More Notes on the Eight Immortals

By W. PERCEVAL YETTS

THE following notes are intended to supplement an article written in 1912 and published in JRAS. for October, 1916, pp. 773–807. The theme then was the tradition of the group as generally accepted at the present day, and limitation of space confined the study to one hero-tale for each of the Eight. The tales were translated intact from an illustrated compilation of Taoist mythology which continues in popular favour and provides a fairly representative treatment of the subject. With a scope so restricted, the former article made but a small contribution towards a better understanding of an important national cult. It is essayed here to probe a little deeper and in more varied places in search of evidence about the origin and evolution of the conception.[1] The writer feels that apologies are due for the scrappy nature of these notes rather than for reverting to the topic; for surely there is call for much fuller inquiry, considering the ubiquity of the Eight in the folk-lore and folk-art of the Far East during many centuries, and the scant attention paid them by Western students.

The Chinese delight in numerical categories; and it is wise to exercise caution in attributing peculiar significance to one among so many. Yet there seems reason for regarding eight as a kind of "perfect" number. Foremost are the Eight Trigrams 卦, a conception of extreme antiquity which has provided a basis for much speculation in the domains of philosophy and all kinds of magic. Corresponding to each of the Trigrams is a beast, and thus a group of Eight Animals 物 is constituted. Then there are the Eight Frontiers

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表 of the world (of China), meaning the four cardinal points and the four intermediate angles.[1] Similarly, there are the Eight Regions 方 and the Eight Winds; and 八 蠻 was a general term for all tribes of barbarians living on the fringes of the empire. The year has eight special periods 節 (or 正). Eight were the sacrifices 蜡 offered by the ancient sovereigns at the close of the year,[2] and the conception of the Eight Spirits 神 is probably as old as history.[3] Musical sounds were anciently recognized as of eight kinds, hence 八 音 stood for the musical instruments that made them.[4] There is a tendency, too, in literature to arrange subjects under eight heads. Witness the 八 書 of the *Shih chi*, in which Ssŭ-ma Ch'ien discusses various rites and branches of learning; the numerical arrangement being based, it is said, on the two equinoxes, the two solstices, and the four seasons.[5]

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[1] Thus these lines of the poet Li Po: 仙 風 道 骨 可 與 神 遊 八 極 之 表 "Having the air of a *hsien* and my person permeated with *Tao*, I can wander through boundless space in the company of spirits". Also compare the terms 八 達, which means "in every direction", and the similar 八 荒.

[2] *v. Li chi*, Legge, *S.B.E.*, xxvii, 431.

[3] *v.* Chavannes, *Mém. Hist.*, iii, 432 *seq.* Ssŭ-ma Ch'ien says that the Eight Spirits have existed since earliest times; but he also quotes a tradition that the belief dated from about 1100 B.C. The Eight are the Lords of the Sky, Earth, Sun, Moon, Four Seasons, the *Yin* and *Yang* principles, and of War. It is noteworthy that the Roman Catholics have adopted the name of the first, 天 主, as their term for God. The same two characters are used for Indra by Chinese translators and writers on Buddhist subjects.

[4] The term denoted all musical instruments. It included those fashioned from eight kinds of materials: metal, stone, silk, bamboo, wood, earth, skin, or a gourd. *v. Shu ching*, Legge, *Chin. Class.*, iii, pt. i, 41. There is no space to discuss here this interesting topic; it must suffice to mention that "metal" comprised bells, "stone" sonorous hanging stones, "silk" stringed instruments, "bamboo" flutes, "wood" sonorous box types, "earth" things like the ocarina, "skin" drums, and "gourd" that strange-shaped reed-organ 笙, the body of which resembles a teapot. *v. Hsiao hsüeh kan chu*, 小 學 紺 珠, ix, 12.

[5] *v.* Chavannes, *Mém. Hist.*, i, Intro. ccxvii.

The foregoing examples are but few among many that might be advanced to support the theory claiming peculiar significance for our group in respect of the number of its components. While not wishing to labour the point, it does seem that, among the many numerical categories of the Chinese, sets of eight are characterized by a certain quality of symmetrical completeness.

The following passage, calling attention to the catholicity of the Eight, is perhaps not out of place here, though it argues that the group embraces all sections of the community because of the personalities of its individual members, rather than because of its numerical constitution. At the same time it bears out the notion of completeness.

> The Eight Immortals are Chang, Han, Lü, Ho, Ts‘ao, Han, Lan, and Li. Here we have old and young, male and female, rich and honoured, and poor and humble. The old are represented by Chang [Kuo]; the young by Lan [Ts‘ai-ho] and Han [Hsiang Tzŭ]; warriors by [Han] Chung-li; scholars by Lü [Tung-pin]; the noble by Ts‘ao [Kuo-chiu]; the sick (i.e. physically defective) by Li [T‘ieh-kuai]; and women by Ho [Hsien-ku].—*Shih wu yüan hui* 事物原會, quoted in *Chi shuo ch‘üan chên*[1] 集記詮眞, 214.

Further, to uphold the thesis that our set of Eight was no chance combination, it is proposed to show that a series of groups, the same numerically if not identical in their membership, may be traced back to various dates prior to the constitution of the modern group. So far as we know the archetype of the lot is the legend of the Eight Worthies,[2] Pa Kung

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[1] This is a compilation from multitudinous sources published towards the end of the last century by the native scholar Huang Po-lu 黃伯祿, who became a member of the Roman Catholic clergy. As its title suggests, the main purpose of the work is to discredit non-Christian beliefs. Its well-arranged pages have provided the basis for much that has been published by Western writers on Chinese religion, though the source of information has not always been acknowledged. It has frequently been consulted in the preparation of these notes.

[2] Not to be confused with the eight ministers of state under An P‘ing Wang 安平王 who were called by the same name, Pa Kung.

八公, related to the second century before the Christian era. Lately M. Pelliot has called attention to it in his important article[1] on the writings of the Philosopher Mou 牟子. That these worthies were early recognized as *hsien* is proved by a sixth century inscription which speaks of a "picture of the Eight Immortals of Huai-nan" 淮南八僊之圖; and a similar phrase is attributed to the Empress Wu some two hundred years later.[2] Popular estimate regarding the continuity of an Eight Immortals tradition dating back at least as far as the time of the Worthies is indicated, too, in the entries which the *Tz'ŭ yüan* has under the heading 八仙.

The story of the Eight Worthies is contained in the well-known collection of Taoist hero-tales written in the fourth century by Ko Hung 葛洪, and takes up a large part of his article about that famous patron of Taoist philosophers and magicians, the Prince of Huai-nan 淮南王, who figures in the lore of the cult as a *hsien* himself. Professed adepts of *Tao* from all parts of the empire flocked in the second century B.C. to the palace of the Prince. One day eight[3] of them with hoary beards and every sign of extreme age arrived at his gates. The gate-keeper, noting that their persons proclaimed failure in the quest of perennial youth which preoccupied his master, hesitated to admit them. Then followed a dialogue in which the gate-keeper remarked on their obvious lack of the magic means of warding off senility. They retorted that he should not judge by mere appearances. " However," said they, " if the Prince dislikes our aged looks, we will become young." Scarcely were the words uttered when all the Eight Worthies turned into youths of about fifteen. Their hair became black and silky, and their complexions like peach-bloom. The amazed gate-keeper ran and told the Prince, who, not waiting even to put on his shoes, hurried out to receive them with every mark of distinction. Having abased himself in suitable terms of oriental metaphor, the Prince put himself at the feet of the Worthies as their humble disciple. The latter, now appeased, changed back into their former shapes, and then proceeded to enumerate their powers of magic. Since the list provides such a complete summary of wonders claimed in Taoist lore to be worked by *hsien* in general, it is deemed worth while to translate it here in full :—

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[1] *v. T'oung Pao*, xix, 318, 404–6.

