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## Sulu in Ming Drama

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## Texts and Documents

### Sulu in Ming Drama

RODERICH PTAK

Several ancient Chinese records on foreign countries contain descriptions of the Philippines and adjacent islands. Many of these texts have been studied, some were translated into English, French, Spanish or German.<sup>1</sup> The object of this paper is to translate and analyse the sources of an additional relatively unknown text which contains a brief description of Sulu. Incorporated into a play and not a historical or geographical record, this description is unique. The play whose author is unknown, was written in the Ming dynasty and is called *Feng t'ien-ming San-pao hsia Hsi-yang* (San-pao follows the emperor's order and sails to the Western

1. For example F. Hirth and W.W. Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua: His work on the Chinese and Arab Trade in the twelfth and thirteenth Centuries*, entitled *Chu-fan-chi* (reprint: Amsterdam: Oriental Press, 1966), pp. 159 ff; W.H. Scott, *A critical Study of Pre-hispanic Source Materials for the Study of Philippine History* (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Press, 1968); Wada Sei, "The Philippine Islands as known to the Chinese before the Ming Period," *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko* 4 (1929): 121-66, which I was unable to consult; Wu Ching-hong, "A Study of References to the Philippines in Chinese Sources from Earliest Times to the Ming Dynasty," *Philippine Social Sciences and Humanities Review* 24 (1959): 1-181; Wu Ching-hong, "Supplement to 'A Study of References to the Philippine Islands in Chinese Sources from the Earliest Times to the Ming Dynasty,'" *Journal of East Asiatic Studies* 7 (October 1958): 307-93, which I was also unable to consult; Ch'en Ching-ho, *The Chinese Community in the Sixteenth Century Philippines* (Tokyo: The Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies, 1968). Some Chinese books also deal with the same material, for example, Ch'en Lieh-fu, *Fei-lü-pin ti li-shih yü Chung-Fei kuan-hsi ti kuo-ch'ü yü hsien-tsai* (Taipei: Cheng-chung shu-chü 1968); Chang T'ieh-sheng, *Chung-Fei chiao-t'ung shih ch'ü-t'an* (Peking: Sanlien shu-tien 1973); Ch'en Tai-min, *Chung-Fei kuan-hsi yü Fei-lü-pin hua-ch'iao* (Min-li-la: I-t'ung ch'u-pan-she 1961); Liu Chih-t'ien, *Chung-Fei kuan-hsi shih*, 3rd ed. (Taipei: Cheng-chung shu-chü, 1964).

Ocean). Its short title reads *Hsia Hsi-yang* (Journey to the Western Ocean).<sup>2</sup>

The text of *Hsia Hsi-yang* may be found in the collections *Ku-pen Yüan Ming tsa-chü*<sup>3</sup> and *Ku-pen hsi-ch'ü ts'ung-k'an ssu chi*.<sup>4</sup> In 1962 Hsi Yün-ch'iao published the text in a separate volume under the title *Hsia Hsi-yang tsa-chü*.<sup>5</sup> Hsi's book also contains a short introduction with general remarks on the art of tsa-chü-plays — *Hsia Hsi-yang* falls into this category — and some footnotes to the text itself.

All three editions are based on the text of the *Mo-wang-kuan ch'ao-chiao-pen ku-chin tsa-chü* collection which is among the treasures of the Peking library. This collection was originally compiled by Chao Ch'i-mei in the early seventeenth century. Among others it includes 172 plays copied by (or for) Chao from materials in the imperial palace. Some of these texts which are commonly referred to as nei-fu-pen bear a date and Chao's signature. Thus, at the end of *Hsia Hsi-yang* we read that Ch'ing-ch'ang tao-jen (Chao's self-given name) copied the text (or had it copied for him) in the forty-third year of the Wan-li period (i.e. 1615).<sup>6</sup> The nei-fu-pen on which Chao's copies are based, were most likely written not later than 1522.<sup>7</sup> Though it is not

2. This title should not be confused with *Hsi-yang chi*, the title of another play now lost. See Ch'i Piao-chia, *Yüan-shan-t'ang ming ch'u-p'in chü-p'in chiao-lu* (Shanghai: Shanghai ch'u-pan kung-ssu 1955), p. 36. There is also a similar title of a Peking Opera, of which, however, I do not know whether there is an existent script. See T'ao Chün-ch'i, *Ching-chü chü-mu ch'u-t'an* (Peking: Chung-kuo hsi-chü ch'u-pan-she 1963), pp. 314-15. Both plays may have had descriptions of Sulu.

3. In *Ku-pen Yüan Ming tsa-chü* (Ch'ang-sha: Shang-wu yin-shu-kuan 1941), vol. 25.

4. In *Ku-pen hsi-ch'ü ts'ung-k'an ssu-chi* (Shanghai: Shang-wu yin-shu-kuan, 1958), Ser. 3, vol. 76.

5. Hsi Yün-ch'iao, *Hsia Hsi-yang tsa-chü* (Singapore: Shih-chieh shu-chü kung-ssu, 1962).

6. For a brief description of the Mo-wang-kuan collection, see Cheng Ch'ien, "Yüan Ming ch'ao-k'o-pen Yüan-jen tsa-chü chiu chung t'i-yao," *Tsing Hua Journal of Chinese Studies*, new ser., 7 (August 1969): 146-47. Sun K'ai-ti, *Yeh-shih-yüan ku-chin tsa-chü k'ao* (Shanghai: Shang-tsa ch'u-pan-she 1953), p. 82, lists the play under nei-fu scripts. The nei-fu-pen were kept in an office called Chung-ku-ssu; see *ibid.*, pp. 101 ff, and p. 4 ff for a biography of Chao Ch'i-mei. Sun K'ai-ti also describes the transmission of the collection from Chao's hands to later collectors. For a listing of *Hsia Hsi-yang* in old catalogues, see Fu Ta-hsing, *Ming tsa-chü k'ao* (Taipei: Shih-chieh shu-chü, 1965), p. 247. For a listing of the lost title *Hsi-yang chi* (see n. 2) see Fu Hsi-hua, *Ming-tai chuan-ch'i ch'üan-mu* (Peking: Jen-min wen-hsüeh ch'u-pan-she, 1959), p. 507.

