

 PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

東亞圖書館
East Asian Library
and the *Gest Collection*

This title is provided ONLY for personal scholarly use. Any publication, reprint, or reproduction of this material is strictly forbidden, and the researcher assumes all responsibility for conforming with the laws of libel and copyright. Titles should be referred to with the following credit line:

© The East Asian Library and the Gest Collection, Princeton University

To request permission to use some material for scholarly publication, and to apply for higher-quality images, please contact gestcirc@princeton.edu, or

**The East Asian Library and the Gest Collection
33 Frist Campus Center, Room 317
Princeton University
Princeton, NJ 08544
United States**

A fee may be involved (usually according to the general rules listed on <http://www.princeton.edu/~rbsc/research/rights.html>).

Huang Lin, "A Mirror to Marriage in Traditional China: Notes on A Tangle of Emotions (I-p'ien ch'ing)", The Gest Library Journal 5, no. 2 (1992): 103-117, accessed January 14, 2017, https://library.princeton.edu/eastasian/EALJ/lin_huang.EALJ.v05.n02.p103.pdf

A Mirror to Marriage in
Traditional China:
Notes on *A Tangle of Emotions*
(*I-p'ien ch'ing*)

HUANG LIN

Among the collections of rare traditional Chinese novels held by Tokyo University's general library, the libraries of the Department of Letters, and the Institute of Oriental Culture, the institute's Sōkōdō collection (Chinese: Shuang-hung t'ang, after Professor Nagasawa Kikuya's private library) is the richest and most spectacular. The Sōkōdō collection holds such rare Chinese works as *Random Gleanings from the Three Teachings* (*San-chiao ou-nien*), *A Life of the Imperial Concubine's Mother* (*T'ien-fei niang-ma chuan*), *A Tangle of Emotions* (*I-p'ien ch'ing*), and *The Queen of All Flowers* (*Pai-hua k'uei*). Each of them represents one of the few extant copies of its kind. *A Tangle of Emotions*, however, has long been considered a pornographic work, and has therefore not received appropriate scholarly appreciation or attention. This work, for instance, is on the list of "pornographic novels" compiled by Ting Jih-ch'ang (1823–1882) during the T'ung-chih reign period (1862–1874). In his *A Bibliography of Chinese Popular Novels* (*Chung-kuo t'ung-su hsiao-shuo shu-mu*), Sun K'ai-ti, a modern bibliographer, classifies it with novels "concentrating solely on the description of obscene affairs."¹ Even a recent work, *Essentials of a Comprehensive Bibliography of Chinese Popular Novels* (*Chung-kuo t'ung-su hsiao-shuo tsung-mu t'i-yao*), com-

piled by the Academy of Social Sciences, Kiangsu Province, describes it as a novel of "bawdy and salacious content."² In fact, however, the author of *A Tangle of Emotions* displays a skillful mastery of colloquial terms, and the novel is written in an easy and fluent style. More important, *A Tangle of Emotions* reflects quite faithfully the marital system and the traditional concept of marriage in China. It holds up a mirror to marriage in ancient China, and for this alone it deserves more attention from modern scholars.

Only two copies of *A Tangle of Emotions* are known to exist anywhere in the world: the Sōkōdō exemplar and one preserved in the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Peking. On the slipcase of the Sōkōdō copy, a title reads "*A Tangle of Emotions: a novel with fine-line illustrations*" (Hsiu-hsiang hsiao-shuo *I-p'ien ch'ing*). The titles that appear in the table of contents and in the text are, however, slightly different from the slipcase. They contain two more characters, which read "newly printed" (*hsin-chüan*). A preface on the opening page was written by "Ch'u-hsien of the P'ei Kingdom [in modern Su-hsien County, Anhwei Province] while boating on the West Lake." Although the original version must have been illustrated, the Sōkōdō exemplar contains no illustrations. The book is well printed in a format of eight lines each half-folio and eighteen characters per line. The table of contents shows the text's division into four volumes; the whole work contains fourteen chapters (*hui*).

