The Wolf of Chung-shan

Hua-yuan Li Mowry

This presentation deals with one of the most popular Ming tales in classical Chinese, the "Chung-shan lang chuan" 中山狼傳 ("Story of the Wolf of Chung-shan"), by Ma Chung-hsi 馬中錫 (1446-1512).[1] I will examine the tale from the perspective of comparative study, discussing its development and comparing it with variations found in other cultures, thus setting it in the broader context of "world literature."

The word *lang* or "wolf" in Chinese has long been used as a synonym for cruelty, feelinglessness, viciousness, greed, ferocity, untidiness, or for other such words denoting the undesirable bestial qualities since antiquity associated with that particular species. The saying "lang-tsu yeh-hsin" 狼子野心 (a wolf's child has a wild heart), according to *Tso-chuan* 左傳, was a common proverb as early as the Spring and Autumn period (722-481).[2] In fact, Chinese expressions such as "lang-tu" 狼毒, "lang-li" 狼戾, "lang-t'un" 狼吞, "lang-t'an" 狼貪 and "lang-chi" 狼藉 have so long formed a part of the vocabulary most frequently drawn upon by the Chinese, that even those who have never seen a wolf might nevertheless detail the many notorious attributes of this beast. But it was not until the first quarter of the 16th century that the wolf was popularly used in China, especially in literature, as a symbol for *ingratitude*. At that time the story of "Chung-shan lang," or "the wolf of Chung-shan," was written down in three different literary forms. Ever since then, this unfortunate beast has been burdened with yet another unsavory attribute, that of ingratitude, while the term "Chung-shan lang" is even now used in reference to any heartless ingrate.

The three Ming forms of this early 16th century wolf tale are 1) Ma Chung-hsi's prose tale, "Chung-shan lang chuan;" 2) the four-act *tsa-chü* 雜劇 play "Chung-shan lang" by an anonymous playwright;[3] and 3) a short one-act *yüan-pen* 院本 play also entitled "Chung-shan lang" by Wang Chiu-ssu 王九思 (1468-1551).[4] The basic plot for all three versions is identical; what follows is my synopsis of the "Chung-shan lang chuan" prose

tale:

> Mr. Tung Kuo 東郭, a Mohist scholar, carrying a bagful of books and riding a donkey, was on his way to Chung-shan when he met a wolf, wounded and being pursued by the hunter Lord Chao and his followers. The wolf requested Tung Kuo's help, asking to be hidden within the bag. After the hunters had passed and the danger was over, Tung Kuo let the wolf out. However, as soon as it was safely free again, the wolf attempted to eat Tung Kuo, citing as his reason for this outrageous behavior the Mohist's advocacy of altruism. Tung Kuo protested. Finally, the man and the beast agreed to seek the opinions of the very first three elderly ones they might come across. The first old one to be asked his opinion was an ancient apricot tree, and the second, an old cow. The tree and the cow each decreed that the man should be devoured by the wolf—men, each declared as he ended the sad story of his life, were indeed the most ungrateful of animals. When at last they came upon the third and final judge, an old man this time, Tung Kuo was desperate. The old man listened to both versions of what had happened between Tung Kuo and the wolf, then suggested that the wolf be put back into the book bag—only, of course, so that he could see for himself what the real situation had been, after which he would deliver his verdict. Without the slightest hesitation the wolf asked to be placed back into Tung Kuo's book bag and there, as before, to have all four legs tied up. This accomplished, the Chung-shan wolf once again came under the Mohist scholar's control and was killed.

What is the moral of this story? There are at least three possible answers:

1) He who returns evil and deceit for good, will be punished.
2) Indiscriminate altruism is foolish and may bring disaster.
3) Human wisdom conquers brute strength.

However read, the moralistic and didactic messages stand out clearly; in this light, then, we may consider the Chinese story of Tung Kuo and the wolf to be a fable. Yet it differs from the classical Greek fables, which are generally short and seem to be narrated in an impersonal way; for in all three Ming versions of the story, particularly in the four-act *tsa-chü* play, one notes a strong satirical element. In fact some Ming scholars consider both the prose "Chung-shan lang chuan" and the *tsa-chü* "Chung-shan lang" to be satirical compositions aimed at a specific historical incident involving some specific person.

That the "Chung-shan lang chuan" is the Chinese version of an old

folk tale found among many oriental and occidental nations was to my knowledge first pointed out by Cheng Chen-to 鄭振鐸 in his "Chung-shan lang ku-shi chih pien-yi" 中山狼故事之變異 ("On the Variations of the Story of the Chung-shan Wolf").[5] In his article of two pages Cheng Chen-to lists five Asian and European variations in addition to the three Chinese versions.

In the many different literatures where it is found, what is the earliest form of this popular tale? Where does it originate? How does it migrate, how is it transformed? Where does the Chinese story about the Chung-shan Wolf come from? Is the Chinese story a mere translation of its source or a deliberate re-adaptation? I will now attempt a concise answer to some of these questions.

The prototype of our tale, as the 19th century German scholar of Sanskrit, Theodor Benfey (1809-1881), points out in the Introduction to his German translation of the *Panchatantra,* can be found among the earliest of the Aesopic fables.[6] In English, the earliest version of this fable, traditionally attributed to Theognis (ca. 6th century B.C.), is the 10th fable, titled "The Man and the Serpent," in the first book of William Caxton's *Aesop's Fables:*[7]

> He who assists or helps evil men, sins—because after you have done them a good turn, they will turn around and hurt you. As the common saying goes, "If you save a man from the gallows, he will hate you forever," regarding which Aesop relates this fable:
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> Once upon a time a man found a serpent amongst some vines. Because of the harsh winter, the serpent was frozen stiff and nearly dead, so that the good man, pitying her, carried her into his house and put her down in front of the fire. He so cared for her that she regained her strength and vigor and was soon buzzing all about the house, and upsetting the good wife and children. So the good man decided to get her out of the house, but when he was about to catch her she made straight for his neck [as if] to choke him. And thus it is with evil folks—take pity on them and they repay you with evil and deceit; hence, associating with them is both unpleasant and fruitless.