[2] *v.* Pelliot, *loc. cit.*, 406.

[3] According to the *Hsiao hsüeh kan chu*, vi, 14, the names of Huai-nan's Eight Worthies were as follows: Tso Wu 左吳, Li Shang 李尙, Su Fei 蘇飛, T'ien Yu 田由, Mao P'i 毛披, Lei P'i 雷被, Chin Ch'ang 晉昌, and Wu P'i 伍被. But it must be remarked that this list is quite inconsistent with the tale told by Ko Hung if it be intended that it should relate to the eight magicians. The names quoted in this note are those of courtiers and others frequenting the Prince's palace. Thus they constitute yet another group under the style Pa Kung, distinct from the *hsien*. Dr. Giles has kindly pointed out a variation of the narrative, as told by Ko Hung, appearing in *Lu i chi* 錄異記 (quoted in *T'u shu*, Section xviii, Bk. 229), where the Eight Worthies are made to declare by what names they were known. These are all fanciful pseudonyms of Taoistic import.

> One of us is able without effort to call up wind and rain, and instantaneously to raise clouds and mists. He can trace lines across the land and they become rivers, and by scooping up the soil he can make mountains. Another of us can cause high hills to collapse, and the sources of deep springs to dry up. He can tame tigers and panthers, summon scaly monsters and dragons to appear, and press the spirits 鬼 神 into his service. Another of us can divide his personality[1] and transform his shape, and is also able to become visible and invisible at will. He can hide whole army corps, and turn midday into night. Another can ride the clouds and tread the empyrean, cross the sea and walk upon the waves. He can go in and out where there is no crevice,[2] or travel in a breath one thousand *li*.

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[1] The power of self-multiplication is possessed by many Taoist magicians and is not unknown in Christian hagiology, e.g. St. Anthony of Padua and St. Alfonso of Liguori, both of whom were seen in at least two places simultaneously. Some *hsien* are credited with being able to reduplicate their persons a hundredfold and more.

[2] A reminiscence of *Tao tê ching*, xliii : 無 有 入 於 無 閒 " That which has no substance enters where there is no crevice ". Lieh Tzŭ has a story of a man who could float in and out of a rocky cliff ; and a like

> Another can enter flames unscathed, and plunge into water without a wetting. Neither swords wound him nor arrows find him their target. He feels no cold in winter frosts, nor does he sweat in summer heat. Another is capable of a myriad transformations: bird, beast, plant, or tree—as the fancy takes him, he can become each or any of these. He can move mountains and bring rivers to a halt; he can transport a palace or shift a house. Another can boil mud into gold, and freeze lead into silver. He is able to fuse the Eight Minerals[1] [of the alchemist] into a liquid from which pearls soar aloft [in place of vapour]. He rides in a chariot of clouds with dragons for his team, and floats above the Great Purity.[2]—*Shên hsien chuan* 神 仙 傳, iv, 2 *seq.*

After the Worthies of the Prince of Huai-nan the next group in our series seems to be the one alluded to in the second century treatise *Mou Tzŭ li huo* 牟 子 理 惑, recently translated by M. Pelliot under the title "Meou-tseu ou Les doutes levés".[3] The passage may, however, point back across and even beyond the four hundred years separating its writer from the Prince. It mentions certain *Records of the Eight Immortals* 八 仙 之 籙, and specifies Wang Ch'iao 王 喬 and Ch'ih Sung 赤 松 as members of the group. Both these names occur in the oldest legends of Taoist saints; at least, it may truly be said so of the latter, who is presumably the Ch'ih-sung Tzŭ written about in the *Lieh hsien chuan* of Liu Hsiang 劉 向. That famous classic of Taoist hagiology contains also a notice of Wang-tzŭ Ch'iao

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feat was performed by the first so-called Taoist pope, Chang Tao-ling. Compare also a note in a book ascribed to a third century author which recounts the powers of a number of Taoist magicians who lived under the Emperor Wu Ti of the Wei dynasty: 出 入 不 由 門 戶 "They go in and out without using the doors".—*Po wu chih* 博 物 志, v, 1.

[1] According to the list given in the *Tz'ŭ yüan*, they are: cinnabar, realgar, copper carbonate, sulphur, mica, ? sal ammoniac, nitre, and ochre.

[2] Taoists distinguish "Three Purities" 三 清, each being the abode of *hsien*: (1) "Jade Purity" 玉 丨; (2) "Upper Purity" 上 丨; (3) "Great Purity" 太 丨. The last, according to Ko Hung, is forty *li* above the earth and of crystalline hardness.

[3] *T'oung Pao*, xix, 255–433.

王 子 喬, in which he is described as the heir to King Ling 靈 (571–545 B.C.). M. Pelliot has discussed the identities of Wang Ch'iao and Wang-tzŭ Ch'iao,[1] and therefore I will only remark that reason may be shown for taking the first two characters of the name Wang-tzŭ Ch'iao to mean merely "Son of the king", and that Wang Ch'iao and Wang-tzŭ Ch'iao figure in art as two separate and different entities. The former is depicted carried through the air with each foot on a wild duck, while the latter rides a crane (or phœnix) and plays the reed-organ of which he was so fond. The surmise may be hazarded that from the context of this passage by the Philosopher Mou one is justified in regarding the 八 仙 used there as a sort of collective term for *hsien* in general.

The next known group in chronological sequence of record is probably the Eight *Hsien* of Shu 蜀 之 八 仙, alluded to in the *Annals of Shu* 蜀 紀 by Ch'iao Hsiu 譙 秀 of the Chin dynasty (A.D. 265–419). The passage, as quoted in the *Tz'ŭ yüan*, runs as follows:—

> The Eight *Hsien* of Shu are these: Jung Ch'êng Kung 容 成 公, the hermit of Hung-mêng 鴻 濛, now called Ch'ing-ch'êng Shan[2] 青 城 山. The next is Li Êrh 李 耳, born in Shu. The third is Tung Chung-shu 董 仲 舒, also a hermit of the Ch'ing-ch'êng Mountain. The fourth is Chang Tao-ling 張 道 陵, associated with what is now called Hao-ming Kuan 鶴 鳴 觀. The fifth is Chuang Chün-p'ing 莊 君 平, the diviner of Ch'êng-tu 成 都. The sixth is Li Pa-po 李 八 百, at the Lung-mên Grotto in Hsin-tu 新 都. The seventh is Fan Ch'ang-shêng 范 長 生 of the Ch'ing-ch'êng Mountain. The eighth is the Master Êrh Chu 爾 朱 先 生 of Ya-chou 雅 州. Votaries have painted pictures of the Eight.

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[1] *Loc. cit.*, 406, 407.

[2] This famous mountain is south-west of Ch'êng-tu. It is called the "administrative centre of the *hsien*" 神 仙 都 會 之 府, and it was the fifth in the series of the Ten Mysterious Palaces of Celestial Places 十 洞 天. *v.* Chavannes, *Mém. conc. l'Asie Or.*, iii, 132, 137 *seq.*

