1. Introduction

The doctrine of physical immortality has exerted a profound influence in China ever since the Warring States period (480 B.C. to 221 B.C.). The yearning for this blissful state in the minds of many an emperor, and the consequent attempts to acquire the elixir of life are widely known. The idea of immortality in popular thought in Han China has been studied by Yu Ying-shih. Its influence on the poets of T'ang and Sung China is now being studied in Kuala Lumpur. And Liu Ts'un-yan has investigated the influence of Taoist thought on the neo-Confucianist elite of the Ming dynasty. However, very little attention has been devoted so far to the influence of the Taoist notion of physical immortality on the Chinese novel.

Contemporary scholars have already noted the influence of Taoism generally on Chinese fiction, but have neglected the specific influence of the concept of physical immortality. Closely linked with Taoism, the idea of
physical immortality found its way into many popular Chinese novels written before the Chinese Revolution. In the sixteenth-century novel Fengshen yen-i for example, Yang Chien, Li Ching, his three sons, and several colleagues-in-arm, finally succeed in attaining the state of physical immortality without having to go through the agony of death, and on one occasion the "Lamp-bearing Adept" Jan-teng Tao-jen[6] restores Wu-wang to life by feeding him with an elixir. In the Hsi-yu-chi another sixteenth-century novel, Sun Wu-k'ung becomes indestructible after stealing and eating the gold elixirs prepared by the holy immortal T'ai-shang Lao-chu[7] (i.e. Lao Tzu), and on another occasion he brings about the resurrection of the King of Crow-cock (Wu-chi[8]) Kingdom by putting into the mouth of the latter's mortal remain one pill of ninefold cyclically-transformed gold elixir, which he obtained from the same holy immortal. The seventeenth-century Chinku ch'i-kuan includes a story about a wealthy merchant, cheated of his gold by a charlatan who takes the guise of an alchemist. Even in the popular Hung-lou-meng, it was felt necessary to introduce a character practising the art of alchemy: namely, Chia Ching[9].

The Hung-lou-meng first appeared in print in the year 1765. At about this time was born Li Ju-chen, who later wrote the Ching-hua-yuan[10] in about 1820. A study of this novel shows that the Taoist idea of physical immortality was still a subject of great interest among the people of early nineteenth-century China.

Li Ju-chen (c. 1763 — c. 1830) was born in Ta-hsing district in Chih-li province (i.e. modern Peking in Hopei province). At about the age of twenty he followed his elder brother Li Ju-huang[11] to Hai-chou district (modern Tung-hai district) in Kiangsu province. Between the age of thirty-eight and forty-eight he served as an assistant magistrate in Honan province. Then he retired to Hai-lou for the remaining years of his life.

In his youth he studied for a period of about eleven years under the eminent Ch'ing scholar, Ling T'ing-kan[12] (1757—1809), an expert on the classics, a phonologist, a mathematician and a calendar-expert. Li Ju-chen later befriended many scholars, among whom were specialists in phonology. The name of his brother-in-law, Hsü Kuei-lin[13] (1778—1821), a mathematician and phonologist, is included in the renowned collection of biographies...
of mathematicians and astronomers, the Ch'ou-jen-chuan. As a result of his interest in phonology and the wide interests he acquired through association with these scholars, he paid no attention to the study of the so-called 'eight-legged essays' (pa-ku wen), a prerequisite for the civil-service examination, which he eventually failed. It looks as though he took the opportunity of writing the Ching-hua-yüan to show his disenchantment with the whole civil-service examination system, and to demonstrate his own knowledge, which covered a wide range of subjects, including astrology, music, medicine, mathematics, rhetoric, poetry, calligraphy, painting, gardening, chess, and parlour games.

Li Ju-chen wrote three books. The first, Li-shih yin-chien, a book on phonology, was published in 1810 and the second, Shou-tzu-p'u, a book on chess, in 1817. His last book Ching-hua-yüan, a novel, was first published in 1828. A selective translation of this novel by Lin Tai-yi, has recently been published.

The Ching-hua-yüan tells how the Fairy-of-the-Hundred-Flowers incurs the displeasure of the Lady-of-the-Moon at a celestial banquet by refusing her request to make all the flowers bloom together, and how the fairy unwittingly pledges that she will live in the 'bitter sea of transmigration', should the hundred flowers ever bloom all at the same time. The Lady-of-the-Moon remembers this promise, and when the Woman Spirit of the star Antares is about to be reincarnated into the human world as the empress Wu Tse-t'ien (reigned 684 to 704), she instigates her to order the hundred flowers to bloom simultaneously. The imperial order is made one winter day when her majesty is overcome by wine in her palace garden. At the time the Fairy-of-the-Hundred-Flowers is away playing chess in the cave of another Fairy, Ma Ku. The subordinate fairies in charge of the individual flowers obey the imperial order and make the hundred flowers all bloom together. Whereupon the Fairy-of-the-Hundred-Flowers and the fairies of the individual flowers are sent down into the mundane world as a punishment for not observing the proper seasons.

The Fairy-of-the-Hundred-Flowers is reborn as a daughter of T'ang Ao under the name T'ang Hsiao-shan, while the other flower-fairies are reborn into families in different places inside and outside China. T'ang Ao is slandered after his success in the civil-service examination and his name is withdrawn from the pass list. He then develops an interest in Taoist immortality. In a temple he dreams of a holy immortal, who tells him to set

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11. Ibid., 51.686-689.
13. See Ching-hua-yuan, (Peking: Tso-chia ch'u-pan-she, 1955; reprinted Hong Kong: Chunghua Book Co., 1965; hereafter CHY) ch. 4. The author must have derived this story from the Ch'uan-T'ang shih-hua (Chin-tai mi-shu ed.) 1. 11a. This incident is mentioned in earlier novels such as the Hsüeh Ting-shan cheng-hsi (18) (Taipei; Wen-hua Book Co., 1971 ed.) 75.175.
off on a sea-voyage to look for twelve famous flowers. Without understand­
ing at first that these flowers are actually the reincarnations of Flower-
Fairies, he sets out on his voyage by accompanying his brother-in-law Lin
Chih-yang and an experienced traveller by the name To Chiu-kung. In his travel T'ang Ao discovers and eats several varieties of elixir plant
and comes across twelve talented girls in overseas countries, whom he
helps to return to China. Many chapters in the novel are devoted to descrip­
tions of the different peoples and customs in these strange places. At last
he comes to the Hsiao P'eng-lai mountain, where he leaves the party and
stays to become a holy immortal.

