye did not mention whether or not his wife Shen was taken from a nunnery.
\end{itemize}
indirectness, i.e., the self is presented through a third person fictional persona.\textsuperscript{128} This is an acute observation. Although Ling had no intention of writing an autobiography for himself and was obviously forced to look somewhere else for subject matter after “all the source material had been collected”\textsuperscript{129} by Feng, there is, indeed, an undeniably autobiographical element in the above-mentioned story, an element that shines a light into one of the enigmatic facets of its author — the facet of Ling's libertinism.

But his failures in provincial examinations 郡试 (xiangshi), by which he was plagued almost all his middle life, made him tremendously changed. We do not know when Ling took provincial examinations; we only know that he took provincial examinations four times and for four times he failed. His biographical epitaph,\textsuperscript{130} written by Zheng Longcai 鄭龍采,\textsuperscript{131} gives us a

\textsuperscript{128} “The rise of the autobiographical sensibility in the novel, whose avowed fictionality seems to have provided a safer medium for continued exploration of the self, should be understood in the context of the repressive cultural atmosphere of the eighteenth century, when formal autobiography suffered from far more restraints than previously for its lack of fictional 'disguise.' To put it differently, when direct self-presentation was no longer tolerated, indirect self-re/presentation in the form of representation of the an explicit other (or others) offered itself as an attractive alternative for the autobiographical urge.” Martin Huang, \textit{Literati and Self-Re/Presentation}, p. 8.

\textsuperscript{129} See Ling Mengchu, preface to \textit{Pai'an jingqi}.

\textsuperscript{130} When I was writing this thesis, I was not aware that Ling's tomb inscription written by Zheng Longcai had been published by Zhou Shaoliang in the journal \textit{Xuelin manlu} (Random Records of Scholars and Academic Works). I mainly relied on \textit{Huzhou fuzhi} and Ye Dejun's article "Biographical Account of Ling Mengchu," as well as on some secondary studies to get the information about Ling's life and works. Now having read the entire tomb inscription, I have made some revisions on and supplements to my footnotes. Some scholars are rather critical of Zheng's epitaph. It is, for example, accused by Hanan of being "notoriously unreliable," despite that it provides us with a vivid picture of Ling's life. See Hanan, \textit{The Chinese Vernacular Story}, p. 142. But Hanan does not give the evidence on which his criticism is based. Ye Dejun does point out some minor mistake or doubtful inconsistencies (though the cause of which he could not figure out). See Ye Dejun, p. 580 & p. 583. Yet they are just trivial problems, and such problems, I believe, are quite common in most of epitaphs, not just the epitaph written by Zheng
more detailed account of his failures: "Lord Ling participated twice in Zhejiang provincial examinations and was successful only in getting his name listed on the supplementary announcement notices as a candidate of good academic standing. Later he took the examinations at the National Academy in Nanjing and then at the National Academy in Beijing, but both times he received the same results." With his unsuccessfulness in earning the second degree, Ling was denied access to official career. We can imagine how he suffered from his setbacks and how he was depressed. Now having descended from an idealist paradise into a world that was punctuated by pain, he was no longer a romantic enthusiast, nor did he entertain Longcai. As Chen Yinke (1890-1968) remarks, the unofficial history (including fiction and epitaph) may not be true, but the official history is not without embellishment; only when we read both official and unofficial histories carefully and make comparisons, are we able to see the truth that is free from falsehood and obscurity. See Hu Shouwei, "Luetan Chen Yinke xiansheng de shiwen zhengshi" (A Brief Discussion of How Mr. Chen Yinke Found Historical Evidence in Prose and Poetry), in Xuelin manlu, no. 5, 1982, p. 74.

131 Zheng Longcai was a juren (the second degree holder in the civil service examinations). He served as Prefect of Wuzhou 威州 (in Zhejiang province) in the last years of the Ming. The Governor of Chu, He Tengjiao 河騰蛟, wanted to appoint him Inspector 錄紀 (jianji) for his army when Zheng met him there. But Zheng declined his offer. After the Ming House was overthrown, Zheng once again passed by Chu and learned that He Tengjiao had been killed. Zheng then went back home, took the tonsure and led a reclusive life as a Buddhist hermit in a mountain. Ever since then he had no longer been involved in worldly affairs. His works include Guiwei lují 蜀未旅記 (Notes of My Travel in the Year Guiwei) and Gaomi tang shi 高密堂詩 (Poems from the Gaomi Hall). See Huzhou fuzhi, juan 59, p. 1128.

132 If the candidate’s name was listed on fubang 副榜 (supplementary announcement notice), he was recognized as having a good academic standing despite his failure in the examination. This is an euphemistic way to say that Ling did not pass the provincial examination.

133 It is not quite clear why he chose different places to take the provincial examinations. Maybe it is because he did not quite trust the judgment of the examiners in the local regions after his family had lost its political influence. But one thing is certain: he was very dissatisfied with the civil service examination system as the only way of selecting qualified official. For his dissatisfaction with the civil service examination system, see Pai’an jingqi, the beginning paragraph of story 29 (for the translation, see note 146).
political ambition as he used to do as a Confucian activist. He wanted to be quit of examinations, of the vanity fair, to lead a reclusive life. He used to be very interested in Buddhist teachings. In one of the sutras he commented on he even described himself as a "disciple of Buddha." But never had he wanted to follow the Buddhist sages as he did now. After thinking the matter over, he wrote a farewell letter to his fellow students, ready to settle back in Huzhou, where in the valley between Mount Zhu and Mount Dai he planned to build himself a cultivate retreat 精舍 (jingshe) for his later years. To record his determination, he wrote a prose-lyric, an essay and a poem under the titles "Zhushan fu" 祗山賦 (Rhapsody on Mount Zhu), "Daishan ji" 萌山記 (A Sketch of Mount Dai) and "Daishan shi" 萌山詩 (Ode to Mount Dai). 

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134 This can be seen from his editing of Su Dongpo's 蘇東坡 work on Chan 禪 Buddhism. In 1604, Ling went to Suzhou with Feng Mengzhen. They traveled by boat, bringing Dongpo chanxi jí with them. On their way to Suzhou they wrote comments on the upper margins of the book. In 1621, Ling combined this commented edition of Dongpo chanxi jí 東坡禪喜集 with Shangu chanxi jí 山谷禪喜集 and published them together. See Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao, juan 174, vol. 43, p. 44. But according to Hanan, on his trip to Suzhou with Feng Mengzhen, Ling brought along two Buddhist works, and one of them was a collection of Su Shi and Huang Tingjian's 黃庭堅 Chan meditations. The two men annotated it together. Much later, in 1621, after Feng's death, Ling published it. See Hanan, The Chinese Vernacular Story, p. 232.


136 The letter was entitled "Juejiao juzi shu" 極交遊子書 (Farewell, my fellow-students). See Zheng's tomb inscription. Quoted from Ye Dejun, p. 583.

137 Jingshe 精舍, a cultivation retreat, was a villa usually built in a scenic spot, in which a Buddhist jushi could cultivate himself according to the Buddhist doctrine. For the explanation of the term jushi, see note 137.

138 See Zheng's tomb inscription. Quoted from Ye Dejun, p. 583. According to Zhang Bing 張兵, these three pieces of literary compositions are not extant. See Zhang Bing, Ling Mengchu yu Etpai 凌濤初與二拍 (Ling Mengchu and his Two Slaps) (Shenyang: Liaoning jiaoyu chuban she, 1992), p. 3.
Whether he became a Buddhist jushi 居士 in the mountains remains to be investigated. Judging from the pseudonym he used for Erpai which was written a few years later, he seems to have turned to and then away from Buddhism and have finally arrived at a kind of intellectual transcendence that was characteristic of a syncretist rather than a devout disciple of Buddha. The credit for discovering Ling’s identity should go to Wang Guowei 王国维 (1879-1927), who was the first scholar to link the pseudonym Jikongguan zhuren 即空觀主人 (Master of the Temple of Emptiness) with Ling Mengchu. Later more evidence found by Ma Lian 马廉 and the access gained by Ye Dejun 叶德鍾 to Lingshi zongpu 凌氏宗譜 (The Clan Genealogy of the Lings) finally established Ling’s authorship for Erpai. However, the authorial resurrection has a

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139 Jushi means a Confucian scholar living in Buddhistic way without becoming a monk. Lin Yutang thought this is a most peculiar Chinese invention, for it allowed a follower of Buddhism to live in married life and become a vegetarian for periods at leisure. Since Su Dongpo’s time, and largely due to his great literary influence, quite a few scholar of high standing has played with Buddhism, and become a jushi of Su’s type without actually entering a monastery as a monk. See Lin Yutang 林語堂, My Country and my People (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1935). p. 125.

140 See Li Tianyi “The original Edition of Pai’an jingqi,” note 5: “In the eleventh section of his Sungyuan xiqu kao 宋元戏曲考 Wang Guowei quotes briefly from Ling Mengchu’s preface to Xixiang ji. As we know, this preface is really the one that appears under the authorship of “Jikongguan” in Min Chiji’s 閔齊伋 edition of the same play. Wang Guowei seems to have made the identification on the basis of Ling Mengchu’s seals that occur under the signature of Jikongguan in Min Chiji’s edition.”

141 According to Li Houji 李厚基, Ma Lian also found Ling Mengchu’s seals under the signature of Jikongguan in Min Chiji’s edition and hence confirmed Wang Guowei’s discovery. although Ma Lian thought that to establish Ling’s authorship for Erpai, further studies were still necessary. See Li Houji, “Guanyu Erpai de zuozhe Ling Mengchu.”

142 According to Wang Zhizhong, Lingshi zongpu was published in the tenth year of the Jiaqing 嘉慶 reign, i.e., in 1805. See Wang Zhizhong, p. 156.

143 Lingshi zongpu contains Ling’s tomb inscription, in which it is clearly recorded that Ling Mengchu was the author of Erpai. See Zhou Shaoliang, “Qumu Congshi,” in Xuelin manlu, no. 5.
deplorable effect on his pseudonym: it has been forgotten, or relegated into a sheer verbal sign, which no longer marks the manner in which its polysemous ambiguity was implied. So far as I know, never have any scholars bothered to raise questions as to why Ling used this pseudonym and what is its meaning. "Jikong," the first two characters of the pseudonym, is, in fact, an elliptical expression of "jiyou jikong" 有殼 (literally, "possession and loss"), a Buddhist term which, according to Prajnaparamita sutra 菩若心經, can be explained as follows:

Since materials in the world and bodies of human beings are insubstantial entities, compounded by the essential four elements — earth, water, fire and wind, we may regard void (emptiness) as being (material existence of things). But when the four essential elements are disintegrated, everything again comes to nothing. So we may also regard being as void. 144

As an essential concept in the Doctrine of Void, this term basically conveys the idea that no particular thing is real and what senses 色 (se) give us is only the experience of transient phenomena. One might be inclined to think that Ling, by using the latter half of this term, might probably have stressed the negativism, or nihilism of its metaphysical assumptions. This, however, is just partially true.

Should he have espoused only the transmundane world outlook, why had he deliberately chosen “guan” 觀 as the third character for his pseudonym? “Guan,” literally meaning "Daoist temple," was ostensibly meant to imply an aspect of his non-Buddhist thought, i.e., the thought of his Daoist eremitism. To the Daoist escapists, especially those of Wei-Jin 魏晉 type who thought

1982. p. 100.

144 See Foguang da cidian 佛光大辭典 (A Great Dictionary of Buddhist Illumination) (Taiwan: Foguang chuban she, 1988), vol. 4, p. 3478.
void was a right stage in experiencing "being" rather than absolute extinction of desire, the Buddhist quest for void was simply an ideal too high to be practicable. If they concealed themselves in mountains, it was not largely for their religious pursuit, but for seeking peace of mind after they had failed in the examinations. They might look transcendental, but they could also be pragmatic and secular; they might live as recluses, but they could also solicit consolation of good wine and beautiful women, — all depended on what they naturally needed.145 "Jikong-guan." an oxymoron that juxtaposes the Buddhist term with the word of Daoist tinge, or rather, mixes something of a Dr. Jekyll with that of a Mr. Hyde, reveals Ling's ideological ambivalence in choosing to be a faithful follower of one single dogma.

Yet there is next the man of even deeper contradiction. On the one hand, he was disillusioned with the mortal world and wanted to spend the rest of his life in seclusion, but on the other hand, he still wished to "be helpful in the hard times"146 which the late Ming regime was facing. After all, he was a Confucian intellectual. Many years of orthodox Confucian cultivation finally brought him on the journey to Beijing to fill in vacancy, if any, through recommendation. This was the only way left for the failures of the provincial examination to enter into the officialdom. Ling traveled on the same boat with Zhu Guozhen 朱國楨, the newly-
appointed Director of the Board of Rites,\textsuperscript{147} who, having heard of Ling’s fame before, was glad to have the opportunity to talk to him and consult him with “governing arts.”\textsuperscript{148} But staying in the capital for three years or so, Ling was not successful in securing any official position. In 1627, he came back to Nanjing and began to take up the writing of \textit{Pai’an jingqi}. “In the autumn of Dingmao (i.e., 1627),” he wrote in the preface, “I tarried in Nanjing after ‘grazing the skin’ and ‘missing the mark’ in my affair.”\textsuperscript{149} These obscure allusions he used refer to his abortive attempt at the official candidacy in Beijing. He was of course piqued at failing to get the nomination for public service. He made his discontentment quite explicit in his preface,\textsuperscript{150} and even went so far as to vent his spleen in one of his stories by bluntly criticizing the civil service examination system.\textsuperscript{151} On the whole, however, \textit{Erpai} shows him as a Confucian writer who, if not without

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{147} Zhu Guozhen, whose courtesy name was Wenning and whose alias was Pinghan, received his \textit{jinshi} degree in the seventeenth year of the Wanli reign (i.e., in 1589). He died in 1632 and was granted the posthumous title Wensu. See \textit{Huzhou fuzhi, juan 69}, p. 1119. His works include: \textit{Mingshi} gai (A Brief History of the Ming), \textit{Huang Ming jizhuan} (Biographies of Emperors and Princes of the Ming), \textit{Da Zhenji} (Records of the Great Political Events), \textit{Yongchuang xiaoping} (A Collection of My Informal Essays), and \textit{Zhu Wensu viji} (The Posthumous Works of Zhu Guozhen). See \textit{Huzhou fuzhi, juan 59}, p. 1130. For further biographical information, see Zhang Tingyu, \textit{Ming shi, juan 240}, p. 6251.
\item \textsuperscript{148} See Zheng Longcai, “Muzhi ming.” Quoted from Ye Dejun, p. 581.
\item \textsuperscript{149} The translation is Hanan’s. See Hanan, \textit{The Chinese Vernacular Story}, p. 144.
\item \textsuperscript{150} In his preface to \textit{Erkepai’an jingqi}, Ling admits that he wrote these stories in order to “relieve frustration” (liaoshu xiongzhong leikuai).
\item \textsuperscript{151} See \textit{Pai’an jingqi} (Hong Kong: Youlian chuban gongsi, 1986), story 29, vol. 2, p. 597: “It was the practice of the pre-Han and Han dynasties that qualified personnel could be either recommended for or appointed to government posts. That is why there were the titles \textit{xianliang fangzheng} 賢良方正 and \textit{maocai yideng} 茂才異等 designed for men of virtues and persons of ability, and the special honor \textit{buqiu wenda} 不求聞達 granted those sterling recluses who did not seek fame. So at that time the worthies were not left unused, nor were the men with expertise. All
\end{itemize}
occasional mockery and superstition, was didactic, sympathetic, positive, humanistic and open-minded, rather than as an aging man full of disgruntlement and cynically pessimistic.

It took Ling a year to write the first collection. The book was well received after it was published. He then, at the urge of his publisher, wrote its sequel Erke pai'an jingqi. But the great commercial success could not cover his mixed feelings in composing these stories. Although he may have, in his private moments, enjoyed pursuing aesthetic pleasure and financial profit, he nonetheless never took his fiction writing as a pure literary or economic activity. Reading his Erpai, we can see that he was still under the sway of the prevailing prejudice against men of letters152 and was eager to endow his stories with a sense of social responsibility. One may say human resources in the country were utilized to the best advantage. Down to the Tang and Song dynasties, however, a great emphasis began to be placed on the civil service examination. Although one could reach a higher position without passing the examination, only those having the degree enjoyed most envious glory. In order to achieve academic success, it was not unusual that scholars would rather grow old and die in the capital. True, at the beginning of our reigning dynasty, three different ways of selecting officials were put on an equal footing. Quite a few renowned scholars and ministers, who performed meritorious deeds for the court and were therefore recorded in history, were not state graduates. Who can say that only state graduates can do things best? But recently more and more stress has been laid on academic credentials. Officials not chosen from degree holders are only allowed to assume minor positions. Even if they may be lucky enough to hold power in some places, the location or the administration must be bad or problematic. There are hardly exceptions. Those who have lower degrees suffer all the same. They will be dispatched to some unsatisfactory regions and it is quite often that they will get dismissed after a short period of service. In short, they are not taken seriously. No wonder they cannot accomplish much, though they are men of superior capacity."

152 The prevailing prejudice against men of letters, best represented by the Song Neo-Confucianist Zhu Xi's 未 diverse opinionated comment that "a person who engages in writing literary works (i.e., fiction and drama) is not worth a serious attention" 一為文人, 便無足觀(yiwei wenren. bian wu zuguans), had a great influence upon Confucian scholars. This is the reason why "popular" fiction authors, usually the literati who held the first degree in the civil service examination, were unwilling to expose their real identity; this is also why they tended to make their novels, novellas and short stories didactic, to teach, rather than merely to entertain, readers and audiences.
that "popular fiction" at its earlier stage "mingled with casual didacticism" "jian can xun yu. 153 Yet Ling in his stories began to approach a new notion. the notion that fiction was a special commitment to Confucian political and moral mission. And his Erpai is. by and large. a record of his wrestling with the problems of accomplishing such a mission.

His Confucian spirit was clearly displayed during his tenure of official positions in his later years. Scholars in mainland China, in line with the political ideology of Mao's regime, tended to criticize his suppression of peasants uprisings154 and avoid mentioning him as a man of integrity who stayed loyal to the Ming and died at his post.155 This is certainly not just to him. In fact. it was because of his martyrdom, instead of his meritorious feats in putting down the peasant rebellions or his literary accomplishments in writing huaban stories, that he was recorded in local histories.

In the seventh year in Chongzhen 崇 瑞 period (1634) when Ling was fifty four, his luck turned. The imperial government, in selecting capable fugong 副贡156 for official positions of lower ranks. appointed him as an assistant magistrate for Shanghai county (then only an insignificant small town). His dream of becoming an official at last came true.157 This was a

155 Some scholar mentions his death for the Ming House from a negative point of view. For example, Wang Zhizhong says that Ling’s death is not worth our commendation. because he died for the feudal dynasty. See Wang Zhizhong. p. 156.
156 The title fugong was sometimes granted men who did not pass the provincial examination but did well enough to deserve honorable mention. See Charles Hucker. A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China. p. 218.
157 It seems that Ling was quite persistent in his endeavor of getting an official position.
turning point for him, which marked the end of his life as a writer and publisher\textsuperscript{158} and the inauguration of his official career. He was at the beginning in charge of the coastal defenses,\textsuperscript{159} but soon acted on behalf of the magistrate\textsuperscript{160} who was on leave for eight months. As an acting magistrate, Ling was diligent and conscientious, collecting land taxes and other levies and straightening out the difficulties of ordinary people. Owing to his remarkable services in Shanghai, he was promoted to the assistant prefectship in Xuzhou 徐州, a position much more responsible and important. The day he was leaving Shanghai for Xuzhou to take up his new post, so many local people came to see him off, with tears in their eyes, that they almost blocked the road.\textsuperscript{161}

Two years of working in Xuzhou was perhaps most challenging to him in his whole life. By that time much of the country had been in turmoil and rapaciousness was everywhere

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According to Zheng Longcai's tomb inscription, the first time Ling went to Beijing for official nomination was in 1623. See Ye Dejun, pp. 582-3. However, he was not appointed until 1634. See Ye Dejun, p. 584. If Zheng Longcai's record is correct, it took Ling more than ten years to realize his dream of becoming an official for the Ming government.

\textsuperscript{158} It seems that after he became an official, Ling did not write and publish anything but a sanqu anthology \textit{Wusao hebian 吴骚合编}, which he compiled in collaboration with Zhang Xuchu. See Ye Dejun, p. 586.

\textsuperscript{159} Ling worked in Shanghai for eight years, mainly in charge of coastal defense. He took strong measures against the malpractice on salterns. For his meritorious service, he received a number of commendations from the central government. See Ye Dejun, p. 585.

\textsuperscript{160} See Ye Dejun, p. 585. According to Zheng Longcai's tomb inscription, the magistrate was Li Baogong from Fujian province. Li was very nice to Ling. On the day Ling took up his official post, Li said to him: "You are my teacher. How can I let you work under me?" Ling once traveled in Fujian province and promised Li (who was then a rather obscure literatus) that he would publish his works. That is why Li was grateful to Ling and treated him kindly. See Ye Dejun, p. 585.

threatening the tottering Ming house. The crisis was not confined to the North and West, but was felt also in Xuzhou where he worked. Ho Tengjiao 何腾蛟,\(^{162}\) the newly-appointed Military Defense Circuit 兵備道 (bingbeidao), was sent to Xuzhou on the mission of exterminating the rebels headed by Chen Xiaoyi 陳小乙, who had captured the fort Fengcheng and proclaimed himself King Xiao 章王. The first battle, however, was lost. An emergency meeting was then convened by Ho and new strategies and tactics were put forward and discussed. Unlike most of his colleagues present at the meeting, Ling kept silent from beginning to end. That night he was invited to have a talk with Ho at his residence. “Aren't you Ling the Nineteenth from the west Zhejiang!” Ho said. “I have heard of your literary reputation and have long been your admirer. Why didn't you say something to help me straighten out of my muddled mind?” “As an official of lower rank,” Ling replied, “I was not in a position to offer different opinions. But I had a feeling that you might wish to talk to me on this subject, so I have prepared a draft, which I hope can catch your attention.” He then presented to Ho his treatise Jiaokou shiche 剿寇十策 (Ten Strategies of Eradicating the Rebels), and Ho, after reading it, exclaimed, “If we do as you have suggested, we may even wipe out the ring leaders in Gansu and Sichuan,\(^{163}\) not to mention the

\(^{162}\) Ho Tengjiao, whose courtesy name was Yuncong, was a native of Lipingwei in Guizhou province. He got his juren degree in 1620. In 1649, when he was fighting against the Manchus for the Southern Ming regime, he was caught by his former subordinate Xu Yong in Hunan province. After fasting for seven days, he was killed. King Yongming of the Southern Ming regime mourned over his death and granted him the title “King of Xiangzhong” and the posthumous title “Wenlie.” See Zhang Tingyu, Mingshi, juan 168, pp. 7171-7177. “Ho Tengjiao” should be spelled as “He Tengjiao” in pinyin romanization system. My adoption of Wade-Gile’s spelling for his surname is simply to avoid confusion with the third person pronoun “He.”

\(^{163}\) The ring leaders refer to Li Zicheng 李自成 and Zhang Xianzhong 張獻忠, who carried on most of their activities in Gansu/Shanxi and Sichuan provinces. The late Ming peasants’ rebellion began in the first year of the Chongzhen reign (1628) under the leadership of Wang Jiayin 王嘉胤. But since 1632 Li Zicheng and Zhang Xianzhong began to play more and more
dinky clown in our Xuzhou.” 164

Ling was very grateful to Ho's appreciation and pledged that he would do whatever was necessary for him, even at the expense of his own life. Ho then deployed the army in the light of Ling's suggestions. This time the enemy was indeed defeated. “Now that the rebels are panic-stricken with the defeat,” Ling said to Ho, seeing many of them fleeing helter-skelter. “Please allow me to go to the Chen encampment so that I can persuade him to make an early capitulation.” Upon hearing this, Ho was greatly surprised. He dissuaded him from taking such a hazardous mission. Still Ling insisted. “If I fail,” he said with firm resolution, “I'll die for you!” The next morning he mounted a horse and ventured alone into the city where the rebels were stationed. Chen, sitting on a high chair with bodyguards protecting him at both his sides, shouted loudly at Ling: “Are you courting death?” “If I were afraid of death,” Ling replied, showing no sign of fear at all. “I wouldn't have come here!” With his convincing argument, Ling compelled Chen to submit at last. 165

The next year was jiashen 甲申 (the Chinese cyclical year corresponding to 1644). Li Zicheng 李自成, having conquered a large part of the country, proclaimed himself Emperor of the Shun 大順皇帝. At his order, one of his detachments approached Xuzhou and the district

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164 See Ye Dejun, pp. 586-587.
165 See Ye Dejun, p. 587.
along the river that was within Ling's jurisdiction\textsuperscript{166} became the first target to be attacked. There is a very moving paragraph in Zheng's epitaph, which describes how Ling dedicated himself at his last moments to the Confucian principles of duty, loyalty, integrity, honor, justice and courage when he and his townspeople were besieged by Li's insurgents:

On the morning of the ninth day of the twelfth month, the insurgents called out, "We want to see Lord Ling!" Lord Ling, standing behind the battlements of the city wall, shouted back at them angrily, "You want me to surrender? What do you think I am? A coward like a rat whose purpose is just to keep on living?" He shot several men dead with his fowling piece. The insurgents flew into rage and attacked the city even more fiercely. Lord Ling said to his folks, "I should not let you fall victims because of me. Please let me jump off the building to kill myself so that all of you can be saved." People cried. They swore they would defend the town until their death. Lord Ling said, "I've been working here for three years. Although I haven't helped you much. I'm certainly unwilling to do you a great harm by throwing you into a dangerous situation. If I die, then you can survive." He then refused to eat and drink. His servants tried to talk him around. Lord Ling replied, "Fighting is now breaking out all over the country. In view of the possibility that there will be no space to bury my corpse in the future, it is wise for me to choose to die at this place!" The servants mildly called his attention to the fact that the position he held was rather insignificant. Lord Ling replied, "No matter what position I have, low or high, I just want to maintain my integrity!" After saying this, he spat out a large quantity of blood.\textsuperscript{167} He then said to his people, "Since the rebels called me 'Lord

\textsuperscript{166} Ling was in charge of the region Fangcun 房村, located on the Huai River 淮河, when he was working in Xuzhou. Fangcun was a region often suffering from flood caused by breaches on the Huai River, and Ling's work was mainly to bring that part of the River under control. See Ye Dejun. p. 586.

\textsuperscript{167} "He spat out a large quantity of blood" is in the original text "Ouxue shusheng" 嘔血數升 (literally, he spat out several pints of blood). Although this kind of exaggeration is rhetorically permissible in Chinese, still I have modified it in my translation to avoid unnecessary misconception to Western readers. In my surmise, Ling probably had tuberculosis. It seems that this was a
Ling, they may not have lost all their sympathy. Please help me up to talk to them." He called out to the insurgents, "I'm on the verge of collapse and shall die tomorrow. I entreat you to spare ordinary people!" On the early morning of the twelfth day, Lord Ling spat blood incessantly. Still, he addressed his people in a loud voice. "Since I can't protect you when I am alive, I will kill these rebels for you after I've become a ghost!" Blood gushed out with his speech. His last words were: "Don't hurt my people!" which he shouted three times before he died.\(^\text{168}\)

In my general portrayal of him, which I hope is approximate to what he really was, I have shown that Ling was a many-sided man and that Confucianism was an essential factor in his thought. It is clear by now that throughout his whole life, no matter how he possibly had romantic days in his youth, how he suffered from his failures in the provincial examinations and how he attempted to become a Buddhist recluse, there was one thing remaining constant: that is, his conviction in Confucian ideals and principles. If we view him basically as a Confucianist, we may as well interpret his pseudonym as a passive endorsement of the Confucian doctrine that in times of peace and good government it is a scholar's honor and obligation to seek official appointment while in times of decay and disorder it is no dishonor but a sign of personal integrity to withdraw from government service.\(^\text{169}\) And we may see, therefore, a logical link between his pseudonym and the hereditary disease in his family. His uncle Ling Zhilong, the famous writer and editor, also "spat out several pints of blood" in his later years before he died from it. See Huzhou fuzhi, juan 75, p. 1432. And his two elder brothers both died young, around the age of twenty. Their death was probably related with this disease too. In the case of Ling Mengchu, it seems that his tuberculosis took a turn for the worse due to his fast. If it had not been for his fast, he could obviously have lived longer. So he did not simply die of tuberculosis; he sacrificed his life for the Confucian moral principles.


\(^\text{169}\) In Lunyu 論語 (The Confucian Analects). book 5, chapter 28, Confucius remarks: "When good
moral attitude that he maintained in his Erpai. This moral attitude not only stands out as a conspicuous feature of his erotic stories, but owing to his influence, also spawned didacticism in the fiction of this type written by authors of later generations.

3. The Social Background

Ling's Confucian leanings and sentiments, manifested especially in his life as an official and in his moral concern that permeates his erotic stories, may be attributed to his family background and his education as I have indicated before. But this explanation will obviously be incomplete if we do not point out their origin in the larger social background — i.e., the state orthodoxy.170


170 The following part about Neo-Confucianism should not be read as a critique. Although I try to connect Ling to Neo-Confucianism as the state ideology and point out that Neo-Confucianism was a repressive moral teaching about sex, I have no intention of criticizing it as a philosophical and ethical system and giving it a comprehensive evaluation. Such a task, undoubtedly, goes beyond the scope of this thesis and requires more reading and thinking. The modern famous scholar Qian Mu 錢穆 (1895-1990) said that it had taken him more than thirty years before he was able to write Song Ming lijue gaishu 宋明理學概論 (A General Introduction to Neo-Confucianism). See Qian Mu, Song Ming lijue gaishu (Taipei: Zhonghua wenhua chuban shiyuan hui, 1953), preface, pp. 2-3. Obviously, Neo-Confucianism is not easy to understand, and we need to take a careful and responsible attitude toward this traditional heritage. To avoid misconception, however, I should make it clear that my position on the whole is not against Neo-Confucianism or Confucianism. I agree with some scholars that the revival of China depends not only on her economic and political reforms, but also on the regeneration of Confucianism and
The state orthodoxy in the Ming was Neo-Confucianism.\(^{171}\) A philosophic school formed in the Northern Song (960-1127)\(^{172}\) and systematized in the hands of the great synthesizer Zhu Xi (1230-1300).\(^{173}\) Neo-Confucianism was far more sophisticated than its heritage from which it developed. Yet despite its metaphysical orientation that blends with Buddhist and Daoist other cultural traditions that constitute the essence of Chinese civilization.

\(^{171}\) There was a debate on whether *lixue* 理学 (literally, study of principle) or *taoxue* 道学 (literally, study of ways) should be the more appropriate Chinese name for “Neo-Confucianism.” Zhang Liwen 張立文 perhaps represents the scholars who prefer to use the former term. The term *lixue*. Zhang maintains, can more clearly indicate the basic characteristic of the Neo-Confucianist school founded by the Cheng brothers, because there was no other Confucianist school which interprets *li* 理 (principle) as the ultimate cosmological nounemon. See Zhang Liwen, “Luelun Song-Ming lixue” 陸論宋明理學 (A Brief Exposition of Song-Ming Neo-Confucianism), in *Lun Song-Ming lixue* 論宋明理學 (On Song-Ming Neo-Confucianism). ed. Zhongguo zhexue shi xuehui 中國哲學史學會 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chuban she, 1981), pp. 14-15. Feng Youlan 汾友蘭 (Feng Yu-lan), the authority on the history of Chinese philosophy, argues that although *lixue* has been more widely accepted and used by majority of scholars in recent years, *daoxue* was the older term for the Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianist school. For this reason, it is more appropriate to use *daoxue* instead of *lixue*. See Feng Youlan, “Luelun Daoxue de tedian, mingchen he xingzhi” 陸論道學的特點, 名稱和性質 (A Brief Explanation of the Characteristics, Name and Nature of Neo-Confucianism), in *Lun Song-Ming lixue*, pp. 48-52.

\(^{172}\) Zhou Dunyi 周敦頤 (1017-1073), well-known for his *Taijitu shuo* 太極圖說 (The Daigram of Supreme Ultimate Explained), and Shao Yong 邵雍 (1011-1077), in whose philosophy we find “emblemology and numerology combined into a single cosmological system,” were scholars who made first contributions to Neo-Confucianism in the Northern Song. But it was Zhang Zai 張載 (1020-1077), especially the Cheng brothers (Cheng Hao 程頤, 1032-1085, and Cheng Yi 程頤, 1033-1107) who laid the foundation of Neo-Confucianist School. “Although Zhou Dunyi, Shao Yong and Zhang Zai all contributed important elements to the development of Neo-Confucianism, its real establishment as an organized school began with the Cheng brothers.” See Feng Youlan, *History of Chinese Philosophy*, trans. Derk Bodde, vol. 2, p. 498.

\(^{173}\) See Feng Loulan. *History of Chinese Philosophy*, p. 533: “With Chu Hsi (1130-1200) we now reach the man who synthesized the ideas of all these predecessors into one all-embracing system and who, indeed, is probably the greatest synthesizer in the history of Chinese thought. Through his prolific writings and his commentaries on the classics, he brought the Rationalistic school to full maturity. and in the process created a version of Confucianism that was to remain orthodox until the twentieth century.”
philosophy, Neo-Confucianism was essentially concentrated on the rationalization of ethics and personal cultivation of morality. Its elaboration on the *a priori* "principle of heaven" 天理 (tianli) "that did not exist for [the sage] Yao nor perish with [the tyrant] Jie" 不為堯存, 不為桀亡 provided for the traditional ethical hierarchy an unprecedentedly solid theory, a cosmology that reinterprets the Three Bonds and Five Relationships 三綱五常 (sangang wuchang) as manifestations of the one single principle in the universe and emphasizes the

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174 It has long been noticed that Neo-Confucianism synthesizes the philosophical essence of Buddhism and Daoism into its system. For instance, Li Zehou 李澤厚 says: "Buddhism and Daoism generally evolved their theoretical system and structure by concentrating their study on life and death, mind and body of the individual. In propagating their doctrines and trying to show that the world is a void and everything is illusory, Buddhists deal with cosmology, world outlook, and epistemology, and this has given rise to well-defined, complete speculative philosophies. The comparatively simpler Daoism is concerned with the making of immortality pills, longevity, and mediation but therefore also has to deal with cosmological theory. These two features of Buddhism and Daoism — individual improvement and the search for cosmology and epistemology — were precisely the basic material that Zhu Xi used to construct his own moral philosophy." See Li Zehou, "Some Thoughts on Ming-Qing Neo-Confucianism," in Wing-tsit Chan, ed., *Chu Hsi and Neo-Confucianism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986), p. 551.

175 See Li Zehou, "Song-Ming lixue pianlun" 宋明理學片論 (Fragmentary Exposition on Song-Ming Neo-Confucianism), in *Zhongguo gudai sixiang shilun* 中國古代思想史論 (Historical Reviews of Ancient Chinese Thought) (Beijing: Renmin chuban she, 1986), p. 220.

176 Henan Chengshi vishu 河南程氏遺書 (The Posthumous Works of the Cheng Brothers), ed., Zhu Xi (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1939), juan 2. p. 30. This book is a record of conversations of the Cheng brothers. Some parts, such as juan 2, were loosely attributed to both brothers, with no effort made to distinguish between the two.

177 The Three Bonds and Five Relationships refer to the general ethical order, a traditional hierarchy that stipulates the relationship between ruler and minister, father and son, husband and wife, and between siblings and between friends.

178 See Zhu Wengong wenji 朱文公文集 (Works of Zhu Xi), juan 70. p. 1282. In another place Zhu Xi makes a more detailed elucidation on how the real and perceptual innate laws of human ethical relationships demonstrate the absolute, rational and noumenal principle: "The mandate is like a command and nature the principle. Heaven uses yin-yang and the Five Elements to create things and qi produces forms. The endowed principle endowed is like an order or a command.
absolute necessity of their maintenance. One of the major founders of the school Cheng Yi (1033-1107) went even so far as to state: "Starving to death is incidental, whereas the loss of chastity [on the part of women] is a matter of great consequences." Later, in a similar vein, Zhu Xi also commented: "The sages might have said thousands of words, but they are only meant to teach people to revere the 'principle of heaven' and restrain their desires." Their orthodox attempts at reexamining and revitalizing the classics, however, did not win immediate official recognition; instead, the teaching they propagated was regarded as "false learning" and suffered proscription in the state examination. Although toward the end of the Southern Song Neo-Confucianism "gained wide

When people are born and things are made, they receive their own endowed principle to serve the Five Relationships." See Zhu Xi, "Zhongyong zhangjü" 中庸章句 (The Commentary on the Doctrine of the Mean), in Sishu jizhu 四書集注 (The Commentary on The Four Books), p. 21.

179 Zhu Xi says, "The Three Bonds and Five Relationships has never been changed up to now, nor will it be changed in the future." See Zhuzi yulei 朱子語類 (Classified Conversation of Master Zhu) (Taipei: Zhengzhong shuju, 1982), juan 24, p. 386. Cf. Li Zehou's explanation on Neo-Confucian emphasis on morality: "Zhu Xi's statement that "principle is one and its manifestations are many" 理一分殊 (liyi fenshu) is essentially aimed at showing that the aforementioned moral behavior possesses a universality similar to law and at proving that moral behavior, connected with human experiences of specific, real material content, still possess a nature with a simultaneous a priori rationality and is therefore universally applicable and effective." See Li Zehou, "Thoughts on Ming-Qing Neo-Confucianism," in Wing-tsit Chan, ed., Chu Hsi and Neo-Confucianism, p. 556.

180 Henan Chengshi yishu, juan 22, p. 328.

181 Zhuzi yulei, juan 12, p. 229.

acceptance and great prestige and enjoyed steady development even under the Mongol occupation. It was not until after the founding of the Ming dynasty that it finally became the predominant ideology sanctioned by the imperial government.

It is true that the rulers of the Ming regime were interested in Buddhism or Daoism or in both Buddhism and Daoism. The founder of the Ming, Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋, had been himself a Buddhist monk before he rose to power. Emperor Chengzu 成祖 (r. 1403-1425) was...


184 The issue of when Neo-Confucianism became the state orthodoxy is a matter to be debated. For example, James T. C. Liu holds that Neo-Confucianism, after having overcome the crisis (i.e., the persecution of the Qingyuan Party 慶元黨), became state ideology in the Southern Song. See James T. C. Liu, ibid. But Tang Yuyuan, whose argument I have adopted in my thesis, maintains that Neo-Confucianism did not become state orthodoxy until the Ming dynasty: “Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism was not immediately accepted by the ruling class as state ideology or official philosophy upon its formation in the Southern Song. After the proscription of the Qingyuan Party was lifted, Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism was no longer banned. Like other schools of Confucianism, it began to enjoy a respectful recognition from the ruling class, although this sort of respectful recognition should not be regarded as equal to state orthodoxy. Later, in the Yanyou reign 延祐 (1314-1321) of the Yuan dynasty, it became an officially acknowledged school, and students were tested in the Civil Service Examination for their knowledge of Zhu Xi’s exposition of Confucianism. But as an officially acknowledged school, the Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism was authoritative only in terms of interpretation of Confucian classics. It still had not reached the status of the orthodox state ideology. It was only in the early Ming, when Emperor Chengzu had had The Three Great Collections compiled and published, that Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism finally became what is called state ideology or the predominant official philosophy of the ruling class, providing not only standardized interpretations for the examination but also the ‘statecraft’ for emperors.” See Tang Yuyuan, “Cheng-Zhu lixue heshi chengwei tongzhi jieji de tongzhi sixiang,” in Zhongguo shi yanjiu, no. 1. 1989. p. 125.

185 For a general account of Ming emperors’ religious beliefs and activities, see Albert Chan. The Glory and Fall of the Ming Dynasty, pp. 108-116.

186 For biographical account of the founding emperor Zhu Yuanzhang as a Buddhist monk, see Wu Han 顧開, Zhu Yuanzhang zhuàn 朱元璋傳 (Biography of Zhu Yuanzhang), in Wu Han wenji 顧開文集 (The Works of Wu Han), vol. 1, pp. 14-24. Zhu Yuanzhang later joined the insurrectionary army headed by Han Tongshan 韓童山. Han believed in the White Lotus religion
a great believer in the both religions. Emperor Shizong 世宗 (r. 1522-1567) was so committed to Daoist immortality that he devoted much attention to unusual elixirs, almost entirely oblivious to his duties as a monarch. But personal ideological favor of a sovereign does not necessarily represent state orthodoxy. State orthodoxy is part of superstructure, linked with the power of

187 It was rumored that Emperor Chengzu died of poison contained in an elixir which he took from a Daoist priest. See Wang Chongwu 王崇武, “Ming Chengzu yu fangshi” 明成祖與方士 (Emperor Chengzu of the Ming and his Daoist Priests), in Zhongguo shehui jingishi jikan 中國社會經濟史集刊 (Journal of Chinese Social and Economic History), no. 1, 1949, pp. 12-19. Zhongguo Daojian shi (History of Chinese Daoism), p. 692, also mentions that Emperor Chengzu did “damage his health” 损體 (sunfi) after taking the pills of immortality given to him by a Daoist priest of Lingji Temple, although it does not say that this was the cause of his death.

188 Although at the beginning Emperor Shizong’s interest in Daoism centered on rituals and practices that helped induce or to increase fertility, he was later mainly preoccupied with the pursuit of immortality. For a detailed account of Emperor Shizong’s belief in Daoism and his relevant court policy, see James Geiss, “The Jiajing Reign,” in Cambridge History of China, eds. John Fairbank and Denis Twitchett, pp. 479-482, Ren Jiyu, et al. Zhongguo daojiao shi. pp. 588-597.

189 James T. C. Liu points out that the state orthodoxy was characterized by three elements: (1) the selection of one particular school or set of interpretations and commentaries as the officially approved ones in the civil service examinations; (2) official proclamation of the same in the name of the state, for presumed application throughout the government, not just the state examinations; and (3) other efforts, parallel to the state efforts, in getting the same to be accepted by the whole society, led by some elite and spreading downward among the common people. See James T. C. Liu, “How Did a Neo-Confucian School Become the State Orthodoxy?” in Philosophy East and West, 1973, p. 484.

190 According to Marx, ideology, along with legal and political institutions, is part of the superstructure: “The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness.” See Karl Marx, preface to A Contribution to
the ruling class and enforced through means such as legislation, decrees and education. Of the
Three Teachings 三教 (sanjiao) prevailling in the late imperial China, only Neo-Confucianism
gained such a political or institutionally authoritarian status, due to the state efforts Zhu

the Critique of Political Economy, p. 20.

191 Scholars vary in opinions as to whether Neo-Confucianism was a religion (in the Western
sense of this word). For the debate, see Ren Jiyu, "Rujia yu rujiao 儒家與儒教 (Confucianism as
an Academic School and as a Religion), in Zhongguo zhexue 中國哲學 (Chinese Philosophy), 3rd
series; Feng Youlan, "Luelun taoxue de tedian, mingchen he xingzhi." in Lun Song-Ming lixue,
pp. 52-6. I find Hu Shi’s 胡適 explanation of this issue quite enlightening: “The Chinese word for
‘religion’ is jiao 教, which means teaching or a system of teaching. To teach people to believe
in a particular deity is a jiao; but to teach them how to behave toward other men is also a jiao. The
ancients did say that ‘the sages founded religions (jiao) on the ways of the gods.’ but it is not
always necessary to make use of such supernatural expedients. And the Chinese people make no
distinction between the theistic religions and the purely moral teachings of their sages. Therefore,
the term jiao is applied to Buddhism, Daoism, Mohammedanism, Christianity, as well as
Confucianism. They are all systems of moral teaching. Teaching a moral life is the essential
thing; and ‘the ways of the gods’ are merely one of the possible means of sanctioning that
 teaching. That is in substance the Chinese conception of religion.” See Hu Shi. The Chinese

192 In the twelfth year of Yongle 永樂 reign (i.e., in 1414), Emperor Chengzu ordered the
Hanlin 翰林 academicians Hu Guang 胡廣 to compile Sishu daquan 四書大全 (The Great
Collection of Commentaries on The Four Books), Wujing daquan 五經大全 (The Great
Collection of Commentaries on The Five Classics) and Xingli daquan 性命大全 (The Great
Collection of Neo-Confucianists’ Works). Thirty nine scholars, all paid by the court, worked
under Hu for this project. In the next year, 1415, they accomplished the compilation of these
three collections, which, containing in total 229 juan, were even more voluminous than the
Wujing zhengyi 五經正義 (The Commentary of The Five Classics) published in the Tang
dynasty. Emperor Chengzu wrote a preface for these three collections, in which he made it clear
that they “should serve as a guide to both the management of family and the administration of the
state.” He ordered the Board of Rites to print these three collections and make them easily
available to the public. See Tang Yuyuan, “Cheng-zhu lixue heshi chengwei tongzhi jieji de
tongzhi sixiang.” in Zhongguo shi yanjiu, no. 1, 1989, p. 132. The Qing Confucianist scholar Pi
Xirui 皮錫瑞 (1850-1908) made the following remark: “Since the compilation of Wujing zhengyi
undertaken more than eight hundred years ago in the Tang dynasty, this (i.e., the compilation of
the three great collections) was the greatest event in history.” See Pi Ruixi, Jinxue lishi
Although it is true that Buddhism and Daoism had their heyday in certain periods, yet they had
never been able, as Chen Yinke says, to replace Confucianism as a predominant ideology. See
Yuanzhang made in building his empire on Confucian thought patterns.

This founding emperor, having defeated the Mongol and restored the Chinese sovereignty, enjoined that The Four Books and The Five Classics with Zhu Xi's commentaries be studied in the National Academy 國子監 (guozi jian) as basic texts and topics for the civil service examinations be drawn from these canons. He also instructed that

Chen Yinke 陳寅恪, "Feng Youlan zhexue shi xiaox shencha baogao" 馮友蘭哲學史下冊審查報告 (A Review of the Second Volume of Feng Youlan's History of Chinese Philosophy), in Jinmingguan congao erbian 金明館叢稿二編 (The Second Collection of Drafts from Jinming Studio), p. 251. In fact, since the founding emperor Zhu Yuanzhang, the Ming court often took measures to restrict Buddhism and Daoism. For example, in the sixth year of the Hongwu reign, i.e., in 1373, Zhu Yuanzhang issued a decree to the effect that only one or two persons was allowed to study Buddhism or Daoism in a mountain. See Yu Jideng 余鈞澄 (fl. 1590). Diangu jiwen 典故記問 (An Informal Account of Administrative Statutes) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), juan 3, p. 50; according to Taizu shilu 太祖實錄 (The Factual Records of Emperor Taizu), Zhu Yuanzhang prohibited Buddhist monks and Daoist priests from establishing altars in a drought, and violators would be severely punished. See, Ming shilu 明實錄 (The Factual Records of the Ming) (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1966), Taizu shilu, juan 53, p. 1037; see also Xia Xie 夏燮 (1799-1875). Ming tongjian 明通鑑 (The Chronicle of the Ming) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), juan 4, p. 291.

193 The students in the National Academy studied mainly The Four Books and The Five Classics. They also had to study law, history, mathematics and calligraphy. Great stress was laid on moral as well as on intellectual training. See Zhang Tingyu. Mingshi, juan 69. p. 1677.

194 In the first year of the Hongwu reign (1368), Zhu Yuanzhang, upon the advice of his learned minister Liu Ji 劉基, made a reform in the civil service examination system. All the topics for the examinations were to be drawn from The Four Books and The Five Classics. Students had to follow the Song Confucian scholars in interpreting the Confucian classics and write in classical style as if they were ancient Confucian scholars (this sort of examination essay was later known as the "eight-legged essay" 八股文). See Zhang Tingyu, Mingshi, juan 70. p. 1693. No wonder He Qiaoyuan 何奇遠 (fl. 1604-1640) says that in the early Ming the legislation and policies that the emperor Zhu Yuanzhang drafted made all scholars throughout the country respect Zhu Xi. See He Qiaoyuan, Mingshan cang 名山藏 (Works to be Hidden in a Renowned Mountain). "Rulin ji. shang" 儒林記上 (The Records of Scholars. Part 1) (Taipei: Chengwen chuban she, 1969), p. 5171. For more information of the civil service examination of the Ming, see Lang Ying 郭瑤, Qixiu liegao 七修類稿 (The Seventh Revised Draft of Categorized Records) (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1963), juan 14, "Benchao kechang" 本朝科場 (The Examination of the Reigning Dynasty), p. 202.
the curriculum in prefectural and sub-prefectural schools, official and private alike, should rest on the Confucian classics too,\textsuperscript{195} and even elementary education should not be exempted.\textsuperscript{196}

When his successor Chengzhu\textsuperscript{197} ascended the throne, he had The Three Great Collections compiled,\textsuperscript{198} and stipulated that examination papers be judged according to their standard

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\textsuperscript{195} See Fu Weilin 傅維麟 (fl. 1646), Mingshu 明書 (History of the Ming) (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1936), \textit{juan} 62, "Xuexiao zhi" 學校誌 (Records of Schools), p. 1230.

\textsuperscript{196} In the Ming-Qing times elementary education usually used Sanzi jing 三字經 (The Three-character Classic) as a major primer, which, originally written in the Song dynasty, consists of approximately 356 three-words lines and contains 500 different characters. It begins with a famous Mencian tenet (“Men at their birth \ Are naturally good; \ Their natures are much the same."\ But their habits are widely different; \ If foolishly there is no teaching, \ The nature will deteriorate”), and the entire text blends moral teaching with historical information, with special emphasis on the Confucian reciprocal obligations of parents and sons, teachers and students, and elders and juniors. See Evelyn Rawski, “Economic and Social Foundations of Late Imperial Culture,” in \textit{Popular Culture in Late Imperial China} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), p. 29. For the full text of Sanzi jing, see Song Hong 宋洪 & Qiao Sang 姜桑, eds., Mengxue quanshu 蒙學全書 (A Complete Primer for Children) (Changchun: Jilin wenshi chuban she, 1996), pp. 3-10.

\textsuperscript{197} It was through the civil war that Zhu Di 朱棣, the fourth son of Zhu Yuanzhang, usurped the throne from his nephew and became the successor of Zhu Yuanzhang. Zhu Di was originally Prince of Yan 燕王. After Zhu Yuanzhang died and Zhu Yunwen 朱允炆 (r. 1399-1403) ascended the throne, Zhu Di rose in rebellion and launched his three-year military campaign against the throne under the pretext of getting rid of treacherous court officials. He finally defeated Zhu Yunwen and became emperor himself. This is what later historians euphemistically call the “Campaign to Clear Away the Troubles” 靖難之役 (jingnan zhi yi). For details, see Gu Yingtai 谷應泰 (1620-1690), Mingshi jishi benmo 明史紀事本末 (A Chronicle of the Ming) Taipei: Sanmin shuju, 1963), \textit{juan} 16, "Yanwang qibing" 燕王起兵 (The Rebellion of Prince of Yan). pp. 163-197; Tang Gang and Nan Bingwen, Mingshi (History of the Ming), vol. 1, pp. 127-135; \textit{Cambridge History of China}, vol. 7, chapter 4 (by Hok-lam Chan), pp. 182-202; Wu Han. “Mingdai Jingnan zhi yi yu guodu beiqian” 明代靖難之役與國都北遷 (The Campaign to Clear Away the Troubles and the Transfer of the Capital to the North), in \textit{Wu Han wenji}, vol. 1. pp. 235-255.

\textsuperscript{198} These three collections are Sishu daquan 四書大全 (The Great Collection of Commentaries on the Four Books), Wujing daquan 正經大全 (The Great Collection of Commentaries on the Five Classics), and Xingli daquan 性理大全 (The Great Collection of Neo-Confucianists' Works).
interpretations. Meanwhile, Confucian ethics were codified in *Da Ming lu* 大明律 (The Legal Codes of the Ming), and edicts were issued to the effect that, among other things, all widows who lost their husbands before the age of thirty but did not remarry until after fifty should be praised in their neighborhood and the corvee of their families should be exempted. All these educational, political and legal measures consolidated the status of Neo-Confucianism as state orthodoxy, making it not only accepted by the scholar/official class but spread to the common people as well.

I am willing to admit that during the sixteenth century this dominant ideology was greatly challenged by the Wang Yangming 王陽明 school. As a “monistic idealist” giving a new direction to Neo-Confucianism, Wang Yangming (1472-1529) emphasized perception rather than intuition as the source of knowledge.

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199 Subjects must obey their ruler, sons and daughters must obey their parents, wife must obey her husband, and students must obey their teachers. Any violation of these Confucian relations is considered as “disobedience to superior” 犯上 (fanshang). The “disobedience to superior” was one of the “ten crimes” 十惡 (shi’ei) and the person who committed the crime was to be severely punished. See Yao Siren 姚思仁 et al., eds., *Da Ming lu fuli zhushi* 大明律附例注释 (Beijing: Beijing University Press, 1993), “Mingli lu” 名例律 (The General Law), p. 116.

200 See Li Dongyang 李東陽 et al., eds., *Da Ming huidian* 大明會典 (The Political Institutions and Administrative Statutes of the Great Ming) (Taipei: Zhongwen shuju, 1963), *juan* 20, p. 364.

201 Undoubtedly, the Neo-Confucianists’ influence on the literati was exerted mainly through education and the civil service examination. As Zhang Liwen points out, Confucian education, especially the civil service examination, made students take Neo-Confucianism as their dogma and follow it without doubt. See Zhang Liwen, “Luelun Song-Ming lixue,” in *Lun song-Ming lixue*, p. 35.


203 Although the new philosophical trend can be traced to Chen Xianzhang 陳獻璋 (1428-
than cultivation and stressed reliance on the innate knowledge of the individual mind rather than reverence for the universal principle. He himself may still be considered as a moralist working "within the universe of Neo-Confucian discourse," yet his insistence on the autonomy of individual consciousness was eventually developed into a revolutionary "mass" philosophy represented by such populist thinkers as Wang Gen 王艮 (1498-1582), Luo Rufang 罗汝芳 (1515-1588), He Xinyin 何心隱 (1517-1579), and Li Zhi 李贄 (1527-1602). Li Zhi, "the

1500), yet for the conciseness I will not delve into the details which are unimportant to my thesis. For discussions of Chen Xianzhang's original contribution to Ming thought, see Ma Zhenduo. "Chen Xianzhang de zhuxue sixiang" 陳獻璋的哲學思想 (Chen Xianzhang's Philosophy), in Lun Song-Ming lixue, pp. 359-376; Jen Yu-wen, "Chen Xianzhang's Philosophy of the Natural." in Self and Society in Ming Thought, ed., Wm. Theodore de Bary (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), pp. 53-92.

204 For a detailed discussion of the difference between Wang Yangming's ideas and Cheng-Zhu's teachings, see Feng Youlan, History of Chinese Philosophy, pp. 605-610; Julia Ching, To Acquire Wisdom, pp. 75-103, 171-177; Wing-tsit Chan, Instructions, pp. xxxix, xxxviii; Tu Wei-ming, Neo-Confucian Thought in Action, pp. 153-172.

205 Andrew Plaks, The Four Masterworks of the Ming Novel, p. 17.

206 Wang, Luo and He were representatives of the Taizhou 泰州 school, although it is arguable whether Li should be considered as a member of this school. For the debate of this issue, see Chen Jinsheng, "Luelun Wang Gen" 略論王艮 (A Brief Discussion on Wang Gen), in Lun Song-Ming lixue, pp. 505-508. For a fuller account of the Taizhou school, see Wm. Theodore de Bary. "Individualism and Humanitarianism in Late Ming Thought," in Self and Society in Ming Thought, pp. 171-178 and passim. While most scholars consider the Taizhou school as a left-wing branch of Wang Yangming school, some experts on Chinese intellectual history deny their relationship. For instance, Hou Wailu 侯外盧 says: "We do not agree that the Taizhou school should be generally called a left-wing branch of the Wang Yangming school. But actually it did not, and their difference has already been noticed by [the late Ming scholar] Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 (1610-1695). In his Mingru xue'an 明儒学案 (The Records of Ming Scholars)... Huang does not list the Cases of Taizhou under the Wang Yangming school." See Hou Wailu, et al, Zhongguo sixiang tongshi 中國思想通史 (A General History of Chinese Thought) (Beijing: Renmin chuban she, 1958), vol. 4, p. 972. The Taizhou school, which, as Huang Zongxi remarks, sought to "unveil more of the Buddha's mysteries and attributed them to the master" (see The Records of Ming Scholars, trans. Julia Ching, p. 165), might have been unrelated or only
greatest heretic and iconoclast.”207 was especially outstanding among them. He carried Wang’s epistemology so far as to bluntly criticize Confucius, completely renounce the classics as standards of right and wrong,208 and openly profess that selfishness, sexual satisfaction and the pursuit of profit are integral to human nature.209 As his iconoclasm facilitated an intellectual trend at his time, it obtained widespread currency. No wonder that some scholar calls the latter half of the sixteenth century “Li Zhi period.”210 In this period Neo-Confucianism was bogged marginally related with the Wang Yangming school, but my usage of the term the “Wang Yangming school” is simply a convenient rubric to describe general ideas and trends of the era.

207 Wm. Theodore de Bary, “Individualism and Humanitarianism in Late Ming Thought,” in Self and Society in Ming Thought, p. 188. Actually, Li Zhi was viewed, by ordinary people and conservative Confucian scholars alike, as a “heretic” (yidian) even when he was alive. However, he seems not to have cared about it at all. “Since I have been regarded as a heretic,” he wrote to his friend, “I should pose as a heretic in order to be worthy of the title I have received.” See Li Zhi. Fenshu (Book to be Burned), juan 1, “Da Jiao Yiyuan” 吳焦澹園 (Reply to Jiao Hong). For a biographical account of Li Zhi’s life and thought, see de Bary. op.cit., pp. 188-222; Rong Zhaozu 容肇祖, Li Zhuowu pingzhuan 李卓吾評傳 (A Critical Biography of Li Zhi); Zhang Jianye 張建業, Li Zhi pingzhuan 李贊評傳 (A Critical Biography of Li Zhi); Wu Ze 吴澤, Rujiao pantu Li Zhuowu 儒教叛徒李卓吾 (Li Zhuowu — A Traitor of Confucianism); Hou Wailu. Zhongguo sifang tongshi. pp. 1031-1095; Feng Youlan. “Cong Li Zhi shuoqin 論李贽思想” (A Discussion initiated by Li Zhi), in Zhongguo zhexueshi lunwen erji 中國哲學史論文二集 (Essays on Chinese Philosophy, Second Collection) (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chuban she, 1962) . pp. 393-410.

208 “If all people take what Confucius said as the standards of right and wrong, then actually they do not have the standard of right and wrong.” See Li Zhi. “Cangshu shijii liezhuan zongmu qianlun” 藏書世紀列傳總目前論 (Foreword Placed Before the Table of Contents of The Book to be Burned), in Li Zhi. Cangshu 藏書 (The Book to be Hidden Away) (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1986). p. 7.

209 See Li Zhi. Fengshu (Works to be Burned), juan 1. “Da Teng Mingfu” 答滕明府 (Reply to Teng Mingfu), p. 40. His emphasis on selfishness as the nature of human beings can also be seen in another of his article “Deye rucheng houlun” 德業儒臣後論 (Postscript to the Biographies of Virtuous Confucianists). See Cangshu, juan 32. p. 544.

210 Dong Guoyan 唐國炎, for instance, refers to the latter half of the sixteenth century as the “Li Zhi period.” See Dong Guoyan. Dangzi, rouqing, tongxin: Mingdai xiaoshuo sichao. 論子,
down in crisis, and in this period individualism and humanitarianism began to be prevalent with the disintegration of traditional morality.

For my own part, I agree with the Ming-Qing intellectual history scholar Bao Zunxin 包遵信 that ideas and trends in the seventeenth century were different from those in the sixteenth century. Li Zhi's suicide in prison in 1602 and the founding of the Donglin Academy 東林書院 (i.e., Donglin Party 東林黨) in 1604 actually marked an end of the nonconformist epoch and an inception of a Neo-Confucian moral crusade. Gu Xiancheng 顧憲城 (1550-1612) the major leader of the Donglin movement, made it clear at the Donglin inaugural...
meeting that they were to follow the line of Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism, defend conventional moral principles and redress Wang Yangming’s errors.\(^{214}\) The Donglin denunciation of Li Zhi’s attitudes and its opposition to heterodox eclecticism were not just partisan passions. They represented a general tendency in the last few decades of the Ming. In fact, as Bao points out, the seventeenth century was a period in which efforts were made by politicians and scholars\(^{215}\) to return to the old tradition and Neo-Confucianism was again elevated to orthodox status politically and ideologically. We should not think that the publication of *Nu sishu* 女四書 (Four Books for Women)\(^{216}\) nor the list of the 27,141 exemplary women 列女 (lienu)\(^{217}\) appearing in *shudian*, 1941). p. 287.


\(^{215}\) Gu Xiancheng (1550-1612), Gao Panlong 高攀龍 (1562-1626), Liu Zongzhou 劉宗周 (1578-1645), Zhang Pu 張溥 (1602-1641), Chen Zilong 陳子龍 (1608-1647), Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 (1610-1695), Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (1613-1682) and Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 (1619-1692) were perhaps the most famous politicians or scholars in the late Ming and early Qing who tried to maintain the tradition of Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianist tradition.


\(^{217}\) Zhu Yilu 朱義禄 provides us with a clear chart, from which we can see the number of chaste women in different dynasties: 6 in Zhou 周, 1 in Qin 秦, 22 in Han 漢, 29 in the Six Dynasties 六朝, 32 in Sui 隋 and Tang 唐, 2 in the Five Dynasties 五代, 152 in Song 宋, 359 in Yuan 元, 27,141 in Ming 明, and 9,482 in Qing 清. See Zhu Yilu, *Rujia lixiang renge yu Zhongguo wenhua* 儒家理想人格與中國文化 (The Confucian Ideal Personality and Chinese Culture) (Shenyang: Liaoning jiaoyu chuban she, 1995), p. 147. We should note that the so-called “lienu” (exemplary women) recorded in the official histories before the Song dynasty were not necessarily “chaste women.” For example, as the Ming scholar Lang Ying 朗瑛 points out, of
the Ming shi 明史 (History of the Ming) — the writing of which began in the seventeenth century\(^{218}\) — were isolated phenomenon or objective records of the fact. They also reflected an ideological emphasis of the time.

The state orthodoxy as has been above described may account for Ling’s Confucian thought and for the moral stance he took in writing his stories. But it certainly cannot explain why at the same time he made so many of his stories erotic. To look into the reasons for this eroticism, we must shift our attention to the economic changes that had taken place and were taking place in the period in which he lived.

According to Ray Huang 黃仁宇, there were at least three economic booms in Chinese history, one in the Han dynasty, one in the period from Tang to Song, and the last one in the late Ming.\(^ {219}\) The flourishing economy in the Ming, starting from the early sixteenth century as what

\(^{218}\) The compilation of the Ming shi began in 1678 by the order of the Kangxi emperor, although it was not completed until the early eighteenth century. For details, see Albert Chan. The Glory and Fall of the Ming Dynasty (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982), pp. xx-xxi.

\(^{219}\) Ray Huang. "Cong Sanyan kan wan Ming shangren" 從三言看晚明商人 (The Late Ming Merchants as Presented in the Three Words Collections), in Fangkuan lishi de shijie
W. G. Skinner has called the "ascending phase of the second great macrocycle," should be ascribed to a large extent to the founding emperor of the dynasty. In retrospect, Zhu Yuanzhang seems to have deemed it advisable to adopt a laissez-faire attitude in socio-economic spheres of government policy. "When stability has just been achieved in the country," he said, "people are physically exhausted and financially deficient. They are like birds starting to learn to fly, or like trees newly planted, so we must not pull out their feathers or shake their roots. We should instead let them lead a peaceful and restful life." He encouraged people to migrate from overburdened arable land to open up virgin soil, financed the construction projects of water conservancy.

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220 In "Introduction: Urban Development in Late Imperial China," William Skinner says: "There is some justification, then, for periodizing the history of urban and regional development since the Sui reunification into great eras separated by a dark age of devolution and depression, and even for speaking of two great macrocycles of development in agrarian China as a whole." See William Skinner, ed., The City in Late Imperial China (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1977), p. 28.


222 For example, in an instruction to the officials in the central administration, Zhu Yuanzhang said: "In Suzhou, Songjiang, Jiaxing, Huzhou and Hangzhou there is not enough arable land and people have to engage in commerce. But in Linhao, my native place, much of the land needs to be reclaimed. So an announcement should be made to the residents having no real estate in those above-mentioned five prefectures that if they are willing to move to Linhao and reclaim land there, they will be given rice, seeds, cattle and boats as financial support, and in the first three years of their settlement there they will be exempted from taxation." After this announcement was made, more than four thousand families moved to Linhao. See Taizu shilu, juan 53. p. 1053.

223 Zhu Yuanzhang once told the local officials that any written suggestions from residents for water conservancy must be immediately submitted to him. He took the matter seriously and during his reign a number of construction projects, often financed by the government, were
and alleviated levies\textsuperscript{224} to entice escapees in the dynastic war to come back to their homeland. He also liberated slaves and simplified commercial taxes,\textsuperscript{225} to facilitate handicraft manufacture and internal trade. Thus agriculture, rural industry and commerce began to recover during his reign, and continued to maintain a slow but steady growth in much of the next century (i.e., the 15\textsuperscript{th} century) due to the long period of peace and security.\textsuperscript{226} From the time Emperor Xiaozong (r. 1488-1506) reigned over the country the pace of economy picked up, and it is a general consensus of historians that when Emperor Wuzong (r. 1506-1522) was in office there appeared a marked economic transformation, a sharp upsurge which in Chinese historiography is referred to as "spouts of capitalism."

It is for sometimes argued that China's self-sufficient agrarian economy was still at that

\textsuperscript{224} According to a rough statistical count, the decrees issued in the Hongwu reign (1368-1399) for reducing levies and taxation numbered as many as seventy. See Han Dacheng. Mingdai chengshi vanju, p. 14.

\textsuperscript{225} Zhu Yuanzhang not only simplified the old complicated levy duty on commerce but also reduced commercial taxation to the thirtieth. In a decree he stipulated that nobody was allowed to charge more than the thirtieth for tax and violators would be punished. See Zhang Tingyu. Mingshi, \textit{juan} 81. "Shihuo zhi"食貨誌 (The Records of Food and Money), p. 1975.

\textsuperscript{226} According to the description of Mingshi, from the Hongwu reign to the Xuande reign (i.e., from 1368-1435), people were comfortably off, the national treasury was replete, and there was no piece of land that was wasted. See Zhang Tingyu, Mingshi, \textit{juan} 77. "Shihuo zhi." p. 1877.
time predominant and most of inland regions were still too backward to "interest merchants in visiting and buying their food crops and commodities." However, in economically advanced areas, especially in the regions situated along the Southeast Coast, the Lower Yangtze River and the Grand Canal, changes did occur. We see an ostensible shift from the traditional agricultural basis of social structure to something similar to a market economy.

The development of subsidiary industry is regarded as one of the important evidences of such a transformation. As productivity increased by the sixteenth century, a large part of the handicraft sector began to be separate from agriculture and become an independent productive entity. Its rapid growth was most clearly reflected in textiles, and concrete examples of this are well-documented, among other things, by the meteoric rise of cotton textile titans. One of Feng

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227 Cf. Tanggang and Nan Bingwen, Mingshi (History of the Ming), vol. 1, p. 551; Qin Peiheng, "Lun shiliu, shiqi shiji zhongguo shehui jingji de xingzhi" (On the Nature of Economy in the Chinese society in the 16th and 17th Centuries), in Ming-Qing ziben zhuyi mengya yanjiu lunwen ji (A Collection of Essays on the Sprouts of Capitalism in Ming-Qing Times) 明清資本主義萌芽研究論文集 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chuban she, 1981). pp. 73-74.

228 See Huo Yuxia, Huo Mianzhai ji (The Works of Huo Yuxia), juan 18. For the underdevelopment of commerce in the north, see also Yongping fuzhi (The Local History of Yongping Prefecture), juan 5, "Fengsu" 風俗 (Customs), p. 17.

229 Judging from Portuguese trade at Macao and the increase in numbers of private academies, the Lingnan regional economy, for instance, might also have experienced growth and prosperity from the onset in the sixteenth century. See Evelyn S. Rawski, "Economic and Social Foundations of Late Imperial Culture," in Popular Culture in Late Imperial China, p. 5.

230 Cf. Liu Yongcheng, "Lun Zhongguo ziben zhuyi mengya de lishi tiaojian" 中國資本主義萌芽的歷史條件 (Historical Prerequisites of Sprouts of Capitalism in China), in Ming-Qing ziben zhuyi mengya yanjiu lunwen ji, p. 3.

231 Other things such as rapid rise of textile town and a large number of workers employed in weaving and dyeing industry can also allow us to see how fast the textile industry grew. For instance, an official named Cao Shiping reported that, according to his witness, there were at
Menglong's stories, collected in his *Xingshi hengyan* (Constant Words to Awaken the World), is actually a vivid portrayal of how a weaver named Shi Fu starts from scratch and in the course of a few years grows into a rich owner of a fairly large weaving workshop.\(^{232}\) This is fiction, to be sure. But we can find a more reliable source in Zhang Han's *Songchuang mengyu* (Reminiscences Written in My Study). Zhang Han (1502-1589)\(^{233}\), a state graduate who once served as Director of the Board of Personnel (libu shangshu), describes his ancestor thus:

"My ancestor Yizhu, suffering from family's financial decline in the middle of his life, was forced to live on a wine-selling business. But he gave up that business in the last year of the Chenghua reign (1487) because of a great flood... He bought a hand loom and began to weave linen in different colors. The quality of his cloth was so good that every time he had a bolt made it was immediately sold. The profit he gained from selling a bolt was equal to one-fifth of the value of his weaving instrument. Having worked about twenty days, he saved at least several thousand weaving and dyeing workers working in the city of Suzhou. See *Shenzong shilu* (The Factual Records of Emperor Shenzong), in *Ming shilu*, juan 361. Quoted from Fu Yiling 傅衣凌, "Mingdai Jiangnan de fangzhi gongye yu zhigong baodong" 明代江南的紡織工業與織工暴動 (The Textile Industry and the Insurrection of Weavers in the Jiangnan Area), in Fu Yiling, *Ming-Qing Jiangnan shimin jingji shitan* 明清江南市民經濟試探 (Tentative Explorations of the Urban Economy in Jiangnan Area) (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chuban she, 1961), p. 78.


\(^{233}\) Zhang Han, styled Ziwen, got his jinshi degree in 1534. He first served as Prefect of Daming prefecture and later, in the early years of Wanli reign, was promoted to Director of the Board of Personnel. But soon he quit, as he could not get along well with Zhang Juzheng 張居正, the most powerful official in the cabinet. After his death, he was granted the posthumous title "Gongyi" 恭懿. For more information, see Zhang Tingyu, *Mingshi*, juan 225, "Zhang Han" (Biography of Zhang Han), pp. 5911-12.
enough money to buy another loom. Later he owned as many as twenty-more looms, but still could not meet the demand of merchants who were crowded around his workshop intending to purchase his cloth. Since then his financial situation greatly improved. My later four ancestors who inherited his business all became millionaires 萬金之富 (wanjin zhi fu).”

At the same time as this significant textile expansion, other handicraft industries such as metal smelting and casting, salt processing and porcelain manufacturing, also showed a notable development. In the same period and later, some previously underdeveloped trades and professions like sugar extraction, cotton ginning, papermaking, printing and publishing began to burgeon too. and printing and publishing were especially thriving. “When I was a youth studying for the provincial examinations there were no guidebooks whatsoever,” wrote Li Xu 李詵 (1505-1593) in his Jie’an.manbi 戒庵漫筆 (Random Jottings of Li Xu). “Now such books published by commercial publishing houses can be found everywhere.” Although government agencies for publication were still active, they could no longer be compared with commercial firms in terms of the volume of books they published. The rise of commercial publishing

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235 It refers to the Zhengde 正德 reign, 1506-1522.


237 Some commercial publishing firms were very large in scale, and the Mao Jin 毛晋 Publishing House was one of them. According to Qian Yong 錢誼 (1759-1844), the Mao Jin Publishing House consisted of a large printing workshop in which carvers worked, a building of stacks named Jigu Ge 汲古閣 and nine storage rooms mainly for keeping plates. See Qian Yong. Luyuan conghua 露園叢話 (Collected Essays of Qian Yong) (Taipei: Wenhui chuban she. 1981). juan 22. pp. 579-580. Mao Jin as the “most famous” publisher in the late Ming is described by Tsien Tsuen-hsuin in his Paper and Printing as follows: “The most famous of these men was Mao Jin (+1599-1659), of Changshu in Jiangsu, who printed more than 600 works on a variety of
business. As the Ming scholar Hu Yinglin 胡應麟 (1551-1604) observed, was fastest in three regions: Wu 吳, Yue 越, and Min 閩, and the advanced printing technique they applied included not only various movable type, but multi-colored printings as well. Nanjing, as a

subjects, especially many multi-volume works of classics, histories, literary collection, and congshu. One record shows that he used 11,846 wood blocks for the Thirteen Classics, 22, 293 blocks for the Seventeen Standard Histories, and 16,637 blocks for the collection Jingdai mishu, which consists of 140 titles. At one time, during its early stage, Mao employed some twenty cutters and printers in his workshop and accumulated as many as 100,000 blocks for printing of various works in his studio Jigu Ge, a name for both his private library and his printing shop. His work had a great impact on printing in the early Qing period. See Science and Civilization in China, vol. 5. part 1, pp. 180-181.

