

CHAPTERS 36-40

MUSICAL & THEATRICAL ENTERTAINMENTS

THE BUDDHIST "PIETY" OF WOMEN

THE DAOIST RITUAL OF CHIAO (JIAO) 醮

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

ENTERTAINMENTS & RITUALS

- THE PACE AND FREQUENCY OF MUSICAL, THEATRICAL, & RITUAL ENTERTAINMENTS RISES TO A NEW PITCH IN CH. 36-40:
- CH. 36: SUZHOU ACTORS PERFORM THEATRICAL SONGS FOR AN CH'EN AND TS'AI YUN; SHU-T'UNG DRESSES UP AS A WOMAN, PERFORMS & SINGS WITH THE ACTORS
- CH. 37: HSI-MEN'S SEDUCTION OF WANG LIU-ERH OCCURS WHILE SURROUNDED BY ILLUSTRATIONS OF SCENES FROM *ROMANCE OF WESTERN CHAMBER*
- CH. 38: SCENE OF CHIN-LIEN SINGING IN THE SNOW TO P'I-P'A ACCOMPANIMENT
- CH. 39: DAOIST STORYTELLING FOLLOWED BY BUDDHIST SERMON OF FIFTH PATRIARCH
- CH. 40: PREPARATIONS FOR PERFORMANCE OF *ROMANCE OF WESTERN CHAMBER*; CHIN-LIAN DRESSES UP AS A MAID (THE MAID HONGNIANG IS A CENTRAL CHARACTER IN THIS PLAY)



NUNS AND THEIR STORIES

- BUDDHIST NUNS WERE TRAINED IN ENTERTAINMENT GENRES LIKE “PRECIOUS SCROLLS” (BAOJUAN) THAT THEY RECITED TO FEMALE AUDIENCES, BOTH IN HOMES & AT TEMPLES
- WOMEN VISITED CONVENTS AND TEMPLES TO PRAY FOR FERTILITY OR FOR THE HEALTH OF CHILDREN, BUT THIS WAS CRITICIZED OR BARELY TOLERATED BY MEN; YUEH-NIANG NARROWLY ESCAPES A RAPIST NEAR THE END OF THE NOVEL WHILE ON A PILGRIMAGE TO MT. TAI
- NUNS WERE CONSIDERED DANGEROUS TO FEMALE PARISHIONERS, TO WHOM THEY DANGLED REWARDS (SONS, HEALTH, SALVATION, ETC.) FOR MATERIAL SUPPORT OR OTHER FAVORS; THEY ARE PART OF THE GROUP OF “THREE GRANNIES AND SIX HAGS” (SANGU LIUPO) WHO ARE OFTEN MOCKED BY HSI-MEN AND OTHERS IN THE NOVEL

CHIAO/JIAO 醮

- DAOIST RITUALS ARE USUALLY ELABORATE PERFORMANCES OF SPEECHES & ACTS OF SUPPLICATION TO VARIOUS DEITIES FOR PROSPERITY & GOOD HEALTH
- THE DAOIST OFFICIANT WU TSUNG-CHE'S LUXURIOUS LIFESTYLE, CLOTHING, & HIS TEMPLE'S OPULENCE MIRROR HSI-MEN'S OSTENTATIOUSNESS
- CHIN-LIEN'S JOKES ABOUT DAOISTS' SEXUAL DISSOLUTION ARE ALSO MEANT FOR THE BUDDHIST NUNS PRESENT; SHE OFTEN POKES FUN AT THE MISBEHAVIOR OF THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS (IT TAKES ONE TO KNOW ONE)
- KWAN-KO IS FRIGHTENED BY THE DAOIST OUTFIT HE'S PUT INTO FOR THE CEREMONY; LUXURY & OSTENTATIOUSNESS WERE FEARED AS TEMPTATIONS TO SPIRITS SEEKING TO SNATCH CHILDREN, WHO WERE DISGUISED TO AVOID THIS







古德明 攝



JUSTICE & HYPOCRISY

- HSI-MEN CH'ING REVELS IN HIS POWER TO ADMINISTER PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT AS A JUDGE IN THE COURTROOM, AND INCREASINGLY TO HIS SERVANTS AND WIVES AT HOME, TOO
- SOMEHOW, HE IS BLIND TO HIS OWN MISDEMEANORS...
- THE PERFORMANCES OF PLAYS, SONGS, AND OTHER ENTERTAINMENTS HIGHLIGHT THE IRONIC DISTANCE BETWEEN WHAT CHARACTERS SAY OR DO, AND THE REALITY BEHIND THEM, DRAMATIZING THE ABSENCE OF SELF-REFLECTION OF THE CHARACTERS, EVEN THOSE WHO ARE GOOD AT SEEING THROUGH THE FAULTS OR DISHONESTY OF OTHERS, SUCH AS CHIN-LIEN
- HAN TAO-KUO AND WANG LIU-ERH'S ENTANGLEMENTS IN BUSINESS, PLEASURE, AND GOVERNMENT (E.G. HAN AI-CHIEH'S MARRIAGE TO MAJORDOMO CHAI CH'IEN IN THE CAPITAL) SIGNALS THE FURTHER UNRAVELING OF THE MORES, RULES, OR SUMPTUARY LAWS, ETC. THAT THIS FAMILY AND SOCIETY AS A WHOLE WERE STILL BOUND BY (AT LEAST IN THEORY)