

SOURCES OF THE CHIN P'ING MEI

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The sources with which this article¹ is concerned are those works which have been copied into the *Chin Ping Mei* 金瓶梅 in sufficient amounts for us to identify them. Only after the source-works have been identified in this manner, have I ventured to make conclusions about the kind of influence they may have exerted upon the author of the novel. In general, I have ignored all the probable and possible sources of this or that detail of plot or characterization which are not guaranteed by the fact of textual borrowing; I feel that consideration of such source-works, as well as of all the various analogues, ought to wait until after the proven sources have been weighed and analysed.

Many of the sources enumerated below have not been pointed out before; it is the primary purpose of this article to identify them. However, even those sources which have already been pointed out—including, of course, the *Shui-hu chuan* 水滸傳, but also some of the vernacular short stories as well as most of the songs—have almost invariably been considered from the point of view of the light their inclusion in the novel

¹ It is based on the latter portion of the writer's thesis; see Patrick D. Hanan, *A Study of the composition and the sources of the Chin Ping Mei*, University of London Ph.D. thesis, 1960. References to the *Chin Ping Mei* are in each case to the *Hsin-k'ê Chin Ping Mei ts'a-hua* 新刻金瓶梅詞話 edition (A.1 in the terminology of the writer's "The Text of the *Chin Ping Mei*", *Asia Major*, NS ix, 1, pp. 1-57). References to the novel exclude consideration of Chapters 53 to 57 which, as was shown in "The Text of the *Chin Ping Mei*", are not the work of the original author.

throws on them, rather than of the light it throws on the *Chin P'ing Mei*. Therefore the secondary purpose of this article is to analyse the use of the source-works made by the author of the novel.

There are times when a search for sources becomes one of the most tedious and unrewarding rituals of scholarship—that is to say, when the sources, once discovered, throw no light on the methods and purpose of the author. Of the *Chin P'ing Mei*, this is not true. A study of the sources—why the author has chosen them and how he has used them—can provide one sure touchstone for understanding the novel.

Nowhere in Chinese vernacular literature is a touchstone more necessary. We know nothing of the novel's composition except what we can glean from the text itself. Since comparable works are few, any conclusions we may make about the novel are bound to be fallible. On the other hand, a comparison of passages copied into the *Chin P'ing Mei* with their original source-works helps to isolate the author's own contribution, and thus provides evidence from which to deduce his motives and preoccupations.

Such an approach is more likely to yield results in the case of the *Chin P'ing Mei* than in the case of any other early Chinese novel. One reason is that many of the sources used by the author still survive, whereas those of the other novels do not. But the principal reason is that the *Chin P'ing Mei* differs essentially from most of the other early novels, which are in some degree the products of a lively oral tradition. In their case, discovery of one source may merely unearth an earlier form of the same tradition; it is always hazardous to seek in them the consistent imagination of a single writer. Yet that is precisely what one expects to find in the *Chin P'ing Mei*, perhaps for the first time in the history of the Chinese novel—one man's imagination as affected by life and literature.²

The actual number and diversity of the source-works is astonishing; even excluding the songs, there are well over a score of different works, some of which belong to forms which one would not expect to find utilized in prose fiction. Sometimes the borrowed passages are combined in an extremely complex way; in Chapter 1, for example, no less than four or five passages, each from a different work, have been woven together into one story. Furthermore, the uses to which different sources have been put vary enormously—dialogue, plot, description, the conception of character, and so forth. It is even possible to discern innovations which the author has made in the form of the novel under the influence of other kinds of literature.

² This is an assumption, but a likely one. The study of the way the sources are used serves only to confirm it. The argument has been put forward that the *Chin P'ing Mei* developed directly from an oral cycle of stories, but no real evidence was produced in support of it, and it has been adequately rebutted. See the articles by P'an K'ai-p'ei 潘開沛 and Hsü Meng-hsiang 徐夢湘 respectively in *Ming-Ch'ing hsiao-shuo lun-wén chi* 明清小說論文集, Peking, 1959.

Not all the sources are of the same value in interpreting the novel. A clear division must be made, for example, between those works which are represented as being performed in the course of the novel, and the rest of the sources. It is one of the most important facts about the *Chin P'ing Mei* that these performed works are actually the currently popular songs, plays, etc. of the time when the novel was written. Nevertheless, although they have a considerable function in the novel, they are bound to be of less interest than those sources which are embodied in the narrative.

How large a part of the total number used are the source-works enumerated below? It is impossible to guess how many more there are. The researcher into the sources is likely to feel a nagging suspicion that certain passages are derived from other works but to be unable to prove the point, either because his reading has not been wide or careful enough, or because the works themselves have ceased to exist. To judge from the ingenuity with which some of the known sources have been utilized, it does seem probable that there are many other sources, as yet undiscovered. All one can say, however, is that a study of the available sources does at least give some basis for deciding what kind of element is, or is not, likely to be of the author's invention.

There are two tasks in dealing with the sources: to identify and describe them, and to evaluate their use in the *Chin P'ing Mei*. For both purposes, it is necessary to consider them under the heading of the source-work rather than under the manner in which they have been used in the novel. They are grouped below, according to their genre, as set out at the beginning of this article (Sections 1 to 7). In the final section (8), some general conclusions are drawn from the author's use of his chosen sources.

I. THE NOVEL—*Shui-hu chuan*

The edition of the *Shui-hu chuan* which the author of the *Chin P'ing Mei* used is no longer extant.³ Among the surviving editions, the closest to it is the 100-chapter edition which has a preface by T'ien-tu wai-ch'ên 天都外臣 dated 1589. (The actual 1589 edition does not exist; this is a Ch'ing reprint.) This is the text, as reprinted in the variorum edition⁴ of the "full" versions of the novel, which is referred to below.

Borrowings from the *Shui-hu chuan* are of two kinds—the story of Wu Sung 武松 and P'an Chin-lien 潘金蓮, which has been borrowed directly, and other passages, which have been extensively adapted to fit into the *Chin P'ing Mei*.

³ This can be seen from the fact that the copied passages have affinities with more than one kind of edition. See Patrick D. Hanan, *A Study of the composition and the sources of the Chin P'ing Mei*, pp. 121-3.

⁴ *Shui-hu ch'uan-chuan* 水滸全傳, 3 vols. Peking, 1954.

The Wu Sung—P'an Chin-lien story

The adventures of Wu Sung as narrated in Chapters 23-7 of the *Shui-hu chuan* are copied into the *Chin P'ing Mei* in three different places.⁵ Chapters 1 to 6 tell his story from the fight with the tiger as far as his brother's murder; Chapters 9 and 10 tell of his return and attempted vengeance; Chapter 87 tells of his murder of Chin-lien. The main divergence from the plot of the *Shui-hu chuan* comes in Chapter 9; by the time Wu Sung returns from the mission on which he has been sent, Chin-lien is already out of his reach, installed in Hsi-mên Ch'ing's 西門慶 household. In an attempt to kill Hsi-mên, Wu Sung kills his companion by mistake; for this deed he is sent into an exile from which he does not return until much later. By thus postponing Wu Sung's vengeance, the author of the *Chin P'ing Mei* has contrived to fit most of the action of his novel within the framework of a brief *Shui-hu chuan* incident.

Within these borrowed chapters, although the *Chin P'ing Mei* follows the text of the *Shui-hu chuan* fairly closely, the author has constantly subordinated it to his purpose. There are some notable excisions and a good deal of fore-shortening. There are numerous added passages, some of them most revealing of the author's attitude. The characters taken over from the *Shui-hu chuan* have sometimes been differently conceived. There are differences in narrative technique, and more fundamental differences in the novelist's approach to his work.

Most of the excisions are designed to bring the *Chin P'ing Mei* as quickly as possible to the point at which Chin-lien becomes the centre of interest. Incidents which concern Wu Sung alone have been omitted or abridged. Thus the episode in the inn, which prepares the reader for the possibility that Wu Sung may be able to kill the tiger has been summarized in a single sentence, and the fight itself has been much abridged. Even in the abridged passages, however, the author has not scrupled to simplify a phrase, to add a detail of motivation, or to insert some evocative remark.

There is one departure from the *Shui-hu chuan* which may be more significant than it seems; this is the change of location from Yang-ku 陽穀 to Ch'ing-ho 清和. Whereas in the *Shui-hu chuan* Wu Sung sets out for Ch'ing-ho but meets his brother in Yang-ku, in the *Chin P'ing Mei*, he does exactly the opposite. This was certainly a deliberate change, for Ch'ing-ho and its neighbouring towns, especially the flourishing canal port of Lin-ch'ing 臨清, play a considerable part in the novel. It would be pointless to

speculate about the author's motive in making this change, but obviously he must have known something of the Ch'ing-ho district.⁶

Many of the additions to the text of the *Shui-hu chuan* are examples of the greater detail demanded by the later novel. One character is added, besides the members of Hsi-men's household, in these early chapters. She is the pitiful little daughter of Wu Chih 武植, Ying-erh 迎兒, who seems to foreshadow that hapless, slovenly maid Ch'un-chü 春菊 in provoking all the viciousness in Chin-lien's character.

Other additions indicate a difference in the author's conception of the characters which he has derived from the *Shui-hu chuan*, notably Chin-lien and Wu Sung. The account of Chin-lien's origin contained in the *Shui-hu chuan* has been replaced by a passage drawn from a vernacular short story, *Chih-ch'êng Chang Chu-kuan* 志誠張主管.⁷ The main difference between the girl of the short story and the Chin-lien of the *Shui-hu chuan* is one of status and accomplishments. The one is possessed of all the arts and graces of the courtesan; the other is, presumably, an unlettered maid. The Chin-lien of the *Chin P'ing Mei* has the background and status of the former; her accomplishments in singing and music, as well as her ability to read, are often insisted upon.

While Wu Sung is still the stern, upright *hao-han* 好漢 of the *Shui-hu chuan*, the macabre feeling which surrounds his act of vengeance is increased. The scenes of roistering, such as the one in the inn, have been omitted; the only Wu Sung we read of is the implacable avenger. Small additions heighten this impression; when Wu Sung returns, he offers to marry Chin-lien—a ruse scarcely consistent with the straightforward Wu Sung of the *Shui-hu chuan*—and it is not until she arrives for the wedding celebration and is confronted with her murdered husband's funeral tablet that she has an inkling of her fate. The reader already knows from the foreboding felt by Yüeh-niang ("he would kill a man without batting an eye") that Chin-lien will die at her prospective bridegroom's hands. Details of the murder add to this effect. The author of the *Chin P'ing Mei* has thus not even attempted to accommodate the larger-than-life figure of Wu Sung within the lifesize realism of his novel; he has merely accentuated the macabre quality of the man's actions.

Some additions to the *Shui-hu chuan* text show how concerned the author was to explain the thoughts and actions of his characters. This sets them apart from the characters of the *Shui-hu chuan*, who to our eyes occasionally have the wanton unpredictability of Grettir or some other such

⁵ In the following notes the photolithographic edition of the *Chin P'ing Mei* *ts'ü-hua* is abbreviated to *CPM*, and the *Shui-hu ch'üan-chuan* is abbreviated to *SHC*. The three different places are as follows: (1) *CPM* Ch. 13b—Ch. 64a, copied from *SHC* pp. 341-401, 405-7, (2) *CPM* Ch. 93b—Ch. 105a, copied from *SHC* pp. 407-418, 423-6 and (3) *CPM* Ch. 871a, 5ab, 8-10, copied from *SHC* pp. 415-6.

⁶ In Ming times there was a large Imperial tileworks at Lin-ch'ing. (See Sung Ying-hsing 宋應星, *T'ien-kung k'ai-wu* 天工開物, p. 137 in the Shanghai 1954 edition.) Contemporary readers would presumably have identified it with the one mentioned in the novel as under the management of two palace eunuchs.

⁷ See Section 2 below, where this story is separately discussed.

hero of the Icelandic sagas. The additions are of two kinds. There are the remarks addressed to the reader, such as those in Chapter 1 which explain that when a woman of wit and vivacity is matched with an unworthy husband, disaster is bound to occur. There are also passages which represent the thoughts of characters. On a trivial level, Chin-lien reflects after meeting Hsi-mên Ch'ing "If he hadn't taken a fancy to me, he would not have turned round seven or eight times to look at me"; Hsi-mên Ch'ing, for his part, reflects "What a fine wench! How can I seduce her?" Of course this kind of representation of thought, as well as the habit of addressing explanatory remarks to the reader, is found in the *Shui-hu chuan*; the *Chin P'ing Mei* differs merely in placing greater emphasis upon it. However, there also occurs, inserted in the early chapters which are so heavily indebted to the *Shui-hu chuan*, the first example in the *Chin P'ing Mei* of what we may describe as "the dramatic use of song", and this is a new feature in the Chinese novel, probably the most important technical innovation made by the author. This innovation, which consists of the introduction into prose fiction of what is essentially a dramatic procedure will be discussed in Section 5 below, but it is worth noting here that the whole reason for its use lies in the need to express the thoughts and the passions of the participants in the novel.

The author's preoccupation with the evocative description of love-making is also apparent in long passages added in Chapter 4. What is also apparent at this early stage—an aspect which should be kept in mind in assessing the function of the erotic passages—is the deliberate crude comedy which the author introduces into these descriptions. The joke is one which the author shares with his readers; the participants remain oblivious to it. There is, for example, a *double entendre* (*shuang-kuan* 雙關) poem which purports to describe a gourd, but which actually describes the male genitals. On this poem a whole scene has been based, for it is on the pretext of borrowing a gourd that Mother Wang goes to summon her neighbour. A similar comic effect is obtained elsewhere by the same means; a scene in Chapter 86 is built around a poem describing a cat chasing a mouse.

The theme of political corruption—an important but under-estimated theme of the novel—is also stressed in some of the additions made to the *Shui-hu chuan* text. In Chapter 10 the prefect sees through the accusation against Wu Sung, and prepares to bring Hsi-mên and the others to trial, but is forced to drop the case when Hsi-mên has strings pulled in the capital by the prefect's superiors. Here and elsewhere the description of the working of political machinery is far different from the somewhat naïve account of the *Shui-hu chuan*. In place of popular legend, for example, Sung Chiang's 宋江 intrigue with Li Shih-shih 李師師, the *Chin P'ing Mei* presents an entirely credible picture of bribes, political patronage, and the

preferential treatment of merchants who ingratiate themselves with those in power.

Other passages borrowed

Other borrowings reveal, from one point of view, how close the *Shui-hu chuan* lay to the author's imagination, and from another, with what ingenuity he adapted passages from it to his own purpose.

In one case, it is just possible that a major figure of the *Chin P'ing Mei* may have been derived from a character in the *Shui-hu chuan*. In giving the background of Li P'ing-êrh 李瓶兒 in Chapter 10, the author remarks that she was once the concubine of Liang Shih-chieh 梁世傑 of Tamingfu 大名府, but that when the whole household was slaughtered by Li K'uei 李逵 in the third year of Chêng-ho 政和, she escaped to the capital taking valuable jewellery with her.⁸ This is clearly a reference to the raid on Tamingfu described in Chapter 66 of the *Shui-hu chuan*. Although it was not in fact Li K'uei who slaughtered the Liang household, he impresses himself on the memory more than the men who did.⁹ It is true that no mention is made of any concubine of Liang Shih-chieh, but the unfaithful wife of Lu Chün-i 盧俊義 has a few features in common with the account given of Li P'ing-êrh. Together with her paramour, she escapes from the city, taking with her a quantity of valuables. Her character and behaviour are not unlike Li P'ing-êrh's. Both women are neglected by their husbands; Lu Chün-i devotes himself to feats of arms, and Hua Tzū-hsü 花子虛 to whoremongering. Both women connive at legal chicanery in order to ruin their husbands and transfer their considerable wealth to their lovers. It is therefore just barely possible that the conception of Li P'ing-êrh's character was influenced by a somewhat inaccurate memory—witness the mistake about Li K'uei—of this part of the *Shui-hu chuan*.

