

philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University • Loyola Heights, Quezon City • 1108 Philippines

The Country Ma-i-[tung] in the Late Ming Novel Hsi-yang Chi

Roderich Ptak

Philippine Studies vol. 34, no. 2 (1986): 200–208

Copyright © Ateneo de Manila University

Philippine Studies is published by the Ateneo de Manila University. Contents may not be copied or sent via email or other means to multiple sites and posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's written permission. Users may download and print articles for individual, noncommercial use only. However, unless prior permission has been obtained, you may not download an entire issue of a journal, or download multiple copies of articles.

Please contact the publisher for any further use of this work at philstudies@admu.edu.ph.

<http://www.philippinestudies.net>
Fri June 27 13:30:20 2008

Texts and Documents

The Country Ma-i-[tung] in the Late Ming Novel *Hsi-yang chi* RODERICH PTAK

The *Hsi-yang chi* (*Journey to the Western Ocean*)¹ is one of the lesser known novels of the late Ming period. Lo Mou-teng, who wrote a preface to this book in 1597, is usually assumed to be its author.² Like the famous novel *Hsi-yu-chi*, *Hsi-yang chi* may be regarded as a "novel of quest" in terms of the theory of archetypes

1. The full title of the novel is *San-pao t'ai-chien Hsi-yang chi t'ung-su yen-i*, i.e. *The Eunuch San-pao travels to the Western Ocean*.

2. Walter Goode, "On the Sanbao taijian xia xiyang-ji and Some of Its Sources" (Ph.D. thesis, Canberra: Australian National University, 1976, photocopied.) pp. 7-9, lists twelve editions of Lo's novel. This list can be amplified by two rare prints: an illustrated edition of 1923 in 100 hui, 16 chs., 8 vols., prepared by Chiang-tso Book Store, n. p. (a copy is in the University of Toronto), and an edition in 100 hui, 4 vols., prepared by Kuang-i Book Store (Shanghai, n.d.), which is listed in the *Catalogue of the Asia Library of the University of Michigan*, vol. 10, p. 467 (upon request, however, I was told that this copy had been misplaced). There is also a very recent modern edition in 2 vols., published by Shang-hai ku-chi ch'u-pan-she late in 1984. I was unable to get a copy of this print when writing this paper. Finally, Tien I Press (Taipei) informed me in February 1985 that a new edition is scheduled to come out in the latter half of 1985. In the present paper I refer to the illustrated edition of the famous Hong Kong publishing house Wu-kuei-t'ang (n.d.). This text is divided in 4 vols., 4 ch. and 100 hui. Its cover title runs *San-pao t'ai-chien hsia Hsi-yang, T'ung-su li-shih ch'ang-p'ien hsiao-shuo*. In front of the table of contents there is the additional title *Hui-t'u Hsi-yang t'ung-su yen-i*. The text of the Ma-i-tung- section, however, is reproduced from the famous late Ming edition by the Pu-yieh-lou Publishing House. This edition is briefly described in Liu Ts'un-yan, *Chinese Popular Fiction in Two London Libraries* (Hong Kong: Lung-men Book Store, 1967), pp. 174, 276, and Li Ts'un-yan, *Ming Ch'ing Chung-kuo t'ung-su hsiao-shuo pan-pen yen-chiu* (Hong Kong: Meng-shih t'u-shu kung-ssu, 1972), p. 33. For other studies on *Hsi-yang chi* see Hsiang Ta, "Kuan-yü San-pao t'ai-chien hsia Hsi-yang chi chung tzu-liao", in *Hsiao-shuo yüeh-pao*, 20:1 (January 1929), pp. 47-67; Chao Ching-shen, "San-pao t'ai-chien Hsi-yang chi", in *Ch'ing-nien chieh* 9:1 (June 1936), pp. 121-44; Kuo Chen-i, *Chung-kuo hsiao-shuo shih* (Ch'ang-sha: Commercial Press, 1939), vol. 2, pp. 382-428 (a reprint of Chao Ching-shen's article); J. J. L. Duyvendak, "A Chinese Divina

which was developed by Northrop Frye and others.³ The entire book comprises of 100 chapters. These may be divided into three major parts.⁴

Part 1 (chs. 1 to 7) describes the birth of the Buddhist monk Chin Pi-feng (an incarnation of Buddha Dipamkara), his youth, his maturation and his subdual of evil spirits. Chin is the hero of the novel. His role is similar to that of Tripitaka in *Hsi-yu-chi*, who is to save the world from evil.