7. See, for example, D. Johnson, *Yuarn Music Dramas: Studies in Prosody and Structure, and a complete Catalogue of Northern Arias in the Dramatic Style* (Ann Arbor: Centre for Chinese Studies, The University of Michigan, 1980), p. 322.

possible to trace the exact history of individual nei-fu-scripts nor to narrow down the time period in which they were possibly composed, we can assume that *Hsia Hsi-yang* must have been written before that date. A careful analysis of the style and formal aspects of its content also suggests that it should be regarded as an early Ming tsa-chü. Tsa-chü-plays written in the latter part of the Ming dynasty often tended to absorb many elements of southern drama, whereas the author of *Hsia Hsi-yang* strictly preserved the characteristics of the northern tsa-chü style.<sup>8</sup>

The dating of the original nei-fu-script (i.e. 1522 or earlier) should be kept in mind for the analysis following in parts four and five.

### SYNOPSIS OF HSIA HSI-YANG

The plot of the drama is based on the seven maritime expeditions of the eunuch Cheng Ho. These expeditions took place between 1405 and 1433. It is, however, impossible to verify which particular expedition was chosen for the setting of the story. It should be emphasized that many parts of the play do not reflect genuine history but are rather a mixture of true facts and fantasy.

*Act I:* Hsia Yüan-chi, Chien I, Ch'en Mou, Fang K'uan and Hsü Ching-ch'ang, all high-ranking officials in the Ming bureaucracy,<sup>9</sup> elect the grand eunuch Cheng Ho (also called Cheng San-pao)<sup>10</sup> to become the supreme commander of a naval force sent to the Western Ocean<sup>11</sup> by the Chinese emperor. The object of this expedition is to collect rare and precious goods and to coerce

8. For plays of hybrid forms see, for example, J. Huang Hung, *Ming Drama* (Taipei: Heritage Press, 1966), p. 174: "After 1521, northern drama was almost out of existence. Most tsa-chü writers abandoned old forms of Yüan drama and followed the southern drama in technique and form."

9. For biographies see L. C. Goodrich and Fang Chaoying, eds., *Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368-1644* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 1:234, 531. For additional materials on these officials see *Ming-jen chuan-chi tzu-liao so-yin* (Taipei: Kuo-li chung-yang t'u-shu-kuan, 1965), 1:405, 604, 890. The *Ming-shih* (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1974), vol. 13, chap. 145, pp. 4095-96, contains a short biography of Fang K'uan. The *Kuo-ch'ao hsien-cheng lu* by Chiao Hung (Taipei: Hsüeh-sheng shu-chü, 1965), vol. 1, chap. 5, 17b, has some lines on Hsü Ching-ch'ang.

10. For a biography of Cheng Ho, see Goodrich and Fang, *Dictionary*, 1:194-200.

11. For the term "Western Ocean" and its geographical delimitation see J.V. G. Mills, *Ma Huan: Ying-yai Sheng-lan, 'The overall Survey of the Ocean's Shores'* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1970), pp. 227-29.

other countries to submit tribute to the Chinese court. Cheng Ho chooses Wang Ching-hung and Ch'en Hsüan to accompany him as commanders of his ships.<sup>12</sup>

*First Demi-Act:* The emperor's order is formally handed over by the emperor's representative to Cheng Ho. A farewell feast is given and Cheng Ho prepares to leave.

*Act 2:* The king of Calicut, a state in southern India, has heard that a Chinese fleet will approach his country to collect tribute. He is very pleased with the virtue and the grandeur of the Chinese emperor and summons the chiefs of Java, Pan-ta, Mecca and Champa to prepare gifts for Cheng Ho.<sup>13</sup>

Having left the imperial capital, Cheng Ho's fleet sails down the Yangtze river. The journey is interrupted at the mouth of the river where Cheng Ho offers a sacrifice to the Goddess of the Sea (T'ien-fei) in a temple.<sup>14</sup> While he is sleeping, the goddess appears in Cheng Ho's dreams. She promises a safe and successful trip without bloodshed. Now Cheng Ho's ships move to the open sea.

*Second Demi-Act:* The king of Sulu is informed that Cheng Ho will sail through his territory. He knows that the Chinese ships carry porcelain and silk, both of which he lacks and desires very much. Together with the kings of Pahang and Ch'uan-hsiung-kuo<sup>15</sup> he traps Cheng Ho's ships and threatens to destroy them unless the Chinese agree to pay silk and porcelain to them. In this situation Cheng Ho uses a ruse. He shows a tree to the three leaders, claiming that it would grow porcelain. The kings become curious and consent to go on board Cheng Ho's ship. There they are captured by Cheng Ho's soldiers. Begging Cheng Ho to spare

12. Biographies of Ch'en Hsüan and Wang Ching-hung are in Goodrich and Fang, *Dictionary*, 1:157-59; 2:1364-65.

13. Pan-ta is unidentified. Probably it is a corrupt form of Pan-ta-li, a place which W.W. Rockhill, "Notes on the Relations and Trade of China with the Eastern Archipelago and the Coasts of the Indian Ocean during the fourteenth Century," *T'oung Pao* 15 (1914): 425, n. 2, tentatively identifies as Pandarani or Pantalani in Southern India. It may also be a corrupt form of Tuban, a dependency of Java, or it may simply be read as "Banda," although this form is rather uncommon in Ming records.