In Chapter 84, there is a deliberate attempt to combine several *Shui-hu chuan* stories into one adventure. The occasion is the visit of Yüeh-niang to the temple on T'ai Shan; at least four parts of the *Shui-hu chuan* are drawn on.

The description of the goddess as seen by Yüeh-niang comes from Sung Chiang's dream in Chapter 42.¹⁰

The account of Yüeh-niang's escape from danger in the temple is derived from two separate stories of the *Shui-hu chuan*. The author explains that the abbot there is in fact a pander for a notorious villain named Yin T'ien-hsi 殷天錫, who is able, because he is the brother-in-law of the local prefect Kao Lien 高廉, to perpetrate all kinds of crimes including the

⁸ P. 7a.

⁹ Actually it was Tu Ch'ien 杜遷 and Sung Wan 宋萬.

¹⁰ CPM Ch. 84 3a, copied from SHC p. 678. The description of the temple in Ch. 84 2ab has evidently been copied from SHC pp. 1243-4.

seduction of such female pilgrims as come to the temple. Yüeh-niang is inveigled into the abbot's room, whereupon Yin appears and attempts to rape her. Her cries bring the others to her help, but by the time they arrive both Yin and the abbot have vanished. Yüeh-niang's brother gives vent to a little of his fury by having the abbot's quarters smashed up. They then lose no time in fleeing down the mountain, which is just as well, for Yin has already collected a band of twenty or thirty idlers armed with clubs and swords, and is giving pursuit.

The figure of Yin T'ien-hsi, together with some of the incident, is drawn from Chapter 52 of the *Shui-hu chuan*.¹¹ He is a local bully, who, coveting the land of Ch'ai Chin's 柴進 uncle, is endeavouring to make him give it up. One day, accompanied by twenty or thirty idlers armed with clubs and swords, he rides up to supervise the eviction. He does not realize that the uncle has died from an illness brought on by worry over the affair; when he threatens Ch'ai Chin, Li K'uei steps forward and kills him, and then routs his followers.

The attempted seduction in the temple, together with a good deal more incident, is, however, drawn from Chapter 7 of the *Shui-hu chuan*.¹² The passage deals with the attempt of the adopted son of Kao Ch'iu 高俅 to seduce Lin Ch'ung's 林冲 wife. This young rake, relying on Kao Ch'iu's protection, makes a profession of rape and seduction. One day he saw Lin Ch'ung's wife as she was visiting a temple; his attempt to seduce her was frustrated by Lin's arrival. Enlisting the aid of one of Lin's friends to lure him away, the young man tried again, but was still unsuccessful. When Lin Ch'ung found he had been duped, he gave vent to his anger by smashing up the friend's house. As well as the obvious parallels with the *Chin P'ing Mei*—the seduction in the temple, the smashing of the furniture, the friend who acts as pander—there are a number of verbal parallels. His wife's cries for help, on both occasions, are all copied in the *Chin P'ing Mei*.

Thus the figures of two villains from the *Shui-hu chuan* have been amalgamated; the composite *Chin P'ing Mei* villain even has the name of one and the nickname of the other.¹³ However, even in the *Shui-hu chuan*, the two men have one thing in common—their dependence on their relationship to the Kao family, for Kao Lien, to whom Yin T'ien-hsi is related by marriage, is said to be the brother of Kao Ch'iu.¹⁴

After her escape in the temple, Yüeh-niang survived yet another danger. On her way back to Ch'ing-ho, she was captured by the lascivious bandit chief Wang Ying 王英, and was freed only on the intercession of

¹¹ *SHC*, pp. 858–60, copied in *CPM* Ch. 84 3a–7b, 10a.

¹² *SHC*, pp. 113–6, copied in *CPM* Ch. 84 3a–7b.

¹³ He is called Yin T'ai-suei 殷太歲 in *CPM* Ch. 84 3a. The other man's name is given as Hua-hua t'ai-suei 花花太歲 (*SHC*, p. 113).

¹⁴ See *SHC*, p. 858.

Sung Chiang himself. This whole episode is drawn from Chapter 32 of the *Shui-hu chuan*, where the captured woman is the wife of the local magistrate.¹⁵

The most important of the other borrowings from the *Shui-hu chuan* are those set pieces of description, with their intricate parallelism and their figurative, non-colloquial language, which are one of the staple elements of the Chinese novel.¹⁶ In several cases, part of the narrative context of the set piece has been transferred to the *Chin P'ing Mei* together with the set piece itself. Thus the one in Chapter 8 which describes how the priests who come to chant sutras for the murdered Wu Chih are dumbfounded at the sight of Chin-lien's beauty, is taken from a similar situation in Chapter 45 of the *Shui-hu chuan*; some of the narrative before it, as well as the remarks addressed to the reader, are also derived from the *Shui-hu chuan*, although in the *Chin P'ing Mei* they show a good deal of elaboration. Other set pieces, however, are applied to situations quite different from those they were originally found in. For example, the one in Chapter 21 of the *Shui-hu chuan* which describes the scene as Sung Chiang and his mistress sit sullenly facing each other the whole night through is utilized in Chapter 59 of the *Chin P'ing Mei* to describe Li P'ing-êrh as she sits fretting all night over her sick baby.

An interesting elaboration by the author of a theme provided by the *Shui-hu chuan* is found in Chapter 27.¹⁷ It is midsummer and intensely hot. The heat is described in a *tz'ü* 詞. Then follows a short disquisition on the subject of the kinds of people—peasants, merchants and soldiers—who have cause to fear the heat and those who have none. At the end of the disquisition the theme is restated in a four-lined poem, the last two lines of which are as follows:

While the peasants' insides like broth are boiling,
In the upper rooms the young lords fan themselves.

Both the *tz'ü* and the four-lined poem are taken from Chapter 16 of the

¹⁵ *CPM* Ch. 84 8a–9b, copied from *SHC*, pp. 501–6.

¹⁶ There seems to be no generally-accepted Chinese term for them, and hence they are here referred to as "set pieces". Sometimes they are called *tsan* 贊 or *tsan* 讚, *fu* 賦 or *i-p'ien yen-yü* 一篇言語 in the course of Chinese novels. One in Chapter 78 of the *Chin P'ing Mei* is referred to as a "long *tz'ü*" (*ch'ang-tz'ü* 長詞). Here is a list of the set pieces copied into the *Chin P'ing Mei*, together with their *Shui-hu chuan* counterparts. *CPM* Ch. 2 5a, *SHC*, p. 723; *CPM* Ch. 8 11ab, *SHC*, pp. 734–5, 739 (includes some prose narrative as well as three four-lined poems); *CPM* Ch. 9 2b, *SHC*, p. 357; *CPM* Ch. 11 8ab, *SHC*, p. 840; *CPM* Ch. 14 5a, *SHC*, p. 194; *CPM* Ch. 15 2b–3a, *SHC*, p. 516; *CPM* Ch. 30 6b, *SHC*, p. 193; *CPM* Ch. 59 13b–14a, *SHC*, pp. 312–3; *CPM* Ch. 61 21b, *SHC*, p. 858; *CPM* Ch. 66 4ab, *SHC*, pp. 882–3; *CPM* Ch. 81 3b–4a, *SHC*, pp. 474–5; *CPM* Ch. 84 2ab, *SHC*, pp. 1243–4; *CPM* Ch. 84 3a, *SHC*, p. 678; *CPM* Ch. 86 7a, *SHC*, p. 126; *CPM* Ch. 89 6ab, *SHC*, p. 102; *CPM* Ch. 89 7a, *SHC*, p. 732; *CPM* Ch. 93 12a, *SHC*, p. 618; *CPM* Ch. 100 10b (identical with that in Ch. 81), *SHC*, p. 474.

¹⁷ *CPM* Ch. 27 2b–3b, copied and elaborated from *SHC*, pp. 229–30, 233.

Shui-hu chuan, which also contains a longer poem stating the theme of the disquisition and naming the various kinds of people who fear, or do not fear, the heat. The poems occur in the course of the incident in which the birthday presents meant for Ts'ai Ching 蔡京 are waylaid by the outlaws. The four-lined poem is the song sung by the man who suddenly appears over the brow of the hill carrying two buckets of wine. In the inclusion of the poems in both novels, we can discern an obvious protest at the extremes of social inequality.¹⁸

Apart from textual borrowing,¹⁹ of which the few cases described above will have to suffice as examples, it seems probable that there was much non-textual borrowing. The birthday presents sent by Hsi-men to his patron Ts'ai Ching remind one of those famous presents sent by Liang Shih-chieh. The original conception of Li P'ing-êrh's character, as discussed above, is another possible instance. Altogether, considering the author's close reliance on the *Shui-hu chuan*, it is likely that there are many more such cases, difficult though they may be to prove.

2. THE VERNACULAR SHORT STORY

There are probable borrowings from at least eight vernacular short stories in the text of the *Chin P'ing Mei*. One of them, the *Kang-k'ou yü-wêng* 港口漁翁, is found in a well-known collection of crime-case stories, and is dealt with separately in Section 2a below. The other seven, which are all found in general collections of the vernacular short story, are as follows:—

- (i) *Wên-ching yüan-yang hui* 刎頸鴛鴦會, copied in Chapter 1.
- (ii) *Chih-ch'êng Chang Chu-kuan* 志誠張主管, copied in Chapters 1, 2 and 100.
- (iii) *Chieh-chih-êrh chi* 戒指兒記, copied in Chapters 34 and 51.
- (iv) *Hsi-shan i k'u kwei* 西山一窟鬼, copied (possibly) in Chapter 62.
- (v) *Wu-chieh Ch'an-shih ssü Hung-lien chi* 五戒禪師私紅蓮記, copied in Chapter 73.

¹⁸ It has been suggested that the *Shui-hu chuan* has here copied from a lost vernacular short story. See Wang Li-ch'i 王利器, "Shui-hu chuan so ts'ai-yung ti hua-pên tzü-liao 水滸傳所採用的話本資料," *Shui-hu yen-chiu lun-wên chi* 水滸研究論文集, Peking, 1957, pp. 312-3.

¹⁹ There are a number of eight- and ten-lined poems which are common to both novels, e.g. CPM Ch. 10 1a (SHC, p. 731), CPM Ch. 18 1a (SHC, p. 874), CPM Ch. 19 1a and Ch. 94 1a (SHC, p. 513), CPM Ch. 68 11a (SHC, pp. 1335-6), CPM Ch. 88 1a (SHC, p. 563), CPM Ch. 89 1a (SHC, p. 47). It is likely that some of them may have been taken from the *Shui-hu chuan*. But, like a few of the set pieces perhaps, they may have been borrowed from anywhere. They have only the vaguest of connections with their context, and many of them are introductory poems that stand at the head of the chapter. The same point applies much more forcibly to the scores of shorter poems which both the novels have in common. I have not bothered to list them.

- (vi) *Yang Wên "Lan-lu-hu" chuan* 楊溫攔路虎傳, reflected (possibly) in Chapter 90.
- (vii) *Hsin-ch'iao-shih Han Wu mai ch'un-ch'ing* 新橋市韓五賣春情, copied in Chapters 98 and 99, and also, just possibly, in Chapter 1.

Most of these sources have been pointed out before, by various scholars;²⁰ (iv) and (vi) and the *Kang-k'ou yü-wêng* are the exceptions. Yet only one story has been fully discussed in terms of its use in the novel;²¹ some of the others have been noted only incidentally in considering the short story collections themselves. There is ample justification for a closer study of each of the borrowings, whether it has been pointed out before or not.

(i) *Wên-ching yüan-yang hui*

The earliest surviving text of this story is found in the *Ch'ing-p'ing-shan-t'ang hua-pên* 清平山堂話本 collection.²²

The story deals with the adulteries of a libidinous woman, and ends with her murder. The story itself, however, is not copied into the *Chin P'ing Mei*, only the introductory *tz'ü* and some general comment from the beginning and end. The borrowed *tz'ü*,²³ which is the opening poem in the novel, deals with woman's power to enslave and ruin men. Even the greatest heroes—the two mentioned are Hsiang Yü 項羽 and Liu Pang 劉邦—have not been able to escape ruination. The short story goes on to explain that the subject of the poem is contained in the two words *ch'ing* 情 "love, passion" and *sê* 色 "carnal love, lust". This too, together with the short piece of philosophical comment which follows it, is reproduced in the *Chin P'ing Mei* with only minor alteration. From this point, however, the novel diverges from the story, and proceeds to explain the poem by describing the careers of Hsiang Yü and Liu Pang and the ruin and humiliation to

²⁰ Wu Hsiao-ling 吳曉鈴, in a review of the republished *Ku-chin hsiao-shuo* 古今小說 in *Han-hsue*, vol. ii (Peking, 1947), pp. 444-55, noted the inclusion of stories (iii), (v) and (vii). Ono Shinobu 小野忍 noted the copying of (i) and (ii). (See *Kimpeibai*, the translation of the novel into Japanese, Tokyo, 1959, vol. i, p. 312.)

²¹ Story (vii). See J. L. Bishop, "A Colloquial short story in the novel *Chin P'ing Mei*", *HJAS* (1954), pp. 394-402.

²² This is the name normally applied, for the sake of convenience, to the extant fragments of an anthology published by Hung P'ien 洪楩 in the middle of the sixteenth century. The title of the story is included in the catalogue *Pao-wên-t'ang shu-mu* 寶文堂書目 of Ch'ao Li 晁瑗 (died 1560).

²³ This *tz'ü* is also used as the introduction to story 32 of the *Ch'u-k'ê p'ai-an ching-ch'i* 初刻拍案驚奇 collection. The accompanying comment is different, however. The author of the *tz'ü* was the Sung poet Cho T'ien 卓田, T. Chia-wêng 蔡翥 (fl. circa 1200). It is quoted with that attribution in *chüan* 1 of the *Ch'ing shih* 情史, of which the preface and some of the notes are by Fêng Mêng-lung 馮夢龍. There are slight divergences among the different texts. The *Ch'u-k'ê p'ai-an ching-ch'i* version is identical with that of the *Chin P'ing Mei*, except for one correction.

which their paramours brought them. After this exegesis, the *Chin P'ing Mei* then returns to the text of the short story, asking itself the question:

"Story-teller, why have you chosen to talk about these two words 'love' and 'lust'?"

But whereas the short story now goes on with the tale itself, the author of the *Chin P'ing Mei* proceeds to answer the question. The first part of his answer is drawn from the general comment at the end of the short story.

The author's use of this source at the very opening of his novel is highly significant. It indicates that in some degree he thought of his novel in the same light as that kind of short story which has for heroine a *femme fatale* of inordinate sexual appetite who ruins physically or financially all the men she captivates. The story *Hsin-ch'iao-shih Han Wu mai ch'un-ch'ing*, which is copied later in the novel and, it seems likely, also echoed in the author's introductory comments in Chapter 1, is another example of this same kind. The attitude traditionally adopted by the narrator was one of warning his audience against being misled by such women. This too is as far as the author of the *Chin P'ing Mei* ever goes—unlike the later editors of the novel—in drawing an explicit moral.