T'ang Hsiao-shan, moved by filial piety, goes on an expedition to the
Hsiao P'eng-lai mountain in search of her father. On her way she meets
with many adventures and also encounters some of the reincarnated Flower-
Fairies who have not yet returned to China. On reaching her destination
she receives, through a woodcutter, a letter from her father advising her
to change her name to T'ang Kuei-ch'en and to return to China in order
to take the civil-service examination under this new name.

T'ang Kuei-ch'en, together with forty-four other reincarnated fairies, takes
the civil-service examination during the reign of the empress Wu Tse-t'ien,
and passes with flying colours, securing all the top places in the pass list.
To celebrate their success these women scholars hold a grand party, at which
they demonstrate their talents in poetry, astrology, mathematics, parlour
games, chess, and other skills. This in effect is a reunion of the Flower-
Fairies in their reincarnated forms. At the close of the party a female holy
immortal pays them a visit and hints at their future destinies.

Then comes a revolt against the empress Wu Tse-t'ien, in favour of the
restoration of the T'ang emperor, Chung-tsung (succeeded 684, deposed the
same year, restored and reigned 705 to 709). Thirty-five reincarnated fairies
campaign with the army that is fighting for the restoration of the deposed
emperor. Some of them lose their lives in battle and the husbands of two
attain translation to the company of holy immortals, but the story ends
without our being told exactly what happens to the others. The author prom­
ised to write more about them in a sequel, but this was prevented by his
death.

2. Holy immortals in the Ching-hua-yüan

The Ching-hua-yüan begins with a reference to the three fairy islands of
P'eng-lai, Fang-chang and Ying-chou. These are the lands of the holy
immortals mentioned in the Shan-hai-ching and the Shih-chi, the discovery
of which was so eagerly desired by the emperor Ch'in shih-huang-ti (reigned
221 B. C. to 210 B. C.) Elixir plants and fruits were said to abound in these

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14 See CHY, 1.
These three fairy islands appear also in early sources like the Shan-hai-ching.
fairy islands, one of which, P'eng-lai, is taken as the starting point of the story in the Ching-hua-yüan. As we have seen, a woman immortal, the Fairy-of-the-Hundred-Flowers (P'ai-hua hsien-tzu), who lives in a cave on this island, forms the main character of the novel.

The birthday-celebration banquet attended by the Fairy-of-the-Hundred-Flowers is that of the Mother-Empress (Wang Mu), a very important Taoist personality who features in a story of the travel of the Chou Mu Wang to the western region during the tenth century B.C. Wang Mu's birthday is supposed to fall on the third day of the third moon in the lunar calendar and the celebration in her honour on that day is known as the 'Festival of the Flat Peaches' (p'an-t'ao sheng-hui). This festival is mentioned much earlier in other novels; in the sixteenth century Wu Ch'eng-en popularised it in the Hsi-yu-chi. The K'un-lun mountain, where the party is held, had also been long considered by the Taoists an abode of the holy immortals; it is mentioned in the Ch'ien-Han-shu, the Shan-hai-ching, and many other sources.

At the banquet the Fairy-of-the-Hundred-Flowers speaks to the Fairy-of-the-Hundred-Plants (P'ai-ts'ao hsien-tzu) concerning some hidden message contained in a mysterious jade tablet. The word yü has often been used with a Taoist nuance, in such terms as Yü-Huang (Jade-Emperor) of Yü-Ti (Jade-King), used for the emperor who ruled the heavens; Yü-ching (Jade-Capital), denoting the city where the emperor of the heavens lived; Yü-chi (Jade-Satchel) or Yü-ts'e (Jade-Documents), referring to Taoist books; and Yü-chiang (Jade-Broth) or Yü-yeh (Jade-liquid), meaning a jade potion that was used as an elixir. The term Yü-pei (Jade-Tablet)
itself appears in the title of a Taoist book, T'ai-ch'ing yü-peî-tzu in the Taoist Patrology (Tao-tsang ed.)

Nearly all the guests present at the banquet of Wang Mu can be traced to a Taoist origin. The more obvious examples are Lao-chün (i.e. Lao-tzu), P'êng Tsu, who was believed to have lived for eight hundred years before his transfiguration to the state of immortality, and Liu Hai-ch'ân a well-known Sung Taoist, the founder of the Southern School of Taoism. Chang Hsien is probably the name of an immortal who blessed his devotees with male offspring, although one could interpret the two words in a wider sense meaning 'the Holy Immortal Chang', in which case one of the many Taoist immortals with the surname Chang could be intended; such as Chang Tao-lang, Chang Kuo, and Chang Po-tuan must be the goddess Hsüan Nü, who, according to the Hsüan-yüan pen-chi, taught the Yellow Emperor military strategy. The Lady-of-the-Moon (Ch'ang O), the Weaving-Damsel (Chih Nü), and Ma Ku are three other popular goddesses in Chinese folklore. The three Immortals of Bliss, Emoluments

20 Information on the Patriarch of Taoism, Lao-tzu, can be found, for example, in the Lieh-hsien-chuan (Tao-tsang ed.), 2.4b; Ling-pao chên-ling-wei-yeh t'u (Chin-tai mi-shu ed.) 13a; Hsieh Shou-h'ao, T'ai-shang hun-yüan Lao-tzu shih-lieh (Tao-tsang ed.); and Werner, 240-241. P'êng-tsu is mentioned in Taoist hagiographies, like the Sou-shen-chi (Chin-tai mi-shu ed.) 1.2a; Shen-hsien-chuan, 151.1, 152.1, 155.1, 156.1, and the T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi (Lei-shu Hui-yao ed. Taipei; Yi-wen yin-shu-kuan.) 2.1-5. See also Werner, 451. Liu Hai-ch'ân was the tzu of Liu Ts'ao, the founder of the Southern School of Taoism (nan-sung) in the 11th century. For further accounts on him see Ch'en Chih-hsü, Chang-yang-tzu chin-tan ta-yao lieh-hsien-chih (Tao-tsang ed.) No. 1055 in Werner, L., Le Canon Taoiste (Patrologie), (Hsienhsien, 1911), 2a; and Werner 255-256.