Although he does not forthrightly declare it, Benfey definitely implies that this particular fable is of Greek origin. Is it then possible that a Greek fable, titled in English by William Caxton "The Man and the Serpent," could

have been the progenitor of the early 16th century Chinese story of the Chung-shan Wolf? And if so, what could have happened during the span of 2000 or more years, to transform such a simple animal fable into a lengthy satirical drama? Here I will summarize the major stages of the fable's transformation, mapped out for the most part by Benfey.

The first significant development of the simple Greek fable can be seen in Kadiri's *Tuti-Nameh* (lit., *Tales of the Parrot*), a Persian work which borrows extensively from various Indian narrative collections; in it we find a story of an ungrateful serpent which clearly is an elaboration of "The Man and the Serpent."[8] Pursued by a man, the serpent approaches a prince for help, who hides the serpent in his sleeve; but as soon as the danger is past, the serpent attempts to bite its benefactor. The prince requests that the affair be laid before another snake, by chance just arrived. The serpent turns his attention to the new arrival and the prince seizing this opportunity, picks up a rock and kills the serpent. In this story we see the simplest motif of the benefactor's requesting an arbiter—a uniquely Indian motif.

This motif is further developed and elaborated upon, and we find in the *Disciplina Clericalis* by Petrus Alphonsus (in the beginning of the 12th century) a story which I think is probably the first recognizable modern ancestor of the Chung-shan Wolf.[9] In the story found in *Disciplina Clericalis* we see not only that an arbiter—this time a fox—appears, but also that the arbiter makes a decision significant to the outcome of the story. This decision—that the snake should first be returned to the condition in which its rescuer found it—is yet another motif unmistakably Indian.[10]

Over the next four hundred years, a collection of ancient Indian fables, derived for the most part from the Buddhist Jataka stories, was translated under many suggestive titles (e.g., "Aesopus alter," "Directorium vite humane," "Buch der Beyspiele," "Exemplario," "The Morall Philosophie of Doni," etc.) into almost all the major European languages, each collection having its own variations and interpolations.[11] Our tale during this same period achieved its final significant transformation, namely, an increase in the number of arbiters from one to three. Before I mention any of the European variations of our tale in its final stage of development, let us first turn our attention to the East and mention briefly two important Indian works, the *Mahābhārata* and the *Panchatantra*.

As we note, Benfey convincingly demonstrates that our tale, throughout the entire course of its development, always falls under Indian influence.

However, as I mentioned earlier, he does seem to believe that the tale's birth place is ancient Greece. His belief was challenged thirty years later by an English Bidpai literature authority who was also an Aesopian scholar, Professor Joseph Jacobs (1854-1916). Drawing evidence from his contemporaries' studies of the *Mahābhārata,* Professor Jacobs states in his *Aesop's Fables* (vol. I, p. 81): "Liebrecht has found a very explicit reference to 'The Man and the Serpent' in Holtzmann's translation of parts of the *Mahābhārata."* Since Professor Jacobs does not see evidence of direct Hellenic (776-323 B.C.) influence on the Indian fable, he consequently dismisses Benfey's supposition regarding our tale's Greek origin, inasmuch as the *Mahābhārata* was certainly compiled in the years before Christ, although it is clearly a work of mixed nature having many interpolations.

Although Professor Jacobs' argument does not provide an answer one way or another with regard to the question of the fable's origin, it *does* point out that in ancient India, as in ancient Greece, there was current among the people a fable of an ungrateful serpent. Further speculation as to the birth place of this fable is pointless for our present study, and I turn now to that second Indian work, the *Panchatantra.* The *Pancha-tantra,* as the name implies, is a Sanskrit compilation including "five books" of an earlier, ancient Indian fable collection.[12] While many of the stories found in the *Panchatantra* date back at least to the second century B.C., there are also many later interpolations, especially in the southern versions. It is with one of the southern versions, the Tamil language *Panchatantra,* that we shall now concern ourselves, because in this Tamil *Panchatantra* we will find an Indian version of our tale in its fully developed form. More significantly, we will recognize in this Tamil tale the immediate ancestor of the Chung-shan Wolf.

The following, then, is Henry K. Beauchamp's 1899 English translation of Abbe Dubois' 1826/1872 French translation, from the original Tamil *Panchatantra,* of the second story told by a crab to the Brahmin Kala-Sarma, as found within a group of stories about the adventures of this Brahmin.[13]

The Brahmin, the Crocodile, the Tree, the Cow, and the Fox

Once upon a time, in the Brahmin village of Agni-sthala, situated on the banks of the river Jumna, there lived a Brahmin named Astika. While on a pilgrimage to the Ganges, he happened one day to reach a river in which he intended to perform his ablutions. No sooner had he stepped into the water than a crocodile approached him, and learning the purpose

for which he had undertaken the journey, entreated him most earnestly to carry it with him to the waters of the sacred river, where it hoped to be able to live more at its ease than in that river, which frequently ran dry during the hot season and caused it the most terrible sufferings. The Brahmin, moved to compassion, allowed the crocodile to get into his bag, and, hoisting it on his shoulders, proceeded on his journey: On reaching the banks of the Ganges the pilgrim opened his bag, and pointing out to the crocodile the waters of the river, bade it crawl in. The crocodile, however, replied that it felt tired out by the long journey they had made together, and was not strong enough to reach the water by itself. It therefore requested the Brahmin to carry it in to a certain depth. The Brahmin, without the least suspicion of foul play, complied with this last request of the crocodile. He advanced as far as he could into the bed of the river and there deposited his travelling companion. Just as he was turning, however, the crocodile seized him by the leg and tried to drag him into deeper water. Filled with dismay, and incensed at such perfidy, the pilgrim exclaimed: "O deceitful and wicked villain! Is it thus that thou returnest evil for good? Is this the kind of honesty which thou practisest? Is this the gratitude which I have to expect from thee for the service I have rendered?"