The copy held by the Central Academy of Fine Arts is incomplete. It was published by the "Hsiao-hua Veranda." An inscription on its slipcase describes it as "an incomplete copy of the Ming-edition *A Tangle of Emotions*." The words "odd and amusing affairs" appear on the upper righthand corner of the inner cover; in the center is the title; and on the lower lefthand corner is another remark, "printed with woodblocks preserved in the Hsiao-hua Veranda." The next page contains the table of contents. An inscription at the beginning says "a newly printed novel." This version of *A Tangle of Emotions* consists of nine chapters, which correspond to chapters one to five, eight to ten, and twelve of the Sōkōdō exemplar. It has some printing errors but no illustrations. Each half-folio of the text has nine lines, and each line has twenty characters. This Hsiao-hua Veranda exemplar obviously represents an abbreviated version derived from the book represented by the fourteen-chapter Sōkōdō exemplar. Only the first three chapters of this abbreviated version are still extant. Moreover, some characters and sentences are missing from the second half of chapter two and the first half

of chapter three. This Hsiao-hua Veranda version is therefore of much lower quality than the Sōkōdō exemplar.

Using a Chinese brush, Professor Nagasawa Kikuya wrote an inscription in Chinese on the title page of the Sōkōdō copy:

I once read this book in the Chiba Library and made some notes. Sun [K'ai-ti]'s description of the book is in fact based on my notes. When the Chiba Library started selling its collection, at first I resorted to every possible means to acquire this book, but to no avail. Eventually I obtained the whole book. Its stories indicate that the book was published during the Shun-chih reign period [1644–1661]. Although the book title is intact, all the illustrations are lost. The table of contents shows that the book has fourteen chapters. But I wonder whether chapter fourteen is indeed the last chapter. *The Vocabulary of Fiction* (*Shōsetsu jii*) has an entry for this book. Judging from its contents, the book is absolutely pornographic.

Professor Nagasawa properly identified this book as a Shun-chih reign period publication. In contrast, the inscription “Ming edition,” which appears on the slipcase of the Hsiao-hua Veranda exemplar, is inaccurate. Inner evidence in the novel supports the Shun-chih date. For instance, chapter twelve, “Little Devil Dies Miserably through Romance,” tells us that the story happened in 1645, one year after the fall of the Ming dynasty and the establishment of the Ch'ing. Some Ming loyalists fled south to create the last Han-Chinese regime, the Southern Ming, and “Emperor Hung-kuang ascended the throne in the southern capital [modern Nanking].” At the end of the chapter is a statement that “the case has not yet been settled.” Another piece of evidence is found in chapter three, “A Foolish Monk Would Rather Die for Flirtation,” in which the term “Emperor T'ai-tsu [r. 1368–1398] of the Ming” is used to refer to the first Ming emperor. This way of addressing the Ming founder was not standard during the Ming, but was commonly used by Ch'ing-dynasty scholars. These two pieces of evidence point to the fact that the author was a man of Ch'ing times, and therefore the book is not a Ming edition. The real authorship of the book, however, remains unclear, except that it is probable that he was from the Hang-chou area: chapter three mentions an imperial envoy who “came to Hang-chou on imperial decree to select three refined girls [to serve in the palace],” and

the author frequently used colloquial expressions in the Wu, a dialect spoken in the Hang-chou region.

A Tangle of Emotions is in four volumes (*chüan*) and fourteen chapters, each of which tells a complete story.

VOLUME ONE

Chapter one, "Tsuan-yün Yen Hides Himself in a Chest"

Chapter two, "Blind Shao Hears Love-making on the Spot"

Chapter three, "A Foolish Monk Would Rather Die for Flirtation"

Chapter four, "A Lascivious Woman Plots for Sheng-sheng's Death"

VOLUME TWO

Chapter five, "An Ugly Girl Eventually Finds Her Luck"

Chapter six, "An Old Woman Satisfies Her Sexual Desire under the Pretext of Looking for a Son-in-law"

Chapter seven, "The God of Vat Cleverly Seduces a Good Woman"

Chapter eight, "A False Eunuch Never Gives up a Woman"

VOLUME THREE

Chapter nine, "A Great Lover Wanders into a Fairyland"

Chapter ten, "Ch'i Yen-sheng Is Misled into the Abode of Immortals"

Chapter eleven, "A Husband Who Dreads His Wife"

Chapter twelve, "A Little Devil Dies Miserably in Romance"

VOLUME FOUR

Chapter thirteen, "A Cultivated Talent Turns Pretence to Reality"

Chapter fourteen, "Frivolous La-li Suffers from His Own Deeds"

As suggestive as these chapter titles may be, *A Tangle of Emotions* is nevertheless different from the Ming-Ch'ing pornographic books that "meant to describe only sexual activities."³ Through the fourteen stories, the author reveals from various angles the problems of traditional marriage. He also offers his opinions on marriage and family, which were indeed quite unusual among his contemporaries: a happy, fulfilling marriage is the basis of satisfactory family life and social stability; a happy marriage should build

on love and a harmonious sexual life between the couple; and neither ethics nor law can sustain an unhappy marriage. In the novel, the author usually expresses these opinions through criticizing the behavior of certain people, making them villains in the stories.