21 CHY, 4. For an account of the immortal Chang Hsien see Ch'in-f'ai ch'i-wen (Pao-yen-t'ang mi-chi ed.), 2. He also appears in a popular novel Hsiêh Ting-shan chêng-hsi 67.157. Chang Tao-lang was the founder of Taoism as an organised religion. For his hagiography see Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien (Tao-tsang ed.) 109. 18a-21a; and Shen-hsien-chuan 4.7-9. Chang Kuo was one of the Eight Immortals. For his hagiography see Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien 113. 21a-22b. Chang Po-tuan was the author of the Wu-chen'pien and the Chin-tan ssu-pai-tzu and an eminent personality in the Southern School of Taoism in Sung China. See Liu Ts'un-yen, "Tao-tsang pen Wu-chen'pien san-chu pien-wu" Tung-hsi wen-hua, 15 (1968), 33-41.

22 Hsüan was used in the personal name of the emperor K'ang-hsi and consequently became a 'taboo word' (hui-tzu) in the Manchu period. It was replaced by the word yüan. Yüan Nü must therefore be identifiable with Hsüan Nü. For further information on Hsüan Nü see for example Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien, 100. 16b-17b and 114, passim; and Werner, 11.

23 CHY, 4. For further information on Ch'ang O, the Lady-of-the-Moon, see Huai-nan-tzu, (Han Wei tsung-shu ed.) 6. 11a, Sou-shen-chi 14.6; and Werner, 43. The Weaving-Damsel, Chih Nü, according to the Shih-chi, 27.4b, was the grand-

[56] 上陽子金丹大要列仙誌 [57] 張仙 [58] 道陵，果，伯端
[63] 金丹四百字 [64] 道藏本悟真篇三註辨訛 [65] 東西文化

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and Longevity (Fu, Lu and Shou\textsuperscript{[71]}) had been featured already in earlier novels, like the \textit{Hsi-yu-chi}, and so had Hung Hai-erh \textsuperscript{[72]}.\textsuperscript{[84]} Mu Kung \textsuperscript{[79]} and the two Immortals of Harmony, Ho \textsuperscript{[76]} also have a Taoist origin\textsuperscript{[25]}. However, the Immortals of Wealth and Happiness, Ts'\text&ai and Hsi, do not often appear in Chinese stories\textsuperscript{[26]}. In Chinese fiction there are two gods who can move about with great speed on 'wheels of wind and fire' (\textit{t'eng-huo-lun}\textsuperscript{[83]}): namely Nata (\textit{No-cha}\textsuperscript{[86]}) and Hung Hai-erh, but in the \textit{Ching-hua-y"uan} the author has given the same magical powers to three other gods or goddesses: namely Chin T'ung-erh\textsuperscript{[87]}, Ch'\texting N"u-erh and Yu N"u-erh\textsuperscript{[88]}.\textsuperscript{[27]} These are the daughter of the Heavenly Emperor, being the goddess of the star Vega. See also Werner, 73—74. For the goddess Ma Ku, who keeps four-inch-long finger-nails, see \textit{T'ai-p'ing y"u-lan}, (\textit{Kuo-hs"u"eh chi-"pen ts'ung-shu} ed. Taipei, Hsin-Hsing Book Co. 1970) 370, 8b; and Werner, 199—2b0.

\textsuperscript{24} CHY, 4. Hung Hai-erh also features in pages 765, 767, and 769. In the \textit{Hsi-yu-chi}, ch. 26, Sun Wu-k'ung in a rage destroys the tree which bears immortal fruits \textit{jen-shen kuo} (\textsuperscript{[89]}), belonging to the Patriarch of the Earthly Immortals, Chen-y"uan-hsien\textsuperscript{[90]}. After promising the latter to restore life to the tree he travels to distant places to look for someone who might come to his help. He tries the three Immortals of Pu, Lu, and Shou, but they confess that their power is insufficient to revive a dead immortal tree. On another occasion Tripitaka and his three disciples are held up by Hung Hai-erh, whose magic power of emitting fire and smoke is too much even for Sun Wu-k'ung to overcome. The Bodhisattva Kuan-yin at last comes to the rescue and brings Hung Hai-erh under submission. See \textit{Hsi-yu-chi}, ch. 25, 26. For Pu-shen, Lu-shen and Shou-hsing see also Werner, 141, 183 & 431.

\textsuperscript{25} CHY, 4. According to the \textit{T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi}, 1.5, Mu Kung, also known as Tung Wang-fu\textsuperscript{[77]} and \textit{Tung Wang-kung}\textsuperscript{[79]}, is the god of the east; see also Shen-i-ching \textit{p. 1} and Werner, 530. Ho and Ho are names of two immortals, whose original names were Han-shan\textsuperscript{[79]} and Shih-te\textsuperscript{[90]} respectively. Both of them were Buddhist monks, but were later granted these names when they were thought to have become immortals. See \textit{Shen-seng chuan}\textsuperscript{[81]} (\textit{Ku-chin i-shih} ed.) 6 7b—9b; and \textit{Hsi-hu yu-lan chih-yu} \textsuperscript{[89]} (Shanghai; Chung-hua book Co., 1960) 23413 However, the two names are sometimes combined to give the name of a deity, called Ho-ho shen\textsuperscript{[90]}. Obviously the \textit{Ching-hua-y"uan} is referring to two rather than one immortal. See also Werner, 158.

\textsuperscript{26} CHY, 4 regards the immortals of Wealth and Happiness, together with the immortals of Bliss, Emoluments, and Longevity, as star deities (\textit{hsing-chin} \textsuperscript{[84]}). These two deities, Wealth and Happiness, do not seem to feature often in other Chinese novels. The deity of Wealth is still worshipped nowadays by Chinese who pray for wealth, but the deity of Happiness is seldom heard of. See Werner 161; & 514—516.

