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A Stinger in the Tale
The "Sudden Awakening" Ending in East Asian Folktales

Abstract

This study explores category-formation in narrative analysis of folktales by arguing that a new motif be recognized in what it calls the "sudden awakening" episode found in a number of tales from China and Japan. It summarizes a number of apparently related tales, makes some comparisons among them, and argues that Ch'an/Zen Buddhism probably has had a good deal to do with the invention or reinforcement of this "sudden awakening" motif. It further argues that the motif also comes characteristically embedded in a larger narrative unit, or tale type, and seeks to establish this by means of motifeme analysis. Finally, it suggests that this tale type has frequently functioned to express and palliate the tension between a cultural and religious orthodoxy on the one hand, and popular, sometimes heterodox, protests or criticisms of that orthodoxy on the other.

Keywords: category-formation—illusion—compensatory fantasy—Ch'an/Zen—P'u Sung-ling

IRONIC REVERSAL IS A NARRATIVE device that depends on a parallelism between earlier and later events so that the story unfolds in an apparent repetition of the pattern of earlier events; the parallel is not exact, however, since the result is in fact reversed. Thus an earlier good result may be parallel to a later bad result. In fact we have a saying, possibly derived from European folktale literature, that suggests this: "going to the well too often." This narrative strategy can be subtle in that the narrator may not call attention to the parallelism; it is just there for the discerning reader to enjoy. It follows that the character to whom this happens is usually unaware of the parallelism as well. Or it may be that only the hearer can know of the parallelism inasmuch as it is not experienced by a single character. Such is the case in the Grimm Brothers' Frau Holle tale (KHM 24), where the good sister out of kindness is obedient and hardworking in the land at the bottom of the well and is rewarded by Frau Holle. The bad sister, wanting only the reward, exhibits her meanness and laziness while encountering exactly the same pattern of events. She of course is severely punished.

I am indebted to my colleague Harold Forshey, who pointed out and named this narrative device in reference to the court narratives in the Hebrew Bible, that is, the story of King David (2 Samuel 9–1; Kings 2). FORSHEY argues that this kind of ironic reversal is a favorite literary device of the narrator of this complex story, and that a structural framework of *inclusio* is formed by a particularly vivid example of this form of irony:

> In the opening scene David takes Bathsheba, an illegitimate act from which flows a steady stream of tragic consequences; ironically, in the closing episode, he is incapable of sexual relations with the beautiful Abishag. (1992, 1175)

The sudden awakening motif to be explored here is related to ironic reversal, but the former seems to be a narrative device that depends for its force not so much on the more or less subtle parallelism and reversal of a set

pattern or structure of events but on the immediate and dramatic "reversal" of more basic circumstances of life. Its suddenness guarantees that the reversal is known both to the character to whom it happens and to the audience reading or listening to the tale. It is therefore dramatic and unmistakable, making as it does for an immediate change in circumstances. In the tales from East Asia that constitute the body of the examples in this study this sudden awakening often comes in the form of a literal awakening from sleep, sometimes from a dream. When a dream is indicated it is the dream content itself that constitutes the set of circumstances that the narration has been at considerable pains to establish and that now disappear, thus resulting in a reversal upon awakening. Otherwise it is simply that sleep functions as a way of dividing the two sets of circumstances.

It might also be useful to note in passing that this kind of reversal is a technique commonly found in humor the world over. This kind of humor is of the sort that ALTICK (1956, 270) calls situational irony, that is, "a situation or turn of events that is the opposite of what is expected or fitting." More specifically, the tales to be considered here tend strongly to be satirical. SIEGEL (1987, 4–5) provides us with a definition of satire that appropriately emphasizes its serious aspect: "Satire is laughter at the vices and follies to which humanity is driven by the agonies of old age, disease, and death," that is, by the human condition. This Buddhist formulation, however, evokes rather too much compassion for our purposes. In our tale collection, the focus is upon the vices and follies, namely, ambition, laziness, lust, and hypocrisy. Such a focus might well lead us to the unflattering view of laughter adumbrated by Thomas HOBBES (1939, 153), who believed that laughter is evoked in many primarily "by the apprehension of some deformed thing in another, by comparison whereof they suddenly applaud themselves." Satire seems especially easy to condemn as mean-spirited; yet its cruelty can be blunted somewhat when we are made to realize that we too participate in these follies; our enjoyment of the foolishness of others is often mitigated by the uneasy realization that we too are implicated in the indictment.

Another curious characteristic of our tales that enhances the humor and serves at the same time to include the audience or reader in it is that, unlike other forms of ironic reversal, the sudden awakening motif nearly always comes at the end of a tale; thus the audience or reader has invested considerable effort in following a narration whose reality is swept away at a stroke. The tale ends quickly thereafter with, often, a pointed moral, and the audience is left to ponder its own naiveté, with the result that it feels almost as foolish as the protagonist of the tale. We, the audience, have been taken in just as he has been taken in. We, on the other hand, can profit by the pro-

tagonist's mistake; we do not have to live with the usually unpleasant new, or real, set of circumstances.

Motif and Tale Type

The folk literature of East Asia contains numerous examples of the sudden awakening motif as a structurally significant narrative device. It is common to find episodes in which a character awakens—sometimes from a dream—to find that what he has supposed to be real was in fact an illusion. There are tales in which the illusion lasts only for a few hours; it may, however, last for as much as the better part of a lifetime. Moreover, the larger narrative context—that is, the tale—in which this motif is usually found embedded has other distinctive features, such as an episode in which the male protagonist seduces or is seduced by a *femme fatale.* There are exceptions to the rule that the motif comes near the end of the tale; however, when it is placed near the beginning it seems to serve primarily to introduce and identify a female supernatural persona. The tale type in which the sudden awakening motif (SuAwM, for short) is characteristically embedded is delineated in the following paradigm, a distillation of a number of tales to be discussed in detail later:

A. A man seeks wealth, status, power, and/or the favors of a beautiful woman.

B. His motives are selfish and his actions are either merely self-indulgent or actually harmful to others.

C. He is temporarily successful and takes (often excessive) pleasure or pride in his accomplishments.

D. Suddenly all his gains disappear (SuAwM), leaving him in a very embarrassing position and feeling very foolish. He understands that all was illusion, that some supernatural power has merely been playing with him.

E. Either the tale ends at this point or it goes on to tell how he takes his experience to heart and changes his behavior.

On the surface the tale seems to have a didactic function such that, along with or, more probably, by means of the humor, it teaches a moral lesson. The humor entertains the listener while the message is painlessly received: the hearer is to reject the behaviors exhibited by the protagonist in the dream or unreal portion of the narrative. Such behaviors include excessive or inappropriate indulgence in various pleasures, disregard for the welfare of others, seeking only short-term gain. Such behavior, the tale tells us,

will be punished, either by physical suffering or the embarrassment of realization of one's own foolishness. In order to place this moralistic aspect in a more universal setting, I invoke the work of Mircea Eliade, who, in his book *Cosmos and History,* stressed that an answer to the question "Why is there suffering in the world?" is a useful key to understanding religious systems in many parts of the world. Moreover, the answers to this question are often implicit in myths, folktales, and symbols, rather than explicit in theologies or metaphysical systems. I posit, therefore, that the sudden awakening folktale has something profound to say about the East Asian worldview(s) in that it provides reinforcement to the human need to believe in a moral universe where the wicked are punished and kindness and compassion are rewarded. To be sure, in the Confucian system that prevailed in traditional China there was *t'ien* 天, the principle of cosmic order symbolized by the slow and stately revolution of the canopy of stars; it was a moral force, but one whose lofty workings concerned matters of state and vast historical epochs more than the destinies of individuals. As such, it was far too remote to be of much comfort even to the elite, let alone to the common people. In the Buddhist system, which prevailed in Japan to a much greater extent than in China, the doctrine of karma functions as another such explanatory device. The karmic world is one in which not only perfect justice prevails, but it does so largely upon the basis of individual behavior. All behavior that can be labeled either good or bad has ramifications for the future: if a person performs goods deeds, then good things will happen to that person in the future. But there is also a problem here since the ramifications may not manifest themselves until the next life, the next incarnation. Those who inhabited this Buddhist world, like their Confucian counterparts, still longed for more direct results, more speed and clarity, more drama, perhaps even a bit of humor with which to relish the comeuppance of the wicked. This I believe is the most basic explanation of the existence of the sudden awakening tale type: it reinforces belief in a just universe, while at the same time offering an immediate relief from what often must have appeared to be the injustice of immediate experience. Thus these tales reinforce belief in a moral universe in such a way as to provide a compensatory fantasy to counteract immediate experience that would otherwise tend to undermine that belief As compensatory fantasy it is an oriental version of what we know in the West as "poetic justice."