It will be noted that all these *hsien*, except one or two, lived in Han times or earlier. A short biography of Jung Ch'êng Kung appears in the old *Lieh hsien chuan*. Said to have been a minister of state under the Yellow Emperor, he again appeared to mortal ken in the reign of King Mu (1001–946 B.C.). Li Êrh are the family and personal names respectively of Lao Tzŭ. Accounts do not agree that he was born in Shu. Ssŭ-ma Ch'ien says his native place was in the township of K'u 苦, and critics place this in modern Anhui. Tung Chung-shu, according to the *Ch'ien Han shu* 前漢書, was native of a town now known as Tsao-chiang 棗强 in Chihli. About 150 B.C. his scholarly attainments brought him the post of Doctor at the Academy of Learning. Chang Tao-ling is famed as the first Celestial Preceptor 天師. He was born A.D. 34 at a spot now included in Chehkiang. Ko Hung says: "Hearing that the people of Shu were simple, honest folk, easy to teach and convert, and that there were in that region many celebrated mountains, he departed thither with his disciples, and settled on the Crane's Call Mountain."—*Shên hsien chuan*, iv, 8. Chuang Chün-p'ing lived at the beginning of the Christian era. He used to tell fortunes in the market-place of Ch'êng-tu. "As soon as he had taken a hundred cash he would shut up shop and let down the blind, and spend the rest of the day studying the works of Lao Tzŭ."—*v. Chi shuo ch'üan chên*, 216. Chuang, being the personal name of Han Ming Ti, was taboo, and therefore the diviner's name is generally written Yen, as in the next list, p. 405. The account given of Li Pa-po in the later *Lieh hsien chuan* says that he lived for eight hundred years under the Hsia, Shang, and Chou dynasties, and that he never moved without travelling eight hundred *li*. At times he would retire as a hermit into mountain forests, at others he would make his home amid the hurly-burly of the markets. According to the *Ssŭ-ch'uan t'ung chih* 四川通志, xxxviii, 1, Ch'ang-shêng, "Long-life," was the name given as a mark of respect to Fan Yu 范友 by his fellow-countrymen of

Shu. His *tzŭ* was Tzŭ-yüan 子元; he was a native of Fou-ling 涪陵. He mixed in worldly affairs, and is said to have refused an offer of the throne when the third ruler of the Ch‘êng 成 State took possession of Ch‘êng-tu in 303. The latter at his instigation assumed the imperial title, and appointed Fan Yu a Minister of State, conferring on him a marquisate and the title "Grand Preceptor of Heaven and Earth" 天地太師. I have not been able to trace the Master Êrh Chu.

There is another list which differs little from that of the Eight *Hsien* of Shu just quoted. The passage recording it provides the interesting information that this particular group was recognized in the tenth century; for the Mêng Ch‘ang 孟昶 referred to was the second ruler of a small state in the central part of modern Szechwan, and he surrendered in A.D. 965 to the forces of the founder of the Sung dynasty. It runs as follows:—

> Tradition accounts the Eight *Hsien* to be Chung-li Ch‘üan, Lü Tung-pin, and the rest. Now, the Taoist priest Chang Su-ch‘ing[1] 張素卿 presented to Mêng Ch‘ang of the Later Shu State 後蜀 a picture of the Eight *Hsien* on the anniversary of his birthday. It portrayed Li Êrh, Jung Ch‘êng, Tung Chung-shu, Chang Tao-ling, Yen Chün-p‘ing, Li Pa-po, Fan Ch‘ang-shou 范長壽, and Ko Yung-k‘uei[2] 葛永璝. For particulars see *Mao t‘ing k‘o hua* 茅亭客話 by Huang Hsiu-fu 黃休復, and *T‘u hua chien wên chih* 圖畫見聞志, in which Li O[3] 李阿 and Ch‘ang-shou Hsien

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[1] "Famous for his paintings of Taoist philosophers and divinities"—Waley, *Index of Chinese Artists*, 5 (London, 1922). Dr. Giles has kindly called my attention to what must be almost a contemporary notice of his work and this picture in particular in *T‘ai p‘ing kuang chi* 太平廣記, ccxiv, 3. Here the list of the Eight *Hsien* has Li I 李已 instead of Li Êrh.

[2] Lived in the third century A.D., assuming that the identification of him with Ko Hsien-wêng 葛仙翁 be correct. In the prefecture of Ch‘êng-tu there is a hill named after him, from which, so the legend goes, he ascended on high as a *hsien*. *v. Chi shuo ch‘üan chên*, 216.

[3] There is an article on Li O in *Shên hsien chuan*, x, 4. He used to frequent the market-places of Ch‘êng-tu. Generation after generation saw him still young and showing no sign of old age.

長壽仙 are given [instead of the names Li Êrh and Fan Chʻang-shou].—Chü i lu 居易錄, quoted in *Yen pu tsa chi* 簷曝雜記, vi, 16.

An echo of the old tradition is traceable in the name of the eighth century coterie of bibulous *littérateurs* styled the Eight Immortals of the Wine Cup, and *Biographies of the Eight Immortals* is the recorded title of a book belonging to about the same period. Both were alluded to in my former article (p. 776). Tu Fu 杜甫, the contemporary of Li Po who was one of the famous coterie, wrote a poem called *The Song of the Eight Immortals of Drinking.*[1]

M. Pelliot cites an inventory of a picture collection of the Southern Sung dynasty (1127–1278), in which eight scrolls are catalogued as representing the Eight Immortals painted by the eleventh century artist Sun Chih-wei 孫知微. He also refers to a passage mentioning in the middle of the twelfth century a 八仙圖.[2]

Perhaps for some hundreds of years the Eight Immortals tradition had no wide popularity. In support of this conjecture may be advanced the fact that the conception (except in the guise of the drunken coterie mentioned above) is missing from the great collection of numerical categories [3] compiled by the thirteenth century writer Wang Ying-lin [4] 王應麟. Then, towards the end of the Ming period an historical critic of note, Hu Ying-lin [5] 胡應麟, discussed the legend as if it was of no great importance nor established antiquity. The same attitude of somewhat careless contempt towards Taoist tales, so characteristic of Confucian scholars, is shown in the following essay published in 1790. The writer is Chao I 趙翼. There are several well-known books from his pen besides the one in which this appears.

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[1] *v. Tu Shao-ling chʻüan chi hsiang chu* 杜少陵全集詳註, i, 17 *seq.*

[2] *Loc. cit.*, 404, 405.

[3] Entitled *Hsiao hsüch kan chu*, *v. sup.*, p. 398.

[4] *v.* Giles, *Biog. Dict.*, 2253.

[5] He took his second degree between 1573 and 1620.

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The popular tradition, handed down for generations, speaks of the Eight Immortals as Han Chung-li, Chang Kuo-lao, Han Hsiang Tzŭ, T'ieh-kuai Li, Ts'ao Kuo-chiu, Lü Tung-pin, and two female *hsien*—Lan Ts'ai-ho and Ho Hsien-ku. Such books as the *T'ai p'ing kuang chi* and the *Shên hsien t'ung chien* 神 仙 通 鑑, while recording the lives of *hsien*, do not provide detailed particulars, nor make mention of the so-called "Eight Immortals".[1]

Hu Ying-lin states that stories of the Eight Immortals as a collective group date from the Yüan period. The teachings of Wang Chung-yang[2] 王 重 陽 were then greatly in vogue; Chung-li was entitled Chêng-yang 正 陽, and Tung-pin Shun-yang 純 陽, Ho Hsien-ku being a disciple of the latter. Such was the origin from which developed, by the addition of other persons from time to time, the group under its present designation. There is a play acted at the present time, entitled *The Eight Immortals going to worship the Star of Longevity*. This is derived from an ancient text of the Yüan dynasty, so that there are good grounds for the view that the legend of the Eight Immortals originated in that period. Among the Eight are several persons who appear in the dynastic histories; but the rest of them are only to be found here and there in fiction and works of imagination.

While many of the wild unrealities described cannot be accepted as based on actual fact, yet we may pick out passages affording evidence of historical authenticity [for some of the Eight]. With regard to Chang Kuo, for instance, see the *Old T'ang History* 舊 唐 書 on the twenty-second year of the

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[1] Though true in regard to the Yüan group, this statement ignores the notice in *T'ai p'ing kuang chi*, referred to in note 1 on p. 405, concerning the older Shu group. The oversight is strange, especially since the notice is headed "Pictures of the Eight Immortals".