Chapter thirteen is perhaps the only exception. Here the writer openly praises the relationship between the hero and the heroine. It tells a story about Mou T'ien-ch'eng, a scholar, and a girl Ai-ku. The two were playmates from childhood and formed a long-lasting friendship. As they grew up, friendship developed into deep affection, and they had their first sexual encounter out of total ignorance and spontaneity when playing naughty games together. Flaming love drove T'ien-ch'eng to ask a matchmaker to propose to Ai-ku for him. Once married, the two, although poor and hard pressed, lived a happy life and were deeply in love with each other. The plot thickens when Feng-chu, an official in Nan-ch'ang and a good friend of T'ien-ch'eng, goes to visit a local gentleman. He tries to make a match between T'ien-ch'eng and Jen-niang, the only daughter of the gentleman, not knowing that T'ien-ch'eng had already married. The proposal is accepted, and Feng-chu writes to T'ien-ch'eng, urging him to come to Nan-ch'ang to get married. Ai-ku, knowing that this could be the only opportunity for her husband to become wealthy and famous, tries to persuade him to go. But T'ien-ch'eng cannot bear the idea of allowing his poverty to end their love. They decide instead to go to Nan-ch'ang together in the guise of brother and sister. T'ien-ch'eng marries Jen-niang, and Ai-ku lives a lonely life but never regrets what she had done. Later, Jen-niang finds out the real relationship between T'ien-ch'eng and Ai-ku and is deeply moved. Despite her father's anger and objection, Jen-niang treats Ai-ku attentively, as though they were sisters. The three live together as husband and wives and raise a big family of many children and grandchildren.

The behavior of T'ien-ch'eng, Ai-ku, and Jen-niang is indeed unexpected to readers, but it is apparently not abnormal in the mind of the author, who considered their relationship an example of "true love" between man and woman. It is this love that linked T'ien-ch'eng and Ai-ku after he had married Jen-niang and become a rich man; it is also this love that encouraged Ai-ku to allow T'ien-ch'eng to marry Jen-niang in the first place. She then follows T'ien-ch'eng to his new home, living a lonely life without any regret. Jen-niang, a minor figure in the story, is as daring as the hero and the heroine in her pursuit of a paradise of "harmonious life between husband

and wife." Even after she finds out the real relationship between T'ien-ch'eng and Ai-ku, Jen-niang, out of the conviction that T'ien-ch'eng would never desert her, disobeys her father's will and does not leave T'ien-ch'eng, the man she deeply loves, to marry someone else.

Unfortunately, marriage in traditional China was not always based on "true love." An unsatisfactory sex life in marriage and the unsolvable conflict between obeying social ethical codes and satisfying one's physical needs often ended a troubled marriage by bringing tragedy to both parties. Through its fourteen stories, *A Tangle of Emotions* tries to reveal certain factors contributing to these tragedies.

First of all, the author of *A Tangle of Emotions* blamed troubled marriages on a mismatch between the man and the woman. Unlike the case of Mou T'ien-ch'eng and Ai-ku, traditional Chinese marriages were often not the fruit of love. Some girls married for wealth and power, some were forced into an arranged marriage by their fathers. The story in chapter twelve illustrates an extreme case of a mismatch. It takes place when Emperor Hung-kuang of the Southern Ming was about to ascend the throne in Nanking. An envoy is sent to Hang-chou to select "refined girls" to serve in the palace. These girls were expected to live a lonely palace life, many of them never even having a chance to meet the emperor. The news caused panic among many Hang-chou girls; some married in a great rush just to avoid being chosen as a "refined girl." Chang-chen, a girl in her late teens, marries Pi Ta, a boy only in his early teens. Ch'ü Hsüeh, a schoolmate of Pi Ta's who was already eighteen, marries a twelve year old. Marriage brings nothing but discontent to Chang-chen and Ch'ü Hsüeh. Later, Ch'ü Hsüeh invites Pi Ta to stay overnight in his house. At the same time he disguises himself as Pi Ta and has sex with Chang-chen, keeping her totally in the dark. After a few such incidents, Ch'ü Hsüeh gives himself away and is caught in the act by Pi Ta's mother, who, following the traditional Chinese practice of forcing an adulterous woman to divorce her husband, sends the innocent victim Chang-chen back to her parents' home that very night. The story is indicative of the problems that a mismatch or a random match would bring to marriage. The author suggests that a mismatch is usually the result of incompatibility between a couple in terms of their personality, age, physical appearance and talents, and sexual ability. And problems often arose right at the beginning of such a marriage.

