

YANG-KO (秧歌)  
THE RURAL THEATRE IN TING-HSIEN, HOPEI<sup>1</sup>

By Chao Wei-pang

I

Besides the dramas staged in the theatres in large cities there are other Chinese dramas which are performed in the limited rural districts. These differ from the city dramas and are varied in technique and setting and are shot through with deep local colour. In contrast with the city dramas, we may call them country dramas. Some of the country dramas are city dramas localized; some originated in their respective districts. Many of the town dramas developed from the country dramas<sup>2</sup>.

The country drama in Ting-hsien (定縣), Hopei, is called *yang-ko* by the people themselves. In all the larger villages in this district there are men who can sing and perform the *Yang-ko* plays. They often

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1) In preparing this paper I am much indebted to Mr. Han Yao-chou (韓耀洲) who comes from Ting-hsien and informed me of many details about the rural theatre, to Mr. Wang T'i-chih (王梯之) who recorded the notation of two Yang-ko songs according to Mr. Han's rendering, and to Mr. Wang Tsê-ch'ing (王澤青) through whom I had the opportunity of knowing Mr. Han and Mr. Wang.

2) As examples of the first kind we may take the I-yang Ch'iang (弋陽腔) and the Kao Ch'iang (高腔), which are southern dramas (南戲) localized in I-yang (Kiangsi) and Kao-yang (Hopei) respectively. Of the second kind, the êrh-huang (二黃) and the hsi-p'i (西皮) may be mentioned. The former originated in Hupei; it derived its name from the names of two districts, Huang-kang (黃岡) and Huang-p'i (黃皮). The latter was originally called Kan-su tiao (甘肅調); it came from Kansu through Shansi to Hopei. A combination of the êrh-huang and hsi-p'i, under the influence of k'un-ch'ü (崑曲), formed the p'i-huang (皮黃) or Peking drama, which is the most popular drama of China to-day. Very probably the pang-tzū (梆子) is originally also a local drama from Northwest China and became very popular in North China in the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties. Concerning the origins of the local dramas and their connection with the town dramas there are many controversial discussions. Cf. *History of the Modern Chinese Drama* (中國近代戲曲史), by Aoki Seiji (青木正兒); translated into Chinese by Wang Ku-lu (王古魯), Commercial Press, Shanghai, 1936; pp. 438-446.

organize themselves in a *Yang-ko* Society, which is commonly called *I-ho Hui* (義合會) or Righteous Union Society. The musical instruments, curtains, costumes and ornaments are purchased by the society. The members divide themselves into actors, musicians and attendants. Among them there are only a few professional actors. Most are farmers. There are no *Yang-ko* plays in printed form; they are taught from mouth to mouth<sup>3</sup>. During the first month, a few days after the Chinese New Year, most villages have *Yang-ko* performances. They are also performed on other festivals. A performance generally lasts from three to four days, in some cases even for ten days. The peasants, men and women, young and old, take much delight in the shows. They not only go to attend them but also sing the songs when they are at work or leisure. They are certainly the chief entertainment of the peasants in Ting-hsien and its neighbouring districts.

'*Yang-ko*' literally means 'rice shoot songs'. According to tradition the *Yang-ko* of Ting-hsien were originally composed by *Su Shih* (蘇軾), a great poet and statesman of the Sung dynasty. In the northern part of this district, in the villages around the Hei-lung Ch'üan (黑龍泉), the peasants supported themselves by planting rice. When *Su Shih* was the magistrate of this district, he saw that the farmers transplanted the rice laboriously in the water field. Hence, he composed some songs for them to beguile the monotony of the work<sup>4</sup>.

*Su Shih* was the magistrate of Ting-chou (i. e. Ting-hsien) in the eighth year of Yüan-yü (1093). He was there only for about four months, from the 23rd of the 12th month to the end of the 4th month of the next year<sup>5</sup>. But, because he was a famous poet and statesman in history, he was regarded as one of the famous magistrates of Ting-hsien.

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3) In 1929 F. C. H. Lee (李景漢) and F. S. W. Chang (張世祿), members of the National Association of the Mass Education Movement (中華平民教育促進會), in undertaking a social survey, asked some actors to sing for them. They recorded forty-eight plays, containing about 500,000 characters. Together with an Introduction about the history and present condition of the theatre and the classification of the plays, they were published by the same Association in 1933 under the Chinese title *Ting-hsien Yang-ko Hsüan* (定縣秧歌選) and the English title *Ting-hsien Plantation Songs*. 2 vols., 1099 pp.

4) *Ting-hsien Plantation Songs*, Introduction, p. 1-4.

5) *Chronological Sketch of Tung-p'o's Life* (東坡紀年錄), in *Tung-p'o's Poetical Works, Classified and Annotated* (集註分類東坡詩), by Wang Shih-p'êng (王十朋).

Even now he is worshipped in a temple in the city<sup>6</sup>; some of his writings are carved in stones and preserved<sup>7</sup>. Although many volumes of his works, including essays, memorials to the emperors, private letters, poems, songs, etc. are still preserved, and a great many paragraphs about him can be found in the works of his contemporaries and in later generations, we, however, find no source authenticating the belief that he had written songs for the rice planters. Why then is the origin of *Yang-ko* attributed to him? Barring a common Chinese tendency of attributing the origin of any custom to a famous personage in history, it may be due to the fact that *Su Shih* had written a song entitled *Yang-ma Ko* ( 秧馬歌 )<sup>8</sup> or 'Song of Rice Shoots Horse'. When he was in Wu-ch'ang ( 武昌 ), he saw that the farmers very conveniently rode on wooden horses while transplanting the young rice shoots in the water field and he composed a song about it<sup>9</sup>. This might have misled the people to believe that he had composed songs for the rice planters in Ting-chou. Some also say that the cultivation of rice in Ting-hsien was originated by *Su Shih* and give as evidences that Su Ch'üan Ts'un ( 蘇泉村 ), where the farmers plant rice, derived its name from *Su Shih*. But in fact, it is pointed out by the compilers of *Ting-chou Chih*, that rice planting was originated by *Hsüeh Hsiang* ( 薛向 ), another magistrate of Ting-chou, and the village Su Ch'üan Ts'un was probably at first called Hsüeh Ch'üan Ts'un<sup>10</sup>.

Nevertheless, this legend, if so it be, is not contrary to the origin of *Yang-ko* in its original sense. The *Yang-ko* in its primitive form still exists in South China. When the farmers, men and women, are trans-

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6) *Ting-hsien Chih* ( 定縣志 ), 1934; chüan 2, p. 31. — Cf. *Ting-hsien, A Social Survey* ( 定縣社會調查 ). By Franklin C.H. Lee, National Association of the Mass Education Movement, 1933; p. 58.

7) *Ting-hsien Chih*, 1934; chüan 19, p. 21-24.

8) *Tung-p'o's Poetical Works, Classified and Annotated*; chüan 24.

