ON THE MAKING OF A MÄRCHEN
CHINESE VARIANTS

BY
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Tales about persecuted queens have stimulated the imaginations of
story tellers in all ages, in many countries and in almost all cultural
complexes. The heroines of these tales are young, beautiful, chaste and
possessed of all the domestic, social and religious virtues. They are
married to commendably faithful but unfortunately stupid husbands.
They are not properly appreciated. The crimes of which they are accused
are various and revolting: that they are the mothers of monsters, that
they murder and devour their own children . . . and these accusations
are all false. Sometimes the husband refuses to believe the first or
second accusation, but finally he is convinced. Sometimes he sends his
wife into exile where she is again falsely accused of terrible crimes; some-
times he orders her to be burned at the stake. Modern research has not
done justice to these unfortunate women who have a talent for being
accused of crimes of which they are innocent. As the homicidal maniac
thrives on murder, these heroines born to "thraldom and penance"
whose pale faces should bring compassion to even the hardest of hearts
find fullest scope for their talents only in suffering. There is a maso-
chism with a difference. After many years and many adventures they
are reinstated, usually by their children who have accompanied them.

Queen Constance in Chaucer's "Man of Law's Tale" is one of this
sisterhood. At the time that Chaucer was recounting her adventures—
or a few years later or a few years earlier—Gower was meditating on her
life.* She is a familiar figure in märchen† legend and drama.‡ She
appeared in China in approximately the same period that her popularity
in Europe was at its height.

Where poets lead scholars follow. The particular problems that
have exercised academic intelligence are the problem of collection and
classification—generally in terms of morphology and source—of the
variants of this tale§ and the problem of explaining; frequently in terms

†cf. "Marienknd.," "Aschenputtel," "Die Sechs Schwäne" and in Aarne's
index the variants listed under "Trave und Unschuld" (Typenverzeichnis, FFC
No. 3, 1911) as well as bibliographical references below.
‡Perhaps the best known dramatic versions are Shakespeare's Hermione in The
Winter's Tale and the Flemish play Esmeret recently translated by Harry Morgan
Ayres under the title An Ingenious Play of Esmeret, the King's Son of Sicily (The
Hague, 1924).
§Much of the Occidental material has been discussed in the following publica-
tions: F. O. Backström, Svenska folkboklor (2 vol., Stockholm, 1846-1848) Vol. I,
pp. 221f in notes on "Helena Antonia of Constantinopel" with particular reference
to the relations between Trivet's version ("Life of Constance") and Chaucer; de
Puymaigre's article, "La Fille aux Mains Cupées" (Rev. de l'Histoire des Religions
(1884) X, 193-208) assembles folktales in which the heroine flies from a father who

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of the obsolescent customs of savage peoples, the extraordinary crimes of which the queens stand accused. Unfortunately the Chinese versions have received very little of the attention of Western scholars and the Western versions have received, so far as I know, no more attention from Chinese scholars. The purpose of this paper is to survey only one small series of Chinese variants to this story of the persecuted queen, and to articulate these with a few of the more important variants in märchen in the hope that some light may be thrown on the genesis of this formula in particular and on the problems of comparative folklore in general.*

1 One group of Chinese variants was studied by Dr. Hu Shih in an article which appeared in two numbers of the Contemporary Review.† Dr. Hu's purpose was to show that popular tales are not reliable guides for the historian because they show the influence of popular emotion in the appraisal of character. In this article Dr. Hu traces the development of the form of the fairytale in the Ching Dynasty through novels, plays and stories to a clear example of the märchen type in the Ch'ing Dynasty. This development from history to romance may throw enough light on the problem to suggest the interpretations offered by Western scholars may not be necessary in explaining the motifs found in the European variants.

The Material on which Dr. Hu reports is found in:

Official History of the Sung Dynasty, 宋史, Sung Shih. Mo Chi 默記, Anecdotes of the Sung Dynasty. Drama of the Yuan Dynasty, 元無名氏作 “李美人御苑拾彈丸, 金水橋陳麻婆拋錦盒” 謠劇

wishes to marry her. Suchier, in his preface to “La Manekine of Beaumanoir (pub. by Soc. des Anc. Textes Franc., in 1894) studies the cycle of the most of the best known Chinese, exile and by the exchanged letter. Cough traced the Constance Saga to an hypothetical Anglo-Saxon folk-tale of the tenth century or earlier. (See his “On the Constance Saga” in Palaestra (1902) Vol. XXXVI.) In the same year a similar study by Siefflin, Der Konstantin-Freihilfe-Saga in der Eng. Lit. auf Shakespere which was followed in 1902 el. (Das Goldsäule Weih in der Eng. Lit.) In 1903 Stefanovic added many Slavonic parallels to those already known in his discussion of the Florence de Rome type in Anglia (XXXV, 483) and Rom. Forsch. (XXIX, 461). A careful survey was made by Edith Rickert in her edition of Emam in 1906. The most careful recent study is Margareta Schlauch’s Chaucer’s and Accused Queens, New York, 1927—see infra pp. 21 ff. Further references are to be found in Johannes Bello and George Polavia, Anmerkungen zu den Kinder U. Hausmärchen der Brüder Grimm (3 vols., 1913-1918), Aume’s Typpenzeichnungen (Supra p. 2, n. 2) and M. R. Cox’s Cinderella (London, 1893) passim.