By “commercial publishing business,” I refer to both commercial press (shufang) and private studio (si jia). Some experts on the history of Chinese books divide the publishing houses in Ming times into three kinds: (1) government agency, (2) commercial press, and (3) private studio. See, for example, Yan Wenyu, Zhongguo shi jianshi (A Brief History of Chinese Books), pp. 177-184. I myself do not see how the commercial presses were different from private studios. Tsien Tsuen-hsuin held that private studios “were motivated by altruism toward spread of literature and did not act for profit or because of official obligation.” See Science and Civilization in China, vol. 5. part 1. p. 178. But from a variety of accounts written in Ming-Qing times, private studios were also commercially oriented rather than “altruistic.” See, for example. Xie Zhaoze 謝肇浙 (1567-1624). Wu zazu 五雜俎 (Five Miscellanies) (Beijing: zhonghua shuju, 1959). jian 13. p. 381. It is true that sometimes they paid great attention to the quality of printing, but I agree with Luo Shubao 羅叔寶 that their emphasis on printing quality grew simply out of the consideration for out-competing their rivals. See Luo Shubao, Zhongguo gudai yinshua shi 中國古代印刷史 (A History of Printing in Ancient China) (Beijing: Yinshua gongye chuban she, 1993), p. 349.

See Hu Yinglin, Shaoshi shanfang bicon 內室山房筆乘 (Notes from Shaoshi shanfang). jian 4. p. 56. And Hu also mentions the printing quantity and quality of these three places: Wu was best for quality, Min was first for quantity, and Yue was second in both. See ibid., p. 57. For a discussion of Hu Yinglin's life and work, see Laura Hua Wu, "From Xiaoshuo to Fiction: Hu Linglin's Genre Study of Xiaoshuo," in Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies, vol. 55. no. 2. 1995. pp. 342-344.

There were wood movable type, copper movable type, tin movable type, and in Dantu of Jiangsu province, even lead movable type. But despite the invention of these movable types, woodblock printing or xylography remained the dominant printing method in the Ming times. See Evelyn Rawski, “Economic and Social Foundations of Late Imperial Culture,” in Popular Culture in Late Imperial China, p. 17. For the description of the technique of xylography, see
commercial printing center well-known for its chromatography, reached its apex in Jiajing 嘉靖 and Wanli 哈歴 reigns in publishing fine editions of popular drama and fiction.  

Commercialization that reached a full-fledged stage of development was probably a most conspicuous sign of the economic changes. The agrarian idyll that "women wove, men worked outside and servants did household odd jobs" seemed to have disappeared with the Zhengde 正德 reign (1506-22) and now in its replacement was the commercial competition of a market economy. It goes without saying that the manufacture of handicrafts, on a scale much larger than before, was certainly for public consumption rather than for private use. Even agriculture, the basis of the traditional imperial order, began to enter commerce. Cash crops, such as cotton, beans, oil, sugar cane, corn, sweet potatoes, peanuts and tobacco, appeared in response to


241 For a discussion of multi-colored printing, see Liu Guojun. Zhongguo shushi jianbian (A Brief History of Chinese Books), p. 83-84. In addition to the movable types and colored printing, the Ming period saw two other advances in printing technology: the improvement of woodcut illustrations and the production of woodcut facsimiles of earlier editions. See Evelyn Rawski, "Economic and Social Foundations of Late Imperial Culture," in Popular Culture in Late Imperial China. p. 17. For details of the improvement of woodcut illustration, see Luo Shubao. Zhongguo gudai yinshua shi. pp. 349-352.

242 For detailed discussions of printing and publishing business in Nanjing in the Ming times, see Zhang Xiumin 張秀民, "Mingdai Nanjing de yinshu" 明代南京的印刷(The Printing and Publishing in Nanjing in the Ming Dynasty), in Zhang Xiumin yinshua shi lunwen ji 張秀民印刷史論文集 (Collected Essays by Zhang Xiumin on Chinese Printing History) (Beijing: Yinshua gongye chuban she, 1988), pp. 140-150; Luo Baoshu, Zhongguo gudai yinshuan shi. pp. 331-334.

243 Gu Yanwu 魏元武, Tianxia junguo libing shu 天下郡國利病書 (On the Advantages and Disadvantages of Different Areas of the Country), juan 32, p. 29.

244 Cf. Liu Yongcheng, "Lun ziben zhuyi mengya de lishi tiaojian," in Mingqing ziben zhuyi mengya yanjiu lunwen ji. p. 5.
increasing market demand. In addition, a part of the rice that was everywhere the staple was now also commercialized. Some of it was sold in local markets for cash or in markets of the Yangtze delta where the price was higher, and some of it was shipped up the Grand Canal to Beijing.

Interregional and to some extent international trade prove that the commercialization, if not new in kind, was at least new in magnitude. "People in the north who are good at cultivation but clumsy at spinning will usually ship their cotton to the south for sale, whereas people in the south superior at weaving but uninterested in cultivation will transport and sell their cloth to the north." Interregional business was certainly not confined to cotton and cloth; it also included other products. As a Ming observer put it, "The commodities manufactured in Yanzhao, Qinjin.

245 For example, the planting of tobacco in Fujian province occupied 60 or 70 percent of the total land. See Guo Qiyuan's article, in Ming jingshi wenbian 明經世文編(Collected Essays by Ming Scholars on Administration and Management), juan 36, p. 20. And in the counties like Fanyu, Yangchun and Donghuan in Guangdong province, the size of the field for growing sugar cane was almost equal to the size of the rice field. See Li Tiaoyuan 李調元 (1734-1804). Nanyue biji 南越筆記 (Notes about Southern Yue), juan 14. "Zhe" 畲 (Sugar Cane), p. 12.

246 Cf. Liu Yongcheng, "Lun ziben zhuyi mengya de lishi tiaojian," in Ming-Qing ziben zhuyi mengya vanjiu lunwen ji. p. 8. According to Liu, the development of handicraft industry and increase of urban population were the factors that brought about the commercialization of grain. For example, Fujian province, due to its planting of cash crops in most of the arable land, had to buy grain from Taiwan or other adjacent provinces, and the same was true of Zhejiang province despite its high yield field of grain.


248 See Yao Zhiyin 姚之駒 (fl. 1721), Yuan Ming shi leichao 元明世類鈔 (A Categorized Account of History of the Yuan and the Ming) (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1935), juan 24, p. 24. See also Xu Guangqi 徐光啓 (1562-1633), Nongzheng quanshu 農政全書 (Complete Treatise on Agriculture) (Shanghai: Guji chuban she, 1979), juan 35, vol. 2. p. 969: "Cotton was shipped to and sold in the south, while cloth was shipped to and sold in the north."
Qiliang, Jianghuai (i.e., in the north) are day and night carried to and sold in the south, and meanwhile merchandise produced in Manhai, Minguang, Yuzhang, Nanchu, Ouyue and Xin'an (i.e.. in the south) are day and night carried to and sold in the north.\textsuperscript{249} The mercantile exchange was so broad that one could even find a variety of fish in the food stores in Beijing that in the previous times had had no fish markets at all, and the prices were even lower than in the south.\textsuperscript{250} It is true, of course, that specialization in production made interregional trade necessary and indispensable. Some sources indicate, for instance, that Songjiang 松江 was specialized in cotton spinning and weaving, Wuhu 蘇湖 in dyeing and starching, and Jiaxing 嘉興 in raising silkworms and making silk fabrics. These areas had to get from others what they lacked and supplied, at the same time, what others needed. But we obviously cannot imagine that without the operation of marketing network and distribution system, such regional specializations would have been possible. To a large extent, therefore, the specialization in production relied on rather than merely facilitated trade.

\textsuperscript{249} See Li Ding 李定, \textit{Li Changqing ji 李長慶集} (The Works of Li Ding), \textit{juan} 19. Li Ding's observation was confirmed by his contemporary Song Yingxing 宋應星 (fl. 1615-1644). In his preface to \textit{Tiancong kaiwu 天工開物} (The Exploration of the Works of Nature), Song wrote: "In a most prosperous age under the reign of our majesty, in which I was luckily born, carts and carriages from the southern Yunnan [province] travel as far as to Liaoyang 遼陽 (i.e., Jilin province), and merchants from the border of Guangdong [province] walk on streets in the north of Hebei [province]." \textit{Hejian fuzhi 河間府誌} (The Local History of Hejian Prefecture), published in the Jiajing reign (1522-1567), provides us with a more concrete example: "The merchants in Hejian who sell silk, rice, salt, iron and timber are usually from other parts of the country. The sellers of silk come from Nanjing, Suzhou and Linqing, the sellers of rice from Weihui and Cizhou, the sellers of iron (most of them sell farm tools which they carry on their own carts) from Linqing and Potou, the sellers of salt from Cangzhou and Tianjin, and the sellers of timber from Zhending." See \textit{Hejian fuzhi, juan} 7, "Fengtu zhi" 風土誌 (The Records of Customs), pp. 3-4.

As more and more people engaged in commercial activities and left their land unattended,\(^ {251}\) trade was not only carried on in "three macroregional cores"\(^ {252}\) but was also expanded overseas. If what Owen Lattimore wrote is an exaggeration,\(^ {253}\) one of the stories by Ling Mengchu, often cited as a description of maritime business adventures, can at least verify that private junks did go as far as to Southeast Asia for trading during the middle and late Ming.\(^ {254}\) The wide use of silver bullion\(^ {255}\) and the adoption of single-whip method of taxation

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\(^ {251}\) See Gu Yanwu, *Tianxia junguo libing shu, juan* 32, p. 29.


\(^ {253}\) "Even a small sailing ship could in one voyage carry from Canton to London more cargo, in a shorter time and at higher profit, than could be moved by a succession of caravans plodding from ancient or medieval China to the markets of the Mediterranean." Owen Lattimore, quoted in Evelyn S. Rawski, "Economic and Social Foundations of Late Imperial Culture," *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China*, p. 4.

\(^ {254}\) In the first story in *P'ai'an jingqi*, the protagonist Wen Ruoxu 文若虛 and his friends take a business trip by boat to a country called "Jiling guo" 吉零國 for the trading of their goods: "They sailed before the wind for several days — how far exactly they could not tell. Then they sighted land and saw from the junk a populous city with towering walls, which they knew must be the capital of some country. Having moored in a harbor where they would be safe from storms, the seamen pegged down the mooring rope, cast anchor and made everything fast. Then most of the crew and passengers went ashore, and discovered that this was the land of Killah, where some of them had been before." See Yang Hsien-yi and Gladys Yang, trans., "Mandarin and Tortoise," in *Courtesan's Jewel Box* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1981), p. 410. According to the Yangs, "Jiling guo," or "the land of Killah" in their translation, "was an important trading post in the Middle Ages; but whether it lay in southern India or the Malay Archipelago we do not know." See the Yangs, ibid., note 1, p. 410. The maritime trade was also recorded in other sources. Zhang Xie 張懋 (1574-1640) mentions that in Fujian rich families sometimes took a huge junk and went abroad for trading. See Zhang Xie, *Dongxi yang kao* 東西洋考 (Records of East and
by the end of the sixteenth century, which simply commuted levies to money payments,256 were actually a reflection of demand resulting from the large-scale interregional and international commerce.

Also worth noticing is urbanization, a prominent phenomenon that was concomitant with the flowering of industry and commerce. Urbanization appeared at the inception to be related with the migration of peasants from countryside to city, a migration that in fact began as early as in the fifteenth century, apparently the result of malpractice on the part of imperial families and

256 For example, the Ming founder had continued the Yuan practice of registering certain households for special service as salt producers, soldiers, or artisans, but this system was replaced in the late sixteenth century by the single-whip tax collection. Goods obtained for Imperial Household use with corvée labor in early Ming were now acquired through subcontracts to private firms using wage labor. See Zhang Tingyu, Mingshi, "Shihuo zhi," juan 81. For a fuller account, see Fu Yiling, "Cong yipian shiliào kan shiqi shiji Zhongguo haishang maoyi xingzhi" (The Nature of the Maritime Business in the Seventeenth Century China: A Discussion of a Historical Document), in Ming-Qing shehui jingji shi lunwenji (Collected Essays on Social and Economic History of the Ming and the Qing) (Beijing: Renmin chuban she, 1982), pp. 216-254.

255 In the early Ming two kinds of money were used: one was copper coin and the other was paper money. The use of gold and silver as currency was strictly prohibited. But since the mid-Ming, silver had become the main currency. Paper money was no longer used, and copper coin was supplementary in actual circulation. For a detailed discussion, see Zhang Tingyu, Mingshi, juan 81, "Shihuo zhi," pp. 1961-1969. According to Tang Gang and Nan Bingwen, the use of silver as the main currency in the middle and late Ming resulted mainly from the unprecedented development of commerce. See Zhang and Nan, Mingshi, p. 528.

West Oceans) (Shanghai: commercial Press, 1936), juan 7, p. 89. In Ming jingshi wenbian 明經世文編 (Collected Essays Written by Ming Authors on Administration and Management), it is recorded that during the Jiajing reign people in Fujian province frequently sailed out and traded with foreign merchants on the sea. See Tang Gang & Nan Bingwen, Mingshi (History of the Ming), p. 524. For a fuller account, see Fu Yiling, "Cong yipian shiliào kan shiqi shiji Zhongguo haishang maoyi xingzhi" (The Nature of the Maritime Business in the Seventeenth Century China: A Discussion of a Historical Document) in Fu Yiling, Ming-Qing shehui jingji shi lunwenji (Collected Essays on Social and Economic History of the Ming and the Qing) (Beijing: Renmin chuban she, 1982), pp. 216-254.
rich and powerful landlords in abusing land policies. 257 It was not until the sixteenth century when commercial economy was flourishing that the forced immigration gradually turned into conscious settlement. A large number of landless farmers as well as farmers with small landholdings, now having seen the alluring prospect of making money in industrial and commercial sectors 258 were willing to move out of the countryside to pursue a better life. The increase of population in cities thus brought about urban expansion, and consequently their economic growth, which, though comparable neither in scale nor in speed with the development taking place after the establishment of treaty ports system in the mid-nineteenth century, was by no means insignificant. The two metropolises Beijing and Nanjing were no longer political and cultural centers only; they also became the biggest commercial distributing cities, functioning as national economic hubs respectively in the north and south. Regional cities also underwent a similar evolution. Suzhou, for instance, had always been the administrative capital of the prefecture. Since the Hongzhi 弘治 reign (1488-1506) there had appeared an army of laborers.

257 See Zhang Tingyu, Mingshi, juan 208. "Zheng Zibi zhuan" 鄭自璧傳 (Biography of Zheng Zibi). p. 5504: "During the Zhengde reign (1506-1521), it often happened that eunuchs illegally took land from its owner and made it part of the manors of imperial families." This kind of malpractice became even worse during and after the Jiajing reign (1522-1566), especially in Henan province where a number of princes were enfeoffed. See Wang Jieren 汪介仁, Zhongzhou zazu 中州雜俎 (Miscellanies of Zhongzhou), juan 1. And according to Zhao Yi 趙翼 (1727-1814), some palace officials 錦衣衛百戶 (jinyiwei baihu) even seized land from people in the Lower Yangtze Delta. See Zhao Yi, Nian'er shi zhaji 廿二史札記 (Notes Taken for the Twenty Two Histories) (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1962), juan 34. "Ming Xinghuan nuemin zhi hai" 明宣宗虐民之害 (The Maltreatment of the Populace by Ming Officials). p. 495.

258 In the late sixteenth century the farm hands received only six cash a day, while urban employees were paid from thirty to fifty cash a day. See Chun-shu Chang and Shelley Hsueh-lun Chang, Crisis and Transformation in Seventeenth-Century China, p. 149.
Only the workers employed for weaving and dyeing alone reached into nearly ten thousands.\textsuperscript{259} Another city Linqing, located along the Grand Canal, was so economically developed that by the end of the sixteenth century shops and stores spread all over the city. Among them there were seventy-three drapers, thirty-two satin stores and sixty-five grocers.\textsuperscript{260}

While large and medium-sized cities were undergoing a marked development, the rising prosperity of market towns was even more conspicuous.\textsuperscript{261} Market towns 市镇 (shizhen) were usually smaller than cities in population, although exact numbers are not readily available. Some small towns might have had only a few hundred households, whereas large ones had more than ten thousand.\textsuperscript{262} It is true that a quite a few towns had previously been the seats of district yamen

\textsuperscript{259} See Fu Yiling, “Mingdai Jiangnan de gangzhi gongye yu zhigong baodong,” in Mingdai Jiangnan shimin jingji shitan, p. 87. The commercial prosperity of Suzhou is described in story 26 of Jingshi tongyuan 警世通言 (Popular Words to Warn the World) as follows: “The streets around Cangmen (in Suzhou) were where people gathered. Truly:

Three thousand courtesans served inside houses, upstairs and downstairs.

Millions of taels of silver came by boat from east and west.

Early in the morning merchants began to sell their goods.

And coming from all over the country, they spoke different dialects.”


\textsuperscript{260} Zhao Shiqing, Guanshui quijian shu, in Ming jingshi wenbian, juan 441.

\textsuperscript{261} For a detailed discussion, see Fan Shuzhi 樊樹志, Ming-Qing jiangnan shizhen tanwei 明清江南市鎮探微 (A Detailed Exploration of Markets Towns in the Ming and the Qing) (Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 1994), chapter 1, pp. 17-57.

\textsuperscript{262} See Liu Shih-chi 劉石吉, “Some Reflections on Urbanization and the Historical Development of Market Towns in the Lower Yangtze Region, ca 1500-1900,” The American Asian Review, Spring, 1984, p. 18. According to Fu Yiling, there were quite a few market towns that had more than a thousand households, such as Zhitang Shi, Fushan Zhen, Shatou Shi, and Meili Zhen in Changshu county, Pingwang Zhen, Tongli Zhen, Jiangnan Shi, Xinhang Shi and Shenze Zhen in Wujian county, Xincheng zhen, Wangjiangjin Zhen in Jiaxing prefecture, and Wu Zhen, Linghu and Shuanglin in Huzhou prefecture. See Fu Yiling, “Ming-Qing shidai Jiangnan shizhen jingji de fenxi” 明清時代江南市鎮經濟的分析 (An Analysis of the Economy
or garrison posts, but the majority of them developed from former villages, desolate fishing ports or settlements dependent on rural periodic markets. One good example is Shenze Zhen.

It was, at the beginning of the Ming, a village where there were only fifty to sixty households. During the Jiajing reign (1522-1567), its population doubled and people began to live on the manufacturing of damask silk. Then it was named "town."

Newly developed market towns like Shenze Zhen, which were mostly concentrated in the regions of the Lower Yangtze Delta where the commercialization of agriculture was more popular and the cotton textile industry was more advanced than in other parts of the country, are too numerous to be listed. Some of the towns grew so big and prosperous that it was hard to tell them from cities. In a typical large town, weaving workshops, dye-houses, restaurants, teahouses, broker houses, pawnshops, grain stores, herbal medicine stores, groceries, vegetable markets and hotels lined up streets, and "buyers and sellers from all over the country were crowded together on roads like bees and ants, leaving virtually no room for one more person to

_of Market Towns in the Areas South of the Yangtse in the Ming-Qing Times), in Ming-Qing ziben zhuwei mengya yanjiu lunwen ji, pp. 297-298.


Wujian xianzhi 吳江縣誌 (The Local History of Wujian County), juan 4, p. 123.

For example, according to the statistics of the local histories, there were as many as more than twenty market towns in Huzhou prefecture and more than seventy in Suzhou prefecture. See respectively Gusu zhi 姑蘇誌 (The Local History of Suzhou) and Huzhou fuzhi (The Local History of Huzhou Prefecture).
Like in big cities, therefore, people living in market towns where economy was booming included not merely coolies, shop assistants, handicrafts workers, merchants and entrepreneurs; there were also a variety of other kinds of dwellers, such as peddlers, boatmen, prostitutes, entertainers, travelers, literati of lower status and retired officials.

Whether or not one agrees that the late Ming economic changes were "sprouts of capitalism," it is undeniable that there was at the time a convergence of industrialization.

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267 For a fuller discussion of different social classes in the late Ming, see Tang Gang and Nan Bingwen, Mingshi, vol. 1, pp. 615-646.

268 Opinions vary regarding the sprouts of Capitalism. Some scholars maintain that the sprouts of capitalism appeared in the late Ming, whereas others argue that evidence of the development of commercial capitalism can be found even in the Tang and Song periods (but Tu Wei-ming points out that commercial capitalism was not same as industrial capitalism, i.e., the bourgeois capitalism which appeared in the late Ming; see Tu Wei-ming, Xiandai jingshen yu rujia chuantong 現代精神與儒家傳統, Modern Spirit and Confucianist Tradition, p. 69), and there are also another group of scholars who simply deny the sprouts of capitalism in the Ming-Qing times. For detailed discussions of this issue, see Zhongguo ziben zhuyi mengya wenti taolun ji (The Collection of Essays on the Sprouts of Capitalism in China), ed. the Dept. of History of People's University; Zhongguo ziben zhuyi mengya wenti taolun ji xubian (The Second Collection of Essays on the Sprouts of Capitalism in China), ed. the Dept. of History of Nanjing University; Ming-Qing zibenzhuyi mengya yanjiu lunwen ji, ed. the Dept. of History of Nanjing University; Xu Dixin 許淙新, et al., Zhongguo ziben zhuyi de mengya 中國資本主義的萌芽 (The Sprouts of Capitalism in China) (Beijing: Renmin chuban she, 1985); Tang gang and Nan Bingwen, Mingshi, chapter 12, "Zibenzhuyi mengya de chansheng" 資本主義萌芽的產生 (The Glowing of the Sprouts of Capitalism), pp. 533-550; Hou Wailu, Zhongguo shiqi shiji sixiang shi 中國十七世紀思想史 (History of Chinese Thought in the Seventeenth Century). pp. 3-22; Ray Huang. "Wo dui 'ziben zhuyi' de reshi" 我對資本主義的認識 (My Understanding of Capitalism), in Fangkuan lishi de shijie, p. 93-139; Shang Yue 尚銘, "Zhongguo ziben zhuyi shengchan yinsu de mengya jiqi zengzhang 中國資本主義生產的萌芽及其增長 (The Sprouts of Capitalist Production and their Growth in China), in Lishi yanjiu 歷史研究 (Studies of Chinese History), no. 4. 1955; Fu Yiling, "Guanyu ziben zhuyi mengya de jige wenti (Some Issues Concerning the Sprouts of Capitalism), in Jianghai xuekan 江海學刊 (Journal of Jianghai), no. 1. 1961; Wu Han, "Guanyu Zhongguo ziben zhuyi mengya de yixie wenti 開關中國資本主義萌芽的一些問題 (Some Issues Concerning the Sprouts of Capitalism in China), in Wu Han wenji, pp. 473-482.
commercialization and urbanization. This trend toward the dominance of the market economy brought about a generalized materialism in society.

What I call materialism mainly refers to pursuit of luxury, love of pleasure, and striving for money and profit. As the traditional emphasis on spiritual life was gradually disintegrating with material abundance, people were more and more fond of extravagance. It touched almost every household. Lavish dining was, of course, one of the telling marks of this luxurious custom. Rich houses, no longer considering thrift as a virtue, would treat their guests with exotic dainties from land and sea. Following in the wake of them, lower-middle class households would also give expensive dinner parties in order to flaunt their wealth. He Liangjun 何良俊 (1506-73)

269 Ellen Widmer held a similar point of view. She pointed out that around 1550 "a combination of economic stimuli prompted an expansion of commerce and an increase in urbanization, publishing, courtesan culture, and other luxury trades". See Writing Women in Late Imperial China, eds. Ellen Widmer and Kang-i Sun Chang (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), p. 1.

270 According to Shen Chaoyang 沈朝陽 (fl. 1599), social customs before the Zhengde reign (1506-1521) were simple and plain; but since the Jiajing reign (1522-1567) it tended toward luxury, and people liked to show off and regarded frugality as despicable. See Shen Chaoyang. Huang Ming Jia Long liangchao wenjian ji 皇明嘉隆兩朝開見記 (A Factual Account of the Jiajing and Longqing Reigns) (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1969), juan 6. Suzhou, as Gong Wei 賴煥 (1704-1766) claimed, was the leading area in extravagance in the whole country. See Gong Hui. Chaolin bitan 巢林筆談 (Written Talk of Gong Wei) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), juan 5. p. 113. For the account of the extravagant social custom in different regions, see Zhang Han, Songchuang mengyu, juan 7. "Fengsu ji"風俗記 p. 139; Fan Lian 范濂, Yunjian jumu chao 雲間撿目鈔 (An Account of Shanghai Based on My Eyewitness), juan 2. in Biji xiaoshuo daguan 筆記小說大觀 (The Great Collection of Biji Literature) (Yangzhou: Jiangsu guji chuban she, 1984), vol. 2. pp. 1269-1273; Zhenze xianzhi 震澤縣誌 (The Local History of Zhenze County), juan 25. pp. 917-919; Chongzhen Songjiang fu zhi 崇禎松江府誌 (The Local History of Songjiang Prefecture Compiled in the Chongzhen Reign), juan 7. p. 1772; Zhaocheng zhi 章城誌 (The Local History of Zhaocheng), "Shanxi sheng" (Shanxi Province), part 2: Boping xianzhi 博平縣誌 (The Local History of Boping), juan 5. pp. 4-5

271 See Jiading xianzhi 嘉定縣誌, juan 2. p. 150. Tao Shiling 陶爽齡 offers a similar account: "In recent years, banquets have become so lavish as to require several days of preparation, and it
accurately observed that in his younger days the banquets for four to six people in Songjiang
松江 area usually had only five main dishes and five side dishes, and sumptuous repasts were
held once or twice a year in gentry household. In the last years of the Jiajing reign (1560s),
however, even ordinary people would host a small festive board, capable of serving ten or more
main dishes. While wealthy and gentry families would offer for a distinguished visitor such a
grandiose feast that could have as many as a hundred dishes with all kinds of delicacies.272

The new impulse in luxury was also manifested in the fashion of clothing. In the early
and middle Ming, women were used to wearing dresses in traditionally accepted drab colors of
black and gray, but now they favored elegant attire with lighter shades and shorter sleeves. Their
shoes became more elaborate with high heels and their hairdos and jewelry were constantly
changed. A similar phenomenon occurred to men’s clothing too. The corrugated bristle hat, it was
officially stipulated in Taizu shilu 太祖實錄 (The Factual Records of Emperor Taizu), was
designed for those who were above the status of licentiate. Yet gradually men of wealth began to
wear it as an emblem of nobility, and later its use extended to all classes of people.273 Silk

is considered impolite to invite guests to dinner unless the menu is extensive and includes the
produce of land and sea. Soups and dishes are served one after another, too much to eat and even
too many to count. A banquet as such usually costs at least several taels of silver.” Quoted from
Wu Han. “Wan Ming Shihuan jieji de shenghuo” 晚明仕宦階級的生活 (The Life of Official and
Gentry Classes in the Late Ming), in Wu Han wenji, p. 186.

272 He Liangjun. Siyou zhai congshuo 四友齋叢說 (Miscellanies of Four Friends Studio)

273 See Fan Lian. Yunjian jumu chao, juan 2. in Biji xiaoshuo daguan (The Great Collection of
Biji Literature), p. 1269. At the beginning of the Ming, people who violated the stipulations on
costume were to be severely punished. See Da Ming lu, the article on violation of wearing
costumes, p. 486; Shen Defu 沈德符 (1575-1642), Wanli yehuo bian 萬歷野話編 (Wanli
Miscellanies), juan 1, pp. 29-30. But the prohibitory regulations had no longer been observed
since the Jiajing reign. Even lower-ranking officials wore golden bands and a garment with a
clothing, a previously frivolous luxury, became prevalent even among servants and workers, and the fine, glossed and silk-lined garments for lower commoners like government runners were now disdained by them and were therefore changed over to Yang-ming dress, the Eight Scholars' dress and the Twenty-four Seasons dress. Even scholars would find cotton gowns, their standard dress, too cheap to put on. The "extremely poor" literatus like Fan Lian 范濬 (1540-?), who had the highest regard for economy and simplicity, finally had to force himself to wear "decorated" outfits.275

Certainly, material enjoyment in the late Ming was not confined to lavish eating and expensive clothing. It was also quite usual to see people live in magnificent mansions.276 use


275 See Fan Lian. Yunjian jumu chao, p. 1269.

276 It seems that the building of magnificent mansions did not become popular until the Jiajing reign (1522-1566). In the early Ming, according to Zhenze xianzhi 震澤縣誌 (The Local History of Zhenze County), ordinary people usually lived in thatched cottages, and even well-to-do families would hide their brick houses by building a thatched structure in front of it, lest officials think they were rich. No one but extremely wealthy people built storeyed houses. Tao Shiling, a scholar who was born around the mid-16th century, also said that when he was young, he did not
silver dining sets and furnish their rooms with elegant furniture. Even sex had now become an indispensable part of this material world. No longer only a procreative component in marriage, it now began to be enjoyed for the sake of pleasure. The open attitude of women toward sex, rather than that of men who in the traditional patriarchal society had always been endowed with the privilege of sexual licence, can serve as a signpost of this new development. One of the glaring examples was the Wife of Wang Ke 汪家婦 278 mentioned by an orthodox Confucian scholar Gui Youguang 归有光 (1507-1571) in his Gui Zhencuan wenji 归震川文集 (Works of Gui

see any mansions in Zhejiang province. See Wu Han, "Wan Ming shihuan jiejì de shenghuo," in Wu Han wenji, p. 186. But in the late sixteenth century, even a yamen runner could afford to live in a house with "a scenery garden." See Fan Lian, Yunjian jumu chao, juan 2, p. 1270. The magnificent mansions, be they grandiose palaces or garden houses, generally ranged in sizes from a few mu to over sixty mu (about nine acres) and largest reached several hundred mu 禹. Size aside, they were great architectural wonders. From the building materials to the minute details, every piece of the structure required the working of the finest architectural mind and artistic skills. As Fan Lian indicated, the costs of building such houses were huge. The labor alone cost more than 10,000 cash a day. An average garden house cost from 2,000,000 to 2,500,000 cash. With officials and merchants competing to build or rebuild such magnificent mansions despite their great expense, the garden houses alone, scattered in major economic and political centers, especially in Suzhou, Yangzhou 扬州, Nanjing, Beijing, numbered more than 2,000 by the mid-seventeenth century. See Chun-shu Chang and Shelley Hsueh-lun Chang, Crisis and Transformation in Seventeenth-Century China, pp. 155-6.

277 Fan Lian, for example, said that when he was young he never saw fine wood furniture such as desks and meditation armchairs. But since Longqing 隆慶 and Wanli reigns, even ordinary houses like those of government runners were filled with fine wood furniture. See Fan Lian, Yunjian jumu chao, juan 2, p. 1270. According to van Gulik, fine wood furniture with which magnificent palace, mansions and villas were furnished, were solid and its design was faultless — in the style of simple grandeur that was never equaled. See Sexual Life in Ancient China, p. 264.

278 Another similar example was the Wife of Li, mentioned by Shen Chaoyang in his Huang Ming Jia Long liangchao wenjian ji, juan 4, p. 539. The Wife of Li was also a licentious woman. She had liaisons with her neighbor, and forced her daughter-in-law to get involved in their illicit sex.
As a promiscuous woman, the Wife of Wang Ke was fond of having liaisons with young men. She often invited her paramours to come over to her house to drink and sleep with her when her husband, an elderly drunkard who hardly paid attention to what she did, was away from home. Once she took a bath with a young ruffian and asked her daughter-in-law to bring water to them. The young ruffian, upon seeing her daughter-in-law, began to be interested in her despite her non-cooperative attitude. He intended to involve her in their sexual games. In order to satisfy him, the Wife of Wang Ke went so far as to entice her daughter-in-law to drink with him and another four men and force her to have sex with them.280

Not only did woman of wealthy families like to spend more time and energy purchasing

279 Gui Youguang, whose courtesy name was Xifu, was a native of Kunshan 昆山 county. He passed the provincial examination in 1541, but later failed eight times in the State Examination. He then moved his home to Jiading 嘉定 county, where he made his living on teaching and writing. His students were often numbered a few hundreds, and he was respectfully called "Mr. Zhenchuan." It was not until 1566 that he finally got his jinshi degree, and thereafter he served for a brief period as Magistrate of Changxing 長興 county. See Zhang Tingyu. Mingshi, juan 287, pp. 7382-7387. Gui Youguang was an excellent essayist. He was praised by his contemporaries as a "present-day Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修." His rival Wang Shizhen 王士貞 (1526-1590) admitted in his later years that Gui's prose "is plain and unaffected and has its own flavor." See You Guo'en. Zhongguo wenxue shi, vol. 4, p. 140.

280 See Gui Youguang, "Shu Zhang zhennu sishi" 書張貞女死事 (A Report of the Death of the Chaste Woman Zhang) and "Zhang zhennu yushi" 張貞女獄事 (The Case of the Chaste Woman Zhang), in Gui Zhenchuan wenji, juan 4, pp. 48-50. Although Gui's report was based on the fact, which allows us to see what late Ming literature of erotica describes was basically a reflection of the reality rather than its authors' erotic fantasy, his purpose was not to arouse his readers' sexual desire. His mention of the licentious woman, the Wife of Wang Ke, was simply to set off the chastity and courage of her daughter-in-law who finally died a tragic death because of her refusal to be raped. This example brings our attention to the conflicting phenomenon in the late Ming: on the one hand, there was a general disintegration of traditional moral fibre on the part of women, but on the other hand, some women still could go so far as to sacrifice their lives in order to keep their chastity and moral integrity. Although the late Ming was morally loose period, it was also a period in which female chastity began to be unusually emphasized. For the discussion of female chastity and its detailed statistics collected from local gazetteers and other historical materials, see T'ien Ju-k'ang. Male Anxiety and Female Chastity, pp. 39-69.
fashionable dresses and seeking intimate male company, "girls in the fields and crones in the
brush." to use Fan Lian's words, also "craved to be seductresses." The strangest phenomenon,
according to this critical observer, was that there even appeared "woman knights-errant" who
were willing to help men in sexual matters:

Although Songjiang [prefecture] has been called licentious and extravagant, we never
before had the term "woman hanger-on." From the time that Saleswoman Wu came on the
scene and saw that the physician Gao Heqin had no offspring and rented herself out to
beget a child with him, she became famous as a woman knight-errant. Families of wealth and
official connections competed to invite her in. Wherever she went, households treated her as
especially valuable.

On the pretext of being a business woman, Wu made her daily living as a hanger-on in
rich houses. She was skilled in making sexual devices and aphrodisiacs and leading people to
indulge themselves in wine and wallow in pleasures. From this she accumulated an estate of
several thousand taels. She came and went in sedan and was called "Triple Wife." 282

This liability to sexual openness is usually ascribed to the "lecherous" lifestyle of
emperors and their advocacy of the art of bedchamber. 283 "During the Chenghua reign (1465-

281 Fan Lian, Yun jian jumu chao, juan 2, p. 1269. The translation is John Meskill's. See his
Gentlemenly Interests, p. 142.

282 Quoted from John Meskill, Gentlemanly Interests, p. 149. "Triple wife," footnoted by the
translator, refers to the wife of the Mongol leader Altan Khan. After he died she became the wife
of his son and later of his grandson. See note 11.

283 Lu Xun's opinion has been most influential. Other scholars such as Hu Shiyin, Ren Jiyu,
and Vivien Ng also held that Emperors Wuzhong 和宗, Shizhong and Shenzhong were
responsible for the "social anomy" in the late Ming times. "The life of the Ming emperors had
been extremely lecherous since the Zhengde reign (1506-1522). Wuzong (r. 1506-1522) was a
typical licentious emperor, openly involved in wanton practice... Owing to his influence, people
became more and more interested in talking about the art of the bedroom without feeling
88)." Lu Xun argues, "the alchemist Li Zi 李孜 and Monk Jixiao 織曉 meteorically rose to eminence by teaching the art of bedchamber, and down to the Jiajing reign (1522-67) Tao Zhongwen 陶仲文, owing to his compounding of the 'Red-lead' pill 紅鉛丸 (hongqian wan),\(^{284}\) won such favor from Emperor Shizhong that he was promoted to the rank of the highest officials and ennobled.\(^{285}\) Thus the decadent trend gradually spread to scholars too. Although Chief Censor Shen Duanming 沈端明 and High Commissioner Gu Kexue 顧可笑 became officials via the state examination, they nevertheless achieved high rank by virtue of presenting the 'Autumn

shameful any more." See Hu Shiying, Huaben xiaoshuo gailun, vol. 2, pp. 463-4. "When emperors worshiped Buddha and Laozi 老子, believed in ghosts and gods, and spent extravagantly on building temples and setting up altars, ordinary people also followed their examples. When emperors and officials were fond of aphrodisiacs and the art of the bedroom and indulged themselves in sexual pleasure, ordinary people also engaged in the same practice. This is the reason why erotic novels like The Golden Lotus and Carnal Prayer Mat were produced only in the Ming." See Ren Jiyu 任繼愈, ed., Zhongguo daojiao shi 中國道教史 (A History of Chinese Daoism), p. 623. "The sumptuous lifestyle of the Wanli emperor set the tone for the rich and powerful in the late Ming society." See Vivien Ng, "Homosexuality and the State in Late Imperial China," in Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past, ed. Martin Duberman (New York: Meridian, 1990), p. 78. For a fuller account of the dissipation of Emperor Wuzhong and the indulgence of Emperor Shizhong in aphrodisiacs, see respectively Mao Qiling 毛奇齡 (1623-1716), Ming Wuzhong waiji 明武宗外紀 (External Account of Emperor Wuzong of the Ming), in Ming Wuzhong waiji (Taipei: guangwen shuju, 1964), pp. 11-29; Shen Defu, Wanli yehuo bian, juan 21, pp. 546-47.

\(^{284}\) "Red-lead" pill was an aphrodisiac made of hymen vaginal blood of young girls. The prescription, manufacturing, and effect of this drug can be found in the medical treatise Sheshen zhong miaofang 攝身原妙方 (A Collection of Marvelous Prescriptions for Health) by Zhang Shiche 張時徹. But according to Bencao gangmu 本草綱目 (The Great Pharmacopoeia) by Li Shizhen 李時珍 (1518-1593), "Red-lead" pill was a fake drug. See Liu Dalin, Zhongguo gudai xing wenhua (The Sexual Culture in Ancient China), pp. 704-5. See also Xie Zhaozhe, Wu zazu, p. 330.

\(^{285}\) For a fuller account of Daoist adepts and court politics in the Jiajing reign, see The Cambridge History of China, vol. 7, pp. 479-82.
Stone' recipes 秋石方 (qiushi fang). Since such sudden prosperity and fame gave rise to envy, opportunists tried by every possible way to obtain unusual prescriptions. As a result, people no longer considered it as indecent to talk about sex and aphrodisiacs. Nevertheless, I must reiterate that despite the influence of the emperors and their high-ranking officials on the general sexual practice, the change of morality toward sex could not have been so drastic and so widely accepted without the trend of materialism generated by economic development.

The materialism was almost ubiquitous: an important change could also be felt in the literary spheres. Writing, especially fiction writing, was now not merely a creative activity; it was also a production aimed at making money. It is true that, unlike poetry, vernacular fiction

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286 The "Autumn Stone" recipe was also an aphrodisiac, which was made of the substance extracted from children's urine. The Tang poet Bai Juyi 白居易 was perhaps the first one to mention this drug. Its recipes were kept in Shen Su liangfang 沈蘇良方 (Good Recipes of Shen and Su), a medical book written by an anonymous Song scholar. It was Shen Duanming and Gu Kexue who presented the recipes to Emperor Shizhong 世宗. See Liu Dalin. Zhongguo gudai xing wenhua, pp. 705-7. Li Shizhen in his Bencao gangmu 本草綱目 has a positive evaluation on its curative effect for sexual overindulgence, seminal emission and the like. See Bencao gangmu, vol. 2, pp. 1606-1608. See also Xie Zhaozhe. Wu zazu, p. 331. Joseph Needham believes that the "Autumn Stone" recipe is a sex hormone. See Ziran kexue shi yanjiu 自然科學史研究 (Studies of the History of Natural Sciences), no. 2, 1988.


288 Cf. the Marxist expositions on literature as production. Although this simple fact is obvious to everyone, and not just to a Marxist, it is Marx and Engels and Marxist critics who have paid a particular attention to it. In his Theories of Surplus Value Marx comments: "A writer is a worker not in so far as he produces ideas, but in so far as he enriches the publisher, in so far as he is working for a wage." Engels also had similar remarks: Art may be the most highly mediated of social products in its relation to the economic base, but in another sense it is also part of that economic base — one kind of economic practice, one type of commodity production, among many. See Terry Eagleton, Marxism and Literary Criticism (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), pp. 59-60. Marxist critics, from the pioneer Walter Benjamin, down to Pierre Macherey to Terry Eagleton, all contributed, to different degrees, to the discussion of this issue. See Walter Benjamin. "The Author as Producer" (1934), "The Work of Art in the Age of
was invested from the very beginning with an entertaining mission. Literary historians, by quoting scholars like Duan Chengshi 段成式 (fl. 843-863), Meng Yuanlao 孟元老 (fl. 1126-1147), Wu Zimu 吳自牧 (fl. 1270) and Guanyuan Naideweng 極園耐得翁 (fl. 1235), have already indicated its origin, i.e., the commercial story-telling carried on at market places in the

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Mechanical Reproduction” (1936); Pierre Macherey, A Theory of Literary Production (1966); Terry Eagleton. Marxism and Literary Criticism (1976). What Eagleton said can perhaps be regarded as a good representative summary of Marxist view of literature as a product: “Literature may be an artefact, a product of social consciousness, a world vision; but it is also an industry. Books are not just structures of meaning, they are also commodities produced by publishers and sold on the market at a profit. Drama is not just a collection of literary texts; it is a capitalist business which employs certain men (authors, directors, actors, stagehands) to produce a commodity to be consumed by an audience at a profit. Critics are not just analysts of texts: they are also (usually) academics hired by the state to prepare students ideologically for their functions within capitalist society. Writers are not just transposers of trans-individual mental structures, they are also workers hired by publishing houses to produce commodities which will sell.” See Eagleton, ibid., p. 59.

289 The history of Chinese literature shows that the major function of poetry was different from that of fiction. It was for self-expression rather than for entertainment. Mao Heng 毛亨 was perhaps the first literary critic who stressed the expressive function of poetry. His famous dictum that “poetry expresses the self’s intent 詩言志 (shi yan zhi)” has been endlessly repeated by poets and critics and has had a very strong influence on the development of Chinese poetry. For this dictum, see Mao Heng, preface to Shijing 詩經 (The Book of Poetry), in Maoshi zhengyi 毛詩正義 (Mao's Version of The Book of Poetry with Annotation) (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju, 1964), p. 9.

290 To be more exact, commercial story-telling was carried on in wasi and goulan 勾欄. The wasi 瓦肆 (or wasi 瓦字, washi 瓦市, washe 瓦舍) was a colloquial expression used by urban residents in the Song. See Hu Shiyi, Huaben xiaoshuo gailun, vol. 1, p. 45. According to Ducheng jisheng 都城紀勝 (Records of Interesting Places in the Capital), pp. 8-9 and Mengliang lu 夢粱錄 (Reminiscences of the Former Capital) (Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chuban she, 1980), juan, 19, p. 179, the wasi was place where people gathered. That is why Sun Kaidi simply called the wasi “market place.” See Sun Kaidi, “Zhongguo duanpian baihua xiaoshuo de fazhan” 中國短篇白話小說的發展 (The Development of Chinese Vernacular Fiction), in Cangzhou ji, p. 75. Prusek explained that wasi was an entertainment park with narrow streets on its sides bordered by a row of little shops reminiscent of bazaars in pre-revolutionary Chinese town, and the goulan was a permanent booth in which the storytellers practiced their art. See Jaroslav Prusek. Chinese History and Literature, p. 402. For a more reliable description, see Wu Zimu, Meng Lianglu. pp. 179-180.
But never before had the fiction writing been so consciously subjected by the literary middlemen — the publishers — to the control of economic laws as it was in the late Ming when printing and publishing industry was undergoing an unprecedented prosperity. As literati, especially hacks, were writing for profit in a slipshod way at the urging of their publishers, they, together with their “Master Manufacturers,” gradually turned fiction into a market commodity. “Writing,” Daniel Defoe writes in 1725 about the situation of literature in England, “is become a very considerable Branch of the English Commerce. The Booksellers are

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291 Lu Xun, Hu Shiyi, Sun Kaidi, Wang Gulu and other literary historians have all indicated that the origin of the vernacular fiction was related to commercial entertainment. This view was first expressed by Lu Xun in his Zhongguo xiaoshuo shilue: “But when we look at the vernacular tales that have come down to us from the Song dynasty, they differ from the sermons and moral tales of the late Tang dynasty; in fact they developed from the storytellers’ scripts used in the amusement parks, for strange tales old and new were told in the Tang dynasty too. Duan Chengshi says in his Youyang Miscellany: ‘At the end of the Taihe period (827-835) I went to a place of entertainment on my brother’s birthday, and there was a storyteller...’ Li Shangyin also writes in one of his poems: ‘Some joke about Zhang Fei’s beard / Some about Deng Ai’s stammer.’ ...When the Song capital was Bianliang and there was abundance and general prosperity, many forms of popular entertainment were known, including variety shows in the market-places where story-telling figured. Storytellers specialized in different types of tales. According to Meng Yuanlao’s Reminiscences of the Eastern Capital, there were xiaoshuo, hesheng, jokes, stories of the Three Kingdoms and stories of the Five Dynasties. After the Song capital moved south to Hangzhou the same fashion persisted. Wu Zimu in his Reminiscences of Hangzhou says that stories were divided into four groups... Naide Weng in his Notes of the Chief Sights in the Capital describing Hangzhou in its heyday, also spoke of four groups of stories... From this we can see that story-tellers were divided into different categories and that they had an organization to help them to improve their craft.” See Lu Xun, Zhongguo xiaoshuo shilue, pp. 111-2 (the translation is Yang Hsien-yi and Gladys Yang’s with the changes of transliteration; see A Brief History of Chinese Fiction, pp.133-135).

292 Cf. Lu Rong 魯隆 (1436-1494), Shuyuan zaiji 茗園雜記 (The Bean Garden Miscellany), juan 10, p. 12: “From Xuande reign to Zhengde reign (1426-1522) printing and publishing were not yet very popular. But nowadays new publications come out every month and every day.”

293 See Ye Sheng 葉盛 (1420-1474), Shuidong riji 水東日記 (The Diary of Ye Sheng) (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1965), juan 21, pp. 540-541.
the Master Manufacturers or Employers. The several Writers, Authors, Copyers, Sub-writers, and all other Operators with Pen and Ink are the workmen employed by the said Master Manufacturers.™ To an uncanny extent, what Defoe said was also equally true of the change taking place in the Chinese literary area at the turn of the seventeenth century.

As a market commodity, vernacular fiction was produced for broad consumers. Writers no longer aimed at satisfying the elite in order to achieve literary fame.™ They first and foremost aimed at pandering to the public. Most of them, contrary to what Ming-Qing fiction scholars believe, wrote not only for gentry class, but also for people with less education,™ not only for


295 The most obvious evidence was the fact that the late Ming fiction writers never used their real names to publish novels and short stories, and a great number of their pseudonyms are yet to be identified. The reason for them to use pseudonyms was mainly because they regarded fiction as a debased kind of writing. Ling Mengchu, for example, candidly admits that he did not take his fiction writing seriously. His “vulgar” book Pai’an jingqi was, in his modest opinion, “not good enough even to be used as covering pieces of paper for the jars of soy-paste.” It could not be compared with his high-brow literary and scholastic works “on which he spent so much time and energy conceiving and writing that he spat blood and wore out his brush and ink stone.” See Ling Mengchu, preface to Erke pai’an jingqi.

296 Wang Hongtai 王宏泰 held a similar viewpoint: “As fiction writing became a commercialized production activity, the taste of consumers (readers) had to be taken into consideration. Thus, to a considerable extent, the readers’ mentality exercised an influence on the content of fictional works.” Wang Hongtai, Sanyan Liangpai de jingshen shi yanjiu 三言兩拍的精神史研究 (A Study of the Spiritual Aspects of Three Words and Two Slaps) (Taipei: Taiwan National University Press, 1997), p. 35.

297 Basically, most of the Ming-Qing fiction scholars can be divided into two groups in terms of the position they take. One group (mainly Japanese and Western scholars) believes that the Ming vernacular fiction was part of the elite literature instead of popular culture that was intended mainly for the enjoyment of gentry and well-to-do classes. Their arguments are based on two kinds of evidence: (1) some editions of vernacular fiction were “relatively fine printings, apparently expensive and meant only for a limited circulation” (see Andrew Plaks, The Four Masterworks of the Ming Novel, p. 23), and (2) “literacy was only one percent” and therefore, the reading ability of folk readers is “questionable.” See “Guanyu Mingmo baihua xiaoshuo de
zuozhe he duzhe” 閣於明末白話小說的作者和讀者(The Authorship and Readership of late Ming Vernacular Fiction), trans. Wu Yue 吳越, Ming-Qing xiaoshuo yanjiu, no. 2, 1988, p. 199. In my opinion, the quality of edition does not determine its content and readership, especially in economically flourishing times when ordinary people have the ability to purchase fine editions (some popular Western magazines like Vogue, Cosmopolitan and Playboy are also relatively fine printing and obviously they are not circulated only among the elite). In fact, most editions of fiction or drama published in the late Ming were inexpensive. For instance, an anthology of libretto from drama entitled Xindiao wanqu changchun 新調萬曲長春 (Ten Thousand Newly Attuned Songs on Eternal Spring) was only 1.2 mace. See Dong Guoyan, Dangzi, rouqing, tongxin: Mingdai xiaoshuo sicao, p. 34. As for literacy, “one percent,” a late Qing statistical figure quoted from Ma Zhongxue’s 馬學宗 book Shizi yundong, minzong xuexiao jingying de jilun yu shijii 讀字運動, 民眾學校經營的理論與實際 (The Theory and Practice of Literacy Movement and the Management of People’s Schools), should not be diachronically applicable. Also I should here call attention to a very simple fact: to read vernacular fiction does not need classical learning; functional literacy (i.e., simple reading and writing) is good enough for rough understanding (for example, the great modern scholar Hu Shi 胡適 says that he was able to read Water Margin when he was only six or seven years old). It is a general consensus of scholars that functional literacy in late imperial China could be as high as 30-45 percent among men and 2-10 percent among women. See John Fairbank, The Great Chinese Revolution, 1800-1985 (New York: Harper & Row, 1986), p. 67; Evelyn Rawski, Education and Popular Literacy in Ch’ing China (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1979). This certainly does not deny that fiction could also be enjoyed by upper classes. Emperor Wuzhong’s purchase of the novel Jin tong can Tang 金統殘唐 (The Romance of the Unification of the Remaining Tang by Jin — this novel is not extant) at the incredibly high price of 50 taels is perhaps the most well-known example (see Hu Shiying, Huaben xiaoshuo gailun, vol. 2, p. 362). According to Hu Yinglin 胡應麟, a renowned scholar-official in the Ming was so fond of Water Margins that it became one of only two indispensable books on his desk. See Hu Yinglin, Shaoshi shannfang bicong 少室山房筆匯 (Notes from Shaoshi shanfang), juan 41, p. 572. What I want to point out is that fiction in the late Ming was not intended only for the elite; instead it was for all classes of people, as a Qing scholar commented: fiction in the Ming dynasty was another “religious teaching” 教 (jiao) on top of Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism, studied and enjoyed not only by scholars, farmers, workers and merchants, but by women and children as well. See Gu Yanwu, Rizhi lu jishi 稱子續集釋 (Records of Daily Increased Knowledge), ed. & annot. by Huang Rucheng 黃汝成 (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1962), juan 13, p. 317.

298 The other group (mainly Chinese scholars) believes that nihuaben 擬話本 (simulated huaben stories) was written only for the reading public, and not for the audience. See Hu Shiying, Huaben xiaoshuo gailun, vol. 2, p. 395; Ouyang Daifa, Huaben xiaoshuo shi, p. 187; You Guo’en, Zhongguo wenxue shi, vol. 4, p. 114. These scholars were probably misled by the term nihuaben (simulated huaben stories) coined by Lu Xun in his Zhongguo xiaoshuo shilue. It was likely that Lu Xun’s invention was inspired by “nizu” 擬作 (simulated writings), a phrase
very likely that they would not stick to high literary criteria when they were set to writing by their
"employers" with the stimulation of a lucrative prospect. But one thing they would never or
would never be allowed to sacrifice: that is, their commitment to amusement. From the titillating

invented by the late Ming writer Tian Rucheng 田汝成 (fl. 1526, for his biographical details, see
Zhang Tingyu, Mingshi, juan 287, p. 7377) in his Xihu youlan zhivu 西湖遊覽誌餘 (A
Supplement to the Account of Sceneries of the West Lake), juan 20, p. 368. But Lu Xun did not
claim that the simulated huaben stories were produced only for the reading public. From the
formal features (digressive discourse, among others), and especially the phrases such as
“storyteller” 說話的 (shuohua de) and “insignificant person” 小子 (xiaozi) used by the authors to
refer to themselves (see, for instance, Ling Mengchu, Pai'an jingqi, vol. 1, p. 123 and Erke pai'an
jingqi, vol. 2, p. 696), we can see that the authors addressed themselves more to audience than to
readers. External evidence also tells us that simulated stories like Sanyan were indeed used by
storytellers as “base-texts” 底本 (diben) in their storytelling performance in the late Ming times.
See Hu Shiying, Huaben xiaoshuo gailun, vol. 2, pp. 380-381. Their audience included not only
people of lower social strata but also members of scholar-gentry classes. See Hu Yinglin, Shaoshi
shanfang bicong, juan 41, p. 573. Wen Zhengming 文徵明 (1470-1559), a literatus well-known
for his calligraphy and painting, admitted that he “was fond of listening to the stories about Song
Jiang 宋江 (the hero in Water Margin) when he had spare time.” See Hu Shiying, Huaben
xiaoshuo gailun, vol. 2, p. 365. Such experience was also mentioned by other famous scholars
such as Yuan Zhonglang 袁中郎 (1568-1610) and Zhang Dai 張岱 (1597-1679). See Yuan
Zhonglang, Jietuo ji 解脫集 (Being Free), in Yuan Hongdao ji jianjiao 袁宏道集校箋 (The
Collated and Annotated Edition of Yuan Hongdao’s Works), ed. Qian Bocheng 錢伯城
(Shanghai: Guji chuban she, 1981), vol. 1, p. 418; Zhang Dai. Tao'an mengyi 陶庵夢憶
(Reminiscences of Zhang Dai), p. 40. To be sure, this is not the place to debate the issue of
readership and audience at full length, and I would like to end my argument by quoting a passage
from the essay “Distinguishing Levels of Audiences for Ming-Ch’ing Vernacular Literature” by
Robert Hegel, which, I think, suggests a judicious approach and a reasonable conclusion: “In
summary, then, investigation of the various vernacular versions of the fall of Li Mi has provided
a workable, albeit cumbersome, means of distinguishing works intended for different audiences.
Nonlinguistic criteria have included extrinsic evidence concerning how and among what strata of
society a work circulated as well as biographical information about known authors and the
significant anonymity of others. Intrinsic evidence has ranged among formal features — the type
and use of verse and the conventional narrator — that define genres and thereby suggest
audiences, and has included relative degrees of rationalism, historicity, and apparent innovation
within each text. This evidence is not intended to question the usual division of Chinese society
during the Ming and Ch’ing into elite, non-elite, and folk audiences; instead it demonstrates that
the body of vernacular texts consists of material designed for all of these audiences.” See Popular
Culture in Late Imperial China, p. 142.
or diverting titles of *huaben* story collections (including the titles of Ling's story collections), we can easily see that there is a commercial entertaining orientation in the majority of late Ming fictional works.

We have seen, from the foregoing analysis, the social forces behind Ling that drove him to be a Confucian apologist and at the same time an erotic writer. Actually, the contradiction in him reflected the contradiction between the traditional state ideology based on the "timeless" agrarian mode of structure and the new booming economy characteristic of modern bourgeois mercantilism. It seems that superstructure is not *always* determined by economic base.

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299 Such as, for example, *Yipian qing* 一片情 (The Expanse of Love), *Huanxi yuanjia* 歡喜冤家 (Antagonists in Love), *Guzhang juecheng* 恭掌絕塵 (Warm Applause) and *Jingu giquan* (Unusual Stories Old and New). The titles of six collections of *huaben* stories, some of which were still available in the earliest *huaben* anthology *Qingping shantang huaben* 清平山堂話本 (Qingping shang tang *Huaben* Stories), are also all entertaining in nature: *Yuchuang* 易窗 (Stories to be Read When Raining), *Changdeng* 長燈 (Stories to be Read under the Permanent Lamp), *Suihang* 隨航 (Stories to be Read on a Voyage), *Yi zhen* 倚枕 (Stories to be Read While Lying on a Pillow), *Jiemen* 解閑 (Stories to be Read to Kill Time), and *Xingmeng* 驚夢 (Stories to be Read When You Wake up from a Dream). See *Qingping shantang huaben*, ed., Hong Pian 洪槉. "Chuban shuoming" 出版說明 (Note for Publication).

300 Some Western scholars since Leopold von Ranke tended to use the phrase "eternal standstill" or "timeless" in describing the social order of the imperial China. See Raymond Dawson, "Western Conceptions of Chinese Civilization," in *The Legacy of China* (Oxford University Press. 1964), p. 14. Prof. Richard Lynn kindly called my attention to a recently published book by Zhang Longxi, in which there is a tantalizing reference to the contradiction between a so-called "timeless" China and the realities of actual Chinese history. According to Zhang, the false idea of a timeless did not begin with Leopold von Ranke. The Jesuits in the late 16th - 17th were strongly influenced by their Chinese colleagues. They took what their Chinese colleagues had told them and peddled in turn in Europe to Leibniz, Voltaire, among others, an idea that hegel and Marx picked up. See Zhang Longxi, *Mighty Opposites* (Stanford University Press. 1998).

301 That economic base determines superstructure or men's social being determines their consciousness is Marx and Engels' famous thesis. It was first expressed in *The German Ideology*, ed. R. Pascal (New York: International Publishers, 1947), pp. 14-15: "Men are the producers of their conceptions, ideas, etc. — real, active men, as they are conditioned by a definite
Although there is a certain relationship between superstructural ideology and material productive forces, their relationship, as Max Weber tried to point out, is characterized more by interaction than by determination, especially in a period of social and economic changes. In the latter development of their productive forces and of the intercourse corresponding to these, up to its furthest forms. Consciousness can never be anything else than conscious existence, and the existence of men is their actual life-process... Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life.” Its fuller statement can be found in the Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1971), pp. 20-21: “In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness.” But according to the French Marxist critic Louis Althusser, there were two Marxes, a young Marx (up to the year 1845), whose idea roughly corresponded with the usual view of dialectical materialism, and a mature Marx (from 1857 onwards), whose way of thinking was radically different. Althusser thought that the older Marx has evolved a form of dialectic different from Hegel’s. He no longer held to the simple deterministic relation of base and superstructure. Economics is determinative but only “in the last instance.” See Louis Althusser. “Contradiction and Overdetermination,” in For Marx, trans., Ben Brewster (New York: Pantheon, 1969), pp. 84-114. See also David H. Richter, ed., The Critical Tradition (New York: St. Martin Press, 1989), p. 561

302 Although Max Weber did not directly deny Marx’ thesis that superstructure is determined by economic base, he nevertheless tried to bring our attention to the phenomenon that the formation of superstructure was also influenced by some other factors. “Among other circumstances, capitalistic interests have in turn undoubtedly also helped, but by no means alone nor even principally, to prepare the way for the predominance in law and administration of a class of jurists specially trained in rational law. But these interests did not themselves create that law. Quite different forces were at work in this development. And why did not the capitalistic interests do the same in China or India? Why did not the scientific, the artistic, the political, or the economic development there enter upon that path of rationalization which is peculiar to the Occident?” See Weber. The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, trans. Talcott Parsons (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1958), p. 25. In another place, p. 45, he argues that the relationship between Protestant ideology and capitalistic development was rather complicated or sometimes even conflicting: “The old Protestantism of Luther, Calvin, Knox, Voet, had precious little to do with what today is called progress. To whole aspects of modern life which the most extreme religionist would not wish to suppress today, it was directly hostile. If any inner
half of the Ming dynasty when such changes were underway, it is understandable that the conflict was ineluctable between the spiritual intercourse of men and their material behavior. The tension between eroticism and morality in Ling’s erotic stories was therefore not just a personal dilemma of the author; it was in substance determined by the contradictory crisis of the society.

4. Aspects of Sexuality

Let us now turn to his erotic stories and consider the tension between their eroticism and morality. In his preface to Pai’an jingqi, Ling writes:

With a long time of peace and tranquility, people are loose-living and licentious. Some young neophyte writers of frivolity have no sooner learned how to hold a brush than begin to defame the world, writing sheer fabrications which are either too absurd to believe or too obscene to read... Officials of insight who are concerned with social mores have suggested that such publications be rigorously banned, and I think they are right.

Judging from this disapproving comment, Ling seems to have had no intention of writing

relationship between certain expressions of the old Protestant spirit and modern capitalistic culture is to be found, we must attempt to find it, for better or worse, not in its alleged more or less materialistic or at least anti-ascetic joy of living, but in its purely religious characteristics."

303 The late Ming was certainly a period of social and economic transformation. In the 1980s, when Deng Xiaoping was in power, China was undergoing another social and economic transformation, and we saw a fierce conflict between the social consciousness representing the new economic order and the old state orthodoxy, a conflict that finally resulted in the June 4th Tian’anmen Incident in 1989.
literature of erotica. But in fact we find him still incapable of getting rid of eroticism if we concentrate on the main plot of his stories. Erotic fiction, if we treat it in a broad fashion,

304 Cf. Zheng Zhenduo's comment: "Ling Mengchu in his preface remarks, 'With a long time of peace and tranquility, people are loose-living and licentious. Some young neophyte writers of frivolity have no sooner learned how to hold a brush than begin to defame the world, writing sheer fabrications which are either too absurd to believe or too obscene to read.' Since Ling attacked pornography and aimed at didacticism in writing huaben stories, he was supposed not to write anything that would 'defame the world.' In fact, however, Slapping the Table in Amazement has been regarded as a pornographic book (yinshu) and was banned more than once. Of the thirty six stories (translator's note: the forty-story edition was not available to Zheng Zhenduo at that time), some are indeed explicitly erotic, and stories 1, 8, 16 and 17 (translator's note: in the forty-story edition they are stories 2, 16, 32 and 34, and I have translated the last two into English) are the examples in point. Story 17 "The Elopement of a Nun" is almost as erotic in description as the notorious novel The Golden Lotus." See Zheng Zhenduo, "Ming-Qing erdai de pinghua ji" (The Huaben Story Collections of Ming and Qing Dynasties), in Zhongguo wenxue lunji (Collected Essays on Chinese Literature), vol. 2, pp. 600-601.

305 Erotic fiction can be divided into a number of sub-genres, among which a very large one is "pornography." According to Oxford English Dictionary, "pornography," a mid-nineteenth-century neologism, first appeared in an English medical dictionary, which defined it as: "a description of prostitutes or of prostitution, as a matter of public hygiene." But the term "pornography" quickly acquired a non-scientific usage: "Descriptions of the life, manners, etc. of prostitutes and their patrons, hence, the expression or suggestion of obscene or unchaste subjects in literature or art." "Pornographic," in terms of literature or art, is defined as "that which deals in the obscene." and often used to refer to the sub-genre that is very different from the one of "eroticism." The French art historian Alexandrian maintained: "Pornography is the description pure and simple of carnal pleasures, eroticism is this same description but evaluated as a function of the idea of love or of social values... It is very much more important to make the distinction between the erotic and the obscene... eroticism is all that makes the body desirable, displaying it in all its brilliancy and vigor, awakening an impression of health, of beauty, a delectable game; whereas obscenity evaluates the body differently, associating with dirt. infirmity, scatological jokes. filthy words." See Histoire de la litterature erotique. Quoted from Jane Mills, ed. Bloomsbury Guide to Erotic Literature (Longdon: Bloomsbury, 1993), p. 10. But to the leading practitioner of French New Novel Alain Robbe-Grillet, "Pornography is the eroticism of others." Quoted from Maurice Charney, Sexual Fiction, p. 1. Charney himself also believed that there is no intrinsic reason — if not for value judgment — to make a distinction between middle-class pornography which has been considered as "redeeming social value" and "community standards" and the more raucous and cruder pornography of the non-cultivated classes. See Charney, ibid., pp. 1-2. In my thesis, I avoid fine distinctions between "pornographic" and "erotic" and use the term "erotic fiction" in such a broad fashion that it includes not only relatively "high-brow" erotica but also the so-called hard-core literature.
describes activities that are sexual or sexually affiliated. With their focuses on the presentation of such activities, Ling's five stories to be discussed here certainly belong to this genre tradition. These five stories, due to the convention of huaben style, contain actually ten tales, for each story is made up of two independent tales, prologue tale 頭回 (touhui) and main tale 正話 (zhenghua). They may differ in length and vary in complexity, but there is one feature that the author made all of them commonly share: that is, their preoccupation with sexuality.

One of the characteristics of erotic fiction, according to the Kronhausens, is its exaggerated depiction of "supersexed males" who are unusual in virile stamina and have an enormous male organ. Whether or not the heroes in Ling's stories are so sexually endowed I am not quite certain, for information as such is not provided except for a young monk who, we are informed, has a penis seven or eight inches long and is able to make intercourse with ten

306 Strictly speaking, a huaben story usually consists of four parts: introduction or introductory comments 入話 (ruhua), prologue tale (touhui), main tale (zhenghua) and epilogue 篇尾 (pianwei). The introduction is a poem 詩 (shi) or lyric 詞 (ci) followed by an explanation, which either focuses on the theme of the story or summarizes the main plot. The prologue tale is a short, simple story (occasionally several short, simple stories), which, though independent in terms of plot, is thematically connected to the main tale. The main tale is the body of a story. Sometimes it is divided into two parts, as we see in the story "Nianyu guanyin" 當年觀音 (Jade Carver), or several parts, as we see in some of Li Yu's 李漁 stories. The epilogue is an attached part — always written in verse(s) — for the recapitulation of theme and the like. Of these four parts, the prologue tale and the main tale are obviously the most important. In some scholarly works, "introduction" is discussed along with "prologue tale," and epilogue, treated as an unimportant section attached to the main tale, is largely left unmentioned. For detailed discussions of the textual features of huaben stories, see Hu Shiying, Huaben xiaoshuo gailun, vol. 1, pp. 133-147; Ouyang Daifa, Huaben xiaoshuo shi, pp. 12-21.

307 See Eberhard and Phyllis Kronhausen, Pornography and the Law (New York: Ballantine Books, 1959), p. 221: "One of their outstanding characteristics is the emphasis which they place upon the exaggerated size of the male organ, the largeness of the testicles, and the copiousness of the amounts of seminal fluid ejaculated."
women in a night. Most of Ling's male characters, however, can at least be called libertines. Though usually they appear as scholars preparing for the civil service examination, in courting a woman they fancy in order to induce her to surrender her chastity, they are bold, aggressive, and capable of making use of all kinds of savoir-faire.

Tangqing, the protagonist in the prologue tale of "The Wife Swappers," is such a scholar unfettered by traditional sexual restraints. Sex appears in him simply as a natural impulse. Once aroused, it presses to fulfillment regardless of obstacles. When the story unfolds, Tangqing, as a licentiate degree holder, is taking a boat to Xiuzhou to take the provincial examination. A romantic youth vulnerable to delightful temptations, he is greatly stirred when he catches a glimpse of the boatman's daughter, who in spite of her plain clothes and light makeup

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308 See the prologue tale of "The Elopement of a Nun," Pai'an jingqi, vol. 2, p. 725. For the quotations from Ling's stories, page numbers are usually given to both the Chinese original text (the edition collated by Li Tien-yi and published by Youlian chuban gongsi in Hong Kong) and my translation, most of which are appended to this thesis.

309 It is true that Ling writes more about late Ming merchants and their commercial activities in Erpai than Feng Menglong does in his Sanyan collections. Zhang Bing says, "Ling Mengchu's Two Slaps are masterworks in representing the life of merchants or businessmen. Among the numerous characters in his two short story collections, many are merchants or businessmen and their proportion is considerably high." See Zhang Bing, Ling Mengchu yu Erpai, p. 28. But so far as Ling's erotic stories are concerned, the heroes are still mainly scholars or from scholar/gentry classes. For example, Yi in "The Wife Swappers" is from scholar/gentry family, Teng in the prologue of "Fatal Seduction" is a scholar waiting for official nomination in the capital, and Tangqing in the prologue tale of "The Wife Swappers" and Wenren in "The Elopement of a Nun" are both licentiates planning to take the provincial examination when the stories begin. As for Ren Junyong, the main character in "In the Harem," he obviously also belongs to scholar/gentry class despite that he fails to pass the lowest level of the civil service examination. The only exception is perhaps Bu Liang in "Fatal Seduction." He is certainly not a scholar, but the story does not indicate whether he is a merchant or not (judging from where he lives, he can at least be called an urban resident, I believe).
looks unusually pretty. Tangqing decides to get the girl and begins to make advances to her. Seeing his coquettish inquiries and deliberate ogles fail to give rise to her reaction, he opens his suitcase and takes out a fine, white, silk handkerchief, which he tosses to her after twisting up a walnut into it in a love knot. He never expects that he will be rejected by this boatmen’s daughter who is much lower in social status than he is. He is about to force her when he changes his mind. He pretends to jump into the river. His suicidal attempt makes her so worried that she finally falls a victim of his wile. At last Tangqing succeeds in carrying her into the cabin and sleeping with her in bed.

It seems that Tangqing does not make much ado in getting his wish fulfilled. The girl, after all, is a boatman’s daughter. Were she from a good family, Tangqing would perhaps have to go through more difficulties before he is able to get his hand on her, as his counterpart Teng 滕 does. A libertine hero in the prologue tale of “Fatal Seduction,” Teng is also a handsome intellectual promising of a bright career. But in his courtship of a high-class lady and in leading her astray, he is a more determined and qualified Casanova. Like Tangqing’s encounter of the boatman’s daughter, it is also by chance — on his excursion to the Western Pond — that Teng meets Lady Di 狄夫人, a beautiful married woman. If it were not for her distinguished family background and her demure disposition, Teng might approach her directly as Tangqing does to his girl. Yet the morality invested in Lady Di is so strong that a rash assault is completely out of the question. Despite his strong erotic impulses, Teng has to resort to some other means. After

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310 In terms of marital status and class background, the boatman’s daughter is quite unusual, because most of the heroines in Ling’s erotic stories are married women of official/gentry classes. For example, Lady Di 狄夫人 in the prologue tale of “Fatal Seduction” is a high-ranking official’s wife. Madam Jade 筑玉夫人 in “In the Harem” is Commander-in-Chief Yang Jian’s
all, Teng is an experienced seducer capable of combining his lechery with his intelligence. After visiting the neighborhood where Lady Di lives, he soon masterminds a scheme. He gets hold of an abbess who is Lady Di’s friend, and gives her a bag of fine pearls worth ten thousand cashes, asking her to serve him as his go-between. The abbess does as he suggests. By wagging her glib tongue, she succeeds in persuading her patron to come to her nunnery for a brief interview with Teng.

