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WHOSE STRANGE STORIES?
A STUDY OF HERBERT GILES' (1845-1935)
TRANSLATION OF P'U SUNG-LING'S 蒲松齡
(1640-1715) LIAO-CHAI CHIH-I 聊齋誌異

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THE HONG KONG
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ABSTRACT OF THESIS ENTITLED
‘WHOSE STRANGE STORIES?’
A STUDY OF HERBERT GILES’ (1845-1935) TRANSLATION OF
P‘U SUNG-LING’S 蘆松齡 (1640-1715) LIAO-CHAI CHIH-I 聊齋誌異’,
SUBMITTED BY TONG MAN
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
AT THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY IN NOVEMBER, 2000

This study proposes a new form of transformative translation, specifically for P‘u
Sung-ling’s 蘆松齡 (1640-1715) Liao-chai chih-i 聊齋誌異 stories. It does this
through analyzing the original stories and Herbert Giles’ (1845-1935) translation.

The first part (chapters one and two) is a study of author and translator. Modern
readers of P‘u Sung-ling’s Liao-chai chih-i have tended to concentrate on the social
aspect of the collection. They have tended to forget that essential element of the Liao-
chай stories, their peculiar “wit and flavour” 趣. The first chapter recreates the
author’s time – the world of the late 17th- early 18th-century Chinese man of letters. It
looks at P‘u Sung-ling’s life, and the evolution of the important chih-kuai and ch ‘uan-
ch‘i genres. Chapter two concentrates on the translator, Herbert Giles. For many
decades, his Strange Stories of 1880, the translation of a selection of the Liao-chai
stories, have been dismissed as orientalist “bowdlerisations” of P‘u Sung-ling. We
take a closer look at the history of Giles’ predecessors, pioneers in the Western
encounter with China, and in the translation of Chinese fiction into European
languages. We also look at Giles’ life, before analyzing and discussing his Strange
Stories.

There has never been a close comparison of Giles’ translation with P‘u Sung-
ling’s original. The second part of this thesis takes a detailed look at one story of the
Liao-chai collection, and at Giles’ translation of it. The story, “Miss Lien-hsiang” 蓮
香, is chosen as a representative case. In the beginning of this part (chapter three), the
"original" story is discussed. In chapter four we read Giles’ translation in detail, to see what exactly he did to the Chinese text. By comparing the translation with the original, we find that the translated version is no longer P’u’s story. It has become Giles’ story. The process of “correcting” Giles offers us a new prism through which to view P’u Sung-ling’s work, and to identify the “wit and flavour” of “Miss Lien-hsiang”. It also presents a new challenge, that of improving Giles. Chapters five and six deal with the use of informal marginalia and visual materials, and presents the new model of transformative translation. This model enables the modern English reader to dive deep into the world of the “original”, to enter the studio world of P’u Sung-ling, and to capture some of its “wit and flavour".
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The more Liao-chai stories I read, the more I am fond of the collection. The stories are so human. This is truly a book of life. The more of Giles' translation I read, the more I am fond of Giles. His version, for all its shortcomings, also shows his humanity. It is filled with his own personal character. Each word, whether in the original or the translated version, has motivated my study. So, I want to thank P'u Sung-ling, the author, and Herbert Giles, the translator, for their wonderful creations.

Teachers give young minds wings. I owe profound thanks to Professor John Minford, my supervisor, who gave me a pair of wings that helped me to dive into the Liao-chai stories, to fly to the studio of the 18th-century Chinese man-of-letters. He taught me not only how to be a researcher, but also how to be a reader and a translator. He played a very important and collaborative role in some of the conceptualization and organization of the material presented in the thesis. I am also grateful to Dr. Chu Chi Yu, who kindly gave me useful suggestions during different stages of this dissertation.

Many thanks go to my beloved family and my dearest friends Chen Lai Tak, Lo Wai Tsin, Sharon Lai, Chan Wan Kam, Lam Yin Yin, and Chan Hung Chong. Their support meant a lot to me.

This thesis has involved many visual assistants. I sincerely thank the editors of the journal East Asian History, and my friend Chen Lai Tak. Their ingenuity with desk-top publishing inspired me a lot. I also want to thank my brother-in-law, Jimmy Lam, who generously helped me by printing the "softer" version of the story "Miss Lien-hsiang".

Last but not least, thank God!
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INTRODUCTION

Commentary, Translation and Understanding:

Wit and Flavour

In 1960, when Martin Gardiner wrote his famous commentary for Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* (written a century earlier), he justified himself in these terms:

In the case of ALICE we are dealing with a very curious, complicated kind of nonsense, written for British readers of another century, and we need to know a great many things that are not part of the text if we wish to capture its full wit and flavour.¹

P’u Sung-ling’s Liao-chai stories were certainly not nonsense. But they were a very complicated, special, even curious kind of literature, written in the late 17th and early 18th centuries in highly refined classical Chinese, for a very special, highly cultured kind of reader. We should not be surprised if a modern edition of these stories, for the Chinese reader of the present day (about three hundred years after the book was first compiled – three hundred years of enormous cultural change), needs even more of a commentary than *Alice*. One cannot simply present the book as it is and expect today’s Chinese-speaking readers to understand it. They have grown up in a totally different world. And we should not be at all surprised if the same is true of a translation of the stories into a modern European language, into a world where many if not all of the cultural assumptions of the original are absent. Just as Gardiner writes that “some of Carroll’s jokes could be understood only by residents of Oxford, and other jokes, still more private, could be understood only by the lovely daughters of

Dean Liddell," so some of the Liao-chai stories, their true "wit and flavour" could be understood only by Chinese scholar-gentlemen of the 17th-18th centuries.

This study begins by looking closely at the Liao-chai stories and their author (chapter 1), and then at the Liao-chai translations done by the prominent British scholar Herbert Giles in the late 19th century (chapter 2). Several issues presented themselves straightaway. What were the shortcomings of the translations? What were their strengths? What things were lost by Giles, and what changes were made? Why did his versions turn out in this way? These questions were closely linked to other, more fundamental questions about the original stories themselves. What kind of stories were they, and for what readership were they written? Only by answering these questions about the originals, was it possible to make any progress with the problems of translation. Finally, all of these questions came together in a rethinking of the very process of translation itself.

To put it another way. First we take apart Giles the translator. But in the act of unpacking Giles, we find ourselves face to face with the challenge of understanding his dilemma, face to face with the original texts he was struggling with; and then we must confront the even more demanding challenge of trying to do something better than Giles. In order to do something better (the treatment of "Lien-hsiang" 蓮香 in Part Two), we have to find our way back into the deeper recesses of the original world of the stories themselves, we have to capture the "wit and the flavour" of P'u Sung-ling, and find a way of letting the modern reader share them. This process leads to a reconsideration of the boundaries of translation. We become aware of how inadequate the existing map is.
Mapping the Worlds of Literature and Translation:

The Text and the Studio

We can imagine the "world" of a work of literature as consisting of the text together with the entire world of reference of its author (in this case, P’u Sung-ling), his contemporary readers, and his own language, society and culture.

DIAGRAM 1: The World of the Original Text

Translators begin as readers, receiving this text with all of its accompanying referential world, decoding it, and attempting as best they can to recreate it in their own language. What they (the translators) often forget is that their translated work is (or should be) a world too.\(^2\) They are (or should be) authors, and have (or should have)

---
\(^2\) We should not forget that John Keats' famous poem "On First looking Into Chapman's Homer", where he compares reading Homer to the discovery of a new planet ("Then felt I like some watcher of the skies, When a new planet swims into his ken") or of a new ocean ("with eagle eyes He star'd at the Pacific") is talking about a translation. It was thanks to Chapman the translator, it was via Chapman's world, that Keats was able to enter the hitherto closed world of Homer's epic poetry.
readers. They are world-to-world communicators, not just word-to-word (void-to-void) manipulators of a text.

**DIAGRAM 2: From One World to Another**

If for the purposes of our argument we call the original world of the Liao-chai stories, with all of its contents, a metaphorical "studio", then what the translators of these stories should be doing is building a new studio to house them in their new world. How do they achieve that?

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3 This studio metaphor is suggested by John Minford, my supervisor of this thesis.
The Realm of Translation -- Text and Flavour

Yen Fu's 檀復 (1853-1921) classic formula for the translation process consists of the three elements hsin, ta and ya. Hsin can be translated as a combination of accuracy and fidelity. It refers to an attitude of mind that gives a high priority to the original text, an ethical responsibility to represent the original faithfully. Ya, which is usually translated as elegance, refers to the translator's own stylistic ability. (Translators of a later time do not need to follow Yen Fu's criteria of elegance, because the original text may not be "elegant"). Ta is a more complex word. It can be interpreted to include both the initial process of understanding (tatao 達到, penetrating or reaching) the meaning of the original, and the subsequent process of expressing (piaoda 表達) that underlying meaning in new words (in a new language). The contemporary scholar Ch’ien Chung-shu, in his essay on the late-19th-century translator Lin Shu 林紓 (1852-1924), added a fourth dimension which he called hua, or transformation.

文学翻譯的最高標準是“化”。把作品從一國文字轉變成另一國文字，既能不因語文習慣的差異而露出生硬聳強的痕跡，又能完全保存原有的風味，那就是入於“化境”。

"The highest standard in literary translation is hua, transforming a work from the language of one country into that of another. If this can be done without betraying any evidence of artifice resulting from divergences in

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4 Yen Fu, “General Remarks on Translation”, translated by C. Y. Hsu, Renditions 1 (1973), pp. 4-6. The original Chinese text can be found on p. 126.
6 This is what George Steiner is talking about in After Babel, when he refers to the "mechanics of penetration and transfer", After Babel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 375.
language and speech habits, while at the same time preserving intact the flavour of the original, then we say that the translator has entered the Realm of Transformation.\footnote{The translation is based on George Kao’s in \textit{Renditions 5} (1975), "Lin Ch’in-nan Revisited", pp. 8-9.}

In a sense, this process of transformation is the missing link between the two forms of \textit{ta}. We may create a new diagram, adding this fourth dimension, in the form of a third world, the Realm of Translation.

DIAGRAM 3: \textit{The Three Worlds of Translation}
P’u Sung-ling and Giles: Whose Stories?

In the light of this map or model of the process of translation, we can look at Giles’ own work on P’u Sung-ling’s stories, and then beyond that to the possibilities for a more creative and “transformative” approach to the task of bringing the Liao-chai stories to life for the modern Western reader. The deconstructed, expanded version of the story “Lien-hsiang” that forms Part Two of this study (chapters three, four, five and six) offers an example of this transformative style of translation. It attempts to reclaim the stories for our own time, to make them ours.⁹

Chapter 1

P’u Sung-ling and his Liao-chai chih-i

"...a writer whose work has been for the best part of two centuries as familiar throughout the length and breadth of China as are the tales of the 'Arabian Nights' in all English-speaking communities."


"Literary biography in all cases runs up against this limit of determinism: there is no clear reason why one secluded clergyman's daughter should be a literary genius when hundreds of others are not. Certain generalizations might be made, in retrospect, about the flowering of, say, Elizabethan poetry or Greek drama or the Russian novel, but the appearance of a great individual remains a chancy matter of microcosmic luck and will. The cultural situation at the turn of the last century might be said to have been sickly; but Yeats and Proust and Joyce all took their beginnings in it."


1.1 P’u Sung-ling and His Times

1.1.1 The Social and Political Background

The period into which P’u Sung-ling was born (1640), the end of the Ming 明 dynasty and beginning of the Ch’ing 清 dynasty, was one of the more turbulent in China’s long history. All the elements of the collapse of the Ming Dynasty began to develop to the full during the period 1610-1640.¹ The threat to the dynasty arose from the external Manchu menace in the north-east, as well as from corruption at court and the

¹ For good general accounts of this period, see Jonathan Spence, The Search for Modern China (New York: Norton, 1990), and Frederick Wakeman Jr., The Fall of Imperial China (New York: Free Press,
disturbances within the country itself. At court, the influence of the eunuchs had reached an almost unprecedented level during the reign of Wan-li 萬歷 (1573-1620).

To quote Herbert Giles:

His long reign ushered in the ruin of the Dynasty. It opened well... The frontiers were kept at peace and even extended, and the country was very rich. The death [in 1582] of his Minister Chang Chü-cheng 張居正 left the Emperor free to indulge in sensualism and extravagance... For a quarter of a century before 1610... no one but eunuchs ever saw the sovereign. The Court was torn by several parties, half the offices were left vacant, memorials were not answered, and distress in the provinces went unrelieved. Meanwhile, the empire was harassed with special taxes, inquisitorially collected on petty household articles by eunuchs, to pay for mines, the proceeds of which went into the Privy Purse. The middle class were mostly ruined, and the people, finding life unendurable, took to brigandage. In 1583 Nurhaci appears in history, and before the end of the reign the Manchus had risen to power... Aboriginal risings, Mongol incursions, Yellow River floods, droughts and famines, are recorded again and again; and the avaricious monarch left a ruined country to his feeble successors.²

After Wan-li’s death, and the extremely brief reign of his son T’ai-ch’ang 泰昌 (1620-1621), his grandson T’ian-ch’i 天啓 (1621-1628), a fifteen-year-old young man who was “physically weak, poorly educated, and perhaps mentally deficient,” ascended the throne.³ From his earliest youth he had been under the influence of the notorious eunuch Wei Chung-hsien 魏忠賢 (1568-1627). Wei murdered all his

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² Herbert Giles, *A Chinese Biographical Dictionary* (London: Quaritch, 1898), pp.177-8. Giles has a gift for summarizing history (for telling stories) in a few memorable phrases. In view of the important role he plays in this study, it seems appropriate to introduce him at his early stage, as a reteller of historical stories.

opponents and dominated the emperor and the country.⁴

He gradually drove all loyal men from office, and put his opponents to cruel and ignominious deaths... In 1627 he was likened in a memorial to Confucius, and it was decreed that he should be worshipped with the Sage in the Imperial Academy. His hopes were overthrown by the death of the Emperor T‘ian-ch‘i, whose successor promptly dismissed him. He hanged himself to escape trial, and his corpse was disemboweled.⁵

The disastrous situation under the eunuch's rule could not be borne by many of the landowning gentry, who no longer supported the government. This caused a lack of government revenue with which to pay the armies to fight against the rebels and the Manchus. Political corruption was widespread, and the common people suffered from the effects of heavy taxation. In addition to all of this, during T‘ian-ch‘i’s reign, an insufficient food supply and frequently recurring famines made life very hard.⁶ After T‘ian-ch‘i’s death, the throne passed to his brother Ch‘ung-ch‘en 崇禎 (d.1644). During the last two decades of the Ming dynasty, there were several peasant rebellions, such as those of Li Tzu-ch‘eng 李自成 (1605-?1645) and Chang Hsien-chung 張獻忠 (1605-1647), which caused still further misery and unrest. In 1644 (when P‘u Sung-ling was four years old), Li Tzu-ch‘eng finally took Peking, and after the suicide of Ch‘ung-ch‘en, established the short-lived Ta-shun 大順 regime.

On April 9, 1644, Peking fell. During the previous night the emperor, who had refused to flee, slew the eldest princess, commanded the empress to commit

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⁵ Giles, Biographical Dictionary, pp.859-60.
suicide, and sent his three sons into hiding. At dawn the bell was struck for the court to assemble; but no one came. His Majesty then ascended the Coal Hill [景山] in the palace grounds, and wrote a last decree on the lapel of his robe: “We, poor in virtue and of contemptible personality, have incurred the wrath of God on high. My ministers have deceived me. I am ashamed to meet my ancestors; and therefore I myself take off my crown, and with my hair covering my face await dismemberment at the hands of the rebels. Do not hurt a single one of my people.” He then hanged himself...  

The Manchus, however, with the help of the turncoat Chinese general Wu San-kuei 吳三桂 (1612-1678) and their well-organized military “Banner System”, invaded Peking, drove away Li and set up the Ch’ing dynasty in the same year. The Ming resistance fled to southern China. By 1659, with the disastrous defeat by the Manchu armies of the last strong Southern Ming loyalist forces under “Coxinga” or Cheng Ch’eng-kung 鄭成功 (1624-1662), the last Southern Ming remnant regime in south China under “Emperor” Yung-li 永立 was compelled to flee into Burma.  

After the conquest, the Manchus imposed many humiliating laws on the Chinese. The Chinese were obliged to wear pigtails, and marriages between Manchus and Chinese were prohibited. The Manchus had no need to pass the demanding State examinations, which the Chinese had to sit, in order to obtain government posts. The Manchus always held superior positions in every office.  

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the other, offering enticement. Pressure was applied through such means as the numerous literary inquisitions 文字狱 of the time, in which “individuals, sometimes including their whole families, were executed or, at least, exiled for real or imagined slights to the Manchus in their writings.”

As a result of this, during the period when P’u Sung-ling first reached manhood, many prominent Chinese scholars were being killed or imprisoned, as in the cases of Chuang T’ing-lung 莊廷鑂 and Chuang T’ing-yüeh 莊廷餒 in 1661-1663,¹¹ Chin Sheng-t’ an 金聖歎 in 1661, Shen T’ian-fu 沈天甫, Lü Chung 呂中 and Hsia Lin-chi 夏麟其 in 1667. It was a true “reign of terror”, which “overshadowed the academic world”,¹² hardly less traumatic than the purges of Stalin, Hitler or Mao Tse-tung in the last century. In order to compensate, by way of enticement, somewhat later (1679), when P’u Sung-ling would have been nearly forty years old, the government held a special examination 博學鴻儒, in “an attempt to bring some of the more aloof Chinese scholars into service under the Manchus”.¹³ Moreover, the young emperor K’ang-hsi 康熙 (reigned 1663-1722), who had now come of age and assumed power, was himself deeply interested in Chinese culture, and attracted a large number of Chinese literati and scholars into

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¹¹ This case (the Ming History persecution) forms the starting point of the novel The Deer and the Cauldron (麒麟記) by the contemporary Hong Kong novelist Louis Cha (金庸).
¹² Chang Chun-shu and Chang Hsueh-lun, Renditions 13, p.64.
positions of government.

This was the troubled social and political background against which P’u Sung-ling lived and wrote. As Chun-shu and Hsuch-lun Chang have written, it was only natural, in such circumstances, for “men of letters to retreat to a world of fantasy... an imaginative world of ghosts and fairies.”

1.1.2 The Intellectual and Literary Background

In the late Ming dynasty, a new strain of liberal and unconventional thinking had made an appearance in the literary and intellectual world. One of the most radical thinkers of the early decades of this period was Li Chih 李贒 (1527-1602). At the age of forty, Li was introduced to the thought of Wang Yang-ming 王陽明 (1472-1528). Wang was famous for his theory of “innate knowledge” 良知, believing that each person is born with his own “innate knowledge”, and has the potential to be a sage. Subsequently, Li used Wang's ideas as a point of departure to create his own brand of individualism, holding that consciousness is the knowledge one is born with, and that this knowledge is universal and egalitarian.

Those in whom consciousness has arisen are Buddhas, those in whom it has not are not yet Buddhas.\footnote{De Bary's translation. See De Bary, "Individualism", p.194.}
Based on this, he went on to challenge the traditional sage.

The sage said you should not look upon people who respect morality as extraordinary individuals. What they did was no more than what should be done by every human being. Man should follow his natural disposition. And do not over-estimate the sage’s conduct. A sage like Yao or Shun is in no way different from an ordinary person.

He proclaimed the importance of the judgment of the individual:

For over eleven hundred years there have been no real judgments of right and wrong. Does that mean that there has been no right and wrong among men? [No], it is because they have all accepted what they thought to be Confucius’ judgments as to right and wrong, and have never had any right or wrong of their own... Now the conflict of right and wrong is like the passing of the years and the seasons, or the alteration of night and day. None of these can be reduced to one. Yesterday’s right is today’s wrong. Today’s wrong becomes right again tomorrow. Even if Confucius reappeared today, there is no way of knowing how he would judge right and wrong. So how can we arbitrarily judge everything as if there were a fixed standard?

And Li emphasized the importance of personal preference and personal value judgement. Applying his ideas to literature, he wrote, in his famous essay “On the

18 李贇, 與書 (北京: 中華書局, 1975).
19 Adapted from De Bary’s translation. See De Bary, “Individualism”, p.201.
20 李贇, 與書紀事目錄論.
childlike mind” 童心:

Once people's minds have been given over to received opinions and moral principles, that is all they ever talk about, not what would naturally come from their childlike minds. No matter how clever such words may be, what have they to do with oneself? They are just phony men speaking phony words, doing phony things, writing phony writings?²¹

夫既以聞見道理為心矣，則所言者皆聞見道理之言，非童心自出之言也。言雖工，於我合與？豈非以假人言假言，而事假事，文假文乎？²²

His words echo those of the Taoist Chuang-tzu, who protested against Confucian conformism and moralism. (And Chuang-tzu, as we shall see, was one of P’u Sung-ling’s “literary ancestors”).²³

Li Chih suggested that the criterion of quality in literature should not be based on considerations such as: whether its content has a moral lesson or a metaphysical message; whether its form is one of the so-called “orthodox” forms; or whether it follows the ancients. The best literature must reflect the “childlike mind”.

There has not been a moment in man’s history in which literary activities have ceased; nor has there ever been any human being incapable of engaging in literary activities. Everything which is creatively written, in whatever individual style, is literature. Thus, when speaking of poetry, why do we always have to refer to Selections from the Ancients? Or when speaking of prose, why does it have to be pre-Ch’in prose? The Six Dynasties had “modern-style” (Chin-t’i) poetry; then, there are the ch’uan-ch’i [stories] of the T’ang, the yüan-pen [dramas] of Chin, and the tsa-chü [dramas] of the Yuan dynasties; and what about the [drama] Hsi-hsiang chi [The Western Chamber] and the [novel] Shui-hu chuan [Water Margin]… this is all the best of literature, from both ancient and modern times. We

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²¹ Adapted from De Bary, “Individualism”, p.195.
²² 李贊, 童心說, in 焚書, p.99.
²³ Chuang-tzu was also one of Herbert Giles’ favourite authors.
should never base our judgement of literary value on considerations as to whether a work was composed at an earlier or later age.\textsuperscript{24}

無時不文，無人不文，無一樣創制體格文字而非文者。詩何必古選，文何必先秦。降而為六朝，變而為近體；又變而為傳奇，變而為院本，為雜劇，為西廂曲，為水滸傳，……皆古今至文，不可得而時勢先後論也。\textsuperscript{25}

Li highly respected the value of vernacular fiction, and is credited with a much-read commentary on the 120-chapter version of *Shui-hu chuan* 水滸傳.\textsuperscript{26}

Li’s ideas about literature influenced several literati, especially his close friend Yüan Chung-tao 袁中道 (1570-1624),\textsuperscript{27} who was one of the leaders of the literary reform movement challenging the antiquarian and imitationist ideas of the orthodox thinkers of the time. Yüan and his two brothers, who formed a literary group known as the Kung-an School 公安派,\textsuperscript{28} believed the essential ingredient of literature to be *hsing-ling* 性靈, sometimes translated as “emotion and personal nature”.\textsuperscript{29} They also put this theory into practice in their own writings. Here is a typical “prose piece” 小品文 by Yüan Hung-tao 袁宏道 (1568-1610):

**RECORDING SOMETHING WEIRD**

When I went to Ch’i-yün, I heard there was a Taoist who claimed that he

\textsuperscript{25} 李贄, 童心說, 梵書, p.99.
\textsuperscript{27} They were friends despite the difference in age (43 years). Yüan wrote the brief biography of Li contained in *Fen-shu* 梵書.
\textsuperscript{28} They were natives of Kung-an 公安 in Hupei 湖北 Province.
knew of a wealthy ghost. I asked him about this and he said: "In N district, the woman X died in pregnancy and was buried at a certain spot. Every evening thereafter, she would appear in the marketplace, hugging a child to her breast and begging for food. Someone recognized her and exclaimed: 'That's the wife of X! She's been dead for half a year!' When the husband was told of this, he had the coffin exhumed and discovered that lying next to the dead woman was a baby boy breathing very faintly. The father took him out and raised him. Now the boy is over forty and has amassed a fortune of ten thousand taels of silver."\(^{30}\)

I asked some people from Anhui Province about the matter and they all said: "This happened quite recently---you can ask the man himself to come and talk with you, if you want."

This is very close to a story in the book *Pien-ching kou-i*, so we can see that the weird events of past and present are often similar. How can one discuss everything under the sky with Confucian pedants?\(^{31}\)

紀異
余至齊雲。聞道士有言鬼朝奉者。問其故。道士云：「某鄉某孕婦死。埋某處。每夕抱一兒向市上乞食。有識之者曰：「此人婦。死半歲矣。」故謂之夫。夫隨開棺驗之。見一兒臥婦旁。氣息微濁。因取養之。今年四十餘。家累萬金。餘問彼人。彼人皆曰：「此近事。其人可召而致。」此與汴京勾異所載絕相類。乃知古今怪事。亦有同者。天下事安可盡與儒者道哉。\(^{32}\)

In this simple piece, which in some respects foreshadows some of the shorter pieces in P'u Sung-ling's Liao-chai collections, Yüan is just sharing with readers his personal experience, his own feeling of the strangeness of this event. The piece contains no teachings at all. Like Li Chih (and like P'u Sung-ling, who wrote several works in folk style), Yüan Hung-tao also thought highly of folk and vernacular

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\(^{30}\) This has been emended from the original translation, "ten thousand cash".


\(^{32}\) Yüan Hung-tao 呂宏道, *Yüan Chung-lang ch'üan-chi* 袁中郎全集, (Hong Kong: Kwong Chi Book Co.), p.4.
literature, because they expressed and communicated human emotions. He once remarked:

In my opinion, it is not the poetry and prose of our age which will be passed down to posterity. The works most likely to be handed down are ones such as "P'i p'o yü" and "Ta ts'ao gan", ditties sung by women or children in the narrow alleys. Such works are by real people -- people who are neither knowledgeable nor erudite -- and therefore are, for the most part, expressions of sincere emotion. Such compositions do not mirror the frowns of writers of Han or Wei, nor do they dog the steps of writers of the heyday of Tang; they are compositions occasioned by man's genuine emotions and, thus, can communicate man's happiness, anger, sadness, and joy, as well as his wishes and desires. It is for this reason they are delightful compositions.33

故吾謂今之詩文不傳矣。其萬一傳者，或今閨閨婦人孺子所唱擊破玉打草竿之類。猶是無聞無識。真人所作。故多真聲。不效颦於漢魏。不學步於盛唐。任性而發。尚能宣與人之喜怒哀樂嗜好情慾。是可喜也。34

In this more relaxed literary climate of the late Ming period, fiction flowered.

One of the most prolific and important writers of the period was Feng Meng-lung 馮夢龍 (1571-1646). Like P'u Sung-ling, Feng took part in the imperial examinations, but with equally little success. Like P'u Sung-ling, he wrote not only fiction but also poetry, drama and prose; not only in the vernacular language, but also in the classical language. Like Yuan Hongdao, he also valued the quality of "naturalness" in literature, and declared that fiction should be the "echo of naturalness" 遇性情.35 His most

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33 Adapted from Huan-yüan Li Mowry, Chinese Love Stories from Ch'ing-shih, "Introduction: The Literary Environment During the Last Century of the Ming Dynasty", p.3.
34 敘小修詩, in 袁中郎全集, p.6.
35 隆樹僧, 馮夢龍散論 (上海: 上海古籍出版社), 1993, p.47.
famous works are the three collections of vernacular stories, known collectively as the
Three Words 三言. 36 Another important writer, who lived a generation later than Feng
and the Yüan brothers, was Li Yü 李漁 (1610-1680?), famous for his essays, his
short fiction and his drama. Li was writing very much in the same tradition. "[His]
other principal aesthetic values are naturalness and simplicity. His notion of the
natural is based on the idea that the innate character of things must not be transgressed
or thwarted." 37

The idea of freely pursuing one's own individual style and expressing one's
individuality also affected the writing of poetry. Even the leading advocate of the
"metaphysical theory" of poetry, Wang Shih-chen 王士禎 (1634-1711), who greatly
appreciated the Liao-chai chih-i, emphasized the importance of shen-yün 神韻, a
difficult term, sometimes translated as "ineffable personal tone or flavour". Wang
once quoted with approval a remark of the Sung poet, Chiang K'uei 姜夔 (1155-
1221):

The poetry of each master has its own flavour, just as each of the twenty-
four modes of music has its own tone, which is where the music comes to
rest. Imitators, even though their words may resemble the master's, have lost
the tone. 38

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36 The Three Words are 喻世明言, 聲世通言 and 醒世恆言.
38 See James Liu, Chinese Theories of Literature, p.45.
This tide of expressive individualism affected not only the literary and intellectual fields, but also the aesthetic thinking of that period. In Jonathan Chaves’ words, “the extraordinary achievements of the so-called individualist painters of the early Ch’ing dynasty were richly foreshadowed by the late Ming masters, many of whom were downright eccentric.”

Li Chih’s contemporary, Hsü Wei 徐渭 (1521-1593), today one of the best known painters and men of letters of that period, once wrote a poem to express his thoughts on the importance of spontaneity in painting, entitled: “I once did a bamboo painting for somebody-Now he wants me to do another, and I have written this to answer him.”

This bamboo I painted a long time ago.
Now you want me to do another? - Impossible!
When the sparrow grows old
it becomes a clam in the sea.
You ask it to turn back into sparrow,
but how can it fly again?41

舊作竹與某，復要予再作，答此。
此竹是予昔所作，
即欲再作今不能。
雀老既然成海蛤，

40 Pilgrim of the Clouds, Introduction, p.12. Chaves is basing this observation on the judgement of the eminent art historian James Cahill.
41 Jonathan Chaves, Pilgrim of the Clouds, p.22.
轉教為雀可飛騰？

At the same time, the exquisite artifacts that constituted the golden age of Ming furniture epitomized, in Gustav Ecke’s words, “the Creative Spirit of the Chinese as it reveals itself in the wood and in the interpretation of traditional patterns.”

Much of this new emphasis in the fields of literary and artistic creation can be summed up in the single word ch‘ü 趣. The art critic James Watt summarizes this important aesthetic idea of the late Ming literati:

Another concept central to late Ming literary criticism is that of ch‘ü (a word with many shades of meaning: delectation, delight, interest, taste, essential meaning, expression, tendency, inclination). For the literati of this period it combines the state of or the ability to delight with the sense of taste or tendency.

Yüan Hung-tao also writes of this same elusive quality:

What is rarest in people is “gusto” [ch‘ü], which is like colour in mountains, flavour in water, light on flowers, or [the] airs of women…

The connoisseur Wen Chen-heng 文震亨 (1585-1645), great-grandson of the
great painter and calligrapher Wen Cheng-ming 文徵明 (1470-1559), wrote in his
Treatise on Superfluous Things (Chang-wu chih 長物志) that in a gentleman’s studio
“as soon as one enters the door there is a lofty and elegant taste (ch’ü) which shuts out
vulgarity.”

These were some of the ideas current in the literary background of the time into
which P’u Sung-ling was born. This was the “flavour” of the studio in which his
stories evolved.

1.2 P’u Sung-ling, His Life

P’u Sung-ling was born on June 5, 1640 in P’u village 蒲家莊, Tzu-ch’uan 滚川
district, Shantung 山東 Province. He had two courtesy names tzu 字, Liu-hsien 留仙
(“Last of the Immortals”), and Chien-ch’en 劍臣 (“The Sword-vassal”). He
also had a literary name hao 號, Liu-ch’üan 柳泉 (“Willow Spring”). His family can
be dated back to the Yüan Dynasty (P’u Lu-hun 蒲魯渾 and P’u Chü-jen 蒲居仁
served as governors of the Pan-yang Route 萌陽路, in Shantung), and had a
distinguished scholarly tradition (his grand-uncle, for instance, had taken the Chin-
shih 進士 degree in 1592). P’u was quite proud of this tradition and mentioned it in

47 Clunas, Superfluous Things, p. 89.
48 See Fang Chao-yíng’s biography in Hummel, Eminent Chinese of the Ch’ing Period (Washington:
U.S.Government, 1943-1944), p. 628. Fang suggested that Pu Lu-hun may have been a Mongol or
Turkish name.
his clan chronicle. But his own father, P’u P’an 蒲槃 (izu Min-wu 敏吾, d.1651) had been a merchant. P’u described his family background as follows:

(P’u) Sung-ling’s father, Mr. Min-wu, a private scholar, grew up a very sharp and intelligent lad, keen to devote himself to studies. His style was close to that of T’ao and Teng. He became a student, but in spite of all his endeavours he was not successful in this career. At home they were very badly off and so he gave up his studies and became apprenticed to a merchant. He was in business for twenty years, and he came to be looked upon as a wealthy gentleman. But even when he reached his forties he still had not a single descendant. He no longer wished to serve Mammon, and so he boarded up his doors and applied himself to his studies. The book was never out of his hands and, in consequence, not even old scholars could compare with him as regards the depth and extent of his knowledge. He supported the poor and built temples, but he ceased to care about his own property. Then, however, his chief wife bore him three sons and his concubine one son. As each of his boys in turn entered their tenth year, he himself taught them to read. But there were few breadwinners in the house and many mouths to feed. So the house declined from day to day.

初，松齡父處士公敏吾，少慧肯研讀，文徵陶、鄧，而操童子業，苦不售。家貧甚，遂去而學貿，積二十餘年，稱秦封。然四十餘無一丈夫子。不欲復居蠶，因閉戶讀，無詰卷時，以是宿儒無其淹博。而問貧建寺，不理生產。既而嫡生男三，庶生男一，每十餘齡，自教讀；而為鬻食眾，家以日落。

P’u was his father’s third son. By the time he was born, his family was already on the financial decline. When P’u was seven years old, a peasant rebellion broke out in Shantung, and a force of around one thousand men attacked his town. His father

50 T’ao is most probably 陶安 (1315-1321), and Teng 鄧以譜 (1542-1599). For these identifications, see Chang and Chang, Redefining History (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press), p.12.
and his uncle led the people in the defence of their town, and eventually succeeded in
driving away the rebels. But his uncle died in the fighting. P’u’s father probably
hoped that his sons would fulfill his own lifetime ambition of performing well in the
imperial examinations and being appointed to a government position.

His father’s aspirations had a strong impact on P’u Sung-ling. At first, he lived
up to them. At the age of nineteen, he performed excellently in the district
examination and became a Hsiu-ts’ai 秀才 or Licentiate. He was thus successfully
through the first of the gruelling series of three examinations. However, he failed in
the subsequent provincial examination 縣試, and he continued to fail even though he
went on trying for thirty-one years. He never qualified as a Chü-jen 舉人 or
Advanced Scholar. At the age of forty-eight, he was even disqualified from taking that
year’s examination because of a violation of a rule. At the age of fifty-one, he made
his last attempts at the provincial examination. He started well, but he was unable to
complete because of illness. In despair, he decided to abandon his attempt altogether.

He wrote of this in his memoir, Some Facts About My Deceased Wife, Madame Liu:

Earlier, when he was about fifty, he had not yet given up the idea of taking
the examinations for an official rank. But Madame Liu urged him and said:
“You must not repeat this. If it had been granted you to pass the

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53 蕭松齡, 蒋氏行實.
54 He was awarded the highest honours. The chief examiner on this occasion was the famous poet and
official Shih Jun-chang 施聞章 (1619-1683). See Fang, Eminent Chinese of the Ch’ing Period, p.628
and p.651.
54 See Chang and Chang, Redefining History, p. 58 and p. 243 n. 11, quoting a poem in P’u Sung-ling ji
蒲松齡全集 p.726. The authors explain the violation (technically known as yueh-fu 越闕) in terms of
P’u Sung-ling “skipping a double page”.

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examinations and achieve official rank, you would today no doubt be an official in the capital. But even in the mountains and forests we can feel ourselves in Paradise, and what need is there to be entertained with the music (produced) by sticks and whips falling on the skins of prisoners being tortured at the courts.” P’u Sung-ling saw the wisdom of these words (and gave up his intention). 55

先是，五十餘猶不忘進取。劉氏止之曰：“君勿須復爾！倘命應通顯，今已盡閣矣。山林自有樂地，何必以肉鼓吹為快哉？”松齋著其言。 56

P’u’s wife (“Madame Liu”) was the second daughter of a local scholar, Liu Chitiao. They were betrothed when P’u was ten. In 1655, when she was thirteen, a false rumour was spread abroad that the Court was seeking daughters of good family for the Emperor’s harem. Mr. Liu, for his family’s sake, sent his daughter to P’u’s family, where his daughter slept by the side of her future mother-in-law. After the rumours died down, she returned home. Two years later, she and P’u Sung-ling were married. According to P’u’s tribute, she was very much loved by P’u’s mother. “Old Madame Tung used to say of her that she had the heart of a new-born babe... Whenever she met anybody she praised her to the skies.” 57 However, P’u’s mother’s favouritism angered the wives of his other two brothers, her elder sons. In the end, P’u’s father was obliged to divide up the family property among his sons, and P’u had to move out into a dilapidated house of his own. “He got an old peasant’s cottage of three rooms, where not one wall was whole; a thicket of small trees flourished there

55 Based on Jaroslav Prusék’s translation. See Prusék, “Two Documents”, pp.87-88.
56 潘松齋，述劉氏行實.
and everything was covered with a tangle of thorns and weeds."³⁸ Although poverty
then followed P’u, and he was always away from his family home, his wife still stood
by him, and helped him to take care of their own family and their children.

Sung-ling spent year after year away from home at his studies and Madame
Liu hacked down the weeds and thorns, hired workmen to set up the walls
and borrowed from her uncle a door of unstained boards not much bigger
than the palm of your hand to divide the inner part from the entrance
passage. ... Although we were very poor and lived in complete seclusion,
she did not wish to deprive her son of the opportunity to study. And because
she felt pity for her little son, at the first gleam of daylight she bound her
hair into a knot and got the little boy out. She herself accompanied him to
school and then went home again.³⁹

松齡歲歲遊學，孺人薈荆榛，覓佣作堵，假伯兄一白板扉，大如掌，聊
分外內。......雖固貧寢守，然不肯廢兒讀。憐兒幼，輒味爽捏髪送兒出，
又目送之入塾乃返。⁴⁰

When his wife died in 1713, at the age of seventy, P’u wrote this touching
memorial essay to express his affection towards her.

Poverty, coupled with failures in the examinations, forced P’u to seek some other
way to make a living. He worked as a private tutor for most of his adult life, except
for one period in 1670-1671 when he was an “invited guest” 幕友, or private
secretary, to an official named Sun Hui 孫蕙 (1632-1686). From 1679, he became
private tutor to the family of the wealthiest and most influential literatus of the
neighbourhood, Pi Chi-yu 卜際有, and taught there for the next thirty years. His son

³⁸ Ibidem.
⁴⁰ 鐘松齡，述劉氏行賞。
wrote: "My father is now seventy-four; only in recent years has he not taught as a private tutor." Although from his poetry and notes it is certain that P’u found the Pi family congenial, and although his life was more comfortable than it had been before, the prolonged separation from his family still troubled him. And, his status as a “paid guest” always reminded him of his failure to succeed in the examinations. As Chang Yüan 張元 wrote in his “Epitaph on the Tomb of P’u Liu-ch’üan”:

He lived, however, in want and poverty, having never in his whole life reached any higher title than that of Senior Licentiate. Only his literary work made it possible for his spirit to shine forth in his own time and to survive into future ages.  

然而扼窮困頓，終老明經，獨其文章意氣，猶可以耀當時而垂後世。  

In his life, P’u suffered many frustrations, and lived in obscurity; but in his Liao-chai chih-i stories he achieved a success and an immortality denied to most of his contemporaries.

Besides the Liao-chai stories, he wrote a considerable variety of other works not only in the classical, but also in the vernacular language. In the field of vernacular literature, he wrote six drum-songs 鼓詞 and fourteen li-ch’ü 倫曲, or narrative folksongs in the Shantung dialect. He has also been credited with the authorship of

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61 See the memorial on their father written by P’u Jo and other sons. 蕭箋等祭父文, in 路大荒, 蕭松齋年譜 (山東：齊魯書社 1980), pp.79-81.
62 Adapted from Jaroslav Prusek’s translation. See Prusek, “Two Documents”, p. 91.
63 張元，柳泉蒲先生墓表 in 路大荒, 蕭松齋年譜, p.73.
64 Fourteen of the li-ch’ü were in fact arrangements of stories from Liao-chai chih-i. See Chang and Chang, Redefining History, p. 61.
the well-known *Hsing-shih yin-yüan chuan* 醒世姻緣傳, a 100-chapter novel of one-million words.\(^6\) In the classical language, he composed volumes of poems 詩 and lyrics 詞, essays in more than sixteen forms, and three musical plays. He also wrote a large number of miscellaneous books on a wide variety of subjects. These include a handbook of common characters for everyday use, *Jih-yung su-tzu* 日用俗字; two basic outlines of Confucian morality, *Hsing-shen yü-lu* 省身語錄 and *Huai-hsing lu* 懷刑錄; a work on the calendar, *Li-tzu wen* 曆字文; a handbook on marriage, *Hun-jia ch‘üan-shu* 婚嫁全書; a book of instructions on agriculture, *Nung-sang ching* 農桑經; and a handbook for preparing homemade medicine, *Yao-tian shu* 藥典書. Except for the *Liao-chai chih-i*, P’u’s works are not well-known and are not widely read today. Even the *Liao-chai chih-i* was not published during his lifetime, but only circulated in several manuscript transcriptions.

In 1709, Pu retired from his position as a tutor. In 1710, he was at last given the rank of *Kung-sheng* 貢生, or Senior Licentiate, which entitled him to a minor official post. But he was already an old man, and did not bother to pursue any higher status. On February 25, 1715, he died at the age of seventy-five.

In the epitaph written by Chang Yuán, ten years after P’u’s death, we can see evidence of P’u’s attitude towards friendship. P’u clearly enjoyed sharing his

enthusiasm for art and philosophy with his friends. In his youth, along with four of his friends, he organized a poetry club called the Ying-chung She 鄧中社. Their main purpose was to write poetry, and to study the arts and philosophy. The members devoted much time to the club. We know also that P'u was very straightforward with his friends about their faults. Knowing that the servants of his former employer and friend, Sun Hui, had been bullying the local people, P'u wrote a letter of over a thousand words admonishing him to watch out for his servants' behaviour. We also know that P'u would not form a friendship simply because of a person's social status.

The Minister of Justice Wang Shih-chen 王士禑 who had always admired P'u's style of writing, wrote to him a number of times and invited him to visit him. But P'u always kept a certain distance from him. He kept himself as a very isolated figure, as a recluse.

In the whole, P'u Sung-ling wasn't a successful official (unlike his admirer Wang Shih-chen), he wasn't part of society (unlike the playwright Li Yü), and he wasn't part of the "literary industry" (unlike writers such as Feng Meng-lung). He was a poor, unsuccessful Shandong scholar, who quietly collected his materials and developed his own skill and ideas. One sentence from Chang Yüan’s epitaph sums up P'u's life:

He had culture and could not show it, he had talents and could not place them
to advantage.\textsuperscript{67}

有文不顯，有穫不施。\textsuperscript{68}

Though P'u Sung-ling never plugged into the commercial world at all, and existed outside that world, he couldn’t help but be aware of the currents of thinking and writing that had developed during the late-Ming, which was the period immediately leading up to his own birth. This awareness helped him to evolve a complex vision of life and of human psychology. This awareness also helped him to build his style of “wit and flavour” in his Liao-chai stories.