14. The most comprehensive study on the T'ien-fei is Li Hsien-chang's *Boso shinko no kenkyu* (Tokyo: Taizan bunbutsu sha, 1979). However, it does not mention that the T'ien-fei appears in *Hsia Hsi-yang*. The temple in the play may be identified as the "T'ien-fei-kung" in Liu-chia-kang, a harbour from which Cheng Ho's ships set sail for the Western Ocean.

15. This is a mythological country. It can be traced back to many old texts. See, for example, J.W. Schiffrer, *The Legendary Creatures of the Shan Hai Ching* (Taipei: Hwa Kang Press, 1978), pp. 10-11.

their lives, the three leaders submit and promise in the future to obey the emperor's orders. Cheng Ho forgives them, and while his fleet continues the journey, the king of Sulu and the others return to their homelands.

*Act 3:* The Chinese reach India where they are welcomed by the king of Calicut and the leaders of Java, Pan-ta, Champa and Mecca. To the delight of Cheng Ho they offer him various precious gifts, moreover, the king of Calicut who adores the Chinese emperor, is allowed to accompany Cheng Ho on his return voyage to China.<sup>16</sup>

*Act 4:* Cheng Ho's ships are back in China. A banquet is prepared to celebrate the successful enterprise and to present the various exotic tributes to the imperial house. The king of Calicut and the leaders of Java, Pan-ta, Champa and Mecca appear in front of the guests, demonstrating their loyalty and submission to the Ming court. Cheng Ho and his men are honoured through gifts and promotions.

#### TRANSLATION OF THE DESCRIPTION OF SULU IN HSIA HSI-YANG

The king of Sulu appears in the second demi-act which opens with the following lines:

The king of Sulu leads Chi-la-pu and Chi-la-tu on the stage and says:<sup>17</sup>

1. The fog over the sea begins to disappear, the day will break;
2. Huge waves roll over the sandbanks of the lagoon.
3. For a long time our home has been the sea;
4. The chief of the barbarians enjoys his peace.

I am Pa-tu-ko Pa-su-li, the king of the state of Sulu. My father, Pa-tu-ko Pa-ta-la, is the Eastern king of the country. These two are chieftains under my command, one is Chi-la-pu, the other Chi-la-tu. Indeed, every one in my country is brave and each man is strong. We rely on the waters of the vast ocean that surrounds us, and on the steep and dangerous mountains that fold in thousand layers. Though barren, the fields in the mountains [can be used] to grow millet and corn and there is hardly

16. Depending on the interpretation of the Chinese text, there may be a break in the logic of the play. At the end of act 3 we get the impression that only the king of Calicut will accompany Cheng Ho to China. In act 4, however, the leaders of Java, Pan-ta, Champa and Mecca arrive in China as well.

17. The king of Sulu plays the role of a "wai". Lines 1-4 are a poem.

enough to feed us. The barbarians [around us] are peaceful. Sago,<sup>18</sup> and fish also serve to nourish us. In my country, [we] boil sea-water to obtain salt and we ferment sugar-cane to produce liquor. [The people] collect clams<sup>19</sup> for their food, and for their occupation they weave bamboo-fibre into cloth.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, [we also] have patterned tortoise-shells<sup>21</sup> and pearls one inch in diameter. [Yes, we] have almost everything, except two things we lack. These are silk of all colours<sup>22</sup> and porcelain dishes of all sizes. Recently I have learnt from inquiry, that there are three big ships sailing across the ocean from China with great amounts of porcelain and silk on board. The day before yesterday I ordered the barbarian kings of each country to meet on the Luan-shih-Island. At this island the waves are fierce and dangerous and the cliffs are sharp as teeth.<sup>23</sup> [There] I [want to] intercept the Chinese ships, and under no circumstances will they manage to escape me. I will ask them for some porcelain and silk as a tariff, then I'll let them pass. I will be satisfied for the rest of my life, if [only] I will get these two precious things. Chi-la-pu, keep a watch at my door and report to me when the kings of the [other] countries arrive!

The other kings appear and Pa-tu-ko Pa-su-li orders them to prepare troops and ships for the next day. The play proceeds as described in the summary.

#### THE SOURCES FOR THE DESCRIPTION OF SULU IN HSIA HSI-YANG

Descriptions of Sulu may be found in the following existent works relating to the Yüan and Ming dynasties:<sup>24</sup>

18. For this expression see Rockhill, "Notes," p. 260; Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua*, p. 193; P. Pelliot, "Les Grands Voyages Maritimes Chinois au Debut du XVe siècle," *T'oung Pao* 30 (1933): 391.

19. "Univalves" and "bivalves" would be a more literate translation. See, for example, W.Z. Mulder, "The Philippine Islands in the Chinese World Map of 1674," *Oriens Extremus* 25 (1978): 226.

20. Ibid. Also See Rockhill, "Notes," p. 111, n.2, and p. 254, n. 1. The explanation in the *Chung-wen ta-tz'u-tien*, No. 26424, 28:1 is similar.

21. The expression "chien-hua ti" does not occur in other descriptions of Sulu. I am not sure whether my translation ("patterned") is correct.

22. "Tuan" should have rad. 120. Here translated as "silk."