How far the author of the *Chin P'ing Mei* really regarded his novel in this light it is impossible to say. Perhaps for him, as for the story-tellers, the formula provided a satisfactory framework within which an evocative tale could be told with some apparent concession to propriety. In fact, of course, the conception of the *femme fatale* rôle has little place in the novel. Such a rôle can, in any case, only be sustained with the simpler, external characterization of the *Shui-hu chuan* or the short stories. The attempts to explain Chin-lien's conduct, and especially the inclusion of the song in which she expresses her desperate loneliness, show that, even at the beginning of the novel, a very different notion of character had already formed itself in the author's mind.

On p. 3a of Chapter 1, there is a short passage about the novel's purpose which is drawn neither from the two short stories nor from the *Shui-hu chuan*. It may well originate with the author himself. It describes the novel as "a tale of the passions" (*fêng-ch'ing ku-shih* 風情故事). This is the only explicit statement in the book of how its author regarded it.

(ii) *Chih-ch'êng Chang Chu-kuan*

The earliest surviving text of this story is found in the *Ching-pên t'ung-su hsiao-shuo* 京本通俗小說 collection. There are three borrowings in the *Chin P'ing Mei*, one certain one in Chapter 1 and two probable ones in Chapters 2 and 100.

Chapter 1, 9b-11a. Chin-lien's origin in the household of General Wang and her purchase by Chang, which have been substituted for the account

given in the *Shui-hu chuan*, are based on this story. It tells how a rich old man, Chang Shih-lien 張士廉, who was over sixty and had no children, one day "smote his breast, heaved a deep sigh, and said to his servants: 'I am getting on in years, and I have no children. If I had a million taels, what use would they be to me!'"

His retainers advised him to take a wife, and two match-makers were called.

This is the same as the account given of Chin-lien's origin in the *Chin P'ing Mei*, except that there it is his wife to whom he complains and who suggests that he buy a couple of girls to be trained to play and sing for his amusement. The young wife of the short story comes from the household of General Wang, just as Chin-lien does, although the reason for her dismissal is not the same. In the short story she has been dismissed because the general's wife has become jealous of her; this resembles Chin-lien's dismissal from the house of her second master, Mr. Chang.

There is another detail borrowed from the short story. The *Chin P'ing Mei* tells how Chang, after sleeping with Chin-lien, developed five kinds of debility, which are listed, as well as "one that cannot be mentioned". This passage is derived from the episode in the short story in which the girl, who has been tricked into believing that Chang is a young man, is aghast on seeing how old he really is. He suffers from "four or five kinds of debility", four of which are described.

Chapter 2, 9ab. The descriptive set piece about Mother Wang is close textually to that describing one of the match-makers in the short story.

Chapter 100, 7b-8a. The set piece which describes Han Ai-chieh 韓愛姐 is the same as the one describing the girl in the story as she throws herself on the hero's mercy. The contexts are vaguely similar; the hero's mother takes the girl in, just as the old woman comes to Ai-chieh's aid.

The passages about Chin-lien are of some importance. As was pointed out above, they have the effect of changing her status; she becomes a figure with the grace and accomplishments of the educated courtesan. It may be, too, that the author's use of this story is an indication of the greater sympathy with which he conceived the character of Chin-lien, for despite the narrator's explicit moral, the girl of the story remains a somewhat pathetic creature, betrayed by old man and young hero alike.

(iii) *Chieh-chih-êrh chi*

The earliest surviving text of this story is found in the *Ch'ing-p'ing-shan-t'ang hua-pên* collection. It tells of a clandestine love affair between the young gallant Juan Hua 阮花 and Ch'ên Yü-lan 陳玉蘭, the daughter of a powerful official. Their meetings were arranged by an astute old nun Wang Shou-ch'ang 王守長, who had access to the houses of wealthy and eminent people.

It is referred to twice in the *Chin P'ing Mei*, first in Chapter 34, and

again in Chapter 51. On the former occasion, it serves as a criminal case brought before Hsi-mên Ch'ing in his capacity as magistrate. Returning home at the end of the day, he gives Li P'ing-êrh an account of the case which amounts to a précis of the short story. His account follows the story closely except in its dénouement; Hsi-mên has the guilty nun flogged, and then releases her. On the second occasion, Chapter 51 4b, Hsi-mên returns home early and finds to his astonished rage that this very nun—Nun Hsüeh 薛—has inveigled herself into his own household. When Yüeh-niang expostulates with him, he explains:

"You don't know what tricks she's been up to! She arranged for Minister Ch'ên's daughter to have sexual relations with a young fellow called Juan III when she . . . went to the temple. Unluckily this fellow collapsed and died while he was lying with the girl. For her part in all this the nun received three taels of silver. When it all came out she was brought to my tribunal, and I had her stripped and given twenty strokes. I ordered her to marry and give up her vocation. Why hasn't she done so yet? Shall I have her taken to the tribunal and given a few more strokes?"

The use of this story shows, of course, that the author sometimes had recourse to earlier vernacular literature when he had need of extra incident. But what is more significant is the borrowing of the figure of Nun Hsüeh. It seems to have been the phrase about her having access to the houses of the rich and powerful that stirred the imagination of the author; she appears frequently in the novel, and comes to have a certain hold over the minds of some of the women of Hsi-mên's household. She is greedy, shrewd and unscrupulous; she is part charlatan, part religious mentor and part entertainer.

(iv) *Hsi-shan i k'u kwei*

The earliest surviving text of this story is found in the *Ching-pên t'ung-su hsiao-shuo* collection. Two descriptive set pieces in Chapter 62 of the *Chin P'ing Mei* occur also in this story. Although there is no certainty that they were derived from the story—one of them also appears elsewhere²⁴—their occurrence together makes it quite probable.

The set piece describing the *shên-chiang* 神將 "ghostly general, genie" summoned up by the old Taoist priest to exorcise the demons plaguing the story's hero is used in Chapter 62 14b-15a to describe the genie summoned up by the Taoist priest P'an to capture the demons plaguing Li P'ing-êrh. The other set piece is used in the story to describe the phantom wind which sweeps away the people of the hero's illusion; in

²⁴ The first of them is also found in the story *Loyang san-kwai chi* 洛陽三怪記 (*Ch'ing-p'ing-shan-t'ang hua-pên* collection).

Chapter 62 16a it describes the phantom wind which blows out the "lamps of life" set near Li P'ing-êrh, thus indicating that she is beyond redemption.

(v) *Wu-chieh Ch'an-shih ssü Hung-lien chi*

The earliest surviving text of this story is found in the *Ch'ing-p'ing-shan-t'ang hua-pên* collection.²⁵ The greater part of it, the end being somewhat curtailed, is related in Chapter 73 11b-14b by Nun Hsüeh. It tells how the "Five Vows" priest deceives his brother-priest and seduces the girl Hung-lien; in the next life the two priests are reincarnated as the poet Su Tung-p'o and the priest Fo-yin 佛印 respectively. It differs from the other tales told by Nun Hsüeh in that it is no *pao-chüan* 寶卷; it clearly retains its *hua-pên* 話本 (vernacular short story) form.

There seems little point in speculating on the story's function in the *Chin P'ing Mei*. It is amusing enough on its own account. Perhaps some additional irony is intended through having the story told by Nun Hsüeh.

(vi) *Yang Wên "Lan-lu-hu" chuan*

The earliest surviving text of this story is found in the *Ch'ing-p'ing-shan-t'ang hua-pên* collection.²⁶ It is a heroic story, reminiscent in many touches of character and incident, of the *Shui-hu chuan*. The *Chin P'ing Mei* is concerned only with a minor character of the story, the champion warrior Li Kuei 李貴, whom Yang Wên overcomes at a temple festival. Li Kuei appears under similar circumstances in Chapter 90 1b-2b. Although no fight is described, Li Kuei does launch into a long passage of rhymed braggadocio. Despite the similarity of situation, there is little or no textual relationship between the two accounts of Li Kuei beyond his name and nickname (the Yaksha of Shantung 山東夜叉). It is impossible, therefore, to be certain that the author derived his knowledge of him from this story. It is quite conceivable that his account, including the braggadocio, is drawn from other popular narrative or dramatic literature which now no longer exists.

Li Kuei is mentioned again in Chapter 99 8b. In boasting of his prowess, Li An 李安 claims that Li Kuei is his uncle.

(vii) *Hsin-ch'iao-shih Han Wu mai ch'un-ch'ing*

The earliest surviving text of this story is found in the *Ku-chin hsiao-*

²⁵ The title of this story is included in the *Pao-wên-t'ang shu-mu*. An oral tale about Hung-lien was current in Hangchow in the Chia-ching period. (See T'ien Ju-ch'eng 田汝成, *Hsi-hu yü-lan-chih-yü* 西湖遊覽志餘, chüan 20.)

²⁶ Yang Wên is described as a grandson of one of the famous generals of the Yang clan, of which there is a story-cycle. There existed an oral tale about him—perhaps this very one—in the Sung dynasty, to judge from the mention of a story called *Lan-lu hu* in the *Tsui-wêng t'an-lu* 醉翁談錄 of Lo Yeh 羅燁. (Shanghai 1937 edition, p. 4.)

shuo 古今小說 collection.²⁷ A good deal of narrative is copied from it into the *Chin P'ing Mei*, and it is therefore worthwhile relating the story in some detail.

It tells how in Southern Sung time there lived near the capital Lin-an a young man named Wu Shan 吳山, the only child of a prosperous silk-merchant and money-lender. He was sober and industrious, and had a wife and child. Every day he would leave his father's house, which served as the main shop, to go and run a subsidiary shop in a nearby village. One day on arriving there he was surprised to find some women in the act of moving their belongings from a couple of barges into the empty rooms above his shop. His anger was mollified, however, by the apologies of the youngest of the women, and he eventually agreed to let the rooms to them. Soon afterwards this young woman, Han Chin-nu 韓金奴, made an attempt to seduce him. Snatching an ornamental pin he wore in his hair and running upstairs with it, she made him follow, and then induced him to make love to her. Once their liaison was established, she proceeded to obtain money from him. In fact, unknown to him, the family had for a long time been living on the prostitution of the girl and her mother. When the girl began, in Wu Shan's absence, to receive other callers, their neighbours, jealous of their reputation and fearful of trouble, forced the family to move out.

Wu Shan had meanwhile fallen sick. On receiving a letter from Chin-nu, he said he was feeling better, and made an excuse to his parents to leave the house. It was up to this point that the author of the *Chin P'ing Mei* copied from the story. It is not necessary to tell in detail how Wu Shan fell critically ill, how his life was despaired of, how he was finally released from the curse which had been placed upon him, and how he resumed the sober and industrious life he had led before meeting Chin-nu.

The story is copied into the *Chin P'ing Mei* in Chapter 98 5a-13a (end of chapter) and Chapter 99 1ab. One day as Ch'ên Ching-chi 陳經濟 sat looking over the canal from his tavern in Lin-ch'ing, he noticed people carrying their belongings from a couple of barges into the empty rooms above. His anger was mollified by the younger of the two women there. Just at that moment the older woman recognized him. (She was Wang VI 王六兒, wife of Hsi-mên's former manager Han Tao-kuo 韓道國, and the young woman was their daughter Ai-chieh 愛姐. Ai-chieh had been sent by Hsi-mên to be the concubine of one of his contacts in the capital, the comptroller of Ts'ai Ching's household. She had later been joined in the capital by her parents, absconding with some of Hsi-mên's money.) Her husband, Han Tao-kuo, now appeared, and told Ching-chi why they had

²⁷ Wu Hsiao-ling, *op. cit.*, suggests that the entry *San mêng sêng chi* 三夢僧記 in the *Pao-wên-t'ang shu-mu* may refer to this story. For a detailed discussion of this story and its bearing on the *Chin P'ing Mei*, see the article by J. L. Bishop referred to above.

had to leave the capital. Ching-chi allowed them to stay in the tavern, and he and Ai-chieh soon became lovers.

When his wife grew jealous of the amount of time he spent at the tavern, Ching-chi was forced to stay at home for a few days. Deprived of his money, the girl's mother, Wang VI, resumed the trade of prostitute. Heartbroken at Ching-chi's absence, Ai-chieh sent a letter to him, and making the excuse that he had to visit the tavern on business, Ching-chi went off to see her.

After this point—Chapter 99 1ab—the *Chin P'ing Mei* diverges entirely from the short story. The author has chosen to use only that part of the story which describes the meeting of Wu Shan and Chin-nu and their subsequent love-making. It is interesting to observe how, even to make use of this part of the story, some preparation has been necessary. The account of how Ching-chi was offered capital to set himself up in business is given just a few pages before this copied passage, and his purchase of the tavern immediately precedes it. It seems probable, since the tavern is not afterwards of any importance in the novel, that these episodes have been created solely in order to accommodate the passages from the short story.

In assessing what the author has taken from the story, one has to admit that in this case he has been uninfluenced by its conception of character. It is true that the venal Wang VI resembles the mother of Chin-nu, but her character has been established much earlier in the novel. As far as the principal figures are concerned, their roles are almost exactly reversed. Ching-chi, one of the most notable profligates and perverts in literature, is worlds apart from Wu Shan. And Ai-chieh bears no resemblance at all to Chin-nu, the very type of *femme fatale*; in her faithfulness to the memory of Ching-chi, she shows herself one of the very few virtuous—and at the same time sympathetic—women in the novel.

What then remains of the short story that would make its borrowing worthwhile? The scene on the docks, transferred in the novel to the bustling canal port of Lin-ch'ing, is strongly evoked. It is noticeable how many of the passages borrowed by the author from other works are descriptive, although this may be because the borrowing of such passages raises fewer difficulties than the borrowing of other material. The account of the love-making—it is not right, with the change in character of the two principals, to call it seduction—is given in detail, and even amplified. The letters exchanged between the two lovers are also used. These points, one must assume, were what persuaded the author of the *Chin P'ing Mei* to make use of the story.

By the way in which he has used the story, the author has, however, been able to solve one or two problems of his own. It would in any case have been necessary to describe the ultimate fate of such important characters as Han Tao-kuo and his family; use of the short story disposes of this

necessity. Moreover, since they come from the household of Ts'ai Ching, Han Tao-kuo's explanation to Ch'en Ching-chi provides a natural account of the collapse of the Grand Tutor and his regime.

There is one other place in which an echo of this short story is perhaps to be found. In Chapter 13ab, the author, writing of the subject of his novel, remarks:

Moreover, what events led to the death of this woman? Those who coveted her destroyed their fine manly six-foot bodies. Those who loved her lost their vast wealth. The affair scandalized Tung-p'ing-fu, and threw all Ch'ing-ho-hsien into uproar.

At the beginning of the short story, at an exactly similar stage, the narrator explains:

Today I shall tell of a young man who did not take heed of the warning against lust, and becoming enamoured of a woman, came close to destroying that fine manly six-foot body of his and losing his vast wealth. The affair shocked the town of Hsin-ch'iao.

It seems likely that the *Chin P'ing Mei* echoes some other work at this point, for the phrase about "losing their vast wealth" does not apply to the main part of the novel at all. Only by a stretch of the imagination can it be said to apply to Ch'en Ching-chi either; although he sold his property to buy Chin-lien, the sum required of him was not a large one, and in any case, the bargain was never transacted. Probably these are just stereotyped remarks once found before many stories of this *femme fatale* kind, but it is just possible that they carry an echo of the story about Chin-nu.