1.3 Liao-chai chih-i, and the Tradition of chih-kuai hsiao-shuo

The Master never talked of prodigies, feats of abnormal strength, natural disorders, or spirits.\textsuperscript{69}

子不語怪，力，亂，神。\textsuperscript{70}

P’u Sung-ling certainly did not heed the Master’s example. The Liao-chai chih-i is a book that talks above all else of prodigies, feats of abnormal strength, natural disorders, and spirits. And it is not the first book of this kind. This characteristically Chinese (if un-Confucian) tradition of “recording the strange” 記怪 can be traced back many centuries.

\textsuperscript{67} Jaroslav Prusek’s translation. See Prusek, “Two Documents”, p. 91.
\textsuperscript{68} 謝松齡集, p. 1815.
The term *chih-kuai*, also translated as "accounts or records of anomalies", first occurs in the opening chapter of *Chuang-tzu* 莊子, entitled "Free and Easy Wandering" 消遙遊. The passage that includes the term is a tale about a huge fish, the *k'un* 鯤, which changes into a huge bird, the *p'eng* 鵬. The passage comments: "Ch'i-hsieh is a recorder of anomalies." 「齊譜者,志怪者也。」 Since then, the terms *ch'i-hsieh* or *chih-kuai* have often been used in the titles of collections of such tales. Examples of this are: *Ch'i-hsieh chi* 齊譜記, *Hsü ch'i-hsieh chi* 續齊譜記, *Ts'ao P'i chih-kuai* 曹毗志怪, *Chih-kuai chi* 志怪記, *K'ung-shi chih-kuai* 孔氏志怪, *Tsa kuei-shen chih-kuai* 雜鬼神志怪, *Tsu T'ai-chih chih-kuai* 祖台之志怪. 71 It was not until the beginning of the T'ang dynasty, that the term *chih-kuai* began to be used as "a generic designation for anomaly accounts (and their authors)". 72 However, it was still not widely used until the Late Ming, when the scholar Hu Ying-lin 胡應麟 (1551-1602) used it specifically to designate the second of his six kinds of *hsiao-shuo* 小說 or fiction. 73

From the very beginning, this genre was closely related to the natural human inclination towards myth-making. The very first work of *chih-kuai* is named *Suo-yü* 琐語 or *Minor Sayings* (it is sometimes also known as *Chi-chung* 汲冢 *suo-yü*).

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70 論語, vii: 20.
72 Campany, *Strange Writing*, p.152.
This work is said to have been found “in the tomb of Prince Hsiang of Wei in Chi
commandery during the reign of Emperor Wu of the Chin dynasty (265-280)”\textsuperscript{74} It is
described as “a book of phenomena concerning divinations, dreams, deviations and
anomalies, and physiognomic techniques from various [feudal] realms 彫國夢妖怪
相書也”\textsuperscript{75} Hu Ying-lin regarded it as the “origin of the accounts of the strange”.

Later than this was the Shan-hai ching 山海經 or Classic of Hills and Seas\textsuperscript{76}
This is the oldest surviving book containing valuable fragments of ancient myth. The
work is divided into: 1. Wu-tsang shan-ching 五藏山經 in five sections and 2. Hai-
ching 海經, which in turn is subdivided into Hai-wai ching 海外經, Hai-nei ching
海內經, Da-huang ching 大荒經, and a final Hai-nei ching 海內經. It is believed
that the first part of the work was probably composed during the Warring States
period, and the second part was written in the Han 漢 or even Wei-Chin 魏晉
period. It contains a large number of myths relating to mountains and seas, botany and
zoology. Kuo P’u 郭璞 (276-324), in his early-fourth-century preface to his
annotated edition of Shan-hai ching, talks of the work as containing “vast absurdities
and twisted exaggerations, many strange and unconventional words 閷誕迂誇，多奇
怪俶儷之言.”\textsuperscript{77} Because of its extremely fragmentary and inconsistent stories, the

\textsuperscript{74} Campany, Strange Writing, p.33.
\textsuperscript{75} Campany, Strange Writing, p.34.
\textsuperscript{76} See the new translation by Anne Birrell (London: Penguin Classics, 1999).
\textsuperscript{77} Campany, Strange Writing, p. 150.
work cannot be regarded as a typical example of the later chih-kuai genre.

In the Han Dynasty, the genre began to develop. Collections like Liu Hsiang’s 劉向 (c.79-c.6 BC) Lieh-hsien chuan 列仙傳, and the Han-wu ku-shih 漢武故事74 by an unknown author, all have complete stories, written with a rich imagination.

The first golden period of the genre was during the Wei-Chin period, when Buddhist and Taoist philosophy were extremely popular, and when (interestingly enough) another wave of creative individualism was influencing Chinese culture.

Some of the more famous works included:

Ts’ao P’i 曹丕 (187-226), Lieh-i chuan 列異傳

Chang Hua 張華 (232-300), Po-wu chih 博物志

Kan Pao 干寶 (fl.310-36), Sou-shen chi 捕神記

Ke Hung 葛洪 (284-343), Shen-hsien chuan 神仙傳

Tsu T’ai-chih 祖台之 (fl. ca. 376-410), Chih-kuai 志怪

Wang Chia 王嘉 (died c.324), Shih-i chi 拾遺記

Tai Tso 戴祚 (fl. late Chin), Chen-i chuan 甄異傳

Sou-shen hou-chi 捕神後記, traditionally attributed to T’ao Yuan-ming 陶淵明 (365-427)

Liu I-ch’ing 劉義慶 (403-444), Yu-ming lu 幽明錄 and Hsüan-yen chi 宣驗記

74 See the most complete version in the Ku hsiao-shuo kou-ch’en 古小說鈔沈, edited by Lu Hsin 魯迅.
Liu Ching-shu 劉敬叔 (fl.early 5th century), I-yüan 異苑

Tung-yang Wu-i 東陽無疑 (fl. early Sung), Ch’i-hsieh chi 齊赭記

Ts’u Ch’ung-chih 祖沖之 (429-500), Shu-i chi 述異記

Jen Fang 任昉 (460-508), Shu-i chi 述異記

Wu Chün 吳均 (469-520), Hsü ch’i-hsieh chi 續赭赭記

Yan Chih-t’ui 顏之推 (531-591), Yüan-hun chih 冤魂志

Many of these works are now completely lost or only survive in fragmentary form.

These fragments can be seen in such works as Li Fang’s 李昉 (925-996) T’ai-p’ing
kuang-chi 太平廣記, and in Lu Hsün’s 魯迅 (1881-1936) Ku hsiao-shuo kou-ch’en
古小說鉤沈.

In his comprehensive study *Strange Writing*, Robert Ford Campany summarizes

the main themes of the genre in this period. It “initially focused on two sorts of

objects of discourse: (1) descriptions of the anomalous deities, fauna, and flora

associated with specific sites on the land, ... (2) narratives of exploits of mythical

figures, sages, rulers, shamans, and specialists in esoteric arts.”79 Then, from the

fourth century, “a new object of discourse comes into focus, the anomalous event per

se, ... an unprecedented focus on ordinary human protagonists -- mostly members of

the elite, to be sure, but also low- and middle-ranking members, as opposed to divine

or legendary figures, rulers, or religious specialists."\(^{80}\)

A major watershed in the development of the genre was the period before the T’ang Dynasty. The genre began to diverge and to develop along a number of separate paths in that period. In the T’ang Dynasty proper, it was replaced by another genre, the ch’uan-ch’i 傳奇. The term ch’uan-ch’i was originally a name used by P’ei Hsing 裴錫 (825-880) for his fiction. It was not until the Yuan 元 Dynasty (1206-1368) that the word became accepted as a new genre name. Actually, both chuan and chih refer to the process of writing or recording, and both ch’i and kuai mean “strange” or “anomalous”. So there is no clear-cut division between the two genres. They both belong within the huge all-embracing category known as pi-chi hsiao-shuo 筆記小說.\(^{81}\) As Hu Ying-lin also said: “Genres such as chih-kuai and ch’uan-ch’i are extremely similar. They can exist in the same book or even in the same story.” 至於志怪、傳奇，尤易出入，或一書之中，二事並載：一事之內，兩全具存。\(^{82}\) The T’ang ch’uan-ch’i certainly derived much in terms of themes and techniques from the earlier chih-kuai. It specially favours love stories, such as Chiang Fang’s 蔣防 (fl. Early ninth century) “Tale of Huo Hsiao-yü” 胡小玉傳, Pai Hsing-chien’s 白行簡 (776-826) “Tale of Li Wa” 李娃傳, Yüan Chen’s 元稹 (779-831) “Tale of Ying-ying” 鵲

\(^{80}\) Campany, Strange Writing, p.100.
\(^{81}\) Certainly this is the branch of Chinese literature least represented in English translation.
\(^{82}\) 胡應麟，九流諸論，in 少室山房筆藪. See Leo Tak-hung Chan, Discourse on Foxes and Ghosts (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1998), p.10.
鶯傳, Ch’en Hsüan-yu’s 陳玄祐 (fl.779) “The Disembodied Soul” 雕魂記, Shen Chi-chi’s 沈既濟 (741-805) “Miss Jen the Fox-spirit” 任氏傳, and Li Ch’ao-wei’s 李朝威 (eighth century) “The Dragon King’s Daughter” 陽穀傳. Among the Tang ch’uan-ch’i there are also martial arts stories, such as Yüan Chiao’s 袁郊 (?) “Red Thread” 紅線傳, Tu Kuang-t’ing’s 杜光庭 (850-933) “The Curly-bearded Stranger” 龜婿客傳, P’ei Hsing’s 裴铏 “Miss Nieh Ying” 聶隱娘, and Hsüeh Tiao’s 薛騫 (?) “Wu Shuang the Peerless” 無雙傳. And then there were stories satirizing worldly reality, such as Shen Chi-chi’s 沈既濟 (750-800) “The World in a Pillow” 枕中記 and Li Kung-tso’s 李公佐 (770-848) “The Millet Dream” 柯太守傳. Compared with the earlier chih-kuai, the content of this ch’uan-ch’i genre stresses the marvelous and exotic rather than the anomalous and curious, and the plots were more complex.

In the Sung 宋 Dynasty (960-1127), there was little change or innovation in the genre. Though there were still works of quality such as Hsü Hsüan’s 徐玄 (916-991) Chi-shen lu 稽神錄, Wu Shu’s 吳淑 (947-1002) Chiang-huai i-ren lu 江淮異人錄 and Hung Mai’s 洪邁 (1123-1202) I-chien chih 夷堅志, the themes and techniques show no outstanding development. In the Ming Dynasty, authors began to combine the format of the chih-kuai with the literary techniques of the ch’uan-ch’i. Ch’ü Yu’s

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83 “The tales of the supernatural by Sung Dynasty scholar were flat and insipid...” 宋一代文人之為志怪，既平實而乏文采。 “Their ch’uan-ch’i tales usually avoided contemporary topics and dealt with the past: they were neither good imitations of earlier works nor yet original tales.” 其傳奇，又多託往事而避近聞，擬古但遠不逮，更無獨創之可言矣。 魯迅，中國小說史略，p.81.
Chien-teng hsin-hua 船燈新話 is a good example. Of the three early Ch’ing-dynasty collections – Yüan Mei’s 袁枚 (1716-1789) Tzu pu-yü 子不語, Chi Yün’s 紀昀 (1724-1805) Yüeh-wei ts’ao-t’ang pi-chi 閒微草堂筆記, and P’u Sung-ling’s Liao-chai chih-i, its stories have always been the most celebrated. Though P’u Sung-ling somehow or other inherited the tradition of the early chih-kuai stories and the Tang/Sung dynasty ch’uan-ch’i stories. And yet his stories are hugely different from those earlier stories. They are much more works of art, they convey a much more subtle way of thinking.

1.4 The Creation of the Liao-chai chih-i

Let us hear how P’u Sung-ling himself introduced his work to his reader, in his own preface, using Giles’ translation and notes.

Clad in wisteria, girded with ivy; thus sang San-lü [Ch’ü-P’ing] in his Dissipation of Grief [Falling into Trouble]. Of ox-headed devils and serpent Gods, he of the long-nails never wearied to tell. Each interprets in his own way the music of heaven; and whether it be discord or not, depends upon antecedent causes. As for me, I cannot, with my poor autumn fire-fly’s light, match myself against the hobgoblins of the age. I am but the dust in the sunbeam, a fit laughing-stock for devils. For my talents are not those of Yü [Kan] Pao, elegant explorer of the records of the Gods; I am rather animated by the Spirit of Su Tung-p’o, who loved to hear men speak of the supernatural. I get people to commit what they tell me to writing, and subsequently I dress it up in the form of a story; and thus in the lapse of time my friends from all quarters have supplied me with quantities of material, which, from my habit of collecting, has grown into a vast pile.

Human beings, I would point out, are not beyond the pale of fixed laws,
and yet there are more remarkable phenomena in their midst than in the
country of those who crop their hair;\textsuperscript{xiii} antiquity is unrolled before us, and
many tales are to be found therein stranger than that of the nation of Flying
Heads.\textsuperscript{xiv} ‘Irrepressible bursts, and luxurious ease,\textsuperscript{xv} ---such was always his
enthusiastic strain. ‘For ever indulging in liberal thought,’\textsuperscript{xvi}---thus he spoke
openly without restraint. Were men like these to open my book, I should be a
laughing-stock to them indeed. At the cross-roads\textsuperscript{xvii} men will not listen to
me, and yet I have some knowledge of the three states of existence\textsuperscript{xviii} spoken of
beneath the cliff;\textsuperscript{xix} neither should the words I utter be set aside because of
him that utters them.\textsuperscript{xx} When the bow\textsuperscript{xxi} was hung at my father’s door, he
dreamed that a sickly-looking Buddhist priest, but half-covered by his stole,
entered the chamber. On one of his breasts was a round piece of plaster like a
cash;\textsuperscript{xxii} and my father, waking from sleep, found that I, just born, had a
similar black patch on my body. As a child, I was thin and constantly ailing,
and unable to hold my own in the battle of life. Our home was chill and
desolate as a monastery; and working there for my livelihood with my
pen,\textsuperscript{xxiii} I was as poor as a priest with his alms-bowl.\textsuperscript{xxiv} Often and often I put
my hand to my head\textsuperscript{xxv} and exclaimed, ‘Surely he who sat with his face to
the wall\textsuperscript{xxvi} was myself in a previous state of existence;’ and thus I referred
my non-success in this life to the influence of a destiny surviving from the
last. I have been tossed hither and thither in the direction of the ruling wind,
like a flower falling in filthy places; but the six paths\textsuperscript{xxvii} of transmigration
are inscrutable indeed, and I have no right to complain. As it is, midnight
finds me with an expiring lamp, while the wind whistles mournfully without;
and over my cheerless table I piece together my tales,\textsuperscript{xxviii} vainly hoping to
produce a sequel to the \textit{Infernal Regions}.\textsuperscript{xxix} With a bumper I stimulate my
pen, yet I only succeed thereby in ‘venting my excited feelings,’\textsuperscript{xxx} and as I
thus commit my thoughts to writing, truly I am an object worthy of
commiseration. Alas! I am but the bird that, dreading the winter frost, finds
no shelter in the tree: the autumn insect that chirps to the moon, and hugs the
door for warmth. For where are they who know me?\textsuperscript{xxxi} They are in the
bosky grove, and at the frontier pass\textsuperscript{xxxii}---wrapped in an impenetrable
gloom!\textsuperscript{xxxiii}

\textsuperscript{84} Herbert Giles, \textit{Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio} (First edition, London: Thos. De La Rue, 1880),
Introduction, “Author’s Own Record”, p.xviii. Ch’un-shu Chang and Shelly Chang in their book
\textit{Redefining History} praised Giles’ translation: “Giles’ translation is exceptionally knowledgeable, ...
There are several other translations but not of the same scholarly quality.” See Chang and Chang, p.266
are indicated by square brackets. Words omitted in the revised edition are indicated by triangular
brackets.
i Said of the bogies of the hills, in allusion to their clothes. Here quoted with reference to the official classes, in ridicule of the title under which they hold posts which, from a literary point of view, they are totally unfit to occupy.

ii A celebrated statesman (B. C. 314) [B.C. 332-295] who, having lost his master's favour by the intrigues of a rival, finally drowned himself in despair. The Annual Dragon Festival is said by some to be a "search" for his body. [The term San Lü used here was the name of an office held by Ch'ü P'ing.]

iii A poem addressed by San-Lü [Ch'ü P'ing] to his Prince, after his disgrace. Its non-success was the immediate cause of his death.

iv That is, of the supernatural generally.

v A poet of the T'ang Dynasty whose eyebrows met, whose nails were very long, and who could write very fast.

vi "You know the music of earth," said <the Taoist sage,> Chuang-tzu; "but you have not heard the music of heaven."

vii That is, to the operation of some influence surviving from a previous existence.

viii This is another hit at the ruling classes. Chi [Hsi] K'ang, a celebrated musician and alchemist (A. D. 223-262), was sitting one night alone, playing upon his lute, when suddenly a man with a tiny face walked in, and began to stare hard at him, the stranger's face enlarging all the time. "I'm not going to match myself against a devil!" cried the musician, after a few moments, and instantly blew out the light.

ix When Liu Chüan, Governor of Wu-ling, determined to relieve his poverty by trade, he saw a devil standing by his side, laughing and rubbing his hands for glee. "Poverty and wealth are matters of destiny" said Liu Chüan; "But to be laughed at by a devil — ," and accordingly he desisted from his intention.

x A writer who flourished in the early part of the fourth century, and composed a work in thirty books entitled Supernatural Researches.

xi The famous poet, statesman, and essayist, who flourished A. D. 1036-1101.

xii "And his friends had the habit of jotting down for his unfailing delight anything quaint or comic that they came across." — The World on Charles Dickens: 24th July 1878.

xiii It is related in the Historical Record that when T'ai Po and Yu Chung visited the southern savages they saw men with tattooed bodies and short hair.

xiv A fabulous community, <placed by geographers to the west of the Dragon city — wherever that may be.> So called because the heads of the men are in the habit of leaving their bodies, and flying down to marshy places to feed on worms and crabs. A red ring is seen the night before the flight encircling the neck of the man whose head is about to fly. At daylight the head returns. [Some say that the ears are used as wings; others that the hands also leave the body and fly away.]
xv A quotation from the admired works of Wang Po, a brilliant scholar and poet, who was drowned at the early age of twenty-eight, A.D. 675.

xvi I have hitherto failed in all attempts to identify this quotation [the particular writer here intended. The phrase is used by the poet Li T'ai-po and others.]

xvii The cross-road of the "Five Fathers" is here mentioned, which the commentator tells us is merely the name of the place.

xviii The past, present, and future life, of the Buddhist system of metempsychosis.

xix A certain man, who was staying at a temple, dreamt that an old priest appeared to him beneath a jade-stone cliff, and, pointing to a stick of burning incense, said to him, "That incense represents a vow to be fulfilled; but I say unto you, that ere its smoke shall have curled away, your three states of existence will have been already accomplished." The meaning is that time on earth is as nothing to the Gods.

xx This remark occurs in the fifteenth [chapter] of the [Analects or] Confucian Gospels;

section 22.

xxi The birth of a boy was formerly signalled by hanging a bow at the door; that of a girl, by displaying a small towel — indicative of the parts that each would hereafter play in the drama of life.

xxii See note 2 to No. II. This note reads: The common European name for the only Chinese coin, about twenty of which go to a penny. Each has a square hole in the middle, for the convenience of stringing them together; hence the expression "strings of cash".

xxiii Literally, "ploughing with my pen."

xxiv The patra or bowl, used by Buddhist mendicants, in imitation of the celebrated alms-dish of Shakyamuni Buddha.

xxv Literally, "scratched my head," as is often done by the Chinese in perplexity or doubt.

xxvi Alluding to the priest Dharma-nandi, who came from India to China, and tried to convert the Emperor Wu Ti of the Liang Dynasty; but, failing in his attempt, he retired full of mortification to a temple at Sung-shan, where he sat for nine years before a rock, until his own image was imprinted thereon.

xxvii The six gātī or conditions of existence, namely: angels, men, demons, hungry devils, brute beasts, and tortured sinners.

xxviii Literally, "putting together the pieces under the forelegs (of foxes) to make robes." This part of the fox-skin is the most valuable for making fur clothes.

xxix The work of a well-known writer, named Lin [This must be a slip for Liu] I-ch'ing, who flourished during the Sung Dynasty.

xxx Alluding to an essay by Han Fei, a philosopher of the third century B.C., in which he laments the iniquity of the age in general, and the corruption of officials is particular. He finally committed suicide in prison, where he had been cast by the intrigues of a rival minister.
xxxii Confucius (Gospel xiv, sec. 37) said, "Alas! there is no one who knows me (to be what I am)."

xxxii The great poet Tu Fu (A. D. 712-770) dreamt that his greater predecessor, Li T’ai-po (A. D. 699-762) appeared to him, "coming when the maple-grove was in darkness, and returning while the frontier-pass was still obscured;" — that is, at night, when no one could see him; the meaning being that he never came at all, and that those "who know me (P’u Sung-ling)" are equally non-existent.

This full-length preface was written in the spring of 1679, in an elegant, terse and extremely dense classical style. The author uses "only 373 words";\(^{85}\) but manages to summon up a great number of allusions and metaphors; he "actually quotes thirty-four different authors, making almost every line a direct or indirect quotation, from the Classics to the Dynastic Histories. P’u draws from masterpieces in philosophy, poetry, and fiction, as well as the Buddhist sutras."\(^{86}\) From the numerous allusions we are given a glimpse of the literary lineage within which P’u Sung-ling sees himself.

In the beginning of the preface, P’u Sung-ling likens himself to many literati who employed the supernatural in their works, writers such as the early "shamanistic" rhapsodist Ch’ü Yüan 屈原 (?343-277 BC) and the Late T’ang poet, "long-nailed" Li Ho 李賀 (791-817); or writers who wrote strange anecdotes, like the Sou-shen chi 搜神記 of Kan Pao 干寶, and the Yu-ming lu 幽明錄 of Liu I-ch’ing 劉義慶; or writers who simply loved ghost stories, like Su Tung-p’o 蘇東坡 (1036-1101). Here, the author implies that he himself is or at least wants to be one of them. In the later

\(^{85}\) Chang and Chang, Redefining History, p.162.

\(^{86}\) Ibidem
part of the preface, P’u compares himself with the Grand Historian Szu-ma Ch’ien 司馬遷，who believed that “great literature is motivated by suffering and dissatisfaction”.\(^7\) Szu-ma Ch’ien used the term “lonely anguish” 孤憤, which is also a chapter title used by the ancient philosopher Han Fei 韓非 (also mentioned by P’u).

In his autobiographical postface Szu-ma Ch’ien writes that his own book *Shih chi* 史記 also aims to expose his “lonely anguish”. P’u Sung-ling’s life, as we have already stated, was full of disappointment and frustration, and it is not strange that he should compare himself with these two great figures from the past. P’u also relates his birth as a reincarnation of a monk who cannot achieve transcendence, implying that he was destined to live a life as a lonely and poor writer.

The preface also gives us several clues as to the reason why P’u wrote the work; as to how he wrote the work; and as to which kind of reader the book was supposed to be written for.

It has often been claimed that P’u wrote *Liao-chai chih-i* purely to express this “lonely anguish” of his, to give vent to his sense of frustration. The things that made him angry and frustrated (according to this popular view, especially as expressed in the People’s Republic of China) were the “national and class struggles” taking place

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in society, and his own repeated failures in the examinations. In a time of repression and inquisitions, it is claimed by such critics, P’u used “these stories of ghosts, fox-fairies and other marvels [amplifying them] with imaginary details to expose and criticize reality.” It is certainly true that the condition of the society in which he lived did inspire him to write many tales reflecting reality and exposing his dissatisfaction. It is undeniable that his failures at the examinations stimulated him to write fiction as a way of venting his personal frustration. But it is clear from his preface, that this “lonely anguish” was not the only or indeed the main reason for him to write the Liao-chai chih-i. The main reason was his fascination with supernatural stories in their own right. The references in the beginning of the preface, and in the phrases: “irrepressible bursts, and luxurious ease,” – such was always his enthusiastic strain. ‘For ever indulging in liberal thought,’ – thus he spoke openly without restraint.” 避飛逸興 狂固難辭 永托嘆懐 痴且不諱, are strong evidence of P’u’s fascination with the supernatural per se. When he had almost finished writing his Liao-chai stories, P’u Sung-ling exchanged poems with Wang Shih-chen. Wang wrote:

姑妄言之姑聽之，豆棚瓜架雨如絲。
料應厭作人間語，愛聽秋殢鬼唱時。

Gourd trellis,
silken rain;

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88 See for example 馬瑞芳, 謝松齡評傳 (北京：人民文學, 1986), p.145.
idle words, idly spoken, idly heard—
like Su the Poet
and Teller of Tales
of whom we were both so fond!
the world’s debates
disdained;
loving instead to hear
ghost songs,
from the graves
of autumn⁹⁰.

P’u replied:

《詫異》書成共笑之，布袍蕭索鬢如絲：
十年頗得黃州意，冷雨寒燈夜話時。
Threadbare gown,
grey head,
silken hair;
Now my Book of Tales is done
—an idle jest to share!
Ten years
I have tasted the joys
of Su the Teller of Tales
and Poet—
of whom we were both so fond!
Night-time conversations,
cold rain,
chill lamp
of autumn.

In their poems, they both mention Su Shih, “the Teller of Tales and Poet”, just as in
his own Preface P’u refers to his admiration for Su, and their shared love of
supernatural 情類黃州，喜人談鬼. It is this love of the supernatural
per se that lies

⁹⁰ These two poems were co-translated with John Minford.
at the root of the Liao-chai collection – a love no doubt tempered by his personal
“anguish”.

From the two poems written by his close friend, Chang Tu-ch’ing 張築慶, in
1664,91 it is quite evident that P’u had already begun to write the Liao-chai stories
when he was in his twenties. By then he had, it is true, already failed twice in the
provincial examinations of 1660 and 1663, but this was not uncommon. It was not
until much later that he despaired and abandoned his attempts. So “lonely anguish”
may have stirred him to write, but it was not the only reason for the creation of the
Liao-chai stories. As Judith Zeitlin has written: “... there is historical precedent for
doing so; he loves to do so; material abounds, and eventually stories are even sent to
him; it is an uncontrollable obsession, a folly he cannot suppress; he was predestined
to do so; he is stirred by ‘lonely anguish’; the ghosts whose history he records are the
only ones who understand him.”92

As for how he wrote the book, the author also provides several clues in the
preface. “I get people to commit what they tell me to writing,93 and subsequently I
dress it up in the form of a story; and thus in the lapse of time my friends from all
quarters have supplied me with quantities of material, which, from my habit of

91 See 袁世碩, 蒲松齡事蹟考述新考 (濟南: 齊魯, 1988). See also “P’u Sung-ling nien-p’u” 蒲松
齡年譜 in P’u Sung-ling ch’uan-chi 蒲松齡全集, p.3369.
92 Zeitlin, The Historian of the Strange, pp.55-56.
93 Here is a mistranslation by Giles. I think 則筆 should be translated as: “I write down what
people tell me.”
collecting, has grown into a vast pile.” 聞則命筆 遂以成編 久之 四方同人 又已
郵筒相寄 因而 物以好聚 所積亦夥 And he also describes how lonely life can be
for a writer: “As it is, midnight finds me with an expiring lamp, while the wind
whistles mournfully without; and over my cheerless table I piece together my tales.”

獨是子夜螢螢 燈昏欲蕊 蕭齋瑟瑟 案冷疑冰 集腋爲裘

At the end of the Preface, the author gives a sigh: “For where are they who know
me? They are ‘in the bosky grove, and at the frontier pass’ – wrapped in an
impenetrable gloom!” 知我者 其在青林黑塞間乎 This sentence can also be read as
a genuine question. The author is asking his readers if any of them can understand
him. In the earlier part of the Preface, P’u has already sought “to create the ideal
audience for his book, to transform the ‘serious men’ who will laugh at him and reject
his ‘unbridled words’ into sympathetic readers who will strive to understand him [and
his strange excursion into the supernatural].”

1.4.1 Dating

It is not clear exactly when P’u Sung-ling began to write the Liao-chai collection,
and when he finished it. The only date given in the preface is the date on which P’u
wrote the preface itself -- 1679. Giles thought (incorrectly) that this must have been

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94 Zeitlin, Historian of the Strange, p.56.
the date when the work was completed.

For instance, the late Mr. Mayers states in his *Chinese Reader's Manual*, p.176, that this work was composed 'circa A.D. 1710,' the fact being that the collection was completed in 1679, as we know by the date attached to the 'Author's Own Record' give above.\(^{95}\)

It is clear that many entries were added to the collection after this date. But probably by the year 1679, P' u had written a large part of the collection. From a detailed study of the stories, it can be shown that P' u kept on adding new entries after having written the preface, over a long period of time. Chang and Chang in their *Redefining History*, provide a table correlating these entries.\(^{96}\) According to this table, there are 46 entries written after 1679. The latest datable entry is the story "Summer Snow" 夏雪, written in 1707, eight years before the author passed away. P' u wrote a poem, which is dated to about 1707 by Yuan Shih-shuo and Yin Meng-lun, in which he used the expression *chi cheng* 集成, "literally 'to collect together'",\(^{97}\) to describe the completion of his *Liao-chai chih-i*. The Changs reconstruct the drawn-out process of P' u's writing the book in these terms: "first a one-volume version, then two-volume version, four-volume version, seven-volume version, fifteen-volume version, sixteen-volume version, and then finally he 'collected together' all sixteen volumes to form one collection as a book."\(^{98}\)


\(^{96}\) Chang and Chang, *Redefining History*, pp.79-80.

\(^{97}\) Chang and Chang, *Redefining History*, p.244, note 24. For the poem, see P' u *Sung-ling ji*, p. 681: 鈔書成，遺家送故袍至，作此寄諸兒.

\(^{98}\) Ibidem.
There are also different dates given for P’u Sung-ling’s commencement of the process of writing and compiling the stories. Using the date given in the story “Lien-hsiang” 蓮香, Jaroslav Prusek suggested the date 1670. However, basing himself on the poems written by P’u’s close friend Chang Tu-ch’ing, Yüan Shih-shuo has suggested that P’u had already begun to collect materials for the collection as early as 1664, when he was in his early twenties.99

It is probably more plausible to say that the compilation was a lifelong hobby of P’u Sung-ling’s. As Chang and Chang point out, “even if the stages of the long process of composing the whole collection can be traced from 1671-1711, the specific date of each story cannot [be traced].”100

1.4.2 Sources

From the Preface, we can glimpse how P’u Sung-ling collected materials from hearsay and from friends, and how he compiled these materials into the collection as we now have it. Based on these few lines, a legend arose:

... It has been said that Master P’u lived in the countryside, alone and without family, and that he was a man of a peculiar disposition. He was the pedagogue of the village, poor and frugal in his habits, never begging from others. Every morning when he was writing this book [Liao-chai chth-t], he would take a big earthen pot, full of thirst-quenching bitter tea, and a pack of tobacco, to the roadside of a thoroughfare. He would sit on a reed mat with

100 Chang and Chang, Redefining History, p. 77.
tobacco and tea beside him. Whenever there was a passer-by, he would grab hold of that person and force him to talk in order to gather whatever strange and unusual anecdotes he might know. If he was thirsty, he would offer him tea; he would offer him tobacco; but above all, P’u would always make him talk extensively. Whenever he heard of an interesting event, he would return home and embellish it. Thus, after some twenty years, the book was finally finished.

相傳先生居鄉里，落拓無偶，性猶怪僻。為村中童子師，食貧自給，不求與人。作此書時，每臨晨，攜一大瓷罈，中儲苦茗，具淡巴菇一包，置行人大道旁，下陳簀簟，坐與上，煙茗置身畔。見行道者過，必強執與詰，搜奇說異，隨人所知。渴則飲以茗，或奉以煙，必令暢談乃已。偶聞一事，歸而粉飾之。如是二十年寒暑，此書方告蒇。101

This legend is questionable, and almost certainly based on pure fantasy. None of us can really know how P’u Sung-ling wrote the collection.102 We can however try to trace the source of each story in his collection. There has been a great deal of research along these lines, and the general consensus is that there are three main sources of the collection: folk materials, written literary sources, and P’u’s own personal dreams, experiences, memories and imagination.103 In a more detailed classification, P’u Sung-ling’s sources could also be divided into six groups: “personal experiences (partly autobiographical), eye-witness [accounts of] events, hearsay of varying forms and nature, folklore and folktales, contemporary writings, and traditional works”.104

According to Chang and Chang, more than one-third of the Liao-chai stories, about

101 鄭強，三借廬筆談 in 李靈年，潘松齡與鄭齋誌異 (瀋陽：遼寧教育出版社, 1993), pp. 54-55.
102 Compare the dearth of factual information about Ts’ao Hsüeh-ch’in 曹雪芹 (1715-1763) and the writing of The Story of the Stone 紅樓夢.
103 Chang and Chang, Redefining History, p.75.
104 Chang and Chang, Redefining History, p.172.
180, "are re-creations based on similar themes or some archetypical sources that were
written from the Han to the Ming dynasties and about 70 of the 180 stories had been
well-known works in the Six Dynasties and Tang periods". They also identify two
important source books for P’u Sung-ling, the Song dynasty anthology *T’ai-p’ing
kuang-chi*太平廣記,* and Hung Mai’s 洪邁 (1123-1202) *I-chien chih*夷堅志.

1.4.3 Themes

Liao-chai scholars have also tended to divide the collection’s themes into several
categories. These include “official corruption”, the “examination system”, “love”,
“family relationships” and a miscellaneous category often called simply “others”
(which in reality covers the majority of the stories). The distinguished 20th-century
thinker and writer Martin Buber in the preface to his translation (or rather adaptation)
of a selection of Liao-chai stories gives a more evocative listing:

It contains about four hundred stories, and they are, in fact, curious communications. They report all kinds of rare and wondrous goings-on, of
the adventures of wayfarers and dreams of the lonely, of singing frogs and
playacting mice, sea serpents and giant birds, snow in summer, floods and earthquakes, strange diseases and peculiar deaths, travels among the
cannibals and travels into the land where beauty counts for ugliness and ugliness for beauty, episodes in the nether world, the sham dead and the
resurrected, all kinds of magic arts, of buried treasures, of alchemists, of
prophecies, and of interpretations of dreams; nor are satires lacking, for

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106 This anthology was compiled by Li Fang (925-967) and others in A.D. 978. According to Chang and
Chang, no less than fifty of the Liao-chai stories are based on materials contained in the anthology. See
*Redefining History*, p.173.
instance, of biased officials, corrupt examiners, ignorant doctors, lying priests – often describing social relations in the netherworld which resemble closely those in the human world. The most numerous stories and the most important, however, concern ghosts: animal ghosts [e.g. fox ghosts], plant ghosts, water ghosts, cloud ghosts, ghosts who live in eyes and ghosts who live in a picture, departed ghosts, ghosts of all kinds in their manifold relations to men and women, especially the dangers and joys arising from the ghosts’ love for individuals. For they all seek out the human being in order to play with him like a toy or like a friend, to punish him or teach him, to carouse with him or cooperate with him, to help him or to obtain help from him, to offer him a love which no fellow human being can grant him or obtain life by means of a love accessible to the ghost only by association with a member of humanity.¹⁰⁷

Buber also points out the main overarching themes of these stories, showing an intuitive perception far superior to that of many so-called “scholars”:

What attracted me was something I did not find so fully expressed in similar tales of any other people: an air of intimacy and harmony. Here demons are loved and possessed by humans, humans by demons, but they who come to court us or touch us are neither incubi nor succubi, wavering presences from a dreadful other world, but rather beings of our own world, merely arising from a deeper, darker region. ... every act bears witness to a demon who, as your friend, as your wife, as your son, enters your house and rewards you. Yet none of this is uncanny: it is home, it is life.

This echoes what P’u himself declared to be the main themes of his work, in his own Preface:

Human beings, I would point out, are not beyond the pale of fixed laws, and yet there are more remarkable phenomena in their midst than in the country of those who crop their hair; antiquity is unrolled before us, and many tales are to be found therein stranger than that of the nation of Flying Heads.¹⁰⁸

This sentence casts a light on the recurring theme of the Liao-chai stories. The author

is talking about strange things, which exist not outside, but in the “geography of the imagination”. They are the strange within us. “The point is that the strange is not other; the strange resides in our midst. The strange is inseparable from us.” The main over-riding theme of his work is thus human nature, human emotions, human hearts and minds, human relationships. Whether he is writing stories of romance or fantasy or satire, whether his actors are human beings or ghosts, foxes or fairies, he praises what he considers to be the beauty of human nature, qualities such as loyalty, honesty, the courage to love, to feel, the ability to understand and make sacrifices; and he criticizes the ugly aspects, such as greed and injustice, lust and cruelty, lack of love and understanding.

Alongside this, P’u also wrote many casual note-form stories in the older pi-chi 筆記 tradition, simply in order to record strange things. These are scattered amongst the other stories throughout the collection, as a sort of counterpoint. They established a very low-key note, a calm, objective scholars’ eye, observing strange objects and events, as opposed to the highly-developed fantasy world of many of the hu-li-ching 狐狸精 stories, for example, and this low-key pi-chi note helps to offset and highlight the more dramatic, personalized stories. The presence of these pi-chi notes helps to make the liao-chai collections that much more complete.

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1.4.4 Language and Style

Language, one of the essential elements in the style of a work, is also an essential element in translation. The language used in the author’s preface is the elaborately crafted literary language known as p’ian-wen 鮀文 or parallel prose.111 But the language used in the Liao-chai stories themselves is the ordinary classical language or wen-yan 文言, the language of scholarship and traditional prose literature in general. Compared with parallel prose, the plain classical language is simpler and much more suitable for narration, free of the restraints imposed by the need to have antithetical lines and to provide endless literary embellishments and allusions. That is not to say that P’u Sung-ling’s classical Chinese was prosaic or unrefined. On the contrary, the language is full of carefully chosen expressions, and uses a rich descriptive and lyrical vocabulary. It was the language of the highly educated literati class, to which P’u and all his friends belonged. He was perfectly capable of writing in the even simpler pai-hua 白話 storytelling manner, as we can see from his li-chʻü 理曲 versions of some Liao-chai stories.112 In the Liao-chai stories themselves, P’u did employ certain colloquial figures of speech and dialect words in his dialogues between different kinds

110 Zeitlin, The Historian of the Strange, p.47.
112 For the title of the seven Liao-chai stories in P’u’s li-chʻü version, see Ts’o Tsung-liang’s 鄧宗良 introduction to Liao-chai li-chʻü chi 聊齋俚曲集 (Peking: Kuo-chi wen-hua, 1999), p.10. The titles of the seven stories and of their popular versions are as follows: 張誠/祝初曲; 珊瑚/姑婦曲; 張鴻靜/富貴神仙, 豹狐曲; 節三官/席方平/寒森曲; 仇大娘/翻魘兾; 江城/瑩妒咒.
of people. This adds to the interest and artistic content of his stories, and contributes
to the “humanising” of his supernatural protagonists.

The complicated plot of the stories is one of the outstanding stylistic qualities of
the Liao-chai stories. Several of the longer tales could have become individual
novels, such as the story “Lien-hsiang” 蓮香 and the story “Ying Ning” 愫寧. And
the vivid description of individual personalities is another famous stylistic quality,
especially of the female characters.

Another very important quality of the Liao-chai stories is the author’s spirit of
“playfulness”. Few contemporary readers have grasped this. Mainland critics,
especially, always place the Liao-chai stories in the category of “serious literature”,
exposing the dark side of society. Actually, this spirit of “playfulness” runs throughout
the whole collection. It is sometimes expressed through the language itself. In the tale
“Dragon Dormant” 蟠龍, for example, P’u uses a large number of Chinese characters
that contain the graphic element representing “insect” or “dragon”. The story is not
a very special one in terms of its content, but thanks to the author’s play with Chinese
characters, the reader is entertained in a vivid manner. The “playful” style can also be
expressed through the tale itself. In the story “Lien-hsiang – the fox girl”, for example,

\[113\] For this, see James V. Muhlan’s PhD dissertation: “P’u Sung-ling and the Liao-chai chih-yi:
Themes and Art of the literary Tale” (Indiana University, 1978), “Chapter Four: Art of the tales”,
pp.132-141.

\[114\] This story is no. 90 in Allan Barr’s index (HJAS 44.2, 1984).
the author uses a joke or a jest 戲 to start the story and to introduce its two female protagonists. The 19th-century critic Tan Ming-lun commented on this playfulness:

“Ghost and fox appear together, and all in jest, naturally, without the slightest trace of artifice. This whole scintillating text, full of the strangest transformations, all proceeds from the word jest. Jest, play, game, the essence of the writer’s art lies in the conception, in the embryo.” The “playfulness” can also be expressed through the comments appended by the Historian of the Strange. In the story “A demon country” 夜叉國, P’u describes a very ugly and powerful female demon or Yaksha 夜叉. At the end of the story he comments: “The Historian of the Strange writes: a demon wife is very rarely heard of today. But after careful thinking, I find that it is not rare at all.

Every family has a demon wife sleeping in its bed.” 風史氏曰 夜叉夫人 今所罕聞然細思之而不罕也 家家床頭 有個夜叉在 This “playful” style is the very essence of the Liaochai stories.

1.4.5 Editions

It was not until 1766, fifty years after the author’s death, that the Liaochai stories were first printed and published. Before that, handwritten copies of the manuscript had been widely circulated among friends and associates.

The earliest is the author’s own manuscript 蕭氏手抄本 (referred to hereafter
as the P’u ms). It contains 237 stories in four volumes, half of the original manuscript. It is believed that after P’u’s death in 1715, the manuscript was carefully preserved by P’u’s family. It was rediscovered in 1948, and published in facsimile form in Peking in 1955. In 1739, P’u’s grandson Li-te 蒲立德 (1683-1751) copied out from his grandfather’s manuscript a selection of tales, “110 in all, arranged in sixteen chüan 卷” for the magistrate of Tzu-ch’uan, T’ang Ping-i 唐秉彝. In 1830, sixty-four years after the first printed edition had been published, the son of the then magistrate of Tzu-ch’uan, Jung Yü 榮稷, borrowed P’u’s manuscript and “copied out forty-two previously unpublished items and incorporated these under the title Liao-chai chih-i shi-i 拾遺 in his compilation, the Te-yüeh ts’ung-shu 得月鐫書”. Then in 1869, when P’u’s seventh-generation descendant, Chie-jen 介人, moved to Shenyang 瀋陽, the original manuscript was lent to the Liu 劉 family. Liu Tzu-kuei 劉滋桂 copied fifty-six tales which were not included in the first edition, in a compilation entitled Liao-chai chih-i i-pian 聊齋誌異逸編. In 1880, the manuscript was rebound in eight volumes and stored in two boxes. The second half was lost. In 1931, an official named Yüan Chin-k’ai 袁金凱 photographed twenty-four stories from the first half and published them as Hsüan-yin 選印 Liao-chai chih-i yüan-kao

113 Published in facsimile by 文學古籍出版社, in 1955.
117 According to Allan Barr, he was the magistrate of Tzu-ch’uan between 1734 and 1739. He was one of those who applied to see the author’s manuscript. See Barr, "Textual Transmission", p.518. Magistrate T’ang’s copy has not survived.
原稿 in 1933. In 1950, the state authorities became interested in the existence of the manuscript, and “the P’u family was persuaded to donate their heirloom to the state”. 