9) In his introductory note to the song he says: "Formerly when I traveled in Wu-ch'ang, I saw that all the farmers rode on rice-shoot horses. For the sake of smoothness its belly was made of elm or date wood; for that of lightness its back of ch'iu ( 楸 ) wood or wood of oil tree. The belly was like the bottom of a boat with the head and tail elevated and the back like a convex tile, so that it was convenient to move on the mud. On its head were fastened some grass, over which were hung the rice shoots. It is much easier for the farmers to ride on it and plant than to plant by stooping over". A picture of the rice-shoot horse is found in the *Nung-cheng Ch'uan-shu* ( 農政全書 ), by Hsü Kuang-ch'i ( 徐光啓 ), chüan 21.

10) *Ting-chou Chih* ( 定州志 ), 1848; chüan 4, p. 80.

planting the young rice shoots in the field, they often sing to one another. Generally love songs are sung<sup>11</sup>. But according to the *T'ung-su Pien*, the *Yang-ko* is originally the songs sung by the women carrying food to the farmers in the field<sup>12</sup>. At any rate, we may say that the *Yang-ko*, as its name indicates, is originally connected with the planting of rice shoots. From such songs are evolved in different localities various dances and songs. In *Wu-lin Chiu-shih* (武林舊事) a kind of performance is mentioned among the dance procession on the lantern festival by the name *ts'un-t'ien lo* (村田樂) or 'country amusement', which, according to *T'ung-su Pien*, was *Yang-ko*<sup>13</sup>. In Chekiang and Kiangsu it has also developed into a kind of dance<sup>14</sup>. In Peking now a kind of singing dance which is also called *Yang-ko* can still be seen on the streets on the lantern festival. The singers walk on stilts of about four feet high. A monk, a fisherman, a fisher-woman and a comedian are often dressed in special costumes. At first they sing alternately; but at the climax they sing together in chorus. Each song consists of four sentences and each sentence of seven characters. The series of songs continues to tell a story or describe the same scene<sup>15</sup>.

At any rate, the rural plays of Ting-hsien to-day have not been composed by *Su Shih*. If he composed anything for the farmers, it was verse, but not drama. The rural theatre may have relationship with the popular dances and songs that are called *Yang-ko*, but we have not enough materials to prove it. In the following discussion the rural theatre is studied as a rural theatre in order to analyse its characteristics in comparison with the town dramas and the *su-ch'ü* (俗曲) or 'popular songs' in general.

## II

In dramatic construction the rural plays of Ting-hsien are more similar to the modern town dramas, the *pang-tzũ* and the *p'i-huang*, than

11) Some examples from Anhui, Yünnan and Ssüchuan can be found in the *Folk-song Weekly*, The Peking National University, vol. I, No. 50 (April 1924); 72 (December 1924); vol. II, No. 31, 32 (January 1937).

12) *T'ung-su Pien* (通俗編), by Chai Hao (翟翹); chüan 21.

13) *Ibidem*.

14) *Ibidem*.

15) Li Chia-jui (李家瑞), *A Brief of Peking Popular Songs* (北平俗曲略), Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, 1933; pp. 182-183. *Ching-i-t'ang Ta-yang-ko* (經仁堂大秧歌), is a collection of the Peking yang-ko songs. Some pieces of these songs are printed also in *Yi-shang Ssü-p'u* (霓裳續譜), a collection of popular songs edited by Wang T'ing-shao (王廷紹) in 1795; chüan 7.

to the earlier ones such as the northern and southern dramas of the Yüan dynasty and the *kun-ch'iang* of the Ming and the Ch'ing dynasties. At the beginning of each act of the northern dramas, the chief character first reads a poem and then declares his name and life in the spoken language. This poem and speech is called *t'ing-ch'ang pai* (定場白) in dramatic terminology. Thereafter, singing and dialogues, i. e. the body of the play, continues alternatively. In the southern dramas, when the chief character appears, he begins with the singing of *yin-tzũ* (引子) or 'introductory words', that is one or, at most, two short songs. Then comes the *ting ch'ang pai* but in general a *tz'u* poem (詞) is used in place of the *shih* (詩) of the northern dramas. The construction of the *kun-ch'iang* is the same as that of the southern dramas. The *p'ang-tzũ* and the *p'i-huang* begin in each scene with the recitation of the *yin-tzũ* also by the chief characters, but it consists of two or, in some cases, four rhythmic sentences. Next is the reading of the *ting-ch'ang shih* (定場詩), that is a *shih* but not *tz'u*. Then the character tells his name and experiences. Only this section is commonly called *ting-ch'ang pai*<sup>16</sup>. Although no such terms as *yin-tzũ*, *ting-ch'ang shih* and *ting-ch'ang pai*, exist in the rural theatre, in fact the rural plays, in most cases, begin in the same manner as the *pang-tzũ* and the *p'i-huang* plays. Among the forty-eight plays collected from Ting-hsien, 30 have *yin-tzũ*, each containing two sentences of equal length, and 8, in which a comedian first appears on the stage, each containing two or more sentences of unequal length. (In *p'i-huang* the comedians recite also irregular *yin-tzũ*.) 31 rural plays have the *ting-ch'ang shih*, a poem of four sentences with five or seven characters in each sentence. After the *ting-ch'ang shih* is *ting-ch'ang pai*. Then singing and dialogues continue.

The songs in each act of the northern and southern dramas and *kung-ch'iang* are sung to a definite set of tunes in a well-known musical suite. They are governed by strict rules: the songs for a certain tune must consist of a fixed number of sentences and characters; the characters in certain positions must be in definite tones, even, ascending or descending<sup>17</sup>. The songs of the *pang-tzũ* and the *p'i-huang* are composed much more freely. They may be either short or long and there is no law regulating

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16) Concerning the construction of the different kinds of Chinese dramas cf. Aoki Seiji, op. cit. (Chinese translation), pp. 49-65. Ch'i Ju-shan (齊如山), *The Structure of the Chinese Drama* (中國劇之組織), Peking 1928; chapter I, pp. 1-20.

17) Hsü Chih-heng (許之衡), *Ch'ü-lü I-chih* (曲律易知), Peking 1922; vol. II, pp. 43-45. Concerning the rules of composing songs cf. Ch'in-ting Ch'ü-p'u (欽定曲譜), compiled during K'ang-hsi, Ch'ing.

the tone of the characters in the sentences. So also are the songs of the rural plays. The Yüan dramas and *kun-ch'iang* generally have unequal number of characters in the sentences of the song. But in *pang-tzũ* and *p'i huang* the number of characters in all sentences of one song is in principle the same. The most common types are the seven-character and the ten character sentences. The rural plays in general have seven characters in a sentence but there are many exceptions. The songs of the rural plays, as those of the town dramas, have rhyme but it is not so regular. In the Yüan dramas the songs for a certain tune have their own specific way of rhyme. The rhyme of the *pang-tzũ* and of the *p'i-huang* songs is at the end of each sentence. The rural plays in this point are different from the *pang-tzũ* and from the *p'i-huang*. Their rhyme is generally at the end of the following sentence, but sometimes it occurs after three or four sentences. There are also blank verses. Another characteristic of the rhyme of the rural plays is that the nasal finals 'an' and 'eng' (*ang, ing, ung, and uang* are rhymed with *eng*) are frequently used. In many cases the an or eng rhyme is used throughout the whole play.