Another function of the sudden awakening tale, which adds considerably to its entertainment value, is that the tale makes possible a good deal of vicarious enjoyment of the very vices and pretensions that are being held up for ridicule. At this point, analysis takes as its mentor the ever-suspicious Sigmund Freud, who stressed the dual nature of many human (especially

religious) activities that he saw as symptomatic of deep psychological ambivalence. The lengthy descriptions of luxurious living or amorous adventures suggest that the audience is given more than enough to make the point: one can enjoy vicariously the excesses of the protagonist while having the comfort at the end of feeling superior to him and affirming the wrongness of what the audience and protagonist have just enjoyed. In these tales one can have one's cake and eat it too, a view that helps us understand the popularity of these tales beyond the vague claim of entertainment value or, for that matter, pointing a moral lesson.

THE TALES: CORE SAMPLE

We will examine in detail four tales: "A Taoist Priest" (GILES 1969, 152–55) and "The Butcher and the Vegetarian" (EBERHARD 1973, 126–28) from China, and "The Awakening" (TYLER 1987, 252–57) and "The Black Hair" (KOBAYASHI 1964) from Japan. I argue that, despite the fact that each leads up to the ending in a different way, each belongs to the sudden awakening tale type because of the way in which it uses the sudden awakening motif.

Tale: A Taoist Priest (ATP)

SOURCE: *Liao Chai Chih I* 聊斎誌異 of P'U Sung-ling 浦 松齢 completed in 1679, first published in 1740 (1963).

SUMMARY:

A. Two friends, Han and Hsu, are fond of drinking. While they are imbibing, a Taoist priest comes to the house.

B. He refuses the alms offered by the servants, but will not leave. Han and Hsu invite the priest to join them, although Hsu treats the priest with a "certain amount of disrespect in consequence of his shabby appearance."

C. The priest does so, and proves himself a hard drinker. He returns often. Hsu finally asks the priest to play the host.

D. The priest agrees, and Han and Hsu are invited in to an elegantly furnished apartment and served a sumptuous meal. The priest calls in two beautiful girls who sing and dance for his guests.

E. Han and Hsu get very drunk, and Hsu accuses the priest of rude behavior, whereupon the priest leaves.

F. Han and Hsu fall asleep, and wake in the morning to find themselves lying upon the road, Hsu with his head in a dirty drain. All is gone: temple, banquet hall, girls, and priest (SuAwM).

This is a tale with a definite Taoist flavor, as there was no official priesthood

in Confucianism, and a Buddhist priest who drank wine would almost certainly have required comment. Moreover, the scene repeats a common vision of the Taoist *hsien* 仙 (immortals, or *genii*), who, while eccentric and unpredictable, are nonetheless worldly, being fond of drinking, poetry writing, lute playing, and chess. One form of popular Taoist salvation was to discover and drink the elixir or pill of immortality, thereby becoming a *hsien*. Thus immortality was an extension of the good life of this world, as is indicated by the belief that *hsien* did not die at all: *hsien*ship was attained in this world and continued in this world.

Thus the enjoyment of worldly pleasures is not faulted in this story; rather it is their enjoyment to excess, coupled with boorish rudeness and selfishness. These elements are seen as disruptive of the proper Taoist social order, whose primary characteristics were simplicity and selflessness.

It was P'u Sung-ling who collected and perhaps embellished this tale —certainly he expressed it in the literary language of the scholar rather than the language of the common people. He was what we might call a failed Confucian: although he had passed the first of the state examinations, and thus demonstrated his knowledge of the Confucian literary canon, he was never able to pass the second examination, and because of that he was never able to gain a government appointment. He lived his life on the edge of an orthodoxy by which he was both shaped and marginalized. He had reason to criticize the establishment, if for no other reason than that, by pointing out the shortcomings of office holders, he could take some of the sting out of his own lack of preferment. Not only did he often select Taoist and Buddhist tales, but he sometimes also appended morals to tales that pointedly called attention to Confucian inadequacies. For example, in a story about a man who takes a ghost as a drinking companion, a ghost that eventually becomes a local god and rewards his former companion, P'u Sung-ling characteristically reflects:

> To attain the heights of ambition without forgetting the friends one made when poor and lowly—that is what made Wang Liu-lang a god! Nowadays, when do the high and noble in their carriages recognize those still wearing a bamboo hat? (ROBERTS 1979, 182)

But P'u Sung-ling's criticism of Confucian society was not entirely direct: his dabbling in the genre of *hsiao-shuo* 小說, or "little stories," was itself a tacit criticism, since the orthodox view of such popular tales was very negative. Not only were they regarded as fictions and thus untrue, and because untrue of no didactic value, they were also permeated with the strange and fantastic—in other words, what were regarded by Confucian

orthodoxy as popular superstitions. If that were not bad enough, from the T'ang dynasty onwards, many of these tales overtly promoted Buddhist or Taoist beliefs and were thus virulently heterodox.

But we must also note a curious thing: among P'u Sung-ling's own circle of friends he was often known as Liu-hsien 留仙, the "last of the immortals," because of the high regard in which his tale collection was held. Moreover, his reputation continued to grow from his own time until the end of the Confucian hegemony. We can only conclude that many among the Confucian literati too wanted a more friendly, interactive universe than their orthodoxy gave them. They wanted a universe more fraught with possibility, where the fantastic was common; a universe, as Eliade might say, permeated with the sacred and the magical, where human beings could transcend their ordinary limitations. Here were the successes of Confucianism, people who had struggled hard and had actually gained high social standing and political power. The popularity of *hsiao-shuo* tales among this hegemonic group indicates that they sometimes found that the Confucian harvest failed to feed the whole person. There had to be also whimsy; there had to be "plum-blossom dreams."

Tale: The Butcher and the Vegetarian (BAV)
SOURCE: An oral tale, collected ca. 1930 (EBERHARD 1973).

SUMMARY:

A. The tale begins with a proverb: "The butcher gets to paradise; the vegetarian falls into a ditch," and promises to explain its meaning with a story.

B. Once there was a bridge upon which the virtuous could cross into the Western Paradise and thus become buddhas and immortals. The bridge no longer exists because it was destroyed by the Taoist immortal Lu Tung-pin 呂洞賓.

C. Before the bridge's destruction, there was a butcher who threatened to skin alive a man who was in debt to him. A stranger then offers to pay the man's debt. The butcher is so moved by this act of charity that he not only forgives the debt but also gives up his profession and performs so many good works that he earns a place in Paradise.

D. On the journey to Paradise he meets an old man who has also earned a place in Paradise by refusing to eat meat for the last forty years.

E. The two come to an isolated farmhouse and ask to spend the night. In the house there are only women; the vegetarian elects to stay the night there, but the butcher thinks it improper and spends an uncomfortable night outdoors among the mosquitoes.

F. When he awakens he is astonished to find himself lying at the edge of the road, all trace of the house gone (SuAwM). Hearing a crunching sound, he discovers the vegetarian in a ditch being eaten by two huge snakes.

