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HSÜ WEI (1521-1593): HIS LIFE AND LITERARY WORKS

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By
I-cheng Liang, B.A., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1973

Reading Committee:
Professor Tien-yi Li
Professor David Y. Ch'en
Professor Yan-shuan Lao
Professor Feng-sheng Hsueh

Approved by:

[Signature]

Adviser
Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures
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VITA

April 20, 1943

Born - Peking, China

1966

B.A., Tunghai University, Taiwan

1967

Graduate Studies, National Taiwan University, Taipei, Taiwan

1968

Graduate Studies, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan

1969

M.A., The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

1969 - 1971

Teaching Assistant, Graduate Research Associate, Teaching Associate, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

1971 - 1973

Teaching Staff, Chinese Summer School, Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vermont

1972 -

Assistant Professor of Chinese, The University of Detroit, Detroit, Michigan

PUBLICATIONS


FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Chinese Literature

Studies in Chinese Literature. Professor Tien-yi Li, Professor David Y. Ch'ien and Professor Yan-shuan Lee.

Minor Fields: Chinese Language and Chinese History


Studies in Chinese History. Professor Hao Chang and Professor Tien-yi Li.
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vita</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. The Life of Esū Wei</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Esū Wei's Literary Theory</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Esū Wei as a Dramatist</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Esū Wei as an Essayist</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Esū Wei as a Poet</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. Conclusion</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A - Chronology of Esū Wei's Life</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B - An Inquiry into the Historical Figures Relating to Esū Wei</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part A - A List of Esū Wei's Literary Works</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part B - Selected Bibliography of Works Cited and Consulted</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

Table                                                                                           Page
1 Degrees and Official Positions Held By The Seven Masters                                27
2 A Statistical Table of Hsü Wei's Poems and Their Forms                                  136
3 The Major Contemporary Figures Around Hsü Wei                                           189
Throughout the entire history of Chinese literature, we find simultaneously a conservative and a progressive trend. Although the conservative trend seems to have been the dominant force in the literary world during most periods, the progressive trend never failed to make an impact. As far as the literature of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) is concerned, this certainly was the situation. While the literary world was dominated by the so-called Seven Masters of the Early Ming period and Seven Masters of the Late Ming period, a progressive trend represented by a group of unconventional writers also evolved.

The Ming dynasty was established by the Han Chinese to replace the former alien Mongol rule. As a result, a narrow nationalism became popular. Traditional Chinese culture was supported by government officials and literary scholars. Bureaucratic systems and regulations of the Han, T'ang, and Sung were revived during the Ming. In literature, Sung Lien 宋濂 (1310-1381), Liu Chi 刘基 (1311-1375), Wang Wei 王祎 (1321-1372) and Fang Hsiao-ju 方孝孺 (1359-1402) of the early Ming were all advocates of T'ang and Sung classical prose. They imitated the literary style of Han Yu 韩愈 (768-824) and Ou-yang Hsin 欧阳修 (1007-1072) in their own writings, and their philosophy was based upon that of Confucius and Mencius. This trend of imitation and classicism was continued and expanded by the "Seven Masters" group. Even some progressive writers of the Chia-ching 嘉靖 (1522-1566) period such as
Wang Shen-chung 王慎中 (1509-1559), T'ang Shun-chih 唐順之 (1507-1560), and Kuei Yu-kuang 此有光 (1506-1571), imitated the prose style of the T'ang and Sung masters.

During the late Ming period, the three Yuan 元 brothers of the Kung- an 公安 school imitated Po Ch'i-yi 白居易 (772-846) and Su Shih 蘇轼 (1037-1101). Chung Hsing 鍾惺 (d.1625) and T'ieh Yuan-ch'un 謝元春 (d.1631), of the Ching-Ming 竟陵 school, drew their inspiration from the Shih-shuo hsii-yü 世說新語 ("New Conversations of the World") by Liu I-ching 劉義慶 (403-444), the travel notes of Liu Taung-yüan 柳宗 元 (773-819) and the informal essays of Huang T'ing-chien 黄庭堅 (1045-1105). As for the eight-legged essay required in the civil service examination system, the emphasis was on the explanation of the thoughts of ancient sages, and the physical literary style was already restricted to a fixed pattern. Therefore, during the entire Ming period, the general literary trend was traditional and imitative; any new thought, technique, or creativity was hidden in the background.

Of course, there were new developments in drama, popular fiction and folk songs during the Ming. However, these works were contemptuously ignored by literary men. They regarded these works as inferior to traditional literature and lacking in elegance and literary value. For this reason, the compilers of the Ming shih 明史 have not included any enumeration of such literature. In some works of this type, such as the Chin p'ing-mei 金瓶梅 (The Golden Lotus), Shui-hu chuan 水滸傳 (The Later Margin), and Ming-feng chi 鳴鳳記 ("Record of a Singing Phoenix"), the original authors did not dare or were not willing to associate their real names with them. But not until much later was the value of such literary works noticed by scholars. ³

Hsü Wei 徐渭 (1521-1593) was one of the most important writers
representing the progressive literary trend of the late Ming period. Although there were many other progressive writers during this period, I have decided to concentrate on the life and literary works of Hsu Wei for the following reasons:

(1) He was well versed in almost all the major Chinese literary forms (genres).

(2) He has been portrayed as such an interesting and popular figure in folklore that it would be worthwhile to study his life.

(3) There are enough primary and secondary sources to be used for research.

(4) So far, there has been no comprehensive study of his life and works, especially in any Western language.

In general, I believe it is possible to provide an accurate and dependable picture of Hsu Wei as a literary man, as well as a critical evaluation of his works. His position in literary history and his influence upon later writers can also be made clear.

Although Hsu Wei was a very outstanding and significant literary man during the late Ming period, there has been no comprehensive and dependable account of his life until very recent times. Hsu Wei did not write any detailed autobiography; his two sons, Hsu K'ai and Hsu Chih were also unable to compose a complete biography, partly because of their lack of literary knowledge. His best man disciples such as Shih P'an and Wang Chi-te were also unable to provide a complete biography because of their limited understanding of their master. As a result, this extremely talented literary man has gradually become a mysterious figure in the history of Chinese literature.
Hsü Wei's reputation grew after his death. Research works on his career and literary writings gradually increased through the years. Yuan Hung-tao and T'ao Wang-ling each wrote a biography of him. In addition, related articles, written by Chang Chung and Ch'ien Ch'ien-i, also contained important biographical information on him. Chang Ju-lin and Yu Ch'un-hsi wrote prefaces for the publication of his collected works. The biography of Hsü Wei, which appears in the Ming shih, is merely a synthesis of the above-mentioned records. The authors of all these works tend to include certain unbelievable and exaggerated stories and anecdotes. We find many mistakes concerning time, place, and identity of person in these works. Although they praised the literary achievements of Hsü Wei, they cannot be completely relied upon for accurate biographical information about Hsü Wei. For example, Yuan Hung-tao confused Hsüeh Hui with Hsüeh Ying-ch'i. In addition, his statement that Hsü Wei became mad during his old age is absolutely wrong. According to Hsü Wei's own records, he became mad only temporarily at the age of forty-four. After six years of imprisonment, he was released at the age of fifty-two and lived twenty more years before his death. During these twenty years, Hsü Wei created a large number of works in poetry, prose, calligraphy, and painting. In addition, at the age of fifty-five, he served under Wu Tui, and at the age of fifty-nine, he served under Li Ju-sung. Therefore, his mental condition then must have been quite normal.

Ch'ien Ch'ien-i's Lieh-ch'ao shih-chi hsiao-chuan and Chang T'ing-yü's Ming shih also contain unbelievable biographical
information concerning Hsi Wei. They state that Hsi Wei participated in the planning of Hu Tsung-hsien’s campaign against Hsi in August, 1556, as well as of Wang Chih’s arrest in November, 1557. This is impossible because Hsi Wei only began to serve under Hu Tsung-hsien in December, 1557. Ch’ien Ch’ien-i’s statements that Hsi Wei had nothing else to sleep on but the papers which he used for sketching, that his only companion then was a dog, and that for ten years he lived without eating grains (i.e., regular food), are also undependable. Hsi Wei was sixty-one years old when he returned from service in Peking; and a year later, he joined the Wang family into which his son, Hsi Chih, had married. He lived with the Wang family for the rest of his life; and as his poems indicate, he was well cared for by the wife of Hsi Chih. When Chang Chung met Hsi Chih, forty years after the death of Hsi Wei, Hsi Chih still preserved some of his father’s portraits and manuscripts.

Some of the information which Chang Ju-lin gives concerning Hsi Wei, is also misleading. Chang Ju-lin’s statement that “he (Hsi Wei) locked himself indoors for ten years except for going out once to attend the funeral of Chang Yuan-pien” is a great exaggeration.

There are, of course, many more recent studies on the life of Hsi Wei. Most of them are valuable, secondary source materials. Among these, Aoki Yasaru’s Jo Sei-tō no geijutsu and Sugimura Yūzo’s Jo Bun-chō, Seki To, Chō Shi-ken are the two most important modern Japanese works. The former is a discussion of Hsi Wei’s life, his poetry, drama, calligraphy and painting, as well as of the anecdotes about him.
The latter includes twenty-two pages of a biography of Hsü Wei, and this is the latest Japanese work on Hsü Wei based upon modern scholarship. The biography deals with various aspects of Hsü Wei's life including his associations with other contemporary painters and literary men.

Besides the two Japanese works, several Chinese studies are also worth noting. For example, Ho Lo-chih's 何洛池《Hsü Wei》17 is a succinct account of Hsü Wei's life, supplemented with a brief discussion of his literary and artistic works. The main emphasis, however, is on Hsü Wei's painting and its influence upon later painters. Another book entitled Hsü Wen-ch'ang 徐文長,18 written by Hsü Inn 徐, is the latest Chinese work on Hsü Wei. Based upon extensive source materials available in mainland China, the author has written a very detailed biography of Hsü Wei. Within the biographical framework, the author has provided information on historical, political, and social backgrounds. Although we may not agree with the socialist interpretations in the book, we definitely find a great deal of historical truth here. A large quantity of primary source materials concerning Hsü Wei, which are not available outside mainland China, have been included in this work. In addition, a very comprehensive bibliography of Hsü Wei's literary works, which is extremely helpful for more advanced study, appears at the end of the book.

English works on the life of Hsü Wei are very few, and they are very short and are based upon the original Chinese or Japanese sources. Tseng Yu-ho's "A Study on Hsü Wei"19 is, so far, the longest and most detailed work on this subject. Within the twelve pages of the study, the author gives a biographical sketch of Hsü Wei, using
various traditional and modern references. Some original Chinese
sources have been included in English translation, such as the obituary
of Hsü Wei, which is considered a short autobiography. The main theme
of this article is centered around the analysis of Hsü Wei's character.
Several plates of Hsü's painting and calligraphy are also included.

It seems to me that, if we want to understand Hsü Wei more objec-
tively and to perceive more clearly the various phases of his life, we
have to investigate his personal life as well as the historical back-
ground of his career. The current study of Hsü Wei's life has benefited
from the above-mentioned works and many others. However, they are not
enough to reconstruct a satisfactory biography. The biographical infor-
mation, furnished by the Combined Indices to Eighty-nine Collections of
Ming Dynasty Biographies21 and Ming-jen chuan-chi tzsu-liao so-yin 玉人
傳記資料索引, 22 is used as basic reference material in the pre-
paration of his biography. And relevant fang-chih 方志.(local
gazetteers), biographical dictionaries, encyclopedias, and anthologies
of anecdotes are also used to support my research.

According to Yuan Hung-tao's biography of Hsü Wei, "Wen-ch'ang's
(Hsü Wei's) sickness is stranger than his personality. His personality
is stranger than his poetry, his poetry stranger than his calligraphy,
his calligraphy stranger than his essays, and his essays stranger than
his painting."23 This statement is a good description of the oddity of
Hsü Wei's life and his literary works. After a study of Hsü Wei's life,
it is necessary for us to turn to his literary works. Hsü Wei was cer-
tainly a very talented and influential writer. His interest covered a
wide range; he composed poems, plays, and both formal and informal
essays. So far, there are few systematic and substantial efforts
to cover these topics. Most of the existing ones deal with his achievements in drama, and they include Haimatsue's &"Shi sei em" 四聲猿, Chang Ch'ian-lang's "K'ang-tai ti ren tsa-chü" 明代的南雜劇, and Cheng Chen-to's "Tsa-chü ti yen-pien" 雜劇的演变. The first is a Japanese article discussing the four plays of Hsu Wei. The second and third articles also include long studies on the plays of Hsu Wei. They and many other works have been very useful secondary sources in support of my research. But regrettably, similar works on Hsu Wei's literary theory, prose, and poetry are very few. They are scattered in many different essays, prefaces, general works, and other sources. Because of the deficiency of such secondary sources, I have depended mainly upon the primary sources in the study of Hsu Wei's literary works.

In the "Ch'ao hsiao chi tsu-htü" 抄小集自序, Hsu Wei compares his love for his works to a pheasant's or peacock's fondness for their feathers. His philosophy of life was "never to hide one's own mistakes." As a result, all of his articles and poems, good or bad, were preserved by him. T'ao Wang-ling's preface to the Hsu wen-ch'ang san-chü 奚文長三集 tells us that originally there was a collection of his works. The popular edition of his works was entitled wen-ch'ang chi 文長集, which only included sixteen-chüan of the main works and ten-chüan of miscellaneous works. Another existing edition was the Ying-t'ao huan chi 靖桃館集, which included several chüan. The printing of this popular edition was so bad that it ceased to exist just after the death of Hsu Wei. Judging from the above note, we know that the sixteen-chüan edition of wen-ch'ang chi and ten-chüan edition of miscellaneous works did exist
before the year 1600. These two editions, however, have not been found to this day.29 Another edition of Hsü Wei's poems was read by Hsün Hsing-tao in the spring of 1597, four years after Hsü Wei's death. Unfortunately, this edition is also not available today.

During the Ch'ing period, Hsü Wei's literary works were listed under "banned books" for political reasons.30 Certain passages of his writings were deleted because of their anti-Manchu sentiments. It is fortunate that his collected works are still in existence today after the proscription under the Ch'ing.

The available primary source materials today include:

1. The Hsü Wen-ch'ang san-chi, the earliest and most complete collection of Hsü Wei's literary works, which was originally published in 1600 and reprinted by the National Central Library in Taipei in 1968.
2. The Hsü Wen-ch'ang i-hao 徐文長逸稿, a collection of his miscellaneous works which are not included in the previous collection, and
3. Hsü Wen-ch'ang i-ts'ai 徐文長遺草, another rather rare and valuable collection of Hsü Wei's miscellaneous literary works.

There are also various other editions of Hsü Wei's works which are consulted as supplementary references.

As stated in its title, this dissertation covers two areas: Hsü Wei's life and his literary works. In the section dealing with his life, a chronological and historical approach is used with the main emphasis on his association with the literary world and his influence upon literary history. Moreover, studies of the historical figures related to him and folktales concerning him are also included in this section. In the second, I will introduce the general features
his major literary works, including his drama, prose, and poetry, with a critical analysis. His literary theory is also discussed in a separate chapter.

It must be stated at this point that the least satisfactory part of this dissertation is perhaps the English translation of Hsü Wei's works in poetry and prose: much of the beauty, flavor, and subtlety of the original Chinese is lost in the translation.
NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

1. They are Li Kung-yang 李夢陽, Ho Ching-ming 何景明, Hsü Chen-ch'ing 徐禎卿, Pien Kang 邊肯, Tsang T'ing-hsiang 王廷相, K'ang Hsi 康海, and Wang Chiu-ssu 王九思.

2. They are Li P'ian-lung 李攀龍, Wang Shih-ch'en 王世貞, Hsieh Chen 謝榛, Tsung Ch'en 宗臣, Liang Yu-yü 梁有譽, Hsü Chung-hsing 徐中行, and Yu Kuo-lun 虞國論.


9. See "Hsü Wei chuan" 徐渭傳 in Ming shih, ch'ian 288; "Hu Tsung-hsien chuan" 胡宗憲傳, in Ming shih, ch'ian 205.


20. For other works on the life of Hsü Wei, see Bibliography.


23. See *FESC(I)*, p. 27.


29. According to *Mihon genbon Minju bunshū rekuroku* 日本現存 明人文集目録, no edition of Hsü Wei's anthology is published earlier than the year 1600. The library of Congress and Harvard-Yenching library also do not have any pre-1600 edition.

CHAPTER ONE

THE LIFE OF HSÜ WEI

Hsü Wei was a native of Shao-hsing 史興, Chekiang. He used many names throughout his life. Among these, Wen-ch'ing 文清, Wen-ch'ang 文長, T'ien-ch'ih 天池, and Ch'ing-t'eng 青藤, were the best-known. He also used many different pseudonyms for his literary and artistic works. His birthday, according to modern research, was March 12, 1521.3

Before we study his life, a survey of his family background will be helpful. Hsü Wei's grandfather served in various military positions; and his father, Hsü T'ung 徐銘, also followed a similar career. Hsü T'ung was born in Shao-hsing. Because some of his relatives were in the military service in the Lung-li Wei 龍里衛 ("Dragon Village Guard") of Kweichow, he went there to teach and took the local civil service examination. In the year 1488, he received the chü-iên degree.4 Hsü T'ung became magistrate of various places such as Chu-chin 巨津, Sung-ming 諧明, Chen-nan 鎮南, Chiang-ch'uan 江川, Lu-feng 徐豐, and Sam-po 三泊 in the Province of Yünnan. He was later appointed to the position of deputy magistrate of K'uei-chou 豆州 in Szechwan. From the above information, we may say that Hsü Wei was born into a family of governmental officials.

Lady T'ung 女, the wife of Hsü T'ung, died while he was serving as the prefect of Chu-chin in Yünnan. Several years later, he married
a widow whose father was Miao Yu-wen, a literary figure in Yunnan. Hsü Tsung eventually was forced to retire because of illness and returned to his home in Shao-hsing.

It is said that, after returning to Shan-yin, Hsü Ts'ung took several concubines, although we have found no information about their exact names or backgrounds. There is no doubt, however, that Hsü Wei was born of one of the concubines at Shan-yin.

His father died about 100 days after Hsü Wei's birth, May 15, 1521. Therefore, Hsü Wei was raised by his own mother and by the second legal wife of his father, née Miao. Because Lady Miao was away from her native home in Yunnan, and because she had no children of her own, she treated Hsü Wei as her own son, and she spent much money and energy to educate him. In one poem, which is included in a series of poems entitled "Ch'un-hsing" ("Spring Thoughts"), Hsü Wei described the situation of his birth and compared himself with Ch'ü Po-yü, who is believed to have understood his forty-nine years of wrongness at the age of fifty:

The fourth day of the second moon (1521) I was born
When She-t'ai pointed the Green Dragon (in the early spring)
Then, my swaddling-clothes with embroidery were made by my mother
For years, my winter clothing was tailored by the neighboring ladies
Just like the corpse of an insect which kept all the ants busy
And the pollen on the pistils confused the bees
I regret the wrongness of Po-yü was known late
Except drinking wine everything was indolent

This poem was composed by Hsü Wei at the age of seventy-one to recollect his life experience from early childhood to old age.

From Hsü Wei's own "Tseng tsu-heung hsü" ("An Essay
for a Cousin) and the Shan-yin hsien-chih 阳 閣 縣志 ("Local History of the County of Shan-yin"), we know that the Hsu family was very rich and famous in the city of Shao-hsing. Most of their relatives and friends were from higher social classes or served in the officialdom. For example, Hsu Yao 徐鎔 was a chin-shih of the Ch'eng-hua 成化 period (1465-1487) and Hsu Tzu 徐錐 was a kung-sheng 尊生 ("Senior Licentiate"). Hsu Wei was the youngest son of Hsii Tsa明. He was 33 years younger than Hsii Huai 徐淮 and 20 years younger than Hsu Lu 徐霽, the other two sons. From early childhood, the intelligence of Hsü Wei was noted. When he was only three years old (1524), he was able to receive the mourners who attended the funeral of his elder sister-in-law.10

At the age of five (1526), he began to receive formal education; he learned quickly to read articles of several hundred characters in length. His first teacher was Kuan Shih-yen 質顥, who taught him to read Tu Fu's poem, "Tsao-ch'ao shih" 早朝詩 ("Morning Audience"). Because he already had learned some Chinese characters, he could memorize it after reciting it only once; and as a result, his teacher praised his talent.12 In the same year, through an introduction by Hsü Lu, Hsü Wei met T'ao Tseng-wei 陶曾蔚, a professor from Shao-hsing, who was also surprised by the talent of Hsü Wei and gave some gifts to him.13 At the age of seven (1528), he began to understand the meaning of the Chinese classics and learned composing the eight-legged essays under Lu Ju-kang 陸子岡, who was surprised by Hsü Wei's extraordinary talent and rapid speed in composition.

Chang Tzu-hsi 張子錫, Chang Tzu-wen 張子文 and Ting Hsiao-fu 丁肖甫 were Hsü Wei's classmates. They often studied and played
They practiced horseback riding for entertainment and, as a result, were hurt quite often. This experience in his early childhood played a great part in shaping his personality and his later enjoyment of military training.\textsuperscript{15}

Two years later (1530), he was taken by his second elder brother to see the local magistrate of Shan-yin, Liu Feng-ping.\textsuperscript{12} The magistrate was also very much impressed with Hsü Wei and advised him to read more ancient works rather than memorizing the formal compositions merely in preparation for the examinations. This advice greatly influenced Hsü Wei. He avoided eight-legged essays for approximately ten years, spent more time reading the classics and eventually became a distinguished literary writer and artist.\textsuperscript{16}

In the same year (1530), a great change occurred in the Hsü family. Because his elder brother, Hsü Huai, failed in business, the family's financial condition became precarious. As a result, Lady Miao was forced to dismiss some servants and maids, among whom was Hsü Hsi's own mother. This event caused much sorrow to Hsü Wei during his childhood.\textsuperscript{17}

In 1532, Hsü Wei learned to play ancient lute under Ch'en Liang-chi, an elder townsman. This same year, his elder brother, Hsü Huai, returned from Szechwan and married a girl from a Hsi family. The following year (1533), his other brother, Hsü In, left home and went to Kweichow.

In 1534, Hsü Wei studied the lute under Wang Cheng. According to his own account,\textsuperscript{19} he learned to play the musical instrument after being taught one melody entitled "Yen Hui". Within one month, he mastered the music of twenty-two different compositions. He
even composed a piece using the text of "Ch‘ien Ch‘ih-pi fu" 赤壁賦 ("First Verse Prose of the Red Cliff") as its lyric. In addition, he enjoyed memorizing the music for the Hsi-chiaih chi 西廬記 (Romance of the Western Chamber) and P‘ei-n‘a chi 蕃蘭記 (Record of the Lute). All these experiences had laid the foundation for his future writing and research in drama.

Partly due to the family’s financial bankruptcy, Lady Miao became ill and died in 1534. Since Hsü Wei’s own mother was only a concubine, she was unable to support the family. Hsü Wei then had to depend on his elder brother, Hsü Huai, who had only recently returned from a long trip to Peking.

In describing his love for Lady Miao, Hsü Wei wrote such lines: "I could not express my emotion even on one hundred pages of paper. Even if I died one hundred lives, I still could not show my love and gratitude to her." Certainly, Lady Miao had treated him very well while she was alive.

In a mood of deep sorrow, Hsü Wei composed an essay entitled "Hsüeh-tzu" 雪詞 ("On Snow") which deeply moved the people of the entire city. The original text of this work is no longer in existence. We may imagine, however, that the theme of this essay was to express his sadness.

It is also known to us that he had learned sword-play under P‘eng Ju-tsu 彭如醉 when he was fourteen years old, in 1535. However, he gave up this endeavor shortly afterwards, probably because of his obesity.

In a poem entitled "Yüan-tan yü Ting Hsiao-fu chiao-she" 元旦發丁梢南載射 ("Shooting Contest Against Ting Hsiao-fu on New Year’s
Day") Hsü Wei tells us that he also practiced archery. Judging from his preface written to Ting, we may assume that this poem was composed by Hsü Wei at the age of sixteen or seventeen:

With smoky light the sun appears above the sea
While the Ch'ing Ti is working on the east
I bend my bow with strength
And aim at the red target
A pair of arched curves are just like two moons
And the long arms resemble those of a gibbon moved
Basically I was not a competitive person
But I feel like a hero at this moment

In 1536, Hsü Wei wrote an essay "Shih hui" ("Essay on Slander") in imitation of Yang Hsiung's 邽雄 (55 B.C. to 18 A.D.) "Chieh ch'ao" ("Essay on Ridicule"). This work made him even more popular in the city. Unfortunately, the original text of this essay is no longer in existence.

In 1537, Hsü Wei participated in the local civil service examination for the first time; but he did not pass it. His elder brother, Hsü Huai, was very disappointed and felt unhappy about the continuation of his younger brother's learning. Judging from a letter written by Hsü Wei, we know that his childhood was sometimes unhappy because of having disputes with his brothers.

Due to the decline in his family's financial condition, Hsü Wei considered his passing the civil service examination as the only way to better his life. He hoped to attain a hsiu-ts'ai degree and then continue to study in order to earn the chü-ien and chin-shih degrees. In the year 1540, he took the civil service examination again, but still could not pass it. He then wrote a very impressive letter to the chief examiner to request a second testing. The special permission was granted by the examiner. Thereupon, he received the hsiu-ts'ai degree.
with the strong recommendation from Fang T'ing-hsi who served then as the magistrate of Shan-yin.28

From the biographical data above, we know that, during the first twenty years of Hsü Wei's life, the condition of his family life was not one of poverty and destitution. Despite the fact that his father died when he was an infant, the family still was able to live on the property left behind by his father. At the same time, owing to the help and encouragement from Lady Miao, as well as from his own mother, two elder brothers, and many other relatives, his life was, generally speaking, calm and comfortable. In addition, his birth place, Shan-yin, was very popular for its scenic beauty of mountains and lakes; it was also very close to the city of Hangchow, which was one of the important cultural and literary centers at that time. This factor must also have exerted an impact on his life during his formative years.

Although Hsü Wei later failed in an examination for a higher degree, he had already become very popular in his native place. P'an K'o-ching, also a native of Shan-yin, through the introduction of Hsü Wei's cousin, T'ung Jo-yeh, promised to marry his thirteen-year-old daughter, P'an Ssu, to him because T'ung recommended to P'an that Hsü Wei was a very talented and handsome young man.29

According to the local custom of Shao-hsing, a rich family was supposed to provide six or seven hundred taels of silver as a gift for the engagement. Even an average middle class family should provide two or three hundred taels. However, due to the financial condition of the Hsü family, this amount of money was certainly a great burden which they could not afford. At last, P'an K'o-ching declined not to
ask for any money, and promised Hsü Wei be married into the P'an family as a son-in-law.30

P'an K'o-ch'ing was a scholar of jurisprudence. After the engagement, he took his daughter and Hsü Wei to his new office in Canton.31 Tnis, Hsü Wei left his old home, Pomegranate Blossom Studio. The green ivy he planted there and the inscriptions beside the T'ien-ch'i-hsü 天池 (Heavenly Pond) have later become historical sites due to Hsü Wei's fame.32

In 1541, when Hsü Wei was twenty years old, the wedding ceremony was prepared in the office of District Police-master and Goal-warden (Tien-shih 警史). Secretary Liu of a minor court (Liu ssu-ch'eng 劉水), a man of the gentry class in the local area, was invited to officiate the ceremony. Hsü Huai also came from Shao-hsing to attend his younger brother's wedding. The wedding proceeded in a very dignified manner, with many guests in attendance. In one poem, which is from a series of poems, entitled "Tao Lang" (Monody, or Mournful Poems for the deceased wife),33 Hsü Wei described the wedding scene and their happiness:

She dressed her hair in a double knot and her embroidered fan was fresh
When we saw each other we were both young
We overheard the whispering of the onlookers saying
That we were like the people from a fairy land

During this time, Hsü Wei probably experienced the greatest bliss of his life. Looking at some of his works, such as "Epitaph to Lady Miao," "The Legal Wife," epitaphs to his two elder brothers, "An Essay Presented to Father-in-law, Mr. P'an," the poems written to his brother, and the poems in reminiscence of his wedding, we can decide that his life after the marriage was filled with comforts and bliss.
However, soon after his marriage, Hsü Wei heard the news that his second elder brother, Hsü In, had died of dysentery at the age of forty in Kweichow. In an epitaph Hsü Wei expressed his feeling that his brother's destiny was even worse than that of his father, because the former had not passed any civil service examination and had died at such a young age.34

After attending Hsü In's funeral, Hsü Wei went back to his father-in-law's office in Canton where he began to learn something about government service.35 Hsü Wei's life in the P'an family, however, was not always happy and comfortable. Since his wife was brought up by a step-mother, she had to be very cautious in order to get along with her step-mother, her close relatives and servants. For example, P'an K'o-ching once sent ten taels of silver to P'an Ssu and told her to give it to Hsü Wei. P'an Ssu, who was afraid of possible trouble by accepting the money, turned it over to her elder brother, P'an Po-hai.36

After living for two years at Yang-chiang in Canton, Hsü Wei moved back to Shan-yin. On his way to Shan-yin, he composed a poem at the T'eng-wang ko ("Pavillion of Prince T'eng") in Han-ch'ang. This poem reveals his feelings and emotions about his floating life.37

In 1543, Hsü Wei again took the civil service examination in Hangchow and failed. His classmate, Chang T'ien-fu 張天復, however, received the chü-ien degree. Hsü Wei moved from his brother's house with anger after returning to Shao-hsing and briefly lived with a Yü family. Just at this time his father-in-law, who had resigned his job in Canton, moved back to Shao-hsing and thereupon invited Hsü
Although Hsü Wei was poor at this time, it did not seem to hinder his enjoyment of life. In addition to reading books and taking examinations in both Shan-yin and Hangchow, he became acquainted with many famous people, such as Hsiao Mien, Ch'en Ho, Yang K'o, Ch'en Hsing-ch'ien, Shen Lien, Ch'en P'ien, Liu Wen, Chu Ta-shou, and Hsi Tai-ming. Hsü Wei and these nine persons were known as the "Yüeh-chung shih-tzu" ("The Ten Scholars of the Yüeh Area"). Among them there were hermits and intellectuals, retired people from the gentry class, government officials observing their mourning periods; and Hsü Wei was the youngest. During this period he learned a great deal and received much help from them on various subjects, such as political thought, literature, art, drama and music. For example, among his friends, Ch'en Ho, Hsieh Shih-ch'en, together with Liu Shih-ju, Shen Shih, and Shen Ming-ch'en were all painters. Hsü Wei, therefore, began to learn painting from them. Later on he even got to sell his paintings and became a painter of some prominence. Moreover, some of his friends such as Ch'en Ho and Shen Shih were both well-versed in drama; and it is possible that most of Hsü Wei's knowledge about the art of drama was learned from Ch'en Ho.

The "Ten Scholars of the Yüeh Area" had no specific political and cultural attitudes. They were not connected with the literary society at large. Instead, they united many scholars and learned young men to form a new power. They were patriotic; they opposed corrupt governmental officials and were fond of literature and painting. They represented a new, progressive, and unconventional trend in Ming literary
society. Having known these people, Hsü Wei was able to develop and refine his own political philosophy and his creativity in the art and literature.

In a poem entitled "Composed at the Meeting of the Ten Scholars of the Yüeh Area," his close relationship with these people is manifested. 40

While all of us spend the end of the year in a secluded place
I alone savor some fancy fruits and see that the
daytime lengthens
Winter solstice comes just as the building is finished
When feasting, we care not whether the night has ended or not

In 1544, a boy was born into Hsü Wei's family and was named Hsü Mei. After the delivery of the baby, Hsü Wei's wife, P'an Ssu, became very ill, suffering from a lung disease. In the summer of the same year, Hsü Wei's brother, Hsü Hui, died at the age of fifty-four, after having swallowed a certain "drug of immortality." 41

The following year (1545), Hsü Wei again took the civil service examination and failed. Of greater misfortune, however, was the fact that his wife, Lady P'an, died of pneumonia on October 8th of the same year. During this series of tragedies, we can imagine how much he must have suffered. In the same year, he was forced to sell his home over legal dispute with a rich Hsü family. 42 The details of this event are not clear to us, but it certainly brought the bankruptcy onto Hsü Wei.

At that time, as before, P'an K'o-ching, the father of his deceased wife, continued to help him in many ways. However, Hsü Wei felt that his wife was dead; he could not realize his ambitions. And as a result, he moved out of the P'an family in 1546. Through the introduction of his friends, he paid a visit to T'ai-ts'ang 太倉 in Nan Chih-li 南直隸. Although he did not enjoy this trip, Hsü Wei
was afforded the opportunity to acquaint himself with the literary and artistic circles of Soochow, which was, at the time, a famous industrial and commercial city in southern China. It was also an important center of culture and art. The great painters like Shen Chou, T'ang Yin 唐寅, Wen Cheng-ming 文徵明, and Ch'iu Ying 仇英; famous calligraphers like Chu Yün-ming 祝允明 and Wang Ya-yi 王雅宜; and the great master of K'un-ch'u, Wei Liang-fu 魏良輔 were all staying in that area. Hsū Wei was very much interested in the different forms of literature and art, which they represented. However, these officials and people of the gentry class did not pay much attention to Hsū Wei because of his low social status and poverty. As a result, Hsū Wei felt it was meaningless to stay there further; and with much disappointment, he returned to Shao-hsing the next summer.