This, of course, is only the first step. Whether Teng can be successful in stealing this another man’s wife completely depends on how tactfully he handles the situation. Teng is indeed a sophisticated veteran. On that day he conceals himself beforehand in a quiet, infrequently visited room in which the abbess has laid out a table of wine and delicacies. As soon as Lady Di comes and is led into it, Teng rushes forward to her with flaunting gallantry and falls to his knees

311 In the Ming dynasty, the Confucianist principles began to work through to the daily life of the people and seclusion of women was practiced in earnest, as witnessed by the Portuguese missionary Gaspar da Cruz who visited Canton in 1556: “They commonly keep themselves close, so that through all the city of Cantam (i.e., Canton), there appeareth not a woman, but some light huswives and base women. And when they go abroad they are not seen, for they go in close chairs; neither when anybody cometh into the house doth he see them, except for curiosity they chance under the door-cloth to look on them that come in when they are foreigners.” See Charles Ralph Boxer, trans. & ed., South China in the Sixteenth Century (London, 1953), pp. 149-150. Because of the separation of the sexes, nuns often acted as go-betweens to help men to form illicit relationship with women. Robert van Gulik explained the reason of why nuns could play the role of go-between as follows: “Buddhist nuns who by virtue of their sex had free access to the women’s quarters, were the favorite counselors of the ladies of the household. Buddhist nuns officiated at intimate household ceremonies as for instance prayer-meetings for the recovery of a sick child, or for curing sterility; they gave the ladies of the household advice in personal problems, acted as self-styled doctors and wonder workers for feminine diseases, and were also employed in the women’s quarters on a more permanent basis as teachers of the young girls in reading and writing, and feminine skills.” See van Gulik, Sexual Life in Ancient China. p. 266.
before her. This leaves his interviewer with no choice but return her obeisance and take a seat at the table. Teng then sends the abbess away and moves to her side. "Since I saw you at the pond, madam, I have been pining for you day and night and only you can save me," he says, and in the meantime is down on his knees again. With his good looks and his moving imploring, Lady Di does not know how to react. Seizing this opportunity, Teng carries her to bed and rashly pulls at her underpants. As Lady Di is too inflamed to be able to control her raging passion, she dodges about only for a while before completely submitting to him, letting him make free with her. If Teng does not have a penis huge enough "for the girls to immolate themselves," he has his own advantage: that is, his expertise in the art of bedchamber. His sexual skill, the author describes, is so excellent that it enables him to set his partner tingling all over and make her female fluid flow out. Little wonder that Lady Di feels extremely satiated after having had sex with him.

Ding Yaokang 丁耀亢 (1599-1671) said that there were three kinds of libertines. The

312 Pai'an jingqi, vol. 1, p. 117; translation, p. 192.

313 The art of bedroom has been generally regarded as a knowledge for enhancing health and promoting longevity. In fact, however, it was also intended for increasing sexual pleasure. As Douglas Wile points out, the art of bedchamber, described in the Ma Wang tui 馬王堆 and Ishimpo (in Chinese, Yixin fang 藥心方, The Essentials of Medical Prescriptions) texts, strongly emphasizes prolonged foreplay, female orgasm and male reservatus as promoting not only superior health but also greater pleasure than ejaculatory sex. See Douglas Wile, Art of Bedchamber: The Chinese Sexual Yoga Classics (Albany: State University of New York, 1992), p. 44.

314 Cf. Eberhard and Phyllis Kronhausen, Pornography and Law, pp. 227-228: "Obscene books (i.e., erotic fiction) stress the female discharge almost equally as much as the man's seminal fluid: this is, of course, to be expected, for if the women are supposed to be as responsive as ' Obscene ' books would make us believe, there would be no better proof of this than reference to the physiological manifestations of their erotic excitement."

315 Scholars have different opinions concerning the date of birth and death of Ding Yaokang and I adopt Huang Lin's 黄霖 argument that Ding was born in 1599 and died in 1671. See Jin
first kind was the "libertine of scholar type" 資子淫 (caizi yin), who was handsome and talented and cared to pursue only most beautiful women; the second kind was the "libertine of prodigal type" 資子淫 (dangzi yin), who spent a fortune on pretty women in the pleasure quarters; and the third kind was the "libertine of sex maniac type" 凶慌淫 (xionghuang yin), who was so shamelessly obsessed with sex that he would copulate with women of any age, looks, or class. If Tangqing and Teng belong respectively to the first two categories, then we may as well take Bu Liang 卜良 — the rapist of a good woman in “Fatal Seduction” — as a typical "sex maniac." A foppish-looking man, he is notorious for his insensate dissipation. “Every pretty woman he saw," as the author makes a point to indicate, "would stimulate his seductive desire and there was hardly anyone [in the town of Wuzhou] who had not fallen a prey to his lust." One of Bu Liang's unfortunate victims is Madam Wu 巫娘子, the chaste wife of Licentiate Jia 賈秀才. One day when Madam Wu is seeing Nun Zhao 劉尼姑 off at the doorway


317 Teng's willingness to use a bag of fine pearls worth ten thousand cashes as a bait for seduction is quite reminiscent of the billionaire in the movie "Indecent Proposal." But the most typical libertine of prodigal type in Ling's erotic stories is of course the hero Yi in "The Wife Swappers." In order to make love with the wife of his friend's, Yi squanders so much money on entertainment that he finally has to sell his family property. See Pai'an jingqi, vol. 2, p. 691; translation, p. 113.

of her house, she happens to be seen by Bu Liang. This accidental exposure incurs an unexpected rape. Bu Liang, because of his promiscuity, is widely associated with the nuns in the areas and Nun Zhao is actually one of his sexual partners. Madam Wu does not know about their intimate relations. When Nun Zhao urges her to come to her nunnery, the latter never expects that she is going to fall into a trap deliberately set up for her. The rape, however, is not carried on in a coercive manner. Nun Zhao, who knows her patron is a virtuous woman unwilling to have sex with a stranger, makes her drowsy first by treating her with a cake that has alcohol and special medicine concocted in it. She then has her carried to her room dragging Bu Liang out from the shadow. “The chick is now being in bed ready for your enjoyment!” she tells him. The rape indeed turns out to be an “enjoyment,” meeting with no resistance at all:

The door was closed. Bu Liang pulled the bed curtain aside and was assailed by Madam Wu’s strong alcoholic smell. With her cheeks being charmingly red like a tipsy crabapple, she looked even more beautiful than before. In an agony of desire, he planted a kiss on her lips. She showed no reaction. He then lightly pulled her pants off and now the white lower part of her body completely laid bare before him. He swiftly parted her legs after

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319 In Ling’s erotic stories nuns are often described as lascivious and involved in illicit sexual activities. This is certainly not Ling’s prejudice against them. Other erotic fiction, such as the story “Hao Daqing yihen yuan yang tao” 鄒大卿遺恨鸳鸯條 (Hao Daqing left his Love Band Before He Died) in Feng Menglong’s Xingshi hengyan (Constant Words to Awaken the World) and Seng ni niehai 僧尼孽海 (The Sea of Iniquities of Monks and Nuns), a late Ming wenyan short story collection attributed to Tang Yin 唐寅 (1470-1523), also describe nuns in a similar vein. As van Gulik points out, “Public opinion regarded nuns and nunneries with disfavor, and Ming novels and short stories paint their alleged iniquities in lurid colors. Nuns were suspected of having entered religions only to practice unnatural vices, and nunneries were described as haunts of secret debauch. It was also commonly alleged that nuns when visiting private households procured for the women love philters and other drugs, and acted as go betweens for illicit relationships with outside men.” See van Gulik, Sexual Life in Ancient China, p. 266-267.

mounting her, inserted his shaft into her vagina and started to thrust forward. Swollen with pride, he said to himself, "Pity my little creature, you're now in my hands!" Though Madam Wu was too impotent to be able to move her body around, she nevertheless had some dreamlike feeling that somebody was making love to her. But she mistook him as her own husband and let him ravish her frivolously. Soon she was worked up by his fierce thrusts. In a hallucinative state, she began to moan as her passion was in full flow. A wild surge ripped through Bu Liang and he was unable to control himself any longer. He clutched her in his arms and cried, "My dearest, I'm dying!" He was then spent, his semen shooting out like a water column.

In spite of having been violated, Madam Wu is a women of moral integrity. She is determined to avenge herself and eventually, in cooperation with her husband, makes Bu Liang and his accomplice meet their doom. However, in Ling's erotic stories hagiographical women like Madam Wu are as few as morning stars. The majority of females are nymphomaniacs, highly passionate, sensual and sexually insatiable. The following episode from the prologue tale of "In the Harem," in which the author describes a sexual combat between a batch of concubines and a

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322 Of the very few hagiographical women in Ling's Erpai, another noticeable example is Xie Xiaoe 謝小娥, the heroine of story 19 in Pai'an jingqi, who, in order to avenge her husband, disguises herself as a manservant and works in the murderer's house for some years before she finally kills her enemy.

323 Females' obsession with lust is a marked feature not only of Ling's erotic stories but of other late Ming erotic fiction as well. The majority of works written before or even after the late Ming may have sufficient descriptions of men's sexual adventures, but they hardly pay attention to women's sexual fulfillment. Only in late Ming erotic fiction are we able to find lustful women whose sexual passions and insatiability are vividly portrayed. For a detailed discussion, see Ma Meixin 馬美信, “Wan-Ming wenxue chutan” 晚明文學初探 (A Preliminary Study of Late Ming Literature), in Zhongguo shoupai wenxue boshi xuewei lunwen xuanji 中國首批文學博士學位論文選集 (An Anthology of the First Batch of the Doctoral Dissertations on Literature in China) (Jinan: Shandong University Press, 1987), pp. 357-377.
sacrificial scholar who gets lost in the big courtyard of a high-ranking official's residence, provides us with a good example:

He squatted in the cave, enduring discomfort. He thought this was a safe place. Nevertheless, things were unpredictable and enemies were bound to meet on a narrow road. It so happened that the red gauze lantern was also advancing toward the pavilion. Watching from the darkness of the cave, which made the lantern and its surroundings even brighter, he caught a sight of about ten young women outside, all in beautiful dress, and all coquettish, frivolous and seductively charming. He was greatly aroused. But to his surprise, they also came swarming to the cave, and reaching out their hands, lifted the felt blanket. All of them, to be sure, were taken aback when they found a stranger inside.

"How come it's not the fellow we're expecting?" They looked at each other, rather bewildered. A more mature woman among them took over the lantern and cast light upon the scholar.

"This one is not bad!" she said, after having had a close look at him. With her delicate hand she grabbed the scholar by his hand and pulled him out of the cave. Submissively, he let her take him, not courageous enough to ask her where they were going. But he was quite certain that nothing harmful would happen.

He was ushered into a boudoir, where a feast of wine and delicacies had already been laid out. The beauties vied with each other to please him, as if they wanted to become a winner in liubo game. They began with exchanging cups with him, and then proceeded to encircle their arms around his neck, stroke his face and kiss his lips, doing all kinds of things that can be imagined. Having had several cups of drink, they all bubbled with lewd excitement. They pushed him into the bed without caring too much about proprieties. After they climbed into the bed curtain, some were busy taking their pants off, while others were trying to hold his waist. As they did not know how to take turns, they had to start from whoever was closest to him. He ejaculated, and they licked his semen up and fondled his organ until it again stood up. Fortunately the scholar was a young man capable of shooting his
string-of-beads arrows for two more times. But without so much as a minute's recuperation between such strenuous bouts of passion, even a man of iron could not endure. He began to feel sick and tired of these women. However, they did not disperse until about the fifth watch in the morning. By that time the scholar had been utterly depleted. His whole body was listless and numb, and his limbs were too weak to support him. 324

To these women, the scholar is simply a stranger; yet they still take advantage of this coincidental "rendezvous" to enjoy sensual pleasure to the full until their playmate is completely used up. As a recurrent motif, females' obsession with lust and their amorous adventurousness and indulgence in coitus feature not only this prologue tale but almost all other Ling's erotic stories, in which, as we shall see shortly, women are generally portrayed as equally audacious and lustful and licentious.

Although she is only sixteen or seventeen years old, the nun Jingguan 静観 in "The Elopement of a Nun" is nonetheless a sexually mature girl who is determined to pursue her secular happiness. 325 She once peeps through the gate of her nunnery and sees a remarkably handsome youth surnamed Wenren 閆人. As she has never seen such a refined youth looking different from most of ordinary worldly men, she wishes to get acquainted with him and marry him. It so happens


325 As van Gulik points out: "Few girls and women entered religion because of a sincere desire for a life of devotion. In many cases girls were destined by their parents to become nuns without being consulted, or even before they were born. Often parents would make a vow that an unborn daughter would become a nun, in order to avert a threatening calamity, or they would do so when a daughter was dangerously ill in order to ensure the recovery. The monastery also offered refuge to girls who abhorred the idea of having to marry a man they had never seen, and to those wives or concubines who wanted to escape from a cruel husband or a tyrannical mother-in-law. And finally also to women with sapphic inclinations, and to lewd women who hoped to find in the monastery a safe place to conduct illicit relations with men without the necessity of registering themselves officially as prostitutes." See Sexual Life in Ancient China, p. 267.
that later, on her way back to Hangzhou as a monk in disguise, she meets this youth again on board the boat.

Transvestism is a noteworthy characteristic in erotic fiction as in heroic legends represented by Ballad of Mulan 木蘭辭 (mulan ci). Because of moral confinements in the imperial China, men and women sometimes appeared in a camouflaged gender for sexual purpose. Though Jingguan’s original aim is just to avoid inconveniences on the road, she now begins to benefit from her disguise as a Buddhist “priest.” At night she is invited to sleep with Wenren on the same bed. When Wenren is asleep, she tosses and turns, thinking how to get him interested in her. She does not want to lose the opportunity this time, so she sits up and feels his body with her hand. Her early education in the nunnery has made her understand her own sexual instinct, and it should not be surprising that the first place she touches is none other than

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326 “Ballad of Mulan,” a narrative verse written by an anonymous author in the Six dynasties, describes the maiden Mulan joins the army in her father’s place, travels thousands of miles, and fights in a hundred battles before she returns triumphantly twelve years later to her native village, with her sex undiscovered. The last few lines of the ballad run as follows:

“And they are all stunned with surprise:
Though they have marched with her for twelve years,
They have not known that Mulan is a girl.”

The translation is Liu Wu-chi’s. See Liu Wu-chi, An Introduction to Chinese Literature, p. 68.

327 Examples can be found in Ling’s erotic stories, for example, in “The Elopement of a Nun” and also in Sanyan story collections, for example, in “Hao Daqing yihen yuanynang tao” and “Jin Hailing zongyu wangshen” (Jin Hailing’s Sexual Overindulgence Brought About his Death).

328 After entering the nunnery, Jingguan has been trained, like other nuns, to serve their customers as prostitutes under the guidance of the licentious abbess. This is the early education she receives, though as a decent girl she usually just looks on passively while her fellow nuns engage in flirtation with men. See Pai’an jingqi, vol. 2, p. 731.
where his genital is located. Like Fanny Hill, Jingguan immediately grasps the function of "that instrument" and keeps on nudging at it until Wenren wakes up. Wenren, still unaware that this disguised monk is a woman, takes "him" to be a gay who is willing to offer him his "rear courtyard flower" (houting hua). So he stretches out his hand to caress "him." She just cuddles herself up, letting his hand move along her body. He reaches her breasts and then down to her private parts. She shows no resistance at all, ostensibly with an intention of encouraging him to have intercourse with her. The inevitable exposure of her feminine gender greatly turns Wenren on. He jumped on top of her, parted her thighs and thrust his shaft right into her vagina.

329 Ma Meixin also rightly notes that in late Ming literature females' sexual desire is especially stressed. Heroine like Jingguan in Ling's story and Du Liniang in Tang Xianzu's The Peony Pavilion are even more aggressive and bolder than their lovers in seeking the fulfillment of sexual desire. See Ma Meixin, "Wan-Ming wenxue chutan," in Zhongguo shoupi wenxue boshi xuewei lunwen xuanji, p. 364. Besides the famous examples like Golden Lotus and the female emperor Wu Zetian (in Ruvi jun zhuan), we can also find some interesting instances of sexually aggressive girls in the collection Shange (Mountain Songs) that Feng Menglong compiled (some of the songs might have been written by Feng himself):

1. She dresses her hair until it shines like a lacquer bowl.
   And in the presence of others seduces a man with her small feet.
   Usually the man seduces the girl.
   But recently in this new age girls are bold enough to entice a man.

2. Don't be timid when you seduce a man.
   If we are caught, I will take the responsibility.
   I will fall on my knee before the Judge and tell him the truth —
   That it was I who seduced the man.

See Feng Menglong, ed., Shange juan 2, in Feng Menglong quanj (Complete Works of Feng Menglong), p. 41 & p. 42. The translation is Yusushi Oki's. See Yusushi Oki, "Women in Feng Menglong's 'Mountain Songs,'" in Writing Women in Late Imperial China, eds. Ellen Widmer and Kang-i Sun Chang, p. 133.

330 See John Cleland, Fanny Hill, p. 30: "From which the instinct of nature, yet more than all I had heard of it, now strongly informed me I was to expect that supreme pleasure which she had placed in the meeting of those parts so admirably fitted for each other."

331 A euphemism for anus.
She is still a virgin. Yet she endures the pains, trying her best to receive him. After they have finished, she proposes that they marry. She then arranges him to stay in her nunnery to prepare for the provincial examination. In the end of the story, Jingguan does achieve what she has wished: she marries with the young man she loves and they remain a happy couple to their ripe old age.

Strictly speaking, only “The Elopement of a Nun” is a true sexual romance among all Ling’s erotic stories. Lady Di’s adulterous entanglement with Teng might turn out to be a romantic comedy if the story were not counteracted by her death — an anti-romance at the end.

At the beginning, Lady Di seems to be a victim of Teng’s larcenous hoax as I have analyzed before. But after she has been seduced, she no longer remains passive. If originally she is a decent woman “lax neither with speech nor smile,” now what we see is mainly her lustfulness. The sexual pleasure given her by her adulterer, which she has never before experienced as a married wife leading a normal sexual life, is so ecstatic and so satisfying that its temptation is well beyond her resistance. After her loss of chastity, she has been completely conquered, sexually as well as emotionally, and is willing to draw herself away from the moral values she used to highly cherish. She yearns to have sex with Teng regularly and even wishes to keep their liaison forever. When the abbess comes back into the room where she has just finished her lovemaking with Teng, she tells the intermediary point-blank without even a slightest embarrassment, “Now I want you to see to it that every night you send him to my house.”

Having been determined to submit herself to sensual gratification, Lady Di does not allow even a

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single night to slip away without seeing her paramour. Their love affair lasts for several months until her husband's return puts a temporary halt to it. Still, Lady Di will have servants send for Teng whenever her husband is away, and their tryst continues in this fashion for another year. It would certainly have gone on for a longer time, had it not been finally prevented by her husband and had she not thereafter died from "lovesickness." 334

It is true that adultery is usually regarded as "a crucial sin" of a man who commits the sexual theft of another man's wife. 335 But sometimes it is also depicted as a sexual infidelity on the part of a married woman who initiates an illicit liaison with a third person, as we see in "In the Harem." Madam Jade, the heroine of the story, is obviously the most lecherous female among Ling's nymphos. While Lady Di appears to be a wife of conventional type, demure, decorous and well-cultured before she loses control of her sexual frenzy, Madam Jade, on the contrary, is a strong woman who acts resolutely in her own carnal interests right from the very beginning. She was formerly the wife of a jade carver in the capital with a shady background. After becoming Yang Jian's seventh lady (concubine), she is more desirous of extramarital affairs, obviously the result of insufficient intercourse she receives from her husband. She dreams of seducing youths even when her husband is at home. When her husband is off to Zhenzhou to visit his ancestors'...
graves, she burns with lust so much that she can no longer stand her lonely nights. She knows that her husband has a retainer called Ren Junyong, who lives in a studio right outside the courtyard. With the help of her personal maid Rosy Cloud 她 fashion a rope ladder by which one can climb on from the other side of wall, and successfully gets the retainer into the harem for a rendezvous with her.

As an active adulteress, Madam Jade is quite different from Lady Di, though they are driven by same sexual passion. From beginning to end, Madam Jade is an initiator in her liaison with that “outhouse guest.” She comes up with the idea of seduction; she makes the rope ladder—an indispensable devise for her adulterous aim; she has her maid set an appointment for a tryst and encourages her reluctant fomicator when he is scared halfway and wants to backslide: “Commander (her husband) is careless,” she assures him, “and moreover he doesn't have eyes on the back of his head. Since the way you've come in is safe and nobody will be able to discover that you are here, there's nothing that you should fret over. Please, sir, come with me to my bedroom!”

Lady Di, after her intimate relationship with Teng has been cut off by her husband, falls ill and dies. But affection or sentimentality is almost unknown to Madam Jade. She is not only much more courageous, active and stronger, but also much more rational, practical and sexually-oriented. To her, men are just her instruments. That she needs them is more for fulfilling her sexual desire than for so-called love. She does not care much whether her maid Rosy

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337 Cf. Ma Meixin's comment: "The love stories written before the late Ming times avoid describing sex and focus only on loving affection, as if a love affair would be vulgar once sexual passion was involved. These works, usually fettered by the concept of 'chastity,' will not allow their heroines to lose their 'virginity.' What they approve and praise is only Platonic love. But late Ming literature takes sexual desire as integral to human nature and mixes love with lust in
Cloud wants to share Ren Junyong with her. As long as she can keep Ren Junyong and indulge herself in fleshly enjoyment, anything else is of incidental consideration. She can even help Madam Beautiful Moon to have sex with her own paramour and rope other concubines into her lascivious orgies. However, she does care whether Ren Junyong has his “instrument” (penis). She loses her interest in him soon after her husband has come back home and has her sexual partner castrated. In spite of a superficial compassion and sorrow she shows for his tragedy. Madam Jade does not miss her old pal much as in the case of Lady Di. for she knows that without his “snake” (she, i.e., penis) to play with. Ren Junyong is a completely useless man to her.

Extramarital affairs seem to be abundant sources for bodily euphoria. True, Ling makes his stories focus on erotic themes; yet he is hardly devoted to concupiscent routines between husband and wife for the sake of procreation. What he explores in his erotic stories is mainly the forbidden territory, the sensual pleasure which is unbounded by matrimony. Adultery is just one kind of the extramarital sex. For men of gentry class, the more common form is visit of prostitutes.

If covertness and deceitfulness are marked features of adultery on the part of wife, then men's visit of prostitutes is permissible (if not legal) and is therefore carried on in an open manner except for officials. This was certainly attributable to the privilege male adults enjoyed description. Moreover, its description of lust usually exceeds in quantity its description of love, as if the pursuit of sensual satisfaction were “its only and ultimate goal.” See Ma Meixin, “Wan-Ming wenxue chutan,” in Zhongguo shoupí wenxue boshi xuewei lunwen xuanji, p. 361.

Although officials in the Ming dynasty were entitled to and also financially capable of taking a large number of concubines, they were nevertheless forbid by the imperial law to go visiting prostitutes. In early Ming, there was a government-sponsored brothel called Brothel of
in the traditional patriarchal society, which gave them the right to freedom and granted them the boon of infidelity. Ren Junyong, the Commander Yang Jian’s “outhouse guest” in “In the Harem,” will drag his friend out, whenever he has spare time, to haunt licenced quarters. Rosy Cloud, in order to seduce Ren Junyong at her mistress’s bidding, teases him when he comes back to his studio early in the morning: “Sir, you’re coming back in the early morning, so you must have spent the night outside, I suppose?” Ren Junyong does not feel ashamed at all about his visiting the pleasure quarters. He frankly admits to her: “Yes, I did spend the night outside. It’s agonizing to sleep alone.” Another customer of brothels is Yi 義, the main character in “The Wife Swappers.” Yi is the scion of a rich family, lavish, profligate and over-liberal. Any beautiful courtesan, no matter how far she lives, will get his patronage. With his substantial family property, he can stay in a brothel for days on end. He never needs to conceal this from his wife. In fact, his wife often encourages him to stay in brothels for a longer period by sending him

Abundance and Happiness 福樂 (fule yuan). This brothel, first set up at Qiandao Bridge and later transferred to Wuding Bridge because of a conflagration, was mainly intended for the enjoyment of officials. Later, it was in view of the situation that officials were overindulgent in sexual pleasure so much as to neglect their duties that the emperor Zhu Yuanzhang, at Vice Censor-in-Chief 中丞 (zhongcheng) Gu Gongzuo’s 異公佐 suggestion, prohibited them from visiting brothels. See Liu Dalin, Zhongguo gudai xing wenhua, pp. 765-766. See also Wang Shunu 王書奴, Zhongguo changji shi 中國娼妓史 (A History of Chinese Prostitutes) (Shanghai: Shenghuo shudian, 1935), pp. 192-198. In Liu Chen’s 劉辰 (fl. 1403) Guochu shiji 國初事跡 (The Events that Happened at the First Years of the Reigning Dynasty), p. 15, there is an account of an official who violated this imperial law. The official, named Li Wenzhong 李文忠, was a general of the army defending Yanzhou. He visited a brothel and openly took a prostitute back home. Zhu Yuanzhang, having been informed about this, sent someone to Yanzhou to kill the prostitute, arrest Li and bring him back to the Capital. It was only through the mediation of the empress that Li luckily escaped punishment. According to Wang Qi 王琦 (1433-1499), officials’ visiting of brothels was considered as a serious crime, and offenders would never be reinstated in office even if he was pardoned. See Wang Qi, Yupu zaji 寓圃雜記 (The Residence and Garden Miscellanies) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), juan 1. p. 7.

things as subsidies for his extra expenses there. Yi, of course, is very appreciative of his wife's generosity. Yet we shall see later that her generosity is not completely for him. It is also partly for herself, for she wants to have trysts with her own lover Hu 胡生.

The story of Yi and his wife Di 狄氏 is actually far more complicated and intriguing: it relates how an intended wife-swapping transmutes into double liaisons and ends in a tragicomedy. As a philanderer, Yi is not quite contented for having just one wife despite the fact that his wife is a transcendent beauty. Once he catches a sight of a lady named Men 閔氏 who turns out to be his neighbor Hu's wife. Yi is infatuated because Men is also very beautiful, almost as beautiful as his own wife. Yi wants to seduce Men and have both the beautiful women in his possession. As he has no idea how to obtain Men, a woman who stays in her boudoir all times, Yi turns to Di for help. He knows Di will never fail to assist him as long as she can. "Everyone praises you as the most beautiful woman," he says to Di, "but so far as I can see, Hu's wife is not at all inferior. How can I think of a way to get her?" Di replies, "Unless we become family friends, that is, Hu lets you see his wife and you do the same to him and often invite the couple over to our house. I can't get you a chance to enable you to carry out your plot." Taking her advice, Yi begins to make friends with Hu. Later he is on such good terms with Hu that he is willing to let him share his wife. He first implicitly tells Hu about his intention that they should exchange wives with each other, and then jokingly asks Di for her permission: "I would like to trade you for Hu's wife. Is it all right with you?" Although Di scolds Yi for his shamelessness in using her body to get someone else's woman, she is actually glad at the prospect of taking

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liberty to make love with Hu, a more handsome, attractive and virile man than her own husband. When Yi gets drunk on a dinner party, it is Di and Hu who become the first to start sex. In order to have more secret rendezvous with Hu, Di sends Yi away to brothels as much as she can. The latter has always been kept in the dark, having no idea at all what has been going on between his wife and Hu until after much later when his dream of wife-swapping comes true. The belatedly realized dream enables him to develop an intimacy with Men, who, seeing her husband Hu is on the verge of dying, finally tells Yi everything about the surreptitious relations between Hu and Di. After they have both died — one from his ulcer related to sexual indulgence, and the other from her grief over the loss of her lover, Yi formally takes Men as his wife.

Swinging\textsuperscript{342} was perhaps very popular in the late Ming. Yiqing zhen 怡情陣 (A Joyful Array), a short novel by an unknown writer which is remarkable for its ribaldry and its explicitly erotic details, offers us a most vivid picture in this respect.\textsuperscript{343} What distinguishes the wife-

\textsuperscript{342} In The Sex Researchers (Boston: Little Brown, 1969), Edward Brecher wrote: "The term wife-swapping was objectionable because of its implication of sexual inequality and of male property rights in wives. Nor was "husband-swapping" or "mate-swapping" an adequate substitute, for much more was often involved than mere swapping — and unmarried men and women also participated. Hence the term "swinging" came into general use in the 1960s and the subculture engaged in such activities came to be known as "the swinging scene" See ibid., p. 250. The reason I that I have changed to the use of the term "swinging" here is not because "wife swapping" implies sexual inequality and male property rights in wives, but because in late Ming erotica there are various kinds of mate swapping, and "swinging" is perhaps a more appropriate word in connoting the different phenomena of this.

\textsuperscript{343} See Yiqing zhen, pp. 133-137: "The story goes that Bai Kun 白昆 and his wife Li 李氏 had Jing Quan 景泉 and (his wife) Jade Sister 玉姐 move into their house. Li found Jade Sister beautiful. Jade Sister was impressed by Li's prettiness. They admired each other so much that they swore themselves to sisterhood. Bai Kun and Jing Quan, now even more sentimentally attached to one another, became sworn brothers too. In the evening, the dinner was ready to serve. Bai Kun and Jing Quan took the seats of honor, and Li and Jade Sister sat at the opposite side. The maids Laurel 桂香 and Rue 雲香 served them tea, one taking a teapot in hand and the other holding glasses. When four glasses had been poured out, Bai Kun passed one to Jade Sister
swapping business in Ling’s story, by comparison, is its half-transparency, its deception and its
Machiavellism, though in view of the lack of a simultaneous exchange on the both parties it is
not typical as a form of group sex.

with both hands. Jade Sister took it. Bai Kun saw her hands were white and her fingers were as
thin as green onion. He gazed at her under the light and was infatuated with her charming looks.
He felt as if he were in a trance, almost losing control of himself. Bai Kun's amorous glance
made Jade Sister feel rather bashful. Having taken the glass and cast a quick glimpse at this
handsome man, Jade Sister lowered her head without saying a word. Li said, “Why so shy,
younger sister? Elder brother is no stranger.” Jing Quan said, “She is shy because this is her first
get-together with you. Next time she should be all right.” Bai Kun said, “Sister-in-law, what I'm
going to say may sound ungentleel to you, but I hope you'll never mind.” Jing Quan said, “You
shouldn't worry about that. We're all friends, aren't we?” Bai Kun then said, “Sister-in-law, I
can't stand any more. My dick is hard. I want to fuck your cunt!” Jade Sister blushed all over
upon hearing this and rose to leave. Li, however, caught her by the arm, saying laughingly,
“Don't be ashamed, don't be ashamed. Every woman does that.” Laurel and Rue were standing
aside. They both burst out laughing. Jing Quan laughed too. He said, “Elder brother, you were
really far too ungentleel and unscholastic.” Bai Kun said. “We're doing unscholastic things, so
what's the need to show off to them our knowledge of the classics? In terms of the conventional
principle. I shouldn't have screwed your asshole and you shouldn't have screwed my wife's cunt
from the very beginning.” “You're right.” Jing Quan said, “Such being the case, I have no reason
to restrain myself any more. My cock is standing too. Sister-in-law, could you please let me
screw your cunt? I'm horny.” Li replied. “You've fucked me before. But your wife is still
reluctant. You should talk her around.” Jing Quan said to Jade Sister. “It's no use feeling
ashamed. You can't escape anyway.” Jade Sister said. “You've taken me in.” Laurel broke in.
“This is a pleasure. Why so stubborn?” Rue poked fun at her, saying, “You came here yourself.
Who else you can blame?” Jade Sister cursed. “You oily mouths! Don’t you know you have only
small pussies between your thighs and I'll never need your comments, eh?” Li said, smiling, “My
good sister. please don’t say any more. You'd better be quick to strip your clothes off and let your
erlder brother fuck you.” Although Jade Sister was still unwilling to comply, she had actually been
aroasted already. Li stretched out her hands to pull at Jade Sister's pants. while Bai Kun carried
Jade Sister to bed. After having a quick kiss, Bai Kun let Li continue her stripping work on Jade
Sister until the latter was stark-naked. Jade Sister covered her eyes with her hands, rather
shamefaced. Bai Kun took his clothes off. He put Jade Sister's legs up and started to ram his
member into that fissure of her thighs... Jing Quan kept looking on when Bai Kun was screwing
Jade Sister. Seeing his beautiful wife being immersed in wonton frolics of copulation, Jing Quan
became rather jealous and excited. He caught hold of Li and pressed her down onto a bench.
They cast off their clothes and became stark-naked too. Jing Quan held Li's face in both his
hands and kissed her twice on the mouth. Li said. “Honey, let's chat first to renew our sweet
experience. You know your precious cock is far too big for me. You have to be slow, all right?”
Among various forms of group sex, carnal orgy usually receives a prominent attention from authors of erotic fiction. Orgy is similar to swinging in that it often involves two couples having sex together. But it is much wilder and contains more people: maids, menservants in addition to the participating couples, as is depicted in *Yiqing zhen*. Ling makes no graphic elaboration of orgy in his stories. Only in “The Wife Swappers” there appears a very brief scene of an orgiastic party — so brief it may be easily overlooked. The party is held in Yi’s house and the participants include high-class courtesans, Yi’s friends notorious for their debauchery, the two husbands Yi and Hu, as well as their wives Di and Men. Di and Men do not really take part in sexual intercourse; they are simply voyeurs hiding themselves behind the bamboo curtain to watch their husbands and other people flirting with courtesans and doing all kinds of lewd activities. In this sense, therefore, their orgy is different from those which function as a dramatic climax in the majority of erotic fiction: it is only preparatory. — to prepare the two wives for a future swapping by stirring up their lust with an amorous live performance.

What Ling writes most in his stories is *menage a trois*. Because of the system of concubinage in the imperial China, it was not unusual for a man to have sex with two or more

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标签: 色情, 群交, 女妾制

344 See *Yiqing zhen*, pp. 133-151.


346 Strictly speaking, the polygamy in China was one husband and one wife, plus more than one concubine. The imperial Chinese law prohibited bigamy, but allowed men to take concubine(s). According to *Ming huidian* (The Collection of Statutes of the Ming), the number of concubines was legally restricted: ten concubines for princes and four for their posterity (they could take two concubines first when they did not have son at the age of twenty-five and two more when they reached the age of thirty but still did not have son), three for generals (they were allowed to take two concubines first when they did not have son at the age of thirty and one more later when they reached thirty-five but still did not have a son), and one for common people when they did not have son at the age of forty. See Chen Dongyuan 陈東運, *Zhongguo funu shenghuo*
than two women at the same time. So it is quite natural that Yi, after his sexual conquest of Men, wants to take her as his concubine and engage her in menage a trois to satisfy his erotic quirks. “My wife is not jealous at all,” he tells Men. “The other day she proposed that I take you home and she help me seduce you. After we get married and live together, the three of us can enjoy pleasure together. Isn't it wonderful!”

In fact, menage a trois is not confined to polygamous marriage. This sex practice is always related with extramarital activities. A maid is also her mistress' bedfellow in their

shi 中國婦女生活史 (A History of the Life of Chinese Women), p. 207. Usually the concubine's position was much lower than the wife's. Some of them had to live in a separate residence (the concubine lived in a separate residence was called “waifu” 外婦, external woman). Cf. Gaspar da Cruz's description: “Commonly the men have one wife... yet may every one have as many wives as he is able to maintain; but one is the principal with whom they live, and the others he lodgeth in sundry houses. And if he hath dealings in divers regions, he hath in every one a wife and house with entertainment.” See Charles Ralph Boxer, ed., South China in the Sixteenth Century, p. 150. But Dyer Ball points out that concubines lived more often under one roof but in separate rooms. "Only one woman in a man's household holds the position of a proper wife; all the others — and he may take as many as he likes — are not principal wives, or legal ones; but secondary wives or concubines, though their children are on an equality with those of the first wife." See Dyer Ball, Things Chinese (Hong Kong: Kelly & Walsh, 1903), p. 372. For a description of lower social status of concubines, which was perhaps not better than that of the high-class prostitute in the modern Western society, see Zhang Dai, Tao'an mengyi, pp. 46-47.

347 The most extreme example can be found in the novel Xinghua tian 杏花天 (When the Apricot Trees Were in Bloom), in which the protagonist has a special bed made, big enough to allow himself and his twelve “wives” sleep on it and make love together. See Xinghua tian, in Zhongguo guyan xipin congkan 中國古艷稀品叢刊, p. 171.


349 It seems that the tradition of this sex practice in extramarital activities can be traced back at least to the time when Cang Jie invented Chinese characters. “What a genius Cang Jie 倉頡 was,” Li Yu wrote in his Rou putuan, “to invent the character script for our use... There’s not so single stroke in any of the characters he invented that does not have its meaning. For instance, the character jian 妖 in jianyi 妖淫 (adultery) is composed of three nu 女 (woman) characters. Since you three are living together and committing adultery, you must surely appreciate the brilliance of the invention!” See Patrick Hanan, trans. Carnal Prayer Mat, p. 246.
lovenaking trio\textsuperscript{350} and concubines are accomplices too for the sake of their collaborative seduction, as Ling describes in “In the Harem.” What strikes me most about maid/mistress relationship in the story “In the Harem” is the active role the maid plays and the generosity her mistress shows toward her. It is interesting to note that in this story Madam Jade's seduction of Ren Junyong is first (or partly) motivated by her maid Rosy Cloud. Even before Madam Jade puts her seductive plan into action, Rosy Cloud has made it clear to her mistress that later she would also like to share the adulterer with her. “Madam,” says Rosy Cloud, rather boldly, “you really should think up a good way so that he can come in and we can both of us enjoy pleasure together.”\textsuperscript{351} She only gets a smiling scold from her mistress,\textsuperscript{352} and is indeed allowed to join them on the same bed after Ren Junyong has been seduced.

Rosy Cloud is not the only one who joins Madam Jade on the same bed. There is another woman. Madam Beautiful Moon, who also envies Madam Jade and wants to share pleasure with her. When she is alone with Madam Jade, she cannot help asking the latter to give her a chance, and to her surprise, she gets her consent:

“Is he (Ren Junyong) coming tonight?” Madam Beautiful Moon asked.

“Why not?” said Madam Jade. “To be frank with you, he comes every night. It's unlikely that he'll stop coming tonight.”

“When he comes, you’ll still keep him to yourself?” Madam Beautiful Moon smilingly

\textsuperscript{350} Cf. the similar relationship between Golden Lotus 潘金蓮 and her maid Plum 春梅 in Jin Ping Mei.

\textsuperscript{351} Erke pai'an jingqi, vol. 2, p. 700; translation, p. 322.

\textsuperscript{352} “Madam Jade smilingly scolds her, 'I haven't got him yet, but you have begun to think of sharing the benefit with me.'” Erke pai'an jingqi, vol. 2, p. 700; translation, p. 322.
asked.

"Elder sister, you said yourself that you wouldn't take part in such sort of things."

"Well," said Madam Beautiful Moon, "that's not my sincere words. I would also like
to have some fun the way you did."

"If this is what you want, elder sister, I'll surely give way to you. Tonight I'll send him
to your room as he comes."

"But I'm not familiar with him. I'd feel embarrassed if he came directly to my room.
Actually I just want to be your helper."

"I don't need a helper, you know," Madam Jade smilingly said.

"I'm always timid at the beginning, so I'd better take your place to make it with him.
You keep it concealed until we've got familiar with each other," Madam Beautiful Moon
suggested.

"If you only want this," said Madam Jade, "you may just hide yourself somewhere
first. After he gets into my bed and takes off his clothes, I'll put the light out and let you
replace me."

"My good sister, are you sure you will help me?"

"Of course!" Madam Jade said.

Madam Jade does not eat her word. In the evening she helps Madam Beautiful Moon to
have sex with Ren Junyong until she reaches her orgasm. Also equally interesting in this story is
the companionship between the concubines Sister Smile 宣笑姐 and Aunt Flower 餐花姨, a
companionship formed simply for a purpose of joint seduction and intercourse. Without another
suitable man available, they can, understandably, only find their prey in Ren Junyong, the
common adulterer of Madam Jade and Madam Beautiful Moon. In order to grab him from their
rivals' hands and taste the delight of menage a trois in a similar manner, Sister Smile and Aunt

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Flower hide themselves one night in an invisible place for a premeditated interception. No sooner has Ren Junyong climbed over the wall and gone down the ladder than Sister Smile darts out, shouting, "Man! You got over the wall from outside and what'd you think you gonna do here in our women's quarters, eh?" And at this moment Aunt Flower charges out. She catches hold of Ren Junyong's clothes and screams, "Thief! Thief!" Ren Junyong, who is afraid that they may report him to the steward, has no alternative but follow their instruction, tiptoeing to Sister Smile's boudoir, where Aunt Flower joins them and the three of them sleep on one bed. The enjoyment is indeed different in sharing out this man, who, experienced in making love in trio, makes both the women "toss and turn like clouds and rain raging in a fury, like mandarin ducks being in heat in their conjugal felicity."

If the relationship between Sister Smile and Aunt Flower is characterized by the camaraderie or "sisterhood," then such relationship can also be found in other female characters. Unlike "viragos" or "shrews" who people some famous late Ming novels, women

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356 I deliberately avoid using "wifehood," a term coined in Writing Women in Late Imperial China. The reason that I prefer to use the word "sisterhood" is because it is broader in coverage, including not only the relation between concubines (wives) but also some other relations such as the relation between mistress and maid, although it is true that "sisterhood" sometimes may not be as accurate as "wifehood."


358 The most famous novel about shrews or viragos is Xingshi yianyuan zhuan 醒世姻缘传 (The Bonds of Matrimony). For discussions of the novel and its authorship, see Xu Zhimo
in Ling's stories are usually not jealous, and we can say that they even regard it as their virtue to share sexual pleasure with each other. The rich lady in "The Elopement of a Nun" is another such a generous woman, so generous that she volunteers to offer the nun the benefit of sharing her lover with her. The lover is a handsome lad whom the rich lady gets acquaintance with when she is praying in a nunnery, and it is she who initiates the seduction by carrying him into the bed and engaging him in sexual intercourse. As a widow whose husband has been dead for three years, the rich lady cannot bear lonely nights and wants to keep this lad with her as her constant bedmate. For this purpose, she needs to get help from the abbess, who is in the position to give him the tonsure and bring him to her residence in the disguise of a nun without causing suspicion. In return for her service the rich lady promises that she will let the abbess partake in their sexual enjoyment. As a licentious nun, the abbess shows a strong interest in taking part in their lovemaking, though she is not quite certain if this is really what her friend will allow her to do. "The only thing I am worried about is that you might be jealous of me should I share pleasure with you," the abbess tells the rich lady of her misgiving. "It's I who want to get your help, so you needn't worry that I'll be jealous of you. After you come to my house. I may even ask you to sleep with us on the same bed."359 Later the rich lady does keep her

徐志摩. "Xingshi yinyuan zhuan xu" 醫世姻緣傳序(Preface to The Bonds of Matrimony) and Hu Shi. "Xingshi yinyuan zhuan kaozheng" 醫世姻緣傳考證(Study of The Bonds of Matrimony), both of which are attached to Xingshi yinyuan zhuan, ed. Huang Suqiu 黃肅秋 (Shanghai: Guji chuban she, 1981), pp. 1435-1497. For a new contribution to the studies of the authorship, see Zhang Qingjie 張清潔, Xingshi yinyuan zhuan xinkao 醫世姻緣傳新考(A New Study of The Bonds of Matrimony). Some other novels or novellas about shrews, such as Liaodu yuan 嫉妒緣(The Cure for Jealousy) and Cu hulu 醋葫蘆(Gourd of Vinegar), are discussed by Keith McMahon in his recent publication Misers, Shrews and Polygamists (Duke University Press, 1995), chapter 3, pp. 66-81.

promise by inviting the abbess to sleep with them together. The abbess teaches the rich lady various lovemaking skills and they find an immense sensual delight in their *manage a trois*, in which — if it is not an exaggerated description — “nothing was extra and nothing could not be put into use except for one of their heads.”360

There is, in Ling’s erotic stories, also a reversed *menage a trois*. Normally, *menage a trois* consists of one man and two women; but a reversed *menage a trois* is made up by two men and one woman, opposite in gender combination. Of the five stories I have translated, “One Woman and Two Monks” is perhaps the most explicitly erotic because of its narrative necessity of recounting the details of this type of sexual occurrence. As the title of my translation shows, this perverted *menage a trois* takes place between a woman and two monks. The heroine of the story, Du社, is a voluptuous village wench. Thinking her husband too coodish to be her match, she dreams of having sex with other men, though it is not of her own accord that she agrees to have a sexual bout with two fellows at the same time. What happens is that one day on her way back home she takes shelter from rain in a monastery and sees a handsome young monk named Zhiyuan. She fancies him so much that she goes into their living quarters at the latter’s invitation. She expects to make love with him after having been led into a bedroom, yet unexpectedly ends up falling into the hands of his master, the old monk, who jumps out from behind the bed and firmly grabs her in his hands, with “his organ butting aimlessly against her from behind his pants.”361 After a coy resistance Du cannot but yield to him, and later in the evening, upon the young monk’s insistence, has to let the old monk sleep with them on the same bed. The story


describes the bed scene as follows:

After supper the three of them did sleep together on one bed. Du put her arms around Zhiyuan's neck as soon as they got onto the bed, paying no attention to the old monk. As the old monk had ejaculated during the day, his organ was still too soft to erect. He decided to let them have intercourse first, thinking that might help stimulate his own sexual desire. Their lovemaking scream, accompanied by the squeaking noises of copulation, indeed worked him up. Fervidly he began to savor her charms here and there, and then threw one arm around her and with the other pressed her to his bosom. His caress of her snatch, now filled by Zhiyuan's member, made him feel so aroused that his object down below, urged on by his own kneading, became semi-hard. He tried to push his disciple aside to replace him. Zhiyuan had just reached the summit of his ecstasies and was unwilling to give way to his master. Meanwhile, Du also clutched Zhiyuan tightly with both her hands to protect him from being pushed down.  

What is worth noticing in this preceding passage is voyeurism on the part of the old monk. In the morally loose period like the late Ming, in which men and women liked to peep at other people in action, voyeurism actually constitutes an indispensable component in menage a trois. It is an integral part not only in this menage a trois sui generis but in menage a trois in general. Madam Jade is so aroused in seeing Madam Beautiful Moon being laid by Ren Junyong that she takes off her clothes and jumps onto the bed to join them. Lady Di in “The Wife Swappers” cannot control herself after watching Hu's flirtation with the call girls and resolves to commit herself to adultery. (The most interesting is an example from Li Yu's Rou putuan:

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Aunt Flora, the middle-aged woman in the novel, is so dependent on erotic incentive in her sexual intercourse that only lewd cries she hears from her maid having sex with her husband are able to bring her to "a fever pitch."

If there is anything that can explain why Ling's characters are so fond of *menage a trois*, it must be, I suppose, voyeurism it involves, or rather, sexual stimulation provided by voyeurism.

The monks' reversed *manage a trois* have actually brought our attention to a conspicuous phenomenon in Ling's stories: the sexual activities of the clergy. In theory these people were supposed to lead an ascetic life for religious cultivation. But as a matter of fact illegal sex that transgressed church regulations was often carried on among them. Despite his Buddhist leanings, Ling seems not to have had favorable impression of them. Almost all the monks and nuns he depicts in his stories appear as "hungry devils of lust."

The monk Guangming 廣明 in the prologue tale of "One Woman and Two Monks" seems to be a hospitable and magnanimous man inclined to make friends with officials and scholars, yet behind scenes he is a woman abductor. There is a mysterious cabin in his monastery, which through a secret tunnel leads to the basement, a secret place where he keeps five or six women

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365 See Patrick Hanan, *The Carnal Prayer Mat*, pp. 258-259: "There is nothing to surpass it among all the thrills and pleasures of sex. It means lying beside a pair of lovers and listening to the sounds they make — enough to drive you wild with delight. I've always taken a special pleasure in listening to other people in action. While my husband was alive, I used to get him to seduce a maid and do it as rapidly and noisily as possible, so that the girl was quite beside herself and began to cry out. That would bring me to a fever pitch."

366 It seems that in the late Ming Buddhist and Daoist priests were notorious for their involvement in illicit sexual activities. Licentious monks and nuns appear not only in Ling's erotic stories, but also in other erotic works, among which the most famous one is *Seng ni niehai* 僧尼孽海 (The Sea of Iniquities of Monks and Nuns).

abducted from nearby villages. Whenever he wants to have sex with them, he just knocks at his wooden fish and they will show up from the tunnel. Beside Guangming the abbess of the Nunnery of Green Duckweed in "The Elopement of a Nun" is by no means inferior. She is so lascivious that she actually differs not much from a brothel procurress. She makes her disciples work like harlots and she herself, taking advantage of her seniority and position, will be the first to sleep with the man lured into the nunnery if she finds him attractive. While Gaungming is clandestine, the abbess is quite overt about her sexual life. "You think we are celibates?" she says to her friend, the rich lady from the south. "To be honest with you, we have patrons to accompany us from time to time."368 Her similar but more superior parallel is the supervising "nun" of the Nunnery of Merits and Virtues in the prologue tale of the same story, who is actually a man disguised as a woman. With his huge penis and unusually excellent skill in the art of bedchamber, he is able to copulate with ten women in a night and seduce both village housewives and ladies from good families. If the Nunnery of Green Duckweed functions as an unlicenced pleasure quarters for men, his nunnery is a de facto bawdyhouse for women, in which female "pilgrims" can stay either for a night or for days on end, to immerse themselves in the raptures of sex.

Seduction, prostitution and abduction369 are surely not extreme means they take to feast


369 According to He Manzi 何滿子, the illicit sexual activities of monks and nuns can be divided into three types: (1) abduction, (2) prostitution and (3) seduction. The first type is that monks abduct and conceal women in their monastery, and rape them whenever they like to. The second type is that nuns act the way a prostitute or a go-between does to her patron. They hook men into spending a night with them or their friends, but instead of charging them for staying overnight in their nunnery, they provide them with food and wine. The third type is that monks go to women's residence to seduce them or keep tryst with them. See He Manzi, Zhongguo
their lust. They can even commit homicide for the same purpose. The lecherous old monk in
"One Woman and Two Monks," seeing the young village woman Du taking shelter from rain in
his monastery, gets so excited as to have his disciple entice her into his bedroom and compel her
to have intercourse with him. Rape and murder usually go hand in hand. Although the first time
the old monk is successful in getting his lustful desire fulfilled, his use of violence to force Du to
make love with him eventually leads to a tragic end of her life:

Hearing footsteps approaching her bed, Du took it for granted that Zhiyuan was
coming back from his errand. She thought that all this time spent in his master's bedroom
must have sufficed to complete his task. "Elder Brother," she called, "please shut the door! I
don't want the old crock to come and harass me."

The old monk, upon hearing what she said, was boiled with fury. He shouted in a
wrathful voice, "Yes, the old crock must have you sleep with him tonight!" He then reached
out his hand, and with one pull, already dragged Du half-way down from the bed.

"Why are you so violent?" seeing him bearing down on her menacingly, Du cried.
"You can't force me into submission!" She clung to the bed firmly and struggled. As the old
monk kept on pulling her, Du screamed, "Even if you kill me, I won't sleep with you!"

"You dare attempt to resist!" the old monk burst out in rage. "I'll give you a stab and
put an end to you!" He seized her by the throat. In a fit of fury he was so forceful he choked
her to death. Du twitched twice and died immediately.370

Similar to the sex of the religious, albeit completely in a different category, is
homosexuality. because legally speaking, neither of them will bring about an institutional


aiging yu liangxing guanxi 中國愛情與兩性關係 (Love and Sexual relations in China) (Hong
union.\footnote{371 If the frequency of illicit sex occurring among the Buddhist priests can be ascribed to the fact that most of them came from the bottom of society and had not yet reached the stage of absolute extinction of desire, the origin of popularity of male homosexuality in the Ming seemed to be also related to a specific class of people at the lowest rung of the social scale whom was historically referred to as \textit{jianmin} 贱民 (base people).\footnote{372} Since Fujian province was where

\footnote{371 I should point out that, according to Shen Defu 沈德符, in Fujian province, gay males did give a “bond” ceremony if they wanted to win social recognition for the establishment of their homosexual relationship. Still, their relationship was informal. When the younger “bond brother” reached the age for marriage, he would finally break up with his elder brother. See Shen Defu, \\textit{Bizhou xuan shengyu} 敬帝軒剩語 (The Leftover Words from the Worn-out-Broom Studio) (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1939), \textit{juan} 3, p. 45. For more discussion, see Vivien Ng, \"Homosexuality and the State in Late Imperial China,\" in \textit{Hidden From History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past}, pp. 85-86. There were, of course, some exceptions. The most glaring example of this is perhaps the marital relationship between two male characters in Li Yu's story, \"A Male Mencius Mother Raises her Son Properly by Moving House Three Times.\" See Patrick Hanan, ed., \textit{Silent Opera} (Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 1992), pp. 99-134.

\footnote{372} Matthew Ricci gave reasons for this as follows: \"This special class of temple servants is considered to be, and in reality is, the lowest and most despised caste in the whole kingdom they come from the very dregs of the populace, and in their youth are sold into slavery to the Osciani. From being servants they become disciples and afterward succeed to the positions and to the emoluments to their masters. This method of succession is accepted in order to preserve the office. Not a single one of them could ever have elected of his own will to join this vile class of cenobites as a means to leading a holy life. Being no inclination toward learning and good manners, their natural bent to evil becomes worse with the lapse of time... Though not a marrying class, they are so given to sexual indulgence that only the heaviest penalties can deter them from promiscuous living." See Louis Gallagher, trans., \textit{China in the Sixteenth Century: The Journals of Matthew Ricci: 1583-1610}, pp. 100-101.

\footnote{373} According to Xiaoming Xiong 小明雄, \textit{jianmin}, by origin, could be barbarians from the south, or the Mongol who had migrated to Fujian and Guangdong provinces. Although the Mongol enjoyed high social status in the Yuan dynasty, they were nevertheless forced to live as pirates in the Ming, and their social position was not even better than slaves. When their boats were at anchor, what they did was basically to sell their bodies as male prostitutes. See Xiaoming Xiong, \textit{Zhongguo tongxing'ai shilu} 中国同性爱史錄 (A Historical Account of Homosexuality in China) (Hong Kong: FenHong sanjiao chuban she, 1984), p. 149. Of course, the popularity of homosexuality in the Ming was also related to some other political or economic factors, for
jīnjùn lived and was best known for male homosexuality. People in the Ming times euphemistically called male homosexuality "southern custom" 南風 (nánfēng)\(^{374}\). Down to the late Ming, according to Xie Zhaozhe's 謝肇淛 (1567-1624) Wu zazu 五雛話 (The Five Miscellanies), this "southern custom" became such a fashion that it could be found in northern cities as well.\(^{375}\) From Xie's account as well as from some other sources, we can infer that by the end of sixteenth century male homosexuality had been generally tolerated by the whole society. Van Gulik believed that lesbianism\(^{376}\) in the late Ming was "quite common"\(^{377}\) whereas male instance, the prohibition on officials from visiting brothels, inexpensiveness of having sex with male prostitutes, and severe political persecution (which made a large number of catamites available). For details, see Xie Zhaozhe, Wu zazu, juan 8, p. 209; Weixing shiguan zhaizhu 唯性史觀齋主, Zhongguo tongxinglian mishi 中國同性戀秘史 (A Secret History of Homosexuality in China) (Hong Kong: Yuzhou chuban she, 1961), vol 2, pp. 77-78; Liu Dalin, Zhongguo gudai xing wenhua, pp. 788-789; Xiaoming Xiong, Zhongguo tongxing'ai shilu, pp. 150-151.

\(^{374}\) "Male homosexuality" 男風 and "southern custom" 南風 are homophones in Chinese and can be used interchangeably.

\(^{375}\) See Xie Zhaozhe, Wu zazu, juan 8, p. 209. In the Ming dynasty, especially in the late Ming, homosexuality was so popular among literati that they humorously called their homosexual behavior "waijiuo" 外交 (external intercourse) and their heterosexual relation with their wife and concubine(s) "neijiaon" 內交 (internal intercourse). The majority of literati enjoyed both "internal intercourse" with their wife and concubine(s) and external intercourse with handsome young men from outside. See Liu Dalin, Zhongguo gudai xing wenhua, p. 788. See also Wu zazu, juan 11, pp. 328-329.

\(^{376}\) The term "lesbian," derived from Lesbos, a Greek island on which the woman poet, Sappho, lived in the sixth century B. C., refers to a woman who loves other women emotionally and usually, but not always, sexually, and her "lesbian" relationship with other women has often been exclusively homosexual. See Jean-Charles Seigneuret, ed., Dictionary of Literary Themes and Motifs (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), vol. 2, p. 747. In Chinese erotica, however, no lesbian devotes herself to homosexual love only. In spite of this difference, however, I still use the term "lesbian" and "lesbianism" for the sake of convenience.

\(^{377}\) See Sexual Life in Ancient China, p. 163.
homosexuality was relatively rare. His assumption, however, has not yet been borne out and all evidence we have from late Ming erotic literature points to the contrary. In Ling’s erotic stories, men involved in homosexuality are as many as seven, including Judge Lin 林斷事, Guard Yu 俞門子, Commander Yang Jian, Ren Junyong, Zhiyuan 智圓, Old monk and Wenren, while we can find lesbianism only in Madam Jade and her maid Rosy Cloud.

As a lesbian example, the relationship between Madam Jade and Rosy Cloud is enlightening. It reveals that female homosexuality is taken simply as a poor substitute for heterosexuality. Madam Jade, as we have seen before, is a woman of strong sexual desire. As she finds nights too lonesome to stand when her husband is away to visit his ancestors’ graves, she invites her intimate personal maid Rosy Cloud to sleep with her. To give vent to her suppressed libido. Madam Jade talks to the maid about sex. When she is aroused, she has the maid take out the dildo, put it on around her waist and make love with her as if she were a man. The maid does as her mistress asks, making her mistress moan with pleasure and wriggle her belly up enthusiastically. What is of particular interest to us is the way they perform coitus. We notice that they use dildo, whereas there is no mention of their cunnilingus. Other late Ming erotica also confirm that the dildo is a sexual instrument commonly used by women engaging in homosexual

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378 Male homosexuality is mentioned or described in almost all late Ming erotic fiction, and there are three erotic story collections exclusively centering around this theme: Bian er chai 弁而釵 (Hairpins Beneath his Cap), Yichun xiangzhi 宜春香質 (Fragrant Bodies Suitable for Lovemaking), and Longyang vishi 龍陽逸史 (Anecdotal History of Male Love). On the contrary, lesbianism, to my knowledge, appears only briefly in Ling’s story, in Xu Jin Ping Mei 續金瓶梅 (A Sequel to The Golden Lotus), and in Xinghua tian (When Apricot Trees Were in Bloom).

379 Although in "The Elopement of a Nun" there is no mention of Wenren’s homosexual relations with men, judging from his initial attempt to have an anal sex with Jingguan — a disguised Buddhist “monk,” he should have had some homosexual experience before.
activities and that cunnilingus popular among modern Western lesbians is hardly applied. This
dildo phenomenon, I think, can be explained by the fact that most of the late Ming lesbians in
erotic literature are bisexual, generally lacking a deep affection toward their homosexual partners
as their modern Western counterparts do. They take homosexuality as an imitation of
heterosexuality and resort to it only when they are alone at home and need to allay their sexual
hunger, although as a poor substitute it cannot really satisfy their “sexual appetite,” as is shown
by the dialogue made between Madam Jade and Rosy Cloud in the middle of their sex play:

“Is this dildo as good as a real man?” she (Rosy Cloud) asked.

“It's only for fun and can’t really satisfy our sexual appetite,” the mistress replied. “The
taste of a real man is of course much better.”

Comparing female homosexuality with male homosexuality prevailing in the late Ming,
we see there is a similarity: while the former is a vicarious means for sensual pleasure applied by
the lonely women who are confined in their boudoirs and thereby unable to have real sexual
intercourse with men, the latter seems to have been practiced by men mainly for enjoying
different kind of erotic relish. Of all the men involved in homosexuality in Ling's stories, none is
a straight gay and none shows commitment toward his partner. For examples, Wenren is a
romantic youth of bisexual proclivity, and the old monk enjoys having sex with women much
more than he enjoys having sex with men, preferring to eat “chick” (woman) instead of “homely
food” (man) whenever there is a female available; Commander Yang Jian, a married man with


a bevy of wives and concubines, can be as cruel as to castrate his ex-catamite Ren Junyong, and Judge Lin, in spite of his ostensible affection toward his young partner Guard Yu, does not feel guilty at all of dismissing him from his employment for some minor transgressions. To them, homosexuality is simply situational and hedonistic — for the fun of sex rather than for a stable loving partnership. This hedonistic attitude is in effect not only accountable for their lack of love in their homosexual relationship, but also helps explain why trans-generational homosexuality is more common among them and why always those senior in age and position play the role of penetrator and youths or boys can only serve as their insertees.

Of all the stories discussed above, be they pre-marital romances or extramarital affairs or non-marital adventures, one can make a flat generalization: they are all marked by a focalization on sex rather than on love. Men estimate women according to their sexiness; women select men in the light of their virility and the size of their penis. Men seduce women in order to

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382 According to David Greenberg, homosexuality can be divided into four categories: “trans-generational homosexuality,” “trans-genderal homosexuality,” “class-structured homosexuality,” and “egalitarian homosexuality.” See Greenberg, The Construction of Homosexuality (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1988), p. 25. Bret Hinsch explains the meaning of “trans-generational homosexuality” as follows: It “involves the determination of social and often sexual roles according to relative age. In general, the older partner takes the active role, with the younger acting in the passive role.” See Hinsch, Passions of the Cut Sleeves, p. 11.

383 These two terms “penetrator” and “insertee” are used by Gary Leupp in his Male Colors (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995) and I have adopted them for their accuracy and conciseness.

384 Non-marital affairs refer to both homosexuality (including lesbianism) and sexual behavior of the clergy, because legally speaking, both gays or lesbians and the religious were not allowed to marry. Although in the Ming dynasty there was not a law prohibiting homosexual marriage, in Da Ming lu (The Legal Code of the Ming) it was stipulated that Buddhist and Daoist priests were to receive eighty bamboo strikes as punishment if they were involved in any kind of sexual activity. See Da Ming lu, p. 368.
possess their sexual organs; women keep liaison with men for the purpose of enjoying the pleasure of orgasm. To satisfy their erotic quirks, men will go visiting prostitutes and indulge themselves in group sex and homosexuality; to quench their sexual hunger, women are as bold as Pan Jinlian (Golden Lotus) in committing adultery and feel free to use lesbianism as their handy vicarious means when a male partner is unavailable. I admit that sex and love are not always clear-cut concepts.385 “Love,” by common euphemism, “is used to cover all the manifestations of sexual impulse” in the West.386 while in China “sex” was once also connected with sentimental passion 情 (qíng).387 it included love or generated love rather than being an antithesis to it.388 In Ling’s erotic fiction, however, sex is completely detached. It is simply taken as an urge of body and erogenous zones and all feelings other than sexual desire are excluded or de-emphasized. As Hu Shiyi 書氏 贼 perspicaciously notes, Ling in these stories does not describe loving affections between men and women. What he describes is their “sexuality in its naked form.”389

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385 For a detailed discussion, see Liu Zaifu 劉再復, “Guangyi qingyu lun” 廣義情欲論 (On the Generalized Concept of Love-Sex). in Shengming jingshen yu wenxue daolu 生命精神與文學 道路 (The Spirit of Life and the Road of Literature) (Taiwan: Fenyun shidai chuban gongsi, 1989), pp. 43-54.


387 This can be seen from what Disenchantment 驚幻仙姑 (Madam Fairy) says about “lust” in Honglou meng: “There are always any number of worthless philanderers to protest that it is woman’s beauty alone that inspires them, or loving feelings alone, unsullied by any taint of lust. They lie in their teeth! To be moved by woman’s beauty is itself a kind of lust. To experience loving feelings is, even more assuredly, a kind of lust. Every act of love, every carnal congress of the sexes is brought about precisely because sensual delight in beauty has kindled the feeling of love.” See David Hawks, trans., The Story of the Stone, vol. 1, p. 145.

388 What is contrasted with sex is not love but asceticism, as has been rightly pointed out by Patrick Hanan. See Hanan, The Invention of Li Yu, p. 123.

5. Repressive Mechanisms on Pleasure

So far I might have given a misleading impression that Ling worked only within the framework of erotic fiction. In fact, however, he also followed another tradition at the same time. the tradition that took literature as a vehicle for instructive purpose. If Ling cared about entertaining a broad audience and readers and intended to get them interested in his Erpai with sexual subject matters, he was equally, or even more, concerned with their moral education. Eroticism is actually just one plane of his stories. All his stories under discussion consist of two planes: one devoted to the presentation of sensual pleasure as I have demonstrated, and the other reserved for his commitment to the containment for an ethical purpose. To those critics who see only sexual aspects without giving a due attention to its repressive mechanisms, these stories with “obscene descriptions” seem to have been written only for the enjoyment of sex. Yet we do not have to go to the other extreme and apologize for them by overemphasizing their moralistic nature. What distinguishes Ling’s erotic stories is none other than the tension between sexuality and morality. This tension, from a formalist point of view, can be described as an interaction between story per se and the way of representation. However, given the fact that sexuality was socially embedded and moral constraint is basically a deliberate textual deployment on the part of the author, it is more appropriate to see it as a result of chiasmic formulations between “historicity of texts and textuality of history.”

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391 I borrow this phrase from Louis Montrose, the meaning of which he explained as follows:
Of course, there is not always a clear-cut division between “textuality” and “historicity.” In actual presentation we will see it is often the situation that these two planes are intermingled with each other. Before we turn to the didactic parts which are relatively detached and independent, it is necessary for us to first attend to his controlling mechanisms, the “textuality” in “historicity” which the author himself called “decent ways of writing” 笔墨雅道 (bimo yadao).392

In his “Introductory Remarks” 凡例 (fanli) to his stories, Ling says that he was determined to follow “decent ways of writing” in order not to be condemned as a “guilty writer.”393 In sticking to this standard he set for himself, especially in the part in which sexuality he was to present may “corrupt customs and damage readers’ health,” Ling often applies linguistic containment. His frequent change over to wenyan 文言 (the literary language) from baihua 白话 (the lingua franca) clearly manifests his stratagem of making use of linguistic means for sexual repression. Wenyan and baihua, though sometimes not quite distinguishable.395

“By the historicity of texts, I mean to suggest the cultural specificity, the social embedment, of all modes of writing — not only the texts that critics study but also the texts in which we study them. By the textuality of history, I mean to suggest, firstly, that we can have no access to a full and authentic past, a lived material existence, unmediated by the surviving textual traces of the society in question — traces whose survival we cannot assume to be merely contingent but must rather presume to be at least partially consequent upon complex and subtle social processes of preservation and effacement; that these textual traces are themselves subject to subsequent textual mediation when they are construed as the “documents” upon which historians ground their own texts. called “history.” See Louis Montrose, “The Poetics and Politics of Culture,” The New Historicism (New York: Routledge, 1989), p. 20

392 See Ling Mengchu. “Fanli” (Introductory Remarks) to Pai’an jingqi (no page number).

393 See ibid.

394 See ibid.

395 This is a controversial point. In his article “Buddhism and the Rise of the Written Vernacular in East Asia: The Making of National Languages,” Victor Mair says: “It must be pointed out that
are commonly used by modern scholars as functional concepts to designate the two sign systems, the bookish language system and colloquial language system. As Ling wrote in the vernacular, one may be inclined to agree with some scholars that colloquialness is a marked feature of his stories. In my opinion, however, to point out that there is a salient colloquial or dialectal element in the linguisticity of his stories is obviously not enough. In many places his stories are

difference between wenyan and baihua is at least as great as that between Latin and Italian or between Sanskrit and Hindi. In my estimation, a thorough linguistic analysis would show that unadulterated wenyan and pure baihua are actually far more dissimilar than are Latin and Italian or Sanskrit and Hindi." Journal of Asian Studies, vol. 53, 1994, p. 707. But in his essay "Weny o he baihua" 文言和白話 (Literary Language and Vernacular Language), Lu Shuxiang 吕叔湘 (1904-1998), a late Chinese distinguished philologist told us that he once gave his friends some paragraphs taken from a variety of old sources, asking them to ascertain whether or not these paragraphs were written in wenyan, and their opinions differed. For a detailed discussion of the difference or similarity between wenyan and baihua, see aforementioned article by Lu Shuxiang. in Lu Shuxiang wenji 吕叔湘文集 (The Works of Lu Shuxiang) (Beijing: Commercial Press, 1990). vol. 4. pp. 67-86.

Victor Mair uses "Literary Sinitic" and "written Vernacular Sinitic" to refer to these two language systems. See Mair, "Buddhism and the Rise of the Written Vernacular in East Asia." Journal of Asian Studies, p. 707.

For example, Li Mengsheng 李夢生 remarks: "Linguistic style [of Slapping the Table in Amazement] is compatible with its content. Three Words, due to their inclusion of a number of Song and Yuan stories, are linguistically heterogeneous. Some stories were largely or completely written in wenyan... and even the stories attributed to Feng Menglong himself are not exempt from mixing baihua with wenyan. By comparison, Slapping the Table in Amazement was written in a pure colloquial, which flows with ease and grace. Obviously, Slapping the Table in Amazement is more mature than Three Words." See Li Mengsheng, Zhongguo jinhui xiaoshuo baihua 中国禁毁小说白话 (Introduction to a Hundred Titles of the Chinese Banned Books) (Shanghai: Guji chuban she, 1994), p. 122.

Wang Gulu 王古鲁 in his introduction to Chuke pai'an jingqi remarks that Ling Mengchu's language, in spite of being smooth and natural, is blended with dialectal words and phrases used in Zhejiang and Jiangsu provinces. These words and phrases may not be difficult to understand to the southerners, but are barriers to the people living in the north or other regions. So he specially made annotations for the sake of readers' convenience. See ibid., p. 16. John Scott, the translator of Ling Mengchu's stories, acknowledged his indebtedness to Wang Gulu: "I have been greatly aided in my translation of some of the author's obscurer idioms in Wu dialect by Professor Wang
also strongly characterized by their use of the literary language. If we compare Erpai with source materials, we will find that Ling appropriated quite a few wenyan sentences or paragraphs from original texts. An example in point is the court verdict written by the judicial officer in the prologue tale of "The Elopement of a Nun." It is almost a verbatim copying of a wenyan story except for the "subtle transformation" of one or two words.

A considerable part of wenyan in Ling's erotic stories is related with sexuality. In referring to sexual parts, Ling usually resorts to old medical terms derived from ancient books on

399 Ling may have been guilty of running the gamut from "plagiarism" to "subtle transformation" — to use David Rolston's words (see his Traditional Chinese Fiction and Fiction Commentary, p. 5). But Ling defended himself in the "Introductory Remarks" (fanli), saying that he just followed the general practice of fiction composition. A large number of fictional works that made free use of other works — be they fiction or non-fiction work — do verify what Ling said was true. For instance, the beginning lyric (ci) of "The Wife Swapper" was obviously taken from Jin Ping Mei (chapter 1). Yet, according to Hanan, the author of Jin Ping Mei appropriated this lyric from a story entitled "Wenjing yuanyang hui" (A Tryst that Made the Lovers Beheaded) in Qingping shantang huaben collection. Hanan also pointed out that the original author of this lyric was a Song poet named Zhuo Tian. See Hanan, "The Sources of Jin Ping Mei," Asian Major, vol. 10, 1962, p. 32-34.

400 See Ling Mengchu, Pai'an jingqi, vol. 2, p. 726, second paragraph: "According to our investigation, the criminal Wang is a sly fugitive in the area of Wu. He advocates the White Lotus religion for the purpose of deceiving his simple believers, and puts on red makeup with the intention of passing himself off as a female. He used to be a monk studying under a Shaman magician. Later he changed himself into a boddhisattva and had pretty women tucked away in his golden house. When he, meditating in bed, moves his jade-like fingers and presses his tender hands together, who could tell whether he was a monk or a nun? As he lay on an embroidered couch taking off his golden lotus, who knew whether he is a man or a woman? A stork perches in a phoenix's nest and it is likely that they will make love. A snake travels into a dragon's cave and nobody can prevent them from doing the work of clouds and rain. The bright moon unwittingly shed its light on the white boudoir, and as a result found that the celibate was not alone. The clear breeze intentionally blew into the rich family, and consequently saw that the ascetic had company. Destroy his abode and burn his books! Make all traces of him disappear for good! Lay open his heart and gouge out his eyes! Let them compensate for the crime he has committed!"
the art of bedchamber,\textsuperscript{401} such as "yangwu" 陽物 (male endowment), "yangju" 陽具 (male organ), "yangdao" 陽道 (virility), "rouju" 肉具 (fleshly organ) and "nanxing" 男形 (male form),\textsuperscript{402} which, with their scientific tinge, are surprisingly reminiscent of the similar words like "machine," "engine" and "instrument" used by Cleland in referring to male genitals in his \textit{Fanny Hill}.\textsuperscript{403} Such stiff medical vocabulary is also applied when Ling describes certain skills of sexual intercourse.

\textsuperscript{401} It may be true that the books on the art of bedchamber were not easily available to Ming readers. But I do not think van Gulik was right when he claimed that "the influence of the handbooks of sex is not noticeable in the numerous novels, short-stories and plays of a general character that were written during the later part of the Ming dynasty." See \textit{Sexual Life in Ancient China}, p. 287. Even though we admit that the ancient "handbooks of sex" had indeed been lost by the Ming and those written by Ming authors were not widely circulated, the art of bedchamber could still be taught via oral transmission, as is noted by Keith McMahon. See McMahon, Misers, Shrews, and Polygamists, p. 58. The influence of the art of bedchamber on erotic fiction is, in my opinion, quite noticeable. It can be attested by the description of libertines' application of the sexual skills, including the use of aphrodisiacs, taught in the \textit{ars erotica}.

