

ON THE QUESTION OF TRANSMISSION OF FOLKTALES IN CHINA

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The Problem and the Data (1)

One area in fairy tale research which should receive more attention is the transmission of popular material. How are tales handed down from one generation to the next? This can differ considerably from one culture to another, and over time within one culture.

The material for this study was collected in 1975 and 1976 in Taiwan, a country which has industrialized very rapidly. With the help of assistants (2), 426 people were interviewed and asked about the Chinese concept of **Ku-shih** (literally story) or **min-chien ku-shih** (folk-story). The concept is wider than Märchen and encompasses the whole of popular oral tradition, including stories based on folk-novels, theater-plays, books, anecdotes, fables and even memoirs. There is no single expression to designate a fairy tale in Chinese. This had the advantage that we were able to determine which type of popular story was the favorite of which group (men, women or children) since the administered questionnaire contains several questions to which the interviewee had to give a particular answer, often a title of a work or an exact characterization of a story.

Only married couples with at least one child (aged 10 to 21) were interviewed. The father, mother and child were interviewed separately. Since certain fairy

tales and stories were typical for Taiwanese, while others occurred on Mainland China, couples were selected where the father came from North (Mainland) China and the mother (if possible) was a native-born Taiwanese. We wanted to ensure the greatest possible difference between the tradition of the father and the mother.

The first sample was of 58 fathers who came from the northwestern provinces of Shenoï, Kansu, Sui-yüan, Sinkiang and Inner Mongolia. As this sample proved to be too small, 83 men from Shantung province were selected for the second sample. Few men had come to Taiwan from northwest China after 1948. Those who had were mostly men in the higher professions and government, and they could not be easily interviewed because they were busy. The sample from Shantung consisted of more men of humbler professions. Many Shantung men had fled with their army units to Taiwan when resistance to the communist regime collapsed. Most of these men have since retired and taken up civilian occupations. An advantage of these two samplings is that men from all social classes were interviewed, but a disadvantage is that certain tales are typical for Shantung and others are typical for the Northwest. Both areas have been neglected by Chinese folklorists.

The Taiwanese wives of these men characterized themselves overwhelmingly as housewives, and the majority were of humble origin. When these women were of marriageable age 15-20 years ago, women of humble background were willing to live with a man whose language they had difficulty in understanding and whose customs and preferences differed from their own. Most men from the mainland came to Taiwan

without their wives, and it was difficult to find a woman in Taiwan from their own region and still more difficult to find an educated Taiwanese woman willing to marry a man from North China.

Since compulsory school attendance was introduced in Taiwan, we can assume that most children from these "mixed marriages" have learned Mandarin Chinese. This is the official standard language in Taiwan and China as well as the language spoken by the fathers. The dialects of North China are very similar to Mandarin, while those of South China and Taiwan are very different. The children of these "mixed marriages" had no difficulty in understanding their mothers who at home spoke Taiwanese with the children and neighbors and who have not learned any Mandarin. By Taiwanese, I mean the dialects of Chang-chou and Ch'üan-chou in Fukien, the province from which most immigrants to Taiwan originate. Our sample included only one Hakka woman who spoke another dialect. The sample from Northwest China included a number of men who had fled to Taiwan with their wives and a few who had married women from Central and South China (see Table 1). These latter women (see Table 2) were better educated than the Taiwanese women.

Table 1: Origin of the wives of men from NW China (Total 59)

Taiwan	38	(64.4%)
North China (not from husband's region)	3	(5.1%)
North China (from husband's region)	10	(16.9%)
Central and South China	7	(11.9%)
Japan	1	(1.7%)

Table 2: Occupations of the wives of men from NW China

	<u>Taiwanese</u>	<u>Others</u>	<u>Total</u>
Housewives	33 (86.8%)	14 (66.7%)	47 (79.7%)
Business Women	1	2	3
Simple Profession	4 (13.2%)	(33.3%)	4 (20.3%)
Higher Profession		5	5
	<u>38 (64.4%)</u>	<u>21 (35.6%)</u>	<u>59 (100%)</u>

The Fathers as Storytellers

Adults were first asked whether they told stories to their children. Most Shantung men (81.9%) told stories, but many men from Northwest China (41.4%) did not. About one-quarter of all the men were either infrequent or non-storytellers. Mongols or Sinkiang men were much more frequently non-storytellers (62.5% and 70%) than Kansu and Shensi men (20% and 36.6%). The difference may be an artefact of the small sample size (see Table 4).

There is some uncertainty over the men's occupations (see Table 3). Military can mean either a common soldier or an officer, and for the majority of men from Shantung the former is probably the case. Businessman can be a small vegetable peddler or a man engaged in a larger firm, while employee can be a government clerk or an employee in a larger business. Under lower occupation we have included men who designated themselves as workers. Under higher professions we included teachers, professors and others who have a college education as well as men in civilian government positions or higher military ranks. As is seen below, military men and men in simple professions are more frequently

non-storytellers. Employees were all storytellers. When non-storytelling fathers gave reasons why they did not tell stories, the most common response was that they did not have time, or that they were not at home before the children went to bed.

Table 3: Fathers, by occupation (Total 141)

	<u>Shantung</u> (total 83)	<u>North China</u> (total 58)	<u>Total</u> (141)
Military	13 (15.6%)	15 (25.8%)	28 (19.9%)
Businessmen	20 (24%)	5 (8.6%)	25 (17.7%)
Employees	22 (26.5%)	-----	22 (15.6%)
Simple Profession	22 (26.5%)	4 (6.9%)	26 (18.4%)
Higher Profession	5 (6%)	30 (52%)	35 (24.8%)
Unknown	1 (1.2%)	4 (6.9%)	5 (3.5%)

Table 4: Non-Story-Telling Fathers, by Occupation (Total 39)

	<u>Shantung</u>	<u>North China</u>	<u>Total</u>
Military	3 of 13 (23.1%)	8 of 15 (53.3%)	11 (39.2%)
Businessmen	4 of 20 (20%)	1 of 5 (20%)	5 (20%)
Employees	0 of 22 (--)	-----	-----
Simple Profession	7 of 22 (31.8%)	3 of 4 (75%)	10 (38.5%)
Higher Profession	1 of 5 (20%)	11 of 20 (36.7%)	12 (32.3%)
Unknown	-----	1 of 4 (25%)	1 (20%)
	15 (18.1%)	24 (43%)	39 (27.7%)

The next question was what kind of stories they told (see Table 5). Answers were given either as a type of story (jokes or myths) or by title of story. Both types of answers could be summarized in categories. The category anecdote (**Schwank**) in-

cluded actual anecdotes, longer, funny narratives (funny to Chinese), as well as short jokes. Frequent topics included the stupid son- or daughter-in-law, and the uneducated or naive scholar. The category myth included actual myths, as well as legends and origin stories of animals or plants. The category piety included stories about sons or daughters who devoted themselves in a particular manner to their parents (usually to the mother) and thereby displayed **hsiao** (filial piety). Under heroic narratives, I included stories of early heroes and their deeds. Novels designated narratives which originated from the better known popular (**Volksromane**) and classical novels. The most important of these novels are the **San-kuo chih yen-i** (The Story of the Three Kingdoms), **Shui-hu chuan** (The Robbers of the Liang-schan Moor), **Feng-shen yen-i** (The Investiture with Divine Rank), **Hsüeh Jen-kui cheng tung** (Hsüeh Jen-kui Fights Against the East), **Hsüeh Ting-shan cheng hsi** (Hsüeh Ting-shan Fights Against the West) and a few others. The designation narratives indicates actual fairy tales (**Märchen**). Dramas designates narratives which originate from well-known dramas or operas, more recently from films and television plays as well. Ghost stories designates a group of narratives to be explained later. Such stories stem sometimes from written sources (e.g. **Liao-chai chih-i**), but sometimes they are memoirs, stories about events which are supposed to have really happened to the narrator or to a person known to him. A few narratives are of Japanese origin (usually the fairy tale **Momotaro**), others are of European origin (Aesop's Fables, The Thousand and One Nights). Informants often named many types.

