

KUAN HAN-CH'ING

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List of works cited

Where more than one edition is mentioned, the first is the one usually quoted in the above study. Where an abbreviated title has been used, the remainder of the full title is placed in brackets below.

Abbreviations used below

- CB *Chūgoku bungaku hō.*
CKKT *Chung-kuo ku-tien hsi-ch'ü lun-chu chi-ch'eng.*
KHCCYC *Kuan Han-ch'ing yen-chiu lun-wen chi.*
KPHC *Ku-pen hsi-ch'ü ts'ung-k'an.*
SPTK *Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an.*
TSCC *Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng.*

I Pre-1900 works (listed by title)

- Chang Hsieh chuang-yuan* 張協壯元 - by anonymous author of the Yuan; in *Yung-le ta-tien hsi-wen san-chung* 永樂大典戲文三種, reprint in type (from the original MS. of the *Yung-le ta-tien* 永樂大典 book 13, 991) by Ye Kung-ch'ao 葉恭綽, Peking, Ku-chin Hsiao-p'in Shu-chi Yin-hsing hui 古今小品書籍印行會, 1931.
- Ch'ang-sheng tien* 長生殿 - by Hung Shen 洪深 (1659-1704) written in 1679; annotated ed. Hsü Shuo-fang 徐朔方, Peking, Jen-min Wen-hsüeh, 1958.
- Chin-shih* 金史 - 135 ch. by Tokto 脫脫(托克托) and others (1345); *Erh-shih ssu-shih* edn.
- Ch'ing-lou chi* 青樓集 - 1 ch. by Hsia T'ing-chih 夏庭芝 1355; CKKT vol. 2 edn.
- Ch'iu-chien hsien-sheng ta-ch'üan wen-chi* 秋澗先生大全文集 - 100 ch. by Wang Yun 王惲 (1227-1304) SPTK edn.
- Chung-yuan yin-yun* 中原音韻 - by Chou Te-ch'ing 周德清, first completed in 1324; CKKT vol. 1 edn.
- Ch'ü-lun* 曲論 - 1 ch. by He Liang-chün 何良俊 (fl. 1522-66); CKKT vol. 4 edn.
- Ch'ü-lun* 曲論 - 1 ch. by Hsü Fu-cha 徐復祚 (1560-post 1630); CKKT vol. 4 edn.
- Ch'ü-lü* 曲律 - 4 ch. by Wang Chi-te 王驥德 (d. 1623 or 1624); CKKT vol. 4 edn.
- Ch'ü-tsao* 曲藻 - 1 ch. by Wang Shih-chen 王世貞 (1526-90); CKKT vol. 4 edn.

- Hsi-hu lao-jen fan-sheng lu* 西湖老人繁勝錄 - 1 ch. by Hsi-hu lao-jen 西湖老人, written mid 13th century; *Tung-ching meng-hua lu: wai ssu-chung* pp. 111-28 edn.
- Hsien-ch'ü chi* 閒居集 - 12 ch. by Li K'ai-hsien 李開先 (1501-68); in *Li K'ai-hsien chi* 李開先集, ed. Lu Kung 路工, Peking, Chung-hua Shu-chü, 1959.
- (*I-li-an*) *Pei-tz'u kuang-cheng p'u* 一笠庵北詞廣正譜 - by Li Yü 李玉 (Ming-Ch'ing); photolith. edn. (of Ch'ing-lien shu-wu 清蓮書屋 edn.) by Peking University, post-1911 (1931?).
- Kuei Tung* 鬼董 - 5 ch. by unknown author of the early 13th century; *Chih-pu-tsu-chai ts'ung-shu* 12th collection edn.
- Li-tai chih-kuan piao* 歷代職官表, by Huang Pen-chi 黃本驥 (mid 19th century); Peking, Chung-hua shu-chü, 1963 edn.
- Lu-kuei pu* 錄鬼簿 - 2 ch. by Chung Ssu-ch'eng 鍾嗣成, first version completed in 1330;
- (i) CKKT vol. 2 edn.
- (ii) Meng Ch'eng-shun edn. in *Ku-chin ming-chü he-hsüan*.
- Lu-kuei pu hsü-pien* 錄鬼簿續編 - 1 ch. by unknown author of early Ming, possibly Chia Chung-ming (1343-1422); CKKT vol. 2 edn.
- Meng-liang lu* 夢梁錄 - 20 ch. by Wu Tzu-mu 吳自牧, written in late Southern Sung; *Tung-ching meng-hua lu: wai ssu-chung* pp. 129-328 edn.
- Ming-shih* 明史 - 336 ch. by Chang T'ing-yü 張廷玉 and others, 1739; *Erh-shih-ssu shih* edn.
- (*Nan-ts'un*) *Ch'o-keng lu* 南村輟耕錄 - 30 ch. by T'ao Tsung-i 陶宗儀 (late Yuan); Peking, Chung-hua shu-chü, 1959
- San-kuo chih* 三國志 - 65 ch. by Ch'en Shou 陳壽 (233-97 A.D.); punctuated edition, Peking, Chung-hua Shu-chü, 1959.
- Shih chieh-i* 詩解頤 - 4 ch. by Chu Shan 朱善.
- Tu-ch'eng chi-sheng* 都城紀勝 - 1 ch. by Nai-te-weng 耐得翁, written in 1235; *Tung-ching meng-hua lu: wai ssu chung* pp. 89-110 edn.
- Tu-ch'ü hsü-chih* 度曲須知 - 2 ch. by Shen Ch'ung-sui 沈龍綏, authors' preface dated 1639; CKKT vol. 5 edn.
- Tung-wei-tzu chi* 東維子集 - 31 ch. by Yang Wei-chien 楊維貞 (1296-1370); SPTK edn.
- Wu-lin chiu-shih* 武林舊事 - 10 ch. by Chou Mi 周密, written some time during 1279-1290; *Tung-ching meng-hua lu: wai ssu-chung* pp. 329-526 edn.
- Yao-shan-t'ang wai-chi* 堯山堂外紀 - 100 ch. by Chiang I-k'uei 蔣一葵 (late 16th-early 17th century); parts composing the *Yao-shan-t'ang ch'ü-chi* 堯山堂曲記, ed. Jen Ne 任訥, in *Hsin Ch'ü-yuan* 9.
- Yu-kuei chih* 幽閨記 - by Shih Hui 施惠, late Yuan; Shanghai, Chung-hua Shu-chü, 1959.
- (*Yu-lan chü-shih*) *Tung-ching meng-hua lu* 幽蘭居士東京夢華錄 - 10 ch.

- by Meng Yuan-lao 孟元老, 1147; *Tung-ching meng-hua lu: wai ssu-chung* pp. 1-88 edn.
- Yuan kung-tz'u* 元宮詞 - by Chu Yu-tun 朱有燾 (1374-1437); *Kung-tz'u hsiao-ts'uan* edn.
- Yuan-shan t'ang ch'ü-p'in* 遠山堂曲品 - by Ch'i Piao-chia 祁彪佳 (1602-45); CKKT vol. 6 edn.
- Yuan-shih* 元史 - 200 ch. by Wang I 王禕, Sung Lien 宋濂 and others, 1370; *Erh-shih-ssu shih* edn.
- Yueh-chiao ssu-yü* 樂郊私語 - 1 ch. by Yao T'ung-shou 姚桐壽 (late Yuan); *Shuo-fu* 18 edn.
- II Collections of works and articles and periodicals (listed by title)
- (*Ch'ao-ye hsin-sheng*) *T'ai-p'ing yueh-fu* 朝野新聲太平樂府 - 9 ch. compiled by Yang Ch'ao-ying 楊朝英, 1351; Peking, Wen-hsueh Ku-chi, 1955.
- Chih-pu-tsu-chai ts'ung-shu* 知不足齋叢書 - compiled and edited by Pao T'ing-po 鮑廷博 (1728-1814), printed by editor during 1769-1814, completed by Pao Chih-tsu 鮑志祖, 1814-23; photolith. reprint, Shanghai, Ku-shu Liu-t'ung-ch'u 古書流通處, 1921.
- Chügoku bungaku hō* 中國文學報 - Kyoto, first issue 1959.
- Chung-kuo ku-tien hsi-ch'ü lun-chu chi-ch'eng* 中國古典戲曲論著集成, - 10 vols. Peking, Chung-kuo Hsi-chü, 1960.
- (*Pai-na-pen*) *Erh-shih-ssu shih* 百衲本二十四史 - edited by Chang Yuan-chi 張元濟, Shanghai, Commercial Press, 1930-37.
- Hsin Ch'ü-yuan* 新曲苑 - ed. Jen Ne 任訥, Shanghai, Chung-hua Shu-chü, 1940.
- Ku-chin ming-chü he-hsuan* 古今名劇合選 - ed. Meng Ch'eng-shun 孟稱舜, 1633; photolith. reprint of Ming edn. in KPHC 4, viii.
- Ku-pen hsi-ch'ü ts'ung-k'an* 古本戲曲叢刊 - 4th collection, Shanghai, Commercial Press, 1954-8.
- Kuan Han-ch'ing hsi-ch'ü chi* 關漢卿戲曲集 - critical edition of Kuan Han-ch'ing's plays and non-dramatic *ch'ü*, by Wu Hsiao-ling 吳曉鈴 and others, Peking, Chung-kuo Hsi-chü, 1958.
- Kuan Han-ch'ing yen-chiu lun-wen chi* 關漢卿研究論文集 - collection of articles on Kuan Han-ch'ing, Shanghai, Ku-tien Wen-hsueh, 1958.
- Kung-tz'u hsiao-ts'uan* 宮詞小纂 - 3 ch. compiled by Chang Hai-p'eng 張海鵬 (1755-1816); TSCC edn. (1937).
- Mai-wang kuan ch'ao-chiao pen ku-chin tsa-chü* 脈望館鈔校本古今雜劇 - MSS. and printed plays formerly in the collection of Chao Ch'i-mei 趙琦美 (1563-1624); photolith. reprint in KPHC 4, iii edn.
- Shuo-fu* 說郛 - originally compiled by T'ao Tsung-i 陶宗儀 during late 14th century, revised and supplemented (1314-85); *Tung-chih-t'ang ching-chieh* edn.

- Ts'u-chü t'u-p'u* 蹴鞠圖譜 - 1 ch. by Wang Yun-ch'eng 汪雲程 (fl. c.1612?); *Shuo-fu* edn.
- (*Tu*) *Yuan (sheng-cheng kuo-ch'ao) tien-chang* 大元聖政國朝典章 - 601 ch. compiled by unknown person or persons in 1322; 1908 edn.
- (*Tu*) *Yuan* *T'ung-chih t'iao-ke* 大元通制條格 - compiled by unknown person of Yuan, 1323; facsimile reprint of fragment containing ch. 2-9, 13-22 and 27-30, Peking, Kuo-li Pei-p'ing T'u-shu-kuan 國立北平圖書館, 1930.
- T'ai-he cheng-yin p'u* 太和正音譜 - 2 ch. by Chu Ch'üan 朱權, 1398, CKKT vol. 3 edn.
- T'ieh-yai i-pien chu* 鐵崖逸編註 - 8 ch. writings of Yang Wei-chien 楊維貞 (1296-1370), annotated by Lou Pu-ch'an 樓卜瀝, 1774; SPTK edn.
- T'ien-i-ke (lan-ke hsieh-pen cheng-hsü)* *Lu-kuei pu* 天一閣藍格寫本正續錄鬼簿 - 2 ch. supplemented version of Chung Ssu-ch'eng's *Lu-kuei pu* by Chia Chung-ming 賈仲明, author's preface dated 1422; photolithographed edition of MS. in Peking Library, Shanghai, Chung-hua shu-chü, 1960.
- Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an* 四部叢刊 - edited by Chang Yuan-chi 張元濟 and others, Shanghai, Commercial Press, 1929.
- Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng (ch'u-pien)* 叢書集成初編 - edited by Wang Yun-wu 王雲五, Shanghai, Commercial Press, 1935-7.
- Tung-ching meng-hua lu*: wai ssu-chung 東京夢華錄 (外四種), Shanghai, Ku-tien Wen-hsueh, 1957.
- T'ung-chih-t'ang ching-chieh* 通志堂經解 - 1,781 ch. series edited by Na-lan Ch'eng-te 納蘭成德 (Hsing-te 性德) (1654-85), Peking, T'ung-chih-t'ang 通志堂, 1680.
- Yuan-ch'ü hsüan* 元曲選 - 100 ch. compiled and edited by Tsang Mao-hsun 臧懋循, 1615-16; Peking, Chung-hua Shu-chü, 1958.
- (*Yueh-fu hsin-pien*) *Yang-ch'un pai-hsueh* 樂府新編陽春白雪 - compiled by Yang Ch'ao-ying 楊朝英, c. 1324;
1. collated edition in 9 ch. by Sui Shu-sen 隋樹森, entitled *Hsin-chiao chiu-chüan pen Yang-ch'un pai-hsueh* 新校本九卷本陽春白雪, Peking, Chung-hua Shu-chü, 1957.
 2. collated edn. in 11 ch. by Jen Ne 任訥 in *San-ch'ü ts'ung-k'an*.
- Yueh-fu ch'ün-chu* 樂府羣珠, - 4 ch. compiled by unknown person of Ming; ed. Lu Ch'ien 盧前, Shanghai, Commercial press, 1957.

Post-1900 works (listed by author)

Aoki Masaru 青木正兒

1. *Shina kinsei gikyoku shi* 支那近世戲曲史, (first published 1930), Tokyo, Kōbundō 弘文堂, 1938.

2. *Chung-kuo chin-shih hsi-ch'ü shih* 中國近世戲曲史, transl. of preceding by Wang Ku-lu 王古魯; Peking, Tso-chia, 1958.
- Chao Wan-li 趙万里, "Kuan Han-ch'ing shih-liao hsin-te 關漢卿史料新得" in KHCYC, pp. 39-41.
- Chao Ching-shen 趙景深
1. *Hsi-ch'ü pi-t'an* 戲曲筆談, Peking, Chung-hua shu-chü, 1962.
 2. "Kuan-yü Yuan-jen san-ch'ü tso-che chu-ming-te i-hsieh wen-t'i 關於元人散曲作者主名的一些問題", in *Wen-hsueh i-ch'an* 文學遺產 supplement, 9th series, Peking, Chung-hua Shu-chü, 1962, pp. 62-87.
 3. *Tu-ch'ü hsiao-chi* 讀曲小紀, Peking, Chung-hua Shu-shü, 1959.
- Chung-kuo hsi-ch'ü lun-chi* 中國戲曲論集, Peking, Chung-kuo Hsi-chü, 1960.
- Feng Yuan-chün 馮沅君, *Ku-chü shuo-hui* 古劇說彙, (first published 1947), Peking, Tso-chia, 1956 revised edn.
- Fu Hsi-hua 傅惜華
1. *Yuan-tai tsa-chü ch'üan-mu* 元代雜劇全目, Peking, Tso-chia, 1957.
- Gernet, J., *la vie quotidienne en Chine à la veille de l'invasion Mongole (1250-1276)*, Paris, Hachette, 1959.
- Hu Chi 胡忌
1. *Sung Chin tsa-chü k'ao* 宋金雜劇考, Shanghai, Ku-tien Wen-hsueh, 1957.
 2. "I-chai-te hsiao-ling 一齣的小令", in KHCYC pp. 44-6.
- Iwaki Hideo 岩城秀夫
1. "Sōdai engeki kikan 宋代演劇窺管", in CB, vol. 19, Oct. 1963, pp. 102-27.
- Jen Pan-t'ang 任半塘, *T'ang hsi-nung* 唐戲弄, 2 vols., Peking, Tso-chia, 1958.
- Li Hsiao-ts'ang 李嘯蒼, *Sung Yuan chi-i tsa-k'ao* 宋元伎藝雜考, Shanghai, Shang-tsa, 1953.
- Lu Yuan-chün 盧元駿, *Kuan Han-ch'ing k'ao-shu* 關漢卿考述, Taiwan, 1961.
- Ratchnevsky, P., *Un code des Yuan*, Paris, Librairie Ernest Leroux, 1937.
- Su I 蘇夷, "Kuan Han-ch'ing-te nien-tai wen-t'i 關漢卿的年代問題", in KHCYC, pp. 16-20.
- Sui Shu-sen 隋樹森
1. *Ch'üan Yuan san-ch'ü*, 全元散曲, (compiler), Peking, Chung-hua Shu-chü, 1964 (2 vols.).
 2. "Kuan Han-ch'ing tseng Chu Lien-hsiu san-t'ao 關漢卿贈珠帘秀散套", in KHCYC, pp. 37-8.
- Sun K'ai-ti 孫楷第
1. *Yuan ch'ü-chia k'ao-lüeh* 元曲家考略, Peking, Shang-tsa 上雜, 1953.

2. "Kuan Han-ch'ing hsing-nien k'ao 關漢卿行年考", in KHCYC, pp. 11-15.
3. *Ye-shih-yuan ku-chin tsa-chü k'ao* 也是國古今雜劇考, Shanghai, Shang-tsa, 1953.
4. *K'ui-lei hsi k'ao-yuan* 傀儡戲考源, Shanghai, Shang-tsa, 1932.

T'an Cheng-pi 譚正璧

1. *Yuan-ch'ü liu ta-chia lüeh-chuan* 元曲六大家略傳, Shanghai, Wen-i Lien-he, 1955.
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3. *Hua-pen yü ku-chü* 話本與古劇, Shanghai, Ku-tien Wen-hsueh, 1953.
4. *Chung-kuo wen-hsueh-chia ta tz'u-tien*, 中國文學家大辭典, Hong Kong, 1961 edn.

Ts'ai Mei-piao

1. "Kuan-yü Kuan Han-ch'ing-te sheng-p'ing 關於關漢卿的生平", in KHCYC, pp. 21-32.
2. "Kuan Han-ch'ing sheng-p'ing hsü-chi 關漢卿生平續記", KHCYC, pp. 33-6.

Wang Kuo-wei 王國維, *Sung Yuan hsi-ch'ü k'ao* 宋元戲曲考 written in 1912; in *Wang Kuo-wei hsi-ch'ü lun-wen chi* 王國維戲曲論文集, Peking, Chung-kuo Hsi-chü, 1957.

Wu Mei 吳梅

1. *Ku-ch'ü chu-t'an* 顧曲塵談 (originally published in twenties?), Taipei, Kuang-wen Shu-chü, 1962.

Yeh Te-chün 葉德鈞, *Sung Yuan Ming chiang-ch'ang wen-hsueh* 宋元明講唱文學, Shanghai, Ku-tien Wen-hsueh, 1957.

Yen Tun-i 嚴敦易

1. *Yuan-chü chen-i* 元劇斟疑, Peking, Chung-hua Shu-chü, 1960.

PART I

As far as is known, Kuan Han-ch'ing was the first author of the first mature form of Chinese drama, the *tsa-chü* ("miscellany-play"), the most prolific writer of this form of drama and, at the very least, one of the four most popular playwrights of his times. During the period when he wrote, moreover, the *tsa-chü* was one of the most flourishing forms of popular entertainment and the writing of the *ch'ü* songs, which are the vital element of the *tsa-chü* and were also written as non-dramatic compositions, was one of the most widespread literary activities and the one most characteristic of the period. For all this, the amount of information now available concerning the life, origins and personality of Kuan Han-ch'ing is extremely small and, apart from that which may be gleaned from his own surviving works, is

found in literature written after his death. The distance of time must inevitably render it somewhat suspect, especially in view of the paucity and imprecision of early information about *tsa-chü* and *tsa-chü* playwrights in general. The circumstances of transmission of his own works are a matter of considerable doubt, and it is open to question whether one can place a great deal of confidence in them. A further grave complication is the apparently contradictory nature of much of the surviving information. While it may be possible to arrive at a few reasonably solid facts, to ascertain the limits of reasonable possibility in some other matters and, by a close study combined with reasonable conjecture, to form some picture of Kuan Han-ch'ing, it must be realized that any such picture can at best be only a very incomplete and tentative one.

Names

Even the elementary problem of the identification of Kuan Han-ch'ing's names and the choice of the correct version of them from among the variants presents considerable difficulties. All evidence agrees on the name Kuan Han-ch'ing. Kuan was clearly his *hsing*. Han-ch'ing was most probably his *tsu*. The *Lu-kuei pu*,¹ first completed in 1330 and a work of prime importance on *tsa-chü*, *tsa-chü* playwrights and *ch'ü* composers, mentions him five times but does not specify whether Han-ch'ing was his *tsu* or not. Of the playwrights listed in this work under the same heading as Kuan Han-ch'ing and of whom both *tsu* and *ming* names are known, two thirds are listed by their *hsing* and *tsu*. Generally the early *tsa-chü* playwrights seem to have used their *tsu* rather than their *ming*. The *Hsi-chin chih*, compiled some time during the period 1341-68 states unequivocally that Han-ch'ing was his *tsu*.² It would be natural to suppose that such was indeed the case.

The *Hsi-chin chih* says in full, "Kuan I-chai, *tsu* Han-ch'ing". Is the I-chai "一齋" then to be taken as Kuan Han-ch'ing's *ming*, as has been claimed by Lu Yuan-chün in a work published in 1961?³ This name I-chai is found among the names of composers in the *Yueh-fu ch'ün-chu*, a Ming collection of Yuan and Ming non-dramatic *ch'ü*.⁴ An article written by Hu Chi some ten years ago, entitled "The *hsiao-ling* of I-chai",⁵ discusses five *hsiao-ling* found in the *Yueh-fu ch'ün-chu* under the name I-chai and asserts,

¹ *Lu-kuei pu*: by Chung Ssu-ch'eng, *Chung-kuo ku-tien hsi-ch'ü lun-chu chi-ch'eng* edn. (based on *Lien-t'ing ts'ang-shu* edn.), Peking, 1959. Edition used in notes below, except where otherwise indicated.

² *Hsi-chin chih* by Hsiung Tzu-te, part as originally included in *Yung-le ta-tien*, ch. 4653 (*t'ien-tzu yün* 天字韻) and quoted in Chao Wan-li "Kuan Han-ch'ing shih-liao hsin-te", article in *Kuan Han-ch'ing yen-chiu lun-wen chi*, Shanghai, 1958, p. 39.

³ Lu Yuan-chün, *Kuan Han-ch'ing k'ao-shu*, p. 5, T'aiwan, 1961.

⁴ For the *ch'ü* concerned see *Yueh-fu ch'ün-chu*, ed. Lu Ch'ien, Shanghai, 1957, pp. 15, 93 and 244.

⁵ *Kuan Han-ch'ing yen-chiu lun-wen chi*, pp. 44-6.

"There is not much question but that these five *hsiao-ling* may be taken as having been composed by Kuan Han-ch'ing."⁶ He goes on to make various assumptions about Kuan Han-ch'ing on the basis of these four *ch'ü* (five stanzas), drawing various conclusions about the playwright's length of life, for instance. He takes the information of the *Hsi-chin chih* as confirming that these are indeed Kuan Han-ch'ing's *ch'ü*. The *Kuan Han-ch'ing hsi-ch'ü chi* published in 1958 includes them among the playwright's non-dramatic *ch'ü* but adds a tentative note doubting whether they are indeed his.⁷ The more recent *Ch'üan Yuan san-ch'ü*, a comprehensive collection of Kin and Yuan non-dramatic *ch'ü*, does not include them under Kuan Han-ch'ing at all.⁸ It would in fact seem clear beyond doubt that they are not his. Their words imply that the writer was an official of high rank, which Kuan Han-ch'ing almost certainly was not. Moreover the circumstances in which the name is found in the *Yueh-fu ch'ün-chu* suggest an alternative. The I-chai songs are found in each case in between songs by Ming or probably Ming composers. The only other composer indicated by a two-character name is Ch'eng-chai 誠齋. In this case the name clearly refers to the famous Ming writer of drama and *ch'ü* Chu Yu-tun (1379-1439), a grandson of the first Ming emperor. Ch'eng-chai was one of Chu Yu-tun's names. Among Ming writers the name I-chai was the *hao* name of a certain Chu Shan (1314-85). He was an eminent scholar and high-ranking official of his time and the four *ch'ü* would seem to fit him.⁹ The *Yueh-fu ch'ün-chu* thus omits the *hsing* "Chu" in both of these the only cases of two-character names. "Chu" in fact was the *hsing* of the Ming imperial family, but the omission here is possibly because these two people were so well known at the time that they could be referred to in a familiar fashion without *hsing*. The important point to be made is that the *ch'ü* under I-chai are highly unlikely to have been composed by Kuan Han-ch'ing.

