K'ung Shang-Jen and His *T'ao-Hua Shan*

A Dramatist's Reflections on the Ming-Ch'ing Dynastic Transition

Chun-shu Chang*
and
Hsüeh-lun Chang

K'ung Shang-jen (1648–1718) was born in Ch'ü-fu, Shantung Province, and was a descendant of Confucius (551–470 B.C.) in the sixty-fourth generation. In his days, the K'ung clan was so big and the clansmen so numerous that his being a descendant of the Sage gave him no special privilege.[1] Yet K'ung Shang-jen distinguished himself from his fellow clansmen for his broad learning and special interest in and knowledge of the rites and music. Thus he made the most of being a descendant of the Sage by obtaining the opportunity to lecture on the Classics in the imperial presence when the Emperor K'ang-hsi (r. 1662–1722) happened to stop at Ch'ü-fu in the year 1684. Impressed by K'ung Shang-jen's many talents, the emperor chose him from among the three hundred and eleven degree-holders of the K'ung clan (three hundred of them obtained the elementary degree and K'ung Shang-jen was one of them) and gave him special attention.[2] The emperor later granted him the favor of being a *po-shih* (Doctor) in the Imperial Academy. This was a turning point in K'ung's life; he henceforth concluded his quiet and seclusive life in his native place and left for the national capital, Peking, in 1685. His masterpiece, *T'ao-hua shan*, was completed during his stay in Peking.

A study of K'ung Shang-jen's life will help us better understand the background and creative process of his work. We shall begin with the important events in his life before taking up the subject matter of the *T'ao-hua shan*.

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* Professor of History at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan. The present paper is the sixth chapter of a forth-coming book, *Literature and Society in Ming-Ch'ing China: The Litterateurs and the Dynastic Transition*, which has been prepared with the assistance of faculty research grants from the Rackham School of Graduate Studies and the Center for Chinese Studies, both of the University of Michigan.

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[1] According to K'ung Shang-jen's own record, there were about ten thousand clansmen gathered at the sacrifice to ancestors in Confucius' Temple in the year 1684. For details, see K'ung Shang-jen, *Ch'u-shan i-shu chi* (1685) in *K'ung Shang-jen shih-wen chi*, ed. by Wang Wei-lin (Peking: Chung-hua Shu-chü, 1962), Vol. 3 (pp. 425-438), p. 426.

[2] For details, see K'ung Shang-jen's *Ch'u-shan i-shu chi*.

According to K'ung Shang-jen's biographical sources,[3] he had lived a very quiet and seclusive life up to the year 1682 when he was invited by K'ung Yü-ch'i (1657–1723), the Holy Duke *(Yen-sheng kung)* by lineal right of Confucius' descendants, to take charge of the funeral service of the latter's wife. It seems by this time that K'ung had already won recognition within the K'ung clan for his literary talent and knowledge of the rites and music. In the same year he was charged to work on the *K'ung-tzu shih-chia p'u* (Family Records of Confucius and His Descendants). In 1683 he completed a new history of Ch'üeh-li (Confucius' birthplace), entitled *Ch'üeh-li hsin-chih.* That year he also assumed the responsibility of selecting seven hundred clansmen to instruct them in the rites and music for making sacrifices to ancestors in Confucius' Temple. The long-prepared ceremony was held in the fall of 1684, and it was a tremendous event for the K'ung clan. Ten thousand clansmen participated in the sacrifice service. It seems that K'ung Shang-jen's service in the ceremony firmly established his reputation for broad learning in the K'ung clan. Later in the same year, when the Emperor K'ang-hsi stopped at Ch'ü-fu on his return from the south, K'ung Shang-jen was recommended to lecture on the Classics in the royal presence. His services won him royal recognition, and he was made a doctor in the Imperial Academy. In 1685, K'ung Shang-jen left for Peking.

When K'ung Shang-jen first left home for Peking, he was full of high hopes and felt that all his dreams of serving his country would be fulfilled. He believed that "the scholars in the Han and T'ang periods who entered the government [to shape the national policy] by way of their classical accomplishments were all granted the post of doctor."[4] But he soon found out that for him this was not the case. In the capital the emperor seemed far-away and unreachable.[5] Besides, the post of a doctor in the Imperial Academy was not as important as he had imagined. He was unoccupied most of the time. No one consulted with him about any important governmental business, to say nothing of participating in shaping the national policy. Deeply disappointed, he wrote many poems to vent his feelings. In his collections of poems, we find that most of those written in the period 1685–1686 are pessimistic in

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[3] The important biographical sources on K'ung Shang-jen are as follows: K'ung Chi-fen, *Ch'üeh-li wen-hsien k'ao* (Reprint. Taipei: Chung-kuo Wen-hsien, 1966), Vol. 4, p. 1632; K'ung Shang-jen, *K'ung Shang-jen shih-wen chi* (1962), pp. 425–438; Chang Wei-p'ing, *Kuo-ch'ao shih-jen cheng-lüeh* (Prefaced 1819, Ch'ao-hua-chai ed.), Ch. 13, pp. 8a-8b; Li Huan, *Kuo-ch'ao ch'i-hsien lei-cheng* (Reprint. Taipei: Wen-hai ch'u-pan she, 1966), p. 5669; Hsü Shih-ch'ang, *Yen Li shih-ch'eng chi* (Tientsin: Hsü-shih ed.), *chüan* 6, pp. 14a-14b; Chi I-feng, *Yen-chou fu-chih hsü-pien* (1719 ed.) *chüan* 16; Ch'en Wan-nai "K'ung Tung-t'ang hsien-sheng nien-p'u kao," *Chung-shan hsüeh-shu wen-hua chi-k'an*, Vol. 5 (1970), pp. 651-742; *idem*, *K'ung Shang-jen yen-chiu* (Taipei: Shang-wu yin-shu kuan, 1971); Jung Chao-tsu, "K'ung Shang-jen nien-p'u," *Ling-nan hsüeh-pao*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (April 1934), pp. 1-86; Arthur Hummel (ed.), *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period* (Reprint: Taipei: Ch'eng-wen ch'u-pan she, 1967), pp. 434–435; K'ung Shang-jen, *T'ao-hua shan* (Peking, 1961 ed.), pp. 24–27 ("Ch'ien-yen"); Shonoya On (trans.), *Tōka sen* (Tokyo, 1922), pp. 3–6 ("Introduction"); Ima Mitsu (trans.), *Tōka sen* (Tokyo, 1926), pp. 1–3 ("Introduction"), which is also a modern Japanese translation of Shinoya On's piece. See also K'ung Shang-jen, *K'ung tzu shih-chia p'u* (Taipei: Chung-yang t'u-shu kuan, 1969 reprint of 1683 ed., 3 vols), Vol. I, pp. 1–98; Vol. III, pp. 1675-1680. The *K'ung-tz'u shih-chia p'u* was completed in 24 *chüan* in 1683 and printed in ten *ts'e* in 1684.

[4] K'ung Shang-jen, *K'ung Shang-jen shih-wen chi* (1962), Vol. 3, p. 438.

[5] *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, pp. 5, 7. Two poems show K'ung's feelings toward the unreachable emperor: "I-ch'ou wei-chung po-men ho Wang Hsien-yin yun" (Vol. 1, p. 5) and "Hsü Ku-kung tz'u" (Vol. 1, p. 7).

nature.[6] In these poems, we often find that whenever he mentions his post, he describes it as "unoccupied," "nothing to do," "poorly paid," "obscured and neglected," and the like. The disillusion and feelings of non-fulfillment are everywhere in his lines.

In 1686 K'ung Shang-jen was appointed to assist Sun Tsai-feng, then Vice-President of the Board of Public Works, in conservation work on the Yellow River. He stayed at the river conservation work for about four years. During this time his experience in official life was even worse; the corrupt and inefficient bureaucracy delayed and confused the urgent conservation work, making of it total chaos. Again finding himself with nothing to do, K'ung Shang-jen wrote poems to vent his feelings. He wrote seven *chüan* of poems (totaling 644) in this period (1686–1689), which, together with three *chüan* of essays (totaling 46) and three *chüan* of letters (totaling 222), are collectively known as the *Collection of Poems, Essays, and Letters Written in Yangchow (Hu-Hai chi).*[7] The *Hu-Hai chi* is very important as a source for the study of K'ung Shang-jen's life. It tells us the significant events of K'ung's life from 1686 to 1689, the places he went to, the people he met, and other important information of a biographical nature. This is especially significant to our study of *T'ao-hua shan,* for the plot of this drama is laid in Nanking and Yangchow, where K'ung Shang-jen personally visited during this period. Moreover, the characters of this drama are all names of real persons whose stories were still vividly told in the period when K'ung Shang-jen visited these areas. For example, through the letters in the *Hu-Hai chi,* we learn that K'ung Shang-jen made acquaintance with several famous Ming loyalists, such as Mao Hsiang (1611–1693) — better known as Mao P'i-chiang; Tsung Yüan-ting (1620–1698); Kung Hsien (19617–1688) — better known as Kung Pan-ch'ien (the painter); and Fei Mi (1625–1701).[8] Thus modern scholars tend to view the period 1686-1689, when K'ung stayed in the south, as the formative years of his masterpiece. Judging from his own record, the *Hu-Hai chi,* K'ung Shang-jen had a most eventful and colorful life during this period. He met many interesting and talented poets, painters, artisans, and scholars in Nanking and Yangchow, which were the capitals of the theatrical and literary world in the early

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[6] K'ung Shang-jen, *K'ung Shang-jen shih-wen chi* (1962), Vol. 1, pp. 1-7. K'ung's poems are generally arranged in order of date. For detailed information regarding the dating of his poems, see Wang Wei-lin's note at the end of Vol. 3 of *K'ung Shang-jen shih-wen chi* (pp. 630-642).

[7] K'ung Shang-jen, *K'ung Shang-jen shih-wen chi* (1962), Vol. 1, pp. 8-182; Vol. 3, pp. 439-481; Vol. 3, pp. 499-571. See also K'ung Shang-jen, *Hu-Hai chi* (Shanghai: Ku-tien wen-hsüeh ch'u-pan she, 1957 ed.), pp. 1-307.

[8] *K'ung Shang-jen shih-wen chi,* Vol. 3, pp. 506, 507, 508, 510, 518, 523, 531, 535, 551, 558, 570. Altogether there are eleven letters addressed to these four Ming loyalists during the period 1686 to 1689. They reveal the mutual admiration and friendship between K'ung Shang-jen and his friends. For biographies of these scholars and artists, see Authur Hummel, *op. cit.*, pp. 240, 566-567; Li Tou, *Yang-chou hua-fang lu* (Peking: Chung-hua Shu-chü, 1960 ed.), pp. 225, 226-227; *Ch'ing-shih kao* (Shanghai, 1942 Reprint), pp. 1530, 1592; *Ch'ing-shih lieh-chuan* (Shanghai: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1928), *chüan* 70, p. 20a; Li Chün-chih, *Ch'ing hua-chia shih shih* (n. p., 1930), Part II, A, p. 14a; Feng Chin-po and Wu Chin, *Kuo-ch'ao hua shih* (Yun-chien: Wen-ts'ui t'ang, 1831), *chüan* 6, p. 14a; Wang Shih-chen, *Yü-yang Shang-jen kan-chiu lu* (2 Vols. Reprint. Taipei: Kuang-wen shu-chü, 1968), pp. 309-311; Hu Shih, "Fei Ching-yü yü Fei Mi, Ching-hsüeh te liang-ko hsien-ch'ü che," in *Hu Shih Wen-ts'un,* Vol. 2 (Taipei: Yüan-tung t'u-shu kung-ssu, 1953), pp. 48-90; Fu Pao-shih, *Ming-mo min-tsu i-jen chuan* (Reprint. Taipei, 1971), pp. 177-181; Liu Kang-chi, *Kung Hsien* (Shanghai, 1962), pp. 1-35; Ch'en Wan-nai, *K'ung Shang-jen yen-chiu,* pp. 47-51, 77-78. Tsung Yüan-ting wrote a preface to K'ung Shang-jen's *Hu-Hai chi* (1957 ed., p. 1). The spirit of these scholars and artists was vividly described by Wang Cho (early Ch'ing) in his *Chin Shih-shuo* (1683) (Shanghai: Ku-tien wen-hsüeh ch'u-pan she, 1957), pp. 53, 56.

Ch'ing. The literary and artistic atmosphere of these cities was most stimulating to a sensitive and creative mind. His writings in this period reflected the influence of these literary gatherings and exchanges of ideas. They are emotion-ridden, which is characteristic of his poems during this period. K'ung Shang-jen himself noticed this. In a letter to a friend, he described the collection of poems in the *Hu-Hai chi* as a "voice of nostalgia and distress."[9] Actually, most of his poems revealing his deep national feelings and his nostalgic reminiscence over the historical past are to be found in this collection.

In 1690 K'ung Shang-jen returned to the capital, and he remained at his original post as doctor of the Imperial Academy until 1694, when he was made a secretary of the Board of Revenue. A small collection of his work (about 65 poems) entitled *An-t'ang kao* (Poems Written in An-t'ang) dates from the period 1690 to 1691.[10] After 1691 K'ung Shang-jen became more interested in drama. In 1691, a small stringed instrument, *hsiao hu-lei*, of the T'ang dynasty came into his possession. It became the theme and the title of a drama which he and his friend Ku Ts'ai jointly wrote in 1694.[11] The success of the drama *Hsiao hu-lei* might have encouraged K'ung Shang-jen to work on his long awaited drama *T'ao-hua shan*. In the spring of 1699, K'ung Shang-jen completed this masterpiece after three revisions. It immediately created a sensation in the theatrical and literary world.[12] In the autumn of the same year, the drama was also well received into the palace and by the following spring had become extremely popular. But suddenly, for some unknown reason, K'ung Shang-jen was dismissed from his office in the spring of 1700.[13] At the time he was dismissed, he had just been promoted from a secretary of the Board of Revenue to a vice-director of the Department of Kwangtung Affairs of the same board. The cause of dismissal was not known, but judging from K'ung Shang-jen's own poems, it was evidently due to a

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[9] K'ung Shang-jen, *K'ung Shang-jen shih-wen chi* (1962), Vol. 3, pp. 521-522: "Yü T'ien Lun-hsia fu-chün"; *Hu-Hai chi*, p. 255. This letter was written in 1688.

[10] K'ung Shang-jen, *K'ung Shang-jen shih-wen chi* (1962), Vol. 1, pp. 183-202; see also Wang Wei-lin's note (Vol. 3, pp. 630-642) for detailed information regarding the dating of K'ung's poems.

[11] See Ku Ts'ai's preface to *T'ao-hua shan*, in K'ung Shang-jen's *T'ao-hua shan* (Shanghai: Shih-chieh shu-chü, 1947 ed.) pp. 1-2; K'ung Shang-jen, *Hsiang-chin pu* in *Mei-shu ts'ung-shu ch'u-chi ti-ch'i chi*, Vol. 4 (Reprint. Taipei: I-wen yin-shu kuan, 1951), p. 242.

[12] Based on K'ung's own record about how he started and completed the *T'ao-hua shan*; see K'ung Shang-jen, *T'ao-hua shan* (Shanghai, 1947), p. 154; Chou I-po, *Chung-kuo hsi-chü shih* (3 Vols. Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1953), pp. 513-514; Wang Chi-lieh, *Yin-lu ch'ü-t'an* in *Chi-ch'eng ch'ü-p'u* (8 Vols. Reprint. Taipei: Ku-t'ing shu-chü, 1969), Vol. I, pp. 59-60; Jung Chao-tsu, *op. cit.*, p. 70. It is said that the K'ang-hsi emperor personally liked the play tremendously but felt very sad about the impotence and corruption of the Hung-kuang court, and that a Yangchow salt merchant even spent 160,000 taels of silver just on the costumes and stage for a production of the drama. See Chang Tz'u-ch'i, *Pei-ching li-yüan chang-ku ch'ang-pien* in *Ch'ing-tai Yen-tu li-yüan shih-liao* by Chang Tz'u-ch'i *et al.* (4 Vols. Reprint. Taipei: Hsüeh-sheng shu-chü, 1965), p. 1657; Wu Mei, *Ku-ch'ü ch'en-t'an* (Reprint. Taipei, 1966), p. 184.