Plays in *an*-rhyme:

*Chieh Tang* (借當)  
*Lan-ch'iao Hui* (藍橋會)  
*Chin-chuan Chi* (金傳記)  
*Liu Yü-lan Shang-miao*  
 (劉玉蘭上廟)

Plays in *eng*-rhyme:

*Hsiao Hua-yüan* (小花園)  
*Chu Hung-wu Fang-niu*  
 (朱洪武放牛)  
*An-êrh Sung-mi* (安兒送米)  
*Chü Kang* (鋸缸)  
*Wang Hsiao Kan-chiao*  
 (王小趕脚)

*Wang Ming-yüeh Hsiu-ch'i*

(王明月休妻)  
*Erh-huan Chi* (耳環記)  
*Lo-ch'un Chi* (襪裙記)

Plays in *an*- and *eng*-rhyme:

*Liu Hsiu Tsou-kuo*  
 (劉秀走國)  
*Kuo Chü Mai-tzũ* (郭巨埋子)  
*Fan-t'ang* (反堂)  
*Lung-pao-ssũ Chiang-hsiang*  
 (龍寶寺降香)

Even in the other plays the *an*- and *eng*-rhymes are still prevailing; the rhymes *i, ao, ou, etc.*, are only occasionally used.

The songs of the rural dramas are always sung in similar rhythms (see musical notes), that are different from the various styles of the town

dramas<sup>18</sup>. Moreover, the singing of the town dramas is accompanied with playing of instrumental music. The singing of the rural dramas is only accompanied by percussion instruments. When one sentence is finished it is followed by the playing of some simple musical instruments, the rhythm of which is always the same. The instruments are: single-skin drum, castanets, *yang-ko* drum, gong, cymballs and *suan-tzū* (a smaller gong made of cast copper). There are no string or wind instruments which play the chief rôles in the orchestra of the town theatre. The single-skin drum and the castanets, that are used to beat time, are the same as those used in town theatres. Probably they are taken from the town theatre. The *yang-ko* drum is smaller than the drum used in town theatres. It is a cylinder about two feet high with a diameter of one foot at either end and a little larger in the middle. It is perhaps originally a kind of drum carried under one arm by the popular song singers travelling from village to village. The gong and cymbals are the same as in town theatres but the *suan-tzū*, which is used only sometimes in the town theatres, is also an instrument of the popular song singers.

As the above analysis shows, in outer form the rural theatre of Ting-hsien is similar to the town dramas, especially the *pang-tzū* and the *p'i-huang*, but at the same time it has its own specific characteristic. Therefore, we can safely say that the rural theatre is not a degenerate town drama. It has developed from something else under the influence of some town drama or dramas.

Very probably it is the *pang-tzū* that most influenced the rural theatre in its development into the present form, although the *p'i-huang* has also the same dramatic construction as it. The *p'i-huang* began to prevail in Peking in the Ch'ien-lung period of the Ch'ing dynasty and it came to the country of the Hopei province in a very later time. The *pang-tzū* had been the most popular drama in North China long before it. The rural theatre seems to have a longer history than the *p'i-huang* in Ting-hsien.

As to the direct source of the rural theatre of Ting-hsien, its characteristics point to the popular songs. Popular songs are the intermediate forms between folk-songs and dramas. According to Dr. *Liu Fu*

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18) Ch'ü Shih-ying (瞿世英), who has attended the performance of the plays, says in his preface to the Ting-hsien Plantation Songs: "In music even the rhythm of the yang-ko is agricultural. If we listen with attention to its melodic rhythm, it is rather like that of the agricultural work. At least we cannot hear the rhythm of the machine".

the difference between popular songs and folk-songs lies in that the former have musical tunes but the latter not<sup>19</sup>. In other words, the former are in a higher and more developed stage than the latter. The former have had their specific forms and rhythms. Moreover, there are songs for professional singers. But they have not developed into dramatic performances. The stories are told by a singer, not performed by actors. In *Li Chia-jui's* Brief of Peking Popular Songs<sup>20</sup> sixty-two kinds of popular songs were described. Among them some should not be placed under the category of popular songs as defined above but should be called country dramas<sup>21</sup>, and some which have subject matters other than stories<sup>22</sup> do not concern us here. More important for us are the various kinds of story-telling (說書), including the *ku-tz'u* (鼓詞), the *ta-ku shu* (大鼓書), the *hsien-tzū shu* (絃子書), the *chu-pan shu* (竹板書), the *k'uai shu* (快書), the *nan-tz'u* (南詞); the *lien-hua lao* (蓮花落) and the *Fêng-yang hua-ku* (鳳陽花鼓). These kinds of popular songs are different from one another in style of singing and in musical instruments used but they have also some common features. The Ting-hsien rural plays considered as plays have their specific characteristics, which are some of the features common to these popular songs. In general these songs are composed of seven-character sentences, the rhyme falls on the end of every-other sentence and one rhyme is used in one song even though it is several volumes long<sup>23</sup>. The story-teller's singing is accompanied by the playing of the *hsien-tzū* (絃子), a three-stringed guitar, and the beating of a drum and the playing of iron castanets by the singer himself<sup>24</sup>. The *lien-hua lao* is also called *shih-pu-hsien* (十不閑) or *t'ai-p'ing-ko tz'u* (太平歌詞); during the singing only bamboo castanets are played<sup>25</sup>. During the singing of *Fêng-yang hua-ku* no musical instrument is used but after four or five sentences the drum and gong are beaten<sup>26</sup>. The drum is same as the *yang-ko* drum.

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19) Liu Fu (劉復), *Draft of a Complete Catalogue of Chinese Popular Songs* (中國俗曲總目稿), Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica 1932. A catalogue of 6044 popular songs. See page 1.

20) Note 15.

21) Such as in group II, Performances of Stories.

22) Such as the ditties in group III.

23) Li Chia-jui, l. c. pp. 1-18.

24) Ibidem.

25) Li Chia-jui, l. c. pp. 145-149.

26) Li Chia-jui, l. c. p. 157.



Moreover, the connection of the rural theatre and the popular songs can also be founded by a comparison of their subject stories. One and the same story is often on one hand told in some popular songs and on the other hand performed in a rural play. Out of the forty-eight plays collected from Ting-hsien seventeen have the same subject matter as the popular songs<sup>27</sup>. This comparison is based on Dr. *Liu Fu's* Draft of a Complete Catalogue of Chinese Popular Songs. Unfortunately in many cases the type of popular songs is not mentioned in this catalogue. For comparison perhaps it is necessary to mention here that only five of the rural plays are taken from town dramas<sup>28</sup>.