The *Hsi-chin chih* attribution of the name I-chai 一齋 to Kuan Han-ch'ing cannot therefore be supported by the presence of the name in the *Yueh-fu ch'ün-chu*. The *Lu-kuei pu*, moreover, says that Kuan Han-ch'ing's *hao* was I-chai-sou 已齋叟,¹⁰ and the very similarity of the names I-chai and I-chai-sou may perhaps arouse one's suspicions. The *Lu-kuei pu* is the earlier work, and its statement would seem to deserve the more credence, if either works are to be doubted. The T'ien-i-ke supplemented version of the

⁶ The *hsiao-ling* is a non-dramatic *ch'ü* to a single tune.

⁷ *Kuan Han-ch'ing hsi-ch'ü chi*, collated edn. by Wu Hsiao-ling and others, Peking, 1958, pp. 1000-2.

⁸ *Ch'üan Yuan san-ch'ü*, compiled by Sui Shu-sen, Peking, 1964, pp. 154-91.

⁹ There is a biography of him appended to the biography of Liu San-wu 劉三吾, *Ming-shih*, 137, pp. 32-3b. His *hao* is noted in a postface dated 1402 to his *Shih chieh-i* (p. 26a) as found in the *T'ung-chih-t'ang ching-chieh*, ed. Na-lan Hsing-te, Peking, 1680, Vol. 52.

¹⁰ *Lu-kuei pu*, ch. 1, p. 104.

Lu-kuei pu, which has a preface by Chia Chung-ming dated 1422, includes an elegy to Meng Han-ch'ing added by Chia Chung-ming.¹¹ In this Kuan Han-ch'ing is referred to as "已齋老叟". "the old man I-chai", clearly with the same name in mind. One imagines this to have been a *hao* taken by Kuan Han-ch'ing in his old age, though not certainly so, with the *i* meaning something such as "cease", "finish". The *Yao-shan t'ang wai-chi* by the late sixteenth - early seventeenth century scholar Chiang I-kuei gives the same information as the *Lu-kuei pu*.¹² It will be noticed that in these names the *i* is represented by the character 已, not by the 一 of the *Hsi-chin chih*. The difference in visual form and in tone, however, by no means permits one to dismiss the phonetic similarity of the two names as irrelevant, for other examples of graphic, phonetic and tonal confusion in the transmission of Yuan names are not infrequently seen. For example the *ning* of Ch'en Ning-fu is found as *ting*, the *fu* of Tai Shan-fu as 夫 or 甫, the *ming* of Chang Ming-shan (Chang Tse) as 鳴 or 明, the *chang* of Shih Tzu-chang and Yen Chung-chang as 章 or 璋, the *fu* of Wang Shih-fu as 甫, 父 or 夫, and so on.

The similarity of the two names is made to seem even closer by information given in the *Ch'ing-lou chi*, a work consisting of brief anecdotal biographies of Yuan singing-girls and actresses, written by Hsia T'ing-chih in 1355. In Chu Ching's preface of 1364 to the *Ch'ing-lou chi*¹³ and also in the biography of Chu Lien-hsiu contained in the Shuo-chi edition of the *Ch'ing-lou chi*¹⁴ Kuan Han-ch'ing is referred to as "Kuan I-chai 關已齋". In this preface the name is listed together with the names Tu San-jen and Pai Lan-ku, both a combination of *hsing* plus *hao*. In the biography of Chu Lien-hsiu the other two *ch'ü* composers mentioned are Feng Hai-su and Hu Tzu-shan. The former name is a combination of *hsing* plus *tsu* and the latter of *hsing* plus *hao*. Especially from the preface one would naturally feel the name Kuan I (已)-chai to be a combination of *hsing* plus *hao*.

In view of the *Lu-kuei pu* statement and the name's meaning, there is little reason to doubt that I-chai-sou was Kuan Han-ch'ing's *hao*, and the form I-chai is most probably a contraction of it. The Lan-ku of Pai Lan-ku above is in fact Pai P'u's *hao*, which is sometimes found as Lan-ku-hsien-sheng. Other *hao* were sometimes similarly contracted. As for the *Hsi-chin chih*'s 一齋, it is not impossible that Kuan Han-ch'ing should have had a *ming* so similar to his *hao*, but since many Yuan playwrights went by their

¹¹ T'ien-i-ke (lan-ke hsieh-pen cheng-hsiü) *Lu-kuei pu*, supplemented version of Chung Ssu-ch'eng's *Lu-kuei pu*, by Chia Chung-ming, photolithographed edition of Ming MS. in Peking Library, Shanghai, 1960, ch. 1, p. 22a.

¹² I refer to the parts of the *Yao-shan t'ang wai-chi* composing the *Yao-shan t'ang ch'ü-chi*, ed. Jen Ne, included in *Hsin Ch'ü-yuan*, Shanghai 1949.

¹³ *Ch'ing-lou chi*, by Hsia T'ing-chih (late Yuan), *Chung-kuo ku-tien hsi-ch'ü lun-chu chi-ch'eng*, Vol. 2 edn., 2 p. 15.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 48, n. 97.

tsu and are referred to by *tsu* or *hao*, even in Yuan and early Ming literature, it is perfectly possible that Kuan Han-ch'ing's *ming* was not known or not widely known to the public of his time or was no longer known by the time the first surviving literature about him was written and that the *i* — of the *Hsi-chin chih* is a mistake for the *i* 已 of his *hao*. The *Hsi-chin chih* does not after all give any *hao* for Kuan Han-ch'ing, though even a few Ming works were aware of the *hao*.

Other names used in reference to Kuan Han-ch'ing in Yuan and Ming literature, Kuan I 關已 and Kuan Ch'ing 關卿, appear in verse and may for want of evidence to the contrary be regarded as contractions for the sake of prosody. In a *Yuan kung-tz'u* by Yang Wei-chen (1296-1370) and also in a remarkably similar *Yuan kung-tz'u* by Chu Yu-tun, the name Kuan Ch'ing is used and it is probable that in both cases the limitations of the seven-character phrase caused the writer to prefer such a contracted form of the name, which since it contained both *hsing* and an element of the *tsu* would at the same time be less ambiguous in its reference for the reader than just a full *ming*, *tsu* or two-character *hao*, deprived of *hsing*.¹⁵ Kuan I is used in Chia Chung-ming's elegy to Fei Chün-hsiang in the *T'ien-i-ko Lu-kuei-pu* and similar reasons may be put forward to explain this contraction.¹⁶

In several instances above I have for the sake of tidiness assumed the character 已 of the names I-chai-sou and the *Ch'ing-lou chi* I-chai to be the correct character for the names, but in some editions of the works concerned the name is actually written or printed with the character *chi* 己 or *ssu* 巳. These characters are commonly confused with one another and there is no reason to regard the variations as being anything but the result of typographic or manuscript errors. In the Meng Ch'eng-shun edition of the *Lu-kuei pu*, where Kuan Han-ch'ing's *hao* is given as *Ssu-chai-sou*, the heading of the section in which he is included begins with the words "前輩已 (*ssu*) 死名公才人", and the sense clearly demands *i* 已 instead of *ssu* in the latter case and *i* would seem more appropriate a meaning than either *ssu* or *chi* in the former case.¹⁷ Meaning apart, *i* occurs the most often among the works concerned and the seeming confusion by the *Hsi-chin chih* of *i* — with *i* 已 would also favour *i* 已 rather than *ssu* or *chi*.

Domicile, Places of Residence

It seems quite certain that Kuan Han-ch'ing had very strong connexions with the Yuan capital Tatu, (Khanbalik or Cambaluc), which was situated in the region of present-day Peking. The name Tatu was first given

¹⁵ See *T'ieh-yai i-pien chu*, *Ssu-pu pei-yao* edn., ch. 8, p. 6b for Yang Wei-chen's version and *Kung-tz'u hsiao-ts'uan*, ed. Chang Hai-p'eng (1755-1861), in *Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng* Shanghai, 1935-40, p. 7 for Chu Yu-tun's.

¹⁶ *T'ien-i-ko Lu-kuei pu*, ch. 1, p. 20b.

¹⁷ *Lu-kuei pu*, ed. Meng Ch'eng-shun, appended to beginning of *Ku-chin ming-chü he-hsuan*, photolithographed edition in *Ku-pen hsi-ch'u ts'ung-k'an* 4, viii, ch. 1, p. 2a.

to the city in 1272 and the *lu* (administrative region) of the same name was set up in 1284.¹⁸ The problem which presents itself here is whether or not Tatu was his domicile of origin and, if not, whether his domicile of origin may be known.

The section in which Kuan Han-ch'ing is listed in the *Lu-kuei pu* is broadly speaking a chronological division. The *Lu-kuei pu* states that he was "a man of Tatu".¹⁹ For most of the other playwrights in the same section various domiciles are given: 17 of the playwrights, excluding Kuan Han-ch'ing, were from Tatu (Hopeh), seven from Chenting (Hopeh), five from P'ingyang (Shansi), three from Tungp'ing (Shantung), two each from T'ai-yuan (Shansi), Changte (Hopeh), Pienliang (Honan), Taming (Hopeh) and Paoting (Hopeh), and one each from Hsiching (Shansi), Chi'nan (Shantung), Itu (Shantung), Loyang (Honan), Chochow (Hopeh), Tichow (Shantung), Haochow (Honan) and Chiangchow (Shansi). Chang Shih-ch'i is said to have lived in Ch'anglü (Hopeh) and the Jürchen Li Chih-fu in Tehsing (Hopeh). Yueh Po-ch'uan is said to have been a man of either Chi'nan (Shantung) or Chenchiang (Kiangsu).

In each case above I note in brackets the present-day province in which the place was situated. All these places except the doubtful Chenchiang are in the north of China and all, moreover, within the Yuan central administrative area known as the *chung-shu-sheng*, except for Loyang, Pienliang and Haochow, which were very near the southern fringe of the *chung-shu-sheng*. Chenting, Chochow, Paoting and Hsiching were all relatively close to Tatu and from these five places stemmed 29 of the 53 playwrights for whom a domicile is given, excluding Kuan Han-ch'ing, and a further two would seem to have resided in places near to Tatu (Tehsing and Ch'anglü). It is evident that not only was Northern China, principally the *chung-shu-sheng*, the main area of *tsa-chü* writing in this period, but that the main concentration of playwrights within this area was in and near to Tatu. All evidence points to the fact that the mature *tsa-chü*, based as it was on northern songs and northern dialect, flourished primarily in the north of China and that the chief centre of its popularity was Tatu. There is thus little reason to doubt that Kuan Han-ch'ing, one of the leading writers of this style of play, spent at least some and probably a large part of his life in Tatu. Other evidence confirms the proposition.

The *Lu-kuei pu* also says that Yang Hsien-chih, Liang Chin-shih and Fei Chün-hsiang were all friends of Kuan Han-ch'ing's, Liang a lifelong friend, and that they were all "men of Tatu".²⁰ The *T'ien-i-ke* version of the *Lu-kuei pu* records of Kao Wen-hsiu that the people of the capital nicknamed him "little Han-ch'ing", which naturally implies that Kuan-Han-ch'ing

¹⁸ *Yuan-shih*, 58, "Ti-li" 1, pp. 3a-3b.

¹⁹ *Lu-kuei pu*, ch. 1, p. 104.

²⁰ *Lu-kuei pu*, pp. 111, 114, 116.

enjoyed popularity in the capital.²¹ The *Hsi-chin chih* ("Gazetteer of Hsichin") states that Kuan Han-ch'ing was "a man of Yen", Yen being the region of present Hopeh province. By the very fact of its inclusion of him it also implies that he was a man of Hsichin. Hsichin was a name used during the Liao and some time during the Kin for the area around (the Yuan) Tatu.²² This is in accord with the *Lu-kuei pu*.

The *Lu-kuei pu* states a domicile for all but three of the 56 playwrights in the section containing Kuan Han-ch'ing, but it would perhaps be surprising, in view of the date when it was written and in view of the sparse and incomplete nature of much of it, if Chung Ssu-ch'eng was actually in a position to provide all the actual domiciles of origin of these playwrights. Quite possibly many of those he gives were acquired domiciles, the places where the playwrights had made their home or come to live for a long period, as might be indicated by the frequency of the statement "a man of Tatu", which has an air of generalization. Indeed Wang Chi-te died 1623 (or 1624). *Ch'ü-lü* says: "Wang (Shih-fu), Kuan (Han-ch'ing), Ma (Chih-yuan) and Pai (P'u) were all men of Tatu, but if one now tries to retrieve some knowledge of their native district (*hsiang*), one is unable to make a single assertion on the matter."²³ Pai P'u was actually a native of Yüchou in present Shansi province,²⁴ but otherwise these words would seem to be near to the truth. Pai P'u, in fact, is an excellent illustration of the point. The *Lu-kuei pu* describes him as a man of Chenting²⁵ probably because he lived there, but his actual domicile of origin was Yüchou. It is quite possible that Kuan Han-ch'ing's domicile of origin was not Tatu and was unknown to Chung Ssu-ch'eng and that Tatu was merely his acquired domicile.

The 1755 version of the *Ch'i-chou chih* ("Gazetteer of Ch'ichow"), under the heading "Kuan Han-ch'ing's home village" says:

Han-ch'ing was a man of Wu-jen-ts'un in Ch'i(-chow) during the Yuan period. He was highly talented but met with frustrations in his career and so wrote the *Hsi-hsiang*, on the basis of the *Hui-chien chi*, in order to give vent to his indignation. He died before he finished writing it and the sound of his weeping came constantly from inside his coffin . . .

Although the matter has not been gone into, there are next to Wu-jen-ts'un the high foundations of a house which is reputed to have been the old residence of Han-ch'ing. Moreover the dialect used in the northern *Hsi-hsiang* is often the speech of this locality and to the present day the servants and common people there are still able to recount events

²¹ *T'ien-i-ke Lu-kuei pu*, ch. 1, p. 6a.

²² *Hsi-chin chih*, reference as in n. 2 above. See also *Chin-shih*, 24, "Ti-li" 1, p. 18a ff.

²³ *Ch'ü-lü*, by Wang Chi-te, *Chung-huo ku-tien hsi-ch'ü lun-chu chi-ch'eng*, Vol. 4 edn., ch. 2, 39, p. 146.

²⁴ See biography of Pai Hua, Pai P'u's father, in *Chin-shih*, 114, p. 1a.

²⁵ *Lu-kuei pu*, ch. 1, p. 107.

from his life, so I note it down to await a more extensive investigation of the matter.²⁶

Wu-jen-ts'un was south of present Ankou in Hopeh province. During the Kin Ch'ichow was in the administrative area known as He-pei *hsi-lu*. During the Yuan it was within the administrative area of Paoting-lu,²⁷ so that, even if Tatu is taken in the broader sense of Tatu-lu, Kuan Han-ch'ing's inclusion in the *Ch'i-chou chih* could not be regarded as according with the statement that he was a man of Tatu. The passage above is lively and full of promise, but unfortunately lacks verification in any other writings. The northern *tsa-chü Hsi-hsiang chi* was indeed based ultimately on the T'ang story *Hui-chien chi*, but the author of the *Hsi-hsiang chi* is more reliably Wang Shih-fu than Kuan Han-ch'ing.²⁸ One may wonder in view of the general paucity of information concerning the playwright whether even in his home village people would still be telling stories of him long after the Yuan, and one may wonder whether the dialect terms of the *Hsi-hsiang chi* would be so peculiar as to be traceable to a particular small locality. The comments on Kuan Han-ch'ing's career frustrations and authorship of *Hsi-hsiang chi* seem very typical of Ming writings on the playwright.

Another possibility is presented by the *Yuan-shih lei-pien* of Shao Yuan-p'ing (fl. during period 1662-1723).²⁹ It states that Kuan Han-ch'ing was "a man of Chiehchow". Chiehchow was in present-day Shansi province and in the Yuan came within the area of Chinning-lu not Tatu-lu,³⁰ so even in broad terms this would not concur with the statement that he was a man of Tatu. To take Tatu as referring to the huge *chung-shu-sheng* area would seem excessive! It is perhaps worth noting that Chiehchow or Chiehliang was the native district of the famous Three Kingdoms general Kuan Yü (A.D. 160-219).³¹ Kuan Yü was such a popular figure in colloquial literature, legend and superstition that one cannot help feeling the author of the *Yuan-shih lei-pien* information may have decided to associate Kuan Han-ch'ing with him and his native district, for want of any precise information concerning the playwright's origins. The coincidence is perhaps suggestive of such an explanation, which can, however, be no more than conjecture.

Both the *Ch'i-chou chih* and *Yuan-shih lei-pien* are very late works, and the most concrete knowledge one has of Kuan Han-ch'ing's domicile remains the *Lu-kuei pu*'s statement that he was a man of Tatu.

²⁶ *Ch'i-chou chih*, ch. 8, as quoted in Feng Yuan-chün, *Ku-chü shuo-hui*, Peking, 1956, p. 107.

²⁷ See *Chin-shih*, 25, "Ti-li" 2, p. 12a and *Yuan-shih*, 58, "Ti-li" 1, p. 10b.

²⁸ The attribution to Kuan developed during the Ming most probably.

²⁹ *Yuan-shih lei-pien*, ch. 36, "Wen-han 文翰" section as quoted in Feng Yuan-chün, *Ku-chü shuo-hui*, p. 107.

³⁰ See *Yuan-shih*, 58, "Ti-li" 1, p. 37a-b.

³¹ *San-kuo chih*, by Ch'en Shou (A.D. 233-97), punctuated edition, Peking, 1959, ch. 36, "Shu" 6, p. 939.

Degrees and Official Status

It is of interest to know whether Kuan Han-ch'ing held any degrees and if so which, since this might give some indication of such matters as his background, social condition, period and so on. A colophon dated 1326 by Ch'ien Fu to the *Kuei Tung* mentions a "chieh-yuan Kuan" and Chiang I-k'uei in his *Yao-shan t'ang wai-chi* seems to correlate this chieh-yuan with Kuan Han-ch'ing.³² Shen Ch'ung-sui's *Tu-ch'ü hsü-chih*, which has a preface dated 1639, states that Kuan Han-ch'ing was a "Yuan chin-shih".³³ I give reasons below for doubting the connexion between Kuan chieh-yuan and Kuan Han-ch'ing.³⁴ The *Tu-ch'ü hsü-chih* contains very little information on Yuan writers and its late date coupled with the lack of supporting evidence in earlier literature immediately renders its statement suspect. It also gives Wang Shih-fu as a "Yuan chin-shih" and in this case, too, there is a similar complete lack of supporting evidence.

To consider for the moment the general possibility of Kuan Han-ch'ing's having obtained a degree through examinations during the Yuan, one may quote Ratchnevsky:

Le système de concours pour le choix à une charge publique n'a été introduit que très tardivement par les Mongols alors que l'influence chinoise se faisait prépondérante à la Cour. C'est l'empereur Jen-tsong qui par un édit, rendu la onzième lune de la deuxième année houang-k'ing (19 nov.-18 déc. 1313), instaura ce système. L'âge des candidats est fixé à vingt-cinq ans; . . .³⁵

According to the *Yuan-shih* it would seem in fact that competitive examinations for government service were held once before this, during the reign of the Mongol emperor T'ai-tsung (Ogodai).³⁶ In 1237 he issued a decree, on the advice of Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai, ordering the establishment of examinations, which were held once but thereafter suspended "perhaps because the people of those times considered it was not convenient". During the reign of Shih-tzu (Khubilai, reigned 1260-94) there were several attempts to revive the examination system, one in 1264 involving Shih T'ien-tse (incidentally a *ch'ü* composer), one in 1267, the prime mover being Wang E, and others later on in his reign, all of which failed directly to result in the reapplication of the system. As a consequence of these attempts, however, the ground was at least prepared. In response to a memorial to the throne submitted in 1313, the emperor Jen-tsong issued a decree re-establishing the

³² *Kuei-tung*, by unknown author of early thirteenth century, *Chih-pu tsu-chai ts'ung-shu* edn. *Yao-shan-t'ang ch'ü-chi*, p. 4a.

³³ *Tu-ch'ü hsü-chih*, by Shen Ch'ung-sui (late Ming), *Chung-kuo ku-tien hsi-ch'ü lun-chu chi-ch'eng*, vol. 5 edn., p. 191.

³⁴ See below, p. 59, n. 133.

³⁵ Ratchnevsky, *Un code des Yuan*, Paris, 1937, Introduction, p. xxvii.

³⁶ See *Yuan-shih*, 81, "Hsuan-chü" 1, p. 3a ff.

examinations and fixing their recommencement for late the following year, 1314.³⁷

Since any estimate of Kuan Han-ch'ing's life dates must make him either dead or at least very old by 1314, the only conceivable occasion when he could have obtained an examination degree during the Mongol period would have been in 1237. There appears to be no evidence regarding the degrees awarded as the result of the examinations held at this time, and since it was the first occasion under the Mongols one may perhaps imagine that few were awarded. The opportunities for Kuan Han-ch'ing to have obtained a degree during the Yuan were sparse in the extreme and had he done so one may feel it would have been too remarkable a fact to escape the attention of Chung Ssu-ch'eng. The obtaining of a degree would surely have earned him a post of noteworthy rank, and of such there is no record. If he obtained a degree at all it would most probably have been during the late Kin, when degrees were more liberally awarded. All in all, however, it is quite likely that he and most of his fellow playwrights took no examinations and held no degrees. The *chieh-yuan* of Ch'ien Fu was probably not Kuan Han-ch'ing, and both *chieh-yuan* and *chin-shih*, moreover, were often used in Yuan and Ming times as a general eulogistic term for "scholar", much in the same way as *hsiu-ts'ai*, so that no great trust could be put in them anyway as signifying actual degrees.

As to whether Kuan Han-ch'ing ever held any official post, here again no definite answer can be obtained. The *Lien-t'ing ts'ang-shu* edition of the *Lu-kuei pu* states that he was a *t'ai-i yuan-yin*, which is translatable as "Supervisor of the Medical Academy".³⁸ The other editions, however, and the T'ien-i-ke supplemented versions all have *hu* 戶 instead of *yin* 尹, which would imply that he was a citizen attached to the Medical Academy for census registration and taxation purposes. The Ming scholars Li K'ai-hsien (1501-68), Wang Chi-te, Chiang I-k'uei and others all talk of Kuan Han-ch'ing as a *tai-i yuan-yin*,³⁹ but the general paucity of knowledge

³⁷ See *Yuan-shih*, 24, "Jen-tsong pen-chi" (仁宗本紀), 1, pp. 17a-17b. The *Ch'o-heng lu* (*Nan-ts'un ch'o-heng lu*, by T'ao Tsung-i of the late Yuan, Peking, 1959 edn.), ch. 1, pp. 17-18, has a section on the examination system during the Yuan.

³⁸ See *Lu-kuei pu*, ch. 1, p. 104. The "Medical Academy" (*t'ai-i yuan*) was first set up under the Kin. See *Li-tai chih-kuan piao*, by Huang Pen-chi (mid nineteenth century), Peking, 1963 edn., ch. 36, p. 167.

³⁹ See Li K'ai-hsien's "Chang Hsiao-shan hsiao-ling hsu" (張小山小令序) as found in his *Hsien-chü chi* (Li K'ai-hsien *chi*, Peking, 1959 edn.), ch. 5, pp. 297-8; (Wang Chi-te's) *Ch'ü-lü* ch. 2, section 39, p. 147, and (Chiang I-kuei's) *Yao-shan t'ang ch'ü-chi*, p. 2a. Li K'ai-hsien's views are of some general interest:

"Of the Yuan *ch'ü* composers, Kuan Han-ch'ing for instance was a *t'ai-i yuan-yin*, Ma Chih-yuan was a subordinate official of the Chiang-che provincial administration, Cheng Te-hui was a petty official in Hangchow and Kung Ta-yung was a minor academic official of the Tiaot'ai academy. There were countless others who were unjustly made to serve as registrars or grew old without being employed. In those times head officials of the ministries, the main officials of local

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concerning early Yuan playwrights which these writers reveal in their works makes it probable that they were echoing some earlier work, possibly the same *Lu-kuei pu* which was the source of the *Lien-t'ing ts'ang-shu* edition.