2a. THE CRIME-CASE STORY—*Kang-k'ou yü-wêng*

The earliest surviving text of this story is found in the *Pai-chia kung-an ch'üan-chuan* 百家公案全傳²⁸ collection, of which there is an edition dated 1594. In later editions, the collection is generally entitled *Lung-t'u kung-an* 龍圖公案 or *Pao kung-an* 包公案; it is a series of crime-case stories in which the famous Sung official Pao Ch'êng 包拯 figures as detective, prosecutor and judge.

The story tells how there lived in Yangchow a wealthy and benevolent man named Chiang Ch'i-lai 蔣奇來, whose style was T'ien-hsiu 天秀. One day an aged priest visited him, and on being treated with great generosity, warned Chiang that a great disaster hung over him, a disaster which

he might possibly escape if he lived prudently at home. Soon after this event Chiang came upon his servant making love to one of the girls in the household. He reprimanded the servant severely, at which the man conceived a deep grudge against his master.

A month later, a letter arrived from Chiang's cousin in the capital, an official named Huang Mei 黃美, asking Chiang to visit him. Despite his wife's pleas, and heedless of the priest's warning, Chiang decided to go. Taking Tung 董 (the servant he had reprimanded) and a page-boy called Ch'in-t'ung 琴童 with him, he hired a boat and set off. Tung plotted with the rascally boatmen; Chiang was murdered and the page-boy clubbed and left for dead. By some extraordinary chance, the boy did not drown, but was saved by an old fisherman. Chiang's body was washed up near the Tz'ü-hui 慈惠 temple in Ch'ing-ho-hsien, where the monks, fearing to involve themselves in trouble, buried it on the foreshore. One day as Pao Ch'êng was riding through Ch'ing-ho, a whirlwind rose up before his horse, and led the way to where Chiang's body had been buried. The body was discovered, the monks questioned by the local magistrate and imprisoned.

Eventually Ch'in-t'ung recognized the two boatmen and accused them of the crime. They were arrested and executed. The monks were released, and Ch'in-t'ung returned with his master's body to give it proper burial. As for Tung, he was never caught, but with the money he had gained was able to set himself up as a great merchant. Yet he too was to pay the penalty for his crime, for some years later he fell foul of some pirates and was killed.

This is substantially the story told in Chapters 47 and 48 of the *Chin P'ing Mei*. The names of the characters have been changed. Chiang T'ien-hsiu becomes Miao T'ien-hsiu 苗天秀; the servant Tung becomes Miao Ch'ing 苗青; and the page-boy—there is already one Ch'in-t'ung in the novel—becomes An-t'ung 安童. Pao Ch'êng does not appear; he and the stupid local magistrate are combined in the figure of the official Ti Ssü-pin 狄斯彬.

In one or two details the *Chin P'ing Mei* version is an improvement on the short story. For example, it is the young concubine of Miao T'ien-hsiu, and not a mere maid, that Miao Ch'ing is caught dallying with; this explains better the jealous hatred he feels for his master.

The author uses this story to illustrate political chicanery and corruption. In the *Chin P'ing Mei*, Miao Ch'ing bribes Hsi-mên to get him an acquittal. When An-t'ung appeals to the honest Censor Tsêng Hsiao-hsü 曾孝序 (a real figure from Sung history, see Section 4 below), Hsi-mên's patron Ts'ai Ching intervenes. Eventually, when Tsêng has accused Ts'ai directly in a memorial, the censor is demoted and ultimately exiled. No suggestion of this theme appears in the short story; it is all the work of the author of the *Chin P'ing Mei*.

²⁸ In 10 *chüan* and (concurrently) 100 chapters. Its full title is *Hsin-k'ou ching-pên t'ung-su yen-i ch'üan-hsiang pai-chia kung-an ch'üan-chuan* 新刊京本通俗演義金瓶梅公案全傳. A copy is preserved in the Hôsa Bunko 蓬左文庫 at Nagoya. See Li T'ien-i 李田意 (Tien-yi Li, "Jih-pên so-chien Chung-kuo tuan-p'ien hsiao-shuo lüeh-chi 日本所見中國短篇小說略記", *Ch'ing-hua hsieh-pao* 清華學報, New Series 1, No. 2, April 1957, p. 79. It is described there as the earliest of all the various *Pao kung-an* editions. It has not been accessible to me in writing this article.

The author has taken the hint about Miao Ch'ing's becoming a great merchant, and developed it significantly. In the *Chin P'ing Mei* he is represented as one of that class of merchants, like Hsi-mên himself, who make their money by bribing those in power to give them favoured treatment. The reference in the short story contains no suggestion of this either.

There is some reason to believe that the author has not found it easy to fit this story into his novel. It causes perhaps the only serious break in the *Chin P'ing Mei*'s continuity. Chapter 46 ends in Hsi-mên's household; Chapter 47 begins in Yangchow with people none of whom the reader has heard of before. Nothing like this happens anywhere else; even in the last ten chapters where the scene changes frequently, some at least of the participants are characters with whom the reader is familiar. A short poem and a few words of explanation at the beginning of Chapter 47 are all that is at hand to bear the reader over the chasm between the two chapters.

A novelist's usual solution of this difficulty was to explain, in an aside to the reader, the past history of the new figure who has appeared upon the scene. Thus the author could have begun the story at the point at which Miao Ch'ing offered a bribe to Hsi-mên Ch'ing, and then given the reader a brief account of how the crime took place. This would, of course, have drained the story of much of its interest, and that may be the reason why the author did not do so. But it is also possible that he actually preferred the other approach; in considering the passages adapted from the *Shui-hu chuan*, one is struck by the number of times in which he has altered the text so as to explain the background of the characters before allowing them, so to speak, to come upon the scene. Perhaps the same motives affected him here—desire for a step-by-step narration of events, anxiety lest a good story be truncated—as one imagines influenced his decision to allow the long circumlocutory account of Wu Sung's adventures to stand at the head of the novel.

It is impossible to generalize about the author's use of these eight short stories. From some, the narrator's introductory comment has been taken, from others the notion of a character or some detail of plot, from yet others, the description of a person or scene. Only two stories—*Hsin-ch'iao-shih Han Wu mai ch'un-ch'ing* and *Kang-k'ou yü-wêng*—are copied at any great length, and even in their case, sacrifices or radical changes have had to be made. The abrupt introduction of the latter story has led to a breach in the continuity to which the reader has become accustomed, while the main point of the former story has been lost. To some extent, it is the very closeness of texture of the author's narration which has allowed him to admit only fragments of other works into his novel, but it is also true that—with the exception of the vaguely-delineated characters which stirred the author's imagination into producing Nun Hsüeh and Miao Ch'ing—the

conception of character of the short stories has been too inadequate to serve his purpose.

In addition to passages from these stories, the *Chin P'ing Mei* also contains other material which is part of the common currency of the Chinese story-teller. Much of the verse, for example, is also found in short stories; since it is usually only vaguely associated with its context, and since it is impossible to say where it originated, there seems no point in giving details of it. Descriptive compositions, either *tz'ü* poems or parallel set pieces, are of more interest, although except in rare cases it is not possible to tell where the author derived them from. The erotic *tz'ü* in Chapter 82 7a, for example, is also found in no less than three different short stories;²⁹ it comes in the first place from the *Hsi-hsiang chi* 西廂記³⁰ of the Yüan dramatist Wang Shih-fu 王實甫. Such examples, together with the long list of poems and set pieces borrowed from the *Shui-hu chuan* do, however, make one sceptical about regarding any of such elements in the novel as being of the author's own creation.

3. THE EROTIC SHORT STORY IN LITERARY CHINESE—*Ju-i Chün chuan*

One of the most significant source-works of the *Chin P'ing Mei* is a short story in Literary Chinese called the *Ju-i Chün chuan* 如意君傳. It proves that the novel is related to an earlier erotic tradition in Chinese fiction—a point which has not been demonstrated hitherto. At the same time, however, it must be admitted that, because no edition of the story survives which antedates the writing of the novel, the precise nature of the relationship between the two cannot be taken for granted.

There is evidence that a work of obscene or disreputable nature called the *Ju-i Chün chuan* was already in existence in the Chia-ching period (1522–66).³¹ It may well have been the same work as the *Ju-i chuan* 如意傳 mentioned in the first preface³² to the *tz'ü-hua* edition of the *Chin P'ing Mei*. There is also a *Ju-i Chün chuan*—this time it is clear from the reference that a work of pornography is meant—referred to in the novel *Hsing-shih yin-yüan chuan* 醒世姻緣傳.³³

²⁹ These are: (1) *Chang Yü-hu chi* 張子湖記, which is contained in the *Kuo-sé t'ien-hsiang* 國色天香, (2) *Chieh-chih-êrh chi*, for which see above, and (3) *Jên hsiao-tz'ü lich-hsing wei shên* 任孝子烈性為神, which is *chüan* 38 of the *Ku-chin hsiao-shuo* collection.

³⁰ Part iv, Scene 1.

³¹ See Sun K'ai-ti 孫楷第, *Chung-kuo t'ung-su hsiao-shuo shu-mu* 中國通俗小說書目, revised edition, Peking, 1957, pp. 153–4. The *Ju-i Chün chuan* in 72 chapters by Ch'en T'ien-ch'ih 陳天池 is a different work, composed in the nineteenth century.

³² The preface by Hsin-hsin 欣欣子. It gives a list of fictional works, in two groups. The first group extends in time up to the fifteenth century. The second group, which is specifically described as later in composition, consists of the *Ju-i chuan* and *Jang Yü-hu chi* (see Section 2a above).

³³ In Chapter 2.

The subject of the story is not in doubt. It evidently described the love-making of the ageing empress Wu Tsé-t'ien 武則天 with the last of her favourites, Hsüeh Ao-ts'ao 薛敖曹, whom she dubbed Ju-i Chün "Lord of Perfect Satisfaction" because he suited her sexual requirements so admirably.^{33a} It need not concern us that the story has little or no foundation in historical fact; what matters is that it was current at the time the *Chin P'ing Mei* was composed. This is shown by a set piece of erotic description in Chapter 37 10a of the novel, in which Wu Tse-t'ien and Hsüeh Ao-ts'ao are listed among the pairs of famous lovers. They are mentioned also in an erotic novel which is slightly later than the *Chin P'ing Mei*, the *Hsiu-t'a yeh-shih* 繡榻野史³⁴ of the early seventeenth century, where the context makes it clear that the special feature of the pornographic description was the size of Hsüeh Ao-ts'ao's penis.

The earliest edition known to me is a Japanese one of the year 1763.³⁵ Its full title is given as *Tsé-t'ien huang-hou Ju-i Chün chuan* 則天皇后如意君傳 and it is attributed to Hsü Ch'ang-ling 徐昌齡³⁶ of Wu-mên 吳門.³⁷ At the beginning of the first page of the story itself, it is entitled *K'un-yü ch'ing-chuan* 閨娛情傳. It is a pornographic work, on the subject indicated. There is, therefore, a sufficiently strong probability that, first, the various early references to a *Ju-i Chün chuan* or a *Ju-i chuan* are to one and the same work, and second, that the extant *Ju-i Chün chuan* I have described is an edition of that work.

To establish the textual relationship between the *Chin P'ing Mei* and the *Ju-i Chün chuan*, it is necessary to note the parallels between the erotic-sadistic episode with Chin-lien in Chapter 27 and two separate accounts of copulation in the short story. The passage describing the innermost recess of the vagina, the *p'in-wu* 牝屋, in Chapter 27 12b is almost identical with that on p. 11a of the *Ju-i Chün chuan*.³⁸ This need not, of course, be due to borrowing; both accounts could conceivably have been copied from somewhere else, perhaps from some handbook of sex. But the fact that in the

^{33a} According to the story, the empress changed her reign-title to Ju-i (692 A.D.) to celebrate her acquisition of Hsüeh. It has been suggested to me, most aptly, that the name Ju-i may include a punning reference to other senses of the same word, "priest's staff" (used in prayer) and "backscratcher".

³⁴ See R. H. van Gulik, *Erotic colour prints of the Ming period*, 3 vols, privately published in Tokyo, 1951, vol. II, p. 180. (It includes copied extracts from the *Hsiu-t'a yeh-shih*.)

³⁵ It is preserved in the Nagasawa Collection of the Tōyō bunka Kenkyūjo 東洋文化研究所 in Tokyo. The publisher is given as Ogawa Hikokurō 小川彦九郎.

³⁶ I have not so far been able to discover anything about him.

³⁷ I.e., Soochow.

³⁸ Since the *Ju-i Chün chuan* is not widely available, I give the relevant passage here. 直抵牝屋之上。牝屋乃婦人深極之處。有肉如含苞花。蓋微析男子垂首。至其處覺翳翳然暢美不可言。(p. 11a). The comparable passage in the *Chin P'ing Mei* is as follows: 直抵牝屋之上。牝屋者乃婦人牝中深極處。有屋如含苞花焉。到此處無折男子垂首覺翳翳然暢美不可言。(Ch. 27 12b).

Chin P'ing Mei it is directly followed by other passages common to the short story seems to put such an incidental relationship out of the question. The novel continues, a couple of sentences later:

Hsi-mên Ch'ing was alarmed . . . Then he helped the woman to sit up. At length . . . she came to her senses again, and affecting a tearful voice, said to Hsi-mên Ch'ing: "My dearest, why were you so violent today? You almost cost me my life. You really mustn't behave like that again. It's no laughing matter. My head is swimming, and my eyes are glazed, and I don't know where I am."³⁹

The comparable passage in the short story (p. 13b) is as follows:

Ao-ts'ao was startled . . . He helped the empress to sit up, and at length she regained her senses . . . Affecting a tearful voice, she said to him: "You mustn't be as rough as this again. If you don't stop for a moment, I shall soon pass right away."⁴⁰

A few sentences above, the empress had said to him: "My head is swimming, and my eyes are glazed, and I don't know where I am."⁴¹

This is the only borrowing of any substance. None of the other parallels would, on their own account, justify one in concluding that the author of the *Chin P'ing Mei* had used this story as a source. Yet once that conclusion is accepted, these parallels show how widespread the influence of the short story has been. A good many of the erotic situations, for example, are also to be found in the short story. Both the parallel incidents quoted above take place out of doors, in the *Chin P'ing Mei*'s case, by an arbour, and in the story's case, in a summer-house.⁴² There is an episode in each work in which the man begins to copulate with the woman while she is still in a state of drunken slumber.⁴³ There is a scene in the story, and several in the *Chin P'ing Mei*, in which the practice of inflicting "love-burns" is described.⁴⁴ The empress sees birds mating, and then thinks of her own situation;⁴⁵ this is reminiscent of Chin-lien on several occasions. Furthermore, the main fact of the story's pornographic description, its *raison d'être*, is the size of Hsüeh

³⁹ 慌了... 于是把婦人扶坐。半日星眸。驚閃離春過來。因向西門慶作嬌泣聲說道。我的達達。你今日怎的這般大惡。險不喪了奴之性命。今後再不可這般所爲。不是要處。我如今頭目森森莫知所之矣。

⁴⁰ 大驚... 扶后起坐。久而方醒。... (后)作嬌泣聲曰。蓋復不宜如此粗率。倘若不少息我回而長逝矣。(p. 14a). The text of the last sentence seems to be corrupt.

⁴¹ 頭目森森然莫知所之。(p. 13b).

⁴² P. 12b. Note that in Chapter 27 8a of the novel, Chin-lien had suggested going to the summer-house.

⁴³ P. 16b. Cp. *Chin P'ing Mei*, Chapter 29 12a, where there is also some verbal similarity.