From the consideration of the last two paragraphs we can clearly see that the rural theatre in its origin is closely connected with the popular songs. But how the connection came about we cannot be certain. There are two possibilities: first, the rural theatre was evolved from one type of popular songs. What type it was we do not know. Secondly, it was formed out of not one but many types of popular songs on the basis of the *Yang-ko* in its literal meaning, i. e. the *yang-ko* in its primitive form. In my opinion, the latter is the more probable.

Another characteristic of the rural theatre, I think, may be mentioned at the end of this section. It has been pointed out by some authors that the Chinese *hsi* (drama) is a kind of opera. Its soul is music. It does not make an appeal to the understanding, but a combined appeal to the senses of color, voice and emotion<sup>29</sup>. This is only true for the town dramas. For a theatre-goer who cannot memorize the text of the song it is surely impossible to understand what the actors sing. But the singing of the rural theatre is very clear and its songs are always in the vernacular language. Every word can come to the ears of the peasants. Furthermore, the same statement is often repeated by several actors. Hence the rural theatre is often said to be *chiu-fan yang-ko* (九翻秧歌) or nine-times repeated *yang-ko*. The peasants can very easily understand what is sung. Besides, local idioms, local humorous expressions and proverbs are much used in the plays. This can make the peasants feel that the plays are arts of their own.

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27) They are: Yang Erh-shê Hua-yen, Ta-niao, Lan-ch'iao Hui, Shuang Suo Kui, Chieh Tang, Chin Chuan Chi, An-êrh Sung-mi, Kuo Chū Mai-tzū, Ting-lang Hsün-fu, Wang Ming-yüeh Hsiu-ch'i, Kao Wen-chū Tso Hua-t'ing, Hsiao-ku Hsian, Chū Kang, Wang Hsiao-êrh Kan-chiao, Ting Têng, Chieh-nü Tiao-hsiao.

28) They are: Hsieh Chin-lien Ma-ch'eng, Kuan-wang Miao, Tso-lou Sha-hsi, Chuang Chou Shan-fen.

29) Lin Yu-tang, *My Country and My People*, 1936; p. 259.

## III

It is pointed out in *Ch'ü Shih-ying's* preface to the Plantation Songs that a great number of the plays are adopted from the popular stories and legends. He even says: "If carefully analysed, nearly all the *yan-ko* plays are popular legends and stories". Some of them are legends about great historical persons; such as *Liu Hsiu Tsou-ki'o*, a legend about the first emperor of the Later Han dynasty; *Chu Hung-wu Fang-niu* about the first emperor of Ming, and *Pai-ts'ao P'o* about *Chao Kuang-yin*, the founder of Sung<sup>30</sup>. Such tales, though about historical persons, are not taken from historical books. The first two are traditional stories among the people; the third one may have been taken from a collection of short stories compiled in the Ming dynasty<sup>31</sup>, but it is also possible that it was originally a story circulating among the people, which some story writer put in his book and the unknown author of this rural play took it directly from the people, not from the book. Most of the rural plays are performances of folk-tales or stories of the peasants themselves of more or less wide circulation. The most famous one is the tale of *Liang Shan-po* (梁山伯) and *Chu Ying-t'ai* (祝英台)<sup>32</sup>. In *Liu Fu's* Catalogue fourteen different popular songs from different quarters of China are catalogued about the same story<sup>33</sup>. *Chin-chuan Chi*<sup>34</sup> is a play based on it. In others, such as

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30) Cf. Résumé 1-3.

31) Fêng Mêng-lung (馮夢龍), *Ching-shih T'ung-yen* (警世通言), chüan 21.

32) Some studies on this tale were published in the *Weekly of the Institute of Sinology*, Peking National University (國立北京大學研究所國學門週刊), No. 3, October 1925. *Folklore Weekly* (民俗週刊), Graduate School of National Sun Yat-sen University, Institute of Letters, No. 93, February 1930.

33) The titles of the songs and the places from which they come are: *Liang Shan-po Ch'ang-ch'un* (梁山伯唱春), *Liang Shan-po Ch'un-tiao* (梁山伯春調), *Ying-t'ai Hsia-shan* (英台下山) from Shanghai; *Liang Shan-po Shih-êrh-yüeh Hua-ming* (梁山伯十二日花名), *Hsiung-ti Hsiang-hui* (兄弟相會), *Ying-t'ai Ssü-hsiung* (英台思兄) from Su-chou, Kiangsu; *Liang Shan-po Hui-you* (梁山伯會友) from Nanch'ang, Kiangsi; *Ying-t'ai Tiao-chih Ko* (英台弔紙歌) from Amoy, Fukien; *Liang Shan-po Sung-you* (梁山伯送友), *Chu Ying-t'ai Shang-hsüeh* (祝英台上學) from Honan; *Chu Ying-t'ai Wu-shan Fang-you* (祝英台吳山訪友), *Liang Shan-po Chu Ying-t'ai Chieh-pai* (梁山伯祝英台結拜) from Fukien; *Shan-po Sung-hsing* (山伯送行) from Ssüch'uan; *Shan-po Fang-you* (山伯訪友) from Yünnan and Kuangtung.

34) Résumé 4.

*Lan-ch'iao Hui*, *Kuo Chü Mai-tzū*, *Chieh Tang*<sup>35</sup>, etc. all are tales of wide circulation. Such plays take their origins from rural society, which is comparatively simple, with the family as its center and marriage as the most important affair; therefore, they are mainly concerned with love, marriage and family life.

Of course, plays of similar content can also be found in the town dramas. But in general the contents of the town dramas, especial those of the present time, are more complex. Their predominant elements are not these folk-tales and popular stories. Conversely, some principal composite elements of the town dramas play no important rôles in the rural plays. For instance, most of the popular plays given in large cities to-day are historical plays, performances of events from historical books, and plays that are adopted from novels and other literary works. In the Ting-hsien rural theatre very few of such plays are performed. In connection with this point, the so-called 'military plays' (武戲), one of which at least is performed in the town theatre in half a day, can scarcely be seen in the rural theatre.

Most rural plays have strong ethical meaning. Because incidents of rural life are performed, the ethical thoughts expressed are concentrated on family life. The compilers of the Ting-hsien Plantation Songs classified the plays into six groups according to their contents: a) On love. To this group belong most of the legends of historical persons and folk-tales such as *Chu ying-t'ai* and *Liang Shan-po*, *Wei Kwei-yuan* and *Lan Jui-lien*, etc. b) On filial piety and connubial fidelity. Out of the forty-eight plays in the whole book, thirteen are classified in the group. The main idea to be expressed is how the son and the wife should conduct themselves. Some good examples are given. c) On relationship of husband and wife. d) On relationship of mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. To these two groups belong nine plays, which, just in contrast to the plays in group b, tell how the husband and the mother-in-law should not behave. Some bad examples are given. e) On humor. Two plays in this group are satires of cowardly husbands. f) Miscellaneous<sup>36</sup>. On the whole no thought of

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35) The songs about the tale *Lan-ch'iao Hui* in Lui Fu's Catalogue are: *Lan-ch'iao Hui* from Peking; *Shui Ta Lan-ch'iao* (水打藍橋) from Honan, and *Shui Yen Lan-ch'iao* (水淹藍橋) from Peking. The songs about *Kuo Chü Mai-tzū*, three different editions from Peking, one from Su-chou and one from Kiangsu. Two songs about *Chieh Tang* from Peking.