The difference clearly lies in a visual confusion of the characters for *yin* and *hu*, but since neither *t'ai-i yuan-yin* nor *t'ai-i yuan-hu* are terms seen anywhere else in any other connexion in old literature concerning or deriving from the Kin and Yuan periods, it is difficult to decide which is the correct version. Neither the *Chin-shih* nor the *Yuan-shih* nor the *Hsin Yuan-shih* contain any mention of either term. The preface dated 1333 to the *Shih-i te-hsiao-fang* by the Yuan writer Wei I-lin gives a list of the titles of Medical Academy (*t'ai-i-yuan*) officials, but does not include the title *t'ai-i yuan-yin*.⁴⁰ *T'ai-i yuan-hu* comes the nearest to direct mention in early works concerning the Yuan. There is no actual use of the term in the histories, but a category which would completely match it is mentioned in various Yuan edicts. The *Yuan tien-chang* quotes an edict of 1262 which exempts those attached to the Medical Academy from various taxes and corvées.⁴¹ The *T'ung-chih t'iao-ke* also quotes a memorial of 1271 which mentions that a large number of people originally attached to the Medical

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government and those occupying important key posts were all their (*i.e.* the Mongols') countrymen. The people of the Central Region (*i.e.* the northern Chinese) were all kept in lowly positions and were unable to fulfil their aspirations. Hence the corresponding note of protest often found in their songs. The reason for the flourishing of Yuan *ch'ü* was the same as that for the Yuan regime's falling into decay."

There may well be a certain truth in this view, but Wang Chi-te's remarks are worth quoting as a complement:

But in those times such (*ch'ü* composers) as Kuan Suan-chai, Pai Wu-chiu, Yang Hsi-an, Hu Tzu-shan, Lu Su-chai, Chao Sung-hsüeh and Yü Shao-an were all ministerial officials and eminent figures and yet they were not lacking in the ability to compose fine *ch'ü*! The ministerial officials and eminent figures of the present day (*i.e.* the late Ming) cannot vie with Suan-chai and the other gentlemen and the poets and literary minds of the present day cannot vie with Han-ch'ing and so on. During the defeated dynasty (*i.e.* the Yuan), it was at all levels of society the custom to admire *ch'ü* and so people became expert in their composition. Nowadays when we hold the brush it is to write Eight-legged Essays and we have no time to acquire such skills. When we raise our status and become an important official, we are overwhelmed with the preoccupations of success and fame. And when we retire from office and return to live in our homeplace we are completely taken up with matters of property and offspring. No wonder we cannot vie with them! While both these gentlemen's comments have a flavour of over-simplification, they do seem to have a certain validity concerning the quality of *ch'ü* composition in the two dynasties and the reasons for the difference. It may be noted that the high officials of the Yuan mostly restricted themselves to non-dramatic *ch'ü*, while it was those of humbler position who wrote the dramas and were probably more responsible for the widespread popularity of *ch'ü* during the Yuan, so that Li's remarks are by no means invalidated by Wang's.

⁴⁰ See Ts'ai Mei-piao, "Kuan Han-ch'ing sheng-p'ing hsü-chi" article in *Kuan Han-ch'ing yen-chiu lun-wen chi*, p. 36.

⁴¹ *Yuan tien-chang: Ta Yuan sheng-cheng kuo-ch'ao tien-chang*, compiled by an unknown person in 1322, 1908 edn., ch. 32, pp. 15-22.

Academy, brothers and children of practising medical men, were no longer possessed of medical knowledge.⁴² This memorial implies that there were *i-hu*, "people of the medical census-category", who nevertheless had no medical knowledge and did not practise medicine. Thus if Kuan Han-ch'ing was a *t'ai-i yuan-hu* he may well have been one of those enjoying the privileges of the category without necessarily being a medical man or even knowing anything of medicine.

One may, however, feel it unlikely that the *Lu-kuei pu* would note Kuan Han-ch'ing's census category, particularly since its corresponding references to other playwrights give their post and never their census category. One may feel that Chung Ssu-ch'eng would probably not know nor have any real reason for mentioning such an item. Of the two characters *yin* is rather the less commonly used and that, too, is perhaps a very slight indication in its favour. If the office of *t'ai-i yuan-yin* indeed existed it must surely have been a minor one to escape mention in the histories and other such works. Does the *yin*, however, suggest a fairly responsible post? Possibly the term is a colloquial one for one of the more important and known posts of the Medical Academy. Yet Kuan Han-ch'ing, from the number of plays attributed to him, must surely have been very much preoccupied with his writing of dramas and probably other theatrical activities. Would he have been able to combine such things with the duties of an important and responsible post? For only 26 of the playwrights in the same section of the *Lu-kuei pu* does Chung Ssu-ch'eng give their official post or profession, which is mostly of a very humble nature. For the other 30 it may be presumed that they too held very lowly official positions or quite likely none at all. All in all, Kuan Han-ch'ing's post, if such it was, was most probably a minor one, but the imponderables are too many to allow of any firm conclusion on the matter.⁴³

The Dates of His Life

From the point of view of Yuan *tsa-chü* studies in general, the most vital problem concerning Kuan Han-ch'ing is that of his dates. Unfortunately

⁴² *T'ung-chih t'iao-ke*, compiled by an unknown person in 1323, facsimile reproduction of fragment containing chs. 2-9, 13-22 and 27-30, Peking 1930, ch. 3, pp. 5a-5b. See also Ts'ai Mei-piao, "Kuan Han-ch'ing-te sheng-p'ing", article in *Kuan Han-ch'ing yen-chiu lun-wen chi*, p. 28.

⁴³ Of Kuan Han-ch'ing's surviving plays only *Pai-yueh t'ing* shows any real sign of what might be specialist medical knowledge but which equally well may have been commonplace knowledge. In Act Two a doctor is called, but the first Mu-yang-kuan *ch'ü* is more or less the only part which survives of the medical scene. The Yuan Southern play *Yu-kuei chi* (by Shih Hui, Shanghai, 1959 edn., Act 25, pp. 63-6) adapted this scene as a splendid piece of comedy reminiscent of Molière's skits on doctors (*Le malade imaginaire*, *L'amour médecin*). It should be noted that Kuan Han-ch'ing's friend Liang Chin-chih was already "an outstanding medical man" in 1250 (see Sun K'ai-ti, *Yuan ch'ü-chin k'ao-lueh*, Peking, 1953 edn., pp. 72-4), which might faintly suggest Kuan Han-ch'ing's having had a medical career of some kind.

the reliable information on the matter is very sparse and some pieces of information seem to contradict others. The most generally reliable material on the matter is undoubtedly that written in the Yuan and perhaps that of the early decades of the Ming. Early Yuan playwrights were mostly not men of political fame or high rank and their writings were not within the traditional bounds of orthodox literature, so that their contemporary reputation was probably one of unwritten popularity. They would seem to have had to wait till after their deaths for the nostalgia and respect of their successors in the world of drama and song-composition to produce some written comment on them. These commentators were of a different age and, moreover, the writing of northern-style *tsa-chü* had by this time spread to the south of China, and this diffusion was doubtless accompanied by a weakening in the unity of oral traditions within the world of *tsa-chü* writers and admirers. Certainly, the first and most complete of the surviving works commenting on the early playwrights, by the paucity and irregularity of its information, leads one to suspect that details of most of the playwrights' lives were already hard to come by.

In the early Ming the *tsa-chü* was waning before the southern, *ch'uan-ch'i* style of drama, the popularity of which soon spread. By this time the oral traditions concerning the playwrights would seem to have been more or less extinguished, at least among the writers whose works touch upon drama and songs. Ming works dealing with or touching upon stylistic, musical and prosodic aspects of Yuan *ch'ü* are numerous. Ming editions and manuscript copies of "Yuan *tsa-chü*" abound. There were Ming bibliophiles who had large collections of such *tsa-chü* and there was evidently a very widespread and ardent interest in Yuan *tsa-chü* during the dynasty. Yet hardly any specific, new or reliable information on early Yuan *tsa-chü* dramatists is to be found in any Ming work. Such information as there is tends to be highly anecdotal and suspect or merely a repetition of statements from surviving Yuan works. In the following paragraphs the discussions are mainly concerned with the statements of such Yuan works concerning Kuan Han-ch'ing's dates.

Beyond question the most informative, comprehensive and reliable early work concerning Yuan playwrights and song-composers is Chung Ssu-ch'eng's *Lu-kuei pu*, first completed in 1330, and revised at least twice by the author, once possibly as late as 1360.⁴⁴ Chung Ssu-ch'eng was probably born around 1280.⁴⁵ A writer of non-dramatic *ch'ü* and *tsa-chü*

⁴⁴ The original prefaces are of 1330 (see *Lu-kuei pu*, pp. 101, 139), the date 1345 is given as the death of Ch'iao Meng-fu (*Lu-kuei pu*, ch. 2, p. 126) and a *ch'ü* dedication by Chu Ching is dated 1360 (*Lu-kuei pu*, ch. 2, p. 139). The *Shuo-chi* and Meng Ch'eng-shun editions do not contain any date after 1337 and must represent an earlier (though not necessarily more "correct") version. The 1337 is given in the Shao Yuan-ch'ang post-face, for which see *Lu-kuei pu*, p. 139.

⁴⁵ For Chung Ssu-ch'eng's dates, see Feng Yuan-chün, *Ku-chü shuo-hui*, pp. 104-5, n. 95.

himself and personal friend or acquaintance of many playwrights and composers, he was clearly well situated to obtain knowledge of the earlier writers in the field. The *Lu-kuei pu* is divided into several general sections which are chronological in nature:

1. Celebrated gentlemen of previous generations who have already died . . .
2. Celebrated gentlemen of the present times.
3. Celebrated gentlemen and men-of-talent of previous generations who have already died . . .
4. Celebrated gentlemen and men-of-talent of present times who have already died and whom I knew . . .
5. Men-of-talent who have already died and whom I did not know.
6. Men-of-talent of the present times whom I know.
7. Men-of-talent of the present times of whom I have heard the reputation but whom I do not know.⁴⁶

"Celebrated gentlemen" (*ming-kung*) seems to refer mainly to eminent officials and writers of non-dramatic *ch'ü*, while "men-of-talent" (*ts'ai-jen*) refers to the playwrights, but the distinction is not always precisely maintained in the work. The first two sections contain composers of non-dramatic *ch'ü*. There are two main divisions of time: "of past generations (*ch'ien-pei*)" and "of present times (*fang-chin*)". *Ch'ien-pei*, which has an honorific sense, is not a very specific term, and includes even Tung *chieh-yuan* a man of the period 1190-1208, but most of the other entries under the term would seem to be people born within the thirteenth century, though for some no dates are known. The last four sections contain people who were Chung Ssu-ch'eng's contemporaries, some also his junior and some his senior. Among the latter such as Tseng Jui (born around 1260) and Kung T'ien-t'ing, who was a close friend of Chung Ssu-ch'eng's father, were clearly of a generation earlier than Chung Ssu-ch'eng.⁴⁷ The sections of the *Lu-kuei pu* are not all watertight, since of many of the playwrights and composers Chung Ssu-ch'eng knew confessedly little and may well not have known the dates or general period of their life.⁴⁸ For him to have been able or to have decided to divide his work into such sections at all, however, one feels he must have had a clear idea of the difference of time between most of and the more prominent of the people in the "present time" sections and those in the "past generations" sections. He was well aware of the age of such personal acquaintances as Tseng Jui and must have felt the writers in "past generations" sections to belong to a distinctly earlier period than them.

⁴⁶ This final section is only found in the *Lien-t'ing ts'ang-shu* edition based on the last known revision of the work, and contains names not given in the other editions.

⁴⁷ For Kung T'ien-t'ing see *Lu-kuei pu*, ch. 2, p. 118. For Tseng Jui see Sun K'ai-ti, *Yuan ch'ü-chia k'ao-lieh*, pp. 42-4.

⁴⁸ See Chung Ssu-ch'eng's own remarks implying the limitations of his knowledge in such respects, *Lu-kuei pu*, ch. 1, p. 117.

Kuan Han-ch'ing is placed first in the third section above as a writer of "past generations". While the arrangement of persons within the sections is not precisely chronological, there seems to be a tendency to put the earlier near the beginning and the later (and possibly those of whom less was known) near the end of the sections. This is especially marked in the first section where quite a number of the dates may still be ascertained. The earliest person is most definitely the one placed first in the first section, Tung chieh-yuan and the same would seem to apply to the fourth, fifth and sixth sections, as far as can be seen. Certain chronological implications would likewise seem to be attached to Kuan Han-ch'ing's position in his section. The *T'ai-he cheng-yin p'u* states that Kuan Han-ch'ing was the "creator" (of the mature *tsa-chü*).⁴⁹ As the recognized "creator" of *tsa-chü*, which is surely why he is placed first, he must have been one of the earliest and possibly the earliest person in his section. It is theoretically conceivable that he was a youthful innovator and that the others in his section were his elderly successors, but it is less likely and one may feel it would surely have been such a remarkable fact as to have been known to Chung Ssu-ch'eng. Moreover Kuan Han-ch'ing was a close friend of Fei Chün-hsiang, the father of Fei T'ang ch'en, one of the playwrights in the same section as Kuan Han-ch'ing.⁵⁰ Other playwrights in the same section such as P'ai P'u (b. 1226), Hou Cheng-ch'ing (born between 1213 and 1216), Liang Chin-chih, Shih Tzu-chang and Wang Chung-wen and probably others were born in the Kin period (i.e. before 1235). It would seem most reasonable to take it that Kuan Han-ch'ing was born at least a generation earlier than such as Tseng Jui, in 1230 or so, and quite probably ten or more years earlier than that. Other information seems to support this suggestion.

The preface written in 1364 by Chu Ching to the *Ch'ing-lou chi*, puts matters quite explicitly:

When our imperial Yuan dynasty first took over "the area within the seas", none of the Kin loyalists (*i-min*) such as Tu San-jen, Pai Lan-ku, and Kuan I-chai bothered to take office, but instead they absorbed themselves with romantic poetry.⁵¹

Chu Ching was a late Yuan-early Ming scholar. He also wrote a dedication to the *Lu-kuei pu* in 1360, was himself a writer of non-dramatic *ch'ü* and several *tsa-chü*, and was clearly well acquainted with the world of drama and

⁴⁹ See *T'ai-he cheng-yin p'u* (written in 1398), by Chu Ch'üan (d. 1448), *Chung-kuo ku-tien hsi-ch'ü lun-chu chi-ch'eng*, Vol. 3, edn., ch. 1, p. 17. The *Chung-yuan yin-yün*, written in 1324 by Chou Te-ch'ing, in mentioning the "Great Four" of Yuan *ch'ü* places Kuan (Han-ch'ing) at the head of the four, which might well have a chronological significance. See *Chung-yuan yin-yün*, *Chung-kuo ku-tien hsi-ch'ü lun-chu chi-ch'eng*, Vol. 1 edn. (preface), p. 175.

⁵⁰ See *Lu-kuei pu*, ch. 1, p. 116, under Fei Chün-hsiang. For dates of playwrights mentioned below, cf. Sun K'ai-ti's studies in *Yuan ch'ü-chia k'ao-lüeh*.

⁵¹ *Ch'ing-lou chi*, p. 15.

dramatists and likely to be well qualified to talk on the matter.⁵² Since the three writers mentioned in the above words were all northerners, Chu Ching is clearly taking the Yuan as having begun with the advent of Mongol rule in northern China upon the downfall of the Kin in 1234, though the dynastic title was not actually established until 1271. The term "loyalist" (*i-min*), as generally used for various periods of Chinese history, refers to those people who remaining loyal to the old dynasty refuse to take service under the new and does not necessarily imply that they actually held office under the old dynasty. The phrase "the Kin loyalists" is in fact not found in the version of the statement given by the Shuo-chi edition of the *Ch'ing-lou chi*.⁵³ This by no means invalidates it, however, and the statement still refers to the same time. It clearly implies that the three men were born in the Kin, though not necessarily that they were actually old enough on the fall of the Kin to hold office under the Yuan.

To digress slightly on the problem of whether in fact Kuan Han-ch'ing was such a Kin loyalist, one may note that since both the other two men were probably such loyalists, it is quite likely that he was one too. A preface by the Yuan scholar Wang Po-wen to Pai P'u's *T'ien-lai chi* says:

At the beginning of the period 1260-64 His Excellency Shih (T'ien tse) was going to recommend him (Pai P'u) to court . . . , but he declined again and again, and remained living in retirement in his humble home, regarding glory and profit as mere nothings.⁵⁴

Here Pai P'u's constant refusal to take office under the Mongols, even on the offered recommendation of Shih T'ien-tse, an important and influential official who would no doubt have been able to ensure him an honourable post, might well indicate Kin loyalist attitudes. Pai P'u was eventually awarded the high (posthumous) titles according to the *Lu-kuei pu*, probably on account of the eminence attained by his son or sons, but apparently never held office under the Mongols.⁵⁵ His father Pai Hua was a high-ranking official under the Kin, so it may be imagined that the son would be quite naturally inclined towards loyalist sentiments.⁵⁶ As for Tu Jen-chieh (i.e. Tu San-jen), he grew up under the Kin and was likewise not employed under the Yuan.⁵⁷ His *hao* "San-jen" itself may imply that he was

⁵² There is a discussion of him in Sun K'ai-ti, *Yuan ch'ü-chia k'ao-lüeh*, pp. 47-54. See also *Lu-kuei pu hsi-pien* by an anonymous author of early Ming, possibly Chia Chung-ming (1343-1422), *Chung-kuo ku-tien hsi-ch'ü lun-chu chi-ch'eng*, Vol. 2 edn., pp. 182-3, for a brief biography.

⁵³ *Ch'ing-lou chi*, p. 42, n. 7.

⁵⁴ See T'an Cheng-pi, *Yuan-ch'ü liu ta-chia lüeh-chuan*, Shanghai, 1955, p. 180.

⁵⁵ *Lu-kuei pu*, ch. 1, p. 107.

⁵⁶ For a biography of Pai Hua see *Chin-shih*, 114, pp. 12-12b.

⁵⁷ For a discussion of Tu Shan-fu as a Kin loyalist, see Su I, "Kuan Han-ch'ing-te nien-tai-wen-t'i", article in *Kuan Han-ch'ing yen-chiu lun-wen chi*, pp. 16-20. The biography of him given in Sui Shu-sen's *Ch'üan Yuan san-ch'ü*, p. 30, says that during the period 1264-94 he was several times summoned to office, but he would seem to have refused.

a gentleman who did not hold office. Both he and P'ai Pu had connexions with Yuan Hao-wen (1190-1257), a famous scholar and poet who held office under the Kin, but not under the Yuan, and was noted for his nostalgia for the Kin.⁵⁸ It is therefore by no means unlikely that Kuan Han-ch'ing, too, was a Kin *i-min*.

The Ming scholar Chiang I-k'uei explicitly asserts that Kuan Han-ch'ing was a *t'ai-i yuan yin* under the Kin, but did not take office after the fall of the Kin.⁵⁹ This, however, may well be merely an amalgamation of the *Lu-kuei pu*'s and Chung Ching's statements. It is possible that Chiang I-k'uei is right, but the evidence is insufficient for a firm conclusion either for or against his statement. Certainly Kuan Han-ch'ing was a scholar of talent and probably he was born in the Kin. He was preoccupied with drama and such dramatic activities, which may be seen as a withdrawal from orthodox career life, were in many ways in opposition to the staidness and respectability often associated with a Civil Service career. One of his surviving non-dramatic *ch'ü* actually advocates withdrawal from career and worldly life and the pursuits of rank and wealth and recommends the hermit life.⁶⁰ Such a life was a common form of refuge for *i-min* at the various periods of Chinese history and very often adopted, actually or as an ideal, by Yuan scholars.

To return to the problem of dates, Yang Wei-chen's *Yuan kung-tz'u* mentioned above says.⁶¹

At the beginning of the dynasty the old *yueh-fu* music was passed on,
And the White-feathered Bird flew onto the thirteen strings.
The jester-counsellor of the Great Kin, Kuan Ch'ing, was there,
And the play *I Yin fu T'ang* was presented.

Yueh-fu was a term used in the Yuan to refer to *ch'ü*, a form of composition which really came into being during the Kin. The "White-feathered Bird" refers basically to a bird which endures the extremes of winter in Mongolia and does not leave. For this reason it became in Mongol tradition a symbol

⁵⁸ Yuan Hao-wen compiled works such as the *Chung-chou chi* 中州集, and *Chin-yuan shih shih-lu* 金源史實錄, which were based largely on Kin material and were an attempt to preserve the memory of the late Kin period. There is a biography of him in the *Chin-shih*, 126 (p. 12) appended to the biography of Yuan Te-ming 元德明. This states that he did not take office after the fall of the Kin. He wrote a "Sung Chung-liang ch'u-shan" (送仲梁出山詩), Chung-liang being Tu Jen-ch'ieh's *tsu* name. Wang Po-wen in his preface to Pai P'u's *T'ien-lai chi* mentions the close connexions and long-lasting friendship between Yuan Hao-wen and the Pai family (see T'an Cheng-pi, *Yuan-ch'ü liu ta-chia lüeh-chuan*, pp. 177-8).

⁵⁹ See *Yao-shan t'ang ch'ü-chi*, p. 2a.

⁶⁰ The *ch'ü* is a Shuang-tiao *t'ao-shu*, found in the Yuan collection (*Yueh-fu hsin-pien*) *Yang-ch'ün pai-hsüeh* by Yang Ch'ao-ying (early fourteenth century), modern collated edition by Sui Shu-sen entitled *Hsin-chiao chiu-chüan pen Yang-ch'ün p'ai-hsüeh*, Peking, 1957, part 2, ch. 4, pp. 171-2.

⁶¹ See above, p. 10.

of steadfast loyalty.⁶² According to the *Ch'o-keng lu* by the late Yuan-early Ming scholar T'ao Tsung-i a tune named "the White-feathered Bird" (*Pai-ling-ch'üeh*) was composed by a certain Shuo-te-lü on the command of Kublai Khan who ruled as the emperor Shih-tsu from 1260 to 1294.⁶³ The second line of the above translation would seem to refer to the composition and playing of this tune on a stringed instrument. "Jester-counsellor" is a figurative or poetic term and should not be taken as implying that Kuan Han-ch'ing actually held such an office. *I Yin fu T'ang* ("I Yin assists T'ang") is given in the *Lu-kuei pu* as a play by Cheng Kuang-tsu.⁶⁴ The play is not extant,⁶⁵ but its story must have been that of the minister I Yin's assistance of (Ch'eng) T'ang, founder of the Shang dynasty. The above *Yuan kung-tzu*, seems, however vaguely, to associate the play with Kuan Han-ch'ing.

If the explanations just given leave the meaning of the verse still obscure, a consideration of the poet's intentions should bring some clarity. He is talking in a grandiose manner of the beginning of the Yuan dynasty, (strictly speaking "the Mongol period") and his aim is to convey a noble and lofty impression of this event. To this end he emphasizes the harmony between the two elements in the new state: the Chinese and the Mongols, the ruled and the ruler. The *ch'ü* music was a distinct characteristic of the Chinese side of the Yuan culture, while the White-feathered Bird was a song Mongol in its essence, highly apposite, moreover, in the virtues associated with it. Kuan Han-ch'ing - to whom Kuan Ch'ing must surely refer - as the prime composer of *ch'ü* or one who might be taken as such and as a survivor from the Kin period, is seemingly put forward as fitting representative of the harmonious transference of loyalties to the new dynasty. To emphasize the loyalty of the Chinese subjects to the Mongol emperor, the play presented is one of which the theme is basically the loyal service of a minister to his ruler. No matter if the play was not actually written by Kuan Han-ch'ing - the purposes of poetic effect are best served by associating the most outstanding playwright with the most appropriate play. Thus Yang Wei-chen mentions the typically Yuan *ch'ü* and *tsa-chü* and at the same time brings them into a depiction of a dynasty commencing in an atmosphere of accord.