Table 5: Which Stories were told by Men?

	Shantung (total 83)	North China (total 58)	Total (141)
Anecdotes	13 (15.7%)	-----	13 (9.2%)
Myths	36 (43.4%)	6 (10.3%)	42 (29.8%)
Piety	9 (10.8%)	11 (19%)	20 (14.2%)
Heroic			
Narratives	9 (10.8%)	11 (19%)	20 (14.2%)
Narratives			
from Novels	47 (50.0%)	35 (60%)	82 (58.2%)
Narratives			
(fairy tales)	17 (20.5%)	9 (15.5%)	26 (18.4%)
Dramas	27 (32.4%)	1 (1.7%)	28 (19.9%)
Japanese			
Narratives	1 (1.2%)	2 (3.5%)	3 (2.7%)
European			
Narratives	4 (4.8%)	7 (12.0%)	11 (7.8%)
Ghost Stories	2 (2.4%)	1 (1.7%)	3 (2.1%)

Table 6 indicates considerable differences between the stories told by Shantung and North Chinese men, divided on the basis of the training or educational level of the men. Such professional distinctions, based on the interviewee's own statements, do not mirror social classes. One employed man from Shantung and two North Chinese, as well as one in a high position, stated that they told Japanese stories. Only two employees from Shantung and one man in a higher profession from North China told ghost stories. With people in Shantung who could be considered middle-class, myths appear to be the favorite, while stories about filial piety seem less well liked by men of the higher professions.

Table 6: Stories told by men, divided on the basis of professional types

	<u>Shantung</u>	<u>North China</u>
a) <u>Anecdotes</u>		
military	3 (23%)	-----
businessmen	4 (20%)	-----
employees	1 (4.5%)	-----
simple profession	3 (13.6%)	-----
higher profession	1 (20%)	-----
unknown	1 (100%)	-----
b) <u>Myths</u>		
military	3 (23%)	-----
businessmen	7 (35%)	3 (60%)
employees	15 (68.2%)	-----
simple profession	8 (36.4%)	1 (25%)
higher profession	3 (60%)	2 (8%)
unknown	-----	-----
c) <u>Piety</u>		
military	3 (23%)	2 (13.3%)
businessmen	2 (10%)	-----
employees	1 (4.5%)	-----
simple profession	3 (13.6%)	1 (25%)
higher profession	-----	7 (23%)
unknown	-----	1 (25%)
d) <u>Heroic Narrative</u>		
military	-----	6 (40%)
businessmen	3 (15%)	1 (20%)
employees	3 (13.6%)	-----
simple profession	3 (13.6%)	1 (25%)
higher profession	-----	3 (10%)
unknown	-----	-----
e) <u>Narratives from Novels</u>		
military	8 (61.5%)	11 (73.3%)
businessmen	12 (60%)	1 (20%)
employees	15 (68.2%)	-----
simple profession	11 (50%)	-----
higher profession	1 (20%)	21 (70%)
unknown	-----	2 (50%)

Table 6 (continued)

	<u>Shantung</u>	<u>North China</u>
f) <u>Narratives</u>		
military	5 (38.5%)	-----
businessmen	2 (10%)	-----
employees	5 (22.7%)	-----
simple profession	4 (18.2%)	1 (25%)
higher profession	1 (20%)	7 (23.3%)
unknown	-----	1 (25%)
g) <u>Dramas</u>		
military	2 (15.4%)	-----
businessmen	10 (50%)	-----
employees	10 (45.5%)	-----
simple profession	2 (9.1%)	-----
higher profession	3 (60%)	1 (3.5%)
unknown	-----	-----
h) <u>European Narratives</u>		
military	-----	1 (6.6%)
businessmen	2 (10%)	-----
employees	1 (4.5%)	-----
simple profession	1 (4.5%)	-----
higher profession	-----	6 (20%)
unknown	-----	-----

More light was shed by the question: "What kind of stories are good for children?" The answers indicated either groups of stories or certain individual narratives. Didactic stories made children "good people". The category romantic love stories appeared to refer primarily to modern novels, not films. Many modern novels, especially those from Taiwan, deal with problems of

individuals and their solutions. The classical (3) and folk novels occasionally contain a very short love story-- seldom more than two or three sentences-- and only as an incidental episode, never as the main theme (see Table 7).

According to lending libraries in Taipei, classical and folk novels were the most -- and modern romantic novels the least-- frequently read. It is striking that only a small number of men considered animal stories to be suitable for children: even among favorite stories men liked to tell, only two Shantung and three North Chinese men indicated animal stories. The same was true for which stories were good for children. Interviewees usually stated that animal stories are untrue because animals cannot speak, and children should not be told lies because that would corrupt them. The small number of animal stories (fables) is also apparent in the numerous collections of Chinese folklorists. All of these collections contain only a few genuine animal stories, or stories in which animals speak with one another. There are frequently stories in which a person talks with an animal or has other contacts (often of a sexual nature) with an animal, but in these cases the animal is not 'real', but a spirit in animal form who can change himself easily into human form and can then speak. By contrast, Aesop's fable of the race between the hare and the tortoise was often cited as a favorite, apparently because school-books include this fable in their repertoire.

Table 7: What kind of stories are good for children?

	<u>Shantung</u> (total 83)	<u>North China</u> (total 58)	<u>Total</u> (141)
Personal or recent events	-----	3 (5.2%)	3 (2.1%)
Historical	11 (13.3%)	5 (8.6%)	16 (11.3%)
Novels transformed into stories	22 (26.5%)	9 (15.5%)	31 (22%)
Heroic, patriotic stories	8 (9.6%)	10 (17.2%)	18 (12.8%)
Payment for good and bad deeds	3 (3.6%)	-----	3 (2.1%)
Myths	29 (35%)	6 (10.3%)	35 (25%)
Filial love	18 (22%)	6 (10.3%)	24 (17%)
Animal Stories	2 (2.4%)	3 (5.2%)	5 (3.5%)
Stories from theater, film	13 (15.7%)	-----	13 (9.2%)
Romantic love stories	7 (8.3%)	-----	7 (5%)
Detective Stories	9 (10.8%)	2 (3.4%)	11 (7.8%)
Didactic Stories	5 (6%)	3 (5.2%)	8 (5.7%)
Anecdotes	8 (9.6%)	6 (10.3%)	14 (9.9%)
Fairy Tales	12 (14.5%)	-----	12 (8.5%)
Foreign Stories	1 (1.2%)	-----	1 (0.7%)

Table 7 displays a basic similarity to Table 5: myths and novel-based stories occupy the highest place. Filial love is in third place, which suggests that these stories are considered important for their didactic element. On the other hand, stories with religious content, such as those about repayment for good or bad deeds in this life or the next, are infrequent. New categories include stories which fathers tell concerning their own experiences or events of recent times as well as narratives of an historical character, often from the early history of China. Stories of this type often appear in history books and they place less value on military qualities than do the heavily patriotic heroic stories.