36) To group a) belong résumés 1-6, 9, 14; to group b) 7, 8, 10, 12; to group c) 11, 13, 15-17; to group d) 18-20.

patriotism and loyalty to emperors, which are the main ideas of the historical plays of the town dramas, can be found in the rural plays. This is also one of the differences of the rural theatre from the town theatres.

Religious ideas play an important rôle in expressing ethical thought. The gods or immortals always help the good and punish the bad. For example, in the play *Ting-lang Hsün-fu* the Great Immortal, probably an old fox, changing itself into an old man pushing a car, asked the boy Ting-lang to draw the car for him at first; and when the boy was tired, he carried him in his car. Then the boy could easily go to South China to find his father<sup>37</sup>. In some plays the religious ideas are expressed explicitly and in some implicitly. In the play *Kuo Chü Mai-tzū*, though no deities appear on the scene, the idea is quite clear. One day poor *Kuo Chü* wanted to bury his child alive in order to save some food for his old mother. When he and his wife were digging the ground, they discovered some silver ingots. With the following verse the play ends:

The fresh blue sky cannot be deceived.  
 Don't laugh at those poor people wearing old clothes.  
 Who does not like possessing wealth and children?  
 Riches and glory are given by the Heaven.

The soul of the peasants is expressed quite clearly. Another paragraph may be quoted here from *Wang Ming-yüeh Hsiu-ch'i*, in which the same idea is expressed but in a more concrete way.

The Jade Emperor sings: The Record of Good and Bad is open on the desk. I observe the Record to find the causes. I lift up my head and observe the Shantung region, where the devils and bandits are crowded. Loudly I shout in my Golden Hall: Listen, you alone, Green Dragon! You are sent to the Shantung region. At midnight, when the watchman beats the watch for the third time, you kill them all. I lift up my head and observe the Shansi region. There is a bad man *Wang Hsiao-êrh*, who does not do good. He beats his parents and scolds his neighbours. White Tiger, you are sent to Shansi. At noon he must be killed. I lift up my head and observe the Hupei region, where the people suffered hardships because for three years it has not rained. *Li Ch'ang-kêng*, you are sent to Hupei. Just at noon rain will fall. Feeling uneasy, I lift up my head again and see the people in Lo-yang, Honan. There is a man, *Wang Ming-yüeh*, who repairs bridges and roads and builds temples for the gods. This good man should have nine sons but he has none. From my Dragon Hall I send out a magical air to call *Sung-tzū Niang-niang*. A

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37) Other examples résumés 11-14.

golden boy and a jade girl will be given to you and you send them to the door of *Wang Ming-yüeh's* house in Lo-yang. Waving the sleeves of my robe, I descend from the dragon throne.

The religious system in the plays is, of course, a combination of Taoism and Buddhism as it is prevailing everywhere in the country. But at the same time some traces of primitive superstitions can also be found. First, the belief that the dragon sometimes comes out of the head of an emperor exists in three plays<sup>38</sup>. Very probably it is a survival of the belief in the external soul, i. e. the soul may temporarily leave the body. The soul of a man is often in the shape of a snake and that of an emperor in the form of a dragon. Secondly, it is commonly believed among the peasants in North China that an old fox can change itself into a man or woman, who can help or play with the people. The Great Immortal in *Ting-lang Hsin Fu* is one example of the first kind, another may be found in *Pai-ts'ao P'o*. When *Chao Kuang-yin* and *Chao Chin-jung* were on their way, two old foxes, a male and a female, who had assumed their form, appeared to make fun of them.

#### IV

Résumés of twenty rural plays.

1) *Liu Hsiu Ts'ou-kuo* (劉秀走國) or *Liu Hsiu's Flight*. — One day when Liu Hsiu, forced to flee by *Wang Mang* (王莽) before he came to the throne, was very tired and fell asleep near a village. A girl, the younger sister of an inn-keeper in the village, saw in a dream that a dragon fell in the country. She went to the place and saw that a boy (*Liu Hsiu*) was sleeping there. She knew at once that he was destined to become an emperor, because a dragon was coiled around his head and several snakes were creeping over his body. The dragon was the symbol of an emperor and the snakes were symbols of the treacherous officers. She asked him to come to her brother's inn and tried to get his permission to be the empress when he became emperor<sup>39</sup>.

2) *Chu Hung-wu Fang-niu* (牛洪武放牛) or *The Cow-boy Chu Hung-wu*. — *Chu Hung-wu* was the founder of the Ming dynasty but in his childhood he was a poor boy tending cattle for a rich family. Over night

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38) Cf. Résumés 1-3.

39) When the throne was robbed by Wang Mang at the end of the Former Han, Liu Hsiu, a descendent of the founder of the Han, attempted to revive the Han cause. At first his army was not as strong as that of Wang Mang and he was driven to flee for a time from place to place in some parts of present Honan and Hopei. Very many legends about his flight were left to posterity.

when he was sleeping in the stall the daughter of the house-holder saw a red light shining over it. She went together with a slave girl to see what had happened. A dragon was seen through the window lying on the head of the sleeping boy. Then she tried to ask his permission that she would be the empress when he became emperor.

3) *Pai-ts'ao P'o* (白草坡). *Chao Kuang-yin* (趙匡胤), the founder of the Sung dynasty, once lived in a temple before he came to the throne. A girl, whose name was *Chao Chin-jung* (趙金蓉), ran to the temple for refuge. He protected her and sent her back home. On the way, when he was fighting with the bandits at *Pai-ts'ao P'o*, a dragon appeared over his head. It meant he would become an emperor later. The girl wished to get married to him, but he refused because he had made a vow that he would treat her as a younger sister.

4) *Chin-chuan Chi* (金磚記) or Golden Brick Romance. — *Chu Ying-t'ai*, a girl, disguised herself as a boy and went to learn to read with a boy *Liang Shan-po*. Afterwards it was discovered by the wife of the teacher and she determined to send *Chu Ying-t'ai* back home, because according to custom it was not good to put a girl together with a boy. Before she was sent away, the wife of the teacher put a brick on their bed between them in the night, and they were told if the brick fell down *Liang Shan-po* would be beaten<sup>40</sup>.