Part 2 (chs. 8 to 14) describes how Chang T'ien-shih, a Taoist magician who stands for the satanic aspects of life, draws emperor Yung-lo's attention to the fact that the imperial seal (an object that according to Confucian belief represents the ruler's heavenly legitimation to govern the world) is missing. Chang, ambitious and egoistic, offers his services to search for this seal on the condition that the Buddhists be persecuted in return. Blinded by his tempter, Yung-lo accepts Chang's proposal. The order for the Buddhist persecution is given and as a result the "natural harmony" in the

Commedia", in *T'oung Pao* 41 (1952), pp. 255-316; J. J. L. Duyvendak, "Desultory Notes on the 'Hsi-yang chi'", in *T'oung Pao*, 42 (1953), S.1-25; Andre Levy, *Etudes sur le conte et le roman chinois* Publications de L. Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient, no. 82 (Paris: Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient, 1971) pp. 115-46; N. E. Borevskaia, "Literatur' nie Istochniki Rannego Kitaiskogo Romana-Epopei (Lo Mou-teng 'Plavanie Cheng Ho po Indiiskomu Okeanu', 1597 g.)", in *Narody Azii i Afriki*, 1973: 3, pp. 91-100; N. E. Borevskaia, *Lo Mou-teng "Plavanie Cheng Ho po Indiiskomu Okeanu" (1597)* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo Universiteta, 1970; copy of *Aforeferat Dissertatsii*); N. E. Borevskaia, "Moreplavatel' v Mire Dukhov (Kitaiski Zagrobnyi Mir i ego Khodozhestvennoe Osmyslenie v Romane XVI v.)", in *Izuchenie Kitaiskoi Literatury v SSSR Sbornik Statei k Shestidesiatiletiu Chlena - Korrespondenta AN SSSR*, ed. H. T. Fedorenko (Moscow: Nauka, 1973), pp. 121-41; N.E. Borevskaia, "Nekotorye Cherty Romana o Kitaiskikh Konkistadorakh", in *Teoreticheskie Problemy Vostochnykh Literatur* (Moscow: Nauka, 1970), pp. 233-39; N. E. Borevskaia, "Otrazhenie Kolonial'noi Politiki Kitaia v Romane XVI v. 'Plavanie Cheng Ho po Indiiskomu Okeanu'", in *Literatura arodov Vostoka Sbornik Smamei* (Moscow: Nauka, 1970), pp. 52-64; N.E. Borevskaia, "Sravnitel'nyi Analiz 'Lusiad' i Romana 'Plavanie Cheng Ho po Indiiskomu Okeanu'", in *Narody Azii i Afriki* 1969:4, pp. 111-16. In some histories of Chinese Literature and some handbooks *Hsi-yang chi* is also briefly discussed.

3. The only published interpretation of *Hsi-yang chi* is a half-hearted archetypal approach by Hou Chien. See his "San-pao t'ai-chien Hsi-yang chi t'ung-su yen-i - i ko fang-fa ti shih-yen", in *Chung Wai Literature Monthly* 1:2 (June 1973), pp. 8-26. Also see my long discussion in "Die Abenteuer Cheng Ho's in Drama und Roman der Ming-Zeit" (Heidelberg: Heidelberg University, 1984; unpublished Habil. thesis), pt.2. For an archetypal approach to *Hsi-yu-chi* see, for example, Karl S. Y. Kao, "An Archetypal Approach to Hsi-yu chi", in *Tamkang Review* 5:2 (October 1974), pp. 63-97.