Taking an opposite approach, the men were also asked whether there were stories which were suitable for men but unsuitable for children. One-third of the men concurred while the other either gave no answer or said that there were no such stories. Half of all the businessmen answered the question. Frequently there was a more exact indication given of what kind of stories were 'men's stories.'

Table 8: Stories only for men and not for children and women

	<u>Shantung</u>	<u>North Chinese</u>
Erotic stories, sexual affairs, relations with prostitutes. Love in general	15	12
Stories from the <u>Chin P'ing Mei</u> and <u>Shui-hu chuan</u>	6	3
Cruel, bloody stories, fights	4	2
Ghost stories	2	-
Stories from <u>Hsi-yu chi</u> , <u>Feng-shen pang</u>	3	-
Obscure, immoral stories	1	-
Stories about one's own marriage	-	1
Stories about polygamous relations	-	1

The **Chin P'ing Mei** is the classic novel, which has been repeatedly banned because of its erotic content; nevertheless all the men appeared to know of it. The **Shui-hu chuan** also contains short erotic episodes, but it was probably mentioned because the novel is very popular with men due to the brave deeds of the 'bandits': women were thought not to like it and children might get wrong ideas from it. The two other classical novels, **Hsi-yu chi** and **Feng-shen pang**, are also full of battles and bloodshed, as well as spirits, gods and their deeds. **Hsi-yu chi** is familiar to all the children-- there are comics and numerous films based on it. I don't know why three men were against these novels as literature for children and women-- in both novels eroticism plays a minor role.

Shantung men were asked what kind of stories women liked best, but few answered. The **Hung-lou meng** (Dream of the Red Chamber) was mentioned because of the romantic love which permeates the novel, as was the **Liao-chai chih-i**, a collection of short novellas by P'u Sung-ling in which many love stories are found. Women supposedly loved stories about the Festival of the Seventh Day of the Seventh Month, the Chinese 'Women's Festival' with the romantic love story as the central element. Those men who answered asserted that women loved romantic stories. Men seemed to prefer stories with 'educational' value for their children. We asked the men, therefore, which stories they liked or disliked.

There were clear differences between the stories which the men themselves liked and those they considered appropriate for children (see Tables 8 and 9). Personal experiences, myths, and stories about filial piety were for the children, as were religious stories of repayment for good and bad deeds in the afterlife. Heroic tales, usually of a patriotic type, were more for men than for children. In general, the men gave more detailed information on which material they thought was good for children than they did about their own personal preferences.

Table 9: Stories which the men themselves liked to hear

	Shantung (total 83)	North China (total 58)	Total (141)
Myths	22 (26.5%)	3 (5.2%)	25 (17.7%)
Anecdotes	10 (12%)	5 (8.5%)	15 (10.6%)
Stories from novels	9 (11%)	12 (20.7%)	21 (14.9%)
Tales (fairy tales)	6 (7.2%)	-----	6 (4.3%)
Operatic content	5 (6%)	2 (3.4%)	7 (5%)
Heroic stories	4 (4.8%)	21 (36.2%)	25 (17.7%)
Historical	4 (4.8%)	5 (8.6%)	9 (6.8%)
Filial piety	3 (3.6%)	4 (6.9%)	7 (5%)
Didactic	3 (3.6%)	-----	3 (2.1%)
Animal stories	2 (2.4%)	2 (3.4%)	4 (2.8%)
Ghost stories	1 (1.2%)	3 (5.2%)	4 (2.8%)
Love stories	-----	4 (6.9%)	4 (2.8%)
Non-Chinese stories	-----	1 (1.4%)	1 (0.7%)

Few answered the question about which stories they didn't like. Nevertheless, it was clear that myths were meant primarily for children. Men did not like religious stories. Fairy tales were neither negatively nor positively viewed. Stories from novels, except tragedies, were viewed negatively.

Table 10: Stories which the men themselves did not like

	Shantung (total 83)	North China (total 58)	Total (141)
Myths	1 (1.2%)	3 (5.2%)	4 (2.8%)
Tragedies	1 (1.2%)	1 (1.7%)	2 (1.4%)
Anecdotes	3 (3.6%)	2 (3.4%)	5 (3.5%)
Heroic stories	-----	8 (13.8%)	8 (5.7%)
Didactic	-----	1 (1.7%)	1 (0.7%)
Historical	1 (1.2%)	-----	1 (0.7%)
Love stories	5 (6%)	10 (17.2%)	15 (10.6%)
Superstition	2 (2.4%)	-----	2 (1.4%)
Religious	1 (1.2%)	-----	1 (0.7%)
Ghost stories	-----	8 (13.8%)	8 (5.7%)
Stories of betrayal	1 (1.2%)	-----	1 (0.7%)
Detective stories	-----	1 (1.7%)	1 (0.7%)

Attitudes to love stories were interesting. Some men occasionally told such stories to their children, though they didn't say whether such stories were supposed to be good for boys or for girls. By their own statements, the men were very much against such stories, but whether this rejection was genuine or merely expressed due to the interviewer's presence is impossible to say. According to Table 8, all erotic stories are for men, not women; on the other hand, the men maintained that the novel **Hung-lou meng** is for women. Despite a number of explicitly sexual scenes, **Hung-lou meng** primarily depicts romantic love, and the men, when they rejected love stories, apparently understood that to mean explicit stories bordering on pornography.

Some of the Shantung men who expressed their disapproval of anecdotes had in mind a group of jokes and anecdotes which non-Shantung men are in the habit of making at the expense of the Shantung population. In these jokes, the Shantung men are represented as stupid or as having a taste for garlic and onions. If we compare Tables 5 and 9, the differences are not great, other

than in narratives from foreign sources which men apparently tell to the children more frequently than their own preference would suggest.

Mothers as Storytellers

On the whole, women stated that they told stories more frequently than their husbands. About one-third of the Taiwanese wives of North Chinese men were non-storytellers. By contrast, North and Central Chinese wives of North Chinese men were frequent storytellers. The women from North China may have been interested in reciting stories to keep alive the memory of their home region. Housewives were more often storytellers than women employed outside the home (see Table 11).

