

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide, consisting of a network of light blue lines and small circles, resembling a circuit board or a stylized tree structure, set against a dark blue background.

JIN PING MEI, CH. 61-70

THE PLOT THICKENS

THE END GROWS NEAR

CH. 71-100

CH. 61-80: THE HOUSEHOLD BEGINS TO FRAY

- The extravagance of P'ing-erh's funeral rites prefigure the sumptuousness of the parties held & gifts given in business of silk, travel to the capital of 65-70
- Hsi-men's conquest of Lady Lin (Chaps. 69 & 78) & of the wetnurse Ju-i lead him to develop physical, mental symptoms of overextension (vertigo, "empty")
- Bickering & mutual recriminations rise to new intensity, with Yue-niang sporadically giving vent to her dissatisfaction with her husband, Chin-lien, etc.
- Echoes of Sung Hui-lien, Dame Wang, Lady Lin (Chin-lien's 1st employer), etc.

IMPERIAL INSIGNIA GUARD (JINWUWEI) IMPERIAL EMBROIDERED GUARD (JINYIWEI)

- The Imperial Insignia Guard (Song Dynasty) was known for corruption, and under Chu Mien was implicated in the economically & socially disruptive construction of Mt. Ken Imperial Garden (Genyue), with its massive stones
- The Imperial Embroidered Guard (Ming Dynasty) was large and pervasive, with officers scattered across the empire engaged in surveillance; they were feared by commoners and civil officialdom alike, esp. during the reigns of the Zhengde (1505-21) and Jiajing (1521-65) Emperors

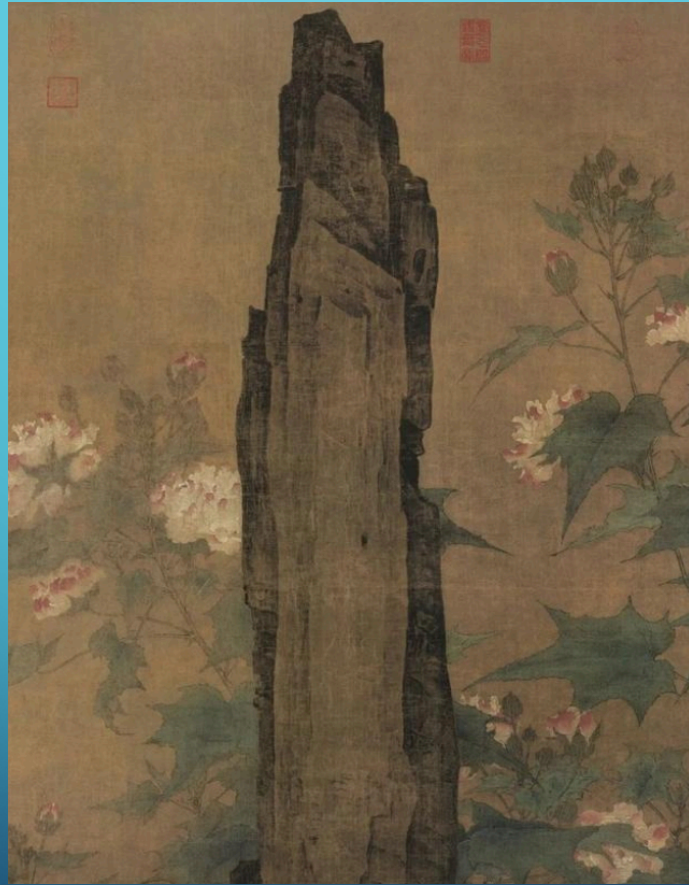


祥龍石者云於珠碧池之南等
洲橋之西相對則勝瀛也其勢
騰湧若虬龍出焉瑞應之狀
容巧態莫能具絕妙而言之小



Shizilin Garden 獅子林, Suzhou





HOUSEHOLD AS MICROCOSM OF THE REALM

- Solely because the wicked and sycophantic
- occupied positions of power,
- It was only appropriate that the Central Plain
- should become soaked in blood...
- Just as womenfolk may ruin a household,
- Petty men may reduce the realm to chaos;
- It is only natural.
- (Chapter 70, pp. 304-5)

TYRANNY AND LECHERY LEAD TO...