⁴⁴ P. 20b. *Chin P'ing Mei*, Chapter 78 and elsewhere.

⁴⁵ P. 15b. There is also a striking similarity between the erotic imagery employed in the two works.

Ao-ts'ao's genitals; it is precisely for this property that he has been recommended to the Court in the first place. The erotic passages in the story are largely occupied with the pleasure and pain which the empress has to endure. This is the same aspect of erotic description which is stressed in the *Chin P'ing Mei*, at least from the point in Chapter 49 at which Hsi-mên Ch'ing obtains the itinerant priest's magic medicine.

To appreciate the *Ju-i Chün chuan*'s value as a source, one has first to make a rough distinction between two different methods of erotic presentation. One is elliptical, indirect, allusive, figurative. Characteristically it uses verse or set pieces of parallel prose. Sometimes it extends a single metaphor, usually on the mock-battle theme, over the length of the whole poem or set piece. The effect of this method is to take the presentation away from the sphere of readily visualized experience. It is the exact opposite of the other, direct method, of which the purpose is to evoke the experience described as fully as possible. The former method naturally predominates in oral literature where, for obvious reasons, contact between performer and audience precludes any extended use of the other. It predominates also in that (written) vernacular literature which is either derived from an oral tradition or which accepts the conventions imposed by the oral literature. Equally naturally, the latter method is found in works which are composed with a reading public specifically in mind.

In the *Chin P'ing Mei*, both methods are used. There are numerous erotic *ts'ü* and set pieces, some of which have been taken from earlier vernacular literature. But in addition to them, and occasionally interspersed among them, are the score or so lengthy passages of direct, evocative description on which the *Chin P'ing Mei*'s reputation as an erotic work mainly depends. The importance of the borrowings from the *Ju-i Chün chuan* is in the fact that they have been copied into a vernacular novel from a story in Literary Chinese. The implication, which is true so far as our knowledge of the early novels goes, is that the author of the *Chin P'ing Mei* has thereby shown his independence of the old vernacular literature and for almost the first time exploited the fact that his novel was destined for a reading public.

We should not underestimate the debt which the *Chin P'ing Mei* owes to the *Ju-i Chün chuan* and other similar works for its vocabulary of erotic description. Use of such a vocabulary implies anything but a detached attitude on the part of the author, and the attitude revealed in the *Chin P'ing Mei*, which is one of relish combined with an unmistakable note of jocularly as between author and reader, is not noticeably different from that evinced in the short story. Furthermore, we should note that the *Chin P'ing Mei*'s habit of breaking up the long passages of erotic description with ordinary, functional dialogue is also a feature of the *Ju-i Chün chuan*.

It is hardly to be expected that the author of the novel could have been

influenced by the characters portrayed in the short story. They are too rudimentary, and in any case, their relationship to each other is remote from anything in the *Chin P'ing Mei*. Obviously, however, the portrait of P'an Chin-lien does owe something to the literary stereotype of the scheming, ambitious, licentious concubine in the palace seraglio, of which the early career of Wu Tsê-t'ien as it is traditionally related—for example her murder of her own child in order to incriminate the empress⁴⁶—is one outstanding example. What the author has done is to apply this stereotype within a new social context, that of the merchant's household. But since no actual copying is involved, such considerations are outside the scope of this article.

4. HISTORIES OF THE SUNG PERIOD

For its historical background, the *Chin P'ing Mei* relies far less on the *Shui-hu chuan* than on works of history. Thus although the Grand Tutor, Ts'ai Ching, appears in the *Shui-hu chuan*, the account of his seven governmental "reforms" in Chapter 48 of the *Chin P'ing Mei* is based, both in point of content and language, on the formal histories. Similarly, the *Chin P'ing Mei*'s account of the final defeat of Sung Chiang's rebels by Chang Shu-yeh 張叔夜⁴⁷ is in accordance with the historical record and not with the *Shui-hu chuan* tradition.

This was not from any concern with historical accuracy. Ts'ai Ching's reforms, for example, the most notable piece of historical background, are themselves a fiction;⁴⁸ they are for the most part an agglomeration of various proposals and edicts of the early twelfth century. Copying from the histories was evidently to give the novel historical verisimilitude rather than historical accuracy. But the author's aim was a great deal more precise than that; almost all the passages taken from the histories state or illustrate the theme of political corruption. It is through the events and figures derived—in some form—from history, that the author's criticism of injustice and chicanery is mainly directed.

Unfortunately, it is impossible to say which historical work he has copied from. Considering that the passages copied into the *Chin P'ing Mei* are mostly very short, we need not be surprised that the exact source cannot be identified. Some of the copied passages, for example, are to be found in much the same form in chronicle-histories as far apart as the *Huang-ch'ao pien-nien kang-mu pei-yao* 皇朝編年綱目備考,⁴⁹ which was compiled in the Southern Sung, and the *Sung-Yüan tzü-chih t'ung-chien* 宋元

⁴⁶ See, for example, her biography in the *Hsin T'ang shu* 新唐書, *chüan* 76.

⁴⁷ For the one concerning a new coinage, see, for example, *Sung-Yüan tzü-chih t'ung-chien* 宋元資治通鑑, of Wang Tsung-mu 王宗沐, ed. Lu Chin 路達, *chüan* 20.

⁴⁸ See his biography in the *Sung shih* 宋史, *chüan* 353.

⁴⁹ By Ch'ên Chün 陳均. There is a facsimile edition produced by the Seikadō Bunko 靜嘉堂文庫, Tokyo, 1936.

資治通鑑 of Wang Tsung-mu which was completed in 1567. Accordingly, any reference in this section to a work of history does not mean that the author of the *Chin P'ing Mei* actually used that work, but that he used *some such work*. It is his use of historical works as a category, rather than his use of any one particular work, that we have to concern ourselves with.

The three most interesting cases of borrowing concern minor historical figures who have been developed into characters of some importance in the novel.

The most obvious case is that of Tsêng Hsiao-hsü 曾孝序, who appears in Chapter 48 as Censor of Shantung province. Having discovered the truth about the murder of Miao T'ien-hsiu (see Section 2a), he sent up a memorial attacking Hsi-mên and the other magistrate. On orders from Ts'ai Ching, the memorial was side-tracked. Tsêng thereupon (pp. 1ab—this is the passage copied) went to the capital and submitted another memorial, this time attacking Ts'ai Ching and his policies. For this he was demoted, and later, through another intrigue, exiled. This Tsêng Hsiao-hsü was an historical figure, whose biography is included in the *Sung shih* 宋史, *chüan* 453. The account given there and in other works of his attack on Ts'ai Ching, his consequent demotion and exile, is substantially the same, and told in the same words, as in the *Chin P'ing Mei*. Only his post has been changed to that of Censor of Shantung province.

The other two characters which have been derived from historical works are An Ch'ên 安忱 and Ts'ai Yün 蔡蘊. They are closely involved with each other in the novel, and are best considered together. In Chapter 36 p. 3a, it is explained in an aside to the reader that the young graduates An and Ts'ai, who have come to visit Hsi-mên Ch'ing, were both concerned in a strange incident at the time of their graduation. An Ch'ên was originally selected *chuang-yüan*, but was attacked by a censor on the grounds that he was the younger brother of An Tun 安惇, the discredited minister of the previous reign. Accordingly the Emperor removed him and made Ts'ai Yün the new *chuang-yüan*. Ts'ai Yün had become the protégé of Ts'ai Ching.

This is an inaccurate version of an historical event of the year 1103, as recorded, for example, in the *Sung-Yüan tzü-chih t'ung-chien*, *chüan* 26, pp. 24ab. Li Chieh 李階 was removed from the list because his father Li Shên 李深 was in disgrace, and it was An Ch'ên, the brother of An Tun, who was allowed to take his place. The role of An Ch'ên, in other words, was just the opposite of that allotted to him in the *Chin P'ing Mei*.

Ts'ai Yün is based on the historical figure Ts'ai Ni 蔡蘊. According to the *Sung-Yüan tzü-chih t'ung-chien* for the year 1107:

In summer, in the fifth month, Ts'ai Ni was appointed a Supervising Censor. In his examination essay, calculating that Ts'ai Ching would soon be returned to power, he had written . . . Thereupon he was

raised to first place, and his answer was officially promulgated throughout the country. He became an official and was appointed *chêng-tzu* 正字 in the *Pi-shu-shêng* 秘書省. In less than a year he had risen to the post of censor. Such a thing had never happened before.

The Ts'ai Yün of the novel was also a protégé of Ts'ai Ching, also obtained the distinction of *chuang-yüan* by dubious means, was also appointed at once to the *Pi-shu-shêng* (the *Chin P'ing Mei* has *chêng-shih* 正事), and was soon after a censor (see Chapter 49 p. 5b). There can be little doubt that he was derived from Ts'ai Ni.

5. THE DRAMA

Some fourteen plays are mentioned as being performed in the course of the novel; from several of them excerpts of the performed text are quoted. Although these passages are not extraneous to the novel—they increase the sense of actuality just as the quotation of documents does, sometimes they supply motivation for the action of characters, and they are usually appropriate to the mood of the company—they cannot be considered of great importance as sources. Since, in any case, they have already been treated in some detail,⁵⁰ they will not be considered here.

Songs from several plays of which the names are not given are also represented as being sung. Even though the songs are not found in the Chia-ching songbooks, it is likely that they formed part of the current repertoire. Many of the popular song-sequences of the songbooks were in fact drawn from Yüan and early-Ming plays. Although they had been taken from the drama, such songs evidently came to lead an independent life as popular song. Therefore they are best considered in the next section with the popular song proper.

There are two plays, however, whose relation to the novel is quite different from that of any of the others. In very different degrees, they have been incorporated in the narrative of the *Chin P'ing Mei*. They are the *Yü-huan chi* 玉環記 and the *Pao-chien chi* 寶劍記.

The Yü-huan chi

The *Yü-huan chi*⁵¹ is one of the plays which is described as being performed, and in Chapters 63 and 64, parts of Scene 6 (the scene in the brothel) are actually quoted.⁵² What distinguishes it from the other plays, however, is the inclusion of a song from the same scene in Chapter 11,

⁵⁰ See Feng Yüan-chün 馮沅君, "*Chin P'ing Mei tzü-hua-chung ti wên-hsüeh shih-liao* 金瓶梅詞話中的文學史料", *Ku-chü shuo-hui* 右劇說彙, Peking 1956 edition, pp. 180-217.

⁵¹ It is contained in the *Liu-shih-chung ch'ü* 六十種曲 collection.

⁵² For details of the acknowledged passages copied from this play, see Chou I-pai 周贄白, *Chung-kuo hsi-chü shih* 中國戲劇史, Shanghai, 1954, pp. 371-2.

without any indication of its origin. This song, sung by the singing-girl Li Kuei-chieh 李桂姐, is clearly used for some purpose more than mere entertainment. It is the song beginning *chü-chih ts'ung-jung* 舉止從容, which in the play is sung by the *shêng* to describe the casual, languid grace of one of the singing-girls. In the novel, it is somewhat differently used: first the casual, languid grace of Li Kuei-chieh is described, and then she is represented as herself singing this song, thus effectively describing herself. Here the author seems to have combined two things: the need to have the girl sing, and the need to describe her. He must have had this scene in mind, and identified the singing-girl in the play with Li Kuei-chieh. This tendency to make the exigencies of ordinary realism serve other aims is found elsewhere in the novel to more obvious purpose.

The *Pao-chien chi*

This play is never mentioned in the course of the novel, yet it is infinitely more important than any of the other plays used. Several parts of it are actually integrated into the narrative, just as the passages from the short stories are. As its use in the *Chin P'ing Mei* has not hitherto been remarked, some details of it are given below.

Its full title is *Lin Ch'ung pao-chien chi* 林冲賣劍記, and its author was Li K'ai-hsien 李開先 (1501-1568), from Chang-ch'iu 章邱 in Shantung.⁵³ A writer of songs and plays himself, he also edited the songs of two Yüan writers. He is said to have written six *tsa-chü* 雜劇, of which two survive, and three *ch'uan-ch'i* 傳奇, of which, apart from the *Pao-chien chi*, one other survives.⁵⁴ Of the *Pao-chien chi* itself, there is an edition with a preface dated 1547.⁵⁵ It is ostensibly the latest dateable source-work of the *Chin P'ing Mei*.⁵⁶

⁵³ There is a chapter on Li K'ai-hsien in *Mindai gekisakka kenkyū* 明代劇作家研究 by Yagisawa Hajime 八木澤元, Tokyo, 1959, pp. 172-268.

⁵⁴ It is the *Tuan-fa chi* 斷髮記. The sole complete copy is in the possession of Kanda Kiichirō 神田喜一郎 of Kyoto.

⁵⁵ There is a facsimile reproduction in the *Ku-pên hsi-ch'ü ts'ung-k'an* 古本戲曲叢刊, First Series 初集, Peking, 1954.

⁵⁶ The extent of Li K'ai-hsien's contribution to the play is obscure. The preface (dated 1547) by Hsüeh-so tao-jên 雪蓑道人 (hao of K'ai-hsien's friend Su Chou 蘇洲) seems deliberately cryptic. He remarks that "some say that T'an-wo 坦窩 began it, Lan-ku 蘭谷 continued it, Shan-ch'üan Wêng 山泉翁 corrected it and Chung-lu Tzū 中麓子 (i.e. Li K'ai-hsien) completed it." But he does not vouch for the statement. It is not known who T'an-wo and the others were; they may have been the local writers whose version of the play, according to Wang Shih-chên 王世貞 in his *I-yüan chih-yen* 藝苑卮言, Li K'ai-hsien is said to have adapted. The two accounts seem reasonably close, especially as Su Chou also remarks that he heard the play sung frequently when he visited Shantung, particularly in Chang-ch'iu. However, another possibility has to be considered, although it is not so plausible. Yagisawa Hajime, *op. cit.*, p. 265, mentions a note at the end of a preface to the *Pao-chien chi* to the effect that Li K'ai-hsien adapted a version of the play which had been written by Su Chou. (He used the edition of the *Hsien-chü chi* 閑居集 of Li K'ai-hsien which is in the

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The *Pao-chien chi* concerns a story of the *Shui-hu* cycle—the persecution of Lin Ch'ung by the powerful minister Kao Ch'iu 高俅 and his adopted son Kao P'êng 高朋. Broadly speaking, the plot follows that of the novel, except that in the play Lin Ch'ung's wife survives to join her husband at Liang-shan-po. However, the passages copied into the *Chin P'ing Mei* do not concern the material which belongs intrinsically to the *Shui-hu chuan* story; there was no need for the author to copy them on that score. For this reason, since the author is usually thought to be, like Li K'ai-hsien, a native of Shantung, it is tempting to infer that there may have been some special significance in his copying from this play. Li K'ai-hsien, it is true, was prominent among the Chia-ching literati who felt a renaissance of interest in the forms of oral and vernacular literature, but there is no evidence for assuming that there was any connection between the two men.

Altogether, five passages are copied from the play, and utilized in four different places in the *Chin P'ing Mei*. These are:

- (1) Chapter 67. Two songs from Scene 33 of the play are sung.
- (2) Chapter 70. Part of a long soliloquy, spoken by a retainer of the Kao Ch'iu household, is given in the form of a set piece describing the wealth of Chu Mien 朱面. (The soliloquy comes from Scene 3.) Immediately after it, there is a song-sequence which purports to be sung for entertainment, but which effectively states the author's attitude. (Scene 50.)
- (3) Chapter 61. Almost the whole of Scene 28 is reproduced, with some additions to it.
- (4) Chapter 79. Part of Scene 10 is reproduced.