5) *Yang Êrh-shê Hua-yen* (楊二社化緣) or *Yang Êrh-shê Begging Alms*. — *Yang Êrh-shê*, whose parents were dead, was driven out of home by his aunt (the wife of his father's brother). He went to visit his fiancé, but he was rejected by his father-in-law because he was as poor as a begger. He went to a temple and became a little monk. One day he was sent to beg alms for the temple, he had a chance to see his fiancé in her garden. She gave him some money to go to the court to complain of his father-in-law.

6) *Shuang Suo Kui* (雙鎖櫃) or Twice Locked up in Boxes. — *P'u Chieh* had been engaged to her cousin, *Wang Chin-to*, but her father, *Yü*

40) This is only a part of the tale and it is told variously in different places. In some places it continues as following: The way to *Chu Ying-t'ai*'s home was far, so *Liang Shan-po* was sent to accompany her. On the way she tried to make him know the fact by some suggestive words. But he could not understand. After several years he went to her and gradually learned the fact. But she was compelled to become engaged to another young man. On hearing this *Liang Shan-po* died from grief. She tried to get the permission to mourn at *Liang Shan-po*'s tomb before her marriage. When she came, the tomb opened, she entered and then it closed again. Afterwards, a couple of coloured butterflies flew out of the grave. It was believed that they were the souls of *Liang Shan-po* and *Chu Ying-t'ai*.

*Lao-i*, repented because *Wang Chin-to* became poor. He announced that his daughter was dead and against her will secretly engaged her to another man, *Kiang Wu-chü*, who was much older than she. One day before the wedding *Wang Chin-to* went to his uncle's home. *Yü Lao-i* and his wife were not at home. *P'u Chieh* received him and prepared some wine and food for him. When they were drinking and eating in her room, her parents came back. She locked him in a big box. Next day the box was carried to *Kiang Wu-chü's* home as her dowry. *Kiang Wu-chü's* younger sister opened the box and found the young man. She knew him and also loved him, so she locked him in another box. In the evening the three, *Wang Chin-to*, *P'u Chieh*, and the younger sister of *Kiang Wu-chü*, fled together and both of the girls were married to him.

7) *Kuo Chü Mai-tzū* (郭巨埋子) or *Kuo Chü Buried His Son Alive*. — It is said that this was a story of Shantung. Poor *Kuo Chü* once had only twelve coins, for which he bought two shao-ping (cakes) for his old and sick mother. But she did not eat them all and gave one to her grandson. Then he decided to bury the child alive, so that none would partake of his mother's food. When he and his wife were digging the grave, they discovered some silver ingots.

8) *An Êrh Sung-mi* (安兒送米) or *An Êrh Sending Rice*. — *An Êrh's* mother was driven out of home by her mother-in-law and took refuge in a nunnery. *An Êrh*, a boy of seven years, saved a little of the rice that his grand-mother gave him every day. One day he sent what he had saved to his mother in the nunnery.

9) *Chieh Tang* (借當) or *Borrowing Pawn*. — *Wang Ting-pao* (王定保), a pupil in a village school, had to go to his female cousin (of another surname) to borrow some money to pay his gambling debt and his cousin went to borrow for him from his fiancé. She gave him some clothes to pawn. When he went to the pawnshop, he was suspected as a thief and was put in prison because he did not know exactly what was in his package. At last his cousin and his fiancé went to the court and saved him.

10) *Ting-lang Hsün-fu* (丁郎尋父) or *Ting-lang Searching for His Father*. — *Tu Wen-hsüeh* was remarried to the daughter of a high official in Hu-kuang and became an official himself there. *Ting-lang*, his twelve year old child from his former wife, came from Shansi, by the help of the Great Immortal, to Hu-Kuang to find him. At first he dared not to accept the child, because he would not like to let his new wife know that he was already married and had a child at home. This wife however accepted the child.

11) *Wang Ming-yüeh Hsiu-ch'i* (王明月休妻) or *Wang Ming-yüeh* Putting away His wife. — *Wang Ming-yüeh* wanted to put away his wife, because she was sterile. When she had explained to him how good she was in managing domestic affairs, he withdrew his divorce-letter. Then they prayed to the heavenly god, the Jade Emperor, for children. The Jade Emperor sent *Sung-tzū Niang-niang* or the Lady who Sends Children to People to give them two children, a son and a daughter.

12) *Pien Lü* (變驢) or Changing to an Ass. — The wife of *Yang Su* treated her mother-in-law very badly. *Yang Su* became aware of it and beat her. She made a vow that if she would beat her mother-in-law once more, she would become an ass. But as *Yang Su* was out, she treated her mother as badly as before. Then a ghost from Hell came and changed her into an ass.

13) *Lung-pao-ssü* (龍寶寺). — A man was put in prison on the suspicion of killing his sister-in-law. His wife went to *Lung-pao-ssü* (a temple) to find the monk who was the real murderer. The Great Buddha ordered the Earth God of that district to protect her from defilement.

14) *Yang Fu-lu T'ou-ch'in* (楊富祿投親) or *Yang Fu-lu* Visiting His Fiancé. — *Yang Fu-lu*, a young man, came from Honan to Peking to visit his fiancé. On the way he was robbed by his servant of his pledges: boots and hat, blue robe and horse. Then the servant paid the visit instead of him. When he came, his father-in-law rejected and beat him. Just as he was about to commit suicide, *Kuan Yin* or the Goddess of Mercy in the shape of a poor woman beggar saved him and, furthermore, she led him to meet his fiancé in her garden.

15) *Érh-huan Chi* (耳環記) or The Ear-ring Romance. — *Wang Ching-ch'uan*, a gambler, was too poor to support his family. He sold his wife to a rich man as concubine. When they were departing from each other, his wife gave him one of her ear-rings as a token of uniting again. After three years she, taking advantage of the rich man when he was drunk, fled back to *Wang Ching-ch'uan* again.

16) *Lo-ch'ün Chi* (襪裙記). — *Ts'ui Niang* of Lo-yang had a happy family consisting of a good wife and two children, a boy and a girl. He afterwards took a concubine and divorced his wife. When he went to Shantung to demand debts, his concubine treated the children very badly. She even wanted to kill them. At last they fled from their home. The whole family was dispersed.

17) *Kao Wen-chü Tso Hua-t'ing* (高文舉坐花廳) or *Kao Wen-chü* Sitting in the Drawing Room. — When *Kao Wen-chü* received the first prize of the imperial examination, he was forced to marry the daughter of the Prime Minister, *Wen T'ung*. His wife went to Peking to find him but



on the way she was robbed and was sick in an inn and at last she had to sell herself to pay her debts to the inn-keeper. She was bought by *Wen T'ung* as a slave woman. When it was known that she was the former wife of *Kao Wen-chü*, she was terribly beaten. The play ends with her meeting her husband in a garden and telling him of all the previous events.