This is obviously a Buddhist tale, although it has been supplied with a curious introduction of folk Taoist origin in order to justify the journey that seems necessary to the main body of the tale. In this regard, it reminds us of nothing so much as an American "farmer's daughter" tale, in which a traveler stops and asks to spend the night at a farmhouse; he is admitted, but is told that he will have to sleep in the same bed with the farmer's daughter. Needless to say, almost any ending can follow this beginning, so long as it is both funny and naughty. Unlike the American idiom, the Chinese tale BAV is clearly a moral tale, with the moral being something like this: True Buddhism and thus true salvation is a matter of the inner heart and not of outward observance. The butcher, although he had spent many years in a trade that required him to kill animals who were sentient beings and thus our brothers and sisters in the metaphysical journey of life, which is the drama of salvation, he had genuinely repented and had become a transformed man. While the vegetarian, outwardly observing the Buddhist precept against injuring (*ahimsa*) his fellow journeyers, was unchanged inwardly by the mere observance, and thus met his just fate in a horrible death, presumably followed by a long period of existence in one of the punishment realms (hells) as well as a long series of lives as an animal.

While neither TING (1978) nor IKEDA (1971) mention this tale as far as I have been able to discover, EBERHARD (1973) includes it in his collection of oral tales collected in the 1930s, although he gives no literary sources prior to that time. He does, however, supply us with a paradigm, which he entitles "Der fromme Schlächter" (The Devout Butcher), as follows:

A. A butcher, wishing to become a saint, sets out on a journey.

B. He meets two others who have been pious for a long time.

C. Along the way these two allow themselves to be seduced by two girls.

D. He discovers that the girls have turned into snakes and that his companions are dead (SuAwM).

E. The butcher becomes a saint.

This paradigm necessarily omits much detail; interestingly, our motif is one of the details that has been all but filtered out, which if nothing else proves that control of category formation is of great importance. A paradigm is after all the judgment of a particular scholar as to what is truly important

in as well as common to a number of apparently related tales. Eberhard and I disagree on the BAV paradigm. Taking the Eberhard paradigm as given for the moment, however, we might take it as suggestive—if not conclusive—that there is no sudden awakening tale type and that SuAwM is an optional tag that a storyteller might or might not add to the end of a tale. From this we might be tempted to formulate a hypothesis as follows: SuAwM is merely an intensifier that does not alter the meaning of a tale; it drives home whatever meaning is contained in the tale to which it may be attached. If this were so, it would follow that SuAwM should be found attached to a great variety of tales. However, our data do not support this conclusion. Curiously, in the tales that fit best the sudden awakening tale type as I have formulated it above, the SuAwM motif is attached primarily to tales involving sexual improprieties or at least sexual activity with supernatural partners. For reasons to be explored below, SuAwM appears to be a special form of comeuppance reserved for men who seduce or are seduced by women in illicit relationships.

Tale: The Awakening (TAW)
SOURCE: *Konjaku monogatarishū* 今昔物語集 *maki* 17, tale 33 written about 1200 (TAKAGI 1961–63, vol. 24, 549–55).

SUMMARY:

A. A young monk of the monastery on Mt. Hiei is too lazy to study; instead he seeks the help of Kokuzō Bodhisattva, to whose temple he makes frequent pilgrimages.

B. One day he is late in leaving the temple and seeks a place to spend the night. A pretty woman invites him in and serves him a fine meal. He catches a glimpse of the lady of the house and determines that he will make love to her.

C. He steals to her bedchamber, whereupon she wakes. She is not angry, but refuses him on the grounds that he is not worthy of her until he has memorized the *Lotus Sutra*. Then she promises to return his caresses.

D. In the morning he hurries back to the mountain monastery, resolved to study hard. This he does until he has memorized the sutra. He returns to his lady, but the previous scene is repeated twice more until, after more than three years, he becomes the most famous scholar-monk of his time.

E. He returns once more and, before their love can be consummated, the lady quizzes him on the sutra, showing her own extraordinary erudition. This takes so long that the monk drifts off to sleep without accomplishing his long-sustained desire.

F. He awakens in the morning lying in a moor with no house in sight (SuAwM). Badly frightened, he dashes back to the temple where the bodhisattva reveals in a dream that it was he all along who had conjured up both lady and house as a way of answering the monk's prayer that he should become an accomplished scholar.

We venture to assert that throughout both China and Japan, SuAwM often serves as a method of criticizing the established authority. In China, as we have already mentioned, Confucianism played the role of cultural orthodoxy, and this criticism is thus often aimed at government office holders and the literati families whence they came; it holds up to ridicule the failure of the actual members of this class to live up to their own lofty ideals. A similar structure of criticism can be discerned in Japan, where Confucianism was unable to supplant native approaches to government and the organization of society, and where in the premodern period the establishment was instead primarily Buddhist. Hence, from the early Kamakura period comes our Buddhist tale (TAW) in which a lustful and lazy priest seeking the favors of a high-born lady is, as it were, seduced into real virtue. In this tale, however, it is clear that, rather than simply undermine the establishment as such, the tale only criticizes the failure of some priests to live up to Buddhism's lofty ideals. Rather than undermine those ideals, the tale promotes them. In fact it teaches the power of *upāya* (expedient means; Japanese, *hōben* 方便) by which a bodhisattva uses the baser motives of humans in order to bring about (sometimes by a skillful reversal) real spiritual growth.

We must hasten to add, however, that, in agreement with the insights of Max Gluckman regarding what he has labeled "rites of rebellion," much of the popular literature also of China critical of Confucian orthodoxy may have the effect of supporting the very orthodoxy it overtly scorns. By taking the form of popular entertainment the criticism loses its revolutionary thrust; it becomes a way of relieving the frustrations of life on the margins of power and prestige without in fact doing anything about it. In short, such folktales give momentary relief by making people forget their troubles, by making them feel good, rather than by seeking to change the nature of society itself and the position of the folk within society. They are important, and useful, but finally harmless, compensatory fantasies.

Indeed, it must also be recognized that Confucians themselves maintained a noble tradition of self-criticism, although the platform from which this criticism was launched is often awash with Taoist and Buddhist sentiments. Truly, it can be said that, remove a Confucian from office, disgrace and banish him from the capital, and you will find an unusually eloquent voice in the service of Buddhist and Taoist ideals. In the T'ang dynasty, the

voice of the poet Tu Fu 杜甫 comes immediately to mind, while the early Ch'ing furnishes the tale collections of P'u Sung-ling already discussed.

In fact a Buddhist-Taoist idea, which seems a necessary foundation for the SuAwM motif and tale, is that the ordinary world of perception is not in fact real in the ultimate sense. For many Buddhists the phenomenal world was an illusion, freedom from which only enlightenment could permanently ensure. As P'u Sung-ling puts it in the moral: "The wise man, free of desire, recognizes that even what exists is delusion; how much more so is that which has yet to come!" (ROBERTS 1979, 65). Yet, though sunk in illusion, even ordinary worldlings might occasionally experience a momentary breakthrough, some fragmentary insight from behind the veil. Closer to the Taoist view is the notion that certain adepts, such as the *hsien* and *tao shih* 道師 ("masters of tao"), can manipulate the senses of ordinary folk so as to create illusions that can be maintained for a short time. It also needs to be mentioned that the belief in ghosts and other mysterious supernatural beings was ubiquitous among the Chinese folk. All these beings and powers potentially had the power either to rend the universal fabric of illusion or indeed temporarily to create such a fabric for particular purposes. Compatible with these folk phenomena, although not necessarily their source, is also the classical Taoism of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu, which was self-consciously critical of the emerging Confucian establishment with its pretensions and hypocritical claims to virtues.

