



# Chapters 21-25

Masters and Servants

Hangzhou's Silk Brocade



# “The First Decade”

- We meet Wu Sung and then his brother, Wu Ta, P'an Chin-lien, and of course then Hsi-men Ch'ing, with the death of Wu Ta and exile of Wu Sung bringing us to the cusp of Chin-lien's entry into the Hsi-men harem...
- But just as this episode, borrowed almost intact from *Water Margin*, comes to a conclusion (Ch. 5), momentum is delayed by Hsi-men's being distracted by his marriage to Meng Yü-lou, and only through machinations through servants does Chin-lien lure him back into her life, followed by a few other twists and turns until she finally enters the household in Ch. 10
- These first 10 chapters thus establish a pattern of “decades” that are repeated over the next 90 chapters with a great deal of consistency: even the alternations between seasons, heat and cold, are replicated, sometimes in the same points, across the different decades



# “The Second Decade”

- The seduction of P'an Chin-lien is echoed in many ways in Ch. 11-20 by that of Li P'ing-erh, another unhappily married woman who finds satisfaction in her tryst with Hsi-men Ch'ing that culminates in her becoming his sixth wife
- Chin-lien and P'ing-erh (with P'ang Ch'un-mei) give the book its title, and form mirror images of each other: one is light-complexioned, the other dark; one is from a poor, humble background, the other wealthy and privileged; one is acid-tongued, feisty, and vindictive, the other one the butt of repeated jokes from her rivals, “slow on the uptake”, credulous, and generally (but not always) forgiving and tolerant toward others
- Their rivalry is the most spectacular, fiery “show” until P'ing-erh dies in Ch. 62; in each of these decades, their struggle to monopolize Hsi-men's affections takes new twists and turns






# Writing as “Fabric”

## 蘇秦 璇璣圖 Su Qin's Palindrome Brocade

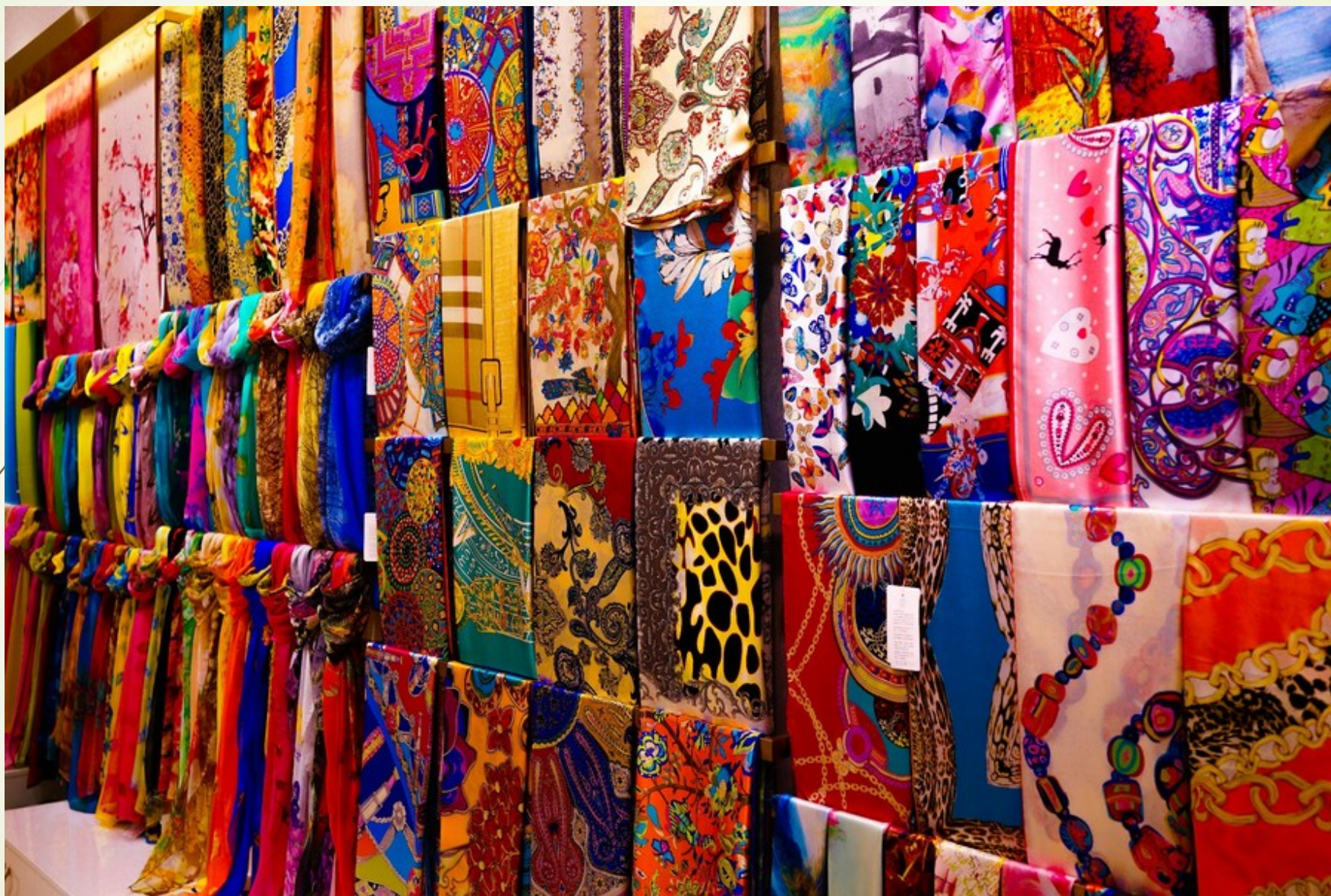
琴流楚激絃商秦曲發聲悲摧藏音和詠思惟空堂心憂增慕懷慘傷仁  
芳應東步階西遊王姿窈窕伯邵南周風興自后妃荒經離所懷歎嗟  
蘭休桃林陰翳桑懷歸思淑窈窕女衛鄭楚屬節中關淫遐瞻傷情  
凋翔飛燕巢鳩雙鵲遊遐路河遐志詠歌長歎不飛飛清韓容朗明  
燿熙長君思悲好舊鄉悲情我感傷情多殷憂龍事自致君夢仁賢別  
春方殊離仁君身兼愁我章微恨微元悼歎威知沙馳窮離懷貴辭  
牆禽心漢之品育施飄飄生天地德實平均專通身架殊乖雁爲  
面伯改者步飄飄生天地德實平均專通身架殊乖雁爲  
殊意誠暉親聞微離喬木誰陰一感寄飭散哀傷有  
感故遺舊廢故離子惟新貞微輝群悲春剛  
故霜水齊潔志清純望誰思懷所親