- The two trysts with Wang Liu-erh & Chin-lien in Ch. 61 foreshadow Hsi-men's death (of sexual exhaustion after back-to-back sessions with them in Ch. 79)
- Hsi-men's sexual appetite grows commensurately with his appetite for power, bolstered by his trips to the capital, "adoption" by Ts'ai Ching, promotion to full judicial commissioner, wheeling and dealing with the dignitaries & merchants who pass through his "jurisdiction," & his cruelty to servants, etc.
- Chin-lien is compared to Daji, the fox spirit blamed for bewitching the last emperor (Zhou) of the Shang Dynasty (ca. 1100 BCE)

THE DESTRUCTION OF EVERYTHING

She is a ravenous beast attired in silk and satin.
Her bed is an execution ground,
Her ivory couch a penitentiary.
Her willowy brows are blades,
Her starry eyes are swords,
Her ruby lips are spears.
Her sweet mouth and her fragrant tongue, Mask the designs of a snake or scorpion

No one who succumbs to her is able to avoid disaster.

They are but fine dust in fluid,
Or snowflakes in scalding water.
The states of Ch'in and Ch'u were hardy, The states of Wu and Yüeh were powerful, But they perished on her account.
You may be warned that beauty is a deadly sword,
That slays us all; but few defend themselves.

(Ch. 79, pp. 639-40)

P'ING-ERH & HSI-MEN CH'ING: DEATH BY CH'I 氣

- Yueh-niang blames P'ing-erh's death on the accumulated anger aroused by Chin-lien's tirades against her, which she can't "discharge" healthily
- Anger is "ch'i": that is, the vital essence that must circulate, not accumulate
- Hsi-men also dies from "accumulated toxicity," also manifested in his genitalia, leading to their swelling & eventual burst/deflation, an event precipitated by Chin-lien's lust & following on the heels of nonstop trysts with Lady Lin, Wang Liu-erh, Ju-i, & a previously unknown servant (Lai-chueh's wife Hui-yuan)

MAIDS IN THE MIDDLE

- Yuxiao's name literally means "jade [vertical end-blown] bamboo flute"
- Her prominence rises (as Shu-t'ong's paramour, Chin-lien's spy, & later as the keeper of Yue-niang's silver) in Ch. 64 with the extended musical, theatrical entertainments of these chapters; & also, as image of sexual debauchery
- Ch'un-mei is becoming increasingly uppity, engages in verbal sparring with a blind singer (Shen) that irks Yue-niang (Ch. 75); she later marries Commander Chou Hsiu (whom Hsi-men disparages for promotion); the plum that "blooms"

“FROM HOT TO COLD”

- P'ing-erh dies after the “Double-Ninth” or “Double Yang” festival in the waning days of Indian Summer; her death, funeral, & its reverberations take 7 chapters to finally wind down, as weather turns colder (she first entered household on snowy day)
- Hsi-men dies 3 months later during the Lunar New Year festivities (as he prepares to celebrate the Lantern Festival), amidst freezing weather when he and his partners ward off the cold temps as they engage in extreme debauchery; but his demise and the coffin, funeral rites, etc. are given relatively little space compared to hers
- Ch. 81-100 continue this stylistic change: descriptive passages are short, events move quickly with few details, reflecting the family's loss of wealth, position, influence

DISCUSSION

1. Shu-t'ung's theft and funeral services for P'ing-erh: a connection?
2. Hsi-men's (in)sincere mourning for P'ing-erh: Wang Liu-erh & wetnurse Ju-i?
3. Entertainment for Defender-in-Chief Huang Ching-ch'en , P'ing-erh's funeral procession, and Mt. Ken Imperial Park project: combined ostentatiousness?
4. Tai-an's assessment of the character of P'ing-erh, Chin-lien, Yueh-niang: accurate?
5. Seduction of Lady Lin: echoes of P'ing-erh?
6. Is it clear by Ch. 70 that the end is nigh?