[2] The name by which Wang Chê 王 嚞 was generally known. He was the famous Taoist who drew many disciples to his headquarters at a monastery in Shantung, and became the founder of a Northern School of esoteric Taoism. He is said to have been a pupil of Lü Tung-pin; but, since he lived in the twelfth century, the tradition can hardly have an historical basis. There is no reason to doubt that one of his pupils was Ch'iu Ch'ang-ch'un 邱 長 春, so renowned for his great journey at the age of over seventy across China to Jinghiz Khan's camp near the borders of India. His success in turning the Khan to more humane ways is an instance of the moral force of Taoist teachings too seldom recognized.

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k'ai-yüan period [A.D. 734], where it is recorded that the Master Chang Kuo 張果先生 of Hêng Chou[1] 恒州 had conferred on him the title Silver-and-Blue Kuang-lu Ta Fu[2] 光祿大夫, besides the designation (*hao*) of T'ung-yüan Hsien-shêng 通元先生.[3]

For Chung-li Ch'üan see the biography of Ch'ên T'uan 陳摶 in the *Sung History* 宋史. It is narrated there that once, when Ch'ên Yao-tzŭ 陳堯咨 was visiting T'uan, he found a Taoist with his hair done up in ancient fashion[4] already seated in the guest's place. Yao-tzŭ inquired privily of Ch'ên who the Taoist was. Ch'ên replied—The Philosopher Chung-li[5] 鍾離子. In the biography of Wang Lao-chih[6] 王老志 there is mention of a beggar, calling himself The Master Chung-li, who presented Lao-chih with some of the magic drug 丹. Having swallowed it, the latter lost his reason, and left his home, abandoning his wife and children.

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[1] The modern Ta-t'ung 大同 in Shansi.

[2] " Under the Ch'in and the Han dynasties the emblem of a Kuang-lu Ta Fu was of silver and had a blue cord. Under the Chin 晉 dynasty senior and junior grades of this rank were instituted, one receiving the insignia of a gold seal with a purple cord, the other that of the Kuang-lu Ta Fu as of old. The Southern Ch'i dynasty was the first to use the titles 'Gold-and-Purple Kuang-lu Ta Fu' and 'Silver-and-Blue Kuang-lu Ta Fu', and succeeding dynasties continued the names, until the Ming who abolished them."—*Tz'ŭ yüan* under 銀青. The late Manchu dynasty retained the title Kuang-lu Ta Fu as the first grade of the highest of the titles of honour 封贈.

[3] The passage quoted is to be found in viii, 23. References in these notes to the dynastic histories are to the 1878 edition.

[4] *v. inf.*, p. 416.

[5] The biography referred to is in *Sung shih*, CDlvii, 2–4; but it does not contain this passage. Ch'ên T'uan was a famous Taoist magician who was unable to talk till the age of four or five when a river sprite suckled him. Thenceforth he exhibited supernatural powers. He was the object of imperial interest under several of the Five Dynasties, and we read the usual tales of his ignoring summonses to Court or obeying them in that off-hand manner characteristic of his kind. Later, the first two Sung emperors requested his attendance and when at last he responded he indulged in his peculiar propensity for going into a trance lasting a month or more. He is said to have departed this world about A.D. 990 at the age of 118. Two works on alchemy in the Taoist Canon (Wieger, Nos. 131, 132) are attributed to him. In pictorial art he is often represented riding on a mule, and so might be mistaken for Chang Kuo.

[6] *Sung shih*, CDlxii, 8.

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With regard to Lü Tung-pin, look again at Ch'ên T'uan's biography, where he is described as a native of Kuan-hsi[1] 關西 living in retirement. He was versed in sword magic, and lived to be more than a hundred. His steps were light and nimble, and he could travel several hundred *li* in an instant of time. He frequently visited T'uan at his library.[2] These three men are all to be found in the dynastic histories, so we may perhaps lend credence to what is said about them.

Han Hsiang Tzŭ is reputed to have been a grand-nephew of Han Ch'ang-li[3] 韓昌黎, the same to whom is addressed Han's poem about his banishment beyond the Lan Pass. But the poem does not contain a word about his possessing any powers of Taoistic magic. Such books as the *Yu yang tsa tsu*[4] 酉陽雜俎 and *Ch'ing so kao i* 青瑣高議, when referring to this poem, contain the gloss that Hsiang was able to cause flowers to spring up, and made appear on their petals a couplet conveying allusions to the Ch'in Mountains and the Lan Pass in anticipation of the event; that is, before his uncle had been exiled.[5] When the uncle actually did come to the Lan Pass and Hsiang turned up there too, the former was able to complete the poem.

According to the genealogical tables of the ministers of the T'ang dynasty, Hsiang was the son of Lao Ch'êng 老成. (*Note.*—There is a poem of Ch'ang-li's addressed to his brother's son, Lao Ch'êng.) Hsiang took the doctor's degree and was appointed an Assistant in the Grand Court of Revision in the third year of the *ch'ang-ch'ing* period [A.D. 823]. There is no mention at first of his having strange magical powers. But there is a stanza by Ch'ang-li addressed to a certain cousin[6] at Hsü-chou 徐州. It runs as follows:—

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[1] In Shensi.

[2] The passage is in *Sung shih*, cdlvii, 2. In the original it says: "He lived to be more than a hundred, yet had the face of a youth."

[3] Ch'ang-li is the *hao* of Han Yü, and is derived from the name of the ancestral home of his family in Chihli.

[4] This book was written by a contemporary of Han Yü. *v.* Wylie, *Notes on Chin. Lit.*, 193, 2nd ed.

[5] This applies only to the *Ch'ing so kao i*. The *Yu yang tsa tsu*, xix, 4, makes the miracle take place after Han Yü's banishment, which quite spoils the story.

Strictly, son of a male paternal third cousin.

"If you ask who it is that knocks at my door,
I reply that it is a kinsman,
Who claims to have strange magic
And to probe mysteries and to know the workings of Heaven."[1]

The kinsman being a cousin, he could not have been a grand-nephew; and the expressions "probing into mysteries and understanding Heaven's workings" only mean that he was something in the nature of an astrologer, able to tell persons' fortunes. Thus further on in the poem he says:—

"His words betokening a meeting with me in the future were no flattery."

This must refer to the time when he was acting as an Assistant.

As a matter of fact, Hsiang accompanied Chʻang-li to Ling-nan [i.e. Kuang-tung]. (*Note.*—Chʻang-li has a poem addressed to Hsiang entitled *Passing the night at the mouth of the Tsêng River.* The Tsêng River is the one at Tsêng-chʻêng Hsien in Kuang-chou.) Thus Hsiang was really not able, like the cousin at Hsü-chou, to "understand the workings of Heaven", and we need not waste further time in discussing the gloss on the Lan-tʻien poem[2] attributing to him feats of wildly improbable magic.

No historical account has anything to say about Tʻieh-kuai Li. The biography of Chʻên Tsʻung-hsin 陳從信 in the *Sung shih*[3] mentions a certain Li Pa-po, who called himself Eight-hundred Years 八百歲. Tsʻung-hsin served him with great assiduity in the hope that he would impart his magical arts to him, but in the end learned nothing at all. In the biography of Wei Han-ching 魏漢津 it is recorded that he (i.e. Wei) acknowledged as his preceptor a Li Pa-po[4] who had lived under the Tʻang. The latter imparted to him the secrets of the alchemist's crucible. So there was a Li Pa-po in the Sung period who was heard and spoken of, but nothing is said about his being lame or having an iron crutch. Hu Ying-lin identifies our *hsien* with Liu the Cripple 劉 跛 子, mentioned in the *Shên hsien tʻung chien*; but the two surnames, Liu and Li, cannot be thus capriciously imputed to him. The *Hsü tʻung kʻao* 續 通 考 also speaks of a Sui dynasty (589–618) man whose *ming* was Hung-shui 洪 水 and whose child-name was *Kuai-êrh* 拐 兒, but without reference to any book as the source of information, so that this identification is just as devoid of foundation as the other.