[13] In Arthur Hummel *(op. cit.)*, the date of K'ung's dismissal from his office was the fall of 1699, following Jung Chao-tsu's view *(op. cit*, p. 69). However, according to two recent comprehensive studies on K'ung's life, it should be "the spring of 1700." See Ch'en Wan-nai, "K'ung Tung-t'ang hsien-shang nien-p'u kao," *Chung-shan hsüeh-shu wen-hua chi-k'an*, Vol. 5 (1970), p. 711; Wang Wei-lin's "Hou-chi" in *K'ung Shang-jen shih-wen chi* (1962), Vol. 3, pp. 634-635. In both studies, K'ung's poems are cited as evidence.

malicious slander that had something to do with his literary work.[14] Moreover, the evasiveness of the contemporary records implies that the *T'ao-hua shan* might have been the cause.[15] Modern scholars are divided on whether the *T'ao-hua shan* was the cause of K'ung Shang-jen's dismissal. The issue is a complicated one, but the pro and con arguments can be analyzed as follows.[16]

Those who believe that the *T'ao-hua shan* was the cause of K'ung's dismissal from the civil service maintain four major points: 1) the main theme of the *T'ao-hua shan*, nationalism, irritated the Manchu court and impelled it to take action against its author; 2) the fact that no one, including K'ung Shang-jen himself, dared to give a detailed account of the dismissal implied the grave nature of the case; 3) judging from K'ung's own explanation in his poems, the cause of dismissal is his literary work and the most logical inference would be this historical drama that had just been released for performance at this time; and 4) the fact that the *T'ao-hua shan* had not been banned only revealed the political shrewdness of the Emperor K'ang-hsi, who disliked the nationalistic theme of this drama but did not want to arouse the Chinese people's hostility by publicly banning the drama. Instead, he found an excuse to punish its playwright and to use this case as a subtle warning to other litterateurs.

On the other hand, those who do not believe that the *T'ao-hua shan* was the cause of K'ung Shang-jen's dismissal maintain different arguments: 1) the *T'ao-hua shan* is an historical play that tells of a love story, with the political strife of the Southern Ming as background. It is true that there are hidden national feelings in the drama, but it would be erroneous to conclude that its main theme is nationalism; 2) according to K'ung Shang-jen's own account, when he was dismissed from office, his friends set up a special performance for the *T'ao-hau shan* in honor of him. If the *T'ao-hua shan* was the cause of K'ung's dismissal, his friends probably would not have done that; 3) judging from K'ung Shang-jen's *Ch'u-shan i-shu chi* (A Record

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[14] K'ung Shang-jen, *K'ung Shang-jen shih-wen chi* (1962), Vol. 2: "Chao Yüeh-yüan kuo An-t'ang ta-p'eng k'uan-yü Wan Chi-yeh, Li Pao-i, Wang Ku-hsiu, Wei Ching-an, Wu Ming-han, Yu Hung-k'o, Meng Yu-shang, Chang Hsiao-yen, Ch'en Li-jen" (pp. 236-237); "Ta Seng Wei-tsai" (p. 237); "Fang-ko tseng Liu Yü-feng yin-chang" (pp. 238-239); "Ta Li Nai-kung" (p. 312); "Ho Ts'ai Kang-nan tseng-shan yüan-yun sung-chih nan-huan" (p. 324); "Liu-pieh Wang Yüan-t'ing hsien-sheng" (pp. 362-363).

[15] There are two major contemporary documents that mention K'ung Shang-jen's dismissal. Wang Yüan, one of K'ung Shang-jen's close friends, gives a vague account of K'ung's dismissal from office. He does not explain why K'ung was dismissed but, instead, mentions that "from nobilities and high-ranking officials down to commoners, all felt sorry for him [K'ung Shang-jen]." See Wang Yüan (1648-1710), "Sung K'ung Tung-t'ang hu-pu kuei shih-men shan hsü," in *Chü-yeh T'ang wen-chi (Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng ch'u-pien* ed.), pp. 247-248. In *Ch'üeh-li wen-hsien k'ao*, by K'ung Chi-fen (Reprint, Taipei 1966), Vol. 4, p. 1632 (or *chüan* 77, p. 11b), the statement regarding K'ung's dismissal reads "dismissed from office for certain reasons," but no specific reasons were ever given.

[16] Several articles have discussed or touched upon the case of K'ung's dismissal: Ch'en Wan-nai, "Lun K'ung Shang-jen 'Yin-shih pa-kuan' i-an," *Ku-kung wen-hsien*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1970), pp. 35-41; Ch'en Wan-nai, "K'ung Tung-t'ang hsien-sheng nien-p'u kao," p. 711; Chao Li-sheng, "Lun K'ung Shang-jen ai-kuo chu-i ssu-hsiang te she-hui ken-yüan," *Yüan-Ming-Ch'ing hsi-chü yen-chiu lun-wen chi* (Peking: Tso-chia ch'u-pan she, 1957), pp. 403-417; Wang Wei-lin, "Hou-chi," in *K'ung Shang-jen shih-wen chi*, Vol. 3, pp. 634-642; Ma Yung "K'ung Shang-jen chi ch'i *T'ao-hua shan*," *Yüan-Ming-Ch'ing hsi-chü yen-chiu lun-wen chi*, pp. 388-402; Fan Ning, "*T'ao-hua shan* tso-che K'ung Shang-jen," *Yüan-Ming-Ch'ing hsi-chü yen-chiu lun-wen chi*, pp. 381-387. Among them, Ch'en Wan-nai is representative of the view that K'ung's dismissal from office had nothing to do with his play *T'ao-hua shan*, and Chao Li-sheng stands strongly for the opposite viewpoint.

of Emperor K'ang-shi's Pilgrimage to the Confucian Temple), K'ung was very grateful to the Emperor K'ang-shi for the special favor and attention that the emperor once granted him. It seems that K'ung viewed the emperor never as a Manchu ruler but just as one of the brilliant emperors in Chinese history, one whom he wished to help to become a Confucian "sage-king." This proves that he did not have much loyalty to the Ming cause. His unhappy official life might later arouse some of his nationalistic feelings, but the purpose of *T'ao-hua shan* is definitely not to criticize the Manchu regime. Rather, it more likely presented the fall of the Ming empire as an historical lesson for the new dynasty.

No matter what caused K'ung Shang-jen's dismissal, the fact remains that he was permanently removed from government employment. He lived in Peking until 1702 and then returned to his hometown, Ch'ü-fu.[17] For the rest of his life he spent his days in retirement. He wrote a large number of poems during this last stage of his life, and died in 1718 at the age of seventy-one.

Although an accomplished poet, K'ung Shang-jen has long been identified only as the playwright of the *T'ao-hua shan*. Needless to say, his achievement in the field of drama has something to do with his poetic talent. Almost all the critics agree that in literary quality, the *T'ao-hua shan* has been ranked among the greatest in the Chinese language. The famous Ch'ing scholar and drama critic Liang T'ing-nan praised both its vivid description of the characters and the beauty of its literary style; he especially pointed out that the tragic ending in the concluding act of the play distinguished the *T'ao-hua shan* from other *ch'uan-chi* operas that usually had a happy ending with a grand reunion.[18] However, Liang also pointed out that there were defects in this play, of which the chief one was in the rhythm and musical pitch, at which K'ung Shang-jen was not too skillful. Wang Chi-lieh, a modern drama critic, lauded the *T'ao-hua shan* as the first *ch'uan-ch'i* opera that may rightfully be called an historical play because it followed very closely all the actual events of history.[19] This significance of its being a true historical play in the literary sense was also pointed out by Wu Mei, a leading authority on the history of Chinese drama in modern times, who actually ranks the *T'ao-hua shan* as the best opera in its literary quality. The only regret for Wu Mei was that there were not many good melodies in this opera.[20] Aoki Masaru, the leading Japanese authority on Chinese drama, agrees with Wu Mei on both his praise and criticism.[21] To Aoki, the chief merit of the *T'ao-hua shan* is its

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[17] Ch'en Wan-nai, "K'ung Tung-t'ang hsien-sheng nien-p'u kao," p. 716; Wang Wei-lin, "Hou-chi," in *K'ung Shang-jen shih-wen chi*, pp. 635-636. Both Ch'en and Wang agreed on 1702 as the year that K'ung returned to Ch'ü-fu. This view is different from earlier scholarship (Cf. Jung Chao-tsu, *op. cit.*, p. 74; Arthur Hummel, *op. cit.)* which viewed the year 1701 as K'ung's date of return.

[18] Liang T'ing-nan, *Ch'ü-hua* in *Chung-kuo ku-tien hsi-ch'ü lun-chu chi-ch'eng* (Peking: Chung-kuo hsi-chü ch'u-pan she, 1960), pp. 270-271. A more recent evaluation of the literary and music qualities of the *T'ao-hua shan* is made by Ch'en An-na, "*T'ao-hua shan* ch'uan-ch'i chih yen-chiu," in Tai-wan Shih-fan Ta-hsüeh Kuo-wen Hsi (ed.), *Ch'ü-hsüeh chi-k'an* (Taipei, 1964), pp. 220-270.

[19] Wang Chi-lieh, *Yin-lu ch'ü-t'an (chüan* 4), in *Chi-ch'eng ch'ü-pu*, Vol. 7, pp. 59-60.

[20] Wu Mei, *Chung-kuo hsi-ch'ü kai-lun* (Reprint. Hong Kong: T'ai-p'ing shu-chü, 1964), *chüan* 3, p. 31. A recent analysis of all these comments is found in Chou I-po, *Chung-kuo hsi-chü shih*, pp. 508-512.

[21] Aoki Masaru, *Chung-kuo chin-shih hsi-ch'ü shih*, trans. by Wang Ku-lu (2 Vols. Reprint, Taipei: Shang-wu, 1965), Vol. 1, pp. 383-390. Aoki's view is based on Shinoya On's; see Shinoya On (trans.), *Tōka* sen (Tokyo, 1922), pp. 21-24 ("Introduction") and Ima Mitsu (trans.), *Tōka sen* (Tokyo, 1926), pp. 16-20. Other similar remarks by Japanese scholars can be found, for example, in the translations of *T'ao-hua shan* by Yamaguchi Takeshi (Tokyo, 1926) and Iwaki Hideo (Tokyo, 1959).

playwright's literary skill — the story is beautiful and the theatrical arrangement of its plot perfect. While the playwright maintains the beauty and coherence of the drama, he also follows truthfully all the historical events of his chosen subject matter. But like Wu Mei, Aoki regrets that there are not many good melodies in this opera. After all, the success of an opera depends not only on a beautiful story but also on its musical composition. For this reason, K'ung Shang-jen's *T'ao-hua shan* has not enjoyed a lasting popularity in Chinese theatres.

The *T'ao-hau shan* is written in the *k'un-ch'ü* style of *ch'uan-ch'i*. It has forty scenes, and an "Interlude" following Scene 20 (the end of *Chüan* One) and a "Prologue" preceding Scene 21 (the beginning of *Chüan* Two), plus a "Prologue" (Hsien-sheng) at the beginning of the play and an "Epilogue" (Yü-yun) at the end. In writing the play K'ung Shang-jen considers himself an historian with a special sense of history that is enhanced by the fact of his being a descendant of Confucius. In the opening of the Prologue, he announces that in writing this historical drama, he abides by the Confucius principle of "praise and blame" *(pao-pien)* in the *Ch'un-ch'iu* (Spring and Autumn Annals).[22] His seriousness in upholding his sage-ancestor's *"Ch'un-ch'iu* tradition" is well established by the fact that he includes at the end of the play bibliographical notes and a chronology of events of the Hung-kuang reign (1644–1645) of the Southern Ming, the background of the play.[23] Never before has any drama been written with such painstaking historical research as was the *T'ao-hua shan.* Furthermore, the time periods of all of the forty-four scenes were specified. Besides the "Prologue" and the "Epilogue," which were timed, respectively, in the eighth month of the year *Chia-tzu* of the K'ang-hsi reign (1684) and the ninth month of the year *Wu-tzu* of the Shun-chih reign (1648), the first of the regular forty scenes was timed in the second month of the year *Kuei-wei* of the Ch'ung-chen reign (1643) of the Ming, and the last timed in the seventh month of the year *I-yu* (1645), with the rest of the scenes timed in between. It is clearly a deliberate effort to follow the chronological style of the *Ch'un-ch'iu.*

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[22] K'ung Shang-jen, *T'ao-hua shan* (Shanghai, 1947 ed.), "Prologue," p. 1. For discussions of the *pao-pien* principle of the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, see Shu Shih-cheng, "K'ung Tzu 'Ch'un-chiu'," *Li-shih yen-chiu*, No. 1 of 1962, pp. 51-51; Chin Yü-fu, *Chung-kuo shih-hsüeh shih* (Reprint. Peking: Chung-hua, 1962), pp. 23-25; Li Tsung-t'ung, *Chung-kuo shih-hsüeh shih* (Taipei: Chung-hua wen-hua ch'u-pan shih-yeh, 1955), pp. 15-17; Naitō Torajirō, *Shina shigaku shi* in his *Naitō Konan zenshū*, Vol. II (Tokyo, 1969), pp. 72-73. For studies of questionable authorship of the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, see Chang Hsin-ch'eng, *Wei-shu t'ung-k'ao* (2 Vols. Shanghai: Shang-wu, 1954), Vol. I, pp. 340ff; George A. Kennedy, "Interpretation of the *Ch'un-ch'iu*," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, LXII (1942), pp. 40-48; Charles S. Gardner, *Chinese Traditional Historiography* (Cambridge, Mass., 1961), pp. 10-11; and P. Van der Loon, "The Ancient Chinese Chronicles and the Growth of Historiographical Ideals," in *Historians of China and Japan*, ed. by W. G. Beasley and E. G. Pulleyblank (London, 1961), pp. 26-28. It is interesting to note that although traditional Chinese historians since Ssu-ma Ch'ien (145-86 B. C.) often were fond of declaring the influence of the *Ch'un-ch'iu* on their historical writings, there seemed to have existed a renewed trend in "writing history following the spirit of the *Ch'un-ch'iu* principles" during the Ming-Ch'ing transition — K'ung Shang-jen's time. This was particularly so with those who wished to preserve the real historical record on the one hand and, on the other, wanted to avoid possible literary inquisition by the Manchu rulers. For them, writing history was an unavoidable duty of an intellectual, as Confucius had demonstrated in recording and interpreting his own age of disturbance and disorder. See Cha Chi-tso (1597-1676), *Tsui-wei lu (Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an* ed.), Vol. I, "Preface," pp. 3a-5a; Wen Jui-lin *(chü-jen* of 1705), *Nan-chiang i-shih* in *Wan-Ming shih-liao ts'ung-shu* (Reprint. Tokyo: Daian, 1967), "Preface," pp. 1-2; and the various references in Chang Tai's (1597–ca.1676) *Shih-kuei shu hou-chi* (Reprint. Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1959) cited in this chapter.

[23] K'ung Shang-jen, *T'ao-hua shan* (Shanghai, 1947 ed.), pp. 151-153: "k'ao-chü."

These unique efforts of the dramatist make obvious the fact that he was using literature to express historical observations and judgments. It is primarily for this characteristic that the *T'ao-hua shan* becomes the subject of our interest.

We shall begin our study of the *T'ao-hua shan* with its historical aspects. Its plot is laid mainly in Nanking and is based on the historical events of the Hung-kuang reign of the Southern Ming in the years 1644–1645. Its characters are real persons of the period. Its plot includes the famous love story of Hou Fang-yü (1618–1655) and his mistress Li Hsiang-chün. Hou, one of the best known essayists of his time, was also one of the "Four Esquires" *(Ssu kung-tzu)* in the late Ming.[24] In the drama, he represents a group of honest and sincere intellectuals of his time who wish to save their country from foreign invasion and internal disorder. These people are mainly the elite of society who do not have much power in the government but have a strong influence upon public opinion through their loosely organized association named the Fu-she. The opposite group of the Fu-she are politicians who are less concerned about the fate of their country and their people than about their own political power. The representatives of these politicians in the drama are Juan Ta-ch'eng (ca. 1587–1646) and Ma Shih-ying (1591–1646).[25] The plot of the *T'ao-hua shan* thus develops through the political strife between these two groups, with the love story between Hou Fang-yü and Li Hsiang-chün as the connecting thread.