The first instance—the two songs in Chapter 67—need concern us no more than the songs from the plays mentioned above.

The second instance is more important. The fact that two different passages from the play are borrowed at the same place in the *Chin P'ing Mei* is additional proof—if proof were needed—that the author had the

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Naikaku Bunko; the *Li K'ai-hsien chi* 李開先集 edited by Lu Kung 路工, Peking, 1959, was based on a manuscript which evidently does not contain this preface). The play was completed and published in 1547. See Hsü Fu-ming 徐扶明, "Li K'ai-hsien ho t'a-ti Lin Ch'ung Pao-chien chi 李開先和他的林冲賣劍記", *Yüan-Ming-Ch'ing hsi-ch'ü yen-chiu lun-wên chi* 元明清戲曲研究論文集, Second Series, Peking, 1959, pp. 288-9. The *Pao-chien chi*, although a *ch'uan-ch'i*, contains a number of Northern song-sequences (i.e. characteristic of *tsa-chü*). For example, Scene 50 starts with a Southern (*ch'uan-ch'i*) sequence and continues with a Northern one. The songs reproduced in the *Chin P'ing Mei* are of both kinds. The sequence from Scene 50 is Northern, but the individual songs drawn from Scenes 28 and 33 are Southern, and in the latter case are specifically described as Southern. It seems, therefore, that the play known to the author must have had, at the very least, a considerable degree of similarity to Li K'ai-hsien's version. It may well have been that version, but because of the uncertainty about the manner of the play's composition, we cannot be sure of this point.

Pao-chien chi specifically in mind. The prose soliloquy, which appears in the novel as a set piece, is a description of, and a satirical attack upon, the power and opulence of Kao Ch'iu. There is nothing strange about its appearing in the *Chin P'ing Mei* as a set piece, for such descriptive soliloquies, which are not uncommon among early *ch'uan-ch'i* plays, are recognizably akin to set pieces. Both forms are, after all, a kind of rhetoric, comic or serious. Both depend on technical virtuosity, of which assonance and parallelism are the most notable features.

The group of songs is used to reinforce the criticism made in the set piece. They appear in the play at a time when an amnesty has been declared for the Liang-shan-po rebels, and Kao Ch'iu and Kao P'êng have been handed over to Lin Ch'ung so that he may exact his vengeance. The song-sequence is Lin Ch'ung's bitter indictment of his former persecutors, and through them, of the Court rogues, Court flatterers and corrupt politicians whom they represent. In the *Chin P'ing Mei*, on the other hand, they are used in an entirely different situation, a situation which at first sight seems quite inappropriate. Chu Mien has been awarded a new honour by the Emperor, and is receiving the congratulations of his colleagues in high office, including Ts'ai Ching, the Grand Tutor. The extraordinary thing is that it is this song-sequence—essentially a savage attack on all that Chu Mien, Ts'ai Ching and the rest of them stand for—which is given as entertainment during their celebrations.

The use of these songs at this point is thus a satirical device on the author's part. The sort of song which one would expect to find used on an occasion like this is a fulsome eulogy such as can be seen in plenty among the song-sequences contained in the Ming songbooks. There is, in fact, one particular song-sequence to which this *Pao-chien chi* one bears a superficial resemblance. It is of the same tune, and has the same first line ("enjoying wealth and high rank, possessing the Emperor's favour") as the first of the *Pao-chien chi* songs. It seems likely, indeed, that the latter were originally intended, at least partly, as a parody of this sequence. It was apparently very widely known, for it appears in all three of the early-sixteenth century songbooks.⁵⁷ It was intended evidently to serve precisely the situation of Chapter 70, for its title in one of the songbooks is given as *shang t'ai-shih* 上太師 "in honour of the Grand Tutor".

Thus, whereas the songs in the *Pao-chien chi* are a direct exposure of flattery and corruption, and are satirical only in so far as they resemble in form a well-known eulogy, in the *Chin P'ing Mei* they become satirical

⁵⁷ *Shêng-shih hsin-shêng* 盛世新聲, photographic reprint, Peking, 1955, p. 12; *Ts'ü-lin chai-yen* 詞林摘艷, photographic reprint, Peking, 1955, *hsin* 辛, 112; *Yung-hsi yüeh-fu* 雍熙樂府, *Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an* edition, *chüan* 3, p. 22. The *Ts'ü-lin chai-yen*, which gives it the title of *shang t'ai-shih*, says it was written by Ch'iu Ju-ch'êng 邱汝成 of the Ming.

because of the situation in which they are used. Placing the songs in such a situation can only be a deliberate statement of the author's own attitude. At the same time, it is a remarkable intervention on his part in the otherwise realistic course of the novel.

The third instance of copying concerns Scene 28 of the play, almost the whole of which has been copied into Chapter 61 of the *Chin P'ing Mei* (pp. 22b-24a). In the play, this is a scene of broad comedy. Kao P'êng, who has fallen ill, is examined by a quack doctor, and much of the comedy consists of the doctor's absurd diagnoses, such as that his male patient is suffering pregnancy pains. This scene has been largely incorporated into Chapter 61, at the point at which Li P'ing-êrh is lying ill. The whole character of the quack doctor—Doctor Chao—has been transposed from the play, together with the comic, self-revealing verse with which he introduces himself on the stage, two of his songs, and most of his dialogue with Kao P'êng. The dialogue has been a good deal augmented in the *Chin P'ing Mei*; in particular, a number of ribald diagnoses have been added.

The function of the verse with which the doctor introduces himself is to allow him to expose his character to the audience. Usually it is the comic or villainous figure who is given such verse to speak. This is obviously a convention which is not easy to apply to the novel, and in fact, in the *Chin P'ing Mei*, it does seem a little awkward. First Doctor Chao gives a list of his qualifications, and then says:

"Here are a few lines which give an outline of them:

I am a doctor named Chao,

At my door people constantly clamour . . ."

As he finishes the verse, altogether of some twenty-odd lines, we are told that "everybody burst out laughing", which was perhaps the hoped-for reaction of the theatre audience.

The fact that this verse is drawn from a play has an extra importance, for there are two, and possibly three, closely analogous poems spoken by other characters in the novel. One is spoken by Midwife Ts'ai in Chapter 30 ("I am a midwife named Ts'ai", etc.), and another describes Tailor Chao in Chapter 40 ("I am a tailor named Chao", etc.). The third, possible example is the braggadocio spoken by Li Kuei in Chapter 90. (See Section 2 above.) The first two are of a similar, self-mocking kind to the verses spoken by Doctor Chao. One hesitates to say what the ultimate origin of the verses is, but it seems likely that they too have been borrowed by medium of the drama.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ The only scholar to have paid attention to these is Fêng Yüan-chün, *op. cit.*, pp. 183-5. She has described them tentatively as vestiges of an earlier form of the novel in which both prose and verse forms were used. That the *Chin P'ing Mei* has certain affinities with *chantefable* literature will be made clear in the next two sections, but the fact that this poem has been taken from a play calls this particular idea into question.

Apart from this introductory verse, two of the doctor's songs are given in the novel. One of them is put into a prose paraphrase, but the other, in which he praises his medicine, is given without alteration. In the novel, it is introduced as follows:

"I have a marvellous prescription", said Doctor Chao,
"which contains these various ingredients. If you swallow it, you are bound to get better. Listen to me while I explain."

Then follows the text of the song, the tune of which is not given. In the play, the song was introduced as follows:

(Doctor Chao) "I have the medicine; let me describe its ingredients to you".

Then follows the tune and text of the song.

Almost all the elements of the dialogue of the scene are utilized in the *Chin P'ing Mei*. Some of the absurd diagnoses fall a little flat because the patient is a woman. Perhaps this is why some ailments peculiar to men have been added.

The fourth instance of copying is found in Chapter 79 8b-9b, where part of Scene 10 has been incorporated into the text of the novel. This is the scene in which Lin Ch'ung, having had a strange dream, sends a servant-boy out for a fortune-teller to interpret it. The fortune-teller asks for Lin's "eight characters" and says that the indications are unfavourable. He is then asked to pronounce on the dream, and his verdict is again unfavourable. In the novel, when Hsi-mên is fatally ill, Yüeh-niang sends a servant-boy out for the fortune-teller Wu Shên-hsien 吳神仙 "Wu the Immortal", who has been mentioned earlier in the book. She asks him to pronounce on Hsi-mên's "eight characters", and then later, on a dream which she has had. His interpretation is unfavourable. Much of the dialogue is the same as in the play, and although no songs are copied into the *Chin P'ing Mei*, two poems from the *Pao-chien chi* appear there.

Whether these borrowings come from Li K'ai-hsien's version of the play, or from some earlier draft, they are among the most bizarre of the literary borrowings made by the author. He has used one song-sequence to make a unique personal intervention into the novel, and has adapted the essentials of two different scenes to fit, a trifle strangely perhaps, into prose fiction.

There is no reason to suppose that his borrowings stop here. But until further specific cases come to light, all one can do is to consider, in general, what influence the drama may have exerted upon the *Chin P'ing Mei*. In view of the author's readiness to use forms peculiar to the drama, such as Doctor Chao's verse and song, it would be surprising indeed if this influence were not considerable.

There are at least two features peculiar to the *Chin P'ing Mei* which

can be explained in part by a reference to the drama. The first of these concerns the dramatic use, that is to say, the use as soliloquy or dialogue, of popular song. This is best considered, together with the songs themselves, in the next section. The second concerns the conception of character. We have already seen how at least one character—Doctor Chao—has been transplanted from the drama, and how two others—Li Kuei-chieh and Wu the Immortal—have for a brief space been identified with characters from the drama. A hint that a more general influence has also been at work is contained in the second preface of the novel, that by Nung-chu k'ê 弄珠客. He describes Hsi-mên Ch'ing as the *ta-ching* 大淨, and Ying Po-chüeh 應伯爵 as the *hsiao-ch'ou* 小丑 of the *Chin P'ing Mei*. No doubt the remark is to be taken metaphorically; the part of the *ching* is frequently that of the tyrant, petty or powerful, and the part of the *ch'ou* that of his sycophant.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, the comparison of Ying Po-chüeh in particular with a stock figure of the drama, the *ch'ou*, is a felicitous one. His outstanding quality, apart from his knavery, is his satirical wit. He is able to slide a remark so deftly past Hsi-mên Ch'ing that the latter is hardly aware he is being ridiculed. He indulges in verbal duels with servant, singing-girl and procuress. In Chapter 52, for example, he keeps up a running fire of irrelevant remarks to tease and embarrass Li Kuei-chieh while she is singing. It may not be too fanciful to see in him, with this verbal facility of his, a representation of the traditional figure of the *ch'ou*, both villain and jester.

This remains little more than a suggestion, even in the case of Ying Po-chüeh. Nevertheless, it indicates that when it is possible to investigate the general literary background of the *Chin P'ing Mei*—as distinct from specific source-works—the drama may be seen to be its most important element.

6. POPULAR SONG

The number of songs in the *Chin P'ing Mei* is one of its most important features. It indicates, if nothing else, that the author was strongly affected by the growth of interest in the oral literature which occurred during the sixteenth century. Many of the songs, as pointed out hitherto, notably by Miss Fêng Yüan-chün 馮沅君,⁶⁰ are also to be found in the songbooks of the first half of the century. There is good reason to believe that most of the others were also in existence before the *Chin P'ing Mei* was written.

⁵⁹ For an account of the function of these two rôles in Ming drama, see Cheng Chên-to 鄭振鐸, "Ching yü ch'ou 淨與丑", *Chung-kuo wên-hsüeh yen-chiu* 中國文學研究, 1957 edition, pp. 559-77.

⁶⁰ *Op. cit.*, pp. 198-217. Her list has been of great service in pointing to the extent of the *Chin P'ing Mei* author's borrowing, but it is now, in many respects, quite inadequate. It avowedly omits mention of 12 songs—see p. 203—because they are not represented as being sung in the novel, although they are found in one or other of the songbooks. In addition to them, however, there are at least another eleven individual

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Altogether, the number of songs quoted in full—this excludes a few which are mentioned by name or first line only—is as high as 20 song-sequences and 120 individual songs. It is simplest to treat the two categories separately.

Song-sequences

Apart from 25 *san-t'ao* 散套 or song-sequences which are mentioned by name or first line only, there are 20 others which are substantially quoted, 17 in full and 3 up to the second or third song. Of these 20 sequences, 14 are to be found in one or more of the following collections: *Shêng-shih* 盛世新聲 (preface dated 1517), *Ts'ü-lin chai-yen* 詞林摘艷 (preface dated 1525), *Yung-hsi yüeh-fu* 雍熙樂府 in 20 *chüan* (preface, not of the original edition, dated 1566), *Wu-yü ts'ui-ya* 吳猷萃雅 (preface dated 1616). Ten sequences are found in the first work, 12 in the second, 13 in the third, and 2 in the fourth.

The authorship of five of these sequences is recorded in the *Ts'ü-lin chai-yen*; two of them have been extracted from *tsa-chü* plays of the Yüan

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songs quoted in full which are also in the songbooks, but which do not receive mention. Furthermore, the song-sequence from the *Pao-chien chi* in Chapter 70, has been mistaken for the conventional eulogy of which, perhaps, it may be a parody, but certainly no more (p. 202). Other items need to be added to the list of songs drawn from plays. I give below a list of the main corrections and additions which have to be made as regards songs which are quoted at some length. I ignore songs which are merely named.

Song-sequences. Note that the sequence in Ch. 70 13ab is from the *Pao-chien chi*, not from the songbooks. (See Section 5 above.) The sequence in Ch. 42 9b-10a is in *YH* (*Yung-hsi yüeh-fu*) 11, not *YH* 13. The sequence in Ch. 71 3a-5b is in *TL* (*Ts'ü-lin chai-yen*) *hsin* 辛, not *TL* *ping* 丙. The one in Ch. 87 8b-9b is also in *TL* *chi* 己 as well as in *YH*. Ten of the fourteen sequences which are found outside the *Chin P'ing Mei* are in the *Shêng-shih* *hsin-shêng* as well as in the other songbooks. It was not available to Miss Feng Yüan-chün when she made her list.

Individual songs. The following need to be added to the list. The *ch'ên-tsui-tung-fêng* 沈醉東風 song in Ch. 4 4b is in *YH* 17. The *liang-t'ou-nan* 兩頭南 song in Ch. 6 7a is in *TL* *chia* 甲. The three *shan-p'o-li-yang* 山坡裡羊 songs in Ch. 8 2a (two songs combined) and 4a are in *YH* 20. The third of them has also apparently been adapted for use in Ch. 82 1b. The three *chi-shêng-ts'ao* 寄生草 songs in Ch. 8 4b, Ch. 83 1b and 7b are in *YH* 19. The *shui-hsien-tzu* 水仙子 song in Ch. 11 9b is in *YH* 18. The two *lo-mei-fêng* 落梅風 songs in Ch. 12 2b are in *YH* 20. The *ch'au-t'ien-tzu* 朝天子 song in Ch. 12 3b is in *YH* 18. The *êrh-fan Chiang-êrh-shui* 二犯江兒水 song in Ch. 38 12ab is in *TL* *chia* 甲. The *p'u-t'ien-lo* 普天樂 song in Ch. 65 15b is found in the *Shêng-shih* *hsin-shêng* (*hsü* 戊) as well as in *TL* *chia*. The *chê-kuei-ling* 折桂令 song in Ch. 80 5b is in *YH* 17. The three *ho-hsi liu-niang-tzu* 河西六娘子 songs in Ch. 82 3ab, 3b and Ch. 83 6b are in *YH* 20. The four *hung-hsiu-hsieh* 紅綉鞋 songs in Ch. 82 4b, Ch. 83 10b, Ch. 85 8a and 8b are all in *YH* 18. The *ssü-k'uai-chin* 四塊金 song in Ch. 94 12b is in *TL* *chia*. In addition, it should be noted that the *chê-kuei-ling* song in Chapter 19 3a, which is found in *YH* 17, appears also in Ch. 52 19b of the novel with only slight alteration. There are also mistakes over the three other *êrh-fan Chiang-êrh-shui* songs in Ch. 38 (8b, 10a and 10b). Each of them is found in *TL* *chia* and in *YH* 15 (second part).