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[1] This poem is not included in Han Yü's collected works.

[2] The town of Lan-tʻien, in the Shensi prefecture of Hsi-an, is near the Chʻin Range.

[3] cclxxvi, 14.

[4] *Sung shih*, cdlxii, 7. Here his name is given as Li Liang 李良. It does not appear that Taoist myth claims for him such longevity as to identify him with the Li Pa-po mentioned above, p. 404. The *Sung shih* has this anecdote of him: "Once when passing the Dragon Gate of San-shan, Li Pa-po, hearing the sound of the waters, turned to the bystanders and said that there must be some jade at the bottom. Forthwith he threw off his clothes, plunged into the river and emerged clasping a boulder which turned out to be real jade."

It has been handed down that Tsʻao Kuo-chiu was the younger brother of the Empress Dowager Tsʻao of the Sung dynasty. According to the *Sung shih*,[1] Tsʻao I 曹 佾, a younger brother of the Empress Dowager Tzʻŭ-shêng Kuang-hsien 慈 聖 光 獻, died at the age of 72. So he does not appear to have succeeded in becoming a *hsien*. Apart from him, no relative of the imperial house studied with a view to hsienship, so that this again is a case of reckless hearsay tradition. The *Tao shan chʻing hua*[2] 道 山 清 話 records that a certain Yen Shu[3] 晏 殊 was a re-incarnation of the *hsien* Tsʻao Pa-po 曹 八 百. The person here referred to as Tsʻao Pa-po can hardly be identified with Kuo-chiu; certainly he was not related to the royal family.

About Ho Hsien-ku the *Liu kung fu shih hua* 劉 貢 父 詩 話 says that she was a native of Yung-chou 永 州, while the *Hsü tʻung kʻao* declares her to have been born at Tsêng-chʻêng in Kuangtung. Tsêng Ta-chʻên 曾 達 臣 in his *Tu hsing tsa chih* 獨 醒 雜 志[4] tells us that she lived during the reign of the Emperor Jên-tsung (1022–1063) of the Sung dynasty; on the other hand, the *Hsü tʻung kʻao* states that she belonged to the time of the Tʻang Empress Wu (684–705). Some of these tales must be false, because of the wide discrepancies between them.

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[1] ccxlii, 10.

[2] A collection of miscellaneous anecdotes. It dates from the Northern Sung dynasty (960–1126), but the author is unknown.

[3] According to the *Sung shih*, about A.D. 1004 there was a wonderfully clever youth named Shu 殊, whose *tzŭ* was Tʻung-shu 同 叔.

[4] *v.* Wylie, *Notes on Chin. Lit.*, 2nd ed., 198.

With regard to Lan Ts'ai-ho, the *T'ai p'ing kuang chi* says that he was usually attired in a ragged blue gown, with one foot shod and the other bare. In summer he wore quilted garments, and in winter he would sleep in the snow. He used to go into the market-places carrying a large pair of castanets, and sing the following in a loud voice:—

"Lan Ts'ai-ho for song and dance, for song and dance!
How short our sojourn here below!
The ancients have passed away like running water, never to return;
While the men of to-day are pressing on in ever increasing multitude."

Yüan I-shan[1] 元遺山 introduced him into one of his poems; the passage runs:—

"I tremble at the appearance of white hairs even more than P'an Yo[2] 潘岳;
People laugh at my blue gown—like that of Ts'ai-ho."

He also inscribed the following on a picture of Lan Ts'ai-ho:—

"Long castanets and loud songs are no sure sign of madness.
You, my children, are equally excited in your pursuit of money.
Whenever, then, you meet the old fellow in the blue gown,
Dance a measure with him in the breeze of spring."

This Lan Ts'ai-ho, then, was a male, and therefore the error persisted in of making him appear dressed as a female in present-day plays is highly ridiculous.—*Kai yü ts'ung k'ao* 陔餘叢考, xxxiv, 24 *seq.*

Readers of the foregoing essay will, no doubt, have formed the opinion that Chao I set out to discredit Taoist legendry. At any rate, it is evident that he did not approach the Eight Immortals in a sympathetic spirit, and the main tenor of his discourse is destructive without attempting to throw light on the human side of conceptions entering widely into the lives of his fellow-countrymen. His attitude is, nevertheless, worthy of study, for it is that of the orthodox scholar of the old type. It illustrates, too, that lack of scientific instinct which strikes some of us in the modern West as so strange. These remarks are far from intending to infer that bigotry and intolerance in religious and imaginative realms are more signal with the Chinese than with us. What is meant is that the Confucianist has not yet taken up the science of folk-lore as an intellectual exercise worthy of his dignity.

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[1] According to the biography in his collected works, *I-shan hsien-shêng wên chi* 遺山先生文集, he lived 1190–1257. His *hao* was Hao-wên 好問.

[2] A poet and official of the fourth century noted for his beauty.

Chao I appends to his essay a number of references to books relating to the Yüan group. Unfortunately many of the works are not available in London, but accessible sources have been drawn on for the notes that follow.

The legend about Chung-li Chʻüan, translated in the former article (p. 778) from the *Lieh hsien chuan*, merely says that he was in command of an expedition sent by a Han emperor against the Tibetans who defeated him. Some passages quoted in *Chi shuo chʻüan chên*, 208, date him much more definitely. There it is stated that he was at one time on the staff of the general Chou Chʻu 周 處, who, as we know from the *Chin shu* 晉 書, served under an emperor of that dynasty during the period A.D. 280–90, and died on the field of battle. The great Han dynasty came to an end in A.D. 220, so that if there be an element of truth in the popular legend it seems more probable that it was under the Minor Han 蜀 漢 of the epoch of the Three Kingdoms that Chung-li Chʻüan commanded an army.

Other writers dismiss the tale connecting our *hsien* with a Han dynasty, yet it does not appear that their arguments are conclusive. For example :—

> Han Chung-li Chʻüan was a Tʻang man, but at the present day he is erroneously identified with the Han general Chung-li Mei 鍾 離 眛. This is, however, a mistake. The aforesaid Han Chung-li is the name of a place, not of a man.—*Ting ê tsa lu* 訂 譌 雜 錄, iii, 2.

The dictionary *Tzʻŭ yüan* has the following entry under Han Chung-li :—

> Chung-li Yün-fang, whose personal name was Ch‘üan, was a *hsien* at the time of the T‘ang dynasty and a contemporary of Lü Yen 呂 嵒 . . . At the present day men call him Han Chung-li. This is due to the character "Han" having been erroneously connected with what follows; and consequently a legend has arisen identifying Chung-li Ch‘üan with the Han general Chung-li Mei. Moreover, Han Chung-li is the name of a place, not that of a man. To give an example, the following lines occur in a poem by Tu Fu 杜 甫: "I have lately heard that my younger sister, Madame Wei, has been welcomed in Han Chung-li."

It is not easy to follow the line of reasoning. Perhaps the argument is that our *hsien* was actually one named Ch‘üan, a native of Han Chung-li. That this combination of names led to confusion with the famous Han general Chung-li Mei, and so the *hsien* figures in legend at one stage of his career as a Han general. There is, however, another clue to the riddle; and it is to be found in the famous Sung catalogue of handwriting entitled *Hsüan-ho shu p‘u* 宣 和 書 譜. The book is alluded to in the above passage from the *Tz‘ŭ yüan*, but, since it is there misquoted, I have omitted the sentence from the translation. The statement that the *hsien* himself claimed to have been born under the Han may but refer to one of those instances of Taoists dating back their births to a fabulous antiquity; so that this claim in itself presents no great obstacle to the theory that our *hsien* was actually a contemporary of Lü Tung-pin. Here is the passage in the catalogue:

> The Master Chung-li is a *hsien*, whose date is unknown. His personal name is Ch‘üan. From time to time he appears, and mixes in mundane affairs. He himself declared that he was born under the Han dynasty. Lü Tung-pin held him in reverence, following him as a disciple. A collection has been made of their dialogues and poems.
>
> He is portrayed as a fine and dignified old man; sometimes with high hat and purple robes [such as persons of distinction wear]; sometimes with curly beard and shaggy whiskers, his hair twisted into a coil on either side of his uncapped head, his

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skin tattooed and his feet bare. With proud mien he stands a tall and comely figure. Of a truth his glance soars above the Four Seas and wanders beyond the limits of earthly horizons. Chung-li styled himself "An unofficial personage in the capital of the empire" 天下都散漢 and the "Untrammelled One".