“The surviving volumes were rebound and deposited in Liaoning Provincial Library.”

Another important manuscript is Chang Hsi-chieh’s 張希傑 (1689-1761) manuscript (the Chang ms). This is also known as the Chu-hsüeh chai 翠雪齋 manuscript after the name of Chang’s studio. It is generally agreed that a postface appearing in the extant Chang ms and dated 1723 was written by the son of Chu Hsiang 朱湘. Chu Hsiang was a friend of P’u Sung-ling, and once possessed a copy of Liao-chai chih-i although he lost it after P’u’s death. Chu’s son borrowed and copied the P’u ms in 1723. Before this 1723 copy was lost, it was copied twice. The first transcription was made by Chia Ju-keng 賈汝庚. Based on this copy, Tuan Yü 段玉 of Li-yang 黎陽 published in 1824 fifty-one stories under the title Liao-chai chih-i i-kao 遺稿. The second transcription made in 1751, is the Chang ms. This Chang ms is therefore one of the two fullest surviving versions of Liao-chai. It contains 488 stories in twelve chüan. Also, “with three exceptions, the order of the stories in the four extant ts’e 冊 of the P’u ms is reproduced exactly in the Chang

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120 Ibidem.
The first printed edition of Liao-chai chih-i was published by Chao Ch'i-kao 趙起果 in Hang-chou 杭州 in 1766. In the preface written by Chao before his death, he states that his edition is based on the manuscript of the Fu-chien scholar Cheng Fang-k'un 鄭方坤, who was once an official in Shantung. He also compared this copy with other copies and concluded that Cheng's manuscript was the most authentic.

The Chao edition contains 431 stories in sixteen chüan, with comments by Wang Shih-ch'en. The Cheng manuscript also comprised sixteen chüan, but the order of the stories and the total number of the stories are different from those in the Chao edition. Allan Barr suggests: “Chao originally intended to select the most outstanding stories from the Cheng ms and published these in twelve chüan. Once he had chosen these stories, he decided it would be a shame to omit the others altogether, and had plans to arrange the remainder in another four chüan.” This also explains why the tales incorporated in chüan 1-12 of the Chao edition are the most original and imaginative stories, while tales in chüan 13-16 are lacking in interest and are more similar to the short anecdotes recorded by other writers. Apart from rearranging the stories, Chao also did some minor editing and omitted some stories. In his preface he wrote:

“I have expunged simple items and brief notes which are dull and
commonplace, forty-eight in all."^{124}

卷中有單章隻句，意味平淺者刪之，計四十八條。^{125}

In fact, sixty tales which appear either in the P‘u ms or the Chang ms are not included in the Chao edition. It has been suggested that the tales changed or omitted in the Chao edition are tales that might have offended the Ch‘ing authorities.\^{126}

Apart from the above manuscripts and editions, there are many transcriptions. There is an incomplete manuscript dating from the K‘ang-hsi period (1708-1722), which includes 260 stories; the Huang Yen-hsi 黃炎熙 manuscript dating from the Ch‘ian-lung period is arranged in twelve chüan, of which chüan 2 and 12 have been lost. The ten surviving chüan contain 263 stories, including three which are not the work of P‘u Sung-ling. There is also a manuscript copy of Liao-chai chih-i in 24 chüan, dating to 1748-1767, which was discovered in 1962 in Tzu-po 淄博, Shantung, and contains 474 stories.\^{127} Other editions such as the Wang Chin-fan 王金範 edition published in 1767, with commentary by his son, Wang Heng-shan 王橫山, comprised 276 titles classified under twenty-six headings in eighteen chüan. Many other later reprints appeared based on the Chao edition, often with commentary and annotation included. The major 19th-century editions were those which incorporated commentary by Wang Shih-chen 王士禎, Ho Shou-ch‘i 何守奇 (of Kuang-tong, 1823), and Tan

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^{126} Barr, "The Textual Transmission", p. 533.

^{127} This was reprinted in 4 volumes in 1981 by the Ch‘i-lu Press.
Ming-lun 但明倫 (of Kuei-chou, 1842) and Feng Chen-luan 馮鎬巖 (of Si-ch'uan, 1818); and annotations by Lü Chan-en 呂湛恩 (of Shantung, 1825), and He Yin 何垠 (of Che-chiang, 1839).
Chapter 2

Herbert Giles and the *Strange Stories*

2.1 Giles the Humaniser

Herbert Giles first had direct contact with China in February 1867, when he joined the recently established China Consular Service and travelled to Peking. He left China twenty-five years later towards the end of 1892, arriving in England in early 1893. Two years before Giles’ return, the great Oxford orientalist Max Müller, in a speech given to the Royal Asiatic Society, spoke of the pressing need to “dispel those golden clouds of mystery which are supposed to surround the sanctuary of the primeval wisdom of East…”

If I were asked to say what in our own time is the distinguishing feature of Oriental research, I should say that it was the endeavour to bring the remote East closer and closer to our own time, and to dispel as much as possible that mystery which used to shroud its language, its literature, and its religion. Oriental scholarship is no longer a mere matter of curiosity. It appeals to higher sympathies, and teaches us that we can study in the East as well as in the West the great questions of humanity… So long as the Egyptian is a mere mummy to us, the Babylonian a mere image in stone… the Chinaman a joke, we are not yet Oriental scholars…

It is only when these strangers cease to be strangers, when they become friends, people exactly like ourselves in their strength and in their weakness… it is only then that we can claim to be oriental scholars, real students of the East, true lovers of humanity, which is always the same, whatever its age, whatever its language…

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The same Royal Asiatic Society, over thirty years later, in awarding Herbert Giles its triennial gold medal in 1922, summed up his achievement by stating that "beyond all other living scholars he had humanised Chinese Studies." In a similar vein, after his death in 1935, in The Dictionary of National Biography, Giles was described as "probably the most potent influence in replacing the old English regard for things Chinese as merely queer or silly by an intelligent perception of the depth and beauty of the culture of China."

2.2 Early Contact between Britain and China

The very earliest contact between China and the West was through the Roman Catholic missionaries.² By the start of the seventeenth century Catholic Europe as a whole had become involved in the attempt to bring Christianity to China. Missionaries such as Matteo Ricci (1553-1610) translated several Chinese books into Latin and published versions of religions and scientific works in the Chinese language. The Catholic dominated the scene for two centuries. Joshua Marshman (1768-1837), a missionary of the English Baptist Mission based in the Danish colony of Serampore, India, though he never went to China, produced a complete translation of the Bible into Chinese (with the help of an Armenian Christian, Joannes Lassar) and printed it

² For a good summary of this, see T.H. Barrett, Singular Listlessness (London: Wellsweep, 1989).
in 1822. The pioneer of Protestant Missionary work in China was the Scot Robert Morrison (1782-1834), who worked simultaneously with Marshman, but quite independently, on a Chinese Bible. He arrived at Canton in September 1807. By 1809, he was appointed translator to the East India Company due to his extraordinary proficiency in the Chinese language. The publication in 1811 in Canton of his first Chinese book marked the beginnings of genuine sustained intellectual contact between Britain and China. He also compiled the first dictionary between Chinese and English, a monumental work that enabled Giles to begin studying Chinese later.

"When I came to China, more than twenty years ago," he wrote in the Preface to his own Dictionary (1892), "I was turned into a room with an abridged edition of Morrison's Dictionary and a teacher who did not know a single word of English."

Morrison, William Milne (1785-1822), David Collie (died 1828), Walter Medhurst (1796-1857), Karl Gutzlaff (1803-1851) and other missionaries were active mainly in Malacca, Singapore and Batavia, but also in a minor way in Canton, Macau, and then Shanghai (as the Treaty Ports on the China Coast opened up). They set up printing presses and published books and journals. After the Opium War, missionaries were

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3 Barrett, p.61.
5 The earlier work edited by Thomas Percy (好望洋 The Pleasing History) in the mid-eighteenth century had no enduring intellectual effect.
6 T.H. Barrett, Singular Littleness, p.65: "David Collie, who on Milne's death achieved the position of Professor of Chinese there [Malacca] in 1823 after only about a year's worth of language instruction from Morrison, produced before his early death in 1828 a translation of the 'Four Books' of Confucianism..."
able to take advantage of the privileges accorded to foreigners. They preached and set up schools and colleges and hospitals in the new Treaty Ports. Several of these missionaries became respected sinologists and their Chinese studies paved the way for their successors, such as the great Scottish missionary James Legge (1814-1897).\(^7\)

Side by side with religion went trade. "The word ‘Trade’ is written large in the history of the British contact with China."\(^8\) Since the early eighteenth century, the British East India Company had set up in Canton and traded profitably.\(^9\) James Flint, an employee of the company, was probably the first Englishman to be properly qualified to act as interpreter between the English and Chinese languages. In 1759, with a view to opening up the trade, Flint sailed north to try to deliver a petition "of his own devising".\(^10\) However, he merely succeeded in "provoking the Emperor's wrath," and was imprisoned. It was not until 1793 that the British could communicate with the Chinese authorities without going through the Canton merchants. Lord Macartney led the first embassy sent by the British government to northern China, and succeeded in obtaining an audience with Emperor Ch'ien-lung 乾隆 (reigned 1736-1796). Though the emperor "waived the prostration (kowtows) exacted by China from

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\(^7\) Singular Listlessness, p.79.: "Noting Wade's disparaging characterization of Legge’s translations as 'wooden', Giles comments 'In my opinion, Legge's work is the greatest contribution ever made to the study of Chinese, and will be remembered and studied ages after Sir Thomas Wade's own paltry contribution has gone, if indeed it has not already gone, to the dustheap.'"


\(^9\) See P. D. Coates, China Consuls: British Consular Officers, 1843-1943 (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1988).

\(^10\) See Susan R. Stifler, "The Language students of the East India Company's Canton Factory", Journal
all such petty tribute-bearers, an audience and a patronizing message for the barbarian chieftain George III was all Macartney did obtain.\(^{11}\) Then, in 1816 came the second embassy of Lord Amherst (on which Morrison served as interpreter). Amherst who was hustled away by Chia-ch’ing’s 嘉慶 (reigned 1796-1821) court because he refused to kowtow.

In 1834, an Act of Parliament brought the East India Company’s monopoly over British trade at Canton to an end. To replace the company, government officials (“superintendents”) were sent to oversee the trade of British subjects in China. However, these superintendents still could not build up a direct relationship with the Chinese viceroy at Canton.

Meanwhile, along the China Coast, there was a growing illicit trade, largely in British hands, in opium. Early in the eighteenth century, the growth of opium-smoking had caused concern to Chinese emperors. And at the end of the century, opium imports were banned by an imperial edict. However, tempted by the large amount of silver they could earn, many Chinese officials encouraged and connived at the trade. Gradually, opium flooded into China, and eventually the Manchu government determined to stop it by action. In 1839, an imperial commissioner, Lin Tzu-hsü 林則徐 (1785-1850), arrived in Canton and took steps to end the

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\(^{11}\) F. D. Coates, *China Consuls*, p.2.
importation and smoking of opium. Lin arrested the British traders in Canton and the chief superintendent, Captain Elliott, and forced Elliott to agree to destroy the many million dollars worth of British-owned opium in Chinese waters. Lin’s action caused anger among the British community, who argued that some members of the seized group had not the slightest connection with the opium trade. Arguing that they needed to ensure the future personal security of British subjects trading in China and to “normalize” relations between Britain and China, the British government declared the First Opium War. The Chinese were defeated by the greatly superior weapons available to their enemies, and the war ended with the signing of the Treaty of Nan- king in 1842. China was forced to open the five treaty ports of Canton, Foochow, Amoy, Ningpo and Shanghai. These five treaty ports were opened to British and other foreign merchants and no import or export duties were to be charged in them. In addition, China was forced to pay a war indemnity and to cede the island of Hong Kong. The British could enjoy all the privileges granted by China to the other powers. British subjects should only be subject to British law and courts, and were excluded from the jurisdiction of Chinese officials and courts. And China had to accept a British consulate at each of the five treaty ports.

From this time on, the doors were thrown open. A growing number of young British gentlemen joined the consular service and came to work in China. Herbert
Giles was one of them.

2.3 Early Translations of Chinese Fiction: Chronology

It was not until the eighteenth century, that the first English translation of Chinese fiction appeared. This was a complete version of the minor 17th-century ts’ai-tzu chia-jen 
才子佳人 novel Hao-ch’iu chuan 好逑傳, entitled by its translators The Pleasing History. The translation was published in London in 1761, in four volumes, and was an immediate success. It was translated into French (1766), German (1766) and Dutch (1767). The Shanghai-based missionary Alexander Wylie (1815-1887) wrote of this in 1867: "The author of this translation is not certainly known. The manuscript was found among the papers of a gentleman named Wilkinson, who occasionally resided much at Canton… The three first volumes [of the manuscript] were in English and the fourth in Portuguese. Dr. Percy, Bishop of Dromore, translated the last volume into English and edited the work."\footnote{Quoted by Martha Davidson, \textit{A list of Published Translations From Chinese into English, French, and German. Part I: Literature, exclusive of Poetry} (published for the American Council of Learned Societies by J. W. Edwards, Publisher, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1952), p.6. Davidson gives an incorrect page number for the Wylie quotation. See Alexander Wylie, \textit{Notes on Chinese Literature} (Shanghai: American Presbyterian Mission Press, 1867), p.xxxiv. It is interesting to note that Wylie’s book, the first general hand-book on Chinese literature written in English, and a landmark in the development of British sinology, appeared in the very year that Giles arrived in China. For further details on Percy and \textit{The Pleasing History} see Ch’en Shou-yi, "Thomas Percy and His Chinese Studies", \textit{Chinese Social and Political Science Review} 20 (1936-7).}

Other English translations of Chinese fiction from the eighteenth century appeared in the two English versions of Du Halde’s encyclopedic French compendium
entitled *Description géographique, historique, chronologique, politique de l'Empire de la Chine et de la Tartarie chinoise, enrichie de cartes générales et particulières de ces Pays, de la Carte générale, & des Cartes particulières de Thibet, & de la Corée, & ornée d'un grand nombre de Figures & de Vignettes gravées en Taille-douce.* Du Halde's book first appeared in 1735 in four volumes. The third volume contains four stories, entitled:

1. Histoire où l'on voit qu'en pratiquant la Vertu on illustre sa famille.

2. Trait d'Histoire où le crime étant d'abord absous, le Ciel, au moment qu'il triomphe, le confond, & le punit avec l'éclat.

3. Trait d'Histoire où l'innocence accablée & prête à succomber, vient tout à coup à être reconnue, & vengée par une protection partiuculière du Ciel.

4. Autre Histoire; Tchouang tse après les bizarres obsèques de sa femme, s'adonne entièrement à sa chère Philosophie, & devient célèbre dans la Secte de Tao.¹³

These short stories are all from the late Ming collection *Chin-ku ch'i-kuan* 今古奇觀, which is itself a short anthology of stories from the *San-yan* 三言 and *Er-p'ai* 二拍 collections of Feng Meng-lung (see Chapter 1) and Ling Meng-ch'u 凌濛初 (1580-1644). Actually there are only three stories in the Chinese original. But one of the

three stories contains two tales, what was quite common in the late Ming style of storytelling, and Du Halde divided this one into two, under his titles number 2 and 3. There were two subsequent English translations of Du Halde. The one entitled *The General History of China Containing a Geographical, Historical, Chronological, Political and Physical description of the Empire of China, Chinese-Tartary, Corea and Thibet* was published in London in 1736, and was translated by a prolific writer and translator by the name of R. Brookes. It was printed “by and for John Watts” in four octavo volumes. It is often said that this Watts edition is “in all respects an inferior production.”¹⁴ Most of the original French plates were not reproduced, there was no general table of contents or index, and Du Halde's long preface was left out. The other translation, entitled *A Description of the Empire of China and Chinese-Tartary, Together with the kingdoms of Korea, and Tibet: containing the Geography and History (Natural as well as Civil) of those Countries* appeared in 1738-1741, and was printed “by T. Gardner in Bartolomew Close for Edward Cave at St. John's Gate” in two grander folio volumes. It was translated by John Green and William Guthrie. John Green was a pseudonym used by the Irish cartographer, Bradock Mead (fl. 1730-1753). William Guthrie (1708-1770) was a Scottish writer and historian who worked for Samuel Johnson's friend and publisher, Edward Cave.¹⁵ The young Samuel

Johnson is said to have played a part himself in the production and promotion of this Cave edition.

The titles of the three stories in these two English editions are as follows:

1. 呂大郎還金完骨肉

A Novel, wherein is shown that the Practice of Virtue renders a Family illustrious. (Watts)

A Novel, called Hi eul, or Virtue rewarded. (Cave)

2. 惡船家計賭假屍銀 狠僕人誤投真命狀

Two Pieces of History: The First, The Second. (Watts)

Two Stories. The Guilty punished by Heaven, and oppressed Innocence justified. (Cave)

3. 莊子休鼓盆成大道

Another Novel: Tchaong tse, after the Funeral Obsequies of his Wife, wholly addict himself to his beloved Philosophy, and becomes famous among the Sect of Tao. (Watts)

Another Story, called Tyen, or the Chinese Matron. (Cave)

The Du Halde Chuang-tzu story was the basis for later adaptations by Thomas Percy, in *The Matron* (London: Dodsley, 1762), and Oliver Goldsmith, "The Story of a

Johnson's famous remark about Green and Guthrie. "Green said of Guthrie, that he knew no English, and Guthrie of Green, that he knew no French; and these two undertook to translate Du Halde's *History*

In the nineteenth century, as more and more missionaries and government consular officials went to China, and since most of them acquired the habit of learning Chinese through reading Chinese novels, so more Chinese works of fiction were translated into English than during the previous century. In 1814, a translation of one tale from Feng Meng-lung’s *Ch'ing shih* 情史, “Fan Hsi-chou 范希周”, was published by Stephen Weston (1747-1830). In the advertisement, the author announces that the book is accompanied by a double translation. One is by Sir George Thomas Staunton, and is “free and elegant”; the other is by Weston himself, and is “verbal and exact, in order to show the genius of the original, which is but faintly exhibited in a paraphrase, and can only by demonstrated in a literal version.”

In 1822, John Francis Davis (1795-1890), Robert Morrison’s student and a promising young “writer in the East India Company, translated three stories from Li

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17 Staunton (1781-1859) was a very important figure in the development of early British sinology and translation. He began as Lord Macartney’s page-boy in 1792-3, and went on to become a prominent figure in the East India Company, supporting the work of Robert Morrison and himself publishing many works on China.
Yü's 

Shi-er lou 十二樓 in his *Chinese Novels*.\(^{18}\) Davis went on to produce his own new translation of *Hao-ch’iu chuan*.\(^{19}\)

In 1827, appeared an English translation of a Chinese romance *Yü-chiao-li* 玉嬌梨 or the *Two Fair Cousins*.\(^{20}\) It was derived from the French translation, which was translated by the famous French Sinologue, Jean-Pierre Abel-Rémusat (1788-1832) in 1826. The translations (it also appeared in German) made the story very famous in the Europe of that time. Staunton also translated four chapters of the story, and published them in the appendix to his *Narrative of the Chinese Embassy to the Khan*.\(^{21}\)

In 1839, the British consul in Ningbo, Robert Thom, using the pen-name "Sloth", published his translation of the Chinese *Chin-ku ch’i-kuan* story: *Wang Chiao-luan pai-nian ch’ang-hen* 王嬌蘭百年長恨 or *The Lasting Resentment of Miss Keaou Lwan Wang*.\(^{22}\)

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\(^{19}\) *The Fortunate Union, a Romance Translated from the Chinese Original* (London: Oriental Fund, 1829).


\(^{21}\) *Narrative of the Chinese Embassy to the Khan of the Tourgouth Tartars... accompanied by an appendix of miscellaneous translations* (London: John Murray, 1821).

2.4 Herbert Giles, his life

Herbert Allen Giles was born in Oxford on the 8th December 1845. He lived through almost the entire Victorian (1873-1901) and Edwardian (1901-1910) periods. He died in Cambridge on the 13th February 1935.

Herbert’s father, John Allen Giles (1808-1884), was himself a very productive writer. He wrote a large number of books on religious topics, and was at various times and places a curate in the Church of England. He was a Somerset man, was educated at the famous public school Charterhouse, and went on to Corpus Christi College, Oxford, on a Bath & Wells scholarship, taking a Double First in 1828, becoming a Master of Arts in 1831, and a Fellow in 1832. Then he obtained the curacy of Crossington in Somerset. During 1836-1840, he tried to run the City of London School as the Headmaster. But “the school did not do well under him.” So he retired and returned to the church as curate of Bampton a country town in Oxfordshire. In 1855, when Herbert Giles was ten years old, John Allen was sentenced to a year of imprisonment in Oxford Castle. It appears that the father, out of good nature, had tried to “cover the frailty of one of his servants, whom he married irregularly” (out of official hours, at the same time falsifying the date and certain other details of the entry

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in the register) “to her lover, a shoemaker’s apprentice”. By a royal warrant, he was released after serving only three months of his sentence. After several years he entered again into the church and at last became rector of Sutton, in the county of Surrey. It is clear that the father was an unusual character. “His literary tastes and some peculiarities of manner and disposition are said to have injured his popularity, but he was kind and courteous.”

Similarly P’u Sung-ling, belonged to a more free-thinking generation, Herbert Giles, through his father, was part of a Christian generation that began to think more freely. Giles was the fourth son. Like his father, he also received a classical education at Charterhouse. But instead of proceeding to Oxford, he went directly into the newly-formed China Consular Service and at a young age arrived in Peking in February 1867 as a “student-interpreter”. A self-taught, make-shift approach to studying Chinese was the accepted way for westerners at that time. When Sir Thomas Wade’s (1818-1895) language text-book, the Tzu Erh Chi, appeared in 1867, Giles, like the other students, began to work with it. But, unlike the others, he found it useless and rejected it. Instead, he chose to read books that a Chinese schoolboy would study for himself, books like the San-tzu ching 三字經, “which I read through by the flickering

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light of Dr Bridgman’s rendering in The Chinese Repository, ... and learnt .... by heart". James Legge’s translations of The Chinese Classics, William Milne’s translation of The Sacred Edict were all on his reading list. At the same time, he read Chinese novels. Like many of his contemporaries, he read the minor Chinese novels which were very popular during that time in the west, such as The Fortunate Union, translated by John Davis from the Hao-ch’iu chuan 好逑傳; Les Deux Cousins, translated by Abel-Rémusat (1788-1832) from the Yü-chiao-li 玉嬌梨; Blanche et Bleue, ou les deux Couleuvres-Feés, translated by Stanislaus Julien (1799-1873) from the story The White Snake 白蛇精記 (1854); Les Deux Jeunes Filles Lettrées (from Lei-feng t’ā 雷峰塔), also translated by Stanislaus Julien (1860). He also read some of the genuinely outstanding Chinese classic novels in Chinese, books such as Shui-hu chuan 水滸傳, Chin-p’ing-mei 金瓶梅, San-kuo chih yen-i 三國志演義, Hsi-yu chi 西遊記, Chin-ku ch’i-kuan 今古奇觀, Hung-lou meng 紅樓夢 and Liao-chai chih-i 聊齋誌異. At this time, Giles, like P’u Sung-ling, was a relative unknown figure, an undistinguished member of the China Consular Service.

From this time to his retirement from the Consular Service in early 1893, he proved his mastery of the Chinese language by publishing numerous books about the country, translating several Chinese literary works, and even studying different Chinese dialects. Unlike P’u Sung-ling, his gift as a writer and China-scholar were
later recognized by his contemporaries. Giles' official career, by contrast, was quite undistinguished. His service as a consular officer is summarised by the Foreign Office List as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1867 | Passed competitive examination  
February 2 appointed Student Interpreter |
| 1869 | November 18 Third Class Assistant |
| 1872 | July 20-August 31 Acting Consul Tientsin  
December 7 Second Class Assistant  
Acted as Interpreter at Tientsin, Ningpo, Hankow, Canton |
| 1876 | August 4 First Class Assistant  
May 8-August 16 Acting Consul Swatow |
| 1879 | June 26 Acting Consul Amoy (until 10 March 1881) |
| 1880 | February 25 H.M. Vice-Consul Pagoda Island |
| 1883 | June 11 transferred to Shanghai |
| 1885 | November 13 Acting Consul Tamsui (until June 30 1886) |
| 1886 | July 1 Consul Tamsui |
| 1891 | April 1 transferred to Ningpo |
| 1893 | October 10 resigned |

His failure to rise high in the Service was most probably the result of his difficult

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26 Edmund Gosse, one of the really big names in the high-Victorian/Edwardian literary scene, who asked Giles to write his *History of Chinese Literature*, and the *Encyclopedia Brittanica*, for which Giles wrote several articles on Chinese culture and literature.

37 *Aylmer, Memoirs*, pp.2-3.
personality. He always expressed his own opinion on controversial matters, and frequently differed from official policy. However, one result of his undistinguished official career was that he had more time and energy to devote to Chinese research and publications. And this certainly helped him to build up a formidable reputation as a sinologist.

After twenty-six years service in China, when he was still only forty-seven years old, Giles retired on grounds of ill health. On his return to Britain in 1893, he went first to Aberdeen, where the university awarded him an honorary degree, the degree of LL.D. Giles enjoyed his time in Aberdeen, and when in 1897 he was appointed to the Chair of Chinese at Cambridge, in succession to Sir Thomas Wade, he left the town of Aberdeen “in deepest regret.” He did not retire from the Cambridge chair until 1928. Once again, his academic career at Cambridge was quite uneventful. He had few students (he himself was quoted in 1909 as saying that he had had “only one student at Cambridge who really wished to learn the language for its own sake”). It was only in 1903 that Chinese was fully recognised as a subject fit for the Cambridge Tripos examination. So he could easily spend much of his time working on his Chinese

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28 Aylmer, Memoirs, p.4. See also Coates, The China Consuls, p.206: “His Career was littered with silly official quarrels…”
29 For example, on such subjects as opium usage in China, and the legitimacy of Yuan Shikai.
30 See Coates, The China Consuls, p.356: “At the age of 47 and with just under twenty-seven years service H. A. Giles applied to retire on the strength of a [medical] certificate which, although no one seems to have noticed, had probably been issued by one of his deceased wife’s relatives.”
researches. He revised several of his earlier works and produced a stream of short books, pamphlets and articles. During his time as Professor, his reputation was also high outside Britain. He was invited to visit the United States at least twice (Columbia University in 1902, Harvard University in 1914); and was twice awarded the prestigious French Prix Stanislaus Julien, once for his Dictionary, published in 1892, once for the Biographical Dictionary, published in 1898.

Giles was well known to be a keen controversialist, and always dealt ruthlessly with all that he considered false scholarship in Chinese studies. “Much amusement as well as instruction may be got from the perusal of his ‘sparring’ with Parker and other sinologues in the pages of the China Review and elsewhere.” However, his brief autobiography\(^\text{32}\) shows us that it was his serious attitude towards the Chinese language, towards China, Chinese culture, and translation, that spurred him into controversy.

He finally retired in 1932 and died, in his ninetieth year, on 13\(^{\text{th}}\) February 1935.

Two of his sons, Bertram and Lancelot, were H.B.M. Consuls in China, while another, Lionel, became keeper of Oriental Books and MSS. in the British Museum, and went on become a respected sinologist in his own right.

2.5 Herbert Giles’ Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio

\(^{32}\) The autobiographical memoirs, prepared by Giles in 1925, were edited for publication by Charles Aylmer in East Asian History 13-14 (1997, pp.1-90).
P‘u Sung-ling’s *Liao-chai chih-i* collection first attracted Giles’ attention as early as 1868, when he had been in China for only one year. It was a book “...which I read carefully with a view to translation.”33 “At length, in the spring of 1877, while acting as Vice-Consul at Canton, I commenced the translation of the work here offered to the English reader.”34 He translated and published two stories: “The Lo-Ch’a Country and the Sea Market” 羅剌海市 and “Dr Tseng’s Dream” 緹黃樑 in *The Celestial Empire* (a weekly journal published in Shanghai), in 1877. Finally, in 1880, his *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio* was published in London by William De La Rue, in two volumes.35 It was revised in 1908 and has been reprinted in 1911, 1916, 1926, and many times since.36

In the revised version of 1908, Giles’ introduction to the book was shortened. The part entitled “Personal”, in which he describes his “qualifications” for translating the Liao-chai stories, and the advantages of choosing a Chinese book to translate instead of writing indirectly about China, was completely cut in the revised version. The excised section contains an important statement by the young Giles, about the need to publish translations from real Chinese literature: “And I would here draw attention to one most important point; namely, that although a great number of books

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34 Introduction to the 1880 edition, p.xiv.
35 The manuscript was almost lost by the French shipping line, Messageries Maritimes, to whom Giles entrusted it. See Giles’ *Memoirs*.
36 The book has continued to be reprinted in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore until the present day.
have been published about China and the Chinese, there are extremely few in which
the information is conveyed at first hand; in other words, in which the Chinese are
allowed to speak for themselves." In his 1908 version, Giles said that his version
"has been carefully revised, all inaccuracies of the first edition having been, so far as
possible, corrected".

In the introduction, Giles states that the Chinese text on which he based himself
was that of Tan Ming-lun 但明倫, "a Salt Commissioner who flourished during the
reign of Tao Kuang [道光]", "collated with that of Yü Chi, published in 1766". He
described this edition as "the best" of many editions; "an excellent edition in sixteen
octavo volumes of about 160 pages each". It included many "commentaries and
disquisitions upon the meaning of obscure passages and the general scope of this
work".

Besides the 164 stories Giles chose to translate, he also translated the "Author’s
own record" 聊齋自誌 and "T’ang Meng-lai’s preface" 唐夢齋序 in his
introduction.

This is probably the work of translation by which Giles is best known (together
with his 1889 version of Chuang-tzu), and for which he is most heavily criticized. It

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37 Introduction to the 1880 edition, p. xv.
38 Yü Ji 余巋 (1739-1823) was in fact the secretary of Zhao Qigao 趙起杲 (d. 1766), the man mainly
responsible for the 1766 edition.
has often been said that Giles "bowdlerized" P'u Sung-ling's original work.\(^{39}\) By reading Giles' translation and the original text closely, we find that Giles did indeed bowdlerize the text heavily. Anything connected with sex, procreation, blood, sometimes indeed the human body in any of its aspects (wounds, mucus, phlegm, etc), all of this he removed from the stories he selected for translation.

Here, as a first example, I would like to present an extract from Giles' translation of a famous story "The Painted Skin" 畫皮, with omissions and departures from the original identified. The relevant words in Giles are underlined; suggested replenishments are in square brackets.

THE PAINTED SKIN

They found the destitute creature raving away by the roadside, [three feet of mucus trailing from his nose, 鼻涕三尺] so filthy that it was all they could do to go near him. Wang's wife approached him on her knees; at which the maniac leered at her, and cried out, "Do you love me, my beauty?" Wang's wife told him what she had come for, but he only laughed and said, "You can get plenty of other husbands, why raise the dead one to life?" But Wang's wife entreated him to help her; whereupon he observed, "It's very strange: people apply to me to raise their dead as if I was king of the infernal regions." He then gave Wang's wife a thrashing with his staff, which she bore without a murmur, and before a gradually increasing crowd of spectators. After this he produced

\(^{39}\) According to Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase & Fable (London: Cassell, 1959), "to bowdlerize" means "to expurgate", from the editor Thomas Bowdler (1754-1825), who in 1818 "published a ten-volume edition of Shakespeare's works 'in which nothing is added to the original text; but those words are omitted which cannot with propriety be read aloud in a family'. He thus cut Juliet's speech of longing for Romeo from 30 lines to 15, together with many of the Nurse's comments, and in King Lear's speech of madness, beginning 'Ay, every inch a king', he cut 22 lines to seven. He removed the character of Doll Tear-sheet altogether."
a loathsome pill which he told her must swallow, [spat out a great lump of phlegm into the palm of his hand and held it to her lips, saying: “Eat it!”] but here she broke down and was quite unable to do so. [she blushed and could not bring herself to do it. 红涨於面 有难色] However, she did manage it at last, and then [remembered the priest’s instructions and steeled herself to swallow it. As it went down her throat it felt hard like a lump of cotton wadding; it took several gulps to get it down, and finally she felt it lodge itself in her chest. 既思道士之嘱 逐强啖焉 覺入喉中 硬如团絮 格格而下 停结胸间 Then] the maniac, crying out, “How you do love me!” got up and went away without taking any more notice of her. They followed him into a temple with loud supplications, but he had disappeared, and every effort to find him was unsuccessful. Overcome with rage and shame, Wang’s wife went home, where she mourned bitterly over her dead husband, grievously repenting the steps she had taken, and wishing only to die. She then bethought herself of [washing away the blood 展血 and] preparing the corpse, near which none of the servants would venture, and set to work to close up the frightful wound of which he died [putting her arms around the corpse, and replacing the organs that had been ripped out 抱屍收腸].

In the original story, this passage conveys to the reader the intensity of the deep passion felt by Wang’s wife towards her husband. The raving lunatic who can really save Mr. Wang’s life, has a thoroughly disgusting physical appearance: “three feet of mucus trailing from his nose”. Also, he humiliates Wang’s wife by asking her to eat his foul phlegm. “He spat out a great lump of phlegm into the palm of his hand and held it to her lips, saying: ‘Eat it!’” Giles’ translation cut or simplified all of these detailed descriptions. This lessens the ordeal that Wang’s wife has to face. In the original text, P’u also describes the reaction or response of Wang’s wife towards the maniac. When the maniac asks her to eat his phlegm, Wang’s wife “blushed and could

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not bring herself to do it." Then, she "remembered the priest’s instruction and steeled
herself to swallow it... It took several gulps to get it down, and finally she felt it lodge
itself in her chest." In Giles’ expurgated translation, we cannot follow the train of
thought of Wang’s wife. And we cannot really feel the intensity of the ordeal which
Wang’s wife has to experience. So, we are unable to feel the depth of her love for her
husband as it is shown in the original text. Only a wife who loves her husband very
deeply would go through such an ordeal for him. Last but not least, in the original,
Wang’s wife “washed away the blood, ... putting her arms around the corpse, and
replacing the organs that had been ripped out.” Giles simply could not stomach these
details, and cut them all. But he did not realize that it is the accumulation of these
details that demonstrates the wife’s love. Love helps her to overcome the terrible
experience: blood, corpse, organs and all the rest of it. All she wants is to save her
husband’s life. Giles’ “bowdlerization” may have made the translation “clean”, but it
also dilutes it, makes it less powerful.

Now let us look at another story “Miss Ying-ning, the Laughing Girl” 嬌寧. The
protagonist – Miss Ying-ning -- in the story is a very innocent girl at first. She likes
laughing, and laughs a great deal. Here is a conversation between her and her cousin,
who loves her very much.
MISS YING-NING, THE LAUGHING GIRL:1

婴宁

Wang ... drew the flower out of his sleeve and handed it to her. "It's dead," said she; "why do you keep it?" "You dropped it, cousin, at the Feast of Lanterns," replied Wang, "and so I kept it." She then asked him what was his object in keeping it, to which he answered, "To show my love, and that I have not forgotten you. Since that day when we met, I have been very ill from thinking so much of you, and am quite changed from what I was. But now that it is my unexpected good fortune to meet you, I pray you have pity on me." "You needn't make such a fuss about a trifle," replied she, "and with your own relatives, too. I'll give orders to supply you with a whole basketful of flowers when you go away." Wang told her she did not understand, and when she asked what it was she didn't understand, he said, "I didn't care for the flower itself; it was the person who picked the flower." "Of course," answered she, "everybody cares for their relations; you needn't have told me that." "I wasn't talking about ordinary relations," said Wang, "but about husbands and wives." "What's the difference?" asked Ying-ning. "Why," replied Wang, "husband and wife are always together [share one bed at night 共枕席]." "Just what I shouldn't like," cried she, "to be always with anybody [to sleep with anybody 我不慣與人生人睡]." At this juncture up came the maid, and Wang slipped quietly away. By-and-by they all met again in the house, and the old woman asked Ying-ning where they had been; whereupon she said they had been talking in the garden. "Dinner has been ready a long time. I can't think what you have had to say all this while," grumbled the old woman. "My cousin," answered Ying-ning, "has been talking to me about husbands and wives [wants to sleep with me 大哥欲與我共寝]." Wang was much disconcerted, and made a sign to her to be quiet, so she smiled and said no more; and the old woman luckily did not catch her words, and asked her to repeat them. Wang immediately put her off with something else, and whispered to Ying-ning that she had done very wrong. The latter did not see that; and when Wang told her that what he had said was private, answered him that she had no secrets from her old mother. "Besides," added she, "what harm can there be in talking on such a common topic as husbands and wives [as where to sleep 且寢處亦常事]?" Wang was angry with her for being so dull, but there was no help for it...

In this paragraph, Giles changes every word related to "sleep with somebody"
into "to be always with anybody" and into "husbands and wives". The concept of "sleeping with somebody" is very concrete. For Wang, the word "sleeping" shows his passion for Ying-ning. He really wants to make love to his cousin. Ying-ning, for her part, is very innocent, and the word "sleeping" means nothing more than "lying down and having a rest", just like eating or drinking. Even though Wang uses such a clear and concrete word, Ying-ning still cannot understand his meaning, his passion. She is totally innocent and naïve. On the other hand, Giles replaces "sleeping" with vague phrases such as "being always with anybody" and "husbands and wives". These two concepts include not only the physical part (as suggested by "sleeping"), but also the psychological part. They are big concepts. For Ying-ning not to understand her cousin's expectation of "being always with anybody" and living as "husbands and wives", would have been quite normal. Readers could not really see from this how very innocent she was.

In the later part of the story, P'u Sung-ling also shows the other side of Ying-ning's character — "the fox character".

MISS YING-NING, THE LAUGHING GIRL:2

Behind the house there was one especial tree which belonged to the neighbours on that side; but Ying-ning was always climbing up and picking the flowers to stick in her hair, for which Mrs. Wang rebuked her severely, though without any result. One day the owner saw her, and gazed at her some time in rapt
astonishment; however, she didn’t move, deigning only to laugh. The gentleman was much smitten with her; and when she smilingly descended the wall on her own side, pointing all the time with her finger to a spot hard by, he thought she was making an assignation. So he presented himself at nightfall at the same place, and sure enough Ying-ning was there. Seizing her hand, to tell his passion, he found that he was grasping only a log of wood stood against the wall; and the next thing he knew was that a scorpion had stung him violently on the finger [Moving towards her, he began to make love to her. Suddenly, he felt something stinging his penis, and with a cry, he fell down. And now he saw that what he had been trying to make love to was not the girl but a hole made by the rain in a rotten log beside the wall. Hearing his cry, his father ran to inquire. He said nothing, but moaned. His wife also came out and he told her what had happened. Lighting a candle, they saw a huge scorpion like a crab inside the hole. The father broke up the log, killed the scorpion and carried his son back. 就而淫之則陰如雉刺 痛徹於心 大號而踣 細視非女 則一枯木臥牆邊 所接乃水淋 砾也 鄰父聞聲 急奔研問 呻而不言 妻來 始以實告 蕃火燐蛻 見中有巨 蠕 如小蟹然 翩碎木捉殺之 負子至家] There was an end of his romance, except that he died of the wound during the night, and his family at once commenced an action against Wang for having a witch-wife...

In the original story, Ying-ning’s “fox character” is expressed through her reactions towards the neighbouring gentleman. Knowing his intention, she smiles at him: “deigning only to laugh”, “pointing all the time with her finger to a spot hard by”, so inducing him to release his inner desire: to make love with Ying-ning. And then she gives the man a really hard lesson: she kills him by making a scorpion bite his penis. Giles’ young man on the other hand, has far milder intentions: he only wants to seize Ying-ning’s hand and tell her about his passion. This change diminishes the intense desire of the man, and decreases the deadly sexual attraction of Ying-ning (such an important element for a fox character). It also destroys the logical reason for Ying-ning to kill the man.
Another good example of Giles' "refashioning" P'u Sung-ling (but this time with
great ingenuity) is to be found in the story "The Painted Wall" 畫壁. Here the
"Kiang-si gentleman Meng Lung-t'an's friend Mr. Chu, M.A.", is "transported" into
the fairy world of a temple mural, and is seduced by a beautiful young maiden, who
"waved the flowers she had in her hands as though beckoning him to come on. He
accordingly entered and found nobody else within." The original text continues: "遂
擁之 亦不甚拒 逐與狎好 既而閉戶去 嘗勿咳 夜乃復至" "With no delay, he
embraced her, and finding her to be not unreceptive, proceeding to enjoy carnal
pleasure with her. Afterwards, she closed the door and left, bidding him not to make
the slightest sound." Giles turned this into: "Then they fell on their knees and
worshipped heaven and earth together, and rose up as man and wife, after which the
bride went away, bidding Mr. Chu keep quiet until she came back." Having made this
change, having substituted a marriage ceremony for a simple sexual encounter, in
order to make his readers believe more fully in the "authenticity" of his story, Giles
adds a most convincing footnote about the traditional Chinese marriage ceremony.
"The all-important item of a Chinese marriage ceremony; amounting, in fact, to
calling God to witness the contract."40 It is an excellent example of Giles'
craftsmanship, his skill at covering over his traces. Which of his readers would have

40 Strange Stories, p.10. note 2.
suspected him writing a footnote for something that was never there in the original?

The result of Giles' changes is to turn the brief but explicit erotic encounter in the original text into a precious, platonic liaison. This happens again and again in Giles' versions of the Liao-chai collection, in his Strange Stories. It greatly dilutes the texture, and gives the stories a consistent quality of Victorian "quaintness": lovers never exchange more than a faint kiss, fox spirits tend to appear not in order to sleep with budding young scholars, but in order to chat with them and perhaps drink a fragrant cup of tea. Also, the young scholar's most intense desire towards the girl he loves is not to make love with her but "to be with" her or hold hands only. Giles' changes have the effect of weakening the deep relationships between the protagonists of the stories.

Giles justifies his course of action in his introduction: "I had originally determined to publish a full and complete translation of the whole of these sixteen volumes; but on a closer acquaintance many of the stories turned out to be quite unsuitable for the age in which we live, forcibly recalling the coarseness of our own writers of fiction in the eighteenth century. Others, again, were utterly pointless..."41 From this, we can see the limitations of the taste and of the ideas of permissibility that were current in Giles' time. Giles was inevitably a creature of his hypocritical time.

the Victorian period, in the days when Giles was living, this sort of explicit writing
about sexual matters existed, but it was obliged to circulate "underground". As
Angela Carter has written: "Removing 'coarse' expressions was a common
nineteenth-century pastime, part of the project of turning the universal entertainment
of the poor into the refined pastime of the middle classes, and especially for the
middle-class nursery. The excision of references to sexual and excremental functions,
the toning down of sexual situations, and the reluctance to include 'indelicate'
material - that is, dirty jokes - helped to denaturize the fairy tale and, indeed, helped
to denaturize its vision of everyday life." And Giles, in his later life, attained a
certain status as the Cambridge Professor of Chinese, and as the great British
authority on things Chinese. So, he was a civil servant/scholar, a man of the world,
whose books enjoyed considerable popularity with the reading public of his time, and
who most certainly was aware of his public, and tried to write for his public. This may
partly explain why Giles left out so much that would have offended his readers.