This strict limitation is due to the difficulty of properly checking non-Chinese material in a city where the necessary references books are not available. In view of the fact that opportunity of presenting the notes I have collected may not arise again for several years it has seemed better to present them in their present inadequate form than to suppress them entirely.

†Nos. 14 and 15, March 14, and March 21, 1925. The Chinese name of the Contemporary Review is 現代評論, Hsien Tai Ping Lun. For translation of this article and for much additional information I am indebted to Missers Shui Tien Tung 水天同 and Liu Pao Tung 吕寶東. Mr. Li has been kind enough to collaborate with me in the preparation of this MSS.

ON THE MAKING OF A MÄRCHEN, CHINESE VARIANTS

Novel of the Ming Dynasty, 包公案, Pao Kung An.

Popular Novel of the Ch'ing Dynasty, 三俠五義, San Hsia Wu I.

The historical facts to which Dr. Hu gives a somewhat guarded assent are in the Official History of the Sung Dynasty* (宋史, Sung Shih). They are (1) The Sung Emperor Chen Tsung (真宗) (998-1022) has in his household the Empress Chang Hsien (孝獻) and the usual complement of concubines and ladies in waiting. Among the latter is one who later became Li Ch'en Fei (李宸妃), silent, composed and well spoken. (2) She becomes the Emperor's favourite. (3) During the period of her pregnancy she walks with the Emperor on a platform in the garden. A jade ornament falls as they are still there. (4) She fears that this is an evil omen, but the Emperor makes a secret resolution in his heart that if the ornament is not broken in the fall she will bear him a son, and it is not broken. (5) The son Jen Tsung (仁宗) is born. (6) He is adopted by the Empress Chang Hsien (孝獻), and is educated by the concubine Yang Shu Fei (楊淑妃). (7) His blood mother, Li Ch'en Fei, is assigned to a separate dwelling, and (8) on his accession to the throne takes her place as court lady, but (9) without any particular title or distinction. (10) The Empress Chang Hsien rules the court and terrifies it. (11) The Emperor is ignorant of the identity of his blood mother. (12) Shortly before his death she is elevated in rank. (13) The Empress wishes to give her an inferior burial, less than that due a lady in the court. (14) She is opposed by the prime minister. (15) The Emperor was present at the discussion but was led away by the Empress. (16) When the interview is resumed, the Empress Liu reminds the prime minister that Li Ch'en Fei is only a common woman and should have only a common burial. (17) The prime minister insists that it is his duty to carry out the proper rites and that the welfare of the dynasty depends on offering the proper honour to Li Ch'en Fei. (18) She is buried in the robes of a queen and the coffin is filled with mercury to preserve the body. (19) This must be done so that it will not be said later that I have not thought of it. (20) When the Empress dies the Emperor is told the facts of his maternity, and (21) that his mother had died by violence. (21) He goes into deep mourning for his true mother, attends to no business for several days, in a public proclamation he accuses himself of unfilial conduct and raises his mother to the rank of queen with posthumous titles of honour. (22) He goes to her tomb to perform ceremonies, (23) has the coffin opened and discovers that she did not die by violence. (24) He then treats the family of the Empress Liu better than before.

These facts are rehearsed with two significant changes in another Sung book, the Mo Chi (默記), an unofficial collection of anecdotes. The changes are (Official History, 19) that the emperor is told the truth about his mother's burial in order to keep him from excessive grief at the death of the dowager. (Official History 20) Pending investigation of the circumstances of his blood mother's death, he sends soldiers to the home of the dowager's

※To be referred to hereafter as Official History with the episodes numbered as below.
family and, as in the 24th episode above, these are withdrawn when the dowager’s innocence is demonstrated. In addition to these particular changes the Mo Chi makes it clear that the court feared the power and jealousy of the dowager and was generally unfriendly towards her. The Mo Chi records other incidents of the period which seem to be dramatic and novelistic as those just mentioned. They were not included in the subsequent development of the tale.

The historical matrix here presented is suitable for the development of the theme under discussion. An inferior woman of excellent character, good looks, perhaps, since she attracted the attention of the Emperor, some beauty, and therefore certainly great virtue, becomes the mother of a male child designated as the heir. The chief queen takes charge of the child and the inferior woman is not accorded the honour which she might have expected. The incidents reflect the social organization of that and most other times; and no hypothesis of primitive survival, racial memory or matriarchal society is necessary to understand the forces in this situation. In all societies the woman who becomes mother to the heir enjoys rights and privileges; when she becomes dowager she exercises a power which is eagerly coveted in all societies whether polygamous and Chinese or monogamous and Occidental. The use of this power arouses resentment. The Empress was within her rights in her discussion with the prime minister. Her insistence that an inferior woman should not receive ceremonious burial, particularly since she was not officially and legally recognized as the mother of the Emperor, was as well justified as the prime minister’s insistence that the actual blood mother of the Emperor should be buried with the greatest honours. Then ethical problems are profound and the conflict between Empress and minister is the kind which the Chinese historian—more interested in morals than history—loves to present.