Since Yang Wei-chen's aim is poetic and seemingly somewhat in conflict with historic reality, his words are not to be taken too literally. Yet if

⁶² See comments by Lou P'u-ch'an (fl. c. 1774) appended to the *Yuan Kung-tz'u* in the *T'ieh-yai i-pien chu*, ch. 8, p. 6b. See also Ts'ai Mei-piao "Kuan-yü Kuan Han-ch'ing-te sheng-p'ing" in *Kuan Han-ch'ing yen-chiu lun-wen chi*, pp. 21-7.

⁶³ *Ch'o-keng lu*, pp. 248-9.

⁶⁴ *Lu-kuei pu*, p. 119, gives the play by its full title *F'ang T'ai-chia I Yin fu T'ang* 放太甲伊尹扶湯.

⁶⁵ There is a play entitled *Li Ch'eng T'ang I Yin Keng-hsin* (立成湯伊尹耕莘) which has a doubtful Ming attribution to Cheng Kuang-tsu. It is highly improbable that this extant play (Mai-wang-kuan edition) is in fact his. The matter is discussed in Yen Tun-i's *Yuan-chü chen-i*, Peking, 1960, pp. 177-82.

Kuan Han-ch'ing had not generally been regarded in Yang Wei-ch'en's times as having lived under the Kin, to mention him thus would surely have been to carry poetic licence to the point of meaninglessness and one must feel that the poet would have found some alternative person or idea were Kuan Han-ch'ing solely associated with the Yuan. Yang Wei-ch'en lived all but two years of his life in the Yuan, was a writer of non-dramatic *ch'ü* and a renowned poet, and was an acquaintance of the *tsa-chü* playwright Wang Yeh,⁶⁶ who in turn was an acquaintance of Chung Ssu-ch'eng.⁶⁷ It is highly likely that he was well acquainted with the world of *tsa-chü* drama and his statements, even as poetry, must carry a certain weight.

The *Yuan kung-tz'u* by Chu Yu-tun is more direct:

The first to compose the music was Kuan Ch'ing,

And the *tsa-chü* *I Yin fu T'ang* was presented.

Spreading into the Forbidden Precincts, enjoyed within the palace,

In a while the new music was heard and sung by all.

The similarity and debt to Yang Wei-ch'en's composition would seem clear, but Chu Yu-tun's version is interesting as a partial interpretation of the latter. The notion of Kuan Han-ch'ing as the creator of Yuan *ch'ü* is put more explicitly. Kuan Han-ch'ing is not connected with the Kin in so many words, but since the verse is talking of the beginnings of the Mongol period the implication remains that he must have been old enough to compose such music on the advent of this period. It would perhaps be unwise, however, to place too much trust in the precise chronology of either of these two *Yuan kung-tz'u* and, since Chu Yu-tun clearly borrows from Yang Wei-ch'en, his version is very limited in its significance for the present discussion. Chu Yu-tun was an early Ming *tsa-chü* playwright, though, and his words perhaps deserve some slight consideration.

The *Hsi-chin chih*, already mentioned above, survives only partially, but it may afford some weak confirmation of the earliness of Kuan Han-ch'ing's dates. In this gazetteer he is placed after Shih Ping-chih. Shih Ping-chih's dates are not certain, but the *Yuan-shih* records that in 1213 when the Mongol Imperial Preceptor, Prince Mu-hua-li, came southwards to attack the Kin, Shih Ping-chih led forth several thousand villagers of his region and surrendered with them to Mu-hua-li. His eldest son Shih T'ien-ni was born in 1187 (d. 1225), so that he himself must have been born around 1170 at the latest.⁶⁸ His grandson Shih Chang, son of Ping-chih's youngest son Shih T'ien-tse (1202-75), was born around 1240 (died

⁶⁶ He wrote a preface to Wang Yeh's *Yu-hsi lu* 優戲錄. See his *Tung-wei-tzu ii*, *Ssu-pu ts'ung k'an* edn., ch. 11, p. 82.

⁶⁷ Wang Yeh is listed in the *Lu-kuei pu* (p. 135) under the heading "Men-of-
 lent of recent times, whom I know . . ."

⁶⁸ See *Yuan-shih*, 147, biography of Shih T'ien-ni.

c. 1288).⁶⁹ Shih Chang, by his *hao* Chiu-san-jen, is placed late in the same section of the *Lu-kuei pu* as Kuan Han-ch'ing.⁷⁰ One would thus expect him, anyway, to be Kuan Han-ch'ing's junior or at most of the same age. If the *Hsi-chin chih* was arranged chronologically, even roughly so, it would be already a rather large gap of time between the consecutive entries if Kuan Han-ch'ing were the same age as the son of the youngest son of the preceding entry. Even were he the same age as the youngest son the gap might seem large, and, moreover, Shih Ping-chih's sons were probably more famous than he himself and would surely have been included as entries in the gazetteer, which, if strictly chronological, would mean that Kuan Han-ch'ing lived earlier than Shih T'ien-ni and Shih T'ien-tse. One would imagine at least that his birth was well back into the Kin period. This, however, is going rather deep into the realms of conjecture, and the whole value of this evidence depends on the supposition that the *Hsi-chin chih* was strictly chronological in its arrangement, and, moreover, that the gap in time between two consecutive entries would not be a great one.

Most of the reliable evidence, such as it is, points towards Kuan Han-ch'ing's having been born during the Kin,⁷¹ and information from his own surviving *ch'ü* seems to indicate that he was still alive well on into the Yuan. A non-dramatic *t'ao-shu* entitled "View of Hangchow", surviving in a Yuan collection of *ch'ü*, the *T'ai-p'ing yueh-fu* compiled by Yang Ch'ao-ying, is attributed therein to Kuan Han-ch'ing.⁷² It is a description of the beauties

⁶⁹ Shih Chang's dates are given by Fu Hsi-hua's *Yuan-tai tsa-chü ch'üan-mu*, Peking, 1957, p. 11, as about 1240-88. There is a biography of Shih T'ien-tse in *Yuan-shih*, 155.

⁷⁰ *Lu-kuei pu*, p. 115. Shih Chiu-san-jen was the author of the *tsa-chü Chuang-chou meng*.

⁷¹ This is not, however, accepted by all modern schools of thought. See nn. 80 and 82 below.

⁷² (*Ch'ao-ye hsin-sheng*) *t'ai-p'ing yueh-fu*, Peking, 1955 edn., ch. 8, pp. 1-2. The full *ch'ü* translates as follows:

Views of Hangchow

The most beautiful country on Earth,
 The gayest, most romantic region in the world.
 The newly annexed country of the Great Yuan Dynasty,
 The old domains of the fallen House of Sung.
 The waters are superb, the hills wondrous.
 Everywhere you go is just made for pleasure,
 It is so splendid and fine here!
 Throughout the city there are embroidered screens and fine
 door-curtains,
 And the inhabitants bustle and throng together.

Two hundred miles of streets neatly set out,
 More than ten thousand storied-houses of all different heights
 and shapes.
 Not any slightest patch of "idle" land.
 Pine-shaded porches and bamboo-lined avenues
 Peony gardens and flowered walks,
 Tea-groves and paddy-fields,

and splendours of Hangchow and its surrounding region and in it are the words "The newly annexed country of the Great Yuan Dynasty, The old domains of the fallen House of Sung." Hangchow was taken by the Yuan forces under Bayan in 1276. Since Kuan Han-ch'ing says "newly annexed", he must have written this shortly after 1276 or perhaps after 1279, when the Yuan had definitively destroyed the last organized Sung resistance in southern China and the House of Sung was truly fallen. Although the city was in fact taken quite peaceably, largely through the surrender of many Sung adherents and the flight of others, the life of the city must have been disrupted somewhat. In this *ch'ü*, which from its vivid and fresh descriptions was surely written from firsthand experience of Hangchow, Kuan Han-ch'ing depicts such a peaceful and prosperous city, that one might imagine it to have been written a few years after the Mongol capture of the city, when normality had been restored. It is clear at least that Kuan Han-ch'ing was still alive and writing *ch'ü* some time after 1276. The allusion to the "Great Yuan", incidentally, does not necessarily conflict with the possibility that Kuan Han-ch'ing was or had been a *Kin i-min*, since some such expression would seem the only expedient parallel to the paired expression "fallen House of Sung", and is anyway no more necessarily a real sign of sympathy for the Yuan than is the latter expression a sign of antipathy towards the Sung.

Two other *ch'ü* compositions found in the earliest Yuan collection of *ch'ü*, the *Yang-ch'ün pai-hsüeh*, and attributed to Kuan Han-ch'ing consist of four and six stanzas respectively, all stanzas being to the tune

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Raised flower-beds and plum-blossom rills.
Here there is a theme for a poem,
And a step further the scene is laid out before one like the face of a fan or a screen.
The Western Salt-yard is just like a sash of gems,
And the colour of Mount Wu is a thousand-fold emerald.
I gaze across at the River Ch'ien-t'ang's million acres of glass.
And there are clear rivulets,
Green waters.
The decorated pleasure-boats ply to and fro in leisurely recreation.
The Chekiang Pavilion is right opposite.
In front are the jutting, odd-shaped rocks of the steep ridges and high peaks,
So worthy of admiration, so fit a theme for poetry.

All the dwellings are reflected in the stream of the canals,
And the storied houses tower from the hillsides.
I gaze afar at the form of the sunset mountains by the Western Lake.
As I look here
And look there,
Even if I had paints I could not put brush to paper.

Ta-te-ke.⁷³ The last stanza of the latter contains the words, "Pipe it, Strum it, Sing the newly current Ta-te-ke". This would suggest that these songs were written shortly after the Ta-te-ke became popular, and probably indeed shortly after it was first composed, for there is no earlier record of the tune than these *ch'ü* by Kuan Han-ch'ing. One must wonder indeed if it was not originated by Kuan Han-ch'ing himself, since there are no other *ch'ü* to this tune surviving from the early Yuan. A natural first tendency would be to associate the Ta-te of the tune-title ("Ta-te song") with the reign-period (*nien-hao*) Ta-te (1297-1307), which uses the same two characters. Yet the origins of many *ch'ü* tune-titles are obscure and the investigation of their origins a task requiring great caution.⁷⁴ Ta-te was used for a reign period title on at least two earlier occasions in history, by Li-Fen of Chiao-chih in A.D. 544 during the Liang dynasty and by the emperor Ch'ung-tsung of the Hsi-hsia in 1135. Theoretically, though very improbably, either could be the Ta-te of Ta-te-ke. Ta-te has various other meanings which could conceivably be the sense of the term in the tune-title. As used in the *Book of Changes* it means "the creative power of heaven and earth". As found in the *Doctrine of the Mean* it means "great virtue". In Buddhist terminology it was used as an equivalent for a Sanskrit term originally referring to the Buddha and also used in Buddhist literature as an honorific term of address for a mendicant priest of venerable age. None the less, as far as any judgement can be made, the Ta-te of the Yuan reign-period would seem to remain the most likely meaning in the tune-title. It was a period in the middle of the age of *ch'ü*, when many of the finest *ch'ü* composers were undoubtedly still alive and composing. *Ch'ü* in their early days were very much a popular form of song and it is quite possible that the creator of the tune wished to give it an air of topicality by including a contemporary reign-period name in its title. The evidence of this tune-title, however, is not firm enough for any definite conclusions, and serves only to suggest a feeling.

If Kuan Han-ch'ing's birth were placed a mere ten years before the fall of the Kin, he would have been in his seventies by the Ta-te period. It is by no means impossible nor even improbable that he was still alive and composing at such an age. The large number of plays attributed to him suggests a long creative life and perhaps the indomitable spirit of another *ch'ü* attributed to him and entitled "Not giving in to old age" would also, if indeed his, be a hint that he may have flourished into a vigorous old age.⁷⁵

⁷³ *Yang-ch'ün pai-hsüeh*, pp. 51-4.

⁷⁴ Feng Yuan-chün outlines some of the dangers of hasty conclusions in deciding the origins of tune-titles. See her *Ku-chü shuo-hui*, pp. 64-5, 102, n. 86.

⁷⁵ The *ch'ü* is earliest found in the *Yung-hsi yüeh-fu*, ch. 10 and the *Ts'ai-pi ch'ing-ta'u*, ch. 5. See *Kuan Han-ch'ing hsi-ch'ü chi*, pp. 949-51 for version with collation notes. The earliest attribution of this *ch'ü* to him is thus Ming-period, and though the rough, natural and forcefully expressive style strongly bespeaks an early-Yuan composer, the attribution cannot be regarded as entirely reliable.

The attainment of old age was apparently common among Yuan *chü* composers and their associates. Pai P'u was still alive as an octogenarian in 1306. Tu Jen-chieh died at the age of eighty. Hou Cheng-ch'ing was still alive and over 90 in 1307. Chung Ssu-ch'eng would seem to have lived to eighty or more, Wan Yun died at seventy-eight and so on. The *Lu-kuei pu* records that Huan Kung-wang's foster-father was ninety before he adopted an heir.⁷⁶ Huang himself died at eighty-six. It also picks out the fact that Kao Wen-hsiu "died early".⁷⁷ Yet Kao Wen-hsiu was the author of thirty-two *isa-chü* and perhaps one may wonder if he would have produced so many plays in his early youth? "Early death" would at least seem to have been a phenomenon worthy of note. An anecdote told in the *Ch'o-keng lu* is perhaps of some relevance in connexion with Kuan Han-ch'ing's dates and is translated in full below for its general relevance to the later parts of this discussion of him.⁷⁸

Wang He-ch'ing of Taming was famed throughout the land for his humour and waggishness. At the beginning of the period 1260-4 there appeared in the capital city of Yen a butterfly of extraordinary size and Wang composed a hsiao-ling to the tune Tsui-chung-t'ien on it, which went:

Breaking its way out of Chuang Chou's dream,
Its two wings ride on the East Wind.

Three hundred famous gardens

It picks clean at one go.

A fine fellow is he not!

He scares to death the honey-bees in their quest for flower-perfume.

And lightly moving in flight.

He fans the flower-sellers away to the east of the bridge.

This made him even more famous.

At that time there was a certain Kuan Han-ch'ing who was also a talented and colourful figure, and Wang would often poke fun at him. Although Kuan would do his best to retort, he never managed to come out on top. Wang suddenly passed away in a sitting posture and two streams of mucus more than a foot long hung down from his nose, filling all with wonderment. When Kuan came round to make solicitous enquiries and to offer his condolences, he asked the reason for it (*i.e.* for the nature of Wang's death). Someone replied, "This is what the Buddhists call 'Being transformed while in a meditative sitting position'." Then he asked what it was hanging from Wang's nose, and

⁷⁶ *Lu-kuei pu*, p. 131.

⁷⁷ *Lu-kuei pu*, p. 106.

⁷⁸ *Ch'o-keng lu*, p. 279.

received the reply "Those are jade chopsticks".⁷⁹ Kuan said, "I think you have the wrong idea about them – they aren't jade chopsticks, they are *sang*." Everyone let out a laugh. Someone teased Kuan: "You've been made to look silly by Wang He-ch'ing for half a lifetime, but you couldn't get one of your own back on him till after he died!" Whenever the Six Domestic Animals become run down, mucus constantly runs from their noses and this is referred to as "*sang* illness". Moreover, fondness for pulling other people to pieces is also referred to as *sang*. Hence the remark.

The Kuan Han-ch'ing of this anecdote, as a friendly enemy of the *ch'ü* composer Wang He-ch'ing, is surely the playwright and *ch'ü* composer under discussion in this present study.⁸⁰ The dates of Wang He-ch'ing are not certain.⁸¹ The *Lu-kuei pu* lists him in its first section among composers born in the late Kin. Not all of the composers' dates are known but those around Wang He-ch'ing are as follows:

Tung chieh-yuan (fl. 1190-1208)

Liu Ping-chung (1216-74)

Shang Tao (1185-1231)

⁷⁹ "Jade chopsticks" sometimes used as a poetic term for "tears", which is possibly its meaning here.

⁸⁰ Feng Yuan-chün in the most original and thoughtful study of Kuan Han-ch'ing's dates (see her *Ku-chü shuo-hui*, pp. 63-70) in fact presumes two Kuan Han-ch'ing's. Some of her arguments, however, seem too open to doubt even for such a topic, where most of the evidence is somewhat shadowy. For instance she calculates that Ma Chih-yuan was still alive in the period 1321-4 on the basis of *ch'ü* first attributed to Ma in the *Pei-tz'u Kuang-cheng-p'u*, and without other supporting attributions. She concludes that one Kuan Han-ch'ing was born in the Kin and another lived from around 1240 for more than seventy years. While there were cases during the Yuan of two scholars of identical name, as almost certainly indeed in the case of Wang He-ch'ing, the likelihood of the existence of two scholars, probably both *ch'ü* composers (?), living within the same century, one of them being the "creator" of mature *isa-chü* and in other respects an outstanding figure and that the remarkable fact should escape the notice of the *Lu-kuei pu*, *Chung-yuan yin-yün*, and other Yuan works, would seem small. The weakness of the evidence in general concerning Kuan Han-ch'ing scarcely demands such an explanation to circumvent the apparent contradictions it poses. The possibility cannot be dismissed, but for want of any real evidence in support of it, it is perhaps best to seek some other solution.

⁸¹ Sun K'ai ti *Yuan ch'ü-chia k'ao-lieh*, pp. 63-6, associates this Wang He-ch'ing with Wang Ting, *tsu* He-ch'ing (1242-1320). Here indeed is surely an example of two scholars in the same dynasty with similar names. For instance the former was a man of Taming (or possibly T'aiyuan, see Sun's article), whereas Wang Ting was domiciled in Weichow, his family originating from Pienliang. The former was a *ch'ü* composer, whose surviving *ch'ü* bear witness to a lively wit and humour (see *Ch'üan Yuan san-ch'ü*, pp. 40-50), the latter was seemingly an earnest-minded official (see Sun's quotation from *Wei T'ai-p'u wen hsi-chi*). If one follows the *Ch'o-keng lu* anecdote and accepts Sun K'ai-ti's theory, then Wang Ting would have established a great reputation as a wit by the age of eighteen, which is not impossible, but unlikely. Moreover, as pointed out in the main text of this study, the birth of the *ch'ü* composer Wang He-ch'ing would seem more probably to have been slightly earlier than 1242.

Tu Jen-chieh (born between 1189 and 1196)
 Yen Chun-chang (dates unknown)
 Chang Tzu-i (dates unknown)
 Wang He-ch'ing
 He Chih-hsueh (dates unknown)
 Yang Kuo (1197-1269)
 Hu Chih-yü (1227-95)
 Lu Chih (1235-1300)
 Yao Sui (1239-1314)

The sequence within the *Lu-kuei pu* section is clearly far from chronologically precise, but, if anything may be concluded from these dates, they would suggest perhaps that Wang He-ch'ing spent at least part of his childhood during the Kin. The *Ch'o-keng lu* says his fame was widespread before 1260. There is of course no absolute rate for the time taken for a *ch'ü* composer or literary wit to achieve fame, but, allowing ten or so years of adulthood for the development of his fame, it would not seem unreasonable to suggest that Wang He-ch'ing was born around 1230 or even a few years before. The surely disrespectful nature of his and Kuan Han-ch'ing's rivalry might possibly suggest that they were of a similar age, since a great disparity of age in olden Chinese society, even allowing for the unusual circumstances of the early Yuan, would perhaps have inhibited ridicule and satire between two acquaintances. If so, one would expect Kuan Han-ch'ing to have been born around the same time. Such an argument is very much a fumbling in the dark, but there are few arguments concerned with the playwright which are not, and it seems to have a grain of likelihood. The "half a lifetime" suggests Kuan Han-ch'ing was associated with Wang He-ch'ing for a lengthy period of their adulthood and indicates fairly firmly that Kuan Han-ch'ing did not die young. The anecdote seems vaguely to relate the rivalry to the period 1260-4, but the matter is not made precise. It must be borne in mind that the *Ch'o-keng lu*'s information here is intended as a lively story and is not really historical in its aims, and this fact imposes severe limitations on its value for the present discussion.

Most of the circumstantial and other evidence above seems to point to Kuan Han-ch'ing's having been born in the late Kin, around 1220 or 1230.⁸² To place his birth much later would mean that the "creator" of

⁸² In an article "Kuan Han-ch'ing hsing-nien k'ao" in *Kuan Han-ch'ing yen-chiu lun-wen chi*, pp. 11-15, Sun K'ai-ti concludes that the playwright's birth must have been between 1241 and 1250 and his death between 1320 and 1324. The birth-date is largely deduced on the basis of the *Shuo-chi* edition of *Ch'ing-lou chi*, which in the biography of the courtesan Chu Lien-hsiu, associates Kuan Han-ch'ing as well as Hu Chih-yü, Wang Yun, Lu Chih, and Feng Tzu-chien with the courtesan (see below and also *Ch'ing-lou chi*, p. 48, n. 97). On the basis of the dates of the other four gentlemen, Sun deduces Kuan Han-ch'ing's date of birth. The dangers of the presumption that the talented courtesan necessarily associated only with men of similar

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tsa-chü was of a later generation than playwrights deemed to be his successors, such as Hou Ch'eng-ch'ing in particular. If one allows him a lifespan of eighty years he would then have died around 1300 or 1310. Ninety would seem remarkable but not impossible, and some *ch'ü* composers are known to have attained such an age, but a hundred would, one may feel, have been rare enough for the fact to have been recorded. That he had passed away by 1324 would seem certain from remarks made in Chou Te-ch'ing's preface to the *Chung-yuan yin-yun* of 1324.⁸³ In this preface the *ch'ü* form of composition is extolled and its perfection attributed to "the completely new creations of Kuan, Cheng, Pai and Ma". This is shortly followed by the remark that "all these gentlemen are no more and their followers have been unable to equal them!" The tone of the passage

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age are pointed out in Su I's article "Kuan Han-ch'ing-te nien-tai wen-t'i", *Kuan Han-ch'ing yen chiu lun-wen chi*, pp. 16-20. He points out that similar analogies could be made between *ch'ü* composers eighty years different in age. It is moreover difficult to see how Sun arrives at his conclusion since both Hu and Wang were born in 1227! For the date of death, Sun relies partly on the evidence of the *Ch'o-keng lu* anecdote concerning Wang He-ch'ing, whom he equates with the Wang Ting who died in 1320. This Wang He-ch'ing, whose reputation was already widespread before 1260 would then surely have been eighty at the very least and more probably ninety or so when he died. It is perhaps a little difficult, though not impossible, to imagine an aged Kuan Han-ch'ing calling round to make lively jokes at the expense of the deceased octogenarian. The weakness of the connexion between Wang He-ch'ing and Wang Ting has already been mentioned in the previous note. Sun's conclusions would anyway seem to make both Wang He-ch'ing and Kuan Han-ch'ing nearly of the same period as some of those included in the "present times" sections of the *Lu-kuei pu* and a generation later than Hou Cheng-ch'ing in his own section. Sun's other item of evidence is Kuan Suan-chai's preface to the *Yang-ch'ün pai-hsueh*. Since Kuan Suan-chai died in 1324, the preface was probably written a few years before that (Sun says around 1313-14). A section of this preface says:

"In recent times Su-chai is graceful and charming like a fairy lady seeking the spring; Feng Hai-su is expansive and extravagant . . . ; Kuan Han-ch'ing and Yü Chi-fu are fascinatingly beautiful . . ."