After returning to Shao-hsing in 1547, Hsū Wei rented a house with several rooms in the eastern part of the city and started a teaching career. There he began his poor and lonely life. He spent most of his life there and named his studio "I-chih T'ang" (一枝堂, "Hall of One Branch"). The name was probably adopted from the Chuang tzu: "When the tailorbird builds her nest in the deep wood, she uses no more than one branch." Another possible source of the name was that he was comparing himself to a phoenix which only stopped on one branch of a forest. There is a poem entitled, "Facing Snow in the Hall of One Branch," describing this place and his own emotions:

The landscape is covered with whiteness  
There is only one branch near the tiny hall  
It's like a gallery located in heaven  
And fabulous birds come down from some sacred place  
Dazzled in a place of infinity  
Which is boundless and incomprehensible
Turning my thoughts back to the peak of Mt. Ch'ien
I'd like to seek immortality, but to where would I turn?

From this poem we can imagine what a difficult and lonely life he lived, making life appear "boundless and incomprehensible." Thinking about those mountains associated with immortals (as Mt. Ch'ien has always been associated with Ko Hsing葛洪), he seemed to have doubts about his meager existence.

It seems that ideals and the reality were always contradictory for him. He planned to seek a chü-ien and then a chin-shih degree but failed every time. Later on he intended to find employment in Soochow but "returned with disappointment." He desired to make friends with famous scholars and become a member in the established literary circle, but he could not earn a living in this way. He became confused after the series of failures and misfortunes. Finally, in order to solve the problems of his mind, he decided to study with Chi Fen季本, who was a protégé of the philosopher Wang Yang-ming王陽明, and author of many works on the Book of Changes. Therefore, we can say that Hsü Wei's thought was indirectly influenced by Wang Yang-ming through the teachings of Chi Fen and Wang Chi王畿. Hsü Wei's dislike of the eight-legged essay and his enjoyment of Buddhist sutras and Taoist classics were also quite similar to such dispositions of Wang Yang-ming.

While studying with Chi Fen, Hsü Wei became acquainted with new friends and classmates, such as Liu Wen, Ting Hsiao-fu, Hsiao Nü-ch'en萧女臣, Yeh Tzu-su葉子素, Li Yu-ch'in李有秋, Li Shih-p'ei馬世培, Jen Shih-ch'eng任士成, Hsiao Ju-hsing蕭汝行, Chang
Tao-pan 張道本, and Lo-Yuan-ling 羅元齡, most of whom were literary men of poor financial backgrounds, and their friendship remained unchanged throughout the years.

In 1549, Hsü Wei failed again in the civil service examination. In the same year, however, he was able to invite his mother to live with him after nineteen years of separation. A maid from a Hu family was hired by Hsü Wei to take care of his first son, Hsü Mei. Therefore, although Hsü Wei was still poor, he once again enjoyed the happiness of family life in the reunion with his mother. In 1550, the northern barbarian, Yen-ta 倪答, crossed the Great Wall through the Ku-pei 古北 Pass and attempted to attack Peking. Hsü Wei composed two poems entitled "Chin-jih ko" 今日歌 ("Songs of Today") to record this event, but in actuality he was lamenting on the one hand that there did not seem to be any capable generals who could fend off the attack, on the other hand, he wondered whether it would be better for him to pursue a military career, since he had failed so many times in the civil service examination.

On the literary scene at this time, Li P'ang-lung, Wang Shih-chen, and Hsieh Chen organized a society for poetry and prose. Their main literary theory was that all prose writing should follow the style of the Western Han writers and all poetic composition should be modeled after that of the golden period of the T'ang. In addition, their supporters and followers such as Liang Yu-yü 梁有譽, Tsung Ch'en 宋臣, Hsü Chung-hsing 徐中行 and Wu Kuo-lun 吳國倫 all earned the chin-shih degree in 1550. A literary clique was thus formed and dominated the general literary circle at large. Hsü Wei lived approximately the same period as did the Seven Masters of the late Ming period, but he did not belong to their group. To understand this, we
need to investigate their social and official backgrounds. The follow-
ing chart shows the literary degree and official positions these seven
masters held:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Official Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Li P'an-lung</td>
<td>chin-shih</td>
<td>Surveillance Commissioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wang Shih-chen</td>
<td>chin-shih</td>
<td>Right Vice Minister, Ministry of War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hsieh Chen</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsung Ch'en</td>
<td>chin-shih</td>
<td>Vice Education Intendant Circuit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liang Yu-yü</td>
<td>chin-shih</td>
<td>Secretary, Ministry of Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hsü Chung-hsing</td>
<td>chin-shih</td>
<td>Administration Commissioner, Kiangsi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wu Kuo-lun</td>
<td>chin-shih</td>
<td>Vice Administration Commissioner, Honan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All of them, except Hsieh Chen, were chin-shih degree holders and
served in very high official positions. Moreover, their supporters
and followers were located in various parts of the empire. Their
influence, especially in literary circles, was wide spread. In 1550,
Li P'an-lung and Wang Shih-chen organized a literary society for poetry
and prose writings. According to the Ming shih, Hsü Wei refused to
associate himself with Wang and Li because Hsieh Chen (see above),
scholar of a lower social position, was mistreated by the other six
scholars. Whether this is the real reason or not is not important.
What is clear is that owing to both different social background and
philosophy, Hsü Wei never had much to do with these "Seven Masters."

As a literary man, Hsü Wei's achievement is by no means lower than that of any of those seven masters. However, until recent times, his value has been underestimated. Had he joined the society of the Seven Masters of the later Ming period, the historical judgment upon him would have been quite different.

In the summer of 1551, Hsü Wei was invited by P'an I of Hsiang-an to be a guest in the Ma-nao Ssu 玛瑙寺 ("Agate Temple") near the West Lake of Hangchow. In exchange for free room and board and a certain amount of salary, Hsü Wei was required to review lessons for the children of some rich families. At that time, Hangchow was the cultural center of Chekiang. Such famous painters as Ch'en Ho, Hsieh Shih-ch'en, and Shen Shih lived there. Hsü Wei, therefore, had the opportunity of making their acquaintances.

In his work, "Ssu-shu hun-hsi" 四書絵序 ("A Preface to a Diagram of the Four Books"), which he wrote at the Agate Temple, Hsü Wei explains his motives for painting this diagram. Judging from this, we know that he had spent much time on the study of the Four Books. The deep meaning of this classic is explained clearly through this diagram. 49

During Hsü Wei's sojourn in the Agate Temple in Hangchow, he was very unhappy over the hypocrisy of the Buddhist monks there. As a result, he composed the Yi ch'en-shih Ts'ui-hsiang i-mang 玉禪師翠鄉一夢 ("Jade Monk's Dream in the Ts'ui Village"), 50 which was one of the four plays entitled Ssu-sheng yuan 四鶴絲原 ("Four Shrinks of the Gibbon"). Judging from the contents of this play, we can assume that it was composed by Hsü Wei during or after his stay in the temple. 51
However, when later he compiled *Four Shrieks of the Gibbon*, this play was chronologically misplaced as the second.

In the summer of 1552, Hsu Wei was invited by Pan I to visit Huchow. The young daughter of Prefect Yen of Huchow was introduced to him by Pan. However, Hsu Wei refused the engagement out of fear of her being a simpleton. Later on, the Yen family was robbed by Japanese pirates. The prefect was killed, and his daughter committed suicide after being captured. Hsu Wei wrote a biography for this lady. After this event, Pan I introduced two other young ladies to Hsu Wei, but both were also rejected by him.

In the autumn of 1552, Hsu Wei passed as first in the local civil service examination at the age of thirty-two. The chief examiner was Hsieh Ying-ch'i. However, Hsu Wei failed to pass the provincial level examination in order to obtain a chu-ien degree. After several failures in the examinations, he was very much frustrated and wrote a rhyme-prose (fu) to dispel his disappointment and frustration.

Because of the constant incursions of Japanese pirates, the famous literary men in the Kiangsu and Chekiang area, such as T'ang Shun-chih, began to talk about the practical use of their knowledge, and they studied military tactics and strategy. T'ang Shun-chih later visited Chi Pen and Wang Chi in Shao-hsing and practiced archery there. Here we find that T'ang's personality and interests are very similar to those of Hsu Wei.

T'ang Shun-chih and Wang Shan-chung of Chin-chiang were frequently referred to as "T'ang-Wang" and were leaders of the new literary trend in the Hsing times. They have attempted to form a power base to change the literary trend in the middle period of Chia-ching.
(1522-1566). However, after the middle of the Chia-ching period, there appeared the so-called "Hou Ch'i-tzu" 後七子, ("Later Seven Scholars") represented by Wang Shih-chen and Li P'an-lung. All Seven Scholars still followed the traditional belief of imitation as the best way in literary writing.

Another scholar, Mao K'un, had already expressed that literary writing should reveal the social background objectively. In a letter written to Mao K'un, T'ang Shun-chih first brought out the theory of pen-se 本色 ("true color") for literary writings. Hsü Wei was also strongly against imitation and agreed with the theory of "true color." This point will be elaborated in Chapter 2.

At this time, the anti-traditional power in the literary society was mainly represented by Hsü Wei, Kuei Yu-kuang, Li Chih 李賁, T'ang Hsien-tsu 陶_experience, and T'ang Shun-chih. However, it was not until the middle of the Wan-li (1573-1620) period that the Kung-an school arose and won the victory over the Later Seven Scholars.

At the beginning of 1553, when the Japanese pirates invaded Shao-hsing, Hsü Wei participated in the war of defense. He also composed several poems describing and commenting on the defects of the local defense. During the war against Japanese pirates, many people enlisted in the Army. Among these, there was a friend of Hsü Wei, Lü Cheng-pin 吕正卿. In praise of his great courage, Hsü Wei composed a poem entitled "A Long Poem for Lü Cheng-pin." For the military generals who led the Chinese army in the war, Hsü Wei also showed great respect and admiration. There are two poems entitled "Tsang Yü ts'an-chiang" 蔣俞參將 ("To General Yü"), in which he highly praised the military merits of Yü Ta-yu 俞大猷.
In 1554 Hsü Wei joined the army of Yü Ta-yu and Wu Ch'eng-ch'i in a campaign to attack the Japanese pirates at K'o-t'ing. He also proposed certain changes in military strategies and wrote a detailed record of the main campaign fought in P'ao-chai. On the seventieth birthday of his teacher, Chi Pen, Hsü Wei composed an essay to show his respect.

After long years of fighting, the invading Japanese pirates were completely defeated. Hsü Wei composed a series of nine poems entitled "K'ān-shan k'ai-k'o" ("Songs on the Victory at Mr. K'ān"). Owing to a series of military victories, Hu Tsung-hsien was promoted from Hsin-an yü-shih (Regional Inspector and Censor) to Hsin-fu yü-shih (Provincial Governor) and later to Tsung-tu (Supreme Commander).

According to Hsü Wei's own account, he and Wu Tui once had fought with some army officers for the benefit of the common people. He has stated that they together struck down some wicked soldiers in order to protect the innocent people. As a result, the inhabitants of Shao-hsing welcomed them. This incident may help us in explaining why there are so many popular tales concerning the chivalrous deeds of Hsü Wei.

In 1556, the war against Japanese pirates inspired Hsü Wei to compose his famous play Ta'u hu-lan ti fu ts'ung-ch'un ("The Girl Hu-lan's Enlistment in place of Her Father").

While the war against the Japanese pirates was in progress, Hsü Wei again participated in the local civil service examination in Hang-chow in 1555. In the first test he passed second. However, he failed in the second test at a higher level.

In the spring of 1556, Hsü Wei made a trip to Fukien where he
lived in the house of his brother-in-law, Pan Po-hai, and visited in the famous Mt. Wu-i and many other scenic spots. However, the main purpose of this trip was to study southern drama. Based upon various sources, he compiled a book entitled Nan-ts'iu hsü-lu (Discussion and Bibliography of the Southern Drama). This book is to this day one of the most important works on southern drama.

In order to put into practice his theory of drama, Hsü Wei composed his famous Four Shrieks of the Gibbon. According to modern researchers, all four of these plays were composed by Hsü Wei before his entering the service at Hu Tsung-hsien's office. Detailed studies on these four plays will be made in an ensuing chapter.

In 1557 through a recommendation by Li Lung-ying, Hsü Wei was invited to teach classics for two months in the office of a Mr. Ch'en, Prefect of P'ing-hu. In October of the same year Shen Lien, one of the "Ten Scholars of the Yüeh Area," was executed in Hsien-hua by Yen Sung. Hsü Wei composed Ku-lang ku-li Yu-yang san-mung ("The Mad Drummer's Three Songs of Yu-yang") to express his indignation and sorrow. This year Hsü Wei was thirty-seven years old and had already attained fame in the literary circle. Hu Tsung-hsien invited him to work in his office as a secretary, after learning of his fame and popularity. After Hsü Wei's acceptance of the offer in December, 1557 his life entered into a new period.

At this time, Hu Tsung-hsien was the commander-in-chief of the Chinese armed forces in the southeastern part of China; these troops' chief responsibility was fighting against the invading Japanese pirates. Hu Tsung-hsien was also supported strongly by Chao
Itea-taa, who was an important follower of Grand Secretary Yen Sung in the Central government. Many famous military generals such as Yu Ta-yu and Chi Chi-kuang were all under the leadership of Hu Tsung-hsien. However, judging from the stubborn character of Hsu Wei, we can see that he was not serving under General Hu wholeheartedly because he remained there only for a very short length of time. After composing several articles, he resigned the official position and returned to Shan-yin, his own hometown.

In the year 1558, a pair of white deer (a male and a female) were caught by the people of Ningpo in Chekiang. The general wanted to present them as an auspicious omen to the emperor. Consequently, he ordered his secretaries to draw up dedicatory memorials to the throne. And Hsu Wei was called back again to participate in this task. All the secretaries' memorials were submitted to Tung Pin-chin, Chancellor of the Hanlin Academy, and he was asked to select the best for presentation to the emperor. The chancellor selected Hsu Wei's writing because of its elegant style, rich content and adorned vocabulary.

This satisfied Emperor Shih-tsun completely, and he consequently showed great favor to General Hu Tsung-hsien. Thus, Hsu Wei rose still higher in the general's esteem. Hsu Wei is known also for his military talent. He made many proposals to the general concerning strategy and the training of the troops.

Hu Tsung-hsien also showed some of Hsu Wei's articles to T'ang Shun-chih, who was then a very famous writer and scholar with the spirit and thought of a reformist. After reading the articles, T'ang Shun-chih asked who had written them and expressed his desire of meeting this author. Hu Tsung-hsien then arranged for T'ang Shun-chih
to meet Hsü Wei. The two talked and enjoyed drinking together as if they were old friends. Hsü Wei was deeply moved by this sincere friendship and understanding. Their meeting was a very important event in the literary history of the Ming dynasty. T'ang Shuh-chih was then the leader of the "Chia-ching pa-ts'ai-tzu" 嘉靖八才子 ("Eight Gifted Scholars of the Chia-ching Period"), and was very influential in the literary circle at that time. He introduced the literature of "true color" to oppose classicism, as represented by Li Meng-yang and Ho Ching-ming. In this regard, Hsü Wei's theory of literature, just like his interests and personality, were very close to that of T'ang Shun-chih, because he also opposed the literature of imitation or classicism. Besides, he also felt that artistic works should reflect their original "true color." Therefore the historical meeting of Hsü Wei and T'ang Shun-chih was very crucial with regard to the conflict between these two literary trends during the Ming dynasty.  

Because of the help from Hu and T'ang, Hsü Wei was able to develop his literary talent and ability. His financial condition also improved as a result of his being employed by the general. Therefore, in 1559, he moved to a new house on Shih-tzu Chieh 獅子街 ("Lion Street") and married into a Weng family in Fangchow. This marriage did not last, however, and soon he and his wife were divorced.

In 1560, Hsü Wei composed the famous "Chen-hai lou chi" ("Record of the Pavillion of Ocean Pacification") for Hu Tsung-hsien. As a result, Hu bestowed two hundred and forty taels of silver upon Hsü Wei as a remuneration. With this large amount of money, Hsü Wei was able to buy a house in the south-eastern part of Shao-hsing and named it
"Ch’ou Tzu T’ang" (The Hall of Word Remuneration), which means "The Hall of Word Remuneration." 73

In the next year (1561), Hsü Wei married a woman from a Chang family. He then participated in the civil service examination for the eighth time; but again he failed. After this failure, he decided not to take examinations any more. In 1562, when he was forty-two years old, his second son, Hsü Chih, was born. This son was often mentioned in his later poems and articles as "Ch’iu-erh." 74 In one poem we find such words:

the bright pearls have scattered already. Who could make the bright moon fly around his own body? When can I find some fine brocade to make some dancing uniform for Ch’iu-erh.

It is very clear that Hsü Wei loved his second son very much.

General Hu Tsung-hsien was known for his severe manners; and none of his subordinates dared to look at him in the eyes. Hsü Wei however, was never constrained by the general’s severe manners. He would sometimes walk in quite unceremoniously, wear simple clothes with an informal cap, and talk to the general casually.

One account tells us that Hsü Wei often sat drinking with the young people in wine shops. Once, when there was some important work to be done in the office and Hsü Wei could not be found, the general stood waiting until late in the night at the gate of the Ya-men. He finally sent the chief of police to fetch the secretary, but the officer came back and reported: "Mr. Hsü is at present completely drunk, he is shouting loudly, and it is quite impossible to bring him here." The general could only say: "Never mind." 75 This story reminds us of lines by the famous T’ang poet, Tu Fu, "The son of heaven called me to board on the boat, but I declined and replied that I was the
wine god."^ Here we find Hsü Wei's love of wine and furthermore, his not being afraid of the authority.

Hsü Wei served in Hsü Tsung-hsien's office for approximately five years. In May, 1562, Grand Secretary Yen Sung was forced to resign; and at the same time, Hsü Tsung-hsien was also accused of cooperating with Yen Sung and of committing "ten great crimes." Hsü Tsung-hsien was arrested in November of the same year. This accusation was rather incredible. How could a governor-general, at the time, avoid contact with a Grand Secretary of the central government? Although Emperor Shih-tsung later discovered that Hsü Tsung-hsien had no illegal dealings with Yen Sung and released him on account of his military merits of defeating the Japanese pirates, Hsü lost his position of governor-general. Naturally, as a result, Hsü Wei also lost his position under Hsü Tsung-hsien.

After his return to Shao-hsing in 1563, Hsü Wei was invited to work in Peking by Li Ch'un-fang, Minister of the Board of Rituals. Unfortunately, he could not accomplish much in the office because of his disagreement with Li over many political issues. As a result, he resigned after only a short term of service and returned home.

In the year 1565, Yen Shih-fan, son of the former Grand Secretary Yen Sung, and Lo Inng-ven were accused of cooperating with the Japanese and were thus sentenced to death; and Yen Sung's estate was confiscated by the government. Hsü Tsung-hsien was imprisoned again because a letter from Lo Inng-ven was discovered in Hsü's house. Shortly thereafter, although Hao K'un tried to intercede on behalf of him, Hsü Tsung-hsien committed suicide in prison.

At this time, Hsü Wei was again frustrated by a series of failures
and was ill many times. Upon hearing the news of Hu Tsung-hsien's death, he became fearful of being implicated as a result of his close relationship with the general. He wrote himself an epitaph in 1565, when he was forty-five years old, at which time he had made an attempt to commit suicide, — he forced a large awl several inches into his ear, and also broke his testicles; yet he did not die. His mental condition was obviously close to insanity. And then his wife, Chang, aroused his suspicion and was beaten to death by him. Consequently he was sent to prison for about six years. This occurred six years after their marriage; and their son, Hsü Chih, was already five years old. Later, as his emotions and mood became more tranquil, he was filled with remorse and was deeply regretful of his actions.

During his imprisonment, he composed a poem entitled "Esdish" ("Snow") from which we can learn the miserable life he had endured during those days:

The dense snow was falling just like weaving
In the morning I peeped outside from the end of
my bed mat
The white powder was about a foot deep
Turning half-round my body, I dared not move freely
And coldness numbed me
My companions and I suffered the same hardship
From whom could I ask for drink and food

Looking at some of the poems he composed in prison, we know that he was permitted to receive those guests who had come to comfort him. In addition, he was allowed to celebrate his fiftieth birthday and even to invite his friends for a party. In 1568, upon the death of his mother, he was temporarily released from prison to make arrangement for her funeral.

During his imprisonment, Hsü Wei continued reading and writing.
The main works he completed during this period were:

1. *Chou I ts' an-tung ch'i chu* 周易参同契注, in which he explained his ideas on nourishing life,
2. A play entitled *Ko t'ai hsi ao* 歌代啸, and
3. Many poems and articles.

Two friends of his, Ko T'ao-chung 葛書仲 and Ko Ching-wen 葛景文, promised to edit a collection of his poems and articles. Owing to his literary talent, Hsü Wei was also requested to compose a few essays on special events in the local government.

In May, 1572, Emperor Mu-tsung 穆宗 died; and Prince I-chin 翊君 ascended the throne, later known as Emperor Shen-tsung 神宗. A special amnesty was granted Hsü Wei. On New Year's Eve of 1572, his six-year imprisonment came to an end.

On the New Year's Day in 1573, Hsü Wei immediately went to visit Chang Yian-pien, who had tried desperately to have him released from prison. At this time, Hsü Wei was fifty-two years old. He had experienced the happiness and deep suffering of the society at large as well as life in official circles. His imprisonment marked a sudden change from a position of honor to a position of disgrace which almost led to his total collapse. When the tragedy was over, his view of life had undergone some change. In a poem composed on New Year's Eve at Wu Ching-ch'ang's 胡銘長 house, Hsü Wei described his feelings on regaining his freedom. He was entertained by the Wu brothers with drinking. After six years of imprisonment, he had already become an old man with white hair. Nevertheless, he was still optimistic about his future, and he remained active. Accompanied by his disciples and friends, he had done much traveling. These trips were
described in some of his poems and essays.  

In order to earn a living, Hsü Wei became a professional writer and painter. At the request of various individuals he composed many birthday presentations, epitaphs, and ceremonial poems. These can also be regarded as examples of Hsü Wei's service to society, and through these writings, the deeds of the noted "Ten Scholars of the Yüeh Area" have been recorded and made known to us.

In 1575, at the invitation of Chang Yuan-pien, Hsü Wei spent four months revising the local history of K'uai-chi. The general introduction and the summary article of each chapter are believed to have been written by Hsü Wei. Owing to this contribution, Hsü Wei regained his freedom completely.

His social life and his relationship to the academic world can be partially gleaned through a number of his poems. Among his friends were the famous painters such as Liu Hsüeh-hu and Chü Chung-yü. In a poem composed in 1576, Hsü Wei criticized Li Plan-lung and Wang Shih-chen for their mistreatment of Hsieh Chen, a scholar without official rank. This can corroborate the information given in the Ming shih that Hsü Wei's rejection to join the literary circle of Li and Wang was directly related to their snobbery toward Hsieh.

In 1576 Hsü Wei was invited by an old townsman named Wu Tui to visit and to hold a job in Hsüan-fu where he consequently stayed for about a year. At that time, Wu Tui's official title was tsung-tsu, or Supreme Commander, of Hsüan-hua. He treated Hsü Wei with high honor. Several dozen poems in the "pian-tz'u" style were composed by Hsü Wei to describe this visit. Hsü Wei also
wrote articles for Wu Tui discussing many military and political problems. Judging from these writings, we know that Hsü Wei must have had a deeply felt respect for Wu Tui; and he was very grateful for Wu Tui's kindness and hospitality.

During his sojourn in Hsin-an-hua, Hsü Wei lived in a house which was close to a Buddhist temple. Under the influence of Wu Tui, the officials and rich people there were quite friendly to him. They sent him as gifts a hat trimmed with sable fur, a fox-skin robe, and a silk brocade. Hsü Wei expressed his thanks to them with his own poems, calligraphy and paintings.

In 1577, owing to his failing health, Hsü Wei decided to resign from Wu's office and to give up his ambition for official service. He stopped in Peking where he stayed for a short time to visit with a few old friends and then continued his journey to the south. Traveling southward by the Grand Canal, he stopped over at many places for sightseeing.

After returning home, his disciples, Wang Tao-chien, Wu Hsi, Ma Ts'e-chih, and Shih P'an, came again to study poetry, prose, drama, calligraphy and painting with him. Hsü Wei also continued to write and paint extensively.

At the invitation of Shen Ming-ch'ien, Hsü Wei paid a visit to Hu Tsung-hsien's tomb in 1578. By this time Hu Tsung-hsien's innocence had already been declared, and a posthumous title had been granted. In April of the same year, Hsü Wei started another trip to Hangchow but was forced back because he suddenly fell ill. At this time, his calligraphy and painting were quite popular and widely appreciated; and because he now had no regular employment, his life was leisurely
As time went on, Hsü Wei could not endure the loneliness of his daily life. In 1580, he accepted an invitation from Li Ju-sung to visit northern China again. He sojourned in Peking and composed many essays there. During his visit to Peking, Hsü Wei became acquainted with new friends who were high-ranking officials. In 1582, after two years away from home, Hsü Wei returned to the south.

At the age of sixty-one (1582), Hsü Wei became ill while at home; and this illness lasted for more than ten years. For a long time, the only thing he could eat was some kind of steamed sweet pear. The magistrate of Shan-yin, Liu Shang-chih, often visited Hsü Wei; they became good friends. In addition, there were many disciples of his studying painting and drama from him. His social life was also enriched by the visits of and meetings with his friends.

Hsü Wei and his second son moved away from their home because he did not get along with his first son and daughter-in-law. His literary talent was obviously still highly admired by the people, since he was requested to compose many essays for the local government. Also, the art of his poetry reached its peak at this time. He became skilled not only in the metrical patterns and the use of allusions, quotations, and rhymes but also in a unique kind of poetic composition. This can be verified in many poems which were composed during his last years.

In 1586, Hsü Wei's second son became the son-in-law of Wang Tao-weng. As a result, Hsü Wei was invited to live with the Wang family with which he decided to stay for the rest of his life, as the care given him by his second daughter-in-law was that of compassion.
and consideration.

At this time, General Li Ju-sung remained friendly with him and sent him many gifts. Later on, Hsü Wei was again invited to visit the north. Unfortunately, he was unable to finish this trip due to his sudden illness on the road. Nevertheless, his second son went to the north and received a position in Li Ju-sung's office. Owing to the financial help from Li Ju-sung, Hsü Wei was able to publish his collected works.

During the last years of his life, Hsü Wei became deaf, once he stumbled and injured himself when drunk. He grew exceedingly poor and had to live by the works of his hands; and his collection of a thousand books was also gradually sold. His own poem says:

Thousands of pages of Buddhist sutras have been exchanged for one bag of rice
Monks and nuns laughed at me for making a living by selling these
I would even sell myself as a slave
Life is emptiness, just like a pile of yellow mud
For years I attempted to complete my writings
All my learning and methods are discarded in one day
A few remaining copies were piled up as a pillow
Without reading a word, I slept until sunset

At this time, his friends and disciples often sent him various kinds of food. To these people, Hsü Wei composed poems to express his appreciation and gratitude. His leisure life and loneliness are also expressed in his poems.

In 1592, at the age of seventy-one, Hsü Wei composed seven poems entitled "Ch'un-hsing" ("Spring Thoughts"). One of them reads:

This year I am seventy-two years old
As I am approaching my last years, I have no grandson to keep my tomb when I die
A starved deer is on the half-acre of rice field
As the two pines have been felled, the cuckoos cease calling
I feel sad for the day when I was born
Facing the drizzling sky on the day of the Ch'ing-ming festival, I could not but cry.
Suddenly I pluck a willow branch and smile
Laughed that I am merely practicing an effeminate type of Ch'\an

Now, it seems that Hsü Wei understood the truth that "Everything is emptiness, and emptiness is everything." His poem explains:

Heaven and earth changed in a moment just as wind and snow
Everything was like a rainbow after the rain
I consider it my lot that I should not have meat after I have fasted
And it is difficult for me to have an empty cup in front of me
There was a guest who used half a string of cash to ask for my calligraphy
And an old man who painted several plum blossoms to buy rice
Drinking casually beside the wall, I feel the gloom of adjacent bamboos
While the tender and pretty (orioles) in couples are chirping in spring bushes.

At the age of seventy-two (1593), Hsü Wei compiled "Tzu-chu ch'i-p'\u2019u," a chronological account of all the major events in his life. At this time, not only were his two sons not living close to him, but he had no grandsons with him either. One account informs us that even his bedclothes and mattress had become completely worn; he had nothing else on which to sleep than the papers which he used for sketching. At last, in the year of 1593, he died at the age of seventy-two.

Yüan Hung-tao, founder of the Hung-an school, was the first literary man who paid the highest respect to Hsü Wei. Because of Yüan's high esteem for Hsü, he published the complete collection of Hsü's literary works, Hsü Wen-ch'ang san-ch\i, in 1600 which was seven years after Hsü Wei's death. When this edition became known, people began to pay more and more attention to the literary works of Hsü Wei.
Various other collections and editions of his works were also published. During the late Ming, men of letters visited the old residence of Hsu Wei and composed many poems in memory of this great literary man.

Hsu Wei was without doubt a great writer of the late Ming period. He had a revolutionary disposition and was an extraordinary talent. It is certainly worthwhile to study his personal life and experiences. His association with his teachers, friends, and disciples will be discussed in Appendix B to this dissertation.

Hsu Wei used to say of himself, "Calligraphy is the first of my arts, then comes poetry, then prose writing, and last my painting." He was in many ways a great artist and a great writer. His significant achievements are found in literary theory, prose, poetry as well as the drama. Many readers and scholars have felt chagrin for his sorrowful and tragic life. However, it was this background which provided him with the necessary environment and inspiration for such a career of creativity. All of his literary works were products of this experience of agony and sorrow, which clearly bears out Ou-yang Hsin's famous saying that "Poetry can only be perfected after the poet has gone through an experience of destitution."

To the common people of China, Hsu Wei was the greatest wit of his age. In the tales associated with his name he used his humor to satirize learned scholars and government officials in defense of the less fortunate. Many such folktales and jokes had been attributed to Hsu Wei. Similar to the case of Hsu Wei, we also find many stories about Wang Chao-chun 王鴻君 (fl.33 B.C.), Ts'ai Po-chiēh 蔡伯喈 (d.190 A.D.), and T'ang Po-hm 唐伯虎.
(1470-1523), which are all far from the historical truth.

A book entitled *Hsieh shih* 論史 was attributed to Hsü Wei (i.e., Hsü Wen-ch'ang). Another book entitled *Hsü Wen-ch'ang hsi-en-sheng mi-chi* 徐文長先生秘集 was once in existence, and chüan 9 of this volume was *Hsieh shih*, which included 116 jokes. However, the original edition of the so-called *Hsü Wen-ch'ang hsi-en-sheng mi-chi* was never made public. Fortunately, in the *Chung-k'o hsiao-hua-shu* 趙科小話-supported by the compiler obtained five jokes from two other sources; and he attributed these to Hsü Wei giving them the general title *Hsieh shih*. If this is dependable, Hsü Wei was probably also a writer of jokes during his lifetime. However, there is not enough evidence to substantiate this.

There exist many separate Chinese collections of tales about Hsü Wei. The two collections entitled, *Hsü Wen-ch'ang ku-shih* 徐文長故事 and *Hsü Wen-ch'ang ku-shih wai-chi* 徐文長故事外集, which were edited by Lin Ian 林蘭, are believed to be the earliest collections of this type. All the tales about Hsü Wen-ch'ang can be arranged into two general groups: the first one is the group of tales which describe his eccentric talents and his helping the less fortunate people; the second is the group of tales which deal with his ridiculing other people who were unfriendly or unjust to him. Sometimes, however, it is difficult to draw a clear line between the two groups because qualities of both exist quite often in the same piece. In most of these tales, Hsü Wei is described as a clever man, ill-tempered and revengeful, one who had unusual talents, and one who exercised terrible jokes. Most of these accounts are not true and are far from being factual, but some of them apparently have certain direct or indirect
relationships to the original, historical figure of Hsu Wei. This was probably intentional on part of the story tellers in order to create a more interesting or attractive story. The deliberate mixing of the historical Hsu Wei with the legendary one was not successfully achieved in most cases. We do find many tales which do not agree with the life and background of Hsu Wei. In writing a biography of him, such materials cannot be depended upon.

Through such tales, Hsu Wei has been cast as a clever, intelligent, and crafty person. Hsu Wei himself might never have thought that he would become such a character in the mind of the common people. Most of these tales and jokes are in very poor taste and of little value as literature. They are only useful for the study of Chinese folklore.