The *T'ao-hua shan* is called an historical drama not merely because it is based on historical events and personages. To students of intellectual history, the significance

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[24] For biographies of Hou Fang-yü, see Arthur Hummel, *op. cit.*, pp. 291-292; Hu Chieh-chih, "Hou Ch'ao-tsung hsien-sheng chuan," in *Chuang-hui t'ang ch'üan-chi* (Shanghai: Sao-yeh Shang-fang ed.) pp. 1a-3a; T'ien Lan-fang, "Hou Ch'ao-tsung kung-tzu chuan," *ibid.*, pp. 4b-5b; Chia K'ai-tsung, "Hou Fang-yü chuan," *ibid.*, pp. 3b-4a; Hou Hsün, *Hou Fang-yü nien-p'u*, *ibid.*, 4 pages; Shao Ch'ang-heng, "Hou Fang-yü Wei Hsi Chuan," in Cheng Chu-jo (comp.), *Yü Ch'u hsü-chih* (Reprint, Taipei: Kuang-wen, 1968), pp. 23-25. *Ch'ing-shih* (kuo-fang yen-chiu yüan ed.), p. 5225; Li Huan, *Kuo-ch'ao ch'i-hsien lei-cheng* (Reprint. Taipei: Wan-hai ch'u-pan she, 1966), pp. 12726-12727; Ch'ien I-chi, *Pei-chuan chi* (Reprint, Taipei: I-wen yin-shu kuan, 1962), *chüan* 13b (in Vol. 52), pp. 2b-3b. For a biographical sketch of Li Hsiang-chün, see Hou Fang-yü, "Li Chi chuan," *Chuang-hui t'ang ch'üan-chi, chüan* 5, pp. 11ab; Yü Huai, *Pan-ch'iao tsa-shih* (Shanghai: Chung-yang shu-tien, 1936 ed.), pp. 18, 26-27. Various biographical sketches of Hou Fang-yü and Li Hsiang-chün, together with sixteen other interesting personages in the *T'ao-hua shan*, also are found in Chiang Yin-hsiang (ed.), *T'ao-hua shan ming-jen hsiao-shih* (Hong Kong: Han-wen t'u-shu kung-ssu, 1970), pp. 1-7.

[25] Arthur Hummel, *op. cit.*, pp. 398-399, 558-559. For detailed biographical information of Juan, see Chang Tai, *Shih-kuei shu hou-chi*, pp. 279-288; Wen Jui-lin, *Nan-chiang i-shih*, pp. 445-448; Wu Wei-yeh, *Lu-ch'iao chi-wen* in *Yang-chou shih-jih chi* in *Chung-kuo nei-luan wai-huan li-shih ts'ung-shu* (Shanghai: Shen-chou kuo-kuang she, 1946), pp. 127-131; *Ming-shih* (Kuo-fang yen-chiu yüan ed.), pp. 3494-3498; Wang Hung-hsü, *Ming-shih kao*, (Reprint. Taipei: Wen-hai ch'u-pan she, 1962), pp. 57-59; Li Yao, *Nan-chiang i-shih tse-i* in *Ming-Ch'ing shih-liao hui-pien*, Series 6, Vol. 3 (Taipei: Wen-hai ch'u-pan she, 1969), pp. 1965-1968. Hsü Tzu, *Hsiao-tien chi-chuan* (6 Vols. Taipei: T'ai-wan yin-hang ching-chi yen-chiu shih, 1963 ed.), pp. 883-886. A detailed biography of Juan Ta-ch'eng in English is written by Robert B. Crawford, "The Biography of Juan Ta-ch'eng," *Chinese Culture*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (March, 1956), pp. 28-105. For further biographical information on Ma Shih-ying, see Chang Tai, *Shih-kuei shu hou-chi*, pp. 275-279; Wen Jui-lin, *Nan-Chiang i-shih*, pp. 442-445; Wu Wei-yang, *Lu-ch'iao chi-wen*, pp. 128-313. *Ming-shih* (Kuo-fang yen-chiu yüan ed.), pp. 3494-3498; Li Yao, *Nan-chiang i-shih tse-i, chuan* 18, 1a; Hsü Tzu, *Hsiao-tien chi-chuan*, pp. 875-880; Wang Hung-hsü, *Ming-shih kao*, pp. 54-57. For modern studies of the Fu-she, see Hu Ch'iu-yüan, *Fu-she chi ch'i jen-wu* (Taipei: Hsüeh-shu ch'u-pan she, 1968), pp. 17-94; Hsieh Kuo-cheng, *Ming-Ch'ing chih-chi tang-she yün-tung k'ao* (Reprint. Taipei: Shang-wu, 1968), pp. 145-186.

of this drama lies in the dramatist's special desire to make it an "authentic history." This is an effort to combine the roles of historian and dramatist into one. Here we should point out that there is a difference, indeed a significant one, between K'ung Shang-jen's "authentic history" and that by a professional historian. When K'ung Shang-jen talked about "authentic history," he concerned himself only with the problem of whether and how justice has been done in history. That is why he emphasized the principle of "praise and blame" of the *Ch'un-ch'iu* as the chief function of history. Moreover, he did change some of the factual historical happenings and dates of some key events to fit the dramatized world of the *T'ao-hua shan.*[26] As he saw it, the minor changes did not interfere with the justice of history.

K'ung Shang-jen's aspiration of making the *T'ao-hua shan* a drama of "authentic history" reflects his *ching-shih* conviction. As a descendant of Confucius, he was especially conscious of an intellectual's mission in history, "to order the society and to promote the welfare of the people" *(ching-shih).* Born as a Ch'ing subject in 1648, he did not literally consider himself a Ming loyalist. However, he was brought up in a time when the past "national catastrophy" was still fresh in people's minds and when the underlying spirit of the transitional age was overwhelmingly influenced by Ming loyalists, including such leading scholars as Sun Ch'i-feng (1583–1675), Huang Tsung-hsi (1610–1695), Ku Yen-wu (1613–1682), Li Yung (1627–1705), and others; he could not help sharing with these thinkers the Chinese national sentiments, since from the standpoint of nationality he too had to recognize the Manchus as "foreigners." Like most Chinese of his generation, he accepted the fact that he was a subject of a new dynasty. Since there was nothing he could do about it, he tried to live with it by telling himself that of numerous dynastic changes in history, the establishment of the Ch'ing dynasty was just one of them. Besides, he personally did not owe anything to the Ming dynasty; he was born under the Ch'ing regime, and he could live in peace with himself in this regard. All he could do for his country and his people was to make himself useful by carrying on the great cultural tradition of his ancestors. Thus, while the Ming loyalists engaged themselves in intense soul-searching through their political and philosophical writings, K'ung Shang-jen attempted to recreate the tragedy of the fall of the Southern Ming in hopes that by so doing he could give the new dynasty and future generations an unforgettable historical lesson. This *ching-shih* aspiration of K'ung Shang-jen was also recognized by his contemporaries. In a local history, we find the following statement about K'ung Shang-jen: "Even when he was in his youth, he considered the carrying of the great Confucian tradition as his goal of life. He did not withdraw from participating in the civil service examinations, for he wished to enter the government in order to carry on the tradition [of 'inner sage and outer king']."[27] K'ung Shang-jen did enter the government, as we mentioned, but his official career was not successful. After long years of frustration, he picked up his youthful dream of writing a great historical drama to vent his feelings. The *T'ao-hua shan* was completed in 1699, when K'ung Shang-jen was fifty-one years old and had been in the government for fifteen years. The fulfillment of his

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[26] For a detailed comparison between the happenings of actual history and the plot of the *T'ao-hua shan,* see Ch'en Chih-hsien, "Kuan-yü *T'ao-hua shan* te i-hsieh wen-t'i," *Wen-hsüeh i-ch'an hsüan-chi i-chi* (Peking, 1956), pp. 206-217.

[27] Chin I-feng, *Yen-chou fu-chih hsü-pien* (1719 ed.), *chüan* 16.

dream of *ching-shih* at this time was apparently as far off as ever. This is one reason why he was so serious about writing an authentic historical drama, using the alleged *Ch'un-ch'iu* principle of "praise and blame" as a guide.

Although the motive and driving force behind the writing of the *T'ao-hua shan* is the moral consciousness of the dramatist, the tremendous immediate success of this opera lies in its unusual literary beauty. Both the plot and the lines are perfect. First of all, the title itself, "The Peach-Blossom Fan," suggests the dramatist's fresh imaginative power. The "peach-blossom" represents the blood-stain of a beautiful lady, K'ung Shang-jen explained to us, with the blood-stain representing her chastity and courage.[28] According to the legend, as recorded by K'ung Shang-jen, the beautiful Li Hsiang-chün, mistress of the young gentleman Hou Fang-yü, hurt her face in her defiance of a powerful official's order. The blood from her face dripped down and stained a silk fan. A friend used a brush to paint this blood-stain into a peach-blossom.[29] Later, Hsiang-chün sent this fan, with the blood-stained peach-blossom on it, to her lover, Hou Fang-yü, to express her eternal love. K'ung Shang-jen, inspired and moved by this beautiful legend, entitled his play "The Peach-Blossom Fan" to highlight the dramatic beauty of this love story.[30]

The plot of the *T'ao-hua shan* is very complicated, because the background of this drama follows the historical events of the late Ming. However, we shall try to give a brief account of the main developments of this drama in order to discuss the thought behind it. The hero of the drama is Hou Fang-yü, who came from a high-ranking official's family. His father, Hou Hsün (*chin-shin* of 1616), President of the Board of Revenue, was a member of the politico-literary party known as Tung-lin. Thus Hou Fang-yü was initiated into current politics when he was young. The story starts from Hou Fang-yü's wandering life in Nanking, where he fails his civil service examination. At this time, the Ming empire is already in a very shaky situation. The rebel Li Tzu-ch'eng's (1605–1645) force is very strong in the northern provinces. Hou Fang-yü's native province, Honan, is ravaged by Li's forces in 1642. Separated from home by the civil war, Hou remains at Nanking to live a wandering life. It is in Nanking that he meets the beautiful Li Hsiang-chün, a courtesan. They fall in love at first sight and plan to get married. But Hou is away from home and because of the war can not get support from his family. At this time, the politician Juan Ta-ch'eng, who has suffered a temporary set-back because of the fall of eunuch Wei Chung-hsien's (1568–1627) party, is also

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[28] *T'ao-hua shan* (Shih-chieh shu-chü 1936 ed.), p. 159: "Hsiao-shih" (A Note on the Title).

[29] *Ibid.*, p. 154: "Pen-mo" (Origin of the *T'ao-hua shan*).

[30] K'ung Shang-jen's choice of "T'ao-hua shan" apparently does not follow the title of the "T'ao-hua yüan chi" by T'ao Ch'ien (T'ao Yüan-ming, 365-427), one of the most popular Utopian writings in Chinese literature. K'ung Shang-jen's detailed explanation of the meaning of the title of his drama speaks quite clearly for this point. For an annotated version of the "T'ao-hua yüan chi," see Pei-ching Ta-hsüeh Chung-kuo wen-hsüeh-shih chiao-yen-shih (ed. and annot.), *Wei-Chin Nan-pei-ch'ao wen-hsüeh shih ts'an-k'ao tzu-liao* (2 Vols. Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1965), pp. 424-429 (and pp. 445-451, 455-466 for biographical information about T'ao Ch'ien); see also Chung-kuo k'o-hsüeh yüan che-hsüeh yen-chiu so (ed.), *Chung-kuo ta-t'ung ssu-hsiang tzu-liao* (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1959), pp. 29-31. An English translation of the "T'ao-hua yüan chi" can be found in Cyril Birch (ed.), *Anthology of Chinese Literature* (New York, 1956), pp. 167-168. The "T'ao-hua yüan chi," however, is not just a Utopia; it too has its historical background and reality. See Ch'en Yin-k'o, "T'ao-hua yüan chi p'ang-cheng," *Ch'ing-hua hsüeh-pao*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Jan. 1936), pp. 79-88; and Ōyane Bunjirō, *Tō Emmei kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1967), pp. 741-674, which is the most comprehensive study of the problem.

in Nanking. Awaiting a chance to get back in power, Juan tries to befriend the literati in order to establish a new political image. Knowing Hou Fang-yü's interest in Li Hsiang-chün and his lack of funds at the moment, Juan Ta-ch'eng tries to buy off Hou through a go-between friend by spending a lot of money in gifts for Li Hsiang-chün and in throwing banquets for them. At the beginning, Hou Fang-yü was moved by Juan's friendly gesture and was wavering in his determination to have nothing to do with the opportunistic politicians. But Li Hsiang-chün is an unusual girl; she is not only beautiful but honest, sincere, and upright by nature. It is she who makes Hou Fang-yü realize that accepting gifts from such a notorious politician as Juan Ta-ch'eng is wrong. They return all of the gifts to Juan, but by so doing they make an enemy of him. From this incident onward, the plot of the *T'ao-hua shan* develops; two hostile groups gradually form, with Hou Fang-yü and his friends on one side and Juan Ta-ch'eng and his friends on the other.

There are several incidents in the drama that deal with the struggles between Hou's literati group and Juan's group of politicians. These struggles become intensified when some of the military leaders are involved. In one incident, Tso Liang-yü (1598–1645),[31] then the Regional Commander at Wu-ch'ang, is facing some problem of shortage of grain supplies; it is rumored that he might march his army to Nanking. When the rumors reach Nanking, the local authority is alarmed. Since Tso Liang-yü was once a subordinate to Hou Fang-yü's father, Hou is asked to write Tso a letter to advise the latter not to make any hasty decision. Hou Fang-yü writes the letter and also receives reassurance from Tso Liang-yü that the latter never has any intention of marching his army eastward. Nanking is reassured by Tso Liang-yü's promise. But Juan Ta-ch'eng, who now very much hates Hou Fang-yü, turns this incident against Hou. He spreads rumors saying that Hou Fang-yü has kept close contacts with General Tso Liang-yü for his own ambitious purposes. The local authority is alarmed by Juan's slander. Thus Hou Fang-yü has no choice but to leave Nanking. He bids farewell to Li Hsiang-chün, and they promise each other that nothing could change their true love. While Hou Fang-yü travels in South China to unite comrades for a patriotic cause, Li Hsiang-chün remains faithful to him. Powerful officials in Nanking try to force her to give up her love for Hou Fang-yü, but Li Hsiang-chün makes it clear that she would rather die than submit to insult. The legend of the blood-stained peach-blossom fan which tells the moving story of this courageous lady proves how widely this romantic story spread among her contemporaries.

While the inner political strife went on, the situation of the Ming empire worsened. In the third month (April) of 1644, when Peking fell to Li Tzu-ch'eng's forces, the Emperor Ch'ung-chen (r. 1628–1644) committed suicide. The Ming royal family fled south. Prince Fu (Chu Yu-sung, 1607–1646) was enthroned in the fifth month (June) of 1644 in Nanking by Ma Shih-ying, then Governor-General of Feng-yang, and

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[31] For a brief biography of Tso Liang-yü's real life, see Arthur Hummel, *op. cit.*, pp. 761-762. For detailed biographies, see Hou Fang-yü, *Chuang-hui t'ang ch'üan-chi*, *chüan* 9, pp. 8b-10b ("Ning-na hou chuan"); Chang Tai, *Shih-kuei shu hou-chi*, pp. 171-174; *Ming-shih* (Kuo-fang yen-chiu yüan ed.), pp. 3062-3066; Hsü Tzu, *Hsiao-tien chi-nien* (2 Vols. Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1959 ed.), pp. 352-354, 342-347; *idem*, *Hsiao-tien chi chuan*, pp. 901-912; Chiang Yin-hsiang (ed.), *T'ao-hua shan ming-jen hsiao-shih*, pp. 13-24. Chi Liu-ch'i, *Ming-chi nan-lüeh* (3 Vols. Taipei: T'ai-wan yin-hang ching-chi yen-chiu shih, 1963 ed.), pp. 192-198.

the politician Juan Ta-ch'eng. This was the beginning of the Hung-kuang reign. The outcome of the new establishment was Juan Ta-ch'eng's coming into power in the Nanking government.