Table 11: Non-Story-Telling Women, husbands from:
(Non-Story-Telling Men- 27.7%)

<u>Shantung</u>	<u>North China</u>	<u>Total</u>
14 (17.3%)	15 (25.4%)	29 (20.7%)

Story-Telling Women by Occupational Groups:

Husbands from:	Shantung (total 81)	North China (total 59)	Total (140)
Housewives	58 (71.6%)	47 (79.7%)	105 (75%)
Businessmen	6 (7.4%)	3 (5.1%)	9 (9.4%)
Employess	6 (7.4%)	-----	6 (4.3%)
Simple Profession	9 (11.1%)	4 (6.8%)	13 (9.3%)
Higher Profession	2 (2.5%)	5 (8.5%)	7 (5%)

A separate study showing the differences between housewives and wives employed outside the home had quite interesting results. All the women liked to tell fairy tales (housewives 56.2%, others 54.3%) and myths (housewives 55.2%, others 54.3%). But

anecdotes were told more often by women employed outside the home (11.4%) than by housewives (6.6%); heroic stories were much more likely to be told by housewives (25.7%) than by others (5.7%), while stories of European origin were told much more frequently by wives employed outside the home who had North Chinese husbands (66.7%) than by housewives married to North Chinese men (8.5%). Stories of European origin were told by only 1.7% of housewives married to men from Shantung.

Table 12: Which stories have the women told?

Husbands from:	Shantung (total 81)	North China (total 59)	Total (140)
Anecdotes	11 (13.6%)	-----	11 (7.9%)
Myths	11 (13.6%)	-----	11 (7.9%)
Filial piety	55 (67.9%)	22 (37.3%)	77 (55%)
Heroic Stories	10 (12.3%)	10 (15.9%)	20 (14.3%)
Stories from novels	20 (24.6%)	9 (15.2%)	29 (20.7%)
Tales (fairy tales)	42 (51.9%)	18 (30.5%)	60 (42.9%)
Dramas	10 (12.3%)	24 (40.7%)	34 (24.3%)
Japanese stories	1 (1.2%)	5 (8.5%)	6 (4.3%)
European stories	1 (1.2%)	11 (18.5%)	12 (8.6%)
Ghost stories	2 (2.5%)	2 (3.4%)	4 (2.9%)

In many cases the women tell the same kind of stories as their husbands, but women tell myths much more frequently than men (55% vs. 29.8%). The women's myths are often stories of the lives and deeds of gods;

with the men, myths *about* the origin of men, animals and things were more favored. Women also tell many more fairy tales than men (42.9% vs. 18.4%). Women mentioned narratives that came from novels less frequently, perhaps because a number of these women still could not read and did not frequent temples or tea-houses where storytellers recite such stories. Instead, they mentioned stories based on dramas or operas which they could have seen at street theaters. They shared with their husbands the rejection of ghost stories.

The women differed in significant degree from their husbands over what kinds of stories were good for children: the women favored myths more (46.4% vs. 25%), stories from novels less (7.1% vs. 22%), and heroic stories less (7.1% vs. 12.8%). Fairy tales were as slightly favored as with the men.

Only 41 women answered the question whether there were stories that were only for women and not for men and children, 35 housewives (33.3%) and 6 women employed outside the home (7.1%), with wives of men from North China more outspoken than wives of Shantung men. The majority didn't answer or know, perhaps due to modesty. A large number of men and several women privately affirmed that there were many jokes that were told only among women. But for all practical purposes it was impossible for me to record jokes of this kind and I believe that the men really didn't know any of the women's jokes, nor perhaps any women's stories about women. Nevertheless, the few clear answers from women furnish some insight: women's stories deal with sexual love, marriage, childbirth and menstruation.

Table 13: What kind of stories are good for children, according to the mothers?

Husbands from:	<u>Shantung</u> (total 81)	<u>North China</u> (total 59)	<u>Total</u> (140)
Personal or recent events	2 (2.5%)	5 (8.5%)	7 (5%)
Novels transformed into stories	5 (6.2%)	5 (8.5%)	10 (7.1%)
Historical	12 (14.8%)	4 (6.8%)	16 (11.4%)
Heroic, patriotic stories	9 (11.1%)	2 (3.4%)	11 (7.9%)
Punishment for bad deeds	2 (2.5%)	-----	2 (1.4%)
Myths	45 (55.6%)	20 (33.9%)	65 (46.4%)
Filial love	11 (13.6%)	6 (10.2%)	17 (12.7%)
Animal stories	-----	-----	-----
Stories from theater, film	1 (1.2%)	5 (8.5%)	6 (4.3%)
Romantic love stories	-----	2 (3.4%)	2 (1.4%)
Detective stories	-----	-----	-----
Didactic stories	-----	10 (17%)	10 (7.1%)
Anecdotes	3 (3.7%)	8 (13.6%)	11 (7.9%)
Fairy tales	14 (17.3%)	3 (5.1%)	17 (12.1%)
Foreign stories	1 (1.2%)	7 (11.9%)	8 (5.7%)

Table 14: Women's stories that are only for women not for children and men

Husbands from:	<u>Shantung</u>	<u>North China</u>	<u>Total</u>
Stories about sex	3	21	24
Story of Hua Mu-lon	1	--	1
Stories about child-birth, menstruation	4	3	7
How to find a man	1	--	1
How to control the man	2	--	2
What women really think	--	1	1
The novel <u>Chin P'ing Mei</u>	--	2	2
Ghost stories of a sexual nature	--	1	1
Revenge of tormented animals	--	1	1

The mention of the story of **Hua Mu-lon**, described by many as a heroine, is notable. Hua is a virgin who enters military service, dressed as a man in the place of her old sick father. She advances high in rank, but no one recognizes her as a woman. After the war she returns home. A man of high rank from her unit wants to visit her and learns for the first time that she is a woman. The story ends in marriage, of course, and her success in preserving her virginity over many years is considered especially honorable. The one woman who rejected the story as unsuitable, thought that such a disguising of a girl was undesirable, because there is another story about a man disguised as a girl where love ends in the death of both partners.

In general, menstruation and details of childbirth are not discussed in the presence of men and children. Girls know nothing about menstruation until their own begins and even then they are given only precautionary rules, but no explanations. Childbirth and menstruation make women 'unclean'.

When we studied the question of what kind of stories women liked, it was apparent that women liked myths (33.6% vs. the men's 17.7%), historical stories (12.1% vs. 6.8%), and love stories (9.3% vs. 2.8%). On the other hand, men preferred stories from novels (14.9% vs. 6.4%), and heroic tales (17.7% vs. 10%).

Table 15: Stories liked by women

Husbands from:	Shantung (total 81)	North China (total 59)	Total (140)
Myths	30 (37%)	17 (28.8%)	47 (33.6%)
Anecdotes	6 (7.4%)	4 (6.8%)	10 (7.1%)
Stories from novels	5 (6.2%)	4 (6.8%)	9 (6.4%)
Tales (fairy tales)	8 (9.9%)	1 (1.7%)	9 (6.4%)
Operatic content	1 (1.2%)	-----	1 (0.7%)
Heroic stories	4 (4.9%)	10 (16.9%)	14 (10%)
Historical	3 (3.7%)	14 (23.7%)	17 (12.1%)
Filial piety	3 (3.7%)	2 (3.4%)	5 (3.6%)
Didactic	6 (7.4%)	-----	6 (4.3%)
Animal stories	1 (1.2%)	-----	1 (0.7%)
Ghost stories	1 (1.2%)	8 (13.6%)	9 (6.4%)
Love stories	2 (2.7%)	11 (18.6%)	13 (9.3%)
Non-Chinese stories	-----	2 (3.4%)	2 (1.4%)

The women were more against ghost stories than the men (14.3% vs. 5.7%) and against heroic stories (15% vs. 5.7%), but women were less frequently against love stories than were the men (5.7% vs. 10.5%). Animal stories were not especially liked by either men or women, but not hated either. Men seemed to prefer masculine stories (about heroic deeds or exciting stories from novels) while women liked romantic stories more. Neither men nor women show any opposition to stories of filial piety and both sexes are not very much in favor of ghost stories. Stories of a religious character are not especially well-liked but they are not attacked. Above all, fairy tales play no important role for men or women.