In his little book *The Civilisation of China* (1911), we see a fuller expression of
Giles' stand:

And here a remark may be interjected, which is very necessary for the
information of those who wish to form a true estimate of the Chinese
people. Throughout the Confucian Canon, a collection of ancient works on

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which the moral code of the Chinese is based, there is not a single word
which could give offence, even to the most sensitive, on questions of
delicacy and decency. That is surely saying a great deal, but it is not all;
precisely the same may be affirmed of what is mentioned above as high-
class Chinese literature, which is pure enough to satisfy the most strait-
laced. Chinese poetry, of which there is in existence a huge mass, will be
searched in vain for any suggestion of impropriety, for sly innuendo, and
for the other tricks of the unclean. This extraordinary purity of language is
all the more remarkable from the fact that, until recent years, the education
of women has not been at all general, though many particular instances are
recorded of women who have themselves achieved successes in literary
pursuits. It is only when we come to the novel, to the short story, or to the
anecdote, which are not usually written in high-class style, and are
therefore not recognised as literature proper, that this exalted standard is
no longer maintained.\textsuperscript{44}

This is of course a gross misrepresentation of Chinese lyric poetry and lyric
drama, which together provide one of the richest storehouses of eroticism in
world literature. We should include here countless numbers of lyric poems (\textit{tz'u}
詠 and \textit{ch'ü} 曲) from the Sung, Yüan and Ming dynasties; and among many
others the dramas \textit{The Western Chamber} (\textit{Hsi-hsiang chi} 西廬記) and \textit{The
Peony Pavilion} (\textit{Mu-tan t'ing} 牡丹亭). Giles' claim is similar to Waley's
assertion that Chinese poetry only treats of friendship, not of passion or
romantic love.\textsuperscript{45} Both claims are as misleading as Robert van Gulik's dismissal
of foot-binding which he describes as a custom on the same level as the

\textsuperscript{44} Giles, \textit{The Civilisation of China} (London: Williams & Norgate, 1911), pp.128-9.
\textsuperscript{45} See the original introduction to \textit{170 Chinese Poems}, quoted in Ivan Morris, ed., \textit{Madly Singing in the
Mountain} (London: Allen and Unwin, 1970), pp. 295-6. Interestingly, the Introduction to the revised
European one of wearing tight corsets.\textsuperscript{46} Like Waley and van Gulik, Giles had his own personal rationale. He was always a fierce defender of Chinese culture. He wanted his contemporaries to admire China and things Chinese. Since the first Jesuits, students of China, like explorers of some alien planet, have dreamed of finding there, in China, the fulfilment of their hopes and dreams. Through the ages, China has seemed the last hope for humanity to "get it right",\textsuperscript{47} to provide solutions for the West.

So, let us not get the bowdlerising of the Liao-chai stories out of proportion. Even in our own age of the late-20\textsuperscript{th} and early-21\textsuperscript{st} centuries, we – Chinese readers and non-Chinese readers – like Giles, suffer from our own share of "correct" preconceptions and cultural limitations. The widely distributed Commercial Press (HK) edition of the stories,\textsuperscript{48} for example, makes many of the same prudish cuts as Giles. For years, mainland Chinese critics have persisted in writing about P'u Sung-ling as if he were nothing more than a social realist, a satirist of Ch'ing society. We are all creatures of our times.

Despite Giles "bowdlerising" of the original text, his versions have survived the test of time. They are still a good read today, and continue to be

\textsuperscript{47} The Oxford Scholar David Hawkes speaking of the Western Sinologists of the 1950s and 1960s (private communication).
\textsuperscript{48} 白話淺註聊齋誌異 (香港：商務, 1963).
reprinted. It is true that his English is long-winded by comparison with the terse original. But it is never turgid or lacking in elegance. Indeed, in this respect, Giles succeeded brilliantly in capturing the style of P'u Sung-ling. The stories in *Liao-chai chih-i* are familiar to ordinary Chinese readers, “as familiar as are the tales of the ‘Arabian Nights’ in all English-speaking communities.”

But this familiarity is more often than not based on popular retellings (in ballad, storytelling, dramatic or cinematic form), not on the original classical versions. In writing the original versions of these stories, P’u was giving full rein to his literary talent. As we have mentioned, the potential readers of *Liao-chai chih-i* were not common folk, but the highly educated literati of P’u’s time. Giles was intelligent and sensitive enough to notice this quality. He wrote in his Introduction: “In illustration of the popularity of this book, Mr. Mayers\(^5\) once stated that ‘the porter at his gate, the boatman at his midday rest, the coolie at his stand, no less than the man of letters among his books, may be seen poring with delight over the elegantly-narrated marvels of the Liao Chai’s; but he would doubtless have withdrawn this statement in later years, with the work lying open before him. During many years in China, I made a point of never, when feasible, passing by a reading Chinaman without asking permission to

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50 William Frederick Mayers (1839-1878), British consular official and sinologist.
glance at the volume in his hand; and at my various stations in China I always kept up a borrowing acquaintance with the libraries of my private or official servants; but I can safely affirm that I never once detected the Liao Chai in the hands of an ill-educated man. ... Mr. Mayers made, perhaps, a happier hit when he observed that 'fairy-tales told in the style of the Anatomy of Melancholy would scarcely be a popular book in Great Britain.'

So, Giles wanted the stories to make for fluent reading, but it should be an elegant and refined fluency. It would therefore be quite wrong to use an English that was unduly abbreviated or prosaic. In the terse style of the original text, P'u's rule was never to use a word more than was absolutely necessary. But different things will be "necessary" for different readers and different languages, and stylistically speaking Giles is quite justified in most of his expansions.

In his translations, Giles always brought his own skills as a reader and translator to bear on the material, and sought to fashion it himself into something that would bring pleasure to his readers and make them more at home and familiar with this Chinese world. He himself had derived both pleasure and instruction from the task of translation. As he writes in the introduction to the 1880 edition: "The amusement and instruction I have myself

derived from the task thus voluntarily imposed has already more than repaid me
for the pains I have been at to put this work before the English public in a
pleasing and available from.”

He was a master of the informal footnote. Many of his footnotes introduce
Chinese customs (including the fake footnote which has already been cited as an
example above). Others allow readers to “relate” more to the stories. For
example, in “The Painted Wall” (the story used as an example above), the young
gentleman Mr. Chu, when he gazed at a beautiful girl in the painting, suddenly
“felt himself floating in the air, as if riding on a cloud, and found himself
passing through the wall.” Giles adds a footnote here, said: “Which will
doubtless remind the reader of ‘Alice through the Looking-glass, and what she
saw there’.” His chatty asides certainly stimulated the reader’s imagination, and
certainly enhanced the readability of the translation. A.C. Benson (1862-1925),
Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge, and a famous essayist himself, read
Giles’ little study, *Confucianism,* in 1915, on the train “on my way up north”,
and sent the author a note of appreciation, which sums up Giles’ style
excellently: “What I like about the book is the light way it carries its learning,
its human sympathy, its clearness, and the charming ripple of humour which

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52 Introduction to 1880 edition, p.xxxii. This sentence is removed in the revised edition.
53 *Confucianism and its Rivals* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1915) was based on the 1914 Hibbert
plays about it from first to last.”

But above all, through these translations Giles succeeded in his principal goal, which was to provide first-hand material that would help correct the “distorted image” his fellow-countrymen had of China. “... many Chinese customs are ridiculed and condemned by turns, simply because the medium through which they have been conveyed has produced a distorted image. Much of what the Chinese do actually believe and practise in their religious and social life will be found in this volume, in the ipsissima verba of a highly-educated scholar writing about his fellow-countryman and his native land...”

In the second part of this study, we will consider in greater detail how Giles’ attempt to correct the misunderstandings of his contemporaries introduced distortions of its own.

Lectures given by Giles at Harvard University.

54 Aylmer, Memoirs, p.55. Characteristically, Giles records these words of praise in his own memoirs.

Part Two

Whose Story? A Case Study

The story “Lien-hsiang” is one of the longer stories in the Liao-chai collections. It occupies twelve pages in Giles’ translation, the same length as “Miss Ying-ning, or the Laughing Girl”. It contains many of the recurring themes of the Liao-chai stories.

In chapter 3, we begin by presenting the original Chinese story itself, with a synopsis in English, and a brief discussion of the themes of the story. Then, in chapter 4, we present Giles’ translation, with the corrections that seem necessary as a result of comparing it with the original. These corrections are analyzed.

Chapter 5 takes the corrected Giles text one stage further, by adding a commentary, taken from different sources. The various elements of the commentary and the reasons for including them are discussed.

The final section, Chapter 6, goes yet another stage further, by adding to the corrected and expanded Giles text a further visual accompaniment. The reasons for adding these visual elements are discussed.

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1 The text follows the 1842 edition of Tan Ming-lun.
Chapter 3

P’u Sung-ling’s Story

3.1 The “Original”, Unpunctuated

蓮香

桑生名曉 字子明 沂州人 少孤 館於紅花埠 桑為人靜穆自喜 日再出就食東鄰 餘時 坐而兀 東鄰生偶至 戲曰 君獨居不畏鬼狐耶 笑答 云 丈夫何畏鬼狐 雄來吾有利劍 雌者倫當開門納之 鄰生歸 與友謀梯妓於垣 而過之 彈指叩扉 生竊問其誰 妓自言為鬼 生大懼 戰震震 有聲 妓遂巡自去 鄰生早至生齋 生述所見 且告將歸 鄰生鼓掌曰 何不開門納之 生頓悟其假 遂安居如初 積半年 一女子夜來扣齋 生意 友人之復戲也 啓戶延入 則傾國之姝 驚問所來 曰 妾蓮香 西家妓女 埠上青樓故多 信之 熄燭登床 綿綿甚至 自此 三五日輒一 一夕 獨坐凝思 一女子翩然入 生意其蓮香 逆與語 畫面殊非 年 nihil 十五六 繫袖垂髫 風流奕奕 行步之間 若還若往 大愕 疑為狐 女曰 妾良家女 姓李氏 慕君高雅 幸賜垂盼 生喜 握其手 冷如冰 問何淩也 曰 幼質單寒 夜霜霧露 非得不爾 既而羅襦解 裏然處子 女曰 妾為情緣 蔓蔓之質 一朝失守 本baz 願常侍枕席 房中得無人否 生左 何彼一鄰倡 願亦不常至 女曰 謹當避之 妾不與院中人等 君勿勿 洩 彼來我往 彼往我來可耳 鳥瞰欲去 賺鋜扉一鈐 曰 此妾下體所著 弄之 足寄思慕 然有人 慎無弄也 愛而視之 竄洞如解結締 心甚愛悅 越夕無人 便篤賞玩 女騖然忽至 遂相親自 此 每出門 則女必念念 而至 異而詰之 笑曰 適當其時耳 一夜 蓮香來 驚云 彼何神氣蕭索 生言不自覺 蓮便告別 相約十日 去後 李來恆無虛夕 問君情人 何久不至 因以所約者 李笑曰 君視妾何如蓮香美 曰 可稱兩絕 但蓮芳肌膚溫和 李變色 曰 君謂雙美 對妾云爾 彼必月殿仙人 妾定不及 因而不勵 乃指屈計 十日之期已滿 嘗勿漏 將竊窺之 次夜 蓮香果至 笑語甚洽 及寢 大駭 曰 妾何矣 十日不見 何益懶損 保無他過否 生詢 其故 曰 妾以神氣召之 桃符如是 凡病也 次日 李來生問蓮香 何似 曰 美矣 妾固疑世間無此佳人 果孤也 去 吾尾之 南山而穴居 生疑其妒 滅應之 昼夕 戲蓮香 曰 余固不信或謂卿狐者 蓮亟問 是誰之云 笑曰 我自戲卿 蓮曰 狐何異於人 曰 惑之者 病甚則死 是以可懼 蓮曰 不然 如君之年 房後 三日神氣可復 縱狐何害 設旦旦而伐 人有甚於狐者矣 天下無病無鬼 宁皆狐書死耶 雖然 必有議我者 生力白其無 蓮詰益力 生不得已 洩之 蓮曰 吾固怪君戀也 然何遽至
此得勿非人乎君勿言明宵當如渠之窺妾者是夜李至栽三數語聞窗外嗽聲急往曰君殆矣是真鬼物暱其美而不速絕冕路近矣生意其妒默不語笠曰固知君不能忘情然不忍視君死明日當備藥餌為君一除此毒幸病帝猶淺十日可陰已請同楊以俟庶可次夜果出刀圭藥啖生頃刻洞下兩三行覺臥者清虛精神頓爽心德之然終不信為鬼病蓮夜夜同衾殫生生欲與合輒拒之數日後膚革充盈欲別殷殷再三李生謹應之及閉戶挑燈輒捉履傾想李忽至數日隔絕頗有怨色生曰彼連宵為我作巫醫請勿於是為好我李稍憐生枕上私語曰我愛卿甚乃有謂卿鬼者李結舌良久罵曰必淫狐之惑君聽也若不絕妾不來矣遂嘔飲飲泣生百詞慰解乃罷隔宿蓮香至知李復來怒曰君必欲死耶生笑曰卿何相妒之深益怒曰君種死根妾為君除之不妒者將復如何生託言以戲曰彼云前日之疾為狐祟耳蓮乃問曰誠如君言君迷不悟萬一不虞妾百口何以自解請從此辭百日自當親君於榻中留之不可拂然遙去由是李夙夜不倦約兩月餘變大困頓初猶自寬解日漸羸瘠惟飲薑粥一甌欲歸就食徧戀戀不忍遽去因循數日沉綿不可復起鄰生見其病廢日遣館童給飲食生至是始疑李因謂李曰吾悔不聽蓮香之言一至於此言訖而瞑移時復甦張目四顧則李己去自是遂絕生嬴臥空齋思蓮香如望歲一日方凝想間忽有搴簾入者則蓮香也臨榻啓曰田舍郎我豈妄哉生哽咽良久自言知罪但求拯救蓮曰病入膏肓實無救法姑來永訣以明非妒生大悲曰枕底一物煩代碎之蓮捫得履就燈前反覆展玩李女歎入擘見蓮香返身欲媌蓮以身蔽門李窘急不知所出生責數之李不能答蓮笑曰妾今始得與阿姨而相質願謝郎君故別未必非妾致今竟何如李僣首謝過蓮曰佳麗如此乃以愛結仇耶李投地縛泣乞垂憐憐蓮扶起細詰生平曰妾李通判女早夭無子無外已死春盡遺嗣未盡與郎相好妾之願也郎必於死良非素心蓮曰聞鬼物利人死以死後可常常然曰否然兩鬼相逢並無樂趣如樂也泉下少年郎豈少哉蓮曰癡哉夜夜為之人且不堪況於鬼李問狐能死人何術獨否蓮曰是採補者流妾非其類故世無不害人之狐斷無不害人之鬼以陰氣盛也生聞其語始知狐鬼皆真幸習常見慣頗不為駭但念慈息如絲不覺失聲大痛蓮顧問何以處郎君李即然遽謝蓮笑曰恐郎強健好娘子要食楊梅也李僣首曰如有醫囑手使妾得無負郎君便當埋首地下敢覷然人世耶蓮解囊出藥曰妾早知有今別後采藥三山凡三閏月物料始備療巨至死投之無不蘇者然症何由得仍以何引不得不轉求效力問何需曰殿日中一點香唾已以丸進煩接口而唾之李暈生頹頦俯首轉側而視其履蓮曰女所得意惟履耶李益漸俯仰若無所容蓮曰此平時熟技今何吝焉遂以丸納生吻轉促逼之李不得已唾之
蓮曰 再 又唾之 凡三四唾 丸已下咽 少問 腹胀然如雷鳴 復納一丸
乃自接脣而布以氣 生覺丹田火熱 精神煥歇 蓮曰 愈矣 李聴雞鳴 循
惶別去 蓮以新瘉 仍須調攝 就食非計 因將外戶反鬬 僞示生歸 以絕
往交 日夜守護之 李亦每夕必至 給奉殷勤 事蓮甚姊 蓮亦深憐愛之
居三月 生健如初 李遂數夜不至 偶至 一望即去 相對時 亦悒悒不樂
蓮常留與共寢 必不肯 生追出 提抱以歸 身輕如絮靈 女不得遣 逐著
衣偃臥 聲其體 不盈二尺 蓮益憐之 陰使生狎抱之 而撾撾 亦不得醒
生睡去 佇而索之 已沓 後十餘日 更不復至 生懷思殊切 恆出履共弄
蓮嘆曰 窮窮如此 委見猶憐 何況男子 生曰 昔日弄履則至 心固疑之
然終不料其鬼 今對履思容 質所憐憐 因而泣下 先是客室章姓 有女
字燕兒 年十五 不汗而死 終夜復蘇 起顧欲奔 章某戶 不聽出 女自
言 我通判女鬼 感桑郎眷眷 遗珠猶存彼處 我真鬼耳 給我何益 以其
言有因 話其至之由 女低徊反顧 茫茫不自解 或有言桑生病歸者 女
執辯其誣 家人大疑 東鄰生聞之 踔踐往窺 見生方與美人對語 掩入
逼之 張皇間 已失所在 鄰生駭詫 生笑曰 向固與君言 雖則納之耳
鄰生述燕兒之言 生乃啓關 將往探看 苦無由 章某聞生果未至 益奇
之 故使僕韫索履 生遽出以授 燕兒得之喜 試著之 鞋小於足者盈寸
大駭 掟鏡自照 忽恍然悟己之借服以生也者 因陳所由 母始信之 女
鏡面大哭曰 當日形態 顏堪自信 每見蓮姊 猶增憎作 今反若此 人也
不如其鬼也 把履號咷 勸之不解 蒙禽傾任 食之 亦不食 腦盡盡腫
凡七日不食 卒不歿 而縣漸消 覺飢不可忍 乃復食 數曰 遍體瘙癢
皮盡脫 晨起 睜thestnas 吐一目 時顧之 則黃大無朋矣 因試前履 肥瘦皓合
乃喜 復 KEY 則眉目頗頗 宛肖生平 益喜 墨飾見母 見者盡異 蓮香
聞其異 勸生以媒通之 而以貧懸懸 不敢遽進 會蓮初度 因從其子賈行
往為壽 媒祝生名 故使燕兒窺窺諭客 生最後至 女駭出提袂 欲從與
俱歸 母詰譏之 始懇而入 生審視宛然 不覺零涕 因拜伏不起 媒扶之
不以為恥 生出 洙母舅執柯 媒議擇吉綦生 生融和儀華 且賜所聘 蓮
悵然良久 便欲別去 生大駭 污下 蓮曰 君行花燭於人家 妾從之而
亦何形顔 生謀先與族里 而後迎燕 乃從之 生以情白章 姊聞其有
室 怒加詫諡 燕兒力白之 乃如所請 至日 生往親迎 家中備具 頗甚
草草 及歸 自門達堂 悉以 KEY 匹繭貼地 百千龍燭 燦列如錦 蓮香扶新婦
入青廬 搭面既揭 歡若生平 蓮陪昏飲 細詰返魂之異 燕曰 爾日抑鬱
無聊 徒以身為異物 自覺形骸 別後 憤不歸墓 隨風漂泊 每見生人則
覺之 善以草木 晚則信足沉浮 偶至章家 見少女臥床上 望之 未知
遂能活也 蓮聞之 默默若有所思 逾兩月 燕舉一子 産後暴病 日就沉
綿 捉燕呂曰 敢以孽種相累 我兒即若兒 燕泣下 妾慰藉之 為召巫醫
詭之 沉痾彌留 氣如懸絲 生及燕兒皆哭 忽張目曰 勿爾 子樂生
我自樂死 如有緣 十年後可復相見 言訖而卒 啓衾將斂 尸化為狐 生
不忍異視 厚葬之 子名孤兒 燕撲如己出 每清明 必抱兒哭諸其墓 後數年 生舉於鄉 家漸裕 而燕苦不育 孤兒頗慧 然單弱多疾 燕每欲生置媵 一日 婢忽白 門外一嬸 攜女求售 燕呼入 卒見大驚曰 蓋姊復出耶 生視之 真似 亦駭 問年幾何 答云十四 聘金幾何 曰 老身止此 一塊肉 但俾得所 姊亦得數飯處 後日老骨不委溝壑 足矣 生優僕而留之 燕握女手 入密室 提其額而笑曰 汝識我否 答言不識 話其姓氏 曰 姊韋姓父徐城買織者 死三年矣 燕屈指停思 蓋死恰十有四載 又 繫顧女儀容態度 無一不神肖者 乃拍其頂而呼之 曰 蓋姊 蓋姊 十年相見之約 當不欺吾 女忽如夢醒 豁然曰 咦 因熟視燕兒 生笑云 此似曾相識之燕歸來也 女泫然曰 是矣 聞母言 姊生時 便能言 以爲不祥 犬血飲之 未昧宿因 今日殆如夢寤 娘子其恥於鬼之李妹耶 共話前生 悲喜交集 一日寒食 燕曰 此每歲姊與郎君哭姊日也 遂與親登其墓 荒草離離 木已拱矣 女亦太息 李謂生曰 姊與蓮姊 兩世情好 不忍相離 亦令白骨同穴 生從其言 啓李塚得姊 姊歸而合葬之 親朋聞之 奇聲澈地 生於他洞 导同社王子章所撰桑生傳 約萬餘言 得卒讀 此其詳略耳
異史氏曰 咦乎 死者而求其生 生者又求其死 天下所難得者 非人身哉 奈何具此身者 往往而置之 逢至競然而生不如孤 滯然而死不如鬼

3.2 Synopsis

The story begins when the young scholar Sang Tzu-ming brags to his neighbour that he is not afraid of ghosts and foxes. The neighbour then plays a trick on him, by sending a sing-song girl who knocks on Sang's door, pretending to be a ghost, and giving Sang the fright of his life.

Six months later, a young lady called Lien-hsiang knocks on Sang's door, introducing herself as a sing-song girl. He thinks it is his neighbour up to his tricks again and lets her in. She seduces him, sleeps with him and continues to visit him every few days.
One evening, another young girl of fifteen or sixteen wanders into Sang’s room, and from her manner and appearance Sang suspects that she may be a fox-girl. She introduces herself as a local girl of good family, named Miss Li. She too ends up sleeping with him. When she goes, she leaves behind her embroidered slipper, telling him that he can think of it as if it is her. From then on whenever he takes out the slipper she appears before him.

One night his earlier visitor Lien-hsiang appears and comments on Sang’s pale, sickly appearance. She then goes away for ten days, during which time Miss Li visits him every night. They talk about Lien-hsiang, and Li, feeling somewhat jealous of the other girl’s beauty, tells Sang she wants to observe her.

The ten days are over, and Lien-hsiang returns. She tells Sang that he is possessed by a ghost. For her part, Miss Li, who has been secretly observing her, tells Sang that Lien-hsiang is a fox, but Sang refuses to believe her.

Sang tells Lien-hsiang that someone suspects her of being a fox. She protests that foxes do not necessarily harm humans. She guesses that it is Miss Li who suspects her. She secretly observes Miss Li, and tells Sang that Li is a ghost. He refuses to believe her. Lien-hsiang looks after him and gives him medicine.

Lien-hsiang asks Sang to break with Li once and for all. But he cannot bring himself to do so. He tells Miss Li what Lien-hsiang has said about her, which angers
her, and she threatens to leave him unless he breaks with the “wanton fox”!

Lien-hsiang knows that Miss Li is still visiting Sang. She is angry, and leaves him. Sang spends every night with Miss Li over a period of two months, and becomes more and more debilitated. He begins to suspect Miss Li, and to regret not having taken Lien-hsiang’s advice.

Lien-hsiang comes back and toys with the slipper, whereupon Miss Li appears. They have a long and almost metaphysical conversation about foxes, ghosts and humans, in the course of which Li tells the story of her life, and as a result of which they both agree that Sang’s illness has been caused by his frequent couplings with Miss Li.

The two of them are able to cure Sang of his “Venereal Consumption” by jointly administering a powerful pill, using a novel kind of mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. They find a common bond in their love for Sang, and begin to feel a deep sisterly affection for each other.

Three months later, Sang is cured. Li succumbs to a deep sense of remorse and vanishes. They both feel her absence strongly.

Li is reincarnated as Yen-erh, daughter of the Chang family, residing in the same town. The resuscitated girl insists that she is Li, the lover of Sang. The family refuse to let her out of the house. Sang’s neighbour hears the strange story, and wanting to
discover the truth of it, goes next door and finds Sang (who has been pretending to be absent) together with Lien-hsiang. The neighbour tells Sang about Yen-erh. Sang wants to see her.

At the same time, Yen-erh undergoes a physical transformation and once more resembles Li.

Lien-hsiang suggests a match-maker for Sang and Yen-erh. Sang attends Mrs Chang’s birthday party, where he meets Yen-erh. He asks her uncle to be match-maker, and they choose a day for the marriage.

Sang tells Lien-hsiang about the proposed marriage, and she wants to leave the two of them. But Sang suggests that they (he and Lien-hsiang) should first go and live in his old home, and that he should then fetch Yen-erh. He tells the truth (about Lien-hsiang) to Yen-erh’s family. They are angry, but Yen-erh talks them round.

Sang fetches Miss Li/ Yen-erh, and arrives at his old home to find it beautifully transformed (by Lien-hsiang). Miss Li tells Lien-hsiang the whole story of her rebirth as Yen-erh.

After two months, Lien-hsiang gives birth to a son, and dies shortly afterwards. She asks Miss Li/ Yen-erh to take care of the boy, and says that if fate allows, they will meet again after ten years. Sang calls the boy Foxy.

Sang’s family prospers, but Yen-erh is sad that she cannot bear him any children.
Foxy is a weakling, so she suggests to Sang that he should take a concubine (in order to have another child). By coincidence, a poor old woman (Mrs. Wei) arrives at the door, wanting to sell her fourteen-year-old daughter. The couple think how startlingly like Lien-hsiang she is, and agree to buy her. The girl suddenly recognizes them, as if she has woken from a dream.

On the Grave Festival they all visit Lien-hsiang's grave, and decided to rebury the remains of the two women (Miss Li and Lien-hsiang) together.

3.3 Discussion

This story, about the love affair between a young scholar named Sang Tzu-ming and two beautiful girls, -- one a fox lady named Lien-hsiang, the other a ghost spirit named Miss Li -- is essentially a story about love and human relationships. As with most of his other stories, at the end of this story the author adds a paragraph telling how he first heard and recorded the story as we have it now. The story doubtless also incorporates a lot of material from the author’s own imagination. It creates a world which represents the fantasies and inner desires and conflicts not only of the author, but also of the typical 18th-century Chinese man of letters. Now, let us enter this world with our author.
In the first place, in this world, a young scholar can love the person of his choice.

"It's for me to say whom I love."  情好在我. Even without any official title or rank or money, he can have several very beautiful girls as his companions.² At the beginning of the story, the author tells us that the protagonist, Sang, is an orphan and poor (he had his meals provided by his neighbour). He is not described as having a particularly outstanding personality. And yet he ends up with two beautiful women as his wife and concubine. Lien-hsiang is (in Giles' words) "a perfect Helen for beauty" and Miss Li "had a graceful and sensuous manner".³

In this world of P’u Sung-ling’s, a woman can also choose her companion freely, just as the man does. Both Lien-hsiang and Miss Li come to Sang of their own accord; their visits are not organized by their families or matchmakers. And when Miss Li is transformed into Yen-erh, even though her family does not approve, she still succeeds in marrying the man she loves.

In this world, man and woman can enjoy sex freely outside marriage. Both Lien-hsiang and Miss Li do so in the story.

In this world, love is an intense affair. Love can make sacrifices, it can be selfless and transcend jealousy. Lien-hsiang saves Sang’s life twice. First, for Sang’s own

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² A later (and even more exaggerated) example of this is the Garden world of Chia Pao-yü in the novel *The Story of the Stone*. In this world, the young man is surrounded by numerous pretty girl-cousins and maidervants.
³ Compare the two beautiful young cousins closest to Chia Pao-yü’s heart: Lin Tai-yü and Hsieh Pao-ch’ai.
sake, she asks him to break with Miss Li; and then after Sang recovers, for his own pleasure, she actually encourages Sang to have sex with his other lover. Miss Li also loves Sang deeply and comes to join him whenever he thinks of her. When she learns that Sang’s illness is caused by her, she vanishes for his sake. She continues to love Sang even after she is transformed into Yen-erh. She insists on marrying him even though her family does not approve. For his sake she also asks him to buy a concubine when she cannot bear him a child.

In this world, a man’s lovers can have very different characters, and yet they can also love each other without jealousy. Lien-hsiang is wise in the ways of the world, she is knowledgeable about sexual matters, and she refrains from having sex with Sang every night; she also knows how to cure Sang’s illness. Lien-hsiang is witty. When she first meets Miss Li, she makes a joke about her and the slipper. Lien-hsiang is also kind. She is never jealous of Miss Li and even praises her beauty when she meets her for the first time. After she and Miss Li come to know each other, she treats her with great affection, and regards her as a sister. Miss Li, on the other hand, is an innocent girl, and ignorant about sexual matters (because of this, she makes Sang ill). But nonetheless she is very faithful to her lover. Though at first she is jealous of Lien-hsiang’s beauty, she ends by loving her too. So, in the end both lovers can live together with their man, free from jealousy.
In this world, despite everything that happens, a young scholar can still pass the examination and acquire an official title! Sang finally passes his second examination in the provincial capital and his family gradually become more prosperous. Although several Liao-chai stories do not end “happily”, this particular story does. No doubt many a Chinese man of letters of that time would have liked to enjoy such a harmonious and love-filled life.

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*In The Story of the Stone, despite everything, Chia Pao-yü also passes his examination with distinction, before disappearing from the “ordinary” world.*
Chapter 4

Herbert Giles' Story

4.1 Replenishment, revision, translation

What now follows is a close study of Giles' translation of "Lien-hsiang". We will see that the translator makes a large number of changes and omissions with respect to the original text. These changes and omissions will be replenished, and from this, a clear comparison can be made between the translation and the original text. We will also be able to see how the translator sees the story "Lien-hsiang". And we will discuss whether or not the translated story is still the author's story – in other words, whose story is it?

In this "replenished" format, words or sentences that diverge from the original Chinese are underlined, and changes and corrections are italicized and placed in square brackets. Giles' own footnotes are presented as they were written. Chinese characters are provisionally jotted down in the lefthand column, as a convenient way of noting the relevant phrases in the original text. Whereas the original (both manuscript and printed version) has no paragraphing or punctuation at all, Giles divides the story into seven long paragraphs. In order to make our text more

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1 For this important characteristic of traditional Chinese fiction, see David Rolston, How to Read the Chinese Novel (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 46-50.
manageable for our present purpose, it is here divided into twenty paragraphs.²

This exercise in replenishment and revision itself becomes the first step in creating a new experimental format for translation.

² The final comment by the Historian of the Strange (which Giles omits) is in addition to this. The Ch’üan-pen edition divides the story into twelve paragraphs. Ma Zhenfeng’s edition divides it into twenty.
4.2 The story replenished

MISS LIEN-HSIANG

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There was a young man named Sang Tzung, a native of I-chou, who had been left an orphan when quite young. He lived near the Saffron market [Saffron Bank], and kept himself very much to himself [enjoyed his own company], only going out twice a day for his meals to a neighbour's close by, and sitting quietly at home all the rest of his time. One day the said neighbour called, and asked him in joke [jest] if he wasn't afraid of devil-foxes [ghosts and foxes], so much alone as he was. "Oh," replied Sang, laughing, "what has the superior man to fear from devil-foxes? If they come as men, I have here a sharp sword for them; and if as women, why, I shall open the door and ask them to walk in." The neighbour went away, and having arranged with a friend of his, they got a young lady of their acquaintance [a sing-song girl] to climb over Sang's wall with the help of a ladder, and knock [tap with her fingers] at the door. Sang peeped through, and called out, "Who's there?" to which the girl answered, "A devil [ghost!]", and frightened Sang so dreadfully that his teeth chattered in his head. The girl [loitered] then ran away, and next morning when his neighbour came to see him [in his studio], Sang told him what had happened, and said he meant to go back to his native place. The neighbour then clapped his hands, and said to Sang, "Why didn't you ask her in?" Whereupon Sang perceived that he had been tricked, and went on quietly again as before.

Some six months afterwards, a young lady [came during the night and] knocked at his door; and Sang, thinking his friends were at their old tricks, opened it at once, and asked her to walk in. She did so; and he beheld to his astonishment a perfect Helen for beauty. Asking her whence she came, she replied that her name was Lien-hsiang, and that she lived not very far off, adding that she had long been anxious to make his acquaintance [she was a sing-song girl]
from the western part of town. There were many sing-song houses in the town, so he believed her. They put out the lamp and went to bed, spending a joyful night together}. After that she used to drop in every now and again for a chat.

But one evening when Sang was sitting alone expecting her [lost in thought], another young lady suddenly walked in [came fitting in]. Thinking it was Lien-hsiang, Sang got up to meet her, but found that the new-comer was somebody else. She was about fifteen or sixteen years of age, wore very full sleeves, and dressed her hair [loosely] after the fashion of unmarried girls, being otherwise very stylish-looking and refined, and apparently hesitating whether to go on or go back [She had a graceful, sensuous manner and drifted across the room]. Sang, in a great state of alarm, took her for a fox; but the young lady said, “My name is Li, and I am of a respectable family. Hearing of your virtue and talent, I hope to be accorded the honour of your acquaintance.” Sang laughed, and took her by hand, which he found was as cold as ice; and when he asked the reason, she told him that she had always been delicate, and that it was very chilly outside. She then remarked that she intended to visit him pretty frequently, and hoped it would not inconvenience him; [Then her silken robe was unloosed. In truth he found her to be a virgin. “Our love is fated,” she said. “For this, I have given you the flower of my virginity. If you do not think me unworthy, I will gladly stay with you for ever and share your bed. Do you have another lover?”] so he explained that no one came to see him except another young lady [a sing-song girl of the neighbourhood], and that not very often. “[I must keep well away from her. I’m not that kind of girl. You must keep our secret.] When she comes, I’ll go,” replied the young lady, “and only drop in when she’s not here.” [The cock crowed and as she left.] She then gave him an embroidered slipper, saying that she had worn it [it was something that had touched the lowest part of her body], and that whenever he shook it [caressed it] she would know that he wanted to see her, cautioning him at the same time never to shake [touch] it before strangers. Taking it in his hand he beheld a very tiny little shoe almost as fine-pointed as an awl [a bodkin for unpicking knots].
with which he was much pleased; and next evening, when nobody was present, he produced the shoe and shook [caressed] it, whereupon the young lady immediately walked in [as if from nowhere, and they embraced]. Henceforth, whenever he brought it out, the young lady responded to his wishes and appeared before him. This seemed so strange that at last he asked her to give him some explanation; but she only laughed, and said it was mere coincidence.

One evening after this Lien-hsiang came, and said in alarm to Sang, “Whatever has made you look so melancholy?” [“You look dreadful! What’s the matter?”] Sang replied that he did not know, and by-and-by she took her leave, saying they would not meet again for some ten days. During this period Miss Li visited Sang every day, and on one occasion asked him where his other friend [lover] was. Sang told her; and then she laughed and said, “What is your opinion of me as compared with Lien-hsiang? [Which of us is more beautiful?]” “You are both of you perfection,” replied he, “but you are a little colder of the two.” Miss Li didn’t much like this, and cried out, “Both of us perfection is what you say to me. Then she must be a downright Cynthia, and I am no match for her.” Somewhat out of temper, she reckoned that Lien-hsiang’s ten days had expired, and said she would have a peep at her, making Sang promise to keep it all secret.

The next evening Lien-hsiang came, and while they were talking [they talked and laughed together gaily. When they went to bed,] she suddenly exclaimed, “Oh, dear! How much worse you seem to have become in the last ten days. You must have encountered something bad.” Sang asked her why so; to which she answered, “First of all your appearance; and then your pulse is very thready.” “You’ve got the devil-disease [the symptoms of ghost possession].” The following evening when Miss Li came, Sang asked her what she thought of Lien-hsiang. “Oh,” said she, “there’s no question about her beauty; but she’s a fox. When she went away I followed her to her hole on the hill-side.” Sang, however, attributed this remark to jealousy, and took no notice of it.

But the next evening when Lien-hsiang came,
| 惑之者病 甚者死 | he observed, “I don’t believe it myself, but some one has told me you are a fox.” Lien-hsiang asked who had said so, to which Sang replied that he was only joking; and then she begged him to explain what difference there was between a fox and an ordinary person. “Well,” answered Sang, “foxes frighten people to death [men who are bewitched by foxes fall ill, and even die], and, therefore, they are very much dreaded.” “Don’t you believe that! [A young man like you has his essence and energy restored three days after the act of love. Even a fox cannot harm you. But if you indulge yourself day after day, a human lover can do you more harm than a fox. You cannot blame every consumption and every death on foxes.]” cried Lien-hsiang; “and now tell me who has been saying this of me.” Sang declared at first that it was only a joke of his, but by-and-by yielded to her instances, and let out the whole story. “Of course I saw how changed you were,” said Lien-hsiang; “she is surely not a human being to be able to cause such a rapid alteration in you. Say nothing; tomorrow I’ll watch her as she watched me.” The following evening Miss Li came in; and they had hardly interchanged half a dozen sentences when a cough was heard outside the window, and Miss Li ran away. Lien-hsiang then entered and said to Sang, “You are lost! She is a devil, and if you [allow yourself to be besotted with her beauty, and] do not at once forbid her coming here, you will soon be on the road to the other world.” “All jealousy,” thought Sang, saying nothing, as Lien-hsiang continued, “I know that you don’t like to be rude to [break with] her; but I, for my part, cannot see you sacrificed, and tomorrow I will bring you some medicine to expel the poison from your system. Happily, the disease has not yet taken firm hold of you, and in ten days you will be well again. [Let me sleep by your side and nurse you until you are cured.]” The next evening she produced a knife and chopped up some medicine for Sang, which made him feel much better. [The next evening she brought a small amount of medicine and gave it to Sang. It immediate by brought on two or three bouts of diarrhea, after which he felt purged and light, and his spirits were revived.] but, although he was very grateful to her, he still persisted in disbelieving that he had the devil-disease [that Miss Li was a ghost]. |

| 如君之年 房後三日 精氣可復 縱狐何害 設旦而伐之 人有甚於狐者矣 天下癭殸鬼 寧皆狐鬼死耶 | | |
Lien-hsiang slept close by his side every night, but whenever he wished to embrace her, she rejected him.] After some days he recovered [and began to put on some weight] and Lien-hsiang left him, warning him [earnestly beseeching him] to have no more to do with Miss Li. Sang pretended that he would follow her advice, and closed the door and trimmed his lamp. He then took out the slipper, and on shaking it Miss Li appeared, somewhat cross [resentful] at having been kept away for several days. “She merely attended on me [healed me with charms and medicines] these few nights while I was ill,” said Sang; “don’t be angry [with her. It’s for me to say whom I love].” At this Miss Li brightened up a little; but by-and-by Sang [in the course of an intimate conversation] told her that [he loved her deeply, but that certain] people said she was a devil. “It’s that nasty [wanton] fox,” cried Miss Li, after a pause, “putting these things into your head. If you don’t break with her, I won’t come here again.” She then began to sob and cry, and Sang had some trouble in pacifying her.

Next evening Lien-hsiang came and found out that Miss Li had been there again; whereupon she was very angry with Sang, and told him he would certainly die. “Why need you be so jealous?” said Sang, laughing; at which she only got more enraged, and replied, “When you were nearly dying the other day and I saved you, if I had not been jealous, where would you have been now?” Sang pretended he was only joking, and said that Miss Li had told him his recent illness was entirely owing to the machinations of a fox; to which she replied, “It’s true enough what you say, only you don’t see whose machinations. However, if anything happens to you, I should never clear myself even had I a hundred mouths; we will, therefore, part. A hundred days hence I shall see you on your bed.” Sang could not persuade her to stay, and away she went [angrily]; and from that time Miss Li became a regular visitor [nightly companion]. Two months passed away, and Sang began to experience a feeling of great lassitude, which he tried at first to shake off, but by-and-by he became very thin, and could only take thick gruel. He then thought about going back to his native place; however, he could not bear to leave
Miss Li, and in a few more days he was so weak that he was unable to get up. His friend next door, seeing how ill he was, daily sent in his boy with food and drink; and now Sang began for the first time to suspect Miss Li. So he said to her, “I am sorry I didn’t listen to Lien-hsiang before I got as bad as this.” He then closed his eyes and kept them shut for some time; and when he opened them again Miss Li had disappeared. Their acquaintanceship was thus at an end.

Sang lay all emaciated as he was upon his bed in his solitary room longing for the return of Lien-hsiang [as a farmer longs for the harvest]. One day, while he was still thinking about her, someone drew aside the screen and walked in. It was Lien-hsiang; and approaching the bed she said with a smile, “[You silly fellow!] Was I then talking such nonsense?” Sang struggled a long time to speak [sobbed a long while]; and, at length, confessing he had been wrong, implored her to save him. “When the disease has reached such a pitch as this,” replied Lien-hsiang, “there is very little to be done. I merely came to bid you farewell, and to clear up your doubts about my jealousy.” In great tribulation, Sang asked her to take something she would find under his pillow and destroy it; and she accordingly drew forth the slipper, which she proceeded to examine by the light of the lamp, turning it over and over. All at once Miss Li walked in, but when she saw Lien-hsiang she turned back as though she would run away, which Lien-hsiang instantly prevented by placing herself in the doorway. Sang then began to reproach her, and Miss Li could make no reply; whereupon Lien-hsiang said, “At last we meet. Formerly you attributed this gentleman’s illness to me; what have you to say now?” Miss Li bent her head in acknowledgment of her guilt, and Lien-hsiang continued, “How is it that a nice girl like you can thus turn love into hate?” Here Miss Li threw herself on the ground in a flood of tears and begged for mercy; and Lien-hsiang, raising her up, inquired of her as to her past life. “I am a daughter of a petty official named Li, and I died young, and was buried outside the wall [of this house], leaving the web of my destiny incomplete, like the silkworm that perishes in the spring. To be the partner of this gentleman was my ardent wish; but I had never any intention of
causing his death." "I have heard," remarked Lien-hsiang, "that the advantage devils obtain by killing people is that their victims are ever with them after death. Is this so?" "It is not," replied Miss Li; "the companionship of two devils gives no pleasure to either. Were it otherwise, I should not have wanted for friends [young men] in the realms below. ["How foolish you are!" said Lien-hsiang, "To couple night after night with a human is too much for any mortal. How much more so must it be with a ghost!"] But tell me, [asked Miss Li] how do foxes manage not to kill people [Foxes can cause men to die; by what skill are you able to avoid doing so]?" "You allude to such foxes as suck the breath out of people?" replied Lien-hsiang; "I am not of that class." Some foxes are harmless; no devils are, because of the dominance of the yin in their compositions."