Back to the drama, once in power Juan Ta-ch'eng initiates a mass arrest of the Fu-she members, and Hou Fang-yü is one of them. When the government is in the hands of corrupting officials, its leadership is lost in every direction. The royal court forgets that there are enemies within and without — foreign invaders and civil rebels everywhere. It is preoccupied with pleasure-seeking; agents are sent to the country to select beautiful and talented girls for the palace. Li Hsiang-chün is one of them — she is chosen as leading lady in the royal theatre. In the capital, Nanking, authorities conducts political arrests and pleasure-seeking activities, while outside the capital, military leaders are quarreling with and competing bitterly against each other. Consequently, General Kao Chieh, one of the Four Grand Regional Commanders *(Ssu-chen)*, is trapped and killed by Hsü Ting-kuo (1576–1646), Regional Commander of Sui-chou;[32] and Shih K'o-fa (1602–1645)[33] loses Yangchow to the Manchus. After escaping from Yangchow, Shih drowns himself in the Yangtze River in the fifth month of the Hung-kuang reign.

There was no hope for the Southern Ming court; Nanking fell to the Manchus after the Hung-kuang emperor fell before the enemy in the fifth month of his reign. There were many turncoat officials and generals but few loyal ones. Finally, when the emperor was betrayed by the traitors and handed over to the Manchu forces, the Hung-kuang regime fell.

In the last two scenes of the drama, set on Ch'i-hsia Mountain (near Nanking), Hou Fang-yü, who escapes from jail when Nanking is falling to the invaders, meets, in the White Cloud Monastery, with Li Hsiang-chün, who has escaped from the palace amidst the chaos. Both lovers are filled with joy for a moment, until they realize they could not have a future together. "Where now is your nation? Where is your home? Where is your emperor? Where is your father?" the Taoiser priest Chang Wei (1608–1695) asks them. The only world left for them is the "other world" of Taoism in the remote mountians, the Taoist priest points out. The drama ends without the usual great reunion of the *ch'uan-ch'i* opera, as both Hou and Li, enlightened by Chang Wei, decide to abandon forever this absurd and hopeless world.

Although the love story is the main thread of this drama, the tragic ending of

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[32] For a brief biography of Kao Chieh's (d. 1645) real life, see Arthur Hummel, *op. cit.*, pp. 410-411. For detailed biographies, see Wen Jui-lin, *Nan-chiang i-shih*, pp. 380-382; Wu Wei-yeh, *Lu-ch'iao chi-wen*, pp. 99-191; Chi Liu-ch'i, *Ming-chi nan-lüeh*, pp. 66-71, 185; 198-201; *Ming-shih* (Kuo-fang yen-chiu yüan ed.), pp. 3068-3070; Hsü Tzu, *Hsiao-tien chi-chuan*, pp. 278-283. For a biography of Hsü Ting-kuo, see *Ch'ing-shih kao* (Shanghai, 1942 reprint), p. 1076.

[33] For a brief biography of Shih K'o-fa's real life, see Arthur Hummel, *op. cit.*, pp. 651-652. For detailed biographies, see Shih K'o-fa, *Shih Chung-cheng-kung chi* (Shanghai: Shang-wu, 1937), esp. pp. 1-11, 62-74; Chu Wen-ch'ang, "Shih K'o-fa lun," *Wen-shih tsa-chih*, Vol. 3, Nos. 7-8 (April, 1944), pp. 61-68; *idem*, *Shih K'o-fa chuan* (Chungking, 1943); Wei Hung-yun, *Shih K'o-fa* (Shanghai, 1955); Chang Tai, *Shih-kuei shu hou-chi*, pp. 165-170; Wen Jui-lin, *Nan-chiang i-shih*, pp. 35-44; Cha Chi-tso. *Kuo-shou lu* in *Wan-Ming shih-liao ts'ung-shu* (Reprint. Tokyo: Daian, 1967), pp. 32-35; Hsü Tzu, *Hsiao-tien chi-nien*, pp. 352 ff, 359-362; *idem*, *Hsiao-tien chi-chuan*, pp. 149-167; Ch'ien Su-yun, *Nan-chung chi* in *Wan-Ming shih-liao ts'ung-shu*, pp. 104-106; Chi Liu-ch'i, *Ming-chi nan-lüeh*, pp. 60-62, 105-106, 109, 202-212; *Ming-shih* (Kuo-fang yen-chiu yüan ed.), pp. 3076-3079; *Yang-chou fu-chih* (1810 ed.), *chüan* 25, p. 29a. As will be discussed later, the ending of Shih K'o-fa's life in the drama is quite different from that in historical records.

the two lead characters' conversion to Taoist monk and nun reveals the playwright's pessimistic view of life. K'ung Shang-jen seems to deny that individual happiness can survive the national disaster. To K'ung Shang-jen, the rights of society as a whole are more important than those of individuals. Furthermore, following the basic time-honored Confucian conviction of an intellectual's unavoidable responsibility to his society and the state,[34] he holds that the fate of a dynasty is in the hands of the intellectuals, and therefore, Hou Fang-yü, as a symbol of the intellectuals, is responsible for the fall of the Southern Ming.[35] This is why K'ung Shang-jen could find no way out for Hou Fang-yü except to make him escape to Taoism and live in the faraway mountains, a symbol of departing from this world. To him, Hou Fang-yü is, and should be, a Ming loyalist in every sense, and as such he has no place to live under the Manchu rule. It is significant, however, to point out that K'ung Shang-jen's frame of thinking on this issue does not in any way reflect his personal experience of the problem of loyalty. Born four years after the Manchu conquest, he was a subject of the Manchu dynasty. Therefore, dynastic "loyalty" was not a problem to him. The ending of the play thus reflects only his conception of dynastic loyalty at a time of dynastic transition.

One may still argue that the tragic ending of the *T'ao-hua shan* reveals both K'ung Shang-jen's political thought and his literary genius. For in literature the tragic finis, by provoking the readers' profound sympathy, surpasses the comic reunion. While this is true most of the time, it is only partly true in K'ung Shang-jen's case. As mentioned before, K'ung was a man of conviction. As a descendant of Confucius, he considered himself the man to carry on the Great Way *(ta-tao)* of the Sage. Thus his thought is no doubt characteristic of orthodoxy. This ideological orientation of K'ung's thought is further evidenced in his voluminous poems. One modern scholar has classified him as one of the most famous poets of the School of Poetry as the Vehicle of the Way *(Shih i tsai-tao p'ai)*.[36] As K'ung himself clearly declared, the purpose of poetry is to manifest the Great Way *(ta-tao)*, and, for that matter, all literature is a vehicle of the Way, which generally refers to the political ideals and philosophy of life prescribed by Confucianism.[37] Thus it becomes clear that K'ung's theory of literature follows the orthodox view of the Confucian school, *wen i tsai-tao* (literature is a vehicle of the Way), that gradually developed and matured from Confucius, Mencius (372–ca. 289 B.C.), and Hsun Tzu (fl. 298–238 B.C.), to the Han scholars such as Yang Hsiung (53 B.C.–A.D. 18) and Wang Ch'ung (27-ca. 97 A.D.), to the T'ang Confucian master Han Yu (768–824), to the Sung Neo-Confucian philosophers Chou Tun-i (1017–1073), Ch'eng Hao (1032–1085) Ch'eng I (1033–1107), and Chu Hsi (1130–1200), and to the late Ming and

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[34] *Lun-yü (Lun-yü cheng-i* ed.; Hong Kong, 1963), pp. 159-160, 403, 405; *Meng-tzu (Ssu-shu tu-pen* ed.; Taipei, 1952), pp. 144, 272, 363-364; Fan Chung-yen (989-1052), *Fan Wen-cheng kung wen-chi (Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an* ed.), *chüan* 7, p. 4a; Ku Yen-wu, *Ku T'ing-lin hsien-sheng i-shu* (Shanghai: Wen-jui lou, 1885, ed.), Vol. 10, *chüan* 4, p. 13a.

[35] *T'ao-hua shan* (Shanghai, 1947 ed.), p. 93.

[36] Tung Pi, "Lun K'ung Shang-jen te shih ho shih-lun kuan-hsi," *Wen-hsüeh i-ch'an tseng-k'an*, Vol. 12 (Peking, 1963), pp. 143-153.

[37] K'ung Shang-jen believed that poetry was written for the sake of expressing the Way, a theory that he elaborated quite clearly in his "Hua-yü t'ang kao hsü." See *K'ung Shang-jen shih-wen chi* (1962), Vol. 3, p. 472.

early Ch'ing intellectual giants, Huang Tsung-hsi and Ku Yen-wu.[38] Comparing his theory of literature with his declaration of the drama as an historical writing to carry the *Ch'un-ch'iu* principle of "praise and blame," one finds a remarkable consistency of Confucian orthodoxy in K'ung Shang-jen's intellectual and ideological beliefs. It is for this reason that we see the tragic ending of the *T'ao-hua shan* not merely as representing literary sophistication but as exhibiting K'ung Shang-jen's Confucian moral conviction that individual happiness should not survive the national disaster.

While traditional Chinese critics tend to emphasize the artistic value of dramas and to neglect the currents of thought in them, modern scholars sometimes tend to overdo their interpretations. In the case of the *T'ao-hua shan*, historians in Mainland China, Marxist and non-Marxist, generally tend to exaggerate nationalism as its main theme.[39] It is of no doubt that there are national feelings in the drama. But what these national feelings amount to is open to question. As pointed out before, K'ung Shang-jen applied the "praise and blame" principle of the *Ch'un-ch'iu* in this historical drama. All the characters praised by K'ung are Ming loyalists: the two lead characters, Hou Fang-yü and Li Hsiang-chün; the national martyr, General Shih K'o-fa; the socially low but highly moral and patriotic storyteller, Liu Ching-t'ing (ca. 1587–d. after 1669); the righteous and courageous musician and singer, Su K'un-sheng;[40] and so forth. Those who are blamed in the drama include the corrupting officials, such as Juan Ta-ch'eng and Ma Shih-ying; the turncoats — officials and generals — such as Grand Regional Commanders Liu Liang-tso

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[38] For the *Wen i tsai-tao* tradition of Chinese literature and its relation with main traditional Chinese intellectual currents, see Nagasawa Kikuya, *Shina bungaku gaikan* (Tokyo, 1966), pp. 9-10; Huang Chi-ch'ih, "'Wen-yü-tao' 'hsing-yü-ch'ing'," *Chung Chi hsüeh-pao*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (May, 1968), esp. pp. 187-192; Yang Hui-chi, "Chung-kuo che-hsüeh yü wen-hsüeh chih kuan-hsi," *Hsien-tai hsüeh-yüan*, No. 76 (July, 1970), esp. pp. 4-6 and No. 77 (Aug. 1970), esp. pp. 22-23; Kuo Shao-yü, *Chung-kuo wen-hsüeh p'i-p'ing shih* (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1961 ed.), pp. 8-10, 16-19, 25-36, 138-150, 403-417; and Lo Ken-tse, *Chung-kuo wen-hsüeh p'i-p'ing shih*, (3 Vols. Shanghai: Ku-tien wen-hsüeh ch'u-pan she, 1958, 1961 ed.), Vol. 2, pp. 142-146 and Vol. 3, pp. 190-192.

[39] Chao Li-sheng, "Lun K'ung Shang-jen ai-kuo chu-i ssu-hsiang te she-hui ken-yüan," pp. 403-417; Fan Ning, "*T'ao-hua shan* tso-che K'ung Shang-jen," pp. 381-387; Ma Yung, "K'ung Shang-jen chi ch'i *T'ao-hua shan*," pp. 388-402; Nieh Shih-chiao, "Lüeh-t'an *T'ao-hua shan*," *Wen-hsüeh i-ch'an tseng-k'an, liu-chi* (Peking, 1958), pp. 251-268.

[40] Both Liu and Su were well-known artists of the time. A rather large number of accounts of their life and activities were written by their contemporaries; the most significant of these are Huang Tsung-hsi (1610-1695), "Liu Ching-t'ing chuan," in *Huang Li-chou wen-chi*, ed. by Ch'en Nai-ch'ien (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1959), pp. 86-88; Wu Wei-yeh (1609-1672), "Liu Ching-t'ing chuan," in *Mei-chia-ts'un ts'ang-kao (Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an* ed.), *chüan* 52, pp. 3b-5a, and *idem*, "Wei Liu Ching-t'ing ch'en ch'i yin," *ibid.*, *chüan*, 26, pp. 2b-3a, and *idem*, "Ch'u Liang-sheng ko," *ibid.*, *chüan* 10, pp. 1a-1b; Ch'ien Ch'ien-i (1582-1664), "Shu Liu Ching-t'ing ts'e-tzu," in *Mu-chai yu-hsüeh chi* (*Ssu-pu ts'ang-k'an* ed.), Vol. 12: *chüan* 51, pp. 79a-80a; Chang Tai (1597-1684?), *T'ao-an meng-i*, ed. by Yü P'ing-po (Peking: P'u-she, 1927 ed.), pp. 67-68; Wang Shih-chen (1634-1711), *Fen-kan yü-hua* in *Ku-chin shou-pu ts'ung-shu*, Vol. 24 (Shanghai: Kuo-hsüeh fu-lun she, 1915), *chüan* II, pp. 1b-2a; Yü Huai (1619-1696), *Pan-ch'iao tsa-shih*, pp. 24-25; Chiang Yin-hsiang (ed.), *T'ao-hua shan ming-jen hsiao-shih*, pp. 24-28. Important and more comprehensive studies by modern scholars are Hung Shih-liang, *Liu Ching-t'ing p'ing-chuan* (Shanghai: Ku-tien wen-hsüeh ch'u-pan she, 1957); Ch'en Ju-heng and Yang T'ing-fu, *Ta Shuo-shu chia Liu Ching-t'ing* (Shanghai: Ssu-lien ch'u-pan she, 1954); Ch'en Ju-heng *Shuo-shu hsiao-shih* (Shanghai: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1936), pp. 37-57; *idem*, *Shuo-shu shih-hua* (rev. and enl. ed. of *Shuo-shu hsiao-shih*, Peking: Tso-chia ch'u-pan she, 1958), pp. 157-169; *idem*, "Kuan-yü Liu Ching-t'ing te chi-chien shih," *Wen-shih tsa-chih*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (1948), pp. 11-14.

(d. 1667) and Liu Tse-ch'ing (d. 1648);[41] and the Hung-kuang emperor (r. 1644–1645) whose inability to recognize and use the talented and the virtuous cost him the Southern Ming empire. From the structure of the two stereotypes of "the praised" and "the blamed" in the pattern of character models in the play, it is obvious that K'ung Shang-jen intentionally upheld Confucian orthodoxy in the writing of the *T'ao-hua shan*. His picture of the Southern Ming court, furthermore, followed standard characterization of the last reign of a falling dynasty in the traditional Chinese historical generalization of dynastic cycles. The loss of the emperor's trust in the righteous and able officials; the continuous strife between feuding field generals; the control of power and continuous purging of the opposition by evil officials who had the emperor's blind trust; the bitter and fatal factional strifes; and the "bad-last" emperor (like Chieh of the Hsia dynasty and Chou of the Shang dynasty) who always indulged in beautiful women, wine, and punishment of able ministers for their righteous advices — all fit the traditional picture of a dying dynasty. As a matter of fact, he plainly called the Hung-kuang regime "the administration of self-destruction" *(wang-kuo chih-cheng)*.[42]

On the other hand, there are hardly, in a strict sense, any anti-Manchu sentiments in the *T'ao-hua shan*. It is true that all Ming loyalists are highly praised, but the praise of these men alone cannot be viewed as the spread of hatred for the Manchus. To praise "loyalty" as the highest form of virtue only leads to hatred of the Chinese "traitors," not of the Manchus who were in general considered "foreigners." Besides, the concepts of loyalty and statesmanship are part of the very essence of the Confucian orthodoxy of statecraft and are not in any way connected with nationalism based on anti-foreignism.