23. The *Ku-pen Yüan Ming tsa-chü* text reads "ts'o-ya" for "ch'a-ya."

24. For brief bibliographical information on these titles see W. Franke, *An Introduction to the Sources of Ming History* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1968). I used the following editions:

1. Wang ta-yüan, *Tao-i chih-lieh* (n. p., preface 1892); *Chih-fu-chai ts'ung-shu*, 12b-13a; Shen Tseng-chih, *tao-i chih-lieh kuang-cheng* (Shanghai: Kuo-sui hsieh-she, 1912), chap. shang, 16a; an edition with comments by Fujita Toyohashi (n.p., 1915; *Hsüeh-t'ang ts'ung-k'o*, 10), 54a-55a.

2. Edition prepared by the Chung-yang yen-chiu li-shih yü-yen yen-chiu-so (Nankang, 1966).

1. *Tao-i chih-lüeh*, written and published in 1350.
2. *Ming shih-lu*, sections *T'ai-tsung Wen-huang-ti shih-lu* and *Jen-tsung Chao-huang-ti shih-lu*, both completed in 1430.
3. *Hsing-ch'a sheng-lan*, preface 1436.
4. *Huan-yü t'ung-chih*, finished and presented to court in 1456.
5. *Ta-Ming i-t'ung-chih*, first edition 1461. Subsequent editions 1505, 1559, 1588 etc.
6. *Hsi-yang ch'ao-kung tien-lu*, preface 1520.
7. *Shu-yü chou-tzu-lu*, preface 1574, prohibited.
8. *Ssu-i k'ao*, preface and first publication 1606, later incorporated into the *Wu pei chih* which first appeared in 1644.
9. *I-ch'eng*, preface 1615, probably written in the Wan-li period.
10. *Tung-hsi-yang k'ao*, completed in 1617, prefaces of 1617 and 1618, first published in the Wan-li period.
11. *Huang-Ming hsiang-hsü-lu*, preface 1629.
12. *Huang-Ming shih-fa-lu*, completed in 1630, printed after

3. Feng Ch'eng-chün, *Hsing-ch'a sheng-lan chiao-chu* (Shanghai: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1954), hou-chi, pp. 15-16.

4. Ch'en Hsün, P'eng Shih et.al., *Huan-yü t'ung-chih* (Nanking: Kuo-li Chung-yang t'u-shu-kuan; *Hsüan-lan-t'ang ts'ung-shu hsü-chi*), vol. 42, chap. 118, 17a-b.

5. Li Hsien et.al., *Ta-Ming i-t'ung-chih* (Taipei: Wen-hai ch'u-pan-she, 1965), 10: 5552-53.

6. Huang Sheng-tseng, *Hsi-yang ch'ao-kung tien-lu* (Taipei: Wen-hai ch'u-pan-she, 1967; *Ming Ch'ing shih-liao hui-pien ch'u-chi*), pp. 519, 20.

7. Yen Ts'ung-chien, *Shu-yü chou-tzu-lu* (Pei-p'ing: Pei-p'ing ku-kung po-wu-kuan t'u-shu-kuan, 1930), vol. 3, chap. 9, 4a-5b.

8. I used the *Wu pei chih* compiled by Mao Yüan-i (reproduction of the original edition, n.p., n.d.). The Sulu-chapter is in chap. 237, 6a-b.

9. Yang I-k'uei, *I-ch'eng* (Shanghai: Hsüan-lan chü-shih, 1947; *Hsüan-lan-t'ang ts'ung-shu*, 2-7), vol. 4, chap. 5, 10a-b.

10. Chang Hsieh, *Tung-hsi-yang k'ao* (Shanghai: Shang-wu yin-shu-kuan, 1937; *Kuo-hsüeh chi-pen ts'ung-shu*), pp. 62-63.

11. Mao Jui-cheng, *Huang Ming hsiang-hsü-lu* (Shanghai: Shang-wu yin-shu-kuan, 1937; *Kuo-li Pei-p'ing t'u-shu-kuan shan-pen ts'ung-shu*, Ser. 1), chap. 5, pp. 62-63.

12. Ch'en Jen-hsi, *Huang Ming shih-fa-lu* (Taipei: Taiwan hsüeh-sheng shu-tien, 1965; *Chung-kuo shih-hsüeh ts'ung-shu*), vol. 4, p. 2164 (i.e. chap. 82, 25a-b).

13. Ho Ch'iao-yüan, *Ming shan tsang* (Taipei: Ch'eng-wen ch'u-pan-she, 1971), 20: 6187-88.

14. Ch'a Chi-tso, *Tsui wei lu* (Shanghai: Shang-wu yin-shu-kuan, 1936; *Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an, san pien, shih-pu*), vol. 60, chap. 36, 84a-b.

15. Fu Wei-lin, *Ming-shu* (Shanghai: Shang-wu yin-shu-kuan, 1936; *Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng ch'u-pien*, 3928-58), vol. 30, chap. 166, p. 3289.

16. Same edition of the Ming-shih as in n. 9, vol. 28, chap. 325, pp. 8422-24.

17. Lung Wen-pin, *Ming hui-yao* (Taipei: Shih-chieh shu-chü, 1963; Ser. *Chung-kuo hsüeh, shu ming-chu*), vol. 2, chap. 77, pp. 1501-2.

In addition to these there are also brief entries on Sulu in Chiao Hung, *Kuo-ch'ao hsien-cheng lu*, 8:5350, and Lu Tz'u-yün, *Pa hung i-shih* (Ch'ang-sha: Shang-wu yin-shu-kuan, 1939; *Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng*, 3263), p. 27.



1632, prohibited.

13. *Ming shan tsang*, published after 1632.

14. *Tsui wei lu*, preface undated, around 1670.

15. *Ming-shu*, K'ang-hsi period, prohibited.