He wrote in running script:—

"The exalted monk who has *Tao* attained is hard to find:
O when! O when! shall I go back to join him?"

These lines are traced with no ordinary penmanship; their forms are light and delicate as vapours that float upward and mingle with the clouds.

Besides these lines he composed in the seventh month of the seventh year of the *yüan-yu* period [A.D. 1092] four cantos addressed to Wang Ting-kuo[1] 王定國 mainly on the profound and earnest study concerned with the quest of longevity and the Philosopher's Stone. The poem is well worthy of careful perusal. At the end the writer discusses his own caligraphy and declares it to be derived from his study of the sinuosities of dragons and serpents, and the connoisseur will not question the truth of this statement.

At present the collection in the imperial gallery contains one example of Chung-li's running hand, and that is the poem addressed to Wang Ting-kuo.—*Hsüan-ho shu p'u*, xix, 13.

All that has been said in these notes about Chung-li Ch'üan leaves him a very hazy figure historically. But we will not, like Wang Ying-lin, because proof is lacking of his substantial existence dismiss him as unworthy of our serious regard. He is, indeed, a very real and tangible personality in the mythic fancy of the Chinese, and we may be sure that the conception arose from definite origin and sufficient cause. Assuming that his mortal prototype was a contemporary of Lü Tung-pin, and assuming, too, that the bronze mirror we are about to discuss is justly assigned to the Sung period, we may recognize the myth being represented pictorially at an

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[1] The date here given indicates that this Wang Ting-kuo cannot be the famous statesman of that name who lived 962–1024, unless the poem was dedicated to him after his death.

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early stage in its career. This opportunity is all the more welcome because several times in the foregoing pages instances have been given of the Eight Immortals manifested in the folk-art as well as the folk-lore of the country. But all these have been mere written allusions to pictures. Here is an actual design cut in wood taken from that well-known catalogue of antiquities called *Chin shih so* 金石索. It portrays a bronze mirror said by the compilers of the work to belong to Sung times. This is their comment:—

> The picture on the mirror shows the two *hsien* Chung-li and Lü Tsu crossing the water, each standing on a sword. In the midst of the sea a pavilion is poised on the crest of a wave. Within the circular space surrounding the central knob are inscribed in intaglio two characters Chou Yüan—doubtless the man who cast the mirror.

There can be no doubt that the compilers of the *Chin shih so* were justified in their identification of the figures. The presentment of the Patriarch Lü will be discussed later. Chung-li Ch'üan is recognizable by his association with Lü Tung-pin, by the mode in which his hair is dressed, and by the indication of a fan in his left hand. This gathering of the hair into two coils, one on either side of the head, is characteristic of Chung-li Ch'üan. It was an ancient practice to cut short a child's hair with exception of two tufts. The tufts were kept till the parents died as reminders of filial obligations. On the death of the father the right one was cut off; on the mother's death the left.[1] Perhaps this custom of antiquity was the origin of the kind of *coiffure* affected by Chung-li Ch'üan and, according to pictures, by other *hsien* too. In the Sung period it was considered an out-of-date fashion; but, as has been remarked, it was often the foible of eminent Taoists to associate themselves with the distant past.

No better argument could be found for the substantial nature of our *hsien*, whether he be the product of mythic

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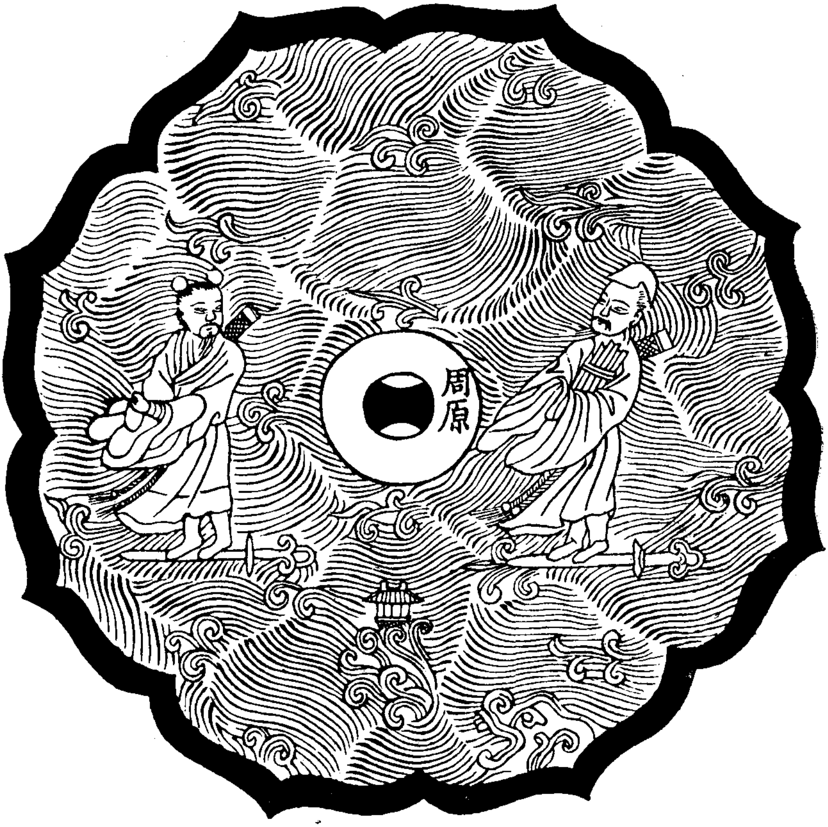
[1] *v.* Couvreur, *Li Ki*, i, 620 *seq.* Also *v. Shih ching*, i, iv, 1.



Back of a Sung Mirror.

(From *Chin shih so.*)

fancy or of a lingering legend about an actual man, than this very human and real figure reproduced from a supplement to the well-known picture-book *Chieh tzŭ yüan* 芥子園. Certainly there is no hint of the warrior about his jovial and well-nourished person.

Accounts of Lü Tung-pin's parentage and birth-place are varied and conflicting, and there is no space for them here, even if to detail them might serve a useful purpose. Many are to be found quoted in Father Huang's compilation mentioned on p. 399. We have seen that Wang Ying-lin passes Lü by with a shrug; yet the student may find in the volumes devoted to him much sound historical evidence of a kind. It is evidence of modes of thought and action prevailing among the shapers and transmitters of the legend, who thus unconsciously hold up a mirror reflecting the religion and manners of their own times.