Sang now knew that these two girls were really a fox and a devil; however, from being long accustomed to their society, he was not in the least alarmed. His breathing had dwindled to a mere thread, and at length he uttered a cry of pain.

Lien-hsiang looked round and said, "How shall we cure him?" upon which Miss Li blushed deeply and drew back; and then Lien-hsiang [smiled and] added, "If he does get well, I'm afraid you will be dreadfully jealous." Miss Li drew herself up, and replied, "Could a physician be found to wipe away the wrong I have done to this gentleman, I would bury my head in the ground. How should I look the world in the face?"

Lien-hsiang here opened a bag and drew forth some drugs, saying, "I have been looking forward to this day. When I left this gentleman I proceeded to gather my simples [on the mountains], as it would take three months for the medicine to be got ready; but then, should the poison [Venereal Consumption] have brought anyone even to death's door, this medicine is able to call him back. The only condition is that it be administered by the very hand which wrought the ill [But the cure must come from the very source of the illness. We must come to you]." Miss Li did as she was told, and put the pills Lien-hsiang gave her one after another into Sang's mouth. They burnt his inside like fire; but soon vitality began to return, and Lien-hsiang cried out, "He is cured!" [Miss Li asked what was necessary. "Just a little saliva
from your pretty mouth,” replied Lien-hsiang.
“When I put in one of the pills, please press your lips to his and let the saliva pass into his mouth.” Miss Li blushed, lowered her head and looked at her shoes. Lien-hsiang joked with her: “Still looking at your pretty shoes!” Miss Li was more embarrassed than ever, and looked up and down, not knowing where to hide. Lien-hsiang said to her: “This is an art you have practised many a time, why are you suddenly being so coy?” Lien-hsiang took the pill and held it to Sang’s lips, then turned to Li and urged her to proceed. Reluctantly Li did as she had been told, put her lips to Sang’s, and moistened the pill. “Again!” said Lien-hsiang, and again she did it. Three or four times she repeated the act, before the pill would go down. In a little while, his belly began to rumble like thunder. Lien-hsiang placed another pill in between his lips and this time she herself pressed her lips to his and projected her own vital force into him. He felt his Cinnabar Field, the very centre of his being, take fire, and his spirit quicken. “He is cured!” said Lien-hsiang. Just at this moment Miss Li heard the cock crow [and she hesitated] and vanished,“ Lien-hsiang remaining behind in attendance on the invalid, who was unable to feed himself. She bolted the outside door and pretended that Sang had returned to his native place, so as to prevent visitors from calling. Day and night she took care of him, and every evening Miss Li came in to render assistance, regarding Lien-hsiang as an elder sister, and being treated by her with great consideration and kindness [affection].

Three months afterwards Sang was as strong and well as ever he had been, and then for several evenings Miss Li ceased to visit them, only staying a few moments when she did come, and seeming very uneasy in her mind [very downcast]. [Lien-hsiang often invited her to stay the night with her, but she always refused.] One evening Sang ran after her and carried her back in his arms, finding her no heavier than so much straw [a straw burial-figure]; and then, being obliged to stay, she curled herself up [until she seemed only two feet long] and lay down, to all appearance in a state of unconsciousness, and by-and-by she was gone. [Lien-hsiang felt an ever greater affection for her. She secretly told Sang to make love to her,
and he began rocking her backwards and forwards, but she did not awaken. Sang himself fell asleep, and when he awoke, he felt for her, but she had vanished.] For many days they heard nothing of her, and Sang was so anxious that she should come back that he often took out her slipper and shook it. "[She is such a sweet, pretty creature.] I don’t wonder at your missing her," said Lien-hsiang, "I do myself very much indeed." "Formerly," observed Sang, "when I shook the slipper she invariably came. I thought it was very strange, but I never suspected her of being a devil. And now, alas! All I can do is to sit and think about her with this slipper in my hand." He then burst into a flood of tears.

Now a young lady named Yen-erh, belonging to the wealthy Chang family, and about fifteen years of age, had died suddenly, without any apparent cause [from an inability to sweat], and had come to life again in the night, when she got up and wished to go out. They barred the door and would not hear of her doing so; upon which she said, "I am the spirit daughter of a petty magistrate. A Mr. Sang has been very kind to me, and I have left my slipper at his house. I am really a spirit; what is the use of keeping me in?"

There being some reason for what she said, they asked her why she had come there; but she only looked up and down without being able to give any explanation. Some one here observed, that Mr. Sang had already gone home, but the young lady utterly refused to believe them. The family was much disturbed [puzzled] at all this; and when Sang’s neighbour heard the story, he jumped over the wall, and peeping through beheld Sang sitting there chatting with a pretty-looking girl. As he went in [he stole in and crept up on them], there was some commotion, during which Sang’s visitor had disappeared, and when his neighbour asked the meaning of it all, Sang replied laughing, "Why, I told you if any ladies came I should ask them in." His friend then repeated what Miss Yen-erh had said; and Sang, unbolting his door, was about to go and have a peep at her, but unfortunately had no means of [pretex for] so doing.

Meanwhile Mrs. Chang, hearing that he had not gone away, was more lost in astonishment
than ever, and sent an old woman-servant to get back the slipper. Sang immediately gave it to her, and Miss Yen-erh was delighted to recover it, though when she came to try it on it was too small for her by a good inch. In considerable alarm, she seized a mirror to look at herself; and suddenly became aware that she had come to life again in someone else's body. She therefore told all to her mother, and finally succeeded in convincing her, [looking in the mirror and] crying all the time because she was so changed for the worse as regarded personal appearance from what she had been before. And whenever she happened to see Lien-hsiang, she was very much disconcerted, declaring that she had been much better off as a devil than now as a human being. ["I used to be rather proud of my appearance. But every time I saw Lien-hsiang, I was more and more mortified. Now that I look the way I do, I think I was better off as a ghost!"] She would sit and weep over the slipper, no one being able to comfort her; and finally, covering herself up with bed-clothes, she lay all stark and stiff, positively refusing to take any nourishment. Her body swelled up, and for seven days she refused all food, but did not die; and then the swelling began to subside, and an intense hunger to come upon her which made her once more think about eating. Then she was troubled with a severe irritation [itching], and her skin peeled entirely away; and when she got up in the morning, she found that her shoes [bed-slippers] had fallen off. On trying to put them on again, she discovered that they did not fit her any longer [were much too big for her]; and then she went back to her former pair, which were now exactly of the right size and shape. In an ecstasy of joy, she grasped her mirror, and saw that her features [eyebrows, eyes, cheeks] had also changed back to what they had formerly been; so she washed and dressed herself and went in to visit her mother. Every one who met her was much astonished.

When Lien-hsiang heard the strange story, she tried to persuade Mr. Sang to make her an offer of marriage [send a matchmaker]. But the young lady was rich and Sang was poor, and he did not see his way clearly. However, on Mrs. Chang's birthday, when she completed her cycle, Sang went along with the others [her sons and her sons-
in-law] to wish her many happy returns of the day [a long life]; and when the old lady knew who was coming [saw his name], she bade Yen-erh take a peep at him from behind the curtain. Sang arrived last of all; and immediately out rushed Miss Yen-erh and seized his sleeve, and said she would go back with him. Her mother scolded her well for this, and she ran in abashed; but Sang, who had looked at her closely [and recognized her], began to weep, and threw himself at the feet of Mrs. Chang, who raised him up without saying anything unkind [without a harsh word]. Sang then took his leave, and got his [her] uncle to act as medium between them; the result being that [Mrs. Chang chose] an auspicious day was fixed upon for the wedding [for him to marry into her family].

So Sang came home and told Lien-hsiang, and discussed with her what they should do. She was downcast for a long time, and then said she wished to go away. He was greatly shocked at this and wept. Lien-hsiang said: “You are going to her home to be wed, and it would not be right for me to be there.” Sang proposed that the two of them should return to his home-town first, and that he should then go to fetch Yen-eri. Lien agreed to this. Sang told the Chang family of his plan. When the Changs learned that he already had a wife, they were angry and reproached him. Yen-erh defended him strongly, and they relented.

At the appointed time Sang proceeded to the house to fetch her [Yen-erh]; and when he returned he found that, instead of his former poor-looking furniture, beautiful carpets were laid down from the very door, and thousands of coloured lanterns were hung about in elegant designs. Lien-hsiang assisted the bride to enter [the marriage hall], and took off her veil, finding her the same bright [lovable] girl as ever. She also joined them while drinking the wedding cup, and inquired of her friend as to her recent transmigration; and Yen-erh related as follows: -- “Overwhelmed with grief, I began to shrink from myself as some unclean thing; and after separating from you that day, I would not return any more to my grave. So I wandered about at random, and whenever I saw a living being, I envied its happy state. By day I remained among trees and shrubs,
but at night I used to roam about anywhere. And once I came to the house of the Chang family, where, seeing a young girl lying upon the bed, I took possession of her mortal coil, unknowing that she [I] would be restored to life again.” When Lien-hsiang heard this she was for some time lost in thought.

And a month or two afterwards [she gave birth to a son. After the birth she] became very ill. She [Her condition became more and more serious. She held Yen-erh by the arm and said: “I wish you to take care of my child. My child is your child.” Yen-erh wept, and comforted her for a while. She sent for the doctor, but Lien-hsiang] refused all medical aid and gradually got worse and worse, to the great grief of Mr. Sang and his wife, who stood weeping at her bedside. Suddenly she opened her eyes, and said, “[Do not grieve!] You wish to live; I am willing to die. If fate so ordains it, we shall meet again ten years hence.” As she uttered these words, her spirit passed away, and all that remained was the dead body of a fox [when they lifted the coverlet to lay her out, her body had been transformed into the body of a fox]. Sang, however, insisted on burying it with all the proper ceremonies. [The boy was given the name Foxy, and Yen-erh looked after him just as if he were her own child. At every Grave Festival, she would take him to weep at Lien-hsiang’s grave.]

Now his wife had no children; [As time went by, Sang passed his second exam at the provincial capital, and his family gradually became more prosperous. To her sorrow, Yen-erh had no children. Foxy was quite a clever boy, but thin and weak, and constantly ailing. Yen-erh frequently suggested to Sang that he should take a concubine.] but one day a servant came in and said, “There is an old woman outside who has got a little girl for sale.” Sang’s wife gave orders that she should be shown in; and no sooner had she set eyes on the girl than she cried out, “Why, she’s the image of Lien-hsiang!” Sang then looked at her, and found to his astonishment that she was really very like his old friend. The old woman said she was fourteen years old; and when asked what her price was, declared that [this was her one child and] her only wish was to get the
girl comfortably settled, and enough to keep herself alive, and ensure not being thrown out into the kennel at death. So Sang gave a good price for her; and his wife, taking the girl's hand, led her into a room by themselves. Then, chucking her under the chin, she asked her, smiling, "Do you know me?" The girl said she did not; after which she told Mrs. Sang that her name was Wei, and that her father, who had been a pickle-merchant at Hsu-ch'eng, had died three years before. Mrs. Sang then [counted on her fingers and] calculated that Lien-hsiang had been dead just fourteen years; and, looking at the girl, who resembled her so exactly in every trait, at length patted her on the head, saying, "Ah, my sister, you promised to visit us again in ten years, and you have not played us false." The girl here seemed to wake up as if from a dream, and, uttering an exclamation of surprise, fixed a steady gaze upon Sang's wife. Sang himself laughed, and said, "Just like the return of an old familiar swallow." "Now I understand," cried the girl, in tears: "I recollect my mother saying that when I was born I was able to speak; and that, thinking it an inauspicious manifestation, they gave me dog's blood to drink, so that I should forget all about my previous state of existence" [incarnation]. Is it all a dream, or [Today it is as if I have awoke from a dream;] are you not the Miss Li who was so ashamed of being a devil?" Thus they chatted of their existence in a former life, with alternate tears and smiles.

When it came to the day for worshipping at the tombs, Yen-erh explained that she and her husband were in the habit of annually visiting and mourning over her grave. The girl replied that she would accompany them; and when they [When the three of them] got there they found the whole place in disorder [overgrown with long grass], and the coffin wood all warped [a large tree growing over it]. [The girl sighed deeply.] "Lien-hsiang and I," said Yen-erh to her husband, "have been attached to [fond of] each other in two states of existence. Let us not be separated, but bury my bones here with hers." Sang consented, and opening Miss Li's tomb took out the bones and buried them with those of Lien-hsiang, while friends and relatives, who had heard the strange story, [came of their own accord and] gathered round the grave in gala dress to the number of
| 庚戌南游 | many hundreds.  
| -- | --  
| 異史氏曰 吾乎 死者而求其生 生者又求其死 天下所難得者 非人身 哉 奈何具此身亡 往往而置之 遂至变化而生 不如狐濤 | I learnt the above when travelling [South] through I-chou [in the year keng-hsu (1670)], where I was detained at an inn by rain, and read a biography of Mr Sang written by a comrade of his named Wang Tzu-chang. It was lent me by a Mr. Liu Tzu-ching, a relative of Sang's, and was quite a long account. This is merely an outline of it.  

[The Historian of the Strange writes: Alas! The dead seek life, the living seek death! Is not this human body the most coveted thing in the world? But unfortunately those who possess it do not cherish it, they live with less shame than foxes, and vanish into death with less trace than ghosts!]  

Giles' Notes:  

i. The term constantly employed by Confucius to denote the man of perfect probity, learning, and refinement. The nearest, if not an exact, translation would be “gentleman.”  

ii. Literally, “a young Lady whose beauty would overthrow a kingdom,” in allusion to an old story which it is not necessary to reproduce here.  

iii. The Lady of the Moon: The beautiful wife of a legendary chieftain, named Hou I, who flourished about 2,500 B.C. She is said to have stolen from her husband the elixir of immortality, and to have fled with it to the moon.  

iv. Volumes have been written by Chinese doctors on the subject of the pulse. They profess to distinguish as many as twenty-four different kinds, among which is one well known to our own practitioners—namely, the “thready” pulse; they, moreover, make a point of feeling the pulses of both wrists.  

v. Miss Lien-hsiang was here speaking without book, as will be seen in a story later on.  

vi. The female principle. In a properly-constituted human being the male and female principles are harmoniously combined. Nothing short of a small volume would place this subject, the basis of Chinese metaphysics, in a clear light before the uninitiated reader. Broadly speaking, the yin and the yang are the two primeval forces from the interaction of which all things have been evolved.
vii. Ber.—It was about to speak, when the cock crew.
Hor.—And then it started like a guilty thing
Upon a fearful summons. I have heard,
The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,
Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat
Awake the God of Day; and, at his warning,
Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,
The extravagant and erring spirit hies
To his confines. Hamlet.

viii. The Chinese cycle is sixty years, and the birthday on which any person completes his cycle is considered very auspicious occasion. The second emperor of the present dynasty, K'ang Hsi, completed a cycle in his reign, with one year to spare; and his grandson, Ch'ien Lung (or Kien Lung) fell short of this only by a single year, dying in the same cyclical period as that in which he had ascended the throne.

viii. Bride and bridegroom drink wine together out of two cups joined by a red string, typical of that imaginary bond which is believed to unite the destinies of husband and wife long before they have set eyes on each other. Popular tradition assigns to an old man who lives in the moon the arrangement of all matches among mortals; hence the common Chinese expression, "Marriages are made in the moon."

x. The bill of sale always handed to the purchaser of a child in China, as a proof that the child is his bona fide property and has not been kidnapped, is by a pleasant fiction called a "deed of gift," the amount paid over to the seller being therein denominated "ginger and vinegar money," or compensation for the expense of rearing and educating up to the date of sale. This phrase originates from the fact that a dose of ginger and vinegar is administered to every Chinese woman immediately after the delivery of her child.
We may here add that the value of male children to those who have no heirs, and of female children to those who want servants, has fostered a regular kidnapping trade, which is carried on with great activity in some parts of China, albeit the penalty on discovery is instant decapitation. Some years ago I was present in the streets of Tientsin when a kidnapper was seized by the infuriated mob, and within two hours I heared that the man had been summarily executed.

xi. The power of recalling events which have occurred in a previous life will be enlarged upon in several stories to come.
4.3 Discussion

We have already discussed the content of the story. From a reading of the translation and its “replenishment”, it will become clear that the translator, through the changes, omissions and simplifications that he has introduced, has profoundly changed the intention of the original. This analysis will now focus on our three protagonists, Lien-hsiang, Miss Li and Sang, and the changes Giles has made to their relationships.

In the original text, the first time Lien-hsiang comes to Sang is during the night. Giles omits this telling detail in his translation. To a certain extent, the omission makes the relationship between Lien-hsiang and Sang appear more “normal” and “innocent”. The word “night” implies a whole range of other possibilities.

When P’u Sung-ling’s Sang asks Lien-hsiang who she is, she answers that she is a “sing-song girl from the western part of the town” 西家妓女. Then they go to bed, and spend a “joyful night together” 息織整床 綢織甚佳. Giles omits all of this, as he omits everything related to any kind of sexual contact, and creates a new and more respectable (although somewhat vague) background for Lien-hsiang. So, Giles’ Lien-hsiang is only a neighbour of Sang’s, not a sing-song girl at all. Giles’ Lien-hsiang

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3 Compare Giles’ cavalier attitude to that of David Hawkes, the translator of The Story of the Stone: “My one abiding principle has been to translate everything... I have therefore assumed that whatever I find in it is there for a purpose and must be dealt with somehow or other.” The Story of the Stone, (David Hawkes) vol. I, The Golden Days (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), p.46. This is even truer of the short, condensed style of P’u Sung-ling.
just wants to be a friend of Sang’s, she just drops in “for a chat”, and of course by implication she does not sleep with him.

This omission on the part of Giles is not just something superficial. It changes the whole role of Lien-hsiang in the story. As a sing-song girl, P’u Sung-ling’s Lien-hsiang is a young woman with a wide experience in sexual matters, and therefore with a lot of knowledge to share. But this is not to say that she is a common prostitute. In the traditional Chinese society that forms the background for all of P’u Sung-ling’s stories, sing-song girls held a very special place. They were often cultured women, who offered a relaxed form of companionship to male members of the official class, oppressed by the weight of public and private life.4

In order to keep their relationship within the limits of a “pure” friendship in the whole translation, Giles makes a point of describing Lien-hsiang as Sang’s “friend” nearly every time she appears. When Miss Li asks Sang who else has visited him, Giles makes Sang answer: “another young lady”, instead of “a sing-song girl of the neighbourhood” 鄺娼 as the original text says. And even when Miss Li talks to Sang about Lien-hsiang, Giles makes her say “your friend”, not “your lover” 情人 as the original text says.

4 See Van Gulik, p.181. “Glancing through the literature on this subject one receives the impression that ... men frequented the company of courtesans often as an escape from carnal love, a welcome relief from the often oppressive atmosphere of their own women’s quarters and the compulsory sexual relations.” R. H. Van Gulik, Sexual life in Ancient China (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1961).
Giles omits every word that might possibly link Lien-hsiang and Sang in any form of sexual activity. Phrases such as “went to bed” 及寢; “sleep beside” 同榻; “sleep close beside” 夜夜同衾侷生, are all suppressed. The last two phrases are not even particularly sexual by implication. They simply describe how Lien-hsiang takes care of Sang as a wife would when her husband is sick. The original text even states clearly that during that period Lien-hsiang “rejects” his attempts to make love to her 生欲與合 輒止之. However, in order to make his translation consistent, Giles has to omit this as well. After all, his Lien-hsiang has nothing to reject.

In the original text, towards the end of the story, there is a paragraph talking about Yen-erh/ Miss Li’s mother wanting Sang to marry into her family. 議擇得贅生. Sang, who wants both his lovers to stay with him, discusses with Lien-hsiang the ways to solve the problem. Since Giles’ Lien-hsiang and Giles’ Sang are “just friends”, there is no problem for them to solve. Therefore, Giles is obliged to cut the whole passage.

In the original text, Lien-hsiang gives birth to a son for Sang. 蓮生一子. The boy is called Foxy. Then, she falls very sick and before she dies, she asks Miss Li to take care of her son. “I wish you to take care of my child. My child is your child.” 敢以孽種相累 我兒即若兒. Because of the “pure” friendship between his Lien-hsiang and his Sang, Giles is obliged to make the son disappear.
Not only is Giles' Lien-hsiang "purified" (i.e. bowdlerized) into being a mere friend of Sang's, but his Miss Li is also "purified" into being Sang's somewhat more intensive, but still Platonic, lover. Like P'u Sung-ling's Lien-hsiang, P'u Sung-ling's Miss Li makes love with Sang the very first time they meet. "Then her silken robe was unloosed. In truth he found her to be a virgin. 'Our love is fated,' she said. 'For this, I have given you the flower of my virginity. If you do not think me unworthy, I will gladly stay with you for ever and share your bed. Do you have another lover?''"

既而羅襦衿解 儗然處子 女曰 妾為情緣 蔘荏之質 一朝失守 不嫌鄙陋 願長侍枕席 房中得無有人否 Giles cuts this and replaces it with an extraordinarily banal sentence: Miss Li "remarked that she intended to visit him pretty frequently".

P'u Sung-ling's Miss Li and Sang are lovers, and it is therefore quite natural that Miss Li should give Sang one of her tiny slippers as a love token, something intimate that has "touched the lower part of her body" 此妾下體所著. This gift poignantly represents their love and physical intimacy. For Sang, to "caress" 弄 the slipper is to caress his absent lover, Miss Li; and when he thinks about her, and caresses the slipper, she appears and they embrace 款昵. None of this is allowed by Giles, who simply says of the slipper that "she had worn it", and only lets Sang "shake" it or "touch" it.

Both of P'u Sung-ling's girls are Sang's lovers. It is natural for Sang to say "I
love you very much” 我愛卿甚 to Miss Li in the course of “an intimate
correlation” 枕上私語. Of course, none of this survives in Giles version.

It is becoming clear that the translator has changed the very nature of the
relationships between the two girls and the young man. He has turned Lien-hsiang
into Sang’s friend, and Miss Li into his Platonic lover. Now, let us see if the
relationship between the two girls themselves has changed in Giles’ hands.

Before P’u Sung-ling’s Lien-hsiang and Miss Li meet, Miss Li knows that Sang
already has another lover (Lien-hsiang), whereas Lien-hsiang, to begin with, is not
aware of Miss Li’s existence. At first, Miss Li tells Sang that she wants to keep well
away from Lien-hsiang because she herself is not “that kind of girl” 當護避之 妾不
與院中人等. She makes a clear distinction between herself and Lien-hsiang. She is a
virgin, whereas Lien-hsiang is an experienced lover — a “whore”. However, in the
whole of Giles’ translation, the two girls are both “good” girls, and in Sang’s eyes
their backgrounds are more or less the same. The translator has simply removed this
crucial distinction, so that readers lose sight of this first stage in their relationship.

Later, P’u Sung-ling’s Miss Li asks Sang to tell her if Lien-hsiang is more
beautiful in his eyes than she is 君視妾何如蓮香美. Giles’ translates: “What is your
opinion of me as compared with Lien-hsiang?” In other words, he shifts the question
from physical beauty to a more general comparison. It is common enough for a girl
whose lover has another girlfriend to ask him which of the two is the prettier. This is the second time that Miss Li compares herself with Lien-hsiang. The first time, the comparison concerns social status; this time, it concerns physical appearance. This kind of thematic development is lost in the translation.

In P’u Sung-ling’s story when Sang tells Miss Li that Lien-hsiang suspects her of being a ghost, Miss Li abuses Lien-hsiang as a “wanton fox” 淫狐. Giles’ Miss Li calls her no more than “that nasty fox”. Again, the translator shifts the focus from the sexual to the general.

After P’u Sung-ling’s Lien-hsiang leaves Sang, Miss Li becomes his “nightly companion” 夙夜必偕. Giles’ Miss Li is no more than “a regular visitor”.

With all these little details P’u Sung-ling builds the subtle relationship between the two girls. The initial jealousy and conflict between them, and their resolutions, are made less vivid in the translation.

Before P’u Sung-ling’s Lien-hsiang meets Miss Li, she sees in Sang’s illness the symptoms of “ghost possession” 鬼症, and knows that it is caused by his relationship with Miss Li. She warns Sang not to be “besotted with her beauty” 昧其美 and to “break with her” for his own sake. Giles uses the expression “devil-disease” for Sang’s sickness, and omits the term “besotted with”. This prevents the reader from understanding Sang’s sickness as resulting from his love-making with Miss Li, the
beautiful ghost. Instead, Giles’ young man is afflicted with some more generalised, unspecified “evil spirit” or “devil”.

When P’u Sung-ling’s Lien-hsiang learns from Sang that Miss Li suspects her of being a fox, she does not deny it, but gives Sang some words of advice. She explains that the real problem lies in sexual over-indulgence. “A young man like you has his essence and energy restored three days after the act of love. Even a fox cannot harm you. But if you indulge yourself day after day, a human lover can do you more harm than a fox.” 如君之年 房後三日 精氣可复 縱狐何害 設旦旦而伐之 人有甚於狐者矣 天下病屍癘鬼 寧皆狐蠹死耶 Giles cuts this piece of information, and his Lien-hsiang only tells Sang not to believe that “foxes frighten people to death”. This is because in the translation, his Lien-hsiang is no more than Sang’s friend. The dynamics of physical intimacy do not enter into Giles’ picture.

What P’u Sung-ling’s Lien-hsiang is most concerned about is not the existence of a rival, but Sang’s health, his well-being, and the need to tell him the truth about physical love. This is her character. Miss Li is more impetuous and reckless. The original text makes a clear distinction between the personalities and attitudes of the two girls. But this distinction is lost in the translation.

When the two girls meet, their relationship changes. P’u Sung-ling’s Miss Li tells Lien-hsiang about her life and they discuss the nature of physical relations
between man and ghost and between man and fox. Miss Li tells Lien-hsiang that there is no pleasure to be had for her in the companionship of "young men" 少年郎 in the realms below. Giles changes the "young men" into "friends". Again, he does not want his readers to think of the companionship as being in any way sexual. P' u Sung-ling's Lien-hsiang explains the reason for Sang's sickness to Li, saying that "to couple night after night with a human is too much for any mortal. How much more so must it be with a ghost!" 夜夜為之人且不堪而況與鬼. Giles deletes all of this. He makes no mention of the specifically sexual nature of Sang's condition, described in Chinese as chai-ku 瘋癲, a form of wasting consumption arising from sexual over-indulgence. 5

In a similar manner, a little earlier, when P' u Sung-ling's Lien-hsiang is talking to Miss Li about the more harmful variety of fox, she uses the expression ts'ai-pu 采補, a key term in the ancient Taoist system of ideas concerning sexuality. According to this age-old idea, the man was able, through sexual intercourse, to absorb the yin 隱 energy of the female (or vice versa). It was, in fact, at its worst, a form of sexual vampirism. None of this is suggested in Giles' translation: "such foxes as suck the breath out of people." In his translation, Sang's sickness has arisen "because of the dominance of the yin in Miss Li's composition." He then makes this seem more authentic by providing a long "fake" footnote on the subject of yin and yang 陽, and

Chinese philosophy in general. (This is similar to the long footnote about marriage customs in the story “The Painted Wall”, which we have already discussed in chapter 2.) By doing all of this, Giles sacrifices the frank exchange between the two girls, and weakens the development of their relationship.

In the original text, there is a long and fascinating passage dealing with how both girls heal Sang together. Lien-hsiang asks Miss Li to press her lips to Sang’s so that her saliva can pass into his mouth 樺口中一點香唾耳 我一丸進 煩接口而嘔之. Miss Li is too shy to do so, and Lien-hsiang jokes with her, as one woman to another, saying that this is an “art she has practiced many a time” 此平時熟技. Reluctantly, Miss Li does as she has been told to do. Lien-hsiang herself also presses her lips to Sang’s and “projects her own vital force into him” 自乃接唇而布以氣. Giles removes all these details, because they expose the clearly sexual nature of the relationship between Sang and both girls. By performing these very intimate activities in each other’s presence, in order to save the man they both love, Lien-hsiang and Miss Li become closer than ever. Miss Li comes to regard Lien-hsiang as an elder sister, and Lien-hsiang also treats Li with great consideration and affection. In the translation, we cannot see the process by which this relationship develops.

Quite apart from the strictly sexual aspect, Giles chooses not to represent other physical facets of Chinese medicine. When P’u Sung-ling’s Lien-hsiang first
administrers medicine to Sang, "it immediately brought on two or three bouts of diarrhea, after which he felt purged and light, and his spirits were revived." 頃刻 洞下三兩行 覺臟腑清虛 精神頓爽. Giles' Sang simply felt "much better". In P'u Sung-ling's story, after the second course of treatment, from both girls, Sang's "belly began to rumble like thunder" 腹殷然如雷鳴. A little later, "he felt his Cinnabar Field, the very centre of his being, take fire, and his spirit quicken" 生覺丹田火熱精神煥發. Giles reduces all of this to: "They burnt his inside like fire; but soon vitality began to return."

P'u Sung-ling goes to some length to describe the affection between the two girls. Lien-hsiang often invites Miss Li to stay the night with her 蓮常留與共寢; Lien-hsiang secretly tells Sang to make love to Miss Li 隱使生狎抱之; Lien-hsiang also misses Miss Li very much when she leaves, and says to Sang that Miss Li is such a "sweet, pretty creature" 窈娜如此; when she is dying, Lien-hsiang even asks Miss Li to take care of her son: "I wish you to take care of my child. My child is your child." 敢以孃種相累 我兒即若兒; Miss Li also treats the boy as if he is her own child, and at every Grave Festival, she takes him to weep at Lien-hsiang's grave 燕梳如己出每清明 必抱兒哭諸其墓. Giles cuts all of this. As a result, the affection between the two girls becomes something quite superficial in the translation.

Not only have the relationships among the three protagonists changed in the
translation; other important details are also changed.

First of all, Giles translates 鬼 into “devil”. The word “devil” carries with it the whole bundle of associations linked with the Christian concept of evil. In China, not all 鬼 are evil. They can be good. Miss Li is not a devil at all. She is a ghost, or spirit. These are more suitably neutral words. The Chinese believe that ghosts always float, rather than walk. That is why P’u Sung-ling uses several different words to describe Miss Li’s manner of moving. He uses terms such as 翩然 “came flitting in”; 忽起忽止 “drifted across the room”; 翩然忽至 “came in as if from nowhere”. Giles translates all of these terms into “walked in”. The Chinese also believe that ghosts cannot stay during the daytime. So in the original text, every time the cock crows, Miss Li has to leave 雞鳴欲去. But Giles omits this detail on their first encounter, and loses the opportunity to create the first impression of Miss Li as a ghost.

During the process of translation, not only is Miss Li’s character as a ghost modified, but Lien-hsiang’s character as a fox is also simplified. In P’u Sung-ling’s original, after Lien-hsiang dies, Miss Li and Sang lift the coverlet to lay her out, and her body has been transformed into the body of a fox 啟衾將斂, 屍化爲狐. Giles simplifies this: “all that remained was the dead body of a fox”. He omits the process of transformation, which is so central to this and so many other Liao-chai stories.
The embroidered slipper, which represents the love between Miss Li and Sang, is described by P'u Sung-ling as being like "a bodkin for unpicking knots" 解結锥. Giles translates it as "an awl". This does not convey the smallness of the slipper. In the later part of the story, Miss Li, reincarnated as Yen-erh, is very sad because of Yen-erh's physical appearance (which is now hers). Then, happily, she regains her own appearance. One sentence describes how she gets back her small feet, and how Yen-erh's big slippers are now much too big for her 索著之則碩大無朋矣. In Giles' version, they "did not fit her any longer". Again, Giles does not emphasize adequately the smallness. In ancient China, small feet were considered highly attractive, and sexually stimulating.⁶ That is why Miss Li is so concerned with this. This important detail is quite lost in Giles' translation.

This is clearly no longer the author's "Lien-hsiang". It has become a new story—the translator's "Lien-hsiang". All in all, we are left with a story that has had several essential elements removed: the physical relationship between the male protagonist and his two lovers; the development of the unusual relationship between the two women themselves; the whole Chinese system of ideas relating to medicine and sexuality; the erotic association of bound feet; the distinct characterization of the two women; the careful distinction between ghost and fox. None of these elements are

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accidental. They are an intrinsic part of the story. By restoring them, we are able to begin the true process of reading (and understanding).
Chapter 5

The Reader’s Story

5.1 Commentary and Understanding

We now have a more or less complete translation, based on Giles. But in the course of making it complete, we have encountered a host of concepts and cultural associations that need to be elaborated for the Western reader with no special knowledge of Chinese culture. To return to Martin Gardiner and Alice: “We need to know a great many things that are not part of the text if we wish to capture its full wit and flavour.” In order to present this elaboration, in order to create the “reader’s story”, a suitable format has to be devised. It must, if possible, be one which is in tune with the style of the Chinese story itself, in sympathy with the “flavour” of P’u Sung-ling’s studio.

The Chinese evolved their own way of doing this long ago.¹ For centuries, Chinese readers and critics of traditional fiction added their own thoughts to those of the writer, in the informal shape of marginalia. As the 19th-century Liao-chai commentator Feng Chen-luan 馮鎮欽 wrote: “After meals, after wine, after dreaming, in rainy weather, in sunshine, after a conversation with good friends, upon

¹ See the two relevant books by David L. Rolston: How to read the Chinese Novel (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990) and Traditional Chinese Fiction and Fiction Commentary (Stanford:
returning from a distant journey, I may toss off few comments; they reflect my personal feelings, and are never intended as serious commentary.” 每飯後、酒後、夢後，雨天、晴天、花天，或好友談後，或遠遊初歸，輒隨手又筆數行，皆獨具會心，不作公家言。 He himself is inheriting the tradition of informal critics such as Chin Sheng-t’an 金聖歎 (1610?-1661), author of the famous commentary on Water Margin 水滸傳. A typical comment by Chin is the following, coming in the middle of Wu Sung’s fight with the tiger, in chapter 22 of the novel: “Subtle and marvelous writing. As I was reading this under the lamp, the light seemed to shrink into the shape of a bean, and its colour became green.” 神妙之筆，燈下讀之，火光如豆，變成綠色。2 Interestingly, the translator of this passage, John Wang 王鴻宇, himself adds a traditional-style footnote in English, appending it to Chin’s comment, and saying: “A sure sign of the presence of a powerful ghost or spirit.”3 This is very much the kind of thing needed for today’s reader of the Liao-chai stories. Some modern Chinese critics have tended to dismiss the traditional-style commentaries. But the value of these comments is well described by the 20th-century essayist Chou Tso-jen 周作人 (1885-1967): “When I read Water Margin, I pay equal attention to the main text and the comments. It is like eating white fungus (白木耳); they taste even better

eaten with soup.”

The standard modern edition of Liao-chai (the so-called san-hui pen or “Three-collection” edition – collected textual emendations, collected marginalia, and collected explanations of words and terms) brings together the main traditional commentaries on the stories. This commentary format does not interfere with the flow of the story itself. On the contrary, it is very much part of the “studio world” of the original. It helps the reader to enter into that world. The aim of this new English commentary, the chosen format for conceptual and cultural elaboration, is the same. It is placed in a column, parallel with the translation, and speaks to the reader as the story progresses, in an intimate tone.

The complete world of Liao-chai consists of over five hundred stories. Many of the fundamental concepts recur throughout the collection, and do not need to be elaborated each time they occur. This new commentary on “Lien-hsiang” imagines the story to be placed first in the translated collection.

Like many other Liao-chai stories, “Lien-hsiang” is a gold mine for anyone wishing to investigate the psychology of the traditional Chinese literati, through the imagery and symbolism of dreams and the supernatural. The Liao-chai stories in general are firmly based on the traditional Chinese conception of physical and psychic

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* 張友鶴, ed., 聊齋誌異會校會註會評本 (Shanghai: Ku-chi, 1983).
“metabolism”, and portray many kinds of “metamorphosis” in an often startlingly concrete way. Blood (including the menstrual variety), puss, phlegm, and semen constantly feature in the narrative, as the author traces strange processes of transformation. These details (lost by Giles) have now been fully restored. But there is still more work to be done, at the level of conceptual understanding. In the story “Lien-hsiang”, we encounter several typical traditional Chinese concepts, concepts that lie behind the vivid imagery of metamorphosis, concepts that have a long history in Chinese culture and literature. As Alberto Manguel writes in his *A History of Reading*: “Every book has been engendered by long successions of other books whose covers you may never see and whose authors you may never know but which echo in the one you now hold in your hand.”⁶ In order to read for meaning, in order to understand these stories and enjoy them as they were meant to be enjoyed, we need to read them in the light of their long ancestry. By absorbing the traditional meaning of these concepts, the modern reader will not take the story for granted, will not read superficially, but will penetrate into its deep implicit meaning.

Modern readers, both Chinese and non-Chinese, have fallen into the habit of reading the Liao-chai stories superficially. From P’u Sung-ling’s own preface, from his dense, lyrical writing style, we can see that the author wrote this book not for the

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common people (as many of the post-1949 Chinese critiques have suggested), but for his fellow literati. If we only read the pai-hua 白話 “translations”, which feebly stick to the letter of the original, but totally fail to capture its spirit, or if we only follow the post-1949 Chinese political critiques, the Liao-chai collection is no better than a lost book. Feng Chen-luan in his preliminary essay “Tips on reading Liao-chai” 談聊齋雜說 guides us: “This book should be read as one reads the Tso Commentary; the Tso is huge, Liao-chai is miniature. Every narrative skill is there. Every description is perfect. It is a series of huge miniatures. This book should be read as one reads Chuang-tzu; Chuang-tzu is wild and abstract; Liao-chai is dense and detailed. Although it treats of ghosts and foxes, the details make it very concrete and real. It is a series of wild details, and concrete abstractions. This book should be read as one reads the Records of the Historian; the Records are bold and striking; Liao-chai is dark and understated. One enters it with a lantern, in the shadows of night; one comes out of it into the daylight, under a blue sky. In so few words, mighty landscapes are evoked, and magical realms are created. It is both bold and dark. It is both striking and understated. This book should be read as one reads the Sayings of the Neo-Confucian philosophers; in the Sayings, the sense is pure; in Liao-chai the sensibility is well-tuned. Every time one thinks a situation is weird, it is in fact very real and true to human nature. It contains both pure sense and pure
sensibility.” 頒法四則： 一、書當以讀左傳之法讀之。左傳闊大，聊齋細工。
其敘事變化，無法不備；其刻劃盡致，無妙不臻。工細亦闊大也。 一、是書
當以讀莊子之法讀之。莊子惝恍，聊齋綿密。雖說鬼說狐，如華嚴樓閣，彈指
即現；如未央宮闕，實地造成。綿密實惝恍也。一、是書當以讀史記之法讀之。
史記氣盛，聊齋氣幽。從夜火籌燈入，從白日青天出。排山倒海，一筆數行；
福地洞天，別開世界。亦幽亦盛。一、是書當以讀程、朱語錄之法讀之。語錄
理精，聊齋情當。凡事境奇怪，實情致周匝，合乎人意中所欲出，與先正不背
在情理中也。7 Feng’s contemporary Tan Ming-lun, with his comments on the story
and on P’u’s writing skills, also suggests a way to read Liao-chai. One of the
important characteristics of P’u Sung-ling’s writing skill is the leisurely life-style,
the tone of cultured perception and relaxed enjoyment, the playfulness 戲, that
permeates his work. This is very much the writing style of the early 18th-century
literati. Tan Ming-lun notices this skill in P’u Sung-ling’s stories. He points out that
P’u Sung-ling is essentially a playful author: playful in his vision of the human
condition, playful in the way he uses language and the art of the storyteller. “Ghost
and fox appear together, and all in jest, naturally, without the slightest trace of
artifice.” 鬼狐雙提 而以戲語出之 了無痕跡 “This whole scintillating text, full
of the strangest transformations, all proceeds from the word jest. Jest, play, game.

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7 See 三會本, pp. 17-18.
The essence of the writer’s art lies in the conception, in the embryo.” 一篇離奇變

幻之文 皆從戲字生出 故作文之要 在於立意立胎

In order to appreciate the true meaning of the stories, we need to enter into this
game, we need to play with the author. We need to be steeped in the culture of P’u
Sung-ling and his fellow literati, we need to be reading in their Studio, the 齋 chai,
that “highly ritualized site of all the cultural practices held most dear by the elite” as
Craig Clunas describes it.⁶ We need to enter into their world. The old elite reading
world has vanished. It requires an energetic act of imagination and reconstruction to
recreate it.

At the same time, it can also help the western reader to be reminded, through
carefully chosen materials, of universal elements in the stories, of things which are
familiar in this exotic world. As Walter Shewring writes in the “Epilogue on
Translation” to his version of Odyssey: “One attraction of good translations is that of
blending convincingly the familiar with the unfamiliar, some things in them belonging
to human experience generally, others only to the country or age or culture from
which a particular work has issued.”⁷ This element of familiarity, in otherwise strange
and alien surroundings, will help readers to relate their own experience to the events
described in the stories. In the words of Manguel, writing of the poet Rainer Maria

Rilke, as a reader and translator: "Beyond the literal sense and the literary meaning, the text we read acquires the projection of our own experience, the shadow, as it were, of who we are."\(^ {10}\)
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### MISS LIEN-HSIANG, THE FOX-GIRL

#### 蓮香

#### Part 1

#### I

There was a young man named Sang Tzu-ming, a native of I-chou, who had been left an orphan when quite young. He lived near the Saffron market [Saffron Bank], and kept himself very much to himself [enjoyed his own company], only going out twice a day for his meals to a neighbour's close by, and sitting quietly at home all the rest of his time. One day the said neighbour called, and asked him in joke [jest] if he wasn't afraid of devil-foxes [ghosts and foxes], so much alone as he was. "Oh," replied Sang, laughing, "what has the superior man' to fear from devil-foxes? If they come as men, I have here a sharp sword for them; and if as women, why, I shall open the door and ask them to walk in." The neighbour went away, and having arranged with a friend of his, they got a young lady of their acquaintance [a sing-song girl] to climb over Sang's wall with the help of a ladder, and knock [tap with her fingers] at the door. Sang peeped through, and called out, "Who's there?" to which the girl answered, "A devil [ghost]!" and frightened Sang so dreadfully that his teeth chattered in his head. The girl [loitered.] then ran away, and next morning when his

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Sang Hsiao, a young scholar, brags to his neighbour that he is not afraid of ghosts and foxes. The neighbour plays a trick on him, by sending a sing-song girl, who knocks on Sang's door, pretending to be a ghost, and gives Sang the fright of his life.

Ghost and fox appear together, and all in jest, naturally, without the slightest trace of artifice. This whole scintillating text, full of the strangest transformations, all proceeds from the word jest. Jest, play, game. The essence of the writer's art lies in the conception, in the embryo. (Tan)

Writing is that play by which I turn around as well as I can in a narrow place. (Roland Barthes)

Game 1: Enter sing-song girl (Tan)

The studio, or chai, [is] a strictly elite male

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11 Professor John Minford guided me a lot in this section.
neighbour came to see him [in his studio], Sang told him what had happened, and said he meant to go back to his native place. The neighbour then clapped his hands, and said to Sang, “Why didn’t you ask her in?” Whereupon Sang perceived that he had been tricked, and went on quietly again as before.