Why have there been so many tales attributed to Hsu Wei? There are at least three major reasons for this:

(1) There was a great need for such a legendary character in popular literature and in the common people's imagination. In an autocratic and corrupt society, the common people were in need of certain imaginary characters who were intelligent, anti-traditional, and willing to help the less fortunate. Among these characters, Hsu Wen-ch'ang is probably one of the best known.

(2) Hsu Wei had unusual talent, popular fame, and unusual life experiences. Uncommon stories had to depend upon the name of a strange person in order to become popular. Story makers, therefore, utilized Hsu Wei's name as the hero of their tales.

(3) The Hsu family declined after the death of Hsu Wei. His sons and grandsons were all mediocre in academic learning and were unable to stop these groundless tales.
There may have been other factors for the popularity of folktales related to Hsü Wei. However, our investigation shows clearly that the legendary Hsü Wen-ch'ang has little to do with the historical figure of Hsü Wei.
NOTES ON CHAPTER ONE

1Hsu Wei was born in Pomegranate Blossom Studio (Liu-hua shu wu 櫻花書屋) to the east of Great Vehicle Temple, (Ta-ch'eng an 大乘庵) of Watching Bridge Alley (Kuan ch'iao hsiang 觀橋巷) of Great Cloud Yard (Ta-yün fang 大雲坊) in Shan-yin 嵩 County, Shao-hsing 邵惺 Prefecture, Chekiang Province. This is today's Studio of Green Ivy (Ch'ing-t'eng shu-wu) in Shao-hsing city. According to Tung Yang's "Record of the Studio of Green Ivy" (Ch'ing-t'eng shu-wu chi), Pomegranate Blossom Studio was the prototype of the Studio of Green Ivy (See Shan-yin hsien-chih, Chia-ch'ing edition, chüen 28). It was not until the Ch'ung-chen years of the late Ming period that Ch'en Hung-shou changed its name to the Studio of Green Ivy in honor of Hsu Wei's birth place.

2At various times in his lifetime, he used many pseudonyms for his own poems, articles, calligraphies, and paintings. To our best knowledge, these names were T'ien Ch'ih Sheng 天池生, T'ien Shui Yüeh 四水月, T'ien-ch'ih shan-jen 天池山人, T'ien-ch'ih ts'o-jen 天池道士, T'ien-ch'ih su-sheng 天池飲生, Ch'ing-t'eng shan-jen 青藤山人, Ch'ing-t'eng ts'o-shih 青藤道士, Ch'ing-t'eng lao-jen 青藤老人, Seng Hui 僧慧, Hai Li 海笠, Ta Huan 太環, Tu Hsi 徐述, Su Hsiien 楚仙, Su Liao 桑老, Su Lao-jen 桑老人, Chin Lei 金雷, Fo Shou 佛壽, Ju Tzu 孔子, Chang Ju 長孺, Mo San-mei 莫三美, Shih-yeh weng 慕葉翁, Chiu-hui shan-jen 馀白山人, Shen-yin pu-i 周以山, Hsiung-fei ch'u-jen 吳敷子, Pai-p'eng shan-jen 白鵲山人, Eh-pi shan-mung 鹵山僧, and so on. In addition, he also gave his residences many different names such as I-chih ts'ang 敬堂, Shih-yeh t'ang 慕葉堂, Ying-t'ao kuan 翩桃館, Ch'ou-tzu t'ang 酋宇堂, Ch'ing-t'eng shu-wu 青藤書屋, and so on.

3According to the lunar calendar, the date was the fourth day of the second moon of the year hsien-ssu (16th year of the Cheng-te era), 1521.


5Shan-yin was then a county of Shao-hsing Prefecture.

6WCS (II), p. 628. For Chü Po-yü, see "Wei ling kung 衛靈公" in Lun yü; 14th and 26th year of "Hsiang-kung" in Tso chüan; "Tse yang 塗陽" and "Jen chien shih" 人間世 in Chueng Tzu.

7WCTK, p. 15.


10. I.e., the funeral of the wife of Hsü Hsai; see "Tzu-chm ch'i-p'u," Ibid., (I), pp. 37-58.

11. HJSC(I), p. 58.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.


15. See HJIK, p. 323.

16. Ibid.

17. HJSC(I), p. 40. Ibid. At the age of 29, Hsu Wei was able to invite his mother to live with him again.

18. Ibid., p. 58.


21. Ibid.


23. HJSC(I), p. 58.


27. See above note.


31. Pan K'o-ch'ing was appointed Tien-shih of Yang-chiang county in Canton.

32. See note no. 1 of this chapter. Ch'ing-t'eng and T'ien-chih 天池 are all Hsü's names.

33. HESC (II), p. 789.

34. Chung-hsiung mu-chih-ming, ibid., (IV), pp. 1531-1535.


37. Teng T'eng-wang ko 鬧滕王闃, in HESC, p. 105.

38. See Tsu-chu ch'i-p'u, in HESC (I), p. 42.


40. Yi T'ieh-chung shih-tzu chi-hui yin-shih so-tso 與越中十子集會方詩所作, in HESC, p. 56.


43. See "Shu Shen Chang ch'un hua" 書沈徵君畫, in HESC (III), p. 1371; "Pa T'ing-yun-luan t'ieh" 郭停雲鶯, in HESC, p. 267; "Pa Ch'en Bai-yang ch'ian" 郭陳白楊卷, ibid., p. 268; "T'ie T'ang Po-hua mu-chung shui-pi ko-chung-jen t'ai-k'o k'ao hua" 題唐伯虎松水壁閂中人待客過畫, in HESC (II), p. 869.

44. See "Tsu-wei mu-chih-ming" 自為墓誌銘, ibid., (IV), pp. 1549-1553.


46. "I-chih t'ang tui-hsüeh" 一枝堂對雪, in HESC, p. 32.


49. See "Shu-shu hui-hsü" 四書序, ibid., (III), p. 1215. According to "Pa Hsü lien-ch'ang tsu-chih chu-mi ko" 羅徐文長自制竹軒, in Hsieng ch'iu mu (Wei-shu ts'ung-shu edition) compiled by...
K'ung Shang-chen, Hsü Wei first started painting at the age of thirty-one. The earliest work of Hsü Wei’s painting, according to “Hsü Wen-ch’ang sung-ch’ou” in T’ui-en t‘i-pa 退庵题跋 (chüan 16) by Liang Chang-chi梁章鉅, was completed at the age of thirty-two.

50 The theme of this play was mainly based upon the tale of "Yueh-ming tu Lin-ts‘ui" 月明渡翠, see T’ien Ju-ch‘eng田汝成, Hsü-hu yu-juan ch‘ih 西湖遊覽志 (1965 edition).

51 See Hsü Lin, Hsü Wen-ch‘ang, pp. 33-34.

52 "Yen lieh-nü ch‘iman" 慎烈女傳, in HEC, p. 343.

53 She ch‘iang fu 涉江賦, in HEC (I), p. 169.


56 "Yu Mao Lu-men ch‘ih-hsien lun-wen shu" 與茅鹿門知敏論文書, in Ching-ch‘uan wen-ch‘i. 仲川文集, (1549 and 1553 editions).

57 "Yeh Tzu-su shih-hsü" 葉子肅詩序, in HEC (I), p. 121; "Hsü hsien-sheng hsi" 豪賢生序, in HEC (I), p. 38.

58 "Hsien-shang ch‘i" 河上曲 (Songs Composed Above the Seas), in HEC (I), p. 230.


60 HEC, p. 75.

61 "Mi shang Tu-fu shu" 拟上督府書, HEC (III), pp. 1043-1052.


63 "T’ao ch’ai chan kuei hsü" 陶宅戰歸序, Ibid., (III), p. 1239.

64 "Tseng Chi hsien-sheng hsü" 贈季先生序, Ibid., (III), p. 1197.

65 Ibid., (II), p. 784.


67 Ibid., (IV), pp. 1754-1775.
Pan Po-hai was then serving as magistrate of Shun-ch'ang in Fukien.

cf. Esu Lun, Hsü T'ien-ch'ang, p. 78.

See Hu's biography in the Mingshih, chüan 205.


"Ch'ou-t'ao t'ang chi" 豐字堂集, in F.C.C.(IV), p. 1169.

Shen Ming-ch'en 謝明臣, "Hsü Chi-shih hsia-chi chi-shih" 徐記室新居記亭, in Feng-tui lü shih-hsien 古堂校詩選. The residence consisted of twenty-two rooms, artificial lakes, trees and flowers.


"T'ien-tzu hu lê pu shang-ch'uan, tzu ch'eng ch'en shih chiu-chung-hsien" 天子呼來不上船自稱臣是酒中仙.

"Feng Shang-shu Li-kung shu" 奉尚書李公書, in F.C.C.K., p. 314.


The main causes of his insanity were:
1) the spiritual shock caused by the suicide of Hu Tsung-hsien,
2) the misery of his unemployment, and
3) the disharmony of his family life.


Ibid., p. 268.

Those people were Kao Sheng 高生, Hsieh Tang 謝堂, Hao Shang-jen 奧上人, Shang Wei-cheng 邵為正, Chang T'ien-fu 張天復, Chang Yüan-pien 張元倩, and Ting Hsiao-fu.

"Wu-shih sheng-ch'eng Wu Ching-ch'ang hsi chu-tzu-ti hsiang yü yuen chung" 五十生辰吳景長義子茅鈞予園中, in F.C.C.K., p. 89.
84. It is commentary on a Taoist classic. The original author of *Ta'en t'ung chi* is Wei Po-yang 魏伯陽.


87. "Ch'u-hsi t'ung-hsiao yin Wu Ch'ing-ch'ang ch'ai*除夕通宵飲 吴景常*, in FESC, p. 13.


91. After his release from prison in 1572, Hsii Wei was still under surveillance for a period of time.


96. "Ta hsieh Shang-kun chu-lung shih*答謝上谷諸公詩, and "Tzu Ch'a-tao tsou Ch'i-yung*自奚道走居庸, ibid., p. 613.


100. The title was "Hsiang-ao 襄樊. See Hua's biography in the Ming shih (I-wen ed.), chuan 205, p. 2224.


104. "Tseng Liang shang-shu hsi" 親梁尚書序, in EWSCE (III), p. 1335. Liang Ying-lung 梁英龍, a native of Chang-ting 衡陽, served as Minister of the Board of War. "Lin-chueh ch'i-jih...ch'en liang yu Ch'ang-an chieh" 六月七日...偕余於長安街, ibid., (1), p. 392. Mei Kuo-chen was a native from Hupai.

105. See "Tsu-chu ch'i-p'u", ibid., p. 49.


107. Shih P'an learned painting. Wang Chi-te 王驃德 and Wang Tan 王壠 learned calligraphy. Chi Tzu-yu 濟子叔, Chi Tzu-wei 濟子微, Ko T'ao-chung 高篤仲, Ko Ching-yen 高景文 and Ch'en Shou-ching 陳寿綬 were his friends. Wu Hsi 吳氏, Wang T'un 王勤, Shang Chün 商濱, and Ch'en Ju-yüan 殷汝元, were his disciples.

108. Chi Tzu-wei was the son of Chi Fen 季芬. Through the recommendation of Hsi Wei, he was employed by General Li Ju-sung. "Sung Chi Tzu-wei ying Li Hsing-ju teung-ping chih yüeh" 送季子微應李馨武德之約, in EWSCE (II), p. 631. "Ku Hsia-shih m-chih-
He moved to a place called Fan-shih tien-she 范氏天台.


113 “Tseng Li Hsuan-chien hsii” 賞李宣鎮序, in EJSCC (III), p. 1310.

114 “Chih Li Chang-kung shii” 致李長公書, in EJSCC (II) 3a-5a.

115 “Fu Li Ling-kung shii” 復李令公書, ibid., chüan 4. EJSCC (III) and EJSCC (II) were published in 1589. Yuan Hsun-tao saw these editions.


117 “Jai shii” 猶書, ibid., p. 671.


120 Ibid., (II), pp. 627-630.


122 He was buried in Mu-chaa shan 木柵山, fifteen li south from the city of Shao-hsing.

123 It was published by Sheng Chün 邵淳, with a preface by T’ao Wang-ling, and a biography of Hsi Wei, written by Yuan Hsun-tao. The
editors were Hsieh Po-si 謝伯義, Shang Chün, and Ch'en Ju-yuan 陳汝元.

124 Chang Jen-ch'ieh 鍾人杰, Fei Wen-ch'eng chüen-chi was once a best seller, published in 1614. It was not really annotated by Yüan Hung-tao. It was compiled by Chang Ju-lin 張汝霖, Wang Ssu-jen 王思任, and edited by Chang Wei-ch'eng 張維城, published in 1623. Other works published were Pi-hsien yao-chih 简玄要旨, Hsian-ch'ao lei-chi 玄抄類摘, Ch'ing-t'ieh shan-jen lu-shih 青藤山人語史, Hsü Wen-ch'ang mi-chi 徐文長秘集, and Ssu sheng yüan 四聲雅.

125 Ch'ing-t'ieh k'u 青藤古意, a collection of all the poems and articles concerning the old residence of Hsü Wei. Tung Yüng 童陽, "Ch'ing-t'ieh shan-wu chi 青藤mag屋記, in Shan-yin hsien-chih (library of Congress Copy), and Shao-hsing fu-chin 蘇興府志, (SPIT hsü-pien edition).


127 See Ou-yang Hsin, "Mei Sheng-yü shih-chi hsü" 梅聖俞詩集序, in Ou-yang w'en-chung kung w'en-chi 楓陽文忠公文集, ch'üan 42.


129 Shanghai: Fei-hsin shu-chü, 1929, 1933.
CHAPTER TWO
HSÜ WEI'S LITERARY THEORY

In Late Ming Literature, Hsu Wei was both a creative writer and an outstanding literary theorist. In various respects, his literary works did not follow the established tradition. He attempted to rebel against conformity and was known as one of the few romantic rebels who openly challenged orthodoxy. He was also one of the few forerunners who appreciated and glorified the art of individualism in literary writings during the late Ming period. Like Li Chih, he also strongly supported the so-called "true color of literature." In addition, he agreed with the idea that there was a proper place for art and literature, as long as they were spontaneous expressions of the author's true emotions.

Yüan Hung-tsao, founder of the Kung-an School, was originally Li Chih's disciple and was deeply influenced by the literary theory of pen-se ("true color"). Because of the similarity between the literary thought of Li Chih and Hsü Wei, Yüan later regarded Hsü Wei as his teacher and glorified Hsü's unconventional and progressive thoughts.

The term pen-se appears in various literary sources and has different meanings. In the Wen-hsin tiao-lung (The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons), it says:

... The color blue is prepared from indigo and the color red is prepared from madder.
And although blue and red are better colors than their sources (pen-se), they are incapable of further change. ...

Here it is clear that pen-se means the original color without being changed. In the Hou-shan shih-hua 後山詩話 ("Ch'ien Hou-shan's Random Notes on Poetry") by Ch'ien Shih-tao 陳師道, we are informed what is not considered pen-se. The author points out that two literary forms have deviated from the course of tradition and "true color." They are exemplified by the shih poetry of Han Yü and the tz'u poetry of Su Shih. These works are different from the traditional shih poems or tz'u poems both in their content and language style.

In the later part of the Ming dynasty, pen-se became a new literary theory. Among the well-known "Chia-ching pa ts'ai-tzu" 嘉靖八才子 ("The Eight Talents of the Chia-ching period"), we find that at least two of them have talked about pen-se. T'ang Shun-chih (1507-1560) maintains that literary writing should reveal its author's personality. This is what he calls pen-se. In his letter written to Mao Lü-men 茅鹿門, T'ang explains his pen-se theory in great detail. Literary writings, according to him, should be natural and spontaneous. As a result, he prizes the poet T'ao Ch'ien 陶淵明 and despises Shen Yuē 沈約, for the former is noted for spontaneity and the latter is renowned for ornamentation in writing. In addition to this, T'ang is against imitation in creative writings. He holds in honor the works of pre-Ch'in Confucianists, Taoists, Moists, and many others, because they all have their own unique style and individuality. For the same reason, T'ang deprecates the post-Han writers, who tended to imitate the style of their predecessors. Li K'ai-hsi'en 李開先 (1502-1568), another one of the "Eight Talents," also talks about pen-se, and his
explanations are quite similar to those of T'ang Shun-chih. As a matter of fact, the pen-se theory represents a new literary trend which was a strong reaction to the antiquarianism of the time.

As a progressive and anti-traditional writer, Hsü Wei is also in favor of the pen-se theory. His understanding of pen-se, though basically similar to that of T'ang Shun-chih and Li K'ai-hsieh, is somewhat different. As we find in his preface to the Hsi-hsiang chi 雲窗記 (Romance of the Western Chamber), Hsü Wei believes that everything in the world has its pen-se and its hsiang-se相色, or "various manifestations." The pen-se, "true color," here may be interpreted as "principal character," and the "various manifestations" are the substitute characters. Apparently, Hsü Wei is talking about the characters in a play. We are further informed in this preface that Hsü Wei disagrees with the character portrayal in the Hsi-hsiang chi, in which a "substitute" has overshadowed the "principal character." Hsü Wei holds the "principal character" in esteem and undervalues the "substitutes" or "various manifestations." In his Fan-tzu' hu hsü-lu, Hsü Wei criticizes a play entitled Hsiang-nang chi 香腮記 ("The Fragrant Paw") as having no pen-se at all. The reason given by Hsü Wei is that the language style of this play is too classical and far from being natural and colloquial. Here we find that Hsü Wei agrees with T'ang Shun-chih on the point that literary writings should be natural and spontaneous. Moreover, Hsü Wei is strongly opposed to imitation and believes that a writer should develop his independent style. This will be explained later in this chapter.

Besides talking about pen-se as a literary theory, Hsü Wei has applied it to his own writings. Further discussions of this will be
provided in the following chapters. Although Hsü Wei does not have a very systematic and detailed thesis on the theory of pen-se, he is certainly one of the few forerunners who have contributed substantially toward a better understanding of this specific literary term.

Imitation and classicism represent the major literary trends of the late Ming period. Most of the traditional writers were under their influence and were, therefore, unable to produce any real creative writings. Hsü Wei strongly reacted against this custom of imitation and classicism. He believed that literature should reveal the author's own times, background, and true feelings. He did not oppose the study of the classics for they were valuable sources from which the writer would build his foundation and capacity so that he may create new literature. The new literature, according to Hsü Wei, should be new in style and content, not mere imitation of the classics.

In order to make the new literature more natural and popular Hsü Wei suggested the use of vernacular language and slang expressions. Such a suggestion was considered a rather radical idea at that time. According to Hsü Wei, this should be applied not only to drama and fiction, but also to poetry and prose so that "magic harmony" would be achieved in all kinds of creative writings.

From the above, we may form a general picture of Hsü Wei's literary theory. That which he opposed was actually the common defects of his contemporary writers. He certainly introduced a great many new ideas to literary circles and made great contributions to the change in literary trend.

The literary theory of Hsü Wei includes the ideas of "true color," "opposing imitation," and "use of colloquial language," which are
applied to all forms of his major literary works, namely, drama, prose, and poetry. In addition to these, Hsu Wei expresses more fresh ideas about drama and poetry which provide more detailed discussions and arguments on these two literary genres.

From Hsu Wei's biography, we know that, during his early years, he had some basic training in music. Later on he studied under Chi Pen, who also was known as a scholar of music. Hsu Wei was influenced by Chi Pen who advised him to stress his new theory about the laws of the sound in southern drama. While visiting in Fukien in 1559, Hsu Wei completed a book entitled Nan-tzu hsu-lu (Discussion and Bibliography of Southern Drama), which discusses in great detail, the origins, development, and the various schools of southern drama. In this book, the author not only provides explanations of some dramatic terms and colloquial expressions, but also collects 107 titles of the southern drama from the Sung, Yuan, and Ming dynasties. In addition, his notes cover the special features of the southern drama, laws of the sound, criticism of major writers and their works, and some special suggestions for the reform of southern drama. Even today, it is still an indispensable reference for the research of southern drama.  

Since the titles of Southern drama listed in the Nan-tzu hsu-lu, are limited to those which were found or seen by Hsu Wei, the list is not complete. Several different works of southern drama, which are not included in Hsu Wei's book, are found in the Jung-lo ta-tien ts'an-pen 永樂大典殘本. Nevertheless, the information and material preserved in this book are still very important to the research of Chinese drama.

According to Hsu Wei, the origins of southern drama could be
traced back even to the time of the Southern Sung dynasty. However, Wang Kuo-wei tells us that, of the 543 titles of the southern drama, there are twenty-four taken from the ta-ch'ü 大曲 ("grand song") of the T'ang dynasty and 290 from the tz'u poems of the T'ang and Sung dynasties. We can thus say that southern drama resulted from the T'ang music and had been influenced by the tz'u poems during the Sung dynasty. After the Yuan and Ming periods, southern drama progressed into various kinds of local plays.

The special features of southern drama, according to Hsu Wei, were the use of slangy expressions and its maintenance of "true color." Even the "chu kang tiao" 謝菖蒲 (madley) of the Chin dynasty and Yuan drama had used slangy and colloquial expressions; and this combination became one of the common characteristics of popular literature.

The difference between the northern and southern schools of drama, according to Hsu Wei is that the northern drama is very strong, fast, and stimulating, revealing the feeling and mood of the northern people. The southern drama, on the contrary, is slow, soft, romantic and beautiful, portraying the sound of a weakening country. Therefore, we know that Hsu Wei evaluates northern drama and southern drama with the same equality for each has its own special features. Hsu Wei feels that the southern folk music and the so-called northern barbarian music are both valuable but the difference between them is that they reflect different localisms of China. From the research of Wang Kuo-wei, we know that the northern drama preserves fewer titles of the ch'i poems of the T'ang and Sung dynasties, than does the southern drama; because from the 335 titles of the northern drama, there were only eleven which had been developed from the ta-ch'ü of the T'ang dynasty. Seventy-five
had been derived from the *ts‘i poems, of the T‘ang and Sung dynasties. This proves that the judgment or conclusion of Hsu Wei is absolutely correct. The music of southern drama and that of northern drama have something in common: they are all derived from the lower classes of society.

In addition, Hsu Wei also praised a newly established form of drama, *k‘un-ch‘u, which flourished after the middle of the Ming dynasty. At that time, in addition to northern drama, among the people there were many different forms of local plays flourishing; such forms were the H‘o-yao style, the H’ai-yen style, and the I-yang style, and so on. However, after the founding of *k‘un-ch‘u by Wei Liang-fu of K‘un-shan, *k‘un-ch‘u replaced northern drama. At the same time, the number of writers of southern drama also increased. During this transitional period, Hsu Wei supported the new literature of *k‘un-ch‘u, which later became the major trend in the development of drama during the late Ming period.

Hsu Wei opposed the use of literary language in the southern drama. He felt that any kind of drama should reveal its "true color" instead of following the rigid rules and regulations of traditional literary works. Here he had pointed out the way for the development of Ming drama. The struggle between the school of "true color" and the school of formalism never ceased to exist throughout the entire Ming period. After the death of Hsu Wei, the dispute over the same problem was continued by T‘ang Hsien-tsu and Shen Ching.

All ideas and suggestions relating to the reform of playwriting, which appears in the *Yun-ta‘u hsü-ju, are part of Hsu Wei's literary and artistic theory. He opposed using the literary language not only
in writing prose or poetry, but also in composing drama. His central thought is that all versions of literature should reflect their time and social background. Therefore, drama as a kind of literary form should also use the popular language, select popular themes, and reflect real life and society. In addition, Hsü Wei argues that it is wrong to say that Kao Ming does not know the rule of music. On the contrary, he believes that Kao Ming has a superior understanding of drama to the other writers.12

Wang Chi-te, in his Ch'ü I, informs us that Hsü Wei is fond of talking about songs and plays and that Hsü is in favor of the "true color" theory. Moreover, Hsü has made comments and explanations on Hsi-hsiang chi 西廬記 and P'ei-pa chi 翳粑記. Hsü dislikes Yü-chüeh chi 五妹記 because he feels that this play is too rigid and conservative.13

Judging from this, we see even more clearly something of his attitude toward dramatic literature. Yü-chüeh chi is a play composed of classical stories and parallel structures which opposed to Hsü Wei's standards of ideal play writing.

In his evaluation of the play P'ei-pa chi, Hsü Wei has pointed out the good qualities lie in its four specific scenes.14 These four scenes, in Hsü Wei's mind, are the reflections of real emotion just like the moon in the water and image in the air. The use of colloquial language in the play is very successful and effective. Hsü Wei describes this technique as "turning iron into gold."15

Two other books entitled, Chiu-jien nan chiu-kung mu-lü 舊編南九宮目錄 and Shih-san tiao nan-ch'iü yin-chieh p'u 十三調南曲音節譜, attributed to Hsü Wei, are now believed to be forgeries.16
Included in these two books are much information and source material about the southern drama.

In his preface to Hsi-hsiang chi, Hsü Wei again discusses the idea of "true color," which he described as the original and undecorated color. In another preface, written for a play entitled, K'un-lun 

the theory of using colloquial language and spontaneous expressions were further elaborated. To him, the language of drama should be understood by children and less educated women. While he supports the use of vulgar and common language, Hsü Wei also emphasizes the refined quality of dramatic writings. This is why he attacked two popular plays which had only the required language but not the refined quality.

In addition to verbalizing his ideas and theories, Hsü Wei has attempted to bring them to fruition by composing his own plays. His four plays collectively entitled Ssu-ch'eng-yüan (Four Shrieks of the Gibbon), represent the distinguished work produced during the transitional period of the northern and southern schools. In the four plays, Hsü Wei mainly uses the form of northern drama and adopts some of the good traditions from the southern drama, such as singing parts by many different characters and using popular and colloquial dialogues.

Hsü Wei's theory about poetry is quite similar to his theory about drama. He is in agreement with the idea that poetry expresses feelings or sentiments and that the rules ofmetrical composition should be relaxed. Under the influence of the traditional theory from the Lun yü (Analects of Confucius), Hsü Wei believes that the songs would "incite people's emotions, observe their feelings, keep them company, and express grievances."
Hsü Wei built up his own theory of poetry upon this foundation. He emphasized the extraordinary and moving force which should be used in poetic writing. He held Li Po and Su Shih in high esteem for their talent and the unlimited moving force in their poems. In addition, he highly valued the literary beauty which he found in Wang Po's 堂 and Li Po's 湛 poems.21

In a letter talking about poetry with his friend, Hsü Wei said: "A good poem should give the reader the feeling of a surprise which is similar to the one when cold water is poured on your back."22 In order to compose a poem like this, a poet has to understand that the content should be true and faithful, and the style independent and non-imitative. The form of a poem should give the reader an unusual and strange feeling. This means that a poet should try to discover his own style rather than to copy somebody else's style already established.

To attack the contemporary custom of imitation in poetic writings, Hsü Wei wrote a very interesting essay,23 in which he uses an allegory to show the futility of imitation. If a man, as he told us, imitates the sound of a bird, his sound is then similar to that of a bird but his nature is still of a man. If a bird imitates the sound of a man, its sound is then similar to that of a man but its nature is still of a bird. The sound acquired through imitation cannot be used to decide the original quality of man and bird. With this in mind he began to criticize his contemporary poets. He has pointed out that those poets never have anything derived from their own but only borrow the words which have been said by other people. Although they can imitate the
styles of other poets to a great extent, their experience is quite similar to that of a bird which imitates the sound of a man. Hsü Wei believes that poetry is a kind of creative literature, one which cannot be produced through imitation. In his opinion, the emotion of a good poem should be frank and sincere; the diction free from ambiguity; the mood relaxed and extensive. There are more joyful than sorrowful feelings. The poet, therefore, could manage these two feelings in perfect manner. The emotions are refined and free from being vulgar. Its diction, although economical and simple, is sufficient and complete. These poems contain words created by the poet himself, not borrowed from other sayings. A poet's own emotions should be described in his own manner of expression. He should then try to refine the trifling defects in order to reach the condition of purity and perfection.

Concerning the evaluation of various poets, Hsü Wei has also made some unconventional statements. He realized that besides Li Po and Tu Fu, there are quite many other remarkable poets, such as Han Yu, Meng Chiao, Lu T'ung, and Li Ho. Hsü Wei acknowledges that the range of his vision was broadened after reading their poems. He disagreed with his contemporary poets who only attempt to imitate Wang Wei and Meng Hao-jan. Here we find that Hsü Wei recognized the value of several less renowned poets, especially Han Yu and Li Ho.

In a letter written to his teacher, Chi Pen, Hsü Wei discusses the art of poetic composition under the "hsing" style:

The first line of a poem is always meaningless. This was so even in the ancient Music Bureau Poems. Music Bureau Poems drew their origins from people's customs, just like the classical folk songs in the
The literary value of folk songs was noticed by Hsü Wei at the time when popular literature was ignored by conservative classical writers.

During the Ming period, a great number of scholars and literary men engaged in doing annotations or commentaries for ancient classics. Hsü Wei criticized these commentators of classics as having changed the original meanings of the classics or having incorporated new ideas of their own. The Confucian scholars, especially those after Chu Hsi (1130-1200), engaged in doing annotation or commentary for Shih ching. Hsü Wei attacked these people for their useless works, and criticized their scholarship. These commentators would elaborate upon a single line from Shih ching according to their own ideas or imagination without an end. Hsü Wei regarded Shih ching as an anthology of poems rather than a classic to which numerous ideas and philosophies may be added.

Hsü Wei's theory of poetry may be summarized in the following five points: (1) The content of all poems should be true and real. (2) Poets should be free from the traditional influence of classicism and imitation. (3) Poets should use unusual forms and not be limited to only one style.
(4) Fan Yu, Meng Chiao, Lu T'ung, and Li Ho were also great poets who could be compared with Li Po and Tu Fu.

(5) Poets should exploit the beauty and strangeness of Li Ho in order to change the custom of imitation which was supported by the so-called Former and Later Seven Masters.

In general, Hsü Wei's literary theory directly influenced his own literary works. His masterpieces were created with such theory as their foundation. Progressive writers during the late Ming, especially the Kung-an School masters, were deeply influenced by him. His literary theory was also systematized and glorified by Yuan Hung-tao. In addition, Chang Tai, Chin Jen-jui, and Cheng Hsieh all showed their greatest respect for Hsü Wei. Their literary works exemplify that they also had carefully studied Hsü Wei's literary theory. From the viewpoint of literary theory and history of literary criticism, Hsü Wei deserves our full attention since his achievements were great and his influence profound.
NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

1 See Cheng Chen-to, Cha’a-t’u Pen Chung-kuo wen-hsüeh shih (Peking: Tso-chia ch’u-pan she, 1957), p. 941.


3 Jen Wei-k’un, "Yüan Chung-lang p’ing-ch’ao," p. 71, in Shih-ta kuo-hsüeh ts’ung-k’ao (no. 3).


6 See "Ta Mao Lu-men chih-hsien 等第階門文獻", in Ching-ch’uen hsien-sheng wen-chi 华川先生文集 (SPTK ed.), 7, pp. 9a-11b. For T’ang’s biography, see Hsing shih, chüan 205.

7 See Lu Kung 路工, "Li K’ai-hsien ti sheng-p’ing chi ch’i chu-tso" 李開先的生平及其著作, in Li K’ai-hsien chi 李開先集 II, 1040.

8 Hsu Wei, "Hsi hsiang hsü 西廂序", in Hsü Wen-ch’eng i-ta’ao, chüan 1, p. 12a.

9 See Nan-tzu hsü-lu, p. 243.

10 Aoki Masaru, "Jo Sei-to no gei jutsu," in Shina bungei ronso (Tokyo, 1927). There is only one edition of this book in existence. Textual criticism is made by consulting the quotations from Chin-yüeh k’ao-cheng 今語考證 which was compiled by Yao Hsieh 耶安.


12 Ibid., p. 241.

These four scenes are: "Shih-k'eng"食應, "Ch'ang-yao"嘗藥, "Chu-yen"楚هم, and "Hsieh-chen"寫真. See 許至三 hsü-lo, p. 243.

15Ibid.

16Ch'en Hsi-ch'ien, editor of 重訂曲苑 Ch'ung-ting ch'ü yüan, made a mistake by listing these two works under the authorship of Hsü Wei. As a matter of fact, these two works were not written by Hsü Wei.

17Hsi hsüang hsü 西廬序, in Hsü yen-ch'äng i-ts'ao (1926 edition), chüan 1.

18Ti K'un-lun mu tsa-chü hou 题屈荀奴雜劇後, Ibid., chüan 2.


21In a letter to Chung T'ien-yü 鍾天毓 (Hsü yen-ch'äng i-ts'ao, chüan 4), Hsü Wei criticized the other annotated edition of Li Ho's poems as being incomplete and when compared with the one prepared by himself.


23Yeh Tzu-su shih-hsü 葉子齋詩序, in HUCSC(III), p. 1211.

24Ibid.


26Ibid., p. 1029.

27Shih shuo chieh-i 詩說解頤, Ibid., pp. 1217-1220.