"Nonsense!" replied the crocodile. "Why dost thou talk to me of *honesty* and *gratitude*? The only honesty of our days is to ruin those who cherish us."

"Be pleased, at any rate, to stay the execution of thy perfidious design for a little while," entreated the Brahmin, "and let us see if the morality which thou professest would be approved by anybody. Let us refer the matter to arbitrators; and should there be found only three who approve thy mode of acting and thinking, I consent to be devoured by thee."

The crocodile yielded to the wishes of the Brahmin, and agreed to defer the sacrifice until it had secured the approbation of three arbitrators who saw nothing to blame in it.

They applied first of all to a mango-tree planted on the river bank. The Brahmin asked the tree if it was right to do evil to those who had done us good.

"I do not know," answered the mango-tree, "if that is permitted or not; but I know very well that it is just the kind of treatment which men like you mete out to me. I appease their hunger by nourishing them with my succulent fruits; and I shield them from the heat of the sun by sheltering them under my shade. Yet, as soon as old age or any accident makes me unfit to render them such services, they, forgetting my past kindness, cut my branches, and lastly deprive me of life itself by digging up my very roots. Hence I conclude that honesty among men consists

in destroying those who cherish them."

The crocodile and the Brahmin then accosted an old cow which was grazing without a keeper on the banks of the river. The Brahmin asked if it was not an offence against honesty to do evil to those who had done good to us.

"What dost thou mean by the word *honesty*?" answered the cow. "Honesty in our days consists in harming those who have rendered us service; I have learned this only too well from my own sad experience. Till recently I rendered most important services to man. I ploughed his fields; I gave him calves; I nourished him with my milk. But, alas! now that I am grown old and unfit to be of service to him, he has discarded me. Forsaken and helpless on the banks of this river, I find myself exposed at every moment to the fury of wild beasts."

The opinion of a third arbitrator only was wanting to complete the ruin of the Brahmin. Perceiving a fox, he asked him the same question that he had asked the mango-tree and the cow. But before making an answer the fox wished to be better informed of the points at issue. So the Brahmin gave a detailed account of the services he had rendered to the crocodile and of the treacherous act that the latter was meditating. The fox laughed heartily, and seemed at first to be going to decide in favour of the crocodile. "However," said he, "before pronouncing a final judgement on your affair, I must see how you both travelled together."

The crocodile, without the least suspicion as to what the fox intended to do, and without the least hesitation, got into the bag, which the Brahmin then hoisted upon his back. The fox told the Brahmin to follow him, and on reaching an isolated spot he made signs to the Brahmin to place his load on the ground. No sooner had the latter done so than the fox took a huge stone and smashed the head of the crocodile with it. Then turning to the Brahmin, the fox said: "Foolish man that thou art, may the dangers to which thou has been exposing thyself teach thee to be more careful in future! Remember well that we should never make friends or associates of the wicked." The fox then called his family together and made an excellent meal of the dead crocodile; and the Brahmin, after accomplishing the object of his pilgrimage by bathing in the waters of the Ganges, returned home safe and sound.

According to Benfey this story is not found in any other version of the *Panchatantra* known to him in the mid-nineteenth century. He suspects it to be a late interpolation. Benfey has not suggested a date for this interpolation. But we know that it can not be later than the first decade of the 16th century, because Ma Chung-hsi, author of the Chinese prose tale "Chung-shan lang chuan," died in 1512, and his "Chung-shan lang chuan," as we shall see

immediately, is based on the crocodile tale found in the Tamil *Panchatantra.*

That Ma Chung-hsi's "Chung-shan lang chuan" is derived from the *Panchatantra* tale "The Brahmin, the Crocodile, the Tree, the Cow, and the Fox" is suggested by the presence, in both the "Chung-shan lang chuan" and the *Panchatantra* tale, of three literary motifs, each characteristically Indian:

1) In both the Tamil tale and the Chinese, the benefactors–the Brahmin and the Mohist–conceal the ingrates–the crocodile and the wolf–in a bag.

2) In both tales it is *three* arbiters, or judges, who are requested by the Brahmin and the Mohist–the first turning out to be a treė (mango in Tamil, apricot in Chinese), the second a cow, and the third a clever fox (Tamil) and an intelligent man (Chinese). Moreover, there are in the Chinese version other apparent traces which indicate a *direct* borrowing from the Tamil. Let us compare what the second arbiter of each tale, a cow, has to say. First, the *Panchatantra* story:

> "What dost thou mean by the word honesty?" answered the cow. "Honesty in our days consists in harming those who have rendered us service; I have learned this only too well from my own sad experience. Till recently I rendered most important services to man. I ploughed his fields; I gave him calves; I nourished him with my milk. But, alas! now that I am grown old and unfit to be of service to him, he has discarded me. Forsaken and helpless on the banks of this river, I find myself exposed at every moment to the fury of wild beasts."

Now, the Chinese "Chung-shan lang chuan," which is much more elaborate than the *Panchatantra* story:

> The cow frowned; opened its eyes wide in anger, licked its nose, opened its mouth, and said to the master, "The words of the old apricot tree are true indeed! When I was young and my horns were just beginning to grow, I was quite strong. The old farmer traded a knife for me and put me to work in the field as a helpmate for the oxen. As I grew bigger and bigger, the oxen daily became older and weaker until I had to attend to everything myself. When the old farmer wanted to go somewhere fast, I pulled him in the farm cart, chose the shortest road to the destination, and ran there in a hurry. When he wanted to plow, I shed the cart and cleared the field of thorns and weeds for him. He depended on me as if

I were his limbs. He relied on me for his food and clothing. He was able to marry because of me, and it was also because of me that he was able to pay his taxes and fill up his granary: On my part, I thought that when I died I would be buried with a mat over my body, like the horse or the dog. Formerly, he never had more than a picul or two of grain in his house; now he harvests more than ten times that amount . . . and every grain and every thread comes from my labor. Now, because of my old age and frailty, he drives me into the wilderness where the wind ravages my eyes and the cold sun is my only company. Bones jut out like hills on my thin body; my old tears fall like rain. Spittle drops from my mouth helplessly, and I don't have the strength to raise my bent legs. My hair is gone and my skin is ruined by unhealed sores and wounds. . . .