The Mainland Chinese scholars' arguments, however, are not only based on K'ung Shang-jen's reminiscence of the Ming empire in the *T'ao-hua shan*. They add that K'ung Shang-jen spent four years in South China and made many friends with Ming loyalists who might have influenced

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[41] For brief biographies of Liu Liang-tso and Li Tse-ch'ing, see Arthur Hummel, *op. cit.*, pp. 524-525 and 531-532, respectively. For detailed biographies of these two generals, see Chang Tai, *Shih-kuei shu hou-chi*, pp. 227-228 (Liu Tse-ch'ing), 231 (Liu Liang-tso); Wen Jui-lin, *Nan-chiang i-shih*, pp. 380-383 (Liu Liang-tso and Liu Tse-ch'ing are treated together with Huang Te-kung and Kao Chieh); *Ch'ing-shih kao* (Shanghai, 1942 reprint), p. 1076 (Liu Liang-tso); *Ch'ing-shih lieh-chuan* (Shanghai: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1928), *chüan* 79, pp. 16a-17a (Liu Liang-tso), *chüan* 80, p. 43b (Liu Tse-ch'ing); Hsü Tzu, *Hsiao-tien chi-chuan*, pp. 912-915 (Liu Tse-ch'ing); *Ming-shih* (Kuo-fang yen-chiu yüan ed.), p. 3070 (Liu Tse-ch'ing); Chi Liu-ch'i, *Ming-chi nan-lüeh*, pp. 64-65 (Liu Tse-ch'ing) and 65-66 (Liu Liang-tso).

[42] *T'ao-hua shan* (Shanghai, 1947 ed.), p. 111. Some of the traditional historical generalizations of the pattern of the fall of a dynasty are discussed in Arthur F. Wright, "Generalization in Chinese History," in Louis Gottschalk (ed.), *Generalization in the Writing of History* (Chicago, 1963), esp. pp. 41-43, and "Sui Yang-ti: Personality and Stereotype," in Arthur F. Wright (ed.), *The Confucian Persuasion* (Stanford, 1960), pp. 61-65; and Yang Lien-sheng, "Toward a Study of Dynastic Configurations in Chinese History," in his *Studies in Chinese Institutional History* (Cambridge, 1961), esp. pp. 10-14. The earliest origin of this Chinese historiographical tradition — the myth of Chieh and Chou as "bad-last" emperors — is analyzed by Hsia Tseng-yu, *Chung-kuo ku-tai shih* (Reprint. Taipei: Shang-wu, 1963), pp. 28-29. A concise picture of the syndrome of the Hung-kuang reign as a dying regime is given in the scene "Chieh-chi" (Battle at Pan-chi) in the *T'ao-hua shan*, in which in the words of two contending generals, Huang Te-kung and Tso Liang-yü, K'ung Shang-jen summed up the most significant symptoms of the Hung-kuang court and compared the Hung Kuang emperor to Chieh and Chou. *T'ao-hua shan* (Shanghai, 1947 ed.), pp. 120-121.

his thought, and that many of K'ung's poems reveal deep patriotic feelings. While this is true, it shows only that nationalistic sentiments indeed existed in K'ung Shang-jen's mind. But such sentiments were universally shared in varying degrees by almost all Chinese in that difficult period of transition, particularly after the Manchu massacres in such cities as Yangchow and Chia-ting in South China. That is somewhat different from being actively engaged in advancing the ideology of Chinese nationalism. Besides, K'ung Shang-jen did not consider himself a Ming loyalist; the special gratitude he cherished for the Emperor K'ang-hsi clearly shows that he regarded the Manchu emperor only as a brilliant prince of a new dynasty, not as an alien ruler.[43]

However, how the dramatist wrote his masterpiece is one thing, and how his readers and audience reacted to this drama is another. While we do not agree that the main theme of the *T'ao-hua shan* is nationalism, we do hold that this drama provoked Chinese nationalistic sentiments at the time. According to K'ung Shang-jen's own record, the *T'ao-hua shan* won immediate popularity after it was staged, and it created a sensation in the literary and theatrical world: "In the capital, the show *T'ao-hua shan* was on every day. . . . But amid the luxurious setting and the music and singing of the opera, there were people in the audience who could not help sobbing; they were the Ming loyalists."[44] The mystery of K'ung Shang-jen's dismissal from office created a myth among people who believed that the dramatist was punished for his sympathy for the Ming cause. It is not important to speculate upon the real cause of K'ung's dismissal; so far, no historical evidence can prove that the *T'ao-hua shan* was the real cause. What is more important is how K'ung Shang-jen's contemporaries felt about his case.

The incident took place a little over ten years after Hung Sheng (1645–1704), another great dramatist of the time, was expelled from the Imperial Academy because of his play *Ch'ang-sheng tien* (The Palace of Eternal Youth), completed in 1688. People could not help connecting the two cases and suspecting that the imperial authority was irritated by these two dramatists' reminiscences of the fall of the past dynasties. Actually, the Manchu court may have been alarmed by the tremendous popularity of these two dramas, and been aware of the possibility that these historical dramas could provoke nationalistic sentiments among the Chinese people. Under such circumstances, it was not important to ask whether or not the dramatists intended to provoke nationalism. To the Manchu court, the thought that these dramas might provoke Chinese nationalistic sentiments was enough for them to take precautionary action. At this time, after the special *Po-hsüeh hung-tz'u* examination of 1679, the Manchu court was adopting an appeasement policy toward the Chinese intellectuals. Naturally, they avoided harsh literary persecutions. It is possible that as a warning they only expelled Hung Sheng and K'ung Shang-jen from the office and sent them home from Peking.

Now we shall discuss some of the characters of the *T'ao-hua shan* in order to have a closer look at this drama. The lead character Hou Fang-yü is the man K'ung Shang-jen chooses to represent the honest intellectuals of Hou's day. Although Hou is a young gentleman-scholar with high aspirations for serving his country, he possesses the wavering determination characteristic of scholars. In the drama, Hou's weakness is shown when the politician

[43] See above, note 1.

[44] K'ung Shang-jen, *T'ao-hua shan* (Shanghai, 1947 ed.), p. 155 ("Pen-mo"). See also Wang Chi-lieh, *Yin-lu ch'ü-hua*, Vol. 7, p. 60.

Juan Ta-ch'eng tries to buy his friendship by spending money and gifts on his mistress, Li Hsiang-chün.[45] Befriended by Juan's gestures, Hou is about to accept Juan's sincerity in self-repentance, and to speak kindly of Juan to his friends. But Li Hsiang-chün makes him realize that Juan Ta-ch'eng is only an opportunist trying to use Hou for his own political ambitions.[46] It is significant that K'ung Shang-jen dramatizes this contrast between Hou Fan-yü's indecision and lack of judgment and Li Hsiang-chün's strong and direct disposition. To K'ung Shang-jen, Hou Fang-yü represents his own kind of intellectuals who has all the patriotic ideas but lacks experience and dynamic purpose. He knows this type of intellectuals only too well to ignore their weakness. At a time of great political turmoil, the helpless feeling of being a useless scholar must have been especially keen. Thus, K'ung Shang-jen recognizes the weakness of Hou Fang-yü just as he recognizes his own. But in the character of Li Hsiang-chün, who belongs to an entirely different social class, K'ung Shang-jen feels free to create his ideal heroine. Li Hsiang-chün is described in the drama as a simple but noble soul who by nature can distinguish right from wrong.

It seems that K'ung Shang-jen's disillusion over the scholar class as a whole goes even deeper. He not only finds weakness in the character of his chosen hero, Hou Fang-yü; he also sees selfishness and opportunism as the main factors that make the scholar-officials corrupt. The character of Juan Ta-ch'eng is an example. Juan, the number-one villain of the *T'ao-hua shan,* is a "successful" scholar-official; he won a *chin-shih* degree — the highest degree in the academic world — in the year 1616. The entire official career of his life shows what an opportunistic politician he is.[47] In 1624, he allied himself with the powerful eunuch Wei Chung-hsien to fight against Yang Lien (1571–1625) and Wei Ta-chung (1575–1625) in order to obtain a coveted post. In 1627, when Wei Chung-hsien was condemned, he wrote memorials excoriating both the Tung-lin group (represented by Yang Lien and Wei Ta-chung), who despised him, and the eunuchs who had helped him.[48] In the following year (1628) he was made Director of the Banqueting Court, but when the case of Wei Chung-hsien was finally settled, he was charged with supporting the eunuch and was deprived of all official titles. From 1629 to 1644, he lived in retirement. It is at the end of this period that the story of our drama takes place. In the *T'ao-hua shan,* we first find that Juan Ta-ch'eng tries to use Hou's influence to make peace with the Tung-lin and Fu-she groups. Failing to buy Hou's friendship, Juan begins vilifying Hou when-

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[45] *T'ao-hua shan* (Shanghai: Hui-wen T'ang, 1924 ed.), *chüan* 1, pp. 43-49 (Seventh Scene, "Ch'üeh-chuang").

[46] K'ung's version apparently was based on a true or well-known story. See Yü Huai, *Pan-ch'iao tsa-shih,* p. 27; Hou Fang-yü, "Li Chi chuan," p. 11a.

[47] For biographies of Juan Ta-ch'eng, see note 25 above.

[48] For a recent historical study of Wei Chung-hsien, see Ulrich H. Mammitzsch, *Wei Chung-hsien* (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawaii, 1968. Microfilm ed.); also see Arthur Hummel, pp. 846-847. For an excellent historical study of the Tung-lin group, see Charles O. Hucker, "The Tung-lin Movement of the Late Ming Period," in *Chinese Thought and Institutions,* ed. by John K. Fairbank (Chicago, 1957), pp. 151-157, which, although it does not discuss the same problem, provides background of the issues involved here; Hsieh Kuo-cheng, *Ming-Ch'ing chih-chi tang-she yun-tung k'ao,* pp. 61-108, of which pages 99-108 directly discuss the factional strife under the Hung-kuang reign. See also Tai Ming-shih (1653-1713), "Hung-kuang ch'ao wei tung-kung wei-hou chi tang-huo chi-lüeh," in *Ming-Ch'ing shih-liao hui-pien,* 3rd series, Vol. 21, pp. 2705-2747.

ever he can. In 1644, when Prince Fu is enthroned by his intimate friend, Ma Shih-ying, Juan Ta-ch'eng is back in power in the Hung-kuang court. Once back in power, Juan makes the most of it by revenging himself on the Tung-lin group. It is under Juan's corrupting leadership that the Nanking government falls. In 1645, when the Manchu troops are approaching Nanking, the Ming emperor flees and Juan Ta-ch'eng escapes to Chin-hua (in Chekiang) where the gentry refuse to receive him. Later, Juan surrenders to the Manchus and punishes the city by leading Manchu troops to destroy it. He dies in 1646 while following the Ch'ing army into Fukien.

Juan Ta-ch'eng's life in the drama is illustrative of the type of official greedy for power and wealth without consideration of national interest. When K'ung Shang-jen makes Juan Ta-ch'eng the number-one villain of the *T'ao-hua shan,* his deep contempt for all that Juan Ta-ch'eng represented is obvious.

In contrast to his disappointment in the ruling class of scholar-officials, K'ung Shang-jen sometimes tends to praise the honest and simple-minded "small people" in order to emphasize their virtues of unselfishness and knight-errantry. Besides the heroine, Li Hsiang-chün, there are two distinct characters of common folk in the *T'ao-hua shan* that K'ung Shang-jen praises very highly. They are the two supporting roles, Liu Ching-t'ing, the traveling storyteller, and Su K'un-sheng, the musician who happens to be Li Hsiang-chün's singing teacher.[49] Both entertainers are praised for their knight-errantry and bravery. For example, in the eleventh scene "T'ou-yüan" (In the Headquarters of the General), Liu Ching-t'ing is sent by Hou Fang-yü to greet General Tso Liang-yü with both oral and written messages asking the latter not to lead his troops to Nanking. K'ung Shang-jen gives in this scene one of his most vivid and unforgettable descriptions of Liu Ching-t'ing's wit and courage.[50] Along the same line of approach, in another moving scene, "Ts'ao-hsi" (To Dispatch a Proclamation against Juan and Ma), the musician Su K'un-sheng's knightly valor on behalf of Hou Fang-yü, who is put in jail by Juan Ta-ch'eng at this time, is forcefully detailed.[51] When Hou Fang-yü is arrested, Su K'un-sheng leaves Nanking for General Tso's

[49] For biographies and studies of Liu and Su, see note 40 above. Both men served General Tso Liang-yü and, after the fall of the Hung-kuang court, continued their profession. Both enjoyed great reputations in their day. Liu Ching-t'ing was particularly respected as a man of high morality and Ming loyalism by leading scholars of his day, and has become a topic of research in modern scholarship. The evaluation of Liu Ching-t'ing as a man of high morality and loyalty, however, has been questioned from his own time to modern day. In his day, while such distinguished scholars as Huang Tsung-hsi, Wu Wei-yeh, and others all praised him highly, Wang Shih-chen held that these scholars praised Liu because he once served General Tso Liang-yü; Tso became in the eyes of the Ming loyalists a symbol of righteousness by openly fighting the evil official, Juan Ta-ch'eng, a symbol of the remnants of Wei Chung-hsien's eunch faction. (See Wang Shih-chen, *Fen-kan yü-hua, chüan* 2, pp. 1b-2a.) Modern scholars are also divided in their view of Liu. Ch'en Ju-heng contends that Liu served, after the fall of the Southern Ming, General Ma Feng-chih (d. 1659), who betrayed the Ming to surrender to the Ch'ing (in 1645), and therefore should not be considered a man of loyalty or a man of morality, because of his association with such an immoral man as Ma Feng-chih. (See Ch'en Ju-heng, "Kuan-yü Liu Ching-t'ing te chi-chien shih," pp. 11-12.) Hung Shih-liang, on the other hand, argues that Liu's joining Ma Feng-chih might be for different reasons. Furthermore, Ma later was accused of making connections with Cheng Ch'eng-kung's (Koxinga, 1624-1664) Ming forces and was killed by the Manchu court, and this fact indicates that Ma might not be totally disloyal to the Ming. (Hung Shih-liang, *Liu Ching-t'ing p'ing-chuan,* pp. 18-19). In the end, Hung holds that Liu was a man of high morality and patriotism (pp. 9, 43-47). K'ung Shang-jen apparently chose to follow the version of the Ming loyalists.

[50] K'ung Shang-jen, *T'ao-hua shan* (Shanghai, 1924 ed.), *chüan* 1, pp. 64-71.

[51] *Ibid., chüan* 2, pp. 68-76.

headquarters at Wu-ch'ang to seek help. Being an obscure musician, Su K'un-sheng can not obtain an audience with the general. To arouse the attention of the general, Su sings loudly in the middle of the night, in defiance of a martial curfew. Arrested by a soldier, he finally has a chance to speak to the general and to persuade him to dispatch a proclamation against the group of politicians represented by Juan Ta-ch'eng and Ma Shih-ying. Later, Liu Ching-t'ing risks his life to personally bring General Tso Liang-yü's proclamation to Juan and Ma. Liu is put into jail as a hostile messenger and is almost killed. Although the efforts of these two artisans do not free their friend, Hou Fang-yü, their loyalty and bravery represent the dramatist's hope in humanity. He refers to both Liu and Su as "courageous and righteous men" and compares Liu to the famous Ching K'o (d. 227 B.C.), a symbol of knight-errantry in Chinese history, who, on behalf of Prince Tan of the Yen State, unsuccessfully attempted to take the life of the King of Ch'in, who was later to become the First Emperor (Shih-huang-ti, r. 221–210 B.C.), of the Ch'in dynasty (221–207 B.C.) and of Imperial China as well. In the characters of Liu Ching-t'ing and Su K'un-sheng, K'ung Shang-jen apparently chooses to reiterate the recurrent theme in the world of popular literature that morality, loyalty and patriotism often can be found only in persons who are socially low and not expected to have these qualities. He further emphasizes that at a time of "national catastrophe" this fact could become most clear.