Two other facts in the historical account may be of worth. First, the name of the person who accused the old Empress of murdering the Emperor’s mother is not recorded or at any rate not emphasized. The source of the accusation remains for the moment in the air—to be caught presently by feeling and to be attached properly. Second, the innocent and accused woman is, for the moment, the old Empress. With a surprising neatness the official account has supplied us with all the elements, even the false accusation of foul play. And yet, although official historians are by nature apologists, Dr. Hu sees no reason to question the general historicity of the historical account. Even the incident of the jade ornament, which Dr. Hu regards as the intrusion of folklore into an otherwise adequate account, is not necessarily to be rejected. Prospective parents of the twentieth and other centuries have been known to seek by pretty games which were taken more or less seriously advance information as to the sex of their unborn children. When the prognostication proves true, it is repeated, remembered and recorded. When false, it is forgotten. Although for the later development of the story it is comparatively unimportant except that it shows how feeling symbolizes itself in incident—there seems no sound reason to reject it. Even in the historical matrix which Dr. Hu accepts the plain sense (rights and privileges

of the heir’s mother are exercised by another) and the feeling (resentment against the Empress for her exercise of this power) are both fertile for future development.

2

In a short anonymous play of the Yuan Dynasty the feeling of antagonism toward the dowager makes her villainy appear greater.* (1) The Emperor Chen Tsung following the advice of his official fortune teller makes a gold pellet which he shoots toward the south-east. He tells his six consorts to find it and announces that the finder will become mother of the prince. (2) Li Chen Pei finds it and the Emperor visits her in her apartments. (3) She becomes mother of a son. (4) The Empress orders her serving woman K’ou Ch’eng Yu (權承御) to steal the child and kill it. (5) The prince is enveloped in a purple and red fog, sign of future greatness. (6) K’ou asks the advice of an eunuch of high rank. (7) The child is put into a box used for cosmetics and the eunuch attempts to smug it out of the palace. (8) He is met by the Empress who asks about the contents of the box and is about to lift the lid when she is called by the Emperor. (9) The child is put in the care of Ta Ta Wang (八大王), an influential courtier. (10) When the child is grown Pa Ta Wang brings him to audience with his father the Emperor. (11) The Empress recognizes his resemblance to his mother Li. (12) She tortures her serving woman K’ou who commits suicide but does not reveal her secret. (13) When the Emperor is about to die he designates as his heir the twelfth son of Pa Ta Wang, and this happens to be his own son by Li. (14) The young man discovers the identity of his mother, and (15) although both she and the Empress are alive he makes no attempt to punish the Empress. (16) He changes his mother’s apartments, gives her additional titles and visits her daily.

As Dr. Hu points out the changes are significant. The incident of the jade ornament (Official History 3, 4) becomes the incident of the pellet (Yuan Play 1, 2). Prognostication of the sex of the unborn child becomes prognostication of the mother of the child. This kind of incident, in one form or another, is common to all peoples, its meaning is not difficult to understand. It is not unusual for lovers to conclude that the chance of their discovery is manifest destiny; nor is it unusual for the general public to meditate on the reasons why a desirable man should choose an undistinguished mate, and certainly young people of all periods and cultural complexes have devices whereby they attempt to discover the identity of their future mates. The incident partakes of magic, but it derives from a state of mind which differs very little from modern autistic thinking. If it is regarded as a survival from earlier cultural states, the term survival needs redefinition.

The light and fog about the prince in the Yuan play are another example of symbolism or wish thinking,† and the world would be a

*Pao Chuan Hu, 無仙仙, see (3) hereafter referred to as “Yuan Play.”
sad place if parents and disciples could not discover signs of greatness
glancing in the faces of their children and masters. Both of these
incidents show the effects of the feeling already noted in the matrix,
resentment against Liu whose manifest destiny deprived her of her
chances of becoming mother of the heir, and sympathy for Li whose child
bears upon him marks of greatness. Feeling also controls the other
additions, namely, the faithful servant K’ou who saves the prince and dies
rather than confess her action, the official who smugly the prince out of
the palace and the added incident of his narrow escape from discovery,
known as a trick from the story teller’s bag. The pathetic figure in
this version is the maid K’ou, a substitute for the mother Li. But the
fantasy ceases abruptly. The wicked Li is not punished and the sufferings
of K’ou are unavenged. The play ends with the elevation of Li
to her rightful position.