16. *Ming-shih*, 1739.

17. *Ming hui-yao*, only completed in 1887.

Assuming that the nei-fu-script from which Chao Ch'i-mei copied, has to be dated not later than 1522, only the first six titles can be considered as potential sources for the description of Sulu in *Hsia Hsi-yang* (little can be speculated about lost texts). Of these the *Tao-i chih-lüeh* and the *Ta-Ming i-t'ung-chih* were probably the most popular and widespread.<sup>25</sup>

The Sulu-chapter in the *Hsing-ch'a sheng-lan* has to be traced back to the first source.<sup>26</sup>

The *Ming shih-lu* entries on Sulu report that several delegations were sent from Sulu to China, but they do not contain descriptions of the country itself.<sup>27</sup> It is also doubtful whether the author of the drama had access to the *Ming shih-lu* and whether he would have bothered to check these texts for the simple purpose of obtaining information on Sulu.

The *Huan-yü t'ung-chin* was an official record, but it was quickly replaced by the *Ta-Ming i-t'ung-chih*. The latter copies the former, though the sequence of phrases and terms under each entry differs slightly in both texts. This is also true for the paragraph on Sulu. However, the *Ta-Ming i-t'ung-chih* and the *Huan-yü t'ung-chih* are valuable in that they indicate their sources. In the case of Sulu the *Tao-i chih* (i.e. the *Tao-i chih-lüeh*) is given as reference.<sup>28</sup>

25. The *Tao-i chih-lüeh* was used as a reference for many later works. Of the *Ta-Ming i-t'ung-chih* there are several editions; see Franke, *Introduction*, p. 237 and L.C. Goodrich, "Geographical Additions of the XIV and XV Centuries, a bibliographical note," *Monumenta Serica* 15 (1956). There also existed another work, the *Ta-Yüan ta-i-t'ung-chih*, which may have enjoyed wide circulation. It is only preserved in fragments now. For this see *ibid.*, pp. 203-6.

26. See Feng Ch'eng-chün, *Hsing-ch'a sheng-lan chiao-chu*, hou-chi, pp. 15-16.

27. See vol. 13, chap. 192, p. 2021; vol. 14, chap. 228, p. 2224 and chap. 236, p. 2264; vol. 15, chap. 3 *hsia*, p. 0115.

28. Tam Yeok-seong, "Kung Chen Hsi-yang fan-kuo chih ti chen-wei wen-t'i", *Nan-yang hsueh-pao* 15 (December 1959); 5, points out that the title *Tao-i chih* in the preface to the *Ying-yai sheng-lan* (see Mills, *Ma Huan*, p. 69 for a translation) may refer to the *Tao-i tsa-chih* and not to the *Tao-i chih-lüeh* as was assumed by Mills and others. The *Tao-i tsa-chih* (also called *Fang-kuo tsa-chih*) was probably written in the Sung dynasty. It is incorporated into the *Shih-lin kuang-chi*, an encyclopaedic work

Finally we have to consider text (6). Its author, Hung Sheng-tseng, mentions in the preface to his book that he collected information from the *Hsing-ch'a sheng-lan*, the *Ying-yai sheng-lan* and another unidentified source.<sup>29</sup> The *Ying-yai sheng-lan* contains nothing about Sulu. It is rather likely, therefore, that Huang relied on the *Hsing-ch'a sheng-lan* for his paragraph on Sulu.

A comparison of the wording of texts (1) and (3) to (6) is necessary to determine the text which may have served as a reference for the Sulu paragraph in the drama.

Below is the description given in the *Ta-Ming i-t'ung-chih* (the letters in brackets show the sequence of phrases in the *Huan-yü t'ung-chih*, if a phrase is omitted in the *Huan-yü t'ung-chih* this is indicated through S):<sup>30</sup>

(a) *Historical developments*: These have not been analysed in former times. In the fifteenth year of Yung-lo (1417), Pa-tu-ko Pa-ta-la, the Eastern king of this country, Pa-tu-ko Pa-su-li, the Western king, and Pa-tu-ko Pa-la-pu, the divisional king, all accompanied by their wives, children and chiefs, came to court to offer tribute.

(c) *Customs*: (S) The people eat sago, fish, shrimps, univalves and bivalves. (d) [Comment:] In the hills there is arable land, but the fields are barren [and only suited] to grow millet and grain,<sup>31</sup> [therefore] the people eat sago, fish, shrimps, univalves and bivalves. [Comment ends].

(e) The climate is semi-tropical. (S) [The people] cut their hair and [wrap] their heads with a black turban. (f) [Comment:] Their customs are vulgar and rustic. (g) Men and women cut their hair and wrap [their heads] with a black turban. (h) Their loins are covered with a small piece of cloth of a printed [pattern]. [Comment ends.] (i) They boil sea-water

compiled at the end of the Sung period by Ch'en Yüan-ching. This work is generally available in an edition prepared by Chung-hua shu-chü, Peking 1963 (6 vols. in one cassette; the cassette contains an additional pamphlet which has the text of the *Fang-kuo tsa-chih*). This text of the *Fang-kuo tsa-chih* does not contain any paragraph on Sulu or Pahang. The term "*Tao-i chih*" in the *Ta-Ming i-t'ung-chih* and the *Huan-yü t'ung-chih* can therefore not refer to the *Tao-i tsa-chih*. Moreover, Tan's statement (see p. 5 of his article) that Wang Ta-yüan, the author of the *Tao-i chih-lieh*, made extensive use of the *Tao-i tsa-chih* does not apply for the description of Sulu.