K'ung Shang-jen's treatment of the military leaders is worthy of examination, because the continuous strife between the ignorant and selfish military leaders was in general conceived at K'ung's time to be partly responsible for the fall of the Hung-kuang court.[52] K'ung Shang-jen also sees the majority of the military leaders of the Hung-kuang reign as being ignorant, selfish, and arrogant. They are so concerned among themselves about trifles that they lose any chance they might have had to unify the country. In the scene "Cheng-wei" (A Quarrel over Seating Position), K'ung Shang-jen gives a most sarcastic description of the quarrel between the Four Grand Regional Commanders — Huang Te-kung (d. 1645), Kao Chieh, Liu Liang-tso, and Liu Tse-ch'ing — over the most insignificant problem of "who sits where" during a conference with Shih K'o-fa, their chief commander.[53] As the strife continues and intensifies, the military leaders end up killing each other or surrendering to the Manchus. Thus in the scene "Chuan-chiang" (To Ambush the General), a bitter confrontation between General Kao Chieh and his subordinate Regional Commander, Hsü Ting-kuo, causes the latter to set a trap to ambush Kao and then surrender to the Manchus.[54] In the scene "Chieh-Chi" (Battle at Pan-chi), the civil war between the two ablest generals of the Southern Ming, Huang Te-kung[55] and

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[52] Chang Tai, *Shih-kuei shu hou-chi* (ca. 1670), pp. 231-232; T'an Ch'ien (1594-1658), *Kuo-ch'üeh* (ca. 1653), (6 Vols. Peking: Ku-chi ch'u-pan she, 1958 ed.) Vol. 6, pp. 6213ff; Wen Jui-lin, *Nan-chiang i-shih* (between 1702 and 1722), p. 385; Chi Liu-ch'i, *Ming-chi nan-lüeh* (1671), pp. 62-70.

[53] *T'ao-hua shan* (Shanghai, 1924 ed.), *chüan* 1, pp. 106-112.

[54] *Ibid., chüan* 2, pp. 36-40.

[55] Huang was considered the only honest, righteous, and loyal top military general of the Hung-kuang period. For a brief biography, see Arthur Hummel, *op. cit.*, p. 348. For detailed accounts of his life, see Chang Tai, *Shih-kuei shu hou-chi*, pp. 226-227; Chi Liu-ch'i, *Ming-chi nan-lüeh*, pp. 62-64; Cha Chi-tso, *Kuo-shou lu*, pp. 73-75; Ch'ien Su-yun, *Nan-chung chi* (1650), pp. 107-108; Wen Jui-lin, *Nan-chiang i-shih*, pp. 380-383; Wu Wei-yeh, *Lu-ch'iao chi-wen*, pp. 98-99; Hsü Tzu, *Hsiao-tien chi-chuan* (1861), pp. 273-277; *Ming-shih* (Kuo-fang yen-chiu yüan ed.), pp. 3022-3023; Shu-ho-te and Yü Ming-chung (comp.), *Ch'ing-ting sheng-ch'ao hsün-chieh chu-ch'en lu* (1776) (2 Vols. Reprint; Taipei: Ch'eng-wen ch'u-pan she, 1969), p. 53.

Tso Liang-yü, leads to the death of the latter.[56] In recreating the military chaos and impotence of the Southern Ming, K'ung Shang-jen forcefully shows the fundamental weakness and helplessness of the Hung-kuang court.[57]

Three generals in the *T'ao-hua shan* die for their country: Tso Liang-yü, Huang Te-kung, and Shih K'o-fa. Although they die in different ways and under different circumstances, they die as notable soldiers, and K'ung Shang-jen pays each of them proper tribute for their bravery, loyalty, and martyrdom. However, K'ung also shows that they represent three different types of loyalty and beliefs, and that, except for Shih K'o-fa, they are critically responsible for the fall of the Hung-kuang regime.

General Tso Liang-yü commands 300,000 troops and controls the middle Yangtze River region. He maintains an independent status before the fall of Peking and the Ch'ung-chen emperor, and even more so after that. He is hesitant to give his allegiance to the Hung-kuang court at Nanking,[58] a fact that contributes to the instability of the new regime. But he is without question loyal to the Ming, and for that reason he marches his troops to rescue the alleged heir-apparent of the Ch'ung-chen emperor, who is imprisoned in Nanking, and rid the court of evil officials such as Ma Shih-ying and Juan Ta-ch'eng, who have corrupted the Hung-kuang emperor and destroyed any chance of Ming restoration.[59] But when his troops are defeated by General Huang Te-kung's forces at Pan-chi, and he learns that his son and his lieutenants have disobeyed his wish to have pillaged a city, he so regrets his action and is so angered at the unexpected event that he first attempts to commit suicide to redeem himself and then suffers a fatal heart attack.[60] In Tso Liang-yü[61] K'ung

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[56] *T'ao-hua shan* (Shanghai, 1924 ed.), *chüan* 2, pp. 87-92.

[57] *T'ao-hua shan* (Shanghai, 1947 ed.), pp. 62, 92, 132 (comments on these pages).

[58] *Ibid.*, pp. 31, 46, 109, 111.

[59] *Ibid.*, pp. 11, 120-121. The affair of the alleged heir-apparent of the Ch'ung-chen emperor who came to the South from the North caused great restlessness and factional strife in Nanking and contributed partly to the instability of the Nanking government. For detailed discussions of the circumstances and development of this event, see Wu Wei-yeh, *Lu-ch'iao chi-wen*, pp. 153-162; Hsiao I-shan, *Ch'ing-tai t'ung-shih*, (Taipei: Shang-wu, 1963), pp. 305-306. Another of Tso Liang-yü's accusations was Emperor Hung-kuang's failure to recognize and accept his wife, who was separated from the emperor — the former Prince Fu — in Honan by military disturbance but eventually reached Nanking. She died in a prison at Nanking. See Chi Liu-ch'i, *Ming-chi nan-lüeh*, pp. 167-170; Hsiao I-shan *Ch'ing-tai t'ung-shih*, p. 305.

[60] *T'ao-hua shan* (Shanghai, 1947 ed.), p. 121.

[61] In actual history, the causes and development of Tso Liang-yü's eastward expedition were to some extent different from what has been said of it in the *T'ao-hua shan*. See Hsü Tzu, *Hsiao-tien chi-chuan*, pp. 909-911; *idem*, *Hsiao-tien chi-nien*, pp. 352-358; Wen Jui-lin, *Nan-chiang i-shih*, pp. 70-71; *Ming-shih* (Kuo-fang yen-chiu yüan ed.), pp. 3066-3143. Among contemporary records, see Li Chieh (late Ming-early Ch'ing), *T'ien-hsiang ko sui-pi (Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng ch'u-pien* ed.), p. 27; Wang Shih-chen, *Fen-kan yü-hua*, *chüan* 2, p. 1b; and Chang Tai, *Shih-kuei shu hou-chi*, pp. 173-174. Although the versions in these works varied to a certain extent, they all indicated that Tso Liang-yü's expedition was motivated more by economic and personal reasons than by his intention of "purfying the surroundings of the throne" *(ch'ing chün-ts'e)*, and that Tso's decision was induced more by the Regional Inspector, Huang Chu, than by himself. Furthermore, these works showed that both Ho T'eng-chiao (1592-1649) and Yüan Chi-hsien (1598-1646), the two governor-generals in control of regions and provinces west of Nanking, considered Tso's move more destructive than constructive and refused to join him, and that Tso died before his troops were defeated first at T'ung-ling and then at Pan-chi. Some of these sources also revealed that Tso's troops numbered about 800,000 and were indeed devastating and pillaging the regions (Li Chieh; *Ming-shih*; etc.). For a biography of Tso Meng-keng, see *Ch'ing-shih kao* (Shanghai, 1942 reprint), p. 1076. For biographies of Ho T'eng-chiao and Yüan Chi-hsien, see Arthur Hummel, *op. cit.*, pp. 290-291, 948-949, respectively.

Shang-jen characterizes a general whose allegiance to the Hung-kuang court is fragile to begin with and is further alienated and even severed by its corruption and factional strifes. In the end, he is partly responsible for its fall, for when the court moves the troops from its northern and northwestern areas to fight Tso Liang-yü, the defense of these areas — critical to the safety of Nanking — is drastically weakened, thus opening the door for the Manchu forces to march southward and overtake Yangchow and eventually Nanking.[62]

Huang Te-kung is one of the Four Grand Regional Commanders. In the *T'ao-hua shan,* as in history, he is a sincere, honest, and sometimes selfish military man. But it is his utmost loyalty to the Hung-kuang emperor that marks him out from such top military leaders of the time as Liu Liang-tso and Liu Tse-ch'ing, who are willing to surrender to the Manchus; his single purpose is to assist the emperor to recover the lost land and to restore the Ming dynasty.[63] Ironically, even the emperor is surprised to learn that Huang Te-kung is actually loyal to him.[64] Yet, even more ironically, Huang Te-kung, more than anyone else, is directly responsible for the fall of the Hung-kuang court and for losing the emperor to the Manchus. Without questioning its implication, he accepts Juan Ta-ch'eng's order to give up his defense against the Manchus and to engage in the civil war against Tso Liang-yü; his victory over Tso's forces at Pan-chi leads indirectly to the death of General Tso Liang-yü.[65] The weakening of the northern defense, the devastating civil war, and the death of Tso Liang-yü all make the Hung-kuang court militarily unable to stop the Manchus' southward march.[66]

When the Manchu troops besiege Yangchow and the city of Nanking falls into chaos, the Hung-kuang emperor flees the capital and by mistake reaches the headquarters of General Huang Te-kung at Wu-hu (in modern Anhwei).[67] With all his loyalty to the emperor and his hysterical but heroic efforts to save him, Huang fails. He is betrayed and shot by his most trusted lieutenant, T'ien Hsiung (d. 1663). T'ien Hsiung turns over the helpless emperor to the other two Grand Regional Commanders, Liu Liang-tso and Liu Tse-ch'ing, who have already surrendered and have come to capture the emperor for the Manchus. After the emperor has been taken away from his own hands, a distressed and wounded Huang Te-kung cries:

> Ah Heavens!
>
> Ah Heavens!
>
> How could the Ming Dynasty be ended in my hands!

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[62] *T'ao-hua shan* (Shanghai, 1947 ed.), pp. 122-123, 125. For a concise, real historical picture of the development, see Hsieh Kuo-cheng, *Nan-Ming shih-lüeh* (Shanghai: Jen-min ch'u-pan she, 1957), pp. 65-66, 70-71.

[63] *T'ao-hua shan* (Shanghai, 1947 ed.), p. 120. For Huang Te-kung as a historical figure, see the sources given in note 55 above.

[64] *T'ao-hua shan* (Shanghai, 1947 ed.), p. 130.

[65] *Ibid.*, pp. 113-116, 119-122. For differences in the development of the civil war between the descriptions of the *T'ao-hua shan* and historical sources, see note 61 above.

[66] In history, after the death of Tso Liang-yü, Tso's forces were defeated by Huang Te-kung's troops, first at T'ung-ling and then at Pan-chi, and after these defeats Tso Liang-yü's son Tso Meng-keng, the new commander, retreated and surrendered his troops to the Manchus. See Hsü Tzu, *Hsiao-tien chi-chuan,* pp. 911-912; *idem, Hsiao-tien chi-nien,* pp. 352-362; *Ming-shih* (Kuo-fang yen-chiu yüan ed.), p. 3066.

[67] *T'ao-hua shan* (Shanghai, 1947 ed.), pp. 125, 129-130.

After that, he kills himself with his own sword![68]

This emotional and telling scene, entitled "Chieh-pao" (To Capture the Treasure) in the drama, clearly is used by K'ung Shang-jen to dramatize — by slightly changing the historical facts — his compelling understanding that the enemy of the Hung-kuang Court is within rather than without. In the character of Huang Te-kung, K'ung Shang-jen symbolizes a general and a leader who has the utmost loyalty to the Hung-kuang court but whose lack of vision and farsightedness is the very reason for its fall.

Of all the top generals, Shih K'o-fa, Grand Secretary and President of the Board of War, is the only one who is praised whole-heartedly by K'ung Shang-jen. Commanding the troops at Yangchow, Shih K'o-fa is characterized as the perfect Confucian high minister: First he settles the bitter, war-threatening disputes between the Four Grand Regional Commanders;[69] then he dispatches General Kao Chieh on the unsuccessful Northern expedition;[70] and following the Confucion principle, "Give your best try even if you know it is helpless" *(Chih ch'i pu-k'o erh wei chih)*, he fights the heroic battle at Yangchow;[71] finally he dies for his country when he realizes that all hope is completely gone. In all, Shih K'o-fa's dedication to his country and his wisdom in fulfilling it are an inspiration to patriotism and loyalty for his soldiers and his countrymen at a time of "national catastrophe."[72]

The death of Shih K'o-fa in the *T'ao-hua shan* climaxes the emotions of sadness and hopelessness that marks K'ung Shang-jen's overall view of the Hung-kuang court. At the same time, it sparks the reliving of a noble, influential Chinese ideal of how at the end of a dynasty the righteous ministers have to carry on the painful task of revitalizing the dying regime even when they know that the future is hopeless, and of how they die for their country after the final hope is gone. This is the scene "Ch'en-Chiang" (Drowning in the River). In this sad, tear-provoking scene, K'ung Shang-jen describes how Shih K'o-fa flees the fallen city of Yangchow and painfully struggles to reach the vicinity of Nanking in hopes of devoting his last efforts to save the

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[68] *Ibid.*, pp. 131-132. At least six different versions of the dramatic scene of how the Hung-kuang emperor was turned over to the Manchus from Huang Te-kung's headquarters were given by contemporaries and in historical sources. See Ch'ien Su-yun, *Nan-chung chi*, p. 108; Cha Chi-tso, *Kuo-shou lu*, pp. 74-75; Chang Tai, *Shih-kuei shu hou-chi*, p. 229; T'an Ch'ien, *Kuo-ch'üeh*, Vol. 6, p. 6213; Li Chieh, *T'ien-hsiang ko sui-pi*, p. 51: Wen Jui-lin, *Nan-chiang i-shih*, p. 383; Hsü Tzu, *Hsiao-tien chi-nien*, p. 369; *idem*, *Hsiao-tien chi-chuan*, p. 277; Chi Liu-ch'i, *Ming-chi nan-lüeh*, pp. 233-234; *Ming-shih* (Kuo-fang yen-chiu yüan ed.), pp. 3022-3023. T'ien Hsiung's biography can be found in *Ch'ing-shih kao* (Shanghai, 1942 reprint), p. 1076. In the *T'ao-hua shan*, K'ung Shang-jen apparently chose to dramatize the most dramatic of all these versions.

[69] *T'ao-hua shan* (Shanghai, 1947 ed.), pp. 59-67.

[70] *Ibid.*, pp. 66, 90-91.

[71] For the origin of the spirit of "*Chih ch'i pu-k'o ehr wei chih*," which was used to describe Confucius, see *Lun-yü*, p. 325; *Kung-yang chuan* in *Shih-san ching chu-shu pu-cheng*, Vol. 12 (Taipei: Shih-chieh shu-chü, 1963), *chüan* 15, p. 5b.

[72] Typical of this is the scene "Shih-shih" (Haranguing the Troops) in the drama. See *T'ao-hua shan* (Shanghai, 1924 ed.), *chüan* 2, pp. 92-96.

dynasty.[73] But after he is told that the Hung-kuang emperor has already fled Nanking as the Manchu troops cross the Yangtze, he realizes that the last hope is gone, and decides to drown himself in the Yangtze River. In the last seconds of his life, Shih K'o-fa looks at the rushing, turbulent, and determined current of the Yangtze and says,[74]

Look the boundless world!

What is the use of keeping your life!

Shih K'o-fa, you can't find your place in this world.

A hero finally reaches the end of his life,

After so many times on the edge of death for his country.

What is there left for him,

After the country has changed its master!