Some six months afterwards, a young lady [came during the night and] knocked at his door; and Sang, thinking his friends were at their old tricks, opened it at once, and asked her to walk in. She did so; and he beheld to his astonishment a perfect Helen for beauty.ii Asking her whence she came, she replied that her name was Lien-hsiang, and that she lived not very far off, adding that she had long been anxious to make his acquaintance [she was a sing-song girl from the western part of town. There were many sing-song houses in the town, so he believed her. They put out the lamp and went to bed, spending a joyful night together]. After that she used to drop in every now and again for a chat.

But one evening when Sang was sitting alone expecting her [lost in thought], another young lady suddenly walked in [came flitting in]. Thinking it was Lien-hsiang, Sang got up to meet her, but found that the newcomer was somebody else. She was about fifteen or sixteen years of age, wore very full sleeves, and dressed her hair [loosely] after the fashion of unmarried girls, being otherwise very stylish-looking and refined, and apparently hesitating whether to go on or go back [She had a graceful, sensuous manner and drifted across the room]. Sang, in a great state of alarm, took her for a fox; but the young lady said, “My name is Li, and I

space. (Craig Clunas)

A clever, roundabout way of preparing for the next scene. (Tan)

Six months later, Lien-hsiang knocks on Sang’s door, introducing herself as a sing-song girl. He thinks it is his neighbour up to his tricks again and lets her in. She sleeps with him, and continues to visit him every few days.

Game 2: Enter the fox (as a consequence of Game 1). (Tan)
Typical Giles, to drag Horner into his Chinese Studio! (TM)

The “real” sing-song girl has prepared us for Lien-hsiang. What subtle, tight writing! And Li’s appearance is linked with Lien-hsiang’s. This is the technique known as Linkage. The whole story repeatedly links ghost and fox. (Tan)

And a cup of tea no doubt... (TM)

One evening, a young girl of fifteen or sixteen wanders into Sang’s room, and from her manner and appearance Sang suspects that she may be a fox-girl. She introduces herself as a local girl of good family, named Li. She too ends up sleeping with him. When she goes, she leaves behind her embroidered slipper, telling him that he can think of it as if it is her. From then on whenever he takes out the slipper she appears before him.

Flitit in: entra avec beaucoup de grace. (Pavillon des Loisirs)

Game 3: Enter the ghost (as a consequence of Game 2). (Tan)

Drifted across the room: une silhouette gracieuse et lascive, une demarche si legere qu’elle semblait flouter. (Pavillon des Loisirs)
am of a respectable family. Hearing of your virtue and talent, I hope to be accorded the honour of your acquaintance.” Sang laughed, and took her by hand, which he found was as cold as ice; and when he asked the reason, she told him that she had always been delicate, and that it was very chilly outside. She then remarked that she intended to visit him pretty frequently, and hoped it would not inconvenience him; [Then her silken robe was unloosed. In truth he found her to be a virgin. “Our love is fated,” she said. “For this, I have given you the flower of my virginity. If you do not think me unworthy, I will gladly stay with you for ever and share your bed. Do you have another lover??”] so he explained that no one came to see him except another young lady [a sing-song girl of the neighbourhood], and that not very often. “[I must keep well away from her. I’m not that kind of girl. You must keep our secret.] When she comes, I’ll go,” replied the young lady, “and only drop in when she’s not here.” [The cock crowed and as she left.] She then gave him an embroidered slipper, saying that she had worn it [it was something that had touched the lowest part of her body], and that whenever he shook it [caressed it] she would know that he wanted to see her, cautioning him at the same time never to shake [touch] it before strangers. Taking it in his hand he beheld a very tiny little shoe almost as fine-pointed as an awl [a bodkin for unpicking knots], with which he was much pleased; and next evening, when nobody was present, he produced the shoe and shook [caressed] it, whereupon the young lady immediately walked in [as if from nowhere, and they embraced]. Henceforth, whenever he brought it out, the young lady responded to his wishes and appeared before him. This seemed so strange that at last he asked

Giles’ Dictionary, under 枕, has 枕伴, which he explains as: “a bed-fellow.” Also 枕席雅安, which he explains as: “unable to rest peacefully in his bed.” He understood perfectly well the meaning of the words he chose to omit. (TM)

“In a single record I have thrown away my body, precious as a thousand pieces of gold. My body and my life I entrust to you forever. May you never disdain me in the future and make me lament my white hairs. (West Chamber, IV.1)

Constantly interwoven, this double thread winds its way through the work, like a rosary or a jade bracelet. (Tan)

The shoe in which the tiny foot was encased flirtatiously suggested concealment, mystery, and boudoir pleasures. Well-to-do ladies took pride in their small and well-proportioned “golden lotuses”, designed shoes for them of crimson silk, and wore especially attractive models when preparing for bed. The sleeping shoes, scarlet in hue, were intended to heighten male desire through a striking colour contrast with the white skin of the beloved. These shoes were greatly prized and sought after as love tokens. A woman might secretly give them to her enamoured as proof of love sentiments. (Levy)

Wonderful description. (Feng)

comme flottant sur le vent. (Pavillon des Loisirs)

May this red satin shoe, my love,
Worn only once,
Resolve your lonely melancholy.
Place it under your bedcovers,
Caress it to your heart’s desire.
Enjoy it in my absence.
When will it rejoin its mate?
When we are as one.

(Fang Hsun, 18th century, trans. Levy)
One evening after this Lien-hsiang came, and said in alarm to Sang, "Whatever has made you look so melancholy?" ["You look dreadful! What's the matter?"] Sang replied that he did not know, and by-and-by she took her leave, saying they would not meet again for some ten days. During this period Miss Li visited Sang every day, and on one occasion asked him where his other friend [lover] was. Sang told her, and then she laughed and said, "What is your opinion of me as compared with Lien-hsiang? [Which of us is more beautiful?]" "You are both of you perfection," replied he, "but you are a little colder of the two." Miss Li didn’t much like this, and cried out, "Both of us perfection is what you say to me. Then she must be a downright Cynthia, and I am no match for her." Somewhat out of temper, she reckoned that Lien-hsiang’s ten days had expired, and said she would have a peep at her, making Sang promise to keep it all secret.

The next evening Lien-hsiang came, and while they were talking [they talked and laughed together gaily. When they went to bed] she suddenly exclaimed, "Oh, dear! How much worse you seem to have become in the last ten days. You must have encountered something bad." Sang asked her why so; to which she answered, "First of all your

One night Lien-hsiang appears and comments on Sang’s pale, sickly appearance. She goes away for ten days, during which time Li visits him every night. They talk about Lien-hsiang, and Li, feeling somewhat jealous of the other girl’s beauty, tells Sang she wants to have a peep at her.

Words of jealousy spoken with such charm! (Tan)

Giles 一笑 ! (TM)
Cynthia prima suis miserum me cepit ocellis,
Contactum nullus ante cupidinibus. Ah! woe is me!
'twas Cynthia first ensnared me with her eyes; till
then my heart had felt no passion's fire. (Sextus
Propertius, born 51 B.C., Elegies, I,1.)

With the 'peeping', the author brings ghost and
fox into clear focus; with the 'beauty contest', he
makes way for the 'peeping'. Subtle. (Tan)

The ten days are over, and
Lien-hsiang returns. She tells
Sang that he is possessed by a
ghost. For her part, Li, who has
been peeping at her, tells Sang
that Lien-hsiang is a fox, but
Sang does not believe her.

When a fox is fifty years old, it acquires the
ability to change itself into a woman. At a hundred
it can assume the shape of a beautiful girl, or that
of a sorcerer, or also that of an adult man who has
sexual intercourse with women. At that age the fox
knows what is happening at a distance of a
appearance; and then your pulse is very thready." You’ve got the devil-disease [the symptoms of ghost possession]." The following evening when Miss Li came, Sang asked her what she thought of Lien-hsiang. "Oh," said she, "there’s no question about her beauty; but she’s a fox. When she went away I followed her to her hole on the hill-side." Sang, however, attributed this remark to jealousy, and took no notice of it.

But the next evening when Lien-hsiang came, he observed, "I don’t believe it myself, but some one has told me you are a fox." Lien-hsiang asked who had said so, to which Sang replied that he was only joking; and then she begged him to explain what difference there was between a fox and an ordinary person. "Well," answered Sang, "foxes frighten people to death [men who are bewitched by foxes fall ill and even die], and, therefore, they are very much dreaded." "Don’t you believe that! [A young man like you has his essence and energy restored three days after the act of love. Even a fox cannot harm you. But if you indulge yourself day after day, a human lover can do you more harm than a fox. You cannot blame every consumption and every death on foxes.]" cried Lien-hsiang; "and now tell me who has been saying this of me." Sang declared at first that it was only a joke of his, but by-and-by yielded to her instances, and let out the whole story. "Of course I saw how changed you were," said Lien-hsiang; "she is surely not a human being to be able to cause such a rapid alteration in you. Say nothing; tomorrow I’ll watch her as she watched me." The following evening Miss Li came in; and they had hardly interchanged half a dozen sentences when a cough was heard outside the window, and Miss Li thousand miles, it can derange the human mind and reduce a person to an imbecile. (Hsian-chung Chi, T’ang dynasty, trans. Van Gulik)

‘Fairy-taken’ was a way of describing someone who has been blasted, haunted or bewitched. The very word ‘fairy’ was itself used to convey the idea of a malignant disease of spiritual origin which could be cured only by charming or exorcism. (Keith Thomas)

Sang tells Lien-hsiang that someone has been saying that she is a fox. She protests that foxes do not necessarily harm humans. She guesses that it is Li who has been saying that she is a fox. She secretly observes Li, and tells Sang that Li is a ghost. He refuses to believe her. Lien-hsiang looks after him and gives him medicine.

In the main the fox has always been an exotic symbol, and for about two thousand years it has been associated with venereal diseases. Hundreds of stories tell how a strikingly beautiful girl appears one night to a young scholar while he is studying, and how he makes love to her. She disappears in the early morning but comes back each evening. The scholar gets weaker and weaker – until a Taoist informs him that the girl is really a fox which is sucking him dry in order to imbibe the essence of immortality. Stories like this are confirmed to North China, to such Palaeo-Asiatic tribes as the Orok and the Gilyak, and to Korea and Japan. They are not found South of the Yang Tze. (Eberhard)

Wise counsel! The young should take heed of this! (Feng)

Of women’s unnatural, insatiable lust, what country, what village doth not complain. (Burton)

The fox, in China, is a fairy beast with wonderful powers of transformation, and the fear of those animals, who are often malicious, is widespread. People especially dread were-foxes who take the form of beautiful young women... Father Mullin, in Cheerful China, speaks of a shrine in Shantung of peculiar structure, with an opening so narrow that worshippers were obliged to crawl and out on their hands and knees. Tiny women’s shoes were given as offerings... The shrine was built over a spot where foxes were supported foreverly to have had their den. (Bredon)

Falstaff: They are fairies; he that speaks to them shall die. (Shakespeare)

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ran away. Lien-hsiang then entered and said to Sang, "You are lost! She is a devil, and if you [allow yourself to be besotted with her beauty, and] do not at once forbid her coming here, you will soon be on the road to the other world." "All jealousy," thought Sang, saying nothing, as Lien-hsiang continued, "I know that you don't like to be rude to [break with] her; but I, for my part, cannot see you sacrificed, and tomorrow I will bring you some medicine to expel the poison from your system. Happily, the disease has not yet taken firm hold of you, and in ten days you will be well again. [Let me sleep by your side and nurse you until you are cured.]" The next evening she produced a knife and chopped up some medicine for Sang, which made him feel much better; [The next evening she brought a small amount of medicine and gave it to Sang. It immediate by brought on two or three bouts of diarrhea, after which he felt purged and light, and his spirits were revived.] but, although he was very grateful to her, he still persisted in disbelieving that he had the devil-disease [that Miss Li was a ghost].

[Lien-hsiang slept close by his side every night, but whenever he wished to embrace her, she rejected him.] After some days he recovered [and began to put on some weight] and Lien-hsiang left him, warning him [earnestly beseeching him] to have no more to do with Miss Li. Sang pretended that he would follow her advice, and closed the door and trimmed his lamp. He then took out the slipper, and on shaking it Miss Li appeared, somewhat cross [resentful] at having been kept away for several days. "She merely attended on me [healed me with charms and medicines] these few nights while I was ill," said Sang; "don't be angry [with her. It's for me to

Giles 笑！(TM)

He knows that she is a ghost; but he won't believe it. (Tan)

Lien-hsiang asks Sang to break with Li. But he will not do so. He tells Li what Lien-hsiang has said about her. Li is very angry, and threatens to leave him unless he breaks with the wanton fox!

In reading these stories, if you read them properly, they will make you strong and brave; if you read them in the wrong way, they will possess you. If you cling onto the details, they will possess you; if you grasp the spirit, you will be strong. Appreciate the wonders of the style; see into the author's subtle intentions; grasp the human qualities of his characters; value his thoughts; then this book will be a unique guide to you in your own inner development. It will transform your character, and it will purify your heart. (Feng)
say whom I love." At this Miss Li brightened up a little; but by-and-by Sang [in the course of an intimate conversation] told her that [he loved her deeply, but that certain] people said she was a devil. "It's that nasty [wanton] fox," cried Miss Li, after a pause, "putting these things into your head. If you don't break with her, I won't come here again." She then began to sob and cry, and Sang had some trouble in pacifying her.

Next evening Lien-hsiang came and found out that Miss Li had been there again; whereupon she was very angry with Sang, and told him he would certainly die. "Why need you be so jealous?" said Sang, laughing; at which she only got more enraged, and replied, "When you were nearly dying the other day and I saved you, if I had not been jealous, where would you have been now?" Sang pretended he was only joking, and said that Miss Li had told him his recent illness was entirely owing to the machinations of a fox; to which she replied, "It's true enough what you say, only you don't see whose machinations. However, if anything happens to you, I should never clear myself even had I a hundred mouths; we will, therefore, part. A hundred days hence I shall see you on your bed." Sang could not persuade her to stay, and away she went [angrily]; and from that time Miss Li became a regular visitor [nightly companion]. Two months passed away, and Sang began to experience a feeling of great lassitude, which he tried at first to shake off, but by-and-by he became very thin, and could only take thick gruel. He then thought about going back to his native place; however, he could not bear to leave Miss Li, and in a few more days he was so weak that he was unable to get up. His friend next door, seeing

Lien-hsiang knows that Li is still visiting Sang. She is angry, and leaves Sang. Sang spends every night with Li over a period of two months, and becomes more and more debilitated. He begins to suspect Li, and to regret not having taken Lien-hsiang's advice.

The Elected Girl asked: "How do incubi originate?" Peng-ru answered: "If a person has an unbalanced sex life, his sexual desire will increase. Devils and goblins take advantage of this condition. They assume human shape and have sexual intercourse with such a person. They are much more skilled in this art than human beings, so much so that their victim becomes completely enamoured of the ghostly lover. These persons will keep the relation secret and will not speak about its delights. In the end they succumb alone, without anyone being the wiser. During sexual intercourse with such an incubus one will experience a pleasure that is greater than ever felt while copulating with an ordinary human being. But at the same time one will become subject to this disease which is difficult to cure. (Secret Instructions Concerning the Jade Chamber, 4th century)

The inordinate love of the Malleus Maleficarum (the compendium on witchcraft compiled by two Dominican Inquisitors in 1486), from which men pine away and die. (Duffy)
how ill he was, daily sent in his boy with food and drink; and now Sang began for the first time to suspect Miss Li. So he said to her, “I am sorry I didn’t listen to Lien-hsiang before I got as bad as this.” He then closed his eyes and kept them shut for some time; and when he opened them again Miss Li had disappeared. Their acquaintanceship was thus at an end.

III

Sang lay all emaciated as he was upon his bed in his solitary room longing for the return of Lien-hsiang [as a farmer longs for the harvest]. One day, while he was still thinking about her, some one drew aside the screen and walked in. It was Lien-hsiang; and approaching the bed she said with a smile, “[You silly fellow!] Was I then talking such nonsense?” Sang struggled a long time to speak [sobbed a long while]; and, at length, confessing he had been wrong, implored her to save him. “When the disease has reached such a pitch as this,” replied Lien-hsiang, “there is very little to be done. I merely came to bid you farewell, and to clear up your doubts about my jealousy.” In great tribulation, Sang asked her to take something she would find under his pillow and destroy it; and she accordingly drew forth the slipper, which she proceeded to examine by the light of the lamp, turning it over and over. All at once Miss Li walked in, but when she saw Lien-hsiang she turned back as though she would run away, which Lien-hsiang instantly prevented by placing herself in the doorway. Sang then began to reproach

Lien-hsiang comes back and plays with the slipper, whereupon Li appears. They have a long and almost metaphysical conversation about foxes, ghosts and humans, in the course of which Li tells the story of her life, and as a result of which they both agree that Sang’s illness is caused by his frequent couplings with Li.

Four young men were on a hunting trip and spent the night in an empty shieling, a hut built to give shelter for the sleep in the gracing season. They began to dance, one supplying mouth-music. One of the dancers wished that they had partners. Almost at once four women came in. Three danced, the fourth stood by the music-maker. But as he hummed he saw drops of blood falling from the dancers and he fled out of the shieling, pursued by his demon partner. He took refuge among the horses and she could not get to him, probably because of the iron with which they were shod. But she circled round him all night, and only disappeared when the sun rose. He went back into the shieling and found the bloodless bodies of the dancers lying there. Their partners had sucked them dry. (“The Demon Dancers” a Scottish Fairy Tale, from Katharine Briggs, A Book of Fairies, London 1997)
her, and Miss Li could make no reply; whereupon Lien-hsiang said, “At last we meet. Formerly you attributed this gentleman’s illness to me; what have you to say now?” Miss Li bent her head in acknowledgment of her guilt, and Lien-hsiang continued, “How is it that a nice girl like you can thus turn love into hate?” Here Miss Li threw herself on the ground in a flood of tears and begged for mercy; and Lien-hsiang, raising her up, inquired of her as to her past life. “I am a daughter of a petty official named Li, and I died young, and was buried outside the wall [of this house], leaving the web of my destiny incomplete, like the silkworm that perishes in the spring. To be the partner of this gentleman was my ardent wish; but I had never any intention of causing his death.” “I have heard,” remarked Lien-hsiang, “that the advantage devils obtain by killing people is that their victims are ever with them after death. Is this so?” “It is not,” replied Miss Li; “the companionship of two devils gives no pleasure to either. Were it otherwise, I should not have wanted for friends [young men] in the realms below. [“How foolish you are!” said Lien-hsiang. “To couple night after night with a human is too much for any mortal. How much more so must it be with a ghost!”] But tell me, [asked Miss Li,] how do foxes manage not to kill people [Foxes can cause men to die; by what skill are you able to avoid doing so]?” “You allude to such foxes as suck the breath out of people?” replied Lien-hsiang; “I am not of that class. Some foxes are harmless; no devils are, because of the dominance of the yin” in their compositions. Sang now knew that these two girls were really a fox and a devil; however, from being long accustomed to their society, he was not in the least alarmed. His breathing had dwindled to a mere thread, and at

These four words, “Turn Love into Hate”, are a Veritable Book of Life. (Feng)

It is true that she had no intention of doing so; but with even the best intentions, love can lead to illness and death. Unbridled lust can kill even in a harmonious marriage. (Tan)

“When out of all my bones she had sucked the marrow” (Baudelaire, “Metamorphoses of the Vampire”, Les Fleurs du Mal, trans. Arthur Symons)

I had observed that intercourse with women distinctly aggravated my health. (Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Confessions, Book XII)

A woman who has learned this secret [of nursing her own potency by absorbing the man’s Yang] will feed on her copulations with men, so that she will prolong her span of life and not grow old, but always remain like a young girl. (Secret Instructions Concerning the Jade Chamber, 4th century)

Originally neither foxes nor ghosts hurt mortals; mortals hurt themselves. (Tan)

This sums up the entire preceding section. It also harks back to the original “jigt”. (Tan)

Possession can be of three types: by ill-disposed human spirits, by demons and by elementals. However, possession can only take place if the vibration of the victim is identical with its own. In other words, the person must himself have a predisposition to hurt. (Colin Wilson)
Lien-hsiang looked round and said, “How shall we cure him?” upon which Miss Li blushed deeply and drew back; and then Lien-hsiang [smiled and] added, “If he does get well, I’m afraid you will be dreadfully jealous.” Miss Li drew herself up, and replied, “Could a physician be found to wipe away the wrong I have done to this gentleman, I would bury my head in the ground. How should I look the world in the face?” Lien-hsiang here opened a bag and drew forth some drugs, saying, “I have been looking forward to this day. When I left this gentleman I proceeded to gather my simples [on the mountains], as it would take three months for the medicine to be got ready; but then, should the poison [Venereal Consumption] have brought anyone even to death’s door, this medicine is able to call him back. The only condition is that it be administered by the very hand which wrought the ill [But the cure must come from the very source of the illness. We must come to you].” Miss Li did as she was told, and put the pills Lien-hsiang gave her one after another into Sang’s mouth. They burnt his inside like fire; but soon vitality began to return, and Lien-hsiang cried out, “He is cured!” [Miss Li asked what was necessary. “Just a little saliva from your pretty mouth,” replied Lien-hsiang. “When I put in one of the pills, please press your lips to his and let the saliva pass into his mouth.” Miss Li blushed, lowered her head and looked

The two of them are able to cure Sang of his Venereal Consumption by jointly administering a powerful pill, using a novel kind of mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. They find a common bond in their love for Sang, and begin to feel a deep sisterly affection for each other.

Giles’ Dictionary, under 畲, has 畳楊敘敘, which he explains as follows: “I respectfully salute you,—said by a woman. This salutation, made by bringing the sleeves together in front of the body, the right hand grasping the left sleeve, accompanied by a bow, corresponds to the 作揖 of a man.”

The venereal disease is always produced by a poison... When it is suffered to take its own course, and not counteracted by proper remedies, the patient will, in the course of time, be affected with severe pains, but more particularly in the night-time; his countenance will become sallow, his hair will fall off, he will lose his appetite, strength, and flesh, his rest will be much disturbed at night, and a small fever of the hectic kind will arise. (Hooper)

“Hand”一字乃Giles暗藏之玄機, 為其改寫之伏筆。（文）

The physiological alchemists were of the opinion that the spitting out of saliva involved a dangerous loss of vitality from the body, and they greatly emphasized therefore the necessity of its conservation—indeed the Yang Qi within it formed one of the essential ingredients for the inner elaboration of enchemy, the Inner Cinnabar. (Needham)

There are vampires and vampires, and not all of them suck blood. (Leiber)
at her shoes. Lien-hsiang joked with her: "Still looking at your pretty shoes!" Miss Li was more embarrassed than ever, and looked up and down, not knowing where to hide. Lien-hsiang said to her: "This is an art you have practised many a time, why are you suddenly being so coy?" Lien-hsiang took the pill and held it to Sang's lips, then turned to Li and urged her to proceed. Reluctantly Li did as she had been told, put her lips to Sang's, and moistened the pill. "Again!" said Lien-hsiang, and again she did it. Three or four times she repeated the act, before the pill would go down. In a little while, his belly began to rumble like thunder. Lien-hsiang placed another pill in between his lips and this time she herself pressed her lips to his and projected her own vital force into him. He felt his Cinnabar Field, the very centre of his being, take fire, and his spirit quicken. "He is cured!" said Lien-hsiang.

Just at this moment Miss Li heard the cock crow [and she hesitated] and vanished, vii Lien-hsiang remaining behind in attendance on the invalid, who was unable to feed himself. She bolted the outside door and pretended that Sang had returned to his native place, so as to prevent visitors from calling. Day and night she took care of him, and every evening Miss Li came in to render assistance, regarding Lien-hsiang as an elder sister, and being treated by her with great consideration and kindness [affection].

Three months afterwards Sang was as strong and well as ever he had been, and then for several evenings Miss Li ceased to visit them, only staying a few moments when she did come, and seeming very uneasy in her mind [very downcast]. [Lien-hsiang often invited her to stay the night with her, but she always refused.] One evening Sang ran

Insufflation, or "symbolic breathing": blowing or breathing upon a person or thing to symbolize the influence of the Holy Spirit and the expulsion of evil spirits; a rite of exorcism used in the Roman, Greek and some other churches. (Oxford English Dictionary)

Only among women, those specialists in romantic friendship, is vampirism embodied in a physical, psychic union which the experts of the next century would label "homosexual". (Leiber)

Li feels remorse and vanishes. They both feel her absence strongly.

What attracted me [in the Liao Chai stories] was something I did not find so fully expressed in similar tales of any other people: an air of intimacy and harmony. Here demons are loved and possessed by humans, humans by demons, but they who come to court us or touch us are neither incubi nor
after her and carried her back in his arms, finding her no heavier than so much straw [a straw burial-figure]; and then, being obliged to stay, she curled herself up [until she seemed only two feet long] and lay down, to all appearance in a state of unconsciousness, and by-and-by she was gone. [Lien-hsiang felt an ever greater affection for her. She secretly told Sang to make love to her, and he began rocking her backwards and forwards, but she did not awaken. Sang himself fell asleep, and when he awake, he felt for her, but she had vanished.] For many days they heard nothing of her, and Sang was so anxious that she should come back that he often took out her slipper and shook it. "[She is such a sweet, pretty creature.] I don't wonder at your missing her," said Lien-hsiang, "I do myself very much indeed." "Formerly," observed Sang, "when I shook the slipper she invariably came. I thought it was very strange, but I never suspected her of being a devil. And now, alas! All I can do is to sit and think about her with this slipper in my hand." He then burst into a flood of tears.

succubi, wavering presences from a dreadful other world, but rather beings of our own world, merely arising from a deeper, darker region. The Chinese avoid all mystifying, shattering horror; instead, we have the magic of the lucid. Here the order of nature is not ruptured but extended; nothing interferes with the plenitude of life, and everything living carries the seed of the ghostly. (Buber)

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Now a young lady named Yen-erh, belonging to the wealthy Chang family, and about fifteen years of age, had died suddenly, without any apparent cause [from an inability to sweat], and had come to life again in the night, when she got up and wished to go out. They barred the door and  

Li is born again as Yen-erh into the Chang family, residing in the same town. She does not realize that she is Yen-erh, but insists that she is Li, the lover of Sang. The family refuses to let her out of the house. Sang's neighbour hears the strange story, and wants to discover the truth of it. He goes next door and finds Sang (who
would not hear of her doing so; upon which she said, "I am the spirit daughter of a petty magistrate. A Mr. Sang has been very kind to me, and I have left my slipper at his house. I am really a spirit; what is the use of keeping me in?" There being some reason for what she said, they asked her why she had come there; but she only looked up and down without being able to give any explanation. Some one here observed, that Mr. Sang had already gone home, but the young lady utterly refused to believe them. The family was much disturbed [puzzled] at all this; and when Sang's neighbour heard the story, he jumped over the wall, and peeping through beheld Sang sitting there chatting with a pretty-looking girl. As he went in [he stole in and crept up on them], there was some commotion, during which Sang's visitor had disappeared, and when his neighbour asked the meaning of it all, Sang replied laughing, "Why, I told you if any ladies came I should ask them in." His friend then repeated what Miss Yen-erh had said; and Sang, unbolting his door, was about to go and have a peep at her, but unfortunately had no means of [pretex for] so doing.

Meanwhile Mrs. Chang, hearing that he had not gone away, was more lost in astonishment than ever, and sent an old woman-servant to get back the slipper. Sang immediately gave it to her, and Miss Yen-erh was delighted to recover it, though when she came to try it on it was too small for her by a good inch. In considerable alarm, she seized a mirror to look at herself; and suddenly became aware that she had come to life again in some one else's body. She therefore told all to her mother, and finally succeeded in convincing her, [looking in the mirror and] crying all the time because she was so changed has been pretending to be absent) together with Lien-hsiang. The neighbour tells Sang about Yen-erh. Sang wants to see her.

When she was a ghost, it was the slipper that gave such pleasure. In her new life, she is not able to forget it. (Tan)

Only after her rebirth can she admit to being a ghost. (Tan)

The slipper (a tiny receptacle into which some part of the body can slip and fit tightly) can be seen as a symbol of the vagina. (Beetelheim)

Sang alludes to a true event in order to prevaricate; and Mr. P'u quietly reminds us of the very beginning of his story. (Tan)

Yen-erh undergoes a transformation and looks once more just like Li.

All my life I have enjoyed reading the Records of the Historian and the History of the Han Dynasty. But only the Liao-chai stories are capable of dispelling that feeling of oppression. After meals, after wine, after dreaming, in rainy weather, in sunshine, after a conversation with good friends, upon returning from a distant journey, I may toss off a few comments; they reflect my personal feelings, and are never intended as serious commentary. (Feng)
Lien-hsiang suggests a matchmaker for Sang and Yen-erh. Sang goes to Mrs. Chang's birthday party, where he meets Yen-erh. He asks her uncle to be a matchmaker. They choose a day for the marriage.

Lien-hsiang tells Sang that she was very much disappointed and decided to return home. She called him a devil because he was not rich and Sang was poor, but she did not know he was a matchmaker. But the young lady [sang] made her offer of marriage [send a matchmaker]. But the young lady was out of order when she came in, and Sang went along with the story. When Lien-hsiang heard the story, she produced her own offer of marriage to Yen-erh and asked Mrs. Chang's birthday party. When she completed her story, Sang went along with the her cycle, Sang met her in her mother's home, and they met her mother. Every one who met her was much astonished.

In ancient Egypt, as in today in certain circumstances, the female slipper is a symbol for the woman who is most desirable in a woman, a woman who is loved in her own right, not for any other reasons. (Pothier)

This slipper really makes her happy. This is the work of the slipper maker. (Lien-hsiang)

The slipper maker, the shoe maker, the shoe maker, is the one who makes the shoe. He is the one who makes the shoe, and the woman's slipper is the slipper maker. (Cited by Richard Burton)
others [her sons and her sons-in-law] to wish her many happy returns of the day [a long life]; and when the old lady knew who was coming [saw his name], she bade Yen-erh take a peep at him from behind the curtain. Sang arrived last of all; and immediately out rushed Miss Yen-erh and seized his sleeve, and said she would go back with him. Her mother scolded her well for this, and she ran in abashed; but Sang, who had looked at her closely [and recognized her], began to weep, and threw himself at the feet of Mrs. Chang, who raised him up without saying anything unkind [without a harsh word]. Sang then took his leave, and got his [her] uncle to act as medium between them; the result being that [Mrs. Chang chose] an auspicious day was fixed upon for the wedding [for him to marry into her family].

[So Sang came home and told Lien-hsiang, and discussed with her what they should do. She was downcast for a long time, and then said she wished to go away. He was greatly shocked at this and wept. Lien-hsiang said: “You are going to her home to be wed, and it would not be right for me to be there.” Sang proposed that the two of them should return to his home-town first, and that he should then go to fetch Yen-erh. Lien agreed to this. Sang told the Chang family of his plan. When the Chongs learned that he already had a wife, they were angry and reproached him. Yen-erh defended him strongly, and they relented.]

One who is eager to climb famous mountains must have the patience to follow a winding path; one who is eager to cat bear’s paw, must have the patience to let it cook slowly; one who is eager to watch the moonlight, must have the patience to wait until midnight; one who is eager to see a beautiful woman must have the patience to let her finish her toilette; reading requires patience too. (Feng)

Sang tells Lien-hsiang about the proposed marriage, and she wants to leave the two of them. But Sang suggests that they (he and Lien-hsiang) should first go and live in his old home, and that he should then fetch Yen-erh. He tells the truth (about Lien-hsiang) to Yen-erh’s family. They are angry, but Yen-erh talks them round.

Clever Old Giles! He had to remove this passage, even though it contains nothing offensive, because he has consistently described their relationship (Sang and Lien-hsiang’s) as a purely platonic friendship. (TM)

Sang fetches Li/Yen-erh, and arrives at his old home to find it beautifully transformed (by Lien-hsiang). Li tells Lien-hsiang the whole story of her rebirth as Yen-erh.

Lien-hsiang is such a darling! (Tan)

The vampire is prone to be fascinated with an engrossing vehemence, resembling the passion of love, by particular persons. In pursuit of these it will exercise inexhaustible patience and stratagem, for access to a particular object may be obstructed.
and thousands of coloured lanterns were hung about in elegant designs. Lien-hsiang assisted the bride to enter [the marriage hall], and took off her veil, finding her the same bright [lovable] girl as ever. She also joined them while drinking the wedding cup, and inquired of her friend as to her recent transmigration; and Yen-erh related as follows: — "Overwhelmed with grief, I began to shrink from myself as some unclean thing; and after separating from you that day, I would not return any more to my grave. So I wandered about at random, and whenever I saw a living being, I envied its happy state. By day I remained among trees and shrubs, but at night I used to roam about anywhere. And once I came to the house of the Chang family, where, seeing a young girl lying upon the bed, I took possession of her mortal coil, unknowing that she [I] would be restored to life again." When Lien-hsiang heard this she was for some time lost in thought.

And a month or two afterwards [she gave birth to a son. After the birth she] became very ill. She [Her condition became more and more serious. She held Yen-erh by the arm and said: "I wish you take care of my child. My child is your child." Yen-erh wept, and comforted her for a while. She sent for the doctor, but Lien-hsiang] refused all medical aid and gradually got worse and worse, to the great grief of Mr. Sang and his wife, who stood weeping at her bedside. Suddenly she opened her eyes, and said, "[Do not grieve!] You wish to live; I am willing to die. If fate so ordains it, we shall meet again ten years hence." As she uttered these words, her spirit passed away, and all that remained was the dead body of a fox [when they lifted the coverlet to lay her out, her body

in a hundred ways. It will never desist until it has satisfied its passion, and drained the very life of its coveted victim. But it will, in these cases, husband and protract its murderous enjoyment with the refinement of an epicure, and heighten it by the gradual approaches of an artful courtship. In these cases it seems to yearn for something like sympathy and consent. In ordinary ones it goes direct to its object, overpowers with violence, and strangles and exhausts often at a single feast. (LeFanu)

It takes will-power even to be a ghost! (Feng)

After two months, Lien-hsiang gives birth to a son, and dies shortly afterwards. She asks Li/Yen-erh to take care of the boy, and says that if fate allows, they will meet again after ten years. Sang calls the boy Foxy.

Again, Giles covers up his traces with cunning! According to his story, there has been no occasion for Lien-hsiang to conceive and give birth. Therefore, no Foxy! (TM)

When the wind and snow fill the sky, and my fire is cold, my page boy lights the coals again and heats my wine; I dust my desk and turn up the wick of my lamp; when I come across a passage that catches my fancy, I quickly dash off a few lines. (Feng)

Only after death does her body really become a fox. (Tan)
had been tranformed into the body of a fox]. Sang, however, insisted on burying it with all the proper ceremonies. [The boy was given the name Foxy, and Yen-erh looked after him just as if he were her own child. At every Grave Festival, she would take him to weep at Lien-hsiang’s grave.]

VI

Now his wife had no children; [As time went by, Sang passed his second exam at the provincial capital, and his family gradually became more prosperous. To her sorrow, Yen-erh had no children. Foxy was quite a clever boy, but thin and weak, and constantly ailing. Yen-erh frequently suggested to Sang that he should take a concubine.] but one day a servant came in and said, “There is an old woman outside who has got a little girl for sale.” Sang’s wife gave orders that she should be shown in; and no sooner had she set eyes on the girl than she cried out, “Why, she’s the image of Lien-hsiang!” Sang then looked at her, and found to his astonishment that she was really very like his old friend. The old woman said she was fourteen years old; and when asked what her price was, declared that [this was her one child and] her only wish was to get the girl comfortably settled, and enough to keep herself alive, and ensure not being thrown out into the kennel at death. So Sang gave a good price for her; and his wife, taking the girl’s hand, led her into a room by themselves. Then, chucking her under the chin, she asked her, smiling, “Do you know me?” The girl said she did not; after which she told Mrs. Sang

Sang’s family prospers, but Yen-erh is sad that she cannot bear him any children. Foxy is a weakling, so she suggests to Sang that he should take a concubine (in order to have another child). By coincidence, a poor old woman (Mrs Wei) arrives at the door, wanting to sell her fourteen-year-old daughter. The couple think how like Lien-hsiang she is, and agree to buy her. The girl suddenly recognizes them, as if she has woken from a dream.

How dull it would have been if the author had wasted a lot of ink explaining the details of Lien-hsiang’s reincarnation. (Feng)

Giles still wants to preserve her friendly status! (TM)

If one reads Liaochai just for the stories, and not for the style, one is a fool. (Feng)

A quaint old word. How many readers today would know that this was an open sewer? Most probably they would think the old woman was afraid of “going to the dogs”. (JM)
that her name was Wei, and that her father, who had been a pickle-merchant at Hsu-ch’eng, had died three years before. Mrs. Sang then [counted on her fingers and] calculated that Lien-hsiang had been dead just fourteen years; and, looking at the girl, who resembled her so exactly in every trait, at length patted her on the head, saying, “Ah, my sister, you promised to visit us again in ten years, and you have not played us false.” The girl here seemed to wake up as if from a dream, and, uttering an exclamation of surprise, fixed a steady gaze upon Sang’s wife. Sang himself laughed, and said, “Just like the return of an old familiar swallow.” “Now I understand,” cried the girl, in tears: “I recollect my mother saying that when I was born I was able to speak; and that, thinking it an inauspicious manifestation, they gave me dog’s blood to drink, so that I should forget all about my previous state of existence” [incarnation]. Is it all a dream, or [Today it is as if I have awoke from a dream;] are you not the Miss Li who was so ashamed of being a devil?” Thus they chatted of their existence in a former life, with alternate tears and smiles.

When it came to the day for worshipping at the tombs, Yen-erh explained that she and her husband were in the habit of annually visiting and mourning over her grave. The girl replied that she would accompany them; and when they [When the three of them] got there they found the whole place in disorder [overgrown with long grass], and the coffin wood all warped [a large tree growing over it]. [The girl sighed deeply.] “Lien-hsiang and I,” said Yen-erh to her husband, “have been attached to [fond of] each other in two states of existence. Let us not be separated, but

This book should be read as one reads the Tso Commentary; the Tso is huge, Liao-chai is miniature. Every narrative skill is there. Every description is perfect. It is a series of huge miniatures.

This book should be read as one reads Chuang-tzu; Chuang-tzu is wild and abstract; Liao-chai is dense and detailed. Although it treats of ghosts and foxes, the details make it very concrete and real. It is a series of wild details, and concrete abstractions.

This book should be read as one reads the Records of the Historian; the Records are bold and striking; Liao-chai is dark and understated. One enters it with a lantern, in the shadows of night; one comes out of it into the daylight, under a blue sky. In no few words, mighty landscapes are evoked, and magical realms are created. It is both bold and dark. It is both striking and understated.

This book should be read as one reads the Sayings of the Neo-Confucian philosophers; in the Sayings, the sense is pure; in Liao-chai the sensibility is well-tuned. Every time one thinks a situation is weird, it is in fact very real and true to human nature. It contains both pure sense and pure sensibility. (Feng)

On the Grave Festival they all visit Lien-hsiang’s grave, and decide to rebury the remains of the two women together.

Though the double system of sexual morality cannot be defended, there was something very pleasant and amiable about the relations of women among themselves in traditional Chinese society, when things went well. (Needham)

P’u Sung-ling’s glorification of a bigamous relationship is to be rejected. It is branded with the ideology of the unreasonable marriage system of the times. (A New Commentary on Two Hundred Liao-chai Stories)
bury my bones here with hers." Sang consented, and opening Miss Li's tomb took out the bones and buried them with those of Lien-hsiang, while friends and relatives, who had heard the strange story, [came of their own accord and] gathered round the grave in gala dress to the number of many hundreds.

being! Stranger still that their bones from a previous existence should be buried together! If ghosts and foxes are like this, what harm can they possibly do? (Tan)

VII

I learnt the above when travelling [South] through I-chou [in the year keng-hsu (1670)], where I was detained at an inn by rain, and read a biography of Mr Sang written by a comrade of his named Wang Tzu-chang. It was lent me by a Mr. Liu Tzu-ching, a relative of Sang's, and was quite a long account. This is merely an outline of it.

[The Historian of the Strange writes: Alas! The dead seek life, the living seek death! Is not this human body the most coveted thing in the world? But unfortunately those who possess it do not cherish it, they live with less shame than foxes, and vanish into death with less trace than ghosts!]

Historical origin of the story, and how P'u Sung-ling came to hear it and record it.

Comment by the Historian of the Strange.

What a fine person was Lien-hsiang! I have seldom seen a woman of such rare quality, let alone a fox! (Wang Shizhen)

Giles' Notes:

i. The term constantly employed by Confucius to denote the man of perfect probity, learning, and refinement. The nearest, if not an exact, translation would be "gentleman."

ii. Literally, "a young Lady whose beauty would overthrow a kingdom," in allusion to an old story which it is not necessary to reproduce here.

iii. The Lady of the Moon: The beautiful wife of a legendary chieftain, named Hou I, who flourished about 2,500
B.C. She is said to have stolen from her husband the elixir of immortality, and to have fled with it to the moon.

iv. Volumes have been written by Chinese doctors on the subject of the pulse. They profess to distinguish as many as twenty-four different kinds, among which is one well known to our own practitioners—namely, the "thready" pulse; they, moreover, make a point of feeling the pulses of both wrists.

v. Miss Lien-hsiang was here speaking without book, as will be seen in a story later on.

vi. The female principle. In a properly-constituted human being the male and female principles are harmoniously combined. Nothing short of a small volume would place this subject, the basis of Chinese metaphysics, in a clear light before the uninitiated reader. Broadly speaking, the yin and the yang are the two primeval forces from the interaction of which all things have been evolved.

vii. Ber.—It was about to speak, when the cock crew.
Hor.—And then it started like a guilty thing
Upon a fearful summons. I have heard,
The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,
Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat
Awake the God of Day; and, at his warning,
Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,
The extravagant and erring spirit hies
To his confine. Hamlet.

viii. The Chinese cycle is sixty years, and the birthday on which any person completes his cycle is considered a very auspicious occasion. The second emperor of the present dynasty, K'ang Hsi, completed a cycle in his reign, with one year to spare; and his grandson, Ch'ien Lung (or Kien Lung) fell short of this only by a single year, dying in the same cyclical period as that in which he had ascended the throne.

viii. Bride and bridegroom drink wine together out of two cups joined by a red string, typical of that imaginary bond which is believed to unite the destinies of husband and wife long before they have set eyes on each other. Popular tradition assigns to an old man who lives in the moon the arrangement of all matches among mortals; hence the common Chinese expression, "Marriages are made in the moon."

x. The bill of sale always handed to the purchaser of a child in China, as a proof that the child is his bona fide property and has not been kidnapped, is by a pleasant fiction called a "deed of gift," the amount paid over to the seller being therein denominated "ginger and vinegar money," or compensation for the expense of rearing and educating up to the date of sale. This phrase originates from the fact that a dose of ginger and vinegar is administered to every Chinese woman immediately after the delivery of her child.
We may here add that the value of male children to those who have no heirs, and of female children to those who want servants, has fostered a regular kidnapping trade, which is carried on with great activity in some parts of China, albeit the penalty on discovery is instant decapitation. Some years ago I was present in the streets of Tientsin when a kidnapper was seized by the infuriated mob, and within two hours I heard that the man had been summarily executed.

xi. The power of recalling events which have occurred in a previous life will be enlarged upon in several stories to come.
5.3 Discussion

Although the story is only 3315 words long, it contains almost enough for a full-length novel. P’u Sung-ling condenses a great deal into a small space. Add to this the often confusing and dreamlike nature of the story, the sequence of transformations and reincarnations, and it is not surprising that an ordinary reader may have difficulty following the plot. For this reason, a division into two parts and seven sections has been adopted, and twenty short abstracts of the narrative have been added at the beginning of each paragraph.