3
In the Pao Kung An (包公案), a collection of tales about the popular
hero Pao Kung, further changes appear. (1) Pao Kung, returning from
famine relief, stops at a village where the people bring him many difficult
cases for judgment and solution. (2) A poor blind woman who lives
miserably in a deserted brick kiln announces to him that she is Li Fei (李飞)
and tells the following story: (3) Li Fei bore a son and Liu Fei a daughter.
(4) The official in charge of the palaces changed the children and gave
Li’s son to Liu and Liu’s daughter to Li. (5) Li Fei, grieved at having
born a daughter, accidentally killed the child. (6) She was wrongly and
unjustly imprisoned. (7) A gardener employed in the palaces knew the
facts and attempted to report to the Emperor. (8) Liu killed him and his
entire family of eighteen persons. (9) When the child became Emperor
he freed all prisoners, and (10) Li became the beggar she now is. (11)
She substantiates her account by reference to the magic characteristics which
were on the palm of the newly born infant. (See Yuan Play 5). (12)
Pao Kung and the Emperor investigate. (13) Liu’s accomplice denies the
charge (See Yuan Play 12). (14) Pao Kung and the Emperor disguise themselves as the Recorder and the Judge of Hell and
appear before the accomplice, who, thinking he has died, confesses his
crimes. (15) Li is brought to the palace and raised to her rightful
position. (16) The Emperor wishes to boil Liu and her accomplice in oil,
but, on representations made by Pao Kung, modifies his sentence to the
execution of the accomplice. (17) The Empress is given a piece of white
cloth with which she is permitted to hang herself.

This version is obviously the story of the persecuted queen. Li is
falsely accused and suffers imprisonment and separation from her son, she
becomes a blind beggar and is finally restored to her rightful position as
mother of the Emperor. Her persecutor is Liu, her powerful rival. The
faithful gardener and Pao Kung are added. The gardener and Liu’s
accomplice who denies the charge under torture are both related in
feeling to K’ou, the faithful servant in the Yuan play (see Yuan Play 12).
Pao Kung is the hero of a cycle of tales which has in this instance absorbed
the formula of the persecuted queen. Thus the masquerade whereby the
guilty are made to confess, a device known in many countries, Hamlet, for
example, may be left with the cycle of Pao Kung rather than the cycle of
the persecuted queens where it is intrusive. Finally, Li’s child is not
stolen, it is interchanged with the daughter of Liu.

In the Sun Hsiu Wu I (三侠五义), a popular collection of the
Ch’ing Dynasty, the formula appears in a more complete form. (1) An
astrologer reports to the Emperor that the stars betoken great harm to the
prospective prince. (2) Both Liu, the Empress, and Li the concubine have
conceived. (3) The Emperor gives each of them the following amulets: a jade seal with a silk embroidered cloth, a golden pellet
containing a pearl engraved with the owner’s name. (4) Liu bears a son, and
(5) Liu plots with an accomplice to kill and skin a cat which is to be substituted (6) for the son of Li. (7) This son is to be abducted and murdered.
(8) The maid consents with an official, (9) puts the child in a box, and (10) barely escapes discovery as she smuggles him out of the
palace. (11) The prince is reared as the third son of Fa Ta Wang (八王) (12) Li is imprisoned for having born a monster and Liu’s son, born later,
becomes the heir apparent. (13) After the death of the Liu apparent
the Emperor designates Pa Ta Wang’s third son, really his own son, as his
successor. (14) This young man passes his mother’s prison, pities her
and begs for her release. (15) Liu tortures the maid K’ou who kills herself,
and (16) informs the Emperor that the misfortunes of his reign were
due to the evil curse put on him by Li. (17) The Emperor sends Li a cloth
to hang herself, (18) a eunuch dies in her place, and (19) she escapes from
prison. (20) She becomes a blind beggar, (21) tells her story to Pao Kung
(包公), (22) offering the amulets as proof. (23) Pao Kung’s wife cures
Li’s eyes by magic and tells the story to Pa Ta Wang’s wife, who tells it to
the Emperor. Pao Kung investigates further, (24) Liu’s accomplice
refuses to confess, and (25) the masquerade of the infernal regions is
performed with success. (26) The claims of Li are admitted. (27) She
is restored to her rightful position. (28) Liu Fei is ill, and (29) dies on
hearing that her crimes have been discovered.

4
An incomplete examination of incidents in Marchen which may be
considered similar to those just described has brought to light between
300 and 400 variants* with a geographical distribution which reaches
from China and the Sino-Siberian border westward across Mongolia,
Siberia, India and Arabia into Europe and on to Louisiana in North
America; and from Iceland in the north into equatorial Africa. That
other territories are not represented is due probably to the incompleteness
of my collections, rather than to the absence of the incidents. For the
moment, the 300 odd variants in the wide distribution which can be
demonstrated for them may serve as a sufficient basis for an inquiry into
the meaning of the tale and its provenance.

*Statistics of this kind are unreliable as it is difficult to determine when two
versions become two variants, particularly in those districts where bilingualism is
common.
These incidents, persecution of an innocent queen and mother with final restitution, are frequently found in the variants of five Märchen published by the Grimms under the titles "Marienkind," "Die Zwölf Brüder," "Sechs Schwäne," and "Die Drei Vögelknospe." As will be shown presently, "Brüderchen und Schwesterchen" probably belongs to this group. The incidents of the persecuted queen's formula which are sometimes attached to Cinderella may be disregarded for the moment* as they seem to have been taken from the groups mentioned above.

The relevant portions of these formulas are as follows:

**Marienkinds.** After an introduction, which will be examined presently, a prince decides to marry the heroine against the wishes of his mother. The mother-in-law drowns the first three children, sprinkles the heroine with blood and accuses her of infanticide and cannibalism. The prince refuses to believe the charge at first, but is finally convinced. As she is about to be burned, she is rescued by a mysterious stranger.