# Parallelism (*duizhang*)

- CHING-CHI FLIRTS WITH A BEAUTY ON THE LANTERN FESTIVAL
- HUI-HSIANG ANGRILY HURLS ABUSE AT LAI-WANG'S WIFE
- 經濟元夜戲嬌姿
- 惠祥怒詈來旺婦
- Chapter 25:
- Red-rouged powdered face facing red-rouged powdered face;
- Jade-white creamy shoulders next to jade-white creamy shoulders.
- Two pairs of jadelike wrists tug and then retug
- Four tiny golden lotuses are tossed and then retossed





# Hangzhou 杭州





# Asian Games Stadium, Hangzhou



# The West Lake











# Birthday Gifts for Ts'ai Ching 蔡京

- ▶ Birthday gifts sent to Ts'ai Ching in *Water Margin* are the occasion for the first major theft by the bandits of Liangshanbo (Chapter 15): this leads to Song Jiang's imprisonment for protecting the thieves, then eventually to his joining them and eventually rising to lead them in rebellion
- ▶ Hsi-men Ch'ing's relationship with Ts'ai, already alluded to in Chapter 9 (when bribes are paid to get Wu Sung banished) and Chapter 17 (when Hsi-men Ta-chieh and Ch'en Ching-chi arrive from the capital), becomes progressively more important to Hsi-men, enabling him to ascend the "ladder of success" through successively pricier gifts or outright cash
- ▶ The corruption at the top of the imperial bureaucracy (Ts'ai, etc.) and the shady goings on of members of Hsi-men's family are linked through Lai Wang & other servants who attend to outside "business" (=bribery, etc.)



# Yangzhou







# The Novel as *Microcosm* of the World

- The landmarks (temples, streets, etc.) of the town of Ch'ing-ho are in many cases identical in name to those of Ming Dynasty Beijing, the seat of both temporal and ritual power extending over the entire realm
- The different constituents of both the town and the household similarly constitute the entirety of society: imperial relatives and household members, eunuchs, both military officials and civil officials, lower-level functionaries, merchants, clergy, laborers, servants, prostitutes and other entertainers...
- Ming society was both highly stratified yet also fluid, allowing for both upward and downward mobility; servants & prostitutes (the bottom) could conceivably move upward, as well as the reverse, and they did

# Wu Yueniang



# Sung Hui-lien





# 療妒緣 "A Union to Cure Jealousy" (ca. 1600 novella)

- ▶ "When you marry a wise wife, then everything is harmonious, and all discord disappears. But if one marries a jealous woman who is always on guard against her husband's waywardness, following his every move, then their arguments can be heard from the street and the husband will have not a moment of peace. In such cases, he'd be better off without a wife..."
- ▶ 人家娶了個賢慧妻子，則琴瑟相調，倡隨和樂，從此千祥駢集，戾氣盡消。若是娶著一個妒婦，時刻提防丈夫，凡行動舉止，都著猜疑，還要詬誶之聲，徹于戶外，使做丈夫的一刻不能安穩，不如無妻的人，反得逍遙自在。無如古來婦人，百病可醫，惟妒難治。若犯了一個「妒」字，便病人膏肓，隨你蘇張之舌，也說化他不轉。即至威勢相加，刀劍恐嚇，彼寧甘就死，斷乎不肯通融。所以有妒婦的人家，往往至于斬宗絕嗣。我想起來，婦人之妒，惟恐自己丈夫被婢妾分去了歡娛。