28Feng shih Chi hsien-sheng shu 奉師季先生書, Ibid., pp. 1026-1027.
CHAPTER THREE
HSÜ WEI AS A DRAMATIST

In the field of Ming drama, Hsü Wei is renowned as both a writer and a theorist. His theory of drama has been discussed in the previous chapter. In this chapter, we shall concentrate on a discussion of his plays.

After the downfall of the Yüan (1280-1367) dynasty, tsa-chü (northern drama) experienced a decrease in popularity. Indeed, after 1566, the place of tsa-chü was completely replaced by the southern ch'üan-ch'i. Most of the playwrights, at that time, sacrificed the writing of tsa-chü altogether, and attempted the new style in Chinese drama. Although a few writers still continued the composition of tsa-chü, they did not adhere to the stringent rules and organization of the original Yüan drama. They employed the features of drama from both the northern and the southern schools in a haphazard fashion; thus, a new style of writing was introduced. According to the Sheng-Ming tsa-chü  by Shen T'ai 泰, all the works of tsa-chü in the Ming dynasty were "half-breeds" of the features from both North and South. Therefore, we can call it neither tsa-chü nor ch'üan-ch'i. Modern scholars of Chinese literature have agreed on the term "tuan-chü", "short play", since these plays are shorter than both tsa-chü and ch'üan-ch'i. The usual length of the short play is from one to seven acts; and adherence of the structural rules of Yüan
drama is relaxed in these plays. In the handling of singing roles, many of such plays follow the typical convention while others provide singing parts for more than one principal actor. The tunes utilized are mostly of Northern origin, and the rhyming scheme is more commonly formulated in accordance with Northern pronunciation in which the "entering tone" is totally abandoned. The literary beginnings of these short plays are usually based upon some of the more exciting, emotional or elegant stories. Each one is described with simplified structure and economized words, usually being of higher quality. Among the writers of short plays during the Ming dynasty, Hsü Wei is one of the most significant. He is the writer who has most completely epitomized the purposeful merging of the techniques of the Northern and Southern schools.⁶

Among Hsü Wei's literary works, there are four plays under the general title, Ssu-sheng yuăn (The Four Shrieks of the Gibbon). Concerning the four plays, Hsü Wei has composed a poem in an explanation of the meaning of the title:⁷

Peach and plum trees do not speak but there are paths under them
The talking of birds is difficult to understand for man
If you want to know if the crying of a gibbon may make you heart-broken
The only way is to become a gibbon yourself

We do find some background information about this poem. Hsü Wei is comparing his plays with the cryings of a gibbon which may make the readers heart-broken. Many scholars believe, however, that this peculiar title is probably based upon a tradition in Chinese folklore to the effect that, when a gibbon has lost its baby, it would utter four shrieks and then dies broken-hearted. Another possible literary
Every sunny and frosty morning, when the groves are cold and the waterfalls frozen, there are often gibbons crying in the high mountains, making people feel chilly. The sounding of it echoes back and forth among the mountains, and continues for a long time. The fishermen sing "among the three gorges of the Yangtze in Pa-tung, Wu Gorge is the longest. When the gibbons are crying there, your clothes will be damp with tears."

Hsü Wei may have thought that these four plays also had the influence of making people think deeply enough to transform their ways of thinking, just as did the gibbons of Wu Gorge, and such thought led him to give such a title to the plays.

In the traditional structure of Yüen drama, a play is composed of four acts; and the singing part is done completely by either the leading actor or actress. However, in the four plays by Hsü Wei, such rules are not followed; there is only one act in Yü-yeng nung 雨英弄; two acts in Ts'ui-hsiang meng 崔鄉夢; and two acts in Ts'iu Kn-lan 嘉本蘭. The fourth one, Nü Chüng-yüen 女狀元, is of Southern style and is also very short, consisting of five acts only. We can say that Hsü Wei's plays represent a special development in dramatic literature during that time. Here I would like to select the above-mentioned four plays and still another of his plays, Ko tai hsing, to be the subjects of further detailed analysis and study in order to demonstrate the distinct features of his style.

Early in the Han dynasty, Pan Ch'ao 蒲松 wrote a book entitled Nü chieh 女誠, in which the idea of san-ts'ung ("three obidences") was revealed. Therefore, the traditional female education in China
was entirely different from that of the male. The men were supposed
to work outside, while the women were only permitted to work inside
the family. After the Sung dynasty, this difference became even more
strictly emphasized. As a result, the women, pictured in the *ta'yu*
poems of the Sung dynasty, in the drama of the Yuan dynasty, and in the
fiction of the Ming dynasty are completely unrelated to political and
military affairs. Only Tiao Ch'an and Lin Fei's *liu fang* wife,
pictured in the *San-kuo yen-i* (History of the Three Kingdoms)
and I-cheng Ch'ing portrayed in the *Shui-hu chuan* (Water
Margin) are a little more outstanding. Moreover, they have no
independent character and no ability to change their fate. The females
in the *Chin p'ing rei* (Golden Lotus) are not worth talking about
because they are dependent on men for everything.

In Hsu Wei's plays, *Ku-lan* is an excellent general who leads male
soldiers through her bravery and intelligence; Huang Ch'ung-ku is also a talented and skillful scholar, who serves in the government
as well as judicial affairs; each has her own will and independent
personality. These extraordinary females are dramatized with vivid
description by Hsu Wei.

The author of "Meng yu", Chang Chung, informs us that Hsu
Wei wrote the four plays as satires, after Hsu was invited by Chang
Chü-cheng 杜正 to serve again in the central government. Chang
Chung thus deduces that the four plays were written during the early
Wen-li (1573-1620) period.

However, Wang Chi-te discloses that the four plays were written
when Hsu Wei was in Shao-hsing. Except for *Yüeh-ning tu Liu Tsui* 明
渡柳翠 which was written during Hsu Wei's early age, the second
was In-lan; the third was Mi Heng, and the fourth was Nü Chuang-yüan. Here we find Wang Chi-te's sequence of the four plays different from many other available editions. Although Wang Chi-te does not point out the exact date of writing, his explanation is different from that of Cheng Chung.

To our best knowledge, Wang Chi-te was the only person who actually saw the composition of these four plays. On the other hand, Cheng Chung's explanation was based on hearsay and his own supposition, since he did not meet Hsü Wei personally. Therefore, we should rely upon Wang Chi-te's explanation in deciding the composition time for the four plays.

The two plays, concerning Hu-lan and Mi Heng, were reflections of the anti-Japanese pirate war and the death of Shen Lien. These two plays were written by Hsü Wei in Shao-hsing. Therefore, the most possible time for their composition was between 1555 and 1557.

Hsü Wei was ill in Shao-hsing between the years 1577 and 1579. The probability of their composition during the early Wan-li period is, therefore, improbable. Judging from the above facts, I suppose that all these four plays were written in the middle of Chia-ching period, from 1552 to 1557.

Therefore, the composition time of the four plays in discussion was before Hsü Wei's service time in Hu Tsung-hsien's office. However, the publication time of these plays was after his entering the service. Shortly after the publication of these four plays, northern drama began to gradually fall to decay. At the same time, k'un-ch'ü and southern drama rose to more popularity. Even Wang Chi-te also changed his new dramatic style to that of southern drama.
In 1582, when Yüan H ung-tao read the four plays, he felt that they were composed by a Yüan writer. This also proves that the four plays were not written during the early Wan-li period. Otherwise, Hsü Wei would have written them in the form of southern drama instead of northern drama, because of the current trend.

The composing time of the Four Shrieks of the Gibbon can, therefore, be decided. It is safe to declare that these four plays were written during the transitional period of the Ming drama, and to be more specific, say, from 1552 to 1557 A.D. The four plays represent Hsü Wei's main works in drama. In the following sections, I shall discuss each separately.

(1) K'üeng ku-lí yü-yang san-mung (The Mad Drummer's Three Songs of Yü-yang). The main theme of this play is derived from a historical story of the late Han period. Mi Heng, who is a scholar at that time, is introduced by K'ung Jung- to Ts'ao Ts'ao , a crafty and cunning man, who is the Prime Minister of the Eastern Han. Because of his unpleasant conversation with Ts'ao Ts'ao, Mi Heng is insultingly appointed to be a drummer by Ts'ao Ts'ao. Using such an opportune time as beating the drum, Mi Heng condemns Ts'ao Ts'ao.

The author of this play, however, does not follow the story as it has appeared in fiction. He dramatizes that the case of Ts'ao Ts'ao and Mi Heng has already been sent to the fifth court of the underworld for final judgment. At that time, Ts'ao Ts'ao is portrayed as having been a prisoner of the underworld, with Mi Heng having been appointed as a literary secretary to the god of heaven. The judge of the underworld wants them to perform this historical event again for his own record.
Hsü Wei tried to express his sympathy toward Mi Heng because he felt sorry for the tragedy of Mi Heng. From the beginning to the end of this play, the main character, Mi Heng, continues his series of blames against the crimes of Ts'ao Ts'ao: first, the wrong in moving Emperor Hsien-ti from the capital and the murder of Empress Fu; second, the murder of Tung Kuei-jen; third, his cheating and pressing upon Emperor Hsien-ti; fourth, his taking over the powers from Yuan Shao and Liu Tsung; fifth, his offending regulations as minister; sixth, his murder of K'ung Jung and Yang Hsien; seventh, his sending Mi Heng to Chiang-hsia; eighth, the trickery in killing people through indirect ways; ninth, the hypocrisy of seeking intelligent officers; tenth, his wrongs in murdering the innocent; last, the wrongs of spoil before his death.

Based on historical facts, the author utilizes his imagination to design this dramatic story. Although there are some elements of unreality, it is really a wonderful work of satire. Actually, the author was trying to criticize the dark, feudal society through his own expression of sympathy toward Mi Heng. In another sense, it is also possible that he utilized this work to satirize the aristocratic society of his own time.

In a poem entitled "Ai Shen ts'en-chün Ch'ing-hsia" 14 Hsü Wei adopts the figure of Mi Heng to compare with Shen Lien and Ts'ao Ts'ao to compare that of Yen Sung. Here it is very clear that the author is hinting that the doing away with Mi Heng by Ts'ao Ts'ao's scheme is the same as Shen Lien's murder by Yen Sung. To our common knowledge, Ts'ao Ts'ao is the typical bad figure in both Chinese
history and literature. Grand Secretary Yen Sung of the Ming dynasty
is also a cruel and merciless person, who had killed innumerable
literary scholars. In this way, Yen Sung is the same person as Ts'ao
Ts'ao. So, although it would appear that the author wrote this play
to denounce Ts'ao Ts'ao, and to praise Mi Heng, what he really
intended was to criticize and blame his contemporary, Grand Secretary,
Yen Sung. The contents of this play, then, have a double meaning
which is easily comprehended.

Throughout the play, we can also find that the author utilizes
Mi Heng to blame Ts'ao Ts'ao eleven times, the utterings from whom are
accompanied by eleven beatings on the drum. Finally, the judge of
the underworld sends Mi Heng to heaven.

The theme of this play is already very popular and influential;
and with the addition of Hsü Wei's fine polish and decoration to its
style and language, the play comes to have an even greater influence
upon its audiences.

From the beginning of the play, Ts'ao Ts'ao is fooled by the
judge. He dares neither to protest nor to obey, nor can he make any
choice between truth and falsehood. As for the part of Mi Heng, we
find his using many words and expressions to reproach Ts'ao Ts'ao.
More interesting is the fact that he not only attacks the Ts'ao Ts'ao,
whom he had seen in the real world, but also attacks the Ts'ao Ts'ao,
whom he had not seen after his own death. Even the former music girls
of Ts'ao Ts'ao are also called upon by the judge to criticize their
former lord. Sung by these music girls is a very interesting, 3-
stanza song. These songs are probably designed by Hsü Wei himself.
Its style is similar to the ch'ieh-chü (seven-word, truncated verse)
of *chu-chih* 竹枝 ("bamboo branch") or *liu-chih* 柳枝 (Willow Branch), with a lot of "padding words" and particles.\(^{15}\)

Throughout the entire play, we find the use of the most popular and colloquial language, which is one of the important features of his style. In addition, the author also utilizes some songs from local music for description which are both humorous and interesting.

In his *Ch'ü p'in* 評論 (Evaluation of the Plays), Ch'i Piao-chia 翟詁 in of the Ming dynasty enumerates that this is the most exciting topic in literature through a thousand years. Ch'i indicates that he does not know how wonderful it could be. However, he can hear a deep sound of "bell and musical stone" when reading this work.\(^{16}\)

When Yuan Hung-tao viewed this play for the first time, he focused much attention to it, all the time wondering if it was a work of a Yuan writer. Yuan Hung-tao states that the language and mood of the play are extremely great and strange. The sad music is accompanied by the sound of drums, producing an excellent effect.\(^{17}\)

Therefore, in many ways the play is a masterpiece. It not only dramatizes the main theme in an elegant style and wonderful plot, but also shows the author's unbending spirit to fight against the traditional society.

The theme of this play is so popular and influential to the art of Chinese drama, that many of the later plays use it as a source. In the *K'un-chü* 渾曲 works, *Ma Ts'ao* 马超 ("Condemning Ts'ao") is a revision based on this original work. In the *K'un-chü* production of the play, Mi Heng beats the hall drum in front of Ts'ao Ts'ao with much hatred and scorn as if he were beating Ts'ao Ts'ao. In addition, the spirit of this play still exists in today's Peking opera entitled
Judging from the above, we know that the original play by Hsü Wei is one of the excellent short-plays in Ming drama. There is also a suggestion that this is the best one of Hsü Wei's four plays. To my mind, however, each of the four is of very high quality; it is really difficult to decide which play is the very best.

Concerning the text of this play, I have compared three editions taken from the Sheng-Ming tsa-chü, Hsü Wen-ch'ang san-chi, and Ku-chin tsa-chü. I have discovered that the best edition among the three is, in my opinion, the Sheng-Ming tsa-chü edition, which has the most clearly printed and punctuated text containing very few errors. The second one would be the Hsü Wen-ch'ang san-chi edition, which is a photo-reprint of a Ming edition. But it has no punctuation, and part of the printing is not clear; there are also a great many words printed in archaic forms, which may create problems for readers. The weakest edition of these three is the one included in the Ku-chin tsa-chü, which is a photo-reprint of a handwritten Ming edition; there are many simplified or wrong characters in the text of this edition.

(2) Yü ch'än-shih Ts'ui hsüang i-meng ("The Jade Monk's Dream in the Ts'ui Village"). In the Yüan-chü hsüan (Anthology of Yuan Drama), we can find the anonymous work entitled Yüeh-ming ho-sheng tu Liu Ts'ui. In this drama, Liu Ts'ui is originally a willow branch planted in the "purifying vase" of Kuan-yin, the Goddess of Mercy. Because of some bad influence she is punished and sent to become a courtesan in Hangchow. The author of this Yuan drama still follows the traditional theme of "golden lad" and "jade maiden." It has nothing to do with hearsay. There is
neither description of Liu Ts'ui's father nor the destruction of Monk Yu-t'ung's religious achievement caused by Hung-lien (Red Lotus) in the drama. The whole story is limited to the saving of Liu Ts'ui by Monk Yüeh-ming.

From T'ien Ju-ch'eng's 趙機 describes Liu Ts'ui's father, Hung-t'ung's 五通, which was published in 1547, we have a story of Liu Ts'ui which agrees in plot with Hsü Wei's play. However, when we trace back to the origin of this play, we learn that the two tales of Red Lotus and Liu Ts'ui are of different origins. The two unrelated tales, then, are combined and reorganized by Hsü Wei into an interesting play.

The story of Red Lotus can be found in Chang Pang-chi's 張邦畿 Shih-erh hsiao-ming lu 侍兒小名錄. It informs us that during the Five Dynasties, a monk named Chih-ts'ung, who has practiced religious discipline for about ten years, follows the Buddhist commandments very strictly. One day he descends the mountain and finds a beautiful woman along the roadside. Deeply moved by her beauty, he becomes involved with her. The next morning they die while bathing together.

Another book entitled Hsiu-ku ch'un-jung, which is supposed to have been written during the Wan-li (1573-1620) period of the Ming dynasty, also has a story of Su Tung-p'o and his Buddhist friend, Fo Yin, meeting in their second life. In this story, it is described that a monk named Wu-chih, who belongs to the Temple of Ching-ts'u-hsiao-kuang, raises an orphan-like baby girl whose name is Red Lotus. When she is sixteen years old, the monk violates her. After this, the monk feels ashamed and commits suicide. The theme of Hung-lien ch'ai, which is
preserved in the Sheng-Ming tse-chü, is very similar to that of Hsü Wei's play. Therefore, we can decide that the story of Red Lotus is very popular during the Ming time.

There are also in the Ming fiction some pieces of work concerning this subject. Nagasawa Kikuya 長澤規矩也 informs us that there is a story entitled "Wu-chieh ch'ên-shih ssu Hung-lien" 五戒禪師私紅蓮 in the incomplete volumes of Ch'ing-p'ing shen-t'ang hua-pen 清平山堂話本, which was published during the Chia-ching (1522-1566) period of the Ming dynasty. In the Ku-chin hsiao-shuo 古今小說, compiled by Feng Meng-lung 馮夢龍, the work entitled "Ming-wu ch'ên-shih kan Wu-chieh" 明悟禪師觀五戒 is also a story about Red Lotus and is similar to the story from Hsiu-ku ch'un-jung. Among the above-mentioned tales of Red Lotus, the one appears in Cheng Pang-chi's Shih-erh hsiao-ming lu, is believed to be the earliest one.

The descriptions of Liu Hsiian-chiao, as Liu Ts'ui's father, appearing in the Hsi-hu vu-lan chih is groundless. As recorded in the T'ung su men 通俗綱, which was compiled by Chai Hao 翟按 of the Ch'ing dynasty, Hsien-ch'un Lin-an chih 咸淳臨安志 (The Local History of Lin-en during the Hsien-ch'un period), there are twenty-three individuals who had been the governor of Lin-en. Their dates of appointment and discharge are listed clearly; and among those twenty-three governors, there is no Liu Hsiian-chiao. If the record is accurate, then the play by Hsü Wei is not based upon historical fact. While Hsü Wei composed this play, he added the character of Liu Hsüan-chiao and combined the two tales of Red Lotus and Liu Ts'ui. In the Second Act of the play, the detailed description of
hand-signaling and gestures during the conversation between Monk Yüeh-
ing and Liu Ts'ui are most skillful and interesting. In Tz'u-yün 陸次雲, author of the Hu-ju tsa-chi 湖壇雜記 recounts that there was a
tale dance of Monk Yüeh-ning and Liu Ts'ui performed regularly in the
Hangchow (i.e., Lin-an) area during each Lantern Festival. This kind
of dancing was popular not only in Hangchow but also in Peking; and in
the Ti-ching ching-an lüeh 帝京景物略, written by Liu T'ung 劉侗
during the late Ming period, we learn that from the Eighth to the Eight-
teenth of January, there was a lantern market at the Tung-hua 東華
gate, and that performers decorated with masks to play the Monk of Great
Head. Fu Yün-tzu傅雲子 states that Monk of Big Bald Head fights
with Liu Ts'ui, wearing their huge masks and dancing together. There are
no singing parts, and it is similar to a pantomime.

Therefore, we can conclude that the special features of the Second
Act of this play are based upon this kind of popular dance regardless
of the fact that the author may have elaborated upon the dance for a
more emphatic description.

In this play, Hsü Wei pictures Yü-t'ung as a monk who lives in the
Shui-yüeh ssu 水月寺 (Water Moon Temple) in Lin-an 隆安. Because he
is not interested in social activities, he does not pay a visit to the
newly-appointed governor, Liu Hsüan-chiao. The governor is angry over
his apparent lack of concern and sends a courtesan, named Red Lotus,
to tempt the monk in order to destroy his religious achievement. One
rainy evening, Red Lotus pretends to be a lady of good family and goes
into the temple to ask for a place to stay overnight. After she is
admitted by the monk, she lies by saying she is sick. The monk then
tries to care for her and asks the methods of remedy, upon which she
replies that only the heat of man's body would cure her. The monk, who
is eager to save her life, does what she has asked. As a result, his religious achievement is destroyed, for by the time the monk discovers this trick, it is already too late for him to stop. After this he feels very ashamed and commits suicide. His soul, however, enters the body of governor Liu Hsüan-chiao's wife. As a result, his spirit reincarnates as the daughter of the governor. She is named Liu Ts'ui 柳翠. After the death of the governor, the Liu family becomes very poor; Liu Ts'ui is forced to become a courtesan. One day while she is with a visitor at the West Lake, she meets Monk Yüeh-ming. They use hand-signaling and gestures to communicate with each other. She tells Monk Yüeh-ming about her former life and that she feels remorseful over the unfortunate fate of her second life. As a result, a thought of sudden enlightenment becomes aroused in her mind; then she decides to escape from this world and return to Buddhism.

The play was written by Hsiu Wei while he stayed at the Ma-nao ssu 玛瑙寺 (Agate Temple) in Hangchow. The structure of it is very strange. In the First Act, the monk is overcome by the courtesan. In the Second Act, however, another courtesan is saved by a monk. The reader detects a distinct contrast. The author gives an indication that evil could overcome right and that right could also destroy evil, whenever a person, who has true emotion and real virtue, will rise to heaven and find the truth.

It is also clear that the author tries to use two absolutely different kinds of people, a monk and a courtesan, to satirize hypocrites and the so-called scholars. Throughout the play, we find a strong affirmation of Buddhist idea of salvation.

A very outstanding point of the play is its special management
of the singing parts. The ending song, of the Second Act, "Shou
chiang-nan" is sung by the main actor and actress line by line,
interchangeably. Of the singing parts, this is a new design which has
never before been tested. Also, the use of language in this play
becomes more free and completely different from the style of King
drama.

Aoki Masaru ranks this play as the best work of Hsü Wei's four
plays since it contains excellent structure. It is also praised by
many other dramatic critics. A book entitled Yuan-shan t'ang ch'ü-p'in
遠山堂曲品, informs us that people who can imitate the style of
Yüan drama are considered the best writers. Hsü Wei does not follow
this. He develops a new style which is more skillful and popular than
works by other people. In the tune pattern entitled Shou chiang-nan,
he writes forty lines of eighty rhymes, just like some Buddhist hymns,
the charm of which may be even compared to the beauty of floating
flowers.

For the purpose of textual study, I have collated the texts of
three different editions drawn from Shen-k'ing tsa-chü, Hsü Wen-ch'ang
san-chi, and Ku-chin tsa-chü. After examining the texts carefully, I
find this conclusion: the best edition is again the one in Shen-k'ing
tsa-chü; the Hsü Wen-ch'ang san-chi play comes next and the poorest is
one taken from Ku-chin tsa-chü. The last version separates the play
into two parts and changes the title into "Yü-t'ung ho-shang ma Hung-
li-en" 玉通和尚篔紅蓮, and "Yüeh-ming ho-shang tu Liu Ts'ui" 月
明和尚渡柳翠.

(3) T'ai Ku-lan t'ie fu ts'ung-ch'ün (The Girl Ku-lan's Enlistment
in Place of Her Father). The story of this play is based upon the
"Ballad of Mu-lan." The author does not follow all the details of the original source. He also makes some revisions in the original story.

In his Yüeh-fu shih-chi, Kuo Mao-ch'ien claims that the name of Mu-lan is unknown as stated in the Ku-chin yüeh-ju. However, the Yü hai by Wang Ying-lin says that the thirteenth ch'üen of Ku-chin yüeh-ju were written by Monk Chih-chiang in the second year of Kuang-ta (568 A.D.). Therefore, we can assume that the date of composition of the "Ballad of Mu-lan" is before the Northern Chou dynasty of the Yü-wen family. It first appears in Ku wen yüen, an old anthology of excellent literature compiled by Chang Ch'iao of the Sung dynasty, and later it is also included in the Yüeh-fu shih-chi. The writing date of this ballad occurred during the Northern Wei dynasty (420-534 A.D.) of the T'ao-pa family. The ballad is a masterpiece of literary work, based upon the background of the long war between Wei and the Jou-jen in the fifth century A.D. In 529 A.D., a general named Ch'ien Ch'ing-chih, from the Liang dynasty, guarded Yuan Hao on his way to Loyang; while in 547 A.D., another general from the Eastern Wei named Hou Ching surrendered to the Liang dynasty with his thirteen "chou" (states) in the Honan area. The "Ballad of Mu-lan" was probably, at this time, originated in the North and taken to the South. The features of a northern folk song are apparent in its contents. But because it deals with the life of a female soldier, it was not readily appreciated by the peace-loving people in the South. Therefore, during the Liang and Ch'ien dynasties, it had no real impact on the Southern literature. During the T'ang dynasty, there appeared a forged work on Mu-lan's story by Wei Yüan-fu. The reason for writing
such a piece was probably to extol the brave deeds of "niang-tzu chün" 娘子軍 ("girls army") led by Princess of Ping-yang 平陽. After the Five Dynasties, the existence of female soldiers was not common. The story of Mu-lan was, therefore, no longer noted by writers.

The "Ballad of Mu-lan" describes Mu-lan, a filial daughter of ancient days as one who, when her father is summoned to serve as a soldier and is unable to obey the order on account of sickness, disguises herself as a man by putting on a soldier's uniform and joins the army for her conscripted father. She is with the army on the north frontier for twelve years. During her military life, she fights many battles and gains great praise for her bravery. Of her companions-at-arms, none suspects her sex; her chastity is preserved. When the war is over, she is decorated by the emperor who appoint her to be Shang-shu lang 尚書郎, an honorary official title in the central government. However, she declines the offer and returns to her parents since her mission of filial piety and patriotism has already been accomplished. She then throws off her soldier's clothes and again wears her female garb.

There are several English translations of this long poem. None of them is outstanding from my point of view; some change the original story and some even misunderstand the original meaning of the ballad.

The poem, referred to as being so widely known, is in ballad form. However, it gives the story of Mu-lan's life with some additional details. Hu Shih 胡適 in his Pei-hua wen-hsüeh shih 白話文學史 states that this folk song is originated from a society of northern people and is refined by writers and scholars of later times.

The author of The Girl Mu-lan's Enlistment in Place of Her Father,
had read this ballad carefully, because most of the incidents in his drama coincide with the contents of the ballad. The only difference is that Hsü Wei changes the original ballad form into a dramatic form, and when he writes it, he revises some parts of the ballad into a play. This will be discussed in a later section.

The opening scenes of this play give an idea of Chinese life in the North. Mù-lan enters, and in the traditional manner, introduces her "unworthy person," her ancestry, and her family which consists of her father, mother, herself, a younger sister (Mù-nan), and a little brother. Seeing the army list of summons, she knows that the emperor is drafting men for the army. There are twelve rolls of such army lists, but the name of her father heads all of them. However, her honored father has no grown son, and she has no elder brother. Therefore, from that time on, she prepares for the saddle-horse to replace her honored father and marches to the battlefield. Because of her excellent fighting skill and bravery, the enemies are completely crushed. She rejects a promotion from the central government and returned to her family. The play ends with her wedding ceremony.

According to some records,\(^{34}\) this play was written after the death of a girl from a Yen family. She was caught by the Japanese pirates and then committed suicide. Hsü Wei wrote a poem and a biography for her, because he hated the cruelty of the Japanese pirates and the impotence of the governmental forces. As a result, he wrote this play which was a reflection of the anti-Japanese spirits after the middle of the Ming period. The author was trying to encourage the people's feeling of fighting against the alien invaders. Although the play is short, it describes the whole story in a complete and coherent manner.
In traditional Yuan drama, only the leading male or the female is permitted to sing, and only one of them in a given play. However, in this play, the singing parts are not monopolized by the leading female. We find some singing parts of the play by other members of the army, including the general, and the two soldiers who are companions to Mu-lan. This is a change of dramatic writing style made by the author.

The author dramatizes the story of Mu-lan. He decides that the time of Mu-lan was in the Northern Wei dynasty of the T'o-pa family, and that her native country was in the Wei prefecture of the Hopei area. These are all very wise decisions. He dramatizes Mu-lan as having been from a general's family, having received a good education, and as having learned many fighting skills. It is, therefore, inevitable that she would choose going to the army as a substitute for her father in order to accomplish her filial piety. In the "Ballad of Mu-lan," she goes to buy soldier's clothes after she has talked with her parents. However, in Hsi Wei's play, after secretly buying the soldier's clothes, and practicing the fighting skills she tells her parents about her decision. Here it shows more clearly her unchanged resolution, brilliant character, and independent attitude. Through the play we can find what a heroine Mu-lan really is.

Deviating from the original ballad, the author of this play has added some new elements to it. There is no Wang Lang in the original ballad. However, in the play, Mu-lan is finally married to Wang Lang who respects her virtue of filial piety. The engagement is arranged by her parents, but later accepted by Mu-lan. Here the author expresses the reasonable management of a marriage; it does not follow the
traditional conceptions of the match of "intelligent male and beautiful female," or romantic experience of love making. The author also hints that Mu-lan could become a good housewife even after long years of military life as he expresses her humble and retiring manner while talking with Wang Lang.

There are also many wonderful narrations throughout the whole play. Let us look at the picture of Mu-lan's father:

Formerly, fixed arrows in bow, pursued great eagles, bored through white wings. Now, leaning on staff, gazes at wild geese flying in blue sky; calls hens; feeds dog; repairs fortresses; tends field; tames falcon, his hands are too week; hits hare, his waist is bending; leads older daughter and younger daughter by the hand; watches them sitting before a mirror while maids comb their hair; opens mouth and laughs with joy; hears now he should draw knife and kill, frowns, brings his brows together, sighs.35

How decorative and vivid it is! The reader may form the images in his mind when reading it. The skill of portrayal is very high.

Another example of the illustration of a vivid scene:

A few miles away from home, she heard the sound of the running water of the Yellow River. The horse's head was bending down while she was moving forward to Lu-hue yen. Her armour was thin, covering with frosty flakes. The emotion of separation was so deep that her face of peach-blossom color become thinner than before, As she thought about the clothes which were sewn by her mother, two strings of pearl-like tear drops fell out from her eyes.36

The delineation of her marching to the frontier is also picturesque:

As we are talking on the way, we do not need to whip the horses; unconsciously, we have crossed thousands of green mountains.

There are also some other interesting passages from the play, such as:

The little bandits in the Black Mountains are certainly superficial. What is the use of hiding yourself away? When the flowers
are blooming, there are lots of butterflies around the branches; when the tree falls down, all the monkeys run away. The more you hide yourself, the more I will find you.  

In the Second Act, it describes that, after twelve years of fighting, they win the victory. While Mu-lan is on her way home, she talks to her companions in some insinuating sentences:

Is there anything strange in me?  
There is one thing which is strange;  
At the temple which is close to my family,  
A mud-made Buddhist God of Diamond will suddenly change his face into Ch'ang Eh.

There are also some perfect couplets in highly polished manner, such as: "One box of flower powder; Two cases of black paint."  

All the above-mentioned examples have shown us, I believe, that the literary value of this play is very high, and that the author has an extraordinary talent and writing skill in dealing with dramatization of many different occasions.

Let us now look at some weak points. Here I would like to bring up two points for discussion. The first in that Mu-lan is described at the beginning as a girl whose feet are bound. However, history tells us that there was no such a custom of foot-binding at the time of Northern Wei. This could be a mistake by Hsü Wei. The second is that, in the entire play, the individual characters of the father, the mother, the younger sister, and the younger brother are not clear. Only the character of Mu-lan is dramatized. Here we find Hsü Wei has actually practiced his theory of "true color" in his own writing. It is possible that the author pays so much attention to the leading female that he forgets to portray other members of the play.

In modern China, the story of Mu-lan is still very popular.
Almost everyone knows her name. Artists paint her portrait; poets refer to her in poems; actors interpret her character on the stage; young revolutionaries take her as a model.

From k'un-ch'i, Peking opera to many different local plays, the theme of Mu-lan has been constantly used. In Peking opera, there is a work entitled "Mu-lan ts'ung-chün" 穆蘭從軍 (Mu-lan Joins the Army) which is one of the most popular, given by the noted actor Mei Lan-fang. In glittering garments, Mei Lan-fang waves a long lance and performs, with his peculiar and incomparable grace, the actions of battle; audiences sway with extreme excitement. Besides, its technique is above Hsü Wei's play. The first dramatization of the story of Mu-lan, is probably Hsü Wei's play.39

The texts from Hsü Wen-ch'eng san-chi and Sheng-Ying tsa-chü editions are almost the same. However, the latter includes punctuation and a better printing than the former. In the Ku-ch'in tsa-chü edition, the title of this play is changed into "Mu-lan nü" 穆蘭女, (The Girl Mu-lan); there are also many simplified and misprinted characters in it.

(4) Mu chuang-yüan ts' u-huang te-feng ("The Woman Chuang-yüan's Rejection of the Female Phoenix and Marriage with the Male Phoenix").40 After completing the above three plays, Hsü Wei decided to write a new play in order to have them coincide with the number "four". His student, Wang Chi-te, suggested the story of "Huang Ch'ung-ku ch'un-t'ao chü" 黃崇嘏當桃記 to him. Hsü Wei then wrote it into a play of five acts.