18) *Hsiao Ku Hsien* (小姑賢) or A Good Younger Sister. — *Wang Lin's* mother did not like her daughter-in-law. One day she forced him to put away his wife. When he had written the divorce-letter against his own will, his younger sister came. She destroyed the letter and advised her mother not to put away her sister-in-law.

19) *Ssü Ch'üan* (四勸) or Four Advices. — This is a very short play. A short dialogue between a brother and a sister while he was sending her to her husband's home. She told him how her mother-in-law and sister-in-law maltreated her. He advised her to be patient.

20) *Chin-niu-ssü* (金牛寺). — *Liu Kuang-tsui* came to ask her daughter's mother-in-law why her daughter was maltreated. A quarrel resulted.

## APPENDIX

A Ting-hsien rural play: *LAN-CH'IAO HUI* or A MEETING AT THE BLUE BRIDGE

Characters: Wei K'ui-yüan and Lan Jui-lien

*Wei K'ui-yüan*: [Ah me! My heart is fraught with many disturbing cares.]\* When I go to school, I carry my books under my arm; when I return home, I bow reverently to Confucius. I gaze long on the distant South Sea and the happy memories of my village surge through my mind. If in a home there is the luxuriant parasol tree, that home will be the favorite abode of the phoenix. Ah! And from behind the embroidered screen emerges a lovely lady. Then, from the South School comes the lucky "chuang yang"<sup>41</sup>. Enough! I must go to school to pursue my studies!

(Sings): Here I am, upstairs. An idea has suddenly taken hold of me. I leap out of my comfortable chair, rush out of my room, and hurry quickly along the street to the South School. The school is dark, so I light a lamp and settle down to study. But, oh! I scarcely read a chapter, and the vision of the lovely lady distracts me. I plunge into another chapter, but I can only see Lan Jui-lien. I cannot read any longer. I must rest. [Oh, wonder of wonders! Lan Jui-lien is singing.]

\* Sentences in brackets have been added by the translator for the sake of clearness.

41) Chuang-yüan is the candidate who wins the first place at the triennial palace examination.

*Lan Jui-lien* (sings):\*\* My mother-in-law has commanded me to carry water from the well. I take the box-wood carrying-pole with two hooks and a twelve-foot rope. It is heavy and bends my body as I carry it on my shoulder. From the kitchen I go through the main gate and follow the winding path out of the mountain. [My life is an unhappy one.] My name is Lan Jui-lien and I am married to Chou Yü-tzū. I am eighteen years old; my husband is fifty-three. I am young and beautiful; he is old and ugly. From his nose hangs pus-like mucus. His mouth is covered with froth. His ears are half gone. He is terribly deformed. He has only one leg and one arm. The hair of his stubby queue is as rough as felt. When he stands erect he is like a small ghost; when he sits down he looks like a mill stone. At night he cannot get into bed alone. If I would not assist him, he would have to sleep on the brick floor. How I hate the night! It is unbearable to lie with him in bed. Now he is sick and cannot rise from his bed. I am going to the well to draw water. One step and two steps are lotus steps. Three steps and four steps are chrysanthemum. Five steps and six steps are peony. Seven steps and eight steps are Pawang's whip<sup>42</sup>. Nine steps and ten steps are ten different colors. I walk forward nine steps, and then backward three steps. I walk a creeping tendril of calabash<sup>43</sup>. I sometimes walk on the north side of the road, and sometimes on the south. Weeping willows are planted around the well. The balustrade is made of white marble. I ascend to the platform, place the pole and the buckets to one side, while I attach the twelve-foot rope to one bucket. As the bucket drops into the water, the dragon waves his tail and the bucket is filled with water. Similarly the second bucket is filled. [But it was hard work in such heat and] Lan Jui-lien's clothes are dripping with perspiration. She will rest awhile on the platform before she carries the two heavy buckets home.

*Wei K'ui-yüan*: I am Wei K'ui-yüan coming from the South School. I cannot forget the thrilling dream I had last night. As I walk from school I muse over it. Oh, the beautiful scene I saw at the Blue Bridge! I am going over to the bridge to see the setting of the dream. On the way I view the countryside, but all my thoughts center on the Blue Bridge, which is very near. I walk up and down the bridge, looking to the right and left, in front and behind. There are old men standing about on the bank of the river. They seem to be about eighty years old. Young girls of sixteen are busy washing clothes at the river's edge. But these are the age-old scenes that I have so often seen before. Where is the one I dreamed about

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\*\* Most of these texts are sung. Those recited in spoken language are marked by 'recites'.

42) a kind of cactus.

43) The above seven sentences portray her beautiful style of walking.

last night? Ah! there before me beside the well is the beautiful lady drawing water. Her flowing hair is as black as ink and bound with a thick red silk cord. She wears flowers in her hair, just above her temples. A white jade hairpin above one temple gleams in the sunlight. Her face is powdered with palace powder from South China. The points of her delicate lips are rouged with Su-chow lipstick. She wears pendant coiled dragon earrings of rings and hooks. Her robe is resplendent with many colors. The silk skirt is made of eight pieces. But, alas! I cannot see her small "golden lilies"<sup>44</sup>. I want to speak with her, but propriety forbids speaking to a lady at the well. Nevertheless, I will approach her and pay her my respects.

*Lan Jui-lien*: I return the gentleman's greetings. Can it be that you have lost your way? Or have you forgotten your home while you were fascinated with the beautiful views at the Blue Bridge?

*Wei K'ui-yüan*: Neither! I have not lost my way, nor have the views made me forget my home and gardens. But I am extremely thirsty, Beautiful One, and would like to ask you for a drink of water. I will repay you with several strings of coins.

*Lan Jui-lien*: On the east highway, I serve free tea. For a drink of water I would never think of asking money. I, Lan Jui-lien, retire.

*Wei K'ui-yüan*: I step up on the platform and drink from the fir wood bucket. But I am not thirsty and cannot drink much. Stealthily I gaze on her small golden lilies. Three drops of water is enough.

*Lan Jui-lien*: On the well platform Lan Jui-lien becomes enraged. You are not thirsty and yet you intended to drink. Why do you so stealthily look at me?

*Wei K'ui-yüan*: I have forgotten while drinking to ask the lady's home. Tell me, where do you live and where is your home?

*Lan Jui-lien*: Having quenched your thirst, you still loiter about. Why do you ask me about my home? My mother's house is behind Hua Shan, my husband's is in front of Hua Shan.

*Wei Ku'i-yüan*: What is your husband's name, and what is your name?

*Lan Jui-lien*: My husband's name is Chou Yü-tzŭ. My name is Lan Jui-lien.

*Wei K'ui-yüan*: What is your husband's age? And how old are you?

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44) her feet.

*Lan Jui-lien*: My husband is fifty-three years old. I am eighteen.

*Wei K'ui-yüan*: Your husband is fifty-three, and you are only eighteen! It is not proper that so old a man should have so young a wife. Beautiful One, you look terribly worried.