(Translated by James R. Hightower)

The old cow further says that the farmer's wife is now urging her husband to have it killed, and ends her sad story by saying to the Mohist scholar, "What have you done for the wolf that you should hope to escape?" In addition to the obviously parallel ideas, the Chinese phrase "ch'i-wo lao-jo, chu-wo chiao-yeh" 欺我老弱，逐我郊野 ("because of my being old and weak, he drives me out into the wilderness") speaks more of an Indian than a Chinese practice.[14]

3) In both tales the third judge in the end outwits the ingrate, who is then killed. And in both the Indian and the Chinese versions the "luring back" scenes are markedly similar.

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In Europe, our tale seems to have achieved its fullest development during the 14th and the 15th centuries. Then, from the 15th century on, it has managed to find its way into almost all the major folktale collections.[15] I shall now discuss three of the many European variations of the tale in its fully developed form, comparing them briefly with the Tamil and the Chinese counterparts.

One of the earliest European variations of our tale is the parable, titled "A Man That Delivered a Serpent from Peril of Death," found in chapter xxx of William Caxton's 1481 English version of *The History of Reynard the Fox,* the first translation into English of the Reynard cycle, and the second-earliest prose version thereof.[16] Its source, the Dutch text of

1479, was the first, and is known to Reynard scholars as the Gouda edition–itself in turn a prose redaction of a verse manuscript composed by an anonymous Dutch poet during the last decade of the 14th century.[17] It is this anonymous Dutch poet, as far as we know, who first introduced the tale into the Reynard epic.[18]

The basic plot of the man and the serpent parable found in *The History of Reynard the Fox* compares closely with that of the Tamil and Chinese versions. The ingrate is a serpent, and the benefactor a man. The arbiters called upon, however, differ slightly from those of the Tamil and Chinese versions. The arbiter summoned first is not a tree but rather Tiselin, the raven; the second consists of the comrades Bruin the bear and Isegrim the wolf; the third is Reynard the fox. The story goes like this: A serpent, caught in a snare, asks the help of a man. Having made the serpent promise that it will not harm him, the man releases it from the snare. Once freed, the serpent immediately attempts to kill the man as it says, "the need of hunger may cause one to break his oath." The man, like his two Oriental counterparts, then requests that the case be brought before some judges. The serpent and man first approach the raven, then together the bear and the wolf. With intentions of sharing the man as a meal with the serpent, the raven, bear, and wolf all agree that the man should be eaten. Finally the man brings his case to the animal king, a lion named Noble, who in turn entrusts the case to Reynard, the wisest in his court. Hearing the story, Reynard demands that both man and serpent be returned to the place where they first met. Subsequently the serpent is put back in the snare, and the man saved.

It is significant that the Dutch author who first introduced the tale into the Reynard epic retained its basic characteristic as a didactic tale, told by someone whose essential concern is to instill truth or to illustrate a point. Here, in *The History of Reynard the Fox*, the tale is told by Reynard's aunt, the she-ape Dame Rukenaw, the more objectively to show Reynard's cleverness and wisdom and to contrast his fairness in handling a difficult law case with the brute selfishness of his arch enemies, the bear Bruin and the wolf Isegrim.

That the tale has been incorporated into the Reynard the Fox story in the same fashion as it is found in the Tamil *Panchatantra*–i.e., emboxed in a frame-story–could indicate that the Reynard author was acquainted with the Indian fable tradition, or that he came upon the tale in one or

another of the European translations of Indian fables current in his time.

The second European variation I shall mention is a popular Italian adaptation entitled "Gli Ingrati," or "The Ingrates," available in English translation in Thomas F. Crane's *Italian Popular Tales.*[19] In the opening sentence of the Introduction to his collection, Crane says, "By popular tale we mean the stories that are handed down by word of mouth from one generation to another of the illiterate people, serving almost exclusively to amuse and but seldom to instruct." Thus Crane assigns no dates to "The Ingrates," although several other Italian variations of this tale are mentioned.[20] Crane also notes that this tale is "of Oriental origin," being "one of the most famous of the Eastern apologues."[21] In this Italian version, the ingrate, again, is a snake; the benefactor, a man. The three arbiters are a horse, a mulberry-tree, and a fox. "The Ingrates" is closer than is the Reynard parable to the Tamil and Chinese versions, in that the first two arbiters agree that the snake should eat the man *because,* in the world of men, "he who does good is always ill rewarded and he who does evil, well-rewarded." However, we find in this Italian version a new motif—one not found in the two oriental variations of our tale, but present in several European variations. This motif is the man's promising the last arbiter a reward, and his subsequent reneging and deceit.

In "The Ingrates," after two unfavorable pronouncements by the horse and the mulberry-tree, the man takes the third arbiter aside, begging the fox to pronounce in his favor. Then, as with all the variations of the tale, the fox declares, "The better to render judgement I must see just how the matter has happened." The snake is tricked back under the large stone where the man first saw it and is left there. The fox then demands a bag of hens as his reward for service rendered. Next morning, the man gives a filled bag to his benefactor, the fox, telling the fox not to eat the hens close-by. The fox takes the bag to a distant valley and opens it, but instead of hens, some dogs jump out and eat the fox. This Italian tale ends, "and so it is in the world; for who does good is ill-rewarded and who does evil is well-rewarded."