29. Mulder, "The Philippine Islands," p. 228 also mentions this point.

30. The translation is based on the editions quoted in n.24 (4) and (5). For phrases identical in the *Ta-Ming i-t'ung-chih* and the *Tao-i chih-lieh*, I frequently use Mulder's translation of the latter work. See Mulder, "The Philippine Islands," p. 226.

31. I skipped the translation of "chien" ("some times"). There is a problem with the second character which differs from text to text. I follow the version in the *Tao-i chih-lieh*, which Mulder, "The Philippine Islands," p. 226 translates: "In the hills there is arable land but it is poor and the fields are barren . . ."

蘇祿國

沿革前代無考本朝永樂十五年其國東王巴都葛叭  
荅刺西王巴都葛叭蘇哩峒王叭都葛巴刺卜各率  
其妻子頭目來朝并貢方物

風俗民食沙糊魚鰕螺蛤山涂田瘠間植粟麥氣候半

熟短髮纏皂縵俗鄙薄男女短髮纏皂縵繫小印布煮海為鹽釀蔗為

酒織竹布為業以上俱島夷志

山川石崎山國以此山為保障

土產竹布 玳瑁 真珠色青白而圓有至徑寸者 蔗

to obtain salt and they ferment sugar-cane to produce liquor. (j) For their occupation they weave bamboo-fibre into cloth. (k) [Comment:] The above is all from the *Tao-i chih*. [Comments ends.]

(b) *Mountains and rivers*: Shih-ch'i-shan. [Comment:] The country uses this mountain for defense. [Comment ends.]

(m) *Local products*: Cloth made of bamboo-fibre. Tortoise-shells. Pearls. [Comment:] They are bluish-white in colour and round, and there are some that reach one inch in diameter. [Comment ends.] (S) Sugar-cane.

Comparing the *Ta-Ming i-t'ung-chih* and the *Huan-yü t'ung-chih* with the description in the play, it can be seen very easily that many phrases are identical in all texts. The *Tao-i chih-lüeh* is also very similar to the above.<sup>32</sup> It contains phrases (b) to (m) in slightly different wording. We may, however, exclude it as a potential source of *Hsia Hsi-yang* for the following reasons: (1) it does not mention the names of the various rulers; (2) the description of the inch-size diameter does not follow directly or precede directly the word "pearl" – instead the *Tao-i chih-lüeh* gives a somewhat more elaborate and complicated description of the Sulu pearls at the end of its paragraph; (3) in both, the *Ta-Ming i-t'ung-chih* and the *Huan-yü t'ung-chih* there follows an entry on Pahang after that on Sulu, but not so in the *Tao-i chih-lüeh*. The next paragraph after Sulu in the *Tao-i chih-lüeh* describes a country called Lung-ya-hsi-chüeh (Langka-suka).<sup>33</sup> In *Hsia Hsi-yang*, however, Sulu and Pahang and not Sulu and Lung-ya-hsi-chüeh are grouped together. I will return to this point at a later stage of the discussion.

The *Hsing-ch'a sheng-lan* shows similar "weak points": (1) it does not mention the rulers, (2) nor the word "sago"; (3) instead of "millet and grain" it uses a completely different expression; (4) after "chih chu-pu" the two characters "wei-yeh" are missing.<sup>34</sup>

The *Hsi-yang ch'ao-kung tien-lu* lists the rulers' names but it has all the other "deficiencies" of the *Hsing-ch'a sheng-lan*. In addition it changes the meaning of phrase (b) in the translated

32. For translations see *ibid.*, p. 226 and Rockhill, "Notes," pp. 270-71.

33. See edition as in n. 24. For an identification of the name see Mills, *Ma Huan*, p. 204, no. 341.

34. See edition as in n. 24, *hou-chi*, p. 15.

text above to "its local capital is called Shih-chi-chih-shan."<sup>35</sup>

This leaves us with the *Ta-Ming i-t'ung-chih* (or the *Huan-yü t'ung-chih*) as that source which stands closest to the description of Sulu in the play.

There are, however, some points that still perplex us.

#### SULU, AN ENEMY?

The author of the play portrays Sulu as an enemy country but there is no indication in the *Ta-Ming i-t'ung-chih* or the *Huan-yü t'ung-chih* that Sulu was ever involved in any action against China.<sup>36</sup> It is also doubtful whether Cheng Ho had contact with the king of Sulu. Moreover, judging from historical records, Cheng Ho never appears to have landed in Sulu.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, Sulu's

35. Translated in Mulder, "The Philippine Islands," p. 228. The expression "Shih-chi-chih-shan" is problematic. It differs in most other texts. Mulder, p. 226, translates the corresponding phrase in the *Tao-i chih-lieh* in the following way: "This country is protected by rocks, capes and mountains." The *Hsi-yang ch'ao-kung tien-lu* (as in n. 24) apparently took this expression as the name of a city. Mills, *Ma Huan*, p. 216, no. 543, and Mulder, "The Philippine Islands," p. 228 both suspect that it refers to Jolo, the provincial capital of Sulu Province. In the *Ta-Ming i-t'ung-chih* the expression designates the name of a mountain.

36. The only negative remark in the *Ta-Ming i-t'ung-chih* may be found in phrase (f). It is very unlikely, however, that this remark inspired the playwright to portray Sulu as a country hostile to China. Later texts such as the *Shu-yü chou-tzu-lu* (see edition as in n. 24, 4b-5b; also Cheng Hao-sheng, *Cheng Ho i-shih hui-pien* (Taipei: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1970), pp. 130-33, elaborate on the tribute delegations sent from Sulu to China. There are no "negative" remarks on these tribute delegations in the *Shu-yü chou-tzu-lu*. "Negative" statements, if any, can only be found in a different context in the *Ming-shih* and the *Tung-hsi-yang k'ao*; see n. 38.