Table 16: Stories that women did not like

Husbands from:	Shantung (total 81)	North China (total 59)	Total (140)
Myths	-----	4 (6.8%)	4 (2.9%)
Tragedies	3 (3.7%)	-----	3 (2.1%)
Anecdotes	1 (1.2%)	2 (3.4%)	3 (2.1%)
Heroic stories	4 (4.9%)	17 (28.8%)	21 (15%)
Didactic	1 (1.2%)	2 (3.4%)	3 (2.1%)
Historical	-----	-----	-----
Love stories	4 (4.9%)	4 (6.8%)	8 (5.7%)
Superstition	-----	-----	-----
Religious	-----	-----	-----
Ghost stories	12 (14.8%)	8 (13.6%)	20 (14.3%)
Foreign stories	-----	2 (3.4%)	2 (1.4%)

Sons as Audience for Stories

We interviewed 74 sons and 71 daughters, and the first question was: What kinds of stories do you hear? The three types mentioned most frequently were narratives from novels, myths, and fairy tales.

Table 17: What kind of stories have the sons heard?

Fathers from:	Shantung (total 43)	North China (total 31)	Total (74)
Anecdotes	11 (25.6%)	1 (3.2%)	12 (16.2%)
Myths	29 (67.4%)	5 (16.1%)	34 (45.9%)
Filial piety	10 (23.3%)	3 (9.6%)	13 (17.6%)
Heroic stories	12 (27.9%)	7 (22.6%)	19 (25.7%)
Stories from novels	27 (62.8%)	22 (71%)	49 (66.2%)
Tales (fairy tales)	22 (51.2%)	4 (12%)	26 (35.1%)
Stories from dramas	9 (20.9%)	3 (9.6%)	12 (16.2%)
Japanese stories	-----	3 (9.6%)	3 (4.1%)
European stories	4 (9.3%)	11 (35.5%)	15 (20.2%)
Ghost stories	4 (9.3%)	3 (9.6%)	7 (9.5%)

The relative frequency of European stories is interesting and surprising. This category is filled to a great extent by the fable of the tortoise and the hare. Since school books in China have a strong didactic slant, the adoption of this fable is remarkable, because the tortoise wins not by diligence or effort but rather by simple deception. The Japanese stories may have been introduced during the Japanese occupations of Taiwan and parts of North China.

Of course, not all stories heard by the sons were liked: anecdotes and jokes came first, then stories from China's history and heroic stories from novels. Fairy tales were not especially well-liked, but they weren't despised either.

Table 18: Which stories did the sons like?

Father from:	Shantung (total 43)	North China (total 31)	Total (74)
Myths	4 (9.3%)	5 (16.1%)	9 (12%)
Anecdotes	16 (37.2%)	2 (6.5%)	18 (24.3%)
Stories from novels	3 (7%)	2 (6.5%)	5 (6.8%)
Stories from dramas	-----	1 (3.2%)	1 (1.4%)
Tales (fairy tales)	4 (9.3%)	1 (3.2%)	5 (6.8%)
Heroic stories	2 (4.7%)	10 (32.3%)	12 (16.2%)
Historical	8 (18.6%)	7 (22.6%)	15 (20.3%)
Filial piety	-----	1 (3.2%)	1 (1.4%)
Animal stories	5 (11.6%)	2 (6.5%)	7 (9.5%)
European stories	2 (4.7%)	2 (6.5%)	4 (5.4%)

Table 19: Which stories did the sons not like?

Fathers from:	Shantung (total 43)	North China (total 31)	Total (74)
Myths	1 (2.3%)	2 (6.5%)	3 (4.1%)
Heroic Stories	2 (4.7%)	-----	2 (2.7%)
Didactic stories	2 (4.7%)	4 (12.9%)	6 (8.1%)
Historical stories	1 (2.3%)	-----	1 (1.4%)
Love stories	1 (2.3%)	5 (16.1%)	6 (8.1%)
Stories of betrayal	1 (2.3%)	-----	1 (1.4%)
Animal stories	-----	1 (3.2%)	1 (1.4%)
Foreign stories	2 (4.7%)	-----	2 (2.7%)
Literary stories	-----	2 (6.5%)	2 (2.7%)

Least-liked were didactic stories, ghost stories and love stories. The literary stories (Table 19) should be counted with love stories, as this is an expression for modern novels in which the theme is often turgid love affairs. We believe that the sons weren't very enthusiastic about didactic stories where the heroes are always models of courage, sacrifice for country or family, hard work and integrity. They share the rejection of ghost stories with their parents. An admission of interest in romantic stories could give the interviewer a bad impression and the answers may not have been honest here.

Love novels were the least demanded books at the lending libraries, and while the sons liked heroic stories as much as their fathers did, sons liked history stories more and myths less than their fathers did. Parents were generally named together as storytellers, but schoolteachers came in second place (see Table 20). Among siblings it was often the older sister who told stories to the little ones. "Friends" were schoolmates and "neighbors" were those who told stories at home, meaning in the vicinity or in the village.

Table 20: Who told the stories to the sons?

Fathers from:	Shantung (total 43)	North China (total 31)	Total (74)
Parents	42 (97.7%)	30 (96.8%)	72 (97.3%)
Siblings	9 (20.9%)	1 (3.2%)	10 (13.5%)
Older relatives	12 (27.9%)	4 (12.9%)	16 (21.6%)
Teachers	33 (76.7%)	16 (51.6%)	49 (66.2%)
Friends	13 (30.2%)	-----	13 (17.6%)
Neighbors	4 (9.3%)	1 (3.2%)	5 (6.6%)

As with the parents, the sons were asked to tell a story and then asked where they had learned it (see Table 21).

Table 21: From whom did the sons learn the stories they have just told?

Fathers from:	Shantung (total 43)	North China (total 31)	Total (74)
Father	7 (16.3%)	6 (19.4%)	13 (17.6%)
Mother	2 (4.7%)	1 (3.2%)	3 (4.1%)
Siblings	1 (2.3%)	-----	1 (1.4%)
Other person	-----	5 (16.1%)	5 (6.5%)
Teacher	21 (48.8%)	3 (9.7%)	24 (32.4%)
Book	12 (28%)	10 (32.3%)	22 (29.7%)
Theatre play	1 (2.3%)	4 (12.9%)	5 (6.5%)
No answer	-----	2 (6.5%)	2 (2.7%)

In Table 20, the sons always indicated both parents, while in Table 21 they distinguished between them. Older relatives and siblings were rarely the source. Teachers were the main source for the story, followed by books (or magazines, newspapers) and theater plays. Children had heard stories from their parents, as well as from

others, but school had a paramount influence. Teachers take their materials primarily from written sources, and this is paralleled by the source for the father's story; parents and relatives are less important than neighbors, and books or periodicals are much more important.