Chapter eleven describes a man of the local gentry, who, although highly

respected by local people, dreads his spouse as much as a devil fears the King of Hell. Incompatibility in personality eventually leads his wife to commit adultery.

Chapter one (see illustration 1) and chapter twelve concentrate on tragedies caused by age differences. At the beginning of chapter one the author points out that "sexual passion between man and woman" is the way of the world. "An old man can hardly win the favor of his young spouse nor satisfy her sexual desire. The inevitable consequence is adultery, or even worse, violent crime committed by the wife or the husband." Fu Ch'eng, the protagonist in chapter one, is a rich landlord who possesses "gardens in the South Hill, houses in the North Village, farmland in the east, and a lake in the west." He had already taken a few concubines, but none of them gave birth to a child. Approaching sixty and anxious to have a child as heir, Fu Ch'eng decides to take another concubine in the hope that she will produce a baby for him. The new concubine is Hsin-yü, a young girl of exquisite beauty. Covetous of the lavish betrothal gifts, Hsin-yü's parents willingly present their daughter to Fu Ch'eng, who promises Hsin-yü a comfortable life. What Fu Ch'eng could not promise, however, was a harmonious and satisfactory marriage for a couple of such disparate ages. Hsin-yü is so bitter about the marriage that she cannot help "cursing the matchmaker, blaming her parents, and sighing over her unfortunate marriage." Frustration leads Hsin-yü to involve herself in an illicit relationship with a handsome young man. When the affair is discovered, Fu Ch'eng has the young man killed and all the evidence of murder destroyed. The loss of her loved one depresses Hsin-yü who soon becomes seriously ill; six months later she dies.

At the end of chapter twelve, the author voices his indignation at the old marriage system and his sympathy for the ill-fated heroine in the story:

It is truly a shame that [some parents and matchmakers] have no due consideration whether a man and a woman are about the same age, or whether she has any true feelings toward the man. They just match them at random, resulting in many unfortunate events. Be extremely cautious when choosing a husband for a girl. Marriage is no game!

It is worth noting that the author tried to search for more fundamental social reasons to account for the unfortunate marriage between an aging

man and a young lady. He was able to free himself from the traditional prejudice against women, which considered them the root of all evil and often blamed them for any failed marriage. He pointed his finger directly at the wealthy aging man and the emperor, expressing a more open-minded opinion, which is indeed praiseworthy.

Incompatibility in physical appearance and talents of the involved couple is another factor contributing to tragedy in marriage. To the author, an ideal marriage, as described in chapter two, should be a union between "the talented and the beautiful," a union between "a beauty and her bosom boyfriend," or between "a talented scholar and his beloved fair lady." In chapter ten, such an ideal is voiced through the mouth of the heroine Li-niang: "The satisfaction is truly beyond expression if you are in the arms of a clever and handsome man, enjoying the physical pleasure with him; but it would be no fun at all even to have a few words with a stupid and ugly person." Unfortunately, the wife of Ch'i Yen-sheng was an unattractive woman. Disgusted by her appearance, Ch'i plotted with his classmate to seduce Li-niang, who agreed to see him after dark. Ch'i, totally by mistake, slipped into the courtyard of his classmate's home and ended up in the bedroom of the classmate's two older sisters. This affair made Li-niang believe that she was cheated. Realizing that a momentary slip of mind almost cost her her virginity, Li-niang gives Ch'i a flat refusal when he tries once again to take advantage of her.