\textsuperscript{402} See Pai'an jingqi, vol. 2, p. 726, 541, 725, and 725. In my translation I have not always rendered these phrases literally for the sake of readability. Most of these words came from \textit{Yi jing} 易經 (The Book of Change) instead of from \textit{Sunu jing} 素女經 (The Classic of the Woman in White), \textit{Dongxuan zi} 洞玄子 (The Work of Master Dongxuan), \textit{Yufang mihue} 玉房秘訣 (Secret Formulations for Jade Rooms) and other medical texts collected in Tamba Yasuyori's \textit{Ishimpo}. The \textit{Book of Change}, though large not a work on the art of bedchamber, contains a considerable part discussing sex, or \textit{yinyang} 阴陽, as has been pointed out by van Gulik: "The \textit{Yi jing} stresses that sexual intercourse is the fundament of universal life, it being a manifestation of the cosmic forces \textit{yin} and \textit{yang}. The second part of the Commentary says in section 4: 'The constant intermingling of Heaven and Earth give shape to all things. The sexual union of man and woman gives life to all things.' And in the 5\textsuperscript{th} section of the first part it is observed: 'the interaction of one \textit{yin} and one \textit{yang} is called \textit{Dao} (the Supreme Path or Order), the resulting constant generative process is called change.' these two passages from the \textit{Yi jing} are often quoted in the later handbooks of sex, where 'one \textit{yin}' and 'one \textit{yang}' are taken to refer to a woman and a man." See van Gulik, \textit{Sexual Life in Ancient China}, p. 37. And it is in this book that some words indicating sexual organs and behavior like "yangwu" (male organ) and "yunyu" 雲雨 (lovemaking) were first used. According to van Gulik, "clouds" are "ova and vaginal secretions of woman," and "rain" is "the emission of semen of the man". See \textit{Sexual Life in Ancient China}, p. 39.

\textsuperscript{403} See John Cleland, \textit{Fanny Hill}, p. 30, 48 and 49.
and "caizhan zhi shu" (the art of getting female fluid through intercourse) and "suoyang zhi shu" (the art of contracting male organ) are two prominent examples in this respect. Besides the wenyan styled scientific phrases, Ling is equally fond of employing euphemisms and metaphors. For instance, "hanhua weiguon feng he yu" (a flower that is not yet used to wind and rain) alludes to "the vagina whose hymen still remains intact." "qiqiang" (flag and gun) to "penis" and "jiaofeng" (cross swords) to "engaging in a sexual bout." The more common euphemistic expressions in the Ming times were "yunyu" (clouds and rain, referring to lovemaking), "yunshou yusan" (clouds has dispersed and rain has stopped, referring to coitus that comes to an end), "houting" (rear courtyard) or "houting hua" (rear courtyard flower) to "anus," "nanfeng" (male custom, referring to homosexuality), "nanfeng yidun" (practice male custom, referring to male homosexual intercourse), and dianluan daofeng (referring to 69 position). All these phrases also

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404 Ji ji zhen jing (True Sutra of Assistance) has an exposition on how to get female fluids through intercourse. For details, see van Gulik, Sexual Life in Ancient China, p. 282. According to Ji ji zhen jing, female fluids include saliva, milk and vaginal secrete. "The upper is called the Red Lotus Peak, its medicine is named Jade Fountain, Jade Fluid, or Fountain of Sweet Spirits. This medicine emanates from the two cavities under a women's tongue. Its color is grey... The middle peak is called the Double Lotus Peak and its medicine is called Peach of Immortality, White Snow or also Coral Juice. This medicine emanates from the two breasts of a woman. Its color is white, its taste sweet and agreeable... Of the three peaks, this one should receive attention first. A woman who has not yet born a child and who has not yet milk in her breast will give the most benefit... The lower is called Peak of the Purple agaric, also the Grotto of the White Tiger, or the Mysterious Gateway. Its medicine is called White Lead." Quoted from van Gulik, Sexual Life in Ancient China, p. 283.

405 For these two terms, see Pai'an jingqi, vol. 2, p. 725.

406 For these three phrases, see respectively Pai'an jingqi, p. 734 and p. 544, and Erkepai'an jingqi, p. 708.

407 Xiuta yeshi has a pictorial explanation of what is called dianruan daofeng (or 倒鳳颠鸚
appear in the part of Erpai in which sexual activities are implied. Ling never broke his rule by making use of some salacious words, not to mention those linguistic taboos. “Bi” 屁 (cunt), “luan” 鸡 (cock) and “ri” 嘴 (fuck), which can everywhere be seen in some of late Ming novels, are in his stories absolutely excluded. Perhaps the only exception is “luandai tou” 乱代頭 (i.e., 門袋頭, the head of a cock), a ribald phrase of the Wu dialect used by the page boy A Si as a curse in “The Elopement of a Nun.” But we must note that in the original context this abusive expression is a pun, which can refer to the monk’s bald head rather than to the real head of his penis.

The poems 詩 (shi) in Ling’s stories, which come up to a large number, are all written in wenyan. With the high literary language that cannot be easily “automatized,” these poems

dao feng dianluan): “Starkly naked, they got into the bed together, with their arms encircling each other’s neck. Dali lay down on his back, and Jin straddled his body. Jin then turned herself around. She began to suck Dali’s cock and licked its head alternatively. Meanwhile, she was kneading her own pussy with her hand. Then she placed her opened vulva against Dali’s mouth and rubbed it with an intention of enticing him to lick her cunt. She said, ‘This is what is called dianruan dao feng.’” See ibid., p. 57.


409 See, for example, Jin Ping Mei, Xiuta yeshi and Yiqing zhen.


411 This is the term used by Jan Mukarosky. “Automatizaion” is opposite to “foregrounding.” “Objectively speaking: automatization schematizes an event; foregrounding means the violation of the scheme. The standard language in its purest form, as the language of science with formulation as its objective, avoids foregrounding; thus, a new expression, foregrounded because of its newness, is immediately automatized in a scientific treatise by an exact definition of its meaning.” See Mukarovsky, “Standard Language and Poetic Language,” in A Prague Reader on Aesthetics, Literary Structure, and Style, ed. Paul Garvin (Washington: George town University Press. 1964), p. 19.
usually give readers an aesthetic pleasure instead of inciting their lust in presentation of sexuality. It is in the poetic form that Ling on many an occasion describes amatory behaviors. In “In the Harem,” after “Madam Jade was so stirred up by her companion’s (Madam Beautiful Moon) sexual pleasure that she also stripped off her clothes and jumped onto the bed,” Ling refrains from getting directly into a detailed narration of how Ren Junyong makes love with these two concubines simultaneously. Instead, he uses the following quatrains to portray, in a symbolic way, their *menage a trois*:

Kissing green and hugging red are most exciting
On Mount Wu that is enveloped by clouds and rain.
A romantic is a butterfly that aroma is stealing,
Shuttling from east to west is simply for a change.

If we understand that the symbolic words “green” 绿 and “red” 红 stand for the two women, Madam Jade and Madam Beautiful Moon, and “a butterfly that aroma is stealing” for the adulterer Ren Junyong, and if we understand that the allusion “Mount Wu” 武山 refers to a place for sexual encounter and the metaphor “shuttling from east to west” to Ren Junyong’s dealing with his two paramours, then we can easily construct an amorous picture from this poem—a picture of their having sex in trio! The application of poems seems to be a facile way for Ling to avoid explicitly sensual scenes. In “One Woman and Two Monks,” an overt description of the

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414 For this allusion, see note of the translation “In the Harem.”
homosexual intercourse between the two young gay males Guard Yu and Zhiyuan would have been inevitable when they both “did sleep” together on the same bed reveling in their carnal pleasure, had there not been a four-line verse that “bears witness”\textsuperscript{415} to it, though in comparison with the poem just quoted it is relatively plain and less allegorical:

> Both young men are an equal match,  
> Taking turns a good time they catch;  
> To have sex, Zhiyuan is the first one,  
> Yet he offers his partner the same fun.\textsuperscript{416}

Ling was a versatile writer, almost equally capable of composing fiction, drama and poetry.\textsuperscript{417} And his versatility can also be seen in the field of poetry, in which he had a perfect command of not only \textit{shi} 詩 (poem), but \textit{ci} 詞 (lyric), \textit{qu} 曲 (song) and \textit{duiyu} 對語 (set-piece, to use Hanan’s translation\textsuperscript{418}) as well, if we consider the last type as a poetic form. In fact, the more common poetic form Ling assigned for sexual description is not “poem,” but “set-piece.” The set-

\textsuperscript{415} “Youshi weizheng” 有詩為証 (a poem that bears witness”) or sometimes “zhengshi” 正是 (truly) is the storyteller tag which usually precedes the poem.

\textsuperscript{416} Pai’an jingqi, vol. 2, p. 551; translation, p. 262.

\textsuperscript{417} Ling’s talent in writing fiction has been generally recognized. But most of us probably do not know that Ling was also a fine playwright and poet and his achievements in drama and poetry were highly thought of by his contemporaries such as Feng Menglong, Wang Yun and Zheng Longcai. For details, see Feng Menglong, \textit{Taixia xinzou}, in \textit{Feng Menglong quanj}, vol. 8, p. 230; Zeng Yongyi, \textit{Ming zaju gailun}, p. 330; Ye Dejun, “Ling Mengchu shiji xinian,” \textit{Xiaoshuo xiqu congkao}, vol. 2, p. 588.

\textsuperscript{418} Hanan in his introduction to his own translation \textit{Tower for Summer Heat} (New York: Ballantine Books, 1992), translated \textit{duiyu} as “set-pieces,” which he defines as follows: “[U]nhymed prose of elevated language and strict parallelism.” See ibid., p. xii.
piece, according to Chen Shidao 陈师道 (1053-1101), is an imitation of the language of Tang
classic tales 傳奇 (chuanqi).\footnote{In his 'Yueyang lou ji' 岳陽樓記 (On Yueyang lou)," Chen Shidao writes, "Lord Fan
Wenzheng 范文正 (i.e., Fan Zhongyan 范仲淹) describes the scenery in a set-piece and people
admired it very much. But his teacher Lu, after reading the prose, remarked: 'This is just chuanqi
style!'" See Chen Shidao, Houshan shihua 後山詩話 (Houshan's Remarks on Poetry), in Liu Yi
Cf. Hu Yinglin, Shaoshi shangfang bicong, juan 41, p. 555.}
It may not have a fixed number of words for each line and may
not adhere to the literary language throughout, but it does generally observe the standard prosody
by using rhythms, similes, metaphors and parallel or antithetical constructions. Because of its
analogy to pianwen 駃文 (parallel prose), which to some extent resembles Shakespeare's blank
verse, I have usually rendered the set-pieces into lines with metrical patterns (and with rhymes
too):

One at the height of his passion dashes madly to fight,
The other is lethargic, reluctant to make her partner satisfied.
One feels lucky to get hold of the food without much ado,
The other by wrongly offering her flower makes herself a fool.
One is so fervent as to gasp like a fire-fanning bellows,
The other is listless as if a sack that blood and bone holds.
For all its tasteless rashness they have undergone,
This momentary enjoyment is a love affair on every account.\footnote{Pai'an jingqi, vol. 2, p. 541; translation, p. 243.}

He meets a beauty like a starving tiger gulping a lamb.
As a thirsty dragon wants water, so is she crazy for the young man.
Lustful, the village wench likes to go wild and promiscuous,
Experienced, the Buddha man is able to conquer the lecherous.
One thrusts hard and the other with effort receives him,
Both of them vie to be triumphant, with equal enthusiasm.
Although the door is thrown widely open by the master,
Yet from the Bodhisattva the young disciple gets more water.\(^{421}\)

Both of the set-pieces are taken from "One Woman and Two Monks," respectively
describing the village woman Du's sexual intercourse with two monks — one with the master
Dajue and the other with his disciple Zhiyuan. Ling, like his predecessor, the author of *Jin Ping Mei* who seems to have been the first in depicting coitus in set-pieces,\(^{422}\) was apparently a
virtuoso in writing this special literary genre. In the passages cited above (quite pieces of work, I
should say), he plies a variety of rhetorical techniques, recounting the erotic scenes in such a
coded way that one can hardly feel its lubricity. Unless one is familiar with Chinese poetic
tradition, one probably will not easily associate the metaphors "food" and "flower" with the

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\(^{421}\) *Pai'an jingqi*, vol. 2, p. 542; translation, p. 245.

\(^{422}\) For example, in chapter 13 of *Jin Ping Mei*, Ximen Qing has a tryst with Li Ping'er 李瓶兒
and their lovemaking is presented in a set-piece: "When she [a maid] saw that the two of them
were going to engage in an illicit liaison that night, she stealthily pulled a hairpin out of her
headdress, poked a hole in the paper of the lower part of the casement, and peeped inside. Truly,
what were the two of them doing with each other? Behold:
By the gleam of lamplight,
Amid mermaid silk curtains;
One comes, the other goes,
One butts, the other lunges.
One of them stirs his jade arms into motion.
The other raises her golden lotuses on high.
This one gives vent to the warbling of an oriole,
That one gives voices to the twittering of a swallow.

woman Du and her vagina, nor will one fully appreciate the graphic similes “like a fire-fanning bellows” and “as if a sack that blood and bones holds” which illustrate the two parties in action—one (the Old Monk) is sexually incompetent and out of breath and the other (Du) is reluctant and languid, not quite different from a corpse. In the latter piece, the author shows an even more marvelous craftsmanship in his implication of erotic connotations. A pair of puns, “di” 稻 and “tiào” 跳 (literally, “buy rice” and “sell rice”), is exploited to implicitly refer to the copulation between Du and Zhiyuan, or to be more specific, to the act of their “thrusting” and “being thrust” (this pair of puns, unfortunately, has to be sacrificed in my translation due to its untranslatableness). And in the final couplet, one may have already noted, the ordinary word “door” and the religious allusion “Boddhisattva’s” “water” 菩提之水 are dexterously transmuted into the emblems for “vagina” and “a large quantity of female fluids that are flowing out in orgasm.”

As sexuality is narrated indirectly in the literary language, its linguistic opaqueness sometimes achieves such an intensity that it may be comparable to that of Joyce's Ulysses. In Ulysses, Joyce often writes in an obscure style in order to present the stream-of-consciousness of his characters, and Molly's preoccupation with anal-erotic thoughts narrated in a lengthy passage without punctuation is an example in point:

My hole is itching me always when I think of him I feel I want to feel some wind in me go easy not to wake him... I wish hed sleep in some bed by himself with his cold feet on me give me room even to let a fart... Thats a very nice invention too by the way only I like letting myself down after in the hole as far as I can squeeze and pull something in it.

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423 James Joyce, Ulysses. Quoted from Mormon Kiell, Variety of Sexual Experience, p. 144.
However, I must point out that there is an ostensible difference between Joyce and Ling. While Joyce's manipulation of language has something to do with his artistry, Ling's shift from *baihua* to *wenyan* was simply for the sake of morality — for making the actual sex play appear *intransparent*. We certainly cannot deny that Joyce sometimes stretched linguistic amorphism to such extent that it becomes too difficult to understand. But generally, his shapeless language allows him to present intermittent and irregular psychological activities in a more genuine way. On the contrary, the high literary vocabulary that Ling chose has only a distancing effect, and it never completely rises to the level of fusing with the real sexual behavior of his characters.

The incongruity between language and reality occurs in Ling's poems and set-pieces as much as it does in his narratives. The dialogue between Tangqing and the boatman's daughter, which is written in *wenyan* style, may catch our special attention:

"You're so beautiful and smart," Tangqing said, "you should find yourself a good husband who is worthy of you. It's a terrible pity that a colorful phoenix should stay in a chicken house by mistake!"

"I'm afraid you are not quite right," the girl replied. "A beautiful girl usually has an unfortunate life. It has been so ever since the time immemorial and I'm not the only one who suffers this fate. This is how we are predestined. How dare I complain about it?"24

To carry a conversation in *wenyan* is not always impossible. Tangqing, as a well-educated scholar, may indeed be able, if he wishes, to speak in a genteel way by using literary language. Nevertheless, even though we consider it as likely for him to address the girl he fancies in the
polite form of second-person pronoun “qíngjiā” (you) and describe her as “guóse” (a national beauty) and “wényuán cāifēng” (a colorful phoenix), still we can hardly imagine that the illiterate daughter of the boatman’s who has received no formal education should also be capable of talking in such an elegant manner and using literary phraseology (such as “jùnyán” 和 “jǐnyuán” 叹怨， meaning “your words” and “complaints”) and bookish expletives (such as “zhī 之” and “yì 了”, meaning “of” and “indeed”) which are apparently not compatible with her social status and education. To be sure, this is not meant to be a criticism of Ling’s artistry. By pointing out his non-realistic usage of language that obviously lacks a fusion with actuality. I only want to call attention to the fact that the author of Erpai did not aim at what we usually call “realism.” What he aimed at was simply his own goal: “decent ways of writing.”

His insistence upon “decent ways of writing” is, of course, not confined to linguistic containment. Behavioral containment is also a common strategy he applies in describing sexuality. His erotic stories, read in their entirety, may appear as a panoramic picture of illicit sex in the late Ming times, peopled by such sexual liberals engaging in various kinds of physical

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426 Rolston’s explanation, which I will paraphrase as follows, may help understand why Ling in his stories tends to slight the so-called “realism” or “reflectionism”: While faithful representation of the world was long held to be the highest goal in art in the West, little emphasis, in the mainstream Chinese aesthetics, was placed on the description of the outside world for its own sake; Chinese aesthetics tends to favor expressionism or impressionism 写意 (xiéyi) over realism 写实 (xíeshí); details from the outside world were incorporated into literary works as part of the symbolic expression of the author’s intent. See David Rolston, Traditional Chinese Fiction and Fiction Commentary (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), pp. 166-7.
enjoyment as we have seen in the previous part. But in fact this picture is not all-inclusive. What is conspicuously absent in it is the sexual behaviors that may be called aberrant. By "aberrant" sexual behaviors, I do not connote anything like "sinful" or "degenerate." The term in question rests on biological, psychological and sociological premises rather than on moral ones. In terms of different abnormalities, we can divide sexually deviate acts into three categories: heterosexual/homosexual mouth-genital contacts, sadism/masochism/sadomasochism, and incest/pseudo-incest. All of these sexual aberrations, however, are carefully avoided by Ling in his erotic stories.

Unlike most erotikers who show a strong interest in the "French way" of having sex, Ling never tried to go directly into the depiction of fellatio and cunilingus, no matter whether they are female-male, or male-male, or male-female or female-female performances. Cunilingus eludes us in the scene in which it is most likely to occur, as when Madam Jade and Rosy Cloud perform lesbian coitus. Similarly, in the prologue tale of "In the Harem," we are almost on the verge of seeing "pingxiao" (taste a "flute", i.e., fellatio) as a train of women are licking up the semen of their playmate, when the author comes to a halt, holding himself back from proceeding any further than that.

As a Confucian writer, Ling seems to be more careful about who performs coitus than

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427 Cf. John Gagnon and William Simon's categorization of sexual deviance. The first kind includes masturbation, premarital coitus and heterosexual mouth-genital contact, which, generally disapproved but performed by large numbers of people, is called "normal deviance." The second kind is called "pathological deviance," and examples include incest, sexual contact with children of either sex, exhibitionism, voyeurism and aggressive or assaultive offense. And the third kind involves the behaviors that generate specific forms of social structure, such as female prostitution and both male and female homosexuality. See John Gagnon and William Simon, Sexual Deviance (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), pp. 7-11.
about the way coitus is performed, and he never allows himself any freedom of depicting any kind of activities which are related with incest or pseudo-incest. This can be seen more clearly in the intertextuality of the late Ming erotica. One may agree with Andrew Plaks on the “relative paucity of direct treatment of incest in Chinese literature,” but after skimming over the major erotic novels or novellas, we will certainly be struck by the high incidence of pseudo-incest, which, according to Plaks, is based on ties by marriage and adoption, figural submissions and retroactive changes of status. Ample pseudo-incestuous cases, such as sex between daughter-in-law and father-in-law as in Chipozi zhuan (Story of a Folly Woman), between son-in-law and mother-in-law as in Dengcao heshang (The Lampwick Monk), between brother and adoptive sister as in Langshi (History of Amorous Adventures), and between son and stepfather as in Xiuta yeshi (Unofficial History of the Embroidered Couch), sharply set off Ling’s discreet abstention from the description of this type of moral impropriety. Without letting his erotic stories involve anything which is related with pseudo-incest or incest, Ling is nearly puritanical, so to speak. Also worth noticing is his effort of avoiding flagellation and other sexual tortures. If sadism or masochism or sadomasochism are psychologically abnormal, they may further break down into two sub-groups: one is savagely performed out of jealousy and the other is playfully administered with loving affection. Appropriate examples are provided not just by de Sade. His

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429 See ibid.
Chinese predecessors had actually taken the lead before him.\textsuperscript{430} Ximen Qing's stripping off Lotus' clothes to lash her naked body for her infidelity in \textit{Jin Ping Mei}\textsuperscript{431} and the female emperor Wu Zetian's burning a ring on the penis of her sexual partner Xue Aocao in \textit{Ruyi jun zhuan} \textit{(Story of the Lord of Perfect Satisfaction)}\textsuperscript{432} can be regarded as two cases belonging respectively to the two sub-groups just mentioned. But, have we ever witnessed an instance of either of these two groups in Ling's erotic stories — be it playful sadism or brutal torture? I am afraid that the answer cannot but be negative. A keen reader may object to this. He may argue that Yi's instigating his wife to have sex with his friend is a covert kind of psychological sadism and the "Nun" Wang's sleep with ten girls in a night to get their female essence differs in effect not much from sexual vampirism. But in these stories we see no description of Yi's attempt to degrade his wife by treating her like a whore, nor are we provided with detailed information as to how "Nun" Wang strengthens his health at the expense of the female partners with whom he has intercourse.

\textsuperscript{430} Although Chinese erotic authors described sadism or masochism before de Sade, none of them can be compared to de Sade in linking coitus with vileness and cruelty. The first thing that strikes us in de Sade' work, as Simone de Beauvoir commented, is beatings, bloodshed, torture, and murder. Perhaps de Sade was the most original writer in the history of erotic literature who, to use his own words, made crime "the soul of lust." See Simone de Beauvoir, "Shall We Burn de Sade?" in \textit{The Marquis de Sade}, comp. & trans. Austryn Wainhouse & Richard Seaver (New York: Grove Press, 1951), pp. 20-28.


\textsuperscript{432} This example, though rather unusual, will be outshone by some similar savage love performed in the West in the recent times, and genital piercing is one of this. "Surfing my favorite adult website, I came across some photos that blew me away: a labia pierced with studs. I showed it to my wife, and she said she would have her lips studded if I got my penis done." "Women with pierced labia, clits and clit hoods and men with Prince Alberts are much more common than you could imagine." "I once had a boyfriend with a pierced dick." See \textit{Eye Weekly}, April 16, 1998, p. 39.
My classification of sexual aberration may seem to be partial, for it does not include even homosexuality (in which anal sex and pederasty are often involved) and group sex (or sex in the presence of others) if we use as reference John Gagnon and William Simon’s typology that defines both of these sexual acts as “socially structured deviance,” i.e., the behavior which is strongly disapproved of by society and is often in overt conflict with other components of the social structure. But in view of the unique background of the Ming China, in which homosexuality was such a prevalent custom generally tolerated by the whole society and polygamy with legal guarantee was so popular as to make group sex increasingly acceptable, it is not completely arbitrary for us to expel these two socially established sexual behaviors from the category of aberration. This defending explanation is perhaps misleading, though. One might think that homosexuality and group sex must have received explicit portrayals in Ling’s stories. This is not the case, as a matter of fact. Ling may have given a fairly extensive attention to the sensual activities which is either homosexual or involves a group of participants. but never did he allow himself to use more than “a limited number of words” for the presentation of these erotic occurrences.

The employment of “a limited number of words” for implicit description of sexuality is a simplification principle Ling made for himself. “In some stories,” he explained in his introductory remarks, “there may be some amorous flirtations, but I have given them only a factual delineation, with a limited number of words implicitly referring to the sexual act.” This principle, as a common method of achieving behavioral containment, is as worth noticing as his


434 See Ling Mengchu, “Introductory Remarks” (fanli) to Pai’an jingqi.
avoidance of sexual deviation. In traditional Chinese fiction criticism, the antithetical concepts 
"xu" 當 and "shi" 柔 are often used to refer to fictional fabrication and factual recording.\(^{435}\) It is 
quite frequent, however, that this pair of terms also stands for two different modes of 
representation — “diegesis” and “mimesis.” To restrict himself to “a limited number of words” is 
actually to apply “xu” technique (or the technique of diegesis). Ling rarely “showed”\(^{436}\) sexual acts 
in mimesis. He tried instead to keep them to the minimum and make them happen offstage if he 
could. Homosexuality and group sex are briefly treated, and so are ordinary copulating scenes. 
For instance, in “In the Harem,” an ample space (thousands of words) is given to Madam Jade’s 
seduction of Ren Junyong. Once Ren Junyong has been lured into her bedroom ready for 
lovemaking, the narration is drastically reduced to such a short paragraph as follows:

It was now completely dark. Silence reigned over other quarters. When delicacies and 
wine had been quietly laid out by Rosy Cloud, the lady and her guest took seats, face to face, 
and started to drink. Meanwhile they chatted in a sweet and tender voice, sending winks at one 
another. After three cups, their passions were aflame. They embraced each other and went to 
the bed together. The pleasure they enjoyed is beyond description.\(^{437}\)

This is not the only example. A similar one can also be seen in “The Wife Swappers,” a story 
which is supposed to be lurid as the title suggests. The hero Yi, as I have mentioned earlier, is crazy

\(^{435}\) See David Rolston, *Traditional Chinese Fiction and Fiction Commentary*, p. 182.

\(^{436}\) For a discussion of the difference between “showing” and “telling,” see Wayne Booth, *The 
Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), part 1, chapter 1, “Telling and 
Showing.”

about his friend Hu’s wife, willing to offer him his own wife Di for an exchange. When one day Yi gets so drunk and excited as to virtually agree that Hu may take liberties with his wife, a reader might be led to an expectation of seeing a sustained scene of their lovemaking. It does not turn out so, however. It is true that the story does describe — not in a prodigious amount — how Hu, after the dinner, begins to approach Di: he goes into the inner room, and seeing Di standing by the bamboo curtain with no intention of dodging him, leans over to kiss her face; when Di in return touches his leg with the tip of her foot, he immediately takes her into his arms, and Di turns around and embraces him too. Nevertheless, the author withholds from going into a meticulous depiction of their coitus. Once their “foreplay” is over, his mimetic presentation ceases too. Their intercourse, in fact, is only implied in a transient and euphemistic language:

She pulled her pants off and reclined on a chaise-lounge placed in the middle of the living room. Then she raised her legs, making herself ready for him to do the work of clouds and rain.438

Immediately after such a summary narration, with a poem following in the wake of it in a routine manner, their “clouds and rain” are formally brought to an end:

Hu, as a veteran in the life of gay, was experienced at lovemaking. By bringing all his skills into play, he offered Di a great deal of sexual delight. Di felt extremely satisfied.439

Exceptions, understandably, are unavoidable. Some of Ling’s erotic stories are indeed

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quite explicit in their sexual description. Wenren's deflowering of the virgin Jingguan on boat in "The Elopement of a Nun" and the sex play in *menage a trois* among Du and two monks in "One Woman and Two Monks" are perhaps two noticeable examples of this. But we should note that Jingguan is a disguised "monk." If Wenren had not felt her body and examined her female sexual parts, he certainly could not have found out that she is woman, and if there had not been any indication that she still is a virgin and it is Wenren who is the first man to have intercourse with her, their marriage at the end of the story would have been impossible. The same can also be said of the detailed portrayal of the sex trio in "One Woman and Two Monks." Without it, the story would have been unconvincing as to why Du hates to make love with the two monks at the same time, and why the Old Monk becomes so jealous that he finally kills the woman. In this sense, both the instances of sexual depiction are crucial in plot development and therefore are indispensable. To cite them as evidence of the author's indulgence in the "obscene description" of lewd activities is obviously not justifiable.

To the morally-oriented writer Ling Mengchu, reliance only on "decent ways of writing"

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440 Virginity in the Song and the Ming, due to the advocacy of Neo-Confucianism, was a prerequisite for men to choose their spouse. According to Liu Dalin, it was a common custom in the Ming that men would have a midwife or their female relative to examine the bride before marriage in order to make sure that she was a virgin. See Liu Dalin, *Zhongguo gudai xing wenhua*, p. 748. If a man did not see his wife "bleed" 见红 (*jianhong*) on the first night of marriage, he had right to dissolve their marital relationship. For example, in *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan* (Bonds of Matrimony), a man called Wei Sanfeng 魏三封 marries a woman who is not a virgin and therefore does not bleed on the first night of their "union" 合卺 (*hejin*). Wei beats her first and then sends her back to her parents' home (i.e., divorces her). See *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan*, chapter 72, pp. 1024-1027.

— i.e., on linguistic and behavioral containment — was not enough for achieving his educational goal. We often see him assume an omniscient moral pedagogue, stepping out of his stories to preach! In reading Erpai, it is our common experience that no matter how at first we are entertained with a sensual story, we will sooner or later be taken onto another track — to listen to the author's admonition and instruction. For this, Ling was accused by the modern scholar Lu Xun of being too didactic. Nevertheless, didacticism was highly thought of by Ling himself as a major function of fiction, a function which is even more important than that of entertainment. In Story 12 of Erke pai'an jingqi he clearly states that the best story is a story that teaches readers something: "It has been our tradition that stories told by professional storytellers are either concentrated on seduction and dissipation or on occurrences extraordinary enough to attract audience. But the most valuable story is actually one that shows the ways of the world and illustrates karmic principle, capable of making audience change their indecent thought when they have heard it." The late Ming huaben stories after Ling tend to be didactic. Whether this is an artistic defect is a matter to be debated. But there should not be too much controversy if we say that Ling was an initiator in making the composition of fiction move toward this tuitionary

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442 See Lu Xun, A Brief History of Chinese Fiction, trans. Yang Hsien-yi and Gladys Yang, p. 264: "Though the story-tellers's tales of the Song dynasty occasionally pointed a moral too, their main purpose was to entertain the townsfolk. The Ming imitators, however, are so concerned with moralizing that they seem to forget that their chief function should be to entertain." Lu Xun's criticism was directed at the majority of huaben story authors, including Ling Mengchu. Zheng Zhenduo had a direct criticism of Ling Mengchu: "Of the thirty-six stories in Slapping the Table in Amusement, very few are refined or sublime works in terms of stylistic achievements... Most of them are too didactic. Reading these stories, one may feel as if they were not pure fictive narratives, but moral teachings illustrated by a popular story." See Zheng Zhenduo, "Ming-Qing erdai de pinghua ji," in Zhongguo wenxue lunji, vol. 2, p. 600.

Late Ming *huaben* stories were written not only for readers but for audience as well. To maintain silence or give audience a break or provoke their interest, professional storytellers often made use of the formulaic practices such as beginning with an introductory comment, singing in verses, and making some digressions. If these formulaic practices used to be sheer *formal elements*, i.e., the elements that were conducive to the unfolding of the story proper only in a technical sense, we may say that it was Ling who changed their nature. In Ling's *Erpai* they are no longer formal elements only; they are also *thematically* integral parts of a story, serving the author as tools for his didacticism. The most useful and effective tool for his didactic imposition is introduction. In a typical Ling story, as Hanan observes, the introduction takes up the theme and the prologue and main tales illustrate it.\(^{445}\) The introduction, with which almost all his stories begin, is usually a disquisition or miniature essay,\(^{446}\) elaborating on the author's moral philosophy. For instance, in his introduction to “The Wife Swappers,” a story that warns readers

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\(^{444}\) In my view, late Ming fiction can be divided into four types: realistic, allegoric, moralistic, and idealistic. The first two types, represented respectively by *Water Margins* and *The Journey to the West*, are mainly entertaining, whereas the latter two types are largely didactic. *Xu Jin Ping Mei* can be considered as a representative work of the moralistic type, and *Yu Jiao Li* (Strange Tales of the Two Beauties) is perhaps one of the most famous idealistic novels (the difference between the didactic type and the idealistic type is that the former imposes moral teaching on the story through the intervention of author/narrator whereas the latter let the story demonstrate a moral theme by setting up a good example of ideal love, usually between a scholar and a beauty). Since the early 17\(^{th}\) century, due to Ling Mengchu's influence as well as to some other factors, didactic fiction (both didactic type and idealistic type) gradually became mainstream, and even an explicitly erotic novel, after depicting all kinds of sexual indulgence, would offer readers some moral cliches.


\(^{446}\) Ibid.
against the seduction of good women and its disastrous consequences, Ling remarks:

A romantic young man, passionate and obsessed with sexual desire, will find it hard to keep his mind hinged. Yet sex always indirectly has something to do with moral merit. The men who kept away from other's wives and daughters and protected their chastity have always been secretly recompensed for their goodness with divine benediction. Some won the highest places in the imperial examinations, some gained important positions with handsome emolument, and some fathered eminent sons. There is no need to recount these stories, for they can be found in the biographies of dynastic histories. As for those who were indulged in sex and made ruses to seduce and violate good women, they either died an untimely death, or lost their official posts, or brought disasters to their wives and daughters. There is none who has not got his retribution.

One point that needs to be explained here is the nature of Ling's moral teaching. At the surface, this foregoing introductory comment seems to be rather Buddhistic with its propagation of retributive principle. But retribution, as we know, was common to several systems of belief.

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447 Here I should point out that despite his warning against seduction and other illicit sexual activities, Ling was by no means an advocator of asceticism. Unlike Song Neo-Confucianists who stressed the necessity of getting rid of “yu” 欲 (desire) in order to obtain “li” 理 (principle), Ling in fact did not take “yu” as negative. What he opposed, as is shown by his erotic stories, was indulgence in illicit sex, not sexual desire itself. At this point, we may say that his attitude was closer to the attitude of the ancient Confucian School than to that of Neo-Confucianists (according to Guo Moruo 郭沫若, the Confucianists in the Warring-States period were hedonistic and they favored a moderate enjoyment of desire over abstention from desire. See Guo Moruo, “Gongsun Ni zi yu qi yinyue lilun”公孫尼子與其音樂理論, in Moruo wenji 沫若文集, vol. 16, pp. 185-191.)


449 “But despite the priest's presence, Buddhism is not of paramount importance in the novel, whose key notion of this-worldly and other-worldly retribution is common to several systems of belief.” See Hanan, The Invention of Li Yu, pp. 126-7. Karl S. Kao, in his article “Bao and Baoying: Narrative Causality and External Motivations in Chinese Fiction,” has a detailed
due to the unification of the Three Teachings in the Ming.\(^{450}\) As Ding Kangyao remarks in his *Xu Jin Ping Mei* 續金瓶梅 (*Sequel to Jin Ping Mei*), no matter whether it was Buddhism or Daoism or Confucianism one wanted to preach, one had to first of all start with the preaching of karma.\(^{451}\)

With this in mind, we can see that in the preceding introduction, Ling, with his emphasis upon the cultivation of self and the regulation of family, is actually more concerned with this-worldly affairs than with afterlife, with Confucian secular ethics than with Buddhist transcendental world outlook.\(^{452}\) This is not to say that Buddhist ingredient in it is a mere camouflage for the author's Confucian concerns. I only intend to emphasize that in spite of its karmic veneer, the introduction still gives people a very practical, albeit somewhat platitude, advice on sexual management:

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explanation: "*Baoying* 報應 is basically religious (Buddhist) in nature and in origin, but it does not lack support from the indigenous Chinese system of belief. In the Daoist text *Dao de jing* 道德經 is found the notion of 'heavenly retribution,' as indicated by the often quoted lines of 'The net is cast wide. Though the mesh is not fine, yet nothing ever slips through.' ...Ge Hong's 葛洪 (*281?*-341) inclusion of the 'merit system'... seems to indicate the prevalence of this belief in Chinese thought during Jin times. As with the Confucian notion of *bao*, Ge Hong sees retribution operate in a trans-personal, cross-generational range within the family system... Daoist conception regarding the matter of retribution is very much a syncretic brand of folk belief, popularized teachings of Confucianism, and Buddhism, and, for that matter, these different strands of the popular belief are not incompatible in the consciousness of the educated class." See *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews*. 1989, pp. 127-8.

\(^{450}\) Chen Cuiying points out that in the Ming times the unification of the Three Teachings was so widely accepted as a folk belief that it had actually become the "Chinese national collective unconsciousness." See Chen Cuiying, *Shiqing xiaoshuo zhi jiazhiguan tantao* (Exploration of Axiological Value in the Novels of Manners), p. 277.

\(^{451}\) *Xu Jin Ping Mei*, in *Jin Ping Mei xushu sanzhong* (Three Sequels to *Jin Ping Mei*), p. 2.

\(^{452}\) There are two kinds of *baoying*: "religious (Buddhist) *baoying" and "moralistic (non-religious) *baoying." "both adhering to the basic decree of just retribution, but the latter being more relaxed in its doctrinal nature." See Karl Kao, "*Bao* and *Baoying," in *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews*. 1989, p. 130. According to Kao's definitions, *baoying* in Ling Mengchu's stories basically falls into the "moralistic" category.
seduce not good women and you will be amply rewarded — not in the other world after you have
died, but right in this world in which you are living!

It is also in a similar vein that the moral exhortations are proffered in the introductions of
other erotic stories, such as in "In the Harem," "Fatal Seduction" and "The Elopement of a Nun."
With or without a Buddhist framework, they all urge people to avoid sexual impropriety and live
an ethical life, and from them, a reader can get such useful instructions as to why it is not
judicious to take too many concubines, why there is a potential danger for sexual safety if a
female is indiscreetly associated with nuns, and why one needs to restrain himself from seducing
a woman who is not predestined for him. It rarely occurs that the introductory comment is
omitted, as in the story "One Woman and Two Monks" that begins quite abruptly without it. This
is certainly an exception. However, the authorial message on morality gets conveyed almost all
the same with the opening poem that functions as a substitute.

The opening section is not the only domain in which Ling avowedly discourses on the
promotion of moral regeneration. His didacticism also appears in the main body of his stories. It
is quite often that in the middle of narration Ling as a "commentator-narrator" will suddenly
step out of the text and make comments to his readers directly:

Gentle readers take note, those who want to become a monk or a nun must reach a
stage in which four elements have all been absent from their mind. That is to say, they must
purge their desires and be down-to-earth in their intention of joining the Buddhist church.
Only when they have had no desires and are determined to cultivate themselves day and night
in earnest according to the religious doctrines are they likely to attain enlightenment.

453 For the explanation of the term, see David Rolston, p. 284.
Nevertheless, it is a common practice nowadays that parents rashly send their young children into the gateway of void. Are they aware that it is easy to begin and yet difficult to persist, for their children will grow up and will therefore experience the awakening of love? When they have had the taste of sexual passion, they will feel that it is the religious obligations that force them to do so, even though they are still able to contain themselves. That is why those who are reluctant to resign themselves to the rules and regulations will go so far as to desecrate their meditation rooms and profane the halls of Buddhas. This is exactly like what the proverb describes. "You start with seeking happiness but end up as a criminal." So pray take my advice: Don't send your sons and daughters on that path!\footnote{Erke pai'an jingqi, vol. 2. pp. 731-732.}

Hanan refers to this kind of narratorial comments, prefaced often with the storyteller tag "kanguan tingshuo" \footnote{This storyteller tag sometimes appears in a simpler form: "kanguan" 看官 (gentle readers or audiences).} as "digressions,"\footnote{See Patrick Hanan, The Chinese Vernacular Story, p. 150.} and he is quite right to bring our attention to Ling's innovative use of them. The digressions, as Hanan has noted, used to be employed only as a means of "providing general information" or "solidifying the social context of the story," and it is Ling who applies them to "drive home his own ideas."\footnote{See Patrick Hanan, The Chinese Vernacular Story, p. 150.} Although the digressions are admonitory or hortatory, they nevertheless do not merely duplicate the moral inculcation offered in the introduction. While the introduction usually expound retribution doctrine, digressions, generally in a more straightforward manner, pass on the author's practical wisdom that is often complementary in terms of the theme.

True, digressions serve only marginally an expository purpose of the moral significance
outlined in introduction, but we will see that Ling never forgets coming back again to his major
topic and beefing it up. Reading his stories we will notice that he tends toward repetitiousness
thematically. After having explicated a retribution theme in introduction, he will reinforce it
when the prologue tale or the main tale is finished. In "The Wife Swappers," for instance, the
adultery theme of warning readers against sexual license reappears in a poem when the prologue
tale draws to an end:

If I defile not another's wife,
He will not defile mine;
But if I defile another's wife,
In turn, he will do the same to mine.458

The poem at the end of "Fatal Seduction" summarizes the story and reiterates the author's
expostulation for women:459

A good flower withers and its scent is gone,
For it has exposed itself to an alluring light.
A piece of advice is good to remember:

457 Ibid.
459 Although Ling in the following poem as well as in some other places may appear as an
orthodox moralist urging women to abide by the conventional ethics, he is generally reasonable
and open-minded in his attitude toward women. His description of Jingguan's premarital sexual
adventure, Madam Jade's audacious adultery and Madam Wu's unconscious loss of "chastity" is
sympathetic rather than critical and negative. In story 11 of Erke pai'an jingqi he even openly
speaks out in defense of women's remarriage and extramarital affairs, maintaining that women
also have the right of seeking happiness and satisfying their sexual desire as men do. See Erke
Women should stay at home and not go outside.\footnote{Pai'an jingqi, vol. 1, p. 134; translation, p. 231.}

As the poems cited above are "extratextual" in nature, I call them \textit{epilogues}. The first poem, inserted between the prologue tale and the main tale, may as well be called \textit{intermediary epilogue}, whereas the latter one, appearing at the termination of the whole chapter, is obviously an \textit{end epilogue}. We should not think that it is only common in \textit{wenyan} fiction to append an epilogue and comment on the moral meaning of the story. If we think that an epilogue must conform to the format used by most of \textit{chuanqi} writers,\footnote{For discussions of the format of \textit{chuanqi} story or \textit{wenyan} story in general, see Karl S. Kao, \textit{The Classical Chinese Tales of Supernatural and Fantastic}, "Introduction," and my paper "Indigenous Intertextuality and Ye Shengtao's \textit{Wenyan} Stories."} it is true that there is only one story in \textit{Erpai} which ends up in that way.\footnote{See Story 29 of \textit{Erke pai'an jingqi}, in which the epilogue, prefaced with the words "Yishi shi yue" 異史氏曰 (The Unofficial Historian says), is as same in format as those in Tang \textit{chuanqi} stories.} In a less restrict perspective, however, we can see that each story Ling wrote has its own epilogues, composed in the form of poem(s)\footnote{Sometimes the poem is preceded by prose-styled extratextual commentary, such as in "Fatal Seduction," pp. 20-21: "It was because of the nun's meddling that Lady Di, originally a virtuous woman, degenerated and died. Of course, her loss of moral sense and submission to lust should also be ascribed to her own fickle nature. There was, by contrast, a woman of integrity, who, in spite of having been violated due to a nun's vicious tricks, insisted on pursuing her vendetta and eventually, in cooperation with her husband, made her enemies meet their doom. It is an exciting} and focused
exclusively on the explication of morality. When the epilogues in his stories are moralized, we seem to have no reason to doubt that the authorial offering of moral advices "for three times in each chapter," as Ling claims in his introductory remarks, is not true. Clearly, there is little of hyperbole about this claim; in effect it is a minimalist statement, given the fact that all his erotic stories, from introduction to epilogue, are "fully loaded with admonitions and exhortations."

In addition to these moralizing discourses which may be called direct didacticism, Ling also resorted to indirect didacticism to persuade people to suppress their improper sexual desire. What I call indirect didacticism refers to the arrangement of characters' fate, to which Ling paid a particular attention. This is not to say that Ling was a realistic writer, committed to the representation of his characters in a faithful manner. In his fiction aesthetics, little emphasis is actually put on the description of characters and their world for its own sake. The revelation of characters' fate is simply a symbolic expression of his own moral intent. In order to enforce the value structure of society, Ling would sometimes rather sacrifice verisimilitude in order to arrange a punitive denouement for those violators of ethical principles. It is interesting to note that in Ling's erotic stories, poetic justice always prevails. Those who indulge themselves in illicit sexual pleasure will eventually get their "heavenly retribution" in one way or another, and the punishments befalling on them take place when they are still alive rather than after they have

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465 See Ling Mengchu, "Introductory Remarks" (fanli) to Pai'an jingqi.

died, as is predicted in the beginning poem in "In the Harem."\(^{467}\)

The most severe punishment is death, of course. Guangming gets killed for his abduction, the Old Monk is executed for his rape-murder, and Bu Liang is flogged and dies for his seduction. And the women involved in sex with them like Du and Nun Zhao also end up in tragedy. Ren Junyong, the male protagonist in "In the Harem," seems to succumb to depression, but the depression is apparently caused by his castration that he receives for his adultery liaisons. The same is also true of Hu. Although at the beginning Hu suffers only from an ulcer for his stealing his friend's wife, the illness ultimately makes him kick the bucket. Since Ren Junyong and Hu's death penalties are given in a more implicit and milder way, the author makes a point, by using the mouths of some minor characters, to indicate the link between their decease and retribution lest readers miss his moral message. "You overindulged yourself," Ren Junyong is thus reproached by his friend after he has been castrated, "and that's why you've got such a punishment!"\(^{468}\) It is also through a character's mouth that Hu's death has been foretold even before he dies: "As for Hu, a wicked seducer and instigator," the adept declares, "he'll get his retribution either in this world or in the next."\(^{469}\)

It is not always that retribution takes the form of death. There are also some other

\(^{467}\) See *Erkepai'an jingqi*, vol. 2, p. 695; translation, p. 307:

"You spend money to teach your young women to sing and dance. However, you must leave them in the arms of another man. This is merely what will happen after you have died. Still worse shall be your retribution while you are alive."

\(^{468}\) See *Erke pai'an jingqi*, vol. 2, p. 718; translation, p. 357.

\(^{469}\) See *Pai'an jingqi*, vol. 2, p. 695; translation, p. 301.
alternatives and tuoyang 脫陽 (collapse resulted from overindulgence in sex and seminal depletion)\(^{470}\) is one of them, from which quite a few libertines, such as Yi, Wenren and the

\(^{470}\) The most serious tuoyang instance can be found in Jin Ping Mei, chapter 79, pp. 1049-1050: "The story goes that Pan Jinlian 潘金蓮 did not sleep after returning from the rear quarters. She lay in bed with her clothes on, waiting for Ximeng Qing. When she heard him coming back, she got up in a great rush to greet him. She took his coat and saw he was dead drunk. She dared not ask why. With one hand Ximeng Qing leaned over onto her shoulder. He took her to him, murmuring, "My little vixen, I'm drunk today. Get the bed ready. I want to sleep." The woman helped him onto the kang 坑 (bed made of bricks) and had him settle to rest. Ximeng Qing started to snore as soon as his head hit the pillow. The woman couldn't wake him up, so she took off her clothes and got under the cross-folded quilt. She slowly stroked that member located on his groin. It was as flaccid as cotton, showing no sign of virility. She had no idea whom he had been with. She tossed and turned, unable to bear her burning lust. Full of lascivious desire, she kneaded it with her hand again and again, then squatted down under the quilt to suck it every possible way. Still it refused to stand up. She grew so impatient that she could not help shaking him. "Where is the monk's medicine?" she asked. She kept shaking him until he woke up. In a drunken state, Ximeng Qing cursed, "Damn little vixen! Could you stop asking? You want me to make it with you? I don't feel like moving around. The medicine is in the golden heart box that I've put in my sleeve. Go and get it yourself. It would be a stroke of luck if you are able to suck it back into shape." The woman went and took out the heart box from inside the sleeve. Opening it, she found only three or four pills left. She fetched a liquor pot and poured herself a glass. She took a pill and left the other three for Ximeng Qing. For fear of the medical potency not being adequate, she shoved all the pills into his mouth together with the alcohol. What a stupid mistake that was! Yet Ximeng Qing, a drunken man without senses about him, let her manipulate him. His eyes closed, he swallowed every pill she gave him. In less time than drinking a cup of hot tea, the drug began to take effect: the woman tied a white silk band around the root of his member and it jumped up at once. Behold: the split-melon head looked like a round eye opened wide, and the full beard appeared as straight as hair standing on end. As Ximeng Qing was still sleepy, the woman straddled him and inserted his member into her vagina after having applied some medicinal ointment onto its piss hole. She rubbed herself over it continuously until it reached deep into the heart of the bud, making her tingling all over. Feeling so ineffably good, she then propped herself up on both her hands and began to move her hips up and down. His member was alternatively engulfed and unsheathed as she pumped. She did this about a hundred times. At first the cervix was not quite smooth, but soon fluids oozed out and it became slippery. Ximeng Qing, however, let her play with him, paying no heed at all. Suddenly, the woman was seized with an impulse of affection. Sticking out her tongue into his mouth and cuddling his neck with her hands, she started to grind his penis full force and rub it against the right and left sides of her vagina. The penis was completely immersed. Only the two balls were left uncovered. Fondling them with her hand, she experienced an indescribable satisfaction. Fluids flowed out. She wiped them away. By the third watch (about one o'clock in the morning), the towels she'd
scholar in the prologue tale of "In the Harem," suffer as a punishment owing to their intemperate sexual indulgence. In addition to tuoyang, lighter disciplines also include failure in the civil service examination, setback in official career and cuckoldry, as we have seen in the cases of Tangqing, Wenren and Commander Yang Jian. At the surface, it seems that the different punishments are meted out arbitrarily without sufficient justification to the author's moral principle. Why, for example, is Commander Yang Jian only cuckolded for his taking scores of concubines, whereas the adulterer Ren Junyong is penalized by castration and death? And why does Hu lose his life for his stealing of another man's wife, whereas his counterpart Yi is pardoned after a short period of suffering from his tuoyang infliction? Given that concubinage, detrimental as it might be to the husband's health, was sometimes necessary for the reproduction of posterity and hence accorded with filiality,\textsuperscript{471} and given that Hu is a duplicitous man who violates the basic moral principle, honesty, as is pointed out by the marginalia,\textsuperscript{472} we can see that

used had been changed five times. The woman had come twice, whereas Ximeng Qing still had not ejaculated. His dick became swollen and looked liverish. All the veins on it stood out and it felt as hot as fire. Ximeng Qing felt uncomfortably distended, so he had the woman remove the band that had been fastened to its root. Still it remained as swollen as it had been before. He asked the woman to suck it with her mouth. The woman went down on him. She wrapped her crimson lips around it and started to suck away. She sucked it for about the time it took to eat a meal before the sperm abruptly spurted forth from the tube, like mercury pouring out into a barrel. The woman hastened to receive it in her mouth, yet she was unable to swallow it all and it gushed out. At the beginning it was semen, but later it became blood. She could not stop it. Ximeng Qing fainted, his limbs growing rigid and inflexible."

\textsuperscript{471} Confucian filiality emphasizes family line more than anything else. "Mencius said, 'There are three things which are unfilial, and to have no posterity is the greatest of them.'" See The Works of Mencius, in The Chinese Classics, trans. James Legge (Hong Kong University Press, 1960), vol. II, p. 313.

\textsuperscript{472} "A false-hearted man may have his way first, but it is also quicker for him to get retribution." See Pai'an jingqi, vol. 2, p. 687, marginalia. "Yi is only crazy, while Hu is detestable." See ibid., p. 689, marginalia. According to Zhang Peiheng, the marginal and
the seemingly arbitrary arrangements of the scenario for these characters are not at all arbitrary:
they reflect Ling's moral stance as a Confucianist!  

With all these repressive mechanisms imposed upon the narratives, Ling's erotic stories are contradictorily caught between teaching and pleasing, and between nostalgia for and withdrawal from the world of sexuality. So in spite of the familiar features they share with erotic stories in general, they are nonetheless not pure erotic stories, but erotic stories that are moralized.

6. Enclosed Typology

Re-reading Ling Mengchu's erotic fiction with a historical perspective, I believe that it interlinear comments were all made by the author himself. Zhang's argument is well supported by a marginal comment in story 6 of Erke pai'an jingqi. Story 6 is based on a tale by Qu You 瞿佑 in his Jiandeng xinhua 舌廬新話 (New Tales Written under the Lamp). In the story there is a letter of strict parallelism which the ghost of Liu Cuicui 刘翠翠 writes to her parents. The letter was not written by Ling Mengchu. Ling simply copied it from Qu You's tale. So the marginal comment over the letter says: “This letter is taken from the original source. The dead may communicate with the living and inform them of her love affairs, but this did not provide the writer (i.e., Qu You) with any reason of using such an artificial language. An old pedant who tried to show off his skill! Since it is hard to change it, I have left it as it was.” Since it is obvious that Ling wrote this marginal comment, Zhang Peiheng thought we have reason to assume that all other marginalia were also written by Ling himself. See Zhang Bing, Ling Mengchu yu Erpai, pp. 25-26.

473 It seems that in deciding whether his character should receive a light or heavy punishment Ling was strongly influenced by Gongguo ge 功過格 (Ledgers of Merits and Demerits). These ledgers are predominantly Confucianistic, although they also equally popular among Daoists and Buddhists. In his book Sexual Life in Ancient China (chapter 9), van Gulik has a detailed discussion of one of such ledgers, and his explanation, I think, can help confirm what I said that the punishment of libertines in Ling's stories reflects the author's Confucian attitude.
ought to be treated as a legitimate genre in Chinese literature owing to its historical, social, cognitive, entertaining and other values on top of its literary merits. With such an assumption, I have, in the foregoing discourse, made a pioneering study of it. My focus is largely concentrated on its nature, or to be more specific, on a paradoxical phenomenon — the tension between sexuality and morality. In my opinion, this tension is the most distinguished feature of his erotic stories. though a great part of late Ming erotic fiction is, to some extent, also tinged with a moral color. I have approached this tension both contextually and textually. That is, I have not only analyzed the textual aspects of sexuality and of morally repressive mechanisms, but have also explored, with an intention of shedding a light on the cause of this tension, contextual factors: the author and the social milieu in which the author lived.

The historical significance of the tension in Ling's erotic fiction lies largely in the way that it reveals the dilemma of Ling in handling with illicit sex both as an orthodox intellectual brought up in Confucian tradition and as a commercial writer living in a socially transforming era in which economy was booming and materialism including the enjoyment of sexual pleasure was unprecedentedly prevailing. This personal predicament made Ling vacillate between sexuality and morality, and that is why he only contained, rather than totally abandoned, sex in Erpai for his moral mission. Such a containment endows his erotic stories with a distinctive quality, making them a quite unique type different from the similar works previously produced.

However, Ling's erotic fiction has long been an "unwelcome muse." Scholars have hardly paid attention to its nature, especially to its repressive mechanisms that make it different from other erotic works. Robert van Gulik, as a pioneering sexologist, had, admittedly, a traditional literary connoisseurship of Chinese erotica. Yet in his book Sexual Life in Ancient China he only
mentioned two kinds of erotic fiction in the late Ming. One he called "pornographic" and the other he defined as "erotic." By these two terms he referred respectively to erotic novels such as Li Yu's *Rou putuan* and Xiaoxiao Sheng's *Jin Ping Mei.* The former, in his view, is "a literary genre," whereas the latter is not necessarily a genre of its own but a part of the total literary pattern, and therefore the fiction falling into this category like *Jin Ping Mei* can be a work of "great literary merits," "an important sociological document" and a mine of "information on Chinese private and public life, manners, morals and sexual habits of that time."

Van Gulik's classification, due to the sociological nature of his work and the limited space allotted for the discussion of late Ming erotic literature, cannot but be preliminary. He obviously did not take into consideration Ling's erotic stories, a kind of erotic fiction quite typical in the last few decades of the Ming. According to his division, we certainly have no reason to put Ling's stories into what he called "pornographic" category. But if we classify them as "erotic," how can we distinguish them from *Jin Ping Mei*, a work that is sharply different? In

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474 Xiaoxiao Sheng 笑笑生 is the pseudonym used by the author of *Jin Ping Mei*. But who was its real author has remained a mystery. We even do not know for sure whether the novel was collectively written or written by an individual person, although a number of writers have been suggested as likely candidates for the honor. For general surveys of the authorship, see C. T. Hsia, *The Classic Chinese Novel*, pp. 166-168; Andrew Plaks, *The Four Masterworks of the Ming Novels*, pp. 55-72. For influential individual studies of the authorship, see, for example, Wu Han, "Jin Ping Mei de zhuozuo shidai ji qi shehui beijing" (The Time and Social Background of the Writing of *Jin Ping Mei*); Arthur Waley, introduction to Bernard Miall, *Jin Ping Mei*, pp. xviii-xix; David Roy, "The Case for T'ang Hsien-tsu's Authorship of the *Jin Ping Mei*," *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews*, no. 8, 1986, pp. 31-62; Xu Shuofang 徐朔方, “Jin Ping Mei chengshu xintan” 金瓶梅成書新探, in *Lun Jin Ping Mei de cheng shu ji qita* 論金瓶梅的成書及其它 (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1988); Zhang Yuanfen 張遠芬, *Jin Ping Mei xinzheng* 金瓶梅新証 (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1984).


476 Ibid., p. 288.
this sense, therefore, his erotic/pornographic bifurcation is not so much an applicable typology capable of generalizing the majority of late Ming erotic fiction as a subjective value judgment representing his personal literary taste.

A more complicated cataloging schema, as put forward by Lin Chen 林辰 (1928-), a scholar well-known in the Ming-Qing fiction field, began to give heed to the uniqueness of the didactic type of erotic fiction. In his short note on Langshi (Story of Amorous Adventures), Lin divided Chinese erotic fiction into the following six types: (1) sexual relations between characters are mentioned but there is no graphic description of their intercourse, such as in Yanyi bian 毓異編 (Collections of Amorous and Unusual Stories);^77 (2) the theme of the story is non-erotic, yet erotic descriptions appear in some paragraphs, such as in Guilian meng 趙蓮夢;^78 (3) sexual behavior is philosophically presented in an allegoric form, such as in Hou xiyou ji 後西遊記 (A Sequel to the Journey to the West); (4) sexual indulgence is described with an

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^77 Yanyi bian is an anthology of wenyan stories published in the Jiajing reign of the Ming (1522-1567). Wang Shizhen's 王士貞 name appears on the book as its editor, but some scholars doubted that it was compiled by this renowned literatus. The anthology has 40 juan and contains 361 stories. Most of them center around the themes of love and the supernatural. Some famous Tang-Song chuangqi stories, such as “Zhao Feiyan waizhuan” 趙飛燕外傳 (Unofficial Biography of Zhao Feiyan), “Yingying zhuang” 英英傳 (Story of the Oriole) and “Qiuran ke zhuang” 麒麟客傳 (Story of the Curly-Beard Man), are included in it. Cf. Liu Shide, et al, eds., Zhongguo gudian xiaoshuo baike quanshu, pp. 658-659.

^78 Guilian meng is a Qing novel published under the pseudonym of Su'an Zhuren 蘇庵主人. It mixes historical events with mystical occurrences. Its heroine, Bai Lian'an 白蓮岸 is a beautiful young woman. She meets a celestial man and is given a book from heaven, with which she founds the religion of White Lotus. She sweeps over the country with her White Lotus army and defeats government troops. Later she falls in love with a scholar named Wang Changnian. When Wang is captured, Bai Lian'an does not hesitate to sacrifice her religious cause for his rescue. The uprising finally resulted in failure. Because of its anti-government subject matter, the novel was not well circulated in the Qing China. Cf. Liu Shide, et al, eds., Zhongguo gudian xiaoshuo baike quanshu, p. 132.
admonitory intention of putting a stop to it, such as in Wutong ying (The Shadow of Wutong Tree); 479 (5) sexual activities are portrayed simply for a purpose of exposing social maladies, such as in Jin Ping Mei; and (6) purely erotic, that is, the presentation of sex is intended only to arouse the lustful desire of readers, such as in Langshi. 480

Although Lin Chen did not mention Ling's erotic stories, we can obviously put them into his fourth category, a category which is equivalent to what I call the didactic type of erotic fiction. However, I should point out that Lin's categorization is largely based on so-called authorial intention rather than on texts, say, on the features of style and motif that constitute the tension between sexuality and morality. But the problem is who knows the intention of an author? And who can say that the intention of Langshi is to arouse sexual desire, whereas that of Jin Ping Mei is not? Even if we do know the intention of an author, it is not, by any means, a criterion of judging the difference of one work from another. In terms of intention, both Erpai and Jin Ping Mei should belong to a same group, i.e., to the fourth category in Lin's classification. 481 Apparently, such a grouping cannot really help us understand the textual

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479 Wutong ying, the authorship of which is unknown, is a novel published in the Qing. It has twelve chapters. The first three chapters are largely introductory, and the story proper begins from the fourth chapter. The story is about Sanzhuo, a son born into a store-owner's family in Suzhou. In his childhood he is sent into a monastery. Having grown up, he met with a Daoist adept, who teaches him the art of bedchamber. Later he gets acquainted with a young man named Wang Runguan. Wang is an actor, handsome, smart, and popular among the women from official and rich families, with whom he has illicit liaisons. Sanzhuo teaches Wang the art of bedchamber. They indulge in sexual pleasure and often make love together. In the end, both of them are arrested and punished for their notorious behaviors. Cf. Liu Shide, et al, eds., Zhongguo gudian xiaoshuo baike quanshu, p. 575.

480 See Lin Chen, Ming mo xiaoshuo shulu 明末小說述錄 (An Annotated Bibliography of Late Ming Fiction) (Shenyang: Chunfeng wenyi chuban she, 1982), pp. 400-401.

481 It seems that we do know what Jin Ping Mei and Erpai were written for. In his preface to
features of Ling's erotic stories.

In fact, it is the textual features, or rather, the repressive mechanisms, rather than the admonitory intention of putting a stop to illicit sex, that made Ling’s erotic stories idiosyncratic, distinguished not only from Rou putuan but from Jin Ping Mei as well. To divide late Ming erotic fiction into three kinds — (1) lust, (2) lust-love, and (3) lust-sex — may perhaps be able to demonstrate more clearly the nature of Ling’s erotic stories. In my tripartite typology, lust is a common property shared by all these three divisions. What makes them different is the ways of presentation. The first kind is basically focused on lust itself, whereas the second kind expands lust as to include other feelings and acts such as loving affection and love-making, and the third kind illustrates lust with concrete sexual intercourse. In another words, we can also say that the first kind is a basic form, whereas the second and third kinds are respectively its enlarged and

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**Jin Ping Mei, Xinxin Zi 林平美, the Master of Delight** (who has been considered as the author by some scholars), remarked that the author of the novel intended to make a contribution “to the moral reformation of the age, the reproof of vice and encouragement of virtue, the purification of the mind and cleansing of the heart.” See preface to Jin Ping Mei cihua, p. 2 (the translation is David Roy’s). Ling Mengchu, in his “Fanli” (Introductory Remarks) to Pai’an jingqi, also made it clear that “this collection [of my stories] is intended for admonition, and that is why moral advices are offered three times in each chapter.” According to their foregoing statements, we seem to have reason to classify both Jin Ping Mei and Ling’s erotic stories as didactic works. Yet the avowed similarity in authorial intention is obviously unable to cover their striking difference in the way of presentation. In my opinion, they belong to different types of erotic fiction. I will explain this soon.

482 These three kinds also represent, so to speak, the three grades of the explicitness in erotic description. The first kind “lust” is the least explicit, the second kind “lust-love” is fairly explicit — between the first kind and the third kind, and the third kind “lust-sex” is the most explicit.

483 My tripartite typology is only intended to help understand the nature of Ling’s erotic stories. It may not be as good as Lin Chen’s multi-classification in terms of comprehensiveness nor necessarily better than van Gulik’s bisection in succinctness, but it is more accurate in defining the uniqueness of Ling’s erotic stories in the entire corpus of late Ming erotic literature.
concretized versions. If we use literary terminology, we can refer to the first kind as *didactic mode*, for it has the least sexual description and the most didacticism. The second and the third kinds, which are characterized less by didacticism and more by naturalistic or hyperbolic presentation, may be called *realistic mode* and *melodramatic mode*. Both of these modes are explicit in sexual depiction, though the former is closer to serious erotic fiction like *Saline Solution* by Marco Vassi\(^{484}\) or *Couples* by John Updike, and the latter is more similar to entertaining hard-core literature.

\textbf{Jin Ping Mei} and \textbf{Rou putuan} represent, so to speak, the realistic and the melodramatic types of erotic fiction, while Ling's stories under discussion fall into the didactic type. To be sure, my typology is by no means an estimation or a ranking of the literary value of different kinds of erotica. Erotic fiction of realistic type is not necessarily better than that of melodramatic type nor of didactic type, and the same is also true the other way around. Actually, in each type we can find both masterpieces\(^{485}\) and inferior works. By establishing this new taxonomy, I only intend to

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\(484\) Marco Vassi was "an intrepid explorer of an uncharted sexual landscape" during the Sexual Revolution in 1960s. "With *Saline Solution*, he also distinguished himself as a novelist." The leading American novelist Norman Mailer has made such a comment on him: "I've always read Marco's work with interest and I have the highest opinion not only of his talent but his intellectual boldness." *Saline Solution* used to be an underground classic. "Through the story of one couple's brief affair and the events that lead them to desperately reassess their lives, Vassi examines the dangers of intimacy in an age of extraordinary freedom." See blurb of and "Introduction" by Richard Curtis to *Saline Solution* (New York: Masquerade Books, Inc., 1997) Marco Vassi's other works include: *A Driving Passion, The Erotic Commedies* and his autobiographical novel *The Stoned Apocalypse*.

\(485\) In addition to \textbf{Jin Ping Mei} and \textbf{Rou putuan}, we can also find some other good works in each type of erotic fiction. \textbf{Ruyi jun zhuang, Chipo zi zhuang,} and \textbf{Xiuta yishi} are superior works of realistic type. \textbf{Yipian qing} (The Expanse of Love) and \textbf{Dengcao heshang} are quite entertaining works of melodramatic type, and \textbf{Xu Jin Ping Mei} and \textbf{Zui chunfeng} 鮮春風 (Intoxicated in Spring Breeze) are works of didactic type well worth reading. Of course, this is just my personal evaluation. Other scholars may have different opinions. So far as the ranking of Chinese erotic
define the nature of major different erotic works more accurately and hence give Ling's erotic stories a more distinct identity.

Opinions may differ on how the artistry of Ling's erotic stories should be evaluated, but it seems less controversial that Ling's *Erpai* ought to take the blame for the decline of late Ming erotic literature. Erotic fiction in the West started from Boccaccio's *Decameron*, developed in the middle through Cleland, de Sade and Walter.\(^{486}\) and finally reached its culmination in the twentieth century. If this indicates a three-stage evolution — from humanistic beginning through literature is concerned, Yao Linxi's unusual appraisal may as well serve as an interesting reference. According to him, Chinese erotic literature can be divided into three grades. Grade A represent "excellent," Grade B "good" and Grade C "mediocre," and each grade is further divided into three sub-grades — 1, 2, 3 (also respectively representing "excellent," "good" and "mediocre"). Grade A: 1, *ZashiMixin* 雜事秘辛 (*A Secret Record of Miscellaneous Affairs*), *Feiyan waizhuan*, *Konghe jian miji*, *Hangong chunse* 漢宮春色 (*The Beautiful Women in the Han Palace*) and *Hejian fu zhuan* 河間婦傳 (*Story of a Hejian Woman*); 2, *Sanshan miji* 三山秘記 (*A Mystic Story of Three Mountains*), *Chipo zi zhuan* and *Guivan qinshe*; 3, *Jin Ping Mei*, *Rou putuan*, *Hailing Wang* 海陵王 (*Story of King of Hailing*) and *Xinghua tian*. Grade B: 1, *Xixiang ji* 西廂記 (*Story of Western Chamber*), *Honglou meng*, *Luve xianzong* 龍野仙踪 (*Immortal Traces on Green Plains*) and *You xiangu* 遊仙窟 (*The Visit of a Celestial Cave*); 2, *Pinghua baqian* 品花寶鑑 (*A Precious Guide to the Appraisal of Flower*), *Yesou puyan* 野叟曝言, *Lianwai taohua ji* and *Nuxian waishi* 女仙外史 (*Unofficial History of a Female Immortal*); 3, *Wopao ji* 倭袍記 (*Story of a Japanese Gown*), *Ruvi qiyuan* 如意奇缘 (*An Unusual Relationship of Perfect Satisfaction*), *Yu Qingting* 玉靑蜓 (*The Jade Dragonfly*) and *Fengshuanfei* 凤雙飛 (*A Couple of Phoenixes Flying Together*). Grade C: 1, *Xiuta yeshi*, *Zhulin yeshi* 株林野史, *Dengcaos heshang* and *Taohua an* 桃花庵 (*The Peach-flower Nunnery*); 2, *Gelian huaying* 隔廉花影 (*The Shadow of Flower Behind Curtain*), *Xianggui miji* 香閣秘記 (*An Internal Record of the Flagrant Boudoir*), *Taohua ji* 桃花記 (*Story of Peach-flower*) and *Ruyi jun zhuan*; 3, *Mudan qiyuan*, *Guizhong mishi* 關中秘史 (*A Secret History of the Boudoir*), *Qinghai yuan* 倩海緣 (*A Predestined Marriage in the Sea of Love*) and *Huaxia yuan* 花缘 (*A Tryst under Flowers*). See Yao Linxi, *Si wuxie xiaoji* 思無邪小記 (*A Record of Non-Amorous Thought*), in *Zhongguo puyan xiping congshu* 中國古艷稀品叢刊 (*Collectanea of Rare Ancient Chinese Erotica*), vol. 7. (Some of the works mentioned by Yao are not accessible to me, so my translation of these titles may not be completely appropriate.)

\(^{486}\) *My Secret Life* was written by an unknown author. Since it is autobiographical and the hero is called Walter, I, like some Western scholars, also refer to its anonymous author as Walter to the sake of convenience.
moral repression up to unconstrained prosperity, then to Chinese erotic fiction such a three-
stage development appeared just as an opposite movement. *Ruyi jun zhuan, Chi pozi zhuan, Jin* 
*Ping Mei* and *Xiuta yeshi* undoubtedly stand for an auspicious start. But immediately following 
such a jumping-off, an ostensible reaction took place, seeking Confucian moral regeneration 
instead of a further sexual liberation. Morality eventually triumphed over sexuality, making 
erotic fiction vanish from the Chinese literary arena completely and for good. This is the 
process that Chinese erotic fiction underwent, — a process of rise, decline and extinction.

Ling's erotic stories, with this characteristic paradox that I have mentioned, had, at the moment 
of their birth, buried seeds for an ominous puritanical future.

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487 The literary representation of sex in these three stages are different too. In the Renaissance 
period that is known for its humanistic advocacy, sex is basically treated as part of love; in the 
repressive 17th - 19th centuries, sex begins to be separated from socially accepted behaviors and 
become a sheer underground activity; and in the 20th century in which erotic literature has 
reached its unrestrained prosperity, sex is consciously taken as integral to human nature and is 
positively intermingled with love and marriage.

488 While erotic literature suffered repression in the West in the nineteenth century, it had a 
still worse fate in China: after an ephemeral prosperity in the late Ming, it completely 
disappeared. Strictly speaking, the nineteenth-century novels such as *Pinghua baojian* (A 
Precious Guide to the Appraising of Flower), *Haishang hualie zhuan* 海上花列传 (Stories of 
Prostitutes in Shanghai) and *Jiuwei gui* 九尾龟 (The Turtle with Nine Tails) are not erotic fiction 
and there has been no erotic literature of any kind produced in the twentieth century. Although 
recently a somewhat erotic novel by the prolific writer Jia Ping'ao 贾平凹 (1952-) was published 
and there seemed to appear a vague sign of tolerance toward occasional literary description of 
sexuality, it is still too early to say that there will be a resurgence of erotic literature in China in 
the near future.

489 In terms of the literary representation of sex, the process of rise, decline and extinction of 
Chinese erotic fiction can also be seen as a process of portraying sex in three different forms: (1) 
sex as a pure carnal enjoyment (often portrayed realistically in juxtaposition with love and some 
other activities), (2) sex in constant conflict with social mores (often portrayed repressively) and 
(3) sex occurring offstage only (largely replaced by love, or to be more specific, by spiritual 
love).
I hope that my exposition on the tension between sexuality and morality may serve as a meaningful commencement to the study of Ling Mengchu's erotic stories, and may also initiate an interest in studying the whole late Ming erotic literature, to fill up a blank in our Ming-Qing fiction field.
PART II

TRANSLATION
Poem:

The monk may be a hungry devil of sex,

But the nun is no less so.

When she finds her way to a boudoir.

Seduction and violation are sure to follow.