If we seek to prove that a mortal prototype of the Lü Tung-pin legend actually existed and was born towards the end of the eighth century, probably one of the strongest arguments that could be advanced is a pictorial one. In the *Burlington Magazine* for September of last year I attempted to trace the graphic tradition of this *hsien* from its supposed beginning in a contemporary portrait, through a series of intermediate pictures, down to one dated 1901—all strikingly alike in design. The first is attributed to the artist T'êng Ch'ang-yu 滕昌祐, and shows our *hsien* apparently aged between sixty and seventy. It is a masterly drawing with an air of reality that convincingly proclaims it a portrait drawn from life. A discussion and reproduction of it may be found in the first volume of *Ars Asiatica* jointly written by the late MM. Chavannes and Petrucci. Data are there given (p. 11) which indicate no chronological inconsistency in attributing a portrait from the living model to the brush of T'êng Ch'ang-yu. It is known that T'êng was alive in 881 and that he lived to be more than fourscore and five. The very fact that this picture has been perpetuated unchanged in all

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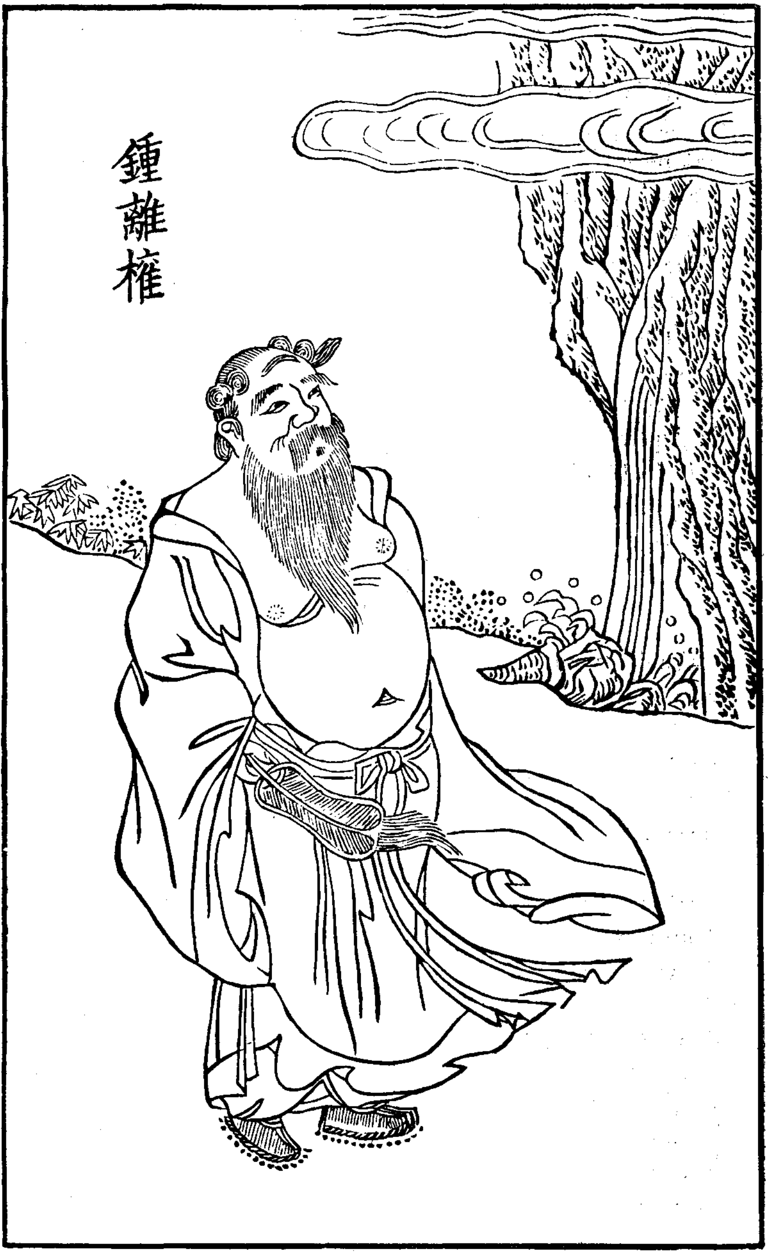

CHUNG-LI CH'ÜAN.

(From Supplement to *Chieh tzŭ yüan.*)

essentials down to the present day is in itself a strong presumption that its subject was a real man. It manifests that purely indigenous art of China concerned in portraying national heroes with characteristic conservatism and unswerving fidelity to tradition.

The latest of the series described in the *Burlington Magazine* was in 1901 incised on a stone stele and set up at Yo-chou 岳州 in a three-storied tower, the Yo-yang Lou 岳陽樓, one of the buildings celebrated in Chinese essay and poem. Yo-chou is closely associated with the Lü Tung-pin legend. There is a popular rhyme about the *hsien's* visits to this locality. It runs :—

Thrice he came to Yo-yang and men did not know him,
Chanting aloud, he flew across the Tung-t'ing Lake.

三到岳陽人不識
朗吟飛過洞庭湖

In the former article (p. 797) it is told how Lü spent four centuries wandering about China, Yo-chou being one of his haunts. Several visits made there under assumed names are narrated in the book of his exploits entitled *Lü Tsu ch'üan shu* 呂祖全書. On one of these occasions he paid his respects to the prefect T'êng Tsung-liang 滕宗諒, who being favourably impressed by his appearance and conversation, caused a portrait of his visitor to be painted and set up in the Yo-yang Lou. The tale ends with a note that this was the beginning of the portraits of the Patriarch exhibited in the Tower.[1] The point is interesting, because this part of the story may be actual fact. In the *Sung shih*, ccciii, 3, there is a biography of the prefect from which we can derive his date, since he is described as a contemporary of Fan Chung-yen 范仲淹, and the latter lived 989–1052.[2]

The Yo-yang Lou has been destroyed from time to time, and doubtless with it the portraits of the Patriarch perished.

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[1] *v. Lü Tsu ch'üan shu*, ii, 9.
[2] Giles, *Biog. Dict.*, 535.

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But it seems that memory linking him with the spot has been kept alive by the provision of fresh portraits whenever the Tower has been restored. Another presentment of Lü is now preserved there besides his traditional portrait above mentioned, and, like it, is incised on a stone slab. It was painted by one Wang Ch'i 王 詰 in 1864. The story told in the accompanying inscription is worth relating. Wang was wishful to paint the Patriarch Lü, but all the portraits he could find showed him with calabash and magic sword, looking far too much like a knight-errant to suit his fancy. One night lying slightly indisposed he dreamed he saw a Taoist holding in his hand an enormous date. Wang asked the apparition his name; but he answered not, merely pointing to two cash hanging from his girdle. When Wang awoke he was much puzzled as to the meaning of his dream. The governor heard of it, and gave the following explanation. The two cash mean two square holes, which allude to the form of the name Lü 呂, and the date refers to an old pavilion called "Fairy Date Pavilion" 仙 棗 亭 then in need of restoration. Thus the Patriarch had at the same time manifested himself to his artist votary, and expressed his desire for the rebuilding of the Taoist shrine. Wang's picture shows him holding a huge date, and differs much from the traditional version of the dignified Lü Tung-pin.

It should be remarked that this play on the form of his name character 呂 was a favourite foible of the Patriarch. Again and again he is described perpetrating a caligraphic pun or anagram by turning the two squares into different characters. For instance, he would call himself 回 道 士 or 回 處 士.

Besides his magic two-edged sword the most constant attribute or distinguishing mark of Lü Tung-pin is his cap. Many men of note have given free play to their fancy in regard to their headgear. Tung-pin was more restrained in taste than some of them, and, moreover, he shared his design with a famous contemporary, the poet Po Chü-i 白 居 易. So

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the cap (shown in the wood-cut reproduced opposite p. 789 of the former article) is called after one or other of the two, 純陽巾 or 樂天巾.[1] The one represented on the Sung mirror (p. 417) is evidently intended for this pattern, though so badly is it drawn that it looks at first sight more like a Western schoolboy's cricket cap. At any rate, it is this peculiar cap that makes the identification of the figure on the mirror most certain.

Wide discrepancies in respect of time and place are found when one compares the popular account of Ho Hsien-ku as contained in the modern *Lieh hsien chuan* and the following story narrating her encounter with Lü Tung-pin. In this her date is given about a century later than in the other, and her native town is fixed in a neighbouring province some 250 miles distant from Canton. There seems little to suggest a historical basis for the myth of Ho Hsien-ku.