This piece of literary criticism mentions the four *ch'ü* composers as being "recent" (*chin-tai*) and on the basis of the dates of Lu Chih (Su-chai) and Feng Tzu-chien (Hai-su), Sun calculates Kuan Han-ch'ing's and considers that the "recent" implies he was still living at the time Kuan Suan-chai wrote. There is in fact no evidence that Lu Chih lived as late as 1313. Nor is the "recent" a very specific term. It could as well be applied to include the past hundred years as the past few years. Indeed the former would seem the more likely reference in this case. Sun K'ai-ti has ignored the all-important words immediately preceding the above translated passage in the preface. These first mention Su Shih (1036-1101) and Hsin Ch'i-chi (1140-1207) then go on to say, "However, in recent times Hsü Tzu-fang is . . . and Yang Hsi-an is . . ." The contrast of both this "recently" and the one upon which Sun bases his supposition would seem to be with the period of Su Shih and Hsin Ch'i-chi, i.e. the pre-1207 Sung! Moreover Hsü Yen (Tzu-fang) died in 1301 and Yang Kuo (Hsi-an)'s dates are 1197-1269, and the preface includes both of them under the term "in recent times", so that on no account could this preface be used to support Sun's thesis. This note is perhaps inordinately long, but several biographies of our playwright have transmitted Sun's conclusions, for instance Fu Hsi-hua's *Yuan-tai tsa-chü ch'üan-mu*, p. 25, and T'an Cheng-pi's *Yuan-tai hsi-chü-chia Kuan Han-ch'ing*, Shanghai, 1957, p. 4, etc.

⁸³ *Chung-yuan yin-yun*, p. 175.

strongly suggests that it is a long time since the four gentlemen were gracing the world of *ch'ü*. At least it would seem clear that they were no longer alive by 1324. As the *Lu-kuei pu* is the most authoritative early work on *tsa-chü* and playwrights, so the *Chung-yuan yin-yun* is the prime and almost sole early authority on *ch'ü* composition. Chou Te-ch'ing was in a position well-suited for reliable knowledge concerning *ch'ü*, composers and playwrights and his evidence must be regarded as among the most solid.

Within its obvious limitations the material used above is the most reliable concerning Kuan Han-ch'ing's dates.⁸⁴ Since Wang Kuo-wei wrote

⁸⁴ It is a moot point how much concrete information concerning Kuan Han-ch'ing may be obtained from the surviving plays attributed to him. While some extant non-dramatic *ch'ü* have fairly reliable mid-Yuan attributions to him, the play attributions are open to more doubt (see below). The value of the information from the plays moreover often depends on other historical, social, linguistic and literary information which is not available and in some cases scarcely likely to be come so. A factor which might connect Kuan Han-ch'ing with the Kin period is that some of the plays attributed to him with some reliability, *T'iao feng-yueh*, *K'u Ts'un-hsiao* and *Pai-yueh t'ing*, all use a number of apparently Jürchen terms (such as *a-ma*, *a-che*, *ch'ih-wa-pu-la-hai*, *sa-tun*) which are not found in the majority of *tsa-chü* attributed to the Yuan. The only other plays of known authorship by early Yuan playwrights in which such words are used are Wang Shih-fu's *Li-ch'un t'ang*, Li Chih-fu's *Hu-t'ou p'ai* and Meng Han-ch'ing's *Mo-he lo*. Wang may well have been born in the Kin. Of Meng's dates little is known, but he was one of the earlier playwrights. Li was in fact a Jürchen. Two of Kuan Han-ch'ing's plays, moreover, *T'iao feng-yueh* and *Pai-yueh t'ing* are clearly set in the Kin period. The latter is based around the Mongol invasion of the Kin capital Chungtu (i.e. the Yuan Tatu) in A.D. 1213 and the flight of the Kin emperor and the inhabitants southwards to the new Kin capital, Pienliang. Only the songs and very small amounts of the speech and stage-directions of the play are found in the extant version, yet the emotions and situations of the flight are sometimes depicted with a realism rare in Yuan *tsa-chü* (see Act One).

Similarly in the *Pei-tz'u Kuang-cheng p'u* and *Ts'ai-pi ch'ing-ts'u* version of the non-dramatic *t'ao-shu* entitled "Not giving in to old age" (see above, n. 75) the writer boasts of various skills he possesses, including *ch'ang che-ku*, *ta-wei*, *ts'u-chü*, *wei-ch'i* and *shuang-liu*. *Ch'ang che-ku* would seem to refer to the singing of the Jürchen song "the Partridge". *Ts'u-chü* "football" was very popular under the Kin. *Ta-wei* "hunting" was popular among the Jürchen and Jürchen-influenced Chinese under the Kin. *Wei-ch'i* "surrounding chess" and *shuang-liu* "double sixes" were both board-games very popular with the Jürchen under the Kin. Some of these arguments are put forward in Ts'ai Mei-piao's article "Kuan-yü Kuan Han-ch'ing-te sheng-p'ing" (in *Kuan Han-ch'ing yen-chiu lun-wen chi*, pp. 21-36), and almost identically by Lu Yuan-chün, *Kuan Han-ch'ing k'ao-shu*, pp. 20-1.

Such information may contribute slightly to the feeling that Kuan Han-ch'ing was closely connected with the Kin, yet it would seem unwise to place much weight on it. Only thirty plays have survived definitely untouched from the Yuan period (though they may well have been altered by editors during the Yuan for all that is known. Concerning all the remaining Ming versions of "Yuan" *tsa-chü*, a considerable amount of Ming editing is to be seen in them and it is difficult to say how far they represent the original form of the play. In other words, it is perfectly possible that Jürchen characteristics may have been edited away or added in some plays. So much doubt exists in the matter of transmission that, in the extreme, it is difficult to point to any one play as definitely the play as written by the original early Yuan author, though for practical purposes one may presume certain plays to belong to certain authors with a fair amount of safety. More serious perhaps is the interpretation of such evidence as given above,

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his brief biography of the playwright in 1912, much has been written on the topic.⁸⁵ Perhaps the other early Yuan playwrights have tended to be neglected and it is to be hoped that from future concentrated studies of them and more precise historical and linguistic studies of the period in general a firmer picture will emerge, too, of Kuan Han-ch'ing's period of life and creative activity.

PART II

Friends and acquaintances

As already stated in the previous part and notes to this article, several people are mentioned in early works as Kuan Han-ch'ing's friends or acquaintances. A further consideration of these people may perhaps shed a little, though very little, more light on the playwright himself.

The *Shuo-chi* version of the *Ch'ing-lou chi*, in the biography of the courtesan Chu Lien-hsiu, has the words, "There is also a Nan-lü *shu-t'ao* which Kuan Han-ch'ing presented to her. Since it is printed in the *Yang-ch'un pai-hsüeh*, we do not give it here."⁸⁶ The term *shu-t'ao* could mean "several *t'ao-shu*", but more probably is a mistaken inversion of the characters of the term *t'ao-shu* for the extant *Yang-ch'un pai-hsüeh* does indeed contain one Nan-lü *t'ao-shu* by Kuan Han-ch'ing.⁸⁷ Neither the other editions of the *Ch'ing-lou chi*, nor the similar biography of Chu Lien-hsiu given in the

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and the question whether or not it is of any use in determining Kuan Han-ch'ing's dates precisely within a few decades. (No one doubts so far as I know that he was born some time within the first sixty years of the thirteenth century.) It is probable that a large number of Jürchen people and very large numbers of Jürchen-influenced Chinese continued to live in northern China during the Yuan and one has no cause to imagine that Jürchen customs, stories and terms of speech ceased to be current immediately upon the fall of the Kin or even very shortly thereafter. Kuan Han-ch'ing's audiences would all continue for decades after the fall of the Kin to be largely composed of people who had grown up during the Kin. His knowledge of the events of 1213 might just as well have derived from the vivid memories of his elders of those troubled times. Some of the "Jürchen" customs mentioned above, such as *tsu-chü*, *wei-ch'i* and *shuang-liu*, survived into Ming times and cannot be classed as peculiarly Jürchen or peculiar to one particular distinct period within the thirteenth century. The *t'ao-shu* is, moreover, first attributed to Kuan Han-ch'ing in a Ming collection, and while stylistically it must surely belong to the early Yuan, the attribution is so late as to be open to some doubt. In the present general state of Kin and Yuan studies, the above evidence is best, one feels, confined to these notes.

Su I's "Kuan Han-ch'ing-te nien-tai wen t'i" (n. 57 above), pp. 18-19 puts forward the theory of a fashion for wit, comedy and satirical ability at the beginning of the Mongol period as an indication that Kuan Han-ch'ing was born in the Kin. It is perhaps broadly true that the lively originality of wit and romance that was characteristic of the early Yuan was replaced by more "automatic" and literary moods in the late Yuan, but the matter is too vague and general to produce any precise answers as to the dates of individuals.

⁸⁵ Wang Kuo-wei, *Sung Yuan hsi-ch'ü k'ao*, Wang Kuo-wei hsi-ch'ü lun-wen chi edn., Peking, 1957, pp. 140-1.

⁸⁶ *Ch'ing-lou chi*, p. 48, n. 97. See previous part of this article, n. 82.

⁸⁷ *Yang-ch'un pai-hsüeh*, 2, ch. 3, pp. 142-3.

Ch'o-keng lu make any mention of his connexion with the courtesan,⁸⁸ but the existence of this *ch'ü* would seem to substantiate the statement made by the *Shuo-chi Ch'ing-lou chi*, even if the statement were occasioned by the discovery of the *ch'ü*.

The *ch'ü* entitled "Presented to Chu Lien-hsiu" is an involved and ingenious play on her professional name, Chu Lien-hsiu meaning literally "Pearled-curtain beautiful". "Pearled or beaded curtain" (*chu-lien*), referring to a type of fine door-curtain, was a common image in Yuan and indeed pre-Yuan poetry, with romantic implications. Here Kuan Han-ch'ing by a highly allusive description of a beautiful curtain praises the beauty and loveliness of Chu Lien-hsiu:

Myriad "shrimp's whiskers" delicately trimmed,
A thousand strings of pearls, deftly woven.
The light of its golden hooks shimmers,
Its embroidered sash whirls in dance.
Like some half mist,
It veils the secluded boudoir,
And ordinary men may not open it at will . . .

It continues in a similar vein, referring more explicitly to Chu Lien-hsiu as it reaches its end. "Shrimp's whiskers" is a common poetic term referring to curtains. The hooks and sash were probably both used for securing the curtain, but the former may have a further allusive reference as mentioned below. Many of the phrases recall famous lines of celebrated earlier poets. From the *ch'ü* one would imagine Kuan Han-ch'ing to have been on intimate terms with the courtesan.

The biography of Chu Lien-hsiu in both *Ch'ing-lou chi* and *Ch'o-keng lu* further states:

Chu (珠) Lien-hsiu had the surname Chu 朱 and was a fourth child. She was an outstanding figure of the age in her performance in *tsa-chü*. She excelled in the *chia-t'ou*, *hua-tan* and *juan-mo-ni* roles. The *hsüan-wei* Hu Tzu-shan once presented a Ch'en-tsui-tung-feng *ch'ü* to her, which went "——". The *tai-chih* Feng Hai-su also presented her a Che-ku-t'ien, which went "——". Chu had a slightly hunched back, which is why Feng used the metaphor of the curtain-hook. Right until the present times her successors have respectfully referred to her as "Madame Chu".

The *ch'ü* by Hu Chih-yu and Feng Tzu-chen are both similar to Kuan Han-ch'ing's in their allusive descriptions of "curtains". Besides these, there is a Che-kuei-ling *ch'ü* entitled "A *yueh-fu* presented when in my cups to Chu Lien-hsiu", which survives in the *Yueh-fu ch'ün-chu* and also a Shou-yang-ch'ü entitled "Taking leave of Chu Lien-hsiu" found in the

⁸⁸ *Ch'o-keng lu*, ch. 20, p. 243.

T'ai-p'ing yueh-fu, both of which *ch'ü* are attributed to Lu Chih.⁸⁹ The former alludes to her beauty and talent, her beautiful voice and playing of the *ch'in* "zither", while the latter expresses sadness at his parting from her. In Hu Chih-yü's *Tzu-shan ta-ch'üan chi* there is a "Preface to Miss Chu's *shih* poems" written for Chu Lien-hsiu.⁹⁰ She must have written a volume of poems, and one *ch'ü* survives which is reliably attributed to her and is a "reply" to Lu Chih's Shou-yang-ch'ü.⁹¹ In Wang Yun's *Ch'ü-chien hsien-sheng ta-ch'üan wen-chi* there is a *shih* entitled "Written after the 'Preface to Chu Lien-hsiu'", which, since it contains the words "None is so romantic as Tzu-shan Hu", must clearly refer to Hu Chih-yu (Tzu-shan)'s "Preface to Miss Chu's poems".⁹² Wang Yun was a friend of Hu Chih-yu's and they were born in the same year.

From the above it is seen that Kuan Han-ch'ing was associated, at least indirectly, through Chu-Lien-hsiu with Feng Tzu-chen, Lu Chih, Hu Chih-yu and Wang Yun. It is quite possible, even likely, that he knew them personally. These four were eminent "orthodox" literary figures of the period and held high office. All except Wang Yun are included in the first section of the *Lu-kuei pu*, under "Celebrated gentlemen . . ."⁹³ The connexion of them, through Chu Lien-hsiu, is an interesting insight into the smallness of the world of *ch'ü* composition in the early Yuan, how, geographically concentrated, the *ch'ü* composers, irrespective of high rank or "disreputable" associations with the theatre, frequented the same kind of society and moved in the same romantic circles. Chu Lien-hsiu, moreover, by her considerable abilities was undoubtedly an outstanding courtesan of her time, and Kuan Han-ch'ing's association with her gives one a glimpse of his romantic environment. It is easier to imagine how the early Yuan scholars could involve themselves so much in the theatrical and singing-girl world, when it is realized that there were singing-girls and actresses such as Chu Lien-hsiu, so highly talented and able to meet the scholars on

⁸⁹ *Yueh-fu ch'ün-chu*, ch. 3, p. 140; *T'ai-p'ing yueh-fu*, ch. 2, p. 1.

⁹⁰ *Tzu-shan ta-ch'üan chi*, ch. 8, as quoted in Ts'ai Mei-p'iao, "Kuan-yü Kuan Han-ch'ing-te sheng-p'ing", *Kuan Han-ch'ing yen-chiu lun-wen chi*, p. 31. There is a "preface to Miss Sung" in the same work, same *chüan*, which actually may possibly have been intended for Miss Chu, the Sung (宋) being a commonplace error for Chu (朱). In it Miss "Sung" is praised as "One woman, yet she has the accomplishments of ten thousand . . . how could the lady musicians of antiquity be compared with her!" This is very similar to the tone of the "Preface to Miss Chu's poems". Cf. Ts'ai Mei-piao "Kuan-yü Kuan Han-ch'ing-te sheng-p'ing" pp. 29-32, and Sun K'ai-ti "Kuan Han-ch'ing hsing-nien k'ao", pp. 12-13.

⁹¹ *T'ai-p'ing yueh-fu*, ch. 2, pp. 1-2. There is another *ch'ü* with a less reliable Ming attribution to her, for which see Sui Shu-sen's *Ch'üan Yuan san-ch'ü*, pp. 354-5.

⁹² *Ch'ü-chien hsien-sheng ta-ch'üan wen-chi*, *Ssu-pu ts'ung-kan* edn., ch. 21, p. 12b. The *shih* itself is headed "Written after the Preface to Chu Lien-hsiu", but in the index it is referred to as "Written on Chu Lien-hsiu's poems", so quite possibly it served a similar purpose to Hu's preface.

⁹³ *Lu-kuei pu*, p. 103.

their own literary and spiritual level. That Chu Lien-hsiu was not the only singing-girl of talent and education is seen from the *Ch'ing-lou chi's* biographies of Liang Yuan-hsiu, Liu Yen-ke, Chang Yü-lien and so on.⁹⁴

The *Lu-kuei pu* mentions some playwrights as friends of Kuan Han-ch'ing, all of them within the same section of the work. Of Yan Hsien-chih, it says: "He was a man of Tatu. He had a firm friendship with Han-ch'ing". The *Lien-t'ing ts'ang-chu* edition has the extra words "Whenever he had any poetry (lit. 'pearls and jade') he would check it with him". This addition would seem to imply that Yan Hsien-chih had Kuan Han-ch'ing check his verse.⁹⁵ Little is known of Yang Hsien-chih, but from the *Lu-kuei pu* one learns that he was the author of eight *tsa-chü*, including *Hsiao-Hsiang yeh-yü*.

The *Lu-kuei pu* also says, under the name Liang Chin-chih, "A man of Tatu. He was an Assessor of the Inspectorate (*ching-hsün-yuan p'an*), was appointed magistrate of a District, then appointed Assessor (*p'an*) of Tahsing Prefecture and later appointed Sub-prefect of Hechow. He and Han-ch'ing were friends in a generations-old family friendship." The same work states that Liang Chin-chih was the author of the *tsa-chü Chin-mei*

⁹⁴ See *Ch'ing-lou chi*, pp. 17, 20, 31 etc. Two of Chu Lien-hsiu's pupils are also noted in this work: Sai Lien-hsiu (pp. 25-6) and Yen Shan-hsiu (p. 39). One may perhaps note another not altogether reliable story concerning Chu Lien-hsiu, found in the work *Lü-ch'uang chi-shih* by an unknown author of the late Yuan. (As quoted in Ts'ai Mei-piao "Kuan Han-ch'ing-te sheng p'ing", p. 29). The passage, entitled "Writing in farewell to a singing-girl", says:

A Taoist of Ch'ient'ang, Hung Chou-ku had intercourse with a singing-girl . . . and took her as his wife . . . Previously Ku Tzu-shan (this singing-girl being called Chu Lien-hsiu) once composed a Ch'en-tsui-tung-feng *ch'ü* for her: . . . His Eminence Feng Hai-su also wrote a Che-ku-t'ien which went: . . . Both of these expressed a metaphorical meaning by singing of "door-curtains".

Ku should, of course, be Hu. This would seem to associate Chu Lien-hsiu with the South, with the area of Hangchow (by the mention of Ch'ient'ang), though from all other evidence, the *Ch'ing-lou chi* etc., one would imagine her to have been living in Tatu, which is more probable. The story of her marriage to Hung Chou-ku has a rather unlikely ring about it, and indeed the whole piece would seem to be an amalgamation of two passages given separately in the *Ch'o-keng lu*: the biography of Chu Lien-hsiu on the one hand and the story of the Taoist of Ch'ient'ang and a singing-girl (see *Ch'o-keng lu*, ch. 15, p. 181) on the other. It is possible that an earlier work is the source of both *Lü-ch'uang chi-shih* and *Ch'o-keng lu* accounts, but the latter is a careful and in some respects scholarly work, often utilised by modern historians, and the *Lü-ch'uang chi-shih* contains other parts similar to it, so that it would be quite natural to conclude that the *Lü-ch'uang chi-shih* merely took two stories from it and made them into one, embellishing the story of Hung Chou-ku with the name of the famous courtesan.

⁹⁵ *Lu-kuei pu*, ch. 1, p. 111. The *T'ien-i-he Lu-kuei pu* (ch. 1, p. 8b) elaborates "This is why he was called Yang the Patcher", the "patching" referring to emendations of the poetry. The syntax of the phrase in the *Lu-kuei pu* is open to doubt, and it is just possible that it implies that Yang improved Kuan's poetry. Modern writers on the matter generally avoid the problem by direct quotation, but T'an Cheng-pi *Chung-kuo wen-hsieh chia ta tz'u-tien* Hong Kong, 1961, edn., p. 815 seems to agree with the version I give.

chien and *Yü-kung Kao-men*.⁹⁶ One of Tu Jen-chieh's writings indicates that a Liang Chin-chih, presumably the same person, was Tu's brother-in-law (the husband of his younger sister).⁹⁷ Thus one may see, from this fact and the discussions in the previous part of this article, an interesting chain of connexions between various of the early *ch'ü* composers: Kuan Han-ch'ing - Liang Chin-chih - Tu Jen-chieh - Yuan Hao-wen - Pai P'u. Such connexions serve to emphasize the fact of considerable social unity and close associations among the early Yuan *ch'ü* composers in general.

Finally, the *Lu-kuei pu* says of Fei Chün-hsiang: "A man of Tatu. Father of T'ang-ch'en. A friend of Kuan Han-ch'ing's. He has an *Ai-nü lun* which is current among the general public." It also notes that he was the author of the *tsa-chü Chü-hua hui*.⁹⁸ His son Fei T'ang-ch'en is given in the same section of the *Lu-kuei pu*.⁹⁹ Few details are known of either father or son, but these entries in the *Lu-kuei pu* serve to add yet further to the impression of close relationships in the world of early Yuan *ch'ü*, when Kuan Han-ch'ing wrote his plays. Clearly he wrote, not as an isolated, ivory-tower, literary playwright, but in social communication with other playwrights, song-composers and indeed the actresses and actors themselves.

View of Playwrights etc.

The *T'ai-he cheng-yin p'u* includes a passage, which purports to contain Kuan Han-ch'ing's words on playwrights and actors:¹⁰⁰

Chao Tzu-ang said: "The *tsa-chü* performed by the young gentlemen of good family are called 'Experts' work' (*hang-chia sheng-huo*) and those performed by common actors are called 'Knaves' tricks' (*li-chia pa-hsi*). People of good standing value their respectability and so their performances have become rarer and there are few nowadays, but to go and call those performed by common actors 'Expert' (*hang-chia*) is very wide of the mark." Someone asked why that should be so! He replied: "*Tsa-chü* derive from the pens of the learned scholars and refined literary men, who are all people of good standing. Were it not for our compositions, how could the common actors perform? When one

⁹⁶ *Lu-kuei pu*, ch. 1, p. 114. The *Shuo-chi* and Meng Ch'eng-shun editions merely have "A man of Tatu, Assessor of Tahsing Prefecture". The *Shuo-chi* edition calls him Liang Chui-chih and the *T'ien-i-he Lu-kuei pu* (ch. 1, p. 21a) calls him Liang T'ui-chih.

⁹⁷ For the piece concerned see Sun K'ai-ti *Yuan ch'ü-chia k'ao-lüeh*, pp. 72-4.

⁹⁸ *Lu-kuei pu*, ch. 1, p. 116.

⁹⁹ *Lu-kuei pu*, ch. 1, p. 113. Here in fact is a clear example of disordered chronology, since the son is placed earlier than the father, but this occurs fairly late in the section and is possibly occasioned by the greater number of *tsa-chü* (three) attributed to the son, so the order might conceivably be a matter of respective dramatic fame. The *T'ai-he cheng-yin p'u* (ch. 1, p. 17) picks T'ang-ch'en out for particular praise in its stylistic assessments.

¹⁰⁰ *T'ai-he cheng-yin p'u*, ch. 1, pp. 25-6. The "young gentlemen of good family" in the passage translated probably refers to the educated and noble amateurs of the theatre.

goes into the matter one realizes the nature of things and that is why they are considered 'Knaves' (*li-chia*). Kuan Han-ch'ing said: "It is not their professional skill (*tang-hung*) – it is all our work. They merely perform the services of slaves, providing amusement and striving to please, all for us. And the young gentlemen's performances all consist of our love and romance." Although this was said as a joke, it indeed fits the true facts, so I quote it here.

Li-chia, loosely translated "knaves", is used to mean the opposite of "expert". Chu Ch'üan in fact quotes these statements to support his implications that the plays of the actors are inferior to those of the gentlemen and scholars.¹⁰¹ He wrote some thirty years after the end of the Yuan, but the slight superfluity and awkwardness of these statements in their context would seem to indicate that they are indeed genuine quotations. Possibly they originated from the Yuan, and their unusual liveliness and pointedness might well point to the genuineness of their attribution. Chao Tzu-ang is Chao Meng-fu (1254–1322), high-ranking official, *ch'ü* composer, poet, calligrapher and to this day a most celebrated painter of the Yuan period. The *T'ai-he cheng-yin p'u* quotes some of his views elsewhere.¹⁰² It is evident in fact that Chao Meng-fu did write on the theory of *ch'ü* and quite probably he did so on *tsa-chü*. In a preface by Yü Chi (1272–1348) to the *Chung-yuan yin-yün*,¹⁰³ Yü Chi recalls that when Chao Meng-fu was *ch'eng-chih* (Senior official of the Hanlin Academicians), Chao found the (*ch'ü*) musical compositions of the officials under him to be inadequate ("not harmonious") and so wrote some of his own and presented them, together with a statement of "his reasons" to the emperor Ying-tsung, who praised and rewarded him for them. This happened during the period 1314–20. It is quite possible that Chao Meng-fu's "reasons" on this celebrated occasion touched upon matters of play-composition and at least it would seem clear that he was an authority of *ch'ü* theory and no doubt on the attendant aspects of drama-writing. It is thus quite probable that the *T'ai-he cheng-yin p'u* does indeed quote from his words, and this probability must influence one's attitude to the attribution of the other statements to Kuan Han-ch'ing, which also have an air of genuine quotation about them – though one has nothing like proof that they are such.