Songs drawn from plays. Add the *Pao-chien chi* and *Yü-huan chi* songs mentioned in Section 5. Note that the *Liang-chou-hsü* 梁州序 songs given in Ch. 27 7a and 8b are from the *P'i-p'a chi* 琵琶記 (*Liu-shih-chung* *ch'ü* ed. Scene 22).

dynasty,⁶¹ and three are original sequences by Yüan and Ming writers.⁶² The latest of these writers was Ch'ên To 陳鐸 (fl. circa 1500).

Many of the sequences are designated in the songbooks as for use on special occasions, such as official receptions or seasonal festivals. Their function in the *Chin P'ing Mei* often tallies with the designations.⁶³ It is clear that in this respect the novel faithfully represents the current practice in the sixteenth century.

Of the six sequences which are not to be found in other works, all but one are indistinguishable in use from the fourteen mentioned. That is to say, they are described as being sung for entertainment on conventional occasions. It seems reasonable to suppose that they too were songs in current use about the time the novel was written.

The sixth sequence, in Chapter 93 pp. 2b-4b, is entirely different in function. Unlike the other sequences, it actually forms part of the narrative of the novel, taking the place of direct speech. Ch'ên Ching-chi, reduced to living with a group of beggars, woke up crying from a dream of past luxury, and on being asked by his companions what the matter was, replied:

"Listen to me, brothers, and I will tell you. There is a *fên-tieh* 粉蝶 which bears me out . . ."

The phrase "there is a . . . which bears me out" is the traditional way of introducing a poem into the narrative. *Fên-tieh* is the tune of the opening song of a song-sequence. It was evidently a popular kind of song-sequence in Yüan and Ming time; several score of them are found in the *Ts'ü-lin chai-yen* (*chüan* 3) and the *Yung-hsi yüeh-fu* (*chüan* 6 and 7). In the songs that follow, Ching-chi describes in the first person his present life as a beggar and then his past life and misfortunes.⁶⁴

This use of song in place of speech is much commoner amongst the individual songs, and will be discussed more fully there. It can be said here, however, that there is no reason for thinking that this sequence originated with the author of the *Chin P'ing Mei*. Facts relating specifically to the novel occur in only one of the songs; the others all concern Ching-chi's

⁶¹ The sequence in Ch. 41 4a-5a comprises eight consecutive songs plus the final song of Act 3 of the *Liang-shih yin-yüan* 兩世姻緣 by Ch'iao Chi 喬吉 (died 1345). The one in Ch. 71 3a-5b comprises all 16 songs of Act 3 of the *Lung-hu fêng-yün hui* 龍虎風雲會 of Lo Kuan-chung.

⁶² The three *san-t'ao* are attributed to Tu Jên-chieh 杜仁傑 (Yüan) and Chu Yu-tun 朱有燾 (1379-1439), as well as to Ch'ên To. See Ch. 58 13b (*TL* *kêng* 庚), Ch. 65 14a (*TL* *chi*) and Ch. 73 3b-5a (*TL* *kêng*).

⁶³ For example, the sequence given in Ch. 65 14a at a reception for the new provincial censor is designated in *TL* *chi* as *shang wên-ch'ên* 上文臣 "in honour of the civil officer". Those used in Ch. 42 9b-10a and Ch. 58 13b to celebrate the Lantern Festival and the Seventh Eve (the seventh of the seventh) respectively are specifically described as for these purposes. (See *TL* *hsü* 戊 and *kêng*.)

⁶⁴ A beggar regaling passers-by with the tale of his misfortunes is, of course, an extremely common figure in Chinese fiction and drama.

adventures immediately before this episode. It is not unlikely that in this case, as in others we have noticed, the adventures have been inserted simply in order to allow the use, in an adapted form, of a passage—in this case, a song-sequence—that was already known to the author.

Individual songs

Excluding the songs drawn from Ming plays, there are altogether 103 *hsiao-ling* 小令 or individual songs used in the novel. Of this number, 47 are to be found in one or more of the songbooks; they are actually derived from 45 songs in the songbooks, since two songs each occur twice in the novel with only slight variation.⁶⁵ The 45 songs are distributed among the following works: *Shêng-shih hsin-shêng* (1 song), *Tz'ü-lin chai-yen* (10 songs), *Yung-hsi yüeh-fu* (35 songs), *Hsin-pien nan-chiu-kung tz'ü* 新編南九宮詞 (4 songs), *Tang-ch'i hui-ch'ang ch'ü* 蕩氣迴腸曲 (2 songs).⁶⁶ One other song, of which the first line only is quoted, is identifiable as a song in the *Yung-hsi yüeh-fu*. In only a few cases is the authorship of the songs mentioned in the songbooks.

Many of the other 56 songs are to tunes well-represented in the songbooks. Some, however, are to tunes which are not found there; this suggests that they may belong to a different time, or a different locality, from the other songs. By far the largest group of these latter belong to the *shan-p'o yang* 山坡羊 tune; there are 15 altogether, and none of them is to be found in the songbooks. The tune is to be distinguished from another tune which is sometimes given the same name, examples of which are also to be found in the *Chin Ping Mei*, as well as in the *Yung-hsi yüeh-fu*.⁶⁷ Similar songs to the 15 *shan-p'o yang* in the *Chin Ping Mei* are found in three or four other Ming works, notably in Li K'ai-hsien's *Tz'ü-nüeh* 詞話;⁶⁸ they are there described as coming from a contemporary or slightly earlier collection, the *Shih-ching yen-tz'ü* 市井艷詞, which is no longer extant. They are evidently genuine popular songs, and like those in the *Chin Ping Mei*, are in extremely colloquial language. In a preface to the lost collection, Li K'ai-hsien discusses the date at which the tune became popular.

⁶⁵ That is to say, the *ché-kuei-ling* song in Ch. 19 3a and Ch. 52 19b, and the *chi-shêng-ts'ao* song in Ch. 8 4b and Ch. 82 1b.

⁶⁶ The last two works are not accessible to me. See Fêng Yüan-chün, *op. cit.*, for details.

⁶⁷ Also called *shan-p'o-li-yang*. There are three of them in Ch. 8 2a, 4a, which are also found in YH 20.

⁶⁸ Li K'ai-hsien 李開先集 ed. Lu Kung 路工, Peking, 1959, p. 946. There are some similar songs which are of known authorship; presumably they are imitations of the current popular song. There are several contained in the *Hsing-shih ts'ü* 懷世詞 of Chu Tsai-yü 朱載堉 (born 1536) and in the *Fang-ju-yüan yüeh-fu* 芳菊園樂府 of Chao Nan-hsing 趙南星 (1550–1627). For a selection from the former work, see *Ming-tai ko-ch'ü hsiian* 明代歌曲選 ed. Lu Kung, Shanghai, 1956. For the latter, see either *Chao Nan-hsing chi* 趙南星集 or a modern reprint in *Ch'ing-tu san-k'ê êrh-chung* 清都散客二種 ed. Lu Ch'ien 盧前, 1935.

At the beginning of the Cheng-tê period (1506–1521), the *shan-p'o yang* tune came into popular favour. The *so-nan-chih* 嶺南枝 did so at the beginning of the Chia-ching period (1522–1566).⁶⁹

A later work, of which the original preface is dated 1603, corroborates this: About the end of Cheng-tê or the beginning of Chia-ching, they mostly sang the *shan-p'o yang*.⁷⁰

Like most of the popular tunes of the Ming dynasty, the *shan-p'o yang* was associated with a particular kind of subject or emotion.⁷¹ It usually expressed fury or desolation or bereavement. The three songs in which Li P'ing-êrh mourns her dead baby in Chapter 59, or the four songs of mourning in Chapter 89, are all to this tune.

Both the *shan-p'o yang* and the *so-nan-chih*, of which there are two examples in the novel, are therefore tunes which became popular in the early sixteenth century. This does not mean necessarily that the seventeen songs are of the author's creation. Some, it is true, are integrated into the narrative, but there are others, not distinct in form, which are merely sung as entertainment.⁷² It appears most likely that these songs were current popular songs borrowed by the author, although it is not inconceivable that some or all of them are his imitations of the contemporary vogue.

Similarly, there are altogether four *double entendre* songs in the novel, and it may be thought that they at least must be of the author's own creation. It is not so; one of them is also found in the *Yung-hsi yüeh-fu*.⁷³

Much more important than the provenance of the songs is the variety of uses to which they are put in the course of the novel. More than half of them, some 54, are not used in the plausible way, that is to say as entertainment; in one degree or another, they are incorporated in the narrative. Nothing like this use is found in other novels of the sixteenth century. It seems to make of the *Chin Ping Mei* a strange and isolated experiment.

It is true that one or two of the uses to which song is put can be paralleled in the novels of the early seventeenth century. Since, in any case, these uses are similar to those to which poems have customarily been put in earlier fiction, no great originality can be claimed for the author; he has, at the most, merely applied a current literary form in a well-established situation. One such example is the use of song to satirise; some nine songs

⁶⁹ Li K'ai-hsien *chi*, p. 320.

⁷⁰ *T'ien-hsiang-lou wai-shih chih-i* 天香樓外史誌異, original preface dated 1603. For the best study of these popular songs, see Yeh Tê-chün 葉德均, "Ming-tai su-ch'ü hsü-lun 明代俗曲序論", a series of five articles which appeared weekly from January 19 to February 23, 1948 in the *T'ung-su wên-hsüeh* 通俗文學 feature of the Shanghai newspaper *Ta wan-pao* 大晚報.

⁷¹ The *Ch'ao-t'ien-tz'ü* tune, for example, was almost always a vehicle for satire.

⁷² For example, the one in Ch. 50 7b. It is represented as sung by a singing-girl in a brothel.

⁷³ It is about tea (on one level) and singing-girls (on the other). See Ch. 12 3b and YH 18 21a. It is spoken by Ying Po-chüeh.

are used in this way, four of them of the *double entendre* variety. Two such songs are used in Chapter 15, one describing the crowd of scroungers who assail Hsi-mên Ch'ing in the brothel, and the other the rakes as they disport themselves. Another common example is the use of song to describe; there is a song in Chapter 82 which describes the fan sent to Ching-chi by Chin-lien.

The distinctive ways in which song is used in the novel are those in which it is used by the characters to express strong emotion. Examples of the expression of anger are Hsi-mên's denunciation of the procuress in Chapter 20 and her reply. The songs spoken by Ch'ên Ching-chi in Chapter 83 are expressions of amorous passion. There are many songs of desolation, including Chin-lien's plaint at Hsi-mên's rejection of her in Chapter 8, and Ching-chi's lament at Chin-lien's rejection of him in Chapter 52. Songs of bereavement are also common; they include Li P'ing-êrh's mourning for her dead child in Chapter 59, and the laments for Hsi-mên and Chin-lien in Chapter 89. There is a strong element of pathos in Li P'ing-êrh's songs, as there is in the songs which Hsi-mên recites to his wife on her death-bed and which she, in reply, recites to him (Chapter 79).

There are short stories, both in Literary Chinese⁷⁴ and in the vernacular, in which a great deal of the dialogue is in the form of *ts'ü*, but the *ts'ü*, specimens of their composers' fine sensibility or poetic virtuosity, are not to be compared with these songs used in the *Chin P'ing Mei*. The only valid comparison is with the drama, and perhaps with certain forms close to the drama, such as certain forms of *chantefable* literature. It seems, indeed, that the author has imitated a dramatic technique. The songs of the drama are essentially a vehicle for expressing high emotion; that is precisely what the distinctive use of song in the *Chin P'ing Mei* amounts to. The *Chin P'ing Mei* songs, however, are not the songs of the drama, with their mixture of high-flown poetic language and colloquial speech; they are the popular songs of the period. It may be said, therefore, that the author's achievement has been to take popular songs and use them dramatically.

The techniques of the drama do not fit the novel form very easily. In his efforts to use song dramatically, the author has had recourse to a variety of expedients. Some of them, such as the use of songs as love-letters, are plausible enough; altogether there are six such love-letters in the novel, each of which is composed of a popular song (one is made up of two songs).⁷⁵ Another expedient is to have a character sing a song to himself or herself which expresses the emotion felt. Thus in Chapter 1, Chin-lien "when alone, often played this song as evidence . . ."; the song is one in which she

⁷⁴ For example the *Chung-ch'ing-li-chi* 鍾情麗集 by Ch'iu Chün 丘濬 (1418-1495). It was evidently very popular in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It is included in the *Kuo-sê t'ien-hsiang*.

⁷⁵ Ch. 8 4b, Ch. 12 2b (two songs), Ch. 82 1b, Ch. 83 1b, 7b, Ch. 85 8a.

expresses her desperate loneliness.⁷⁶ But in the majority of cases, the fact that song is being used dramatically is perfectly evident. In Chapter 79, for example, Hsi-mên on his death-bed gave his last instructions to his wife.

She wept, and he said:

"Don't cry. Listen while I tell you what I want you to do. There is a *chu-ma-t'ing* 駐馬聽 that bears me out:

Do not weep, virtuous wife . . ."⁷⁷

When Yüeh-niang heard him say this, she replied in like manner:

"Husband, I thank you . . ."⁷⁸

Similarly, in Chapter 20, realizing that the procuress had deceived him and allowed Li Kuei-chieh to be patronized by someone else, Hsi-mên pointed at her, and cursed her:

"There is a *man-t'ing-fang* 滿庭芳 that bears me out:

You are wickedness itself, old crone . . ."⁷⁹

The old woman replied in like manner:

"You just listen to me, my good Sir. If you don't come, I deal with others. The whole family depends on her for its living . . ."⁸⁰

In the songs of bereavement, a similar device is used. In Chapter 59, on seeing her dead baby, Li P'ing-êrh collapsed, and then burst out weeping, and said:

"There is a *shan-p'o yang* as evidence (of what I feel):

I cry out to Heaven . . ."⁸¹

Later, talking with the other women, she "grew sad again. The tune as above:

"When I think of my beloved . . ."⁸²

The phrase "the tune as above" (*ch'ien-ch'iang* 前腔) points to the origin of this technique, for it is, of course, the term used in *ch'uan-ch'i* plays when a tune is being repeated. Earlier, the sight of the dead baby's toys had recalled him to her.

"She could not help weeping again. A complete *shan-p'o yang* as evidence:

"When I come into the room . . ."⁸³

⁷⁶ Ch. 1 11b-12a.

⁷⁷ Ch. 79 20b.

⁷⁸ *Loc. cit.*

⁷⁹ Ch. 20 15ab.

⁸⁰ Ch. 20 15b.

⁸¹ Ch. 59 16a.

⁸² Ch. 59 21a.

⁸³ Ch. 59 19b-20a.