The mother-in-law, rather than the first wife, is here the persecutor; the heroine is accused of infanticide and cannibalism rather than infanticide (Pao Kung An, 5 and 6) or monstrous birth (San Hsia 5 and 6) but both accusations are false. The mother is separated from her child and suffers almost to the point of death before she is saved. The person of the heroine varies. In some variants it is a black lady, a virgin, a mysterious man in a grey cloak, or a father with incestuous desires. The persons of the persecutors change, but the sufferings of the heroine remain similar.

**Six Swans.** A different introduction merges into a similar arrangement of events. Again the heroine is married by a prince. Her sufferings are frequently, though not always, caused by her mother-in-law. In typical versions the children are born while the prince is away at war; an evil person steals the letter which announces the good news and substitutes for it one asserting that the Princess has born monsters (San Hsia 5 and 6). Persecution, suffering and rescue follow as in "Marienkinds." Both the "Six Swans" and "Marienkinds" became popular in the twelfth century.†

The similarities between this story of the "Six Swans" and the stories of the "Seven Ravens" and the "Twelve Brothers" are so great that they might all three be considered sub-groups in a large family. In "Twelve Brothers" the sufferings of the heroine undergo some modification in that the incident of the substituted bride is frequently introduced to replace the charge of infanticide, cannibalism or monstrous birth. The variants in which this occurs fall somewhat beyond the limits of the

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*When Cinderella becomes queen she takes her stepmother and step-sisters into her service. They attempt to destroy her children and her, but their plans are frustrated.
†Cf. Vico Offa., Gruner’s dissertation, Mathematische Literatur (1890); and Doloquist produced about 1100 and frequently discussed as G. Paris, Romania II, 400, XIX, 324; W. Muller, Germania I, 420, 425, and generally V. Chavrin, Bibliographie des ouvrages arabes ou relatifs aux Arabes (1929), VIII, 206 and Hagen’s discussion of the marmot in the Abhandlungen der Berliner Akademie (1898).
herself when persecuted. The first cycle of suffering is being sold into bondage (Marienkind) or at the misfortunes of the brothers (Swans, Ravens and Brothers) or under the wicked step-mother. The second cycle of sorrow comes from the persecutions by enemies or in the substitution of another for herself (Brother and Sister).

6.

Several possibilities must be faced in an attempt to estimate the folklore and literary significance of the Chinese account when that account is articulated with the folk tale. One obvious problem is that the author of one of the versions here discussed knew the folk tale, and that the historical material of the official history was bent to fit the popular formula. Similar situations are not infrequent, and it is a commonplace of folklore that the formula of a legend shows greater rigidity than the name of the hero or the place of his adventures. Identical legends are attached to different characters in widely separated districts.

However, when the Chinese variants are re-examined, a difficulty arises. Each of these variants seems to have arisen directly out of the others. There seems to be no point at which we can say that the folk formula entered and took possession of the historical facts. The History and the Mo Chi present a matrix, but there is as yet no persecution of the concubine Li. In the Yuan play, Li's persecution is only her separation from her son. Accusation and imprisonment are lacking. Had there been no later versions this story would have been about the tyranny of Liu and not about the persecution of Li. The Pao Kung An raises several points of interest. Li's child is kidnapped, but she receives another in its place, the child of the Empress which she thinks is her own. She is imprisoned for having murdered her child, whereas she had killed the child by accident. Manslaughter, not murder should have been the charge. There is no reason to believe that the author of the Pao Kung An was following the popular formula, and, even if he knew the formula, its influence on his work was not great. The San Hsia Wu I develops suggestions from the earlier versions. Although the substitution of the skinned cat for the concubine's child are of and from the formula, it is obvious that if the author is using only the one child in his tale and that child is to be kidnapped, some way out must be found. The cat and accusation of monstrous birth suit the situation as they give opportunity to direct attention towards the sufferings of Li which are in contrast with the wickedness of Liu. Again the suggestion arises that if the popular formula had been the strongest factor in the development of these plots, the plays would show more signs of influence than they do.

The quality of the adventures in the oriental versions of the folk tale is markedly different from the quality felt in the versions Dr. Hu has discussed.

A variant widely distributed among the Tartar stems is as follows: Three daughters driven out by their step-mother are taken into the house of a Chan who marries the oldest. She bears a boy and a girl who have golden teeth and hair. The step-mother throws the children into the water, but the river god protects them and tells them of their origin. They return to the Chan.

A Burjat version tells how the two elder wives throw the child of the younger wife into the sea. The third child is hidden in the arms of the mother who substitutes a dog for it. Mother and child are saved. He soon gets magic objects and rediscovers his brothers.

In the Mongol version a Chan marries three sisters. The youngest is buried alive at the cross roads because the others had substituted dogs for her twin children. Boy wins a virgin who brings his dead mother back to life.

The Karagas of the Sino-Siberian border are said to recount that when God wandered on earth he wished to marry one of three sisters. He kills the two dogs that were substituted for his wife's first two children and sews the wife and the third child into a cow skin and throws them into the sea. The child finds its brothers. Incomplete.