\textsuperscript{27} CHY, 4. For a detailed study of No-cha or Nata see Liu Ts'\textunyan, \textit{Buddhist and Taoist Influences on Chinese novels}, (Wiesbaden, 1962) chapter 11, passim. The Golden Lad fairy, Chin T'ung and the Jade Maiden, Yu N"u, were two attendants of the mother goddess Hsi Wang Mu. They featured often in \textit{Y"uan} and Ming dramas; for example Chin Chung-ming's\textsuperscript{[90]} "T"ieh-kuei Li Tu Chin T'ung Y"u N"u". See \textit{T'ai-ho cheng-yin-p'u}\textsuperscript{[91]} (Lu-kuei Pu ed., Reprinted, Shanghai; Ku-tien wen-hs"u"eh ch'u-pan she, 1957); and Liu Tui's\textsuperscript{[92]} "Chin-t'ung y"u-nu chiao hung chi".

\item \textsuperscript{[71]} 福, 禄, 棌 \item \textsuperscript{[72]} 紅孩兒 \item \textsuperscript{[73]} 人參果 \item \textsuperscript{[74]} 鎮元仙子
\item \textsuperscript{[75]} 木公 \item \textsuperscript{[76]} 和, 合 \item \textsuperscript{[77]} 東王父 \item \textsuperscript{[78]} 公
\item \textsuperscript{[79]} 寒山 \item \textsuperscript{[80]} 拾得 \item \textsuperscript{[81]} 神僧傳 \item \textsuperscript{[82]} 西湖遊覽志餘
\item \textsuperscript{[83]} 和合神 \item \textsuperscript{[84]} 星君 \item \textsuperscript{[85]} 風火輪 \item \textsuperscript{[86]} 哪吒
\item \textsuperscript{[87]} 金童兒 \item \textsuperscript{[88]} 青, 玉女兒 \item \textsuperscript{[89]} 賈仲明
\item \textsuperscript{[90]} 鐵拐李渡金童玉女 \item \textsuperscript{[91]} 太和正音譜 \item \textsuperscript{[92]} 劉兿 \item \textsuperscript{[93]} 絲縷記
guests at the celestrial banquet of Wang Mu 28.

Holy immortals come into the story every now and then. We read about T'ang Ao's intention to search for the holy immortals in order to learn the way to immortality (ch'iu hsien fang 29). In one place are mentioned the names of Ho-shang Kung 30 (the Venerable of the River) and T'ao Hung-ching 31, both of whom have long been regarded by the Taoists as eminent immortals. In another place P'eng Tsu is said to have lived up to 800 years and the name of Tung-fang Shuo 32 also occurs. On one occasion Lin Chih-yang 33 reports a dream predicting that he will be saved by a holy immortal. In another T'ang Ao remarks that there are no holy immortals with bound feet. After T'ang Ao has become an immortal a~

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[102] 薛冥記
Iai mountain, Lin Chih-yang goes to look for him and discovers a poem written on a stone tablet that gives evidence of his attaining hsienship. Later T'ang Hsiao-shan, yearning for her father, writes a poem expressing her feelings on immortality. On one occasion T'ang Hsiao-shan is captured by water demons, and saved by two holy immortals. On another occasion she is threatened by other demons, but a female immortal in the guise of a Taoist nun comes to her rescue. T'ang Hsiao-shan herself speaks of the cultivation of hsienship, comparing it to the cultivation of trees and plants. She says that if she were a reincarnation of a heavenly spirit, it would be easy for her to cultivate physical immortality, but plants and animals would have to become human beings before they could start cultivating hsienship, and so the process would be a very difficult one. Eventually she arrives at the Hsiao P'eng-lai mountain and begins to search for her father. There she encounters a holy immortal in the guise of an old wood-cutter and from him she receives her father's message. As we have seen, T'ang Hsiao-shan now changes her name to T'ang Kuei-ch'en, in obedience to the instructions in the message.

Holy immortals are mentioned at many other points. On a boat, we encounter the Fairy-of-the-Hundred-Grains (Pai-ku-hsien), who appears to T'ang Hsiao-shan in the form of a Taoist nun, when the crew are suffering from hunger after being robbed of their food by pirates. The notion that an immortal will never age is expressed in a conversation between Lü-shih (Lin Chih-yang's wife) and T'ang Kuei-ch'en. Lin Chih-yang's daughter, Lin Wan-ju is one day jokingly called an immortal when she is bare-footed — she is nick-named 'Junior Bare-Footed Immortal' (ch'ih-tsu hsiao-hsien). The Bare-Footed Immortal (ch'ih-chiao ta-hsien) had appeared in earlier novels like the Hsi-yu-chi and the P'ing-yao-chuan. The Sung emperor Jen-tsung (reigned 1023 to 1063), according to a story given in the latter, was the reincarnation of the Bare-footed Immortal, and hence, as the story goes, he often went about bare-footed in his palace. The goddess Ma Ku appears in the form of an immortal named Ch'ang-chih shan-jen, before the final episode that settles the quarrel between the Lady-of-the-Moon and the Wind Aunt (Feng-i) on one side, and the Goddess of the Star of Learning on the other, and that discloses the future to the reincar-
nated Flower-Fairies. In a wine-drinking contest the reincarnated Flower-fairies speak freely about the holy immortals and mention the name of Ko Hung, the celebrated fourth-century alchemist. When they suffer hardship in the battles against the army of Wu Tse-t'ien, holy immortals like Ch'ing Nü-erh, Yü Nü-erh, and Chin T'ung-erh, together with the Fairy-of-the-Hundred-Fruits come to their rescue and help to defeat their enemy.