4. For this partition see, for example, Kuo Chen-i, *Chung-kuo hsiao-shuo shih*, vol. 2, p. 425; Fan Yen-ch'iao, *Chung-kuo hsiao-shuo shih* (Hong Kong: Hua-hsia ch'u-pan-she, 1967), pp. 139-40; Ou Itai, *Le Roman chinois* (Paris: Les Editions Vega, 1933), p. 44. Lu Hsün, *Chung-kuo hsiao-shuo shih-lüeh*, in *Lu Hsün ch'uan-chi* (Peking: Jen-min wen-hsüeh ch'u-pan-she, 1973), vol. 9, p. 316. The *Hsi-yu chi* can be divided in a similar manner. See, for example, Kao, "Archetypal Approach", p. 65.

universe is destroyed, the "original sin" is committed and "paradise" is lost. At this point Chin Pi-feng enters the imperial palace. He defeats Chang in a magic contest in order to stop the world from tumbling into chaos and falling prey to "satan." Having thus obtained control over his enemy, Chin gains the emperor's confidence and gives his advice on how and where to search for the seal, although he intuitively knows that the seal will not be found because it is inseparably linked to the evil.

Part 3 (chs. 15 to 100) describes the actual quest. A huge fleet under the command of Cheng Ho and Wang Ching-hung sets out for the Western Ocean where the seal is suspected to be.⁵ Chin and Chang accompany this force as advisors, the first always keeping control over the latter. The ships pass nine major countries and several smaller places (the total numbers $49 + 1 = 50$). These are all in turn forced to surrender and to submit tribute to the Chinese.⁶ In the course of these events countless battles are fought and many enemies are killed by Cheng Ho, Wang Ching-hung and Chang T'ien-shih but not by Chin Pi-feng who, as a Buddhist monk, abstains from unnecessary violence. Finally, the fleet reaches Kuei-kuo, the "Country of the Dead." Here King Yama accuses the Chinese of having committed many murders. Yet, instead of punishing the culprits, he hints to Chin who is also guilty in that he could have prevented much of the bloodshed by his magical powers, that he should exalt the dead through a ceremony so as to redeem the sinners from their sins and to assure the fleet's safe return to Nanking, the imperial capital. This is the crucial point in

5. For the historical Cheng Ho and Wang Ching-hung and their seven expeditions see, for example, J. J. L. Duyvendak, "The True Dates of the Chinese Maritime Expeditions in the Early Fifteenth Century", in *T'oung Pao*, 34 (1939), pp. 341-412; Cheng Hao-sheng, *Cheng Ho i-shih hui-pien* (Taipei: Chung-hua shu-chu, 1970); Cheng Hao-sheng & Cheng I-chün, *Cheng Ho hsia Hsi-yang tzu-liao hui-pien* (Chi-nan: Ch'i Lu shu-she, 1980), vol. 1; Fan Chung-i & Wang Chen-hua, *Cheng Ho hsia Hsi-yang* (Peking: Hai-yang ch'u-pan she, 1982); L. C. Goodrich & Fang Chaoying (eds.), *Dictionary of Ming Biography*, 1368-1644 (New York, London: Columbia University Press, 1976), vol. 1, pp. 194-200, vol. 2, pp. 1364-66.

6. This calculation does not include the following places: Pulau Condore which is only circumnavigated but not visited; Sembilan which is briefly mentioned but with whom no contacts are established; five places mentioned at the end of the descriptive section on Janggolo and three at the end of the Java segment — these eight places cannot be considered as separate countries; Sedayu, Sri Vijaya and Honore which are only mentioned but not passed; Hami which is part of the Champa-section. If these are added to the 50, the total amounts to 64 places (a correlation to the 64 hexagrams?). The reader will certainly recall the 81 adventures in *Hsi-yu chi* which are also based on a numerical play with mythological numbers.

the novel. Chin understands Yama's hints and, consequently, performs a ceremony similar to the "Great Mass of Salvation" ("shui-lu ta-hui") in *Hsi-yu chi*. This "mass" also serves the triumphant exaltation of the hero himself. Chin proves that he has not lost his state of enlightenment, that he is as mature as he was prior to his descent to earth. The final section of the novel describes Cheng Ho's return to Nanking and the presentation of tribute to emperor Yung-lo. The imperial seal which is not only linked to "satan" but which is also a symbol of vanity and illusion, is not found in the course of the quest. The implications are clear. "Satan's" efforts remain unsatisfied, his eternal struggle for superiority cannot lead to any positive results. On the contrary, he is taught a lesson. The dark forces are definitely put under control. The entire quest, a series of trials for Cheng Ho's men, for the Chinese commanders and, of course, for Chin Pi-feng, may thus be regarded as a gradual subdual of the evil with which the world has been contaminated ever since Yung-lo's "temptation." Yet, the order which prevails on earth at the end of the novel is basically the same as it was immediately following the defeat of Chang—a "temporary" and "artificial" order and not of "paradisaic harmony" as prior to the "fall."