Incompatibility in the looks and talents of a couple is often the reason for disharmony, causing cracks or even unsolvable conflicts in marriage. Hsiu-yüeh, the heroine in chapter two, is a victim of such incompatibility. A quick-witted girl, she is forced by her parents to accept an arranged marriage with a blind fortune teller, Mr. Shao, whose fortune telling was said to have been so accurate that it drew many people to him from near and far and made him a wealthy man. But Hsiu-yüeh is not happy. She often sighs, asking herself, "What sin did I commit in my previous existence? Why has fate brought such a horrible husband to my life?" At the same time, Shao, out of the conviction that "a blind man's wife is always adulterous," keeps his wife on a short leash. Hsiu-yüeh is disgusted by the restrictions that her husband imposes on her, which, instead of keeping her safely in the marriage, drive her to seek out freedom and love. She develops an illicit relationship with Shao's cousin. Out of vengeance, Hsiu-yüeh even has sexual intercourse with her lover right in front of the poor blind man without his

knowledge. Shao eventually learns about the affair and divorces Hsiu-yüeh. She immediately marries her lover and moves to another place. In this story, incompatibility in physical appearance apparently dragged the marriage into trouble. This is also true of the hero in chapter ten, who abandons his “ugly” wife to look for a beautiful woman. Through these stories, the author was advocating the idea that in matching a man and a woman for marriage, the major consideration should be compatibility in their looks and talents. Even when a match cannot attain the ideal of one between a talented scholar and a beautiful lady, it should at least be one between “a waste basket and a broom”; that is, the couple have to be compatible. And once married, both husband and wife should make every effort to fulfill their obligations to their spouse.

Sexual dysfunction of the husband often ruined a marriage. In traditional China, a man could divorce his unfortunate wife if she suffered from sexual dysfunction. He could also keep her as his legal wife while taking as many concubines as he wished. In contrast, a woman had to put up with her husband’s sexual dysfunction. If she refused to live a life without sexual pleasure, if she dared to challenge the traditional ethical codes and tried to break away from solitude, she would subject herself to tremendous pressure from public opinion and often suffer a miserable end. In chapter eight the unlucky heroine Shui-shih marries a man who suffers from both premature ejaculation and impotence. Never satisfied sexually, she often curses her spouse and “would not let a day pass peacefully without having quarrelled with him two or three times.” Their neighbor Chia K’ung learns of this. He manages to entice the heroine by bragging about the size of his sexual organ. But the heroine’s pursuit of sexual satisfaction ends in a disaster: the husband kills her and her lover with an axe. And not only does the husband escape punishment for his capital crime, the local authorities, perhaps calculating that this violent action against adultery was useful to their efforts to maintain good social customs, reward the killer with a token of “one *liang* [fifty grams] of silver.” At this juncture the author sneers at those who “are incompetent sexually but still keep numerous wives and concubines.” In his opinion, these men, who often refuse to admit their sexual dysfunction, should be blamed for their failed marriages, because they, knowing that they were unable to bring happiness to their spouses, married them anyway. By so doing, they “entrapped” these women, but from time to time they were also humiliated by the extramarital affairs of their wives.

新鐫繡像小說一片情卷之一

第一回

鑽雲眼暗藏箱底

詩曰

古來好色膽如天，
祇笑衰翁不自閒，
頓使芳心隨蝶亂，
空將畫閣鎖嬋娟。

1. Author unknown, *I-p'ien ch'ing*, text 14 chaps. in 4 ch., table of contents 4 ch. Eight cols. of 18 chars.; block 11.5 x 20 cm. Shun-chih edition (1644-1661). Collection of the Institute of Oriental Culture, Tokyo University.

Separation also had a detrimental effect on marriage. In traditional China, husbands and wives were separated for a variety of reasons, one of which was the thirst for profit which drove some merchants to places far from home and resulted in their neglect of family life. For example, in chapter four, Ch'eng Sheng-sheng, a trader in medicinal herbs, goes on a business trip to Peking, leaving behind his wife who is five months pregnant. Away from home, Sheng-sheng is sad and lonesome. He goes to a brothel where he encounters a lascivious woman whom he later takes as his concubine. The relationship brings him not tender love but trouble. First, the concubine steals his money; then she deliberately provokes him. When Sheng-sheng becomes sick and broke, she plots with her sister to do away with him. Their idea is to take turns having sex with Sheng-sheng in the dark in the hope that excessive sex will weaken him physically and eventually lead to his death. Fortunately, Sheng-sheng learns of the plot. He divorces his concubine and leaves Peking for South China, where he starts a dried fish business. After more than ten years, Sheng-sheng makes a fortune. He returns home, and the family is reunited.