A Chinese tale that is intriguing for its similarity to the Japanese Buddhist tale (TAW) is found embedded in a longer tale in the *Liao Chai Chih I* of P'u Sung-ling (ca. 1679). Interestingly, it has no overt Buddhist content; nor is it a Taoist critique of Confucianism; instead, it enlists supernatural help in pursuing the social mobility built into the Confucian social structure. The woman who is the object of the protagonist's desire is a disguised fox, while the goal is not to become an accomplished Buddhist scholar-monk, but to pass the Confucian examinations so that he may become a successful part of the Confucian establishment, the orthodox literati class. A summary of the appropriate part of this tale, "The Magic Mirror" (GILES 1969, 333–34), is as follows:

> A lazy candidate is attracted to a beautiful woman, who is in fact a fox. She refuses to bestow her favors upon him until he takes his degree, but gives him a magic mirror in which he can see her image. The harder he studies, the closer she appears and the more friendly is her countenance. Finally he passes the examination. When next he looks into the mirror, the object of his desire is imaged with perfect detail. Suddenly, she actually emerges from the mirror to stand beside him.

To be sure, this Chinese tale does not quite contain our motif as we have defined it: the seduction or its intention is there, but the sudden reversal is not. The similarity to the Japanese tale (TAW) is rather in the use of the promise of sexual favors as a device on the part of a supernatural woman (bodhisattva or fox) to motivate an otherwise lazy man to achieve distinction in scholarship, which is the socially sanctioned means by which upward social mobility was achievable. These are in fact Horatio Alger stories by which insignificance is transformed into significance, unworthiness into worthiness, low status into high status. The subtlety of doing the socially right actions for the morally (psychologically?) wrong reasons at first may seem absent from the American tales of success, a view which we might either celebrate or deplore, depending upon whether we see American culture to be virtuously straightforward or lamentably lacking in subtlety and sophistication.

Yet upon more mature reflection there seems to be a rather striking similarity—namely, that in American lore the virtues of hard work, honesty, and frugality are the values that the tales promote, while wealth and social status are results that are unintended by-products. In the American case too, there is a disparity between means and ends, as Max Weber has schooled us to be aware. In a "rational" (i.e., secular) world, wealth and social status are seen as "natural" goods, to be gained straightforwardly by applying the means by which reason tells us they may be had: hard work, honesty, and frugality. But as Weber saw, these named virtues were originally the methods of a spiritual economy, promoted as the proper way of life for those in a state of spiritual grace, the grateful response to a loving god's election. In the Protestant ethic, to which surely the Horatio Alger tales owe their genesis, the motivation of gratitude seizes upon the virtues as a means of its expression, while the secular results are at worst accidents, at best further proof of god's election: the good man prospers, although prosperity has only symbolic, not intrinsic, value. In the case of this Japanese tale (TAW), we have a parallel situation, only in a sense reversed: whereas in the Protestant ethic a spiritual goal (to please god, show gratitude) uses virtuous behavior to attain a secular result (wealth, status), in TAW a secular goal (the fulfillment of lust) uses virtuous behavior to attain a spiritual result (enlightenment), although in the case of TAW we must also recognize that fame as a great monastic scholar (secular in at least a karmic sense) is also a by-product. Each has its own irony, each its own subtlety. Irony comes in the disjunction between intention and result, while subtlety comes in the ambiguity of the goal in the case of the Protestant ethic—because not always explicitly stated nor consciously understood—and in the ambiguity of the result in the case of TAW—because the prayer to the bodhisattva was for fame and "secular"

accomplishment, while the result, even though it fulfilled the prayer, brought with it an infinitely more valuable though unsolicited result: enlightenment, or at least significant spiritual progress toward self-transformation.

Tale: The Black Hair (TBH)

SOURCE: The earliest literary source is the *Konjaku monogatarishū, maki* 27, no. 24 (TAKAGI 1961–63, vol. 25, 510–12).

SUMMARY:

A. An impoverished young samurai leaves his wife to become the retainer of a powerful lord some distance away. He remarries to enhance his position, ignoring the wife he left behind.

B. The samurai, unable to forget his first wife, turns his back on fortune and returns to his former home. *Even though the house appears to be in ruins,* he finds his first wife dwelling alone in the house. Meekly she accepts his sudden reappearance after so long. They talk and make love through the night, falling asleep only at dawn.

C. Next morning the samurai awakens (SuAwM) to find himself lying in filth in a dilapidated house; beside him is the decomposed body of his long-dead first wife. [The skull, long black hair still attached, pursues the terrified man]. He flees from the house.

D. *Questioning the neighbors, the samurai discovers that his wife died some time ago in great poverty, the house being abandoned and shunned by all out of fear of a vengeful ghost.*

The portions enclosed in brackets are additions made by KOBAYASHI (1964) in the filmed version. Italicized portions are found in the *Konjaku* version but not in the filmed version. In terms of the paradigm given above, the oldest version and the film version agree very well. The film adds the dramatic pursuit by the skull with its long black hair, while the *Konjaku* spells out in perhaps unnecessary detail the events related by the neighbors after the encounter with the wife's ghost. Ueda Akinari 上田秋成 in the eighteenth-century *Ugetsu monogatari* 雨月物語 takes the greatest liberties. Projecting the story forward to a time of frequent civil wars, he makes the separation of the samurai and his wife an involuntary event, the samurai being prevented from returning for several years because of the unsettled situation and his own obligations. He does not remarry. Thus the love story is unblemished by selfishness or infidelity; the problem to be overcome is not poverty but the uncontrollable vicissitudes of war. Moreover, the samurai, on returning, finds his wife's grave immediately and encounters no ghost. Ueda's version

ends, like that in *Konjaku,* with information supplied by the neighbors. Thus, while Ueda's source is easily recognizable, it nonetheless differs in essential ways: there is no seduction, no sleep, and no sudden awakening, differences that will appear more important when we proceed to consider the relevant motifemes.

Comparative Analysis of Core Sample

Taking these four examples, we are now in a position to move from paradigm to motifeme analysis—that is, we can abstract what appear to be salient features exhibited more or less consistently by each of the four tales in our core sample. Motifemes, as the linguistic parallel suggests, should be deep structures, and as such should be expressed in as general terms as possible. I suggest four motifemes, arranged in the following sequence: 1) seduction; 2) sleep; 3) awakening/reversal (SuAwM); 4) changed life. In tabular form we can compare the tales with respect to the presence and sequence of these motifemes as given in Table 1 on the next page.

Other Tales of Interest

In addition to the core sample, selected initially on the basis of an intuition that they represent the motif most clearly, we will examine four additional tales that contain the motifeme "awakening/reversal" (that is, SuAwM) but that seem to be aberrant in a number of ways. We will compare these tales with the core sample in order to test the intuition both of their relatedness and of their aberrance. The results appear in Table 2.

Tales from China:

1. DTD: "Dr. Tseng's Dream" (Giles 1969, 237–43)

Ting's paradigm lists several variations that may set the stage and provide the narrative "proof" that all happens in a moment, such as a man waiting for a pot to boil or for his wife to prepare dinner. He dozes off, has a dream, and awakens before the preparations are completed. Ting offers the following epitome of the earliest known version, from the T'ang dynasty *T'ai-p'ing yü-lan* 太平御覧 compiled by Li Fang 李昉 (925–996): "The dinner (millet) on the stove is not yet done. He has dreamt of several of his prior existences, learned about the vicissitudes of life, extreme joy, fear, grief, etc. He sometimes becomes a religious person." The seventeenth-century version (Giles 1969, 237–43) is entitled "Dr. Tseng's Dream." We summarize it as follows:

> A haughty man named Tseng, having just taken his doctor's degree, consults an astrologer who predicts that he will rise to the august position of Secretary of State. Tseng becomes more arrogant than ever. As it is raining,

TABLE 1: COMPARISON OF MOTIFEMES IN CORE SAMPLE

	Chinese Tales		Japanese Tales		
Tales	ATP	BAV	TAW	TBH	
Motifeme					Total
Seduction	X	X	X	X	4 of 4
Sleep	X	X	X	X	4 of 4
Awakening/ Reversal	X	X	X	X	4 of 4
Changed Life	O	(X)	X	O	2 of 4
Totals	3 of 4	4 of 4	4 of 4	3 of 4	