North Chinese men never mentioned mothers as the source for their stories, and the fathers were unimportant sources for all men. Over half of the Shantungese stated that their stories had been learned from neighbors while almost half of the North Chinese had gotten their stories from a book. A number of fathers could not remember from whom they had heard their stories, and it is possible that they hadn't heard their stories as children, but instead later in life. The important role of printed sources might likewise point in that direction.

Table 22: From whom did the fathers learn the stories they have just told?

Father	6 (4.2%)
Mother	8 (5.7%)
Wife	1 (0.7%)
Sibling	2 (1.4%)
Unrelated person	59 (41.8%)
Book or periodical	39 (27.6%)
Theater, film	7 (5%)
Personal experience	4 (2.8%)
Custom in village	2 (1.4%)
No answer	13 (9.2%)

Daughters as Audience for Stories

The daughter's answers were very similar to those of their brothers when asked what stories they had heard: stories from novels, followed by fairy tales and then myths. The daughters have heard more European stories than their brothers. Ghost stories were seldom mentioned. All Chinese are familiar with ghost stories, partly from novella collections (the *Liao Chai chi-i*), and partly from novels. These stories are frequently based on their own experience or the experience of a person known to them. The belief in ghosts is widespread in Taiwan. Small children were frequently warned that they should sleep quietly, otherwise a ghost (or the ghost-animal, a cat) would come. There exists, in my opinion, a taboo here: people don't like to admit that they like ghost stories because they are so exciting. The answers "I can't sleep then" or "I'm afraid then of the night" appeared frequently in the questionnaires.

Table 23: What kind of stories have the daughters heard?

Fathers from:	Shantung (total 42)	North China (total 29)	Total (71)
Anecdotes	12 (28.6%)	1 (3.4%)	13 (18.3%)
Myths	25 (59.5%)	2 (6.9%)	27 (38%)
Filial piety	13 (31%)	2 (6.9%)	15 (21.1%)
Heroic stories	8 (19%)	7 (24.1%)	15 (21.1%)
Stories from novels	30 (71.4%)	18 (62.1%)	48 (67.6%)
Tales (fairy tales)	24 (57.1%)	14 (48.3%)	38 (53.5%)
Stories from dramas	14 (33.3%)	2 (6.9%)	16 (22.5%)
Japanese stories	-----	2 (6.9%)	2 (2.8%)
European stories	2 (4.8%)	20 (69%)	22 (31%)
Ghost stories	5 (11.9%)	2 (6.9%)	7 (9.9%)

The stories that the girls had heard do not seem to be the ones they especially liked. At first none of the daughters stated that they had ever heard love stories, but five daughters did admit that they liked to hear such stories.

Table 24: Which stories did the daughters like?

Fathers from:	Shantung (total 42)	North China (total 29)	Total (71)
Myths	7 (16.7%)	3 (10.3%)	10 (14.1%)
Anecdotes	4 (9.5%)	2 (6.9%)	6 (8.5%)
Stories from novels	2 (4.8%)	4 (13.8%)	6 (8.5%)
Tales (fairy tales)	13 (31%)	2 (6.9%)	15 (21.1%)
Heroic stories	-----	5 (17.2%)	5 (7%)
Historical	4 (9.5%)	1 (2.9%)	5 (7%)
Filial piety	1 (2.4%)	1 (2.9%)	2 (2.8%)
Animal stories	2 (4.8%)	3 (10.3%)	5 (7%)
European stories	-----	11 (37.9%)	11 (15.5%)
Didactic	3 (7.1%)	-----	3 (4.2%)
Love stories	4 (9.5%)	1 (2.9%)	5 (7%)
Ghost stories	2 (4.8%)	3 (10.3%)	5 (7%)

They had heard stories from novels often but didn't like them. Their favorites were fairy tales, European stories and myths. They expressed an opinion less often about types of stories they disliked. Ghost stories were high on the list, followed by what they often called "battles, fighting" (heroic stories). Love stories were as frequently liked as disliked -- even here an ambivalent attitude is apparent, perhaps only manifested in a shyness to admit an interest in such stories.

Table 25: Which stories did the daughters not like?

Fathers from:	Shantung (total 42)	North China (total 29)	Total (71)
Myths	1 (2.4%)	2 (6.9%)	3 (4.2%)
Heroic stories	3 (7.1%)	6 (20.7%)	9 (12.7%)
Didactic stories	1 (2.4%)	3 (10.3%)	4 (5.6%)
Historical	1 (2.4%)	-----	1 (1.4%)
Love stories	3 (7.1%)	2 (6.9%)	5 (7%)
Ghost stories	8 (19%)	6 (20.7%)	14 (19.7%)
Foreign stories	-----	2 (6.9%)	2 (2.8%)

After the daughters had each recited a story, they were asked from whom they had heard the story. Their answers were very similar to those of the sons, though for the daughters the mother played a greater role as storyteller than the father. Siblings as a story-source didn't occur at all.

Table 26: From whom did the daughters hear the stories they just recited?

Fathers from:	Shantung (total 42)	North China (total 29)	Total (71)
Father	8 (19%)	2 (6.9%)	10 (14.1%)
Mother	9 (21.4%)	6 (20.7%)	15 (21.1%)
Teacher	15 (35.7%)	5 (17.2%)	20 (28.2%)
Book	11 (26.2%)	14 (48.3%)	25 (35.2%)
Theater, television	4 (9.5%)	3 (10.3%)	7 (9.9%)

A comparison with the mothers is interesting. For the fathers (see Table 22), 12% of the sources were members of the family, for the mothers, 34%, for the sons, 23.1%, and for the daughters, 35.2%. Grandparents were excluded, and the number of

non-family storytellers had decreased considerably, while the role of the teacher as well as that of printed literature had increased very much. We can see in this an increasing urbanization and the influence of universal compulsory school attendance.

Table 27: From whom did the mothers learn the stories they had just recited?

Father	9 (6.4%)
Mother	26 (18.6%)
Sibling	6 (4.3%)
Other family member	7 (5%)
Unrelated person	45 (32.1%)
Book, newspaper	21 (15%)
Theater, television	14 (10%)
Personal experience	3 (2.1%)
Local custom	2 (1.4%)
No answer	10 (7.1%)

We do not know when the mothers had heard their stories. Some of the stories recited became familiar to them only in recent years, and television or newspapers have clearly been of importance.

Table 28: Who told the stories to the daughters?

Fathers from:	Shantung (total 42)	North China (total 29)	Total (71)
Parents	40 (95.2%)	28 (96.6%)	68 (95.8%)
Siblings	4 (9.5%)	2 (6.9%)	6 (8.5%)
Older relatives	11 (26.2%)	6 (20.9%)	17 (23.9%)
Friends	10 (23.8%)	-----	10 (14.1%)
Neighbors	4 (9.5%)	-----	4 (5.6%)
Teachers	34 (81%)	21 (72.4%)	55 (77.5%)
Unknown	2 (4.8%)	1 (3.4%)	3 (4.2%)

The girls gave answers similar to the boys to the question from whom they had heard stories. Parents-- as they themselves stated-- still tell stories, but their stories are not the same as those which they recall first when asked to recite a story on the spot.