Although the possibility that the historical material was influenced by the folk tale cannot be ruled out until many more thousands of Chinese marcben than we now have been collected and studied, there seems to be no direct connection between the folk variants now available and the literary variants under examination. If the influence was felt it was felt in an indirect fashion.

In the Chinese variants, the feeling against the Empress, foreshadowed in the historical matrix, blows with increasing force through all the later developments. This fact may have significance in an examination of the meaning of the tale.

7.

Another possible interpretation of the theme of persecuted queens is found in Dr. Schlanach's dissertation, Chaucer's Constance and Accused Queens (New York, 1927). Dr. Schlanach notes that the accusers in the tales are frequently mothers-in-law. Sometimes they are co-wives and at other times a father whose incestuous desires have been frustrated or a witch or a jealous person. The accusations are frequently of monstrous birth, infanticide, or infanticide with cannibalism. She notes the very widespread distribution of these tales. She does not think that an African and an Icelandic variant influenced each other, yet "a common denominator exists between Chaucer and an African folk tale, perhaps the heritage of a similar past of half forgotten customs, superstitions and beliefs which dis-

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*Sh sorik materialov dlya opisaniia matromoi z piemen Kanskiza (1-29, Tiflis, 1881-1901) XXXII, 3, 29 no. 3. See XXXIII, p.28 where discussion of distribution among Tartars is to be found.

†M. N. Changalov, Balagan kij Sbornik (Tomsk, 1903) p. 152.

‡Comte A. P. Benoisons, Legend i kazky centralnoi Azii (St. Petersburg, 1912)

play a remarkable similarity the world over.** After an examination of a large number of märchen, Schlauch concludes that "the crimes and accusations become more significant when compared with the customs and beliefs current among so-called primitive peoples to-day."† Incidents is understood and practiced in certain parts of the world. Animal birth, too, is the subject of sober belief. The royal mother-in-law "has an ancient and inherited hostility to the young wife who shares her son's affections." Husband's jealousy is conspicuously absent. Dr. Schlauch thinks that the evidence points to the origin of this formula in a particular kind of primitive culture, namely, matriarchy.

These tales, then, contain survivals of primitive customs "seneesol or abandoned, perhaps, but not forgotten. And it is remarkable how long such customs have their cruel logic of life and death and causation survive in the tradition of more enlightened times. They undergo softening or modification, it is true, but their original form is clearly visible."‡

Not only does Dr. Schlauch suggest that the stories can be traced to an earlier state of culture, matriarchal in organization, but he thinks they may be placed in a time when matriarchy was being replaced by patriarchy. Although this applies largely to the group about the incestuous desires of the märchen king, it must, as the accusations seem to be indifferent to the introduction they follow, apply also to the other variants.§

At some later time it may be possible to determine the geographical area and the cultural period when this formula was first used. For the present I am chiefly concerned with inquiring what light may be thrown on the Chinese variants by Dr. Schlauch's contention. This contention leads us to assume: first, that in a matriarchal cultural complex in some undefined area stories arose as statements of sober fact or as phantasies in which a daughter-in-law is persecuted by a mother-in-law eager to preserve her legal position; second, that at some later time other persecutors were substituted for the mother-in-law and other charges for the charges of infanticide and cannibalism;* and third, that, when these stories arise in cultural complexes where the new persecutors (jealous co-wives) and the new charges (infanticide and monstrous birth) are credible, the stories either arise from the more primitive matriarchal tales or do not belong to the cycle. Fourth, when these stories are told in fourteenth century England where matriarchy, father-daughter incest, infanticide, cannibalism and monstrous birth are presumably no longer social amenities; they show us "how long such cruel customs . . . survive in the traditions of more enlightened times."

In less than half of the folk versions and in none of the Chinese versions derived from the Sung history are there traces of the eminence of a mother-in-law or of cannibalism. Yet there is a strong affinity between the Chinese and the Western versions of the tale. This affinity is both morphological, in that the incidents of the Chinese versions agree closely with the incidents in many of the Western versions both in fact and in arrangement, and, to use a rough term, aesthetic in that the feeling in both groups is similar: for in both groups a charming and innocent lady is accused by jealous contemporaries of having committed a heinous crime against morality and society. She suffers greatly and is vindicated later by her own children or friends.

Emotions which might be translated as follows "I am a better person than I appear to be (grandiose)," "I am persecuted by people who are jealous of me (persecution)," "I shall be vindicated (self-pity and grandeur)" seem to be centred to the tale wherever it is found. The person of the persecutor and the nature of the persecution are irrelevant to the definition of the theme, and, unless all variants are collected and compared, can give us little information as to the provenance of the tale or its method of distribution. Charges and persecutors are the variant symbols whereby the feeling is made manifest. Many tales undoubtedly do preserve references to customs once alive in earlier forms of society, but even when these primitive survivals have been proved to exist, the task still remains of explaining how and why they should have survived. More similarity between episodes in folk-tales and the customs of backward peoples is not sufficient to prove that these customs are reminiscences of earlier cultures.

*Schlauch, op. cit., p. 8.
†Ibid., p. 60.
‡Schlauch, op. cit., p. 15.
§Schlauch, pp. 44-5.