THE DESCRIPTION OF MA-I-[TUNG]

We shall now look at a brief passage which occurs in chapter 50 of *Hsi-yang chi* and which may be of interest to the Philippine reader. In this chapter, Cheng Ho is on his way to Malacca. In the area of the Strait of Singapore, his men encounter a group of pirates, some of whom claim to be from a place called Ma-i-tung. These pirates are reprimanded for their actions but no drastic measures are taken against them. After this interlude, the Chinese are forced to anchor their ships near Lung-ya-men for a longer period of time due to the rise of strong winds.⁷ Now Cheng Ho orders his officers to go ashore and to explore the neighbouring countries. Several days later they return to the ships together with some foreign delegates who offer tribute to the Chinese. Among these delegates there is an embassy of Ma-i-tung which is guided to Cheng Ho by a certain Ma Ju-lung, one of the Chinese commanders. Now follows the text:

7. Lung-ya-men stands for Langkasuka.

As to the second group of foreigners, they also had their hair tied up in a mallet-like tress. They wore a long shirt around the upper part of the body and patterned cloth around the waist.⁸ They bowed to the ground and offered [some gifts]: tortoise-shell, bee-wax, betel-nuts, cloth of [various] patterns, cauldrons of bronze, ingots of iron and liquor made of sugar-cane.

Cheng Ho asked [them]: "Where do you come from?"

The foreigners replied: "Our country is called Ma-i-tung. The legends of our forefathers tell of [a certain] Mr. Ma-i who once came to this place to practice fortune-telling for a living. As our people did not understand anything about it he could not sell his art. [Soon,] he did not have enough cloth to put on, he did not have enough food to eat, and felt terribly cold. For this reason our country was called 'Ma-i-tung' (i.e. 'Ma-i cold')."

Cheng Ho said: "What does your country produce?"

The foreigners answered: "The fields are fertile. As to the five kinds of grain, we harvest twice as much as other countries. We also boil sea water to obtain salt and we ferment sugar-cane to obtain liquor."⁹

Cheng Ho asked: "How about the customs [of your people]?"

The foreigners replied: "In [our] customs [we esteem the qualities of] chastity and uprightness. When a husband dies the widow cuts her hair and scratches her face.¹⁰ She does not eat for seven days and sleeps beside the corpse of her husband. Most of the women [who follow this custom] also die. If after seven days they are not dead, the relatives urge them to eat and to drink. On the day when the husband is cremated, many [of the widows] throw themselves into the flames and die also. If by chance they [still] survive, they will never marry again."

When Cheng Ho heard this story he burst out laughing thrice and said: "The barbarians practise such chastity and righteousness — what a remarkable thing!"

He then ordered [his men] to accept the gifts [from the people of Ma-i-tung] and to reward [the foreigners] with scarfs and hats, various cloth, shoes and socks. He also took [an assortment of] female garments, caps and shirts to be given to the chaste women of that country. In addition, he gave them a cardboard sign with four large characters written on it: 'Country of chastity and righteousness'. [These words] he told them to carve into a stone tablet and to set it up in the middle of a busy market square (i.e. perhaps in the capital).

8. In Wang Ta-yüan, *Tao-i chih-lüeh chiao-shih*, annotated and ed. by Su Chung-wai chiao-t'ung shih-chi Chi-ch'ing (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1981; p. 33, it is said that the people wore blue cotton shirts. Other editions of this book have different readings.

9. In *Tao-i chih-lüeh chiao-shih*, p. 33, liquor is obtained from treacle or dregs.

10. "Li mien" should read "sui mien", i.e. "to scratch the face", to "Mutilate the face", etc. See Fei Hsin, annotated and ed. by Feng Ch'eng-chün *Hsing-ch'a sheng-lan chiao-chu*, (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chu, 1954), hou-chi, pp. 10-11.