Summary: Transmission of Stories in Mixed Marriages

All subjects were asked to recite one story. One could have investigated whether there was a connection between the parent's and the children's stories, but an interviewing problem arises. If the children had frequently recited the same story as their parents, they could have been present at the parents' interview and repeated the same story. The parents might have told them what kind of story they had recited. Interviewers might not have asked the child or simply credited him or her with a story that the parents had recited. Only two cases of parallel stories were found, and in all the other cases there is no direct or content connection between the stories of the parents and those of their children. The 400 stories show a number of interesting types and motifs which should be briefly mentioned:

a) **Anti-Confucianism:** The wife of Confucius is more clever than her husband (Text 38, Shantung father); Confucius' wisdom is attacked (Text 92, Shantung father) (4).

b) **Critical Attitudes toward Ethnic Groups:** the Japanese are the descendants of P'an Chin-lien, the immoral, unfaithful wife in the novel *Chin P'ing Mei* (Text 12, Shantung father); the Japanese visited the grave of Jenghis Khan to destroy

it (Text 9, North Chinese father); Japan's war against China (Text 32, North Chinese mother; Text 45, North Chinese daughter); the folk hero of Taiwan, Liao T'ien-ting, who fought against Japanese colonial rule is praised (Text 11, Shantung son; Text 93, Shantung mother); two jokes where misunderstanding because of the different dialects of the speakers is funny (Text 10, Shantung son; Text 34, North Chinese mother); a joke in which a foreigner incorrectly expresses himself (Text 19, Shantung father).

c) **Social Criticism:** stories which mock uneducated 'scholars' (Text 8, Shantung son; Text 67, Shantung father); story about a conceited scholar (Text 35, Shantung father).

d) **Sexual Themes:** A woman has sexual intercourse with a dog (Text 4, Shantung daughter); a dead girl is violated (Text 3, Shantung daughter); story of an illegitimate birth (Text 10, North Chinese mother).

e) **The Malicious Daughter-in-Law:** the daughter is not devoted to the parents-in-law (Text 20, North Chinese father; Text 58, North Chinese father; Text 98, Shantung mother). In reality, as far as we can tell from anthropological studies, the mother-in-law often seems to have tormented and mistreated her daughter-in-law.

f) **Political Allusions:** praise for Chiang Kai-shek (Text 2, North Chinese father); the parable of the stupid man who with his children and grandchildren spends his life working to remove a mountain which hindered traffic. This parable is repeatedly proclaimed in word and picture in the People's Republic, but it is also quite well-known in Taiwan (Text 10, Shantung father; Text 52, North Chinese father, Text 1, Shantung daughter).

There are very few specifically North Chinese stories among the fathers. The story of the ginseng spirit (Text 13, Shantung father; Text 40, Shantung daughter), points clearly to Manchuria where many Shantungese have immigrated and become wealthy by gathering ginseng roots. A North Chinese son claims to have heard (from his father) the story about Jenghis Khan's father who demonstrated on his death bed the power of unity to his three sons by breaking one arrow but being unable to break three together. This story occurs already in a text written around 700 years before Jenghis. It can also be found in Chinese school books in various versions (Text 7, North Chinese son; Text 17, North Chinese father, but without the name Jenghis). A Shantung son told a story about Jenghis and his falcon (Text 63), but admitted having gotten it from a book.

Specifically Taiwanese stories are common with the mothers and their children: the legend of the girl from An-p'ing (Text 12, North Chinese mother; Text 14, Shantung mother), the parrot origin story from the legend cycle around Coxinga (Text 29, Shantung daughter; Text 19, Shantung mother), the legend of the half worn down mountain near Kao-hsiung (Texts 22, 32, 74, Shantung mothers); of the five-finger mountain (Text 24, Shantung mother); of the two rivers (Text 39, Shantung mother); and of Nan-kun-shen (Text 64, Shantung mother). There are also legends about divinities which are typical for Fukien and Taiwan, such as the legend of the friends Ch'i-yeh and Pa-yeh who became gods (Texts 10, 69, Shantung mothers); the legend of Shun-fend-erh and Ch'ien-li-yen (Text 30, Shantung mother); the legend about the medicine god Pao-shen ta-ti (Text 31, Shantung mother), and the legend of the origin of the narcissus (Text

62, Shantung mother). We could also mention the stories of the folk heroes Liao T'ien-ting and the robber Pai (specifically Taiwanese, from Shantung mothers, Texts 93 and 95; the first twice from sons, once from a book (Text 11), once from a friend (Text 56)).

These findings seem to indicate that the mothers are more often the bearers of local and regional traditions than the fathers, and that the daughters are more receptive to them than the sons are. The North Chinese fathers have hardly had any influence on their children, perhaps because Shantung soldiers left their home districts very early and journeyed all over China before coming to Taiwan. They may have learned little of their own traditions. Genuine fairy tales played only a minor role, confirming earlier investigations (5), but many men and women were still familiar with fairy tales. Animal stories are likewise rare. Stories connected with festivals play an important role. Men and women enjoy telling such stories. A North Chinese father (Text 18) even describes Moslem festive customs. On the whole, stories and theater plays based on folk novels are much more popular than fairy tales and animal stories.

This method is suitable to establish the popularity of fairy tales as opposed to other stories. Few animal stories were produced, but instead stories in which a person plays the main role and an animal a secondary role. Our study shows that legends are especially well-liked, at least by Taiwanese, and it would be worthwhile to make a special collection of legends and fables. We still lack collections of this kind. A special study of manners and customs connected with festivals could easily be done since our interviewees gladly reported on festival customs.

In answer to the main question of our study (how are fairy tales handed down from one generation to the next?), the evident answer is that parents no longer play an important role in present-day Taiwan. The parents still tell stories and fairy tales, but their children don't particularly like them. Teachers and books play an important role for the children and so does television.

Conclusion: The Question of the Relationship of Popular Literature to Art Literature

Our findings raise another question: what is popular literature in China and what is actual (high) literature? (6) What is "popular culture" and what is "high culture?" Many stories are oral literature, transmitted through recitation. But we have seen that many recited stories originate in Chinese literature. Can we still designate them as oral literature? In my opinion we can if the story even when borrowed from a printed source, is recorded word for word, for example on recording tapes. Unfortunately, our stories couldn't be taken down on tape because many of the interviewees would have refused to recite anything, perhaps even refused to be interviewed. But the notes taken by the interviewers from dictation and shortened, nevertheless show clearly that the stories which were recited differ greatly from the printed original. The difference is enormous for texts which I had recorded on tape and for which there is an older written text. (7) There are motifs and details added which are not in the original; other motifs and details of the original are omitted; the literary style is transformed into the style of spoken language; and the original language, a written form of Mandarin, is translated into

a dialect that is used only orally. This entails not only a change in the pronunciation but in many cases also a substitution of images and idioms of the written text by corresponding images and idioms of the Chinese dialect. The recited stories are the product of a creative effort and should be judged as originals of oral popular literature. They cannot simply be dismissed as *gesunkenes Kulturgut*.