The third and final European variation is the Norwegian tale entitled "Such Is the World's Reward" as found in the 19th century folktale collection of Asbjörnsen and Moe.[22] Just as with "The Ingrates," we have no idea as to when our tale migrated to this northern European country. But we recognize our tale as soon as it speaks to us, although its garment has been altered to suit this northern land and its people.

In "Such Is the World's Reward" the ingrate is no longer a snake but the familiar northern European dragon. There are still three arbiters—an old dog, an old nag, and the cunning fox Michael—and a man.[23] The story develops along much the same lines as does its Italian counterpart, "The Ingrates." First, the man saves the trapped dragon, rescuing him from under a boulder, whereupon the dragon attempts to eat the man. Eventually, though, they agree to seek the opinions of three arbiters.[24] Both the first and the second arbiters declare that the dragon should eat the man for "such is the world's reward." At last the fox Michael comes along, and the man and the dragon agree to ask Michael to act as their final arbiter. Having heard the man's story, Michael the fox takes him aside and whispers in his ear, "What wages will you give me, if I save you from the dragon?" "I'll take you home with me and you may take care of all my hens and geese every Thursday night," the man replies. So the dragon is tricked and returns to his spot under the boulder. When Thursday night arrives, Michael goes to the man's chicken-coop and there gorges himself with so many chickens that he can not move. Next morning the mistress discovers the fox "stuffed as tight and round as a sausage," snoring away in the sun. She summons all her maids, and they beat the fox nearly to death. When the fox finally manages to flee into the woods, it mumbles to itself, "Oh, my; oh, my, it's very certain, such is the world's reward!"

It is interesting to note, despite the close resemblance of the European tales to the Tamil and to the Chinese versions, that the European folk story-tellers have almost completely changed the nature of our tale by adding the episode of the fox's bribing the man. In both "The Ingrates" and "Such Is the World's Reward," the moral concern—so prominent in the Tamil and in the Chinese versions—is only vaguely detectable, if at all present. The overriding tone in both the Italian and the Norwegian variations is one of cynical ridicule; there, as also in the Reynard parable, the protagonist is clearly the cunning and greedy fox, with the ungrateful animal and the man each playing mere supporting roles.

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I have attempted to show several stages which have occurred in the transformation of this one simple fable, "The Man and the Serpent." Before we turn our attention again to China and India, I should add one more point,

no doubt stated many times over by students of folklore and popular literature. That is, while we probably all agree that oral literature and written literature belong to two differing literary genres, we must still rely, to a large extent, on written documents and records for the study of oral literature. This is true even today, when we have at our disposal various other, more modern devices to record and transmit the works of popular artists and professional storytellers. This suggests, among other things, that there will never be anything approaching a complete study of the history of a literary work such as is our tale, whose development and circulation belong to both the oral and the written traditions of many peoples. Reading through, say, Asbjörnsen's and Moe's "Such Is the World's Reward," we naturally wonder how many other versions of the tale, which never managed to find their way into the realm of written literature and are consequently now forever lost, were circulating among the common folk of northern Europe during the 19th, 18th, 17th, 16th, or 15th centuries. It is this question and others like it, which have prevented me from drawing up a chart with lines and arrows to indicate our tale's long, criss-cross journey, for although we may have the general directions of a tale's travel, we can never be sure of just what it is the lines connect, or precisely where the arrows point.

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Let us now return to India and China. Recent scholars of Chinese consider the Ming dynasty to be the renaissance age of fable-writing.[25] And many agree that Ma Chung-hsi's "Chung-shan lang chuan," the first of the three Chinese versions of our tale, is one of the best among the Ming fables. But though we have come to the conclusion that the Chinese story is derived from the Indian we have no idea what Ma Chung-hsi's immediate model might have been. Was it a written piece? Was it a story he heard? We don't know. Nor do we know how, when, or even in which language, the *Panchatantra* tale migrated to China. The contemporaries of Ma Chung-hsi evidently were not interested in questions of this nature—we have no written records concerning the origin and history of the "Chung-shan lang chuan" from any of the Ming or Ch'ing scholars. But some things we do know. For example, some of Ma Chung-hsi's contemporaries claim to know why he wrote this particular story of a wolf. According to several Ming sources, Ma Chung-hsi was prompted to write his "Chung-shan lang chuan" by the following incident:[26]

K'ang Hai 康海 (1475-1540), a gifted and well-known scholar-poet-playwright, by befriending the powerful eunuch Liu Chin 劉瑾, once saved the life of Li Meng-yang 李夢陽 (1472-1529), the leader of the so-called "former seven-scholars" 前七子 (ch'ien ch'i-tzu) and a close literary colleague of K'ang Hai.[27] Later on, when Liu Chin was executed in 1510 by imperial decree, K'ang Hai was also implicated and thereby lost his official post. At that time Li Meng-yang was in a position to assist K'ang Hai, but for some unknown reason did not lift a hand to help his friend.[28]

Li Meng-yang's ungrateful attitude angered Ma Chung-hsi, who had been a teacher to both K'ang Hai and Li Meng-yang; consequently Ma Chung-hsi wrote his "Chung-shan lang chuan" as a protest against Li Meng-yang's ingratitude.

In fact, K'ang Hai himself has written a poem intitled "Tu Chung-shan lang chuan"讀中山狼傳("On Reading the Story of the Chung-shan Wolf").[29] The poem reads:

P'ing-sheng ai-wu wei ch'ou-liang 平生愛物未籌量
When extending my affection to animals
I have never had other intentions.
Na-chi tang-shih chiu tz'u-lang[30] 那記當時救此狼
How could I, then, have expected anything in return
at the time I saved the wolf?
Hsiao-wo chiu-lang lang shih-wo 笑我救狼狼噬我
You laugh at me because I saved the wolf,
and it bit me.
Wu-ch'ing jen-yi ke wu-fang 物情人意各無妨
Does your ridicule however,
change the bestial instinct, or human nature?