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS IN TABLE 1:

ATP = A Taoist Priest
BAV = The Butcher and the Vegetarian
TAW = The Awakening
TBH = The Black Hair

X = The motifeme is present
(X) = The motifeme is weakly represented or only implied
O = The motifeme is not present

TABLE 2: COMPARISON OF MOTIFEMES IN LARGER SAMPLE

	Chinese Tales					Japanese Tales			
Tale	ATP	BAV	DTD	TTG	ASW	TAW	TBH	HSF	
Motifeme									Totals
Seduction	X	X	O	O	(X) 3**	X	X	O	5 of 8
Sleep	X	X	X	X	O 1	X	X	O	6 of 8
Dream	O	O	X	O	O	(X)	O	O	2 of 8
SuAwM	X	X	X	X	X 2	X	X	X	8 of 8
Changed Life	O	(X)	X	X	X 4	X	O	X	6 of 8
Totals	3/5	4/5	4/5	3/5	3/5	5/5	3/5	2/5	
Totals*	3/4	4/4	3/4	3/4	3/4	4/4	3/4	2/4	

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS IN TABLE 2

ATP = A Taoist Priest
ASW = A Supernatural Wife
BAV = The Butcher and the Vegetarian
DTD = Dr Teng's Dream
HSF = Head Shaved by Foxes
TAW = The Awakening
TBH = The Black Hair
TTG = The Three Genii

X = The motifeme is present
(X) = The motifeme is weakly represented or implied
O = The motifeme is not present

*Totals omitting the provisional motifeme "dream."
** Numbers indicate order of appearance in the tale, since they deviate from that assumed in table.

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he decides to take a nap in the temple. Suddenly in walk two officials who inform him that he has been appointed to high office. Honors and wealth follow, and he proceeds to reward friends, denounce old enemies, and intimidate the less powerful. Then he is stripped of his office and his wealth and taken to the capital to await trial. On the way he is set upon by a group of bandits made up of the many victims of his crimes. They chop off his head. Immediately he is led before the King of Hell, who subjects him to numerous tortures for his wickedness. Eventually he is reborn as a woman into a family of beggars. He/She is sold as a concubine, ill-treated by his/her master's wife, but exhibits exemplary behavior. He/she is falsely accused of killing the master, and, while the sentence of "lingering death" is being carried out, he awakens from his nightmare still in the temple. He is a changed man: no longer full of pride, he withdraws from public life and dwells in the hills as a recluse. Needless to say, a very Taoist lesson has been learned.

2. ASW: "A Supernatural Wife" (GILES 1969, 364–66)

An impoverished man named Chao is near death from illness. He awakens from a nap to discover a beautiful girl standing by his bed. She announces that she intends to marry him. She tells him that she is a spirit, come from the Han dynasty, when, in an earlier life, Chao had benefited her family. As repayment for his past kindnesses, she heals him and magically transforms his hovel into a well-appointed dwelling. They live together and never want for money. One day at a dinner party she becomes angry at a guest, "an unprincipled young graduate," and strikes him so hard that his head flies out the window. Later, at the Dragon Boat Festival, a white rabbit enters, the wife leaps up, announces that "the doctor has come for me," and follows the rabbit out. At her order, the company

fetches a ladder and places it against a tall tree in the garden. She and Chao mount up to the sky and are never seen again. When the company examine the area, they find that the ladder is only an old door-frame and the house is once again old and dirty, all the wealth having disappeared with the couple.

This tale, while it contains most of the motifemes of the sudden awakening tale paradigm, also presents several anomalies. First, the sequential order of the paradigm is violated in that the sleep and awakening/reversal come at the beginning, and serve to introduce the supernatural wife and the wealth that she brings to the poor man's house. This is in fact a reversal of SuAwM in that it is a "suddenly it all appears," rather than a "suddenly it was all gone" structure. The bulk of the tale describes the happy position of wealth and status thus obtained, as well as the curious events that lead to the disappearance of the couple. This is then followed by another sudden reversal, when the house returns to its original dilapidated state. This second reversal is closer to SuAwM as we have defined it; however, it does not follow sleep, nor is it the result of a dream but of a collective hallucination on the part of the neighbors, or, better, an example of how certain supernatural beings can temporarily manipulate reality in order to benefit or to entangle those whom they choose.

3. TTG: "The Three Genii" (GILES 1969, 133–34)

A. A scholar, on his way to take the examination for the master's degree, meets three other graduates. They drink wine together.

B. One of them invites the group to his house, where they engage in more drinking as well as an essay-writing exercise. Each produces an essay. The scholar is so impressed by the essays of his three new friends that he makes a copy of them before going to sleep in the room provided by his host.

C. He awakens (SuAwM) to find himself lying on a hillside, with no house in sight. He finds the copy of the essays in his pocket, however.

D. He discovers from the local inhabitants that he has been to the grotto of the Three Genii, who are only occasionally visible to humans.

E. When he takes the examination, the three themes upon which he is asked to write are the same as the three essays provided by the Genii. He passes the examination at the top of the list.

Tale from Japan:

HSF: "How a Man was Bewitched and Had His Head Shaved by the Foxes" (MITFORD 1966, 298–303)

> A man named Tokutaro boasts that no fox can make a fool of him. His companions make a wager with him that he cannot go to a notorious moor known for its foxes without being bewitched. On the moor he meets a woman whom he recognizes but whom he takes for a fox. In trying to force her to reveal her true shape he kills her. A priest intervenes and prevents Tokutaro from being put to death for his crime on condition that he become the priest's disciple. Both Tokutaro and villagers agree and his head is shaved to make him a priest: "When...the ceremony was over, there was a loud burst of laughter; and at the same moment the day broke, and Tokutaro found himself alone, in the middle of a large moor." Greatly ashamed, Tokutaro returns to his friends and pays the wager. But, we are told, "Tokutaro never allowed his hair to grow again, and renounced the world, and became a priest under the name Sainen" (303).

(The tale is said by Mitford to have been taken from a book called *Kanzen yawa.*)

Validity of the Sudden Awakening Motif and Tale Type

We can test the usefulness and perhaps thereby the validity of both our tale paradigm and motifeme analysis by integrating these four added tales into our comparative schema as in Table 2 above.

The reader will note that a fifth motifeme in the table, "dream," has been introduced on the strength of its centrality in DTD; the results, however, show that the motifeme does not merit inclusion, since it is not shared by enough of the other tales to make it significant. Moreover, of the four additional tales in the table, while all contain the SuAwM motifeme as a minimum criterion for inclusion, three (DTD, TTG, HSF) do not contain "seduction," while two (ASW, HSF) omit "sleep." On the other hand, all are strongly moralistic in that all four tales (ASW, DTD, HSF, TTG) contain "changed life" while the core group (ATP, BAV, TAW, TBH) only exhibits this motifeme half the time. In terms of individual tales, note that all the newly added tales except HSF contain at least three of the four motifemes in the Totals* column; because HSF does not, it should be excluded on this account alone as not bearing a close enough resemblance to the sudden awakening tale. ASW ought also to be disqualified because, as a quick perusal of the summary readily indicates, it violates the sequence established for our motif. This leaves the newly added tales DTD and TTG as still possibly belonging to the sudden awakening tale type. It seems that the only way to eliminate all the newly added tales and return to the core sample as the only true examples of the sudden awakening tale would be to privilege motifeme one. Yet there seems no defensible reason for such a maneuver.

Thus we are left with a delineation of SuAwM as a motif that may or may not include seduction and that may or may not end with the explicit statement that the protagonist changes his life as a result of his extraordinary experience.

The inclusion of these four added tales in our comparison has gone far, I would argue, toward justifying the delineation of sudden awakening as a unique tale type composed of four motifemes which in turn are arranged in an unvarying sequence. Tales may contain many or even all the motifemes of the sudden awakening tale and yet not qualify if the sequence is disarranged, while containment of too few of the motifemes is obvious ground for disqualification.