If the quotation is accepted as Kuan Han-ch'ing's words, it would perhaps reveal him as conscious of himself and his fellow-playwrights as distinct and "superior" scholar class as opposed to the mere professional actors who performed their plays. They were words said in humour, however, and one imagines (as already mentioned above) that the early Yuan playwrights in reality worked in close conjunction with the actors, just as

¹⁰¹ See also *T'ai-he cheng-yin p'u*, ch. 1, p. 44.

¹⁰² See n. 101.

¹⁰³ *Chung-yuan yin-yün*, pp. 173–4.

they were on intimate terms with the singing-girls and actresses. The *Lu-kuei pu* in fact includes several playwrights in the same section as Kuan Han-ch'ing who were clearly actors or performers in the entertainment profession turned playwright: Chao Wen-yin, Chang Kuo-pao, Hung-tzu Li-erh and probably Hua Li-lang, all connected in some way with the Music Academy (*chiaofang*).¹⁰⁴ That they did not constitute a completely separate sphere of playwriting, is made clear by the *Lu-kuei pu*'s information that the play *Huang-liang meng* was a joint creation, one of the four acts being written by each of Ma Chih-yuan, Li Shih-chung, Hua Li-lang and Hung-tzu Li-erh respectively.¹⁰⁵ The first two of these were undoubtedly scholar playwrights, Ma Chih-yuan being one of the "Great Four" among Yuan playwrights. It is most probable that Kuan Han-ch'ing and the other early playwrights also associated with actor-playwrights and indeed with the actors and were on familiar terms with the theatres and stages where their works were performed.¹⁰⁶ There were actor-playwrights and it is also quite likely that there were sometimes playwright actors.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ See *Lu-kuei pu*, ch. 1, pp. 113–41. The *Lien-t'ing ts'ang-shu* edition actually gives Hua Li-lang as Li Lang here, but on p. 117 under Li Shih-chung gives Hua Li-lang, or more fully and rather curiously: "Academician Hua Li-lang", The *Shuo-chi* and Meng Ch'eng-shun editions are both without the first mention of him (see *Lu-kuei pu*, p. 192, n. 502), and Meng Ch'eng-shun has "Academician Fang" (放) for the second mention (*ibid.*, p. 204, n. 606). The *T'ai-he cheng-yin p'u* (ch. 1, p. 44) refers to him as Hua Li-lang, and this is probably correct. The *Lu-kuei pu* speaks of him and Hung-tzu Li-erh as sons-in-law of Liu Shua-he of the Music Academy and both the former names are clearly stage or professional names. The *Tai-he ch'eng-yin p'u* (*loc. cit.*) includes all four with their plays under a separate heading "Common entertainers, not included with the men of genius", and gives Chao Wen-yin and Chang Kuo-pao by the names Chao Ming-ching and Chang K'u-p'in respectively, both of these latter names being stage or professional names (*yueh-ming*, "entertainment names").

¹⁰⁵ *Lu-kuei pu*, ch. 1, p. 117.

¹⁰⁶ It is theoretically quite likely that Ma Chih-yuan and the other authors of *Huang-liang meng* co-operated with one another within the framework of one of the "writing societies" (*shu-hui*), which were the co-operative organisations of writers during Yuan times. Writers wrote for the *shu-hui* and within such societies the activities of actor or entertainer and writers were presumably co-ordinated. There were drama *shu-hui* in both Tatu and Hangchow at least in the late Yuan. Detailed studies of the *shu-hui* may be found in Feng Yuan-chün's *Ku-chü shuo-hui* pp. 17–18, 57–8; and Sun K'ai-ti's *Ye-shih-yuan ku-chün tsa-chü k'ao* (Shanghai, 1953) pp. 388–95. It is likewise quite probable that Kuan Han-ch'ing and the other early Yuan playwrights were members of such societies, but firm evidence is lacking. Most of the statements connecting these playwrights with *shu-hui* are found in Chia Chung-ming's supplementary elegies in the *T'ien-i-ke Lu-kuei pu*, and both Feng Yuan-chün and Sun K'ai-ti accept this evidence and lean heavily upon it.

In a colophon (dated 1422) to the work Chia Chung-ming says of the *Lu-kuei pu*: "It contains the men-of-talent of the generations preceding him (i.e. Chung Ssu-ch'eng) from Yen and Chao of the *shu-hui* of the capital". (See *T'ien-i-ke Lu-kuei pu* prefaces, p. 3b.) This remark embraces Kuan Han-ch'ing, all the other playwrights in his section and seemingly all the playwrights in the work, though since the "of the generations preceding him" is somewhat contrary to the actual nature of the *Lu-kuei pu* as a whole, it perhaps excludes those of the later sections. The term used for "capital" is *Yü-ching*

—n. 106 continued and n. 107 on following page

"Creator" of Yuan *tsa-chü*

Various evidence in Yuan and early Ming works suggest that Kuan Han-ch'ing was the creator of the Yuan form of *tsa-chü*, (the *tsa-chü* as a mature drama), that he was in effect the first person to write such plays. Chou Te-ch'ing, one of the most reliable sources, talks in his preface to the *Chung-yuan yin-yun* of *ch'ü* and mentions "the creative innovations of Kuan,

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"Jade capital", which may simply refer to the capital (i.e. Tatu) in general, but which seems to be taken by Feng Yuan-chün (Sun omits mention of it) as the name of a specific *shu-hui*, "Jade Capital Writing Society". It is seen from Chia Chung-ming's elegy to Chao Kung-fu (see *T'ien-i-ke Lu-kuei pu*, ch. 1, p. 11a) that he uses the term *yü-ching* in a generalized sense, since the 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th phrases of this elegy are:

His vast literary talents unfolded
Worldwide,
Throughout the *yü-ching*,
And in Yen and Chao he excelled all others.

Here the *yü-ching* refers merely to the "the capital", i.e. Tatu.

It is, moreover, scarcely probable that all the playwrights from Yen (Hopeh) and Chao (Shansi) would belong to one and the same *shu-hui*, that Chia would know they did or that he would presume they did. His other references to *shu-hui* in his elegies are likewise generalized terms: "Wu-lin *shu-hui*", Wu-lin being a common alternative name for Hangchow, and "Yuan-chien *shu-hui*", Yuan-chien being the reign-period 1295-7. None of the terms used by Chia Chung-ming is definitely recognizable as a specific name of actual *shu-hui*. Names of other professional societies which do survive from Sung and Yuan times are mostly very individual, "Golden Gate Society" (*Chin-men she*), "Eight Immortals Society" etc. and even a "Nine Mountains *shu-hui*" (cf. Feng Yuan-chün, p. 17). From Feng Yuan-chün's evidence it would seem that there was more than one *shu-hui* in Hangchow and one imagines the same would be so in Tatu. Certainly if the *shu-hui* were organized on a basis of competition between different troupes or theatres, as Feng's evidence implies and as surely they must have been, then one would expect the early Yuan playwrights to have belonged to more than one *shu-hui*.

Regarding Chia Chung-ming's evidence as a whole, one must remember that it was written in the fifteenth century (though Chia Chung-ming's personal memory might extend to his youth in the last years of the Yuan), and includes hardly anything which may be regarded as reliable new evidence on early Yuan playwrights. His main contribution is the extra titles given for the plays, which were most probably obtained from versions of plays current in the early Ming. Although he writes a colophon and a number of elegies to various playwrights, nearly all the information given therein is traceable directly to the information already provided by Chung Ssu-ch'eng. His other statements are mostly of a very generalized nature. Sun K'ai-ti states that there is no Yuan evidence concerning the Yuan *shu-hui* organization (see Sun, p. 394) and indeed there is no early Yuan mention of their existence and the earliest references concern Hangchow. So it is even quite possible that *shu-hui* did not exist in Tatu in the early Yuan. They may have been late Yuan and predominantly Hangchow developments. All in all, however, given the facts that various entertainment societies were current in those times and that there is firm evidence of the scholar-playwrights, co-operating with actor-playwrights to produce *Huang-liang meng*, it is quite probable that there were some such organizations in the early Yuan, probable but surely no more than just probable.

¹⁰⁷ The *t'ao-shu* "Not giving in to old age" mentioned above (see above p. 27 and n. 75), has in its *Yang-hsi yueh-fu* version, for the tenth phrase of its Huang-chung-wei tune, the words "I can do comic acts", which would probably refer to stage performance. However, neither the *Ts'ai-pi ch'ing-tz'u* nor *Pei-tz'u Kuang-cheng p'u* version of this *ch'ü* have this phrase. Chia Chung-ming's elegy to Kuan Han-ch'ing in the *T'ien-i*

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Cheng, Pai and Ma" which "none of their successors can match up to".¹⁰⁸ Chou Te-ch'ing seems to have regarded Kuan Han-ch'ing as at least one of the four creators of a new style of composition. *Ch'ü* were undoubtedly composed before Kuan Han-ch'ing, by such as Tung *chieh-yuan* for instance, and it is probably the new dramatic use of *ch'ü* to which Chou Te-ch'ing is particularly referring and which was probably the main factor in bringing about the widespread popularity of the *ch'ü* genre during the early Yuan. Kuan Han-ch'ing and the others by establishing a new school of drama, in the plays of which *ch'ü* were the principal feature, quite probably brought new life, new music and new rules and standards into *ch'ü* composition and first established it as a distinct and recognized style. Such would seem to be Chou Te-ch'ing's implication and it has a strong air of reliability.

The *Lu-kuei pu*, as already noted, places Kuan Han-ch'ing at the head of its first section of playwrights. At the head of the initial section of composers of non-dramatic *ch'ü* it places Tung *chieh-yuan*, regarded in a sense as the "father of *ch'ü*". As already suggested, Kuan Han-ch'ing's position probably also indicates that he was the earliest in his section, the earliest writer of the mature *tsa-chü*.¹⁰⁹ When the Great Four of Yuan *tsa-chü* are mentioned in Yuan and Ming works, as by Chou Te-ch'ing, Kuan is nearly always the first name given, quite probably because he was regarded as the "father" of Yuan *tsa-chü*. The most forthright statement to the effect is the *T'ai-he cheng-yin p'u*'s that "he was the first writer" or "creator" of *tsa-chü*.¹¹⁰

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ke Lu-kuei pu (ch. 1, p. 3a) refers to him as "Leader of the Pear Orchard, Commander of the Army of Writers", the first of these phrases seemingly referring to acting, "Pear Orchard" (*Li-yuan*) being the place where actors were trained in the time of the T'ang emperor Hsüan-tsung (reigned 713-56). More explicitly, Ts'ang Mao-hsün's second preface, dated 1616, to his famous collection of "Yuan" *tsa-chü*, the *Yuan-ch'ü hsiian* (Peking, 1958 edn., p. 3) says: "Kuan Han-ch'ing and his fellows contended in the presentation of their skills, not objecting to acting on occasions, even treading the boards, their faces powdered and made up, in order that 'our' work might be performed." These opinions are, of course, Ming, and rather late, and while interesting as the opinions and impressions of two scholars deeply involved in *tsa-chü*, are not concrete evidence that Kuan Han-ch'ing actually acted. Yang Wei-chien's "jester-counselor" reference to Kuan Han-ch'ing mentioned above, might faintly imply a combination of "court-actor" and "court-counselor", but could equally well be no more than a poetic turn of phrase. The evident performability of surviving plays attributed to Kuan Han-ch'ing and their effective dramatic structure (esp. *Chiu feng-ch'en*, *Pai-yueh t'ing*, *Tan-tao hui*, *Shuang-fu meng*) are probably the firmest indication of Kuan Han-ch'ing's familiarity with the stage. They suggest a strong contrast with the more "detached" and literary playwrights of late Yuan and Ming times.

¹⁰⁸ *Chung-yuan yin-yun*, p. 175.

¹⁰⁹ See above, pp. 18-20. The *Lu-kuei pu* (ch. 1, p. 103) actually says of Tung *chieh-yuan*, "because he was the originator, I place him at the head".

¹¹⁰ *T'ai-he cheng-yin p'u*, ch. 1, p. 17. One may note that Chia Chung-ming's elegy to Kuan Han-ch'ing in the *T'ien-i-ke Lu-kuei pu* (ch. 1, p. 3a) says:

He was in the front as leader of the Pear Orchard,
He was commander at the head of the Army of Writers
He was leader of the troupe of *tsa-chü* composers.

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One would naturally expect to obtain confirmation or refutation of such propositions from a general study of the origins of *tsa-chü* and a comparison of the Yuan *tsa-chü* with the forms of play which preceded it. No texts of definitely pre-Yuan drama survive, and evidence concerning pre-Yuan plays is exceedingly sparse.¹¹¹ There is no real evidence of any prior form of play comparable in complexity of plot and structure, versatility and maturity, with the Yuan *tsa-chü*. The *yuan-pen* and *tsa-chü* of the Kin and Sung would seem to have been, at the most, farces, burlesques, rough comedies,

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This possibly implies that Kuan Han-ch'ing was the first in time as well as ability in the *tsa-chü* theatre, but the phrasing is not very precise and too general to be of any solid value. Chu Yu-tun's *Yuan Kung-tz'u* also says "The first to compose the music was Kuan (Han-) ch'ing". See above, p. 24. Literally he says "The first to arrange the rules of music", but the phrase is probably not to be taken so literally.

¹¹¹ Hu Chi's *Sung Chin tsa-chü k'ao* (Shanghai, 1957) amounts to some 326 pages on the subject of Sung and Kin *tsa-chü*, under which term he includes the Kin *yuan-pen*. It is a fairly exhaustive collection of source material and modern comments on various aspects of the subject and an elaborate examination of the surviving terminology of the plays, particularly the role type names, the various names and categories of the *yuan-pen* and *tsa-chü*, and the probable subject matter of the plays of which titles survive. He draws very freely on T'ang, Yuan and Ming information as well as Kin and Sung sources for his evidence. For all his efforts, the picture of the plays in Kin and Sung times remains extremely incomplete. The incompleteness lies particularly in the aspect which is the most fundamental for an understanding of the plays: the actual story content and nature of performance. As Hu Chi says (p. 158) "The analysis of the contents and form of Sung *tsa-chü* and Kin and Yuan *yuan-pen* is the most complex problem and the most difficult to resolve." His subsequent discussions are mainly an explanation of the Sung *tsa-chü* titles in a list from the *Wu-lin chiu-shih* (a work written by Chou Mi some time during 1279-90) and the Kin and Yuan *yuan-pen* listed in the late Yuan *Ch'o-keng lu* (ch. 25, p. 306 ff.). In both cases, as is seen from Hu's study, the lists include many items which were clearly not dramas or plays, but were comic duologues, singing and dancing, acrobatics and so on, often without story or plot (cf. Hu's table, pp. 263-4). Many of the other titles, particularly of the *yuan-pen* are similar or identical with Yuan *tsa-chü* and were clearly based on some story, but one has no real cause to believe the story was presented as a complex drama, and it may equally well have been a brief sketch or sometimes perhaps an accompanied narrative performance. Earlier in his work (pp. 60-1), Hu mentions the Southern *hsi-wen* drama *Chang Hsieh chuang-yuan*, one of the three surviving examples of the *hsi-wen* preserved in the remnants of the *Yung-le ta-tien*. This is undoubtedly a complex drama and Hu attributes it to the "late Southern Sung" on the basis of such matters as the use of dialect, the looseness in the organization of *t'ao-shu* and so on. The evidence is, at the least, not strong. Chou I-pai in his *Chung-kuo hsi-chü shih chiang-tso* (Peking, 1958), ch. 3, p. 62, says "at least it is not later than the Yuan", and this would seem the more prudent view. Hu himself does not, it would seem, suggest that this play itself actually precedes the advent of the Yuan *tsa-chü*.

There is a critique of this work of Hu Chi's by Chao Ching-shen entitled "Sung Chin-tsa-chü k'ao' p'ing-chia" found in Chao's *Hsi-ch'ü pi-t'an*, Peking, 1962, pp. 237-42. Less comprehensive but more careful general studies on Sung and Kin drama are found in: T'an Cheng pi's *Hua-pen yü ku-chü*, Shanghai, 1956, part 2, pp. 151-288; Li Hsiao-ts'ang, *Sung Yuan chi-i tsa-k'ao*, Shanghai, 1953, pp. 1-52. An older study by Aoki Masaru (*Shina kinsei gikyoku shi*) *Chung-kuo chin-shih hsi-ch'ü shih*, transl. by Wang Ku-lu, Peking, 1958, ch. 2, is still worth consulting for its systematic approach to the subject. An excellent recent study using some new material is Iwaki Hideo's "Sôdai engeki kikan", article in *Chûgoku bungakuhô*, Vol. 19, October 1963, pp. 102-27.

very rudimentary dramas and so on. Though various individual elements of the Yuan *tsa-chü*, its *ch'ü*, its role-types, its themes, may be traced to earlier times, as a composite whole there is no known prior form of play which even nearly approaches it. The *yuan-pen*, which survived from the Kin into the Yuan and continued to be performed in the same age as the Yuan *tsa-chü*, were clearly very different, a much humbler and more restricted form of performance than the Yuan *tsa-chü*.¹¹² Everything would seem to indicate that the latter, making its advent early in the thirteenth century represented a radical innovation. Undoubtedly its appearance was influenced by social, economic, political and literary considerations and by the developments in popular entertainment.

The development of the cities, the growth of urban populations and urban commercial prosperity during the previous few centuries had created the necessary conditions for large audiences, a large class of people with some surplus wealth and leisure and a desire to be entertained. At the same time other forms of popular urban entertainment had been spreading and

¹¹² Hu Chi in his *Sung Chin tsa-chü k'ao*, p. 70 defines the Yuan *yuan-pen* as "principally farce, stressing amusing actions and laughter-making; may occasionally add one or two 'small-songs'; all were short plays". He notes that it was short enough to be included as a minor episode in some of the *tsa-chü* and southern (complex) drama of the period. T'ao Tsung-i says (*Ch'o-keng lu*, ch. 25, p. 306), "In the Kin there were the *yuan-pen*, the *tsa-chü* and the *chu-kung-tiao*, *yuan-pen* and *tsa-chü* being actually one and the same. Only with this dynasty (i.e. the Yuan) did *yuan-pen* and *tsa-chü* become two separate things."

Hu Chih-yü (1227-95) in his "Preface to Miss Sung", mentioned in n. 90 above, includes the words:

Among all things there is no soul more noble than man, but none suffers sorrows more than man . . . This is the reason why the sages made music to dispel their (people's) cares and also why musicians and actors are so popular. Music is allied to administration, and plays (lit. "skills and plays", the first being a term commonly used with reference to acrobatics and so on) also change according to the fashions of the time. In recent times, apart from the *yuan-pen* of the Music Academy, there has been the new development of *tsa-chü*. They are called "miscellaneous" (*tsa*) because, on the higher plane they deal with the successes and failures of the rule of monarch and ministers at court and on the lower plane they deal with the depth or lack of feeling between father and son, elder brother and younger brother, husband and wife, and friends in the villages and markets (i.e. among the common people), the situations and circumstances of Buddhists, Taoists and merchants in matters of medicine and fortune-telling, and the differences of customs and language in different localities and strange parts . . . in not one of these do they fail to catch the true circumstances and go to the root of the matter.

As an early Yuan view, this is even more reliably indicative of the change which took place than is T'ao Tsung-i's. Hu Chih-yü's description of *tsa-chü* implies that its comprehensiveness and high quality was something new. The earliest surviving description of a *yuan-pen* performance would probably be Tu Jen-chieh's non-dramatic *t'ao-shu* entitled "The farmer unacquainted with the theatre", which depicts a peasant-farmer making his first visit to the theatre. For this *ch'ü* see Sui Shu-sen's *Ch'uan Yuan san-ch'ü* pp. 31-2. In it the farmer describes the *yuan-pen* or part of it, which he sees performed. It would seem to have been a simple performance in the nature of a farce, and from the words of the *ch'ü* it must have served as a prelude to a *tsa-chü* performance in this case.

becoming diversified, and had created the necessary pre-conditions for the advent of mature drama,¹¹³ the widespread taste for popular entertainment and habit of being entertained *en masse*, the establishment of recognized locations and even buildings for such entertainment and the existence of a large class of skilled entertainers who could apply their skills to the new drama.¹¹⁴ There was a long tradition of "plays", comic duologues by actors and a shorter tradition of rudimentary drama to accustom the public to stage performances,¹¹⁵ which was probably paralleled and reinforced by the tradition of religious-festival acted performances. By no means less important was the contribution of the story-tellers and ballad-mongers, who thoroughly acquainted the public with the stories which were often to be the themes of the new drama and the subject of vital allusions in its poetry and song.

Likewise of great importance was the stage of development of the *ch'ü* form of song, which, with its acceptance of irregularity of phrase-length, its free use of *ch'en-tzu*, and its combination of popular and literary origins, had a novelty, a versatility and an adaptability making it ideally suitable for the new drama.¹¹⁶ By the early thirteenth century it had become familiar enough to the ordinary public, through ballads, popular songs and other popular entertainments to be readily acceptable to them when included in dramatic performances, yet at the same time it had not yet come to be regarded as an established and orthodox literary form by the highbrow scholar, and so had not been subjected to scholarly analysis, the strictures

¹¹³ The work *Tung-ching meng-hua lu* written by Meng Yuan-lao in 1147 contains numerous descriptions of the diversity of city life and entertainments in Pienliang during the Northern Sung. Works such as the *Tu-ch'eng chi-sheng* (1235) by Kuan-p'u Nai-te-weng, *Hsi-hu lao-jen fan-sheng lu* (mid thirteenth century) by Hsi-hu-lao-jen, the *Meng-liang lu* (late Sung) by Wu Tzu-mu, and the *Wu-lin chiu-shih* (some time during 1279-90) by Chou Mi, all describe similar aspects of Hangchow during the Southern Sung. A lively modern account of late Hangchow is given by Jacques Gernet in his *la vie quotidienne en Chine à la veille de l'invasion Mongole* (1250-1276), Paris, Hachette, 1959, which draws considerably on Marco Polo (see especially p. 242). Modern works such as Li Hsiao-t's *ang's Sung Yuan chi-i ts'a-k'ao*, mentioned above in n. 26, Ye Te-chün's *Sung Yuan Ming ch'ang wen-hsieh* (Shanghai, 1957) and so on give some picture of the diversity of entertainments during the pre-Yuan period. Of particular interest for its contentious theories concerning puppetry of Sung times and its links with drama is Sun K'ai-t's *K'ui-lei hsi k'ao-yuan*, Shanghai, 1952, especially chs. 2-3.

¹¹⁴ With regard to the places of performance, Aoki Masaru's study (*Chung-kuo chin-shih hsi-ch'ü shih*, ch. 15, pp. 511-59) is a comprehensive investigation. Narrower in scope, but useful, is Feng Yuan-chün, *Ku-chü shuo-hui*, pp. 1-5, 47-8, 55-6.

¹¹⁵ Quite a number of such comic duologues, simple satirical sketches performed by actors, brief burlesques, and so on, survive from the T'ang and a few from earlier times. Writers anxious to place the advent of Chinese drama as early as possible sometimes refer to such performances as *hsi-chü* ("drama"), though in the later general use of the term, this would scarcely seem justified. See, for instance, Jen Pan-t'ang's *T'ang hsi-nung*, Peking, 1958 (2 vols., 1069 pp.) which, however, is a useful collection of material on such T'ang performances.

¹¹⁶ I have gone further into this matter in subsequent chapters of my original thesis, Cambridge 1967, from which this article is taken.

of literary theorization,¹¹⁷ the often stagnating influences of literary fashion or the limitations of "respectable", orthodox taste. It was, at this particular time, a versatile, fresh style, popular, yet a medium as suited to the expression of refined and beautiful sentiments as to the conveyance of rough and bawdy humour.