According to this poem, then, it would seem that K'ang Hai himself considers the "Chung-shan lang chuan" a satire; however, in contrast to the interpretation of his contemporaries, K'ang Hai views "Chung-shan lang chuan" as a satire aimed mainly at himself, and not at Li Meng-yang. Reading "Chung-shan lang chuan" today—almost 500 years after K'ang Hai wrote his poem—I must say that *if* "Chung-shan lang chuan" was indeed written as an intentional satire, then the main object of Ma Chung-hsi's ridicule does indeed seem more to have been the Mohist scholar, Mr. Tung Kuo—K'ang Hai in real life—than the Chung-shan Wolf, or Li Meng-yang in real life. And to

encourage agreement with K'ang Hai, we need only re-read the last passage of Ma Chung-hsi's "Chung-shan lang chuan"—the passage that follows immediately upon the wolf's having been tricked back into the book bag:

> The old man signaled with his eyes that the master should stab the wolf with the knife. The master said, "Won't it hurt the wolf?" The old man laughed, "If you still can't bear to kill an animal that has been as ungrateful as this, you are humane indeed, but also stupid to a degree. To save a man from a well, to give your clothes to preserve a friend's life, are procedures that have a good result for the recipient; but what about the benefactor, if he dies in the process? Humaneness pushed to the point of stupidity is something the superior man does not condone." As he finished speaking he gave a great laugh, and the master laughed with him. Then he helped the master wield the knife and together they killed the wolf, threw the carcass on the road, and departed.
>
> (Translated by James R. Hightower)

Here, let us pause and recall the tale found in the southern Tamil *Panchatantra;* this Chinese passage is but a Confucian scholar's version thereof, carrying exactly the same didactic message as the one originally intended in the tale "The Brahmin, the Crocodile, the Tree, the Cow, and the Fox."

I mentioned earlier that "The Brahmin, the Crocodile, the Tree, the Cow, and the Fox" is the second story the crab tells to the Brahmin, Kala-Sarma. In the frame-story enclosing "The Brahmin, the Crocodile, the Tree, the Cow, and the Fox," we see that Kala-Sarma, like Astika, is on his way to the Ganges, when he encounters a crab; Kala-Sarma eventually consents to take the crab along to the sacred river. While traversing a dense forest at midday, Kala-Sarma stops to rest beneath a tree. As soon as he falls asleep, a crow living in the branches of that same tree calls for its friend, a poisonous snake, to come. The snake bites the Brahmin and the man dies. However, just as the crow is about to devour the dead Brahmin, the crab catches it by the neck with its claws, refusing to turn it loose. The snake at last is called back to suck out all the venom from the man, and thus restore him to life. When the man revives, the crab tells him what has happened, and is on the verge of strangling the crow to death as punishment. But the revived Kala-Sarma reminds the crab that it had promised the crow its life in return for causing the snake to revive him, and insists that the crab spare the crow's

life. In answering Kala-Sarma, the crab says:

> Foolish man! Can we attach the least faith to the words of the wicked? Can we ever rely on their promises? Thou art, of course, ignorant of the fact that this treacherous crow has already caused the death of a host of innocent beings, and that if I now set him free he will cause a still greater number to perish. Wouldst thou like to know what good people gain by obliging the wicked? Wouldst thou like to learn how the latter ought to be treated when once they are in our power? The following fable will teach thee.

It is at this point the crab tells Kala-Sarma the story of "The Brahmin, the Crocodile, the Tree, the Cow, and the Fox." And after having finished the story, the crab again says to the Brahmin:

> This fable ought to convince thee that no covenant should be made with the wicked, and that we may without the least scruple fail in our word to them. When we happen to have them in our power, we should ruthlessly destroy them.

What the crab says to the Brahmin Kala-Sarma does not in essence differ from what the old man says to the Mohist Tung Kuo, although the crab speaks much more directly and forcefully than does the old man. The moral tone of the Tamil tale, in other words, is well retained in the Chinese story.

The four-act *tsa-chü* play "Chung-shan lang," written by an anonymous playwright contemporaneous with Ma Chung-hsi, is an elaboration of Ma Chung-hsi's "Chung-shan lang chuan." As with "Chung-shan lang chuan," some Ming and Ch'ing critics considered it a satire, aimed at Li Meng-yang. If we compare the *tsa-chü* "Chung-shan lang" with Ma Chung-hsi's prose tale "Chung-shan lang chuan," we will see that this much elaborated *tsa-chü* play, in contrast to Ma Chung-hsi's tale, does contain some severe criticism of the ungrateful—criticism directed not only at the Chung-shan Wolf but also, in a more general direction, at the lack of sincerity, trust, and faith in the human world. The following passage is spoken by the third judge, the old man, in the last act of the play:

> What you (i.e., Mr. Tung Kuo) have said is true. There are indeed in this world countless ungrateful people: there are those who betray their lords,

while receiving the highest pay from the imperial court for doing nothing but committing crimes and performing evil deeds, ruining their government and endangering the people, degrading beyond repair their country which had been as strong as an iron barrel; there are those who betray their parents, somehow never able to repay their parents for their upbringing, always blaming their own failures upon the parents, never hesitating to break with them yet, as soon as they begin to enjoy good fortune, boasting to others about their having elevated the position of their parents, though never once having thought of their parents as the very source of their own lives; and then there are those who betray their teachers, putting up an arrogant front, treating their old teachers like strange passers-by, and never recalling the days when they themselves were but young children, receiving guidance and instruction from the very teachers whose patience and consideration are now completely forgotten; and again there are those who betray their friends, enjoying their company and care, sticking to them like glue or lacquer, swearing that they are willing to die for the friendship but then, as soon as they feel that their friends are in a less prominent position, going to other places after fun and profit, completely pushing out of their minds their former comrades in poverty, their friends of former times; there are also those who betray their relatives . . . Now do you not think that such ungrateful people as these, all of them, actually personify the wolf of Chung-shan?