*Lan Jui-lien* (recites): I do not hate him because he is so old. We were married at "Hair-binding"<sup>45</sup>.

*Wei K'ui-yüan* (recites): There are no persons passing by. I made sure of that. Here on the well-platform I will dally with the girl sent from heaven. I have something important to tell you, but I fear that you may not wish to hear it.

*Lan Jui-lien*: Don't be afraid to speak out your mind. If it is good, I most certainly do wish to hear it.

*Wei K'ui-yüan*: I want you. Please, don't get angry with me.

*Lan Jui-lien*: That one word enrages me! I point my finger at you and scold you. You have younger and elder sisters at home, why don't you go to them? I am angry at you!

*Wei K'ui-yüan*: The more you scold, the happier I am. Lovely One, come with me. Do you remember the story of Fan Li-hua? It's an old story. Fan Li-hua was married to a man called Yang Ch'ou. One day she fought with a young general, Hsüeh Ting-shan. She fell in love with him. So she went home, killed her husband, and married the young general. Lovely Lady, come with me. You know that fresh flowers live for only a short time.

*Lan Jui-lien*: One never puts two saddles on a good horse. Neither does a good woman have two husbands.

*Wei K'ui-yüan*: Oh, but a good horse can bear two saddles, and a good woman can also have two husbands.

*Lan Jui-lien*: No! A horse with two saddles is not a good horse, and a woman married to two husbands is not a good woman.

*Wei K'ui-yüan*: I have seen good horses with two saddles! And a woman married to eight husbands can still be a good woman. Lovely One, you will not come with me? Then listen to me and I will tell you about myself. I am Wei K'ui-yuan, a student from the east of the river. I own several hundred mu<sup>46</sup> of fertile land. I have many houses with second floors and tiled roofs. In the winter I use warm silk blankets; in the hot summer I sleep under a cool netting. If you want to smoke, a servant will

45) They were married in childhood when they first bound their hair.

46) Chinese acre.

strike fire for you. If you want to drink, you need but call the maid. Lovely Lady, if you do not come with me, the spring of your youth will be wasted. Then, please, do not lay it to my blame.

*Lan Jui-lien*: Your words take away my breath. I lose control of my will. My heart is all aflame with passion. I look at you, but I cannot forget that I have a husband. You both are men. But my husband is not as handsome as you. Pa! Pa! Pa!<sup>47</sup> I will give up my husband and go with you.

*Wei K'ui-yüan*: Since you will come with me, let us confirm our union with vow to the Blue Bridge. I will go first.

*Lan Jui-lien*: I follow you, but my heart is not quiet.

*Wei K'ui-yüan*: I now ascend the Blue Bridge.

*Lan Jui-lien*: Before the Blue Bridge we shall make a vow,

*Wei K'ui-yüan*: I bow with folded arms.

*Lan Jui-lien*: I bow in deep reverence.

*Wei K'ui-yüan*: Kneeling down on the ground, I promise faithfully to my lady to meet her again at the third beating of the drum.

*Lan Jui-lien*: I likewise promise to come at the third watch beating.

*Wei K'ui-yüan*: At the third drum beating we shall come to the Blue Bridge.

*Lan Jui-lien*: Before the Blue Bridge we shall meet.

*Wei K'ui-yüan*: Our vow has now been pronounced. I rise to stand.

*Lan Jui-lien*: I stand on the plain ground. Our vow has been made. I will now go.

*Wei K'ui-yüan*: Please do not go, my Lovely One. The vow has just been made and you already want to leave? What will you give me for a token?

*Lan Jui-lien*: I am deeply embarrassed. I came here to draw water for my mother-in-law and have nothing worthy of a token. I can only give you my phoenix hairpin. Take it and keep it wherever you go. Even if you should become a beggar and have this token, I will love you.

*Wei K'ui-yüan*: I accept your hairpin as a token. Now I will go.

*Lan Jui-lien*: I will not allow you to go. I have given you a token; what token will you give me in return?

*Wei K'ui-yüan*: I am also embarrassed. I came from the east of the river to look at the scenery. I have nothing that I could give you for

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47) exclamation expressing 'determination'.

a token, unless it be a piece of my blue robe. If you keep this, no matter if you should become a servant, I will love you.

*Lan Jui-lien*: I accept the token and place it in my sleeve.

*Wei K'ui-yuan*: I now descend from the Blue Bridge with my lady.

*Lan Jui-lien* (recites): Here I am alone, on the platform of the well. Wei K'ui-yuan has left. There is nothing for me to do but carry the water to my mother-in-law. I take up the box-wood carrying pole with the hooks on it and the twelve-foot carrying pole. I attach the two buckets to the carrying pole over my shoulder and proceed along the winding pass to my mother-in-law's home.

The End

# Hsiao Ku Hsien

## 小 姑 賢

The wife of Hwang Lin 王林 sings

70

李瑞蓮我正在味廚房裡呀  
Li Jui-lien wo ching tsai i ch'u fang li ya

給老娘作飯 响 忽聽  
chi lao niang tao fan na hu ting

的呀 我的老娘他 叫我一  
ti ya wo ti lao niang ta chiao wo i

聲 唻 我擺下鋼刀噫  
sheng keng wo pai hua kang tao yai

我不搵菜 味 去到這庭  
wo pai t'ao t'sai i chiu tao che ting

前 看一個明 白 噫  
chien kan i ho ming pai ai i

### A Good Younger Sister

I (Li Jui-lien) am in the kitchen preparing a meal for my mother. Suddenly I hear that my mother is calling me. I lay down the knife and do not cut vegetables. Let me go to the yard and see what is the matter.

# Chieh Tang 借 當

Ting-pao 王定保 sings:

$\text{♩} = 90$  *mf*

Ting-pao tso tsai nan hsiieh li hu jan i shih siang hsin  
 定保坐在南學裡忽然一思想心  
 chien na shih fu tung chuang pei ko shü yn chiu tsu hua  
 間叻師傅東莊陪客去飲酒丟下  
 chung hai tung hsiieh pa men k'an na chung hai tung hsiieh  
 衆位同學把門看叻衆位同學  
 hu pieh i. shang liang cho chi pa kai lai yen na  
 無別意商量着即把戲來演叻  
 chang shang hua hei lien chuang Chang Fei Li shang hua hung  
 臉裝老關叻急的定保無的扮  
 lien chuang lao Kuan na Li Ting-pao hu li pan  
 pan ho Liu Pei chü Hsi chuan na  
 扮個劉備取西川叻

## Borrowing Pawn

I, Ting-pao, am sitting in the South School, suddenly an idea comes to me. The teacher has gone to the East Village to attend a drinking party. The students are left here to watch the door. The pupils have no other idea than to discuss how to act plays. Pupil Chang painting his face black plays the rôle of Chang Fei. Pupil Li painting his face red plays Old Kuan (= Kuan Yü). Ting Pao worries that there is no other character for him to act. He plays Liu Pei who captures Hsi-chuan.