There are also some more complex ways of employing song. In Chapter 38, there are four songs which are used part dramatically, part descriptively. The first one is applied in the following way.⁸⁴ Chin-lien, claiming that she has wasted away while pining for Hsi-mên, asks her maid to bring her a mirror. Then follows a poem on the theme of her fears of looking in the mirror. The poem is followed by the first part of the first song, which states the same theme. Hsi-mên enters, and they proceed to fondle each other. Chin-lien complains that his hands are cold, and her complaint is followed by the second part of the song, which originally described the singer's loneliness. She then complains in rhyming prose—it has the same rhyme as the song—and follows her complaint, again without any introduction, with the final part of the song. Although the third part of the song is clearly meant to be taken as something Chin-lien said, the same is not true of the other two parts. Perhaps they can be considered as descriptive of her mood. The other three songs are used in a similar, though less complex, manner.

There are a number of songs which also raise one of the problems of the songs in Chapter 38. In most cases, the song follows the usual "there is a . . . as evidence" formula, but expresses in the first person the emotions of the character concerned. The character is not represented as speaking, let alone singing, such songs. One can only conclude that they represent his thoughts and emotions. They correspond, that is to say, to the use of song in the drama as soliloquy. Their effect is no different from that of the songs in which Chin-lien bemoans her loneliness in Chapter 1, or expresses her misery to Hsi-mên's servant in Chapter 8; they merely dispense with the transparent artifice shown there. They come closer to the plain, unambiguous representation of thought and emotion in the novel than any other songs.⁸⁵

In the whole novel, there are one song-sequence and about thirty individual songs which are used dramatically, although the number will vary somewhat according to one's definition.⁸⁶ The number includes songs which are to be found in the songbooks, as well as songs not found there. It is certainly not true to say that all of such songs are of the author's

⁸⁴ Ch. 38 8b.

⁸⁵ For example, Ch. 83 6b–7a, representing the maid's thoughts, and Ch. 82 10a, describing Ching-chi's reactions.

⁸⁶ Others, not mentioned above, include: Ch. 19 3a, in which Ching-chi expresses his sadness; Ch. 83 5b–5a, in which Chin-lien expresses to her maid her love for Ching-chi; Ch. 83 6b, in which Chin-lien pleads with the maid to take a message to Ching-chi; Ch. 83 8b, in which Chin-lien expresses her loneliness to Ching-chi; Ch. 83 10b, in which she and Ching-chi express their feelings by making up this song together; Ch. 91 13b, in which Li's concubine complains to him of her treatment. Seven short individual songs are used in Ch. 82 and seven in Ch. 83; they make of this episode—the love-affair between Chin-lien and Ching-chi—something different in form from the rest of the novel.

composition, and it is not necessarily true that any of them are of his composition.

The purpose of the *Chin P'ing Mei*'s dramatic use of song has already been indicated. Almost all of the songs come at a point in the action at which some deep emotion is felt by the characters involved. The use of song is merely another aspect of the author's preoccupation with describing the states of mind of the people in his novel. Obviously, the technique is one which he has developed from observation of the drama, although it is also possible that the example of *chantefable* literature, where poems or songs—sometimes represented as speech—alternate with passages of prose narrative, may have helped to influence him.

In considering the author's use of his sources, one is bound to ask in what form he has borrowed them. In the case of the *Shui-hu chuan*, the histories and the short stories, there can be no doubt that he copied either directly from a written or printed text, or else from his memory of such a text. Only in the case of the drama and the song—where in any event one would expect it—is there any clear indication that the author copied from an auditory memory of the performance. The best proof of this is given by the *Pao-chien chi* songs; among the numerous minute differences between the text as given in the *Chin P'ing Mei* and the text of the play, there are several features that indicate that the *Chin P'ing Mei* version derives ultimately from the form in which they were sung. These include the replacement of a character by its homophone and the replacement of a character by its rhyme. Since the same features also distinguish the *Chin P'ing Mei* versions of popular songs from those of the songbooks, one may well conclude that the author knew the songs by heart, from hearing them performed, or even from singing them himself, and that he wrote them down from memory.

7. *Chantefable* LITERATURE

Chantefable literature—the word is intended merely as a translation of the Chinese term *shuo-ch'ang* 說唱 or *chiang-ch'ang* 講唱—is found copied in several places in the *Chin P'ing Mei*.⁸⁷ In all there are three

⁸⁷ It is of course true that some at least of the vernacular short stories copied into the *Chin P'ing Mei* originated as *chantefable* literature, and that even the *Shui-hu chuan* stories derive ultimately from a *chantefable* form. Indeed the *Wên-ching yüan-yang hui* story still bears the mark of a *ku-tzu tz'u* 鼓子詞, a *chantefable* form current in Sung times. (See Yeh Tê-chün, *Sung-Yüan-Ming chiang-ch'ang wên-hsüeh* 宋元明講唱文學, Shanghai, 1957, p. 8.) But by the time the *Chin P'ing Mei* came to be written, they had long formed part of written vernacular literature, and it is in this form, not as oral literature, that the author must have known them. (He could, of course, have known some of the stories, and certainly the *Shui-hu chuan* tales, as part of the current sixteenth-century oral literature as well.) What is called *chantefable* literature here is literature which was still, at the time the novel was written, primarily intended for performance.

pao-chüan 寶卷 which are quoted.⁸⁸ In addition, a number of other works, notably *pao-chüan* and *tao-ch'ing* 道情, are mentioned as being performed.⁸⁹ What is more to our present purpose is that the *shuo-ch'ang* technique is actually applied at one point in the novel.

It is the passage in Chapter 86 8a which describes the beating administered to Ch'én Ching-chi by Yüeh-niang and her maids. Ching-chi, smarting at Yüeh-niang's treatment of himself and of Chin-lien, had thrown off a remark about the paternity of Yüeh-niang's child. To avenge herself for this insult, she had him brought before her, and with the help of seven or eight of the women, soundly thrashed. Only by the ruse of slipping down his trousers and baring his private parts did Ching-chi so unnerve his assailants as to be able to escape. The narrative runs:

She told him to kneel before her. "Do you admit you were in the wrong?" she asked. But Ching-chi did not kneel. He continued to hold his head as high as ever. Then Yüeh-niang said: "There is a *ch'ang-tz'ü* 長詞 in evidence":

At first Yüeh-niang had not attacked him, but now her expression changed,

And Ching-chi, for his part, his head held high, denounced her in these words:

"There's no need to carry on with your pointless prattle!

I want to get that clear between us!" . . .

A single rhyme runs through the whole piece, for some twenty lines. The lines themselves vary greatly in length, and cannot be regarded as approximations to the regular verse of *chantefable* literature. On the other hand, no mention is made of the tune of the popular song, if popular song it is. The term *ch'ang-tz'ü* is not of much help. It is not found, to the best of my

⁸⁸ They are the *Wu-tsu Huang-mei pao-chüan* 五祖黃梅寶卷, partially quoted in Ch. 39, 14b-16b, 18ab; the *Chin-kang k'ê-i* 金剛科儀, partially quoted in Ch. 51 17b-18b; and the *Huang-shih nü pao-chüan* 黃氏女寶卷, quoted in Ch. 74 11b-27b. There is another work, narrated by Nun Hsüeh in the same manner as a *pao-chüan*, except that it has no parts for singing or chanting. It is in fact the vernacular short story *Wu-chieh Ch'an-shih ssü Hung-lien chi*. (See Section 2 above.) For a study of the *pao-chüan* in the *Chin P'ing Mei*, see Sawada Mizuho 澤田瑞穂 "Kimpei-hai shiwa shoin no hōkan ni tsuite 金瓶梅詞話所引の寶卷について Chūgoku bungakuhō 中國文學報 5 (Oct., 1956).

⁸⁹ The *Hung-lo pao-chüan* 紅羅寶卷 is mentioned, but not quoted, in Ch. 82 5a. The term *tao-ch'ing* has two meanings, either moral, exhortatory songs of a Taoist import, or else Taoist tales told in a special *chantefable* form. It is the latter, narrative kind of *tao-ch'ing* that is meant here. Yeh Tê-chün, *op. cit.*, p. 24, has pointed out two references to them in the novel. The *Han Wên-kung hsüeh-yung Lan-kuan* 韓文公雪擁藍關, which is mentioned in Ch. 64 7b, is concerned with the famous story of Han Hsiang-tzū 韓湘子. Another, *Li Po hao t'an pei* 李白好食盃, is referred to in the same place in the novel. Two other forms of *chantefable* narration are mentioned in the novel. They are *ta-t'an* 打談 in Ch. 15 3a, and *mên-tz'ü* 門詞 in Ch. 21 12b. (See Yeh Tê-chün, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-6).

knowledge, in the field of *chantefable* literature, and in its other occurrence in the *Chin P'ing Mei*, in Chapter 78, it refers to a long erotic set piece on the mock-battle theme, which is unrhymed, and of which the main feature is its parallelism. Yet there is no mistaking the *chantefable* technique that is being employed here. The passage, which is mainly composed of dialogue between Yüeh-niang and Ching-chi, helps to further the narrative. It has a function quite different from that of either the set piece or the popular song.

8. CONCLUSIONS

It is not the fact of copying which is important, but its nature and the purpose for which it was undertaken. Copying passages from earlier novels was a common practice in vernacular fiction. The *P'ing-yao chuan* 平妖傳 and the *Ts'an T'ang Wu-tai shih yen-chuan* 殘唐五代史演傳, for example, both contain passages which must have been derived from the *Shui-hu chuan*.⁹⁰ And in the field of drama, the practice of copying was even more widespread.

Viewed in isolation, the copied passages form a bizarre collection of literary bric-à-brac. It is only when we ask questions as to how they have been used and why they should have been so used, that they can throw light on the *Chin P'ing Mei*.

The first point to note is the degree to which the author has relied on literary experience rather than on personal observation. The copied source-works naturally form part—the only certain part—of the literary background on which the author drew in writing his novel. It is remarkable just how pervasive the influence of that literary background has been; short though the copied passages are, it is a rare section of the novel that contains nothing copied. We have noticed to what lengths of ingenuity the author has sometimes resorted in order to weave a passage from some earlier work into his narrative. Time and again he has been shown to depend on earlier literature for some seemingly trivial detail of description, character or incident. Often it would have been simpler and quicker to invent it himself, so trivial is the point in question and so laborious the effort its inclusion demanded. Such considerations should lead us to revise somewhat our view of the *Chin P'ing Mei*, which is often spoken of as if it consisted entirely, save for a few obvious exceptions, of the author's fresh observation of life around him. Undoubtedly the novel does contain much pertinent reference to the author's times—this feature is one of the most significant things about it—

⁹⁰ The beginning of Chapter 26 in the 40-chapter *P'ing-yao chuan* duplicates the *Yeh-chu lin* 野猪林 episode (the attempt on Lin Ch'ung's life) in the *Shui-hu chuan*. (*Shui-hu ch'üan-chuan* Chapter 8.) *Chüan* 1 of the other novel, the episode entitled *An Ching-ssü mu-yang ta-hu* 安景愚牧羊打虎, has a good deal in common with the account of Wu Sung's fight with the tiger in Chapter 23 of the *Shui-hu chuan*.

but the author's frequent reliance on a literary background ought also to be given its due weight.

The second point is the breadth of the author's borrowing. The copied sourceworks represent the whole spectrum of Ming dynasty literatures. Wherever the literary historian discerns boundaries between different literatures, the author of the *Chin P'ing Mei* can be seen to have crossed those boundaries. From the "recognized" literature (defined for our present purpose as work written in Literary Chinese), he has taken the snippets of formal history and erotic fiction. In the field of the written vernacular literature, he has drawn on both the novel and the short story. Like the drama, these two forms have evidently been particularly close to the author's imagination, so that it needed only the slightest hint of a similar situation to cause him to turn to them. From the oral literature current in his time, he has taken the songs and, if not the *chantefable* piece itself, then at least the *chantefable* technique. Such eclectic borrowing is indeed accompanied by a willingness to use the procedures of different literatures. The fleeting experiment with *chantefable* technique is merely one instance of this. Another is the author's exploitation of the fact that his novel is destined for a reading public and not a listening public, as was shown in Section 3 above. As a result, we should be wary of trying to place the *Chin P'ing Mei* within any one literary tradition. The novel is remarkable in patently accepting so many diverse influences; the implication for us is that we should regard it as transcending earlier patterns, rather than conforming to them.

When we ask in what way the copied passages give us insights into the novel, the answer, paradoxically enough, is that they supply us with information mainly through their inadequacy to meet the author's purpose. It is when they fall short of what the author demands of them, and he has consequently had to adapt them, or when they fall short of what he has led his readers to expect, that we have a measure of the novel's originality.

The underlying unity of the novel is one such case. The *Chin P'ing Mei* is demonstrably more closely-knit in narration than any surviving novel before it. As a result, it has proved impossible for the author to work any extended piece of fiction into his novel—apart, that is to say, from the chapters of the *Shui-hu chuan* at its beginning. No other story could have been included whole without rending the fabric of the *Chin P'ing Mei*'s exceedingly close narration. Only where the narration becomes looser, in terms of place and time, has it been possible to work other stories in successfully, as, for example in Chapter 84 when Yüeh-niang goes on her pilgrimage, or in the last chapters of the novel, where the picaresque adventures of Ch'en Ching-chi are described. And even here the story *Hsin-ch'iao-shih Han Wu mai ch'un-ch'ing* has been included at the cost of sacrificing most of its point. The sole exception is the *Kang-k'ou yü-weng*,

and this stands out from the rest of the novel. Perfectly acceptable though it might have been in the older, episodic form of fiction, it is here conspicuous because it offends against that structural unity with which the novel has up to this point impressed the reader. The author cannot have been unaware of this. We can only surmise that, with no precedent for his work apart from the episodic novel, he thought it pardonable to allow this lacuna to remain.

Similarly, the author's use of one or two stories of the *femme fatale* type at the very beginning of his novel is also most significant. As a *femme fatale* story, the *Chin P'ing Mei* is hopelessly miscast. But that was evidently the only remotely comparable story to the new kind of work which the author was creating.

This new kind of work required characters described in more detail, and in a different kind of detail, than in earlier fiction. The characters borrowed from the *Shui-hu chuan*, the vernacular short story and the drama have all proved inadequate for the author's purpose. Either they have been allowed to remain insubstantial figures, like the quack doctor from the drama, or else they have been delineated with a precision unknown hitherto. This delineation is frequently concerned with the social status of the character described.⁹¹

It is, however, in his attempt to add another dimension to character depiction that the author has made his most remarkable technical innovation. This is the experiment, modelled on the methods of the drama, which uses popular song to depict the states of mind of the characters in the novel. However unevenly the technique is applied, whatever our estimate of its success, it deserves attention as a quite revolutionary advance. And even more important than the technique itself is the impulse behind the technique, the impulse to go beyond the old external methods of characterization.

Finally, the study of the sources seems occasionally to allow us a glimpse of the author's attitude towards his material or towards his readers. We have already remarked how the author's use of an erotic short story, coupled with his use of the *double entendre* poems, carries implications about his attitude towards the erotic. And this is not the only instance. What kind of sardonic quirk, for example, must we attribute to him in Chapter 70, when he switches a scathing attack for the conventional eulogy that ought to have been?

⁹¹ For a speculative essay on the central importance of this topic, see P. D. Hanan, "A Landmark of the Chinese novel", *University of Toronto Quarterly*, vol. xxx, no. 3 (April, 1961), pp. 325-35.