The commentary form has already been discussed in the introduction to this chapter. The content can be discussed under a number of headings.

1. How to read Liao-chai

2. Cultural symbolism and imagery

3. Conceptual: philosophy, religion, medicine

4. Western parallels

5.3.1 How to read Liao-chai

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, many modern readers take the Liao-chai stories for granted, they do not really know how to read them. So, an important place in the marginalia is taken up by readers who do know. Here we have
the 18th or 19th-century Chinese critics Tan Ming-lun, Feng Chen-luan and Wang Shih-chien. And by way of contrast, a modern Chinese comment from the popular selection *A New Commentary on Two Hundred Liao-chai Stories*, showing the inevitable political bias of its times.¹² Also, we have the perceptive observations of the great Jewish philosopher Martin Buber (1878-1965), who translated Liao-chai into German.¹³

All of Tan’s comments are from his edition of Liao-chai. As we mentioned before, he pointed out one of the leading qualities of P’u Sung-ling’s writing: playfulness 戲. His comments act as a guide, guiding us to understand the meaning of the story and also guiding us to appreciate P’u’s writing style. For example, when he comments on the appearance of our two heroines, Tan writes: “The ‘real’ sing-song girl has prepared us for Lien-hsiang. What subtle, tight writing! And Li’s appearance is linked with Lien-hsiang’s. This is the technique knows as Linkage. The whole story repeatedly links ghost and fox.” 假妓而出蓮香 文勢已不鹹突 已不誣散 乃出李女 而猶必牽合蓮香 此類連法也 通篇鬼狐並寫 供用此法 His words help the reader to understand the story not only from the point of view of its meaning, but also from the point of view of its writing style. Feng also comments: “If one reads Liao-

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chai just for the stories, and not for the style, one is a fool.” Tan also analyzes the plot, the structure of the story. In the beginning of the story, he points out the “playful” style of P’u Sung-ling, then, he points out every scene or part of the plot that develops from this “playful” style. For example, he divides the appearance of the three girls into three games. And in the story, when Sang begins to know that the two girls are really a fox and a ghost, Tan comments: “This sums up the entire preceding section. It also harks back to the original ‘jest’.” His comments also “hark” readers “back” to the beginning of the story, helping them to link the flow of the whole story. Moreover, Tan’s comments show us his own feelings about the story. This rule also applies to the other chief commentators: Feng and Wang. When commenting on Lien-hsiang, Tan writes: “Lien-hsiang is such a darling!” 蓮香終是可愛 Wang had also written: “What a fine person was Lien-hsiang! I have seldom seen a woman of such rare quality, let alone a fox!” 賢哉蓮娘 巾幗中吾見亦罕 况狐耶 In the original story, Lien-hsiang explains to Sang that a fox cannot do harm, it is the man who harms himself. Feng comments: “Wise counsel! The young should take heed of this!” Feng shows his readers exactly how he reads the Liao-chai stories, the spirit in which he makes his comments. This not only helps us to grasp a way of reading the stories, but also opens up to us the world of the traditional Chinese man-of-letters.

It is not only certain Chinese critics who understand how to read Liao-chai.
Martin Buber, with the instinct of a great universalist thinker, also really touched the meaning of the stories. He understood that the ghosts and foxes in the stories actually reflect human nature. As noted earlier, he wrote in his preface to his translation: “They who come to court us or touch us are neither incubi nor succubi, wavering presences from a dreadful other world, but rather beings of our own world, merely arising from a deeper, darker region.”¹⁴

Not all Chinese readers understand how to read Liao-chai. At the end of the original story, both girls are able to share their common lover together happily. The modern communist commentary finds this objectionable: “P’u Sung-ling’s glorification of a bigamous relationship is to be rejected. It is branded with the ideology of the unreasonable marriage system of the times.” 作品裡把一夫二妻視為風流韻事，並不可取。它明顯地留下了封建時代不合理地婚姻制度的烙印。 This is a good example of how a reader’s lack of sympathy can prevent him from knowing how to read Liao-chai.

5.3.2 Cultural symbolism and imagery

As with many other Liao-chai stories, in the story “Lien-hsiang”, we encounter many instances of traditional Chinese cultural symbolism and imagery. In order to

¹⁴ English translation by Alex Page, Chinese Tales, p. 111.
enable the western reader to understand the implicit meanings of these symbols and images, an explanatory expansion is needed.

The story takes place in a young scholar’s studio or study, chai 庵. In ancient China, only men had the right to education. So, a studio or study is a meaningless space for a woman. She knows nothing about the things to be found there, and is not welcome as a visitor. For a man, on the other hand, a studio or study functions precisely as his own private world. There he can enjoy his favorite books, his little artefacts, his paintings and carvings, even his daydreams and fantasies. It is his space. Many Liao-chai stories are representations of the daydreams of 18th-century young men-of-letters. The implicit meaning of the studio and its ambiance is thus very important for the understanding of the story.

Another important symbol or image of the story is the “tiny little shoe” or “the slipper”. As mentioned in the last chapter, the “shoe” or “slipper” is a kind of “love token”. Howard Levy presents the meaning of these tiny shoes very well: “The shoe in which the tiny foot was encased flirtatiously suggested concealment, mystery, and boudoir pleasures... The sleeping shoes, scarlet in hue, were intended to heighten male desire through a striking colour contrast with the white skin of the beloved. These shoes were greatly prized and sought after as love tokens. A woman might
secretly give them to her enamoured as proof of love sentiments.\textsuperscript{15} Here we have also incorporated a love poem related to the embroidered slipper, written by an 18\textsuperscript{th}-century Chinese scholar Fang Hsün 方紹, to prove the feeling behind the image of the shoe.\textsuperscript{16} There are many other associations connected with shoes. Some psycho-analysts see in the slipper "a symbol of the vagina", "a symbol for that which is most desirable in a woman, [an object that] arouses love in the male for definite but deeply unconscious reasons."\textsuperscript{17} The 10\textsuperscript{th}-century Arab writer Cheikh Nefzaoui wrote that "the loss of a shoe foretells to a man the loss of his wife."\textsuperscript{18} All these references guide the reader towards a richer understanding of the image or symbolism of the shoe or slipper.

Lien-hsiang, our protagonist, is a fox. It is because she is a fox, that the story can flow as it does. The fox is really a central image in the Liao-chai stories. As the German sinologist and social anthropologist Wolfram Eberhard wrote: "In the main the fox has always been an erotic symbol, and for about two thousand years it has been associated with venereal diseases. Hundreds of stories tell how a ravishingly beautiful girl appears one night to a young scholar while he is studying, and how he


\textsuperscript{16} The writings about footbinding by Fang Hsün are to be found in \textit{chūan} 8 of the \textit{Hsiang-yen ts'ung-shu} 香豔叢書. They include 香蓮品藻, and 金類雜纂.

\textsuperscript{17} These statements occur in Bruno Bettelheim's well-known psycho-analytical study, \textit{The Uses of Enchantment: the meaning and importance of fairy tales} (New York: Knopf, 1976).

makes love to her. She disappears in the early morning but comes back each evening.

The scholar gets weaker and weaker – until a Taoist informs him that the girl is really a fox which is sucking him dry in order to imbibe the essence of immortality." In the story “Lien-hsiang”, though Lien-hsiang is not a harmful fox, the young scholar Sang and the ghost spirit Miss Li all believe that foxes cause their lovers to die. And this leads to conversations between Lien-hsiang and two of them about sexual relationships between man and fox and between man and ghost. Huge numbers of Chinese stories talk about the fox woman or *hu-li-ching* 狐狸精, creatures believed to have supernatural powers of transformation, of mind-reading and prophecy. Van Gulik’s translation of the passage from the early T’ang *Hsüan-chong chi* 玄中記 is one telling example:

> When a fox is fifty years old, it acquires the ability to change itself into a woman. At a hundred it can assume the shape of a beautiful girl, or that of a sorcerer, or also that of an adult man who has sexual intercourse with women. At that age the fox knows what is happening at a distance of a thousand miles, it can derange the human mind and reduce a person to an imbecile.\(^{20}\)

狐五十歲能化為婦人。百歲為美女，為神巫：或為丈夫，與女人交接。能知千里外事；善變魅，使人迷惑失智。\(^{21}\)

Bredon’s informal comments on the fox in China is another helpful pointer.\(^{22}\)

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\(^{21}\) 魯迅, 《小說鉤沈》(下), p.378.

\(^{22}\) For details, see Juliet Bredon and Igor Mitrophanow, *The Moon Year* (Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh, 1927), p.417.
5.3.3 Conceptual: Philosophy, religion, medicine

Besides these special Chinese symbols or images, there are still many words related to Chinese ideas of philosophy, religion, and medicine which need elaboration if they are to be grasped by the modern reader.

In the story, Miss Li, after she sleeps with Sang, says to her lover that she has given him her virginity, and that this means she will love him and be with him forever. A similar conversation also occurs in the Yüan drama, *West Chamber*. In traditional Confucian China, a girl’s body is her treasure, she will not part with her virginity until she meets the man she truly loves. The parallel with *West Chamber* helps the modern reader to understand Miss Li’s traditional attitude.

In the story, Sang’s illness is specifically referred to as a form of venereal consumption (*chai-ku*). Lien-hsiang, the fox, is wrongly suspected of being the main reason for this disease by sucking Sang’s *yang* during sexual intercourse (as fox-women were generally thought to do). In fact his disease is because of his sexual over-indulgence with Miss Li, the ghost, and especially because of the intensity of *yin* in Miss Li’s nature. This is all very difficult for the western reader to understand. As a point of reference, we provide an extract from a traditional English medical compendium, to describe the comparable symptoms of venereal disease in the west:
“The patient will, in the course of time, be affected with severe pains, but more particularly in the nighttime; his countenance will become sallow, his hair will fall off, he will lose his appetite, strength, and flesh, his rest will be much disturbed at night, and a small fever of hectic kind will arise.”

And the characteristics of the kind of ghost that sucks man’s yang are described in the section “Curing Incubi” 斷鬼交, of the Sui-dynasty sex manual Secret Instructions Concerning the Jade Chamber 玉房秘決: “They are much more skilled in this art than human beings, so much so that their victim becomes completely enamoured of the ghostly lover. These persons will keep the relation secret... 與之交通之道，其有勝於人，久處則迷惑，諱而隱之，不肯告人... During sexual intercourse with such an incubus one will experience a pleasure that is greater than ever felt while copulating with an ordinary human being.

But at the same time one will become subject to this disease which is difficult to cure.

但行交接之事，美勝於人，然必病人而難治” And the woman who knows this art (of “nurturing the Yin” 養陰) “will feed on her copulations with men, so that she will prolong her span of life and not grow old but always remain like a young girl.”

These various quotations may not provide an immediate understanding of the concepts, but they help the reader to understand the disease, and the general idea of

“sexual vampirism” so widespread in traditional Chinese thinking about fox-women, female ghosts, and women altogether.

In the story, when Lien-hsiang cures Sang, she asks Miss Li to use her saliva to moisten the pill, and then pass it into Sang’s mouth and let him swallow it. Also, she herself “projects her vital force into him”. Actually, saliva 病 and vital force 氣 are two essential concepts in Taoist thought, and especially in the Taoist system of sexual alchemy. As Needham wrote: “The physiological alchemists were of the opinion that spitting out the saliva involved a dangerous loss of vitality from the body.”\(^{23}\) Needham’s explanation helps readers to understand that an important part of the healing process is to restore Sang’s vital force.

At the end of the story, both girls are married to Sang, and the three of them are able to live in harmony. This may be difficult for western readers, who believe in monogamy. Actually, it is also difficult for modern Chinese readers to understand. In ancient China, a man’s social status was very much higher than a woman’s. A man could have a wife and several concubines, but a woman could only have one man. And because women had no social status, they could not make a living, so they had to rely on men. And they had to resign themselves to this kind of marriage system. But at the same time, they were occasionally able to turn this to the good. To quote

\(^{23}\) See Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol v:5, for numerous references to the importance of saliva in Taoist physiology.
Needham again: "There was something very pleasant and amiable about the relations of women among themselves in traditional Chinese society, when things went well."\(^{26}\)

This was certainly the case with Lien-hsiang and Miss Li in the story.

### 5.3.4 Western parallels

As Walter Shewring remarked, the "blending of the familiar with the unfamiliar", and the incorporation of elements "belonging to human experience generally", constitute one of the qualities of a good translation. A good translation can make the special, unfamiliar things more accessible by evoking other things that are general and familiar to readers. To make the otherness more familiar, we need to link the strange with similar concepts in the reader's culture, we need to provide suggestive echoes.

The "playfulness" of P'u Sung-ling's style, is echoed in the modern French critic Roland Barthes' (1915-1980) remark: "Writing is that play by which I turn around as well as I can in a narrow place." Indeed, the Liao-chai stories may appeal to the modern (and post-modern) reader precisely because of their terseness and teasingly playful quality. This is a part of their "wit and flavour" that has survived well.

For the moon-goddess-like beauty of Lien-hsiang, Giles gives us Cynthia, a

name for Diana/Artemis, but also Sextus Propertius' (c.50-c.16 BC) Cynthia, courtisan or noble woman, living creature or ghost, whose great beauty was the cause of the poet's ecstasy, torment and humiliation.  

For Sang's possession, we have the old European idea of "Fairy-taken". It is not only Chinese ghosts or foxes that are believed to suck a human being's vital force. "When Goodwin Wharton found himself too sexually exhausted to sustain his relation with Mrs. Parish, he was able to surmise that the Fairy Queen had been with him in his sleep, and sucked out the very marrow of his bones in her vovaciousness." Shakespeare's Falstaff also reminds us: "They are fairies, he that speaks to them shall die." The West has its array of witches, demons, vampires, and werewolves. To parallel Lien-hsiang's act of healing, "pressing her lips to his and projecting her own vital force into him", we have the old idea of Christian insufflation or "symbolic breathing", whereby possessed souls were exorcised.

5.4 Commentary and Translation

Having made certain necessary changes to Giles' translation, we move on to inherit the traditional Chinese scholar's style of commentary, making our own comments or marginalia, to help readers to understand the story, to enable them to

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27 The lines quoted in the commentary form the opening complet of Propertius' Elegies.
make it “theirs”.

This “Reader’s Story” is also another step towards a new way of translating the Liao-chai stories.

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Chapter 6

The Published Story

6.1 Publication

The reader's story remains hypothetical until it is published and finds actual readers. In the process of preparing this story for actual publication,1 and considering illustrative material, a further stage evolved: the format itself expanded, to incorporate visual elements that contributed towards a better reading and understanding of the story. These visual elements help the reader to absorb something of the visual texture of the Chinese language itself, they too help to preserve and recreate some of the original "wit and flavour".

6.2 The Visual Dimension

It is easy to forget how much of this visual dimension is lost in the simple transfer from a language such as Chinese to a purely phonetic script like English. Take the very short Liao-chai story "Dragon Dormant" 蝤龍 as an example.

Commissioner Ch'ü, of Wu-ling County, in the Provice of Shantung, was reading in an upper room, when a heavy rain began to fall. In the deepening gloom he saw a little creature, bright as a glow-worm, wriggle its way onto his reading table. It meandered across his scroll, scorching the page as it went and leaving a slug-like trail behind it. He thought it must be a dragon, and lifting up the scroll in both his hands, carried it outside. He stood there in the doorway for

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1 In the journal *East Asian History*, 17/18 (June-December 1999). Thanks for Professor John Minford's and *East Asian History*’s collaboration.
some time holding it solemnly aloft, but the creature simply coiled in on itself like a caterpillar and would not budge.

"Have I caused some offence?" pondered Ch'ü aloud, and returning with the scroll placed it on the table again. Donning full mandarin hat and girdle this time, he made a deep bow and carried it once more to the door. He stood beneath the eaves, and finally the creature reared its head, stretched and took off into the air above the scroll, whirring and emitting a stream of light.

It flew a few yard, then turned back towards the Commissioner: its head was now the size of a large earthenware jar, its trunk twenty or thirty spans wide. Round again it spun and this time, with a rumbling roar, soared up into the heavens.

Ch'ü retraced its winding trail to one of the bamboo boxes in which he stored his books.²

龍
於陵曲銀台公，讀書樓上。值陰雨晦暝，見一小物，有光如蟄，蠕蠕而行。過處，則黑如軀跡。漸盤卷上，卷亦焦。意為龍，乃捧卷送之。至門外，持立良久，龍曲不少動。公曰：‘將無謂我不恭？’執卷返，仍置案上，冠帶長揖送之。方至檐下，但見昂首乍伸，離卷横飛，其聲噌然，光一道如縷。數步外，回首向公，則頭大於瓮，身數十圍矣；又一折返，霹騷震驚，膽霧而去。回視所行處，蓋曲曲自書笥中出焉。³

To begin with, the two Chinese characters that make up the title of the story contain pictures representing “insect” and “dragon”. The “insect” comes a further six times in the course of the story, which is altogether only 133 characters only. In the 17-character sentence describing the “little creature’s” first appearance, the “insect” radical comes three times in a row. In the Chinese script, we can almost see it wriggling on the page. Again, towards the end, in the 12-character sentence describing the creature’s roaring ascent into the heaven, the “weather” radical comes

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² This is John Minford’s translation. See “Seven Strange Tales from the Liao-zhai zhi-yi of Pu Songling (1645-1715)” Meanjin vol. 54, No. 1, 1995.
four times. We can almost hear the roaring of the dragon, like claps of thunder. The translator working into a phonetic script such as English has none of these resources directly to hand.

6.3 Seals

By employing the traditional Chinese seal-inscription, we can bring back indirectly some of this lost visual dimension. At the same time, the wording of the seals, if carefully chosen, helps to enhance the poetic atmosphere. Most of the seals chosen are of the variety known as hsien-chang 聞章, or "leisure seals", popular in the Ming and early Ch’ing Dynasties. Such seals were collected and reproduced in the many Seal Catalogues or yin-p’u 印譜 published at that time. These were "seals bearing as legend just a motto or phrase dear to the owner and supplying no clue to his identity... [They] ... reflect the spirit typical of the scholar-artists of that period. Their love for the quaint and unusual, their interest in all that has an antique flavour, their striving after individual expression – all these characteristics are found in the personal seals of the Ming Dynasty."4

The seals also help to recreate the physical "flavour" of the studio, to re-install a new leisurely reading space. And they do this in a very compact way. As the Chinese

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4 Robert Van Gulik, Chinese Pictorial Art as Viewed by the Connoisseur (Rome: Institute Italiano per il
saying about seals puts it: “This space of one square inch naturally comprises hills and dales.” 方寸之內 自有邱壑

6.4 Bays and Lattices

In this re-installation, the two columns of verbal and visual commentary are combined with the translation to form a studio of three “bays”, or chien 間. In the central hall is Giles (with whatever emendations and additions have seemed necessary to make Giles complete), divided into vertical sections with lattice patterns from the rich collection in Daniel Sheets Dye’s Grammar of Chinese Lattice. “Chinese designers produced an extraordinary wealth of geometrical complexity in those wooden lattices which, covered with paper, filled the windows of palaces, houses and temples.” This flowing “latticization” of the translation, according to which the twenty paragraphs are linked by windows into one single space, like a Chinese studio in its enclosing garden, is in fact closer to the structure of the undivided, unpunctuated Chinese original than Giles’ seven long rambling paragraphs. The manageable divisions also help to throw light on the complicated plot, with its multiple identities and incarnations. As the King James translators of the Bible wrote in their “Preface to

5 Van Gulik, p.422
the Reader”: “Translation it is that openeth the window, to let in the light...” Each lattice is accompanied in the outer column by a short synopsis of the new section.⁷

6.5 Talismanic Protection

In the inner column, along with the seals, poignant visual reminders of the Studio environment, the “walls” are hung with potent talismans 符 against a variety of afflictions. These strangely formed calligraphic characters were believed, especially by Taoists, to have magic power. “The magic power of talismans derived, as we have seen, from the fact that, according to Taoist belief, they were permanently inhabited by spirits. Thus men were able to communicate directly with spirits by means of these talismans without the participation of a medium. The talismans themselves acted as mediums, and were to be treated with the greatest respect, veneration, and secrecy. The interdependence of the Taoist spirit world with the material world made use of talismans much more significant than it would be to Western spiritualists, since spirits were believed to play a commanding role throughout the whole universe, and not merely in a realm of ghosts and supernatural beings.”⁸ The young scholar-protagonist

⁸ When published in East Asian History, thanks to the techniques of desk-top publishing, and the ingenuity of the editors, the lay-out of the story was designed to be symmetrical on facing pages.
of the story, the author, the translator and the reader may all be in need of protection.

The outer column contains the verbal running commentary. This "enriched" tripartite reworking of Giles is in effect another (virtual) chai, 齋.

6.6 Sections

*Lien-hsiang* 蓮香 (literally Lotus Fragrance) is the name of the heroine. *Lien*蓮 or *chin-lien* 金蓮 (Golden Lotus) or *hsiang-lien* 香蓮 (Fragrant Lotus) can also refer to the small bound feet or the embroidered slippers worn by a woman with such feet. The slipper is an important love-token in the story, symbolizing the relationship between Sang and Miss Li. The tiny embroidered shoe on the top of the very first page represents this.

Each of the seven sections has a picture to go with it, a motif with a rationale behind it. The first section, in which the scene for the story is set, has a contemporary map-like reconstruction of southern Shantung, showing the environment in which the story takes place, and the relative positions of I-chou and Saffron Bank. In section two it is difficult for our modern reader to imagine the reason for Sang’s sickness. His intimate relationship with the ghost, Miss Li, causes him to sink into a decline and Lien-hsiang heals him, at the same time teaching him about man’s primary essence, primary energy and primary spirit. The picture of the alchemist-adept (taken from a
17th century illustration), nurturing his "three interlinked primary vitalities," can help readers to understand this context. In section three, the two girls finally meet. This first encounter is well represented in the illustration from the popular Hsiang-chu Liao-chai chih-i t'u-yung (1886). In section four, both girls heal Sang. His sickness is due to his over indulgence in love-making with Miss Li, who, as a ghost, has a very powerful yin energy. The alchemical picture of the intercourse of yin (tiger) and yang (dragon) provides a broad philosophical context. In the fifth section, Miss Li is reincarnated into the Chang family as Yen-erh. When she regains consciousness, she recalls details from her previous life. The dreamlike quality of this episode is suggested by an illustration of a dream sequence from the 1498 edition of the Yuan Dynasty play West Chamber. In the sixth section, Lien-hsiang is reborn as a little girl, having given birth to a son, Foxy. Hers is the most important role in the story, and she is a fox-spirit. The picture of the nine-tailed fox from the Ming encyclopedia San-ts'ai t'u-hui is well complemented by Martin Buber's explanation of the role of the fox-spirit, and the workings of the "dark, feminine, primeval principle." The last section is the author's pseudo-historical comment, telling the reader where and when he first heard the story. The illustration chosen for this section (again from the Hsiang-chu Liao-chai chih-i t'u-yung) is a late-19th-century imaginary reconstruction of the studio environment in which P'u Sung-ling wrote his stories.
6.7 Envoi

Now, before sending the published version of the story on its way, I would like to ask the reader to close his (or her) eyes. Imagine that you are in an 18th-century Chinese scholar’s studio. Imagine the bamboo desk, the chair, the page-boy, the fragrant tea, the incense, the delicate strains of music...
MISS LIEN-HSIANG, THE FOX-GIRL

by P'u Sung-ling

The First Part

Section One

An imaginary modern reconstruction of the southern part of Shantung province, showing the relative positions of T-chen and Saffron Bank.

Seals of Kao Ch'ang-huan

高春, from Preface to Hsia-chen Kao-chih-chih, 1859 詮注聊齋誌異 回誥 (1859)
There was a young man named Sang Yan who had left an orphaned son behind when he went away. He lived near the village. One day, when the son came home, he found that the parents had left him a note saying, "I have left you an inheritance. Go and look for it." The son was curious and went out to search, but he couldn't find anything. He was about to give up when he noticed a piece of paper on the ground. He picked it up and found that it contained a riddle: "There is a treasure hidden in the town. Who finds it shall have it." The son was excited and decided to solve the riddle. He thought about the words and finally realized that the treasure was hidden in the town's library. He went to the library and searched through the books, finally finding a treasure map. With the map, he embarked on a journey to find the treasure. He followed the clues on the map and finally reached the treasure. He was overjoyed to discover that the treasure was a valuable collection of rare books. The son realized that the inheritance his parents left him was not just financial, but also a valuable legacy of knowledge. He decided to share his treasure with the village, using it to improve the community's education. His story became a local legend, inspiring others to seek knowledge and pursue wisdom.
Six months later, Lien-Hsiang knocked on Sang's door, introducing herself as a singing girl. He thinks it is his neighbour up to his tricks again and lets her in. She sleeps with him, and continues to visit him every few days.

Some six months afterwards, a young lady [sound during the night and] knocked at his door, and Sang, thinking his friends were at their old tricks, opened it at once, and asked her to walk in. She did so, and he beheld to his astonishment a perfect Helen for beauty. 2 Asking her whence she came, she replied that her name was Lien-Hsiang, and that she lived not very far off, adding that she had long been anxious to make his acquaintance [she was a singing girl from the western part of town. There were many singing girls in the town, so he believed her. They put out the lamp and went to bed, spending a joyful night together]. After that she used to drop in every now and again for a chat.
One evening, a young girl of fifteen or sixteen wanders into Song's room, and from her manner and appearance, Song suspects that she may be a fox-girl. She introduces herself as a local girl of good family, named Miss Li. She too ends up sleeping with him. When she goes, she leaves behind her embroidered slipper, telling him that he can think of it as if it is her. From then on, whenever he takes out the slipper, she appears before him.

Game 3: Enter the ghost (as a consequence of Game 2) (Fan)

"Faire la sauté": enter avec beaucoup de grâce. (Vendelain des Fauves)

"Infiltra através do quarto": uma silhueta graciosamente leoa, uma dama María Teresa que se endireita fina. (Vendelain des Fauves)

Giles' Dictionary, under 枕, has 枕伴, which he explains as "a bed-fellow." Also 枕席歸安, which he explains as "unable to rest peacefully in his bed." He understood perfectly well the meaning of the words he chose to omit. (TM)

"In a single second I have thrown away my body, precious as a thousand pieces of gold. My body and my life I entrust you forever. May you never disdain me in the future and make me lament my white hair." (West Chamber, IV.1)

Constantly interwoven, this double thread winds its way through the work, like a rosary or a jade bracelet. (Fan)
The shoe in which she tiny foot was enclosed finicky-suggested concealment, mystery, and boudoir pleasures. Wedged ladies took pride in their small and well-proportioned "golden lotuses," designed shoes for their of chosen silk, and wore especially attractive models when preparing for bed. The emptied shoes, secured in line, were intended to heighten male desire through a striking color contrast with the white skin of the beloved. These shoes were highly prized and sought after as love tokens. A woman might secretly give them to her man to express part of her sentiments. (Lucy)

"Boating" A wonderful description. (Fong)

Charm suspended facing the East (Dori)

Section Two

The alchemist-adept (In a seventeenth-century illustration) nurtures his three interlinked primary realities, the primary essence changes (by the wear and tear of emotions) into the sentient essence of sexual intercourse, the primary energy changes into the breathing of respiration, and the primary spirit is "sickled" over by the pain cost of thought. (Sam Fink, sixteenth century, The Mysterious Pearl of the Red River, translated by Needham
The ten days are over and Liensiang returns. She tells Sang that he is possessed by a ghost. For her part, Miss Li, who has been peeping at her, tells Sang that Liensiang is a fox, but Sang refuses to believe her.

When a fox is fifty years old, it acquires the ability to change itself into a woman. At a hundred it can assume the shape of a beautiful girl, or that of a sorceress, or also that of an adult man who has sexual intercourse with women. At that age the fox knows what is happening. A distance of a thousand miles, it can destroy the human mind and reduce a person to an imbecile (Cyn. Gold).

Volunteers have been written by Chinese doctors on the subject of the pulse. They profess to distinguish twenty-four different kinds, among which is one well known to our practitioners, namely, the "thready" pulse; theyMoreover, make a point of feeling the pulses of both wrists. (Gills)

"Fairy-tale" was a way of describing someone who has been blessed, admired, or convicted. The very word "fairy" was itself used to convey the idea of a semblance, disease of spiritual origin, which could be cured only by charms or exorcism. (Thomas)

Sang tells Liensiang that someone suspects her of being a fox. She promises that foxes do not necessarily harm humans. She guesses that it is Miss Li who suspects her. She secretly observes Miss Li, and tells Sang that she is a ghost. He refuses to believe her. Liensiang looks after him and gives him medicine.

The next evening Liensiang came, and while they were talking, they laughed together. When they went to bed, she suddenly exclaimed, "Oh, dear! How much worse you seem to have become in the last ten days. You must have encountered something bad!" Sang asked her why so; to which she answered, "First of all, your appearance, and then your pulse is very thready. Have you the devil disease (the symptoms of ghost possession)?" The following evening when Miss Li came, Sang asked her what she thought of Liensiang. "Oh," said she, "there's no question about her beauty; but she's a fox. When she went away I followed her to her hole on the hillside." Sang, however, attributed this remark to jealousy, and took no notice of it.

But the next evening when Liensiang came, he observed, "I don't believe it myself, but some
one has told me you are a fiiix."  Liien-lisang
asked who had said so, to which  Sang replied
that he was only joking, and then she begged
him to explain what difference there was be-
tween a fiiix and an ordinary person: "Well," an-
swered Sang, "foxes frighten people to death [men
who are bewitched by fiiixes fall ill, and even die],
and, therefore, they are very much dreaded."
"But you believe that! A young man like you
has his essence and energy restored three days
after his act of love. Even a fiiix cannot harm you.
If you indulge yourself day after day, a
human lover can do no more harm than a fiiix.
You cannot blame every consumption and every
death on fiiixes!" cried Liien-lisang; "and now
tell me who has been saying this of me."  Sang
declared at first that it was only a joke of his, but
by and by yielded to her instances, and let out
the whole story. "Of course I saw how changed
you were," said Liien-lisang; "she is surely not a
human being to be able to cause such a rapid
attention in you. Say nothing: tomorrow I'll
watch her as she watched me."  The following
evening Miss Li came in, and they had hardly
interchanged half a dozen sentences when a
cough was heard outside the window, and Miss
Li ran away.  Liien-lisang then entered and said
to Sang, "You are lost! She is a devil, and if you
allow yourself to be bewitched by her beauty,
and I do not at once forbid her coming here, you
will soon be on the road to the other world."  "All
Jealousy," thought Sang, saying nothing, as Liien-
lisang continued, "I know that you don't like to
be tied to [be in love with] her; but I, for my part,
cannot see you sacrificed, and tomorrow I will
bring you some medicine to expel the poison
from your system. Happily, the disease has not
yet taken firm hold of you, and in ten days you
will be well again. [Let me sleep by your side and
nurse you until you are cured.]"

The next evening she produced a knife and chopped up some
medicine for Sang, which made him feel much
better.  The next evening she brought a small
amount of medicine and gave it to Sang. It
immediately brought on two or three bouts of

He knew that she was a ghost; but he wouldn't believe it (Yung).

Lien-hsiang asks Sang to break with Miss Li once and for all. But he cannot bring himself to do so. He tells Miss Li what Lien-hsiang has said about her, which angers her, and she threatens to leave him unless he breaks with the 'wanton fox'.

In reading these stories, if you read them properly, they will make you strong and brave; if you read them in the wrong way, they will possess you. Cling onto the details, and they will possess you; grasp the spirit, and you will be strong.

Appreciate the wonders of the style; see into the author's subterfuges; grasp the human qualities of his characters; value his thoughts; then this book will be a unique guide to you in your own inner development. It will transform your character, and it will purify your heart. (Feng)

Lien-hsiang slept close by his side every night, but whenever he wished to embrace her, she rejected him. After some days he recovered (and began to put on some weight!) and Lien-hsiang left him, warning him [earnestly beseeching him] to have no more to do with Miss Li. Sang pretended that he would follow her advice, and closed the door and trimmed his lamp. He then took out the slipper, and on shaking it Miss Li appeared, somewhat cross [resentful] at having been kept away for several days. “She merely attended on me [bedded me with charms and medicines] these few nights while I was ill,” said Sang; “don’t be angry [with her]. It’s for me to say whom I love.” At this Miss Li brightened up a little; but by and by Sang [in the course of an intimate conversation] told her that [she loved her deeply, but that certain] people said she was a devil. “It’s that nasty [wanton] fox,” cried Miss Li, after a pause, “putting these things into your head. If you don’t break with her, I won’t come here again.” She then began to sob and cry, and Sang had some trouble in pacifying her.

A charm for dispelling sadness and anxiety in the sick (Lowe)
Next evening Lien-hsiang came and found out that Miss Li had been there again; whereupon she was very angry with Sang, and told him he would certainly die. "Why need you be so jealous?" said Sang, laughing; at which she only got more enraged, and replied, "When you were nearly dying the other day and I saved you, if I had not been jealous, where would you have been now?" Sang pretended he was only joking, and said that Miss Li had told him his recent illness was entirely owing to the machinations of a fox; to which she replied, "It's true enough what you say, only you don't see subtle machinations. However, if anything happens to you, I should never clear myself even had I a hundred mouts, we will, therefore, part. A hundred days hence I shall see you on your bed." Sang could not persuade her to stay, and away she went angrily; and from that time Miss Li became a regular visitor in his house. Two months passed away, and Sang began to experience a feeling of great lassitude, which he tried at first to shake off, but by-and-by he became very thin, and could only take thin gruel. He then thought about going back to his native place; however, he could not bear to leave Miss Li, and in a few more days he was so weak that he was unable to stand.

Lien-hsiang knows that Miss Li is still visiting Sang. She is angry, and leaves him. Sang now spends every night with Miss Li over a period of two months, and becomes more and more debilitated. He begins to suspect her, and to regret not having heeded Lien-hsiang's advice.

The Elected Girl asked, "How do invasions originate?" Peng-tu answered, "If a person has an unbalanced sex life, his sexual desires will increase. Devils and goblins take advantage of this condition. They assume human shape and have sexual intercourse with such a person. They are much more skilled in this art than human beings, so much so that their victim becomes completely enamored of the ghostly lover. These persons will keep the relation secret and will not speak about its delights. In the end they succumb alone, without anyone being the wiser. During sexual intercourse with such an invasus one will experience a pleasure that is greater than ever felt while copulating with an ordinary human being. But at the same time one will become subject to this disease which is difficult to cure. (Secret instructions)"
The inordinate love of the Mother-Male-fearing (the compendium on witchcraft compiled by two Dominican inquisitors in 1605), from which men pine away and die. (Duffy)

to get up. His friend next door, seeing how ill he was, daily sent in his boy with food and drink; and now Sang began for the first time to suspect Miss Li. So he said to her, "I am sorry I didn't listen to Lieh-hsiang before I got as bad as this." He then closed his eyes and kept them shut for some time; and when he opened them again Miss Li had disappeared. Their acquaintance was thus at an end.

Section Three

Illustration from Hsiang-chu Hao-chai chih-i Ch'ung. "When she saw Hien-hsiang she turned back as though she would run away, which Hien-hsiang instantly prevented by placing herself in the doorway"
Enquiring of my Heart's Desire 自問心如何... seal caused by Ch'en Heng-shun 陳鴻鈞 (1763-1832)

Lin-hsiang comes back and plays with the slipper, whereupon Miss Li appears. They have a long and almost metaphysical conversation about foxes, ghosts and humans, in the course of which Miss Li tells the story of her life, and as a result of which they both agree that Sang's illness has been caused by his frequent couplings with Miss Li.

Sang lay all emaciated as he was upon his bed in his solitary room longing for the return of Lien-hsiang has a former song for the harvest. One day, while he was still thinking about her, some one drew aside the screen and walked in. It was Lien-hsiang; and approaching the bed she said with a smile, "This silly fellow! Was I then talking such nonsense?" Sang struggled a long time to speak (he had rested a long while); and, at length, confessing he had been wrong, implored her to save him. "When the disease has reached such a pitch as this," replied Lien-hsiang, "there is very little to be done. I merely came to bid you farewell, and to clear up your doubts about my jealousy." In great tribulation, Sang asked her to take something she would find under his pillow and destroy it; and she accordingly drew forth the slipper, which she proceeded to examine by the light of the lamp, turning it over and over. All four young men were on a hunting trip and spent the night in an empty shelter, a hut built to give shelter for the sheep in the grazing season. They began to dance, one supplying mouth-made. One of the dancers wished that they had partners. Almost at once four women came in. Three danced, the fourth stood by the music-maker. But as he hummed he saw drops of blood falling from the dancers and he fled out of the shelter, pursued by his demon partner. He took refuge among the horses and she could not get to him, probably because of the iron with which they were shod. But she circled round him all night, and only disappeared when the sun rose. He went back into the shelter and found the bloodless bodies of the dancers lying there. Their partners had sucked them dry. (Legge)
"...When out of all my forces she had subdued the nimrods." (Ondesertair)

I had observed that intercourse with women distinctly aggressed my health (Mousguai).

A woman who has learned this secret for raising her own position by absorbing the youth, will feel on her reputation with men, so that she will prolong her span of life and not grow old, but always remain like a young girl. (Wong Halsanga)

These four words, "Turn love into hate," constitute a variable soul of life. (Feng)

"...at once Miss Li walked in, but when she saw Lien-hsiang she turned back as though she would run away, which Lien-hsiang instantly prevented by placing herself in the doorway. Sang then began to reproach her, and Miss Li could make no reply; whereupon Lien-hsiang said, "At last we meet. Formerly you attributed this gentleman's illness to me; what have you to say now?" Miss Li bent her head in acknowledgment of her guilt, and Lien-hsiang continued, "How is it that a nice girl like you can thus turn love into hate?" Here Miss Li threw herself on the ground in a flood of tears and begged for mercy; and Lien-hsiang, raising her up, inquired of her as to her past life. "I am a daughter of a petty official named Li, and I died young, and was buried outside the wall of this house, leaving the web of my destiny incomplete, like the silkworm that perishes in the spring. To be the partner of this gentleman was my ardent wish, but I had never any intention of causing his death. "I have heard," remarked Lien-hsiang, "that the advantage devils obtain by killing people is that their victims are ever with them after death. Is this so?" "It is not," replied Miss Li; "the companionship of two devils gives no pleasure to either. Were it otherwise, I should not have wanted for friends."

5 Miss Lien-hsiang was here speaking without book, as will be seen in a story later on. (Gilles)

6 The female principle, in a properly constituted human being, is the male and female principles are harmoniously combined. Nothing short of a small volume would place this subject, the basis of Chinese metaphysics, in a clear light before the uninitiated reader. Broadly speaking, the yin and the yang are the two primordial forces from the interaction of which all things have been evolved. (Gilles)

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"...This sums up the entire preceding section. It also hands back to the original "jest." (Tan)

Possession can be of three types: by ill-disposed human spirits, by demons and by elementals. However, possession can only take place if the vibrations of the victim is identical with its own (i.e. that of the "possessor"). In other words, the person must himself have a predisposition to such (Wilson).

Certificate of good conduct sent to the ruler of Hades (Oort)
Passport for wandering souls on the way to Hades (Donδ)

Intercourse of dragon and tiger, Yang and Yin, fused in the alchemical cohabitation (Chin-tan ta-yen tu 金丹大要論, 1343)
The two of them are able to cure Song of his Venereal Consumption by jointly administering a powerful pill using a novel kind of mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. They find a common bond in their love for Song, and begin to feel a deep sisterly affection for each other.

Giles' Dictionary, under 饅, has 嫉意昏睡, which, with its usual precision, he explains as follows: "I respectfully salute you, said by a woman. This salutation, made by bringing the sleeves together in front of the body, the right hand grasping the left sleeve, accompanied by a bow, corresponds to the 作揖 of a man." (TM)

Lien-hsiang looked round and said, "How shall we cure him?" upon which Miss Li blushed deeply and drew back; and then Lien-hsiang smiled and I added, "If he does get well, I'm afraid you will be dreadfully jealous." Miss Li drew herself up, and replied, "Could a physician be found to wipe away the wrong I have done to this gentleman, I would bury my head in the ground. How should I look the world in the face?" Lien-hsiang here opened a bag and drew forth some drugs, saying, "I have been looking forward to this day. When I left this gentleman I proceeded to gather my simples [on the mountains], as it would take three months for the medicine to be got ready, but then, should the poison [Venereal Consumption] have brought..."
anyone even to deal's door, this medicine is able to call him back. The only condition is that it be administered by the very hand which brought the ill [that is, the very hand that came from the very source of the illness. It must come from you]. Miss Li did as she was told, and put the pills Lien-Ihsiang gave her one after another into Song's mouth. They burnt his inside like fire, but soon vitality began to return, and Lien-Ihsiang cried out, "He is saved!" Miss Li asked what was necessary. "Just a little salve from your pretty mouth," replied Lien-Ihsiang. "When I put in one of the pills, please press your lips to his and let the salve pass into his mouth." Miss Li blushed, lowered her head and looked at her shoes. Lien-Ihsiang joked with her. "Still looking at your pretty lips? Miss Li is now embarrassed than ever, and looked up and down, not knowing where to hide. Lien-Ihsiang said to her: "This is not a place you have practised many a time, why are you suddenly being so shy?" Lien-Ihsiang took the pill and held it to Song's lips, then turned to Li and urged her to proceed. Reluctantly Li did as she had been told, put her lips to Song's, and moistened the pill. "Again!" said Lien-Ihsiang, and again she did it. Three or four times she repeated the act, before the pill would go down. In a little while, his belly began to rumble like thunder. Lien-Ihsiang placed another pill in between his lips and this time she herself pressed her lips to his and projected her own vital force into him. He felt his Ch'in-Ch'i Field, the very centre of his being, take fire, and his spirit quicken. "He is cured!" said Lien-Ihsiang. Just at this moment Miss Li heard the cock crow and she hesitated and vanished. Lien-Ihsiang remained behind in attendance on the invalid, who was unable to feed himself. She bolted the outside door and presented that Song had returned to his native place, so as to prevent visitors from calling. Day and night she took care of him, and every evening Miss Li came in to render assistance, regarding Lien-Ihsiang as an elder sister, and being treated by her with great consideration and kindness [affection].