In chapter seven, the marriage of a newly wed couple also deteriorates when the husband leaves home on a business trip. Sheng-erh, the lonely heroine, cannot help shedding tears and blaming her husband for "leaving me at home for two years without ever thinking how the golden years in my life would be wasted." Her loneliness gives a young man the chance to take advantage of her. He persuades her to go to a fortune teller, where she is raped by both the men. On his return home her husband learns of the incident and takes revenge on the two men: they are beaten to death by order of the county magistrate. But soon thereafter Sheng-erh also dies, of illness.

Keeping concubines was a common practice in traditional Chinese marriages, and just as happened in a marriage, a man could end up separated from his concubine. At the beginning of chapter five, the author points out that "when a man wants a concubine, he will find one at all costs. But he often dares not bring her home for fear of objection from a shrewish wife." Or "sometimes he stops over in a place on his journey and takes a concubine only to find out later that it is inconvenient to bring her along." Whatever the reason might be, these women often ended up in a vulnerable position: they were left behind by their men. This situation from time to time brought disasters to them. In the story, a general is ordered by imperial

decree to lead his troops north after he has just taken a concubine in Yangchou. Since military discipline forbade anyone to bring family dependents while on the march, the general has to leave his concubine in the care of his colleague. But she later commits adultery with the sons of her neighbor. In a word, the author believed that when husbands and wives lived apart from one another their marriage was bound to suffer.

Normal family life, according to the author, is the basis for social stability. Without it, society is endangered. In *A Tangle of Emotions* we see two kinds of people who did not have normal family lives: widows and monks. The author argues that "human beings are the most intelligent of all living creatures on earth. They would naturally pair themselves off even though some of them are as foolish as birds and beasts and as innocent as ants and insects." He also stresses the importance of physical pleasure in human relationships: "Of all the joyous things in this world, sexual love is the only real pleasure." Since sexual desire is a fundamental desire of all human beings, "only death will make it cease to exist." Through his stories, the author shows us examples of men and women who were deprived of normal family life, with horrible consequences. In chapter nine, three brothers die one after the other, leaving behind their mother and three young widows. When a young man sees the three beautiful widows, his desire for these women is aroused. Longing for sex, the widow of the eldest brother is the first to give up her chastity to join him. They then manage to involve the other two widows in a promiscuous relationship. The affair is eventually discovered by their mother-in-law, who immediately marries them off. And all of them come to a disgraceful end. The author, however, was rather sympathetic with these three widows. He points out that it was against human nature to urge the three "young and beautiful women" to live in widowhood only for the sake of chastity. "When they were forced to do so, they could hardly stay chaste or widowed forever."

In contrast, the author was rather sarcastic toward monks. In the story, monks are described as distorted human beings, forced to give up sexual pleasure to comply with monastic discipline. Their suppressed sexual passion nevertheless needed a way of release, which led some monks to abnormal and despicable conduct beyond the imagination of ordinary people. Liu-ho in chapter three is such a monk. He takes a fancy to a young woman. Since monks were not allowed to marry, Liu-ho, by a dirty trick, tries to force her into a double arrangement: she would become the nominal

wife of his friend, but a real sex slave of Liu-ho himself. The young woman refuses to go along with this arrangement. Liu-ho, after a disappointing sexual encounter with the woman, decides to let his friend have her. He then tries to seduce another woman but is beaten up by the woman and her husband. He flees to another place, where he claims that he is a living Buddha. But the local prefect soon finds out his real identity and sentences him to death.

As the author saw it, promiscuous monks were not the only threat to marriage coming from religion. Sometimes, a devoted Buddhist believer could also endanger his own marriage if he neglected family life. His unsatisfied spouse would involve herself in relations offensive to public decency. In chapter six, we read about a husband who "stayed in a temple twenty-nine days a month," leaving his wife in sexual hunger. A woman in her late forties still very active sexually, she comes up with a self-serving arrangement: under the pretext of looking for a suitable husband for her daughter, she lures many young men into her bed. But she soon becomes the victim and laughingstock of the three brothers of a local family, who make her their sex toy.