There are three aunts and six crones\(^1\) whom people should take most care to avoid. These women have abundant idle time to fritter away and are shrewd and adept at scheming. Having visited thousands of households, they are rich in experience and familiar with all walks of life. Indecent women, nine out of ten, will be duped by them. Even decent ladies who are faultless and

\(^1\) The original title of this story (story 6 of Pai’an jingqi) is: “Jiu xia jiu Zhao ni’ao mihuа /Ji zhong ji Jia xiucai baoyuan” 酒下酒靚尼姐迷花/ 樣中樣賈秀才報怨 (With an Extraordinary Wine Nun Zhao Inebriated the Flower /Using an Unusually Clever Stratagem Licentiate Jia Avenged the Humiliation).

\(^2\) According to Chuogeng lu 殿耕錄 (Notes Recorded during the Respite from the Plough) by Tao Zongyi 陶宗儀 (1316-1403), nigu尼姑 (nun), daoGU道姑 (shamaness) and guagu卦姑 (soothsayer) are called “three aunts”三姑 (sangu), and 齐婆 yapo (slave broker), meipo 媒婆 (go-between), shipo 神婆 (sorceress), qianpo 货婆 (procuress), yaopo 譽婆 (female quack), and wenpo 無婆 (midwife) are called six crones 六婆 (liupo). See Tao Zongyi, Chuogeng lu, in Dushu zhaji congkan 讀書札記叢刊 (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1963). 2nd series, juan 10, p. 157. Yapo, or yasao 牙嫂, a term that also appears in Shuihu zhuan 水滸傳 (Water Margins) and is unfamiliar to most of the modern readers, refers to a woman who on behalf of high officials and wealthy people searches for girls to be used in their households as maids. See Wu Zimu 吳自牧 (ca. 1270). Mengliang lu 夢梁錄 (Dreaming of the Capital when the Rice is Cooking) (Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 1980), ch. 19, p. 183. For the etymology of ya 牙 in the phrase of “yapo” or “yaren,” see Meng Yuanlao 孟元老, Dongjing menghua lu zhu 東京夢華録注 (Dreaming of the Prosperous Capital Dongjing, An Annotated Edition), annot., Deng Zhicheng 鄧之誠 (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1963), juan 3, p. 120.
unspoilt will often fall victims to their wily intrigues. They are as artful as master strategists
Zhang Liang and Chen Ping, and enjoy the repartee that can be found only in such famous
sophists as Sui He and Lu Jia. Given the potential troubles they may make out of nothing,
conventional official households have to put a large sign on their gate to prohibit the visit of
these people.

Of all these above-mentioned women, the nun is the most vicious. On the pretext of

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3 Zhang Liang 張良 and Chen Ping 陳平 helped Liu Bang 劉邦 defeat Xiang Yu 項羽 and
establish the Han Dynasty. Liu Bang would have been killed by Xiang Yu at Xia Pei 夏壇 but for
Zhang Liang’s information and tactful arrangement. See Sima Qian 司馬遷, Shi ji 史記
(Historical Records) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1964), vol. 1, juan 7, pp. 311-315; Burton
Watson, trans., Records of the Grand Historian of China: Han Dynasty I (New York: Columbia
University Press, 1993), part II, pp. 28-33. Sima Qian says that he had always imagined that
Zhang Liang must have been a man of majestic stature and imposing appearance. Yet when he
saw a picture of him, his face looked like that of a woman or a pretty young girl. See Sima Qian,
ibid., vol. 6, juan 55, p. 2049; Watson, ibid., part IV, pp. 113-14. Chen Ping was very poor when
he was young. He married a girl who had married five times but each time her husband had
immediately died. When the rumour had it that Chen Ping carried on in secret with his brother’s
wife and accepted money from various generals, Liu Bang’s suspicions aroused. He summoned
Wei Wuzi 魏無知, who had first recommended Chen Ping to him and began to berate him. But
Wei replied, “I recommended the man because of his ability. But now Your Majesty questions
me on his behaviour! Even the most shining examples of chaste and loyal behaviour would be of
no help in deciding our fate in battle, so why should Your Majesty trouble about such
questions?” Liu Bang then pardoned Chen Ping. Later Chen Ping devised six ingenious strategies
for Liu Bang. See Sima Qian, ibid., vol. 6, juan 56, p. 2054; Watson, part IV, pp. 115-128. For
“six ingenious strategies,” see note 16 of this story.

4 Sui He 蔡勛 (fl. late 3rd-early 2nd centuries B.C.) was renowned as a skilful speaker.
During the Chu-Han War 楚漢戰爭 Liu Bang dispatched him as an envoy to the residence of
Qing Bu 慶布, the King of Jiujiang, telling him, "If you can persuade Qing Bu to raise an army
and revolt against Chu, Xiang Yu will be bound to halt his advance and attack him. If I can get
Xiang Yu to delay for a few months, I will surely be able to seize control of the empire!" Sui He
went and pleaded with Qing Bu, who as a result revolted against Chu. See Shi ji, "Gaozu benji"
高祖本紀, vol.2. juan 8, p. 371; Burton Watson, Records of the Grand Historian of China: Han
Dynasty I, "The Basic Annals of Emperor Gaozu," p. 68. Lu Jia 陸賈 (c.228-c.140 B.C.) was also
famous as a rhetorician and was one of Liu Bang’s trusted advisors, serving time and again as the
envoy to the various nobles. See Shi ji, "Lisheng Lu Jia liezhuan" 鄭生陸賈列傳, vol. 8, juan 97,
preaching Buddhism and with the advantage of having a private sanctuary, the nun is able to
attract both women to come and burn incense and youths to visit and amuse themselves. If the
visitor is a man, she will greet and talk to him the way a monk does without feeling put out by
their different sexes. As a female in physique, she naturally feels more convenient to carry on
intimately with her female patrons when she is chanting sutras to them in her meditation room.
The nun is a notorious middlewoman. In most of the liaisons known to us, the nun was usually
involved, with the nunnery serving as a meeting place for paramours.

In the Tang dynasty there was a woman named Di. Because of her distinguished official

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5 “Notorious middlewoman” in the original text is “cuoheshan” 搠合山 and “mabailiu”
馬佰六 (which sometimes can be changed to “mapoliu” 马泊六), meaning a go-between
specially for illicit love affairs. Chu Renhuo 褚人穎 (fl. 1675-95) in his Jianhu guangji 堅瓠廣記
(Sequel to Hard Gourd) says that when he first heard people call a go-between as mabailiu he
did not understand the meaning of the phrase. Only until after he had read a book did he learned
that the phrase was derived from a practice in the north, where a large drove of horses usually
consisted of 106 horses, with a male horse leading more than ten female horses in each small
group. See Jianhu guangji, juan 6, in Biji xiaoshuo daguan 筆記小說大觀 (Great Collectanea of
Note-Form Literature) (Yangzhou: Jiangsu guangling guji keyinshe, 1984), vol. 7, p. 429.

6 “Di” 秋 in the original text is “Dishi” 狄氏. “Shi”氏, when it follows a woman’s maiden
name in the old times, usually indicates that the woman in question is married. This practice can
be traced back, at least, to the Spring and Autumn period. See, for example, Zuozhuan 左傳:
“Chu, Zhen Chenggong qu yu shen, yue Wujiang, sheng Zhuanggong ji Gonghsu dian,
Zhuanggong wusheng, jing Jianguoshi” 初, 鄭武公娶於申, 曰武姜, 生莊公及共叔段, 莊公寤生,
鶼姜氏 (In the past, Duke of Wu of Zheng had taken a bride from the state of Shen, known as
Lady Jiang of Duke of Wu. Lady Jiang gave birth to the future Duke of Zhuang and to his
brother. Duan of Gong. Duke Zhuang was born wide awake and consequently greatly startled
Lady Jiang). See Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu 春秋左傳注 (Spring and Autumn Annals with Zu’s
Commentary. An Annotated Edition), annot., Yang Bojun 楊伯峻 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju,
1981), vol. 1, p. 10; Burton Watson, trans., The Tso Chuan (New York: Columbia University,
1989), pp. 1-2 (the translation is Watson’s). Ling Mengchu in his stories often used “shi” for
those married women disregard their social status. Since I can not find a suitable English
equivalent for “shi,” I have simply omitted it in my translation.
family background and her marriage to a high-ranking bureaucrat, she was entitled “lady.”7 Lady Di was famed in the capital for her outstanding beautifulness. The women of imperial and aristocratic families, when squabbling with each other out of jealousy, would often say, “You think you’re handsome and can put on airs? You’re way below Lady Di!” Despite her reputation as an unmatchable beauty, Lady Di was nevertheless a woman of demure disposition, decent, and lax with neither speech nor smile.

When the story unfolds, it was the season of spring. On the Western Pond8 literati and their wives joyfully gathered, and colourfully painted and gaily curtained carriages loaded with princes and dukes and the like arrived in an endless stream. Following with the social convention, Lady Di also joined the spring excursion.

A handsome youth by the name of Teng,9 waiting in the capital as a candidate for some

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7 Here “lady” is an honorific title granted wives of the rank 3a and higher officials. See Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 & Song Qi 宋祁, Xin Tang shu 新唐書 (New Tang History) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), vol. 4, p. 1188.

8 The name of the pond, which is probably first mentioned in Liu Yiqing’s 劉義慶 (403-444) Shi shuo xinyu 世說新語 (A New Account of Tales of the World) collated by Yang Yong 楊勇 (Hong Kong: Dazong shuju, 1969), ch. 13, “Haoshuan” 豪爽 (Virile Vigour), p. 456: “Emperor Ming, who was crown prince at the time, was fond of warfare and maintained a number of warriors. These dug out the pond in a single night, so that it was completed by dawn. It is currently known as the Crown Prince’s West Pond 太子西池 (taizi xichi). The English translation is Mather’s, but I have changed “moat” into “pond.” See A New Account of Tales of the World (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976) pp. 302-303. The commentator Liu Xioabiao 劉孝標 says: “The West Pond was constructed by Sun Deng 孫澄, and was the same one which in Wu shi 吳史 (History of Wu) is called West Garden 西苑 (xiyuan). It was Emperor Ming (still crown prince at that time) who repaired and restored it.” See also Liu Yiqing, ibid., p. 456. The West Garden is located in the west of modern Luoyang 洛陽 county in Henan province.

9 “Teng” 滕 in the Chinese text is “Tengsheng” 滕生, literally, “Mr. Teng” or “Student Teng” or “Scholar Teng.” The author Ling Mengchu liked to use “sheng” after the surnames of those men who belong to the gentry/scholar class. Since in vernacular fiction “sheng” is a rather informal appellation, I have usually omitted it in my translation unless it is necessary.
official post, was also on the pond on that day. When he saw the flashy beauty Lady Di, he was so carried away that it had been as though his soul\textsuperscript{10} had been taking flight. He followed her wherever she went, without taking his fixed eyes off her for a moment. Lady Di on one occasion looked around and caught sight of him. Although she noticed that he was a young attractive romantic, she did not pay him too much attention. On his part, however, Teng had been completely captivated. He stood gazing at her in a daze, wishing he could have found some cold water to help gulp her down into his stomach, complete with the clothes she was wearing! He asked tourists around and learned that she was the well-known beauty Lady Di.

Carriages and horses dispersed. Teng returned to his lodgings, dejected. Thinking of her kept him awake all night. From that time on he pined for her so much that he would forget eating while in the middle of a meal or keep going when he was supposed to stop, as if he had been weighed on his mind every single moment by a lost treasure. As he could no longer bear the distress, he went to the area where Lady Di lived. After making inquiries about her in the neighbourhood, he was told that she was a virtuous woman hard to approach.

She must have had some close friends, Teng thought. If I can find out who they are, I should be able to make acquaintance with them when possible.

One day, he saw a nun coming out of Lady Di's house. He followed her, and after asking people on the street, learned that the nun was called Huicheng. Huicheng, he was informed, was the abbess of the Nunnery of Tranquil Happiness and often came to visit Lady Di.

\textsuperscript{10} "Souls" in the original Chinese text is "sanhun qipo" 三魂七魄 (three ethereal souls and seven material souls). It used to be held that every man had two groups of souls, three superior souls 灵 (hun) and seven inferior ones 魄 (po) and they separated at death. See Henri Maspero, \textit{Taoism and Chinese Religion} (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1981), pp. 266-67.
“Good! Good!” he exclaimed to himself. He hastened back to where he stayed, took out ten taels of silver, wrapped them up and went hurrying to the nunnery.

“Is the abbess in?” he asked.

Huicheng came out. Seeing it was a young gentleman, she invited him in for drinking tea. After they bowed to each other,¹¹ Huicheng asked, “Sir, may I know your honourable name and what has brought you here?”

Teng told her his name and then explained the reason: “Nothing particular. It has been long since I heard of the reputation of your holy place. Today I came to present you a small amount of money so that I may worship and burn incense in your nunnery later on.”

He fished out the silver from inside his sleeve¹² and handed it over to the abbess. As an experienced woman, Huicheng was able to tell with a single sweep of her eyes that with such a heavy bundle of money the person was bound to ask her for doing him some favour.

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¹¹ “Bow” in the Chinese text is “jishou” 稽首 (to touch one’s forehead on the ground). According to Zhou li 周禮 (The Institutions of the Zhou), “jishou” was the most respectful greeting ceremony. See Zhou li (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1965), “Chunguan II” (春官, 下) p. 120. Matthew Ricci says that if one wishes to express his/her profound veneration, as on an occasion of first meeting or after a long absence or for any other special reason, they fall upon their knees and touch the forehead to the ground. See Louis Gallagher, trans., China in the Sixteenth Century: The Journals of Matthew Ricci: 1583-1610 (New York: Random House, 1953). book one. ch. 7. p. 60.

¹² Traditional Chinese men’s garment did not have a pocket on it. Men usually put small stuff inside their sleeves, which, “Venetian in style, are long but not wide and open at the wrist.” See China in the Sixteenth Century: The Journals of Matthew Ricci: 1583-1610, book one, ch. 8. p. 78. An Indian interpreter, Ricci told us in his journal, had filled his long and spacious sleeves with stones beforehand, and in the court he simply unfolded his arms and stones went rolling all over the floor as a protest. See ibid., p. 163. For the pictures of garments for Ming Chinese scholars, see Zhou Xun 周洵, et al., Zhongguo fushi wuqian nian 中國服飾五千年 (A Five-Thousand-Year History of Chinese Garments) (Kong Hong: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1984), p. 156, 157 & 159.
“Don’t bother!” she declined, though at the same time her hands had already taken the money. She then thanked Teng, saying, “I appreciate very much for your generous indulgence. Maybe you would like to talk to me?”

Teng prevaricated. He said that he had nothing particular to say and that the money was just a slight token of showing his sincerity. After saying this, he took leave and went back to where he lived.

This is really strange! thought Huicheng. He’s such a dashing youth and I’m just an old nun. It’s unlikely that he fancies me. But why did he give me such a bounty of money without saying a word? She was unable to get an answer.

Teng then came to the nunnery every day, showing more and more enthusiasm to her. Soon they had been quite familiar with each other. Huicheng one day brought up the question again. “Sir,” she said, “you look restless. I suppose you must have something on your mind? If there is anything that you can entrust with me, I’ll surely do my best to help you.”

“I don’t think you’ll be able to help me,” Teng said. “I’m not quite sure if I should tell you about it. But since this is a matter of life and death to me, I wish to get your assistance, no matter how trifling it would be. If I’m not successful, I’d rather fall sick and die.”

Huicheng couldn’t make head or tail of his ambiguous words. She said, “To be or not to be, you must first of all tell me what on earth you want me to do for you.”

Teng then told her that he had met Lady Di on the Western Pond and how he had been missing her and how he was willing to spend ten thousand pieces of gold\(^\text{13}\) if he could get his

\(^{13}\text{Gold 金 (jin), a general term for money in ancient time, can also refer to silver and copper coin. See Zhang Huixin 張惠信, Zhongguo Yinding 中国銀锭 (Chinese Sycee) (Taipei: Taipei xian zhonghe shi, 1988), p. 9. And according to Lien-sheng Yang 揚連陞, “the word ‘jin’ in}
wish fulfilled.

"This task seems not easy," said Huicheng with a smile. "She may be unusually beautiful and I may have had some personal contact with her, but given her flawless virtue I really don’t know how to help you."

Teng meditated for a while and then said, "Since you’re familiar with her, you must know what she likes best?"

"Nothing particular as far as I know," Huicheng replied.

"Did she ever ask you to do something for her?" Teng continued to ask.

"Well, the other day she did ask me several times to look for some fine pearls for her," Huicheng said. "But that’s the only thing she’s ever asked me to do for her."

"Splendid! Splendid!" Teng said, bursting into laughter. "As luck would have it, I have a relative who is a jeweller and has a lot of fine pearls. Right now I stay at his house. I can get you as many fine pearls as you wish."

He went hurrying out, hired a horse, and sped off. A moment later he came back with two bags of big pearls. which he handed to Huicheng for her inspection. "These pearls are worth twenty thousand strings of cash," he said. "Since she is such a beauty, I’ll reduce half the price

ancient Chinese texts has three meanings, namely, gold, copper, and metal in general.” See Lien-sheng Yang, Money and Credit in China: A Short History (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), ch. 5, p. 40. Therefore, “ten thousand pieces of gold” 萬金 (wanjin) can also be taken as “ten thousand taels of silver,” i.e., a huge of amount of money.

14 Theoretically speaking, a string of cash 一貫 (yiguan) was equal to a thousand coins 一千文 (yiqian wen), and a thousand coins were equal to a tael of silver 一兩銀子 (yiliang yinzi). In fact, however, the exchange rate differed from time to time and also from place to place. For example, during the years from Chongning 憲宗 reign to Xuanhe 宣和 reign (1102-1125), a tael of silver could exchange for 1,250 coins (see Zhang Huixin, Zhongguo yinding, p. 27), and in Zhejiang province, was only worth 250 coins (see ibid., p. 60).
and only ask for ten thousand.”

“But her husband is now on a diplomatic mission in the north,” said the abbess. “She is a woman after all and probably can’t scratch up that much money when her husband is away.”

“I’ll let her have them if she can afford four or five thousand,” Teng said. “Or she can pay me a thousand or even less. If she agrees to make love to me, I won’t charge her a single cent.”

“Stupid!” the abbess smilingly chided him. “But now that you have had these pearls, I’ll surely wag my glib tongue as Zhang Yi and Su Qing did and devise “six ingenious strategies”

15 In the first years of the Tang dynasty the greatest threat came from the Eastern Turks (dong tujue) located in the north of the Tang empire. Emperor Gaozu, fully aware that the Tang was still in a weak military position, regularly bribed the Eastern Turks not to invade Tang territory. So the dispatch of his envoys to the north on the mission of giving large gifts to the Turkish qaghan was a common practice during his reign. See Lu Zhenyu 吕振羽, Jianming Zhongguo tongshi 简明中國通史 (A Brief History of China) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1955), pp. 318-19; Dennis Twitchett and John K. Fairbank, chief eds., Cambridge History of China (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), vol. 3, ch. 3 (written by Howard Wechsler), pp. 181-182. But since the author does not indicate a particular year or reign in the story, we cannot take it as completely historical.

16 Su Qin 蘇秦 (fl. early 3rd century B.C.) was an itinerant politician, who travelled from court to court of the Six States during the Warring-State period, persuading their rulers to adopt his strategies. See Shi ji, vol. juan 69, pp. 2241-2278; William Nienhauser, Jr., ed., The Grand Scribe’s Records (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), vol. vii, pp. 97-119. Zhang Yi 張儀 was also a politician working at his mouth and tongue. Earlier he and Su Qin once served the Venerable Guigu 鬼谷子 (Guigu zi) as disciples and learned the arts of politics, and Su Qin thought he had not attained to Zhang Yi’s skill. Zhang Yi later became Wei’s Prime Minister and died in Wei. See Shi ji, vol. juan 70, pp. 2279-88; Nienhauser, ibid., vol. vii, pp. 123-138.

17 “Six ingenious strategies” 六出奇計 (liuchu qiji) refer to the schemes employed by Chen Ping. The first strategy: Chen Ping suggested that Liu Bang part with 30,000 or 40,000 catties of gold in order to bring about dissension between Xiang Yu and his honest ministers such as Fan Zeng 范增 and Zhongli Mei 鍾離昧. The second strategy: Xiang Yu happened to send an envoy to the Han camp. The King of Han 漢王 (Hanwang, i.e., Liu Bang) had a meal of all sorts of fancy dishes prepared and brought in but, upon seeing the envoy, he pretended to be thoroughly startled and said, “I supposed you were the envoy from Fan Zeng, but I see that you have come from Xiang Yu!” He then had the feast taken away and a meal of coarse food brought in and
for you. I'll see to it that she'll at least come to visit the nunnery. Then I'll create an occasion for you to meet her. You should be tactful once she is in your hands. Whether or not you can succeed, it totally depends on your luck and there is nothing I can do about it.”

“I'll count on you to save my life, abbess!” Teng said.

Huicheng was delighted. She went to Lady Di’s house carrying the two bags of pearls with her. After customary exchange of greetings upon seeing each other, Lady Di asked, “What’s inside your bags?”

“The pearls you asked me to look for the other day,” Huicheng answered.

“The pearls you asked me to look for the other day.” Huicheng answered. “These are very
fine pearls and today I’m coming specially to let you take a look.”

The bags were undid. Lady Di took out the pearls and made a scrutiny. “Why, they’re indeed fine pearls!” she praised, looking at them over and over again and fondling them admiringly. Then she asked, “How much are they?”

“Ten thousand,” Huicheng told her.

“This is only half the price and I simply can’t believe they are so cheap,” Lady Di said. Only my husband is away and I’m unable to get so huge an amount of money. What should I do?”

“I’d like to talk to you in private, lady,” Huicheng, tugging at Lady Di’s sleeve, said. After they went into an inner room, she went on, “If you like these pearls, you can have them without paying a single cent, because they belong to a young scholar and he wishes to get your help.”

Story-teller, you may protest, how dare the nun, in front of the lady from a good family, say plainly that the jewels would be given her for the sake of a love affair?

Gentle readers, please have a little patience. The silver-tongued nun certainly knows how to couch her intention in appropriate diction.

“What help does he expect to get from me?” asked Lady Di.

“That young gentleman used to be an official,” explained Huicheng, “but he lost his post because of a false accusation lodged against him by his enemy. In order to have a chance to defend himself at the Board of Personnel and get reinstated, he’s willing to give these pearls to

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18 The central administration of the Tang dynasty consists of sansheng 三省 (three departments): Zhongshu sheng 中书省 (the Secretariat), Menxia sheng 門下省 (the Chancellery), and Shangshu sheng 尚書省 (the Department of State Affairs), and under the Department of State Affairs.
whoever can help him. Since your husband, brothers and uncles are all top officials, it’s not difficult on your part to instruct him how to get his problem solved. If you’re willing to help him, then these pearls will be yours for free.”

“If that is the case,” said Lady Di, “you’d better return them to him for the time being and ask him to wait until I think it over and am sure I can do something for him.”

Huicheng was persistent. “He’s in a rush,” she said. “I’m sure he will seek help from other people and will offer them these pearls if I return them to him. Then you won’t be able to get them again. I would like to suggest, lady, that you take them, tell him that you can manage a way out for him and ask him to wait for your reply tomorrow.”

“All right,” Lady Di agreed, “I’ll just do as you said.”

Huicheng then took leave. She told Teng of their talk in detail.

“Now, what should be done next?” Teng asked.

“Since she likes the pearls and has taken them,” Huicheng said, “I’ll in all events make her come to the nunnery tomorrow. Trust me!”

Teng gave the abbess another ten taels of silver, asking her to make an early departure

Affairs there were liubu 六部 (six boards): liu 鬟部 (Board of Personnel), hubu 戶部 (Board of Revenue), liu 禮部 (Board of Rites), bingbu 兵部 (Board of War), xingbu 刑部 (Board of Justice) and gongbu 工部 (Board of Work). See Ouyang Xiu, et al., Xin Tang shu, vol. 4, juan 46, pp. 1184-85; Charles Hucker, A Dictionary of Official titles in Imperial China (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), “Introduction: Governmental Organization Era By Era,” pp. 28-37. The Board of Personnel was the civil office in charge of the supervision of officials, taking care of the matters such as their appointment and dismissal, promotion and demotion, etc. For detailed account of the Board of Personnel, see Xin Tang shu, vol. 4, juan 46, pp. 1186-92; Hucker, ibid., pp. 306-7. Usually I follow Hucker in translating official titles and proper names of organizations, but occasionally I have made some changes, e.g., “Board of Personnel” instead of “Ministry of Personnel.”

19 This is probably an anachronism. According to Peng Xinwei 彭信威, the copper coin,
next morning.

Lady Di, after Huicheng had left, once again took a look at the pearls. The more she looked at them, the better she liked them. To think, just to ask a small favour from my brothers and these pearls will be mine, she mused.

One should not have desires. Once one has desires, one may become vulnerable and fall a prey to other people’s trick. Had Lady Di not asked the nun to look for pearls for her, nothing unexpected would have happened. When she had seen fine pearls, she could have bought them if she had money; she could also have chosen to get along without them if she had been in a straitened financial situation. One would have been one and two would have been two, and no

instead of silver, was the major currency used in the Tang dynasty. See Peng Xinwei, Zhongguo huobi shi 中國貨幣史 (A History of Monetary System in China) (Shanghai: Qunlian chubanshe, 1954), vol. 2, p. 175. Since its output in the Tang times was very limited (twelve thousand taels a year to fifteen thousand taels a year), silver was rarely used as currency at that time. See ibid., vol. 2, p. 183. The use of silver as currency did not prevail until the Ming. During Xuande 宣德 reign (1426-35), silver was a currency only for unofficial transactions, and after Yingzong 英宗 occupied the throne (1436), silver as a major currency was officially recognized. See ibid., vol. 2, p. 429. If we compare the source material of this story collected in Tao Zongyi’s Shuofu 說郛 (The Froniers of Apocrypha), in which we see the term “wanmin” 萬緯 (ten thousand strings of copper coins) is used, with the details of using silver added by Ling Mengchu, we can come to the conclusion that the use of silver actually reflects the monetary system in the Ming times rather than in the Tang dynasty. For the sources of this story, see Tan Zhengbi 鄧正璧, Sanyan Liangpai ziliao 三言兩拍資料 (The Source Materials of Sanyan and Liangpai) (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1981), vol. 2, pp. 607-609. Patrick Hanan tried to solve the problem of authorship and dates of vernacular stories by studying their stylistic features. See Patrick Hanan, The Chinese Short Story: Studies in Dating, authorship and Composition (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973, and his article, “Sung and Yuan Vernacular Fiction: A Critique of Modern Methods of Dating,” in Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies, vol. 30, 1970, pp. 159-184. I think the monetary system, which has so far never been adequately studied for the purpose of ascertaining the dates of some vernacular stories, can also be helpful in this respect. For the reason why silver became the major currency in the Ming, see Peng Xinwei, ibid., vol. 2, p. 421, p. 429 and passim; Wu Han 吳晗, “Guanyu Zhongguo ziben zhuyi mengya de xie wen” 關於中國資本主義萌芽的幾個問題 (On the Issues of Capitalist Sprouts in China), Wu Han wenji 吳晗文集 (The Works of Wu Han) (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 1988), vol. 1, p. 480.
man would have been able to touch a single fine hair of her no matter how capable he was. The fact is, however, she took fancy to the pearls yet could not afford to buy them. As a result, she fell into the trap the nun had set up for her and her ice-clear jade body therefore got entangled in an illicit affair.

The next day Lady Di was still preoccupied with the thinking of this matter when Huicheng came. She asked, “Have you got some idea how to help him?”

“Last night,” said Lady Di, “I gave his problem a careful thought. I’m sure I can find some connections to pull strings for him.”

“Still, there is another problem,” said Huicheng. “Since this is a big transaction and the huge amount of money is involved, how can I, as an insignificant nun with only a few pounds of flesh on my body, convince him that you can do something for him if he doesn’t know you personally?”

“That’s true,” Lady Di admitted. “What do you think will be a proper way of handling this matter?”

“I have a silly idea,” Huicheng suggested. “In order to let you meet him. I would like you to come to my nunnery. You may pretend that you are observing fast in the nunnery and see him by coincidence. That way you can make his acquaintance. What do you think?”

Lady Di was a decent woman. The nun’s suggestion that she meet the stranger in her nunnery set her blushing all over. “This is out of the question!” she said, waving her hands.

Huicheng’s face fell, too. “Why are you taking it so seriously?” she said. “This is just to give him a chance to speak to you directly and this is also a chance for you to assure him that you can find a way out for him lest he be filled with misgivings. If you think you shouldn’t see him,
then this transaction can’t proceed any further and you have to give it up. I have no intention of forcing you into doing something which you don’t like to.”

Lady Di was unable to make up her mind. Upon second thought she said, “Since you’re very experienced, abbess, I believe what you’ve suggested should be all right. Two days later, it’s the anniversary of my late brother’s death and I’ll come to your nunnery to fast and pray. But you should advise him that I can only have a brief talk with him and he’s supposed to leave as soon as the business is finished. I need to be careful to shun busybodies.”

“That’s what I would like you to do,” Huicheng said. “When he is finished with his talk, certainly he has no reason to continue to stay. You don’t have to worry about that.”

The date having been settled, Huicheng went back to the nunnery and told Teng about what had happened. Teng had actually arrived at the nunnery ahead of her. After having heard out her detailed account, he made her a deep bow and expressed his appreciation to her, saying, “Even Su Qing and Zhang Yi’s lobbying couldn’t be better than what you have done for me!”

The day came. Huicheng got up early in the morning and made vegetarian dishes. She had Teng concealed in a quiet, infrequently visited room in which she had laid out a table of wine and delicacies. Then she closed the door behind her and went out into the reception room to await her guest. Truly:

20 “Zuozhai”做齋. here I have translated as “to fast and pray,” was a fasting ceremony carried on in a Buddhist monastery for the commemoration of the dead. In Buddhist monasteries and nunneries, meat, fish, dairy products and intoxicating beverages have been forbidden or customarily avoided. When one fasts and prays in a Buddhist monastery, only vegetables (except vegetables of onion family), rice and bean curd can be eaten. Holmes Welch says that this dietary abstinence was an ancient Chinese tradition that actually antedated the arrival of Buddhism, and the Chinese thought if they abstained from meat, they were able to perform rites for the dead with greater effectiveness. See Holmes Welch, The Practice of Chinese Buddhism (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 112.
Assaulting nostrils is a fragrant bait
Specially made to tempt a female whale.

As expected, Lady Di came in the afternoon, dressed in a splendid outfit. In order to avoid gossip, she had sent her male servants away. She brought with her only a young maid. No sooner had she arrived at the nunnery than she saw Huicheng.

"Has he come?" she asked.

"Not yet," Huicheng said.

"Good, let me finish the fasting ceremony first."

When the wish had been made and the sutra recited, Huicheng bade a young nun to take the maid out to amuse themselves in some other place. She then said to Lady Di, "Let's go to a small room and sit for a while."

They went through several small paths and reached a secluded abode. Lady Di, upon pulling aside the curtain and stepping into the room, was surprised to see a young man sitting by himself at the table on which wine and food were laid. She was about to withdraw herself when Huicheng interposed in time. "Sir," the abbess addressed Teng, "the lady you wish to talk to is now in front of you. Please be quick to bow to her!"

Upon hearing this, Teng rushed forward to Lady Di with flaunting gallantry and fell to his knees right before her. Lady Di had no choice but return her obeisance.

"This young gentleman," said Huicheng, "has specially prepared some wine and dishes in honour of your kind visit. It is his humble wish that you would appreciate his sincerity. Please
don't reject him!"

Lady Di turned around. When she looked up, she recognized that the young man was the person she had seen on the Western Pond. Seeing he was a handsome and refined youth, Lady Di became less rigid. In a delightful yet still somewhat timidly affected tone, she stammered, “Please tell me what you want me to do for you.”

Huicheng tugged at her sleeve and said, “It’s better to sit down to talk to each other. Why are you both standing?”

Teng, after smilingly bowing his thanks to Lady Di, poured out a glass of wine to its brim and presented it to her with both his hands. Lady Di could not reject him. She took hold of the glass and drank it off. Huicheng picked up the wine pot and poured herself a glass. Out of politeness Lady Di has to drink toast in return. Her manner was now not so prudent and reserved as it had been before. She even began to make eyes with Teng.

“What post do you wish to get, sir?” she asked him.

Teng gave Huicheng a look. “I’m afraid I can’t tell you in the presence of Abbess.”

“I’ll leave and let you talk,” Huicheng said. She jumped to her feet and went out, closing the small door behind her.

In less time than it takes to tell, Teng changed his seat and moved to Lady Di’s side. He took her to his arms and said, “Since I saw you on the pond, madam, I have been pining for you day and night. I’m now on the verge of dying and only you can save me. Madam, should you let me get my wish, then my body and my life would be yours, not to mention an official position, which I really don’t care too much as a matter of fact.”

He went down on his knees. What with his good looks and his moving imploring, which
was generously sprinkled with plenty of “madams,” Lady Di felt alarmed and happy at the same
time. She wanted to scream, but knew it would not help her too much. She then tried to struggle
out of him; yet he tightly clutched her with both his hands. Taking advantage of his kneeling
position, Teng succeeded in carrying her to him and putting her onto the bed. He then recklessly
pulled at her underpants. Lady Di became so inflamed that she was unable to control her raging
passion. She dodged about only for a while before she yielded, letting him make free with her.
Young as he was, Teng was very experienced with the art of bedroom. With his love-making
skill, he set Lady Di tingling all over and soon her female fluid flowed out. It was true that Lady
Di was a married woman leading a normal sexual life, but she had never experienced so ecstatic
sexual pleasure as she did this time. She felt extremely satiated.

After they had finished the work of clouds and rain, Lady Di held Teng’s hand and

21 “*Xiaoyi* 小衣, which I have here translated as “underpants,” can refer to 1) underpants or
2) underclothes. Usually it refers to underpants (see, for example, *Honglou meng*, ch. 33), but it
is not impossible that “*xiaoyi*” can occasionally also refer to underclothes. See Fu Meilin 傅美琳
et al., eds., *Zhongguo fengsu da cidian* 中國風俗大辭典 (Beijing: Zhongguo heping chuban she,
1991), pp. 646-47. According to *Qingbai liechao* 清稗類鈔 (Classified Unofficial Records of the
Qing Dynasty), “*maxiong*” 胸衣 (corset) can also be called “*xiongjian xiaoyi*” 胸間小衣 (a small
underwear for breasts). See Xu Ke 徐珂, *Qingbai liechao* (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan,), vol.
46. p. 92. For the description of corset (or broad brassiere, to use van Gulik’s term), see van

22 This implies that Teng knows how to make use of the pleasure principle, i.e., prolonged
foreplay, female orgasm and male *reservatus*. For more discussion of the pleasure principle, see
University of New York Press, 1992), p. 44.

23 According to van Gulik, the “clouds” can be explained as “the ova and vaginal secretions
of woman” and the “rain” as “the emission of semen of the man.” See *Sexual Life in Ancient China*,
p. 39. The completion of the act of sexual intercourse is usually described in Ming-Qing
vernacular fiction in a phrase *yunshou yusan* 雲收雨散 (after the rain has come down and clouds
have dispersed).
asked, "What’s your name, sir? I would have spent my whole life in vain but for today’s meeting. From now on I would like to meet you every night."

Teng told her his name and thanked her profusely. At this moment, Huicheng opened the door and came in. Lady Di was too embarrassed to speak. Huicheng said, “Lady, I hope you can forgive me! This gentleman has been slowly killing himself because of you and as a sympathetic nun I just wanted you to save him. To build a seven storeyed pagoda is certainly not as good as the benefaction you have granted him."

“You have taken me in with such a hoax!” Lady Di said, pretending to be vexed. “Now I want you to send him to my house every night.”

“No problem,” Huicheng promised. They parted company in the evening.

Since then there had been not a single night that did not see Teng slip in through a side door to meet his paramour. Lady Di, who had deeply fallen in love with him, tried her best to please him for fear of his growing tired of her. Teng, too, sustained himself as much as he could to make her happy and satisfied. They were as thick as thieves for several months until Lady Di’s husband came back home. Now Teng could no longer visit her regularly. Lady Di, however, would have somebody send for him whenever her husband was away. Their tryst lasted in this fashion for about a year before her husband got wind of something and took precautions, which made it impossible for her to continue their liaison any longer. Lady Di missed Teng so much that she finally fell sick and died.

It was because of the nun’s meddling that Lady Di, originally a virtuous woman, degenerated and died. Of course, her loss of moral sense and submission to lust should also be ascribed to her own fickle nature. There was, by contrast, a woman of integrity, who, in spite of
having been violated due to a nun’s vicious trick, insisted on pursuing her vendetta and eventually, in cooperation with her husband, made her enemies meet their doom. This is really an exciting story, extraordinary and amazing, which tallies exactly with what “Pumeng pin” (Universal Gateway of the Bodhisatva)\(^{24}\) predicts:

> With poisonous drugs and spells and curses
> Someone intends to have your body injured.
> Owing to the power of the Perceiver of Sound,
> The misfortune will upon the prayer rebound.\(^{25}\)

\(^{24}\) “Pumeng pin” 普門品 (The Universal Gateway) is the 25th chapter in *Lotus Sutra* 蓮華經 (*Lianhua jing*).

\(^{25}\) There are three Chinese versions of *Lotus Sutra*, respectively translated by Kumarajiva 墨摩羅什 (*Jiumo Luoshi*), Dharmaraksa 立法護 (*Zhu Fahu*) and Jnanagnpta 善那屈多 (*Shena quduo*). For these versions, see J. Takakusu & K. Watanabe, eds., *Da zheng zang* 大正藏 (The Tripitaka in Chinese) (Tokyo: Society for the Publication of the Taisho Tripitaka, 1924), vol. 9, p. 58 and vol. 9, p. 192. So far as ji 偈 (verse form) of “Pumeng ping” is concerned, Kumarajiva and Dharmaraksa’s versions differ very much from each other (Jnanagnpta’s version does not even have the verse forms most of the times). The verse in the story, which Dharmaksa rendered differently, is taken from Kumarajiva’s translation. There are quite a few English versions of *Lotus Sutra* translated from Kumarajiva’s Chinese text. For the translation of the poem in this story, cf. Leon Hurvitz, *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma* (Columbia University Press, 1976), p. 317: “When either by spells, or curses, or by various poisonous herbs, /[Someone] wishes to harm his body, the victim, /By virtue of his constant mindfulness of Sound-Observer, /Shall send them all back to plague their author;” Burton Watson, *The Lotus Sutra* (Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 304: “Suppose with curses and various poisonous herbs /Someone should try to injure you, /Think on the power of that Perceiver of sounds /And injury will rebound upon the originator.” We can also find the translation of this verse in Lin Yutang’s *The Gay Genius: The Life and Time of Su Tungpo*: “A curse upon all persons! /By the help of the Goddess of Mercy, /May those who use poison on others /Take the poison themselves.” See *The Gay Genius* (London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1948), p. 135.
In the town of Wuzhou there was a young licentiate named Jia, who was erudite and exceptionally intelligent. His wife, nee Wu, was a beautiful and demure woman. The husband and wife enjoyed a happy conjugal life like fish and water and never had they have half a bickering word with each other. The licentiate, working as a private tutor, resided in a rich household and returned home only twice a year. Madam Wu, in the company of her maid

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26 Wuzhou 婺州 is modern Jinhua 金華 County in Zhejiang province.

27 Xucai 秀才 (literally, "cultivated talent," which I have here translated as "licentiate") was in the Ming-Qing times an unofficial reference to shengyuan 生員 (students in governmental schools) who were qualified to participate in provincial examinations 鄉試 (xiangshi) in the civil service examination sequence. See Charles Hucker, A Dictionary of the Official Titles in Imperial China, pp. 248-49. They were a distinguished class representing the advanced citizenry of their particular town, were given seats of honour at the conventions of the magistrates, and could enjoy a great many civil privileges. See Louis Gallapher, trans., China in the Sixteenth Century: The Journal of Matthew Ricci: 1583-1610, p.34. All xiucai (or shengyuan), were enrolled in prefectural or county schools and subjected to instruction, periodic reviewing tests and the discipline of school officials. They were exempt from corvee duty and were entitled to free board and a monthly stipend of a whole shi 石 (Chinese bushel). Later, to meet the popular demand for larger shengyuan quotas, the government created a new category of students, Zengsheng 增生 (additional shengyuan), without fixed quotas. The difference between the original shengyuan and zengsheng was that the latter were not entitled to government stipends, although after passing local qualification examinations they had the same right as the former to take the provincial examination. See Ho Ping-ti, The Ladder of Success in Imperial China (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), pp.172-74.

28 "Madam Wu," my transition of "Wu nianzi" 巫娘子, is perhaps rather confusing to Western readers. The term "nianzi" 娘子 can refer to both aristocratic ladies and ordinary women (see Tao Zongyi, Chuogen lu, pp. 211-213) and can be used for both married and unmarried women. See Xiao Yaotian 蕭道天, Zhongguo renming de yanjiu 中國人名的研究 (Study of Chinese names) (Beijing: Guoji wenhua chuban gongsi. 1987), pp.176-177. When "nianzi" is used, it is usually preceded by the woman's maiden name, as is in the case of Wu Nianzi here in this story. I have found it hard to translate this appellation into English. If "Wu Nianzi" were an unmarried girl, I could easily translate it as "Miss Wu." Unfortunately, however, she is a married woman. If I change her maiden name "Wu" to her husband surname "Jia" 賈 and translate it as "Mrs Jia" -- just to follow the Western custom, it will surely sound all right to Western readers. Nonetheless, the faithfulness will be sacrificed. One way of being faithful to the original is to simply use sound transliteration. The reasons I have chosen to translate "Wu nianzi" in this way are not only because I think this translation, faithful as it is, is more
Spring Flower, usually did homework, leading a domestic life.

Madam Wu was good at needlework. She embroidered a picture of the Boddhisatva Guanyin. Its colour being vivid and expression solemn and dignified, Guanyin looked as if it were real. She was very proud of her work. At her bidding, the licentiate took her embroidery to a frame shop and had it mounted. People who saw it all gasped in admiration. It was made into a scroll. After it had been taken back home, Madam Wu hung it in a clean room and burned incense and prayed before it every day in the morning and evening.

Since Madam Wu was a devotee to the Boddhisatva Guanyin, a Nun Zhao of the Nunnery of Guanyin, which was also located on the same street, often dropped in on her. She would sometimes stay for a couple of days to accompany her when the licentiate was away, and occasionally would even invite her to the nunnery. Being a well-behaved woman, Madam Wu

acceptable to general readership than sound transliteration, but also because I would like to call attention of experienced translators to the problem of translating a variety of Chinese appellations for which English does not have equivalents, so that they may contribute a better rendition.

29 Guanyin 觀音 (or Guanshiyin 觀世音), sometimes translated as “the Goddess of Mercy” or “Avalokitesvara,” literally means Boddhisatva Perceiver of Sound. As Mary is the guiding spirit of Rome, so is Guanyin of the Buddhist faith. Guanyin is the most widely revered bodhisattva, Buddha-to-be, in the East Asia, especially in the Tiantai 天台, Tantric 密宗 and Meditation 慈 Schools. See Wing-tsit Chan 陳念慈, Religious Trends in Modern China (New York: Octagon Books, 1969), pp. 87-88. According to a beautiful Chinese legend, Guanyin, when about to enter Heaven, heard a cry of anguish rising from the earth beneath her, and moved by pity, she paused as her feet touched the glorious threshold. Hence her name Guanyin (one who notices or hears the cry, or prayer, of the world). Guanyin, the “mother” to millions of devout Chinese and guardian of children and protector of womanhood, was at one time always represented as a man; but in the Tang dynasty and Five Dynasties we find him represented as a woman, and he has been generally, though not invariably, so represented since that time. See E. T. C. Werner, Myths and Legends of China (London: George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd., 1922), p. 251. For a definitive account of the hagiography that developed around this figure, see Glen Dudbridge, The Legend of Miao-shan (London: Ithaca Press, 1978).
usually would not go out. She went to the nunnery at most once or twice a year.

One day in spring when the licentiate was not home, Nun Zhao called on Madam Wu. After having had a brief talk, she rose to leave, saying, “What a nice day! You should come out with me to take a look!”

Madam Wu saw the nun off to the doorway. As ill luck would have it, when Madam Wu was just popping out her head to look around, she saw none other than a scamp who came swaggering on the street. He saw Madam Wu before she could shrink back to hide herself behind the door. Nun Zhao, however, stood gazing away at him.

In fact, the man knew Nun Zhao. “Mother Zhao!” he called, “I’m looking everywhere for you and who would have thought that you’re here! I’ve got something to ask you.”

Nun Zhao said, “Let me take leave of the lady of the house before I come and talk to you.” She went in and said parting words to Madam Wu. After she had left, Madam Wu closed the door and returned to her room.

This foppish-looking man who had accosted Nun Zhao was called Bu Liang. He was an insensate dissipator notorious in the town of Wuzhou. Every pretty woman he saw would stimulate his seductive desire and there was hardly anyone who had not fallen a prey to his lust. Since what he wanted was simply sex, he did not care too much whether his partner was beautiful or ugly. Because of his promiscuity, most of the nuns in the area liked to associate with him. Sometimes they were his go-betweens, and sometimes they themselves had sex with him. Nun Zhao had a pretty disciple, about twenty years old, whose ecclesiastic name was Benkong. It

30 Bu Liang 卜良 is a punning name that suggests the words “bu liang” 不良, meaning “not good.”
was more appropriate to take Benkong as a whore supported by Nun Zhao rather than as a tonsured member in the Buddhist order, for she prostituted herself on the sly and got money for selling her body. Bu Liang was actually one of their customers.

Nun Zhao, having parted with Madam Wu on that day, caught up with him. “Mr. Bu, what do you want to ask me about?”

“Is the house you visit Licentiate Jia’s residence?” he asked.

“Yes?”

“I’ve heard that his wife is pretty and I suppose she must be the woman who just came out with you and stood behind the door?”

“My dear!” Nun Zhao said, “You think there is another beautiful woman in his house? Even on this entire street you can’t find another one as beautiful as she is!”

“She is indeed good-looking,” Bu Liang said, “and deserves the reputation she’s been enjoying. I wish I could see her for one more time and get a close look at her!”

“This is not difficult,” said Nun Zhao. “The nineteenth of the second month is the birthday of Guanyin.\(^\text{31}\) As there is going to be a parade on the street, crowds of people are bound to come to see it. You may rent an upstairs room on the opposite side of the street beforehand. Since she is alone at home, I’ll go and invite her out. It should be all right for her to watch the parade at her own doorway and I can bet she will stand there for some time. When she is out, you

\(^{31}\)E. T. C. Werner says that Guanyin has three birthdays, the nineteenth of the second, sixth, and ninth months. See Myth and Legends of China, p. 252. But, in fact, Guanyin’s birthday is the nineteenth of the second month. The nineteenth of the sixth month is the day she joined the Buddhist order and the nineteenth of the ninth month was when she became a Buddha. See Fuguang da cidian 佛光大辞典 (The Great Dictionary of Buddhist Lumination) (Gaoxiong, Taiwan: Foguang chubanshe, 1988).
can peep at her through your window until you feed your eyes to the full.”

“A wonderful idea! A wonderful idea!” Bu Liang exclaimed.

On that day, in accordance with the instruction Nun Zhao had given him, Bu Liang rented an upstairs room, from which he could obtain a clear view of the Jia house located on the other side of the street. As expected, he saw Nun Zhao go into the house and come out with Madam Wu. The poor woman did not catch on. She was only afraid that standing at the doorway she might be seen by onlookers on the street. Never had she thought that somebody was already peering at her stealthily from inside the window of an opposite house! Involuntarily she offered herself, from beginning to end, for an scrutiny of the voyeur, who watched her until she went in. When Bu Liang came downstairs, Nun Zhao had also just stepped out of the Jia house.

“Now you must have had a close look at her, haven’t you?” she asked him smilingly as they met with each other.

“Yes, I did have a close look.” Bu Liang said. “But just looking and thinking of her won’t do me any good but drive me crazy. I’d better find a way to get her.”

“You’re in the gutter but want to eat the flesh of a swan!” said Nun Zhao. “She is the wife of a licentiate and usually does not come out. You are not a relative of her husband nor do you have any relations with her, how can you make her acquaintance? You can only look at her.”

So saying, she walked away and was soon back in the nunnery. Bu Liang, who had been following on her heels, went kneeling down in front of her after he was inside the nunnery.

“Mother,” he implored, “since you often visit her, I would like you to think of a scheme for me

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32 A slightly changed form of the colloquial expression “Laihamo xiangchi tian’e rou” (a toad wants to eat the flesh of a swan), which is usually used to mock people who have a vain hope.
and make her rise to bait.”

Nun Zhao shook her head. “Difficult, difficult, difficult!”

“I’d die content if I could have a taste,” Bu Liang insisted.

“Madam Wu is no ordinary woman,” Nun Zhao said. “It’s not easy to strike up a light conversation with her, let alone to get her aroused and engage in an illicit liaison with you. Even if you spent ten thousand years, I doubt you would be able to succeed. However, if you only want to have a taste, I may as well force her into submission. It should be no problem if you can be a little patient.”

“You want me to rape her?” Bu Liang was confused.

“You don’t have to rape her; she’ll submissively let you have your own way with her,” Nun Zhao said.

“What’s your magic scheme, my brilliant advisor?” Bu Liang asked.

“As an old saying goes, paddle a boat slowly and you can catch drunken fish. Unless you get her drunk, you won’t be able to achieve your goal. What do you think?”

“The idea is not bad, but how can you carry it out?”

“The problem is that she doesn’t drink wine, not even a drop,” Nun Zhao said. “You can’t force her to drink if she is stubborn, because if you urge her over and again, she may get suspicious and angry, and as a result she’ll certainly refuse to comply and you can do nothing about it. It doesn’t help much if you’ll persuade her to gulp down only one cup or two. Since it’s

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easy to get her drunk, it's also easy for her to sober up. You still can't get a chance to lay your 

hands on her.”

“Then what should we do?” he asked.

“I know what I'm about,” said Nun Zhao. “You don't have to bother your head about it.”

Yet Bu Liang insisted that she tell him the plot. Nun Zhao then said something in whisper 
to his ear. After having told him her idea, she asked, “What do you say?”

Bu Liang gave a great guffaw. “A wonderful idea! A wonderful idea! From ancient time 
to the present I've never heard of a scheme as good as this one!”

“One thing, however, I'm still pretty much worried about,” said Nun Zhao. “I may 
manage to take her in, but when she wakes up, she'll definitely get mad at me for my tricking her 
and will break up with me. I really don't know how to handle that scenario.”

“The only thing that needs to be worried about is get hold of her,” Bu Liang said. “Once 
she has fallen into our trap, I don't think she'll kick up a rumpus and fall out with you. As long as 
you keep coaxing her with honey words, you may even enable the two of us to establish a long-
term intimacy. In case she blames you, I'll repay you amply for what you have done for me. But 
to think, should I carry on intimately with her, I might be able to make the both of you renew 
your good relationship!”

“Look how glibly you're talking!” said Nun Zhao. They poked fun at each other for a 
while before breaking up.

From that time on Bu Liang came to the nunnery every day inquiring about Madam Wu, 
and Nun Zhao racked her brains every day thinking her scheme. A few days later, she prepared 
two boxes of cookie to pay a visit to Madam Wu and was invited to stay for dinner. This gave her
a good opportunity to carry on a casual conversation with the mistress.

"Madam Wu," said Nun Zhao, "you and your husband are a young couple. Since you have been married for quite a long time, I think you should have been able to conceive a child by now."

"I wish I could," said Madam Wu.

"If you are serious, why don’t you pray for it?" asked Nun Zhao.

"I do, as a matter of fact," Madam Wu said. "In front of my embroidered Bodhisatva Guanyin I burn incense every day in the morning and evening and also pray silently now and then. But my pray is not working."

"Madam Wu," Nun Zhao began to coax her, "you’re perhaps too young and don’t know how to pray for a child. If you want to conceive a child, you must pray Guanyin-in-White. There is a sutra entitled The Sutra of Guanyin-in-White. This is not the sutra we usually recite nor ‘The Universal Gateway of the Bodhisatva.’ The Sutra of Guanyin-in-White that I’m talking about contains many effective words. Since it is in the last few fascicles and I didn’t bring it with

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34 I have checked with Da Zang jing and Xu da zang jing 续大藏經 (Supplement to the Chinese Tripitaka), both of which do not have the so-called Baiyi jing 白衣經 (Sutra of Guanyin-in-White). Foguang da cidian (The Great Dictionary of Buddhist Lumination) does not mention it, nor does Foxue da cidian 佛學大辭典 (The Great Dictionary of Buddhism). My knowledge on Buddhism is insufficient to ascertain if there has been indeed a sutra called Sutra of Guanyin-in-White. Here I can only offer two immature suppositions: 1) Sutra of Guanyin-in-White was an unorthodox name for the chapters after “Pumengping,” i.e., the chapters 26, 27 and 28 of Lotus Sutra, because Nun Zhao says that “it is in the last few fascicles (juan 卷, i.e., parts);” 2) the sutra in question has been lost. Wing-tsit Chan says that many sutras were lost and it was due to efforts of the celebrated Buddhist layman Yang Wenhui 楊文會 that some of the “lost and forgotten” Buddhist literature were brought back from Japan in the last century. See Wing-Tsit Chan, Religious Trends in Modern China, pp. 59-60. The above note was made a year ago. Recently, I re-read Xie Zhaozhe’s 謝肇淛 Wu zazu 五雜俎 (Five Miscellanies). Xie also mentioned The Sutra of Guanyin-in-White. According to him, this sutra was indeed lost.
me today, I can’t show you right now. Although I lack information about other areas, I can at least assure you that in our town there is none who has read or copied out this sutra without having given birth to a child. It’s indeed no exaggeration to say that whenever there is a pray, there is a response.”

“Since it’s so effective, may I bother you, mother, to lend me the fascicles so that I can read the sutra at home?”

“You are not familiar with the text,” Nun Zhao said, “so you might feel it too difficult at the beginning. Maybe I should invite you to the nunnery first. I’ll inform Guanyin-in-White of the sutra you’re going to read. Only after I’ve prayed on your behalf and recited the first few chapters for you can you begin your own study at home and perform the daily recital of the sutra by yourself.”

“Good, I’ll do as you said,” Madam Wu agreed. “I’ll fast for two days beforehand and then I’ll come to your nunnery to pledge in front of Guanyin-in-White that I’m going to read the sutra you have designated for me.”

“A two-day fast is sufficient to show your sincerity,” Nun Zhao told her. “During the period when daily mass is performed, it’s necessary that you stick to some vegetarian diet in the morning before you begin with your sutra-reading. But after you have finished, if you want to eat some meat or fish, it should be all right.”

“If that’s how things should be done, it seems not difficult,” Madam Wu said.

With the date of visiting the nunnery having been set, Madam Wu gave Nun Zhao five maces of silver as the expense of preparing fasting food and the like. Nun Zhao then left and told Bu Liang of this good news.
Madam Wu ate vegetarian fare for two days. On the third day she got up at the fifth watch. After dressing herself up, she went to the nunnery in the company of her maid Spring Flower. Early in the morning there were few pedestrians outside. She walked across the street and soon reached the nunnery.

Gentle readers take notes, the nunnery\textsuperscript{35} is a place that women from good families should avoid at all costs! Had I lived in that time and at that place and had been informed about her going to the nunnery, I would have barred the door to stop her. That way she could have preserved her virtue and Nun Zhao could also have been exempted from her mishap. However, it was only because of this visit of hers that

The pretty woman of good pedigree
   Will be defiled like a sullied jade tree;
   And the malicious hag of the nunnery
   Will be like a maple all over bloody.

But this is the end of the story. Now we should pick up where we have left off.

Nun Zhao, in high glee, greeted Madam Wu and invited her to sit down in the reception room. After tea had been served, she led her patron to pay homage to Guanyin-in-White, and in front of it Madam Wu prayed silently by herself for sometime. Then Nun Zhao gave a formal

\textsuperscript{35} Nunneries 廟院 (\textit{anyuan}) were smaller and more private in comparison with monasteries 寺 (\textit{si}), and since they were so many in the Ming that they were usually exempt from the regulations governing the monasteries. See Timothy Brook, \textit{Praying for Power} (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 161. This is perhaps the reason why the story admonishes women to avoid the “nunneries” only.
prayer on her behalf, helping convey her sincere wish to the bodhisatva. “This devotee, nee Wu, of the Jia house,” she prayed, “is willing to recite The Sutra of Guanyin-in-White in the hope of having a son as early as possible and enjoying a felicitous and satisfying family life.” With the wish having thus been made, she beat the wooden fish and fell to chanting. She first chanted “Mantra for the Purification of Mouth” and then “Mantra for the Protection of the God of Earth.” Only after she had remained prostrated before the bodhisatva for a long while did she begin the recitation of The Sutra of Guanyin-in-White, which she read at one breath for more than twenty times.

Nun Zhao was good at playing tricks. She knew Madam Wu had fasted for two days and had come visiting the nunnery early in the morning without having had her breakfast. So she purposely brought her nothing to eat, nor did she ever mention a word about the morning repast, pretending as if she had been completely oblivious. She intended, by deliberately whiling away time, to make her guest suffer hunger. Madam Wu was a frail woman. What with her early rising and empty stomach and with so many kowtows and bows she had been obliged to make to those Buddha and bodhisatvas, she felt extremely tired and hungry. However, she could not complain about it. She could only say in whisper to her maid Spring Flower, “If you can find some hot porridge in the kitchen, ladle out a bowl for me.”

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37 “Re tangshui” 熱湯水, which I have translated as “porridge,” can be “some food served in soup” (usually porridge) or “hot water.” See Luo Zhufeng 羅竹風, chief comp., Hanyu da cidian.
Having heard what Madam Wu talked to her maid, Nun Zhao said, “I’m so preoccupied with the performance of sutra-reading that I forgot asking you if you have had breakfast?”

“Since I came here early, I didn’t have breakfast,” Madam Wu told her.

“You see how muddle-brained I was! I didn’t even prepare breakfast for you. Now it’s very late. What should I do? Maybe we can eat our midday vegetarian meal a little earlier?”

“To be honest with you,” Madam Wu said, “I’m starving. If you have some snacks, whatever. I would like to eat some first.”

Nun Zhao deliberately said some self-depreciatory words before going off to her own room. She was in there for some time and then made her way to the kitchen. After a while a tray of food, together with a pot of tea, was ready to serve, which she had Benkong take out and set on the table. The various kinds of fresh fruit in the tray were certainly unsuitable for Madam Wu whose stomach was rumbling with hunger. Only the hot cake was what she felt like eating. She took one piece of the cake and found it was soft and sweet. Starving, she ate several pieces in succession, and after she drank some tea that Benkong had poured her, ate another few more.

漢語大辭典 (A Great Dictionary of Chinese Language) (Shanghai: Hanyu da cidian chubanshe, 1988), vol. 5, p. 1459. In the sentence “Zai yuanzhong chunei, zuo le re tangshui yu ta chi” 了園中睡內，做了熱湯水與他吃, “re tangshui” certainly means “some food served in soup.” See Honglou meng 紅樓夢 (Shanghai: Gujichubanshe, 1988), vol. 2, ch. 69, p. 1139. And Yang Hsien-yi and David Hawks are basically right, though not quite accurate, to render the phrase as “food” and “nourishing soup” respectively. See A Dream of Red Mansions (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1978), vol. 2, p. 495; The Story of the Stone (New York: Penguin Book, 1980), vol. 3, p. 362. Indeed, this colloquial expression is rather misleading. It seems that Holmes Welch took it for granted that “re tangshui” only means “hot water,” so he wrote: “So it was in writing and speaking, for only ‘hot water’ was consumed after 12:00 a.m. But if anyone examined the ‘hot water’ with his own eyes, it turned out to be congee.” See Holms Welch, The Practice of Chinese Buddhism, p. 112. But I think his observance is right that the daily fare in Buddhist monasteries and nunneries consisted of rice, congee, beancurd and mixed vegetables (see Holmes Welch, ibid., p. 113), and that is the reason why I have translated “re tangshui” as “porridge.”

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pieces. Then she poured out tea herself and drank again until her face grew red and she felt as if the ceiling and the ground were rotating around her. She yawned and collapsed into her chair.

Nun Zhao pretended to be startled. “What’s happened to her? Maybe she is feeling dizzy because she got up early this morning? Let’s help her to bed so that she can sleep for a while.”

She and her disciple then hoisted the chair she was sitting on, carried it away to the bedside, and put her in the bed until her head rested on the pillow and she slept comfortably.

Do you know why the cake had such a power? Because it had been specially made by Nun Zhao for a woman like Madam Wu who could not drink. To make the cake, Nun Zhao first ground sticky rice into fine powder, and then mixed it with wine, and then baked it until it completely dried. She then repeated the whole process of grinding and concocting and baking for two more times before she put in some herbal medicine she made up herself and steamed it, to ensure that the cake, when eaten with hot water, would have a medical and alcoholic effect as strong as the yeast for brewing liquor. Ordinary people might get drunk after eating the cake, let alone the starving Madam Wu who could not even bear the food pickled in wine. No wonder that having eaten quite a few pieces of the cake and drunk hot water Madam Wu was utterly under the sway of its effect. Truly:

You may be smart and keen and witty like an imp,
Yet your auntie can make you drink water in her footbasin.

Now having fallen a prey to Nun Zhao, Madam Wu could not but be at her mercy. Spring Flower, taking advantage of her mistress sleeping, had gone away with the young nun to eat and
amuse themselves. Now there was no one to look after Madam Wu nor come to her rescue. In no time Nun Zhao dragged Bu Liang out from the shadow.

"The chick is now being in bed ready for your enjoyment!" she told him. "Don't forget you should thank me for this!"

The door was closed. Bu Liang pulled the bed curtain aside and was assailed by Madam Wu's strong alcoholic smell. Her cheeks being charmingly red like a tipsy crabapple, she looked even more beautiful than before. In an agony of desire Bu Liang planted a kiss on her lips. She showed no reaction. He then lightly pulled her pants off. Now the white lower part of her body completely laid bare before him. He swiftly parted her legs after mounting her, inserted his shaft into her vagina and started to thrust forward. Being swollen with pride, he said to himself, "Pity my little creature, you're now in my hands!" Although her body was too impotent to be able to move about, Madam Wu nevertheless had some dreamlike feeling that someone was making love to her. However, she mistook him to be her husband, letting him ravish her frivolously. Soon she was worked up by his fierce thrusts. In spite of being still in a hallucinative state, she began to moan as her passions were in full flow. A wild surge ripped through him. Without being able to restrain himself any longer, Bu Liang clutched her in his arms, crying, "My dearest, I am dying!"

Then his sperm came shooting out like water column.

Bu Liang had finished, but Madam Wu still had not yet awakened. Bu Liang then lay down beside her. Putting his hand over her body and pressing his face close to hers, he fell into sleep. After the spell of medical efficacy was over, Madam Wu woke up. Opening her eyes, she was surprised to find that a stranger was sleeping with her on the same bed.

"My God!" she cried, breaking out into a cold sweat. She sat up promptly, now having
entirely come to her senses. “Who are you?” she shouted at Bu Liang in a loud voice. “How dare you defile a good woman!”

Bu Liang was startled, too. He hastily knelt down and begged Madam Wu for her clemency: “Please excuse me for my offence.”

With her pants off, Madam Wu knew that she had been debauched. She ignored his imploring and called out to Spring Flower. In the meantime she pulled up her pants and jumped off the bed to make her way out. Bu Liang, who dared not follow her for fear of being seen by somebody, still stayed in the room. Madam Wu pushed the door open and went out.

“Spring Flower!” she called once again.

Spring Flower had dozed off in the disciple’s room because of her early getup. When she heard her mistress calling her, she yawned and rushed to her immediately.

“You damned slave!” cursed the mistress. “Why didn’t you accompany me while I was sleeping in that room?” She was about to beat her to vent her spleen when Nun Zhao came and dissuaded her. This made Madam Wu even more angry. She gave the maid two slaps on the face.

“Go! Go home with me right away!” she shouted.

“We haven’t yet recited the sutra,” the maid meekly said.

“You lousy meddlesome slave!” the mistress cursed. “That’s none of your business!”

Madam Wu was so furious that her face turned purple. She did not blame Nun Zhao nor say goodbye to her, just going out of the nunnery with Spring Flower. She walked back home without even pausing to catch her breath. After opening the door and going into the room, she sat sullenly by herself. Only after a while did she begin to cool down.

She asked Spring Flower, “Since I only remember I was hungry and ate the cake, how did
I end up sleeping in bed?"

"After you ate the cake and drank some tea," answered the maid, "you fell asleep on the chair. It was Nun Zhao and her disciple who carried you to the bed."

"Where were you then?" the mistress asked.

"As you slept and I myself was hungry, I first ate some pieces of the cake that you had left over and then went to the young nun's room to drink tea. I felt tired and was just in the middle of napping when you called me."

"Did you see anybody come into the room where I slept?"

"No, I saw nobody but Nun Zhao and her disciple."

Madam Wu said nothing. Some vague scenes of what had happened to her during her sleep appeared before her eyes as she thought back. She felt her private parts with her hand and found they were still sticky.

"I've been taken in," she sighed. "Who would have thought that this old nun was so vicious as to let that damned knave defile my chaste body. How can I live on?"

Tears came out of her eyes. She was so filled with regret that she wanted to commit suicide. Yet when she thought of her husband and wished to see him and tell him the truth, she could not make up her mind. She went to her embroidered bodhisatva and tearfully complained: "This disciple has resentment in her mind and wish to get your help in finding a way to avenge her insult." She wept while praying, and thinking of her husband made her sob bitterly for a long time. She then went to sleep, despondent, leaving Spring Flower in bewilderment, unable to make head or tail of what had really happened to her mistress.

But let's put aside the story of the remorseful Madam Wu for a moment.
Nun Zhao, seeing Madam Wu was wrathful and left without even saying goodbye to her, knew Bu Liang must have got his way. She went into his room, seeing him still lying naked in bed, staring blankly with his finger in his mouth. This made the old bawd greatly stirred up. She at once straddled his body.

“Now it’s the time you thank your matchmaker!” she said, burning with lewd desire. She bounced her buttocks up and down and with her hand felt his crotch. As Bu Liang had just ejaculated, his penis was limp. It refused to erect no matter how Nun Zhao kneaded it. Nun Zhao bit him as she grew frustrated.

“You’ve got what you wanted but you don’t know how I suffered for you!” she complained.

“I’m very grateful to you,” Bu Liang said. “In the evening I’ll keep you company and make you as happy as possible. Also I would like to consult you about my future plan.”

“Your future plan?” Nun Zhao was confused. “You said you just wanted to have a taste, so what’s your future plan about?”

“It’s quite understandable that one will covet Sichuan after capturing Gansu. Now that I’ve had the taste, why shouldn’t I make a further move? This time I forced her into coupling. I want to engage her in a real enjoyment, to make her have sex with me of her own accord, happily and delightfully.”

“You seem hard to please,” said Nun Zhao. “You’ve had intercourse with her and she was so mad at me that she didn’t even say goodbye to me. I’m not sure what she will do next. How

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38 This idiom is usually used in a derogatory sense, meaning “too greedy.” It first occurred in Fan Ye’s 吳 汉書 (History of the Later Han) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1965), vol. 3, juan 17, p. 660: “ji de long, fu wu shu” 既得陇, 复望蜀.
can I help you with your future plan? You have to wait until I find out if she is still on good terms with me, and then I can perhaps find some chance for you.”

“You’re right,” Bu Liang said. “Anyway, I’ll count on your wonderful strategy.”

Bu Liang, full of gratitude to the old nun for what she had done for him, hid himself in the nunnery that evening, trying to make his matchmaker happy and satisfied. It goes without saying that they spent a good time indulging themselves in sexual pleasure. But no more of this.

Our story goes that Licentiate Jia, who stayed in his employer’s house, dreamed a dream on that night. He found himself at home and a woman in white walked in through the door. He went up to greet her, but she disappeared in the room. He strode into the room hastily in order to catch up with her, only to bump into the embroidered Guanyin scroll. Looking up, he found there were a few lines of words on it, which, upon a close look, revealed themselves to him as follows:

What has been gained through a mouth will be lost also through a mouth

It is only through her disciple that your revenge can be carried out.

After finishing reading these words, he turned and found his wife down on her knees before him. He raised her to her feet and then suddenly woke up. This dream is incomprehensible, he reflected. Perhaps my wife has been indisposed or has had an accident, so she asked Guanyin to help her reveal the truth to me?

Next day Licentiate Jia took leave from his employer and went back home. On his way back he tried to solve the puzzle but was not successful. He felt rather worried. When he arrived, Spring Flower came out to open the door for him.
"Where is my wife?" the licentiate asked her.

"Mother hasn't got up yet," Spring Flower answered. "She is still lying in bed."

"It's pretty late. Why is she still sleeping?"

"Mother is not happy," she said. "She keeps calling your name and sobbing."

Upon hearing this, the licentiate went rushing in. Seeing her husband come back home, Madam Wu got up promptly. Her eyes being red and her hair dishevelled, she jumped off the bed and dropped to ground in front of him, wailing and weeping.

The licentiate was shocked. "What are you doing this for?" he asked, helping her to her feet.

"I beg you to avenge me," she said.

"Somebody has bullied you?"

Madam Wu sent the maid away to the kitchen to prepare tea and lunch. Then she said, "Since I married you, husband, I haven't had half a bickering word with you nor have made a slightest mistake. But now I have been guilty of a horrible sin, and deserve death punishment. I've been just waiting for your return so that I can explain the things to you. If you can avenge me, I can die with my eyes closed."

"Please don't say such inauspicious words," said the licentiate. "Tell me what has really happened to you."

Madam Wu then told her husband how Nun Zhao coaxed her to read sutra in her nunnery and how she fed her with the cake and had somebody rape her when she was asleep. After she was finished, she cried and fell down on the floor.

Having heard out her story, the licentiate was so infuriated that his hair stood on end.
"What an unusual misfortune!" he cried. Then he asked, "Do you know who the fellow was?"

"How do I know?"

The licentiate drew out a sword from the head of the bed and struck it on the table. "If I don't kill these people, I won't be a man!" he cried. "However, since you don't know who the fellow is, we are bound to make mistake if we act rashly. I think we'd better make a plan before we take action."

Madam Wu said, "Now that I've made a clean breast of everything, on my part I'm finished and have no more to say to you. I beg you to let me use your sword to kill myself, here right in front of you."

"Don't be so short sighted!" the licentiate said. "It's not that you wanted to lose your chastity. It is that the misfortune befell you. You've made it clear to me that you're innocent. If you were to die, there would be a great deal of inconvenience for me."

"You might have some inconvenience, but that can't deter me," Madam Wu said.

"If you were to kill yourself," the licentiate said, "your parents and other people would surely demand that I give a reasonable explanation for your death. If I were to tell them the truth, both your good reputation and my future career would be destroyed. But if I were to hide the fact, your kinsmen wouldn't let me off for sure, nor would I feel comfortable taking revenge for you when I don't have an appropriate moral reason."

"If you want me to live on," Madam Wu said, "you must killed that malicious old baggage and that damned ruffian for me."

The licentiate brooded over the matter for a while. "After you found that she had tricked you, what did you say to her?" he asked.
“I was so angry at that time I just came back home without saying a single word to her,” she said.

“If that’s the case, the revenge can’t be taken openly,” he told her. “Open revenge would bring us to court and make it impossible for us to cover the truth. If people know about it, your good fame will be definitely ruined. Now I’m thinking if I can contrive a scheme that will avenge you without letting any of these evildoers escape alive.”

He hung his head in thought for some time. Then he cried, “I’ve got it! I’ve got it! This scheme tallies exactly with what the Bodhisatva revealed to me in my dream. A wonderful scheme! A wonderful scheme!”

“Could you let me know about it?” Madam Wu asked.

“Wife,” said the licentiate, “if you want to clear the matter up, and want me to avenge your humiliation you have suffered, you must obey me in each and every respect. Should you not obey me, then I wouldn’t be able to revenge you nor could I trust that you’re really faithful to me.”

“As you’re making decision for me, why shouldn’t I follow your instruction?” Madam Wu said. “Please just make sure everything will go all right.”

“Since you didn’t blame Nun Zhao nor made a fuss with her,” said the licentiate, “she must have thought that you went back home because you felt embarrassed, and therefore taken it for granted that you will change sooner or later like other fickle women. Now, you should entice her to come to our house and I’ll tell you how to deal with her.”

He whispered in her ear, saying thus and thus and so and so. “I can guarantee,” he said confidently, “that she will be caught in my trap.”
"The scheme is certainly very good," said Madam Wu, "just I'll feel embarrassed to carry it out. But now that revenge is the first and foremost important thing to me, I have to disregard those secondary considerations."

The plan had thus been designed between the husband and wife. Next day the licentiate hid himself in a quiet place behind the back door, while Madam Wu sent Spring Flower to invite Nun Zhao over for a talk. When Nun Zhao saw Spring Flower and learned that she was invited, she thought to herself: I bet this chick must have had a pleasant sensation last time. Now she is unable to resist its temptation and has changed her mind.