In the original story, the heroine, Huang Ch'ung-ku, is a very learned and great writer.41 Trying to compete with men, not only in
writing but also in appearance, she likes to put on male clothing so as to appear in public without being stared at as a female. She is a very unconventional person. It is said that she is imprisoned because she is involved in a case of arson. While she is serving her term in prison, she does not reveal her identity. The magistrate, who is also very unconventional, notes her literary talent; and, not knowing that she is a girl, he wants her to be his son-in-law. So, at last she has to disclose that she is the orphan girl of a famous commissioner. Therefore, still in male clothing, she is employed as the magistrate's secretary-general. After some time, she resigns from her post and disappears.

Using this historical anecdote as the basic framework, Hsü Wei writes the play. The complication of the plot is enhanced by sending the unconventional girl in male clothing to the competitive civil service examination and having her come out as the most successful candidate. By employing subtle puns and interjecting clever jokes into the superbly humorous dialogues, Hsü Wei succeeds not only in unfolding a charming story of the stage but also in substantiating his theme that there is no irrefutable reason why a woman is necessarily inferior to a man.

The play describes Huang Ch'ung-ku as a girl from Lin-ch'iung of the Shu state. When she is only twelve years old, her parents die. She escapes with her nurse-servant to a cottage in the mountains. Several years later, she has completed her study, posing as a man, takes the civil service examination. Her nurse-servant named Huang Ku, also disguises as a man, went with her. Later, Huang Ch'ung-ku passes the examination and was offered the title of chuang-vien.
Prime Minister Chou, being very fond of the new chuang-yuen, appoints her to serve in the judicial court of a local government in Ch'eng-tu. During her service, she achieves great deeds of discovering some unjust judicial punishment. At this time, Prime Minister Chou attempts to marry his daughter to Huang Ch'ung-ku because he isn't aware of her disguising herself as a male. Therefore, being forced to reveal the truth of her sex, she is asked by the Prime Minister to marry his son.

The five acts are closely related to dramatizing this interesting story. The First Act illustrates Huang Ch'ung-ku disguising herself as a man in order to participate in the examination. The Second Act portrays Prime Minister Chou proceeding with the examination and deciding on Huang Ch'ung-ku to be the number one of the candidates. The Third Act recounts what Huang Ch'ung-ku does during her service at a local government in Ch'eng-tu; the Fourth Act depicts Prime Minister Chou attempting to marry his daughter to Huang; and the Fifth Act explains how Miss Huang is married to the son of Prime Minister Chou.

In this play, the author tries to point out how women are being treated by society at that time. Although Huang Ch'ung-ku is a very intelligent and brilliant woman, she can only pass the civil service examination and becomes a governmental official because she is disguised as a man. After she is identified as a woman, all her political talent and literary knowledge is useless: the only thing she can do is to get married. Some hint of sorrowful feeling is disclosed in this play, even though it ends with a happy conclusion. In Hsu Wei's days, women were not allowed to compete with men. The main theme or central idea of this play is very similar to the Mu-lan play: all are dealing
with the rights and abilities of women. The difference is that the 
Mu-lan describes a military general and this play portrays a literary 
figure.

The author also has exposed the poor influence and defects of the 
civil service examination system. He criticizes this tradition through 
the dialogue of another candidate, Hu Yen. This represents a 
high skill of satiric literature.

In this play, the author does not talk about the problem of foot-
binding while the lady is preparing to participate in the examination. 
This is an improvement which supersedes the Mu-lan play in this regard.

In general, the form of this play is derived from southern drama. 
During the Ming dynasty, each work of southern drama is usually com-
posed of several dozens of acts. All these long plays do not portray 
any more a complicated story than does this play by Hsü Wei. The 
author has only used five acts to describe the most colorful life and 
unusual experience of the lady. Actually, the author has broken the 
rule of length in southern drama, expressing his extraordinary ability 
of selecting material and composing it into a very compact and in-
teresting plot. Moreover, the language used by Hsü Wei is more 
colloquial and plain than that of the classical plays composed during 
the Ming.

(5) Ko tai hsiao. A play entitled Ko tai hsiao is also 
attributed to Hsü Wei. The subject matter of this play consists of 
elements of comedy and satire. Although the work is attributed to 
Hsü Wei, the name of Ch'ung-ho chü-shih also appears on 
the title page of this play. Even Yüen Hung-tao could not make sure 
who Ch'ung-ho chü-shih was. The play was probably written by Hsü Wei
but he later attributed its authorship to a Taoist hermit because of its unserious contents. However, when Yuan Hung-tao and T'ao Wang-ling published 虢文彰山岐, a complete collection of Hsü Wei's works, this play was not included. Besides, the title of this play is also not included in various bibliographies of dramatic works of the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties.

The play is composed of four acts. Act One narrates a Monk Li who steals a dark-green melon from Monk Chang's melon field, and sends it as a gift to his girl friend, Madam Wu. Act Two illustrates Monk Li who is wearing Monk Chang's hat and who comes to see the Wu family, and meets with Madam Wu's father and husband. Pretending to cure a toothache, Monk Li hurt Wu's leg with fire. In Act Three, the man accuses Monk Li, and uses the hat of Monk Chang as evidence. As a result, Monk Chang is sent to prison by the judge. Act Four delineates the mother of a governor who sets the governmental office on fire and asks people to put out the fire. The people come to help in a hurry by bringing their lamps because it is late then. However, after the fire is extinguished, the governor orders that nobody is ever to use lamps in his house again. Apparently, this is a satirical play which is based on a story from low social class at that time.

According to the research of some modern scholar, this play was written by Hsü Wei during imprisonment. He also gives four reasons to support his supposition. The first reason is that the main theme and thought of this play are very similar to the poems and articles which Hsü Wei wrote while in the prison. Second, the principal problem revealed in the play is not only "Chang's hat worn by Li," 但 also the fact that a governor prohibits his people to
use lamps which coincides with the mood of Hsü Wei while he was in prison. Third, while in prison Hsü Wei was permitted to compose tz'u poems; therefore, he utilized these tz'u poems to compose a play. Fourth, the northern drama fell to decay from the year 1567 to 1573. However, in this play, the author still uses the form of northern drama and the rhyme of Chung-wuán vin-vun 中原音韻. If this play were not written by him in prison, he would not have written this in northern drama; it would have been written in the style of the southern.

The plays written by Hsü Wei have been highly regarded by critics and commentators. In a note on the literary achievements of the Four Shrieks of the Gibbon, Wang Chi-te recounts the four plays of Hsü Wei as some of the most unusual and excellent writings in the world. Among the four plays, Wang believes that the northern Mu-lan and the southern Huang Ch'ung-ku are the most important masterpieces. They may even match the works by the writers of Yuan drama.

T'ang Hsien-tsu, one of the most important playwrights of the late Ming period, says that the Four Shrieks of the Gibbon is the "Flying General" in the field of literary writing. T'ang also informs us that he has tried several times to perform these plays and that he hopes to find Hsü Wei again so that he can borrow his tongue.

Chou Liang-kung, another literary critic, says of Hsü Wei that T'ang Hsien-tsu wants to borrow Hsü Wei's tongue after seeing his Four Shrieks of the Gibbon, and he feels like borrowing the arm of this great playwright.

Ch'en Tung of the Ch'ing dynasty also praises the dramatic achievements of Hsü Wei by stating that the best Ming dramatists should
be T'ang Hsien-tsu and Hsü Wei. Ch'en has also pointed out that although Hsü Wei is occasionally not so accurate in the use of rhymes, his language is forceful and effective.\footnote{50}

In general, Hsü Wei's contribution to the art of Ming and Ch'ing drama is extensive.\footnote{51} The dramatist could not develop his talent and ability because of the social background. Therefore, he utilized play-writing as an outlet for his agony and sorrow. The dialogues in his plays are most vivid, realistic, and spirited. Though not entirely the language of the common people it is a distinctive style achieved by the author. The growth of democratic ideas in China, which opposes feudal tradition, emphasizes the importance of individuality and demands emancipation of women, is very evident in his plays.

However, most of his achievements in play-writing are based on the literary theory of the school of "true color." His four plays have the beauty of high quality and liveliness. The author has certainly made special effort to create these works. However, he did not write many; he may have considered the quality of literature to be more important than its quantity. Although Hsü Wei has written only four (or five) plays during a lifetime, his influence on dramatic art is important and his place in the history of Chinese literature is high.

During the Ch'ing dynasty, Hsü Wei's works were listed under the "banned books." However, his plays and paintings were continuously influential among people. Cheng T'ao 張饕, a writer of the early Ch'ing period, composed \textit{hsü Ssu-sheng yün} 修四聲猿\footnote{52} in imitation of Hsü Wei. During the Ch'ien-lung period (1736-1796), Kuei Fu 桂馥 also entitled his plays \textit{hsu Ssu-sheng yün} 後四聲猿.\footnote{53}
Here we can see how Hsū Wei's original Sen-sheng yüan have great influence on some of the Ch'ing playwrights.
NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE


4 Tsa-chü was brought to full fruition in the North during the Yuan dynasty, began to show signs of aging and decline in the Ming dynasty. See Ling Ching-yen, "Nen-hsi yü Pei-chü chih chiao-hua," 南戏与北剧之变化 in Yen-ching hsueh-pao 27 (1940), pp. 171-197.


7 See EWCSC, p. 133.

8 Shui-ching chu 水经注 written by Li Tao-yuan of the Pei Wei. See "Chiang-shui" 江水 part of the book.

9 The obediences to her father, husband, and son. See "Sang-fu chuen" 蒲信, in Lii-ly 倫禮.

10 See appendix to EWCSC or EWCSC(I), pp. 29-34.


12 See Hsü Lon, Hsü Wen-ch’ang, p. 77. The Ku-lun play dramatizes a female military general. The Mi Heng play recounts the tragic death of Mi Heng whose fate was similar to that of Shen Lien.

13 A list of existing editions is placed in the following paragraph for the benefit of reading and research: (1) Hsü Wen-ch’ang.
san-chi edition of 1600, preserved in Peking Library and National Central Library in Taipei; (2) Ming edition of the Wen-li period, preserved in Peking University Library and Fu Hsi-hua's personal collection; (3) Ssu-sheng yuan edition of the Wen-li period, preserved in Nanking Library and Peking University Library; (4) Ssu-sheng yuan edition of the Chung-chen period, with comments by Ch'eng Tao-jen, preserved in Fu Hsi-hua's personal collection; (5) Ssu-sheng yuan edition of the Chung-chen period, revised by Shen Ching-lin; (6) Sheng-Ming tsa-chü edition; (7) Lo ch'ing chi edition, vol. 26; (8) Huen-hung shih hui-k'o ch'üan-chü edition, vol. 9, reprint of 5; (9) Ku-chin tsa-chü edition, from Ku-k'un hsü-ch'ü ts'ung-k'an, photoreprint of Ming edition. This play is also known to us in many simplified titles, such as Yu-ying san-nung, Yu-ying mung, K'ung ku-li, and so on. Concerning the title of this play in Chinese characters, we find that it was printed as K'ung ku-shih Yu-yeng san-nung in many available editions such as Sheng-Ming tsa-chü, Ku-chin tsa-chü, and Hsi Wu-ch'ang san-chi. However, in other works, such as Chin-chieh k'ao-ch'eng, and Chü-hai tsung-chu t'i-i-yao, the Chinese character "shih" of the title was replaced by "li". Some of the modern scholars on Chinese drama agree with this change because it makes better sense to us.

14 (A) Shen ts'an-chün Ch'ing-hsia, "衰沈參軍青霞 in HWSC (1) p. 246.

15 Many "padding words" like "i-ko ti-tu" "i-ko ch'iao-hsi" "i-ko tung-hung" are found in the original text.

16 See Yüan-shen t'eng Ming ch'ü-chü chü-chü chiao-lu (Shanghai: Sheng-hai ch'u-pen kung-ssu, 1955).


18 The existing editions of this play are listed chronologically: (1) HWSC edition of 1600, preserved in Peking Library and National Central Library in Taipei; (2) Ming edition of the Wen-li period, preserved in Peking University Library and Fu Hsi-hua's personal collection; (3) Ssu-sheng yuan edition of the Wen-li period, preserved in Nanking Library and Peking University Library; (4) Huien yeng k'uan edition of the Wen-li period, preserved in Peking Library; (5) Ssu-sheng yuan edition of the Chung-chen period, with comments by Ch'eng Tao-jen, preserved in Fu Hsi-hua's personal collection; (6) Ssu-sheng yuan edition of the Chung-chen period, revised by Shen Ching-lin; (7) Sheng-Ming tsa-chü edition; (8) Huen-hung shih hui-k'o ch'üan-chü edition, vol. 9, reprint of 5; (9) Ku-chin tsa-chü edition, from Ku-k'un hsü-ch'ü ts'ung-k'an, photoreprint of Ming edition.


20 Ibid., p. 61.

22For more detailed description to these two tales, see (1) Aoki Masaru, "Ryu Sui densetsu ko, 柳翠偉說考 in Shina tungal ku sei jitsu ko, pp. 225-241; (2) Chang Ch'üen-kung, "Hung-lien Lin Ts'eik ku-shih ti chuan-pien," 紅蓮翠翠故事的轉變 in Ling-nan hsüeh pao 5 (1936), pp. 54-74.

23The fifteenth of the first month in the lunar calendar.

24See chüan 2.

25See Nan-chin tsa-chih 南金雜誌 10. Special issue on drama.

26See Aoki Masaru, Chung-kuo chin-shih hsi-ch'ü shih, pp. 184-186.

27See Ch'iü-lü.


30A northern barbarian tribe founded by Ch'e Lu-hui 南夷會.

31See Hsin T'ien shu 新唐書, chüen 83.


The existing editions of this play are listed: (1) HNCSC edition of 1600, preserved in Peking Library and National Central Library in Taipei; (2) Ming edition of the Wan-li period, preserved in Peking University Library and Fu Hsi-hua's personal collection; (3) Ssu-sheng yuan edition of Wan-li period, preserved in Nan-king Library and Peking University Library; (4) Ssu-sheng yuan edition of the Ch'ung-chen period, with comments by Ch'eng Tao-jen, preserved in Fu Hsi-hua's personal collection; (5) Ssu-sheng yuan edition of Ch'ung-chen period, revised by Shen Ching-lin, preserved in Fu Hsi-hua's personal collection; (6) Sheng-Ming tsa-chü edition, vol. 8; (7) Kuen-hung shih hui-k'o ch'uan-chi edition, vol. 9 reprint of 4; (8) Ku-chin tsa-chü edition, from Ku-pen hsi-chü t'sung-k'üan, photoreprint of Ming edition.

This was an honorary title of the civil service examination in the highest level.

Such as the 36 acts of Sha-kou chi 賭狗記, 32 acts of Pai-tu chi 向月記, 40 acts Pai-nu-ch'ing 拜月亭, 48 acts of Ch'ing-ch'ai chi 劉鈕記, 55 acts of Hu-tan t'ing 拜月亭, 53 acts of Tzu-ch'ai chi 紫鈕記, 30 acts of Han-tan chi 劉鈕記, 44 acts of Nan-k'o chi 南柯記, and 41 acts of Ming-feng chi 明鳳記.

The existing editions of this play are as follows: Ming-yeh shan-feng manuscript edition of the Tao-kuang (1821-1850) edition, preserved in Provincial Library of Kiang-su; Photoreprint of the above manuscript made by Kuo-hsüeh t'u-shu-k'uan in 1931. Library of Congress has a copy of this; She-mo-t'a shih chu-ts'ung 奉摩他室曲叢 edition, edited by Wu Lei.

See Shih-liu kuo ch'ur-ch'iu 十六國春秋 and "Huang Ch'ung-ku ch'un-t'ao chi," 習善論養 桃記.

See Hsiu Lun, Hsi Wen-ch'ang, pp. 124-125.


48 See the preface to Mu-ten t'ing 牡丹亭, Ch'ing-hui ko edition.

49 Postscript of Lai ku t'ang shu-hua 賴古堂書畫.

50 See Kuan-lung wu-chung ou-i pien 關龍唔中偶憶編.

51 Cheng Chen-to Ch'a-t'u pen Chung-kuo wen-hsüeh shih (Peking: Tso-chia ch'u-pan she, 1957), pp. 897-901.

52 It was written during the early Ch'ing period, in Ch'ing-jen tsa-chü 请人雜劇 (Hong Kong: Lung Men Press, 1969), pp. 173-196.

53 It was written during the Ch'ien-lung period, in Ch'ing-jen tsa-chü, pp. 199-219.
HSÜ WEI AS AN ESSAYIST

Hsü Wei is noted for his excellent works in prose. He has been regarded as one of the most outstanding and unconventional prose writers during the transitional period of the Ming dynasty. A historical survey of the appraisals and criticisms of his prose works will help us to understand the qualities which made him a great essayist.

Yüen Hung-teo (1568-1610), the famed late Ming non-conformist littérature and an admirer of Hsü Wei's literary works, describes Hsü Wei's prose as being unconventional and similar to that of Han Yu (768-824) and Tseng Kung (1019-1083). He believes that although Hsü Wei's prose is stylistically different from that of his contemporaries, it would be recognized as excellent literature after a hundred years.

In his preface to Hsü Wei's collected works, T'ao Wang-ling states that Hsü Wei's prose style is similar to that of the T'ang and Sung masters, and it is well structured. But the major literary trend in Hsü Wei's time centered on the restoration of the ku-wen styles of the Ch'in and Han times. Thus, his prose works were neglected in contemporary literary circles. In addition, due to his limited contact with the conservative literary circles, his name was not well known during his lifetime. Moreover, T'ao tells us that at a banquet Hu Tsung-hsien showed Mao K'un an essay written by Hsü Wei, but Mao assumed it was the work of T'eng Shun-chih, manifesting that he was genuinely impressed.
Yü Ch'ün-hsü in his preface to another edition of Hsü Wei's collected works lists Hsü Wei, Wang Shih-chen (1526-1590), T'ang Hsien-tsu (1550-1617) and Yuan Hung-tao (1568-1610) as the four most important writers of the Ming dynasty, and regards Hsü Wei to be the best among the four. Similarly, Huang Ju-heng tells us that Hsü Wei's prose has some unique features and powerful qualities without too much embellishment.

Chang Ju-lin, compiler of some miscellaneous works by Hsü Wei, thinks that Yuan Hung-tao's appreciation and high evaluation of Hsü Wei's prose and poetry has secured a position for Hsü Wei as a great writer.

Lu Yun-lung, who compiled the most famous anthology of Hsü Wei's informal essays, considers Hsü Wei an excellent writer in this special literary genre. In his opinion, the major writers of informal essays during the late Ming and early Ch'ing were under the strong influence of Hsü Wei.

Judging from these comments, we certainly cannot doubt Hsü Wei's qualifications as a great prose writer. His literary merit, however, was for a while intentionally neglected for political reasons. Some of his literary works were proscribed for their anti-Manchu sentiments. In the Hsing-wen-tsei, a very important anthology of selected Ming prose by the Ch'ing scholar Hsüeh Hsi, we cannot find even a single essay by Hsü Wei. This was probably owing to political considerations. In addition, the compiler of the anthology believed that prose literature should carry the "tao," or the moral principle. Because of this rigid orthodox attitude, he naturally could not have appreciated Hsü Wei's unconventional works.
The *Ssu-k'u ch'ien-chu tsung-tzu t'ie-yao* 四庫全書總目提要 (*Summary of the Complete Catalog of the Books of Four Treasuries*)

which was compiled during the early Ch'ing, favorably comments upon Hsü Wei's prose. It informs us that Hsü Wei's prose has originated from that of Su Shih and was highly thought of by T'ang Shun-chih and Mao K'un.\(^\text{14}\)

In the *Ming shih chi shih* 明詩紀 ("Record of Events in Ming Poetry"), which was compiled by Ch'en T'ien 陈田 in late Ch'ing, Hsü Wei is described as a great prose writer whose style is unique and without adornment. Ch'en feels that it is quite similar to the *ku-wen* style of the T'ang-Sung prose writers.\(^\text{15}\)

A new collection of Hsü Wei's miscellaneous works was published in 1925.\(^\text{16}\) In his preface to this book, Ch'en Shih-fan 陈石範 tells us that the biographies, records of events, and letters written by Hsü Wei show very subtle, profound, and unconventional qualities. Although he did not attain popularity during his lifetime, Hsü Wei's name has certainly become immortal after his death.\(^\text{17}\) Shen Te-shou, editor of the book, also agrees that Hsü Wei's prose is refined and unconventional.\(^\text{18}\)

Aoki Hasaru, the famous Japanese sinologist, feels that Hsü Wei's prose style is quite similar to that of T'ang Shun-chih.\(^\text{19}\) This is not surprising since the friendship between these two people was partly based upon their literary affinity.

Li Sung 李松, a modern Chinese scholar, believes that Hsü Wei's prose is strongly influenced by T'ang Shun-chih. He has also commented that Hsü Wei's prose is noted for its unrestrained and natural manner, and for its patriotism and anti-Japanese sentiment.\(^\text{20}\)
Cheng Chen-to, in his Chung-luo wen-hscih shih (History of Chinese Literature), regards Hsü Wei, Li Chih, and T'ang Hsien-tsê as the three forerunners of the Kung-an school. The style of their prose is quite different from that of their contemporary writers. He thinks that Hsü Wei's prose has an "unconventional atmosphere."  

As prose writer, Hsü Wei is also noted as the forerunner and leader of the progressive trend against what the Seven Masters had advocated. In order to understand Hsü Wei's prose more clearly, I think it is necessary to examine his educational background and to trace the origin of his literary style.

Hsü Wei has casually stated that he imitated the classical prose writings during his youth. He also confessed that his prose writing drew upon the Six Classics, the works of pre-Ch'in philosophers and historians, and the works of Chuang Tzu, Chia Yi, Han Yu, and Su Shih. He has also pointed out that in order to form one's own style one has to borrow some essential elements from various writers.

P'an K'o-ching, Hsü Wei's father-in-law, taught him the composition of parallel prose and official letter. Hsü Wei's admiration for Chia Yi's and Su Shih's prose originated from his reading the memorials and proposals on government policies which they had written. These writings provided the foundation for Hsü Wei's excellent parallel prose.

From the study of Hsü Wei's biography, we know that Hsü Wei studied for more than ten years under Chi Pen, his most respected teacher. Chi Pen was interested in the use of practical knowledge to
solve real social and political problems. Under the strong influence of Chi Pen, Hsü Wei tended to be realistic in his philosophy of life and this is reflected in his prose writings.

Both Chuang Tzu and Chia Yi exerted great impact upon the prose style of Hsü Wei. From Chuang Tzu, Hsü Wei learned the use of allusion, clever devices and the esthetics of the language. But while Chuang Tzu was noted for his pessimistic and other-worldly philosophy, Hsü Wei, as expressed in his prose, was much more realistic and positive. He wanted to improve the entire nation and society. This was quite similar to the character of Chia Yi, who was formerly noted as a "kuo shih" ("scholar of national stature"). In Hsü Wei's writings concerning national affairs, corruption in the government and decay of society, we may discover that Hsü Wei believed that literature should give a truthful representation of the world, that it should observe meticulously contemporary life and customs and analyze them carefully.

Chuang Tzu and Chia Yi had diametrically opposite philosophical outlooks and styles. There had been very few writers in Chinese literary history who was able to unify the styles of these two completely different writers. Hsü Wei, however, was very successful in achieving this goal. His prose contains both abstract and realistic, pessimistic and optimistic elements.

In addition to the influences of Chuang Tzu and Chia Yi, Hsü Wei learned from Han Yu to be forceful. He also learned from Su Shih how to write clear and moving prose. According to Liu Hsi-tsaï, the prose style of Su Shih had also been influenced by Chia Yi and Chuang Tzu. Thus one may safely say that Hsü Wei, to a certain
extent, followed Su Shih's steps in prose writing.

Liu Hsi-tsai described Su Shih's prose style as "direct and outspoken" with a solid foundation. By using many unusual expressions, Su Shih developed an obscure and mysterious style. He controlled the theme in his writing just like a decisive and experienced captain controls his boat. These comments concerning Su Shih's prose may equally well be applied to Hsi Wei, because of the similarity of their styles.

Hsi Wei's prose was written in various traditional forms. We will first discuss the major literary forms of his prose and give some examples under each form.

(1) Piao 飄 - memorials to the throne. The word piao means to "bring out into the open" an obscure matter. It could include memorials on matters ranging from the offering of congratulations to declining an appointment. The best known works in this form are the "Dedicatory Memorial on Presenting the White Deer," and the "Dedicatory Memorials on Presenting the White Tortoise and the Divine Fungus." All of these, except one, were written by Hsi Wei on behalf of such contemporaries as General Hu Tsung-hsien and other high-ranking officials.

(2) Shu 劍 - memorialized petitions to the throne, or itemized reports. There is only one work in existence in this form, and it is a petition for the restoration of Wang Yang-ming's honorary title. It also was written on behalf of someone else and was not actually presented to the throne.

(3) Ch'i 雜 - letters stating something specific in parallel prose form. In early times, ch'i referred to a letter sent by one
person to another who was of the same rank. Later, while retaining the original meaning the word ch'i was also used to denote communications to superiors. Many of Hsü Wei's works in this category were written on behalf of other people. His letters to a Mr. Yen and Chu Nan-ming are the best examples.

(4) Shu 鬥 - formal letters, or letters in the form of an essay. Hsü Wei wrote many letters to his teachers, friends, and disciples. Most of these letters provide important information for the study of Hsü Wei's biography. His literary theory was also expressed quite often in these letters. The letters written to his teachers Chi Pen and Wang Chi also fall into this category.

(5) Lune 樂 - discussions, disquisitions, discourses, or articles. In seven articles on the character chung 中 ("middle"), Hsü Wei discussed his own philosophy in great detail. Another twenty articles were originally included in the K'uai-chi hsien-chih ("Local History of the K'uai-chi District") in which Hsü Wei discussed many different aspects of the place, such as its geography, custom, products, population, irrigation, historical sites, and so on. Another interesting example is the one on how to control one's mind and spirit, in which Hsü Wei discussed the ways of self-cultivation.

(6) Ts'ei 地 - proposals on government politics. In many such works, Hsü Wei displayed his profound knowledge in government and military affairs. Some of his suggestions and ideas were accepted by General Hu Tsung-hsien and were carried out.

(7) Hsü 調 - essays presented to someone on a special occasion, such as one's birthday, or for a special purpose, such as publication of a book. In the latter case, it may be rendered as a "preface."
Its purpose was to explain the reason for writing a book, to excuse its defects or to praise its merits, and to set forth the writer's views on the theme of the book or other matters. It could also be a composition presented at parting. Hsu Wei wrote many such essays to his teachers, relatives, friends, and disciples. These are also valuable materials for the study of Hsu Wei's life and his literary theory. Two prefaces to the anthology of his own collected works and the prefaces written for the publication of his friends are especially important.43

(8) Pa сп colophons.44 Almost in all cases, these writings were appended to books, essays, and rubbing of inscriptions. Hsu Wei composed these for his friends. They were usually short, and some of them were written on the painting or calligraphy by other people, with emphasis on the aspect of art.45

(9) Tsan сп colophons, panegyrics, or eulogies.46 These may be composed in verse or prose and may commend the merit or quality of human beings or gods which are unusual or interesting. A limited number of the works in this category were short biographies of his friends and students. These materials are good reference on the study of Hsu Wei's life and the people associated with him. The most interesting among these is, of course, his "Colophon to my Self-portrait."47

(10) King сп inscriptions.48 This can be further divided into the memorial inscriptions and the admonitory inscriptions. The former were composed in prose or in verse, often with lines of irregular length. The latter were carved or written on different objects, such as doors, walls, furniture, clothing, weapons, and so on. They vary in length from a few words to a paragraph. Hsu Wei's better works
under this form belong to the latter category. 49

(11) Chi 論 - accounts on events and special occasions. 50 Many of
the so-called "accounts" are actually "discussions", owing to the inser-
tion of the author's views and opinions. Of these, the travelogs and
some notes on events, places or people are good specimens of Hsü Wei's
literary skills. 51

(12) Pei 墓 - epitaphs with versified eulogy. 52 About half of
the works in this form were composed by Hsü Wei on behalf of other
people. The most famous one is the inscription of the tablet erected
at the temple of his teacher, Chi Pen. 53

(13) Chuan 传 - unofficial biographies or minor biographies. 54
These may be either in addition to or as an alternative to an official
biography, but they are never included in the official histories. Hsü
Wei composed many works in this form to remember his deceased associates.
Some works are valuable source material, besides their value in
literature. The biographies written for Shen Lien and the mother of
a Mr. Po are good specimens in this category. 55

(14) Hu chih ming 葬誌铭 - tomb inscriptions. 56 In early times,
written evidence of ownership was buried in the grave, and the use of
"epitaph" developed out of this practice. 57 Most of the works in this
form contain important information concerning Hsü Wei's relatives,
such as his mother, two brothers, his wife lady P'an, and his father-in-law, Mr. P'an, 58 and his family affairs. Two other works, composed
for his associates, are noted for their elegant style. 59

(15) Hsing-chuang 行状 - accounts of conduct. 60 These are
detailed biographical notes on some deceased eminent individuals and
were either to be submitted to the official historians or composed on
behalf of the family. Hsü Wei composed them all in prose form without any verified eulogy. Only two works are in existence, the one composed for his teacher Chi Pen and the one for Minister Lâ of the Board of Public Works. 61

(16) Chi-wen 祭文 - sacrificial eulogies. 62 They are mostly composed in prose, but occasionally in antithetical style or in verse. The main function was to exorcise demons, to solicit blessings, and to express sympathy on the occasion of a death. The intercession is usually appended to an account of the circumstances with which it is connected. Most of the works in this category were composed by Hsü Wei at the request of other people. The distinguished pieces under this form are those composed for his mother, his teacher Chi Pen, and General Hu Tsung-hsien. 63

(17) Tsa-chu 杂著 and Tsa-chi 杂记 - miscellaneous writings or notes. 64 These are essays on various themes. These miscellaneous works are compiled together because they do not fall into any specific category.

(18) Shuo 説 - expositions. 65 It can also be an essay, a monograph, or a talk in the first person, or the answer to a question. In this category there is only one piece of work existing, and it deals with the theme of "stupidity." 66

(19) Shou-wen 寿文 - a composition embodying birthday congratulations. 67 It could be in prose or in parallel prose style. Most of these works were written for other people and intended as a gift. The best examples are those composed for General Hu Tsung-hsien, Hu's mother, and General Wu's mother. 68
(20) Pien - arguments or apodictic treatises.69 Only one article which deals with the story of two heroes is in existence.70

(21) Ch'ih-tu - correspondences.71 Hsü Wei wrote many letters of this nature with a great variety of titles.72 As compared with the category shu, this type of letters tends to be less formal.

(22) Fu - rhyme-prose, metrical, rhyming compositions.73 These are something between prose and poetry, and are used for narrative purposes, especially in describing a certain object. Compositions, which were written about such subjects as cranes, peonies, and parrots, are among the best works in this category.74

From the above, it may be stated that Hsü Wei wrote in almost all forms of traditional Chinese prose. Hsü Wei's prose writings also showed many special features as a result of his unusual experiences and his unconventional literary theory.

As a man of letters, Hsü Wei had served in the capacity of a private secretary in the office of General Hu Tsung-hsien. Later on, he also worked for such famous military generals as Wu Tui, Li Ju-sung, and Li Ch'un-fang. Thus, he had opportunities of gaining a knowledge of many important national and military affairs. He wrote many articles on military strategy, economic policy, and the wars against Japanese pirates.75 His essays on military strategy and tactics show an untrained strength and forcefulness. Looking at these works, we can see that Hsü Wei was not only a great writer but also a scholar well versed in national affairs.

A rather unusual feature concerning Hsü Wei's prose is that many such works including memorials, reports, and letters were written by him on behalf of other people.76 These were mostly parallel prose and
were not originally intended for publication. Generals Hu Tsung-hsien and Li Ch'um-fang hired Hsü Wei as a secretary on account of his talent in writing such formal essays. Hsü Wei resigned from Hu and Li's offices, and this ended his career in the officialdom. His early resignation was fortunate, however, in that he could thus reduce the quantity of such stereotyped writings. The most distinct defect of such writings is that we cannot find the author's personality in them. From the viewpoint of literary history, however, we may still regard Hsü Wei as one of the major writers of parallel prose during the Ming times because of his unconventional style.

The art of parallel prose reached a plateau during the Sung times and gradually declined afterwards. It has been pointed out that the three unique features of Sung parallel prose are as follows:

(1) It imitated the literary air and polished style of classical prose so as to make it more balanced and complicated.

(2) It used more long couplets to make it more effective.

(3) It combined proverbs, slang expressions and familiar stories in order to make the writings more forceful and easy to understand.

Hsü Wei's outstanding works in parallel prose also seem to exhibit these three features. A memorial composed by Hsü Wei on behalf of Hu Tsung-hsien may be regarded as an example of first-class parallel prose during the Ming dynasty. The impartial, honest, and upright personality of Hu Tsung-hsien was expressed without any exaggeration. On the other hand, the virtue of the Ming emperor was compared with the "brightness of the sun and the moon." The emperor, of course, was much impressed and delighted by this memorial.