Certain stories in *A Tangle of Emotions* indicate that the author, although remarkably open-minded for his time, was not yet completely free of traditional prejudices against women. Sometimes women are still depicted as "the root of all evil." In chapter fourteen, for example, a promiscuous wife of a tailor first commits adultery with her husband's apprentice, and then becomes romantically involved with a new apprentice. Jealous, the senior apprentice encourages his master to catch the two in the act. In disarray, the tailor kills his wife by accident, but the junior apprentice manages to get away unharmed. Shocked and enraged, the tailor kills the informant. The adulterer is so terrified by the violence that he dies half a year later. Some stories in the novel are also indicative of the author's belief that "a husband is the master of his wife." From time to time such superstitious ideas as "pre-ordained fate," and "marriage is in the hands of the gods" are also evident in the work. Nevertheless, the major theme of *A Tangle of Emotions* is the author's sharp criticism of the traditional Chinese marriage system from a humanitarian point of view. His criticism is not incisive nor does it have much depth. But his stories touch on problems in traditional marriages that arise from a variety of causes, and the misfortune and tragedy that the old marriage system brought to many men and women in many

different social strata. In that sense, *A Tangle of Emotions* as a literary work is perhaps as valuable as the *Golden Lotus* (*Chin p'ing mei*) and *The Dream of the Red Chamber* (*Hung-lou meng*).

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article was translated into English by Ms. Chen Yangling, a graduate student under Professor Huang Lin at Fudan University, Shanghai, and revised by the staff of the journal.

NOTES

1. Sun K'ai-ti, *Chung-kuo t'ung-su hsiao-shuo shu-mu* (Peking: Tso-chia ch'u pan-she, 1957), pp. 109-110.
2. Kiangsu-sheng she-hui k'o-hsüeh-yüan Ming-Ch'ing hsiao-shuo yen-chiu chung-hsin, *Chung-kuo t'ung-su hsiao-shuo tsung-mu t'i-yao* (Peking: Chung-kuo wen-lien ch'u-pan kung-ssu, 1991), pp. 239-240.
3. Lu Hsün, "Chung-kuo hsiao-shuo shih-lüeh," in his *Lu Hsün ch'üan-chi* (Peking: Jen-min wen-hsüeh ch'u-pan-she, 1973), vol. 9, p. 328.

GLOSSARY

Ai-ku 愛姑	Hang-chou 杭州
Anhwei 安徽	Hsiao-hua veranda 嘯花軒
Chang-chen 掌珍	hsin-chüan 新鐫
Ch'eng Sheng-sheng 程生生	Hsin-yü 新玉
Ch'i Yen-sheng 奇彥生	Hsiu-hsiang hsiao-shuo <i>I-p'ien ch'ing</i>
Chia K'ung 賈空	繡像小說一片情
<i>Chin-p'ing mei</i> 金瓶梅	Hsiu-yüeh 羞月
Ch'ü Hsüeh 瞿雪	hui 回
chüan 卷	Hung-kuang 弘光
Ch'u-hsien 擲仙	<i>Hung-lou meng</i> 紅樓夢
<i>Chung-kuo t'ung-su hsiao-shuo shu-mu</i>	<i>I-p'ien ch'ing</i> 一片情
中國通俗小說書目	Jen-niang 任娘
<i>Chung-kuo t'ung-su hsiao-shuo tsung-mu t'i-yao</i>	Kiangsu 江蘇
中國通俗小說總目提要	La-li 臘梨
Feng-chu 鳳竹	liang 兩
Fu Ch'eng 符成	Li-niang 利娘

MARRIAGE IN TRADITIONAL CHINA

Liu-ho 六和

Mou T'ien-ch'eng 謀天成

Nagasawa Kikuya 長澤規矩也

Nan-ch'ang 南昌

Pai-hua k'uei 百花魁

P'ei (Kingdom) 沛

Pi Ta 畢達

San-chiao ou-nien 三教偶拈

Shao 邵

Sheng-erh 勝兒

Shōsetsu jii 小說字彙

Shui-shih 水氏

Shun-chih 順治

Sōkōdō (Shuang-hung t'ang) 雙紅堂

Su-hsien 宿縣

Sun K'ai-ti 孫楷第

T'ai-tsu 太祖

T'ien-fei niang-ma chuan 天妃娘媽傳

Ting Jih-ch'ang 丁日昌

Tsuan-yün Yen 鑽雲眼

T'ung-chih 同治

Yang-chou 揚州