She then came swaggering to the Jia house, with Spring Flower leading the way in front, scampering as if she were flying. No sooner had Nun Zhao seen the mistress than she said, "Please forgive me for my offending you and not entertaining you well enough the other day."

Madam Wu sent the maid away. She then held Nun Zhao’s hand and asked her in a low voice. "Who was that fellow, may I know?"

"That’s Mr. Bu, a romantic young beau living in this area," seeing Madam Wu show interest in him. Nun Zhao replied. "His name is Bu Liang. He is so popular with women that none of the girls who has seen him doesn’t like him. Since he was attracted by your good looks and took fancy to you, he begged me day and night to help him. I was moved by his sincerity and felt difficult to reject him. Besides, you’re all on your own at home and must be very lonely. I thought you should have the right to take some lovers, enjoying your life to the full when you’re young. So I made this arrangement for you. Which cat doesn’t eat fish and meat? I know all this sort of things. You shouldn’t take it too seriously. Take it easy and live as happily as you can. To think, what harm will you get if you have someone who takes you as his honey and serve you so
willingly as if you were his Buddha?"

"However," said Madam Wu, "you should have discussed it with me beforehand rather than set up the trap for me without letting me know about it. Now it's over, we'd better not mention it any more."

"Since you don't know him," Nun Zhao explained, "you might not have consented to my arrangement if I had told you flatly. Now you have had a contact with him, you should consider of establishing a long-term intimacy with him."

"I made a spectacle of myself last time," Madam Wu said, "and didn't even allow myself a chance to have a good look at his face nor try his temperament. Since he loves me dearly, you may invite him to come to my house and let me take one more look at him. If he indeed is good-looking, I may allow him to come and see me secretly from then on."

She has again risen to bait, thought Nun Zhao.

Joyful and without a bit of suspicion, she said, "Well, if this is what you want to do, I'll ask him to come here tonight. This man is really comely. The closer look you take of him, the more you'll be attracted."

"I'll be awaiting him behind the door when it's time to light lamps," said Madam Wu.

"But he can only get in after I send him a signal with coughs."

In raptures Nun Zhao went back to the nunnery. Having been informed of this good news, Bu Liang shook his head and wagged his tail, as if he were expecting the golden bird fall down from sky or the jade rabbit take off from ground.\(^{39}\)

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\(^{39}\) "The golden bird" 金鳥 (jinniao), or sometimes "the golden crow" 金烏 (jinwu), is perhaps derived from the approximately homonymous phrase "cunwu" 疊鳥 (crippled crow), which, as the myth has it, is a three-legged bird residing in the sun. See Huainanzi 淮南子 (The Book of
the doorway of the Jia house, popping his head and looking around. He was in such a frenzy of impatience that he wished he could take his member out and poke it into the door. Now, it was pitch dark and the door slammed shut. This made him rather anxious. He began to suspect that the nun might have probably played a trick on him. Just at that moment, however, a cough came out from inside, signalling him to go in. He hastily gave a cough back and the door was lightly opened. He coughed again. Upon hearing the second cough, he swiftly sneaked in. Now he was inside a small walled courtyard and could, by starlight, see her silhouette vaguely. He went forward and took her into his arms.

"Madam," he said, "I’m so grateful to you for your benefaction!"

Despite all her resentment, Madam Wu did not reject him. Instead, she responded to him by dragging herself closer to him. This gave rise to his ardent reaction. Bu Liang kissed her deeply and inserted his tongue into her mouth. Madam Wu hugged him even more tightly, licking and sucking his tongue without having a pause until he grew wild with sensual delight. His member was now standing up. He stuck out his tongue and made it go more deeply into her mouth. Madam Wu, now having mustered up enough courage, suddenly bit his tongue and gnawed off half an inch before he was forced to loose his hands out of the piercing pain. In panic Bu Liang pulled himself away from her and made his way out in a rush.

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Huainan Zi, annot., Gao You 高誘 (reprint, Taipei: Yinwen yinshuguan, 1968), juan 7, p. 179. This phrase, be it “jinniao,” “jinwu,” or “cunwu,” is usually used as a metonymy referring to the sun. “The jade hare” 玉兎 (yutu) is a kenning for the moon, because the legend goes that there is a white hare in the moon. Jinniao and yutu often appears in Chinese literary works. See, for example, Yuanqu xuan waibian 元曲選外編 (Supplement to the Anthology of Lyric Songs of the Yuan Dynasty), vol. 3, p. 974; Shuihu zhuang, vol. 2, ch. 35, p. 557; Yang Wanli’s 楊萬里 poem: "The golden bird always flies and the jade hare always walks, /But never will the hair on temples remain black forever.”
Madam Wu spat out the tip of his tongue into her hand and then closed the door behind him. She then went rushing to the back door.

"Here’s the enemy’s tongue I’ve bitten off," she told her husband as soon as she saw him. The licentiate was delighted. He took the tongue and wrapped it up in a handkerchief. Then under the dim light of stars and the moon he went to the Nunnery of Guanyin, bringing his sword with him.

Taking it for granted that things would go all right and Bu Liang would sleep in the Jia house, Nun Zhao had closed the door and slept. Suddenly, there was a knock at the door. The young nun, after her head hit the pillow, had already fallen into a sound sleep; even a loud bang would not be able to wake her up. Nun Zhao, however, could not fall asleep. Thinking that Bu Liang and Madam Wu were being in action in bed made her feel quite aroused. Upon hearing somebody knock at the door, she mistook it for Bu Liang coming back to the nunnery. She called her disciple and there was no response. She had to get up and went to open the door herself.

Licentiate Jia darted in the moment the door was pulled ajar. With his sword in hand he chopped at Nun Zhao right on the head. The old nun fell backward on the ground, her blood spattering out without stop. She died on the spot.

The licentiate shut the door, and bringing the sword with him, went rushing into the room. I’ll kill that son of bitch if he happens to be here, he thought. Seeing the permanent light before the Buddha was still on, he took it and cast it upon every corner of the room. He found nobody in there but the young nun who was still sleeping. He gave her a stab and she died at once. Having adjusted the lightwick and made the light brighter, he unwrapped the handkerchief and took out the tongue, which he stuffed into the mouth of the young nun after he had pried
opened her jaws. He then put out the light, closed the door and went back home.

"Both the old and young nuns have been killed and you’ve taken your revenge now," the licentiate told his wife.

"It's a pity I haven’t killed that scoundrel myself," she said. "I only bit his tongue off."

"Take it easy," he said. "Somebody will kill him for you. From now on you should just feign ignorance and don’t mention it at all."

Now the sun had been three yards high in the sky. Seeing its gate still remain closed without anybody going in and coming out, the neighbours around the Nunnery of Guanyin suspected that something might have gone wrong. They pushed the gate and it was immediately opened, for it had not been bolted. Catching sight of the old nun lying dead across the doorway, they were panic-stricken. After entering into the house, they saw the young nun had been murdered too. One had been cut on the head and the other at the throat. In a flurry they went to fetch the coordinators in charge of residential security affairs, whose responsibility it was to make a formal inspection and report the case to the local authorities. The coordinators came, and having inspected the corpses, noticed there was something between the young nun’s tightly closed teeth. They took it out and found it was a human being’s tongue.

"It goes without saying that this is a rape-murder case," they said. "Since we don’t know who the murderer is, we’d better report the case to the local authorities immediately."

It so happened that the district magistrate was presiding over the court at that time. As

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40 The coordinator 坊長保正 (fangzhang baozheng) was in charge of residential security affairs in a community that usually consisted of ten households (sometimes fifty households) in baojia 保甲 (residential security) system. Baojia system started with Wang Anshi’s 王安石 reform in the Song dynasty. See Ma Duanlin 马端临, Wenxian tongkao 文獻通考 (Studies on Books and Documents) (reprint, Shanghai: Tushu jicheng chu, 1899), “Bingkao” 兵考 (Study on
soon as the written report was ready, they submitted it without delay.

"It's not difficult to catch the murderer," the magistrate said. "He must be the man whose tongue has been bitten off. Be quick to seek that fellow! Make sure you go to every place, town and village alike, and check with residential security coordinators one by one. I hope you will soon get him."

Not long after the official order was issued, a suspect was indeed caught and taken to the yamen.

Bu Liang, with his tongue having been impaired, realized that he had been tricked. He fled helter-skelter without paying careful attention to directions and soon got himself lost in small alleys, incapable of telling east from west and north from south. For fear of being caught as a thief, he hid himself in a deserted lane, crouching under the eaves of a household for a night. When day dawned, he took off, trying to find his way back home.

Perhaps Heaven wanted him to be caught. He went back and forth in a small lane looking for an exit to the main street. In anxiousness, however, he just could not find a way out. To make the things worse, he could not even open his mouth asking for directions. The residents living on the street found him rather suspicious. An officious man among them began to cross-examine him when the news was spreading about the murder in the nunnery and the official notice was being posted. Bu Liang could only mumble when he was interrogated, unable to express himself clearly. Moreover, they found that there was blood all over his teeth and gums. This discovery at once caused a commotion in the area. A bunch of people came and surrounded him.

"If he were not the murderer, who else could be?" they said. Allowing no chance for him
to defend himself, they tied him up with a rope and dragged him to the yamen.

“He is a scamp and has never been up to any good,” some of his acquaintances in front of the yamen remarked. “It’s not a surprise that he’s committed such a crime.”

The magistrate seated himself on the dais and had Bu Liang brought in. When he interrogated him, he could only hear him mumbling “wu li wu la” that was completely incomprehensible. The magistrate then had a lictor slap Bu Liang on the mouth for a couple of times and ordered him to stick out his tongue, which he found had been gnawed off and on which the trace of blood was still fresh.

“What’s the name of this doggy man?” the magistrate asked the residential coordinators. People who hated him told the magistrate his name as well as the bad things he had done in the past, among which were rape, fraud, robbery and blackmail.

“Obviously,” said the magistrate, “this doggy man must have tried to rape the young nun. He first killed the old nun when she opened the door for him and then went to rape her disciple. The young nun hated him and therefore bit his tongue off. In his fury this doggy man killed her. Can you deny it, eh?”

Bu Liang, upon hearing this, made gestures with both his hands and feet, indicating that he wished to get a brush and a piece of paper so that he could defend himself. Yet his incapability

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41 The magistrate was the official in charge of the entire administration of the district under his jurisdiction, whose duty it was to collect taxes, register births, deaths and marriage, keep up to the date the land registration, and maintain the peace. Besides, he was also the presiding judge of the local tribunal, responsible for the punishment of criminals and the hearing of all civil and criminal cases. Since the magistrate supervised practically every phase of the daily life of the people, he is referred to as the “Father-and-Mother Official” 父母官 (fumu guan). See Van Gulik, The Haunted Monastery and the Chinese Maze Murders (New York: Dover Publications, 1977), postscript, p. 322; John Fairbank, United States and China (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), “The Political Tradition,” p. 110.
of articulating even half a word greatly provoked the magistrate.

"You sly ruffian! Don't think I will give you a piece of paper and a brush!" he cried. Then he turned to the lictors and said to them: "Given his inarticulateness and lack of the lethal weapon as material evidence, it is impossible to get him confess. Select a big bamboo and flog him a hundred strokes until he dies!"  

The magistrate, while presiding over the court, was usually assisted by the personnel of the tribunal, such as the secretaries, the constables, the coroner, the warden of the jail, the lictor and the guards. The lictor in Chinese is "Zaoli" (literally, the runner wearing a black uniform), because in accordance with the stipulation, staff of yamen like runners must wear black uniforms and hence the name. See Zhang Tingyu 明末清初法律資料 (History of the Ming dynasty) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), "Yu fu zhi" (Records of carriages and costumes), vol. 6, juan 67, p. 1655.

Theoretically, this was illegal. According to Ming shi, there were five punishments in the Ming time: 1) chi (beating with the light bamboo from 10 strokes to 50 strokes), 2) zhang (beating with the heavy bamboo from 60 strokes to 100 strokes), 3) tu (penal servitude), 4) liu (exile), and 5) si (death). See Zhang Tingyu et al., Ming shi 明史 (History of the Ming dynasty) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), "Yu fu zhi" (Records of carriages and costumes), vol. 6, juan 67, p. 1655. Matthew Ricci had an impression that the penal laws of the country did not seem to be too severe, and John Fairbank in his book The United States and China also wrote: "The five punishments were imposed by a hierarchy of courts running from the county magistrate’s yamen up through the prefecture and province to the capital and eventually, for death sentences, to the emperor. Cases were reported to and reviewed by superiors. Appeals could be made. Magistrates were under deadlines to apprehend criminals and could be severely disciplined for wrong judgments." See John Fairbank, The United States and China, p. 120. On the other hand, however, Matthew Ricci also pointed out that, in spite of the seemingly lenient penal codes, many were illegally put to death by the magistrates, due to a fixed and ancient custom of the country permitting a magistrate, without any legal process or judgement, to subject a person to flogging when it might please him to do so. According to his description, "this punishment is administered in public. The victim, lying prone, face down to the ground, is beaten on the bare legs and buttocks with a tough reed, split down the middle, about an inch thick, four inches wide, and about a yard long. The executioners swing this flail with both hands and strike unmerrulously. The regular number of blows is ten, with thirty as a limit, but the first blow usually breaks the skin and the flesh flies about in the subsequent beating, with the result that the victim frequently dies from the flogging." See Louis Gallagher, trans., China in the
As a dandy fond of lolling about among the circles of women, Bu Liang was unable to endure the heavy torture like this. After fifty strikes he had been dead already. The magistrate, having bidden the local coordinators to have his corpse claimed by his relatives and the nuns’ corpses burned, filed a document, on which he made such a comment as follows:

Bu Liang, where is your*44 tongue? I know the reason why you lost it. Young nun, who could stand the temptation of your nice neck? That is why you got it broken. Needless to say, this is a rape-murder case, serious enough to put the convict to death. This record is to be kept in file for future reference.

Thus the district magistrate had solved the case. There is no more to say about it.

Licentiate Jia and his wife rejoiced at the court decision when they heard people on the street talking about it. Nobody knew that Madam Wu had been raped and Licentiate Jia was the one who killed the nuns. That the licentiate had taken the vengeance without destroying his wife’s good reputation should be attributed to his own intelligence as well as to the revelation that he had received from the Boddhisatva. Now the couple loved each other even more than before. one admiring her husband for his courage and the other appreciating his wife’s faithfulness to him.

People of later ages came to learn the truth. They remark that for all his ingenuity and his

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*44 In the Chinese original text, it is "wushe" 該舌 (my tongue) instead of "your tongue." I suppose "wū" (my) is probably a printing error, so in order to make the sentence understandable, I have changed "wu" to "your."
furtive way of taking the revenge, his wife was defiled anyway. Outsiders might not have known her secret, but the wife herself must have suffered from it. She has this accident simply because she is not careful enough in associating with nuns, and this should be a good lesson for virtuous women. As a poem remarks:

A good flower withers and its scent is gone,
For it has exposed itself to an alluring light.
A piece of advice is good to remember:
Women should stay home and not go outside.
Poem:

A beauty will incur the motive of murder,
As a monk tends to be incited by erotica;
A hungry devil of lust is a real Raksasa,
Who can spill the blood of a visitor.

Our story goes that in Lin’an there was a provincial graduate named Zheng who lived...
and studied in the Temple of Felicity. He had a room of his own at its north western corner, which was called Clear Cloud Domicile.\(^5\) The handsome and generous abbot Guangming liked to make friends with officials and scholars. Since the temple was well supported and Guangming himself was rich with family resources, scholars enjoyed being together with him. Zheng was a lodger staying at his temple for the longest time and was his closest friend. He had been taken to all exquisitely furnished abodes and serenely secluded lodgings. Only to one small cabin, however, his entrance had never been permitted. Situated in the depths of exclusiveness, this small cabin always remained closed. Guangming himself rarely went there. Every time he came out from it he was careful enough to lock its door behind him. No one else had ever entered it, and Zheng was no exception in spite of his intimacy with the monk. He thought it was a hoarding place of the temple, and like everybody else, took care to keep away from it as much as he could.

One day Guangming was in that small cabin when the bell rang sonorously in the hall, announcing the arrival of a high-ranking official and his family members. Guangming had to rush out to welcome his patrons. Zheng was at the time taking a walk by himself. He happened to pass by the cabin and saw the door was open. “This cabin is always locked and I’ve never had a

\(^5\) According to Yan Genwang 嚴耕望, the practice of studying in Buddhist monasteries (esp. the scholars from poor families studying in Buddhist monasteries) dated back to the Tang dynasty. See Yan Genwang, “Tangren duo dushu shansi” 唐人多讀書山寺 (Scholars in the Tang Times Liked to Study in Buddhist Monasteries Located on Mountains), in Dalu zazhi 大陸雜誌 (The Journal of the Mainland), vol. 2, no. 4, 1951, p. 5. Matew Ricci says that letting out the rooms in temples to strangers was a common practice throughout the land in the Ming time. See China in the Sixteenth Century: The Journals of Matew Ricci: 1583-1610, p. 101.
chance to see how the inside looks like,” he said to himself. “But why is it open today?”

He let himself walk into it. Taking a look around, he found that the room was finely floored, elegantly furnished and well decorated. But nothing in it was extraordinary, nothing in it was precious enough to be worth hiding away. These monks are eccentric, he thought. There’s no secret about this room, so I just can’t understand why every time Guangming bothers to lock the door behind him.

While looking around, Zheng noticed there was above a small bed a netting hook. It hung a purple sandalwood fish tied with a tiny mallet. The fish was so smooth and refined that it aroused his interest. He took it down, held it in his hand and made a scrutiny of it. He casually struck the mallet on the fish a couple of times and suddenly a bell sounded from underneath the floor. Then behind the bed a small floor board was opened and a young beautiful woman emerged. No sooner had she seen Zheng than she drew back in astonishment. Zheng was also shocked, for he recognized that the woman he had seen was his cousin.

The secret entrance cover was ingeniously designed. Along its joint it could be pushed open to serve as a door. Closed, it looked exactly the same as ordinary flooring. It could be opened only from below and no one was able to remove it from outside. In fact, the knock on the fish was a signal. Upon hearing it, anyone inside would ring the bell and come out. Underneath the floor was a cellar with its own window and door, which led to the kitchen through a secret tunnel. It was so hidden away that even God wouldn’t have been able to know about its

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6 A wooden fish is a skull-shaped musical instrument on which monks beat time with a hammer when chanting. For its picture, see Wang Qi 王圻, comp. Sancai tuhui 三才圖繪 (Assembled Illustrations from the Three Realms) (reprint, Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1970), vol. 3, p. 1344.
existence.

No wonder that the bald knave keeps the door locked all the time, Zheng reflected. Now that I have discovered his secret, he probably won’t let me off. In a flurry he put the fish back to where it had been placed and then left the room. However, he bumped straight into Guangming. Guangming was startled to find that the door had been left open. Zheng’s rather jittery look and his purplish red face gave rise to his notice. He looked ahead and saw the wooden fish was swinging to and fro from the hook. He knew his secret had been espied.

“Did you see something just now?” he asked.

“Nothing, nothing at all,” Zheng answered.

“Please come in and sit for a while!” Guangming said. He took Zheng’s arm and brought him into the room. Then he bolted the door behind him and drew out a sword from the head of the bed. “Although we’re good friends,” he said, “I can’t forgive you for what you did today. I’ll do whatever I can in order not to let myself fall through and be killed. You can only blame yourself for entering this room by mistake. Now it’s time for you to end your life. Don’t blame me!”

Zheng cried. “It’s my fault to fall unfortunately into this fiery pit,” he said. “Now that I can’t get your pardon and there is no way for me to escape death, I beg you to grant me some wine so that I can get myself drunk and won’t feel pain when you cut off my head. I’ve been with you for so long and you should have some mercy on me.”

Given their long-term friendship, Guangming found it difficult to reject his pitiful plea. Taking the sword with him, he locked the door from outside and went to the kitchen. He fetched a pot of wine and poured him a large bowl.
“I can’t drink without food,” Zheng said. “Please give me some simple dishes!”

Guangming had to comply. He once again went to the kitchen to get dishes for him. Zheng tried to find a way out but was not successful. He began to look for something that could be used as a weapon to kill the monk. There were, however, neither sticks nor bricks in the room. All the stuff that he could lay his hands on were too light to serve his purpose. Suddenly an idea dawned upon him as he cast his eye upon the large wine pot. He tore a piece of cloth from his gown and stuffed it into its mouth. The pot, together with the wine it contained, weighed about six or seven pounds. He then hid himself behind the door, with the pot carried in his hand. When Guangming was entering the room, he struck him hard on the shaved head. Guangming nearly swooned from the blow. Before he could stretch out his hands to protect himself, he received another two blows on the top of his head. Guangming instantly collapsed and fainted away. Zheng kept hitting away on his head with the pot, like hitting away at clothes with a laundry beater. until his brains dashed out. He died on the spot.

Seeing he was dead, Zheng locked his corpse inside the room and left. No one noticed what had happened. He hurriedly went to the yamen to report the case to the county magistrate. Without delay the county magistrate sent an officer and some soldiers to the temple. They surrounded the cabin before they broke into it. The monk was still lying on the floor, his head broken and blood having splashed all over. However, they could not find the woman.

“I know how to make her show up,” said Zheng, a smile appearing on his face.

Zheng took off the wooden fish from the hook and struck it a couple of times. As expected, a ring of the bell sounded. Then the floor board was pushed open and a woman climbed out. The officer shouted and grabbed the cover before the woman could retreat and shut
it up. Then they all jumped down into the secret entrance.

Down below was a cellar, which on one side of its ceramic-tiled walls had a window facing a small stone-walled courtyard. This was a place unknown to outsiders and five or six women were found inside it. They were brought out one by one, and under interrogation, confessed that they had been abducted from villages. Zheng’s cousin was taken into it with a trick when she was in the temple burning incense and begging for pregnancy. Her two sedan carriers had been made drunk beforehand, so they had no inkling of where she was. When the family brought a lawsuit against them, they were both put into jail as suspects. Guangming’s wide social connections and his careful concealment of her enabled him to go scot-free. Who would have thought that the woman was found in his temple. He and his fellow monks were all sentenced to death by the county magistrate.

Gentle readers, those monks receive alms from their patrons\(^7\) and have no problems with food and clothing. Their rooms are clean and beds are comfortable. Sleeping on bed without anything else to do makes them think only about this thing. Despite a few boy monks they have as their catamites, they do not feel satisfied. As the saying goes, “No matter how many steamed-buns you have eaten, you will still need a proper meal.”\(^8\) Moreover, women like to burn incense

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\(^7\) “Patrons” in the Chinese text is “shifang shizhu” 十方施主, literally, “patrons from ten directions,” i.e. from west, east, north, south, southwest, southeast, northwest, northeast, up and down.

\(^8\) This colloquial expression “chisha mantou. dang bude fan” 吃煞饅頭, 搞不得飯 perhaps only reflects the way of eating in the area of Wu (the Lower Yangzi Valley). “Steamed bun” as a general term can refer to both “steam stuffed bun” 包子 (baozi) and “steam bun without stuff” 饅頭 (mantou). In the Lower Yangzi Valley, steamed bun is usually taken as snack rather than as main food for lunch or supper. In the present days and also in Ming-Qing times, the main food in the area has been rice. See Gu Guangyu 谷光宇, comp., Zhonghua chuantong wenhua cidian 中華傳統文化辭典 (Dictionary of the Traditional Chinese Culture), p. 167. For more discussion
and pray to Buddhas at temple. They often appear in front of them. After seeing a beautiful woman, it is difficult for monks not to think of her when they sleep at night by themselves. That is why they will try every possible way for seduction. Seduction itself is a heinous crime. But monks can do things even worse. As a poem remarks:

Not a wicked man is not a monk,
And not a monk is not wicked:
The balder a monk grows,
He becomes the more wicked.\(^9\)

\(^9\) Monks (and nuns as well) were generally despised by the gentry class in the Ming times. Mattew Ricci says: “This special class of the religious people living in the temple is considered to be, and in reality is, the lowest and most despised caste in the whole kingdom. They come from the very dreg of the populace and with no inclination toward learning and good manners, their natural bent to evil becomes worse with the lapse of time... Though not a marrying class, they are so given to sexual indulgence that only the heaviest penalties can deter them from promiscuous living.” See China in the Sixteenth Century: The Journal of Mattew ricci: 1583-1610, pp. 100-101. But it is perhaps too much to claim, as A. C. Graham did, that “Buddhism as an organized religion had degenerated and had gradually been reduced to the despised creed of the lower classes. See A. C. Graham, “The Place of Reason in the Chinese Philosophical Tradition,” in Raymond Dawson, ed., The Legacy of China (London: Oxford Clarendon Press, 1964), p. 57. Although gentry class in the late Ming sometimes did look down upon Buddhist priests. they still believed to different degrees in Buddhism, especially the teachings of karma. This can be borne out by the didactic messages in The Carnal Prayer Mat, the deliberate arrangement of denouement in Golden Lotus as well as the beginning paragraphs of Ling Mengchu’s story, “The Wife Swappers.”

\(^10\) The proximate source of this passage is the corresponding verse in Jin Ping Mei cihua 金瓶梅詞話 (The Golden Lotus) (Taipei: Guiguan tushu gufen youxian gongsi, 1988), vol. 1, ch. 8, p. 232. According to David Roy, the ultimate source of this poem is an apocryphal work attributed to Su Shi 蘇軾 entitled Wenda lu 明答錄 (A Record of Repartee), in Congshu jicheng _concatenation of text_
In order to have their sexual desire fulfilled, they will do anything, even arson and murder. The monk in Lin’an, whose story I have just related, is a typical example. Since he is on good terms with Zheng, he could have asked him not to leak his secret. He could either beg him or offer him some bribes. Why should he have tried to kill him, only to have brought about his own death? Obviously the heaven’s law could not tolerate him.

To show how those religious people are inhumanly brutal, I am now going to tell you another story, a story about a monk who is exceptionally evil and wicked. There is a poem that bears witness to it:

Rape and murder go hand in hand,
And the most dangerous is jealousy.
If their male relations did not fall apart,
How can we warn against debauchery?

Our story goes that in Wenchuan county of Chengdu prefecture, Sichuan province, there was a farmer called Jing Qing. Jing Qing had a wife, nee Du. As a good-looking woman, Du was...

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1st series, vol. 2987, p. 1.1. 12. The anecdote recorded that one day Su Shi was drinking with the Buddhist priest Foyin 佛印(1032-98) when the latter challenged him to cap a four-line epigram as follows: “The unstingy are not rich, /The unrich are not stingy, /The stingy are most likely to be rich, /The rich are most likely to be stingy.” Su Shi, realizing that the epigram was directed at him, returned the compliment by replying as quoted in the text. See The Plum in the Golden Vase (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), note 38 of ch. 8, p. 500. Roy translated the poem as follows: “The untonsured are not vicious, /The unvicious are not tonsured, /The vicious are most likely to be tonsured, /The tonsured are most likely to be vicious.” See ibid., ch. 8, p. 166. To my understanding, the word “tu” 秃 in the poem is a pun, so it can be translated as “monk” (the tonsured) or as “bald.” Roy’s translation does not quite...
sexy and voluptuous. She thought her husband was too coarse to be her match and would pick up a quarrel with him every day. One day she got so angry because of a trivial dispute that she returned to her parents’ house. She stayed there about ten days. Her folks comforted her and finally she cooled and went back home. There was only about a mile between the two households. Familiar with the route, Du would usually go and back by herself. It so happened that on her way back it began to rain cats and dogs. Du did not bring umbrella with her, and in wilderness she was unable to find a place to take shelter. When she heard a bell ringing at a distance, she looked up and saw a temple looming large at the end of a small pass. She had to make a detour and went to the temple to seek refuge from the rain. She intended to wait there until the rain stopped.

The temple, situated in wilderness, was called the Temple of the Zen Pacific. About ten monks lived in there. In its front house lived three monks, one master and two disciples. The old master was named Dajue, who was the supervisor. A young disciple, named Zhiyuan, was a good-looking and amiable man, and he was dearly loved by the old monk. The other disciple was called Huiguang, a boy about eleven years old. Though in his late fifties, the old monk was as lascivious as a young man. Every night he would sleep with Zhiyuan on the same bed and would hold him in his arms and talk to him about having sex with women. When he was aroused, he would make it with the disciple to work off his sexual desire. His lewdness is beyond our description.

On that day both the master and the disciple were standing at the doorway when they saw a pretty woman walk in to take shelter from rain. Her advent aroused their lust just as a mouse convey Su Shi’s skillfulness in playing the word game.
will when it wanders near the jaws of a cat.

The old monk threw a hint to the younger one and said, “A Bodhisattva Guanyin\textsuperscript{11} is coming in! Go and welcome her.”

Zhiyuan put on an air of levity and approached Du. “Hello, young lady,” he said, “I suppose you’re coming here to take shelter from rain?”

“Yeah,” said Du. “It’s raining heavily. I’d like to take refuge from rain for a while.”

“The rain won’t stop soon,” said Zhiyuan, his face wreathed in smiles. “As there is no place here to sit on, nor is it good standing outside, I would like you to take a seat in our small residence and drink a cup of tea. You’d better stay until it rains out.”

If Du had been a decent woman, she would have ignored the monk’s invitation and would have chosen to stand outside so that she could leave when it stopped raining. A monk’s abode is a place women should take most care to avoid. Who would have thought that Du was a loose woman who enjoying having sexual adventures. Seeing Zhiyuan was a white-faced and clean-shaven youth quite adept and graceful in conversation, she began somewhat to take fancy to him.

The rain will keep me here for some time anyway, she thought to herself. To take a seat inside is certainly better than standing here talking with him. I might as well do as he said. She then followed Zhiyuan, walking into the temple.

Upon seeing her move in, the old monk instantly sneaked back into the house and opened his bedroom to wait for her. Zhiyuan and Du winked at each other while walking to the living quarters. After having entered the house and sat down, they had Huiguang the boy monk serve

\footnote{\textsuperscript{11} “A Bodhisattva Guanyin” refers to Du 杜. Guanyin is the model of Chinese beauty, and to say a lady or a young girl is a “Guanyin” is a high compliment to her beautifulness. See E. T. C.}
them tea. Zhiyuan chose a fine bowl from the tea tray, and then tucking up his sleeve, presented it to Du. Du took it at once with both her hands and in the meantime cast a glance at this young monk. The more she looked at him, the more she felt him handsome and attractive. She grew so infatuated that by accident she brushed the bowl with her sleeve. Her sleeve was soaked.

"You wetted your sleeve," Zhiyuan told her. "You may go to the inner room and dry it on the brazier."\(^\text{12}\)

This suggestion of his clearly revealed to Du his real purpose. However, to go to his bedroom was just what she wanted. Instead of rejecting him, she asked him where the room was in which she could find the brazier. Zhiyuan led her to his master's bedroom. He knew that the old monk was already inside waiting for her and he had to give way to him first. When Du went into the room, Zhiyuan pointed at the brazier, saying, "You may dry your sleeve on this. There is still some fire in it." Then he backed himself out of the room.

Seeing Zhiyuan hesitated to come in, Du was rather puzzled. Is he not brave enough for lovemaking? she thought. She was just stretching out her hand to dry the sleeve on the brazier when the old monk jumped out from behind the bed and took her to his arms. Du squealed like a pig being slaughtered.

"There's nobody around," said the old monk. "It's no use screaming here. You came into my room and you can only blame yourself for that."

Du tried to escape, but the smart young monk had already bolted the door from outside.

The old monk, after firmly getting hold of Du with his hands, butted his shaft aimlessly against

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\(^{12}\) Brazier 蓄籬 (xunlong) has a bamboo frame placed over it.
her from behind his pants. Du yielded after a coy resistance.

“Where’s the young master?” she asked, “I’m not expecting you!”

“You want to make it with my disciple, eh?” said the old monk. “He is my sweetheart. Let me get it done with you first, and I’ll let him accommodate you.”

I fancy his young monk, Du thought, but unfortunately I’ve been entangled by this old fog. Now I’m in his hands and have no way of getting rid of him. If I allow him to get what he wants, in return he’ll certainly let me share his young disciple. She then reluctantly subjected herself to him and let him carry her onto the bed and do the work of clouds and rain.

One at the height of his passion dashes madly to fight,

The other is lethargic, reluctant to make her partner satisfied.

One feels lucky to get hold of the food without much ado,

The other by wrongly offering her flower makes herself a fool.

One is so fervent as to gasp like a fire-fanning bellows.

The other is listless as if a sack that blood and bone holds.

For all its tasteless rashness they have undergone.

This momentary enjoyment is a love affair on every account.

Though he was quite aroused, the old monk was not the man having sexual stamina. Quite a bit of his sperm had dripped out as he hugged the woman, and the real bout lasted only a few minutes before he was spent. Du had been impatient with him. Now her discontentment grew into an ill feeling against him. She got up and tied her skirt, murmuring, “An old worthless
crock! Don’t you feel shameful? For what have you been so desperate?”

The old monk knew that he had let her down, so he was rather dampened. He called out to Zhiyuan to open the door for him. After unlatching the door, Zhiyuan came up to him and asked, “Was it good?”

“What an experienced woman!” remarked the old monk. “Just I wasn’t skilful enough today and disappointed her.”

“I can work her up,” Zhiyuan said. He rushed into the room and closed the door behind him. Then he turned around and embraced Du. “My darling,” he said, “I’m so sorry to have let you suffer in his hands.”

“You coaxcd me to come into this room, only to have made me raped by that old crock!” Du said.

“He is my master and I had no choice,” Zhiyuan explained. “Now I’ll offer you something for your compensation.”

He took her to him and tried to carry her to the bed. As her experience with the old monk had made her feel so insipid, Du assumed a serious air. “Such a shameless pair!” she cursed. “One has just finished and the other wants to take his turn in no time!”

“What my master did to you was simply an overture,” Zhiyuan said. “But you and I are about the same age and we should not miss this good chance!” Then he dropped to his knees before her.

“I complained only about your old fogy,” Du said, raising him up. “Actually I love you too.” Zhiyuan, by taking advantage of this, held her in his arms, and then kissed her on the mouth and carried her onto the bed. Their lovemaking, in comparison with the previous one, was quite
He meets the beauty like a starving tiger gulping a lamb,
As a thirsty dragon wants water, so is she crazy for the young man.
Lustful, the village wench likes to go wild and promiscuous.
Experienced, the Buddha man is able to conquer the lecherous.
One thrusts hard and the other with efforts receives him,
Both of them vie to be triumphant, with equal enthusiasm.
Although her door is thrown widely open by the old master,
Yet from the Boddhisattva the young disciple gets more water.

Zhiyuan was in the prime of his life, virile and full of energy. Du, attracted by his good looks, also had a high sexual passion. They copulated about a full hour before they came to a stop. Du felt extremely contented.

"I've heard that monks are skilful," she said. "That incompetent old crock can only bring shame on you people. You are, however, a great lover and I'd like to sleep with you tonight."

"I'm so pleased that you like me," said Zhiyuan. "I wonder if it would be a problem for you to stay here overnight? May I ask where you are from?"

"My maiden name is Du," Du told him. "I've been married into a Jing family in a nearby village. The other day my husband and I had cross words and I went back to my parents' house. I stayed there for several days. Today I was on my way home when it began raining. I came in to take shelter from rain and it so happened that I met you. My husband didn't know I am returning."
He keeps no contact with my parents. So nobody knows I'm here. It should be all right if I stay here for a couple of days.”

“Nothing could be better than that!” Zhiyuan said. “Tonight we can enjoy ourselves for a whole night. The only thing I’m worried about is that my master may want to share fun with us.”

“Oh, no, I don’t want that old crock,” Du said.

“But he is the head of the house and it’s impolite to reject him,” Zhiyuan persuaded her.

“Anyway, you can get done with him easily.”

“How can three people have sex together?” said Du. “It’s kind of embarrassing to me.”

“The old monk may be lecherous, but he is not quite sexually capable. We can throw ourselves into an all-out assault on him from both sides, and it only needs one of us, either you or me, to finish him off. Then we don’t have to pay attention to him any more and can make love by ourselves.”

As they talked congenially, they kept talking on and on for a long time. The old monk was standing outside. Hearing their bed creaking without cease, he regretted that he had finished too soon and had not enjoyed the greatest pleasure while he was in her. He felt a jealousy of their revelling in sexual bliss. The more he waited for them to come out, the more he became impatient. At last he could not help breaking into the room. Seeing their bodies clinging to each other and their tongues entwined, he was really irritated. She didn’t treat me the way she is treating him, he thought.

“In such broad daylights,” the old monk shouted at Zhiyuan, “don’t you feel shameful to shut yourself in the bedroom to sleep? Now that we have had the taste, we should have a discussion of a long-term plan.”
Responding to his master’s complaint, Zhiyuan smilingly said, “Master, I should let you know that we can indeed look forward to having a long-term taste.”

“How can that be?” asked the old monk.

“Because the young lady is going to stay here tonight,” Zhiyuan told him.

“We won’t let her go so soon,” said the old monk, breaking into a broad smile.

“If we were to force her, she might accuse us,” Zhiyuan said. “Now that she has offered to stay of her own accord, we won’t be involved in trouble.”

“Where does she live?” asked the old monk.

Zhiyuan repeated what Du had told him. This made the old monk beside himself with joy. He went hurrying to prepare for supper and before long the dinner was laid out. The three of them sat around the table to eat. Du did not drink much no matter how the old monk urged her to. But though she rejected him with a variety of excuses, she would nevertheless take the wine Zhiyuan poured her. She ogled at him, showing an unusually intimate feeling toward this handsome young monk. Using some teasing words the old monk would occasionally find a chance to cut into their tender conversation, yet he could hardly arouse their interest and what he said was therefore largely ignored. He was somewhat conscious that he was an unwelcome person. Still he grudged to give her up, like a dog grudging to give up a hot greasy plate while it is in the middle of licking it.

After supper the three of them did sleep together on one bed. Du put her arms around Zhiyuan’s neck as soon as they got onto the bed, paying no attention to the old monk. As the old monk had ejaculated during the day, his organ was still too soft to erect. He decided to let them have intercourse first, thinking that might help stimulate his own sexual desire. Their lovemaking
screams, accompanied by the squeaking noises of sex, indeed worked him up. Fenidly the old monk began to savour her charms here and there, and then threw one arm around her and with the other pressed her to his bosom. His caress of her snatch, now filled up by Zhiyuan's member, made him feel so aroused that his object down below, urged on by his own kneading, became semi-hard. He tried to push his disciple aside to replace him. Yet Zhiyuan had just reached the summit of his ecstasies and was unwilling to give way to his master. Meanwhile, Du also clutched Zhiyuan tightly with both her hands to protect him from being pushed down.

"Master, I can't stop," Zhiyuan cried. "If you're really horny, you can mount on my back and make it with me."

"No." the old monk insisted. "It's ridiculous to eat homely food while the delicious game is being laid in front of me."

His disturbing cling to them finally forced the young monk to climb down. Du was rather piqued. While the old monk began to thrust forward, she, out of resentment, deliberately wriggled her hips a couple of times. The old monk had been hot. He was no longer able to contain himself and ejaculated. Then he broke down, gasping for breath.

"Why bothered like this?" said Du with a cold smile.

The old monk felt too ashamed to answer back. Without saying a word, he turned to the other side to sleep, letting them rally their guns and flags to start another bout. Both being

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13 In Chinese erotic fiction sexual intercourse is often referred to as a "battle." This metaphor, according to van Gulik, is derived from an anecdote about the famous strategist Sunzi 孫子 (Master Sun, i.e., Sun Bin 孫膑 of 6th century B.C.), an anecdote which is related in chapter 65 of Sima Qian's Shi jì. Playful expressions denoting sexual act such as "huazhen" 花陣 (a flowery battle-array) and "Wuying" 吳營 (camp of Wu) are also borrowed from this anecdote. These phrases are jocular and no resentful or harmful connotations are involved. See van Gulik, Sexual
young persons, Zhiyuan and Du were capable of making love for a long while. A short sleep was sufficient for them to recover and a new round ensued immediately. Envious as he was, the old monk could not but swallow his envious saliva. That night saw him make many a clumsy lewd spectacle.

At daybreak Du got up. After washing and combing, she said to Zhiyuan, “I’m leaving now.”

“Yesterday you said it would be all right to stay for a few days,” said Zhiyuan. “This temple is out of the way. Nobody knows you’re here. You and I have just started our intimate relations. How can you be willing to part with me? I really can’t figure out what has made you change your mind.”

“It’s not that I want to leave you,” Du whispered to him. “I just can’t stand the old crock and his disgusting harassment. If you want me to stay, you have to agree on one condition: the old crock mustn’t sleep with us on the same bed!”

“I doubt that the master will agree on this point,” said Zhiyuan.

“Fine if he disagrees,” Du said. “Then I’ll quit.”

Her determination to leave left Zhiyuan with no alternative. He had to go to the old monk and talk the matter over with him.

“The young lady is going to leave,” he told the old monk. “What should we do?”

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Life in Ancient China, p. 157. In Daoist books, having sex is also called “the battle of stealing and strengthening” (cai bu zhi zhan). Douglas Wile says that this is a somewhat ominous term indicating the potential for increasing one’s own treasury at the enemy’s expense. See Douglas Wile, Art of the Bedchamber: The Chinese Sexual Yoga Classics, 1992, p. 14. Van Gulik admitted that in some Daoist texts one may indeed discern an element of hostility to the other sex. but he believed that it was not in accordance with the considerate attitude that Daoism
"You guys are so intimate," said the old monk, "why does she want to leave?"

"She is from a good family, feeling embarrassed to sleep with two men on one bed. That's why she wants to quit," Zhiyuan said. "In my opinion, we'd better put up a bed in the opposite room. I'll sleep with her for a night first. When I have talked her into staying for a longer time, you'll be able to find some chance for you to make it with her. We shouldn't sleep together until she gets quite familiar with you. If we don't comply to her, she'll leave for sure and that, of course, is not good to either of us."

Zhiyuan's lobbying reminded the old monk of their having sex together on the previous night. The trio made me oversexed and behave like a nuisance, he thought. Obviously, that's not a satisfying way for having sex. But if she leaves, what will I gain? I'd better let them sleep without me. In that way I can sometimes have her alone with me in my bedroom for a whole night. Why should I bother to stick with them on one bed, only to ask for her contempt?

"Well," he said to Zhiyuan, "I think your idea is not bad. As long as she stays, we can both of us benefit. That consideration aside, you are after all my sweetheart. I won't object even if it's only for your own interest."

The old monk, though agreeing in words, was actually very jealous in his mind. Without a better idea, however, he had to compromise for the time being.

Zhiyuan told Du that they had been allowed to sleep in a separate room. Du was delighted. She decided to stay, looking forward to the coming of the night.

In the evening the old monk said to Zhiyuan, "Tonight I'll sleep alone to husband my strength. You two can enjoy yourselves for the whole night. Make sure to coax her to stay,

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generally maintains toward woman. See van Gulik, ibid., p. 157.
tomorrow is my turn.”

“No problem,” said Zhiyuan. “Tonight I’ll persuade her to stay. If three of us sleep together on one bed as we did last night, we can only mess things up. We may feel dissatisfied, and she will definitely leave. So wait until after I have talked her around. Then I’ll make an arrangement for you. I guarantee you will be satisfied.”

“That’s what my sweetheart should do,” the old monk said.

That night Zhiyuan and Du slept in a separate room. With the door closed, they were carefree, playing together merrily and without constraint.

Our story goes that the old monk, who had been afraid of losing the woman, slept alone that night in his own room as Zhiyuan suggested him to. No woman accompanied him, nor did his own disciple who had always been his constant bedmate. Being a lone sleeper, the old monk felt very unhappy. Moreover, the scenes of the young couple making merry together kept appearing before his eyes, making him unable to fall asleep. He pounded the bed and turned his pillow upside down, tossing restlessly for a whole night.

After getting up the next morning, he said to Zhiyuan, “You guys had good times, but you made me suffer a lonely night!”

“I’m afraid we had no other choice if we want her to stay,” Zhiyuan said.

“Tonight,” said the old monk, “I must have her for a whole night.”

Zhiyuan dared not disobey him. When the night fell, he urged Du to join the old monk in his bedroom. Du, however, refused to submit. “Don’t you remember what I told you when you asked me to stay? Why are you pushing me again to sleep with that loathsome old fogey?”

“He is the head of the house,” Zhiyuan said.
“So what?” Du retorted. “I’m not his wife and why should I be afraid of him? If you drive me nuts, I’ll hit the road right away!”

Zhiyuan knew that she would not give in. He went to his master and said, “She’s shy and refused to come to your room. Master, could you please go to her room instead?”

Taking his advice, the old monk groped his way to her room. Du was already in bed, waiting for Zhiyuan to lay her. When the old monk sidled up to the bed and jumped onto it, she took him as the young monk and at once held him in her arms and gave him a kiss on the mouth. This set the old monk tingling all over. Only after they began having sex did she find that he was not the one she had been expecting.

“You old fogy,” she cursed, “can you stop harassing me like this?”

The old monk paid her no heed at all; instead he began to pound furiously. He intended to make her happy, but as he overexerted himself, he was soon out of breath. Du had just begun to enjoy his thrusts. Now she realized that he was about to come and the battle would soon be over. Feeling so disappointed she turned her body around and pushed him off the bed with all her might. The old monk fell to the ground, his semen shooting wide of the mark and making a sticky mess on the edge of the bed and on his own thighs.

Such a venomous bitch! he thought, getting to his feet. He then went back to his own bedroom, bearing resentment in his mind.

No sooner had the old monk been out of her room than Zhiyuan went in to fill up his gap. With her lust having been stirred into flame by the old monk, Du was more than pleased that Zhiyuan returned in time. Without even allowing herself time for a word, she at once clasped him and an erotic melee ensued, bustling with noise and excitement.
The old monk, now back in his own room, still remained sullen. I’ve been ousted and they can indulge in pleasure by themselves, he thought. Why shouldn’t I listen to what they are doing? He then went to their room. No sooner had he got there than he heard their lewd cries and vibration of the bed, so loud that it sounded as if it were an earthshaking. “The bitch is playing favourites!” he, clenching his fists, muttered between his teeth. “If you had given me some of your loving affection, I could have also enjoyed pleasure. Now that you want to make merry only between the two of you, I’ll do whatever I can tomorrow to blow you up!”

Despondent, he went back to his room to sleep. After he got up next morning, he felt itchy and a little painful in his penis. His urine came dripping out as he was relieving himself. It was obvious that he had got what was called “turbid water” infection,¹ a disease that had resulted from his incomplete ejaculation on the previous night because of Du’s pushing him off the bed.

Fancy I’ve suffered so much from this vicious bitch! he said bitterly to himself.

But when Du arose, the old monk was again brazen-faced, trying to strike up a light conversation with her. Du, however, was indifferent, making no response to his flirtations. While the old monk could only ask for her snub, he felt even sorer to see her whispering in his disciple’s ear and laughing heartily.

In the evening Zhiyuan said to Du, “To save you troubles, I’ll go to sleep with him first. I’ll see to it that he’ll be used up and break down.”

“Do it quickly,” said Du. “I’ll be waiting for you in bed.”

¹ Urethritis.
Zhiyuan went into the old monk’s bedroom. “For the last two nights, Master, I didn’t accompany you and I feel rather guilty. Tonight I’m going to sleep with you!” he said, trying to ingratiate the old monk as much as he could.

“For the 1st two nights, Master, didn’t accompany you and I feel rather guilty. Tonight I’m going to sleep with you!” he said, trying to ingratiate the old monk as much as he could.

“Why should I eat homely food when I have this young chick at home!” the old monk said. “Go ask her to come here. She must keep me company tonight!”

“She won’t listen to me,” Zhiyuan said. “Unless you go yourself and beg her in person.”

“I’ll see if she dares not to come!” the old monk said spitefully. He went to the kitchen to fetch a knife before going to her room. If she dares confront me again, I’ll finish her off! He thought.

When Du heard footsteps approaching her bed, she took it for granted that Zhiyuan was coming back from his errand. She thought that all this time spent in his master’s bedroom must have sufficed to complete his task. “Eder Brother,” she called, “please shut the door! I don’t want the old crock to come and rape me.”

The old monk, upon hearing what she said, was really boiled with fury. He shouted in a wrathful voice. “Yes, the old crock must have you sleep with him tonight!” He then reached out his hands, and with one pull, already dragged her half-way down from the bed.

“Why are you so violent? You can’t force me into submission!” seeing the old monk bearing down on her menacingly, Du cried. She clung to the bed firmly and struggled. As the old monk kept pulling her, she screamed, “Even if you killed me, I wouldn’t sleep with you!”

“You dare attempt to resist!” the old monk burst out in rage, “I’ll give you a stab to put an end to you!” He seized her by the throat. In a fit of fury he was so forceful that he choked her to death. Du twitched twice and died immediately.
Zhiyuan, since his master left, had been lying in bed, waiting for him to come back. He was uncertain what was happening when he heard shrieks and strange noises in the opposite room. He went rushing out and ran straight into the old monk, who, carrying a knife with him, had just walked out of that bedroom.

“I’ve killed that fucking bitch!” the old monk told his disciple as he saw him.

Zhiyuan was shocked. “You really did that?”

“I’m not joking!” said the old monk. “Why should I let you two enjoy pleasure without me?”

Zhiyuan fetched a candle and went into her room. The scene of Du’s corpse affected him painfully. “Master,” he groaned, “I never suspected that you would do things like this!”

“The bitch didn’t want to come over to my room and I was so provoked that I lost control of myself,” the old monk said. “Now that she’s been killed, it is no use blaming me. What we should do right now is to bury her as quickly as possible. Later on I’ll find you another woman, a good one, all right?”

Zhiyuan, despite his distress, had to take a shovel and go to the backyard with the old monk to bury her. “If I knew this would happen,” he said, shedding his tears in secret, “I would have let her leave earlier. I never thought that she would have been killed for no reason at all!”

The old monk was afraid that Zhiyuan might be resentful, so he tried his best to please him. The truth was thus covered up. Huiguang was a boy after all. Though he was curious about the sudden disappearance of the woman, he did not look into the matter, and other people did not know the murder either. But no more story of this.

Our story goes that two or three days had passed since Du left her parents’ house. Her
parents, not knowing whether the couple had been reconciled, sent someone to see their daughter. At the same time someone from the Jings also went to the Dus’ intending to take the young wife back. They both failed to meet the woman. The Jings accused the Dus of having remarried their daughter by taking advantage of their bad conjugal relationship. But the Dus said that this was exactly the reason for an intentional murder on the part of the Jings. As both the parties blamed the other and could not reach a reasonable conclusion, they wrote their plaints and brought the case to the county authority.

The county magistrate was absent at the time, and the acting officer was Captain of the Guard named Lin Daling. Lin was a native of Fujian province, a graduate from the National Academy. Nevertheless, he was a capable and discerning judge. He had the suspects of the two parties.
families brought to the court for interrogation.

"Your Honour," said Jing Qing, "this humble man and his wife often quarrelled with each other. The other day she felt wronged and went back to her parents’ house. My father-in-law, out of his own considerations, has tucked her away. He has no intention of returning her to me. This should not be permitted by the law!"

"It is true," said Old Du, "that our daughter returned to stay with us for a few days because of their squabble. Three days earlier my wife and I talked her round and she went back to her husband’s house. But they quarrelled again for the reason we don’t know and our daughter was finally killed. However, the Jings incriminated us for hiding her away. I beg Your Honour to make a fair judgment." Having thus finished, Old Du cried, his tears coursing down from his face like raindrops.

From his outward appearance Judge Lin could tell that Jing Qing was an honest farmer rather than a malicious murderer. "As husband and wife," he then asked Jing Qing, "why couldn’t you get along well with each other?"

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provincial examinations yet was still considered as having a good academic standing, belonging to the first category mentioned above). He was rather dissatisfied that the civil service examinations system became the only prestigious way of selecting officials in the late Ming (see the beginning paragraph of Story 29 of Pai’an jingqi). This is probably why in the story the transitional phrase suiran 随然 (though), which I have translated as "nevertheless," is used. But on the other hand, it was also true that since more and more literati (usually senior shengyuan of local schools) became tributary students in the National Academies, graduates from the National Academies in the late Ming were no longer as qualified and capable as they used to be. According to Ming shi, the quota for tributary students reached a thousand. Ming shi explicitly criticizes the dissatisfying and excessive enrolment in the National Academies by quoting Yao Xie’s 姚燮 (Minister of the Board of Rites) complaints: "The National Academies are the places to cultivate talented students. But recently they began to accept forty-year-old shengyuan from local schools in the capital and provinces. Moreover, there are too many tributary students who have contributed grains or horses. They are nearly ten thousands." See ibid., vol. 6, juan 69, pp.
“My wife thought I was too coarse to be her match,” replied Jing Qing. “That’s the only reason she often picked up quarrels with me.”

“How does your wife look like?” asked the judge.

“She is fairly good-looking,” replied Jing Qing.

The judge nodded and then turned to Old Du. “Your daughter,” he said, “must have thought that she married a wrong person. Since she disliked her husband, you and your wife, out of parental feeling toward her, might possibly have taken her side. So it is not unlikely that you have remarried her into another family. Things like that did happen before.”

“Our house is not far from our son-in-law’s,” Old Du defended, “how can we manage to hide the truth if we remarry our daughter? Do you think we will conceal our daughter in some remote place, only to make it impossible for her to come back home to see us? If she were indeed remarried, sooner or later people would find out her new husband. We’ll never dare do such sort of things. Obviously, the Jings killed her, and that is why she is nowhere to be found.”

The judge pondered over the argument for a while and then said, “None of your suppositions is well-grounded. I believe that something must have happened to her on her way back home. Since she had the accident in the midway and no good man was around helping her, neither of you was informed. The court is now adjourned until the matter has been further investigated.”

He issued a wanted circular and bade constables search Du in every possible place. Quite a long time passed and yet their investigations produced no result at all.

1682-83.
Our story goes that there was a young man named Yu working for the county jurisdiction as an entrance guard. He was twenty years old, effeminate and clever. Fujianese are extremely fond of male love and so was Judge Lin. It goes without saying that he loved the guard dearly. Yu, feeling secured as his favourite, would sometimes be involved in unlawful practices. One day he was so careless as to be caught on the spot. In spite of all his attempt to screen his misconduct, Judge Lin could not openly violate the principle of justice. He thought that the only way he could save Yu was to let him atone his crime by performing a meritorious service. He

16 "Nanfeng" (男風, which I have here translated as “male love” as Bret Hinsch does in his Passions of the Cut Sleeve (Giovanni Vitiello maintained that “homosexual custom” was a better translation), was especially popular in Fujian province. As nanfeng was believed to start in the south, particularly in Fujian, sometimes it was also called “southern custom” 南風 (nanfeng). See Bret Hinsch, Passions of the Cut Sleeve: The Male Homosexual Tradition in China (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1990), p. 120; Giovanni Vitiello, “The Dragon’s Whim: Ming and Qing Homoerotic Tales from the Cut Sleeve,” T'oung Pao, vol. lxxviii. 1992, p. 348. According to Shen Defu 沈德符, the Fujianese were extremely fond of male homosexuality. Men of different classes, noble and humble alike, would seek their partners of similar social status. The older man is called “qixiong” (qixiong) and the younger man is called “qidi” (qidi). When the elder brother visited the younger brother’s house, the younger brother’s parents would treat the elder brother as if he were their son-in-law. The elder brother, on the other hand, was obligatory to take financial responsibility for the younger brother’s living and marriage expenses. An affectionate couple slept together like husband and wife even they were over thirty. See Shen Defu, Bizou xuan shengwu (Surplus Words from the Worn-out Broom Studio) (reprint, Shanghai: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1939), juan 3, p. 45. Given that the coastal regions of Fujian were infested with sea rovers and pirate leaders were often called qixiong by their subordinates, Shen Defu concluded that the prevalence of homosexual practices in Fujian was a result of the influence of pirate culture. See Vivien Ng, “Homosexuality and the State in Late Imperial China,” in Martin Duberman, et al., eds., Hidden From History: Reclaiming Gay and Lesbian Past (Markham, Ont: Penguin Book Canada Limited, 1989), p. 86. Liu Dalin 劉達臨 thought two special causes can help account for the prevalence of homosexuality in Fujian Province: 1) geographically Fujian was a remote area and people of lower classes (barbers, for example) were usually engaged in prostitution in order to earn their livings; 2) there was a special class in Fujian called “jianmin” (jianmin) (base people). They lived on boat and both men and women would sell their bodies as male and female prostitutes when their boats were anchored. See Liu Dalin, Zhongguo gudai xingwenhua 中國古代性文化 (The Sex Culture in Ancient China) (Yinchuan: Ningxia renmin chubanshe, 1993), ch. 7, pp. 790-80.
then secretly summoned him to his office.

"Your transgression is serious and I have to fire you," he said to Yu. "Should I pardon you for your wrongdoings, I would be criticized by my colleagues. So for the time being you'll be dismissed. I'm going to put a notice on the wall so that people can say nothing against me."

The guard, after hearing this, kowtowed to the judge, apologizing for the trouble he had caused.

"But you shouldn't think that you're finished," the judge continued. "Actually I've thought up a way of saving you. The case of the lost woman is still pending and we haven't found out the real cause for her disappearance. I would like you to investigate this matter for me in secret. You may pass yourself off as a man who has been kicked out of the yamen. You should take care to look into every possible place located between the two households, whether it is town or village, Daoist temple or Buddhist monastery. If you find where she is, I'll not only reinstate you but reward you handsomely. Then, no one can raise a bable of criticism against me."

Yu had no choice but take his order. He went rushing here and there and stopped by all the places that might provide him with the information he needed. Looking like a page boy, he would not incur an iota of suspicion even if he put his nose into some private business. Despite his diligent visits and attentive search, he obtained nothing all the same.

One day Yu saw a group of idlers sitting together and gossiping. He came up to listen to what they were talking about. One of the fellows noticed him as he looked up.

"Look," the fellow said quietly to his companions, "what a nice-looking young man!"

"There is a young monk in the Temple of the Zen Pacific who is also very handsome,"
another remarked. “But his master, a lecherous old monk, is a terribly devious rascal.”

Pretending that he had heard nothing, Yu moved off. Is the young monk really as beautiful as they said? he thought. I’d better go to the temple and take a look myself.

In fact, Yu was a habitue for homosexuality. The prospect of seeing the handsome youth made him quite excited. As he did not know how to get to the temple, he asked directions all the way going there. After entering the gate, he saw an unusually beautiful young monk sitting on the threshold of their house. That must be him, Yu thought.

Zhiyuan, seeing a handsome youth come into the temple, also felt excited. He rose to his feet to greet him. “Elder Brother,” he said, “what are you coming here for?”

“Just to play around,” said Yu.

Zhiyuan invited him in to drink tea. Yu had already fancied him, so he followed on his heels into their living quarters with great delight. The old monk was inside the house at that time. Seeing his disciple ushering an attractive young man into their residence, he had a broad smile on his face. He asked Yu his name and where he lived.

“I used to be an entrance guard for the yamen,” said Yu, “But for some minor offences I’ve been fired. Now I don’t have a fixed place to live, and that’s why I’ve come to your place.”

The old monk was delighted to learn his situation. “Our small abode can accommodate you.” he said. “It should be no problem if you stay here for a few days.”

He and his disciple treated Yu with tea and wine as ingratiatingly as they could. After gobbling down two bowls of wine, the old monk became quite tipsy. He took Yu into his bedroom, pulled off his pants and sodomized him. Unlike the village woman who had not seen much of the world and had been quite picky on her partner, Yu was an experienced gay capable
of tolerating a man like the old monk. This made the old monk very happy.

Gentle readers take note, men who do not have sexual stamina are especially fond of male love. Do you know why? Because male love cannot be merged into a natural union. Since the person taking passive role does not enjoy much pleasure and what he wants is to get things done rather than obtain gratification, the penetrator can do whatever he likes without being concerned too much whether his penis is hard enough or whether his ejaculation is too fast. But in the case of having an intercourse with a woman, the man should take care to please her. If he spends at midpoint and she is not yet satisfied, she will grow furious and that will put the man in a difficult situation. Making male love, however, is much easier. You can find joy in your own way. That’s why the old monk felt quite contented this time.

After they had finished, Zhiyuan said to his master, “I brought Elder Brother in, but you took the prize first. Tonight he must sleep with me.”

“No problem, no problem,” said the old monk smilingly.

Yu himself also wanted to stay, so that night he and Zhiyuan slept together on the same bed. A poem bears witness to it:

Both young men are an equal match,
Taking turns a good time they catch;
To have sex, Zhiyuan is the first one,
Yet he offers his partner the same fun.

The two good-looking youths, after taking turns in intercourse, embraced each other to
sleep. Next day the pesky old monk tried again to pull Yu into his bedroom for having sex. Because of the previous incident that had happened to Du, Zhiyuan became rather jealous this time. “In all fairness,” he said disgruntledly to the old monk, “Elder Brother should be my companion. You have no right to take him away from me.”

“Why?” said the old monk.

“You have me all day long to work off your burning lust,” Zhiyuan said. “Who can I make it with to relieve myself? The other day I got someone and began enjoying pleasure, but you cut in and cut the life off. Elder Brother stays here because of my invitation, and I think it is reasonable that I demand he stay with me.”

The old monk, though quite offended by his disciple’s recalcitrant attitude, dared not go into a direct confrontation with him. He pursed his lips, feeling rather unhappy.

Yu was a purposeful observer. He brought up the topic again at night when he and Zhiyuan reached the height of their passion playing together. “You said someone was cut off the other day. Is that true?” he asked.

Zhiyuan, who had been turned on already, said unwittingly, “The other day we had a woman from a nearby village. We were happy being together and enjoying pleasure. Who would have thought that the old ignoramus would get so jealous of our intimacy that he finally cut the things off. Thinking of what happened, I still feel regretted.”

“Where’s the woman now?” asked Yu. “Why don’t you go and get her so that we can

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17 Because the old monk always plays an active role and Zhiyuan was always his passive (submissive) partner. In China, man who was senior in age or position usually played active role in male homosexuality, that is, he usually engaged in the penile penetration of his junior partner. For a detailed discussion, see Bret Hinsch, Passions of the cut Sleeve, introduction, pp. 1-14.
have fun together?"

"Where to go to look for her?" Zhiyuan said, with a sigh.

Yu knew there was more to it than what had been said, so he continued to interrogate him. But Zhiyuan refused to disclose any information concerning the whereabouts of the woman. Yu had to drop their conversation on this topic.

Next day when there was nobody around he asked the boy monk in low voice, "A woman stayed at your place some time ago?"

"Yes," answered the boy monk.

"How long did she stay?" asked Yu.

"Only for a few days," replied the boy monk.

"Where did she go then?"

"She didn't actually leave." the boy monk said. "One night she just disappeared."

"What did she do when she was here?" Yu continued to ask.

"I don't know." said the boy monk. "I only know she was together with the old master and the young master for a couple of nights and then disappeared. Since then they have often argued with each other. But I didn't understand what they talked about."

Although he did not get a definite answer, Yu had nevertheless had some idea of what had really happened to the woman. "I've been here for two days already," he then said to the master and the disciple, looking as if nothing had happened. "I'd like to be away for a while today."

"Don't leave us for good," said the old monk.

"He won't," Zhiyuan smirkingly said, ogling at Yu. "He can leave you, but he won't part
with me.”

Yu winked back at Zhiyuan, saying, “I’ll be back soon.”

After getting out of the temple, he directly went to the yamen and reported to Lord Lin what Zhiyuan and the boy monk had told him.

“So that was it!” Lord Lin nodded his head. “Judging from what they said, the woman must have been killed by that malicious old monk. If she had left the temple, she should have been home three days later. Where else could she have gone, you suppose? No wonder that half a year has passed and the woman still can’t be found.”

He bade the guard to keep the things secret. The next day the judge got up early in the morning and set out for the temple in his sedan, accompanied by a bevy of his retainers. At his bidding, one retainer in the front of the procession went to announce to the temple:

“Lord Lin had a dream last night and is now coming to burn incense in your temple!”

All the monks in the temple were at once gathered to greet him. Lord Lin, after getting off his sedan, burned incense and prayed to the Buddha. When he had finished praying, the abbot served him with tea. All the monks were standing in two rows on both sides. Lord Lin stepped down from the platform. He looked up as if he were listening to somebody high above. He kept looking up for a while and then suddenly bowed to Heaven, saying.

“Your servant now knows about this incident.”

He then raised his head and bowed once again, saying,

“Your servant now knows about this man.”

Then he came rushing down and shouted, “Where are the constables? Hurry up and catch the murderer for me!” All the constables shouted back at once, reporting to him for duty. At that
time Lord Lin darted a glance at the monks. Although they were startled, the monks were nevertheless still standing in rapt attention without showing least trepidation. Only an old one was frightened, his face growing pale and teeth chattering. Pointing at him with his finger, Lord Lin ordered the constables to bind him up.

"Have you seen it?" he spoke to the monks. "Heaven told me that this old monk, Dajue, is the murderer of the Jings' woman." He then turned to the old monk and said, "Hurry up and confess the crime you committed!"

The other monks did not know anything about the murder. But they all marvelled that Lord Lin, an officer who had never been to their temple before, knew that the old monk was called Dajue. Obviously he has received divine instructions from Heaven, they thought. They did not know that it was the entrance guard Yu who had told the judge beforehand.

The old monk was caught off guard by this unanticipated raid. What made him more frightened, however, was the revelation of the power of Heaven. He became paralysed with panic, keeping kowtowing ceaselessly without being able to utter a word. Lord Lin ordered the constables to put him on squeezers. As expected, the old monk confessed everything in detail. He confessed that he killed the woman because he and Zhiyuan had sex with her together and he finally became jealous of her intimacy with his disciple. Lord Lin then had Zhiyuan put to torture. As a delicate young monk, Zhiyuan could not stand squeezers. He confessed before the torture.

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18 To those who had been sentenced to death or had committed serious crimes such as robbery. the judge could apply tinggun 钢棍 (cudgel), jiagun 夹棍 (squeezers), laotie 烙铁 (branding iron). For details, see Ming shi, juan 94, p. 2315. According to Chayu kehua 茶餘客話 (Random Talks after Drinking Tea), squeezers as an instrument of torture were made of wooden sticks and ropes. It began to be used in court when Song Lizong 宋理宗 was on the throne (r. 1225-1264) and it could squeeze thighs as well as fingers. See Ruan Kuesheng 阮英生 (1727-
ropes began to tighten. "She was killed by my master," he said. "Her corpse was buried in the
backyard."

Lord Lin called the constables to take the two monks to the courtyard. When they dug
into the ground, they did see a corpse of a woman, her neck broken and blood stains all over all
her body.

The two monks were then taken to the yamen under escort. Lord Lin wrote statements of
their confessions. Death penalty was meted out for Dajue for his rape and murder of the woman.
Zhiyuan, because of his involvement in seduction and homicide without turning his accomplice
to the officials, was sentenced to three-year imprisonment with the condition that he must resume
secular life and do servitude after he is released. Then the Jings and the Dus were summoned to
claim the corpse for burial. The pending case was thus finally solved. Lord Lin profusely
rewarded Yu and also reinstated him. The news about the monk's lechery and murder soon
spread out and people in the county all praised Lord Lin as a wonder judge. The verdicts of the
court were later approved by the superiors and the old monk was executed after autumn equinox.
Local people were all jubilant about his execution. They passed the news from one to another,
and today the legend about Lord Lin, how perspicacious he was and how he got the help from
Heaven with magic power and solved the enigmatic case, is still widely circulated in Sichuan
province. A poem can testify to it:

The village woman is picky in choosing her partner.
The hungry devil of lust is heartless as a contender.

Willingly to offer his rear courtyard\textsuperscript{19} is Yu the guard,

And in making heaven work Judge Lin is a good actor.

\textsuperscript{19}“Rear courtyard” 後庭 (houting), or sometimes “rear-courtyard flower” 後庭花 (houting hua), is an euphemism for anus, frequently appearing in Ming erotic fiction. See, for example, 
\textit{Jin Ping Mei cihua}, vol. 2, ch. 37, p. 984: “Yuanlai furen (Wang Liu'er) you yijian maobing, dan fan jiaogou, zhi jiao hanzi gan ta houting hua” 原來婦人 (王六兒)有個毛病, 但凡交媾, 只教漢子干他後庭花 (The woman had a predilection: when she was having sex, she would like the man to fuck her asshole).
THE WIFE SWAPPERS

Lyric:

With a single hand the hero holds his Hook of Wu,

Ready to chop at thousands of men-at-arms;

1 The original title of this story (story 32 of Pai'an jingqi) is: “Qiao duihuan Huzi xuyanin / Xian baoshi woshi ruding” ( HOURA, Ḿosf, / 風報復師入定). Hu had his lustful desire fulfilled by means of fake swapping / in his trance the Buddhist adept predicted his retribution.

2 I follow Patrick Hanan in translating the Chinese poetic genres shi 詩 as “poem” and ci 詞 which are written to preexisting tunes, as “lyric.” For this practice, see Hanan’s translations of Li Yu’s 李漁 fiction, Carnal Prayer Mat (New York: Ballantine Books, 1990) and A Tower for the Summer Heat (New York: Ballantine Books, 1992).

3 Hook of Wu 吳鈞 (Wugou) was a sword of curved shape made in the area of Wu. For the origin of Hook of Wu, see Zhao Ye 趙燁, Wuyue chunqiu 吳越春秋 (Annals of Spring and Autumn of Wu and Yue) (reprint, Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1937), juan 2, p. 44: “Since Gai Lu loved Moye’s swords, he ordered his people to make more swords. He said, ‘Those who can make good swords will be rewarded a hundred pieces of gold.’ Then many people in the State of Wu began to engage in making swords.” In JIng Ping Mei there is an explanation of the name of Hook of Wu: “Hook of Wu is the name of an ancient sword. In those days there were swords with the names such as Ganjiang 干將, Moye 莫邪, Tai’e 太阿, Hook of Wu, Fish Cut 魚腸, and Death’s-head 死頭.” See Jing Ping Mei cihua (Taipei: Guiguan tushu gufeng chuban gongsi, 1986), vol. 1, p. 47; David Roy, trans., The Plum in the Golden Vase, p. 13. According to Zhang He 張荷, the area of Wu-Yue has been known for gold and tin resources. See Zhang He, Wuwue wenhua 吳越文化 (The Culture of Wu and Yue) (Shenyang: Liaoning jiaoyu chubanshe, 1991), p. 23. Other areas could not produce swords as good as those made in Wu-Yue area because of its regional geographical advantage. See Zhou li 周禮 (The institutions of the Zhou Dynasty) (reprint, Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1965), juan 11, p. 201. One of the swords made in that area more than 2,400 years ago and unearthed recently in Hubei is still sharp enough to cut ten more layers of paper at one time. See Zhang He, ibid., pp. 24-25. The most famous sword artisans in Wu-Yue area were the couple named Ganjiang and Moye. For their story, see Cao Pi 曹丕, Lieyi zhan 列異傳 (The Stories of the Strange), in Taiping yulan 太平御覽 (Encyclopaedia Compiled for the Emperor’s Reading in Peaceful times), juan 343; Lu Xun, comp., Gu xiaoshuo gouchen 古小說鈔沉 (A Collection of Ancient Fiction), in Lu Xun quanj (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1973), pp. 248-49; Lu Xun’s story, “Zhujian” 鋸劍 (Forging the Swords), in Gushi xinbian 故事新編 (Old tales retold) (Taipei: Fengyun shidai chuban gongsi, 1989), pp. 89-115.
However, he will yield himself to a flower,\(^4\)

No matter how tempered out of iron is his heart.

Look at the heroes Xiang Ji and Liu Ji\(^5\).

They could cause all to fret when they angered;

Yet in the arms of their women Yu and Qi,\(^6\)

Even they were willing to be conquered.\(^7\)

\(^4\) A metaphor for beautiful women.

\(^5\) Xiang Ji 項籍 (232-202 B.C.), styled Yu 羽, was born into a noble family in the State of Chu. When he was young he studied the art of warfare with his uncle Xiang Liang 項梁 (?-208 B.C.). After Chen She 陳涉 and Wu Guang 吳廣 had arisen in rebellion against the Qin court, Xiang Yu and his uncle also began their uprising. Later Xiang Yu defeated the Qin’s main forces at Jülü 巨鹿 (in the southwest of modern Pingxiang county of Hebei province) and proclaimed him the Hegemon King of Western Chu 西楚霸王 (xichu bawang). He ruled nine provinces and Pengcheng was the capital. In what the historians call “Chu-Han War,” which lasted about four years, he and Liu Bang fought to rule the whole country and he was finally defeated by the latter at Gaixia 垓下 in 202 B.C. He then committed suicide. See Sima Qian, Shi ji, “Xiang Yu benji” 項羽本紀, vol. 1, juan 7, pp. 295-339; Burton Watson, Records of the Grand Historian of China: Han Dynasty I, “The Basic Annals of Xiang Yu,” pp. 17-48. Liu Ji 劉季 (256-195 B.C.), whose name is Bang 邦 and posthumous title is Gaozu 高祖, was the founder of the Han dynasty (206 B.C.-220 A.D.). Sima Qian says that Liu Bang had a prominent nose, a dragon-like face and beautiful whiskers on his chin and cheeks. He was kind and affectionate with others, liked to help people and was very understanding. He always had great ideas and paid little attention to the business in which the rest of his family was engaged. During the “Chu-Han War” he defeated his rival Xiang Yu and established the Han dynasty. He reigned from 206 to 195 B.C. See Sima Qian, ibid., “Gaozu benji,” vol. 2, juan 8, pp. 341-49; Burton Watson, ibid., vol. 1, pp. 77-119.