In another memorial composed for Hu Tsung-hsien, Hsü Wei again
expressed the humble, sincere, courageous, and confident personality of General Hu Tsung-hsien in a rather complex but stimulating way. In this memorial, the Japanese pirates were compared as "giant whale," and Hu Tsung-hsien pledged that he would try to capture them in order to achieve a lasting peace.

As with his parallel prose, Hsü Wei also composed a great deal of classical prose to entertain his friends or associates. Each work has its independent background and interesting style. His philosophy on life and his way of thinking are also expressed vividly. In two colophons, one to Shen Chou's painting, and another to Chu Yün-ming's calligraphy, Hsü Wei not only commented on their art, but showed his erudition and skill in making accurate appraisals.

A strange sacrificial eulogy was composed by Hsü Wei for an unidentified person. It described clearly and directly the emotion and feelings of the son towards his father. The literary style is rather unusual because of the mixed use of some vernacular expressions and classical allusions which cause much ambiguity, making a translation of it a virtual impossibility.

Another famous sacrificial eulogy was written for Chi Pen, the great disciple of Wang Yang-ming, and Hsü Wei's mentor. With only 420 characters he discussed Chi Pen's writing, life experience, influence, and the establishment of the worshipping temple. Almost everything related to Chi Pen is covered. Reasoning and narration, and the lyrical elements are all merged together in this single piece. In addition, it is also a masterpiece in which the essence of classical prose, parallel prose and poetry are integrated. It is, therefore, elegant, succinct, sincere, and multi-facet. The style is quite
similar to the sacrificial eulogy for Ou-yang Hsiu composed by Wang An-shih.

In the two compositions Hsü Wei presented to Li Ch'eng-liang and Li Ju-sung, we find descriptions of the loyalty, filial piety, bravery, and frugality of the Li family. Both men were talented military generals who contributed much to the national defense of the Ming empire. While their deeds and achievements were duly recorded in the Ming shih, their family life and educational experiences were described vividly in these two short articles by Hsü Wei.

From a literary point of view, the most successful works in Hsü Wei's prose are the informal essays. He is regarded as the foremost writer of the informal essay during the late Ming period. He has not only composed many valuable works but also influenced many later writers, such as Cheng Tai and Yuan Hung-tao. His masterpieces have been included in various anthologies of late Ming informal essays.

A few of Hsü Wei's better informal essays are worth noting. "Tzu-wei mu chih ming 自為墓誌銘" ("The Self-compiled Epitaph") is an excellent example, because the style is rather peculiar and unconventional giving the reader an impression which cannot be described. "Chi meng 記夢" ("Notes on Dreams") is noted for its strange quality and imagination. "Chieh-chu lou chi 借竹樓記" ("Notes on the Borrowing-bamboo Pavilion"), "Ch'iu-tzu t'ang chi 齊堂記" ("Notes on Ch'iu-tzu Hall"), "Huoj-jen t'ang chi 誓然堂記" ("Notes on Wide-open Hall"), and "Pan-Ch'êns an chi 半禪庵記" ("Record of the Half-Ch'êns Temple") are all excellent descriptive informal essays.

Another kind of informal essay which Hsü Wei was versed in was the preface or epilogue, such as "Ch'ao hsiao chi tzu-hsū 抄小集"
Hsü Wei expressed his philosophy and literary theory in a very artistic and elegant manner. In addition, Hsü Wei also was good at writing letters of refined quality. For example, the letters addressed to Hsü Pei-k'ou, Chang T'ai-shih, Mr. Ho, Chi Yu, Liu Sheng, Ma Ts'e-chih, Mei Ch'un, and two painters are all written in excellent form and dealt with interesting subject matters. An anthology of short letters was compiled by Hsü Wei. In this anthology we find many excellent short letters on a variety of subjects. This anthology is believed to have been compiled by Hsü Wei for the general public as a guide to letter writing.

In order to understand Hsü Wei's prose writings further, I have selected three examples which may show the style of Hsü Wei. The first of these is a humorous and interesting informal essay entitled "Colophon to my Self-portrait." Here he borrowed the anecdote of "butterfly" from the Chuang Tzu and provided this piece with much sense of humor.

The second work is a natural, moving, and succinct essay entitled "Record of the Trip to Wu-hsieh" written in a very colloquial style. This is a travelog about his pleasant trip to the famous scenic spot, Wu-hsieh, in 1574. The author used a very easy and clear language describing the interesting experiences and the wonderful scenes he had seen.

The last example is an elegant and dignified work with spacious
qualities. It has a powerful and influential atmosphere which is similar to the styles of Ou-yang Hsiau and Sung Lien. The article is entitled "An Account of the Pavilion of Ocean Pacification." In the essay Hsü Wei explained in great detail about the historical background, the practical use, and the re-construction of this dignified building. It may be pointed out that, although this piece was written on behalf of General Hu Tsung-hsien, one cannot fail but notice the elegance, eloquence, and patriotic sentiment contained therein.

From the viewpoint of literary skill, Hsü Wei's prose is clear, readable, and well structured. Occasionally, it lacks strength, moving spirit, and humorous elements, although we do find a few exceptions. These weaknesses are partially due to the fact that Hsü Wei was influenced by Chuang Tzu and Su Shih as well as by Chia Yi and Han Yu. To a certain extent, the realistic features of Chia and Han's literary styles have curbed the development of humor and interest in Hsü Wei's prose.

From the viewpoint of literary history, Hsü Wei was certainly a very important prose writer. He belonged to the new and progressive school of prose writing in late Ming times. In addition, he also influenced the great writers of informal essays, such as Chang Tai and the Kung-en and Ching-ling masters. Even the talented writers of the early Ch'ing, such as Chin Jen-jui 金人瑞, Yuan Wei 袁枚, and Cheng Hsieh 沈德潛 were under the strong influence of Hsü Wei's styles.

Finally, let us examine Hsü Wei's alleged authorship of some works which are merely connected with prose peripherally. Hsü Wei is noted for his association with two Ming novels which were written in prose style, namely the Chin p'ing mei (The Golden Lotus) and Huang Ming ying
But since all theories regarding Hsü Wei's authorship of these two novels are still far from established, I do not attempt to discuss this aspect in detail.

When talking about the authorship of The Golden Lotus, Arthur Waley says:

... The writer who may be taken as the leader of this actual school at the end of the sixteenth century is Hsü Wei (1520, i.e., 1521-93), who was not only an important political figure, but is also known as the author of several popular plays.... Now we have already seen that at the beginning of the seventeenth century the only discoverable complete manuscript of the Chin P'ing Mei was procured from the Hsü family. This is a fact worth remembering. We have seen, too, that at the beginning of its career the book was regarded as the work of a well known scholar of the Chia-ch'ing period. Such a description is quite applicable to Hsü Wei.... Of possible candidates for the authorship of the Chin P'ing Mei I personally regard Hsü Wei as the strongest. It would certainly be worthwhile comparing the lyrics in his plays with the poems scattered about through Chin P'ing Mei and seeing whether there are any correspondences.

The argument seems laudable. It is unfortunate, however, that Waley did not finish what he has proposed in order to prove his hypothesis.

C. T. Hsia is uncertain about Waley's opinion and says "... A noted playwright, Hsü Wei would have been familiar with the type of popular songs introduced in Chin P'ing Mei, though one may question whether his eccentric genius could have fathered a book of such low culture and ordinary mentality." In addition, in view of the peculiar dialect of the text, it seems most probable that this novel was written by a native from the Shantung area.
Chekiang, it is unlikely that Hsü Wei would have been able to use the Shantung dialect in his writing.

The author of The Romance of the Ming Dynasty Heroes, according to Lu Hsün's A Brief History of Chinese Fiction was Kuo Hsün 郭璞 106

* * * This work came from Kuo Hsün's family and describes the generals who helped to found the Ming dynasty, paying special attention to the achievement of Kuo Ying 郭英 who was Kuo Hsün's ancestor. 106

His basic argument is apparently based upon the accounts given by two collections of late Ming anecdotes. 107 And since the dependability of these two Ming sources is rather doubtful, Lu Hsün's hypothesis is, therefore, far from reliable.

Aoki Masaru believed The Romance of the Ming Dynasty Heroes was written by Hsü Wei. 108 His main evidence is Hsü Ju-han's 徐如翰 preface to the book which was published in 1616 A.D. As we know Hsü Wei died in 1593 A.D.; thus the novel was published twenty-three years after his death. We can find virtually no evidence from Hsü Wei's biography and literary works which would prove Aoki's theory. I have examined six different Ming and Ch'ing editions of this novel; 109 and although they are all noted as having been compiled or written by Hsü Wei, none of them was published before the year of 1616 A.D. It is very possible that someone during the late Ming wrote this novel and attributed its authorship to Hsü Wei in order to take advantage of his fame in prose writing and popular literature. 110 We could, therefore, draw the conclusion that this novel was written neither by Kuo Hsün nor by Hsü Wei, but by an author whose name is not yet known to us.111
NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

1 A historical survey of the Ming prose shows Hsü Wei is a progressive essayist. His influence upon late Ming writers was quite strong.

2 "Hsü Wen-ch'ang chuan" 徐文長傳, in HUCSC(I), p. 21.


4 "Hsü Wen-ch'ang chuan," ibid.


7 "Hsü Wen-ch'ang wen-chi hsü," ibid.

8 "K'o Hsü Wen-ch'ang i-shu hsü" 錄徐文長佚書序, in HUCIK, pp. 1-3.

9 Ibid., p. 1.

10 See his preface to the Hsü Wen-ch'ang hsien-sheng hshao-p'lin (Ming edition).

11 In Yün-lung's preface to Hsü Wen-ch'ang hsien-sheng hshao-p'lin 徐文長先生小品.


13 "Ming wen tsei hsü" 明文在序, in Ming wen tsei 明文在 , (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1936), pp. 3-5.

14 Chüan 178; Pieh-chi lei ts'um-mu 別集類存目 5.

15 Ming shih chi shih 明詩紀事 (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1936), Chüan 17.

16 "Hsü Wen-ch'ang i-ts'ao 徐文長佚草, 1926 edition.

17 "Hsü Wen-ch'ang i-ts'ao hsü" 徐文長佚草序 A.

18 "Hsü Wen-ch'ang i-ts'ao hsü" B.
19
Jo Sei-tô no gei jutsu

20
Hsu Wei sheng-p'ing yù ch'i hui-hua ch'ang-chin

21
Chung-kuo wen-hsing shih

22
The later Seven-masters are Li P'an-lung, Wang Shih-chen, Hsieh Chen, Tsang Ch'en, Liang Yu-yü, and Wu Kuo-lun.

23
Tzu-wei mu chih ming

24
Shu T'ien-sheng shih-wen hou

25
HUCSC, p. 267.

26

27
Ibid., pp. 16b-17a.

28
HUCSC(III), pp. 955-980; HUCLX, pp. 159-161.

29
HUCSC(III), p. 957.

30
Tai chin pai kuei ling chih piao

31
HUCSC(III), pp. 976-980.

32
HUCSC(III), pp. 981-990.

33
Wei ch'ing fu Hsin-chien po feng-chüeh piao

34
HUCSC(III), pp. 991-1031; HUCLX, pp. 161-166.

35
Shang Yen kung

36
HUCSC(III), pp. 1019-1116.

37
Feng shih Ch'i hsien-sheng shu

38


52. *F.JSCG* (IV), pp. 1471-1493; *F.JHSK*, pp. 303-306.


52. "Ti mu Miao yi jen mu chih ming" 嫡母苗宜人墓誌銘，
in *H.CSC (IV)*, p. 1526; "Po hsing mu chih ming" 伯兄墓誌銘，*ibid.*, p. 1531; "Ching hsing mu chih ming" 仲兄墓誌銘，*ibid.*, p. 1533;
"Wang ch'i Fan mu chih ming" 亡妻潘基誌銘，*ibid.*, p. 1555; "Plan kung mu chih ming" 萬公墓誌銘，*ibid.*, p. 1543.

59. "Shang Wu-chi mu chih ming" 常無極墓誌銘，*H.CSC*, p. 331;
"Xao ch'un mu chih ming" 高君墓誌銘，in *H.CSC (IV)*, p. 1540.


63. "Kan mang chi ti mu wen" 感夢祭嫡母文，in *H.CSC (IV)*, p. 1608; "Chi hsien-sheng ju hsing-hsien ts'u chi-wan" 孝生生入鄉
誌祠祭文，*ibid.*, p. 1616; "Chi Shao-pao kung wen" 稱少保公文，
*ibid.*, p. 1610.

64. *H.CSC (IV)*, pp. 1633-1696; *H.CIK*, pp. 355-374.


68. "Shao-pao kung wu-shih shou p'ien" 少保公五十壽篇，in *H.CIK*, p. 243; "Feng shou Shao-pao kung mu fu jen hsü" 奉壽少保公
母夫人序，*ibid.*, p. 227; "Tseng Ku T'ung-fu mu fu jen hsü" 曾
龜通府母夫人序，*ibid.*, p. 228.


72. "Ta Li cheng-lung" 當李長公，*ibid.*, p. 317; "Feng shang-shu
Li kung smu" 奉尚書李公墓，*ibid.*, p. 314; "Ts Wu hsüan-chên" 答


Ehriyagava Shinya, a Japanese scholar defined the informal essay as the kind of writing composed while people sat in the armchair near the fireplace in the winter time or drank tea in the summer time and chatted leisurely with friends. Therefore, it includes things like philosophy and humor, as well as emotional feelings. The range of its subject matter may cover national affairs, local triflings, book reviews and news from friends, recollections of the past, and so on. Almost everything and every topic could be included. The informal essay may include personal elements, humor, graceful style, rambling structure, unconventionality or novelty of theme, freshness of form, freedom from stiffness, affectionate, incomplete or tentative treatment of topic. In addition, it may also have sober seriousness of purpose, dignity, and logical organization. The informal essay became a major type of literary writing because certain literary themes or topics could not be well described in the forms of poetry, fiction, or drama. However, its literary value was, for a long time, neglected in the traditional Chinese society and it was not regarded as real literature. The origins of the so-called informal essay in Chinese literature can be
traced back to the anecdotes which were included in the Shih chi, the miscellaneous notes and records of travelling composed during the Six Dynasties and later times. The themes of informal essays in Chinese literature can also cover almost everything—from world philosophy to personal experiences. It must have personal character and express personal styles. It also combines the objective phenomena with the author's own feelings. The Ming and Ch'ing informal essays can be classified into three major categories; namely, the "Sui" (Random composition) the "tsa chi" (Miscellaneous Notes) and the "tsa kan" (Various Impressions). In the realm of Ming literature we find three major types of literary writing which represent the unique features of this special period. These three types are: drama, fiction and the informal essay. The first anthology of Ming informal essays was the Ts'ang Ming shih-lu chia hsiao-p'in ("Informal Essays of the Sixteen Masters of the Royal Kings") which was compiled by In Y'un-hung. Since then numerous similar collections have been put out. The writings of informal essays increased greatly during the last seventy years of the Ming dynasty. To explain this strange phenomenon we may find three main reasons: (1) The Ming government at that time was very corrupt and the literary society was also unjust. Literary men and educated people felt rather frustrated and they had to find a way to express their emotions and feelings; (2) the classicism of the Seven Masters had proved to be a failure and all the other writers had to discover a new way for literary writing; (3) the popularity of fiction and drama had influenced the style of prose, especially the use of colloquial language and dialects in such writings.


88 RSCSC(IV), pp. 1549-1553.
89 ECTK, p. 357.
90 Ibid., pp. 236-238.
91 RSCSC(IV), pp. 1469-1470.
92 ECTK, pp. 239-290.
93 RSCSC(IV), pp. 1452-1455.
94 Ibid., (III), pp. 1262-1263.
95 Ibid., pp. 1254-1257.
96 Ibid., pp. 1385-1386.
97 Ibid., pp. 1211-1212.


100. "Tzu shu hsiao hsiang tsan" 自書小像篇, in H.C.H., p. 1398.


103. "Chen hai lou chi" 鎮海樓記, ibid., p. 1465.

104. See Arthur Ialey's introduction to the novel.


109. Yu ming t'ien p'in t'ien Yün-ho chi-tsung 玉茗堂評點雲和奇蹟 (Library of Congress copy); Chi t'ung chuan 奇蹟篇 (Library of Congress copy); Hsia-hsiang ch'ing-yen Yün-ho chi-tsung 玉茗堂英雄奇蹟 (Library of Congress copy); T'ung-ch'ing t'ien yung lieh ch'ien-chuan 童承衝雲和奇蹟玉茗堂英烈全傳 (Princeton University Library copy); Hsia-hsiang yung lieh ch'ien-chuan 童承衝英烈全傳 (1725 edition, Library of Congress copy); Shih ch'i ko ch'ing-tsing muang Hsing yung lieh ch'ien-chuan 石集德精訂皇明英烈傳 (Library of Congress copy).


111. See Chao Ch'ing-shen's preface to Yirz lieh ch'uan, (Shanghai: Ssu-lich ch'u-pan she, 1955), pp. 3-4.
CHAPTER FIVE

HSÜ WEI AS A POET

Hsü Wei used to say to himself "calligraphy is the first of my arts, then comes poetry, then prose writing, and last my painting." 1 Judging from this information, we know that he had great confidence in his own poetic writings. The poets of the P'ên-t'ao She 甫僑社 2 ("Grape Vine Society"), such as Yüan Hung-tao (1563-1610), regarded Hsü Wei as the foremost poet of the Ming dynasty. A survey of some important comments on his poetry will help us to understand Hsü Wei's reputation as a great poet during the late Ming period.

In discussing Hsü Wei's life and poems Yüan Hung-tao states that Hsü Wei spent most of his time traveling to many places, such as northern China and the desert, because he could not realize his ambition in official society. Yüan believes that this travel accounts for the settings of many of Hsü Wei's poems. He also concludes that Hsü Wei's stubborn disposition and sad temperament increased the appeal of his poems to the people, while at the same time alienating him from his contemporary writers and officials and thereby limiting his fame to the southeastern part of China. 3

In addition, in a personal letter, Yüan Hung-tao explains Hsü Wei's poetry which does not follow the read-made patterns but has its own devices. Yüan argues that Hsü has the strangeness of Li Ho (790-816) and his own perspicuous style of writing, and that he has the
structure of Tu Fu's 杜甫 (712-770) poetry and the argument of Su Shih's (1036-1101) poetry. The Seven Masters,\(^4\) in Yuan's opinion, are not worthy of comparison with him. Either Ho Ching-ming or Li Meng-yang would be inferior to him.\(^5\)

In his preface to the 胡文忠三合, T'ao Wang-ling recounts that Hsü Wei's ways of composing poems are similar to that of writing prose, that his methods are profound and the outward appearance of his poems is ignored, that his poetic style is similar to that of the great poets of the middle and late periods in the T'ang dynasty, and that the meaning of his poems is very deep and difficult to understand. T'ao believes that Hsü Wei could be compared with many famous poets such as Li T'ung 麗正 (d.835), Meng Chiao (750-814), Mei Yao-ch'en 梅堯臣 (1002-1060), and Ch'en Shih-tao 陳師道 (1053-1101).\(^6\)

Chang Ju-lin, a compiler of Hsü Wei's miscellaneous works, tells us that Hsü Wei felt sad for the innocent death of Hu Tsung-hsien, and he was sorry that he could not help prevent this tragedy. His regretful emotions were constantly expressed in his poems.\(^7\)

The compilers of the 隋唐五代詩人傳記 comment that the poetic style of Hsü Wei is a mixture of Li Po's and Li Ho's poems. Although Hsü Wei had great talent, his fame was limited to his local area. His poems reveal a certain mischievous spirit and non-elegant diction. These poems could move the heart of the reader but did not fit in the regular metric patterns. Yüeh Hung-tao praised him because his own literary style was similar to that of Hsü Wei. In general, his poetry could be regarded as the forerunner to that of the Kung-en masters. The mood of a scholar in retirement could also be found in his poems.\(^8\)
Ch'ien Ch'ien-i, a famous scholar of the late Ming and early Ch'ing times, also praises Hsü Wei's poems. He feels that they are closer to the styles of the middle and late T'ang poets, and that they are difficult for us to understand.  

In the Ming-shih tsung 明詩綜 (Anthology of Ming Poetry), which was compiled by Chu I-tsun, thirteen poems of Hsü Wei are included. However, the compiler believes that there is no arrangement or order. 

In another anthology, Ming-shih nieh-taie 明詩別裁 ("Separate Selection of Ming Poetry"), only one poem of Hsü Wei was included and no comment was given. It is clear to us that, in the eyes of these popular anthologists, Hsü Wei was not a very important poet in comparison with others of the same period. 

The compiler of the Ming-shih chi-shih has more favorable comments on Hsü Wei's poems. The general impressions from Hsü Wei's poems are described as similar to (1) the scene of late autumn while all the tree leaves are gone and all the mountain ranges are clear; or (2) the scene of nature when the flood is over, the lake water is transparent, and the aquatic weeds are displayed. However, he depended on his talent and fell into unorthodox practices. In addition, Yuan Hung-tao's praise of Hsü Wei led to more criticism by traditional scholars. 

Aoki Masaru points out that Hsü Wei imitated the style of Li Ho. As a result, Hsü Wei's poems were quite similar to those of Li Ho; they give the reader the feeling of a kuei-ts'ai 鬼才 (demon-talented). Hsü Wei did not imitate any single poet, nor did he follow traditional rules. Under the influence of various earlier poets, he formed a unique style, just like to build "a castle in the air." His tragic life experiences provided the melancholy mood and
unrestrained emotion in his poetry. However, some air of tranquility
could also be found in his poems. Being influenced by religious Taoism
at an early age, Hsü Wei sometimes reveals Taoist philosophies in his
poems. Just like T'ao Ch'ien, he also has the mood of "loving his own
cottage," trying to forget the inequality in this world. The joys of
his retirement were also described vividly in his poems.\textsuperscript{14}

Li Sung, a modern scholar from mainland China, emphasizes that a
great number of Hsü Wei's poems pictured in words the Chinese heroes
who fought against the Japanese invaders, and that his poetic style
represented the natural and unrestrained literary trend during the late
Ming period.\textsuperscript{15}

Cheng Chen-to describes Hsü Wei's poems as having had an unusual
style which was completely different from the traditional one. He used
new diction, had new thoughts, and did not avoid the use of slang
expressions and common themes in his poetic composition. He actually
opened the new field of poetry which was later continued and glorified
by the Kung-an masters.\textsuperscript{16}

Having examined the historical criticism of Hsü Wei's poems, we
shall move to draw a general picture of Hsü Wei as a poet. From the
viewpoint of literary history, Hsü Wei is a very significant poet.
We must remember that the significance of all poets and all artists
must be compared with the works of earlier and contemporary poets
and artists.\textsuperscript{17}

Hsü Wei represented the progressive and unconventional literary
trend during the late Ming. In addition, he played a very important
role in the changing literary style. He certainly created a new phase
of poetry which was later developed by Yüan Hung-tao and many others.
In the following, I shall concentrate my discussion on the poetry of Hsü Wei. To do this, I plan to divide the discussion into two parts: namely, the form and the content of his poems.

When we examine the form of Hsü Wei's poetry, we find that he wrote in all possible traditional poetic forms such as the Music Bureau style, the ancient styles of the four-syllabic verse, the five-syllabic verse, and the seven-syllabic verse, the regulated styles of the five-syllabic verse and the seven-syllabic verse, the truncated styles of the five-syllabic verse and the seven-syllabic verse; the regulated verse in a row; and the lyric metres (tz'u).

The first anthology of Hsü Wei's poems is entitled Ch'üeh pien ("Incomplete Collection") which was published in 1593. Unfortunately, this anthology is no longer in existence. The only available section of this anthology is the preface, which had been written by Hsü Wei himself. The Hsü Wen-ch'eng san-chi and Hsü Wen-ch'eng i-keo include all Hsü Wei's existing poems. On the basis of these two collections, I have prepared this statistical table to show the number of poems under each specific poetic form.
### Table 2: A statistical table of Hsü Wei's poems and their forms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forms / Collections</th>
<th>Hsü Wen-ch'ang san-chi</th>
<th>Hsü Wen-ch'ang i-kao</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Music Bureau verse</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>four-syllabic verse</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>five-syllabic ancient verse</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>six-syllabic ancient verse</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seven-syllabic ancient verse</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>five-syllabic regulated verse</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seven-syllabic regulated verse</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>five-syllabic verse in a row</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seven-syllabic verse in a row</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syllabic Truncated Verse</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six-syllabic Truncated Verse</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven-syllabic Truncated Verse</td>
<td>428</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyric Metres (tz'au)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Together</td>
<td>1418</td>
<td>656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2074</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the table on the two previous pages, we find that the forms of Seven-syllabic Regulated Verse and Seven-syllabic Truncated Verse were the most commonly used. More than half of his poems were composed in these two forms. The reason is that the length is neither too long nor too short and suitable for social activities, such as impromptu verse, congratulations, seeing people off, and showing friendship.

In his poetic writings, Hsü Wei followed some of the traditional rules, but he also attempted to make variations. He did not follow standard metrical patterns or physical forms. For example, a poem entitled "Kuan-lien p'ien" ("Watch Hunting") is under the form of Seven-syllabic Ancient Verse, but in the middle of this poem there are four-syllabic lines. Another poem entitled "Shih-chou p'ien" ("Stony Islets") is also a Seven-syllabic Ancient Verse, but there were twelve five-syllabic lines. The "Wan-yü shan-fang ko" ("Song of the Ten Thousand Jade Mountain Retreat") is also a Seven-syllabic Ancient Verse containing three-syllabic lines. In addition, we find certain poems of varied length. All these examples show that Hsü Wei tried to ignore the traditional restrictions and standards in his poetic composition. This is probably why, in the Sou-k'ua ch'ien-shu tsung-yü t'i-yaou, Hsü Wei is criticized as "no longer asking what the methods and rules of ancient people are." In the forms of Regulated Verse in a Row and Lyric Metres, Hsü Wei composed poems to emphasize his talent and erudition by using allusions and classical diction. These works are composed for socializing with upper class people.
The content of Hsu Wei’s poems is extremely broad and extensive. We find various themes or subject matters, such as depictions of war, explanations of philosophy, praise of achievement, discussions of social problems, descriptions of local manner and customs, feelings of personal life, and expression of friendship for his associates. Most of his poems reveal his background. He lived under the rule of the Emperor Shih-tsung and Grand Secretary Yen Sung. Both his failure in passing the civil service examination and his family troubles made life to him very tragic and unbearable.

Seven types of Hsu Wei’s poems represent the major features of his poetic art. These will be discussed separately in the following.

The first type is poems composed by imitating the styles of other distinguished poets. For example, "Shady Wind Blows the Fire,"28 and "One Red Dot on Ten Thousand Green Brenches"29 imitated the style of Li Ho. "Rhyming after Su Chang-kung’s Snow Poem"30 imitated the style of Su Shih. "The Joy of Fishing"31 imitated the style of T’ang Hsien-tsu. All these show Hsu Wei had deep respect for talented poets. He attempted to imitate their styles before he could build up his own style.

The second type of his poems includes those about war or military affairs. In these poems, we find that the heroic mood and nationalism were expressed to a great extent. In the year 1557, Hu Tsung-hsien invited Hsu Wei to work in his office as a secretary. At that time, Hu commanded the Chinese armed forces in the southeastern part of China to fight against the invading Japanese pirates. The famous military generals, such as Yü Ta-yu and Ch’i Chi-kueng, were all under
the leadership of Hu Tsung-hsien. One famous poem, composed by Hsü Wei at this time, was entitled "Songs of the Ocean." This poem reveals the real historical and political backgrounds of that time. The corruption of the government forces and the impotence of the King royal court were described vividly. During the anti-Japanese pirates war, many people enlisted in the army. A friend of Hsü Wei, Lü Cheng-pin, also volunteered to fight. In praise of his great courage, Hsü Wei composed a poem entitled "A Long Poem for Lü Cheng-pin." In this poem, Lü is described as a handsome young man who possesses a strange quality from birth. A strong patriotic sentiment is confessed in this poem.

After long years of fighting, the invading Japanese pirates were beaten. Hsü Wei composed "A Banquet at Mt. Len-k'ou" to congratulate Hu Tsung-hsien on the military victory. A series of poems entitled "Victory Songs of K'en Shan" was also composed to celebrate the end of the bitter war. The military victory, of course, was the result of constant bloody fightings. Such is the scene pictured in Hsü Wei's poem, "In the morning people watched the returning soldier on horseback, a piece of ice chilled the soldier's blood-soaked clothes."

To the military generals who led the Chinese army during the war, Hsü Wei also showed great respect. There are two poems entitled "To General Yü" in which he highly praised the "worthy service" of General Yü Ta-ju. From this poem, one may imagine the severe, continuous battles which turned the wind and clouds dark, and the fightings which took place from one island to another at night time.

For another famous military general, Ch'i Chi-kuang, Hsü Wei also composed three poems to celebrate his victory. The poems were
under the general title "Victory Song for General Ch'i." In this poem Hsü Wei uncovered that even the birds were happy and flew when the news of victory arrived. In 1558, another military victory was won by the two generals. Hsü Wei composed another poem to record this event. A mood of joy and happiness is disclosed in this poem.

The third type of Hsü Wei's poems include those about local manners and customs. For example, there are twenty-six poems under the title "Frontier Poems" which describe the local background of Hsüan-fu in northern China. In addition, "Song of the Upper Valley," and "Song of Yen-ching," both deal with local manners and customs. Some pastoral poems composed during Hsü Wei's travels can also be classified under this category, such as "Mt. Chiang-lang," "Pistil and Stamen Peak," and "Wu Hsieh."

The fourth type of Hsü Wei's poems deals with friendship. Hsü Wei was very sincere and warm-hearted to all his friends, and this can be verified in his poems. The relationship between Hu Tsung-hsien and Hsü Wei is a very interesting example of this friendship. In a poem entitled "Silvery Pheasant" Hsü Wei describes his own feelings toward General Hu. It seems that Hsü Wei held deep respect for the general. Nevertheless, he used the term "narrow cage" to express the feeling of losing his freedom in the official service. Through the introduction of Hu Tsung-hsien, Hsü Wei came to know T'ang Shun-chih who was a leading contemporary scholar. At a party prepared by Hu, they talked and enjoyed drinking together as if they were old friends. Hsü Wei was deeply moved by T'ang's sincerity and understanding. From a poem written by Hsü Wei, where he has depicted their real friendship, we learn that Hsü Wei regarded T'ang as an "intimate
friend," one who understood his voice.46 Certainly this is not an exaggeration! This meeting was not only the beginning of their personal friendship but also a very important event in the literary history of the Ming dynasty. Several years later, a second meeting was made possible. As a result of this second meeting with T'ang Shun-chih, Hsü Wei also composed a poem to express his friendly feelings toward him.47 Ever since that time, he has always regarded T'ang as a real friend who could understand and share both his sorrow and happiness.

In a poem entitled "Pao an chou,"48 Hsü Wei expresses his sympathy and regards for his friend Shen Lien, who was exiled to the northern frontier. Shen Lien was later executed by Yen Sung for personal reasons. In a poem entitled "The Mourning of the Military Adviser Shen Ch'ing-hsia,"49 Hsü Wei expresses his deep respect for him.

To another close friend, Ch'en Ho, Hsü Wei composed a poem to congratulate him upon the completion of his new house.50 In this poem, we find that Ch'en Ho enjoyed his retreat to the mountain where he lived as a recluse. We find the extent of his friendship with Ch'en Ho. Upon the death of Ch'en Ho, Hsü Wei wrote a poem to reveal his sad feelings.51 This poem recounts the upright personality and personal experiences of Ch'en Ho. It also shows Hsü Wei's deep respect for his deceased friend.

Hsü Wei has composed many other similar poems for his friends and associates, such as "Thinking of Gen. Ch'en T'ung-fu,"52 "On a Trip to the Azure Clouds Temple Drinking under the Withered Willow,"53 and "Seeing off Monk Hsiao on His Trip to Wu-t'ai."54 These are
excellent poems showing Hsū Wei's sincerity and affection toward his friends.

The fifth type of Hsū Wei's poems includes his life experiences and the loneliness experienced during his old age. These poems can be regarded as both biography and literature. The important events during his lifetime, such as his wedding, the happiness of his youth, his poverty and loneliness, as well as his philosophy of life were all described. The best works under this type are those on his leisure and loneliness. Most of them were composed during his old age.

"Night Repose at a Sandbank" is a good example:

... A distant fire flickers on the dark cliff,
The moon moves with the waves
In the solitary wilderness the sound of nature is heard indistinctly
With one single layer of blanket I feel the severe coldness ...

The solitude of the poet and the scene certainly provided the necessary background for this wonderful poem. Another poem entitled "To Spend a Hot Day at Huo-jan Hall in Early Autumn" similarly describes the leisure of his life.