AMBIVALENCE

Another aspect of our tales that we have yet to comment upon in detail is the ambivalence of attitude, a kind of collusion between audience and storyteller, by which the faults of the protagonist are dwelt upon too much. Can there be a Freudian conflict buried beneath the surface here? By invoking the name of Freud I do not mean to imply that SuAwM lends itself to application of the method exemplified by BETTELHEIM (1976) and DUNDES (1989), which method centers on the Freudian "family romance." No amount of creative assignment of symbolic meaning can reduce SuAwM to a matter of problems of oral or Oedipal stages of psychological development. There are no child- or parent-figures here, however well disguised. Rather, I wish to invoke a Freudian insight into a ubiquitous psychological mechanism, namely that of ambivalence. Ambivalence, or the peculiar human ability to maintain two contradictory attitudes simultaneously, is in fact the basic mechanism whereby repression manifests itself in neurotic symptoms. Consciously the neurotic maintains a socially and morally correct attitude, while unconsciously the repressed knowledge of incorrect but fundamental id-grounded impulses continues to be energized. The result is a collection of neurotic symptoms, the disguised evidence of the "real," that is repressed, attitude.

Applying this to the sudden awakening tale is not difficult. If we peel away the layers of humor, entertainment, and moralism from our tales we find that the bulk of each tale dwells lovingly on the details of the behavior that the socially correct ending points out to be unacceptable. The rich appointments of luxurious houses, pavilions, and grounds are described, and mention is frequent of the elegant and extravagant meals eaten, the number of wine bowls guzzled, and the beauty of women seduced. These are heaped up for the hearer's vicarious enjoyment. True, Chinese literary tales, as distinct from oral tales, are notable for their delicacy when alluding to sexual activity—except of course for certain Taoist lore that uses, among other things, a number of sexual techniques in order to promote longevity (VAN

GULIK 1963). And, while Japanese literature is rather more frank in these matters, my point is not that these tales paint a particularly detailed or complete picture of these and other pleasures; in fact much continues to be left to the imagination; rather, I argue that the portion of the tale devoted to this phase of the narrative is disproportionate. Table 3 shows the proportion of the narrative of each of the six tales, which we have concluded are clear examples of the sudden awakening tale type, that is given over to the description of the roistering and its setting.

TABLE 3: PROPORTION OF ENJOYMENT TO THE WHOLE

	Chinese Tales				Japanese Tales	
Tale	ATP	BAV	DTD	TTG	TAW	TBH
Enjoyment	70%	19%	82%	64%	60%	44%*
Deviation from Average	+12	–38	+25	+7	+3	–13*

Average proportion = 57%
*Indicates text of MARTIN (1996) version used for calculations.

Although there is some variation in the data—BAV is clearly anomalous—this comparison supports the notion that there is a strong tendency among both Chinese and Japanese storytellers to utilize SuAwM in order to indulge their audiences in the vicarious enjoyment of prohibited excesses. I call this tendency the "this, oh this, is what I'll never do" syndrome after the scene in Gilbert and Sullivan's *Mikado* where the protagonist kisses the beautiful Yum Yum repeatedly, all the while maintaining at length that he will never do what he is in fact doing to excess.

As FREUD (1950) so long ago observed, the totemic meal in certain ritual settings allows the celebrant both to honor and to kill and eat the object of desire. By prohibiting such activity at all secular (non-ritualized) times, the sacredness and inviolability of the beloved object is maintained. But this is not enough. By ritually (read: neurotically) killing the sacred totem one does not psychologically do what one physically does. The ritual/symbolic act allows one to indulge both sides of the ambivalence simultaneously. To take an example from a more familiar area, we can say that a nude in a girlie magazine is naked, while a nude in the Louvre is clothed in art, and, as such, can be enjoyed both as art and as sexually stimulating. Again, violence in the movies has long been acceptable so long as the good guys triumph in the end, so long, that is, as the extended, exaggerated scenes of murder and

destruction are "just" recompense for evil deeds previously perpetrated by the baddies and also, incidentally, are enjoyed by the audience.

But the *Konjaku* version of TBH offers us an interesting opportunity to probe this ambivalence further. Had we used it in the above quantitative calculations, the SuAwM portion would have accounted for only 34% of the whole, still less anomalous than BAV at 19%, but problematic. This suggests more than that the ambivalence factor in these tales admits of greater variation. We must be prepared to go beyond the usual folkloric explanation, which claims that in every tale type there are portions that, being inessential, are treated by the tellers as opportunities for individual virtuosity. Such would be the entertaining, titillating portions considered here. But, at least in the case of the *Konjaku* version of TBH, we can go further. We note immediately that the tone is darker, more brooding throughout. More particularly, the author specifically mentions the classical literary term *mono no aware* 物の哀, difficult to render into English but usually translated as "the pity of things." Very much bound up with a realization of the fleeting nature of pleasure and perfection, the inevitability of loss and death, *mono no aware* was very much reinforced in the thirteenth century by the fact that the classical world itself was recently lost and especially lamented. It was a mental state that could be induced by literature or by direct experience and was seen as the epitome of the cultured and authentic life. As such it gradually was merged into the Buddhist *mujō* 無常 (impermanence); life lived fully in mindful consideration of this concept was the only proper religious life. To grasp *mujō* fully was tantamount to the achievement of enlightenment.

The author of *Konjaku* was writing only a few years after the battle of Dan no Ura, which signaled the end of the Heian period of aristocratic taste and elegance. Neither he nor his audience could ignore its central experience, that of *mono no aware*. Therefore, it seems likely that TBH began as a popular tale, probably much as Kobayashi's film nearly eight hundred years later became popular as a straightforward ghost story. This was appropriated by the aristocratic remnant and their samurai admirers, and thus a tale of cruelty and vengeance is partly transformed into one of refined subtlety, an opportunity to experience once again the poignancy of *mono no aware*. And this version became the prototype for Kobayashi, who returned it to what must have been close to its original form. To appreciate this point fully, let us consider the complete *Konjaku* version.

"The Story of a Former Wife Who, After Her Death, Is Reunited with Her Husband"

Just now, or perhaps long ago, there was in the capital a servant of little expe-

rience who for many years had been poor and had no means of making a living. Unexpectedly, _____ became lord of _____ province. That servant, because he had known the lord for some years, went to the lord's residence and the lord said to him: "Since there is no way for you to make a living in the capital, as soon as I take up my appointment I can look after you a bit. For some time I have wanted to do you a favor, but I have been unable even to help myself. When I go down [from the capital] to take up my coming appointment, what do you think about accompanying me?" The servant said, "I would be happy to do so, sir," and made ready to depart. The servant had a wife to whom he had been married for some years, and although the poverty had been unbearable, she was young and had a nice figure. So things were not so bad really, and because she worked hard he did not mind his own poverty; thus the thought of separation was difficult. When the man left for the distant province, he parted from this wife, and in no time was able to make his fortune with another wife who was wealthy. Because this wife took care of everything, when he departed he went down to the province with her.

While he was in the province, he became very wealthy. The more his appetite for wealth was fulfilled, the more unbearable became his yearning for the original wife he had cast off in the capital. Suddenly he wanted to see her and thought, "If I go up [to the capital] right away I might catch a glimpse of her." It was as if his innermost heart were being torn apart; as the days and months passed he experienced a thousand emotions and became ever more confused. When his appointment ended, the lord went up [to the capital] and the servant accompanied him. The thought occurred to him, "I left my original wife for no reason. Since I am returning to the capital, I will go directly to [her] residence." It was late when he arrived at the house of his wife, and the man was wearing his traveling clothes. As he opened the gate and entered the garden he could see nothing but a wretched ruin with no sign of an inhabitant. As he gazed at this scene more and more he felt an infinite loneliness at how pitiful it was [*mono no aware*]. It was the ninth month, about the tenth day, and the moon was very bright. His regret was intensified by the misery of the cold night.