In this *tsa-chü* play, any ridicule of Tung Kuo's indiscriminate altruism is minimized; indeed, the skillful hands of this anonymous Ming playwright have transformed our tale into a satirical drama having a high degree of human concern and interest.

Wang Chiu-ssu's "Chung-shan lang" one-act *yüan-pen* play is a truncated version of the *tsa-chü* "Chung-shan lang." It differs slightly from the prose tale "Chung-shan lang chuan" and the *tsa-ch*ü "Chung-shan lang" in three places: 1) In both the prose tale and the *tsa-chü,* the Mohist hides the wolf before the pursuing hunters arrive; in the *yüan-pen,* however, he hides the wolf, but in a hamper, not a bag, and only after the hunters have already passed. 2) In the prose tale and the *tsa-chü* the third arbiter turns out to be an old man who happens along; in the *yüan-pen* it is the local deity, the *t'u-ti shen* 土地神 who transforms himself into an old man in order to act as the last judge and thereby save the life of Tung Kuo. 3) In the prose tale and the *tsa-chü,* it is the Mohist scholar (in the tale, with the help as well of the old man) who finally kills the wolf; but in the *yüan-pen* it is an imp—an assistant to the deity—who kills the wolf, for the Mohist simply

cannot bear to kill an animal.

In this short one-act play, the satirical tone is just as strong as it is in the *tsa-chü* play. But there is also clearly apparent a measure of ridicule directed specifically at the Mohist philosophy.

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Chinese literature—like the literatures of many other lands—owes a debt to the Indian. Though scholars and students of comparative literature have, in the past half century, paid a fair amount of attention to Indian influences upon traditional Chinese fiction and drama, not much scholarly effort has been directed to the Indian influences upon traditional Chinese fables and folktales. Isn't it now high time we began exploring this fascinating area as well?

Notes

1. Ma Chung-hsi, *Tung-t'ien wen-chi* 東田文集 , chapter III. Two English translations of the "Chung-shan lang chuan" are readily available: 1) "The Wolf of Chung-shan," trans. James R. Hightower, in *Anthology of Chinese Literature,* Vol. 2, ed. Cyril Birch, (New York: Grove Press, 1972), pp. 46-52; and 2) "The Chung-shan Wolf" in *Traditional Chinese Stories,* Y.W. Ma and Joseph Lau, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), pp. 117-121.
2. *Tso-chuan* 左傳 , the fourth year of Duke Hsüan 宣公 (604 B.C.). When the Minister of War in Ch'u 楚 , Tzu-liang 子良 , had the son Yüeh-chiao 越椒 born to him, Tzu-wen 子文 (i.e., Tzu-liang's brother) said to Tzu-liang, "We must kill this child. This child has the appearance of a bear or a tiger, and the voice of a jackal or a wolf. If we don't kill him, he will certainly cause the extinction of our Jo-au 若敖 family. The common saying goes, 'A wolf's child has a wild heart.' This child is actually a wolf. Should he be brought up?"
3. See Shen T'ai's 沈泰 *Sheng Ming tsa-chü* 盛明雜劇 , chapter 19. In the *Sheng Ming tsa-chü* Shen T'ai attributes the authorship of "Chung-shan lang" to K'ang Hai 康海 (1475-1540), the well-known scholar-poet-playwright, and one of the so-called "Former Seven-scholars" 前七子 (Ch'ien Ch'i-tzu) of the Ming.
4. There are two English translations of this short play: 1) "The Wolf of Chung-shan" by J.I. Crump, *Renditions,* No. 7 (1977), pp. 29-38 (with the original Chinese text included in pp. 164-166); and 2) "Wolf of Mount Zhong" by William Dolby, in his *Eight Chinese Plays* (1978), pp. 93-102.
5. Cheng Chen-to 鄭振鐸 , *Chung-kuo wen-hsüeh yen-chiu* 中國文學研究 , chapter

4, pp. 1123–1124.

6. Theodor Benfey, *Pantschatantra* (1859), Vol. I, Einleitung, pp. 113–120; unless otherwise noted, subsequent references to Benfey derive from these pages.
7. Joseph Jacobs, *Aesop's Fables* (1889), Vol. II, p. 15. In quoting the text, I have modernized the spelling.
8. The *Tuti-Nameh* by Muhammad Kadiri (ca. 17th century) is an adaptation of Nakhshabi's (d. 1350) work of the same name. Nakhshabi, in turn, based his *Tuti-Nameh* on various Indian works. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that most of the tales found in Kadiri's *Tuti-Nameh* are ultimately of Indian origin. The *Tuti-Nameh* I use for this study is Emile Muller's French translation from the original Persian, entitled *Tuti-Nameh ou Les Contes du Perroquet* (1934). The story is the 29th tale, "L'histoire du prince qui avait caché un serpent dans sa manche," pp. 97-99.
9. Almost all the tales found in *Disciplina Clericalis* are of Jewish or Arabic origins. For a brief but interesting account of *Disciplina Clericalis* and its compiler, Petrus Alphonsus, see Jacobs' *Aesop's Fables,* Vol. I, pp. 198-199.
10. Benfey, in discussing this motif, mentions two earlier Oriental stories containing the "luring back" device, both ultimately from India. The first is found in a Mongolian version of a Buddhist Sanskrit work where a demon is lured into a tiny vessel and burned. The second is the well-known tale in *A Thousand and One Nights* where a fisherman lures back into the bottle a genie whom he found there.
11. Max Müller, in his "On the Migration of Fables" (*Chips from a German Workshop,* 1876, pp. 139-198), gives a summary chart (p. 165) of the various European translations of the Indian fables. A more detailed survey of the migration of the ancient Indian fables can be found in Joseph Jacobs' Introduction to his *The Fables of Bidpai* (1888), pp xi-lxxx .
12. Of the numerous *Panchatantra* scholars besides Benfey, we should name at least one more German, Professor Johannes Hertel, who, after Benfey, has helped to pave the road for our study of this Sanskrit classic. Among the several English translations of the *Panchatantra,* Professor Arthur W. Ryder's (1925) is still the most popular and readable. A book-length study attempting to reconstruct the original *Panchatantra* by comparing and examining the principal extant versions of the text is *The Panchatantra Reconstructed* by Franklin Edgerton, in *American Oriental Series,* Vol. III (1924).
13. I know of two European translations of the Tamil *Panchatantra:* that into French by Abbe J.A. Dubois, and that into English by E. Winford. Abbe Dubois' translation (*Le Pantchatantra ou les cinq ruses. Fables du Brahme Vichnou Sarma; Aventures de Paramarta et autres contes*) was first published in 1826 and reprinted in 1872 in Paris; Winford's translation was published in 1873. I presently have access to neither translation. However, a complete English translation of our tale, together with other tales of the same unit, can be found in an English translation of Dubois' noted French manuscript on Hindu manners,