After that, Shih K'o-fa, like the Sung loyal general and minister Chang Shih-chieh (d. 1278) and Lu Hsiu-fu (1236–1279) at the end of their dynasty, throws himself to the mercy of the water, thus ending the struggle of saving the Hung-kuang court and probably the Southern Ming as well.[75]

In Shih K'o-fa, K'ung Shang-jen dramatizes an ideal of life and ministership and the Confucian spirit of *Chih ch'i pu-k'o erh wei chih,* which were perfected previously by the Sung ministers Chang Shih-chieh, Lu Hsiu-fu, and Wen T'ien-hsiang (1236–1283) at the end of that dynasty. This was a similar historical incident which saw the last remnants of a dying Chinese dynasty wiped out by a southward-marching

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[73] *T'ao-hua shan* (Shanghai, 1947 ed.), pp. 132-133. The scene of Shih K'o-fa's death in the *T'ao-hua shan* is K'ung Shang-jen's creation, which differs from the often-varied versions of the event in historical sources. In history, Shih died in the Yangchow area, although the exact location and manner of his death have been varied in different records. See the various works cited in note 33 above; Shu-ho-te and Yü Ming-chung, *Ch'in-ting sheng-ch'ao hsün-chieh chu-ch'en lu,* p. 53; Wu Wei-yeh, *Lu-ch'iao chi-wen* (pp. 92-98), p. 97; Tai Ming-shih, "Hung-kuang i-yu Yang-chou ch'eng shou chi-lüeh," in *Ming-Ch'ing shih-liao hui-pien,* 3rd series, Vol. 21, pp. 2773-2774; Cheng Ta (late Ming-early Ch'ing), *Yeh-shih wu-wen* (1692), in *Wan-Ming shih-liao ts'ung-shu,* pp. 118-119; Chi Liu-ch'i, *Ming-chi Nan-lüeh,* pp. 228-230; E. Backhouse and J. O. P. Bland, *Annals and Memoirs of the Court of Peking* (Reprint. Taipei: Ch'eng-wen, 1970), p. 187. For the fall and pillage of Yangchow, see Wang Hsiu-ch'u (17th century), *Yang-chou shih-jih chi* (1645), in *Yang-chou shih-jih chi,* pp. 229–243; its English translations may be found in E. Backhouse and J. O. P. Bland, *op. cit.,* pp. 187-208, and Lucien Mao (trans.), "A Memoir of Ten Day's Massacre in Yangchow," *T'ien-hsia Monthly,* Vol. 4, No. 5 (March, 1937), pp. 515-537. But it must be pointed out that Wang Hsiu-ch'u has often been misunderstood and that his book has errors in its statements about the number of people killed in Yangchow and other events; see Chang Te-fang, "*Yang-chou shih-jih chi* pien-wu," *Chung-hua wen-shih lun-ts'ung,* Vol. 5 (Shanghai, 1962), pp. 365-376.

[74] *T'ao-hua shan* (Shanghai, 1947 ed.), p. 133.

[75] For Chang Shih-chieh, see *Sung-shih* (K'ai-ming shu-tien; *Erh-shih-wu shih* ed.), p. 5635; for Lu Hsiu-fu, see *Sung-shih,* p. 5635. Both Chang and Lu drowned themselves in the South Sea. Holding the last Sung emperor, Ti-tsung (Ping, r. 1276-1279), Lu threw himself and the emperor into the sea at Yai-shan off the Kwangtung coast after he had thrown his wife and children into the sea. Lu took the boy emperor with him because he did not want to see the emperor insulted by his enemies. After having heard that Lu and the emperor had drowned themselves in the sea, Chang Shih-chieh decided to lead his troops to Champa, but on the way he changed his mind and drowned himself in the sea when he realized that his final hope of restoring the Sung dynasty was gone. For these developments see, in addition to the biographies of Chang and Lu in the *Sung-shih,* Pi Yüan, *Hsü Tzu-chih t'ung-chien* (4 Vols. Peking: Ku-chi Ch'u-pan she, 1958 ed.), pp. 5027-5028; Feng Ch'i, *Sung-shih chi-shih pen-mo,* ed. with additions by Ch'en Pang-chan (*Kuo-hsüeh chi-pen ts'ung-shu* ed.), pp. 938-939.

northern people, the Mongols.[76] Some of Shih K'o-fa's weaknesses, such as indecision, failure to insist on his principle, and lack of determination had been regarded by his contemporaries as being contributing factors in the fall of the Hung-kuang court, but these are not explicitly criticized by K'ung Shang-jen. K'ung rather considers those weaknesses of Shih K'o-fa the results of his heroic deeds, of bending a little in order to keep the court and his country harmonious and united behind a great cause. But his patience, wisdom, and goals are in vain, just as were those of the famous minister Chu-ko Liang (181–234) of the Shu (221–264) of the Three Kingdoms period (220–265).[77]

To conclude our study of the *T'ao-hua shan*, we may again point out that although most of the characters of the drama are based on real personages of the late Ming and early Ch'ing period, the plot is not exactly structured after what happened in history. A comparison of real historical

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[76] For Wen T'ien-hsiang, see *Sung-shih*, p. 5560. The hopeless last struggle of the Southern Sung against the Mongols parallels, to a certain extent, that of the Southern Ming against the Manchus. For a concise and informative account of the tragic Southern Sung story, see Li Chieh, *Sung-shih* (Taipei: Ta-hsin shu-chü, 1968), pp. 207-215; Pi Yüan, *Hsü Tzu-chih t'ung-chien*, pp. 4983-5028; Feng Ch'i, *Sung-shih chi-shih pen-mo*, pp. 919-930. In the spirit of Chang Shih-chieh, Lu Hsiu-fu, and Wen T'ien-hsiang, we see that of Shih K'o-fa in K'ung Shang-jen's *T'ao-hua shan*. Ming loyalists took pride in comparing the last struggle of the Southern Ming to that of the Southern Sung. The whole issue reflected one of the most fundamental political ideologies of traditional China — the problem of life and death during drastic political changes. It was generally and commonly believed that at the time of dynastic defeat the ruler should die for his country and his ministers should die for their offices as a demonstration of their loyalty to their ruler and their dynasty. But these people should die in the right place and at the right moment. Death should not come unless the final hope of saving and restoring the dynasty is gone, and it should be well planned and foreseen. In short, death for a political cause was a most revered and at times mandatory ideal of life in traditional China. Traditional historians often evaluated the historical place and success of a dynasty in terms of the total number of deaths in the name of loyalty. In the mind of traditional Chinese intellectuals the core of this tradition was first developed by Confucius in his *Ch'un-ch'iu*, gradually fabricated through later dynasties, and finally elaborated into a predominant political ideal in the Neo-Confucian traditions since the Sung dynasty. For Ming loyalists' conception of this tradition, see, for example, Chang Tai, *Shih-kuei shu hou-chi*, pp. 43-44, 46, 55, 134-135, 146, 218-219. It seems quite reasonable to assume that K'ung Shang-jen's treatment of the problem of loyalty and death followed this general climate of opinion.

[77] *T'ao-hua shan* (Shanghai, 1947 ed.), pp. 46-54. See also the comments on these pages; it must be pointed out that K'ung Shang-jen approved of these comments as interpreting his views correctly. See his "Pen-mo," p. 155. One nineteenth-century scholar even ascribed the authorship of these comments to K'ung Shang-jen himself. But positive evidence for such a view is lacking. See Li Tz'u-ming (1830-1894), *Yüeh-man t'ang jih-chi*, ed. by Yu Yun-lung (2 Vols. Reprint. Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1963), p. 920. For the personality and deeds of Chu-ko Liang, see his biography in the *San-kuo chih*, punctuated and collated by Ch'en Nai-ch'ien (5 Vols. Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1959 ed.), pp. 911-931, 934-937 (including various comments). Chu-ko Liang's description of his spirit as a minister "To bending my body and exhausting my energy [in the service of the state], only death shall put a stop" *(Chü-kung chin-ts'ui ssu erh hou i)* has long become the motto and belief of all who dedicated themselves to the service of the state in traditional China. See Yen K'o-chün (ed.), *Ch'üan Shang-ku San-tai Ch'in-Han San-kuo Liu-ch'ao wen*, Vol. 13 (Taipei: Shih-chieh shu-chü, 1963 ed.), *chüan* 58, p. 8. In the mind of K'ung Shang-jen, Shih K'o-fa's service to the Southern Ming government at Nanking

(Continued to page 331)

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exactly followed this description. However, judgments on and evaluation of Shih K'o-fa's place in history have been controversial from his day to modern times. Among the contemporary and slightly later records are included, for example, Li Chieh, *T'ien-hsiang ko sui-pi* (after 1644), pp. 45-46, which criticized Shih for a lack of farsightedness that led the Hung-kuang court to lose opportunities of consolidating the regions of Honan and Shantung, and for not taking stern disciplinary action against feuding generals and corrupting soldiers; Wang Hsiu-ch'u, *Yang-chou shih-jih chi* (1645), and Chang Tai, *Shih-kuei shu hou-chi* (ca. 1670), p. 170, both of which criticized Shih for his narrow-mindedness and selfishness; Chi Liu-ch'i, *Ming-chi nan-lüeh* (1671), pp. 61-62, 229-230, which also pointed out Shih's failure to consolidate regions in the north, thus losing the large territory to the Manchus. All of these views are in general critical of Shih K'o-fa as a person and as a minister. Later views of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, however, tended to praise Shih's bravery and wisdom and loyalty, and sympathized with Shih's hopeless situations; among these are included, for example, Wen Jui-lin, *Nan-chiang i-shih* (between 1702 and 1722), p. 44; *Ming-shih* (1736) (Kuo-fang yen-chiu yüan ed.), p. 3083; Hsü Tzu, *Hsiao-tien chi-nien* (1891), p. 361, which gave high praise to Shih K'o-fa's loyalty and policy and compared his failure to save the Hung-kuang court to that of Chu-ko Liang to unify China, both due to a stroke of Heaven's will which was beyond human efforts. This changed trend seems to have been influenced by the Manchu court's continuous efforts to praise Shih K'o-fa's loyalty and spirit of "*chih ch'i pu-k'o erh wei chih*," including the bestowal of the posthumous title of "Chung-cheng" (Loyalty and Righteousness) in 1776. See Chi Liu-ch'i, *Ming-chi nan-lüeh*, p. 229; *Shih Chung-cheng kung chi*, pp. 1-14; Anonymous, *Chiang-nan wen-chien lu* in *Chung-kuo nei luan wai-huan li-shih ts'ung-shu*, Vol. 3: *Tung-nan chi-shih*, ed. by Wang Tu-ch'ing (Shanghai: Shen-chou Kuo-kuang she, 1947), p. 325. Modern views of Shih K'o-fa have been as divided as ever. Chu Wen-ch'ang praises Shih as a great statesman and military leader, but also points out his basic weaknesses of indecision and indetermination which clouded the fate of the Hung-kuang court ("Shih K'o-fa lun"). In Mainland China, a debate over Shih K'o-fa's place in history developed in 1952 and a number of articles were published in the issues of the *Li-shih chiao-hsüeh* of that year. While Ting Cheng-hua, Lo Cheng-yüan, and others hold that Shih should not be considered a national hero because he suppressed the peasant rebellions, Ch'i Hsia, Chien Po-tsan, Chu Huo, Wei Hung-yun, and others still regard Shih as a great national hero in his fight against the Manchu invaders although his actions against the peasant rebels must be criticized. See Ch'i Hsia, "Kuan-yü Shih K'o-fa te p'ing-chia wen-t'i," in Li Kuang-pi and Ch'ien Chün-hua (eds.), *Chung-kuo li-shih jen-wu lun-ts'un* (Peking: San-lien shu-tien, 1957), pp. 233-243; see also Wei Hung-yun, *Shih K'o-fa* (Shanghai, 1955), esp. 14-24, 32-57. The debate has continued to the 1960's. Hsieh Kuo-cheng praises Shih as a great statesman, military leader, mediator, negotiator, and national hero who gave his life for the defense of his country against foreign invaders; see his *Nan-Ming shih-lüeh*, esp. pp. 66-71. Chang Hsi-k'ung holds a similar view that Shih K'o-fa was a national hero, that his defense of Yangchow was a noble revelation of the Chinese nationalistic spirit against foreign invasion, and that his service to the Hung-kuang court was an exemplification of how a person should work for a national goal at a time of national crisis (*Shih K'o-fa*, Peking, 1959). The last work, which is in the series *Li-shih hsiao ts'ung-shu* edited by Wu Han, again promoted a series of articles (10) and letters (9) in the *Wen-hui Pao* in Shanghai in 1966. While some of these severely criticized Chang Hsi-k'ung for misinterpreting Shih K'o-fa as an historical figure and voiced the view that Shih was a "feudal reactionary," "the enemy of the people," and "the slaughterer of the peasant armies," some still evaluated Shih K'o-fa as a great man of loyalty and a national hero, and still others followed a middle road by pointing out both the weaknesses and achievements of Shih K'o-fa. Although these discussions were first motivated by political reasons, their conclusions were still far divided. It is significant to note that one of these articles is a re-examination by Tsung Chih-huang of the image of Shih K'o-fa portrayed by K'ung Shang-jen in the *T'ao-hua shan*; it makes severe criticisms of K'ung Shang-jen's characterization of Shih K'o-fa and denounces Shih "a slaughterer of the peasant armies," "a traitor of the Chinese people," and "a slave of the *feudal* ruling class." For all these, see Liu Hui *et al.*, *Shih K'o-fa p'ing-chia wen-t'i hui-pien*, ed. by O. K. Newspaper Agency (Hong Kong: O. K. Newspaper Agency, 1969); Tsung Chih-huang's article, "Ts'ung *T'ao-hua shan* t'an-ch'i — P'ing Shih K'o-fa," is on pages 59-68.

events[78] and the rewriting of these events in the *T'ao-hua shan* reveals K'ung Shang-jen's modes of recasting the historical personages and events that, in turn, illustrate his ideas of history and man. As real historical figures, the lead characters portrayed in the drama acted differently in key decisions in their lives. Hou Fang-yü did not become a Taoist for the sake of the Ming. To the contrary, he even took a Honan provincial examination under the Manchu rule in 1651, though he was not quite successful.[79] Shih K'o-fa did not drown himself in the Yangtze River near Nanking. Although stories about the last hours of his life varied, he was probably captured by the Manchus after an unsuccessful suicide attempt and was killed at Yangchow by the Manchu commander Dodo (1614-1649) upon his own request. In any event, he died in the Yangchow area and was not as perfect and as noble as was characterized by K'ung Shang-jen. Tso Liang-yü did not march his troops eastward just for "purifying the surroundings of the throne"; he had in mind other practical considerations; in any case, he died before the battle at Pan-chi. General Huang Te-kung did not lose the Hung-kuang emperor in the fashion described in the drama, and was not as upright and as innocent as was portrayed by K'ung Shang-jen. It becomes clear that K'ung Shang-jen created the drama of *T'ao-hua shan* to express his historical judgment and moral creed; the dynastic transition from the Ming to the Ch'ing occasioned his writing and provided the background of a stage on which he paraded his ideas and visions of history and man and society, and his criticism of the society in which he lived. As one contemporary of his, Wang Yüan (1648–1710), observed, it was through the love story of Hou Fang-yü and Li Hsiang-chün that K'ung Shang-jen interpreted the causes and process of the demise of the Hung-kuang regime.[80] In so doing, K'ung Shang-jen

[78] For a concise treatment of the Hung-kuang reign, see Hsieh Kuo-cheng, *Nan-Ming shih-lüeh*, pp. 46-75; Li Chieh, *Ming Shih* (Hong Kong: Hai-ch'iao ch'u-pan she, 1962), pp. 196-209; Hsiao I-shan, *Ch'ing-tai t'ung-shih*, Vol. I, pp. 293-312; *Ch'ing-shih* (Kuo-fang yen-chiu yüan ed.), pp. 5797-5827; *Ming-shih* (Kuo-fang yen-chiu yüan ed.), pp. 4111-4114. For contemporary and slightly later accounts of the Hung-kuang period, see Ku Yen-wu (1613-1682), *Sheng-an chi-shih* in *Ku T'ing-lin hsien-sheng i-shu* (Shanghai: Wen-jui-lou, 1885 ed.), Vol. 4, pp. 1a-10b and 1a-5b; Huang Tsung-hsi (1610-1695), *Hung-kuang shih-lu ch'ao* in *T'ung-shih* (Reprint. Taipei: Kuang-wen shu-chü, 1968), Vol. 2; Chang Tai (1597-1684?), *Shih-kuei shu hou-chi*, pp. 50-52; T'an Ch'ien (1594-1658), *Kuo-ch'üeh*, Vol. 6, pp. 6173-6217; Wu Wei-yeh (1609-1671), *Lu-ch'iao chi-wen*, pp. 79-131; Cha Chi-tso (1601-1676), *Tsui-wei lu, chüan* 18, pp. 1a-20b; Chi Liu-ch'i (Early Ch'ing), *Ming-chi nan-lüeh* (1671), pp. 1-223; Wen Jui-lin (*chü-jen* of 1705), *Nan-chiang i-shih*, esp. pp. 1-11, 35-44, 380-383, 405-412, 442-448; Hsü Tzu, *Hsiao-tien chi-chuan* (1861), pp. 1-35. Needless to say, these sources, primarily primary sources, are by far incomplete and differ with one another on many issues. But the reading of them still presents a general historical picture that clearly tells the dramatic and at times creative nature of the *T'ao-hua shan*.