SOME REMARKS ON THE TEXT

Whether Ma-i-tung (Mo-i, Ma-i, Ma-yeh, Ma-yeh-weng, etc.) stands for Mindoro in the Philippines as related through the famous accounts of Chao Ju-kua and Wang Ta-yüan, or for Billiton Island in the Indonesian Archipelago as suggested by Fei Hsin is a question that has interested many scholars.¹¹ It can be reduced to the following formula: Fei Hsin's suggestion is based on a misunderstanding of Wang's description. Lo Mou-teng's descrip-

11. There are several references to Ma-i-tung (under this or other names) in old Chinese records. Here is a list of references in Yüan and Ming works only (excluding ritters and works like the *Ming shih* which were compiled later): T'ao-t'ao, et al. *Sung shih*, (Shanghai: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1977), vol. 20, ch. 489, pp. 14093-94; *Tao-i chih-lueh chiao-shih*, pp. 33-38; *Hsing-ch'a sheng-lan chiao-chu*, hou-chi, pp. 10-11; Chang Huang, comp. *T'u-shu pien, Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu chen-pen, wu chi, tzu-pu*, (Taipei: Shang-wu yin-shu-kuan, 1974, vol. 14, ch. 51, p. 6031; Yang I-ku'uei *Hsüan-lan-t'ang ts'ung-shu*, 2-7 I ch'eng, (Shanghai: Hsuan-lan chü-shih, 1941), vol. 5, ch. 7, 61a; *San-ts'ai t'u-hui*, compiled by Wang Ch'i (Taipei: Ch'eng-wen ch'u-pan-she, 1970), vol. 1, p. 451; *Lu Jung, Shu-yüan tsa-chi*, Ts'ung-shu ch'i-ch'eng, ch'u-pien, 329-30, (Shanghai: Shang-wu yin-shu-kuan, 1936, vol. 1, ch. 3, p. 23. — Western works on Ma-i-tung (or Ma-i, etc.) contain translations of and comments to these and other works but no references to the description in *Hsi-yang chi*. See, for example, W. P. Groeneveldt, *Notes on the Malay Archipelago and Malacca Compiled from Chinese Sources* (Batavia: W. Bruining, 1876), pp. 78-79; Gustav Schlegel, "Geographical Notes, VI: Ma-it — Ma-i-tung — Ma-iep-ung", in *T'oung Pao* 9 (1898), pp. 365-83; G. E. Gerini, *Researches on Ptolemy's Geography of Eastern Asia (Further India and Indo-Malay Archipelago)* (Repr.: New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, 1974), p. 712, n.1, p. 752; Berthold Laufer, "The Relations of the Chinese to the Philippine Islands", in *Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections*, 50:2 (1907/8), pp. 251-52; Friedrich Hirth & W. W. Rockhill, *Chau Ju-kua: His Work on the Chinese and Arab Trade in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries Entitled Chu-fan-chi* (Repr.: Amsterdam: Oriental Press, 1966), pp. 159-60; W. W. Rockhill, "Notes on the Relations and Trade of China with the Eastern Archipelago and the Coast of the Indian Ocean During the Fourteenth Century", in *T'oung Pao*, 16 (1915), pp. 263-64, 267-68; Wada Sei, "The Philippine Islands as Known to the Chinese before the Ming Period", in *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko*, 4 (1929), pp. 136-39; J. K. Fairbank & S. Y. Teng, "On the Ch'ing Tributary System", in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 6 (1941), pp. 221 and 229; Wu Ching-hong, "A Study of References to the Philippines in Chinese sources from the Earliest Times to the Ming Dynasty", in *Philippine Social Sciences and Humanities Review* 24:1-2 (1959), pp. 75-82, 91 et seq., 141, 143-45, 148-49; Paul Wheatley, *The Golden Khersonese: Studies in the Historical Geography of the Malay Peninsula before A.D. 1500* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press 1961), pp. 230-32; C. I. Rivera y Olarte, "The Country of Ma-i. An Old Chinese Account of the Philippines in the 13th Century", in *Sunday Times Magazine*, 8 July 1962, pp. 14-15; William H. Scott, & Ju I-hsiung, "Chau Ju-kua's Description of the Philippines in the 13th Century. A New Translation", in *Historical Bulletin* 2:1 (March 1967), pp. 69-72; William H. Scott, *Prehispanic Source Materials for the Study of Philippine History*, Unitas-Filipiniana Series, no. 9 (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Press, 1968), pp. 68-70, 72-75, 79, and pp. 68-69, for further translations; Ch'en Ching-ho, *The Chinese Community in the Sixteenth Century Philippines*, East Asian Cultural Series, no. 12 (Tokyo: Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies, 1968), pp. 3-10; W. Z. Mulder, "The Philippine Islands in the Chinese World Map of 1674", in *Oriens Extremus* 25 (1978), pp. 221 and 225.