\(^6\) Yu 處 (i.e., Yu ji 處姬) and Qi 武 (i.e., Qi futen 武夫人) were respectively Xiang Yu and Liu Bang’s favourite concubines. For details, see notes 8 and 10 of this story.

\(^7\) The proximate source of this lyric is the corresponding passage at the beginning of the first chapter in Jin Ping Mei. See Jin Ping Mei cihua, vol. 1, p. 47. Cf. David Roy’s translation, The Plum in the Golden Vase, p. 12: “The hero grips his Hook of Wu, /Eager to cut off ten thousand heads. /How is it that a heart forged out of iron and stone, /Can yet be melted by a flower? /Just take a look at Hsiang Yu and Liu Pang: /Both cases are equally distressing. /They had only to
This lyric, composed long ago by a prominent person, tells us that a man is most concerned with sex. It does not matter he is a hero or a murderer of cold blood, his bag of flesh and blood\(^8\) will go soft once he sees an alluring woman. Look at the Hegemon-King of Western Chu and Gaozu the Han founding emperor.\(^9\) How valiant they were in fighting to rule the land under heaven!\(^10\) However, one could not forget his concubine Yu before he committed suicide,\(^11\)

meet with Yu-chi and Lady Ch’i /For all their valour to come to naught.” According to Hanan, the name of the tune, which is omitted both in this story and in Jin Ping Mei, is “Mei yan’er” 媒眼兒 (pleasing eyes) and this lyric was composed by the author named Zhuo Tian 卓田 (fl. early 13\(^{th}\) century). See Hanan, “Sources of the Chin P’ing Mei.” in *Asian Major*, vol. 10, 1960. Tang Guizhang 唐圭璋, comp., *Quan Song ci* 全宋辭 (Complete Lyrics of the Song Dynasty) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1965), vol. 4, p. 2481.


\(^9\) Liu Bang was the King of Han 漢王 (Han Wang) instead of the emperor of the whole country when he was fighting with Xiang Yu. But his personal name was tabooed in the Han and writers of later ages were also accustomed to calling him by his posthumous title Gaozu, even though this is sometimes anachronistic from the narrative point of view, as it is here.

\(^10\) “The land under heaven” 天下 (tianxia) refers to China, not to the world. Mattew Ricci gave a good explanation in his journal of why it was so: “Of all the great nations, the Chinese have had the least concern, indeed, one might say that they have had practically no contact whatever, with outside nations, and consequently they are grossly ignorant of what the world in general is like... [T]heir universe was limited to their own fifteen provinces, and in the sea painted around it they had placed a few little islands to which they gave the names of different kingdoms they had heard of. All of these islands put together would not be as large as the smallest of the Chinese provinces. With such a limited knowledge, it is evident why they boasted of their kingdom as being the whole world, and why they called it Thienhia (tianxia), meaning, everything under the heavens.” See China in the Sixteenth Century: The Journals of Matthew Ricci: 1583-1610, p. 166.
and the other was reluctant to make his consort Qi discontented even when he was drunk. If

11 This refers to the moving scene before Xiang Yu was to die. Xiang Yu’s army was surrounded by the Han army at Gaixia and his supplies exhausted. At night Xiang Yu heard the Han armies all about him singing the songs of Chu. He then got up and drank within the curtains of his tent. With him were the beautiful Lady Yu, who enjoyed his favour and followed wherever he went. Filled with passionate sorrow, Xiang Yu began to sing sadly: “My strength plucked up the hills /My might shadowed the world; /But the times were against me, /And Dapple runs no more. /What then can I do? Ah Yu, my Yu, /What will your fate be?” See Shi ji, “Xiang Yu benji,” vol. 1, juan 7, p. 333; Watson, Records of the Grand Historian of China: Han Dynasty I, “The Basic Annals of Xiang Yu,” p. 44-45. According to Jin Ping Mei, Xiang Yu’s face was streaked with tears when he finished singing. “Your highness must be sacrificing important military considerations on my account,” Yu said to him. “Not really,” he replied. “It’s just that we can’t bear to give each other up. Moreover, you’re such a beauty that Liu Bang, who is a ruler addicted to wine and women, is sure to take you for himself if he should see you.” “I would rather die in an honest cause than compromise myself in order to save my life,” Yu wept. Then asking Xiang Yu for his sword, she slit her throat and died. Xiang Yu was so moved by her act that, when the time came, he followed suit by cutting his own throat. See Jin Ping Mei, vol. 1, pp. 48-49; David Roy, trans., The Plum in the Golden Vase, pp.13-14 (the translation is Roy’s).

12 This refers to the episode recounted by Sima Qian in “Liuhou shijia” (Hereditary House of the Marquis of Liu). The emperor (Liu Bang) wished to removed the heir apparent (son by Empress Lu 呂后) and set up Ruyi 如意, the king of Zhao 趙王, his son by Lady Qi. in his place. Many of the high ministers had strongly advised him against this. However, because of his love of Lady Qi, now day and night attending the emperor with her Ruyi always with him, the emperor swore that “no unworthy son shall ever hold a place above this beloved child.” Zhang Liang told Empress Lu that probably only four old men whom the emperor had not succeeded in attracting to his court might be able to make the emperor change his mind. With Zhang Liang’s arrangement, a banquet was held and wine set out in the palace. The heir apparent waited upon the emperor and the four old men accompanied him. All of them were over eighty, with snow-white beards and eyebrows and arrayed in the most imposing caps and gowns. The emperor, struck with curiosity, asked who they were, and they announced their names. “Your Majesty,” then they said, “is contemptuous of others and given to cursing people. We did not consider it right to subject ourselves to insult, and therefore we were afraid and fled into hiding. But it came to our ears that the heir apparent was man of kindness and reverence, who loved others. The whole world looked to him with yearning.” “If it is not too much trouble,” said the emperor, “I hope you will be kind enough to look after the heir apparent and assist him.” The four men proposed a toast to the emperor’s health. The emperor then called Lady Qi to his side, saying, “I have hoped to changed the heir apparent, but these four men have come to his aid. Like a pair of great wings they have borne him aloft where we cannot reach him. Empress Lu is your real master now!” Lady Qi wept. “If you will do a dance of Chu for me,” said the emperor, “I will make you a song of Chu,” and he sang, “The great swan soars aloft. In one swoop a thousand miles. /He has spread his giant wings /And spans the four seas. /He who spans the four seas --
men like them could not hold themselves back from making sentimental spectacles, how can ordinary people who are not their equals?

A romantic youth, passionate and obsessed with sexual desire, will find it hard to keep his mind hinged. Yet sex is a thing that indirectly has something to do with moral merit. Men who kept away from other's wives and daughters and protected their chastity were secretly recompensed for their goodness with divine benefaction: some won the highest places in the examinations, some gained important positions with handsome emolument, and some fathered eminent sons. There is no need to recount these stories, for most of them can be found in the biographies of dynastic histories. As for those who were indulged in sex and made ruses to seduce and violate good women, they either died an untimely death, or lost their official posts, or brought disasters to their wives and daughters. There is none who has not got his retribution.

Let us look at an example. In the last year of the Chunxi reign of the Song dynasty, there

\[\text{Ah. what can we do? /Though we bear stringed arrows to down him, /Where to should we aim them?} \]


13 Moral merit is a liberal translation of “yinde” 儀德 (literally, do something good secretly without letting people know about it), a term which is related to the concept of Buddhist karma.

14 The Buddhist karma originally was supposed to work on an individual rather than on a family basis. Since about the Tang and certainly from the Song period, it has been generally accepted that divine retribution works on a family basis and through a chain of lives. For detailed discussion of the concept of retribution, see Lien-sheng Yang, “The Concept of ‘Pao’ as a Basis for Social Relations in China,” in *Chinese Thought and Institutions*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), pp. 291-309.

15 Chunxi reign 淑熙, during which Emperor Xiaozong 孝宗 (r. 1163-1189) of the Southern Song dynasty was on the throne, corresponds to the years 1170-1189.
was a licentiate in Shuzhou\textsuperscript{16} named Liu Yaoju. People called him Tangqing.\textsuperscript{17} Tangqing's father held an official post in Pingjiang prefecture\textsuperscript{18} and Tangqing lived there too.\textsuperscript{19} In the fall of that year the provincial examination was to be held.\textsuperscript{20} Tangqing, taking advantage of his father's

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\textsuperscript{16} Shuzhou 舒州 is modern Qianshan 黥山 county in Anhui province.

\textsuperscript{17} Tangqing is his “zi” 字 (in my translation I usually render zi as “style” as Cyril Birch does in his translation \textit{Stories from a Ming Collection}). The names of Chinese, says E. B. Howell, are often a puzzle to the uninitiated, and are reminiscent of the difficulty that Alice encountered in the Looking-glass Country with regard to the name of the poem sung to her by the White King. See Howell, trans., \textit{The Inconstancy of Madam Chuang and Other Stories from the Chinese} (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company), p. 32. “Style,” according to \textit{Li ji 禮記} (Book of rites), is the name given to the person when he reached the age of twenty: “The giving of the name in childhood, of the designation at the capping, of the title of elder uncle or younger uncle at fifty, and of the honorary title after death, was the practice of the Zhou dynasty” 幼名, 舐字, 五十以伯仲, 死謚, 周道也 (\textit{youning, guanzi, wushi yi bozhong, siyi, zhoudao ye}). See Chen Hao 陳耀, ed., \textit{Li ji jishuo 禮記集說} (Li ji with Collective Annotation) (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1962), “Tangong I” 唐公 上 p. 38; James Legge, trans., \textit{Li Chi: Book of Rites} (New York: University Books, 1967), vol. 1, p. 144 (the translation is James Legge's). While “ming” 名 (personal name given to the person by the parents when s/he is born) was basically used as a self-addressed form (only the people senior in position or age were allowed to call the person by his personal name). zi (style) was an appellation to be used by other people so that they could address the person politely. See Xiao Yaotian, \textit{Zhongguo renming de yanjiu} (Study of the Chinese Names), p. 121. That is why sometimes “zi” has been translated into English as “courtesy name” or “polite name” (see Burton Watson, \textit{Records of the Grand Historian of China: Han Dynasty I}, p. 17). It is quite often that some famous historical figures are better known by their styles rather than by their personal names. and Xiang Yu (the style of Xiang Ji) and Lin Qinnan 林琴南 (the style of Lin Shu 林纾) are two examples of this. An even more polite appellation for a gentleman was to call him by his “hao” 号 (sobriquet). In the late Ming, the sobriquet was so abused that it is now very difficult for general readers to know who is who if we do not know his personal name as well. See Menghang jushi 夢鄉居士, ed., \textit{Biehao lu 別號錄} (The Record of Sobriquets) (reprint, Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1936), preface.

\textsuperscript{18} Pingjiang 平江 prefecture is modern Wu county 吳縣 in Jiangsu province.

\textsuperscript{19} Here the faithful translation should be “Tangqing also held an official post in Pingjiang.” This is obviously a slip of pen. I have corrected this error in my translation according to its source material. For the source material, see Tan Zhengbi, \textit{Sanyan Liangpai ziliao} (Source Material of Three Words and Two Slaps), vol. 2, p. 724.

\textsuperscript{20} The provincial examination was held every three years.
official position, chartered a boat and left for Xiuzhou\textsuperscript{21} to take the examination.

The boat set sail. Looking up toward the direction of the stern, Tangqing was startled to see a pretty girl holding the oar there. She was about sixteen or seventeen years old. With her hair at temples hanging down gracefully and a coquettish tenderness shining in her eyes, she looked unusually attractive in spite of her plain clothes and light makeup. Standing on the stern, she had the picturesque appearance of a slanting crabapple reflected on the surface of water. Tangqing was greatly aroused. He did not feel contented just to look at her. After watching things going on on boat, he found out that the girl was the boatman’s daughter.

"There are shining pearls in old oysters as the saying goes," he murmured to himself in admiration, "and this is indeed true!"

He would have struck up a light conversation with her if he had not been afraid that her father, also sailing the boat at the stern, might see through his motive. He pretended to be prudent and dared not look at the stern directly. From time to time, however, he would steal a glance at her. The more he looked at her, the more beautiful she looked. He could hardly control himself when an idea presented itself to him.

Saying that the boat was rather heavy and slow and he might be late for the examination, he urged the boatman to go ashore to tow the boat. The boatman was an old man. He had a son and a daughter and they were both his helpers. The son San Guanbao was actually towing the boat on the bank at that moment. When the father had been sent away to join him, only the daughter was left at the helm. Tangqing was alone in the cabin. Now he felt comfortable to coquet with the girl. He started, in a routine manner, with some casual questions. He asked about

\textsuperscript{21} Xiuzhou 秀州 is modern Jiaxing 嘉興 county in Zhejiang province.
ten questions and she responded only to one or two of them. She was very charming in the way she responded. Tangqing kept making eyes at her as she was speaking. She either avoided his gaze shyly or put on a serious expression to stop his flirtation. But when Tangqing looked away, paying no more attention to her, she teased him with some sarcastic comments. She giggled behind his back and squinted stealthily at him. It was obvious that she pretended to be unperturbed before his gaze yet tried to incite him covertly. To resist seductiveness like this was not easy. Tangqing felt as if his soul had been carried away.

He thought he should make open advances to her. He swung open his suitcase and took out a fine, white, silk handkerchief, which he tossed to her after twisting up a walnut into it in a love knot. Though she saw it, the girl feigned that she did not. She kept sculling without showing a trace of emotion on her face. Tangqing was afraid that she might indeed not have noticed it, so he repeatedly sent her hints with his eyes and motioned her with his hand to hide the handkerchief. But she stood there without reaction, as though she were unaware of his intention at all. Seeing her father had coiled up the rope and was about to come back to the boat, Tangqing became even more anxious. He gestured frantically with both his hands and feet, only to see that she still remained motionless. He did not know how to handle the situation. He regretted very much what he had done and wished he could reach out a long arm to get the handkerchief back.

The old man came back onto the boat. Tangqing’s face became red all over. Cold sweat dripped from his body. He was so embarrassed that he wished he could find a place to hide himself. At this moment, however, he saw the daughter lightly stretch out her foot to the handkerchief and draw it back with the tip of her shoe and cover it under the bottom of her skirt. She then stooped down to pick up the handkerchief and put it away in her sleeve. She looked up,
and then looked out at the water. A smile played on her face. Tangqing, after having suffered the anxiety, was certainly grateful for the concealing effort she had made for him at this critical moment. He felt she was even more lovely than before.

They began to be fond of each other. Next day Tangqing again sent her father onto the bank by using the same pretext. When the father and the son were both towing the boat, Tangqing, brazen-faced, spoke to the girl to express his gratitude, “I thank you very much for what you did for me yesterday. Without your kindness, I wouldn’t be able to face your folks.”

“I thought you were bold,” the girl replied with a grin, “but actually you’re a coward.”

“You’re so beautiful and smart,” said Tangqing, “you should find yourself a good husband who is worthy of you. It’s a terrible pity that a colourful phoenix should stay in a chicken house by mistake!”

“I’m afraid you are not quite right,” said the girl. “A beautiful woman usually has an unfortunate life and that has been so ever since the time immemorial. I’m not the only one who suffers this fate. This is how we are predestined. How dare I complain about it?”

Tangqing greatly admired her sensibility. Now they were congenial in conversation, a few-feet distance seemed unable to separate them at all. One being in the cabin and the other on the stern, they flashed amorous glances at each other. Yet they could not, in spite of their growing passions, do anything more substantial than verbal communication. The boatman was on the bank. He would see them when he looked over his shoulder.

Tangqing, after arriving in Xiuzhou, did not look for a lodging place. He continued to stay on the boat. His mind was on the girl even when he was taking the examination. No sooner had he got examination sheets than he began to write and he wrote so fast that he finished his
essay at one go. He left the examination room ahead of time and hurried back to the boat.

With nothing to do on boat, the boatman and his son went to the town to shop, leaving the daughter on watch. Tangqing, seeing the girl was alone, was beside himself with joy. He hastily jumped onto the boat.

"Where are your father and brother?" he asked.

"They are shopping in town," the girl said.

"I would like to talk to you," Tangqing said, and went to unfasten the mooring rope.

"May I bother you to move the boat to a quiet place?"

The girl understood his purpose. She rowed the boat to a place where no one could see them. Tangqing jumped onto the stern and drew her to him. "I'm in the prime of life and haven't married yet," he said. "If I happen to be to the person you like, I would propose that we make a life-long union."

"I'm no beauty," the girl said. "Though it's my wish to marry a gentleman like you, how dare a wild unnourishing vine entertain a high hope of climbing up a lofty pine? You are destined for an official career. I doubt you will pay attention to a humble woman like me when you succeed. I can't accept you. You should behave yourself!"

Her seriousness made Tangqing even more sympathetic with her situation and more aroused with sexual desire. Yet he knew he could not force her. As he grew rather impetuous, he patted her on the shoulder, saying, "You shouldn't be so concerned with gains and losses. For the last two days I was out of my mind because of you. I almost lost control of myself. I only wanted to approach you and make love with you. Today, thanks to Heaven, I'm granted such a chance. Only you and I are here and we can do whatever we like to satisfy our desire. I didn't expect that
you would reject me. I really feel disappointed. If a man can’t have his wish fulfilled, what’s the use of his life? Yesterday you concealed the handkerchief for me and I’m grateful for that. Now that I don’t have the luck to get united with you, I would rather die in order to repay your kindness.”

He was on the point of jumping down to the river when the girl grabbed him by his clothes, crying, “Don’t rush! Let’s talk it over.”

Tangqing turned around and held her in his arms. “I don’t think we should talk any more!” he said, carrying her into the cabin. Then they slept on bed together. The pleasure they experienced, like obtaining of treasure, was far more exciting than they had expected.

The girl got up after they had finished. Having fixed her dishevelled hair and brushed down his clothes for him, she said, “I took it as my honour to be loved by you, so I offered you my body regardless of shame in order not to let you down. Although our physical pleasure was momentary, my affection for you has been and will be as firm as gold and stone. Please don’t let this impaired flower flow with water in vain!”

Tangqing replied, “I’m glad that I have won your precious love, which, I swear, I will never abandon. The examination result will soon come out. If I pass, I will marry you in a proper ceremony and have you live in a golden house.”

Both of them, for a while, basked in loving affection and pleasure. Then the girl said, “I’m afraid my father will be back soon.” They moved the boat to where it had been previously anchored. Tangqing deliberately disembarked and didn’t come back until after her father had returned. The things that had happened between them were thus not discovered. But
For a secret affair discreditable,

It is to God's lightning eyes discernible.

Tangqing's father was in Pingjiang, looking forward to receiving his son's good news. One day he dreamt a dream at night. He saw two men in yellow with a sheet of paper held in their hands come and announce to him, "The result of the examination has been posted on the heavenly gate" and your son has got the first recommendation." However, the sheet of paper they were holding was suddenly taken away by a passer-by. "Liu Yaoju," this mysterious stranger said, "will not be recommended this time due to his misbehaviour." The father was startled and woke up, only to find that it was a dream. This was really a strange dream, he reflected. Although he did not know what things his son had done, the words he had heard in his dream made him worried that his son might not succeed.

His worry turned out to be true. When the result of Xiuzhou examination district came...

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22 A hyperbole for fancy house.

23 "Heavenly gate" 天門 (tianmeng) refers to the gate of the compound where the provincial government was located, not the gate of the imperial palace in which the "son of heaven" 天子 (Tianzi) lived. The result of the provincial examinations was first brought out on a large placard, which the examination officials placed outside the government compound, in full public view. Then the governor general of the province sent to each prefecture the names of the successful candidates who had passed the examinations and the prefect passed the news down to the district magistrate, who in turn informed the man himself. See Conrad Shirokauer, trans., China's Examination Hell (New York: Weather Hill, 1976), pp. 55-56. The fact that the examination officials were sent "by imperial commission" 钦差 (qinchai) as the emperor's deputies can probably explain why the term "heavenly gate," which obviously implies that the result of the examination was posted on the behalf of the emperor as if it had been done by the emperor himself, was employed.

24 "Recommendation" means recommendation for the state examination. This is another way of saying that the man passed the provincial examination.
out, Tangqing was indeed not among the list of recommended candidates. At first Tangqing had been highly praised by the invigilator. He suggested that Tangqing win the first place. But another examiner, fancying a different examination paper, intended to downgrade him to the second place. The invigilator was unwilling to make concession. He said, “I would flunk him rather than let him only get the second place. I’m sure he will be the number one if he takes the examination again next time. I don’t want to rank him unfairly.” Suppressing his indignation he failed Tangqing at last.

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25 "Juren" 舉人 (who passed the provincial examinations) literally means "recommended men" (for taking the metropolitan examinations). Cf. note 3 of the story "One Woman and Two Monks."

26 Usually the papers were read twice by two examiners. According to Ichisada, the papers first passed through the hands of the associate examiners, who had to do the grading in designated places and were forbidden to carry a paper somewhere else on their own initiative. They used blue ink for their remarks and decided in general upon passes and failures. When they wrote “mediocre” on the cover, or “without merit,” or other such critical comments, the paper failed. When the paper was considered to be “excellent in style and content,” they wrote “recommended” on the cover and then the paper was delivered to the chief and deputy examiners, who usually read only those recommended papers, although they were free to have other answering sheets brought to them. See Ichisada Miyazaki, China’s Examination Hell: The Civil Service Examinations of Imperial China, trans., Conrad Schirokauer, p. 52.

27 In terms of the concept of “bao” 賄 widely accepted on all levels of Chinese society in the Ming times, a man secretly committed a sinful deed would surely suffer for it. The most likely time for such a retribution was the provincial examination, which the sinner was bound to fail even if there was no reason at all, as in the case in this story. There is another similar story told also from the “bao” perspective. An associate examiner discovered an outstanding answering papers and forwarded it to the chief examiner with the recommendation that the examinee be given the first place. The chief examiner then read the paper and also admired it. But in a dream that night the King of the Dead appeared to him and said, “That examination paper can’t be accepted. Look at this. It is like this †.” Whereupon he opened his palmed, on which was written “yin” 淫, the character for “licentious” (“licentiousness” as a vice for scholars usually refers to their seduction of good women, not visiting courtesans and the like). The next day, when the chief examiner again went to work on the papers, he completely forgot about the dream. But as he gathered the same best paper to make his final decision, he suddenly saw that in one place on this paper there was a violation of form. He took up his brush and marked the place with an X.
Tangqing waited on boat while people went hustling and bustling reporting the news of success. No one, however, came to him; his boat was quiet. He sighed, realizing that there would be no hope for him. The girl standing on the stern was disappointed too. Tears spilled out from her eyes. Tangqing consoled her when there was nobody around. Then taking their boat he went back home.

He reported in to his parents when he arrived. His father, having told him about his dream, asked, "Since I had that dream, I knew you wouldn’t pass the examination. But I wonder what dishonest things you did affected your score?"

"I didn’t do anything," Tangqing denied. But in his mind he was quite astonished. He muttered to himself, "How can that be true?" He was not without suspicion. It was until later when rumour circulated that he knew he could have had the first recommendation but for his moral discredit. He felt awfully chagrined.

Still he missed the girl very much. In the next examination he indeed got the first recommendation. He recalled his promise, and had people search the girl everywhere. But the search was not successful, for the girl drifted along the river and nobody knew her whereabouts.

Although Tangqing finally passed the state examination, he nevertheless regretted very much the loss of the girl all his life.

The associate examiner saw this and said, "This does not amount to a violation of form. If this is a violation, then there will be many cases like it in other papers." He immediately showed the chief examiner that other answering papers had the same problem. The chief examiner regretted what he had done and sprinkled water on the "X" mark to wash it out. Usually it could be easily erased. But this time the more he washed, the clearer the "X" mark became. At last he gave up and failed the paper. Later he learned that the examinee excelled in scholarship but was notorious for his improper conduct. See *China’s Examination Hell: The Civil Service Examinations of Imperial China*, p. 54.
Gentle readers, you now have seen how Tangqing is punished for his misbehaviour: he is not allowed to pass the provincial examination until the second time, nor even have a chance of getting reunited with the girl he loves. The girl is predestined not to be his wife and that is why the retribution that has befallen him is more severe than usual. So here I should offer a piece of advice to all men in the world: don’t be rash to seduce good women! How well an ancient said:

If I defile not another’s wife,
He will not defile mine;
But if I defile another’s wife,
In turn, he will do the same to mine.

Now I am going to tell you a story of retribution, a story of how a man wants to seduce his friend’s wife and finally gets his own wife seduced by the friend. During the Yuan dynasty, there lived in Yuanshang community of Mianzhou prefecture a young man by the name of Yi Rong. Yi was a scion of a distinguished family and his ancestor had served as a Censor of Embroidered-Garment. Yi had a wife, named Di. She enjoyed a reputation of the most dazzling

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28 Yuan dynasty lasted from 1279 to 1367.
29 Mianzhou 涟州 is modern Hanyang 漢陽 county in Hubei province.
30 The central administration of the Mongol regime, though in the form of three-way division inherited from the Tang and Song dynasties, was structurally rearranged. The Mongol did away with the old Chancellery 門下省 (menxia sheng) and Department of State Affairs 尚書省 (Shangshu sheng), but retained the Secretariat 中書省 (zhongshu sheng) as a general organ for directing the operations of six subordinate boards (Boards of Personnel, Revenue, Rites, War, Justice, and Works). In the central government there were also a Bureau of Military Affairs 樞密院 (shumi yuan), which was in charge of military plans, preparations and operations, and a
beauty in the entire city.

It was the local custom that women were fond of making jaunts and wealthy households liked to show off their beautiful wives. If a man married a beauty, he would boast of her so much as to make her known far and near and would bring her out and let her appear on public occasions. In flowery mornings or on moonlit evenings, men and women would gather together and would, in the hubbub of jostling crowds, get intimate with each other. No one would pay a slightest attention to their improper behaviour. On their way back home at night, men would make critical comments on the females they had seen and would grade them one by one. Talking about a pretty woman, they would be loud and frivolous without caring much whether her

Censorate called the Tribunal of Censors 御史臺 (yushi tai), which exercised general impeachment control over all government personnel, civil and military. The Censorate, established in 1268 to investigate the morality of officials and disadvantage of government policies, included two censors-in-chief 御史大夫 (yushi dafu), two vice censors-in-chief 御史中丞 (yushi zhongcheng), two associate censors 侍御史 (shi yushi), and two secretarial censors 治書御史 (zhishu yushi). Besides, there were a Court of Palace Affairs consisting of two palace censors and a Court of Surveillance consisting of thirty-two investigating censors. See Charles Hucker, The Censorial System of Ming China (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966), pp. 25-29; A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China, pp. 58-69. According to Han shu 漢書 (History of the Han), the Censor of Embroidered-Garment 繡衣御史 (xiuyi yushi) was an associate censor specially assigned to supervise the suppression of banditry in a certain area. Yan Shigu 阮師古, the commentator of Han shu, explained, “The officials who wore embroidered garments enjoy the trust of the emperor.” See Han shu (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1970), vol. 3, juan 19, pp. 725-26. The Censor of Embroidered-Garment as an imperially ordered duty assignment was first set by Wudi of the Han 漢武帝. Wang Ao 王鏊 (1450-1524) in his Zhen Ze Changyu 震澤長語 (The Jotting of Zhen Ze Accumulated in a Long Period) says that “[The emperors] since the Han dynasty have usually trusted the local officials in that they are closer to the people... It has only been once in a while that the inspecting commissioners and the Censors of Embroidered-Garment were assigned.” See Shen Yunlong 沈雲龍, ed., Ming-Qing shiliao huibian I 明清史料匯編（一） (The first Collection of Historical Materials of the Ming-Qing Times) (Taipei: Wenhai chuban she, 1967), vol. 3, pp. 1104-05. In the Yuan dynasty, the Censor of Embroidered-Garment or the associate censor was a rank 2a official. See Song Lian 宋濂 et al., Yuan shi 元史 (History of the Yuan) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1976), vol. 5, juan 86, p. 2171.

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husband might hear of their conversation. When their conversation did reach her husband, the husband would take it as praise of his wife and would therefore feel pleased. Even if he heard some unpleasant words about him, he would never mind at all. This practice became even more popular in the Zhiyuan and Zhizheng reigns.31

With a stunning beauty like Di as his wife, Yi surely liked to go out in her company, to parade her charm and grace. Wherever they went, people would praise Di to the skies. It goes without saying that Yi's friends and acquaintances would poke fun at him or compliment him for his having such a pretty wife. Even strangers would introduce themselves to him once they learned that Yi was Di's husband. They would therefore flatter him or treat him with food and drink. As a lucky man of marriage, Yi was well received wherever he went. He never carried money with him when he went out. Somebody would surely invite him and feed him with wine and meat, and it was a usual scene that he came back home, full and tipsy. There was not a man in the city who did not know him nor harboured an evil intention of seducing his wife. But since Yi was from a distinguished family and he himself was a man of bold-spirit, no one dared put his hands on him without a good reason. They could only swallow their covetous saliva or gain some advantages through eye contact and verbal flirtation with his wife. Two old proverbs are well said:

31 Zhiyuan 至元 and Zhizheng 至正 reigns, which were both the reign names of the last Emperor Shundi 順帝 of the Yuan dynasty, correspond to the years 1335-1367. In Chuke pai'an jingqi collated and annotated by Wang Gulu 王古魯, "Zhiyuan and Zhizheng reigns" is "Da Yuan Zhizheng chao" 大元至正朝 (the Zhizheng reign of the Great Yuan dynasty, which corresponds to the years 1341-1367). See Chuke pai'an jingqi (Hong Kong: Gudian wenxue chubanshe, 1974), vol. 2, p. 605. But I think that the Shangyou tang 尚友堂 edition collated by Li Tianyi 李田意, which I use for my translation, is more trustworthy so far as this point is concerned, because it is confirmed by the source material, Mideng yinhua 觀燈因話, upon which
An exposed hoard solicits robbers,

As such a ravishing beauty living such an era, how could Di lead a chaste life? She was inevitably involved in an affair. Without coincidences there is no story. It so happened that at that time a man living on the same street called Hu Sui also had an exceedingly elegant wife named Men. Men was a first-rate beauty in spite of being slightly inferior to Di. No one but Di could compare with her. But Hu was a libertine; despite having such a pretty wife, he was still dissatisfied for her not being as beautiful as Di was. Nevertheless, who would have thought that Yi, upon seeing Men, would be so infatuated with her as to think of seducing her. He wanted to have both the beautiful women in his possession. This became his most cherished desire.

With deceitful intentions in their minds, both men began to make friends. Later they grew intimate enough as to be willing to share their wives with each other. While Hu was crafty, Yi was of a straightforward disposition. He often unintentionally betrayed his interest in Hu’s wife in front of him. Hu knew how to take advantage of Yi’s weakness. He tricked him into speaking his mind openly so that he could not backslide. Yi thought Hu was easy-going and was therefore

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Ling Mengchu’s story was based. See Tan Zhengbi, \textit{Sanyan liangpai ziliao}, vol. 2, p. 726.
confident that he would be able to achieve his aim. It never dawned upon him that Hu intended to seduce his wife but did not want him to see through his real purpose.

“Everyone praises you as the most beautiful woman,” Yi said to Di, “but as far as I can see, Hu’s wife is not at all inferior. How can I think of a way to get her? One can only live once. If I can have both of you, I shall die contented.”

“You and Hu are good friends,” Di said. “Why didn’t you speak to him frankly?”

“I did show him my intention in an indirect way and it seemed that he didn’t take offense.” Yi said. “However, I find it difficult to bring the matter up to him frankly. Only you act as my go-between can I succeed. But I’m afraid you might be jealous.”

“I’m not a jealous woman,” Di said. “As long as I can, I’ve never failed to help you. But so far as this business is concerned, you’re dealing with a woman. As she usually stays in her boudoir, how can you reach her and lay your hands on her? Unless Hu and you become family friends, that is, Hu lets you see his wife and you do the same to him and often invite the couple over to our house. I can’t get you a chance to enable you to carry out your plot.”

“My good wife,” Yi said, “what you said is absolutely right!”

From that time on, Yi was even more hospitable to Hu. He would often invite him over for drinks. His wife Men would usually be invited too, and Yi would have Di keep her company. To amuse Hu and also to stir up his wife, Yi would engage high-class courtesans and philanderers for their orgies. When it came to carnal pleasures, Di would lead Men into the inner part of the room and they would only peep from behind the screen. Seeing all kinds of lewd activities going on outside, even a woman made of stone would burn with lust. When the two husbands harbouring seductive thoughts in their mind were vying to arouse their beautiful wives
with flirtation, one of the women watching behind the screen was indeed aroused.

Do you know which woman she was? It was Di, because though Men was also spying together, she was after all a guest and felt not quite at ease. Di was in her own home. She could wantonly give herself up to the enjoyment of the scene of those racy performances. As Hu was a handsome man, superior to Yi not only in appearance but also in temperament and love-making, Di had been greatly attracted by him. From time to time she showed herself from behind the screen to make eyes at him. She even paid more attention to the supply of wine and food and did not reveal a slightest sign of fatigue. Yi felt pleased. He thought his wife was a great helpmate to him and had not perceived that she had her own purposes.

“It’s hard to find two good friends like us who both have a beautiful wife,” Yi said to Hu, quite drunk.

“My ugly crone can’t be compared to your lady, a beauty of real perfection,” Hu modestly replied.

“In my humble opinion, they are about the same,” said Yi. “Only we don’t have much fun just sticking with our own women. Now that we’re in high spirits, why don’t we swap our wives with each other so that we can have a taste of different beautifulness?”

These words were exactly what Hu wanted to hear. But he crookedly said, “You might have thought highly of my ugly crone, but I dare not engage in something indecent with your supreme lady. This is not what my ethical principles can allow me to do.”

“Man are we drunk! Listen to what we’re talking about!” Yi said, breaking into a laugh. Then they both laughed and the party broke up. Yi went into the inner room, still quite drunk. Holding her chin in his hands, he stared at Di.
"I would like to trade you for Hu's wife. Is it all right with you?" he asked.

"You silly turtle!" Di cursed him unctuously. "You're a man from a good family. Aren't you ashamed of stealing someone else's woman at the expense of your own wife's body? You had the nerve to say so!"

"Well." Yi said, "we're all good friends and this is to our mutual benefits. You shouldn't..."

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33 Turtle, because of its long neck and pointed head which resemble man's penis, is sometimes used to refer to this sexual organ. According to van Gulik, "gui" 龜 (turtle) for a long time had been a venerated symbol of vital force and longevity. See Sexual Life in Ancient China, p. 225. It is said that in ancient times a sacred turtle lived for three thousand years. See Ruan Yusong 阮慕東, ed., Zhuangzi jizhu 莊子集注 (Zhuangzi with Collective Annotation) (Taipei: Guangwen shuju, 1972), "Qiushui" 秋水 (Autumn Flood), p. 282; Burton Watson, trans., The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), p. 188. (Here, by the way, I should point out that Watson made a mistake in his translation. The original text of Zhuang Zi is: "Wu wen Chu you shengui, si yi sanqian sui yi" 我聞楚有神龜，死已三千歲矣 (I have heard that there was a sacred turtle in Chu that had been three thousand years old when it died). But Watson translated it as: "I have heard that there is a sacred tortoise in Ch'ü that has been dead for three thousand years). Cao Cao 曹操 (150-220) has a poem entitled "Gui sui shou" 龜隨首 (Though the Sacred Turtle Could Live Long), in which the poet writes: "Though the sacred turtle could live a long life, /Still it could not escape death." See Xia Chuancai 夏傳才, ed., Cao Cao jizhu 曹操集注 (The Works of Cao Cao with collective annotation) (Wuhan: Zhongzhou guji chubanshe, 1988), p. 20. Since the turtle was a symbol for longevity, in the Tang-Song times people liked to use the character "gui" for their name. For example, a famous singer of the Tang is called Li Guinian 李龜年 and the poet Bai Juyi 白居易 called his nephew Xiao gui 小龜. See Wang Quangen, Huaxia xingming mianmian guan 華夏姓名面貌 (Aspects of Chinese Names) (Nanning: Guangxi renmin chubanshe, 1988), p. 111. It was only towards the Ming dynasty that turtle began to acquire sexual connotations and was therefore banished from fine and applied art. And the word "gui" also became a taboo in polite society. Late Ming fiction usually uses "gui" as a term for penis. For example, in Xinghua tian 杏花天 (When Apricot Trees Are in Bloom), juan 1, p. 32, there is such a sentence: "Qi gui you ba cun zhi chang, xing zhang ru mu bang" 其龜有八寸之長, 形狀如木棒 (His penis is eight inches long, the shape of which is like a wooden stick). It is sometimes also used as a vulgar abuse, which implies that the person who is cursed has indulged in some unnatural vices (for instance, incest or pseudo-incest). "Gui" or "wu gui" 乌龜 (black turtle) also became a vulgar term for the tout and procurer. H. G. Giles in his Chinese-English Dictionary lists a "gui" phrase that means "cuckold." That is to say, the word "gui" can also denote "a man who connives at (or derives profit from) his wife's fornication," or a man who is unwittingly deceived by his wife. For more discussion of “gui,” see van Gulik, ibid., pp. 224-28.
take it so seriously.”

“I can help you only behind the screen,” Di said. “But I myself won’t do the thing you’ve suggested.”

“I’m just joking,” Yi said. “Do you think I will really exchange you for a woman like her? I just want to seduce her.”

“For this thing you must be patient,” Di suggested. “If you keep Hu as happy and entertained as you can, then it’s not unlikely that he will go crazy the way you did and offer you his wife.”

“Oh, my understanding mother, this is indeed a good advice!” Yi hugged Di and exclaimed. Then they went into the bedroom to sleep. But no more story of this.

Our story goes that Di, who had grown fond of Hu, was afraid that her bad-natured husband might cause troubles. He said those crazy words simply because he was excited with the idea of seducing Hu’s wife, she thought. If I really do what he said and he knows about it, he may later on cold-shoulder me and put me in a difficult situation. This is after all not good for me. I should think up a plan so that I can do things safely behind his back and enjoy pleasure to my heart’s content.

One day Hu came to Yi’s house for dinner. This time the two men were alone and there were no other guests accompanying them. Di, as usual, served them behind the screen. She signalled Hu to keep his wits about him and Hu took her warning in tacit understanding. He sipped only a small mouthful each time while kept wheedling Yi into gulping down bowls.

“‘My worthy brother, you always love me and treat me even better than my own kindred,” Hu hoodwinked him. “You condescend to consider my ugly crone and my ugly crone admires
you just as much. In fact, I've talked the things over with her and she has kind of agreed. As long as you take care of me, that is, you stand treats and engage a hundred courtesans for me, I'll certainly help you to have your wish fulfilled."

"If you grant me an opportunity," Yi said, "I'll be willing to stand a thousand treats."

Yi grew excited with the conversation and went on a drinking spree with big bowls. Hu kept egging him on with obsequious words until Yi got dead drunk. Taking advantage of helping him to bed, Hu went into the inner part of the room. Di was standing by the screen. Instead of dodging him, she at once reached out her hands to support her husband. With Yi being unconscious, Hu leaned over, attempting to kiss Di's face, and Di in return touched Hu's leg with the tip of her foot. She then called the maids Yanxue and Qingyun to carry their master into the bedroom. Left to themselves behind the screen, Hu took Di to his arms and Di turned around and embraced him too.

"You don't know how I've been yearning for you," Hu wooed Di to make love to him. "If I'm allowed to enjoy heavenly pleasure today, that will be a luck for my three lives."34

"I've been also in love with you, so no more words!" said Di.

Di pulled her pants off and reclined on a chaise-lounge placed in the middle of the living room. Then she raised her legs, making herself ready for him to do the work of clouds and rain. How ironic it is that Yi wanted to seduce Hu's wife but ended up a cuckold first! Truly

Chasing his friend's wife he leaves his woman neglected.

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34 The three lives 三生 (in sanskrit, "trayo-dhvanah") are previous life, this life, and after life. For detailed explanation, see Foguang da cidian, vol. 1, pp.536-538.
Yet behind his back a secret tryst is taking place.

Like selling dumplings in order to buy noodles,

Is there anyone so silly as to make such a mistake?

No stranger to pleasure, Hu was experienced at love-making. He brought all his skills into play, offering Di the greatest sexual delights. Di felt extremely satisfied.

However, Di urged Hu after they had finished, “Never let my husband find out!”

“My respectful sister-in-law,” Hu said, “I thank you very much for the pleasure you’ve given me. But this pleasure has long been promised me by your husband. I don’t think he’ll mind at all even if he does know about it.”

“My husband has fancied your beautiful wife and that’s why he’s given you such a promise,” said Di. “He may be lustful and fond of sexual pleasure, but he is also hot-tempered. You should never get on his bad side. What we should do is to think up a plot so that we can make love in secret. This is a long-term solution.”

“What plot will do, then?” Hu asked.

“He likes wine and women,” Di said. “So when you learn that there is some famous courtesan, you should take him to visit her. If he stays overnight in the brothel, then we can indulge ourselves in pleasure throughout the night.”

“A marvellous idea!” said Hu. “Since he wants to seduce my wife, he has promised me that he will treat me a hundred times in brothel. I’ll take advantage of what he said and have a good courtesan to detain him. I can bet he’ll be unwilling to leave her. The only problem is how to supply him with enough money for his cathouse expense?”
“Don’t worry about that,” Di said. “Just leave it to me.”

“My good sister, if you take care of money problem, I’ll certainly do everything I can to keep you happy and satisfied.” After things had been settled, they parted.

In fact, Hu’s family, unlike Yi’s, was in a rather straitened financial situation. That is why Yi had been able to establish a close camaraderie with Hu by treating him with wine and food. Who would have thought that as a fawning guest Hu turned out to get the upper hand! Because Yi had squandered too much money on feasts and enjoyments, he was now gradually using up his family resource, though it had been previously quite adequate. That Di had a lover made their finance even worse, for she often urged her husband to seek pleasure outside and often invited Hu over for expensive dinners that had all kinds of delicacies. The daily expenses were huge, yet Di, over-contented, did not care at all. The time finally came when Yi fell into serious money problems. At the urging of Di and Hu, Yi sold off his family property at a loss. Di deducted a portion of money from the sale, which she saved for her adultery purposes. Whenever Hu heard about a well-known courtesan, he would invite Yi to visit her. With wine and food prepared for his enjoyment, Yi would stay in the pleasure quarters for days on end. To support her husband, Di would send him things that she had hidden away as subsidies for his expenses there. As long as her husband stayed outside, she would indulge in sensual pleasure with Hu to her heart’s

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35 It was the custom in the Yuan times to restrict the residence of public women to the suburbs of the city. But according to Marco Polo, courtesans of the capital “are here in such numbers as I dare not venture to report and not only near the squares, which is the situation usually appropriated for their residence, but in every part of the city they are to be found, adorned with much finery, highly perfumed, occupying well-furnished houses, and attended by many female domestics.” See The Travels of Marco Polo (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1927), p. 295. What Marco Polo described about the distribution of prostitutes in the capital was perhaps also true of other cities, as, for example, the city in which this story takes place.
content. Yi thought his wife was not jealous and became more and more wanton and dissipated. When he returned home for a few days and saw Di was nice to him without showing the least discontentment and jealousy, he would be very appreciative. He even in his dreams praised his wife as his good woman.

One day Di was preparing wine and fruit for Hu when Yi happened to come back. Seeing foods on the table, Yi asked, “Who are you making this feast for?”

“For you.” Di replied. “I knew you would return today, so I have made these foods for you lest you feel bored and lonely. I have also sent for Hu to come and join you.”

Yi exclaimed, “Nobody knows me better than my wife does!”

Before long Hu arrived. Yi was happy to drink with him. He talked with him about brothels and prostitutes, and would occasionally mention Men too when he got drunk.

“With all these famous courtesans accompanying you, you still have interest in my ugly wife?” Hu asked. “Well, if you do think she is attractive, I’ll do whatever I can to make an arrangement for you.”

Yi was very grateful. It never occurred to him that Hu only paid him lip service. In fact, by urging him to go to brothel and getting him drunk and dizzy day and night, Hu had made it virtually impossible for him to have time to seduce Men. In the meantime, however, he himself had grown thick with Di and had not let even a single night pass without sleeping with her. Now Yi was back, which presented an obstacle for their trysts. To free themselves from such inconvenience became imperative. Hu had a special recipe of brewing liquor. He then gave it to
Di. Anyone who drank ten cups\textsuperscript{36} of the liquor made according to this recipe would fall into a drunken sleep. With this specially-made alcohol ready for use, Yi was no longer a threat to them even if he was at home, for he would break down after drinking a few cups of the liquor. When Yi was lying insensible, Hu would come out and change the wine for Di. Then he and Di would talk and drink and joyfully engage in sexual frolics all evening. Yi, however, knew nothing about it.

Once Yi returned when Di and Hu were just in the middle of eating. Although Hu was able to conceal himself without being discovered, Di had no time to clear away the cups and plates that were scattered in disorder on the table. This could not but give rise to Yi’s interrogation.

"A relative came and I asked him to stay for dinner," Di explained. "Since he is not much of a drinker, he slipped away for fear that you may force him to quaff and he may not be able to stand it."

Yi let it go without further questioning her. As Di had said herself that she would not be involved in swapping, Yi had taken it for granted and had never doubted her virtue. He trusted her even more when Hu did his utmost to fawn on him and keep him company in visiting prostitutes and drinking wine. Indeed, it was hard for the careless Yi not to be taken in. Both Hu and Di were adept at scheming, and besides they had the maids to help them as accomplices. Even if they had left some traces unwittingly, they could gloss them over. No wonder that Yi had been so stubborn taking Hu the adulterer as his best friend and the unfaithful Di as his chaste wife. Later more and more people living on the same street knew about his cuckoldry. They

\textsuperscript{36} In China the genteel classes in the past use small cups for drinking.
composed a doggerel to a deviant tune of “Sheep on the Mountain Slope” to scoff at him:

The place of breeze and moon

No man is unwilling to frequent.

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37 “Sheep on the Mountain Slope” (shanpo yang) is a tune of san-qu (lyric song). The term qu (or quzi) refers to the corpus of ci (lyrics) composed in the Yuan dynasty. Some scholars hold that the difference between qu and ci is the absence of chenzi (inserted words) in the latter (see Zhou Yibai, Changlun zhushi, p. 44). Luo Kanglie did not agree. See Luo Kanglie, Tianci chenzi shili (Examples of Inserting Words into Lyric Song). Disregard the argument on the difference between ci and qu, we can still accept the definition made by Wayne Schlepp for qu: “The term qu originally referred to the song music. Another term ci was used to designate the words that were set to the music. The main corpus of Song verse that has come down from the Tang and Song dynasties is called ci and what we now call sanqu were still called ci during the Yuan. It was only later that qu came to refer not to song music but to the song verse that was preserved from Yuan times, most probably through expanded usage in the treatises of Ming and Qing times in which the term came to cover loosely both verse and music. Later, as the music of Yuan went out of currency, all that was left of Yuan song verse were several collections of verse, and the term qu or sanqu, was used to set this verse off from the song verse of the Tang and Song periods.” See Wayne Schlepp, “Introduction,” San-ch’u: Its Techniques and Imageries, p. 3. The orthodox form of “Sheep on the Mountain Slope” contains 41 words. Its prosody and tones are as follows: four seven, three, seven, one three, and one three: - x | - x | - x | - x | - | - | - x | - | - | - | - | - | x | - x | - x | - x | - x | - x | - x | - x | - x | - x | - x | - x | - x | - x | - x | - x. See Luo Kanglie, Bei xiaoling wenzipu 北小令文字谱 (Prosody of Northern Songs) (Hong Kong: Longmeng shudian, 1962). pp. 55-56. But the “Sheep on the Mountain Slope” in this story has 131 words and its prosody is completely different. Although chenzi are allowed in qu, they could never be as many as 90 words for a short qu like “Sheep on the Mountain Slope,” nor should they be supposed to change the entire prosodic pattern as in this case. Maybe this is the reason why the author, an experienced hand in writing sanqu, called it a deviant tune (taidiao) of “Sheep on the Mountain Slope.” I have checked with Sui Shusen’s 隋樹森 Quan Yuan sanqu 全元散曲 (A Complete Collection of Songs of the Yuan Dynasty) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1964) and some other source books, but none of them contains any of the deviant forms of “Sheep on the Mountain Slope.” Perhaps this san-qu verse was entirely Ling Mengchu’s own invention, or perhaps, as Luo Kanglie points out, many tunes (including deviant forms of the tunes) have been lost. For a general discussion of sanqu, see also Ren Na 任納, Sanqu gailun 散曲概論 (A General Introduction to Sanqu) (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1931); Kurt Radtke, Poetry of the Yuan (Canberra: Australian National University, 1984).

38 An euphemism for brothel.
Yet having had such a pretty wife,
You should feel content.
What's the point of visiting courtesans,
Only to let your sweetie go to pay your retributive debt?
You want to get another woman with one single hand,
Your woman tries with both hands her betraying attempt!
While she has obtained what she needs,\(^{39}\)
Have you ever had a chance for your own date?
Cutting a cat’s tail to prepare for the cat’s meal,
You deserve to have wasted your abundant wealth away.
Alas! your over-indulgence in the love of flowers
Has cost you money and made you misfortunate.
Alas! engaging in the swinging business,
You can never expect a decent life to be sustained!

Due to the befuddled life of wine and sex that he had given himself over to, it was not long before Yi fell sick and had to lie in bed. Now he was at home all day long. Hu felt inconvenient to visit Di and dared not come to see her any more. But Di had somebody to pass on her words to him: “Her husband can’t get up. Besides, she has maids on her side to help her

\(^{39}\) The original line is a punning sentence, which I found difficult to translate literally. Mine is a free translation, in which, I am fully aware, the original flavour is completely lost.
cover things up. Please feel free to come.” Hu, having been so informed, had no more scruples.
He then called on Di anytime he liked, as if Yi were not at home. Because of his old habit, he
was once so careless as to pass before Yi’s bed and was seen by Yi.

“How come Mr. Hu was walking out from inside?” asked Yi.

“Where’s Mr. Hu? We didn’t see anybody,” Di and the two maids said in chorus.

“I did see Mr. Hu,” Yi said. “But you said there was nobody walking out. Is it that I was
so sick that my vision was blurred and what I saw was a ghost?”

“Not exactly a ghost,” Di said. “Since you’ve been so obsessed with his wife, it is not
unlikely that when you opened your foggy eyes in a delirium, you might have seen an illusion of
somebody.”

Next day Di told Hu about this incident.

“Well,” said Hu, “you may cook up some nonsense like that to con him, but I doubt it will
work for long. Later when he has recovered, he can certainly figure out the real situation and will
then be suspicious of us. As he thought he might have seen a ghost, I’d better show him a real
ghost to convince him that he was indeed giddy, lest he doubt us.”

“You’re bantering again,” said Di smilingly. “How could you find a real ghost?”

“I’ll hide in your rear room when it gets dark tonight.” Hu explained. “To be sure, I’d like
to take advantage of this to make love with you. Tomorrow morning I’ll go out disguised myself
as a ghost. This is a killing of two birds with one stone, isn’t it!”

That night Di arranged Hu to stay in another room and bade the two maids wait upon
their master at his bedside. Saying she was tired of attending him and wanted to retire separately,
Di left her husband and slept with Hu for a whole night. Next morning Hu daubed his face with
indigo and dyed his beard red. He also wrapped his feet up with cotton pads so that he could walk lightly as to be imperceptible. When he was informed that Yi had been half-awake, he darted out right in front of him. Yi, after all, was a sick person; he cried out in great astonishment when he caught sight of Hu, “Ghost! Ghost!” He covered his head with his quilt, trembling without cease.

Di rushed to his bedside. “Why making such a fuss?” she asked.

“I said what I saw yesterday could be a ghost and today I indeed saw a ghost,” Yi whimpered. “I’m afraid that my condition bodes ill rather than well. You’d better hurry up and send for a shaman to avert disaster for me.”

Because of this shock Yi became seriously ill. Di felt rather sorry and had to send for a Buddhist master. At that time there lived thirty miles away from Yuanshang community a Zen adept named Sitting Consciousness, alias Empty Valley, whose moral integrity was without equal among local mountains. With rich gifts Yi invited him to their residence. Yi then had a confession altar built for the purpose of supplicating for the Buddha’s protection. The Zen adept did not get up on time the day he started his trance; it was until late in the afternoon that he was awake.

“Do you have an ancestor who served as a Censor of Embroidered-Garment?” asked the adept.

“That’s my late grandpa,” Yi replied.

“Among your acquaintances, is there a man by the name of Hu?” the adept continued to ask.

“He’s my good friend,” Yi replied.
Di was startled when she heard their mentioning of her lover. With a guilty conscience she began to eavesdrop their conversation.

"The scenes that I have seen in my trance are very strange," said the adept.

"May I know the details?" Yi asked.

"At the beginning," the adept told him, "I saw your ancestor, the Censor of Embroidered-Garment, was suing Hu in front of the God of Earth40 for his ruin of his grandson's life. The God of Earth was not high enough in rank to judge a case like this. He suggested to your grandpa.

'Today the North Dipper and the South Dipper are going to descend at the foot of Mount Yusi41 and you should go there to appeal. I'm sure you will get a hearing.' Your grandpa then invited me to go with him. Having reached the mountain, we saw two old men sitting face to face, one in pink and the other in green. They were playing chess. Your grandpa lodged his complaint after kowtowing to them. However, they paid him no heed at all. In spite of their disregard, your grandpa went on with his complaining until they finished their game.

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40 The God of Earth 土地神 (tudi ci) or 土地神 (tudi shen) was the deity protecting a certain local area. Zhao Yi 趙翼 (1727-1814) says that "The God of Earth worshipped by the Imperial Academy 翰林院 (Hanlin yuan) as well as by the Board of Personnel in our times was, according to a legend, Han Changli 韓昌黎 (i.e., Han Yu 韩愈) of the Tang dynasty." See Zhao Yi, Gaiyu congkao 隨餘叢考 (Miscellaneous Studies Made in the Spare time of Supporting My Parents) (reprint, Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1965), juan 35, p. 21. In fact, the God of Earth first appears in Gan Bao's 孫寶 (fl. 317-322) Sou shen ji 摺神記 (Records of Seeking Spirits) (reprint, Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1937), juan 5, p. 31: "I should become the God of Earth for this area, bringing fortune to you people" 我當為此土地神, 遜福與爾民 (Wo dang wei ci tudi shen, yifu yu ermin).

41 Mount Yusi 玉笥峰, originally called Qunyu feng 群玉峰, was in the southeast of Xiajiang county 峡江, Jiangxi province. A Daoist book says it is a famous mountain and one of its peaks, Yusi peak, is especially beautiful. See Zang Lihe 藤烈, comp., Zhongguo gujin diming da cidian 中國古今地名大辭典 (The Great Dictionary of Ancient and Modern Geographical Names) (Hong Kong: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1982), p. 125.
Then they said to him, 'Fortune, happiness, disaster and licentiousness are all governed by heavenly laws. You are a Confucian scholar, so you should be able to understand that a trouble is usually caused by oneself rather than by others and it is useless to beg mercy from us. Your grandson has not abided by filiality. He is supposed to receive death penalty. But given your status as an eminent Confucianist and the inexpedience of cutting off your posterity, your grandson can be saved. As for Hu, a seducer and instigator, he will get his retribution either in this world or in the next. Please go back home, for Hu will naturally be punished. You shouldn’t have resented him, nor has it been necessary for you to appeal to us.' Having thus finished, they turned to me and went on, 'You are lucky enough to see us. Since you are a witness, you should tell people what you have seen to make them know that fortune and disaster never come without reasons.' Then both men disappeared. This is what I saw in my trance. Now I have learned that you do have an ancestor who was a Censor of Embroidered-Garment and a friend named Hu, I really feel surprised about it.'

Di was dumbfounded by what she had heard and did not know how to deal with the situation. But Yi had not yet realized that his wife was also involved. He took it for granted that his grandpa’s complaint was only against Hu for his urging him to visit prostitutes and squander family property. So when he knew he could be exempt from death, he felt quite relieved. His illness began to improve. Meanwhile, however, Di became sick from worrying too much for her lover. In the next few days Yi had completely recovered. But Hu started to fall ill. At first it was pains at his waist. Then after a week or so he suddenly had a serious ulcer attack. The physician

\[42\] The original words for “did not know how to deal with the situation” is a colloquial expression “\textit{maizuo lihui chu}” 沒做理會處. It is quite ambiguous and can also be translated as
said that this disease, caused by over-indulgence in wine and sex, had resulted in the exhaustion of internal waters and there was not much of hope for the patient to be cured.

Hu's critical condition brought Yi to his bedside every day. As their family friend Yi had no scruples about entering into the bedroom to inquire after Hu's health. Men was looking after her husband at his sickbed. At the beginning she looked affectedly embarrassed and was not quite comfortable with Yi's being in there. But her appreciation for Yi's financial assistance to their family gradually led her into communication with him. She later even ogled at him. Yi had long been admiring her and the situation offered him golden opportunities to seduce her. When they both grew passionate, they made love behind Hu's back. Now Yi's long-standing wish had finally been fulfilled and his cuckoldry had been compensated, too. Truly

Measure for measure,
Heaven is fair.
A long patient contact
Is rewarded with this affair.

After having had sex, Men and Yi remained glue to each other like Di and Hu in their early days of sexual love. They knew that Hu's days were numbered and could not be restored to health, so they swore to each other that their love would be as eternal as mountain and sea and they would remain a devoted couple to their ripe old age.

"My wife is not jealous," Yi then said to Men. "The other day she proposed that I take

"she did not understand the adept's words."
you home and she help me seduce you. After we have married, we can live together and the three of us can enjoy pleasure together. Isn’t it wonderful!”

Men said with a cold smile, “Since she’s so willing to help others, she certainly knows how to help herself!”

“Help herself?” Yi was confused.

“It has been long since she had liaisons with my husband,” Men told him. “My husband didn’t often sleep at home. Whenever you were away, he would go over to your house. Don’t you know anything about it?”

Until now did Yi finally awaken from his dream and sober up from his inebriety. He realized that he had been deceived. No wonder that in his trance the Zen adept saw my grandpa accusing Hu of having ruined my life, he thought. Now I have seduced Men, and this is apparently his karmic retribution.

“In fact,” he said to Men, “I saw your husband walking out from inside our house the other day. But they tricked me into believing that it was my hallucination. If you hadn’t told me the truth, I would still have been kept in the dark.”

“But when you go home,” Men said, “you mustn’t reveal to your wife that I have told you the truth lest she blame me.”

“Now that I have had you, I’ll let it go,” said Yi. “Moreover, your husband is going to die. There’s no need to make a scene.”

Yi quietly left Men and went back home, without mentioning a word to his wife. A few days later Hu died. After offering his condolence, Yi returned home. He saw Di was weeping. She missed her lover, so she could not help feeling sad. Now being a conscious observer, Yi
certainly understood why she was shedding her tears.

"Where are your tears coming from?" he said, with a cold smile on his face.

Di did not respond.

"I’ve already known your secret," Yi continued. "It’s not necessary to hide it from me any more."

"What did you know and what did I hide from you?" Di sprang to her defence, her face turning liverish blue. "I’m sighing and weeping simply because you’ve lost your good friend!"

"Don’t justify yourself!" said Yi. "When I stayed outside overnight, did he sleep in his own house and did you sleep alone? And who was the man I saw the other day when I was sick? You’re sighing and weeping because you have lost your own good friend!"

He had hit home. Di dared not defend herself any more. She became silent and melancholy. Hu was on her mind every moment; whenever she closed her eyes she would see him appear in front of her. As her depression grew worse and worse, she finally fell sick. She had no appetite for food and died soon after. Half a year later, with the arrangement of a matchmaker, Yi took Men as his second wife. They got along very well with each other. Thinking of what the Zen adept had talked to him about fortune and disaster, Yi now fully awoke to the power of karma.

He said to Men, "I was attracted by you and wanted to seduce you, only to have had my own wife seduced by Hu in the first place. This is the retribution for my sexual licence. Hu and my wife committed adultery behind my back and now they both died and have left you in my hands. These are the retributions for their sexual licence. Anyone who wants to indulge in illicit sex should learn lessons from our cases. The Zen adept already laid bare the functioning of
karma in his talk, and now I'm determined to follow his instruction. Although there is not much family property left, we can still make do with what we have, if we keep to a simple and decent life.”

He then formally took the Zen adept as his teacher and began to abide by the Five Commandments like a Buddhist monk. Not only he himself kept away from sexual promiscuity, he also prohibited his wife Men from going out and seeking pleasure. As a testimony of the infallibility of karma, their story became gradually known in the Han-Mian region, and the local people, urged on by the Zen adept, finally changed their customs. There is a poem that bears witness to this:

In the Jiang-Han region
Women tended to be licentious;
Unbounded by cultural tradition,
Men were just as much lecherous.

Seeing the beautiful wives,
Both husbands were ready for seduction;
However, the swift-footed
Was the first to succeed in action.

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43 The five precepts of Buddhism are: 1) slay not, 2) steal not, 3) lust not, 4) be not light in conversation, 5) drink not intoxicants nor eat meat.

44 Jiang-Han 江漢 refers to the area between Yangzi River and the River of Han 漢水 (Han shui) in Hubei province.
Urging his rival to go to brothel,
He himself enjoyed sex with his wife.
But the untimely death of his
Left his estate to the man alive.

This-worldly retribution.
Took place without a mistake;
So pray take my advice:
Don’t let your desire lead you astray!
IN THE HAREM

Poem:

You spend money to teach your young women to sing and dance,

However, you must leave them in the arms of another man.

This is just what will happen to you after you have died,

Yet even worse will be retribution for you when you are still alive.

Not a rich man in the world does not have a flock of concubines at home. They are proud to be flanked by girls from Yan and ladies from Zhao and entertained by a row of beauties singing and dancing in front of them. Do they know, however, that the sexual capacity of men and women are roughly equal? One man alone is hardly capable of having sex with several women. What is more, rich men are generally middle-aged, whereas the flowery concubines they have taken are much younger. How can the limited sexual energy of a man satisfy a party of his

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1 The original title of this story (story 34 of Erke pai’an jingji) is: “Ren Junyong zile shengui/Yang Taiwei xigong guanke” 任君用恣樂深閨/楊太尉戲宮箋客 (Ren Junyong Gave Reins to his Sexual Indulgence in the Harem/Commander Yang Found Amusement in Castrating his Retainer).

2 “Girls from Yan” 燕姬 (yanji) and “ladies from Zhao” 趙女 (zhaonu) refer to beautiful concubines. It is said that in ancient times women were most beautiful in the States of Yan and Zhao. See Zhang Qiyun 張其昀, et al., eds., Zhongwen da cidian 中文大辭典 (The Encyclopaedic Dictionary of the Chinese Language) (Taipei: Zhongguo wenhua xueyuan chubanbu, 1967), vol. 20, p. 455. In Chinese literature yanji and zhaonu are often used as allusions to beautiful concubines. See, for example, Wei Yingwu’s 竇應物 “Bing fu” 冰賦 (Rhapsody on Ice): “Zuoyou wei yanji zhaonu, cifu meise” 左右為燕姬趙女, 侈服美色 (on my both sides are girls from Yan and ladies from Zhao, all being beautiful and beautifully dressed). See Wei Yingwu, Wei Suzhou ji 竇蘇州集 (Works of Wei Yingwu) (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1993). juan 1. p. 3.
female partners on the pillow and mattress? This explains why their harems are either full of bitterness or notorious for scandalous liaisons.

Some rich men may be very strict with their family regimes. But no matter how rigorous they are and how their compounds are well surrounded by bronze or iron walls and guarded by a gate keeper who patrol around, with a bell in hand, so vigilantly that not even water can find a fissure to seep in, they can only confine the bodies of their women, not their mind. Treating them simply as a good-for-nothing, their women will be loath to share real passions with them. They will, instead, take each and every advantage to carry on illicit liaisons behind their back. If you have racked your brains and spent your money, only to have bought the detestation of your women, do you think your efforts are worthwhile?

Look at Red Whisk and Red Silk. The former escapes from the house of the Duke of

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3 Hongfu 紅綾, which I have translated as "Red Whisk" as Patrick Hanan did in his translation The Carnal Prayer Mat (New York: Ballantine Books, 1990, p. 65), is a fictional character in Du Guangting’s 杜光庭 “Qiuran ke zhuan” 红綾客傳 (The Man with Curly Beard). Her story is as follows: "When Emperor Yang of the Sui dynasty 隋炀帝 (605-618) visited Yangzhou. Councillor Yang Su 楊素 was ordered to guard the West Capital. Now Yang Su, plumed himself on the fact that in those unsettled times no one in the empire had greater power or prestige than he, gave free rein to his love of luxury and pride, and received both officials and guests seated on a couch in the company of beautiful maids. One day Li Jing 李靖, later on became the Duke of Wei but then a private citizen, asked for an interview in order to offer advice on government policy. While Li had been discoursing brilliantly, one of Yang’s maids, a very beautiful girl who was standing in front of them holding a red whisk, had been watching him intently. Li then went back to his hostel. That night, just before dawn, there was a soft knocking at Li’s door, and when he got up he found a stranger there in a cap and a purple gown. ‘I am the maid with the red whisk in Councillor Yang’s house,’ the stranger said. Li quickly let her in and found she was a beautiful girl of about nineteen with a fair complexion. ‘I have served Yang Su for a long time,’ said she, ‘and seen many visitors. But there has never been any one like you. The vine cannot grow by itself, but needs a tree to cling to. So I have come to you.’ ‘But councillor Yang has great power in the capital; how can it be done?’ said Li. ‘Never mind him; he’s an old imbecile,’ she replied. ‘Many maids have left, knowing that he will fall and he makes very little effort to get them back.’ See Gu shi wenfang xiaoshuo 顧氏文房小說 (A Collection of
Yue and the latter eloped from a high-ranking official. This sort of things, which are too

Stories by Gu’s Studio (Shanghai: Hansfang lou, 1925), vol. 5; Tang Song chuanqi ji

4 Hongxiao, a girl in red which I have translated as “Red Silk,” is a fictional character in the Tang story “Kunlun nu” 昆侖奴 (Kunlun Slave) by Pei Xing 裴釗, a part of which is as follows: “In the Da Li 大曆 period there lived a young man by the name of Cui 崔. One day his father told him to call on his friend, the minister, to ask after his health. The minister made him sit down and talk. There were three ravishingly beautiful maids there, peeling peaches and putting them in a gold bowl. The minister told one of the maids in red to give the bowl to Cui. Cui was shy and refused, and the minister told the maid in red to feed him with a spoon. When Cui took his leave, he saw the girl in red raise three fingers, turn up the palm three times and then point to the little mirror she wore on her breast. ‘Remember!’ she said to him. After he went back home, Cui became silent and low-spirited. A Kunlun slave of the family by the name of Melek asked him. ‘What is troubling you that you look so sad all the time?’ When Cui told him what had happened, Melek said, ‘That’s easy to understand. When she raised three fingers, she meant that there are ten rooms in the minister’s house where the maids live, and she lives in the third room. When she turned up one palm three times, she was showing fifteen fingers, for the fifteenth of the month. And the little mirror on her breast stood for the full moon on the night of the fifteenth. That’s when she wants you to go.’ In the night of the fifteenth, Melek carried Cui on his back and vaulted over about a dozen walls. Having reached the girls’ quarters, they stopped at the third room. Cui lifted curtain and entered. For a moment the girl was speechless. Then she jumped off the couch and grasping Cui’s hand said, ‘I knew a clever man like you would understand the signs I made with my fingers.’ Melek first took out her baggage. Then he carried Cui under one arm and the girl under the other and jumped over the walls, just as when they had come in.’ See Li Fang 李昉, et al., eds., Taiping guangji 太平廣記 (Works Widely Collected during the Taiping Reign), juan 194; Wang Piqiang 汪楫疆, edited and annotated, Tangren xiaoshuo 唐人小說 (Fiction of the Tang Dynasty) (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), pp. 324-26; Chi-chen Wang 王志真, trans., Traditional Chinese Tales (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944), pp. 93-97; Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang, Tang Dynasty Stories, pp. 106-111. Hongxiao’s story can also be found in a Ming zaju play by Liang Bolong 梁伯龍, entitled “Hongxiao zaju” 紅绡雜劇 (A Drama of Hongxiao).

5 Yang Su, because of his military merits, had been enfeoffed as Duke of Yue before he became Councillor. For his biography, see Wei Zheng 維傳, Sui shu 隋書 (History of the Sui
numerous to be recounted, will occur to you when you are still alive. After you die, both your withered flowers and your tender buds, like monkeys escaping when a tree crashes down, will scatter and become another man’s concubines. It is hard to find one out of a thousand women who will refuse to remarry as Guan Panpan did. But things like this will not, after all, affect you too much until after your death and you may therefore disregard it. Being a rich man, you may think you should be concerned only with your present living and enjoy your life to the fullest. As a spectator, I really cannot help worrying about your situation.

In the Song dynasty there was a scholar living in the capital and he was now coming back from his journey. When it began to grow dark, he passed by a backyard of a household and noticed that there was a breach on the wall, low enough to jump over. As he was still quite drunk, he vaunted over the gap and found himself inside an unusually big garden. Looking around, he saw there were flowers and trees everywhere and small paths crisscrossed the ground. He was

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6 Guan Panpan 閆盼盼 was a courtesan of Xuzhou 徐州 in the Tang times. She later became a concubine of the minister Zhang Jianfeng 張建封. After Zhang died, Guan Panpan lived hermetically in Zhang’s residence for about ten years, refusing to remarry. When the poet Bai Juyi 白居易 wrote a verse to mock at the way of her living, she fasted a few days and died consequently. See Dong Kang 董康, ed., Quhai zongmu tiyao 曲海總目提要 (A Complete Annotated Bibliography of Dramas) (reprint, Tianjin: Guji chubanshe, 1992), vol.1, juan 2, “Guan Panpan,” p. 79-80.

7 The Song dynasty lasted from 960 to 1279. The first half of the dynasty is called the Northern Song (960-1126, which is also mentioned in the story), because its capital Dongjing 東京 (modern city of Kaifeng 開封 in Henan province) was located in the northern China, and later half is called the Southern Song (1127-1279), because its capital moved to Lin’an (modern city of Hangzhou in Zhejiang province) in the south after the territory north of Huai River 淮河 had been occupied by the Nuzhen 女真 Tartars. For the border between the Southern Song and the Jin 金, see Tan Qixiang 譚其驥, ed. Zhongguo lishi ditu ji 中國歷史地圖集 (Historical Altas of China) (Beijing: Zhongguo ditu chubanshe, 1982), vol. 6, pp. 42-43.
fascinated, thinking the scene must be worth exploring further. He strolled along the stone-paved tracks, and after several turns, gradually went into the depths of the garden. Nobody was around. He took his time enjoying the landscape while wandering about at ease.

It now had become rather dark. He intended to turn back, but he forgot the trails he had taken. He was in the middle of recalling when, abruptly, a red gauze lantern appeared from afar. It must be some guests of the family coming to visit, he thought. He was flustered, and the way out, therefore, became even more evasive. He thought he’d better hide himself somewhere for the time being.

On the left side of the path was a small pavilion, and in front of it was a cave made of Lake Tai stones. The opening of the cave was covered by a small piece of felt blanket. What an excellent hideout! he thought. If I conceal myself in it, I certainly can’t be discovered. He then went hurrying to the cave. He was about to pull the felt blanket up in order to get into the cave.

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8 The stone produced in Lake Tai 太湖 (Taihu) in Jiangsu province, has been famous for making rockeries and garden decoration. Du Wan 杜緞 in his Yunlin shipu 雲林石譜 (Stone Catalogue of Cloudy Forest) recorded: “The Lake Tai stone, produced in Lake Dongting 洞庭湖 (Dongting hu) of Pingjiang 平江 prefecture, is solid and moist. It is full of dents on surface and has holes that look grotesque and go zigzag inside the stone.” See Du Wan, Yunlin shipu (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1936), vol. 1, p. 2; Edward Schafer, trans., Tu Guan’s Stone Catalogue of Cloudy Forest (Berkeley: University California Press, 1961). Here Lake Dongting does not refer to Dongting hu, China’s biggest lake in Hunan province. It is another name for Lake Tai. In his commentary to San hai jing 山海經 (Book of Mountains and Seas) Guo Pu 郭璞 indicated that “Mount Bao of Lake Tai has an underwater cavern called Dongting, and hence the name for the whole lake.” Quoted from David Knechtges, trans., Wen Xuan 文選 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), vol. 2, p. 324. In one of his stories, Ling Mengchu gives us a different hint why Lake Tai can also be called Lake Dongting: “On the Dongting island in Lake Tai the soil is as soft and fertile as in Fujian and Guangdong.” See Ling Mengchu, Pai’an jingqi 斧鰱 (Slapping the Table in Amazement) (Hong Kong: Gudian wenxue chubanshe, 1974), story 1. 轉運漢巧遇洞庭紅 / 波斯胡指破龜龍殼, p. 7; Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang, trans., The Courtesan's Jewel Box: Chinese Stories of the Xth-XVIIIth Centuries (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1981). “The Tangerines and the Tortoise Shell.” p. 410.
when all of sudden a man darted out from inside. The scholar was startled. Setting his eyes on this fugitive, he found that the man was a beautiful youth. He was confused why he had hidden himself in the cave. This beautiful young man, presuming that somebody was following on his heels, was panic-stricken. He scurried off and soon disappeared.