In the Ching-hua-yüan even animals can become immortals. It mentions a kind of bird with a human head that can attain the state of immortality. A white monkey who has attained the Tao appears in several places, and it is this immortal monkey who plays the part of the intermediary who is supposed to have transmitted the whole story of he Ching-hua-yüan to its author. The monkey plays an important role in classical Chinese novels. Monkey in the Hsi-yu-chi, so popular among the Chinese, has been introduced to many Western readers by Arthur Waley. He reappears in several other novels, such as the Hsi-yu-pu, the Hou hsi-yu-chi, and the Hsüeh T'ing-shan cheng-hsi. In the Feng-shen yen-i a mighty white monkey, named Yüan Hung, engages Yang Chien in a struggle, during which, 'they transform their shapes into whatever they wish so that they might destroy their opponent', and he is only captured after the latter has borrowed a magical painting from Nü Wa. A white ape appears in the Ming novel P'ing-yao-chuan under the names Yüan Kung and Pai-yüan shen, the White Ape Deity. Through the advocacy of Hu Shih, a theory that the Monkey in the Hsi-yu-chi was deeply influenced by the character Hanumat in the Râmâyana story had come into favour, and still commands wide support, in spite of individual objections. Recently Glen Dudbridge has reopened the issue after failing to find any clear-cut trace of the Râmâyana story in Chinese sources. The monkey, in the form of a white ape, appears in the Po-yüan chuan, a short T'ang novel by an anonymous writer. The myth of this white ape goes as far back as some Han sources, like the I-lin.

Although the author mentions several important places where holy immortals were deemed to live (for example the three magic islands of P'eng-lai, Fang-chang and Ying-chou, and the K'un-lun mountain, the abode of the Mother-Empress Hsi Wang Mu) the sole spot where the characters in the main story of the Ching-hua-yüan attain immortality is the island-mountain Hsiao P'eng-lai, or Little P'eng-lai, a place also mentioned in the some-

44 CHY, 661-689. For a hagiography of Ma Ku see Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien, 109.12b—13b, and for the Wind-Aunt, Feng-i, see T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi, 146.14a.
45 CHY, 713.
46 CHY, 765 & 768.
47 CHY, 63.
48 CHY, 367, 404, 406, 408, 518, & 771.
what earlier novel, Wu-hu p'ing-nan[111]. This is where T'ang A'o first becomes a holy immortal[58]. Later T'ang Kuei-ch'en and Yen Tzu-hsiao[112] both go there and remain as holy immortals[64]. Yen Tzu-ch'iung[113] also visits this fairly island on two occasions, to obtain help; once to seek advice on how to reduce the fortress of Yu-shui Kuan[114]; once to seek a cure for her husband's comatose condition at the fortress of Pa-tao Kuan[115].

3. Various elixir substances

The Taoist believed that one could attain the blissful state of immortality after eating an elixir or some elixir plants or animals. Many varieties of elixir substances are mentioned by Li Ju-chen in the Ching-hua-yüan. The first immortality-giving substance in the book is the flat peach (p'an t'ao) grown in the celestial orchard of the Empress-Mother Hsi Wang Mu. According to the Han Wu-ti nei-chuan, Wang Mu gave four flat peaches to the emperor Han Wu-ti, who kept stones intending to bring them back to his palace for planting. He gave up his plan after Wang Mu told him that the tree would take three thousand years to flower and three thousand years to produce fruits[66]. The Han-wu ku-shih says that Tung-fang Shuo stole flat peaches from Wang Mu's orchard during three successive fruit seasons[57]. The flat-peach is often represented in pictures of the Immortal of Longevity. It is in allusion to the flat-peach, as a symbol or auspicious omen of long-life, that elderly Chinese celebrate their birthdays with cakes made in the shape of peaches (shou t'ao[116]).

The numinous mushroom (ling-chih[117]) occupies an important place in this novel. The empress Wu Tse-t'ien is informed by Shang kuan Wan-erh[118] that the numinous mushroom is grown among famous mountains and is eaten by holy immortals[58]. Before the Fairy-of-the-Hundred-Flowers sets forth on her reincarnation in the immortal world, the Immortal-of-the-Hundred-Animals (Pai-shou ta-hsien) the Immortal-of-the-Hundred-Birds (Pai-niao ta-hsien), the Immortal-of-the-Hundred-Carapaced-Creatures (Pai-chieh ta-hsien), and the Immortal-of-the-Hundred-Fishes (Pai-lin ta-hsien) together present her with a numinous mushroom, saying that after one has consumed it, one's life span becomes coextensive with that of heaven and

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[113] CHY, 725 & 726.
[114] CHY, 745 & 726.
[115] Han-Wu-ti nei-chuan (Tao-tsang ed.) 3a.
[116] Han-wu ku-shih (Ku-chin l-shih ed.), 5b.
earth. The story also tells of T’ang Ao snatching a numinous mushroom from the immortal white monkey and giving it to To Chiu-kung, who eats it with great joy. In another episode, T’ang Ao goes up the mountain Hsiao P’eng-lai in the land of the immortals, and does not return. To Chiu-kung says that T’ang Ao has left to become a holy immortal, as a result of eating the ‘flesh mushroom’ (jou-chih) and the ‘crimson plant’ (chu-ts’ao). In an earlier episode, we are told of T’ang Ao eating a ‘flesh mushroom’, which appears in the form of a tiny human being riding on a tiny horse. Liu Ju-chen writes, “If in the mountains you should come across a little man five to seven inches tall riding in a palaquin or on a horse, it will be a flesh mushroom. By taking it you will increase your life span, and can also accomplish the Tao and become a holy immortal”. It looks as if the author was quoting the Pao-p’u-tzu of Ko Hung, without being too particular in citing the exact words. The ‘crimson plant’ is another discovery made by T’ang Ao. When he rubs the plant on a piece of jade, the latter turns into a red jelly. T’ang Ao eats it and feels distinct physical and mental improvement. T’ang Ao also attains the magical power of walking on thin air, after having found and eaten the ‘treading-on-the-empty-air plant’ (nieh-k’ung-ts’ao).