The sources of popular literature are quite varied. In many cases a popular story is based on a story from literature. The filial piety story has as a model the literature of almost 2000 years ago. This holds true for a number of the heroic stories especially when they deal with historically known heroes. Stories from novels are harder to determine. Some sources have been discovered: the *San-kuo chi-yen i* (Romance of the Three Kingdoms) is undoubtedly based on the official imperial history of the period of the *San-kuo chih* (three kingdoms) but the romance differs from the imperial history not only in details, but in important points. The romance depicts Liu Pei as the legitimate ruler of one of the dynasties and not, as in the official history, the man whom the Han dynasty removed by force-- Ts'ao Ts'ao and his son. To take another case, a report exists by the monk Hsüan-tsang on his journey to India for the purpose of bringing Buddhist texts back to China. The novel *Hsi-yu Chi* (The Journey to the West) deals with the journey of the pilgrim-monk, but has very few points of similarity with the travel report. In both cases we know that centuries before the first known written copy of either novel, storytellers were reciting tales that were later written down, thereby producing the first versions of both novels. Other examples exist, where there were

stimuli from the official history, but the novels arose from a different basis.

Literary historians don't agree among themselves here, and probably never will. Were there first storytellers whose stories were then written down by a man with at least a certain degree of education and still later improved on by one or more literati? Or did an educated person write a novel which was later taken over by storytellers? In my view the actual process was a reciprocal one: these novels or their written sources were from time to time taken over by storytellers (which means that these men could read), then written down by literati in a reworking, then perhaps taken over again by the storytellers and once again written down. I see here, then, a continuing reciprocal connection of which only fragments, namely the various written versions, can ever be known to us. Only a modern tape recording of a story from one of the novels is accordingly genuine popular literature.

The same applies to dramas or operas. Performances in the street theater (in Taiwan: *Ko-tsai hsi*) are popular literature since they are performed in colloquial language and are frequently not based on written sources. (8) The dramas and operas which were performed early at court and then in the houses of the wealthy or in commercial theaters (e.g., the Peking Opera) are based on texts which were memorized and composed in a special operatic language incomprehensible to the masses. Such operas are high literature. We know that the folk theater also takes its themes from novels, but it is influenced by reworked operas. I consider these reworkings to be popular and oral literature. It is also well-known that Taiwanese scholars have written texts

and these have been performed -- whether word for word from the written text or not, we don't know. Such plays are also popular literature in the sense that they are written for the people. This is evident in the use of dialect expressions in the plays.

Ghost stories are popular literature since there is no written source. A number of myths and especially legends and fables give the impression of unwritten folk literature, written only in the most recent times. Many fairy tales have not found their way into literature and have been collected and published by folklorists only in recent decades. Many anecdotes (*Schwänke*) are folk literature, even though others are attested in literature more than 2000 years ago. Since anecdotes and jokes are relatively short and since the punchline must not be tampered with, older jokes from books and those stemming from today's oral tradition are often very similar. Folk songs have been taken down mostly since 1920, but the recorders have frequently subjected even these songs to 'improvements' so that they are not always genuine folk literature.

Even the *Shan-ko* (Mountain Songs) published by Feng Meng-lung in the 16th century are based on songs of the people, but probably not on songs sung by the peasants and tea-pickers in the mountains. Rather, they are most likely based on the songs of courtesans on the boats at Su-chou. But they are clearly reworked so that the too obviously erotic passages are changed and overly localized expressions are brought into line with Standard Chinese.

In summary, narrative material recorded on tape and then transcribed is folk literature. Characteristic for it are numerous elements from the local dialect, noticeable in grammar, sentence structure and above

all in the use of local idioms. Folk literature has been collected and taken down by educated people, although infrequently in pre-modern times. For this reason, the language has in general been brought into conformity with the standard literary language with dialect words excluded. These texts actually belong then to the high culture and are no longer oral literature though their original character is often still recognizable.

There is a narrative material that is written by educated persons (often men who hadn't passed the university qualifying exams), and which was intended for the people, for example many of the folk novels and folk dramas. The authors frequently asserted that they wrote to raise the moral level of the people and to replace vulgar books or dramas with better ones. The style used avoided excessive dialect words so that the texts could be read in different areas of China and could also be used by storytellers and theater groups. In addition, such writers also wrote uplifting books which reported on the evil consequences of sinful deeds (such as the **Shan-shu**).

We have then as popular literature:

- a) genuine folk works which are spread orally and those which once written down are sharply transformed;
- b) works written by literati or men of slight education (but not illiterate) for the moral improvement of the common people - and incidentally to win a certain fame and recognition.

Both parts of this popular literature can take their material from the works of the official (high) literature, but also from the vernacular of the people, and occasionally from non-Chinese sources as well. Our **ku-shih** (stories) here are all such popular

material. High literature is written by people with a classical education without dialectic influences in a language which only another educated person can really read and understand. It is always written with a moral that does not differ much from Confucianist morality, even when the writer is a Taoist or Buddhist. High literature can also be transmitted orally as when poets at a festival compose poems together in the classical style and in the rhyme scheme of the classical system. Such oral classical literature was normally written down within a short time, often within a few hours. The rhyme scheme uses the pronunciation of words normal at court in the T'ang period and not contemporary pronunciation. The rhyme system of popular literature has entirely different categories and takes account of present-day pronunciation. Like all definitions, ours likewise does not try to force every case into either of these two categories. The 400 stories thus are popular literature, although the sources for these stories are frequently found in high literature.

NOTES

(1) This article appeared originally under the title "Zur Frage der Tradierung von Volkserzählgut in China" in **Sitzungsberichte der Bayrischen Akademie der Wissenschaften** (Philosophisch-historische Klasse), Jahrgang 1981, Heft 4. It is translated and reprinted by permission of the author. For space reasons, it has been moderately abridged.

(2) I would like to express my thanks to the interviewers. Miss Hsü-Yen-chiu and Mister Jan took part in both studies. Miss Fang participated in the first study and Miss Wang Ch'un-hua in the second one. Men were questioned by Mister Jan and women by the female interviewers. How-

ever, men were also questioned by the female interviewers. It was not possible to find another suitable male interviewer, since most of the young men if not on military duty, were engaged or had returned to the home districts.

(3) An exception is the *Hung-lou meng* (Dream of the Red Chamber) which describes many love scenes, but gives much more emphasis to romantic love than to sexual activities. The *Chin p'ing Mei*, frequently considered a classic novel, has been officially forbidden throughout its history and in recent times only expurgated editions have been published. Here the emphasis is on sexual matters with little on love. Other erotic novels (because they are forbidden) are not widely known in China and were not mentioned by the interviewees.

(4) These designations are abbreviations: the father comes from North China; and 'Shantung Mother' means a woman from Taiwan married to a man from Shantung.

(5) See my *Studies in Taiwanese Folktales* (Taipeh, Taiwan: The Orient Cultural Service, 1971).

(6) I participated in a conference at Harvard University in August 1978; some of the papers read there will shortly be published in rewritten versions.

(7) W. Eberhard, *Südchinesische Volksmärchen* (Köln: Eugen Diedrichs Verlag, 1977) contains a number of such texts.

(8) W. Eberhard, "Thoughts about Chinese Folk Theater Performances," (unpublished manuscript, 1979).