customs, and ceremonies. See *Hindu Manners, Customs, and Ceremonies,* trans. and ed. Henry K. Beauchamp (1899), chapter 26, pp. 439-455. All my references to our tale are based on Beauchamp's translation.

14. I am indebted to Professor P'ei P'u-hsien 裴普賢 of the National Taiwan University for pointing out this Chinese phrase and its implication. See P'ei P'u-hsien, *Chung Yin wen-hsüeh yen-chiu* 中印文學研究 (*Studies on Chinese and Indian Literatures)* (Taipei, 1967), p. 199.
15. Jacobs lists all the European variations known to him in his *Aesop's Fables,* Vol. I., p. 235, under the heading "Man and Serpent."
16. The text I use here is from Donald B. Sands' *The History of Reynard the Fox Translated and Printed by William Caxton in 1481* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1960), pp. 132-136, titled "A Man That Delivered a Serpent from Peril of Death."
17. See Sands' *The History of Reynard the Fox,* Introduction, pp. 3-40.
18. Sands observes that this parable is relevant to the Reynard story "because it recalls Reynard's past deserts, puts Isegrim and Bruin in a bad light, and warns the king that due process of law should be observed," but he continues, "the tale falls out of the character of the early Flemish Reynard epic by treating man and animal on the same level. . . ." *The History of Reynard the Fox,* p. 212, Note 181.
19. Thomas Frederick Crane, *Italian Popular Tales* (1885), pp. 150-151.
20. *Italian Popular Tales,* p. 354, Note 6.
21. Of the 109 tales included in the *Italian Popular Tales,* twelve are designated as "stories of Oriental origin," chapter III, pp. 149-184.
22. Almost all the tales collected by Asbjörnsen and Moe in the middle of the 19th century have been translated into English. Our tale is found in the 1924 English translation by Helen and John Gade, entitled *Norwegian Fairy Tales,* pp. 221-225.
23. The fox Michael is a northern European equivalent of Reynard. There are several familiar Reynard adventures in which we find the character Michael, among the tales by Asbjörnsen and Moe.
24. In a remarkable parallel with the Chinese versions, the man in this Norwegian tale, when requesting a third arbiter, says to the dragon that "all good things are three." In the Chinese prose tale "Chung-shan lang chuan," the Mohist scholar also declares that "it is a custom of the local people to consult three elders when in doubt" ("min-su shih-yi, pi-hsün san-lao" 民俗事疑，必詢三老). In the four-act play "Chung-shan lang," the Mohist also quotes a common saying: "to get the best answer, one must consult three elders" ("ch'ang-yen tao, jo-yao-hao, wen san-lao" 常言道，若要好，問三老). And in the short one-act play "Chung-shan lang" it is the "ancient" proverb, "to settle a dispute, one must consult three elders" ("jo-yao-liao, wen-san-lao" 若要了，問三老) which is quoted.
25. See, e.g., Cheng Chen-to's "Yü-yen te fu-hsing" 寓言的復興 ("On the Renaissance of the Fable"), in his *Chung-kuo wen-hsüeh yen-chiu,* pp. 1207-1210.
26. See, e.g., Chiang Jui-tsao 蔣瑞藻 , *Hsiao-shuo k'ao-cheng* 小說考證 , section 25,

under the heading "Chung-shan lang," pp. 53-54.

27. In Ch'ien Ch'ien-yi's 錢謙益 *Li-ch'ao shih-chi hsiao-chuan* 列朝詩集小傳 , the story goes like this: During the first year of Cheng-te 正德 (1506), the eunuch Liu Chin imprisoned Li Meng-yang on account of one of Li's memorials to the throne which contained some unfavorable criticism of Liu Chin. When he learned that Liu Chin harbored the intention of putting him to death, Li Meng-yang immediately sent K'ang Hai a note, containing but four characters "Tui-shan chiu-wo" 對山救我 or "Tui-shan (i.e. K'ang Hai) save me." At that time Liu Chin, very much desired the friendship of the well-known literary talent (K'ang Hai). So, K'ang Hai went to see Liu Chin, and the very next day Li Meng-yang was released. (See *pin-chi* 丙集 under K'ang Hai.)

28. Again in *Li-ch'ao shih-chi hsiao-chuan,* after having lost his official career, K'ang Hai spent his remaining thirty-odd years mostly in the company of courtesans and musicians. When he died, he left 300 drums, but no money nor property.

29. This poem can be found in K'ang Hai's *Tui-shan chi* 對山集 , and in the *Ming-shih chi-shih* 明詩記事 of Ch'en T'ien 陳田 , Vol. 4.

30. Sometimes this sentence is given as "na-chi tang-nien chiu tz'u-lang" 那記當年救此狼 ("How would I still remember that I saved the wolf that year?").