As he entered the house he saw that his wife lived in that place quite alone. The wife looked at the man with no sign of bitterness. She seemed pleased to see him and when she said politely, "Why are you here? When did you arrive?" the man spoke of the matters he had been thinking about while in the province: "As of now, I live here. Tomorrow I will have some things brought that I collected from the province. I have summoned a number of servants. Tonight there was another reason for my coming." The wife seemed happy at this and they told stories of past years until deep into the night. "Now my journey home has made me sleepy"—so saying, the two of

them lay down locked in a close embrace. When the man asked "Is there no one else here?" the woman said, "I have passed the time in an inviolate state; there has not even been a servant." Through the long night they talked, until dawn came. He thought how like a painting their bodies seemed, as if permeated with sadness [*aware* 哀れ]. As dawn broke they both fell asleep. They slept, unaware that night was giving way to day as the sun rose. Last night, with no [servants] here, the shutters were closed as usual; yet they are up [that is, open], not down, and bright sunshine is pouring in. The man is terrified: he can now see that the person in whose arms he has been sleeping is dead, her skin and bones dried up and withered. "What place is this?" he thinks. Because such a thing is strange and frightening, he leaps up, grabs his clothes, and flees. "Perhaps I am mistaken" [he thinks], but what he had seen was truly a dead body.

Then he rushes to put on his now dry *hakama* and runs out of the house. He goes to the small neighboring house and, greeting those within, he asks, "Where are your neighbors?" "No one lives in that house" answer the people in the house. "When the man who once lived there went away to a distant province, that person [the wife] seemed to grieve terribly and, with no one to do the work, became ill. When summer was gone that abandoned person was buried, and nothing has changed since. Out of fear no one has approached the place. The house is useless to the servant," they answer. He becomes more and more frightened. Since [the house] is therefore worthless, he returns whence he came.

How truly frightening! Truly one can meet demons [*oni* 鬼] who remain [after death]. Apparently the man was unequal to thoughts of the past; certainly he was married! It was an extraordinary business.

Such is the story that has been handed down of how one should conduct oneself when inquiring after someone after a long absence.

(TAKAGI 1961–63, 510–12)

We find here that the author invites us into the mind of the protagonist to an extraordinary degree for a popular tale. Particularly, we are privy to another, more fully conscious, ambivalence, namely, that set up by the samurai's contradictory feelings about the wife he is about to wrong. Clearly he loves her, and does not feel easy with what he is about to do; at the same time he rationalizes it: she is still young and pretty, so some man will be attracted to her and provide for her. He does not want to give her up, but she is an impediment to his plans for getting on in the world. So powerful are his feelings that they make his new position almost unbearable and eventually lead to the grotesque scene in which he once again confronts what he takes to be her real self, and his feckless attempts to justify his return. Our author certainly

does not make the samurai an admirable character, but he does humanize him: some of his actions are monstrous, but he at least, like us, the audience, has qualms. He sweats over his cruelty and burns in his love. He at least suffers psychologically for his crime.

It is just this interiorizing of the protagonist that makes the introduction of the theme of *mono no aware* both possible and natural. This feeling of the exquisite pain of transience is much written about in Heian literature, especially as it relates to the garden in autumn, once a place of hope and growth and beauty, now a place of disorder, decay, and a symbol of the inevitability of death. A house set in that garden, as Heian aristocratic houses were, is itself a place of former pristine and tasteful social interaction and happiness. Its decay is like that of an abandoned temple, or a place of past glory, and thus an opportunity to experience the most powerful emotions of pitiable loss. Such is the cultural milieu into which our tale has been inserted here. The cruder, more popular sumptuousness and salaciousness has been largely replaced by a more sophisticated ambivalence: here life looks at death and in some sense enjoys it, instead of moral censure looking at moral depravity and enjoying that.

The cultural milieu of this version of TBH also helps confirm our hypothesis that this tale type is frequently used to mediate the tension between cultural and social orthodoxy and heterodox ideas and values widely held by those both more numerous and less powerful. We have argued that in China our tale type is usually positioned to criticize Confucian pretensions to virtue and thus to question their fitness to govern. We have also suggested that in the case of TAW in Japan it is more often Buddhism that is chastised for its failure to live up to its own ideals. In the *Konjaku* version of TBH it is possible to see a criticism of the newly emerged samurai elite. It was only a few years since the final triumph of this class over the old aristocratically dominated government and social structure. The samurai, widely held by the aristocracy to be crude, uneducated, and cruel, are represented in our tale by a man who not only puts away his wife for economic advantage, and while making no provision for her well-being, but also has the audacity to return after some years, expecting to take up where he left off in their relationship. His comeuppance, while decisive and emotionally tumultuous, is compounded by an unspoken but uniquely Japanese sense of pollution and violation in his intimate contact with the dead. Finally, his character seems unchanged by all he has experienced, since the tale ends with an innuendo that he is still concerned about the economic loss that he has suffered inasmuch as his house is worthless because haunted.

This is surely not a flattering portrait of this one samurai, but it would seem that we are justified in universalizing the referent to the entire upstart

samurai class of the early thirteenth century. The warrior usurpation of economic and political power as well as de facto social position is clearly not accompanied as yet by a corresponding moral or cultural leadership. Our tale, once again, places its message at the point of historical sensitivity: elites in East Asia, as in many other areas, are assumed to be in positions of leadership because they possess numerous excellences that make them worthy and deserving of such a position. Moreover, leadership without such excellence is pretentious and morally corrupt, and, as in many of our tales, leads to ironic reversals, the use of SuAwM, and a good deal of amusement.

Conclusion

While we cannot claim that a folktale is a ritual—although there certainly are ritual aspects of the actual oral telling of such a tale—we do have grounds to claim that Freud's analysis of "civilization and its discontents" (Freud 1961) is to some degree borne out by our analysis. Human beings need compensation for their sacrifices to civilization—or at least to the dominant cultural systems: by living in harmonious social groups, governed by custom or by law, individuals must curtail the immediate and thorough indulgence of many of their most primary desires. A sacrifice is needed; Freud made this explicit, but in traditional societies it is represented in more veiled ways. Our sudden awakening motif indicates that the folk mechanism of compensatory fantasy has been alive and well in East Asia for many centuries.

And, as shown above, even the moralistic level of SuAwM itself can be interpreted as compensatory fantasy in that it reinforced a belief, often belied by immediate experience, that the universe is a place where justice prevails.

We have argued that our tale type also serves to provide a cultural means for ruminating on if not resolving value conflicts, a function especially well exhibited by the *Konjaku* version of TBH and also in TAW. In the latter, since this tale uses SuAwM to present the mysterious paradox of the Buddhist bodhisattva who makes use of people's worldly desires to draw them to unworldly ends. Mysteriously, in this Buddhist tale, doing the right thing for the wrong reasons results in a transformation of personality that includes the seat of desire itself. Thus, what one desires changes, and, ultimately, desire itself is extinguished in the enlightenment with which the title of the tale plays. That is, the common meaning of *satori* 悟 is to awaken from sleep; its religious meaning is enlightenment. Thus does the bodhisattva carry his or her client over the contradictions that torment the unreformed worldling. The most basic problem of Buddhism, the conflict of not wanting, but wanting to want, nirvana, is thereby overcome (Miller 2000).