Other elixir plants are also mentioned. The Fairy-of-the-Hundred-Plants on one occasion assumes the form of an old woman, and gives an ‘auspicious plant’ (jui-ts’ao) to T’ang Hsiao-shan. This is a kind of numinous mushroom (ling-chih), according to the author. On another occasion T’ang Hsiao-shan finds and eats the ‘flesh mushroom’ (jou-chih) and the ‘crimson plant’ (chu-ts’ao). This is what T’ang Hsiao-shan does when she comes to the land of the holy immortals; and she finds that she can do so without eating other food. There is also the ‘resurrecting plant’ (hui-sheng hsiien-

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59 CHY, 34.
60 CHY, 51 & 281. Li Ju-chen’s description of the ‘flesh mushroom’ must have come from the Pao-p’u-tzu nei p’len, 11.195. See also J. R. Ware, Alchemy, Medicine, and Religion in the China of A. D. 320, 184. The ‘crimson plant’ (chu-ts’ao) appears in several places in the Ching-hua-yüan; see CHY 53, 54, & 281. It is mentioned earlier in the Ta-Tai li-chi (Ssu-pu ts’ung-kan ch’u-pien) 9.44 A and the Shih-li-chi 1.2. Li Ju-chen’s description of the plant must have come again from the Pao-p’u-tzu nei p’len 4.71a. See also J. R. Ware, Alchemy, Medicine, and Religion in the China of A. D. 320, 85.
61 CHY, 51. This again comes from the Pao-p’u-tzu nei p’len 11.195. See J. R. Ware, Alchemy, Medicine, and Religion in the China of A. D. 320, 184.
62 Traditional Chinese scholars were generally not too particular in quoting the exact words of their sources.
63 CHY, 53 & 54.
64 CHY, 51 & 52. This plant is mentioned earlier in the Tung-ming-chi, 3.2a and Yu-yang tsu-tsu ch’ien-chi (Ssu-pu ts’ung-kan ch’u-pien ed.), 19.107b, calls it chang-chung-chiieh.
65 CHY, 324–326.
66 CHY, 332.
67 CHY, 348–362.
ts'ao) which is presented to the Fairy-of-the-Hundred-Flowers by six other fairies just before she leaves to be reincarnated into the mortal world. She asks the Fairy-of-the-Hundred-Plants to take custody of this plant on her behalf. Later T'ang Hsiao-shan (her reincarnation) is rescued, in a comatose state, from the wicked dragon at the bottom of the sea. The wicked dragon had approached the Fairy-of-the-Hundred-Plants for the 'resurrecting plant' in order to bring T'ang Hsiao-shan back to life, so that he might marry her. However, the Immortal-of-the-Hundred-Carapaced-Creatures and the Immortal-of-the-Hundred-Fishes come to her rescue and use the 'resurrecting plant', which they recover from the wicked dragon, to revive her.

The author also mentions the chu-yü plant, which cures hunger, a fruit called tao-weih-o, which makes one an immortal after one has eaten it, and the 'wooden crop' (mu-ho) which produces a kind of giant-sized rice, a grain of which will keep one from being hungry for a whole year (it is also called ch'ing-ch'ang-tao). Then there is the tree of immortality (pu-szu-shu), which grows near the 'spring of immortality' (chih-ch'uan) in the 'kingdom of immortality' (pu-szu-kuo). Both the tree and the spring will bring immortality to the aspirant to hsienship.

One could also become an immortal, it was believed, after eating flying-fish. One would die first, but after two hundred years be resurrected and become an immortal. The fish was also a remedy for haemorrhoids. Ning Feng at the time of Huang-ti is said to have eaten this fish and become an immortal.

4. Moral excellence as a prerequisite for hsienship.

In connection with Chinese alchemy Li Ju-chen mentions only the two best-known treatises, the Ts'an-t'ung-ch'i and the Pao-p'u-tzu. Of the many Taoist hagiographies, he mentions only Kan Pao's Sou-shen-chi and Wang Chia's Shih-i-chi. Of special interest is his citation of the two Taoist writings on good and bad deeds and their rewards and punishments, namely

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89 CHY, 35. The hui-sheng hsien-ts'ao is mentioned earlier in the Shih-chou-chi 2a—2b.
90 CHY, 330—332.
91 For Chu-yü see CHY, 51. It is mentioned earlier in the Shan-hai-ching 1.1a. For tao-weih-o see CHY, 52. It is mentioned earlier in the Shen-l-ching, Nan-huang-ching, 6. Yu-yang tsai-tsu ch'ien-chi, 18.99, calls it suzwei-mu. For ch'ing-ch'ang-tao see CHY, 376 & 378. It is mentioned earlier in the Shih-l-chi, 6.2a. The Shan-hai-ching, 11.3b, and the Huai-nan-tzu, 4.2b, both describe a fabulous tree mu-ho, which produces giant-sized rice.
92 CHY, 277. The 'tree of immortality', the 'spring of immortality' and the 'kingdom of immortality' all appear in the Shan-hai-ching, 6.4a; 11.5b. See also Po-wuchi (Lung-hsi-ching-she tsung-shu ed.) 8.5, and Huai-nan-tzu, 4.2b.
93 CHY, 98. The 'flying fish' is described in the Shi-i-chi, 1.4a, and Yu-yang tsai-tsu ch'ien-chi, 17.93. See also Shan-hai-ching, 2.19a & 5.9a, and San-ts'ai-l'u-hui (Taipei; Ch'eng-wen ch'u-pan-she; 1970 ed.) Niao-shou, 6.2b & 5.45b.
94 CHY, 691 & 713.
95 CHY, 1 & 704.
the *Yin-chih-wen*\(^{134}\) and the *Chüeh-shih-ching*\(^{135}\). In fact, in two of the prefaces of the *Ching-hua-yüan*, written by the author's friends, it is said that the main purpose of the book is to foster the sense of loyalty and filial piety among its readers. Li Ju-chen includes the cultivation of these two virtues among the ways and means to attain the state of immortality.

The Buddhist doctrine of cause and effect would not have seemed an entirely new concept in China, when it was introduced. A similar concept appeared earlier, as a Confucian doctrine, during the time of the Spring-and-Autumn period (722 B.C. to 480 B.C.), taking a somewhat different form—that of retribution by the natural order. The *Ching-hua-yüan*, quoting from the *Shu-ching*, says, "On those who do good [the Emperor above] bestows a hundred blessings; to the evil-doers [He] sends down a hundred misfortunes"\(^{75}\). Again, quoting from the *I-ching*, it says (on several occasions), "A family with accumulated good deeds will certainly enjoy overflowing blessings (even carried over to the later generations); one that accumulates bad deeds will inevitably suffer misfortunes (affecting even the succeeding generations)\(^{76}\). Such a doctrine is also emphasised in later Taoist writings. The early 11th-century Sung Taoist book *Tai-shang kan-ying-p'ien*\(^{136}\) has this to say: "Tai-shang says, ‘Woe and Weal are not predestined, but come only at the call of men. As the shadow follows the form, so are good and evil requited’. . . . . . ." Li Ju-chen quotes the second sentence from the above, in the *Ching-hua yüan*, without giving the source\(^{77}\).