I'm so sorry, said the scholar to himself. But I'll have to take refuge in here for the time being.

He squatted in the cave, enduring discomfort. He thought this was a safe place. Nevertheless things were unpredictable and enemies were bound to meet on a narrow road. It so happened that the red gauze lantern was advancing also toward the pavilion. Watching from the darkness of the cave, which made the lantern and its surroundings even brighter, he caught sight of about ten young women outside, all in beautiful dress, and all coquettish, frivolous and seductively charming. They aroused his strong interest. To his surprise, however, this group of women also came swarming to the cave, and reaching out their hands, lifted the felt blanket. All of them, to be sure, were taken aback when they found a stranger inside.

“How come it’s not the fellow we’re expecting?” They looked at each other, rather bewildered. A more mature woman among them took over the lantern and cast the light upon the scholar.

“This one is not bad!” she said, after having had a close look at him. With her delicate hand she grabbed him by his hand and pulled him out of the cave. Submissively the scholar let her take him, not courageous enough to ask her where they were going. But he was quite sure that nothing harmful would happen.

He was ushered into a boudoir, where a feast of wine and delicacies had already been laid
out. The beauties vied with each other to please him, as if they wanted to become the winner in _liubo_ game. They began with exchanging cups with him, and then proceeded to encircle their arms around his neck, stroke his face and kiss his lips, doing all kinds of things that can be imagined. When they had drunk several cups of wine, they bubbled with lewd excitement, and pushed him into the bed without caring too much about proprieties. After climbing into the bed curtain, some of them were busy taking their pants off, while others tried to hold his waist. Since they did not know how to take turns, they had to start from whoever was closest to him. He ejaculated, and they licked his semen up and fondled his organ until it again stood up.

Fortunately he was a young man, capable of shooting his string-of-beads arrows for two more times. But without so much as even a minute's recuperation between such strenuous bouts of passion, even a man of iron could not endure. He began to feel sick and tired of these women. Yet they did not disperse until about the fifth watch in the morning. By that time the scholar

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9 _Liubo_ 六博 (liubo) or 六轉 (liuzhuan) was a game played with twelve pieces of chess on a board resembling the plate of the Han sundial that contains many astrological symbols. The moves of the pieces were determined by the throwing of six sticks 誌 (zhu) and they were divided into two sides, each piece being marked with one of the four animals symbolizing the directions of space. There seems to have been a central belt of water, like the Milky Way in later systems, and when a piece arrived there it was promoted to be a "leading piece" with greater powers. See Joseph Needham, _Science and Civilization of China_, vol. 4, part 1, p. 327; Yang Lien-sheng, "A Note on the So-called TLV Mirrors and the Game Liu-po," in _Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies_, no. 10, 1947, pp. 202-206; Yang Lien-sheng, "An Additional Note on the Ancient Game Liu-po," in _Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies_, no. 15, 1952, pp. 124-139.

10 This is an euphemism for semen.

11 "Fifth watch" 五更 (wugeng) or 五天 (wugeng tian) is the time when day breaks. A night used to be divided into five sections in ancient China: 甲夜 (the first section of night, roughly 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm), 乙夜 (the second section, roughly 10:00 pm - 12:00 pm), 丙夜 (the third section, roughly 0:00- 2:00 am), 丁夜 (the fourth section, roughly 2:00 am - 4:00 am), and 戌夜 (the fifth section, roughly 4:00 am - 6:00 am). The "fifth watch" was a more popular name for _shuye_.

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had been utterly depleted. His whole body was listless and numb, and his limbs were too weak to be able to support him.

The mature woman helped him into a big box, which she had two or three maids carry away. As soon as they were out of the compound, the maids turned the box over to let him get out, and then went hurrying back and closed the gate behind them. Now day was breaking. For fear of being seen and involved in trouble, the scholar had to pluck up his strength to drag himself back home. He dared not mention his adventure to anybody.

A few days later when he had been nursed back to health, the scholar went to revisit the place he had passed by the other day, inquiring who lived inside the compound surrounded by the wall with a breach on it. When he was told that it was the Grand Preceptor Cai Jing’s residence, he was so astonished that for quite a long while he could not withdraw his tongue. He broke out

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12 Cai Jing 蔡京 (1047-1126) was a native of the Fujian Province. He obtained his jinshi 进士 degree when he was only 24 years old, and later became the most powerful minister at the court of Emperor Huizong 徽宗 (r. 1101-1126). Among the official posts he assumed were Left Grand Councillor, Grand Academician of the Hall for Veneration of Governance, Grand Preceptor, and Minister of Personnel. It was not until the capital was in imminent danger and the emperor abdicated in favour of his son Qinzong 钦宗 that Cai Jing was ousted and exiled to the south. He died on the way to Tanchou (modern Changsha in the Hunan province). In popular literature Cai Jing is usually referred to as Grand Preceptor Cai 蔡太師, because Grand Preceptor was one of Sanshi 三師 (three preceptors) who from antiquity to the Song times had been officially considered as the 3 paramount aides to the ruler and held highest possible ranks in the officialdom. According to Dongjing menghua lu, Cai Jing’s residence was located outside of the Gate of Liang, on the southern side of the street, close to a Daoist temple called Jianlong Temple. See Meng Yuanlao, Dongjing Menghua lu zhu, annot. Deng Zhicheng, juan 3, p. 85. Lu You 陸遊 (1125-1210) in his Lao xue’an biji 老學庵筆記 says that Cai Jing’s residence, granted him by the emperor, was “unusually spacious.” Its Six-crane Hall was so high (about fourteen metres) that viewed from its top, people moving down below “look like ants.” See ibid., note 6 by Deng Zhicheng, p. 87. Ding Chuanjing 丁傳靖 says that Cai Jing also had a private residence in Hangzhou which was also magnificent and luxuriously furnished. See Compilation of Anecdotes of Sung Personalities, selected and translated by Chu Djiang and Jane Djiang (Taipei: St. John University Press, 1989), pp. 525-26.
into a sweat and dared not go by that place any more.

Gentle readers, you can imagine how powerful Cai Jing the Grand Preceptor was and how strict his orders. But lo and behold, what sort of things his concubines did behind his back! One man was invited and scared away, and another came and replaced him. They indulged in sex as much as they could as if there were no one around. But why did the Grand Preceptor not subject them to discipline in order to prevent their adulterous affairs? The reason was that he had too many concubines to take care of.

Among the four notorious court officials Gao, Tong, Yang and Cai in the Northern

13 Gao = Gao Qiu 高魁 (?-1126), Tong = Tong Guan 童貫 (1054-1126), Yang = Yang Jian 楊簡 (?-1121) and Cai = Cai Jing 宋靖, are all historical figures, known as the four evil ministers 四大奸臣 (sida jianchen). Gao Qiu was defender-in-chief of the Imperial Bodyguard. For his notorious contribution in facilitating the Flower and Rock Convoys and the construction of the Mount Ken Imperial, he was granted the title of Grand Guardian Park. See Huichu lu (Records for Chowrie Waving Conversation), by Wang Mingqing (1127-c.1214) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju. 1961). “Houlu,” juan 7. p. 176. He is one of the principal villains in the novel Shuihu zhuan. See Shuihu zhuan, vol. 1 ch. 2, pp. 16-21 and passim; Shapiro, trans., Outlaws of the Marsh, vol. 1 ch. 2, pp. 15-24 and passim. He is also the principal villain in the sixteenth century chuanqi drama Baojian ji 賢劍記 (The Story of the Precious Sword) by Li Kaixian 李開先 (1502-68). See Dong Kang, ed., Quhai zongmu ticao, vol. 1. juan 5, p. 208. Tong Guan was an eunuch. Yet he was strong-built, having about ten wisps of beard on his chin. Women of the palace (below the imperial concubines of the third rank) would often send him presents, attempting to curry favour from him and hence to establish an intimate relationship. They were often seen waiting upon him at his sides and their praises of him were heard from time to time. See Song shi (History of the Song Dynasty) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977), “Huanzhe III” 建極三 (Biographies of Eunuchs), vol. 20, juan 468, p. 13,662. Chu Djiang and Jane Djiang seem to be very sympathetic with Tong Guan. Tong Guan, they say, was an imposing figure of a man, well-versed in military tactics and was not known to be corrupt or given to luxurious living. He was arrogant and deft to criticism, but he was generous toward his subordinates and enjoyed their support. As far as his military record was concerned, his career could not be classified as a typical failure. For many years he was the chief architect of the Song military policies. He had fought several battles against the western barbarians and won with distinction, and his campaign against Fang La 方腊 rebellion in Zhejiang province was a tremendous success. Without his swift surgical operation the rebellion could have spread over the whole country. Yet he was blamed, at least partly, for the collapse of the Northern Song. This was largely due to the traditional
Song dynasty, Yang Jian, the Commander-in-chief of the Imperial Guard,\(^4\) who was almost as

prejudiced attitude of the Chinese biographers toward eunuchs. See *Compilation of Anecdotes of Song Personalities*, pp. 543-44. For both Cai Jing and Yang Jian, see respectively notes 9 and 13 of this story.

\(^4\) Taiwei 太尉, which here I have translated as Commander-in-chief of the Imperial Guard, was higher than taifu 太傅 (Grand Mentor) in the Song dynasty: “Inheriting the Tang institutions, the Song court also took taishi 太師 (Grand Preceptor), taifu and taibao 太保 (Grand Guardian) as ‘Three Preceptors’ 三師 (sanshi) and taiwei 太尉, sifu 司徒 and sikong 司空 as ‘Three Dukes’ 三公 (sangong). Originally taiwei was below the three preceptors; from the Tang to the Song, taiwei had been gradually promoted and finally was above taifu.’ See Tuotuo 脫脫, et al., eds., *Song shi*, “Zhiguan zhi” 職官誌 (Records of Official Institutions), vol. 6, juan 161, p. 3771. But according to *Song shi*, Yang Jian seems not to have been appointed as taiwei. The highest position he assumed was *Zhenghua jun jiedushi* 彰化軍節度使 (The Military Governor of Zhenghua region). See *Song shi*, “Huanzhe III,” vol. 20, juan 468, p. 13,664. Yang Jian was an eunuch, which is certain. Nevertheless, there is no account in his biography about his private life. C. T. Hsia in a note to the “Appendix” in *The Chinese Classic Novel* says that “Yang Jian was a eunuch and could not have a wife” (see *The Classic Chinese Novel*, p. 256). Hsia’s comments are directed at a story entitled “*Kanpixue danzheng erlangshen* 勸皮靴單訟二郎神 (The Investigation of a Leather Boot Convicts Erlang Shen) in *Xingshi hengyan* 醒世恒言 (Stories to Awaken the World), in which Yang Jian, as a historical figure, has a wife. See Feng Menglong, ed., *Xingshi hengyan*, collated and annotated by Gu Xuejie 魯學捷 (Hong Kong: Zhong hua shuju, 1958), vol. 1, ch. 13, pp. 241-265. Yet that *Sanyan* 三言 story, together with this story by Ling Mengchu, can probably only support, if read as “unofficial history,” what Van Gulik has already pointed out that “once established they (eunuchs) usually took a wife to look after them, and adopted sons to continue their family.” See *Sexual Life in Ancient China*, p. 256. According to *Wanli vhuobian* 萬歷野獲編 (Miscellanies of Unofficial Records about Wanli Reign), it was a fashion, at least in the Ming, for eunuchs to take a wife and a bunch of concubines. See Shen Defu. *Wanli vhuobian* (Fuli shudian, 1869), vol. 4, juan 6, p. 34. The modern scholar Shi Kekuan 施克寬 held that it is understandable that eunuchs had intimate relations with women, because they extremely needed women to give them comfort when they got old, having suffered long-standing discriminations as men of neutral gender. See Shi Kekuan, *Zhongguo huanguan mishi* 中國宦官秘史 (A Secret History of the Chinese Eunuch) (Beijing: Baowentang shudian, 1988), p. 58. However, even though we agree that eunuchs did take a wife, we are still not quite sure if they were really able to carry a normal sexual life with their spouse. Patricia Buckley Ebrey’s *The Inner Quarters: Marriage and Lives of the Chinese Women in the Sung* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), a book specially dealing with women and their marital lives in that period, provides us with nothing about the life of eunuchs’ wives, because it completely ignores this issue. The legend has it that the eunuch Wei Zhongxian 繆忠賢 and the wet nurse of Emperor Tianqi, Lady Ke 龍氏, indeed had sexual relations. This legend might be true, because 1) the sexual function of a eunuch who had an incomplete castration operated by himself as in the case of Wei Zhongxian was easier to be restored, and 2) eating human brain
powerful as Cai the Grand Preceptor at that time, also had such a scandal, which later became public and turned him into a laughing stock. If you do not feel bored, gentle readers, I would like to tell you the story in detail.

Going wild for sex are pretty women in the harem,
For none of them has sufficient rain and dew.\(^1\)
Since the Terrace Villa serves them as a place for tryst,
Awaiting King Xiang for lovemaking has been very few.\(^2\)

might also help restore the sexual function and Wei Zhongxian, like other high-ranking eunuchs, did in fact kill seven prisoners and eat their brains. See Shi Kekuan, ibid., pp. 58-59. Whether Yang Jian was able to lead to a normal sexual life with a bunch of concubines is an interesting topic for further investigation. For the discussion of the sexual life of Chinese eunuch, see also Liu Dalin, Zhongguo gudai xingwenhua, ch. 7, pp. 711-721, and for the general discussion of the eunuchs in the Ming dynasty, see Shih-shan Henry Tsai, The Eunuchs in the Ming Dynasty (Albany: State University of New York, 1996).

\(^1\) "Rain and dew" 雨露 (yulu) is a poetic euphemism for semen.

\(^2\) This allusion comes from a story told by Song Yu 宋玉 (3rd century B. C.) to King Xiang of Chu 楚 (r. 298-265 B. C.) about a tryst between the Goddess of Witch’s Mountain 巫山 (or Mount Wu) and his father King Huai 怀王 (r. 328-299 B. C.) in the prose preface to “Gaotang fù” 高唐赋 (Rhapsody on Gaotang), which has been traditionally attributed to Song Yu (a poet who was regarded as a follower of Qu Yuan 屈原) but more probably a Han work dating from the first century B. C. For details, see Stephen Owen, Anthology of Chinese Literature (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996), p. 189. According to the preface, King Huai once was walking at Gaotang. Feeling tired he stopped for a rest. A young woman appeared in his dream and said, “I am the goddess of Witch’s Mountain, and the mistress of the Terrace Villa of Gaotang. When I learned that you were visiting the district, I determined to keep you company on your pillow and mattress.” Responding to her wishes, the king lent the goddess his favours. The goddess then bade him farewell, saying, “I live in the south of Witch’s Mountain. At dawn I am the morning cloud and every evening I can be found below the southern terrace.” The next day and following days the king went to the chosen spot. Later King Huai’s son King Xiang visited the Terrace Villa, with Song Yu serving him as a palace poet, and heard about the story of King Huai. In the night Song Yu had also a similar dream, which he told King Xiang the next morning. King Xiang ordered Song Yu to record these two dreams in two poems, i.e., “Rhapsody on
The story goes that in the Song dynasty Commander Yang Jian, a lecherous and evil-doing top official, was in the emperor's good graces. He had so many concubines that nobody could compare with him except Cai the Grand Preceptor. One day Commander decided to visit his ancestors' graves in Zhengzhou. He brought along with him a bevy of wives senior in position as well as their maids, leaving all other women at home who were either too old, or too young to serve him, or too delicate to stand winds and frost, or unfit for travel for feminine reasons. The total number of those who remained, including maids and wet nurses, numbered fifty or sixty. Commander was suspicious by nature. To prevent his concubines from going out, he had all the passageways between the middle gate and outer gate locked and sealed with paper strips on which the date was written in red ink, and had a hole made on the wall of the veranda inside the middle gate with a rotating tray installed in it, so that food prepared outside could be swivelled in. An old housekeeper surnamed Li was entrusted to take charge of the surveillance, and a guard, whom no one dared look at squarely, was hired to go on patrol, beating drums and clappers everyday from evening to daybreak.

Gaotang" and "Rhapsody on Goddess" 女神賦. See Wenxuan (Selected Works of Literature), compiled by Xiao Tong 蕭統 and annotated by Li Shan 李善 (reprint, Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1960), pp. 393-400; Stephen Owen, ibid, pp. 189-193. In Chinese popular literature the roles played by King Huai and King Xiang are often mixed. In fact, as pointed out by Shen Kuo 沈括 (1124 - ?) in his Bu bitan 補筆談 (Supplement to Mengxi bitan), King Xiang had no intimate relations with the Goddess of Witch's Mountain. See Yuan Ke 袁珂, Zhongguo shenhua chuanshuo 中國神話傳說 (Chinese Myths and Legends) (Beijing: Zhongguo minjian wenyi chubanshe, 1984), vol. 1, p. 157 & p. 162. For a study of the "Gaotang fu," see Lois Fusek, "The 'Kao-t'ang fu,'" in Monumenta Serica, vol. 30 (1972-73), pp. 392-425.

17 Zhengzhou 鄭州 can refer either to Zhengzhou prefecture, or to the town of the same name in Zhengzhou prefecture, Henan province, about 50 kilometres west of Dongjing (modern city of Kaifeng). See Tan Qixiang, Zhongguo lishi ditu ji, vol. 6, pp. 12-13.
Among those left at home, there were some dazzling beauties, such as Madam Beautiful Moon, Madam Jade, Sister Smile and Aunt Flower, all being Commander’s favourite concubines. As they and their maids were shut in the harem, they felt day was long and night endless. What they could do to while away their tedious hours was to play mahjong, or play on a swing, or play flower-collecting game or kickball. Although these diversions were hardly satisfying, daytime was, anyway, easier to wear away. Much more unendurable was lonely nights.

Madam Jade used to be the wife of a jade carver in Chang’an. As a clever and attractive woman, she had been well known in the capital and had had some extramarital affairs before.

18 “Playing flower-collecting game” 靡百草 (Dou baicao) is an ancient game played by women, in which women make a bet by matching the names or comparing the quality of the flowers they have collected. See Fu Meilin, et al., Zhongguo fengsu da cidian (Beijing: Zhongguo heping chubanshe, 1991), p. 453.

19 “Kickball” 踢鞠 (cuju) is an ancient Chinese football game. According to Liu Xiang 劉向 (see his Bielu 別錄), kickball was either invented by Huangdi 黄帝 (Yellow Emperor), or originated during the Warring States period. Kickball game was first mentioned in Shi ji (see “Su Qin liezhuan” 蘇秦列傳, William Nienhauser, ed., The Grand Scribe’s Records, vol. vii, p. 106), and also appears, quite frequently, in Ming-Qing fiction. For example, Gao Qiu, the chief villain in the novel Shuihu zhuan, is known to be “an excellent footballer.” See Shuihu quanzhuan (A Complete Story of the Water Margin) (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1954), ch. 2, p. 18; J. H. Jackson, trans., Water Margin (New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corporation, 1968), p. 2. And it seems that playing kickball used to be a popular outdoor sport for young women. See, for example, Xinghua tian, in Guyan xipin congkan, p. 52: “Taitou yikan, jian sange nuzi, zai yu muxiangting bian cuju” (When he looked up, he saw three girls playing a kickball before the Fragrant Wood Pavilion).

20 Chang’an 長安, now in the northwest of Chang’an county, Shanxi province, was in Chinese history the capital of several dynasties, such as the Han dynasty, the Sui dynasty and the Tang dynasty. But Chang’an can also be used as a non-proper name to refer to any place where an emperor lived. For example, Zhou Mi 周密 says: “The snow is of course very good; only the poor people in Chang’an may suffer from it.” Chang’an in Zhou Mi’s essay refers to the capital of the Southern Song dynasty, i.e., Lin’an. See Zhou Mi, Hou wulin jiushi 後武林舊事 (Reminiscence of Lin’an: A supplement) (Baoyan tang, 1922), juan, p. 4. In this story Chang’an refers to the capital of the Northern Song, Dongjing.
Commander Yang once saw her by chance. Taking advantage of his power he obtained her and made her his seventh lady. He loved her dearly and called her Jade, for she said she looked as beautiful as a jade sculpture. This name also implied where she was originally from. Compared with her female peers in the household, Madam Jade was unmatchable in both intelligence and licentiousness. She dreamed of seducing youths even when Commander was home. Now that Commander was off, how could she not burn with sexual desire as she was shut in with nothing to do all day long?

Commander Yang had a retainer, whose surname was Ren and whose style was Junyong. He was a failure in the examinations. But since his handwriting was good, he was up to secretarial work such as writing letters and invitations. He was a handsome young man, now about thirty years old. He used to be Commander’s catamite when he was at the age of wearing his hair in two topknots. What with his rear courtyard relations and with his humour in poking fun and docility in disposition, he had won Commander’s favour, dwelling as a constant hanger-

21 In ancient China aristocrats and high-ranking officials liked to keep retainer(s) 門客 (menke) or 馆客 (guanke) in the fashion of Lord Mengchang 孟嘗君 (d. 279 B.C.), a member of the ruling house of the state of Qi during the Warring States period (475-221 B.C.). Lord Mengchang was famous for his patronage of large numbers of retainers. He recruited guests and retainers from feudal lords, even wanted men and those who had committed offence, and set aside his own income to care for them lavishly. See Shi ji, vol. 7, juan 75, pp. 2351-63; William Nienhauser, Jr., ed., Grand Scribe’s Records, vol. 7. Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang, trans., Records of the Historian (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1981), pp.76-88.

22 “Wearing one’s hair in a topknot” 總角 (zongjiao) is a common expression in Chinese literature for childhood, for in the old times a Chinese boy usually wore the tufts of his hair in two topknots, and when he grew up (usually over 16 years old), he began to wear long hair, preparing for his capping ceremony at the age of twenty.

23 This is an euphemism for male homosexual relationship. Cf. note 19 of the story "One Woman and Two Monks."
on in Commander’s residence. In view of the inconvenience he might cause when getting on and off the carriages with a train of women on the journey to Zhenzhou, Ren Junyong had been bidden to stay home. He lived, as usual, in an outhouse, a studio outside the compound.

Ren Junyong had a good friend, a childhood classmate named Fang Wude. Whenever he had spare time, he would call on his pal, chatting and drinking with him. As Commander was gone to visit the graves and there was not much work for him to do, he now had more time at his disposal. He would often invite Fang Wude to stroll around streets during the day, and at night they would either stay at licensed quarters or he would return to sleep in his studio. But no more of this.

Our story goes that Madam Jade, with Commander being away from home, found night too lonesome to stand. She invited Rosy Cloud, her most intimate personal maid, to sleep with her on her bed. To give vent to her suppressed desire, she talked with the maid about sex. She took out her paraphernalia when she felt aroused and had Rosy Cloud put on a dildo \(^{24}\) around her waist and make love with her, as if she were a male lover. Rosy Cloud did as she asked, making her mistress moan with pleasure and wriggle her belly up enthusiastically. Rosy Cloud was then

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\(^{24}\) A dildo in Chinese is usually called “Mr. Horn” 郭先生 (guo xiansheng) or 角先生. According to van Gulik, the dildo, or the “double olisbos,” to use his term, is a short-ribbed stick made of wood or ivory, with two silk bands attached to the middle. See van Gulik, Sexual Life in Ancient China, p. 163. And for its picture, see van Gulik, Erotic Colour Prints of the Ming Period (Tokyo: privately published, 1951), plate xvii; Michel Beurdeley, et al., The Clouds and the Rain: The Art of Love in China (Switzwerland: Office du Livre, 1969), p. 175. But in The Clouds and Rain, I have to point out, the dildo has been inappropriately named as “mien-lung” (i.e. mianling 緣鈴). “Mien-lung,” more often spelled as mien-ling, is actually a round-shaped sexual instrument that has nothing to do with dildo. For an elaborate description of a homosexual pair engaging in lovemaking by using mienling, see Xiuta yeshi 纡緜野史 (Unofficial History of the Embroidered Couch), an erotic novel attributed to Lu Tiancheng 呂天成, in Zhongguo guyan xipin congkan (Collectanea of Ancient Chinese Erotic Treasures), p. 64-66.
worked up too.

"Is the dildo as good as a real man?" she asked.

"It's only for fun and can't really satisfy our sexual appetite," replied the mistress. "The taste of a real man is of course much better."

"Since a real man is so good, it's a pity that a man living at our residence is left unused!" Rosy Cloud said.

"You mean Ren Junyong, don't you?" asked the mistress.

"Yes," Rosy Cloud said.

"He's our Commander's most favourite guest," the mistress told her. "He's indeed very handsome. When we peeped at him from inside our rooms, we often felt aroused."

"How nice it would be if we could manage to bring him in," said Rosy Cloud.

"He may be unoccupied," the mistress said, "but the wall is so high that it's impossible for him to get over into the compound unless he has two wings."

"We need some special devise," Rosy Cloud spurred her mistress. "Otherwise we can't get him in."

"I might be able to think of a way," said the mistress.

"Right outside the wall of our backyard is where he lives," Rosy Cloud told her mistress. "Maybe we should get up early tomorrow morning and go to the backyard to find out if we can do something there. Madam, you really should think up a way to get him in so that we can both of us enjoy pleasure together."

"I haven't got him yet, but you have begun to think of sharing the prize with me!" the mistress chided her smilingly.
"To eat alone will make you sick, madam!" Rosy Cloud said. "Since we're both interested in him, we can help with each other."

"That's true," the mistress agreed.

There was no more talk on that night. When it was broad daylight, they got up, washed and combed their hair. Then they opened the door and went out into the garden. They made their way toward the foot of the wall facing the outhouse and in the meantime plucked flowers to wear in their hair. When they reached a swing and saw its rope hanging down from the tree, Madam Jade broke into a broad smile.

"Aha," she said, "this will be a useful thing!"

She then caught sight of a ladder leaning against a Lake Tai stone, a ladder that was usually used for trimming trees. "Look! Look!" she called out to Rosy Cloud. "As long as we have these two things, we don't have to worry about the wall."

"What's your plan?" asked Rosy Cloud.

"Well," said Madam Jade, "let's get closer to the wall that faces his studio. I'd like to have a survey there first before telling you what's going on in my mind."

Rosy Cloud led her mistress to the two umbrella trees. "His studio is just outside the wall," she told her mistress, motioning her to look in that direction. "He must be all on his own right now."

The mistress stared fixedly in that direction, thinking for a while. "Things don't look bad," she said. "Tonight we'll try to get him in right from here and it shouldn't be too difficult."

"How can you do that?" asked Rosy Cloud.

"We'll fetch the ladder quietly," Madam Jade explained, "and lean it against this umbrella
tree. You climb up the ladder and then get onto some higher bough. Then you call out to him and he should be able to hear you.”

“It’s not difficult to climb up from our side, nor is it hard to make him hear me,” said Rosy Cloud. “But how can he get over the wall from his side?”

“I’ll bind up some planks at their two ends, one foot apart, by making use of the rope of the swing. Drawn in, these planks will look like a bundle of firewood; but when they are spread, they can serve as a rope ladder. After you have made arrangement with him, you may climb up the tree from the ladder and tie the ends of the rope around an old solid branch. Make sure they take roots. And then you just throw the rope ladder out to the other side of the wall. Once we have this rope ladder ready for use, we can let an army of men get over the wall, not to mention just one person.”

“Why,” Rosy Cloud exclaimed, “this is really a marvellous idea! We’d better hurry up and fashion this rope ladder right away to see if it does work.”

In high glee Rosy Cloud went trotting back into their quarters. She fetched ten more small planks and handed over to her mistress. Madam Jade, having had Rosy Cloud unfasten the rope of the swing, bound up planks herself to ensure that they would be sufficiently safe and secure.

“Now get the ladder and put it against the tree.” the mistress bade Rosy Cloud. “After climbing up the ladder, you’ll be able to see if you can pass a message to him. If you don’t see him around, you may start down the rope ladder yourself to fix a time with him.”

Rosy Cloud did as her mistress asked. Petite in stature, she was quite agile and it took her just a few seconds to reach a top branch. It so happened that as she was craning her neck to look around, she should see none other than Ren Junyong himself, returning home from some place
where he and his friend Fang Wude had just spent the night. He was about to step into his studio when Rosy Cloud called out to him, with a grin, “Isn’t this Mr. Ren?”

Hearing somebody speaking and chuckling on the wall, Ren Junyong raised his head and saw a young girl with two buns on her head. He recognized that she was Rosy Cloud. As a young man in his prime, Ren Junyong felt quite excited.

“Sister,” he said, “what did you say?”

Rosy Cloud intended to stir him up. “Sir,” she said, “you’re coming back in the early morning, so you must have spent the night outside, I suppose?”

“Yes, I did spend the night outside,” Ren Junyong admitted. “It’s agonizing to sleep alone.”

“Look,” said Rosy Cloud, “whoever inside the wall is not sleeping alone? Why don’t you come in so that we can both have company?”

“I don’t have wings. How can I fly over the wall?” Ren Junyong said.

“You don’t have to have wings if you really want to come in” said Rosy Cloud. “I can manage to help you.”

Ren Junyong bowed his thanks to the top of the wall, saying, “Many thanks to you, sister. I’d appreciate it if you could tell me how you can help me.”

“Wait, I should consult the lady first,” said Rosy Cloud. “I’ll let you know the result tonight.” She then quickly descended from the tree.

Although he understood what she had said, Ren Junyong still felt quite puzzled. Which

[25] In ancient China an unmarried girl wore her hair in two buns and hence the use of the term “shuanhuan nuzi” 雙環女子, which implies that the girl in question, usually a teenager, is
lady will give me such an opportunity and how can I get into the compound? he thought. But I should be patient and wait until I get her message in the evening. He then looked forward to the setting of the sun. Truly

The three-leg bird\(^{26}\) has appeared for no reason

In a round sun that radiates and glistens.

But how can I obtain a Houyi's bow\(^{27}\)

To shoot and bring down this sun that glows?\(^{28}\)

We should, for the time being, leave him awaiting the coming of the evening.

Our story goes that Madam Jade, having heard each and every word of their conversation, was excited. She went back to her room before Rosy Cloud could ask her for instruction.

Presently Rosy Cloud was back also.

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unmarried.

\(^{26}\) According to *Huainan Zi* 淮南子, there is a crippled crow living in the sun. and Gao You 高誘 says in his commentary that the crippled crow is a three-legged bird. Cf. note 39 of the story “Fatal Seduction.”

\(^{27}\) Hou Yi 后羿 is a famous archer in Chinese legend. It is said that in the time of Yao 姚 there were ten suns and plants got scotched. Yao then ordered Hou Yi to shoot these suns and kill them. See *Huainan Zi*, p. 209. For the legend of Hou Yi, see B. Kargren, “Legends and Cults,” pp. 312-31.

“Tonight you won’t be alone,” Rosy Cloud said.

“He is a young man after all and may perhaps change his mind,” said Madam Jade. “Such things are likely to happen.”

“He looked so anxious that he might even have wished he could fly over the wall,” Rosy Cloud told her. “When I told him I could manage to help him, he kept thanking me all the time. I don’t see anything he should be afraid of. Just make preparation for having fun tonight.”

To be sure, Madam Jade was delighted. A lyric to the tune “The Moon Over the Western River” describes the scene as follows:

The bed is covered with exotic brocades,
And incense is kindled in the burner.
Fruits and confections are set on the table,
Together with fragrant tea and liquor.

Like a horse-ape long trapped in a pitfall,
She is now of the mandarin ducks covetous.
With baits to entice this handsome man,
She is sure to have a time gorgeous.

It was now getting dark. The mistress and her maid were once again back in the garden. Rosy Cloud, having reached the ladder, climbed up the tree the way she had done in the morning and loudly coughed a couple of times. Ren Junyong, seeing night falling, was beginning to pop
out his head and look around for signals when he heard coughs. He looked up and saw Rosy Cloud standing on a bough.

"Oh, my kind sister!" he said, too impatient to wait any longer. "I have been gazing so long I've almost worn out my eyes. Please be quick to get me in."

"You just wait here and I'll be back with you in a minute," said Rosy Cloud. She then went down the ladder hastily.

"That guy has been waiting there for a long time," she told her mistress.

"Hurry up and get him in," the mistress bade her.

Rosy Cloud got the rope ladder and carried it under her arm while working her way up the tree. She fastened the rope to a high branch once she had mounted it. "Watch out!" she shouted, tossing the rope ladder out to the other side of the wall, from which it hung down to the ground. Ren Junyong, having seen it was something to climb up on, was beside himself with joy. After tentatively stepping on the planks, he found they were solid enough. He then held the ropes with his hands and started to ascend, step by step, toward the top of the wall.

Rosy Cloud hurried down the ladder, calling out to her mistress. "He's coming! He's coming!"

Feeling somehow embarrassed, Madam Jade shrank back to a Lake Tai stone some distance away, on which she sat to await her guest. Now, Ren Junyong had succeeded in getting over the wall. He jumped off the ladder and took Rosy Cloud to him the moment he landed on the ground. "Sister," he exclaimed, "you're my benefactor! You're the creator of my greatest happiness!"

"Phooey! You shameless swine!" Rosy Cloud spat at him. "Don't be so greedy! Go report
to the lady first!”

"Which lady?" Ren Junyong asked.

"The seventh lady, Madam Jade," Rosy Cloud said.

"You mean the well-known beauty in our capital?"

"Who else could you expect to see if it were not her?"

"I dare not see her," Ren Junyong said.

"Hey." said Rosy Cloud, "she has missed you and thought up this way to help you come in. What are you afraid of?"

"If that’s the way things stand," Ren Junyong said, "I might not be able to live up to her expectation."

"Don’t be modest!" said Rosy Cloud. "It must be fate that favours you. Just don’t forget me after you know her."

"I won’t." Ren Junyong promised. "I’ll never forget you. I’ll do the same to you in return for what you have done for me."

Thus talking, they found themselves already in front of Madam Jade. Rosy Cloud, in a high-pitched voice, announced, "Here’s Mr. Ren!"

With a wide grin on his face, Ren Junyong made the lady a deep bow, saying, "My fair lady. I would never have presumed, as an insignificant worldly man, that I could get so close to you should you not have condescended to offer me such an honourable opportunity! I could only attribute it to the workings of fate in my former incarnation."

"This humble woman," said Madam Jade, "though dwelling inside her boudoir, had some chances of obtaining a view of your handsome appearance owing to Commander’s feasts, and has
long been missing you. Now that Commander is away and there is no one keeping me company, I'm making a point of inviting you so that we can have a chat. I would feel fortunate if my invitation were not rejected.”

“Your Ladyship’s favour is hard to refuse,” said Ren Junyong. “But despite this I’m afraid I may cause a serious trouble when later on Commander finds out what has happened between us.”

“Commander is careless,” said Madam Jade, “and moreover, he doesn’t have eyes on the back of his head. Since the way you have come in is safe and nobody knows you are here, there is nothing you should fret over. Please, sir, come with me to my bedroom!”

Madam Jade bade Rosy Cloud lead the way in front, and she and Ren Junyong walked behind, arm in arm. Ren Junyong was so carried away that it had been as though his soul had flown beyond the skies. Thinking nothing about consequences, he let himself be quietly conducted into her boudoir.

It was now completely dark and silence reigned over other quarters. When delicacies and wine had been laid out quietly by Rosy Cloud, the lady and her guest, sitting face to face, started to drink, while at the same time conversing in a sweet and tender voice and sending winks at one another. After three cups, their passions were aflame. They embraced each other and then went to bed together. The pleasure they were enjoying is beyond description.

As a lonely guest staying in his master’s outhouse,
He is going to the top of Mount Penglai today.

The taste of the first encounter is surely different,

Like the meeting of Shepherd and his Weaving Maid.

After their clouds and rain came to a stop, Ren Junyong said, “I’ve heard of your reputation long ago. But who would have ever thought that today I’ve been able to sleep with you on the same bed! Your benefaction is as high as sky and as thick as the earth, which I’m afraid I can never repay.”

“I’ve been always yearning for romance,” said Madam Jade, “but with Commander’s strict control I couldn’t get my wish fulfilled. The entertainment we have day and night do not

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29 Mount Penglai is a legendary mountain where the immortals lived. According to Sanhai jing 山海经 (Book of Mountains and Seas), Mount Penglai is in the sea. Guo Pu says that “on the top of the mountain there is a gold-jade palace of immortals and all the birds and animals there are white; they look as if they were clouds.” See Sanhai jing, collated & annotated by Yuan Ke (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 1992), p. 378. Taiping yulan 天平御覽 (The Encyclopedic Anthology Compiled in the Taiping Reign for the Emperor’s Reading) says that Mount Penglai is a divine mountain located in the Sea of Bohai, accessible only to the men with high moral attainments.” See Li Fang, comp., Taiping yulan (reprint, Shanghai: Hanfen lou, 1936), juan 38.

30 The Weaving Maid is the star Vega who crosses the Milky way to meet her lover the Shepherd, the star Altair, once a year on the night of the seventh day of the seventh month. According to Edward H. Schafer, Weaving Maid was unfaithful to her Shepherd, and there are two pairs of quatrains surviving from the Tang era that record this love affair. The story goes that the Maid appeared to a certain Guo Han on a moonlit night and declared her love for him. After that, each night over the period of a year, she descended from the sky and then left him tearfully to return to her sky palace forever. Whether longing for her faithful Shepherd in the sky or for a rare mortal over like Guo Han, the Maid appears in uncounted poems as the very prototype of the woman who suffers from the endless weary waiting that follows the brief intensity of passion. See Edward H. Schafer, Pacing the Void: Tang Approaches to the Stars (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), pp. 143-48.

31 See note 23 of the story “Fatal Seduction.”
make me happy. If I had not contrived this method to get you in, I would have certainly let time elapse without being able to enjoy its pleasure. I would like to keep our intimate relations for as long as I can, and I would not complain at all even if I were to die of overindulgence.”

Ren Junyong replied, “To be allowed to near your jade body is an unusual luck for me, let alone that you have graced me by filling me with your rain and dew and have had my wish fulfilled by merging your body into mine. Even if this affair cost my life, I would not regret it.”

They talked on and on merrily, without being aware that day began to dawn. Rosy Cloud came to the bedside, urging Ren Junyong to leave. “You’ve been at it for a whole night and you should feel satisfied!” she said. “If you don’t get up now, just when you think you’re going to leave?”

Ren Junyong then rose in a hurry and donned his clothes. Madam Jade, holding his hand, was still reluctant to part with him. Until after she asked him to come again for the second time did she finally let him go. Rosy Cloud, at her mistress’ bidding, saw him off to the wall of the courtyard, where Ren Junyong went out via the rope ladder the same way as he had come in. In the evening he again got into the compound over the wall. Truly

In the morning he leaves,
In the evening he arrives.
He goes not by streets,
He does things in secret.

Their tryst went on in this fashion for several nights. Later Rosy Cloud was involved and
the three of them made love together on the same bed.

Madam Jade, happy and satisfied, would sometimes betray herself when she was absent-mindedly carrying a conversation with her female companions. At the beginning her companions did not pay much attention to what she talked about. Gradually they noticed there was something unusual in her manner and began to be suspicious. They purposely kept alert at night and some of them eventually overheard some strange noises in her bedroom. They were all pent-up ladies, burning with sexual passions\(^{32}\) and eager to find some excuses so that they could get benefit in troubled waters themselves.\(^{33}\) However, not a shred of reliable evidence was discovered by them.

One day, in high spirit, these ladies wanted to play on swing. They went to where the swing had been installed, but could not find the rope. Madam Jade and Rosy Cloud kept silent. Ren Junyong, on the first two days of his rendezvous, unfastened the rope ladder and put it away after he had got out, lest it be seen by other people. Later he was no longer so cautious. He thought he would use the ladder in the evening anyway and was better off leaving it as it was. Now, although he was out, the rope ladder still stayed where it had been placed, hanging down from the tree to the other side of the wall. It was discovered before Madam Jade and Rosy Cloud could tuck it away.

"Isn’t this the rope of the swing?" said the ladies. "How come it has been tied onto this

[^32]: The Chinese text for “burning with sexual desires” is “\textit{chi de bei'er de}” 喜得杯兒的 (literally, “can eat cups” or “can drink wine”). I guess this is perhaps a slang used in the north China in the Ming (Ling Mengchu lived in Beijing for some years and that is why he was able to use some northern colloquial expressions in his stories). As I am not quite certain of its exact meaning, my free translation for this phrase may not be completely correct.

[^33]: “Troubled waters” 漁水 (\textit{hunshui}) is an elliptical form of the idiom \textit{hunshui moyu} 漁水摸魚 (to fish in troubled waters), meaning “to get benefit by taking advantage of a chaotic situation.”
tree and thrown out to the other side of the wall?"

Sister Smile, the youngest and the most agile among them, had caught sight of the ladder leaning against the tree. She flipped the ladder, scrambled up onto a higher bough and pulled the rope back. The other people standing down below were all taken aback as they saw the rope had planks attached to it.

"Strange! Strange!" they exclaimed. "Someone must have come in and go out over the wall."

Madam Jade blushed. For a long while she could not utter a word.

"Obviously," Madam Beautiful Moon said, "someone among us must have had an affair with someone from outside. We must report it to Steward Li and ask him to investigate it. When Commander is back, we can inform him of what has happened."

So speaking, Madam Beautiful Moon cast some meaningful glances at Madam Jade. In such a predicament Madam Jade could do nothing but remain silent, her head bent down. By now Aunt Flower had already perceived who the adulteress could be.

"Madam Jade," she said with a smile, "why are you keeping silent without saying a word? You seem to have something on your mind and you'd better let us know the truth so that we can help you."

Rosy Cloud knew there was no means of escaping, so she said to her mistress, "If we keep the things secret, they'll surely make a scene and this would force us to give him up even though we are unwilling to. Please tell them the truth so that we may continue to live on good terms with each other."

All clasped their hands. "Well said, Sister Rosy Cloud! There is no point of deceiving
Madam Jade then told them, from beginning to end, the whole story of their plotted seduction of Ren Junyong, a retainer who lived in the outhouse.

“Good sister!” said Madam Beautiful Moon. “How could you do things like this behind our back!”

“Don’t talk about it any more!” said Sister Smile. “Now that we’ve known about it, we should consider sharing this pleasure together.”

“Some may want to, but others probably won’t,” said Madam Beautiful Moon deliberately. “How can you make such a suggestion!”

“Even if we wouldn’t,” said Aunt Flower, “in view of our sisterhood, we’d better help with each other.”

“You’re right, auntie!” said Sister Smile. Then in hilariousness they broke up.

Madam Beautiful Moon, who was very close to Madam Jade, had actually been excited by the discovery of this liaison. She intended to share fun with her boon companion, and it was only because of the presence of other concubines that she had put on a puritanical air. She went into Madam Jade’s room after they had dispersed.

“Is he coming tonight, sister?” she asked.

“Why not?” said Madam Jade. “To be frank with you, he comes every night and it’s unlikely that he’ll stop coming tonight.”

“When he comes,” said Madam Beautiful Moon. “you’ll still want to keep him to yourself?”

“Sister, you said yourself that you wouldn’t take part in such sort of things,” Madam Jade
said.

"Well, that’s not my sincere words," said Madam Beautiful Moon. "In fact, I’d also like to share fun with you if you don’t object."

"If this is what you want, I’ll certainly give way to you. Tonight I’ll send him to your room when he comes."

"But I’m not familiar with him and I’d feel embarrassed if he came directly to my room." Madam Beautiful Moon said. "I only want to be your helper."

"I don’t need a helper. you know," Madam Jade smilingly said.

"Since I’m always timid at the beginning, maybe I should take your place to make love with him?" Madam Beautiful Moon suggested. "You keep it secret until we have got familiar with each other."

"If you want this, just hide yourself somewhere first." Madam Jade told her. "After he gets onto my bed and takes his clothes off, I’ll put the light out and let you replace me."

"My sister, are you sure you will help me?"

"Of course!" said Madam Jade.

The things had thus been settled. When the evening came, Rosy Cloud was sent to the backyard to put the rope ladder in its right place so that Ren Junyong could come in. After Ren Junyong had arrived, Madam Jade sent him off to bed first. She then blew out the light, quietly dragged her friend out and pushed her onto the bed. Madam Beautiful Moon, partly because of the talk between Ren Junyong and Madam Jade and partly because of Ren Junyong’s handsome appearance that she had caught sight of from the dark corner behind the lamp when he was coming in, was aroused so much that her eyes flared with lustful fire. By the time she was
dragged out, she was in such a frenzy of impatience that it had been as though she could not wait one more minute.

Now in sheer darkness she had nothing to be ashamed of. She quickly slipped into the quilt. Ren Junyong, who had been waiting in bed for some time already, took her as Madam Jade. As he had been so familiar with her, he scrambled up onto her body and started to screw without even allowing time for her to speak. Burning with lust, Madam Beautiful Moon tried her best to receive him. But when he was deep in her, he felt the texture of her body was somehow different. He also noticed that she was quite affected in the way of making love. Her unusual reticence aroused his further suspicion.

“My dear lady,” he called in a tender voice, “why don’t you speak tonight?”

Madam Beautiful Moon did not reply. When he was trying again to get her speak, she simply held her breath without even letting a slightest sound come out of her mouth. Ren Junyong became rather bewildered and impatient. He stopped moving his body and kept murmuring, “Strange! Strange!”

Madam Jade, who was standing at bedside while Ren Junyong interrogated Madam Beautiful Moon, could not help breaking into giggles. She then whipped the bed curtain aside and gave him a heavy strike. “You damned knave!” she said, “You’ve got what you want and why are you being so garrulous? Listen, it is Madam Beautiful Moon who is now sleeping with you. You’re really lucky to have such a lady to come together with you, a lady who is ten times better than I am!”

Now that his hunch had been confirmed, Ren Junyong said, “This insignificant man didn’t know that it is another lady who is condescending to offer him this special favour. Please
forgive me for my having taken liberties of you without bowing to you and making your acquaintance first.”

Madam Beautiful Moon then began to speak: “Why are you talking so gently? Now that you’ve known who I am, it should have sufficed your curiosity.”

Upon hearing her sweet voice, Ren Junyong was greatly turned on and started to pump even more vigorously. Soon Madam Beautiful Moon was worked up to the climax of her ecstasy.

“Oh, my kind sister,” she cried, “I’m dying! I thank you so much for letting me share such an enjoyment!” Then her fluid flowed out and her limbs went paralysing.

Madam Jade was so stirred up by her companion’s sexual pleasure that she could not help stripping her clothes off and jumping onto the bed to join them. Fortunately, Ren Junyong’s flag and gun were still standing. Madam Beautiful Moon, with her passion having been spent, made haste to loose her clutch and pushed her partner toward Madam Jade. After mounting the new comer, Ren Junyong at once started his another bout. Truly

Kissing green and hugging red is most exciting

On Mount Wu that is enveloped by clouds and rain.

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34 “Flag and gun” 旗枪 (qiqiang) is an euphemism for penis. In Chinese sexological works, male sexual organ is often referred to in military metaphors. For example, 阳锋 yangfeng, meaning “sharp point of the male sword,” is used in Dongxuan zi 洞玄子 (Master Dongxuan’s Instructions on How to Have Sex). See Mishu shizhong 秘書十種 (Ten Secret Texts) manually copied out by Yinyue anzhu 吟月庵主. 1951. Late Ming vernacular fiction, if not explicitly erotic, usually uses euphemism to refer to sexual organs.

35 Mount Wu 巫山, or sometimes translated as “Witch’s Mountain,” is located on the border between the provinces of Sichuan and Hubei, its shape being like the Chinese character “wu” 巫. Mount Wu in literary works often alludes to the place where man and woman meet each other for a love affair. For the source of this allusion, see note 15 of this story.
A romantic is a butterfly that aroma is stealing,
Shuttling from east to west is only for a change.

Let's say no more of their making love in trio. Our story goes that Sister Smile and Aunt Flower, after having known about Madam Jade’s adulterous affairs, planned to intercept Ren Junyong in the evening when he was coming again. They wanted to get Madam Beautiful Moon involved in their seduction, to enjoy pleasure together. After supper they went to Madam Beautiful Moon’s room. Sure enough, she was not available. Full of suspicion they went in a hurry to Madam Jade’s place to find out if she was there. Rosy Cloud was at that time standing outside. So they made inquiry of her: “Is Madam Beautiful Moon at your place?”

“Yeah, she’s in there,” replied Rosy Cloud, giggling. “She is now sleeping on my lady’s bed.”

“You mean they’re sleeping together?” they asked. “It’ll be kind of inconvenient when he comes.”

“What’s the inconvenience?” said Rosy Cloud. “The three of them have already slept together and haven’t yet found any inconvenience.”

“The guy has come in already?”

“Yes, he has come in!” said Rosy Cloud sarcastically. “By now he must have been tired of ‘in and out!’”

“A fake prude!” said Sister Smile. “In the morning she opposed my suggestion, but now she’s become the first one to enjoy pleasure!”

“It’s usually loose women who tend to be prudish,” remarked Aunt Flower.
"Go and make a scene!" said Sister Smile. "I'll see if they dare reject us!"

"No, no!" Aunt Flower dissuaded her. "The man must have been exhausted dealing with the two of them and I don't think he has much energy left for us." She then whispered to Sister Smile, "We'd better be patient today and tomorrow we'll make an early preparation and get him into our place. I can bet he'll let us have our way with him." Then they returned to their own rooms. Nothing happened the rest of the night.

Next morning, after Ren Junyong had left, Rosy Cloud went to the bedside, reporting to her mistress that Sister Smile and Aunt Flower had come to look for Madam Beautiful Moon last night.

"Did they know that I was here?" Madam Beautiful Moon, after hearing this, immediately asked.

"Of course!" answered Rosy Cloud.

Madam Beautiful Moon was stunned. "Gosh, what should I do? They must have had a good chuckle behind my back."

"The best way is to coax these two chicks to join us," suggested Madam Jade. "Then we won't have to be on guard against each other, nor will Ren Junyong have to leave in the morning and come back in the evening. He can stay here all day long and we can take turns sleeping with him. Isn't this much better?"

"Your suggestion may be very good," said Madam Beautiful Moon. "Just I feel too embarrassed to see them."

"Take it easy, sister, and you don't have to mention anything today," Madam Jade consoled her. "If they don't ask you, well and good; if they do, I'll take advantage of it and rope
them in."

Madam Beautiful Moon then felt somewhat relieved. Because of her sensual indulgence last night, she was quite exhausted and did not get up until noon time. Although she was happy and contented, she was nevertheless very much on guard against Sister Smile and Aunt Flower. She was afraid they might give her hard time, and avoided them as much as she could. Who would have thought that they were harbouring their own intrigue and did not mention a single word about the previous night in her presence, as if nothing had happened.

In the evening, after careful deliberations, Sister Smile and Aunt Flower went out into the garden to wait for Ren Junyong. They hid themselves in an invisible place near the tree. Presently they saw Ren Junyong climb over the wall and step down the ladder. When he had adjusted his cap\textsuperscript{36} and brushed down his gown, ready for striding toward his destination, Sister Smile darted out.

"Man!" she shouted. "You came in from outside the wall and what'd you think you gonna do here in our women's quarters, eh?"

Aunt Flower also charged out, and catching hold of his clothes, screamed, "Thief! Thief!"

Ren Junyong was greatly startled. He defended himself in a garbled voice. "It i-s...i-s...i-

\textsuperscript{36} In ancient China only official-scholar 士 (shi) could wear guan 冠 (hat), and cap 巾 (jin), or 巾帻 (jinze) were usually for plebeian to cover their hair. See Zhou Xibao 周錫保, Zhongguo gudai fuzhuang shi 中國古代服裝史 (History of Traditional Chinese Costumes) (Beijing: 1984), p. 280. And according to Dai Qinxiang 戴欽祥, cap, which a man could wear with a hat or without a hat, was also a sign of adulthood. See Dai Qinxiang, et al., Zhongguo gudai fuzhuang shi 中國古代服裝史 (History of Traditional Chinese Costumes) (Taipei: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1994), p. 112. The cap has many styles. For the caps that the common people wore during the Song time, see Shen Congwen 沈從文, Zhongguo gudai fushi yanjiu 中國古代服飾研究 (A Study of Traditional Chinese Costume) (Hong Kong: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1981), ch. 104, pp. 341-43; for other styles, see Wang Qi, Sancai tuhui (Assembled Illustrations from the Three
s...the two ladies inside who invited me in. Sisters, please don't scream in such a high voice."

"You're Mr. Ren, aren't you?" asked Sister Smile.

"Yes, yes," replied Ren Junyong, "this insignificant man is indeed Ren Junyong, not a phony."

"You've seduced our two ladies in secret and this is a horrible sin!" said Aunt Flower.

"Now, you want to make it public or settle it privately?"

"It is those ladies who invited me in," said Ren Junyong, "otherwise I wouldn't have been so brave as to come into your compound. I don't want to make it public. I'd prefer to settle it privately."

"To make it public," said Sister Smile, "we'll hand you over to Steward Li and let Commander mete out punishment for you when he is back. Now that you want to settle it privately, you must quietly come with us to our room, not to their place, and let us discipline you."

Ren Junyong broke into a smile and said, "I trust you won't treat me harshly? Well, I'll just go with you." They tiptoed to Sister Smile's boudoir, where Aunt Flower joined them on the same bed. They tossed and turned, like clouds and rain raging in a fury, like mandarin ducks being in heat in their conjugal felicity. But no more of this.

Our story goes that Madam Jade and Madam Beautiful Moon, who did not see Ren Junyong come in the evening, sent Rosy Cloud to the backyard to give him a signal. Carrying a lantern with her, Rosy Cloud went to the foot of the wall. By virtue of the light she observed that the rope ladder had been moved to the inner side of the wall. She knew Ren Junyong must have

been in the compound already, because every time he came into the garden he would pull the rope ladder in lest people outside see it and follow on his heels.

“Mr. Ren has come in already!” she reported, after having hurried back. “As he is not here, he must be in some other place.”

Madam Jade reflected for a while and then smilingly said, “There must be someone who has kidnapped him!”

“He must be in the bedroom of one of those two chicks,” said Madam Beautiful Moon.

Rosy Cloud was again sent out, this time on a detective errand. She first went to Aunt Flower’s quarters, which were locked and were quiet. Then she made for Sister Smile’s place, where she heard laughter and squeaks of the bed coming out from the bedroom. She knew they must be in bed having intercourse. Undoubtedly she was envious. She streaked back to report to the two mistresses.

“Ren Junyong is indeed in their place, just in the middle of doing things with them,” she said. “We’d better hurry up to catch them in act.”

“Wait,” said Madam Beautiful Moon. “Since they didn’t disturb us last night, we have no reason to make troubles for them today. For the sake of our friendship we shouldn’t take such an initiative.”

“I’m just planning to rope them in,” said Madam Jade. “Who would have thought that they have been so mindful and have carried on with him already. This is exactly what I want them to do. In order to teach them a lesson and make them collaborate with us, I’d rather cut off his way out tomorrow morning than create disturbance for them tonight.”

“How to cut off his way out?” asked Madam Beautiful Moon.
“What we should do is just to have Rosy Cloud unfasten the rope ladder and tuck it away.” explained Madam Jade. “Without the rope ladder, Ren Junyong can’t go out tomorrow morning, and then we’ll see how they can hush the matter up.”

“A brilliant idea! A brilliant idea!” Rosy Cloud exclaimed. “We made this rope ladder and got him in, but now they wanted to take the prize without letting us know about it. That’s really ridiculous!”

She grabbed a lantern and ran to the garden in a huff. With alacrity she got on the tree and undid the rope ladder, which she then coiled up into a bundle and carried back to the room. “Here you are!” she said, giving it to her mistress.

“Put it away,” Madam Jade told her. “Since there is nothing we can do tonight, we’d better go to sleep.”

Both the ladies then went to their own bedrooms to sleep. They could not help feeling lonely. Truly

Although a jade hourglass marked the same time

Night was long in one bedroom but short in the other.

Holding Ren Junyong in their arms, Sister Smile and Aunt Flower spent a tempestuous night. When day dawned, they urged him to get up and leave and bade him come again in the evening. Ren Junyong walked in front, and they followed in the wake of him, their hair being dishevelled and faces unwashed. After reaching the tree, Ren Junyong climbed up the ladder as he had usually done. But there was no rope ladder awaiting him. As he could not get out, he had
to come down the tree.

"The rope ladder disappeared!" he told them. "I think it must have been tucked away by the other two ladies. I didn't show up last night and they might have somehow got wind of where I was, so they have deliberately put me in such an awkward situation. Could you find another rope for me so that I can go out?"

"I would," said Sister Smile, "if you could tell me where to get such a thick rope that can lift you up and let you down."

"Then I'd better go to see those two ladies and apologize to them," said Ren Junyong.

"That way I can perhaps solve the problem."

"But we feel kind of embarrassed," said Aunt Flower.

The three of them were hesitated when they saw Madam Jade and Madam Beautiful Moon, together with Rosy Cloud, come rushing into the garden. Madam Jade and Madam Beautiful Moon clasped their hands and laughed. "You may do things in secret, but can you make him fly over the wall?"

"Somebody before us did things in this fashion and we're just following suit," said Sister Smile.

"No bickering words!" said Aunt Flower. "We should have helped with each other as we said at the beginning. Since you both abandoned us and kept him to yourselves, we on the spur of the moment chose to carry on with him without informing you about it. Now we shouldn't mention it any more. Please take out the rope ladder and let him go."

"I wonder if it's still necessary," said Madam Jade smilingly. "Now that we've all known him and all of us have had relations with him, we may as well keep him here. It won't hurt any
one of us, will it? So why not indulge ourselves as much as we can and live a happy life together for some time?”

They all broke into smiles, saying, “A wonderful idea! A wonderful idea! Nothing could be better than what you’ve suggested!”

Holding Ren Junyong’s arm, Madam Jade, together with her companions, went back to their living quarters. From that time on Ren Junyong stayed inside the compound day and night. This morning he sat shoulder to shoulder between two Madams with his thighs on top of theirs, and that evening he lay in bed in the arms of Sister and Aunt. Endless indulgence in sex soon depleted his energy and he felt tired. He wanted to take leave and rest for a few days. This, however, was not what he could now decide by himself. His request was not granted. The ladies took out their private savings and had nutritious food bought for him to husband his strength. They also pooled a large sum of money to bribe Steward Li lest he betray them. Ren Junyong, being completely carefree, was not aware that he had gone too far in his enjoyment. But

One can not be fully satisfied,
Nor enjoy excessive happiness.
As extreme fortune begets sorrow,
So he will end in miserableness.

Ren Junyong spent more than a month in the harem, happy and contented. One day, people working outside abruptly reported that Commander was coming back home. Those concubines, in a sleep-drunk state, did not take it seriously. To their surprise, however,
Commander arrived in no time and all of sudden the gates of the mansion were all widely opened. They were now thrown into a panic and confusion. Hastily they bade two maids send Ren Junyong to the backyard. The maids urged him to get out from the wall as quickly as possible, and once he had mounted the wall, they removed the ladder immediately.

"Go! Be quick about it!" they shouted at him. Then in a rush they went hurrying back.

Fleeing helter-skelter, Ren Junyong did not notice that the rope ladder had not been tied until he was up on the wall. He could not climb down to the other side of the wall, nor could he descend into the garden because the ladder had been already removed. I'll be in trouble if somebody sees me on the wall, he thought. He wanted to jump down, but as he had been physically enervated and his limbs were weak and sore, he failed to muster up enough courage. After struggling for a while, he could not but sit on the wall trembling, like

A goat that butts into a fence

Gets stuck in this predicament.37

As the old saying goes, "Enemies are bound to meet on a narrow road." Who should have thought that upon his arrival Commander's first thing first was to go around the compound to check if there was any suspicious trace. When he came into the backyard, he immediately caught sight of somebody sitting on the wall as he raised his head. Ren Junyong, looking down from the

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UMI
moved downward to the wound below his belly, which had now healed into a big scar. The organ with which he used to have intercourse had already been cast into the sea. He felt the scar, tears flowing down like rains. A poem can testify to it:

In the past he was happy surrounded by flowers,
Today sitting by himself he is a sad loner.
He now realizes that women and luxurious living
Are only for those whose good fate is predestined.

After Ren Junyong had been castrated, Commander was much more hospitable to him than he used to and would greet him smilingly whenever he saw him. Now that his guest had lost his genital and he had nothing to guard against, he would even bring him into the harem and let him sit among his womenfolk and drink and play games with them. Ren Junyong had now simply become a jest, an object that could only provide the women with pleasure. At the beginning, those who had had intimate relationship with him like Madam Jade and Madam Beautiful Moon would mention their love affairs of the bygone days, full of compassion and sorrow. But, after all, Ren Junyong could no longer produce his snake for them to play; he had become a useless man to them, good to look at but not good for use any more.

"When Commander had come back," he said to his old lovers, "I thought my hope of seeing you would be dashed for good. Who would have thought that I can still meet you from time to time. Only I've been transformed into a crippled man, completely useless to you. How
tragic it is! How tragic it is!"

Now Ren Junyong would spend most of his time in the harem. He rarely went out. Being a eunuch, with his voice having become feminine and his beard lost, he felt embarrassed to walk on streets and meet people he knew. He lost contact even with his closest friend Fang Wude, whom he had not seen for nearly half a year. In fact, Fang Wude once came to Commander’s residence to inquire after him. However, the household staff, acting in accordance with Commander’s instruction, told him that Ren Junyong had been dead.

One day Commander and his women went to visit the Temple of Serving the Country.\(^{46}\)

\(^{45}\) This is an euphemism for penis.

\(^{46}\) The Temple of Serving the Country 相國寺 (Xiangguo si), located at the centre of Kaifeng city, was first established in the sixth year of Tianbao 唐睿宗 (555 A.D.) of the Northern Qi 北齊 dynasty on the site of the old residence where Lord of Xinling of the Warring States period had lived. Ruizong 穆宗 (r. 684 and 710-712) of the Tang dynasty had it rebuilt and named it Xiangguo si. In the second year of Zhidao 重道 Reign (996) of the Song dynasty it was renovated and its name was changed to Da Xiangguo Si 大相國寺 (The Great Temple of Serving the Country). See jiaqing chongxiu vitong zhi 嘉慶重修一統誌, vol. 69, juan 187, p. 27. Xivou ji 西遊記 (Journey to the West) recounts a completely different legend of how the Temple of Serving the Country (Hsiang Kuo National Temple in Waley’s translation) was built: “[T]he minister Wei-ch’ih (Yuchi should be pronounced as yuchi) went to Kai-feng with a store of silver and gold, to pay back the money lent by Hsiang Liang. Now Hsiang Liang was a water-carrier, and his wife made a living by selling pottery... When Wei-ch’ih came to their door, laden with silver and gold, their astonishment knew no bounds... They were reduced to speechless consternation. and throwing themselves on to their knees they bowed low and long. ‘Rise!’ cried Wei-ch’ih. ‘I have merely come to repay the money that you were good enough to lend to his Majesty the Emperor 太宗 (Taizong).’ ‘We have never lent money to anyone,’ they stammered, ‘and cannot possibly accept what does not belong to us.’ ‘I am aware,’ said he, ‘that you are poor people. But owing to your constant alms and dedication of paper cash to the spirits of the world below, you have great sums to your credit in that world. Recently when the Emperor spent three days in the realms of Death, he had occasion to borrow heavily from your account there, and now I have come repay the debt.’ ‘It’s true,’ they said, ‘that we have something to our account in that world. But what proof have we that his Majesty borrowed from us there? We could not dream of accepting.’ ...Finding that they were obdurate, Wei-ch’ih sent a report to the Emperor, who remarked on reading it. ‘Such virtue is indeed rare among the rich!’ And he issued a rescript, that with the money a temple was to be built, and shrine at the side of it, dedicated to the Hsiangs. A
and Ren Junyong also joined the excursion. It so happened that while he was strolling about by himself in the Great Mercy Hall, he bumped into Fang Wude. Fang Wude was not quite sure at first sight if the person he saw was his friend, although he looked quite familiar. What with the news about his death and with his facial features having greatly changed, Fang Wude went away after a momentary hesitation. Yet Ren Junyong recognized him.

"Wude! Wude!" he called to him. "Why did you avoid your old friend?"

Fang Wude then knew it was indeed Ren Junyong. He came back and saluted him.

Holding his hand, Ren Junyong could not help wailing and sobbing.

"I'm sorry I haven't seen you for a long time," said Fang Wude. "Is it that something unfortunate has happened to you?"

"Yes, but it's really hard to explain it in a few words," Ren Junyong said. He then told his friend the story from beginning to end. After finishing his story, he was practically drowned in tears. "A short time enjoyment has made me suffer so great a misfortune!"

"You overindulged yourself and that's why you have got such a punishment," said Fang Wude. "Now that things are over, you shouldn't be overcome with regret. Go visit your old friends as much as you can and you'll still able to live a happy life."

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site was found on ground not required either by the people or the military authorities, to the extent of fifty acres, and when the building was finished it was called the Hsiang Kuo National Temple... This is the Great Hsiang Kuo Temple that still stands today." See Xiyou ji (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju, 1972), vol. 1. pp. 129-130; Arthur Waley, Monkey (New York: Grove Press Inc., 1943), p. 112 (the translation here is Waley's). As a royal temple since the beginning years of the Northern Song, the Temple of Serving the Country occupied the land of more than five hundred acres at its prime. It was so grandiose and magnificent in its golden colour it could even make rosy clouds look dull and gloomy. See Zhongguo shanshui wenhua daguan 中國山水文化大觀 (A Grand Exposition of Mountains and Rivers in China) (Beida chubanshe, 1995), p. 194. The temple, Meng Yuanlao says, opened five times a month to the
“I don’t have face to see my friends,” Ren Junyong said. “I would feel contented if I could drag out the rest of my life in such a humiliating condition.”

Fang Wude expressed his sympathy and then left. Later on he learned that Ren Junyong died of depression in Commander’s residence. This was the retribution that Ren Junyong received for his illicit love affairs. Fang Wude, whenever he saw a young man yearning for romance, would admonish him by telling him the story about his friend.

Gentle readers take notes, sanguine youths are not the only ones who should be careful about sex. Other people should not be exception. Commander Yang, in spite of his vicious revenge, also suffered the disgrace of cuckoldry, for his women had been debauched. This is a good lesson for all the rich men who like to keep a large number of concubines.

Funny is the carnal organ hanging down below,

Which some cannot tolerate but some likes to fondle.

Here is an advise for lustful young men to learn:

Let not your body be held hostage by your tiny organ.

There is another poem that mocks Commander Yang:

You has his genital cut to eliminate his desires.

But he can still dally with your concubines.

public during the Song dynasty. See Dongjing menghua lu zhu, juan 3, p. 90.
When a palace girl needs a eunuch for consultation,
Who can prevent her from making flirtation?
**Glossary**

**Of Names, Titles and Terms**

**Part I: Introduction**

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胡适

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嘉靖

教

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見紅

錦紀

交鋒

吉川

汲古閣

吉隆國

靜觀

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文若虚 文秀堂 文言 文輛彩風 文徵明 吴 吳興 武則天 武宗 賢良方正 小令 洞開居 小子 孝宗 謝道縉 寫實 寫意 西門慶 新調萬曲長春 醒夢 凶恨淫秀 筒 宣德 蘇赦齋 蘇方山 徐州 陽道 陽叔 陽真 陽物 燕哀 異端 宜人 吳史氏曰 一為文人,便不足觀 旗檻 淫穢小說 淫書 營勝司 陰陽 倚枕 永樂 有詩為証 欲
yuanwai lang
"Yuchuang"
Yue
"Yueyanglou ji"
Yumingtang ji
yunshou yusan
yunyu
Yuzan ji
zengguang sheng
Zhang Fei
Zhang Jinglu
Zhangguo ce
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zhongcheng
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Zhu Yunwen
Zhu Yuanzhang
Zijian

Part II: Translation

anyuan
Bei Juyi
Baiyi jing
bao
baojia
"Baojian ji"
Bielu
bingbu
Bohai
Bu bitan

廬院
白居易
白衣經
報
保甲
寶劍記
別錄
兵部
渤海
補筆談
Bu Liang
buliang
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canshi
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cuju
cuohe shan
daixe de pinang
daodao ling
daogu
Da Yuan zhizheng chao
Deng Yubin
Dongjing
Dongting hu
Dong tujue
dou baicao
Fang La
fangzhang baozheng
fumu guan
fuzhi
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guan
guan
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gui
Guigu zi
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hanlin yuan
Han shui
漢王

號

紅緋

紅緋雜劇

侯克中

后羿

淮水

宦者

戶部

混水（混水模魚）

花陣

僧

既得隴，復望蜀

巾幗

稽首

夾棍

薦舉

甲夜（乙夜，丙夜，丁夜，戍夜）

今

金

金鳥（金烏，俊烏）

舉壁

開封

飄給膜想吃天鵝肉

烙鐵

禮部

吏部

李龜年

李開先

梁伯龍

倒壘

林紳（林琴南）

獻食其

流

劉邦（劉季）

六博（六轉）

六部

留侯世家

劉向

陸賈

馬伯六

媚眼兒

孟睿君

門下省

鏞鈴
Mianzhounan
moxiongnanfeng
nanwu sanman duo, mutuo nan’an,
dulu dulu, ddiwei sapo ke
nigu
niangzi
meipo
Penglai shan
“Pumen pin”
Qi furen
qixiong (qidi)
qianpo
quanxuan
Qunyu feng
Qu Yuan
re tangshui
Ruizong
sangu liupo
sanhun qipo
sansheng
sanshi
shanpo yang
Shangshu sheng
Shanhia jing
sheng
Shen Kuo
shi
shi
shifang shizhu
shipo
shi yushi
shuanghuan nuzi
shumi yuan
si
si
sikong
situ
Su Qin
Sui He
Sun zi
taibao
taidiao
taifu
taishi
taiwei

汾州
抹胸
南
南无三满哆，母驮喃噜，
度噜度噜，地尾薩婆呼
尼姑
娘子
婆
蓬莱山
蓬　門　品
契　兄（契　弟）
契　婆
選　　玉峰
屈　原
熱　　湯　水
睿　　三　姑　六　婆　
三　魂　七　魄　
三　師　
坡　羊　　首　山　海　經　
生　　沈　括　
士　氏　
十　方　施主　
師　　婆　
侍　　御　史　
雙　　環　　女　　子　
樞　　密　　院　
死　　寺　
司　　徒　
蘇　　秦　
司　　子　　保　　调　　太　　師　　
司　　太　　尉　　
Wutong shen (Wulang shen)
Xiang Yu (Xiang Ji)
Xiucai
Xiuyi
Xiaogui
Yan Shigu
Yang Su
Yang Wenhui
Yin
Yinde

taixue
tianmen
tianxia
tinggun
Tong Guan
tu
wanmin
Wei Zhongxian
wenpo
wugeng
wugou
Wushan
wushe

太學
天門
天 下
鋳 構
童 貫
徒
萬 諸
魏 忠 賢
穆 娅
五 更
吳 鉤
巫 山
吾 舌
五 通 神 （ 五 郎 神 ）
吳 福
婺 州
縣
祖 國 寺
鄉 試
小 龜
西 楚 霸 王
繫 辭
小 衣
項 羽 （ 項 籍 ）
刑 部
刑法
新 化 軍 節 度 使
信 陵 君
秀 才
條 利 ， 修 利 ， 摩 柯 裁 利 ， 修 裁 利 ， 薩 婆 告
繡 衣 御 史
訓 導
薰 龍
顔 師 古
牙 婆
牙 人
陽 鋒
燕 姬
楊 蕭
楊 文 會
藥 婆
一 千 銀 子
一 千 文
陰 德

xuanlao
xunlong
Yin
tyao
yaren
yangfeng
yanji
Yang Su
Yang Wenhui
yaoapo
yiguan
yiliang yinzi
yiqian wen
yin
yinde

xian
Xiangguo si
xiangshi
Xiaogui
Xichu bawang
“Xici”
xiaoyi
Xiang Yu (Xiang Ji)
xingbu
“Xingfa”
Xinhua jun jiedu shi
Xinling jun
xiucai
xiuli, xiuli, mokexiuli, xixiuli, sa po ke
Xiuyi yushi
xundao
Yan Shigu
yao
yaren
yangfeng
yanji
Yang Su
Yang Wenhui
yaoapo
yiguan
yiliang yinzi
yiqian wen
yin
yinde
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