APPENDIX 1: The "Suddenly" of SuAwM

We would be remiss should we leave the subject of suddenness in an East Asian context without exploring the centrality of this or at least a similar notion in Ch'an/Zen Buddhism, namely, "sudden enlightenment." So pervasive was its influence that even among nominally Confucian scholars in the Sung dynasty in China, Ch'an terminology played a significant role in art criticism and in the self-identity of a number of literati painters. The Southern School of art emphasized the character of the painter: much older was the Confucian view that only a person of superior virtue could rightly be called a *chun-tzu* 君子, a superior man, and, as was true of all important accomplishments, only a person of superior virtue could paint a truly great picture. What the Southern School added to this under Buddhist influence was the idea that the virtue, or quality, needed was a radical revolution of personality so powerful that one who experienced it was transformed into a sage, the Confucian structural equivalent of the Buddhist bodhisattva. The Ch'an influence can be seen in the peculiar quality of this transformation, namely, its suddenness. In art circles suddenness (*tun* 頓) was seen as superior to the gradualness (*chien* 漸) of the Northern School. Gradualness connoted the plodding of the merely technically accomplished. Inspiration required a meditative posture and was the result of the pure spontaneity (*tzu-jan* 自然) of the enlightened mind. Of course *tzu-jan* was a favorite term of the authors of the Taoist classic *Tao Te Ching* 道德経, where it describes the effortless and egoless activity—that is the spontaneous activity—of the Taoist sage.

It was probably Tao Sheng 道生 (ca. 360–434) who gave meditative Buddhism the strong shot of Taoism it needed in order to bring forth that quintessentially Chinese form called Ch'an. Certainly it was he whose influential but now lost treatise *Becoming a Buddha through Sudden Enlightenment* set the stage for the emergence of the dominant school of Ch'an, the Southern School. But it was not until the early eighth-century *Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch* 六祖壇経 that this school solidified its identity. In that curious document we find the story of Hui-neng, an illiterate brush-cutter, who upon accidentally hearing someone reciting the *Diamond Sutra,* as the text puts it, *teng-shih pien wu* 登時便悟, suddenly [I] achieved enlightenment" (YAMPOLSKY 1967, 4).

For our purposes two things about this sutra stand out: (1) its extensive use of the folktale genre in its narrative portions, which are full of intrigues, midnight escapes, and fears that someone might "steal the dharma" from the patriarch, Hui-neng (MILLER 1984); and (2) the particular term used to express enlightenment, namely, *wu* 悟. The common-language meaning of *wu* is "to awaken, as from sleep or from a dream." As the *Diamond Sutra* puts it,

> As stars, a fault of vision, as a lamp,
> A mock show, dew drops, or a bubble,
> A dream, a lightning flash, or cloud,
> So should one view what is conditioned.
> (CONZE 1958, 68)

As Conze explains, "Only the enlightened are awake to reality as it is; compared with their vision of true reality, our normal experience is that of a dream, unreal and not to be taken seriously" (70).

Of course these are only comparisons, only juxtapositions of similarities; they are not the proof of the historian who must demonstrate causality via intermediate steps, actual connections, if possible documentary evidence making attributions. They remain only suggestive that SuAwM, both motif and tale, might have a Buddhist, or Buddhist-Taoist, origin in East

Asia. This is not to say, however, that independent invention in other cultural contexts, at least of the motif, might not have happened elsewhere.

APPENDIX 2: Additional Examples of SuAwM or SuAwM-Like Narratives

1. Tsao Hsueh-chin, *Dream of the Red Chamber* (TSAO 1958)

Pao-yu's dream (41–47): The boy Pao-yu falls asleep and dreams of an opulent palace where he meets the Goddess of Disillusionment, who is "in charge of the plaints of unhappy maidens and sad lovers, their debts of love, and their unfulfilled desires" (41). There he reads many poems about impermanence, karma, fate, and especially disappointment and sadness, most of which he does not understand. The goddess, who has failed in her attempt to "enlighten" him with words, then resorts to actual experience: she calls in her sister, who seduces Pao-yu and thus initiates him into the mysteries of sexual love. The next day he is out walking when suddenly he finds himself in a wild place. Just as he is about to be set upon by monsters, he awakens to find himself in bed. While telling his maid the dream, he reenacts with her the sexual encounter. Of course the frame tale tells us that what is conventionally experienced as reality is in fact a dream.

As in the sudden awakening tale, the sexual encounter occurs in the illusory portion of the narrative, here in a dream. The threatening portion, however, is not logically connected to the plot of the story and serves merely as a dramatic occasion to heighten the effect of the awakening. Unlike SuAwM, the threat or embarrassment does not come as a result of the awakening, nor is the lesson taught by means of the sudden reversal. Indeed, there is a sudden awakening but no reversal at all. On the contrary, the "lesson," sexual initiation, is not taught by the awakening from illusion to reality, but reality simply reinforces illusion in the portion of the narrative that follows the dream.

2. Shen Chi-chi (750–800), ed., "The Fox Fairy" (*Jen-shih chuan*) (BAUER and FRANKE 1964, 68–80)

A Mr. Cheng, brother-in-law to an imperial officer, was "too fond of the bottle," he "preferred wine and women to anything else." On his way to a drinking party in the capital of Chang'an in the year 750, Cheng meets three young women. After some bantering, the most beautiful of the three, a Miss Jen, agrees to go with him to the Eastern Pleasure Garden. Night has fallen when they come to an imposing palace. They drink together and spend the night together. Early next morning Miss Jen hurries Cheng away lest they be discovered. Later Cheng asks of a local baker, "Who owns the palace you can see from here to the east, the one with the large entrance gate?"

"Those are just ruins," the baker replies in amazement. "There's no house there!" (70).

After further adventures, the two get together again and Cheng sets up Miss Jen as his mistress, as he already has a lawful wife. One day, as they are riding together, a dog attacks her; she slips down from the saddle on to the ground and races away, "in her true form as a vixen." The dog, however, catches her and kills her. Cheng tearfully buries the body and returns to her horse: "Her clothes still hung on the saddle, her shoes and stockings in the stirrups were like the empty skin of a cicada; only the headdress had fallen to the ground. There was no further sign of her. Even her servants and serving women had disappeared without a trace" (78).

3. "Tsu Tzu-chlun" (MA and LAU 1994, 416–19; LI 1961)

This tale also begins with a man who gives himself over to drink and dissipation. However,

rather than presenting the denouement immediately after the man arrives at a state of impoverishment and degradation, this tale presents a series of adventures enabled by a mysterious old man who enriches the profligate three times. Only after the third enrichment does Tsu Tzu-ch'un begin to think of others. His aid to widows and orphans then prompts the mysterious old man, with the symbolic accoutrements of a proper Taoist alchemist, to set up a series of horrible and frightening experiences. Tsu is admonished no matter what happens not to move or speak. He experiences terrible monsters, the torturing and murder of his wife, his own tortures and eventual rebirth as a girl. It is only when, after "his" marriage and the birth of "her" son, the infant son is dashed to death against a stone and "he" cries out "No!" that the SuAwM occurs. Suddenly Tsu is back in the old Taoist's presence. He is told that he might have achieved immortality had he remained silent; the experiences were intended to purge him of "joy and anger, grief and fear, loathing and desire." Tsu returns home sad and ashamed.

4. "Student Huang" (GISKIN 1997, 220–22): An oral tale, collected in Xiantao City, Hubei, late twentieth century

A student of the Confucian classics journeys to take the imperial examinations. Along the way he comes upon a man who, after offering him food and a place to sleep, tells him a tale of injustice: a wealthy man has stolen this poor peasant's land. Huang promises to take the case to an honest official, and the man and Huang go to bed for the night. Next morning the SuAwM event occurs. Huang finds himself sleeping beside a newly built tomb. He discovers that the man from whom he had heard the story had been dead for some time. Nonetheless Huang perseveres and eventually justice is done so that at least the dead man's widow and children can regain what is rightfully theirs and have the wherewithal to survive. The tale ends with a hint that supernatural intervention aids Huang in his winning of first place in the examinations.

Here SuAwM is associated with wrongdoing, but not on the part of the man who experiences it. Nor is there any hint of sexual impropriety. As it stands, this is a straightforward tale of moral uprightness on the part of an aspiring Confucian official (the student) and the actual official who carries out the righting of the wrong. SuAwM serves here only to underline the supernatural element, that is, the converse with a ghost.

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