To the student of folk-lore this tale will be of special interest, since it exhibits the world-wide theme of supernatural lapse of time. Generally the mortal is summoned to perform some service for the superhuman denizens of a mysterious Otherworld. Or else he or she is drawn by curiosity, greed, love of pleasure, or perhaps unconsciously by a spell to enter their domain. Not only is the enchanted person prevented from returning to ordinary mundane existence, but remains, while under the spell, unconscious of the flight of time and immune from its ravages.

The theme occurs in a number of Taoist legends, and I fancy it may be claimed that they constitute a distinct type possessing a characteristic feature. Stories of supernatural lapse of time all over the world commonly tell of return to the inevitable fate of mortals so soon as the spell has been removed. When the human being re-enters natural life his bodily frame quickly assumes a condition more or less compatible with the actual flight of time that has occurred unknown to him during his enchantment. If in reality a lifetime has passed while he was in fairyland, he emerges a tottering grey-beard; if centuries have sped by, he promptly crumbles into a heap of dust. Such a fate would, of course, be out of place when Taoistic magic is concerned, and we see devotees of *Tao* regaining home and human society very little changed since they left the world of mortals. The spell on Ho Hsien-ku imposed by Lü Tung-pin with his magic peach lasted but a month, and hence the instance is not a typical one. A better example is the well-known tale of Wang Chih 王 質, the Chinese Rip van Winkle, who returned after centuries to his native place, and, saddened by the disappearance of his former associations, retired to the mountains and became a *hsien* presumably in a condition far more youthful and vigorous than that of his Western counterpart. The story of the female member of the group of Eight is published as one of the episodes in the career of Lü Tung-pin. It runs as follows:—

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[1] *v. San ts'ai t'u hui* 三才圖會, Section on Dress, i, 23.

Ho Hsien-ku was a girl who frequented the markets and streets of Ling-ling 零 陵 [forming the prefectural city of Yung-chou 永 州 in Hunan]. At the age of thirteen she accompanied a girl friend into the hills to pluck leaves of the tea-plant.[1] All at once she missed her companion, but walked on alone. When it came to retracing her footsteps she lost the way. At this juncture she spied standing at the foot of the eastern peak a man with long beard and purple eyes, wearing a tall cap on his head and dressed in cheap garments. This was none other than the Patriarch Lü. To him Hsien-ku humbly made obeisance again and again. The Patriarch gave her a peach. "Eat it all," said he, "and some day the time will come for you to soar on high, otherwise your abode will still be here on earth."

As soon as Hsien-ku had finished eating the fruit, the Patriarch pointed out to her the way back, and she returned home. According to her own account she had stopped away but one day, and she was not aware that a whole month had passed. From that time onward she felt no hunger, and menstruation ceased. Understanding profoundly the affairs of mortals, she was able to foresee human joy and tribulation.

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[1] Tea entered into the composition of many Taoist nostrums.

In course of time she gained release from the trammels of the flesh (*shih chieh* 尸 解).[1]—*Lü Tsu ch'üan shu*, ii, 38.

The same tradition in briefer and less complete form is found in *Ming i t'ung chih* 明 一 統 志:—

In her youth Ho Hsien-ku met a magician 異 人, who gave her a peach to eat. Having done so, she felt no hunger. She had the power of foreknowing the misfortunes and happinesses of mortals.—Quoted in *Chi shuo ch'üan chên*, 214.

Another account from the book devoted to topics connected with Lü Tung-pin is as follows:—

Hsien-ku went into the hills to gather tea, and there she chanced to meet the Patriarch Lü, who imparted to her methods of cultivating vitality 修 養. Moreover, he gave her some of the Drug of Immortality 金 丹, which she swallowed. He took her to see the Patriarch Chung 鍾 祖, and led her to the Isle of P'êng-lai 蓬 萊.[2] There she paid homage to Mu Kung 木 公 and Chin Mu 金 母.[3] Chin Mu carried her back with her to the Gardens of Boundless Space,[4]

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[1] See note in former article, p. 783.

[2] One of the Isles of the Blest in the Eastern Sea. P'êng-lai is the most famous of the group; indeed, its name is often used alone to represent this ocean paradise myth of the Taoists. It seems that P'êng-lai is exalted above its fellows; for according to the Record of the Ten Islands 十 洲 記 it is accessible only to those *hsien* who can fly, and in palaces of heavenly splendour crowning its peaks live some who rank among the holiest of adepts 太 上 眞 人. It is the home, too, of the "Nine Ancient Worthies" 九 老 丈 人. *v.* Yetts, *Folk-Lore*, xxx, 35–62.

[3] Names for Tung Wang Fu 東 王 父 and Hsi Wang Mu 西 王 母 respectively, who in Taoist mythology appear to be male and female embodiments of cosmic forces, and also to exercise special control over the destinies of mortals at the time when they attain the goal of hsienship. These two early provided a subject for pictorial representation, as exemplified in the Shantung scuptures and in the decoration of several Han mirrors reproduced in *Chin shih so.*

[4] Lang Yüan 閬 苑, one of the terrestrial abodes of *hsien*. In the famous art catalogue of the Emperor Hui Tsung (A.D. 1101–26) entitled *Hsüan ho hua p'u* 宣 和 畫 譜, there is mention of Yüan Kao 阮 郜 as painting pictures of female *hsien* and landscapes of the Jasper Pool (Yao Ch'ih 瑤 池) and the Lang Yüan. The Jasper Pool is one of the wonders of the fairyland in the K'un-lun Mountains 崑 崙 山 presided

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and set her to sweep up leaves fallen from trees of the magic peach 蟠桃. Hsien-ku appeared from time to time among mortals.—*Lü Tsu ch'üan shu*, ii, 38 *seq.*

Oral tradition provides an explanation of the ladle which is the recognized attribute of Ho Hsien-ku. The girl had a stepmother who dealt harshly with her and kept her toiling beyond her strength at menial domestic duties. It will be recalled that the popular account tells how as the result of a dream Hsien-ku vowed never to marry.[1] The prospect of the hated daughter remaining permanently at home embittered the parent still more and resulted in further ill-usage. In spite of this treatment Hsien-ku behaved with such exemplary filial piety that Lü Tung-pin was moved to come and rescue her from her miserable servitude. One day he arrived and found her busy at work in the kitchen, and as he carried her away to paradise she still grasped in her hand the ladle which she was using at the time.[2]

There are variations to the tale of Li T'ieh-kuai, Li of the Iron Crutch, as told in its most popular form in the former article. One legend says that his *ming* was K'ung-mu 孔目, and that he had a diseased foot. The Fairy Queen Hsi Wang Mu 西王母 admitted him to the celestial paradise of the *hsien* and gave him official status there, bestowing on him an iron crutch. Li had previously met Chung-li Ch'üan (who is described there as a Han general), and had been invested by him with a Taoist title. Another account calls him Li Ning-yang 李凝陽, and gives fuller details about his *hun* revitalizing the cripple's corpse.[3]

One version of the Eight Immortals group gives him

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over by Hsi Wang Mu. Both Yao Ch'ih and Lang Yüan occur frequently in the euphemistic phraseology of poets and essayists. They are, for instance, used as names for Peking.

[1] *v.* former article, 782.

[2] *v.* Wilhelm, *Chinesische Volksmärchen*, 74 (Jena, 1919).

[3] For the foregoing see the passages quoted in *Chi shuo ch'üan chên*, 215.

the name Li Yüan-chung 李元中. From the same source comes the information that Li Yüan-chung lived in the T'ang period between the years 713 and 779, and that he studied *Tao* for forty years on Mount Chung-nan 終南, the famous resort near Ch'ang-an of Taoists and other recluses. The account says:—

> His *yang* spirit left its carnal tenement, which [afterwards in the spirit's absence] was eaten by a tiger. So the spirit took possession of the body of a crippled beggar, who had just died, and made that its abode—nobody realizing what had happened.—*Shih wu yüan hui*, quoted in *Chi shuo ch'üan chên*, 214.

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