ion and the descriptions in other Ming works largely follow Fei's account. It is obvious that Lo did not compare Fei's account with any other accounts on Ma-i-tung.¹² We may therefore assume that he did not realize Fei's mistake and that he did not know the exact geographical location of Ma-i or Ma-i-tung.

Concern has to be given to a second question. Fei's book and most other Yüan and Ming sources on Southeast Asia contain brief sections on various parts of the Philippines, for example, Luzon or the Sulu Archipelago. In the novel, however, Cheng Ho does not sail to these places, nor are they mentioned in the text. This is remarkable, yet it would be wrong to conclude that Lo was among those who believed that the historical Cheng Ho had never seen the Philippines (this controversial point has not yet been clarified) and that he had taken Ma-i-tung for Billition.¹³ On the contrary, such a conclusion must be regarded as merely accidental for, after all, the novel is not a historical source, as was often erroneously assumed by previous scholars, but a rather fantastic account, at best a mixture of truth and fancy. This does not only apply to the description of Ma-i-tung itself (for example, the etymology of the country's name, as we will see below) but also to the description of most other places mentioned, some of which are even double-listed under different names, or to the sequence of the countries listed and to the route which is taken by the fleet.¹⁴ In chapter 45, for example, Cheng Ho reaches the island of Timor. This is one of Lo's inventions. The historical Cheng Ho never sailed that far. Moreover, Lo's description of Timor is nothing but an elaboration of Fei's account.¹⁵

12. Lo Mou-teng drew most of his geographical knowledge from Fei's account and from Ma Huan's *Ying-yai sheng-lan*. The latter, however, has nothing on Ma-i or Ma-i-tung. For this also see Kuo Chen-i, *Chung-kuo hsiao-shuo shih*, vol. 2, pp. 387-417, particularly p. 400.

13. Several scholars believe that Cheng Ho went to the Philippines, others do not believe in this theory. One of the most recent discussions is Chou Shao-ch'uan, "Cheng Ho wei shih Fei-lü-pin shuo chih-i", in *Ming shih yen-chiu lun-ts'ung* 1 (1982), pp. 339-53.

14. A-lu and Ya-lu (both stand for Aru) or Ku-lin and Hsiao-ko-lan (both stand for Quilon) are among the double-listings. The sequence Quilon, Morocco, Nagur, Egypt, Mosul, Ghazni, Mirbat, Lide, Bagdad, Lambri, San-fa (an invented country), Pulau Weh, etc. does not make very much sense either.

15. For this see my "Some References to Timor in Old Chinese Records", in *Ming Studies* 17 (Fall 1983), p. 39.

The explanation of the name "Ma-i-tung" is based on a word play. Ma-i-hsien-sheng (Mr. Ma-i) was a historical person. His real name is usually given as Li Chien. He lived in Ch'ang-an during the Yüan period and practised fortune telling for a living.¹⁶

Cheng Ho's admiration of the virtuousness of the women in Ma-i-tung is fictional as well. Although this custom is mentioned in Wang Ta-yüan's *Tao-i chih-lüeh* and several other records, Cheng Ho may not have even known about it, nor is there any indication that the Chinese ever asked the residents of Ma-i-tung to set up a stone tablet. This story has to be seen in connection with Cheng Ho's role in the novel. Unlike Chin Pi-feng and Chang T'ien-shih he is to represent the Confucian sphere of action. As a Confucianist Cheng Ho does not only adhere to the traditional Chinese concept of the world – China is superior, all other nations are "barbarians" and morally inferior – but also to the idea that the virtuous should be praised and the wicked punished. In other words, Cheng Ho simply executes the emperor's wish to "regulate" the "barbarians" according to Confucian standards; Ma-i-tung is a positive example, Timor is a negative one.¹⁷