37. Chu Chieh, for example, doubts whether Cheng Ho went to the Sulu Islands. See his "Cheng Ho ch'i tz'u hsia Hsi-yang so li ti-ming k'ao," *Tung-fang tsa-chih* 42 (1946) 49, and his *Cheng Ho* (Peking: San-lien shu-tien, 1956), p. 84. Ch'en Lieh-fu, *Fei-lü-pin ti li-shih* . . . , p. 58, is undecided and leaves the question open. Liu Chih-t'ien, *Chung-Fei kuan-hsi shih*, pp. 320-21, is among those who uncritically accept the view that Cheng Ho sailed to Sulu. In general, the following arguments support Chu Chieh: (1) Ma Huan, one of Cheng Ho's companions, did not report on any Chinese visit to Sulu (cf. Mills, *Ma Huan*). (2) Fei Hsin, who also accompanied Cheng Ho on several occasions, did not include his paragraph on Sulu in the first section of his *Hsing-ch'a sheng-lan* (this section contains descriptions of countries seen by Fei Hsin personally), but only in the second part (which contains descriptions of places not seen by Fei Hsin). Moreover, Fei Hsin's account of Sulu is heavily based on the *Tao-i chih-lieh* and does not add any significant information. (3) in his *Shu-yüan tsa-chi* (around 1475) Lu Jung claims that Cheng Ho sailed to Timor, Sulu and other places in the Philippines on the occasion of his third trip; see Lu Jung, *Shu-yüan tsa-chi* (Shanghai: Shang-wu yin-shu-kuan, 1936; *T'ung-shu chi-ch'eng ch'u-pien*, 329-30), vol. 1, chap. 3, p. 23; Pelliot, "Les Grands Voyages," p. 335; Cheng Hao-sheng, *Cheng Ho i-shih hui-pien*, pp. 91-92. This statement was generally accepted as an argument in favour of a possible journey to Sulu. However, upon closer examination it becomes clear that Lu Jung based himself

action against Cheng Ho seems to be based on pure invention. Nevertheless, there is some evidence in later works that Chinese merchants who privately sailed to Sulu for trade, were treated harshly by the natives. The *Tung-hsi-yang k'ao* and the *Ming-shih*, for instance, mention that the people of Sulu frequently took Chinese merchants hostage claiming that this was necessary to assure that the Chinese would return to Sulu in subsequent years.<sup>38</sup> Unfortunately we do not know the sources from which the *Tung-hsi-yang k'ao* and the *Ming-shih* took this information. Yet there remains the possibility that a text existed which contained descriptions of this kind and which was probably used for both the play and the historical records.

#### AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN PAHANG AND SULU?

No source mentions an alliance between Pahang, Sulu and the mythological country Ch'uan-hsiung-kuo. The *Ta-Ming i-t'ung-chih* and the *Huan-yü t'ung-chih* do not contain any chapter on Ch'uan-hsiung-kuo, but their paragraph on Pahang follows directly after that on Sulu. Interestingly enough, the third paragraph in the sequence of these two works is that on Calicut. In the play, Calicut is Cheng Ho's port of destination. Sulu and Pahang are on the way to Calicut. This seems to match the arrangement and the sequence of countries in the *Ta-Ming i-t'ung-chih*. It may be from here that the playwright drew the idea of creating an alliance between Sulu and Pahang.

#### LUAN-SHI-HSÜ

The name of this place may be translated as "Wild-rock-island." Again, it cannot be confirmed through other sources. We may only guess quite arbitrarily, that expression (b) in the *Ta-Ming i-t'ung-chih* (or *Huan-yü t'ung-chih*) inspired the author's fantasy. As a

on Fei Hsin, whose account he obviously did not read carefully enough, for otherwise he would not have included places like Timor and Sulu in his list of Cheng Ho's ports of destination. Yet, while it thus appears from early Ming sources that Cheng Ho had indeed never reached the Sulu Islands, we may not exclude the possibility that a ship or a small fleet under his command toured this part of the Philippines in a side mission.

38. See *Tung-hsi-yang k'ao* (edition as in n. 24), p. 63; *Ming-shih* (edition as in n. 9), vol. 28, chap. 325, pp. 8423-24. For translation see W. Groeneveldt, *Notes on the Malay Archipelago and Malacca compiled from Chinese Sources* (Batavia: W. Bruining, 1876), pp. 103 ff.

result he created a Luan-shih-hsü which, dangerous and violent as it was by nature, perfectly served Pa-tu-ko Pa-su-li for his plans.

#### SULU, AN ISLAND COUNTRY

Our attention is drawn to another point. Sulu, the drama says, was surrounded by the sea. This suggests that the playwright knew that Sulu was an island state. But none of the texts cited above explicitly describe Sulu as an island or archipelago. What then was the author's source of information?

#### SULU'S LOCATION

The *Hsing-ch'a sheng-lan* and the *Hsi-yang ch'ao-kung tien-lu* state that Sulu was in the "Eastern Ocean" (*tung-hai chih yang*). Not so the *Ta-Ming i-t'ung-chih* (or the *Huan-yü t'ung-chih*). In the Ming dynasty there existed a clear distinction between "Western Ocean" and "Eastern Ocean."<sup>39</sup> Presumably everybody knew that Cheng Ho had only sailed to the "Western Ocean." The phrase "Hsia Hsi-yang" was almost proverbial. Did the playwright deliberately ignore this fact? Or did there exist a second tradition, written or oral, according to which Cheng Ho was said to have visited numerous places in the "Eastern Ocean" as well?