*Clouston's suggestion in Burton's Supplementary Arabian Nights (1887), III, p. 647, that the story of Padmatai may be the original of the entire series is open to objection. This story he took from Mitra, Sanskrit Buddhlist Literature of Nepal (1882) p. 65. Padmavati bears twins for the king Brahmadatta. Jealous co-wives throw the children into the river and tell the king that Padmavati had eaten them. She is condemned to death, but is saved by a sympathetic servant. The sons are raised by a fisherman and later are recognized by their father, who also recognizes his wife in a pilgrimage to Benares. It would seem obvious that no adequate conjectures as to the geography or history of these phantasies can be of value until adequate surveys have been completed of the large dark territories of the märchen map. The work of the Finnish investigators offers valuable suggestions: Cf. Kaarle Krohn, Die Folkloristische Arbeitsmethoden (Oulu, 1926) pp. 32ff., and particularly pp. 53-5, and the same author's "Mann und Fuchs" (Commentationes der 250-jähr. ein der Hels. Univ., IX) pp. 42-47; also Bär (Wolf) und Fuchs in Journal de la Soc. sciences in ouugienne, VI; A. Aarne's investigations in the same journal, Vol. XXXVII, 1911.

However, "I do not mean to reduce the whole problem to a ridiculous simplicity by the statement of a dogma like this:
"A mother-in-law is a more primitive persecutor than an ambitious nephew;"
"The bearing of animals is a more primitive accusation than infidelity;" but some such priority does become probable in the fight of the märchen we have examined." Schlauch, op. cit. p. 61.

†To examine Dr. Schlauch's very slight anthropological evidence is probably unnecessary. In which matriarchal societies were male children killed and eaten? Europe and Asia? When it still occurs, as it does at times, in sophisticated cultures, is it to be considered as a survival from some earlier cultural complex? Is the knowledge that human beings bear monsters confined only to obeseters? Is the eminence between a man's mother and his wife only an historic survival.

‡Schlauch, op. cit., p. 15.
The hypothesis that the theme of the persecuted queen is a survival from a primitive social organization seems to break down on two counts: first, in that many of the variants of this theme do not preserve memories of primitive customs and there is no evidence to show whether these are older or younger than the variants which are supposed to preserve them; and second, there is no evidence to show by what mental process a large number of people, narrators and listeners, should have preserved their interest in customs, which, it is assumed, disappeared long before the stories were told.

8.

If it seems improbable that the Chinese variants under discussion were derived from the folk-tale, and if the hypothesis of primitive origin meets with difficulties, another approach may lead to a more adequate comprehension of this tale, and, by presenting the problem, serve to throw light on similar difficulties elsewhere. Inasmuch as the story of the persecuted queen is found in widely separated territories and among peoples whose interests show great diversity, the factor which is common to all of its variants must be ubiquitous and must be part of the mentality of the people who tell and hear the story.

It may or may not be a fact that many wives have been and still are persecuted by mothers-in-law or by jealous contemporaries, but it is a fact that many women permit themselves to believe that they are. This sense of persecution is not restricted to any geographical or cultural area. It is both more universal and more immediate than matriarchy or infanticide or cannibalism. Persecution in the extreme forms in which it is found in these tales is, one hopes, of rare occurrence in most cultures, but the phantasy of persecution is a commonplace of the psychiatric wards.

Although the relations between literary phantasy and mental pathology have been examined in some detail during the last twenty years, the experts disagree among themselves with such violence that their results are, thus far, of little service to folklore.* On a few points, however, there is general agreement. Few, for example, will dispute the general adequacy of MacCurdy’s statement: “One of the major functions of art is to produce in the reader . . . a subtle emotional reaction. This is done by portraying a situation with which the subject identifies himself unwittingly.”† Yet, if this is accepted, the study of the function and effectiveness of literature, which implies in itself the cause and effectiveness of it, becomes a psychological study. If regarded from this point of view the similarity between incidents in märchen and the imaginings of psychotics is not surprising. Indeed, the experience of literature—insofar as we identify ourselves as in narrative literature with the hero-

* I refer to the very broad statements of the kind found in Jung’s *Psychology of the Unconscious*, Hinrichsen’s *Zur Psychologie und Psychopathologie des Dichters*, Mordell’s *Erotic Motive in Literature*, books which contain shrewd observations incompletely documented or warped to fit uncertain hypotheses.


The Village and Caves at Yun Kang, near Ta-tung Fu, North Shansi. From the Water Colour Sketch by Anna M. Hotchkis.
might be called a psychosis, but it differs from the malignant psychoses in that the person who participates in it can with more or less ease leave the phantasy and return to the affairs of everyday life, in that it is better organized than most malignant psychoses, and in that it appears to be characterized by arcs of emotion.† In the story of the persecuted queen a marked similarity exists between the incidents of the folk-tale and a definite symptom complex, at present referred to by the term paranoia, most frequently found, I believe, in schizophrenia.‡ Any psychiatrist who was told by a female patient that she had been pursued by an incestuous father, that her father had sold her when a baby to a mysterious stranger, that she was the innocent cause of bringing a spell upon her brothers, that she had looked into a dark room and had seen something which she dared not speak of, or that she had been deprived of the power of speech by a malignant person, that she was a queen, that her children had been stolen from her by envious people, that she had been accused of infanticide, cannibalism, or of bearing monsters, would immediately suspect the existence of paranoia.§

The existence of the Chinese variants to the tale of the persecuted queen may be found to have significance in illustrating how in this case the literary imagination developed a series of events into a folk-tale. The constellation of ideas in the historical account generated a current of feeling in a person with a paranoid tendency or strengthened a current of feeling which was already present.¶ This feeling symbolized itself in the

*MacCurdy distinguishes between psychosis and insanity, in that ‘‘the latter is, strictly speaking, referring to the condition of one who is certified through legal procedure as being mentally incompetent. This implies serious disability, whereas psychosis being a medical term implies only the existence of a mental derangement, no matter how slight in degree.’’ Op. cit. pp. 582-583.