That high moral standards are a basic requirement for aspirants to *hsien*ship is made clear in the words of the elderly immortal, with whom T'ang Ao has a conversation in the dream mentioned earlier. Quoting from the words of Ko Hung, the elder says, "One who aspires to become a holy immortal ought to have the basic [virtues of] loyalty, filial piety, affability [among equals], obedience [on the part of a junior], benevolence, and sincerity [among friends]. If one does not cultivate these virtues and attends only to search for the way of the immortals, one will ultimately end in failure. One who wishes to become an Earthy Immortal (*ti hsien*) should [first] do three hundred good deeds; and one who wishes to become a Heavenly Immortal (*t'ien hsien*) should perform one thousand three hundred good deeds"\(^{78}\). After saying these words the holy immortal tells T'ang Ao that he has an important mission for him: twelve famous flowers are scattered in different places overseas, and his services are required to search for these flowers. After performing such a good deed he will be able to join the ranks of the holy immortals—hence T'ang Ao's determination to embark on.

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76 CHY, 72, 73, & 523. From *I-ching*, 1.3b—44; see John Bloedel, *The Book of Change*, (London, 1965) 64.


78 CHY, 39. See *Pao-p'u-tzu nel p'ien*, 3.48 & 49 and also J. R. Ware, *Alchemy, Medicine, and Religion in the China of A. D. 320*, 66.
an expedition to search for these flowers, without his knowing at first that the holy immortal was referring to the twelve reincarnated Flower-fairies in oversea countries. After accomplishing this mission T'ang Ao becomes a holy immortal in the Hsiao P'eng-lai mountain.

Special emphasis is laid by the author on filial piety. T'ang Hsiao-shan expresses her filial piety by yearning for her father T'ang Ao, and by going to search for him at the Hsiao P'eng-lai mountain. Eventually she herself becomes a holy immortal. Lien Chin-feng dives into the sea to gather sea-cucumber to cure her mother's illness, but is caught in a fisherman's net and sold as a slave. She is rescued by T'ang Ao. To repay him she kills an oyster demon and gives its pearl as a present to her saviour. Later the father of the oyster demon takes revenge and instigates the wicked dragon to capture T'ang Hsiao-shan. The Immortal-of-the-Hundred-Carapaced-Creatures and the Immortal-of-the-Hundred-Fishes come to T'ang's deliverance and capture the elder oyster demon, telling him that his son was punished for the crime of wanton killing and was put to death by a truly filial daughter, Lien Chin-feng.

The power of filial piety extends even to the animal kingdom. Li Ju-chen mentions the unfilial bird (pu-hsiao niao), supposed to be the reincarnation of one who was in a previous life an unfilial and immoral human being. This bird was two-headed, one head like that of a man, the other like that of a woman. On the two foreheads were written the words 'unfilial' and 'unloving', while on its wings were written other words of a similar kind. Endowed with intelligence, however, this bird had the ability to understand the Tao and to cultivate the way of the immortals. Because it did so, the writings gradually disappeared from its body, and after a few years it would be able to shed its feathers and attain the state of immortality. This is cited as an example to show that even the bad can repent and become immortal by doing good and cultivating the Tao.

Filial piety can even influence the holy immortals. To Chiu-kung tells the story of how his great-grand-father, wishing to obtain a cure for his mother's ailment, went to the Hsiao Fang-chang mountain, knelt down there, and made a bow in between every step he made. A holy immortal, moved by his intense filial piety, appeared to him in the form of a fisherman and gave him a medical prescription, with which he cured not only his mother but also many other people.

5. Conclusions

Chinese alchemy began to decline during the time of the Mongols in the fourteenth century. The decline accelerated during the time of the Manchus.
No alchemical book worthy of the name was written throughout this period (1644—1911). In the early nineteenth century Min I-te (130) edited the Tao-tsong hsü-p’ien ch’u-chi, which is a collection of some thirty short Taoist works, composed largely between the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. An early nineteenth-century body, authoritative on Taoist spiritual alchemy, the nei-tan school of meditation and respiratory exercises, was founded by Fu Chin-ch’uan (140), who had written commentaries on a number of Taoist texts, none of which, however, deals with the actual experimental practice of alchemy. So it is that, by the time of the Manchus, even the Taoists themselves seemed to know little about alchemy. Whatever little knowledge they had was confined to a few individuals, as it had to be kept secret. Nevertheless, belief in physical immortality, the elixir and gold-making, was widespread among the common people. Although the Ching-hua-yüan suggests that Li Ju-chen knew little about the processes of alchemy, his book was evidently deeply influenced by notions about physical immortality prevalent at his time.

The Taoist aspirant for hsienship believed that he could achieve his objective by following one or more of a number of different practices. These techniques have been classified into the following categories: respiratory, heliotherapeutic, gymnastic, sexual, alchemical and pharmaceutical, and dietary (85). With the decline of Chinese alchemy, alchemical and pharmaceutical techniques became less and less understood in the Manchu period. Li Ju-chen was himself a Confucian scholar. He wrote the Ching-hua-yüan after his failure in the civil service examination. He found solace in turning his mind to Taoist mysticism, but at the same time, his training as a Confucian scholar must have led him to emphasis high moral standards as a prerequisite for the aspirant to hsienship.