In two poems entitled "Picture of the Phoenix Kite," Hsū Wei used a picture of children playing with their kites to hint that his hope could only be found in these children. He compares his childhood with a "kite of broken line" to show that time, once passed, would never return. These poems were composed during his old age.

The sixth type of Hsū Wei's poems encompasses those concerning art. All these poems show Hsū Wei's knowledge of art. Most of them were originally written on the top of his paintings, resembling the T'ang poet, Wang Wei, who is often known as, "in his poems there are
paintings, and in his paintings there are poems. For example, "Song of the Sixteen Flower Fairies" was originally written on a painting of many flowers and was later included in his anthology. This poem may have different interpretations. It may be regarded as a simple poem which explains the meaning of the painting, but it may also be a symbolic poem which deals with female beauties.

Another poem entitled "Nine Stanzas on the Lotus" is also a good example of this combination of painting and poem. Actually, it includes nine seven-syllabic truncated verse which were written on paintings. These nine short poems deal with the theme of "Lotus" from different angles. From these poems, we find lively pictures of the lotus flowers and leaves. The poet used cool breezes, butterflies, mandarin ducks, and historical beauties to decorate the vivid pictures. These poems show that Hsü Wei is not only a painter, but also a poet. Actually, these can be regarded as combining arts of poetry, painting, and calligraphy. From the viewpoint of literature, these poems are very valuable because they contain refined artistic quality and beauty.

The seventh type of Hsü Wei's poems deals with humorous themes. In these poems we discover Hsü Wei's sense of humor. It seems that the poet was not serious while composing these poems. The interesting and humorous character of Hsü Wei is clearly revealed. In a poem entitled "One Exposed His Abdomen while Lying under the Pine Tree," Hsü Wei made fun of an overweight hermit who was taking a nap under a pine tree:

Sleeping under the pine tree is a man with a big bare belly,
He must be a superior man dozing off by a pine;
Which line of Tu Fu's poems may be used to describe this?
"Raising the goblet, with the whites of his eyes, looks at the blue sky." 62

There are many other humorous poems like this, such as "Picture of Cleaning the Ears," 63 "The Cockcrow," 64 and "The Sound of Frogs." 65 These poems reveal another aspect of Hsu Wei's personality as well as his poetic art.

Having examined the seven major types of Hsu Wei's poems, we find some general features of his poetic art. A great majority of his poems tended to use direct descriptions without any fancy ornamentation.

His personal emotions and experiences were included in his poems. Sometimes, he used such items as a worn hat, insects, or common events as topics. In accordance with his literary theory of "true color," Hsu Wei created his unique poetic style. According to him, a good poet should have true emotions in order to portray true things. Refined diction and metrical pattern may be ignored as long as the poet possesses concrete subject matters in his poems.

We do find occasionally the symbolic tendency in some of Hsu Wei's poems. But these poems are few in number and they do not represent the general features of Hsu Wei's poetry. In these poems, it is truly difficult for the common reader to understand that which was being discussed. However, if we delve deeply into the world in which the poet lived, we will find that his thoughts and emotions experienced there are those he tries to reveal in an indirect way. Owing to the ambiguity of Hsu Wei's poetic expressions, an English translation of some of his poems is almost impossible. The symbolic quality makes these poems ambiguous and vague, but extremely beautiful.
"Inte Without String" is a good example:

The music is heard when the lute is played,
Without playing it the music still exists.
If one touches only one string,
What sound may enter the ears?
When Bodhidarma came no (Ch'an) literature
was created.
Theory is complete without any words.
Opening the mouth, one does not surprise the public,
Closing mouth, it seems like a thunder.

Another poem entitled "Pavilion of Purifying the Heart" is also noted for its symbolic meaning:

The refined house is overlooking the abyss,
The isolated pavilion is reflected in the lake.
A lost heart is nowhere to be found again,
I wish to purify it but which direction has it gone?
Flowers watch over the table on which incense is burning
The door is not far from the ferry boat dock.
The birds beside Lake Azure Clouds,
Frequently float on the river in front.

Most of these poems reveal Taoist influences, such as the theories of quiescence and non-action. They also reflect a state of mind which was free from worldly cares and desires. The poet was at peace with himself and with nature.

After studying his poems with their superior character of truth and seriousness, combined with the superiority of diction and movement, we have to rank Hsi Wei as one of the leading poets of the Ming period. During the Ming dynasty, literary society was dominated by the noted Former Seven Masters and Later Seven Masters. They considered "imitation" the method of creative writing in literature. As a result, they claimed that poetry should be on the model of the golden period of the T'ang dynasty. Hsi Wei strongly argued against this conservative literary theory and brought some fresh and reasonable ideas into the art of poetry. He can be regarded as both a great poet and a great
literary theorist on poetry. The superiority of his poems is contained in both the substance and the style. His superiority in substance is given by his vast and comprehensive view of human life. His literary style and his new theory of poetry made an epoch and founded a tradition. In the history of Chinese literature, Hsü Wei should be regarded as a major poet. His achievement lies not only in his poetic works, but also in the fact that his poetic convictions changed the literary trend during the transitional period from the late Ming to the early Ch'ing.
NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE


2. The so-called Grape Vine Society was basically a society of poetic composition. In addition, it can also be regarded as the forerunner of the most popular Tung-lin party and the "Fu She" 復社 ("Recovery Society"). However, it has not been noticed by historians.


4. See Note no. 1, Introduction.


6. T'ao Wang-ling's preface to HESC in HESC (I), pp. 7-9.


Ibid., p. 7.

H.E.IK., pp. 190-191.

The figure 2074 is tentative.


"Shih-chou p'ien" 石洲篇, Ibid., pp. 380-381.


A poem with five or more couplets is known as p'ai-hu 排律 which can be as long as a poet is able or willing to write. See F. S. Hsueh, "Elements in the Metrics of T'ang Poetry."

This is a tradition in Chinese poetry.


"Fu te wan-lü chih-t'ou hung i-tien" 賦得萬緑枝頭紅一點, Ibid., (II), p. 697.


"Yu lo t'u" 渔樂圖, Ibid., (I), pp. 398-400.

"Hai shang chü" 海上曲, Ibid., p. 230.


"Yen-yu Lan-k'o shan" 宴遊灑柯山, Ibid., (II), pp. 791-792.

K'an-shan k'ai-ko 龍山凱歌, Ibid., p. 784. The poems were composed for his friend, Wu Ch'eng-ch'i 昇成器, in 1555. See also "K'uai-chi Wu-hou shang-t'ou pei" 謝緒吳侯生祠碑, Ibid., (IV), p. 1476.

H.E.IK., p. 75.
37"K'ai-ko tseng ts'ang-chiang Ch'i-kung" 凯歌赠参将威公，

38 "Hsueh-ch'ang ch'üan-ch'i, chüan 7.


40 "Shang-tu ko" 上谷歌, ibid., pp. 820-823.

41 "Yen-ching ko" 燕京歌, ibid., pp. 813-816.


43 "Hsia-fu feng" 花蕊峰, ibid., p. 224.

44 "Hsiao hsien" 西簡, ibid., p. 491.


46 Ibid., chüan 4.


49 "Ai Shen Ts'an-chün Ch'ing-hsia" 哀沈参軍青霞, ibid. (I), p. 246.

50 "Yung Hsi-chiao shan-jen hsin-kou" 詠海樵山人新構,
ibid., p. 224.

51 E.D.S.G, p. 246.

52 "Huai Ch'ên Chiang-chün T'ung-fu" 懷陳將軍同甫 in Kang-shih
p'ien-t's'ai, p. 52.

53 "Yu Pi-yin lin-shang k'u-lu chin-hsia" 游碧雲流觕枯柳

54 "Sung Hsiao sheng-jen chin ku-t'ai" 送驟上人之五丈,
ibid., p. 602.

55 "Yeh su sha-p'u" 夜宿沙浦, ibid. (I), p. 236.

56 "Hsien-ch'in pi-shun Hsueh-jen t'ang" 新秋避暑葛然堂,

57 "Peng-yuan t'u" 厳巍圖, Hsü 'ien-ch'iang chüan-ch'i, chüan 12.

English translation of this poem is made by Adele Austin Rickett.

60. This is also a tradition in Chinese literature.


64. "Chi sheng" 雉聲, ibid., p. 90.

65. "La sheng" 蛙聲, ibid., p. 90.


67. "Hsai hsing t'ing" 洗心亭, ibid., p. 489.
CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

The life of Hsü Wei reveals various aspects of a non-conformist as a literary man. He suffered a great many tragic experiences. His failure in passing the high-level civil service examinations prevented him from any advancement in official service. Hu Tsung-hsien, the famous general, and many other powerful and influential figures tried to make use of Hsü Wei's literary talent, but they did not understand his character. For various social and political reasons, Hsü Wei lost his hope and intention to serve in the official world. The tragic death of Hu Tsung-hsien weighed heaviest on Hsü Wei's ambitions. Moreover, his six years' imprisonment brought him great disgrace. As a result of these tragedies, he could only concentrate his time and strength on developing his literary and artistic talents, and eventually he became an outstanding writer and artist. While we regret his tragic life, we may also be grateful for the valuable literary works which he produced through his personal agony and sorrow.

In his personal life, Hsü Wei was both unconventional and orthodox. Throughout his life, he was, for the most part, optimistic and satisfied with his fate because he believed in both Confucianist and Taoist philosophies. Although he is known as a great drinker, his mind seems to have been clear and sharp most of the time. He was frank, sincere, and warm-hearted to all of his relatives, to his
teachers, and friends. His literary works reveal his true emotions as well as the objective background. Talent, of course, was the most important element in helping him to become an excellent writer.

In addition to this talent, Hsu Wei benefited from a sound family background and schooling during his youth. Through constant learning, he became well-versed in the ancient classics. His association with teachers and friends and his colorful life experiences also assisted him in building a foundation to become a successful literary writer.

Hsu Wei's achievement in literature, however, was not directly the result of his association with his teachers and friends. We find that none of them inspired him to promote his literary talent. For example, Chi Fen, his most respected teacher, was basically a philosopher whose main interest lay in classics, history, geography, and people's life. Chi Fen's knowledge of literature, however, was not too outstanding. Hsu Wei's other teacher, T'ang Shun-chih (1507-1560) was noted for his talent in both academic learning and military strategy. T'ang was also a great prose writer and an erudite scholar. Nevertheless, Hsu Wei learned more from him on the various aspects of military tactics and strategy. Hsu Wei's other associates, such as Hsüeh Ying-ch'ü who was a great master of the eight-legged essay; Mao K'un (1512-1601), who was an outstanding writer of classical prose; and Li Ch'un-fang and Tung Pin, who were two parallel prose advocates, could only destroy Hsu Wei's literary talent and ability to do creative writing.

Two of Hsu Wei's contemporary literary figures are known for their progressive thought and unconventional writings. The first one is Wu Ch'eng-en 吳承恩 (1500-1582), the famous novelist. Wu Ch'eng-en was
once interested in service at Hu Tsung-hsien’s headquarters. His
talent and background are very similar to those of Hsü Wei. He could
have led Hsü Wei to the road of popular literature if they had worked
together at Hu’s headquarters. Unfortunately, Wu Ch‘eng-en was not
employed by Hu Tsung-hsien and was, therefore, unable to meet Hsü Wei.
The other literary figure is Li Chih, the great literary theorist
who was six years younger than Hsü Wei. Li Chih had a close relationship
with the three Yuan brothers but did not have a chance to know
Hsü Wei. As a result, Hsü Wei was not able to develop his literary
theory further with the assistance of Li Chih.

Among the Seven Masters of the late Ming period, of whom Hsü Wei
was also a contemporary, Tsung Ch‘en was four years younger and Wang
Shih-chen was five years younger than Hsü Wei. The Seven Masters were
all ambitious and outstanding literary figures at that time. Hsü Wei
would have benefited from association with them, if he had had the
chance to know them well. Very regretfully, however, his low social
position and poor financial condition prevented him from socializing
with those chin-shih degree holders.

Besides being a literary man, Hsü Wei also regarded himself as
a military expert and strategist. His association with many military
generals, however, did not help to develop his literary talent.

From the above, we know that Hsü Wei’s literary achievement was
derived mainly from his talent and self-cultivation. His association
with his teachers and friends was not very important to his career as
a great writer. His life experiences, nevertheless, assisted him in
creating many valuable literary works. These works rank him as one of
the most important literary writers during the late Ming period.
In the field of literary theory, Hsü Wei may be considered a pioneer. He expanded the idea of "true color" which was a new literary theory then. Therefore, he promoted the use of colloquial language in prose and poetry. He believes that the study of ancient classics, however, should be continued in order to create new literature. Moreover, his attitude of opposing imitation in literary writings actually turned the literary trend in a new direction. All these show that Hsü Wei was very progressive in his literary convictions. Although he may not be regarded as a great literary theorist, he certainly introduced and glorified new ideas.  

Hsü Wei's poetry and prose did not help him to attain higher degree in the civil service examination, but made him known as a great literary writer. His works in prose are found in various traditional forms, such as memorial, letter, discussion, strategy, preface, and epilogue. From the viewpoint of literature, his informal essays are among the best of his works. Besides prose, poetry is equally important. More than two thousand poems of Hsü Wei are in existence today. These poems are of various traditional poetic forms. The subject matters of his poems include his life experiences, friendship, war, local manners and custom, and many others.  

Most literary critics believe that Hsü Wei's most valuable contribution in literature was in drama; namely, The Four Shrieks of the Gibbon (Ssu-sheng yüan), which he, himself, did not even mention. In these four plays, Hsü Wei shows great talent and creativity in drama. Unfortunately, he did not fully develop his talent in this direction. There were two main reasons for his failing to write more plays:

(1) His poor living condition did not allow him to engage in this
kind of non-profitable writing. The famous dramatists of his time, such as Chin Ch'üan 朱權 (d.1443), K'ang Hsi 1475-1540), Wang Tao-k'ün 汪道昆 (1547 chin-shih), Li K'ai-hsien 李開先 (1502-1568), and T'ang Hsien-tsa (1550-1617), were all financially much more secure than Hsü Wei.

(2) Hsü Wei did not gain any support from the professional dramatic organizations (shu-hui 書會) as Kuan Fan-ch'ing 關漢卿 (1220-1307?) and Ma Chih-yüan 马致遠 (1265-1325?) did during the Yuan period. Later on, Hsü Wei was afraid of political persecution as a result of writing satirical plays, so he discontinued writing more plays.

As a literary man, Hsü Wei's talent did not decline even during his old age. A very high percentage of his literary works was completed during his last twenty years. In the history of Chinese literature, Hsü Wei is considered a very important and influential writer. The poetry of T'ien Hung-tao (1568-1610) and Chang Hsieh (1693-1765), the prose of Chang Tai (1597-1684?), the literary theory of Chin Jen-jui (d.1661) and T'ien Hung-tao, and the drama of Wang Chi-te (d.1623) and Shih P'an 21 all show the strong influence of Hsü Wei.

Through his celebrated literary works, Hsü Wei is still alive in the minds of numerous readers. His posthumous fame has been growing ever since his death. His achievement in literature and his significance in literary history have been recognized. Out of the tradition-honored "Three Imperishables," namely, virtue 立德, meritorious achievements 立功, and writings 立言, Hsü Wei has gained at least one. His imperishable writings have made him a permanently respected literary figure of the late Ming period. He is certainly one of the few important literary writers who belong to the general public.
He and his everlasting literary works are the incarnation of truth, perfection, and beauty.
NOTES TO CHAPTER SIX


2. Wu Tui, ibid., friend no. 27. Li Ju-sung, ibid., friend no. 13.

3. Chi Pen, ibid., teacher no. 2.

4. T'ang Shun-chih, ibid., teacher no. 10.

5. Hsüeh Ying-ch'i, ibid., teacher no. 7.


7. Li Ch'un-fang, ibid., friend no. 12.

8. Tung Pin, ibid., friend no. 24.


11. See Chapter One for the relationship between Hsü Wei and the Seven Masters of the Late Han period.


13. See Chapter Two, "Hsü Wei's Literary Theory."

14. See Chapter Four, "Hsü Wei as an Essayist."

15. For discussion of Hsü Wei's informal essays, see Chapter Four.

16. See Chapter Five, "Hsü Wei as a Poet."

17. Ibid.

18. See Chapter Three, "Hsü Wei as a Dramatist."

20. Wang Chi-te, ibid., disciple no. 5.

21. Shih P'An, ibid., disciple no. 4.

22. See Tso chuan 左傳, 24th year of Hsiang-kung.
APPENDIX A
A CHRONOLOGY OF HSÜ WEI'S LIFE*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1521</td>
<td>(March 12) born in Shan-yin, Shao-hsing, Chekiang.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1526</td>
<td>Began to receive education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1540</td>
<td>Received hsü-t'ieh degree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1541</td>
<td>Married with P'an Ssu, daughter of P'an K'o-ching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1547</td>
<td>Moved to I-chih T'ang (&quot;Hall of One Branch&quot;).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1550</td>
<td>Studied with Chi Pen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1552</td>
<td>Met with T'ang Shun-chih.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1555-1557</td>
<td>Composed Ssu-sheng yüan (&quot;The Four Shrinks of the Gibbon&quot;).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1557</td>
<td>December - served temporarily at Hu Tsung-hsien's office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1558</td>
<td>Employed by Hu Tsung-hsien as a secretary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1559</td>
<td>Met with T'ang Shun-chih for the second time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1560</td>
<td>Bought Ch'ou Tzu T'ang (&quot;The Hall of Word Remuneration&quot;).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1561</td>
<td>Married with Chang, his third wife. Failed in the civil service examination for the eighth time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1563</td>
<td>Served under Li Ch'üan-fang in Peking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1565</td>
<td>Committed suicide; wrote &quot;Tzu-wei mu-chih-ming.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1567</td>
<td>Imprisoned because of the murdering of his wife, Chang.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1572</td>
<td>Released from prison.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1576 Visited Wu Tui in Hsüan-hua.
1577 Returned to the south; taught many disciples.
1578-1585 Composed a great deal of literary works.
1586 Moved to the Wang family residence.
1589 Published Hsi Wen-ch'ang ch'u-chi and Ch'ueh pien, with the financial support from Li Ju-sung.
1591 Communicated with T'ang Hsien-tsu.
1592 Composed "Ch'un-hsing" ("Spring Thoughts").
1593 Compiled "Tzu-chu ch'i-p'u" and died.
1600 Hsi Wen-ch'ang san-chi was published.
APPENDIX B

AN INQUIRY INTO THE HISTORICAL FIGURES RELATING TO HSÜ WEI

All through Hsü Wei's life, he had many acquaintances. For example, his relationship with Hu Tsung-hsien is well known. And he has recorded in some detail his relation with some of his close relatives such as his legal mother, Madam Miao, and his first wife, P'an.

In this appendix, I want to concentrate my study on some of the important figures who are acquainted with him. On the basis of various source materials, I shall try to give some descriptions of such acquaintances who were either neglected or erroneously identified during the past centuries. For the convenience of discussion, I will divide these people into three groups: namely, teachers, friends, and disciples. Because of the very limited materials available, the descriptions of some individuals must remain rather simple and short.

A. His Teachers: According to Hsü Wei's own account ("Tsu-chü ch'ü-p'ü," in Hsü Wen-ch'ang san-chi), twenty people are listed under the category of teachers. Some of these are famous and some are less known. Here I have selected twelve of the more important ones including three who are not included in Hsü Wei's own list. I have arranged them in an alphabetical order according to the transcription of their last names; and each will be described separately:
1. Ch'en Liang-ch'i 陈良器. He was Hsü Wei's teacher who taught him lute playing. The only biographical information available is from the "Tzu-ehn ch'i-p'yu," compiled by Hsü Wei.

2. Chi Pen 孔(P. Peng-shan 彭山, 1485-1563). He was a native of Shan-yin, received his chin-shih degree in 1517, and once served as prefect to Ch'ang-sha. He was the most respected teacher of Hsü Wei. At the age of twenty-six Hsü Wei began to study with Chi Pen while the latter was sixty-three years old. Their teacher-disciple relationship lasted for almost sixteen years. Many essays and poems were composed by Hsü Wei reminiscing about his relationship with Chi Pen. All are written in a very respectful and sincere manner.

As a great disciple of Wang Yang-ming, Chi Pen was noted for his moral courage, unswerving integrity, and his practical philosophy. Although his philosophy was derived from Wang Yang-ming, he made considerable revisions. In order to avoid being unrestrained or desolate, he suggested that people should be active and be careful of one's self when alone. The philosophy of Chi Pen had great influence upon Hsü Wei. While we may say that Hsü Wei's clever and intelligent personality was inborn, the careful and sincere aspects of his personality were molded by Chi Pen.

3. Chiang the Magistrate of Fu-kou 乔抚洲. He was from Ling-ling 彭陵, once served as the magistrate of Fu-kou. His original name is as yet unknown. We only know that he had later become a Taoist. As Hsü Wei's brother, Hsü Huai, believed in immortality drugs, and traveled to many famous mountains trying to find immortals, he later studied Taoism with this Mr. Chiang. They made experiments to refine some drug of immortality on Mt. K'uai-ch'i. Before they could
obtain success, Hsü Hsai died in 1545. Chiang's relationship with Hsü Wei is not too clear to us. Nevertheless, it is very possible that Hsü Wei was influenced by his Taoist philosophy. In a poem sent to Chiang, Hsü Wei describes the former as a mysterious and respectable figure (see HSCSC I, p. 271). It seems that Hsü Wei did not regret the death of his elder brother who was probably poisoned by the Taoist drug of immortality, because he believed that a man could become an immortal by swallowing some kind of drug.

One thing which should be made clear is that, in the mind of Hsü Wei, there is no difference between "immortal" (hsien) and "Buddha" (fo). This kind of thinking was common during the Ming dynasty. From novels, like the 《西游记》 (Journey to the West), we also find the mixed idea of the immortal and Buddha.

As you know, Wang Yang-ming's philosophy is noted for its mixed idea of Confucianism and Buddhism. Hsü Wei's philosophy is even more progressive in that it combines the above two elements with Taoism. Although, later on, he became a student of Chi Pan, Hsü Wei did not give up his studies of some Taoist classics and his belief in the drug of immortality. Judging from the above, we can assume that Chiang Fu-kou may have played an important role in the forming of Hsü Wei's unique philosophy.

4. Ch'ien P'ien. A native of Shao-hsing, received his chin-shih degree in 1526 and became a high-ranking official in the Board of Punishments. Later on, he gave up his official position and became a Taoist. Ch'ien P'ien is probably the first person who introduced Taoism to Hsü Wei. Because of his influence, Hsü Wei began to believe in the Taoist thoughts of immortality and the use of drugs
during his younger years. In one of the poems entitled, "Ai-tz'u 衰詞," ("elegies") Hsü Wei described their relationship in great detail. Although later on Ch'ien P'ien also studied under Chi Fen, Hsü Wei still regarded him as his teacher.

5. Hsiao Ming-feng 萧鸣凤 (T. Tsu-yung 子鸑). A student of Wang Yang-ming, he earned a chih-shih in 1514. His wife was from the Hsü family. He was appointed wú-shih 御史 ("censor") and many other positions in educational administration. However, because of his upright and unyielding personality, he could not cooperate with other people and was discharged from the government. Hsü Wei wrote a preface to the Hsiao-shih chia-ch'eng chi 萧氏家乘集, an anthology of Hsiao's works. Hsiao was Hsü Wei's teacher during his early years.

6. Hsieh Shih-ch'en 謝時臣. Hsieh was a famous painter in southern China. His specialty was landscape painting. Hsü Wei once learned the art of painting with him.

7. Hsüeh Ying-ch'i 胡應時 (T. Fang-shan 方山). Hsüeh was from Wu-chin 武進 in Kiangsu and received his chin-shih degree in 1535. He has been regarded as one of the four or eight most important writers of the so-called "eight-legged essay" in the entire Ming dynasty. According to Hsü Wei's own account, Hsüeh Ying-ch'i was the examiner who passed him in the Chekiang local civil service examination. Also, it was through the recommendation of Hsüeh Ying-ch'i that T'ang Shun-chih came to visit Hsü Wei in 1552, because both Hsüeh and T'ang were natives from Wu-chin. However, Hsü Wei did not include Hsüeh's name as one of his teachers in his "Tzu-chu ch'i-p'u." To understand this omission, we have to investigate the relationship between Hsüeh and Wang Chi, both of whom were highly respected by Hsü Wei. According to
the Ming-ju hsieh-an 明儒學案 and Ming shih, Wang Chi was severely attacked by Hsieh with malice. Thus, it is conceivable that as a disciple of Wang Chi, Hsü Wei was constrained to keep a certain distance from Hsieh.

Yuan Hung-tao wrote a biography of Hsü Wei in which he confused Hsieh Ying-ch’i of Wu-chin and Hsüeh Hui of Po-chou 阮州. The same article is also included in the most popular anthology, Ku-wen kuan-chih 古文觀止, in which the note of Hsieh’s life is copied from the biography of Hsüeh Hui. This is certainly a careless mistake! Fortunately, in the Hsü Wen-ch’ang san-chi, this same article does not include the above mentioned inaccuracy. They were probably removed by T’ao Wang-ling and Shang Chun when they edited the entire collection.

Throughout Hsü Wei’s works, we cannot find any word about Hsieh Hui. Therefore, we can assume that Hsü Wei was not acquainted with Hsieh Hui and that Hsieh Ying-ch’i was Hsü Wei’s fang-shih 師, who served as chief examiner when Hsü Wei passed the local civil service examination.

8. P'an K'o-ching 詹克敬. He was from Shao-hsing and was Hsü Wei’s father-in-law. He was born into the family of a rich merchant. Later on, he studied criminal law and served as a judicial official of the Chin-i Wei 錦衣衛 (“Embroidered-Uniform Guard”) in Peking, and a District Police-master and Gaol-warden in Canton. Because of his appreciation of Hsü Wei’s literary talent, he married his daughter to him. In 1541, he arranged the wedding of his daughter to Hsü Wei. After the marriage, Hsü Wei left his elder brother, Hsü Huai, and moved with his wife’s family. He did not however, change his own surname.
P'An K'o-ch'ing planned to make Hsü Wei a literary official in the Ming court. He taught Hsü Wei how to write memorials and parallel prose, as a result, Hsü Wei became versed in this kind of writing. Based upon this special training and his knowledge in religion, Hsü Wei was able to compose dedicatory memorials and sacrificial odes for high officials to the royal court.

9. F'eng Ju-tsui 彭如醉 (T. Ying-shih應時). He taught Hsü Wei swordplaying at the age of fourteen. He later was killed in a battle against Japanese pirates. Hsü Wei wrote a short biography of him in memory of his heroic deeds.

10. T'ang Shun-chih 唐順之 (T. Ying-te應德, H. Ching-ch'uan 剪川). T'ang was a native of Wu-chin and passed in the hui-shih 會試 examination of 1529. After that, his name and talent became widely known. His most important theory is that all literary works should reveal their own true color. Following this theory, Hsü Wei also expressed the similar idea which can be found in his preface to Hsi-hsiang chi (Romance of the Western Charter).

Two poems by Hsü Wei describe his relationship with T'ang Shun-chih. In another poem by Hsü Wei, which was written in 1552, T'ang Shun-chih is described as a person with both literary and military talent.

As a man of letters, T'ang Shun-chih's field of learning was very broad. Based upon the information given in the hsin-shih, we know that, besides literary writing, he also studied astronomy, music, geography, military strategy, archery, and fencing. This versatility is quite similar to that of Hsü Wei. In general, they have something in common: delight in talking about military tactics and strategy, and
a belief in practical philosophy which was expounded by Wang Yang-ming and Wang Chi.

All through his life, Hsü Wei was very grateful to T'ang Shun-chih for his sincere friendship and hospitality. There is little doubt but that T'ang has provided inspiration and stimulation for Hsü Wei's artistic creativity and the bolstering of his self-confidence.

11. Wang Cheng (T. Pen-jen H. In-shan). He was Hsü Wei's lute teacher. The only information available is from the "Tzu-chu ch'i-p'u."

12. Wang Chi (T. Lung-hsien). A native of Shan-yin, he is one of the foremost disciples of Wang Yang-ming. A large number of literary men at that time, such as Chang Yuan-pien and T'ang Shun-chih, studied under him. Being a cousin of Hsü Wei, he exerted great influence upon the latter; thus, he is the very first mentioned in Hsü Wei's teacher list found in "Tzu-chu ch'i-p'u." Only one letter and two poems of Hsü Wei are related to Wang Chi. All of these are of little value, because they do not contain any important information.

Wang Chi is noted as a very eloquent scholar. For more than forty years, he appeared as a great master in the philosophical school of Wang Yang-ming. His lecture halls were located in Hankow, Peking, and many other places. As a result, he commanded even more respect than Chi Pen. Probably this is the reason why Hsü Wei regarded him as his first teacher.

B. His Friends: From the "Tzu-chu ch'i-p'u," we find at least twenty names which are listed as Hsü Wei's friends. Among these, the names of Ch'ien P'ien and T'ang Shun-chih can be found under the list of
teachers. Here I have selected thirty more important persons for discussion:

1. Chang Chü-cheng 張居正. Chang, one time the prime minister in the Ming court had no direct acquaintance with Hsu Wei. However, certain misconceptions regarding their relationship should be clarified.

According to Chang Chung, the San-sheng yün (The Four Shrieks of the Gibbon), by Hsu Wei, was a satire about Chang Chü-cheng who served as prime minister at that time. That this statement seemed reliable was due to the fact that Chang Chung, the son of Chang Wei-ch'eng 張維城, not only knew Hsu Wei's son Hsu Chih quite well but also supported the collection of the scattered works of Hsu Wei. In addition, Chang Chung is also known to have read the complete collection of Hsu Wei's works very carefully.

Modern scholars, however, have reached an agreement that The Four Shrieks of the Gibbon was composed by Hsu Wei during the Chia-ching period (1552-1566), rather than in the Wan-li period (1573-1619). As a matter of fact, the play entitled "The Mad Drummer's Three Songs of Yü-yang" is an attack on Yen Sung instead of Chang Chü-cheng. Shen Lien, a close friend of Hsu Wei, was premeditatively murdered by Yen Sung. As a result, Hsu Wei wrote many essays to express his sympathy for Shen Lien and hatred against Yen Sung.

Judging from the articles written by Hsu Wei, we find that he was quite friendly toward Chang Chü-cheng. For example, in an essay commemorating the seventy-first birthday of Chang Chü-cheng's mother, Hsu Wei compares the mother of Chang Chü-cheng with Hsi wang mu 母王 ("Mother Queen of the West") and compares Chang Chü-cheng with the
worthy ministers of Yellow Emperor, such as Feng Hou and Li Mu.

In addition, Hsü Wei also wrote many articles and sent them to a number of influential political and military figures, such as Fang Feng-shih and Liang Meng-hung. All these people were closely related to Chang Chü-cheng. During his old age, Hsü Wei maintained a good relationship with Li Cheng-Hiang who was also an important political figure especially trusted by Chang Chü-cheng.

Judging from such information, we can assume that Hsü Wei's impression of Chang Chü-cheng could not have been too bad. However, Chang Chü-cheng's mind was filled with the thought of legalism; he disliked the scholars of other schools. Hsü Wei, as a student of Chi Pei and Yang Chi, was, therefore, neglected by Chang Chü-cheng. Because of Chang's unfavorable attitude toward Taoism and Taoists, Hsü Wei's works such as "Chin pai-lu lai o i: ("Dedicatory Memorials on Presenting the White Deer") also could not have been appreciated by Chang Chü-cheng.

2. Chang Yuan-pien (1538-1583). He was also a native of Shan-yin and received his chin-shih degree in 1571. His main work in existence is the Fan-ko ran-ju (Random Notes of the Fan-jin Academy). He was Hsü Wei's close friend who succeeded in getting Hsü Wei out of prison on the New Year's Eve of 1572. On the New Year's Day of 1573, Hsü Wei went to visit Chang Yuan-pien and his son to express his gratitude. One t'ai poem, composed by Hsü Wei, intended to congratulate Chang Yuan-pien's chuang-wan distinction in the examinations. According to some recent research, Hsü Wei also
cooperated with Chang Yün-pien in writing the K'uai-chi chih ("Local History of K'uai-chi"). His son, Chang Ju-lin, was the compiler of Hsü Wen-ch'ang 1-kao.

3. Ch'en Ho 陈鹤 (T. Ming-yeh 堪揚, H. Chiu-kao 丘皋, Hsü-ch'iao shan-jen 海樵山人). Ch'en was also from Shan-yin. He received his chü-jen degree in 1525. He also held a hereditary position in the Shao-hsing Wei 韶興衛 (Shao-hsing Guard). He was skillful in painting and the composition of ch'i poems and became the leader of the literary circle in Shao-hsing. Hsü Wei wrote a preface for Ch'en Ho's Hsi-k'ao yu-jin 息柯餘藝, a collection of Ch'en's ch'i poems. Later on, Ch'en Ho resigned his position and became a "shan-jen" 山人 ("hermit"). After his death in 1560, Hsü Wei composed an epitaph at the request of Ch'en Ho's son. From this epitaph, we know that Ch'en Ho had led a hermit's life for about thirty years. During his last four years, he stayed in Nanking and died there. Hsü Wei composed one poem expressing his grief and sympathy. In another of Hsü Wei's poems entitled "A Song for the New House of Ch'en Ho," we find the extent of this friendship with Ch'en Ho clearly stated.