The crisis of disease is always produced by a poison. When it is suffered to take its own course, and not counteracted by proper remedies, the patient will, in the course of time, be affected with severe pains, but more particularly in the right side; his countenance will become sallow, his hair will fall off; he will lose his appetite, strength, and flesh, his voice will be broken, disturbed at night, and a small force of the heart's blood will arise. (Hooper)

"Hand"—字乃"Giles renovations", 为
其改革之代表。《文》

There are vampires and vampires, and not all of them suck blood. (Bible)

Insufflation, or "sphinctic breathing", blowing or breathing upon a person or thing to symbolize the influence of the Holy Spirit and the expulsion of evil spirits, a rite of exorcism used in the Roman, Greek and some other churches. (Oxford English Dictionary)

7 Bir._It was about to speak, when the cock crowed. Har._And then it started like a guilty thing upon a fearful summons. I have heard, The cock, that is, the trumpet to the morrow. Daws with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat Awake the God of day, and at his warning, Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air, The extravagant and eerie spirit lies to his confines. —Hamlet. (Giles)

Only among women, those specialists in romantic friendship, is vampirism embodied in a physical, psychic union in which the experts of the next century would label "homoeroticism." (Aubérand)
Miss Li succumbed to a deep sense of remorse and saintliness. They both felt her absence strongly.

Three months afterwards Sang was as strong and well as ever he had been, and then for several evenings Miss Li ceased to visit them, only staying a few moments when she did come, and seeming very uneasy in her mind. [very downcast] [Tien-hsiang often invited her to stay the night with her, but she always refused.] One evening Sang ran after her and carried her back in his arms, finding her no heavier than a straw burial-figure; and then, being obliged to stay, she curled herself up until she seemed only two feet long and lay down in all appearance in a state of unconsciousness, and by-and-by she was gone. [Tien-hsiang felt an ever greater affection for her. She secretly told Sang to make love to her, and he began rocking her backwards and forwards, but she did not awaken. Sang himself felt asleep, and when he awoke, he fell for her, but she had vanished.] For many days they heard nothing of her, and Sang was so anxious that she should come back that he often took out her slipper and shook [fondled] it. "She is such a sweet, pretty creature! I don't wonder at your missing her," said Tien-hsiang, "I do myself very much indeed." "Fortunately," observed Sang, "when I shook [fondled] the slipper she invariably came. I thought it was very strange, but I never suspected her of being a devil. And now, alas! All I can do is to sit and think about her with this slipper in my hand." He then burst into a flood of tears.
The Second Part

Section Five

Dream sequence from the 1408 edition of Western Chamber
Miss Li is reincarnated as Yen-erh, daughter of the Chang family, residing in the same town. The reincarnated girl insists that she is Miss Li, the lover of Sang. The family refuse to let her out of the house. Sang’s neighbour hears the strange story, and wanting to discover the truth of it, goes next door, to find Sang (who has been pretending to be absent) together with Liang-hsing. The neighbour tells Sang about Yen-erh. Sang wants to see her.

Now a young lady named Yen-erh, belonging to the wealthy Chang family, and about fifteen years of age, had died suddenly, without any apparent cause (from an inability to sweat), and had come to life again in the night, when she got up and wished to go out. They barred the door and would not hear of her doing so; upon which she said, “I am the spirit daughter of a petty magistrate. A Mr. Sang has been very kind to me, and I have left my slipper at his house. I am really a spirit; what is the use of keeping me in?” There being some reason for what she said, they asked her why she had come there; but she only looked up and down without being able to give any explanation. Some one here observed, that Mr. Sang had already gone home, but the young lady utterly refused to believe them. The family was much disturbed [puzzled] at all this; and when Sang’s neighbour heard the story, he jumped over the wall, and peeping through behold Sang sitting there chatting with a pretty-looking girl. As he went in (stole in and crept up on them), there was some commotion, during which Sang’s visitor had disappeared, and when his neighbour asked the meaning of it all, Sang replied laughing, “Why, I told you if any ladies came I should ask them in.” His friend then repeated what Miss Yen-erh had said; and Sang, unbolting his door, was about to go and have a peep at her, but unfortunately had no means of (pretext for) so doing.

When she was a ghost, it was the slipper that gave such pleasure. In her new life, she is not able to forget it. (Tan)

Only after her rebirth can she admit to being a ghost. (Tan)

The slipper (a tiny receptacle into which some part of the body can slip and be tightly) can be seen as a symbol of the vagina. (Liuvelloso)

Sang alludes to a true event in order to preclude; and Mr. Pu quietly reminds us of the very beginning of his story. (Tan)
Meanwhile Mrs. Chang, hearing that he had not gone away, was more lost in astonishment than ever, and sent an old woman-servant to get back the slipper. Sang immediately gave it to her, and Miss Yen-erh was delighted to recover it, though when she came to try it on it was too small for her by a good inch. In considerable alarm, she seized a mirror to look at herself; and suddenly became aware that she had come to life again in some one else's body. She therefore told all to her mother, and finally succeeded in convincing her, [looking in the mirror and] crying all the time because she was so changed for the worse as regarded personal appearance from what she had been before. And whenever she happened to see Lien-li-shiang, she was very much discontented, declaring that she had been much better off as a devil than now as a human.

Yen-erh undergoes a physical transformation and once more resembles Miss Li.

Red charm suspended towards the South (Daxi)
Lien-fis-hung suggests: a match-maker for Sang and Te-erhs
Sang attends Mrs Chang's birthday party, where he meets Te-erhs. He asks her uncle to be match-maker, and they choose a day for the marriage.

The Chinese cycle is sixty years, and the birthday on which any person completes his cycle is considered a very suspicious occasion. The second emperor of the present dynasty, King Hsi, completed a cycle in his reign, with one year to spare, and his grandson, Chien Lung (of Lien Lung) fell short of this only by a single year, dying in the same cyclical period as that in which he had ascended the throne. (Goles)

When Lien-fis-hung heard the strange story, she tried to persuade Mr. Sang to make her an offer of marriage (send a matchmaker). But the young lady was rich and Sang was poor, and he did not see his way clearly. However, on Mrs. Chang's birthday, when she completed her cycle, Sang went along with the others (her sons and her sons-in-law) to wish her many happy returns of the day (a long life), and when the old lady knew who was coming [saw his name], she
One who is eager to climb famous mountains must have the patience to follow a winding path; one who is eager to eat a hero's banquets must have the patience to let it cook slowly; one who is eager to watch the moonlight must have the patience to wait until midnight; one who is eager to see a beautiful woman must have the patience to let her finish her toilette; reading a story such as this requires its own kind of patience. (Song)

Sang tells Lien-hsiang about the proposed marriage, and she wants to leave the two of them. But Sang suggests that they (he and Lien-hsiang) should first go and live in his old home, and then he should fetch Yen-erh. He tells the truth (about Lien-hsiang) to Yen-erh's family. They are angry, but Yen-erh talks them round.

Clever Old Giles! He had to remove this passage, even though it contains nothing offensive, because he has consistently described their relationship (Sang and Lien-hsiang's) as a purely platonic friendship. (TM)

So Sang came home and told Lien-hsiang, and discussed with her what they should do. She was downcast for a long time, and then said she wished to go away. He was greatly shocked at this and wept. Lien-hsiang said, "Now you are going to her home to be wed, and it would not be right for me to be there." Sang proposed that the two of them should return to his home-town first, and that he should then go fetch Yen-erh. Lien-hsiang agreed to this, and Sang told the Chang family of his plan. When the Chungs learned that he already had a wife, they were angry and reproached him. Yen-erh, however, defended him strongly, and they relented.

Studying Should Root Itself in Tranquility
學以靜為本—leafcarved by Kao Peng-han

Calm suspended facing the West (Dore)
At the appointed time Sang proceeded to the house to fetch her [Yeu-erh], and when he returned he found that, instead of his former poor-looking furniture, beautiful carpets were laid down from the very door, and thousands of coloured lanterns were hanging about in elegant designs. Lien-Ishiing assisted the bride to enter [the marriage bed], and took off her veil, finding her the same bright [lovable] girl as ever. She also joined them while drinking the wedding cup, and inquired of her friend as to her recent transmigration; and Yeu-erh related as follows:

"Overwhelmed with grief, I began to shrink from myself as some unclean thing; and after separating from you that day, I would not return any more to my grave. So I wandered about at random, and whenever I saw a living being, I envied its happy state. By day I remained among trees and shrubs, but at night I used to roam about anywhere. And once I came to the house of the Chang family, where, seeing a young girl lying upon the bed, I took possession of her mental coil, unknowing that she [I] would be restored to life again." When Lien-Ishiing heard this she was for some time lost in thought.
Two months later, Lien-biang gives birth to a son, and dies shortly afterwards. She asks Miss Ch/ Yan-erh to take care of the boy, and says that if fate allows, they will meet again after ten years. Sang calls the boy Foxy.

And a month or two afterwards she gave birth to a son. After the birth she became very ill. She [her condition became more and more serious. She held Yan-erh by the arm and said, “I wish you to take care of my child. My child is your child.” Yan-erh wept, and comforted her for a while. She sent for the doctor, but Lien-biang refused all medical aid and gradually got worse and worse, to the great grief of Mr. Sang and his wife, who stood weeping at her bedside. Suddenly she opened her eyes, and said, “Do not grieve! You wish to live; I am willing to die. If fate so ordains it, we shall meet again ten years hence.” As she uttered these words, her spirit passed away, and all that remained was the dead body of a fox [when they lifted the coverlet to lay her out, her body had been transformed into the body of a fox]. Sang, however, insisted on burying it with all the proper ceremonies. [The boy was given the name Foxy, and Yan-erh looked after him just as if he were her own child. At every Grave Festival, she would take him to weep at Lien-biang’s grave.]

Again, Gillovers up histories with cunning. According to his story, there has been no occasion for Lien-biang to conceive and give birth. Therefore, no Foxy (TM)

When wind and snow fill the sky, and my fire is cold, my jade boy lights the coals again and bears my wine. I dust my desk and turn up the wick of my lamp; when I come across a passage that catches my fancy, I quickly dash off a few lines. (Feng)

Only after death does her body really become a fox. (Tao)
Section Six

Nine-tailed fox (San-t'ui Fu-hsi)

Appearing in many forms, the fox ghost most frequently assumes the role of a beautiful maiden who approaches a man, wins his love, bears him children, looks after his house, and achieves through such a union both a family and a brighter state of existence. One explanation among others for this preferential treatment of the fox is that when it crosses a frozen river or lake it repeatedly lays its head upon the ice in order to listen to the flowing waters underneath. Thus it deduces, so to say, the domain under the ice, the region of Yin, the dark, feminine, primordial principle, with the lighter world of Yang, the masculine, active element (Buber)
Now his wife had no children. As time went by, Sang passed his second exam at the provincial capital, and his family gradually became more prosperous. To be sure, he had no children. Fauxy was quite a clever boy, but timid and weak, and constantly ailing. Yen-erk frequently suggested to Sang that he should take a concubine but one day a servant came in and said, "There is an old woman outside who has put up a little girl for sale." Sang's wife gave orders that she should be shown in; and no sooner had she set eyes on the girl than she cried out, "Why, she's the image of Lien-hsia!" Sang then looked at her, and found to his astonishment that she was really very like his old friend. The old woman said she was fourteen years old, and when asked what her price was, declared that this was her one child and her only wish was to get the girl comfortably settled, and enough to keep herself alive, and ensure not being thrown out into the street at death. So Sang gave a good price for her, and his wife, taking the girl's hand, led her into a room by themselves. Then, chucking her under the chin, she asked her, smiling, "Do you know me?" The girl said she did not; after which she told Mrs. Sang that her name was Wei, and that her father, who had been a pickle-merchant at Hsi-ch'eng, had died three years before. Mrs. Sang then fainted on

Sang's family prospered, but Yen-erk is sad that he cannot bear any children. Fauxy is a weakling, so she suggests to Sang that he should take a concubine (in order to have another child). By coincidence, an old empress wife arrives at the door, wanting to sell her fourteen-year-old daughter. The couple think how like Lien-hsia she is, and agree to buy her. The girl suddenly recognizes them, as if she has known them from a dream.

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10 The bill of sale always passed to the purchase of a child in China. As a proof that the child is the seller's legal property and has not been kidnapped, it is a pleasing fiction called a "deed of gift," the amount paid over to the seller being then described "giving and receiving money", or compensation for the expense of rearing and educating up to the date of sale. This phrase originates from the fact that a dose of ginger and vinegar is administered to every Chinese woman immediately after the delivery of her child. We may here add that the value of male children to those who have no heirs, and of female children to those who want servants, has fostered a regular kidnapping trade, which is carried on with great activity in some parts of China, albeit the penalty on discovery is instant decapitation. Some years ago I was present in the streets of Peiping when a kidnapper was seized by the infuriated mob, and within two hours I heard that the man had been summarily executed. (Gilles)

Gilles still wants to preserve her friendly status (IM).

A quaint old word. How many readers today would know this was an open secret? Most probably they would think the old woman was afraid of "going to the dogs." (JM)

How dull it would have been if the writer had wasted a lot of ink explaining the details of Lien-hsia's reincarnation. (Feng)

Feng reads: "Lio-ch'ien just for the stakes, and not for the style, one is a fool." (Feng)
The first story which occurred in a previous life will be endured upon in several stories to come. (Tse)

This book should be read as one reads the Tao Commentaries. The Tao is huge. Lao-ch'ü is miniature. But every narrative still is there. Every description is perfect. It is a series of huge miniatures.

This book should be read as one reads Chuang-ch'è. Chuang-ch'è is wild and abstract. Lao-ch'ü is dense and detailed. Although it treats of ghosts and fates, the details make it very concrete and real. It is a series of wild details and concrete abstractions.

This book should be read as one reads the Records of the Historians. The Records are bold and striving. Lao-ch'ü is dark and understated. One enters the tantrum in hand, in the shadow of night; one emerges from it into the daylight, under a blue sky. In so few words, mighty landscapes are created, and magical reachings are evoked, and magical reaching created. It is both bold and dark. It is both striking and understated.

This book should be read as one reads the Sayings of the Neo-Confucian philosophers. In the Sayings, the sense is pure, in Lao-ch'ü the sensibility is soft-tuned. Everything one thinks about will be altered. It is in fact very real and true to human nature. It contains both pure sense and pure sensibility. (Fung)

On the Grave Festival they all visit Lien-hsiang's grave, and decide to bury the remains of the two women together.

Though the double system of sexual morality cannot be defended, there was something very pleasant and reviving about the relations of women among themselves in traditional Chinese society, when things went well. (Needham)

When it came to the day for worshipping at the tombs, Yen-erh explained that she and her husband were in the habit of annually visiting and mourning over her grave. The girl replied that she would accompany them and endeavors. When the three of them got there they found the whole place in disorder, towering with...
The girl sighed deeply. "Hsia-hsiang and I," said Yen-chih to her husband, "have been attached together in love for over two thousand years. Let us not be separated, but bury my bones here with hers." Sung consented, and opening Miss Li's tomb, took out the bones and buried them with those of Hsia-hsiang, while friends and relatives, who had heard the strange story, crowded round the grave in gay dress to the number of many hundreds.

Pu Sung-ling's proliferation of a bigamous relationship is to be rejected. It is branded with the idea of the unreasonable marriage system of the times. (New Commentary)

Strange, that both ghost and fox should be human beings! Stranger still that their bones from a previous existence should be buried together. If ghosts and foxes are like this, what harm can they possibly do? (End)
I learnt the above when travelling through Ichou in the year Kong-fu (1676), where I was detained at an inn by rain, and read a biography of Mr Sung written by a comrade of his named Wang Tzu-chang. It was lent me by Mr Liu Tzu-ching, a relative of Sung's, and was quite a long account. This is merely an outline of it.

Composed by the Chronicle of the Strange.

What a fine person was Lim Hsiao! I have seldom seen a man of such rare quality, let alone a fool (Wang Shih-ch'ien).

The Chronicle of the Strange writes: Alas! The dead seek life, the living seek death! Is not the human body the most coveted thing in the world? Unfortunately those who possess it do not cherish it; they live with less shame than foxes, and vanish into death with less trace than ghosts!
CONCLUSION

Transformative Translation

By stretching and exploring the boundaries of translation, this thesis has sought to emphasize the dimension of the translator’s “world”, and the need for a translation to exist in its own right, to create its own world. It has sought to recreate the world of P’u Sung-ling’s Studio, to let in new light through the Studio’s lattice windows, to reconstitute the “wit and flavour” 趣 of the original. This has meant following the original down its sometimes winding paths, in order to be sure of what the author had in mind.

The experimental format of the newly “Published Story” (the three columns, text, commentary and visual accompaniment) is one solution to the problem of how to deal with the depth and richness of this special world. Other similar forms have been used in the past, to deal with other comparably subtle worlds. Angus Graham, for example, in his highly successful anthology of translations Poems of the Late T’ang,¹ provides his translations with both Introduction and Commentary, themselves written in a lyrical, poetic (not academic) manner (Graham was a practising poet). He does this in order to bring out fully and effectively some of the multiple meanings and allusions of the original poems – the Late Tang was a period in which poets often said many things at the same time, and delighted in the possibilities of ambiguity. Graham’s version of Li Shang-yin’s many-layered poem “The Patterned Lute” has a full two pages of Background, followed by a mere eight lines of actual translation,

followed by two further pages of Commentary. It is another model of transformative translation.²

So is David Hawkes’ monumental translation of the first eighty chapters of the classic 18th-century novel The Story of the Stone. Here, Hawkes sets out to communicate in a very long novel the whole range of meanings that he finds in Ts’ao Hsüeh-ch’în’s masterpiece, while never losing sight of the fact that he is himself creating a novel that must be readable. He prefaced the first volume of the translation with these much-quoted words:

My one abiding principle has been to translate everything – even puns. For although this is ... an unfinished novel, it was written (and rewritten) by a great artist with his very lifeblood. I have therefore assumed that whatever I find in it is there for a purpose and must be dealt with somehow or other.³

Many years later he reflected on the whole enterprise:

I’d thought that what I’d like to do is a translation where I don’t have to think about academic considerations. Scholarly considerations. I’ll just think– this is Penguins, after all – about how to present this book in such a way that I do the whole of it but at the same time it’s enjoyable for the English reader, if possible, and they can get some of the pleasure out of it that I got myself.⁴

In keeping with this intention, throughout his translation, Hawkes avoids the use of footnotes, which would disrupt the flow of the narrative and spoil the illusion. Instead he constantly uses the device of the Incorporated Footnote, as a way of bringing up into the text itself background references he believes to be necessary for the modern

² The term “transformative” implies two things: that considerable change and freedom has been permitted in the translation; but that the essence (or spirit, or flavour) of the original has thereby been reborn (where it might have been lost altogether by a literal, “faithful”, and non-transformative version).
Western reader. For example, in chapter 3, Lin Tai-yü is being described in detail, and Ts’ao Hsüeh-ch’ìn writes that she “looked more sensitive than Pi Kan, more delicate than Hsi Shih.”5 This is Yang Hsien-yi and Gladys Yang’s translation. They then add two explanatory footnotes, one for each of these references. The first note says: “A prince noted for his great intelligence at the end of the Shang Dynasty.” The second: “A famous beauty of the ancient kingdom of Yüeh.”6 Hawkes deals with this problem quite differently. He adds the information (as little as is necessary for the comparison to work for the Western reader) into the text itself. “She had more chambers in her heart than the martyred Pi Kan [Bi Gan]: And suffered a tithe more pain in it than the beautiful Hsi Shih [Xi Shi].”7

In a novel as vast as Hung-lou-meng, with literally hundreds of characters, each of whom has a name, the translator is confronted with the problem of enabling the reader to navigate through the complex world without getting lost. The Yangs seem more or less content to transliterate all the Chinese names. Thus, Chia Pao-yü’s principal maid becomes Hsi-jen. Hawkes, on the other hand, spent a great deal of time working out a system for names, so that the reader would be helped to overcome this obstacle.

Now one of the problems it presents – to some extent I suppose it’s a problem translating any Chinese novel presents – that is, Chinese names. Chinese names are just very difficult. Well, I’m sure you’ve noticed. English people are always saying, “What’s your name?”, and can you tell me it again, I’ve forgotten it, and how do you spell it, that sort of thing! (laughs) They can’t remember Chinese names. Particularly if they’re written

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4 This is from the interesting interview Hawkes gave in December 1998 to Chan Oi-sum, in which he talks at some length about Hung-lou-meng. See the appendix to Chan Oi-sum’s M. Phil. Dissertation, “The Story of the Stone’s Journey to the West”, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, 2000.
5 Hung-lou-meng _po-shih-hui chiao-pen_ (Hong Kong: Chung-hua, 1974), p. 32.
7 _The Story of the Stone_, vol. 1, p. 103.
in some of the spellings, like Wade-Giles. They think Chinese looks like Ching-chong ching-chong ching... They just can’t remember.

If you say Chia Cheng, and Chia Chen, Chia Ching – it all looks the same. So you’ve got this problem. And there are so many of them. What do you do about this? It seemed to me that particularly in this novel where there are such a vast number of characters (it’s a long novel, with hundreds of characters) it seemed to me that one thing you could do would be to divide them up and treat one class of character in one way, and one in another way, and one in another way, so that at least – it’s still difficult – but you’ve reduced the possibilities (when you ask who’s this?) by a third. The method I adopted – roughly speaking – was to say that this was a novel about masters and servants; hsiao-chieh, ku-niang, and ya-t’ou; and quite apart from the problem of names, there’s also the difficulty that in Chinese you’ve got many more distinctions than are possible in English, when it comes to relationships. I mean you’ve got your yi-erh and ku-mu, and po-mu, and this that and the other, and they’re all aunt in English. So I said, well let’s decide to take all the master class, they stay Chinese; so Chia Cheng; Lady Wang, and so on. The maids, the inferior class, will be translated. I wouldn’t say that it’s a good thing to do in principle regardless in translation. But in this case. I’m just talking about the problems of translating Hung-lou-meng. So that people can follow the story and know what you’re talking about. Or what sort of person you’re talking about. It’s something if they know that this person is a maid and not a mistress. Then in that other class of translating names I take religious people; I said well, OK, any Buddhists and people like that, I’ll give Latin names. So I called them Sapientia and so on. Actresses I’ll give French names to. Parfumee and so on. That’s not a general principle I have about translating names. It was just something that I hit upon in this particular instance.

Hawkes’ underlying motive in this was to make it possible for his translation to become a world, which the reader could enter and explore, enjoying the illusion which is an essential part of fiction. He kept transliteration for the names of the Chia family and other high class people, and used other methods for other categories of characters. Maids, pages and other servants were translated. So, Chia Pao-yü’s principal maid becomes Aroma. Religious characters (monks, nuns, etc) were put into Latin: Vanitas, Sapientia, etc. Actors were given French names: Fragrante, Parfumee, etc. Hawkes was playing with his own translation, creating a new world.
Hawkes often translates the simple Chinese *hsiao* 笑 (smiles, laughs) or *hsiaotao* 笑道 (says with a smile, with a laugh) by actually describing the smile or the laugh (a cunning smile, a bitter smile, etc), believing that the context justifies this, and that the loss of feeling in the translated dialogue can be compensated for in this way. For example, in chapter 7, Wang Hsi-feng is talking to various relations about Ch’in Chung. The Chinese text is: 鳳姐笑道. Hawkes translates this, “said Xi-feng cheerfully.” A little further on: 營笑嘻嘻地說. This is translated as “Chia Jung cringed in mock alarm.”

Even when the original simply says *tao* (speaks), Hawkes has no qualms about taking liberties and describing the tone of voice. In chapter 3, Chia Pao-yü is talking to his Grandmother about the sleeping arrangements now that Miss Lin is here. “Dearest Grannie,” said Pao-yü pleadingly, “I should be perfectly all right next to the summer-bed.” In the Chinese, there is no mention of the pleading tone of Pao-yü’s voice. The words are simply: 寶玉道. Hawkes has added this adverb, to help the reader capture the flavour of the dialogue.

Hawkes also invents with extraordinary ingenuity transformative ways of translating puns, without having to spoil the “flavour” by explaining everything literally. A good example of this is the name of the crag at the foot of which the stone is left, at the very beginning of the novel – 青埂峰. The Yangs translate as follows: “She … threw the remaining block down at the foot of Blue Ridge Peak.” They add

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8 1998 Interview.
9 Hung-lou-meng *pa-shih-hui chiao-pen*, p. 76.
10 *Stone*, vol. 1, p. 177.
11 *Stone*, vol. 1, p. 105. *Pa-shih-hui chiao-pen*, p. 34.
the footnote: “Homophone for roots of love.” 12 Hawkes is much more adventurous
(and transformative) here, and creates a new name for the crag, which incorporates
some of the double meaning of the original. “… leaving a single odd block unused,
which lay, all on its own, at the foot of Greensickness Peak…” 13

All of these are examples of the creative way in which Hawkes goes about
translating Ts’ao Hstüeh-ch’ìn’s enormous fictional world. If P’u Sung-ling’s world is
a Studio, Ts’ao Hsüeh-ch’ìn’s is surely a Garden, in which the drama of passion and
illusion is enacted. The differing styles of the two masterpieces is captured in two
poems written by their respective authors.

Ts’ao’ Hsüeh-ch’ìn

Pages full of idle words
Penned with hot and bitter tears:
All men call the author fool;
None his secret message hears. 14

滿紙荒唐言
一把辛酸淚
都云作者痴
誰解其中味

P’u Sung-ling, in reply to Wang Shih-chên

Threadbare gown,
Grey head, silken hair;
Now my Book of Tales is done
– an idle jest to share!
Ten years

13 See John Minford, “Pieces of Eight: Reflections on Translating The Story of the Stone”, in Eoyang and
single word a drop of blood/Ten years of labour most extraordinary. 字字看來皆是血，十年辛苦不尋常.
Pa-shih-hui, p.2.
I have tasted the joys
Of Su the Teller of Tales and Poet –
Of whom we were both so fond!
Night-time conversations,
Cold rain,
Chill lamp,
Of autumn.

誌異書成共笑之
布袍蕭索鬓如絲
十年顏得黃州意
冷雨寒燈夜話時

Hawkes’ methods, as he himself states in the 1998 interview, were developed specifically for his particular book, with its “secret message”, its particular “wit and flavour” 其中味 :

You ask questions about principles of translation and things like that. I don’t know whether I’ve got any principles. I suppose I have got some sort of vague principles. But so much of what I did, in so far as I had any rules, they were rules I made for translating that specific novel, because of its problems, the problems it presented.\(^{15}\)

His goal was to create a fictional world that might “convey to the reader a fraction of the pleasure this Chinese novel has given me”.\(^{16}\)

Different kinds of literature call for different solutions. The Liao-chai stories have certain qualities that require very careful handling. They have a very special flavour, one that is quite different from that of The Stone, and without that flavour the translation fails (as so many have: even Giles was working within severe limitations).

It is the duty of the translator to find that flavour, and to explore every possibility, exploit any device, in the effort to capture and recreate it, to transform it. The

\(^{15}\) Interview.

\(^{16}\) *Stone*, vol. 1, Introduction, p.46.
translator, like the reader, is searching for the inner meaning, the secret message, the 
中味, of the original, in order to communicate it to a new audience, in order to keep 
the stories alive, and give them to their new readers. It is only when the translator 
succeeds in this endeavour on behalf of his readers, that the stories will become truly 
theirs.
APPENDIX I

Translations of Liao-chai chih-i into Western languages: A selective chronological listing

Gottfried Rösel, appendix to Umgang mit Chrysanthemen (Zurich: Die Waage, 1987).

1848 Jakdan 扎克丹 (字秀峰) (1780-?)

Sonjof i ubaliyambuha liyoo jai ji 1 bithe 滿漢合璧聊齋誌異. Manchu interlinear translation, accompanied by the Chinese text. 24 chūan, 130 stories.

1867 Mayers, W. F. (1831-1878)


1868 Wasiljew, Wasilij Pawlowitsch (1818-1900)

A number of stories, with Chinese text and notes, in Chinese Chrestomathy, A textbook for students of Chinese, published in St. Petersburg. Wasiljew was Professor of Chinese at St. Petersburg University.
1872-1876  Allen, C. F. R.

"Tales from the Liao Chai Chih Yi" in China Review, 2-4. 18 Stories:
趙城虎  "The Pious Tiger of Chao-ch’eng", 長 清僧  "The Metempsychosis of the Priest", 青蛙神  "The Frog God", 嶗山道士
“The Taoist Priest of Lao Shan”, 雲籬主  "The An Family", 偷桃
丐僧  "The Sturdy Beggar", 宮籬弌  "Kung Ming Pi", 畫皮
"Painting Skins", 仇大娘  "Ch’iu Ta Niang", 張誠  "The Brothers".

1874  Williams S. W. (1812-1884).

種梨  and "The Duck Thief" 罵鶴 (Davidson mistakenly refers to the latter story as "The Story of the Taoist Priest").
1880  Giles, Herbert A. (1845-1935)


1880  Imbault-Huart, Camille


1889  Tchen, Ki-tong

*Les Chinois peints par eux-mêmes: Contes chinois* par le General Tcheng-ki-tong (Paris: Calmann Levy, 1889). From 1884 to 1891, Tchen was military attaché in the Chinese Embassy in Paris. 26 stories (see Cordier 1774), translated into Italian, 1900.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher &amp; Years</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>Hillier, Walter</td>
<td><em>The Chinese Language: How to learn it</em>, published in Peking. 12 stories, freely adapted and retold in colloquial Chinese, and then translated.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1913  Soulié de Morant, G.


1914  Wilhelm, Richard (1873-1930)

Chinesische Märchen (Jena: Diederichs, 1914). 16 stories, freely adapted from a retelling known as the Liao-chai yen-i 聊齋演義.

1921  Wilhelm, Richard

Chinese Fairy Book. 9 stories, translated into English from Wilhelm’s 1911 German originals.

1922  Baylin, J.

Contes Chinois (Peking: Collection de la Politique de Pékin, 1922). 22 stories, interlinear versions.

1922  Werner, E.T.C.

Myths and Legends of China (London: G.G. Harrap, 1922). Fox legends taken from H.A. Giles’ versions. 5 stories translated including: 河間生

1922 Alexejew (Alekse’ev), Wasilij Michailowitsch (d.1951)


1923 Halphen, J.


1925 Laloy, Louis (1874-1944)


1925 Di Giura, Ludovicò Nicola
P’u Sung-ling, *I racconti fantastici di Liao*, Unica traduzione autorizzata dal cinese di Ludovico Nicola di Giura, edizione aumentata e riveduta con premessa e note di Giovanni di Giura. Introduzione di Giuseppe Tucci. 32 tavole a colori fuori testo. Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 1925. First complete translation into any Western language, by the Naval Doctor, Baron Di Giura, who came to China during the Boxer Uprising and stayed for 30 years in Peking as the Legation Doctor. The translations were revised by his nephew, Baron Giovanni Di Giura, himself also a diplomat in Peking.

1928 Willoughby-Meade, G.


1933 P’an Tzu-yen 潘子延

*China Journal of Science and Arts*. 馬介甫 “A Crow Wife”.

1937 Ch’u, T.K. 初大告


Three stories: 種梨 “Planting a Pear Tree”, 三生 “Interesting Deaths”, and 偷桃 “The Peach from the Royal Mother’s Garden”.
1938  Daudin, Pierre


1944  Brandt, J.


1946  Quong, Rose

1955 Prušek, Jaroslav

Zkazky o šesteru cest osudu. Vybor providek a basai. Z čínskeho originálu podle edice Cao Cchi-kaovy z r. 1766 preložil, doslov a poznamky napsal Jaroslav Prušek. 51 stories translated into Czech by the famous sinologist.

1957 Yu Fanqin 于范琴


1961 Yang, Hsien-yi and Gladys Yang


1965 Yeh, Kai

Foreword by Werner Eichhorn.

1969  Hervouet, Yves et al.


1975  Baar Adrian


1978  Baar Adrian

*Erotische Geschichten aus China*, herausgegeben und übersetzt von Adrian Baar (Frankfurt: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1978). 7 stories, 3 from English or Russian, 4 from Chinese.
1978        Idema, W. L.

*Pu Songling, De beschilderde huid. Chinees Spookverhalen.* Translated by
W. L. Idema, J.J. Ras, G.H. Schokker, J. Voorhoeve, B.C.A. Walraven and
J.J. Witkam. Amsterdam, 1978. 29 stories translated into Dutch by six
Dutch scholars.

1978        Ma, Y. W. and Joseph S. M. Lau, eds.

*Traditional Chinese Stories,* translated and edited by Y. W. Ma and Joseph

1978        Spence, Jonathan

*The Death of Woman Wang.* (New York: Viking, 1978) Several stories
translated, and incorporated into narrative.

1979        Roberts, Moss

*Chinese Fairy Tales and Fantasies* (New York: Pantheon, 1979). 20 stories
translated.
1980  Y.K. Martin, Yuk-ying Lo, Katherine Carlitz and C.Y. Hsu


Yuk-ying Lo translated: 阿寶 “A-pao”, and 俠女 “Hsia-nü”.

Katherine Carlitz translated: 江城 “Chiang-ch’eng”.


1982  Lu Yunzhong, Yang Liyi, Yang Zhihong and Chen Tifang

Strange Tales of Liaozhai (Hong Kong: Commercial Press, 1982). 50 stories translated.

1983  Chang, H.C. (Zhang Xincang) 張心滄


238
1989  Mair, Denis C. and Victor H.


1987-1992  Rösel, Gottfried


1995  Minford, John

*Meanjin 54* (Melbourne: Australian Centre, University of Melbourne, 1995).


239
1997    Zhang Qingnian et al.

*Strange Tales from the Liaozhai Studio*, 3 volumes (Beijing: People’s China
Publishing House, 1997).

Volume 1: Translated by Zhang Qingnian, Zhang Ciyun, Yang Yi. Edited by
Martha Graham. Contains 60 stories.

Contains 64 stories.

Contains 81 stories.

1998    Wang Juan 王娟

*100 Passages from Strange Stories of Liaozhai* (Hong Kong: Commercial
APPENDIX II

Herbert Giles’ translations from the Liao-chai Stories, listed against the complete Chinese original contents (based on Allan Barr, 1984).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original text</th>
<th>Entry</th>
<th>Translation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16 chüan</td>
<td>12 chüan</td>
<td>Giles</td>
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<td>1/14</td>
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</table>

| 2/1           | 2/6   | 嬰寧     | 15. Miss Ying-ning; or The Laughing Girl |
| 2/2           | 2/7   | 聶小倩   | 16. The Magic Sword |
| 2/3           | 2/13  | 水莽草   | 17. The Shui-mang Plant |
| 2/4           | 2/15  | 凤陽士人 | 18. Little Chu |
| 2/5           | 2/17  | 珠兒    | 19. Miss Quarta Hu |
| 2/6           | 2/18  | 小官人   | 20. Mr. Chu, the Considerate Husband |
| 2/7           | 2/19  | 胡四姐   | 21. The Magnanimous Girl |
| 2/8           | 2/20  | 祝翁    | 22. The Boon Companion |
| 2/9           | 2/24  | 俠女    | 23. Miss Lien-hsiang, The Fox Girl |
| 2/10          | 2/25  | 酒友    | 24. Miss A-pao; or |
| 2/11          | 2/26  | 蓮香    |                |
| 2/12          | 2/27  | 阿寶    |                |

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<td>26. The Lost Brother</td>
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<td>蛙曲</td>
<td>28. The Singing Frogs</td>
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<td>29. The Performing Mice</td>
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<td>30. The Tiger of Chao-ch'êng</td>
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<td>32. Hsiang-ju's Misfortunes</td>
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<td>附林西仲 (雲銘)</td>
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<td>33. Chang's Transformation</td>
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<td>3/3</td>
<td>道士</td>
<td>34. A Taoist Priest</td>
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<td>37. Engaged to a Nun</td>
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<td>3/8</td>
<td>11/20</td>
<td>織成</td>
<td>38. The Young Lady of the Tung-t'ing Lake</td>
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<td>3/9</td>
<td>11/21</td>
<td>竹青</td>
<td>39. The Man who was changed into a Crow</td>
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<td>樂仲</td>
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<td>11/31</td>
<td>香玉</td>
<td>40. The Flower-nymphs</td>
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74. A Chinese Rip van Winkle
75. The Three States of Existence
76. In the Infernal Regions
77. Singular case of
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102. Justice for Rebels
103. A Taoist Devotee
104. Theft of the Peach
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106. The Resuscitated Corpse
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137. Feasting the Ruler of Purgatory
138. The Picture Horse
139. The Butterfly’s Revenge
140. The Doctor
141. Snow in Summer
142. Planchette
143. Friendship with Foxes
144. The Great Rat
145. Wolves
146. Singular Verdict
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APPENDIX III

Herbert Giles, A selective bibliography of his work, in chronological order

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<td>1871</td>
<td>Translation of Cicero’s <em>De Natura Deorum</em> (Latin) appeared in <em>Keys to Classics</em>.</td>
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<td>1872</td>
<td><em>Chinese Without a Teacher: Being a Collection of Easy and Useful Sentences in the Mandarin Dialect, with a vocabulary</em>. Shanghai: A.H. de Carvalho, 60pp (reprinted in 1901, Shanghai: Kelly &amp; Walsh and many times; 8th ed. 1922).</td>
<td>Reviewed in the North-China Daily News of 18 December and in the Shanghai Evening Courier</td>
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<td>Vanity Fair (20 Nov.</td>
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<td>Record of the Buddhistic Kingdoms</td>
<td>Shanghai: Kelly &amp; Walsh; London: Trubner; x-129pp.; reprinted in 1885. Previously appeared in <em>The Celestial Empire</em> (Cordier 2652, who also gives article by Watters on “Fa-hsien and his English translations” in <em>China Review</em>, VIII, this referring to Giles and Beal?) Beal says Giles’ work first appeared in the <em>Shanghai Courier</em> [see <em>China Review</em> VIII, pp.107-116]. This early version later replaced by the greatly revised 1923 <em>Travels of Fa-hsien</em>.</td>
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<td>1878</td>
<td>A Glossary of Reference on Subjects</td>
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*An Short History of Koolangsu.* Amoy: A.A. Marcal, 38pp. (Cordier 2280)


1879

“Mesmerism, Planchette and Spiritualism in China”, in *Fraser’s Magazine*, February 1879; included in *Historic China*.

1880

*Freemasonry in China.* Amoy: A.A. Marcal, 34pp. (Reprinted in *Historic China*)


1881

*Easy Sentences in the Hakka Dialect: with a vocabulary.* Hong Kong: China Mail, 57pp.


1882


“Education in China”, pp.233-256.
“Wei-ch’i, or the Chinese Game of War”,

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<td>1884</td>
<td>Gems of Chinese Literature by Herbert A. Giles H.B.M. Vice-Consul, Shanghai. London, Quaritch; Shanghai: Kelly &amp; Walsh, xv-254pp. Reprinted 1898; enlarged and revised edition, 1922 1923 in 2 vols., reprinted in 1926; reprinted New York: Paragon, 1965. (NB: Note the Han Wen Tshui Chen 漢文萃珍 of J. H. S. Lockhart, [Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1927], which contains the original texts of Giles' Gems) Cordier 1810-1811 gives Table of Contents and several notices. See also Cordier 3949-3950 for 2nd ed. Chinese preface on rear cover. Chinese Poetry in English Verse in the series &quot;The Living Age&quot;.</td>
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<td>1885</td>
<td>&quot;The Hung Lou Meng: Commonly Called the Dream of the Red Chamber&quot;, in Journal of the NCBRAS, New Series, XX: 1, pp.1-23, and XX: 2, pp.51-52. &quot;by Herbert A. Giles, President&quot;; read 16 April, 1885, published separately as pamphlet by the journal. Cordier 1771-1772, which gives a lengthy extract from the second; also 2247. &quot;An attempt to Burn Books during the T'ang Dynasty&quot;, in Journal of the NCBRAS, New Series, XX, p.279. Cordier 1811.</td>
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<td>&quot;The Family Names 百家姓&quot; in <em>Journal of the NCBRAS</em>, New Series, XXI:5-6, pp.255-88. (Cordier 2249)</td>
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<td>&quot;Lockhart's Manual of Chinese Quotations&quot;. CR XXI, 405-412.</td>
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<td><em>China and Chinese.</em></td>
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<td>“In Chinese Dreamland”, in <em>Nineteenth Century</em>, April, 576-584.</td>
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<td>“Who was Si Wang Mu?”, pp.1-19.</td>
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<td>“What is Filial Piety?”, pp. 20-25.</td>
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J.C. Ferguson reviewed this in *Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*
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<td>“Psychic Phenomena in China”, pp.145-162 (paper read at China Society, 21st March 1907)</td>
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<td>“Swallowing Gold”, pp. 185-188.</td>
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<td><em>Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio, 2nd</em></td>
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| 1908 | *Adversaria Sinica* I:7 | Shanghai: Kelly & Walsh, 185-228pp.  
"Japan's Debt to China", pp. 189-203.  
"Art thou the Christ?", (continued from p. 44) pp. 215-218.  
"The Mariner's Compass", (continued from p. 107) pp. 219-222.  
"The Chinese Taxi-Cab", in *Imperial & Asiatic Quarterly Review*, July, pp. 184-86. (Cordier 3983) |
| 1911 | *Adversaria Sinica* I:9 | (translation)  
| 1912 | *Chinese – English Dictionary*, 2nd edition | (see 1892). (Cordier 3901-2 who gives several notices and later notes by L.C.Arlington, Moule, Parker)  
"China and Chinese" (for children). In *St George's Magazine*. |
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<td><em>Adversaria Sinica</em> I:10</td>
<td><em>China.</em> (in the series &quot;History of the Nations&quot;)</td>
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<td><em>Adversaria Sinica.</em> Shanghai: Kelly &amp; Walsh, 43pp. (Collection of previous articles)</td>
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<td>“Mr. Laufer and the Rhinoceros”, pp.11-38 (by Lionel Giles and H.A.G.)</td>
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<td>“Another Mistranslator”, pp. 39-44.</td>
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<td>“An Emperor on Ku K’ai-chih”, pp. 45-52 (by Lionel Giles and H.A.G.)</td>
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<td>“Hibbert Lectures”, pp.53-56.</td>
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<td><em>Supplementary Catalogue of the Wade Collection of the Chinese and Manchu Books in the Library of the University of Cambridge.</em> Cambridge University Press, 29pp. (Cordier 3955)</td>
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<td><em>The Hundred Best Characters – How To Begin Chinese.</em> London: Quaritch; Shanghai: Kelly &amp; Walsh, 72pp. Reprinted in Shanghai, 1935. Cordier 3902 gives the title as <em>The Best Hundred</em> etc., and lists notice in NCR.</td>
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| 1922 | *Gems of Chinese Literature* rev. and greatly enlarged ed. (see 1884). Shanghai: Kelly & Walsh; xiv+287 pp.; + portrait. (Cordier 3949-3950 gives Notice in NRC)  
*The Second Hundred Best Characters*  
*Revision of Bullock’s Progressive Exercises* in the Chinese Written Language.  
“Christ in the Li tai shen hsien tung chien”  
A letter from Dr. H.A.Giles in *Journal of the NCBRAS*, LIII, pp. 238-46. (Cordier 3881) |
Thirty-two reviews |
*Chaos in China*. Cambridge: Heffer, 43 pp.(NB – not a political tract) |
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*Unidentified titles*. On Some Translations and Mistranslations in Dr. Williams’ Syllabic Dictionary *(Source: Historic China, rear page announcement)*. |
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