[79] Hou Hsün, "Hou Fang-yü nien-p'u," in *Chuang-hui t'ang chüan-chi*, p. 4a; *Ch'ing-shih* (Kuo-fang yen-chiu yüan ed.), p. 5225. His name appeared only on the supplementary list of successful candidates (*fu-pang*).

[80] Wang Yüan, "Sung K'ung Tung-t'ang hu-pu kuei Shih-men shan hsü," pp. 247-248. For a different but also keen observation of the *T'ao-hua shan*, see also Yang En-shou (1834-after 1885), *Tz'u-yü ts'ung-hua* in *Chung-kuo ku-tien hsi-ch'ü lun-chu chi-ch'eng*, ed. by Chung-kuo Hsi-ch'ü Yen-chiu Yüan (Peking: Chung-kuo hsi-chü ch'u-pan she, 1959), Vol. 9, p. 272. Wang Yüan's view was shared and further elaborated, sometimes incorrectly, by Pao Shih-ch'en (1775-1855) and Li Tz'u-ming (1830-1894); see Pao Shih-ch'en, *I-chou shuang-chi* (1851) in *An-wu ssu-chung* (Taipei: Wen-hai ch'u-pan she, 1968), pp. 718-721; Li Tz'u-ming, *Yüeh-man T'ang jih-chi*, p. 920 (this particular comment was written in 1886). Other traditional interpretations of the themes of the *T'ao-hua shan*, which are often arbitrary and misleading, can be found in Chiang Jui-tsao, *Hsiao-shuo k'ao-cheng, Hsü-pien, Shih-i* (Shanghai, Ku-tien wen-hsüeh ch'u-pan she, 1957), pp. 120-122, 550-552; *idem*, *Hsiao-shuo chih-t'an* (2 Vols. Shanghai: Shang-wu yin-shu kuan, 1931), pp. 55-62. For a modern analysis and critique of these varied views, see Chou I-po, *Chung-kuo hsi-chü shih*, pp. 502-508.

created history by remolding some of the key personages of that historical period. The character of Shih K'o-fa in the *T'ao-hua shan* is a good point at issue. Basing the character on a controversial and generally much criticized historical figure, he moulded Shih into a perfect national hero and a symbol of loyality and martyrdom in the play, while the Shih K'o-fa of history has also gradually changed to catch up with its dramatic image. As a result, Shih K'o-fa has become a perfect Confucian minister, a model for all others to emulate; and his historical image has also become the focus of deep intellectual, historiographical, and political concerns, particularly in modern times. Even in 1966, the *T'ao-hua shan* image of Shih K'o-fa was still an ideological concern and a topic of heated debate in Mainland China.[81]

To students of intellectual history, what the *T'ao-hua shan* represents in the world of ideas is far more important than how accurately the dramatist K'ung Shang-jen projected the tragic historical experience of the Hung-kuang reign into his play. In the *T'ao-hua shan*, we have seen the beliefs and feelings that K'ung Shang-jen intended to share with his audience in a dramatic fashion. It is exactly through these beliefs and feelings that the tremendous impact of the Ming-Ch'ing dynastic transition has been felt. These are the ideas and emotions that he had received from his cultural traditions, his family heritage, and his special historical and social contexts. He, in turn, transformed all these into action by applying them to examine and interpret a critical period in Chinese history.[82]

[81] See above, note 77.

[82] It is worth noting here that the University of California Press at Berkeley has advertised the forthcoming publication of a complete translation of the *T'ao-hua shan* by Chen Shih-hsiang and Harold Acton. This translation, by two of the leading translators and scholars of Chinese literature in the West, promises to be an excellent reading for those who, after reading this article, wish to acquaint themselves with the literary qualities and ideas of the *T'ao-hua shan* but do not have enough training in Chinese to read the original.

Glossary

An-t'ang kao 岸堂稿
Aoki Masaru 青木正兒
Chan Shih-chieh 張世傑
Chang Wei 張薇
Ch'ang-sheng tien 長生殿
Ch'en-Chiang 沉江
Cheng-wei 爭位
Ch'eng Hao 程顥
Ch'eng I 程頤
Chieh-pao 刼寶
Ch'i-hsia 棲霞
Chia-tzu 甲子
Chieh-Chi 截磯
Chih ch'i pu-k'o erh wei chih 知其不可而爲之
chin-shih 進士
Ching K'o 荆軻
ching-shih 經世
Chou Tun-i 周敦頤
Chu Hsi 朱熹
Chu Yu-sung 朱由崧
Chu-ko Liang 諸葛亮
Ch'u-shan i-shu chi 出山異數記
ch'uan-chi 傳奇
Ch'ü-fu 曲阜
Chuan-chiang 賺將
chüan 卷
Ch'ung-chen 崇禎
Ch'üeh-li hsin-chih 闕里新志
Dodo 多鐸
Fei Mi 費密
Feng-yang 鳳陽
Fu 福
Fu-she 復社
Han Yü 韓愈
Hou Fang-yü 侯方域
Hou Hsün 侯洵
hsiao hu-lei 小忽雷
Hsien-sheng 先聲
Hsü Ting-kuo 許定國
Hsun Tzu 荀子
Hu-Hai chi 湖海集
Huang Te-kung 黃得功
Huang Tsung-hsi 黃宗羲
Hung-kuang 弘光
Hung Sheng 洪昇
I-yu 乙酉
Juan Ta-ch'eng 阮大鋮
K'ang-hsi 康熙
Kao Chieh 高傑
Ku Ts'ai 顧彩
Ku Yen-wu 顧炎武
Kuei-wei 癸未
k'un-ch'ü 崑曲
Kung Hsien 龔賢
Kung Pan-ch'ien 龔半千
K'ung Shang-jen 孔尚任
K'ung-tzu shih-chia p'u 孔子世家譜
K'ung Yü-ch'i 孔毓圻
Li Hsiang-chün 李香君
Li Tzu-ch'eng 李自成
Li Yung 李顒
Liang T'ing-nan 梁廷枏
Liu Ching-t'ing 柳敬亭
Liu Liang-tso 劉良佐
Liu Tse-ch'ing 劉澤清
Lu Hsiu-fu 陸秀夫
Ma Shih-ying 馬士英
Mao Hsiang 冒襄
Mao P'i-chiang 冒辟疆
Pan-chi 坂磯
pao-pien 褒貶
Po-hsüeh hung-tz'u 博學鴻詞
Shih-huang-ti 始皇帝
Shih i tsai-tao p'ai 詩以載道派
Shih K'o-fa 史可法
Shu 蜀
Shun-chih 順治
Ssu-chen 四鎮
Ssu kung-tzu 四公子
Su K'un-sheng 蘇崑生
Sui-chou 睢州
Sun Ch'i-feng 孫奇逢
Sun Tsai-fang 孫在豐
ta-tao 大道
Tan 丹
T'ao-hua shan 桃花扇
T'ien Hsiung 田雄
T'ou-yüan 投轅
Ts'ao-hsi 草檄
Tso Liang-yü 左良玉
Tsung Yüan-ting 宗元鼎
Tung-lin 東林
Wang Chi-lieh 王季烈
Wang Ch'ung 王充
wang-kuo chih-cheng 亡國之政
Wang Yuan 王源
Wei Chung-hsien 魏忠賢
Wei Ta-chung 魏大中
wen i tsai-tao 文以載道
Wen T'ien-hsiang 文天祥
Wu Mei 吳梅
Wu-tzu 戊子
Yang Hsiung 楊雄
Yang Lien 楊漣
Yen 燕
Yen-sheng kung 衍聖公
Yü-yun 餘韻

孔尚任與《桃花扇》

—個戲曲家對明清朝代轉換的歷史教訓的探討

（中文摘要）

張春樹 駱雪倫

在中國歷史上朝代的轉換常是中國文化發展的扭轉與關鍵點，因爲在這轉變期間新的政治制度與統治階級，新的經濟政策，新的社會方針，新的軍事組織方式，新的思想種子，與新的道德規範等都逐漸蛻變而出。新舊制度、思想之替換常需很長的時間去調節與適應。在這一段調整時期，最受影響的無過於知識份子，因爲他們不但在政治與物質環境方面需要調節適應，在思想方面——尤其是「忠」的歸屬問題——更面臨極爲複雜與多變的諸多挑戰；另外，他們還要檢討前朝亡因與本朝興由以盡他們所崇信的歷史責任與指出當朝應走的道途。正因如此，知識份子在這段時期內多透過史學上的、文學上的、一般隨筆性的著作來描述、分析他們所感受和經驗到的問題與抒想的議論；這些著作在一方面是研究中國歷史的最豐富的文獻之一，在另一方面更是研究某一朝代轉換時期內思想發展與一般問題的最有價值的材料。

十七世紀間之明清朝代轉換是上述這類朝代轉換情況的一個最具代表性者之一。它的一般歷史重要性與其關係中國近代一切之發展者已是衆皆熟知，但它在思想上也是關係中國傳統思想方法與範疇的演變的一個扭轉點，而在文獻資料方面又是一個最豐富的時期。基於這諸多原因，我們撰述了一部明清朝代轉換期間（約爲一六三〇至一七〇〇）的思想與社會，全書共三冊，其中第一冊分析這一時期中文學作品——特別是通俗文學作品——內所紀錄、表現、和論述的思想上、社會上、政治上、與個人際遇上的各種問題。全冊共六章，另加導論與結語，本文便是本冊中的第六章。

本文以清初文學家孔尚任（山東曲阜人）與其最負盛名的戲劇《桃花扇》爲討論中心。首先簡論孔氏的家庭背景，個人經歷，以及思想淵源。其次詳論《桃花扇》的寫作動機與其在思想史和社會史上的特殊意義。

孔尚任（1648—1718）是孔子的六十四代後裔。自幼工詩賦博典籍；弱冠即以道

統爲己任。到中年已在孔族享有博學和精通禮樂的聲名：他卅五歲時（1682）被委任修≪家譜≫及≪闕里誌≫；次年又被派去教鄒魯弟子（共選出七百人）祭孔禮樂，並同時負責採訪工師製造禮樂祭器。一六八四年康熙帝到曲阜祭孔廟。孔尙任和族兄孔尙鉉被選爲皇帝特用講書員，祀禮之後在御前講學。講學之後又引駕徧覽闕里聖蹟，應對從容，康熙很賞識他，特任他和尙鉉做國子監博士。

一六八五年，孔尙任雄心勃勃，抱着經世的理想到北京任國子監博士之職。（因爲他認爲漢唐以來，儒生報國皆由此途。）他的雄心壯志很快地就幻滅了，因國子監博士是閒職，離他想像的能參與國事民生大計甚遠。他大半時候無所事事。從一六八六年到一六八九年他被派到南方佐理孫在豐（工部侍郎）到江淮疏濬黃河海口。按理說疏濬河道應是實職，他應該感到有事可做，有所作爲。事實上不然，在官場上一切皆是因循苟且，敷衍塞責；沒有人眞正做事，也沒有人能有機會做事。他政治上的理想到這時候完全破滅。雖然如此，在南方這幾年的生活體驗却奠下他日後寫≪桃花扇≫的基礎。因≪桃花扇≫寫南明弘光朝的興亡，發生地就在南京揚州一帶。在南方的幾年，耳聽目睹使孔尙任對南明政治增加了很多了解，伏下他想寫一部南明興亡史的種子。

一六九〇年孔尙任回到北京，他對戲劇的興趣就在他回北京後開始。一六九四年孔尙任和他的朋友顧彩合作，寫了他第一部戲曲≪小忽雷≫。≪小忽雷≫的成功促使他進一步對戲曲努力。一六九九年≪桃花扇≫寫成，立刻轟動一時，使孔尙任成爲清初最負盛名的戲劇家之一。

≪桃花扇≫是用崑曲體式寫的，一般習慣上皆稱它有「四十齣」。（不包括第廿齣後的「閏廿齣」和第廿一齣前的「加廿一齣」，以及作爲序幕的「先聲」和作爲尾聲的「餘韻」。）它的劇情以明末四公子之一的侯方域和名妓李香君的戀愛故事爲經，以弘光南渡，奸臣誤國的恨事爲緯，是一部實事實人，有憑有據的歷史劇。

≪桃花扇≫書成，「王公薦紳，莫不借鈔，時有紙貴之譽」。上演時更是轟動一時，比美十年前洪昇所作的≪長生殿≫（在本書第五章對此劇有詳細討論），被譽爲清初劇壇的「雙璧」。但就在書成的第二年孔尙任就「因事罷官」。孔尙任的「罷官」和洪昇的「罷官」正巧合：兩劇皆在傳至內廷後才發生劇作家被革職的事件。因此當時有人說孔尙任是蹈洪昇覆轍——對清廷有所諷刺——因≪桃花扇≫問題罷官。本來戲劇扮演近人近事就容易犯忌諱，尤其≪桃花扇≫劇中多明末清初政事，嫌疑更多，但從各方面的資料來推敲，似仍無法證明其說。

反對孔尙任罷官是因≪桃≫劇的人最主要的根據是孔尙任本人沒有反清思想。以尙任與康熙遇合之雅，被恩之隆（尙任自稱爲「不世之遭逢也」），加上≪桃≫劇中

頗多對清廷的歌頌。例如清兵的入關被解釋爲「殺退流賊，安了百姓，替明朝報了大讐。」這些事實似皆可證明尙任沒有强烈的反清情愫。但孔尙任本人有沒有反清思想並不重要，當時一般看≪桃花扇≫的人如何解釋≪桃≫劇才是最重要。這便回到本文的主題≪桃花扇≫的主要思想是什麽？

≪桃花扇≫以侯方域、李香君的兒女私情爲名，實在是寫南明亡國的始末。在此孔尙任是用≪春秋≫「褒貶」之筆向歷史一一結算：忠貞愛國的予以獎勵，使留芳百世；爭權誤國的予以痛責，使遺臭萬年。這是第一次劇作家如此嚴肅地將歷史的裁判當作他主要的使命來處理。姑不論他對歷史人物的判斷是否皆正確（比如說他對南明諸將如史可法、左良玉、黃得功等都有程度不等的袒護），他提出來的問題——南明亡國誰該負責——對他同時代的讀者和觀衆則毫無疑問地是震撼人心的問題。

孔尙任是「以道統爲任」的人。歷史的裁判對他而言就代表「道統」。這本質上仍是儒家一貫的「文以載道」思想的發揮。値得注意的是這歷史裁判的內容。≪桃花扇≫眞正的英雄是妓女李香君，曲師蘇崑生，說書人柳敬亭等，是孔子所謂「難養」的「女子與小人」；≪桃花扇≫的惡人是奸臣馬士英、阮大鋮等，却是讀書識字的「君子」，是儒家心目中領導階級的人物。卽使男主角侯方域，在≪桃花扇≫中代表正派的讀書人，但也受到孔尙任深刻的批評。當阮大鋮企圖用厚禮收買侯方域、李香君時，後者的嫉惡如仇和前者的優柔寡斷是一尖銳的對比。由這一對比更看出孔尙任對這兩類人之評價。

≪桃花扇≫對讀書人的批評，和對一般社會下層人物的推崇，充分反映出明清過渡時代之動盪社會對人心的巨大衝擊。亡國的慘痛經驗使人對很多價値觀念有了重新的估價。南明統治階級的弱點——腐敗無能，自私短視，優柔寡斷——在亡國的過程中完全顯露無遺。相形之下民間一些想不到的可歌可泣的行爲便更襯出它們可敬可佩的高貴本質。這樣積壓在人心中的愛國情愫，便很自然地產生了對負亡國之責的統治階級的痛恨，和對一般不直接負責的民衆的歌頌。孔尙任出生在清朝，他本人沒有反清的民族主義的感情。但他對傳統文化的熱愛必然和愛國的情愫分不開的。如果我們說≪桃花扇≫的主要思想便是愛國主義，大概也是可以接受的罷。