Yet another feature of the time, which coincided with all these other favourable circumstances, was the disruption caused by the Mongol conquests and the subsequent attitude of the Mongol rulers towards the conquered. The very upheaval and the destruction of the old society, must inevitably have brought about a disturbance of old accepted ideas and attitudes and produced a general atmosphere agreeable to the introduction of new concepts and new pleasures. At the same time the examination system fell into abeyance and the Mongols employed mainly Mongols and other non-Chinese Asiatics in the important posts of their administration, so that for the Chinese who had undergone a traditional formal education there was little outlet for his ability and little general hope of success in a civil-service career. Antagonism towards the Mongols and loyalties to the old dynasty may well also have inhibited some scholars from taking up an official career. A considerable number of educated men were thus left without an outlet for their abilities and ambitions, as well as quite possibly without the means to maintain themselves. Undoubtedly the early Yuan saw an unprecedented involvement of the well-educated in the field of popular entertainment. The coincidence of all these factors would account for the sudden appearance of a mature form of drama at that particular time, even without a gradual period of transitional developments preceding it.

Surviving Yuan northern plays show a remarkable unity in their quite complex structure. Nearly all have four acts, with an occasional extra, minor act. Each act uses one distinctive key for all its songs and one person only sings all the songs in one act or more often all the songs in the play. The songs within the act are arranged in fairly regular sequences and certain keys tend to be regularly used for certain acts, the first act in particular always using the same key in every play. These and other features reveal a general unity of structure and style among early Yuan *tsa-chü*, which strongly suggests a single source for this form of drama. Even the undoubted fact of the geographical limitation of its origins to the northern part of China, would not seem a satisfactory explanation of this unity. One might well expect, especially since it was an entertainment "in the dark" so to speak – not within the unifying light of literary orthodoxy and official approval – that had it resulted from a spontaneous, gradual evolution of stage performances, it would have manifested itself in a variety of concurrent, mature forms, even within the area of northern China. The sharp

¹¹⁷ Chou Te-ch'ing's *Chung-yuan yin-yun* was the first work analysing the theory of *ch'ü*.

contrast between the Yuan *tsa-chü* and what is known of previous plays and this tight unity of form make it not improbable that the style was the "sudden" creation of a single educated individual or possibly several of such individuals working in close collaboration. There would seem to be no strong reason for disagreeing with the implications and the statement that Kuan Han-ch'ing, even single-handed, was the originator of the Yuan *tsa-chü*, China's first mature form of drama.

Character and attitudes

The discussion of any writer's character in the absence of a detailed autobiography or a biography written during his own times is a hazardous task. In the case of Kuan Han-ch'ing the scantiness of reliable early material on the subject is such as to render an attempt to do so almost vain at the outset. The predicament is indicated to some extent by Chu Ching in his preface to the *Ch'ing-lou chi*, where, after mentioning Tu Jen-chieh, Pai P'u and Kuan Han-ch'ing he says "... The common and vulgar regarded them lightly and the leaders of society sneered at them. The hearts of these three gentlemen are indeed difficult to know."¹¹⁸ One or two very general traits may, however, be suggested.

The *Hsi-chün chih* says of him: "Born a free and untrammelled spirit, he was learned and a talented writer, witty and ingenious, full of deep emotion and a gay romantic, being the outstanding person of his time." This is a late-Yuan view and can scarcely be regarded as very solid, being quite probably derived from a consideration of Kuan Han-ch'ing's works and conventional opinions of him, but it seems to agree with the little other information available concerning the playwright. Freedom of spirit, wit, ingenuity and a romantic disposition would seem to have been among the principal features of his character. The *Ch'o-keng lu* story of the rivalry with Wang He-ching depicts him, however unfavourably, as a man of wit, describes Wang as being "famed throughout the land for his humour and waggishness" and refers to Kuan as "also a talented and colourful (lit. 'gay romantic') figure".¹¹⁹ The comments quoted as Kuan Han-ch'ing's on playwrights and actors in the *T'ai-he cheng-yin p'u* are referred to by Chu Ch'uan as having been said "as a joke", and this, too perhaps indicates a humorous disposition on Kuan's part.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ *Ch'ing-lou chi*, p. 15.

¹¹⁹ See above, pp. 28-30.

¹²⁰ See above, p. 38. With regard to Kuan Han-ch'ing's romantic disposition, his sense of humour too perhaps, and his personal life, there is a lively story, which is still often quoted in works on him (e.g. T'an Cheng-pi, *Yuan-tai hsi-chü-chia Kuan Han-ch'ing*, p. 66). The Ming scholar Chiang I-k'uei in his *Yao-shan t'ang wai-chi* (*Yao-shan t'ang ch'ü-chü*, p. 3a) says:

Once Kuan Han-ch'ing, seeing one of the marriage-maids, composed a *hsiao-ling* (to the tune) *Ch'ao-t'ien-tzu* which went:

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One might expect to cull more information from Kuan Han-ch'ing's own work, though in the absence of external information concerning an author, it is often very debatable how much of his works may be viewed as the voice of his soul and how much is produced to meet the requirements and fashions of his time, which two aspects may, to be sure, coincide. Whether what the poet writes on one day or during one month or year of his life is necessarily indicative of his general character over even a short period is also a point to be considered. In the case of Kuan Han-ch'ing one may present the possibilities, but surely make no definite assertions. The most subjective and personal of his works are his non-dramatic *ch'ü*, though many of the words of these are written with the imprecision and

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Raven locks,
Cheeks like sun-coloured clouds,
She humbly came with the dowry.
Her manners are those of a noble household,
And she is not inferior to Hung-niang
She greets one with a charming smile,
And reports to one with refined speech.
She is truly a "talking flower".
If I should take her,
I would upset the grape-trellis.

The "marriage maid" was one who accompanied a bride from her home into the husband's home, and remained to serve her mistress there. Hung Niang is the famous and ingenious maid-servant of the *Hsi-hsiang chi*. "Talking flower" is a term said to derive from the T'ang emperor Hsüan-tsung, who, when walking with his *entourage* by a pond of beautiful white lotus flowers, pointed to his beloved Yang *kuei-fei* and said: "How can they compare with my talking-flower" (lit. flower who understands speech). The origin of the expression "upset the grape-trellis" is not known, but it probably means something like "to set the cat among the pigeons", to cause a great deal of trouble, or possibly means more specifically "to cause terrible jealousy". The phrase is found in the Ch'ing play *Ch'ang-sheng tien* by Hung Shen (1659-1704), Act 19 (ed. Hsü Shuo-fang, Peking, 1958) where the Lady Yang *kuei-fei* calls at the emperor Hsüan-tsung's apartments. The emperor is at the time enjoying the company of the Lady Mei and hurriedly has her hide. The eunuch Kao who is present says laughing, "... I laugh, for if he thus conceals a beauty (*chiao*) in golden chambers, one fears the grape-trellis may in a trice be pushed over." Here the term must refer to the imminent danger of Yang *kuei-fei*'s jealous wrath or of the terrible trouble she would cause if she discovered her rival's presence with the emperor. The words "a beauty in golden chambers" have a curious echo in the poem given below.

The twentieth-century scholar Wu Mei in his *Ku-ch'ü chu-t'an* (Taipei, 1962 reprint, ch. 4, pp. 142-3) quotes the above *ch'ü* from Chiang I-k'uei's work with additional information:

There is a most amusing anecdote about Kuan Han-ch'ing. Once, seeing a "marriage-maid" and she being extremely beautiful, he tried all means and ways to have her for his mistress, but was prevented from doing so by his wife. There being nothing he could do about it, Kuan composed a *hsiao-ling* for his wife: ... (above *ch'ü*). When his wife saw it, she replied with a poem, which went:
I hear that you have been peeping at (the picture of) a beautiful lady, Sir,
—You are not such a fine man as Lord Kuan.
If you keep an A-*chiao* in golden chambers,
I shall sing right through a Ts'u-hu-lu.

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impersonality common to much of Chinese poetry, which allows for breadth of association, but are not helpful in an investigation of concrete facts.

Eighteen non-dramatic *ch'ü* compositions found in Yuan collections are attributed therein to Kuan Han-ch'ing. Since not all have theme titles, it is most convenient to refer to them here by the romanization of their first phrase. I list these eighteen compositions below in alphabetical order, and indicate by the letter *t* or *h* whether they are *t'ao-chu* or *hsiao-ling*. Also indicated are the number of stanzas in each and, finally in brackets, the page(s) on which they are found in the recent collection *Kuan Han-ch'ing hsi-ch'ü chi*.¹²¹

Chih-ch'ih-ti (t'ien-nan ti-pei): h, 5, (991-2)

Ch'ing-tsai hsia (wan-hsü): t, 3, (948-9)

Ch'u-t'ai yun-yü (hui Wu-hsia): t, 9, (953-6)

Ch'un-kuei yuan-yü: t, 7, (933-4)

Fen-ch'iang ti: h, 6 (995-6)

Huan-pu no-tsung: t, 5 (975-7)

Huang Shao feng-ch'ien: h, 10, (997-9)

Hsiao-lai yü-kuo (shan heng-hsiu): t, 5, (940-1)

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Lord Kuan, Kuan Yü, was traditionally supposed to have maintained a very proper reserve towards women. There is a famous anecdote concerning the Han Emperor Wu-ti's resolving when a small child to keep the girl A-chiao (who indeed later became his wife) in "golden chambers". The term "to keep A-chiao in golden chambers" came to refer to the keeping of one's lady love in fine apartments and, by natural extension, to illicit love affairs. Ts'u-hu-fu was a *ch'ü* tune-title, of which the *ts'u* "vinegar" is a term used in expressions denoting "jealousy". The phrase warns of the jealousy that such an illicit love affair would reap.

Wu Mei further associates these matters with another *ch'ü*, the fourth stanza of Kuan Han-ch'ing's *Huang Shao feng-ch'ien* which likewise concerns a forlorn, secret love affair:

On the feast-mat and before the wine-jug,

But not under the bed-quilt and on the pillow are we destined to come together

Beneath the willows and amid the flowers,

We have had poems and songs (i.e. love) for many years.

I do not dare to tell others,

But in my heart secretly pray to Heaven.

My love is firm and sure,

But each day we meet in vain.

Heaven!

When will we be united in marriage.

T'an Cheng-pi in the work (pp. 6-7) mentioned earlier suggests this *ch'ü* in the light of the other pieces as revealing the reason for Kuan Han-ch'ing's leaving home and going to dwell among singing-girls, leading a romantic life and thereby obtaining the rich and varied experience which enabled him to write such full and varied dramas!

Delightful though this story may be, it is unfortunately very doubtful. The *ch'ü* attributed by Chiang I-k'uei to Kuan Han-ch'ing is more reliably attributed by the *T'ai-p'ing yueh-fu*, some hundreds of years earlier than Chiang I-k'uei, to Chou Te-ch'ing. Wu Mei states no source for his additional information, nor have scholars since been able to discover any earlier source than Wu Mei.

¹²¹ *Kuan Han-ch'ing hsi-ch'ü chi*, pp. 929-1002, which includes collation notes on other surviving versions of the *ch'ü*.

P'u t'ien-hsia (chin-hsiu hsiang): t, 3, (946-7)

Shih-ch'ing t'ui wu-li: t, 8, (973-4)

Shih-i hsiang: h, 4, (990-1)

Ssu-shih ch'un fu-kuei: h, 4, (981)

Ts'an-yueh hsia hsi-lou: t, 6, (935-6)

Ts'u-chü ch'ang-chung: t, 7, (978-80)

Tzu-kuei t'i: h, 4, (993-4)

Tzu sung-pieh: h, 1, (990)

Yun-huan wu-pin (sheng tui-ya): h, 4, (982-3)

Yü-ts'ung ssu-k'ung (chin an-chien): t, 21, (957-73)

The part of the phrase bracketed off is omitted below to avoid making the references too cumbersome. Besides these there are a number of *ch'ü* attributed to Kuan Han-ch'ing in Ming works and collections.¹²² Among these

¹²² Excluding the four compositions by I-chai (see above, pp. 7-10) on pages 1000-2 of the *Kuan Han-ch'ing hsi-ch'ü chi* and the *ch'ü* with the first phrase *P'in-ya* (see above, n. 120) on page 989 of the same collection, there are the following *ch'ü* given therein which are attributed to Kuan Han-ch'ing in Ming collections or works:

Hua-yueh chiu-chia lou: t, 5, (937-8)

Hsi-lo k'e shuo yin-yuan: h, 16, (983-9)

Jen-nao ch'u: t, 3, (939)

P'an ch'u-ch'iang to-to hua: t, 5, (949-53)

Pieh-li i: h, 1, (999)

Shih-chih ju k'u-sun: h, 1, (981-2)

Tien-k'uang liu-hsü (p'u-lien fei): t, 7, (941-5)

Jen-nao ch'u is attributed to Kuan Han-ch'ing in Li Yü (1590?-1660?)'s *Pei-tz'u kuang-cheng p'u*. (For a discussion of Li Yü's dates see Chao Ching-shen, *Hsi-ch'ü pi-t'an*, Peking, 1962, pp. 15-77, article entitled "Li Yü-te sheng-p'ing yü ch'uang-tso" 李玉的生平與創作.) *Pieh-li i* and *Shih-chih ju k'u-sun* are certainly early Yuan, as they are both found in the *Chung-yuan yin-yun*, and it is not improbable that they were by Kuan Han-ch'ing, though Chou Te-ch'ing states no author for them. Besides these, Sui Shu-sen's *Ch'uan Yuan san-ch'ü* (pp. 189-90) gives a *t'ao-shu* (*Yin-t'a pieh-hou*) which has a Ming attribution to Kuan Han-ch'ing, but since it is a Southern *ch'u* is most probably not his. The same collection (p. 191) gives an extra fragment of two phrases attributed to Kuan Han-ch'ing in the *Pei-tz'u kuang-cheng p'u*. Of the seven *ch'ü* listed above, two, *Pieh-li i* and *Tien-k'uang liu-hsü* are predominantly "boudoir repinings" and a further four are also largely concerned with love between man and woman: *Jen-nao ch'u* concerns a man's disappointed love hopes; *Hua-yueh chiu-chia lou* begins in praise of romantic love-life and a vaunting of the writer's (or the first-person of the *ch'ü*'s) prowess in the field of love, but turns into a sad account of the end of love and romances; *P'an ch'u-ch'iang to-to hua* is the "Not giving in to old age" mentioned above and below and is largely a vaunting of the writer's prowess in love and an advocacy of the gay romantic life in general; and *Hsi-lo k'e shuo yin-yuan* is the story of *Hsi-hsiang chi*, the love affair which after many vicissitudes ends in the happy reunion of the man and woman. Thus of the seven, only *Shih-chih ju k'u-sun* is not concerned with love and romance, being a skit on some lady's broken, blunted finger-nails. Here again, however, some of the lady-like acts which the "decrepit" finger-nails are unable to perform are connectable with romance. Generally then, romance is the predominant theme of these *ch'ü*, too.

A further four *t'ao-shu* are given in the Ming manuscript *Yang-ch'un pai-hsüeh* as Kuan Han-ch'ing's, but not in the Yuan printed editions of the collection (see Sui Shu-sen's *Ch'uan Yuan san-ch'ü*, pp. 1846-50). These must reluctantly be confined to

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Ming attributions, the most interesting here is *P'an ch'u-ch'iang to-to hua* already mentioned a few times above under its theme title "Not giving in to old age". The earliest attribution of this to Kuan Han-ch'ing, being late Ming, is open to doubt, and I discuss the *ch'ü* in a note.¹²³

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the notes, though since the printed editions give no author for them and also place them immediately after Kuan Han-ch'ing's *Ch'u-t'ai yun-yü*, the probability that they are his is fairly strong. They in fact give *Ch'u-t'ai yun-yü* under the name Han-ch'ing, but from the list of song-composers at the beginning of the collection it is clearly Kuan Han-ch'ing who is intended. The four *t'ao-shu* are:

Hsien cheng-to ting-fei (liao Li-ch'un yuan): 5

Chiao hsien-feng ch'ui-san (Ch'u-t'ai yun): 6

Chai-erh chung feng-yueh (sha ching-an): 5

Feng-huang t'ai-shang (i ch'ui-hsiao): 6

The first expresses a man's disappointment in a love affair, the second a lady's "boudoir repinings" at her desertion by her lover, the third and fourth likewise concern unfruitful love affairs.

I should note here that some *hsiao-ling* stanzas, though printed together, may in fact have been composed quite separately, and I merely refer to them by a joint heading for the sake of convenience and since one has no real means of knowing whether or how they would in fact have been separated. On the authorship of *ch'ü* in general, see Chao Ching-shen's article "Kuan-yü Yuan-jen san-ch'ü tso-che chu-ming-te i-hsieh wen-t'i" in *Wen-hsieh i-ch'an* supplement, 9th series, Peking 1962, pp. 62-87.

¹²³ The *Yung-hsi yueh-fu* version translates as follows, my explanations of various points being given for convenience in between stanzas:

I pick the flowers that grow beyond walls,

I pluck the twigs of willow by the side of the roads.

The red buds of the flowers I pick are soft,

And the emerald twigs of willow I pluck are tender.

I am a rake and a gallant.

With my willow-plucking flower-picking hand,

I shall go on until the flowers are faded and the willows withered away.

For half a lifetime I have plucked the willows and picked the flowers,

For a whole generation I have slept with the flowers and lain with the willows.

"Flower" and "willow" are metaphors for "singing-girl". This *ch'ü* is a vaunting of the writer's romantic prowess and mastery in love and of his other skills and delights, all of which he refuses to abandon in the face of old age. There is a roguish panache and sparkling freedom in the tone of the piece as a whole.

I am a leader of all the beaux in the world,

The chief of all the rakes on Earth.

May my ruddy countenance never change but always stay so!

I dispel my cares amid the flowers,

I forget my sorrows in wine.

I "divide tea and weigh bamboo",

I play *ta-ma*-chess and hiding-the-clasp,

I am thoroughly conversant with the Five Keys and Six Pitches:

What idle sorrows shall come to my heart!

She with whom I consort is a lady player of the silver zither who in front of a silver

table plays a silver zither as she smiling leans against a silver screen,

She with whom I consort is a fairy of the Jade Heaven and, holding her jade hand,

I walk shoulder to her jade shoulder as we together ascend the jade tower,

She with whom I consort is a Golden Hairpin who sings a "Golden Thread" and,

holding a golden wine-jug, fills a golden goblet to overflowing.

You say I am old,

—Continued on following page

Taking an overall glance at the *ch'ü* found in Yuan collections one is immediately struck by the recurrence of certain themes. No less than eleven of the compositions are primarily concerned with love between man and woman. Of these, no less than seven are mainly in the nature of "boudoir repinings", the sadness and bitter regrets of the lonely lady yearning for her lover: *Chih-ch'ih-ti*, *Ch'un-kuei yuan-yü*, *Huang Shao feng-ch'ien*, *Hsiao-lai yü-huo*, *Tzu-kuei t'i*, *Tzu sung-pieh* and *Yun-huan wu-pin*. To these one

—Continued from previous page

—Hold hard!

I am first in romantic fame and success,

I am smart,

And I am fine.

I am commander-in-chief of the Brocade Ranks and the Encampment of Flowers,

And I have known gay times in cities throughout the land.

"Ruddy countenance" means "youthful looks". "Dividing tea and weighing bamboo" was some form of amusement pastime, possibly a dance. *Ta-ma* was a board game current in the Sung and Yuan. "Hiding-the-clasp", *ts'ang-chiu*, was a game, which must have been the subject of a non-extant play, *Ts'ang-chiu hui*, attributed to Kuan Han-ch'ing. "The Five Keys and Six Pitches" refers here to "music" or "the principles of music". The three similar phrases use silver, jade and gold respectively to convey the beauty and finesse of the kind of ladies with whom the writer says he associates in idyllic circumstances of romance. "Jade" as applied to hands and shoulders and so on can mean "beautifully white and smooth" or be used as a general term implying "beautiful". "Golden Hairpin" is a term for "(beautiful) woman", sometimes with the implication of "singing-girl". "Golden Thread" (*chin-lü*) was the name of a *ch'ü* and also a *tz'u* tune (*Chin-lü-ch'ü*, *Chin-lü-ke*, *Chin-lü-tz'u*, *Chin-lü-i*), with romantic associations. "Brocade Ranks" and "Encampment of Flowers" are both metaphors for "(beautiful) women" or "singing-girls".

Young blades, you are baby rabbits, newly born in a sandy nest on a grassy

hillock, running suddenly and too soon about the hunting preserve;

I am a grey-green feathered old wild pheasant that has gone through the traps and snares,

Experienced as a pounding war-horse,

That has gone through hidden bows, treacherous arrows and "tin spearheads",

But has never fallen behind others.

Do they not say, "When one reaches middle-age everything ceases"

—Shall I then waste my best days!

Here the writer, as an old-hand in the pursuits of love, compares his own great experiences with the innocence of the young fellows who frequent the singing-girls. "Hidden bows" and "treacherous ('surprise', lit. 'cold') arrows" have a figurative sense, of course, and "tin (sometimes found as 'wax') spearhead" would seem to imply "ineffectual attack", the writer having presumably suffered these in the course of his romantic past.

I am a resounding, clanging Copper Pea that cannot be steamed to a mash, cannot be boiled up, cannot be hammered flat and cannot be popped by roasting,

You young blades, who told you to creep into their thousand-layered, slowly enveloping brocade snares, which cannot be cut apart, cannot be hacked down, cannot be untied and cannot be thrown off.

My sport is the moon of Liang Garden,

My drink is the wine of the Eastern Capital,

My enjoyment is the flowers of Loyang,

And that which I pluck is the willow of Chang'ai.

—Continued on following page

may add the first stanza of *Fen-ch'iang ti*, which deals with a similar theme. *Ts'an yueh hsia hsi-lou* also treats of sad love, that of a man who cannot forget his lady-love from whom he is parted. The third and fourth stanzas of *Fen-ch'iang ti* are concerned with a man's love in vain. The second stanza concerns disappointed love, though in this case the person disappointed is the villain of a popular story. *Yu-ts'ung ssu-k'ung* depicts the vicissitudes of a

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I can play "surrounding-chess",
I can play "football",
I can hunt,
I can do comic parts,
I can sing and dance,
I can play wood and string instruments,
I can *yen-tso* (?)
I can intone poetry,
And I can play Double Sixes.
Even if you knocked out my teeth,
Twisted my lips,
Lamed my legs,
And broke my arms,
—If Heaven bestowed such evil afflictions upon me,
I would still not be willing to give up.

"Copper Pea" is a metaphor for "tough old-hand", in this case an old-hand in the pursuits of love. The writer contrasts his own resilience and dauntlessness in romance to the innocence and helplessness of young men who become involved with the singing-girls. "Brocade snares" refers to the wiles used by singing-girls to "ensnare" men. The Liang Garden was a famous park established during the Han by Prince Hsiao of Liang, which later acquired romantic associations. "Eastern Capital" could refer to K'aifeng, but more probably to Loyang, the Eastern Capital of the Han and a city often mentioned in connexion with romance. The "willow (*liu*) of Changt'ai" is another common romantic reference. "Willow" was in fact the name of a singing-girl in a well-known love-affair of the Han period and Changt'ai was the name of a street in the Han capital Ch'angan. Chang-t'ai-lui was a *ts'u* and *ch'ü* tune title. This and the preceding three phrases thus refer to the writer's romantic pastimes. "Surrounding-chess" or *wei-ch'i* is a still-common board-game. "Football" or *ts'u-chü* was a game and entertainment with origins at least as far back as the Han and popular in the Kin and Yuan. "*Yen-tso*" is unexplained, but, since it comes between the playing of music and the intoning of poetry, one may perhaps conjecture that it was some form of musical, vocal or poetical accomplishment. "Double-Sixes" (*Shuang-liu*) was a popular board-game.

Not unless Yama Rāja himself calls for me,
And the spirits and demons come to arrest me,
And my Three Spiritual Souls go to the Underworld
And my Seven Animal Souls die and go to the Shades,
O Heaven,

—Only then shall I cease to walk the Roads of Mist and Flowers.