Ch'en Ho is noted for his painting of flowers by the dramatic use of liquid ink. By imitating his style, Hsü Wei excelled Ch'en Ho in many ways and founded the so-called Ch'ing-t'eng hua-p'ai 青藤畫派 ("Green Ivy School of Painting"). It is clear Ch'en Ho had exerted a great influence upon Hsü Wei's literature and art.

4. Ch'en Shou-ching 陈守经 (H. Hsi-p'ing shan-jen 正平山人, Ch'en Chang-kung 陳長公, Ch'en Po-tzu 陳伯子, Ch'en Ta 陳大). Ch'en was a poet friend of Hsü Wei during his old age. From the existing works of Hsü Wei, we find more than ten poems related to
Ch'en Shou-ching. The contents of these poems are limited to themes such as rain, the rainy season, wine drinking, eating silver-fish, swimming-crabs, enjoying cherry blossoms, and so on. Some of Hsü Wei's poems, written for Ch'en Shou-ching, are merely literary games. For example, in a poem entitled "Han tao," ("Praying for the Drought"), Hsü Wei used the rhyme of going tune and literally piled up all kinds of meaningless words. This kind of writing goes against Hsü Wei's own poetic theory. However, it reveals a special style of Hsü Wei's poetry which he developed during his old age.

5. Ch'i Chi-kuang (T. Han-t'ang 南塘). Ch'i, the famous military general who defeated the Japanese pirates, came to know Hsü Wei while they were both serving under the leadership of Hu Tsung-hsien. Ch'i is noted for his knowledge of military affairs. Upon the great military victory over the Japanese pirates at Ningpo and Wen-chou area in 1561, Hsü Wei composed three "K'ai-k'o" ("Songs of Triumph") to congratulate Ch'i Chi-kuang.

6. Chu Kung-ch'ieh (T. Yin-ch'ung 允中). He was one of the "Ten Scholars of the Yüeh Area," and once served as prefect in P'ang-t'ae 彭澤 and T'ai-chou 泰州. After his retirement, he taught at Chi-shan 山. His son, Chu Keng 朱慶, was married to Ch'en Ho's daughter. Hsü Wei wrote a couplet as a gift to him.

7. Chu Ta-shou (T. Tuan-fu 端甫, H. Han-ming 南明, Lung-ch'üan 龍泉). Chu, another native of Shan-yin, received his chin-shih degree in 1557. His highest official rank was Vice-president of the Board of Rites. Hsü Wei and Chu Ta-shou became acquainted in Hang-chou around 1540. However, their friendship during the early years was not too close. Hsü Wei's two letters written to Chu Ta-shou were
simply pleas for help during his imprisonment.

In addition, three other poems written by Hsü Wei were nothing more than mediocre to entertain Chu Ta-shou. When Chu died in Peking in 1570, Hsü Wei composed an elegy to describe their friendship and the sorrow over his death.

According to the biography of Kuei Yu-kuang, which was written by Ch’ien Ch’tien-i, we find an anecdote informing us that both Hsü Wei and Chu Ta-shou appreciated an essay by Kuei Yu-kuang; they compared it to the work of Qu-yang Hsin. Although, we cannot find any poem or essay which has anything to do with Kuei Yu-kuang from the existing works of Hsü Wei, it is still possible that Hsü Wei and Chu Ta-shou together read the manuscript by which Kuei Yu-kuang received his chü-ien degree in 1540; and that both admired the great talent of Kuei Yu-kuang manifested therein.

8. Hsiao I (T. L5-ch’en女臣). He was the nephew of Hsiao Kung-feng, who served as T’i-hsieh fu-shih, an official position in educational administration, was also Hsü Wei’s best classmate in their early years.

9. Hsiao Mien (T. Chu-shan柱山). A student in the T’ai-hsiang 太学 (Imperial University), he was associated with Shen Lien and Ch’en Ho. He was a person who was involved in government affairs. Because of his relations with the Hsü family, Hsü Wei called him "nephew Hsiao."

10. Hu Tsung-hsien (胡宗憲). Hu, a native of Chi-hsi 稚溪, Anhui, received his chin-shih degree in 1538, and died in 1562. His relationship with Hsü Wei has already been discussed in Chapter 1.
11. Ko T'ao-chung 葛韜仲 and his nephew Ko Ching-wen 葛景文.
Both were from Shang-yü in Chekiang and Hsü Wei's close friends in his last years. Both were accomplished in poetry.

While Hsü Wei was in prison, they visited quite frequently to comfort him and bring him food. At the same time, they also tried to put together the scattered works of Hsü Wei and promised to write a preface for the publication of the collection.

Both Ko T'ao-chung and Ko Ching-wen were from famous families. Owing to their upright and unyielding characters, they tried to retreat from the contemporary world and became hermit-scholars.

After Hsü Wei was freed from his imprisonment, he compiled a complete collection of his own writings himself. In the extant edition of this collection, the preface written by Ko T'ao-chung and Ko Ching-wen is not included. But there are more than ten poems in it manifesting the close friendship between Hsü Wei and the two members of the Ko family. And we may have a glimpse of their personalities through these poems.

12. Li Ch'üan-fang 李春芳 (T. Shih-lu 石齡). Li was from Hsing-hua, in Yangchow, and was the chuang-tsien, ranking first in the chin-shih degree examination of 1547. Later on, he held such high official ranks, as President of the Board of Rites, and Grand Scholar of the Chung-chi Palace. Because of his excellent writing of sacrificial odes, he earned Emperor Shih-tsung's attention.

After the downfall of Hsü Tsung-hsien, Hsü Wei went to Peking and became a guest at Li Ch'üan-fang's office in 1563. It is believed that Li invited Hsü Wei to become an assistant to draft sacrificial writings. But because of his being unable to finish his assigned works on time, Hsü Wei was dismissed from his position shortly
thereafter. A letter and a poem by Hsü Wei describe his relationship with Li Ch’un-fang.

13. Li Ju-sung (李如松). He was son of the famous general, Li Ch’eng-liang, was himself a meritorious general. He became acquainted with Hsü Wei in 1576 while they were in Peking. The relationship between Hsü Wei and the Li family can be gleaned through Hsü Wei’s own writings.

From such writings, we learn that Li Ju-sung was very friendly with Hsü Wei. Owing to the money and gifts sent by him, Hsü Wei was able to subsist. Later on, Hsü Wei introduced his second son, Hsü Chih, to Li Ju-sung hoping to obtain a job for him at the office of Li Ju-sung.

During Hsü Wei’s old age, Li Ju-sung continued to be friendly and sent him various kinds of gifts. It was also through the financial support of Li Ju-sung that the first publication of Hsü Wei’s works was made possible.

In May of 1592, Japanese invaders, led by Toyotomi Hideyoshi 細秀吉, attacked the Korean Peninsula and soon occupied Seoul and Pyongyang. Li Ju-sung was appointed commander-in-chief of the Chinese expeditionary force in December and completely defeated the Japanese in April, 1593. Upon hearing the news of military victory, Hsü Wei composed a poem to commemorate this event. In the same year, Hsü Wei died at the age of seventy-three. Five years later, 1598, Li Ju-sung died during a campaign against some local aborigines.

Li Ju-sung is not only noted as a famous military general, but noted also as a great painter. Judging from the numerous poems composed by Hsü Wei, we know that their friendship was built upon
their common interests and their sense of righteousness and honor.

14. Li Yu-ch'iu 李有秋 (T. Tzu-sui 子遂, H. Sui-ch'ing 唐卿). Li was from Chien-yang 建陽, in Fukien. Starting from 1547, Hsü Wei began to study with Chi Pen. In Hsü Wei's opinion, among the disciples of Chi Pen, the most friendly and most respected one was Li Yu-ch'iu.

After Li Yu-ch'iu returned to the south, he and Hsü Wei's friendship continued being maintained through the exchange of poems and articles. In February, 1579, after years of separation, Li Yu-ch'iu came from Fukien to visit Hsü Wei. Hsü Wei, an old man at the age of fifty-nine then, was deeply touched. This particular emotional boost influenced Hsü Wei's illness favorably. After Li's departure, Hsü Wei wrote him a letter in which he expressed his deepest respect for the learning and virtue of Li Yu-ch'iu.

Once Li sent to Hsü Wei a precious silver pheasant as a gift. However, it was killed later by a wild fox. To express his sorrow, Hsü Wei composed three poems.

Later on, Hsü and Li met again in Peking where they traveled to the Pi-yün su 藍雲寺 (Temple of the Azure Clouds), and exchanged many poems. Hearing the death of Li Yu-ch'iu, Hsü Wei composed an elegy to express his grief.

15. Liu Wen 柳文 (T. Pin-chung 彭仲). Liu, a native of Shao-hsing, is one of the so-called "Three Distinguished People of the Yüeh Area," as well as the "Ten Scholars of the Yüeh Area." He was a friend of Hsü Wei and Shen Lien. Their early friendship is evidenced in an essay written by Hsü Wei.

In 1539, Liu Wen participated in the compilation of Shan-yin hsien-chih. As a Kung-sheng ("Senior Licentiate"), he served as an
educational administrator in Kao-yu 高郵 and Wu-yüan 吳郡. Later on, he became the magistrate of Tu-ch'ang 鄱昌 in Kiangsi and died in 1574 at the age of sixty-one. Hsü Wei wrote an epitaph for him.

Three existing poems by Hsü Wei are related to Liu Wen. The first one is merely a friendly correspondence. The second asks for help during Hsü Wei's imprisonment. The third expresses his wish to visit Liu after being released from prison. None of these poems, however, can reveal any true emotion or sincere friendship.

16. Lü Tui-ting 吕對亭 (T. Kuang-sheng 光升, H. Lien-feng 藤峰, Tui-ting shan-jen 對亭山人). He was from Hsin-ch'ang 新昌, and a younger brother of Lü Kuang-hsün 昌洵, who once served as the Minister of Defense. His younger brother, Lü Kuang-yu 昌裕 (T. Cheng-pin 正寗) was a famous "knight-errant" in Chekiang. All three were close friends of Hsü Wei.

17. Mao K'un 姆坤 (T. In-men 廬門, H. Shun-fu 顺甫). Mao was a native of Kuei-an in Chekiang, receiving his chin-shih degree in 1533. His highest rank in official service was An-ch'a-ssu fu-shih 接司副使, (Associate Surveillance Commissioner).

According to the record of T'ao Wang-ling, at a drinking party, Mao K'un read an unidentified article which was actually written by Hsü Wei, and assumed it to be the work of T'ang Shun-chih.

Hsü Wei wrote two poems and one letter to Mao K'un. The style of these works is quite extraordinary and difficult to understand.

Mao K'un, an intimate friend of Shen Lien, provided help to the latter during Shen's exile. Later on, he helped Shen Hsiang 沈襄, son of Shen Lien, to prove the innocence of his father. During the imprisonment of Hsü Tsung-hsien, Mao K'un also attempted to rescue him.
Although Mao T'ien and Hsü Wei had similar interests and dispositions, because of their different social positions and financial background, their relationship was none-too-close.

18. Shen Lien沈隄(T. Ch'un-fu純甫). Shen was from K'un-chi, a 1538 chin-shih graduate, and became a high-ranking official in the Chin-i Wei 锦衣衛 (Embroidered-uniform Guard). Because of his impeachment of the "ten big crimes" of Grand Secretary Yen Sung and his son, Shen Lien was exiled to Ch'ia-ha-erh where he continued his anti-Yen activities. As a result, Yen Sung, with the support from governor-general Yang Shun 揚順, sentenced Shen Lien to death. Shen Lien's innocence, however, was clearly manifested during the beginning years of the Img-ch'ing 亁庳 (1567-1572) period.

In Shen Lien's opinion, Hsü Wei was an excellent writer. During the three-year mourning period for his parents at home, beginning in 1544, Shen Lien developed a closer relationship with Hsü Wei, and became the most influential friend of Hsü. He married a lady from the Hsü family. Some poems written by both of them reveal their friendship and a leisurely life they enjoyed during this period.

When Shen Lien was exiled to Ch'ia-ha-erh in 1551, Hsü Wei wrote a poem expressing his sympathy. Four years later, Hsü Wei wrote another poem persuading Shen Lien to be cautious.

After the unjust execution of Shen Lien and his two young sons in 1557, Hsü Wei composed a play, The Mad Drummer's Three Songs of Hsi-yeung to protest the cruelty of Yen Sung. Some essays were also written by Hsü Wei to lament the death of Shen Lien when his innocence was clearly proven.
19. Shen Ming-ch'en (T. Chia-tse嘉則). Shen was from Yin-hsien鄞縣, in Chekiang. He and Hsu Wei served together under Hu Tsung-hsien. After the death of Hu Tsung-hsien, Shen Ming-ch'en aided in the redressing of Hu's grievance.

Judging from the numerous poems describing their friendship, we can assume that Shen Ming-ch'en and Hsu Wei were very close.

Shen Ming-ch'en is also known as a great poet. His most important works are his more than seven-thousand poems and some other miscellaneous writings.

Throughout their lives, the friendship between Hsu Wei and Shen Ming-ch'en remained unchanged. This is manifested in Hsu's and Shen's poems.

20. Shen Hsiang (T. Shu-ch'eng叔城). He was the son of Shen Lien, and regarded Hsu Wei as his "uncle," but it probably would be more accurate to regard them as peers.

After the downfall of Yen Sung, Shen Hsiang compiled an anthology in memory of his deceased father and tried to redress his grievances. Two poems and one essay were composed by Hsu Wei to comfort Shen Hsiang before the verification of his father's innocence. From three other poems by Hsu Wei, we know that Shen Hsiang sent a Japanese-made sabre to him as a gift. Later on, Shen Hsiang was appointed to an official position as compensation for the unjust death of his father. He became skillful in plum-blossom painting.

21. T'ang Hsien-tsu (T. I-jeng義仍, H. Jo-shih若士, Ch'ing-yüan tao-jen請遠道人). He was from Lin-ch'uan臨川 in Kiangsi and he received his chin-shih degree in 1583. Both he and Hsu are well-known playwrights in the late Ming period. However, Hsu Wei
is about twenty-nine years older than T'ang Hsien-ts'ai.

Hsü Wei and T'ang had similar backgrounds. First of all, their teachers were related to the philosophical school of Wang Yang-ming. Secondly, they both had independent and extravert personalities. Their sincere friendship is manifested in their poems and letters. In addition, Hsü Wei compiled an annotated edition of the T'ang Hai-jo

we chi-yu-tsa'o 湯海若間雜草, an anthology of T'ang’s poems.

In praising Hsü Wei’s plays, T'ang Hsien-tsu said, "Four Shrieks of the Gibbon" are the "Flying General" (an accomplished figure) in the field of dramatic literature. I have tried several times to perform these plays. How can I find Hsü Wei again so I can borrow his tongue?"

Judging from these, it is clear that their friendship was a genuine one. Therefore, it is tragic that when T’ang Hsien-ts’ai was appointed as a prefect in Chekiang in 1593, Hsü Wei died in the same year.

22. T’ao T’ung-ling 陶桐齡(T. Chou-wang周望, H. Shih-kuei 石 玺). T’ao was a native of Shan-yin. He wrote the famous biography of Hsü Wei, and a preface to the Hsü Wen-ch’ang san-chi. He had the official position of Fan-lin yüan pien-hsüi 翰林院編修.

23. Ting Hsiao-fu 丁肖甫. Ting was a friend of Hsü Wei during their early school years, who studied techniques of the “eight-legged essay” together with Hsü Wei. Subsequently, they both became the students of Chi Fan.

In a preface written to Ting Hsiao-fu, Hsü Wei commented very objectively upon the qualities of Ting’s poems. In addition, Hsü Wei also composed other poems related to Ting Hsiao-fu. But, all these works appear to lack true emotion and profundity.
24. **Tung Pin** (T. Yung-chün 唐均). Tung was from Wu-ch'eng 烏程 and he received his chin-shih degree in 1541, and became President of the Board of Rites and Reader of the Hanlin Academy.

It was through the appreciation and introduction of Tung Pin that Hsi Wei's "Dedicatory Memorial for Presenting the White Deer" was accepted by Hu Tsung-hsien.

25. **Wang Yin** (T. Chung-fang仲房, H. Liang-ch'ing亮卿, Shih-yüeh shan-jen十岳山人). Wang was from She-hsien雪巖 of Anhwei. Even during his early ages, he was noted for his military and literary talents. After receiving his hsün-ts'ai degree, he went to K'ai-feng開封, where he studied poetry with Li Heng-yang. Later on, he learned the art of fighting and military strategies at the Shao-lin Temple and traveled to many famous mountains to find the drug of immortality. When the war against Japanese invaders broke out, he became a staff member under Hu Tsung-hsien, where he presumably made acquaintance with Hsi Wei.

Judging from many essays and poems written by Hsi Wei, we know that he had a very high esteem for Wang Yin's military and literary talent.

26. **Wu Ch'eng-ch'i** (T. Ting-an鼎庵). Wu was a native of Hsin-nings休亭 in Anhwei, served as a District Police-master and Gaol-warden of K'uai-chi and assistant sub-prefect of Shao-hsing. As a very low-ranking civil official, he was noted for his military courage in defeating the Japanese pirates. In praising his heroic deeds, Hsi Wei composed the most famous "K'an-chan k'ai-ko," ("Songs of Triumph at Mt. K'an") and many other poems. In these works, one may find much valuable historical source material.
In addition, Hsü Wei also composed some other works to celebrate the eightieth birthday of Wu Ch'eng-ch'i's mother. The chastity and filial piety of the Wu family have been clearly described in Hsü Wei's writings.

At the age of fifty-two, when Hsü Wei was released from prison, he composed a poem to thank Wu Ch'eng-ch'i for his gift of some ink made in Hui-chou in Anhwei.

27. Wu Tui 吳見 (T. Chun-tse 吳見). Wu was from Shan-yin, a 1560 chin-chih. He and Hsü Wei were good friends while studying together. He was appointed Right Vice-president of the Board of War in 1574. Two years later, Hsü Wei was invited to serve at Wu's office where he composed some essays. From Hsü Wei's letter to Wu Tui, we learn that, he resigned his position within a year, because he was not accustomed to the official life in the office.

In 1577, when Wu Tui was appointed Tsung-tu (Supreme Commander) of the Shansi area, Hsü Wei composed a poem to congratulate his inauguration. At this time, Hsü Wei had already left his position at Wu's office.

Wu Tui later became Junior Guardian of the Heir-apparent and President of the Board of War. He retired from official life in 1583.

28. Yang K'o 楊珂 (T. Mi-t'u 楊珂, 1502-1572). A native of Mü-yao 慕堯, his calligraphy exerted great influence upon Hsü Wei. According to the Mü-yao hsien-chih, Yang K'o imitated the calligraphy of the great Chin 晉 masters and gradually developed his own style. Hsü Wei emulated the style of Yang K'o and formed some characteristics which are distinctively his own. They were equally famous in calligraphy.
29. Yeh Tzu-su 葛子肅. Yeh was Hsü Wei's old classmate who was versed in poetry. In a preface written for Yeh Tzu-su (FTSC I, p. 1211), Hsü Wei gave his favorable judgment of the arts and contents of Yeh's poetry. Hsü Wei also wrote several poems as a gift to Yeh Tzu-su.

When Yeh Tzu-su died in Peking in 1581, Hsü Wei, an old man at the age of sixty, then composed a poem to mourn the death of his old friend.

30. Yu Ta-yu 俞大猷 (T. Chih-fu 志輔). Yu was a native of Chin-chiang, with a military chin-shih degree, he once served as Right Military-Governor. The relationship between Yu Ta-yu and Hu Tsung-hsien, however, was not close because Yu was once imprisoned owing to Hu Tsung-hsien's prejudiced report to the throne. Hsü Wei had an opportunity to become acquainted with Yu Ta-yu when serving under Hu. He also composed a poem for Yu Ta-yu praising of Yu's military prowess in defeating the Japanese pirates.

C. His Disciples: Unlike those in the above two categories, the names of Hsü Wei's disciples have not been included in his "Tzu-chu ch'i-p'u." From Hsü Wei's various writings, I have found the following eight persons to be most important under this category:

1. Ch'en Ju-yuan 陳汝元 (T. T'ai-i 太乙, H. Ch'i-hou 起侯, Jan-li hsien-k'o 燕禮客). A native of K'uai-chi, he once served as Department Magistrate. His studio was named "Han san kuan 漢三園." Although his family was very poor, he managed to study the classics and learned ch'i poems and calligraphy well. His dramatic writings are no longer in existence except for one tsa-chü entitled, Fun-ch'ien ch'ai
As a disciple of Hsü Wei, Ch'en Ju-yüan was one of the three important editors of the *Hsü Wen-ch'ang san-chi*.

2. Liu Yüan-hu 柳元潚. He was the son of Liu Wen, and he formally requested Hsü Wei to be his teacher. This is verified by one of Hsü Wei's own poems. Judging from the fact that Liu exchanged some antiques of the T'ai-k'ang 太康 period (280-289 A.D.) for two of Hsü Wei's paintings, it is evident that his admiration for Hsü Wei was truly great.

A short letter was written by Hsü Wei to Liu Yüan-hu in 1580, when the former was on his fourth trip to Peking. In addition to this, there are two more poems composed for Liu Yüan-hu. They are, however, written in a light-hearted vein.

3. Shang Chun 商濛 (T. Ching-chen 景哲). A son of Shang Yenyang 商應陽, he was also a disciple of Hsü Wei. He was a native of K'uai-chi. He had pledged to compile the collected works of Hsü Wei, and the 1600 edition of the *Hsü Wen-ch'ang san-chi* was made possible through his financial support.

4. Shih P' an 史粲 (T. Shu-k'ao 投考 1532-1630). A native of Shan-yin, he was Hsü Wei's nephew, but their age difference was small. He learned prose, poetry, and painting from Hsü Wei. According to Huang Tsung-hsi 黃宗羲, Shih P'an's calligraphy and painting were so similar to those of Hsü Wei that even Hsü Wei himself could hardly tell the difference.

As a student, Shih P'an had set a limit to his field of specialization. On Hsi's paintings sent to Shih P'an, we found three poems describing in some detail the art and skill of Hsü Wei's painting.
In order to please his uncle, Shih P'an often presented wine and food to him. A poem composed by Hsü Wei, at the age of seventy, was to express his thanks for the oranges which his nephew had sent. Two additional poems, with unknown dates, are also written for Shih P'an.

Shih P'an is also noted for his ch'ü poems, which are similar in style to those appearing in Hsü Wei's Four Shrieks of the Gibbon. In addition, he also wrote thirteen ch'üen-ch'üi plays of refined quality. It is unfortunate that of these, only one is still extant. His other works include three tsa-chü and some miscellaneous writings. As a friend of Wang Chi-te, Shih P'an's biographical information may be found in Wang's book on drama, the Ch'ü-pi 曲律.

5. Wang Chi-te 王際德, (T. Po-liang伯良, H. Fang Chu-sheng方諸生, Ch'in-lou wei-shih幸樓外史). A native of Shan-yin, he was fond of music during his early years. Later on, he became a famed writer of ch'üi poems.

Coming from the same locality as Hsü Wei, he started his classical learning with Hsü Wei and was deeply appreciated by the latter. Besides his ch'ü poems and works on music, Wang Chi-te also composed five tsa-chü in which only the Ten wang-hou 王后 ("The Male Queen") is in existence.

Being a disciple of Hsü Wei, he made very favorable comments on Hsü Wei's plays. Because he was the only person who actually witnessed Hsü Wei composing the Four Shrieks of the Gibbon, we may base his note to decide that these four plays were composed between 1555 and 1557.

After Hsü Wei was released from prison, his three students, Wang T'u 王圃, Wu Hsi, and Ma T'æ 馬策, accompanied him to visit a place named Wu-hsieh 烏池. The next year, Wu Hsi and Ma T'æ followed Hsü
Wei to visit Mt. T'ien-mu 天目山. The following is a brief biographical sketch of these three disciples:

6. Ma Ts'e 马思 (T. Ts'e-chih 謝之). Ma began study with Hsü Wei in 1564. As a disciple of Hsü Wei, he often copied manuscripts for Hsü Wei.

7. Wang T'u 王 (T. Tao-chien 道堅). His study with Hsü Wei started in 1564. Upon the death of Wang's mother, Hsü Wei composed an elegy for her. Gleaning through the information contained in Hsü Wei's poems, we know that Wang's poetry, calligraphy, and painting were all quite accomplished.

8. Wu Hsi 吳 (T. Lu-t'ing 鹿庭). A native of Shan-yin, he was the son of Wu Wen 吳文, a chivalrous gentleman. In 1581, Hsü Wei composed an epitaph after the death of Wu Wen. In another poem, Hsü Wei encouraged Wu Hsi to exert himself in the lu-wen movement. Wu Hsi lived to be more than eighty years old and became a friend of Chang Tai. Because of the encouragement from Wu Hsi, Chang Tai decided to publish the scattered works of Hsü Wei.

Having collected information on the known associates of Hsü Wei, we can form a somewhat clearer picture of this literary man himself.

In the category of his teachers, we can find certain special features of those people. First of all, most of them are very erudite and well-educated. For example, T'ang Shun-chih, Hsüeh Ying-ch'i, and Chi Fen all had their chin-chih degrees. Secondly, they are either literary writers or great thinkers. Chi Fen and Wang Chi are noted for their unique philosophies and thoughts; T'ang Shun-chih, Hsüeh Ying-ch'i, P'an K'o-ch'ing are all great writers. Ch'ien P'ien and Chiang, the Prefect of Fu-kou are people with the Taoist philosophy.
The personalities, philosophies, and literary backgrounds of these people could not but greatly influence Hsu Wei. It appears that Hsu Wei has picked up both the good and bad elements from them.

Among the friends he has been associated with we can also find certain general features. First, most of them were literary men. Some of these, like Li Yu-ch'iu, Ting Hsiao-fu, and Yeh Tzu-su were his classmates; their relationships remained unchanged through the years. Individuals like Chang Yuan-pien, Ch'en Ho, Liu Wen, and T'ang Hsien-ts'ai were all noted for their literary writings. Even Shen King-ch'en, Ko T'ao-chung, and Ch'en Shou-ch'ing were litterateurs versed in poetry.

Besides the above-mentioned pure-literary people, we can find another category of friends—those who received excellent literary education but later became government officials. For example, Chu Ta-shou, Mao K'un, Shen Lien, Tung Pin, and Wu Tui all had their chin-shih degrees, and Li Ch'un-fang was a chih-shih-wien. Some of them actually held very high positions in the Ming central government. Indeed Hsu Wei, at a certain juncture had harbored similar hopes to achieve a career as an official by becoming friends of these persons. But because of his stubborn personality and his failure in the civil service examination at a higher level, he could never realize his ambition.

Another group of Hsu Wei's friends were talented people with a profound knowledge of military tactics and strategies. The national heroes and military generals like Yang Yin, Li Ju-sung, Wu Ch'eng-ch'i, Chi Chi-kung, and Yü Ta-yu, fall into this category. Because of Hsu Wei's admiration of heroes and his deep-rooted interest in military affairs, these people were respected by him.
Among the disciples of Hsü Wei, the most important is probably Wang Chi-te and Shih P'an. The former learned drama, and the latter studied the art of calligraphy and painting with him. Regarding other disciples only Ch'en Ju-yüan, Shang Chun, and Wu Hsi are really worth noting because they were involved in the editing and publication of Hsü Wei's collected works.

Although Hsü Wei did not have many disciples to carry on his unique literary style and his theory of literary writing, his influence upon the later literary movement was great and profound. Literary writers, like Yüan Hung-tao and Chang Tai, of the late Ming and Cheng Hsieh, and Chin Jen-jui of the early Ch'ing were in one way or the other inspired and influenced by Hsü Wei.

In the discussion of the literary trends of the late Ming period, we must not neglect the value and position of Hsü Wei. The purpose of this appendix is to make a composite sketch of the social circle in which Hsü Wei was active; I have done so by identifying as many of his acquaintances as possible.

In an abbreviated version of the information gathered above, a table is given on the following page which will show the major figures who were either associates or contemporaries of Hsü Wei.
TABLE 3:
The Major Contemporary Figures Around Hsü Wei

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Field of Interest or Profession</th>
<th>Native Place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chi Fen 季本</td>
<td>1485-1563</td>
<td>philosophy</td>
<td>Shan-yin  山陰</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hsieh Shih-ch' en 謝時臣</td>
<td>1488-?</td>
<td>painting</td>
<td>Wu-hsien 吳縣</td>
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<td>Shen Shih 沈仕</td>
<td>1488-?</td>
<td>painting</td>
<td>Jen-bo hsien 仁和縣</td>
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<td>Wang Ch'ung 王寵</td>
<td>1494-1573</td>
<td>calligraphy</td>
<td>Ch'ang-chou  長洲</td>
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<td>Hsieh Chen 謝榛</td>
<td>1495-1575</td>
<td>poetry and prose</td>
<td>Lin-ch' ing 靈清</td>
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<td>Lu Chih 陸治</td>
<td>1496-1576</td>
<td>painting</td>
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<td>Wen Pi'eng 文彭</td>
<td>1498-1573</td>
<td>painting</td>
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<td>Hsüeh Ying-ch' ih  薛應旂</td>
<td>1500-?</td>
<td>scholar and official</td>
<td>Wu-chin 武進</td>
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<td>Wen Chia 文嘉</td>
<td>1501-1583</td>
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<td>painting</td>
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<td>Yang K'o 楊珂</td>
<td>1502-?</td>
<td>calligraphy</td>
<td>Yu-yao 鄱姚</td>
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<td>Yü Ta-yu 俞大猷</td>
<td>1503-1579</td>
<td>general</td>
<td>Chin-chiang  鈕江</td>
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<td>Kuei Yu-kuang 歸有光</td>
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<td>poetry and prose</td>
<td>Wu-hsien 吳縣</td>
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<td>Year</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Province</td>
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<td>1507-1557</td>
<td>Shen Lien</td>
<td>poetry, prose and official</td>
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<td>1507-1560</td>
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<td>1509-1574</td>
<td>Huang Chi-shui 黃姬水</td>
<td>poetry, prose and calligraphy</td>
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<td>1510-1584</td>
<td>Li Ch'un-fang 李春芳</td>
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<td>Hsing-hua Kiangsu</td>
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<td>1512-1601</td>
<td>Mao K'un 茅坤</td>
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<td>Kuei-an Chekiang</td>
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<td>1514-1570</td>
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<td>poetry and prose</td>
<td>Li-ch'eng Shantung</td>
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<td>1516-?</td>
<td>Ch'en Ho 陳鶴</td>
<td>painting and poetry</td>
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<td>1521-1593</td>
<td>Hsü Wei 徐渭</td>
<td>poetry, prose, drama, painting</td>
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<td>1525-1590</td>
<td>Hsiang Huan-pien 項元汴</td>
<td>art collection</td>
<td>Chia-hsing Chekiang</td>
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<td>1525-1582</td>
<td>Chang Ch'i-cheng 張居正</td>
<td>official</td>
<td>Chiang-ling Hupei</td>
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<tr>
<td>1526-1615</td>
<td>Li Ch'eng-liang 李成梁</td>
<td>general</td>
<td>Korea</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Wang Shih-chen 王世貞</td>
<td>poetry and prose</td>
<td>T'ai-ts'ang Kiangsu</td>
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<td>1527-1602</td>
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<td>poetry and prose</td>
<td>Chin-chiang Fukien</td>
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<td>Shih P'an 史槃</td>
<td>1532-?</td>
<td>calligraphy and painting</td>
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<td>Wang Chih-teng 王祚登</td>
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<td>Chiao Hsing 焦竑</td>
<td>1541-1620</td>
<td>poetry, prose and scholar</td>
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<td>En Hsien-ch'eng 顧憲成</td>
<td>1550-1612</td>
<td>scholar</td>
<td>Wu-hsi 無錫 Kiangsu</td>
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<td>T'ang Hsien-tsu 湯顯祖</td>
<td>1550-1616</td>
<td>poetry, prose and drama</td>
<td>Lin-ch'uan 蓮川 Kiangai</td>
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<td>Hsing T'ung 邢侗</td>
<td>1551-1612</td>
<td>calligraphy and painting</td>
<td>Lin-i 臨邑 Shantung</td>
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<td>Tung Ch'i-ch'ang 蒲其昌</td>
<td>1555-1637</td>
<td>calligraphy and painting</td>
<td>Hua-t'ing 華亭 Shensi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yuan Hsing-tso 袁宏道</td>
<td>1568-1610</td>
<td>poetry and prose</td>
<td>Kung-an 公安 Hpei</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chang Tai 張岱</td>
<td>1597-1684?</td>
<td>prose, history</td>
<td>Shao-hsing 紹興 Chekiang</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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