†An article in preparation will examine the relation between the marchen theme and the emotional arc. In the story of the persecuted queen the two arcs which may or may not be presented together are the introductory misfortunes of the heroine and her misfortunes as queen.

‡Paranoia (Paranoid state): mental disease characterized by ideas of reference, i.e., misinterpretation of the motives of other people, and ascription to them motives which they do not possess, such as ‘‘enmity towards the patient, and so on.’’ MacCurdy, op. cit., p. 582 (Italics are mine). Kraepelin characterizes ‘‘paranopia systematica’’ as an ‘‘extremely insidious development of continually progressive personality’’ (Italics are his) Emil Kraepelin, Dementia Praecox and Paraphrenia (Edinburgh, 1891), p. 284. Jelliffe and White, Diseases of the Nervous System (Philadelphia and New York, 1919), p. 658 report that Bleuler is of the opinion that paranoia takes its origin in certain constellations of ideas or complexes and the same nature as are formed in healthy individuals and that the disease element in it (the psychosis).

§If he should happen to be a Freudian psychiatrist of the extreme type, he would make great play with the erotic symbols—incestuous father, dark room, stupor and the like.

¶The questions of homo-and heterosexual sexuality enter here in the identification of the reader with the queen, but lead further into psychology than I am at present ready to go.
incidents in the Yuan play. These symbols, as they approached more closely to the paranoid emotional complex typical of the persecuted queen, served to arouse stronger currents of feeling which found the symbols used in the Pao Kang An. The process may be generalized.

A constellation of ideas or experiences arouses a feeling which symbolizes itself in incidents which transform the constellation. This transformation increases or “steps up” the feeling. By a process of experimentation, and, under the control of inhibiting factors, the feeling and its symbolization assume typical or classical forms and a märchen or a märchen theme is established.

ART NOTES

THE CAVE TEMPLES OF YÜN KANG

At Yün Kung near Ta-t'ung Fu in North Shansi there are some remarkable cave temples containing numerous figures, both large and small, that were hewn out of the living rock away back in time of the Northern Wei Dynasty, which extended from 386 to 552 A.D.

The Northern Wei Dynasty had its capital at Ta-t'ung Fu, which was then called Ta-p'ing Ch'eng. Its Emperors were Toba Tartars, and they exercised sway over a very extensive area. This dynasty must not be confused with the earlier Wei Dynasty of the Three Kingdoms period, which lasted from 200 to 264 A.D., nor yet with the later Western and Eastern Wei Dynasties into which it divided, and which lasted from 535 to 554 A.D. and 534 to 543 A.D., respectively, being overcome by the Northern Chi and the Northern Chou.

The Emperors of the Northern Wei were strong adherents to Buddhism, and they appear to have been the originators, as far as China is concerned, of the idea of excavating great cave temples and leaving images of Buddha and others carved in the solid rock. In fact these Yün Kung sculptures are the oldest examples of Buddhistic art so far found in China. Besides those occurring at Yün Kung, some Northern Wei cave temples and stone colossal are to be found at Lung Men, or the Dragon Gate, a deep gorge in the mountains about ten miles south of Lo-yang (Ho-nan Fu) in the province of Honan. Subsequently, during the T'ang Dynasty (613-906 A.D.), further cave temples and stone Buddhás were excavated and carved at Lung Men, being followed in the Sung Dynasty (960-1128) by cave temples at such places as Yen-an Fu in North Shansi containing exquisitely carved figures.

Another place where similar beautiful stone carvings are found is T'ien-lung Shan in the mountains to the south-west of Ta-i-yuan Fu in Shansi. The temple and sculptures of this locality date from 560 A.D. in the Northern Chou Dynasty well into the T'ang Dynasty. Yet other temples with these great sculptures of Buddha and his associates occur at Kang Hsien, Ta Shan and Yün Men Shan in Shantung.

The Emperors and Kings of these early dynasties ruling over various parts of what is now China have left behind them a wonderful heritage in stone, striking carvings of the Buddha and his attendants, telling subsequent generations of their magnificence and supplying the modern archaeologist and scholar with the key to the spread of the influence of Buddhistic and Hindu art through China to Japan.

A Stately High-relief Stone Carving in one of the Cave Temples at Yün Kung near Ta-t'ung Fu in North Shansi that date from the Northern Wei Dynasty. From the Tempora Colour Painting by Mary A. Mullikin exhibited last December in Shanghai.