The last few phrases of the previous stanza, and the whole of this stanza express the writer's determination to continue his romantic life, come what may and to the end of his days. Yama Rāja (Yen-wang or Yen-lo wang) is the King of the Demons and Ruler of the Underworld of afterlife in Buddhist and folk religion and as such he is said to send out his demon lictors to take people into the Underworld at the end of their lives. The Taoist religion and folk religion in general regarded man as having Three Spiritual Souls (*hun*) and Seven Animal Souls (*p'o*), which separated on death. "The Roads of Mists and Flowers" is a metaphor for "singing-girls' quarters" or "the world of romance".

love affair, but ends with the couple's being blissfully reunited. *Ch'u-t'ai yun-yü* depicts a love tryst culminating in the rapturous physical union of the couple. *Ssu-shih ch'un fu-kuei*, too, describes a love tryst in ideal conditions, with no note of sadness. *Ch'ing-ts'ai hsia wan-hsü* is the composition to the courtesan Chu Lien-hsiu and abounds in allusive references to love and romance. Love is also mentioned in various of the compositions in which it is not the main theme, such as the final stanza of *Shih-ch'ing t'ui wu-li* and the fourth stanza of *Huan-pu no-tsung*, both of which stanzas advocate the romantic life.

Two compositions, *Huan-pu no-tsung* and *Ts'u-chü ch'ang-chung*, are primarily concerned with the game and entertainment of *ts'u-chü*, "football",¹²⁴ but this was a game often regarded in Yuan times as part of the gay romantic life. They are both descriptions of women playing the game and praise the skill and beauty of their movements. *P'u-t'ien-hsia*, the "View of Hangchow" *ch'ü*, is the only composition wholly consisting of descriptions of scenery, the man-made and natural beauties of Hangchow.¹²⁵ The fifth stanza of *Fen-ch'iang ti* is descriptive of a winter scene.

The other major theme, besides love and romance, which is found in these *ch'ü* is one which is sometimes loosely termed "Taoism". This is the predominant theme of *Shih-ch'ing t'ui wu-li* and *Shih-i hsing*. Aspects of it are also advocated in the sixth stanza of *Fen-ch'iang ti*, the ninth stanza of *Huang Shao feng-ch'ien*, and the third and fourth stanzas of *Huan-pu no-tsung*. Basically the philosophy expressed is that of withdrawal from complex, mundane human society and its artificial worldly values.¹²⁶ Such a

¹²⁴ The most extensive, early exposition of *tsu-chü* is the *Ts'u-chü t'u-p'u* (given in the index as *Ta-ch'iu i* by Wang Yun-ch'eng (fl. c. 1621), found in the Ch'ing supplemented version of the *Shuo-fu*, Vol. 21, ch. 2.

¹²⁵ One should note that Ts'ai Mei-piao in his article "Kuan-yü Kuan Han-ch'ing-te sheng-p'ing", *Kuan Han-ch'ing yen-chiu lun-wen chi*, pp. 29-30, puts forward arguments for regarding this *ch'ü* as the one presented to Chu Lien-hsiu, principally because of the mention it contains of "beautiful . . . curtains" (*hsü . . . lien*). He was not, however, aware of the *ch'ü* *Ch'ing-ts'ai hsia wan-hsü*, which is clearly the *ch'ü* to Chu Lien-hsiu. The matter is corrected by Sui Shu-sen's "Kuan Han-ch'ing tseng Chu Lien-hsiu san-t'ao" in *Kuan Han-ch'ing yen-chiu lun-wen-chi*, pp. 37-8.

¹²⁶ *Shih-i hsing* presents the attitude in some detail:

I walk as I please,
I sit with contented heart.
When thirsty I drink,
When hungry I eat,
And when merry with wine I sing.
When I become weary, I there and then lie down on the mat of grass . . .
I am carefree and happy.
I rebrew the old wine,
And brew again new, unstrained wine,
And by an old earthenware bowl laugh and guffaw,
And leisurely match verses with recluse priests and rustic gaffers . . .

I have pulled back the horses of my mind,
Chained-up the monkeys of my heart.

philosophy was very current among scholars of the Yuan period in general, who, withdrawing from the society dominated by the alien and barbaric Mongols and from a society which, moreover, offered them less than usual opportunities for worldly fame and success, often sought refuge in a hermit life of simplicity and communion with Nature or wrote or painted with this as their confessed ideal. However, although Kuan Han-ch'ing's *ch'ü* advocate a "return to Nature", the agricultural life and humble simplicity and contentment, his type of withdrawal was more complex than that. *Shih-ch'ing t'ui wu-li* and the fourth stanza of *Huan-pu no-tsung* at the same time advocate the romantic life and love with women.

At first sight such romantic and undeniably "active" pursuits, giving rein to the emotions of love, would seem incongruous in the middle of lines recommending "Taoist" withdrawal and passivity, which in the sense of the Taoism of Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu included a withdrawal from indulgence in the emotions and sensual pleasures, a restraint. In fact Kuan Han-ch'ing seems also to be recommending a type of hedonism, a principle of "enjoy yourself while you can as much as you can" similar to the philosophy ascribed to the Chou philosopher Yang Chu. The contrast is partly seen in the two final phrases of *Shih-ch'ing t'ui wu-li*:

T'ao Ch'ien of the Tsin amid pines and chrysanthemums,
Fan Li of Yueh on the rivers and lakes.

T'ao Yuan-ming (Ch'ien) was a famous recluse, Fan Li was the minister of the Chou state of Yueh, who in a popular legend of the Yuan period eloped with the famous beauty Hsi-shih.¹²⁷ The combination of reclusion and love of women is clearly made in these phrases.

The apparent inconsistencies between this "positive" hedonism and the "Taoist" simplicity and passivity is much less than it might at first seem. The point of similarity lies in the fact that both constitute a withdrawal from mundane society and its conventional values. The standard

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I have jumped out of the wind and waves (i.e. evil vicissitudes) of the mundane world.

Whoever disturbs me from my midday dream in the locust-tree shade?

I have left the arena of wealth and fame,
To burrow into a nest of contentment and joy . . .

I plough in the "southern fields",

I lie (in reclusion) on the "eastern mountain"

I have seen a great deal of the ways of the world and the doings of men,
And I idly pore over the things of the past.

Others are wise,

I am foolish,

But what does it matter.

¹²⁷ A non-extant *tsa-chü* attributed to Chao Ming-tao, with the title *T'ao Ch'ung-kung Fan Li kuei-hu*, probably dealt with this story. T'an Cheng-pi, *Yuan-ch'ü liu ta-chia lüeh-chuan*, pp. 69-73, gives a summary of various writings on the stories concerning Fan Li. See also Feng Yuan-chün, *Ku-chü shuo-hui*, pp. 323-8.

existence or aim of a scholar in old Chinese society was the official career within mundane society. The hermit life amid Nature and the unfettered pursuit of romance, with its concept of living for the pleasure of the moment, both represented a form of withdrawal from such an existence and such ambitions. The Yuan scholar-playwright may be viewed as having retired from worldly career and orthodox scholar-life, by burying himself in love, pleasure-seeking, and writing for popular entertainment among the lower strata of society and by firmly associating himself with the "disreputable" entertainment world. There is thus some considerable common ground between Kuan Han-ch'ing's "Taoism" and hedonism. Both recommend living for the happiness of the moment, not for worldly social duty, not for future glory, rank, wealth or political power. One may choose to term such attitudes "escapism", the Yuan scholar's consolation for his being virtually deprived of hope for high office under Mongol rule, but a distinctly positive result of them was some of the liveliest and most unconventional pieces of Chinese literature.

These attitudes were not the sole property of Kuan Han-ch'ing, nor even of his times, though they seem to have been particularly current during the Yuan. They do seem to be especially stressed in his *ch'ü*, however. Regarding the general impressions conveyed by his *ch'ü*, there are not infrequently passages of a stereotyped and wooden nature, particularly in the "boudoir repinings",¹²⁸ but a good example of his naturalness of feeling and sensitive touch is his *Ch'u-t'ai yun-yü*. It opens with a young man's going to meet his lady one evening:

¹²⁸ For instance, the third stanza of *Ch'un-kuei yuan-yü*:

There has been no message (lit. "fish and wild geese") from him,
And she is too listless to write her "brocade" letters.
The golden bracelet dangles on her wrist,
Her jade flesh has wasted,
And her silken dress hangs loosely.
Tears have spoiled the rouge on her cheeks,
She is too sad to approach her precious mirror,
Too abashed to put on her emerald-and-gold hair-clasp.

This picture of the lady's pining uses images which occur again and again in Yuan *ch'ü*, and elsewhere in Kuan Han-ch'ing's own *ch'ü*, the third stanza of his *Hsiao-lai yü-kuo* for example:

Why is she troubled?

Why is she sad?

—Because her love has left her long ago.

Dust forms on her jade mirror-stand and precious mirror,

By her green window lonely and forlorn, her needlework lies idle.

Can he know that the bracelet dangles loose on her jade wrist,

That the two petals of her eyebrow are wrinkled with cares.

Given the complexity of *ch'ü* composition and the prevalent lack of inhibition among *ch'ü* composers about the use of commonplace images, this cannot be regarded as poor poetry. Ingenuity was required in the placing of the images in accordance with the prosodic pattern of the tune. Yet such verses lack the appealing freshness and originality of some of Kuan Han-ch'ing's other *ch'ü*.

... I go to the love-tryst we arranged last night.
The swallows are roosting on the house-tops,
And the crows are already heard in the courtyards.
She must have ceased her needlework and have finished her evening toilette.

I slowly tread the flowery path,
And stand alone beneath her gauze window.
I cannot still the anxiety of my trembling heart,
I do not dare to call out her name,
I must just await her coming.

For fear lest others see me
I peer out from behind a brier-rose trellis.
A long time I wait, but she does not appear,
And I can only stand alone beneath the blossom-shade.

A long time I wait, I do not see her,
We surely arranged this as our tryst of love!
- Can it be that she has forgotten it in her love of sleep?
I "lie entombed beneath Lan Bridge",
With troubled thoughts and on the point of cursing her.
Then I hear the door creak open,
And suddenly see my flower-like lady.

Her hair is drawn into buns of black clouds...
Her cheeks adorned with red dawn-clouds.
Her willowy waist is a delight of perfection...

I go towards her,
I call her...
I embrace my beautiful "predestined enemy" to my bosom,
I kiss her fragrant cheek and we whisper softly and intimately.

Both deep in love,
Our passion rises,
And the ground serves for a while as a bed,
While the moon burns its silver candle on high.
The night is deep
And all are still...

The Lan Bridge allusion refers to a faithful lover in ancient times, who is said to have arranged to meet his lady beneath a bridge. When she did not appear, he clung to the support of the bridge and allowed himself to

drown.¹²⁹ "Predestined enemy" is a term which equates love with hate and means the opposite of what it says: "predestined lover". The above phrases are followed by a poetic but detailed description of the lovers' lovemaking. In this latter respect Kuan Han-ch'ing is unusually explicit and far-reaching, as may also be seen from the final stanzas of *Yü-ts'ung ssu-k'ung*, which likewise treat of love-making.

If anything may be gathered of Kuan Han-ch'ing from his non-dramatic *ch'ü* it would be largely the qualities mentioned by the *Hsi-chin chih*. Many of them have a freedom and naturalness, and an emotional insight unusual even among the earlier *ch'ü* writers. If one compares his compositions with those of the eminent gentlemen composers of *ch'ü*, such as Lu Chih, Wang Yun and Hu Tzu-shan,¹³⁰ one notices how the latter are rather more restrained and formal, albeit still well within the romantic spirit of the age, and how they use such themes as "Thinking of ancient times at Chinling", "Written in harmony with so and so's verse", of a type which is not found among Kuan Han-ch'ing's *ch'ü* and which, one may feel, would perhaps have been alien to his tastes. Here, however, one is plunging deep into conjecture, for the existing *ch'ü* attributed to Kuan Han-ch'ing quite possibly represent a one-sided selection from his actual range of composition. Moreover, even the attributions of the earliest of Yuan *ch'ü* collections are not entirely to be trusted if one accepts the criticism of a writer who wrote around the time of the collection's first appearance.¹³¹ Quite possibly *ch'ü* were attributed to him on the basis of current ideas of his character and style, as one suspects in the case of some of the Ming attributions. It is not known, and the imponderables are again too many for anything firm to be said on the matter.

As for Kuan Han-ch'ing's plays, most survive only as titles. As far as may be gathered from the titles of the plays attributed to him by the *Lukuei pu*, there are eighteen or so which are primarily concerned with love or marriage, nineteen or so which are concerned with notable historical situations or personalities, and the rest are light comedy or have such themes as ghostly revenge for injustice, and the deeds of a model scholar of ancient times. Since not a great deal can be gathered from titles alone, this general classification can be only the vaguest of guides. Moreover the themes are not mutually exclusive and love and history or ghostly revenge and love, for instance, may clearly be combined in one and the same

¹²⁹ A non-extant Yuan *tsa-chü* entitled *Wei-sheng ch'i-nü yen Lan-ch'iao* attributed to Li Chih-fu deals with this story. See also Wang Chi-ssu's annotated edition of *Hsi-hsiang chi*, Hong Kong, 1960, p. 87, n. 22, which discusses the story. There were two distinct stories both concerning a Lan Bridge, which were referred to in allusions by Yuan writers.

¹³⁰ Sui Shu-sen's *Ch'üan Yuan san-ch'u*, pp. 66-9, 93-102, 103-35.

¹³¹ Lo Tsung-hsin, who wrote a preface to the *Chung-yuan yin-yun*, and was a friend of Chou Te-ch'ing's. For his views, see *Chung-yuan yin-yun*, p. 177.

play. It is evident, however, that love and romance constituted the major single theme in Kuan Han-ch'ing's plays. One may note incidentally, that although probably none of them was a tragedy ending on a tragic note, a small number were clearly predominantly sad, involving the death of the hero or heroine of the play. How much Kuan Han-ch'ing's themes were a matter of his own taste and how much they were chosen for him by such things as general demand, is probably an insoluble problem, but perhaps they may serve to contribute to the notion of his preoccupation with and inclination for romance.

Kuan Han-ch'ing's reputation during his own time was considerable and he was referred to by the *Chung-yuan yin-yun* as one of the Great Four of Yuan *ch'ü*. During Ming times his works were nearly always highly praised in writings on Yuan *ch'ü*,¹³² and in recent times he has been the most

¹³² His reputation during his own times is testified to by the Lu-kuei pu's statements that Kao Wen-hsiu, a playwright in the same section, was nicknamed "little Han-ch'ing" by the people of Tatu, and that Shen Ho, a playwright of Hangchow who died in 1330 and is included in the third section of the *Lu-kuei pu* (ch. 2, p. 121), was known in the central and southerly parts of China as the "Southern Kuan Han-ch'ing". His reputation was clearly already established during the Yuan. The first work on *ch'ü* composition, the *Chung-yuan yin-yun*, has the preface by Chou Te-ch'ing praising "Kuan, Pai, Cheng and Ma". The first surviving general collection of Yuan non-dramatic *ch'ü*, the *Yang-ch'ün pai-hsüeh* has the preface by Kuan Suan-chai, which picks out Kuan Han-ch'ing for praise. The Yuan work on the actresses and singing-girls of the world of drama, the *Ch'ing-lou chi*, has the preface by Chu Ching which chooses to name him with P'ai P'u and Tu Jen-chieh as representative figures of the song-writers of the early Yuan. In the Ming and later times, too, whenever the outstanding figures of Yuan *ch'ü* were mentioned his name was almost bound to be included.

The *T'ai-he cheng-yin p'u* (ch. 1, p. 17) says, "his *ts'u* (i.e. *ch'ü*) are like a wine-merry guest at a jewelled banquet. Regarding the expressions he uses, they are of an erratic talent and the reason why he is picked out is that he was the originator of *tsa-chü* writing and so is given a position of pre-eminence." Other Ming comments are mostly less stilted in their praise. Chia Chung-ming's elegy in the *T'ien-i-ke Lu-kuei pu* (ch. 1, p. 3) says:

His pearly phrases flow naturally forth,
His jewelled expressions spring into being.
His delicate feelings are heaven-inspired,
His romantic emotions show so much experience and mastery.
His name is fragrant,
He was one of the Great Four divine beings.

Li K'ai-hsien's "Chang Hsiao-shan hsiao-ling hsü" (see part. I, n. 39 above) picks out Kuan Han-ch'ing, along with Ma Chih-yuan, Cheng Te-hui and Kung Ta-yung, as representative of the flourishing of *ch'ü* during the Yuan.

The *Ch'ü-lun* by He Liang-chün (fl. during 1522-66), *Chung-kuo ku-tien hsi-ch'ü lun-chu chi-ch'eng*, Vol. 4 edn., p. 6, mentions Ma Chih-yuan, Cheng Te-hui, Kuan Han-ch'ing and Pai P'u as having been regarded as the Great Four during the Yuan, but he says of Kuan, "His songs are vigorous and bluntly straightforward, but lack deep emotional meaning." He Liang-chün, would seem to have found the simpler, less ornate and less allusion-filled *ch'ü* of the early Yuan not so much to his taste. He names Cheng Te-hui as the best of the four.

Wang Shih-chen (1526-90) in his preface to his *Ch'ü-tsao*, *Chung-kuo ku-tien hsi-ch'ü lun-chu chi-ch'eng*, Vol. 4 edn., p. 25, speaks of Kuan Suan-chai, Ma Chih-yuan, Wang Shih-fu, Kuan Han-ch'ing, Chang K'e-chiu, Ch'iao Chi and Kung T'ien-t'ing

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studied of Yuan playwrights. The attention paid to him is fully deserved, for his position in the history of Chinese drama is surely unrivalled in importance.¹³³

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as being "rich in talent, delighting in music, and so excelling in their times". Elsewhere (pp. 31, 34, 37, 39) *Ch'ü-tsao* picks out Kuan Han-ch'ing as a standard of excellence, sometimes pairing him with Wang Shih-fu or Ma Chih-yuan.

Wang Chi-te's *Ch'ü-lü*, ch. 3, section 39, pt. 1, p. 149 says "When people talk of the masters of *ch'ü*, they are bound to mention Kuan, Cheng, Pai and Ma." Wang Chi-te argues for the inclusion of Wang Shih-fu also. On page 151 he says "Composers of Northern *ch'ü* such as Wang, Ma, Kuan and Cheng set up extremely strict rules, and throughout the Yuan era these were adhered to with extreme care, with no one daring to transgress them. But composers of Southern *ch'ü* such as Kao and Shih frequently committed errors in their *p'ing-tse* and phonology." Elsewhere (p. 163) he too uses Kuan and Ma as a standard of excellence. The *Ch'ü-lun* by Hsü Fu-cha (1560-after 1630), *Chung-kuo ku-tien hsi-ch'ü lun-chu chi-ch'eng* Vol. 4 edn., appendix, p. 246, praises Ma, Kuan Wang and Cheng for the singability and pleasing music of their compositions. Ch'i Piao-chia (1602-45)'s *Yuan-shan t'ang ch'ü-p'in*, *Chung-kuo ku-tien hsi-ch'ü lun-chu chi-ch'eng*, Vol. 6 edn., p. 172, mentions "Wang and Kuan" as the assumed most outstanding *ch'ü* composers.

In general one notes that besides the Great Four of Kuan, Pai, Cheng and Ma, Ming writers on *ch'ü* have a tendency to include Wang Shih-fu and often to refer simply to Wang and Kuan as the height of excellence. Kuan is the common factor in most of such combinations. Few indeed of the names of Yuan *ch'ü* composers and playwrights are mentioned in most Ming works on *ch'ü*, and it is a testimony to Kuan Han-ch'ing's reputation that his name appears therein so (relatively) often.

¹³³ A final note should perhaps be added concerning another assertion by the Ming scholar Chiang I-k'uei, who says of Kuan Han-ch'ing (*Yao-shan t'ang ch'ü-chi*, p. 38), "He was fond of chatting about sprites and ghosts, and among his writings there is the book *Kuei Tung*, which is most diverse and delightfully broad in its range." As far as may be seen, these remarks would all seem to derive from an attribution of the work *Kuei Tung*, a collection of ghost stories and other such tales, to Kuan Han-ch'ing, and this attribution would seem to be based on a colophon written by a Yuan scholar Ch'ien Fu in 1326 to the *Kuei Tung*. This colophon, as found in the *Chih-pu-tsu-chai ts'ung-shu* (20th collection) edition of the *Kuei Tung* at the end of chapter 5, translates:

I found the *Kuei Tung* in five *chüan* in the home of Yang Tao-fang of P'iling. This is only a manuscript copy. At the end of it there was a short postface, but it was too fragmentary for me to be able to obtain its details. What I was able to discover from it was that it mentioned a student of the Imperial Academy (by the name of) Shen, and also a man of the Hsiao-Kuang period, but that it was transmitted by the *chieh-yuan* Kuan. I enjoyed the systematic nature of its narration and the way in which, even though involving matters of the supernatural, it provided evidence, so I have copied it out and put it into cloth book-boxes to hand on to those who share my likes.

Colophon by Ch'ien Fu of Lin'an on the day of the Festival of Clear Brightness, 1326.

The "Hsiao-Kuang period" refers to the reigns of the Sung emperors Hsiao-tsung and Kuang-tsung, i.e. 1163-89 and 1190-4 respectively. Chiang I-k'uei would seem, if this was the source of his information, to have taken it that the Kuan *chieh-yuan* wrote the *Kuei Tung*, and to have identified this Kuan *chieh-yuan* with Kuan Han-ch'ing. Neither supposition would seem to be very justified, especially not the latter. The Ch'ien Fu colophon seems surely to imply that the actual author of the work was not Kuan *chieh-yuan*. Evidence from the *Kuei Tung* itself suggests most strongly that the author was not Kuan Han-ch'ing. The playwright was almost certainly a northerner and it is unlikely that he could have spent much if any time in the south before the fall of the

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Southern Sung in 1279. A number of dates and *nien-hao* are given in the *Kuei Tung*, which I list with *chüan* and page in brackets: 713-41 (ch. 1, p. 4b), 1228 (ch. 2, p. 4a), 1218 (ch. 2, p. 5a), 1223 (ch. 2, p. 5b), 1131-62 (ch. 2, p. 8a), 1227 (ch. 3, p. 1b), 1229 (ch. 3, p. 2b), 1227 (ch. 3, p. 5b), 1228 (ch. 3, p. 7a), 1106 (ch. 3, p. 9a) 1162 (ch. 4, p. 6b), 1218 (ch. 4, p. 10a) 1187 (ch. 5, p. 2b), 1187 (ch. 5, p. 4b), 557-9 (ch. 5, p. 6b). Of these fourteen dates all but two are Sung, and eleven are Southern Sung, given mostly as or with Southern Sung *nien-hao*. No less than eight are between the years 1218 and 1229. The year 1228 is twice referred to without a *nien-hao*, by just its "stem" and "branch". The omission would seem to imply a certain familiarity, probably of chronological proximity, and one may conjecture that the work was first written not long after 1229. None of the *nien-hao* given is Kin or Mongol. The place-names mentioned throughout the work are predominantly of places south of the Yangtze.

Various comments within the work associate the author with the events narrated, probably to heighten the credibility of the stories. In one story (ch. 2, p. 5b) it says "In the autumn of 1218 I sat in my lodgings in the prefectural capital with Sub-prefect Chao of Chiahsing and Registrar Liu of Tech'ing . . ." Chiahsing and Tech'ing are both places in present-day Chekiang Province. Elsewhere (ch. 1, p. 7b) it has, "I unfortunately did not see the poem. Recently a guest passed it on to me and so I give it here." It is evident from these and other references in the first person that he is presenting himself as being involved in both the southern geographical area and the Southern Sung times of the stories.

Ch'ien Fu himself was a man of Lin'an in present Chekiang and he obtained his copy of the *Kuei Tung* from Yang Tao-fang who was a man of P'iling in present Kiangsu. The owner and copier of the book were thus both southerners and all evidence points very strongly towards the likelihood of the author's being a southerner, too. There is no evidence that Kuan Han-ch'ing was either a southerner, a *chieh-yuan*, or a story-writer, nor any that he was living in the South during the second and third decades of the thirteenth century. The evidence, such as it is, all points in directions contrary to such propositions.