The doctrine of rebirth is undoubtedly Buddhist, and this has become a popular religious belief. The spirit of a dead person, according to this doctrine, is reincarnated in the human world, the state of the next existence being dependent on the performance of the individual, whether good or evil, in the former existence. Even deities can be reincarnated in the mundane world, sometimes as punishment, and sometimes for the purposes of a benevolent mission. The emperor Sung Hui-tsung (reigned 1101 to 1125) was supposed to be the reincarnation of Ch’ang-mei ta-hsien (141), the Great Long-Eyebrowed Immortal. The celebrated T’ang poet Li Po (701—762) was said to be the reincarnation of the Spirit of the star Venus. The famous Sung general Yüeh Fei (1103—1141) was believed by some to be the reincarnation of a roc. And another story claimed that the philosopher Chuang Chou (fl. 290 B.C.) was the reincarnation of a butterfly (86). This doctrine has in-

84 For a full discussion of this matter see Joseph Needham, Science and Civilisation in China, (Cambridge University Press; in press) V. 3.
86 See Ching-chung shuo-Yüeh ch’uan-chuan (142) (Shanghai, Chin-chang Book Co., edition) 1.1.
fluenced many Chinese fiction-writers. Without mentioning again the many cases quoted earlier in this article, one can call to mind the story of the Hsi-yu-chi, in which Tripitaka is the reincarnation of Buddha's second disciple, Chin-ch'an Tzu[143] (Golden Cicada), Pigsy the reincarnation of General T'ien-p'eng[144], a marshal of the watery hosts of Heaven, and Sandy the reincarnation of the Chüan-lien ch'ang-chün[145], a great Captain of Spirits serving the Mother-Empress Wang Mu[87]. In another early nineteenth-century novel, Wan-hua-lou[146], Pao Kung[147] is the reincarnation of Wen-ch'ü[148], the Deity of Learning, and Ti Ch'ing[149] that of Wu-ch'ü[150], the Deity of Military Arts[88]. In the popular Ch'ing novel Ch'i-shih lu-ch'i[151] Chin-t'ung and Yü-nü are both reborn at seven different times to become lovers but without being able to get married to each other until the last reincarnation. There are other examples far too many to be cited here.

The doctrine of physical immortality flourished alongside that of rebirth. When one had attained hsienship one would escape from the agony of death. The stage of hsienship does not correspond exactly to nirvana, neither does it bear any close resemblance to the condition enjoyed by those in the Christian paradise, for whether a holy immortal would be reborn into another state or otherwise was directly related to his deeds and misdeeds, or sometimes to the will of the heavenly emperor, as we have seen. These doctrines are where Taoism, Buddhism and Confucianism meet and intermingle with one another.

The question on the religious and philosophical backgrounds that rendered it possible for the seed of the idea of physical immortality to germinate and grow in the past in China has already been taken up elsewhere[89]. In the West there was quite a clearcut idea of human survival after death derived from both Hebrew and Christian origin. Heaven, hell, and purgatory were very real for both Latins and Greeks in Christendom. Chinese conceptions, on the other hand, were rather different. None of the Three Doctrines — Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism — had any clear conviction as to an individual 'soul'. Confucianism declined to discuss the issue, keeping to the famous saying of Confucius 'Before one understands what is Life how can one understand Death?' in the explicit interest of high social morality in the here and now, or, as Creel puts it, 'to make this world a better place to live in'. Neither does the belief in an individual persisting soul exist in the reincarnation and nirvana process in Buddhism. As for Taoism, although it speaks of 'multiple souls', it is the originator of the concept of the immortals itself, perhaps since the time of the Warring States in the fifth century B.C.

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There immortals (*hsien*) were ethereal purified beings, originally with feathers like the birds, possessed of magical powers, and wandering for ever without material needs among the mountains and forests, there to enjoy eternally the contemplation of the beauty of Nature, the outward and visible form of the Tao. Heaven or paradise did not exist in the minds of the vast majority of the Chinese people at the time when the *Ching-hua-yüan* was written, in spite of the fact that Matteo Ricci had brought Christianity to China more than wo hundred years earlier. It is also significant that no trace of Christian influence is found in this early nineteenth-century Chinese novel.

Traditionally, in the minds of the Chinese people, religion was no barrier to the belief in physical immortality. In popular Chinese beliefs the knowledge of the secret of life immortality was never the monopoly of the Taoists. Many Buddhist monks in in Chinese fiction were equally gifted with alchemical knowledge, magical powers and perpetual life. In the story of the White Snake in the *Pai-she-chuan*, for example, Hsü Hsien\(^{[152]}\) acquires the secret of immortality form Fa Hai\(^{[153]}\), a Buddhist monk. An interesting example is found in the seventeenth-century scholar Chü T'ai-su, who, impressed by the learning of Matteo Ricci, thought that the latter possessed the secret of the elixir of life. Chü approached Ricci, but eventually he was converted to the Christian faith, and one day he brought along the alchemical books in his possession to his master and set them ablaze\(^{99}\).

The traditional attitudes in China towards religion differed considerably from those in Europe, there being no clearcut lines of demarcation between Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, comparable to those between Christianity and other religions in Christendom. Confucianism, properly understood, was more a teaching than a religion, while Taoism borrowed heavily from Buddhism. Popular religious beliefs consisted of a mixture of Taoism and Buddhism, together with some ingredients of Confucianism, and elements of traditional Chinese proto-sciences, such as astrology, fate-calculation, geomancy, etc. The common folk did not have to search their consciences when, having worshipped in a Taoist monastery in the morning, they prayed in a Buddhist temple in the afternoon. The austere Confucian scholar, obedient to the teachings of the Master, would not speak of strange things, power, rebellion, and the spirits. He would prostrate himself before his ancestral tablets, following Confucius' injunction that 'one must pay respect [to one's dead parents] as if [they] were [still] existing'. Although some of the literati were sceptical about the popular beliefs, they often showed great tolerance when members of their families worshipped in monasteries and temples.

Lin Tai-yi says that Li Ju-chen could not have been a believer in Popular Taoism, and that if he was a Taoist, it must have been the original unadul-

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terated philosophy that attracted him. From his hao, Sung-shih Tao-jen[^154], we can only assume that Li Ju-chen was at least attracted by the philosophical teachings of Lao Tzu, Chuang Tzu and Lieh Tzu, but we cannot decide whether or not he was a believer in Popular Taoism. Nevertheless, his novel clearly demonstrates an interest in the concept of physical immortality and other doctrines of Popular Taoism common among the Chinese in the early nineteenth century, and his attitudes towards religion were typical of the literati of his time. Comparison with earlier sources shows that the author added nothing new to these doctrines.

6. Acknowledgement

The writers wish to express their gratitude to Professor Liu Ts'un-yan of the Australian National University for his advice on Taoism and to Dr. David Parker of the University of Malaya for reading the draft of this paper and for giving them the benefit of his expertise.

[^154]: 松石道人