The fact that Cheng Ho bursts into laughter is not to be seen as a sign of disapproval, suspicion or mistrust but simply as a sign of straightforwardness and, to some degree, naivete. This naivete has to be considered as a positive attribute of Cheng Ho's character, quite similar perhaps to the naivete of Tripitaka in *Hsi-yu chi*. In both cases naivete is equal to innocence, *ergo* to uprightness and integrity. Cheng Ho does his duty in a "direct" and "straightforward" manner – of course, he runs into similar troubles as Tripitaka – but, to some extent at least, his naivete guarantees his protection. Thus, Tripitaka is spiritually pure. He cannot be harmed by any ogre. Cheng Ho is a eunuch for the queen of Nü-erh-kuo or the "Country of Women" fails to seduce him.¹⁸ Both heroes are,

16. See *Chung-wen ta tz'u-tien*, 14819:1081, 2. There was also a certain Ma-i tao-che in the Sung dynasty. See *Chung-wen ta tz'u-tien* 48866:31 and 33, where Shao Po-wen's *Ho-nan Shao-shih wen-chien lu*, (Hsüeh-chin t'ao-yüan, ed. *Pai-pu ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng*, 46:24), vol. 2, ch. 7, 12a-b, and Seng Wen-ying *Hsiang-shan yeh-lu*, (Hsueh-tsin t'ao-yuan, ed. *Pai-pu ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng* 46:24), vol. 2, ch. 7, 12-b, and Seng Wen-ying *Hsiang-shan yeh-lu*, (Hsueh-tsin t'ao-yuan, ed. *Pai-pu ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng* 46:24, vol. 2, ch. hsia, 7-ab, are quoted. The expression "Ma-i hsian-fa" became to describe the art of physiognomy.

17. See note 14.

18. See *Hsi-yang chi*, vol. 2, hui 46, pp. 125-27. For Tripitaka see, for example, Chang Ching-erh, *Hsi-yu chi jen-wu yen-chiu* Chung-Kuo hsiao-shuo yen-chiu ts'ung-

of course, helpless in many situations and therefore dependent on their assistants, Sun Wu-k'ung, better known as "Monkey", and Chin Pi-feng respectively. Again in both cases, the historical models and the heroes in the novels have little or nothing in common.

k'un (Taipei: Tai-wan hsieh-sheng shu-chü, 1984) p. 110; C. T. Hsia, *The Classical Chinese Novel. A Critical Introduction* (New York, London: Columbia University Press, 1968), pp. 144 et seq.; Wu Ta-yun, "T'ien-ti pu ch'üan - Hsi-yu chi chu't'i shih-t'an", in *Chung Wai Literature Monthly* 10:11 (April 1982), pp. 87 et seq.

干番人頭上也。桂盤上身穿長衫。下身圍一段花布。磕了頭。獻上些玳瑁黃蠟檳榔。花布銅鼎。鐵塊蔗酒。元帥道你是那裡人。番人道小的地名麻逸。凍父老相傳說是當原日。麻衣先生到這裡賣卜。番人不曉得甚麼。卦賣不得。衣不供身。食不供口。凍得慌。故此地名叫做麻逸。凍。元帥道你地方上出此甚麼。番人道田地膏腴。五穀倍收。於他國。又且煮海為鹽。釀蔗為酒。元帥道風俗何如。番人道俗尚節義。夫死婦人削髮釐面。七日不食。與死夫同寢。多有同死者。七日不死。親戚勸化飲食。俟丈夫焚化之日。又多有赴火死者。萬一不死。終身不嫁。元帥聽了這一篇。嘔上的大笑了三聲。說道夷人有此節義。奇哉。奇哉。分付受下他的禮物。賞賜他巾帽衣服鞋襪。又取過女冠女衫女裙之類。給與他。地方上節婦又賞他一面綵牌。上寫着節義之鄉。四個大字。教他鐫刻在石上。立在衙門市中。

第二