The following seems to be more likely: The playwright did not read the *Hsing-ch'a sheng-lan* and the *Hsi-yang ch'ao-kung tien-lu* (this was already indicated above), so he did not know anything about Sulu's geographical location. From the *Ta-Ming i-t'ung-chih* he simply assumed that Sulu was but another country on the way to India. Thus he thought that Cheng Ho must have passed through it.

Admittedly, there always remains a possibility of textual coincidence and, of course, that of lost sources. Perhaps the playwright knew from another unidentified text that Sulu was an island country, but it would be somewhat surprising if such a source contained no information on Sulu's location while it clearly described Sulu as an archipelago. The problem of a lost source will also have to be considered in the next paragraph.

39. See n. 11.

## SULU'S KINGS

In most Ming sources Pa-tu-ko Pa-su-li is referred to as the "Western king," and Pa-tu-ko Pa-ta-la as the "Eastern king". The *Ta-ming i-t'ung-chih* (also the *Huan-yü t'ung-chih*) follows this pattern. Moreover, the *Ming-shih* and the *Ming shih-lu* mention that Tu-ma-han was Pa-tu-ko Pa-ha-la's eldest son (Pa-ha-la obviously stands for Pa-ta-la).<sup>40</sup> And Tu-ma-han's uncle was called Pa-tu-chia-su-li. Mulder thinks that the latter stands for Pa-tu-ko Pa-su-li.<sup>41</sup> This implies that Pa-ta-la and Pa-su-li were brothers. The Chinese term for "uncle" in this context is "wang shu". Thus, we may conclude that Pa-su-li was the younger brother. The play confuses the relationship between Pa-ta-la and Pa-su-li, saying that the former was the father of the latter. There are two interesting things to be noted here. First, whether father or elder brother, Pa-ta-la is portrayed as the older one. Secondly, the *Tung-hsi-yang k'ao* (written after 1522!) explicitly states that Pa-ta-la was the leading ruler among the three kings of Sulu.<sup>42</sup> Pa-ta-la's leading position seems to parallel his superiority in age and his role as a father in the play. How did the playwright get this idea for none of the early sources (nos. 1, 3-6) contains hints which might lead to this conclusion. Again we have to raise the question: Is it possible that there existed a source which served the play and later the *Tung-hsi-yang k'ao* as a reference?<sup>43</sup>

Assuming that the playwright consulted the *Ta-Ming i-t'ung-chih* or the *Huan-yü t'ung-chih* as his first reference, it is quite possible that he did not understand why there were three kings in one and the same country. A second unknown book may have "solved" his problem: One of the kings was identified as the father or the elder brother of the other. The playwright ignored the term "Hsi-wang" (probably as a compromise between contradictory information), and believing that the third ruler was a local chief of

40. See *Ming-shih* (edition as in n. 9), vol. 28, chap. 325, p. 8423; *Ming shih-lu* (edition as in n. 24), vol. 13, chap. 192, pp. 2021 ff. The text is also in Chiu Ling-yeong et. al., *Ming shih-lu chung chih Tung-nan-ya shih-liao* (Hong Kong: Hsieh-tsin Press, 1976), 1:218 ff.

41. See Mulder, "The Philippine Islands," p. 228 where he translates parts of the *Ming shih-lu* passages on Sulu.

42. See edition as in n. 24, p. 62.

43. The *Ming shih-lu* may be excluded as the playwright's source.



minor importance,<sup>44</sup> he simply played with his name and created two figures, Chi-la-pu and Chi-la-tu. No need to say, that these "funny" and "strange" names served to amuse the audience.

It should be added here, that Mulder identifies the term "Pa-tu-ko" as Paduka ("Excellency"). He also transcribes the names of the rulers as Pahala, Pasuli and Prabu.<sup>45</sup>

## CONCLUSION

It is more than likely that either the *Ta-Ming i-t'ung-chih* or the *Huan-yü t'ung-chih* served as a reference for the description of Sulu in *Hsia Hsi-yang*. At least one additional source may have been employed, either oral or written. Its title is unknown. We may, however, assume that it contained both accurate historical facts and imaginative elements. A complete examination of the drama's paragraphs on Pahang and other countries may confirm this result.

Given that the *Ta-Ming i-t'ung-chih* appeared first in 1461 (the *Huan-yü t'ung-chih* in 1456) and the nei-fu-script was not written later than 1522, *Hsia Hsi-yang* would have to be dated somewhere in between 1461 (or 1456) and 1522. One of the figures in the play, Ch'en Mou, died only in 1463. It is likely that some years passed before he was characterized on stage. Probably the period 1475 to 1522 would be a more appropriate date in this case. Then we may also assume that the *Ta-Ming i-t'ung-chih* and not the *Huan-yü t'ung-chih* (the earlier one) formed the basis of the Sulu chapter in *Hsia Hsi-yang*.

44. In some texts Pa-tu-ko Pa-la-pu is not referred to as the "divisional ruler" but as "the wife of the divisional ruler." See, for example, *Ming-shih* (edition as in n.9), vol. 28, chap. 325, p. 8423; *Tsui wei lu* (edition as in n. 24), 84a; *Ming shan tsang* (edition as in n. 24), p. 6187. The *Shu-yü chou-tzu-lu* (edition as in n. 24), 4a, reads "tung" ("cave") instead of "tung" ("district inhabited by aboriginal tribes," "divisional ruler" etc.). Mulder, "The Philippine Islands," p. 229, concludes that "king of caves" refers to an area in Borneo which was ruled by Pa-tu-ko Pa-la-pu. See also the sources mentioned by Mulder for further reference.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 228-29. Also see Rockhill, "Notes," p. 270, who mentions an older work by Rouffaer not available to me.